

TEACHERS' ACCEPTABILITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHERS' BARE-WALLS CLASSROOM POLICY



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Teachers' Acceptability in the Implementation of Teachers' Bare-walls Classroom Policy

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Abstract

This study was conducted in response to the implementation of Department Order No. 21 s. 2023, which mandated the removal of "unnecessary artwork, decorations, tarpaulin, and posters" in educational institutions, examined the impact on teachers' job satisfaction and challenges in their bare-walls classrooms. Employing a descriptive-research design, the study surveyed 105 teachers and six selected teachers to answer open-ended questions regarding their insights in the implementation of bare wall classroom policy from the Naawan District, Phillipines and was conducted during the school year 2023-2024. The study synthesized challenges encountered by teachers across three dimensions: personal, educational, and environmental. Teachers expressed positive views towards the policy, particularly noting benefits to their personal experiences and administrative processes. They also recognized positive effects on curriculum and teaching methods and highlighted strong positive impacts on the physical classroom environment. The study provides a comprehensive overview of the themes and subthemes identified in the transcripts of the interviews, highlighting the participants' diverse perspectives and observations regarding the implementation of the "bare walls" policy in the classroom. The various perspectives, experiences, issues, realizations, and benefits that educators possess concerning the acceptability of the DepEd order 21 series of 2023 are all captured in each theme. The findings stress addressing administrative challenges and offering tailored support to improve educators' well-being. The action plan outlined in response to the study's findings aims to address key factors affecting work-life balance.

Keywords: *teachers' challenges in bare-walls classrooms policy, department order no. 21, personal challenges, environmental challenges, and educational challenges*

Introduction

Education is a cornerstone of society, and the role of teachers in shaping the future cannot be overstated. Teachers play a vital role in imparting knowledge, nurturing young minds, and creating an environment conducive to learning. Teachers have a significant impact on the quality of education in any country. However, several factors influence in the nurturing of young minds among teachers, including the physical environment in which they work. One significant aspect of this environment is the condition of the classroom where teaching and learning take place. Also, the educational landscape is continually evolving and educational policies often undergo revisions to meet the changing needs of students and schools.

One such policy change is exemplified by Department Order No. 21 s. 2023, which requires schools to remove all unnecessary artwork, decorations, tarpaulin, and posters from school grounds, classrooms, and all its walls. The phenomenon of "bare-walls classrooms" has gained attention, referring to learning spaces devoid of educational materials, decorations, or visual aids. This phenomenon poses challenges for teachers and potentially impacts their roles. This paper aims to explore the challenges of teachers and their insights in the implementation of bare-walls classroom policy.

The implementation of a bare walls classroom policy, where classroom walls are kept free from excessive decoration and clutter, can have several positive impacts and elicit various reactions from teachers. The removal of these items is intended to create a more conducive learning environment for students and to promote a culture of cleanliness and orderliness in schools. The physical environment of the classroom is one such factor that can significantly impact teachers' perceptions and insights in this snap implementation. Research suggests that an aesthetically pleasing and well-equipped classroom environment can contribute positively to teachers' morale, motivation, and effectiveness (Baker et al., 2018).

However, the order has been met with mixed reactions, with some groups criticizing it as a form of censorship and an attack on academic freedom while other teachers may have different pedagogical approaches. Some might feel that a minimalist environment is more conducive to learning. Forcing a particular aesthetic may be perceived as limiting their professional autonomy. This is notably observed among the 138 elementary teachers in Naawan District, where teachers shared different reactions about the said policy and a significant proportion of teachers face challenges in bare-wall classrooms policy linking to their personal notions.

The removal of classroom decorations and posters can potentially exert a detrimental effect on teachers. Teachers often perceive these adornments as an avenue for expressing their creativity and individuality within the classroom environment. Consequently, when such decorations are stripped away due to new guidelines or policies, educators may feel as though a part of their personal touch and identity within their teaching space is being stifled, contributing to a sense of professional disempowerment. Furthermore, the absence of these visually stimulating elements may render classrooms feeling sterile and unwelcoming, potentially diminishing student engagement and motivation (Baker et al., 2018). This demonstrates the interconnectedness of a teacher's work, personal satisfaction, and the overall classroom atmosphere, underlining the significance of considering both factors when implementing such changes in educational settings.

However, DepEd Secretary Sara Duterte has defended the order, stating that it is necessary to ensure that classrooms are free from distractions and that teachers can focus on their primary task of teaching (Department of Education, 2023). This policy, though well-intentioned, has generated considerable debate and discussion within the education community. Critics argue that the removal of artwork, decorations, and other visual aids might stifle creativity, hinder students' engagement, and potentially affect teachers' job. Conversely, proponents of the policy argue that it will help create a more streamlined and efficient learning environment, which will ultimately benefit both teachers and students (Llego, 2023).

The importance of teachers' jobs as molders of the youth in the classroom cannot be overstated. Happy and satisfied teachers are more likely to be effective educators, fostering a positive learning atmosphere and enhancing students' academic outcomes (Rahm, 2019). Thus, understanding how the implementation of Department Order No. 21 s. 2023 affects teachers' personal and educational paradigms is a matter of significant educational and policy relevance.

This study delves into the implementation of this policy and its challenges and insights, recognizing the critical link between teachers' acceptability and effective education. However, only a few research studies investigating the challenges encountered by teachers in the removal of "unnecessary artwork, decorations, tarpaulin, and posters" linked to teachers' work. This research aims to contribute valuable challenges encountered by teachers regarding the bare-walls policy and how this policy influences the perceptions of the teachers in Naawan District.

Research Questions

In light of the implementation of Department Order No. 21 s. 2023, which mandates the removal of "unnecessary artwork, decorations, tarpaulin, and posters" in educational institutions, it has brought about a complex set of challenges wherein the policy change was still fostering the insights of the teachers. These challenges, together with the ongoing problem among teachers, call for a thorough investigation of how educators dealt with the policy shift and how it affected their ability to manage work and personal life. This study aimed to investigate the teachers' challenges and insights in bare-walls classrooms policy implementation among elementary teachers of Naawan District, Division of Misamis Oriental in the 3rd quarter of School Year 2023-2024. Specifically, the study sought to address the following key problem areas:

1. What are the challenges encountered by the teachers in the implementation of Department order no. 21 s. 2023 in terms of:
 - 1.1. personal;
 - 1.2. educational; and
 - 1.3. environmental?
2. What is the demographic profile of teachers in terms of;
 - 2.1. age;
 - 2.2. sex;
 - 2.3. civil status;
 - 2.4. length in service;
 - 2.5. grade level taught; and
 - 2.6. plantilla position?
3. What are the insights of teachers in the implementation of bare walls classroom policy?
4. What action plan can be designed based on the result of the study?

Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive method was employed in this study. A questionnaire is administered to a sample or to the whole population of people to describe their attitudes, opinions, behaviors or characteristics (Creswell, 2018). Collection of data was done through the distribution of a questionnaire to the teacher respondents in Naawan District, Misamis Oriental to gather data on their demographic profile, challenges in personal, educational, and environmental related to their insights in the implementation of bare-wall classrooms policy.

The research method of phenomenology was also employed in the study. Phenomenology is an approach used in qualitative research that focuses on comprehending the subject respondents' subjective insights and points of view. Reaching a description of the nature of the specific phenomena was the approach's main objective (Creswell, 2018). The collected data would be examined, like words and topics that were subsequently gathered to create meaningful clusters when read again (Creswell, 2018). The researcher developed the event, circumstance, or insights' global meaning through this approach, leading to a deeper comprehension of the topic.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were the Elementary teachers of Naawan District. The respondents were selected using the stratified random sampling method. They were subdivided by school for the samples. The sample size was determined using the Raosoft formula. The Raosoft Sample Size Calculator was employed to determine the sample size, with parameters set at a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. Applying the Raosoft formula, the sample size was 105 elementary teachers constituting 75% of the total

population of 138 elementary teachers.

Meanwhile, a subject among the respondents was chosen to answer open-ended questions regarding their insights on the implementation of bare walls classroom policy. There were six (6) teachers who served as respondent representatives to answer open-ended questions on the matter of giving insights and reactions of teachers with regard to the implementation of bare walls classroom policy imposed by the Department of Education.

The selection of teachers as respondents is essential as they play a vital role in the educational ecosystem and are directly affected by policy changes such as the removal of unnecessary decorations. Their experiences, feelings, and perspectives are valuable in understanding the implications and outcomes of such directives. By examining the insights levels of these educators, it was aimed to provide valuable data on the teachers' reactions with this bare walls policy implementation in the teaching community in Naawan, Misamis Oriental.

Table 1. *Distribution of Sample Size by School (Raosoft calculator)*

<i>Schools</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>
Naawan Central School	48	37
Maputi Elementary School	15	12
Linangkayan Elementary School	13	10
Tuboran Elementary School	7	5
Don Pedro Elementary School	7	5
Patag Elementary School	7	5
Mapulog Elementary School	7	5
Tagbalogo Elementary School	11	9
Mat-I Elementary school	10	8
Macabagla Elementary School	3	2
Pagdihon Elementary School	3	2
Lubilan Integrated School	7	5
Total	138	105

Instrument

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data gathered, the survey questionnaire used in this study for questions numbers one and two underwent a thorough validation process. This procedure is essential to verify the accuracy of the study results. It included a number of essential measures intended to improve the questionnaire's efficacy and fit for the study.

A researcher-made questionnaire was used in the study because no suitable standardized questionnaire is available. During the initial validation phase, the questionnaire was subjected to an expert evaluation. This process entailed scrutinizing the instrument by a panel of specialists with extensive expertise in education, digital technology, and research methodology. Their valuable perspectives, input, and suggestions were carefully integrated into the questionnaire. This expert assessment plays a crucial role in enhancing the instrument, clarifying any uncertainties, and confirming that the questions are pertinent and in line with the research aims.

After the expert review, a trial run was carried out. This involved a specific set of teachers separate from the main study group. The objective was to uncover any possible concerns regarding the questionnaire's format, wording, or lucidity. The input collected from this trial run offered valuable perspectives, revealing any uncertainties, unclear sections, or aspects that could potentially hinder participants' comprehension of the questions. Utilizing the feedback obtained, adjustments and clarifications were made to improve the questionnaire's clarity.

The questionnaire underwent a thorough evaluation of its content validity, a critical step in guaranteeing that the questions effectively gauge the targeted constructs and comprehensively address educators' insights and the challenges faced in bare-wall classrooms policy. The research team meticulously reviewed the questionnaire to ensure it accurately represented the multifaceted aspects being investigated.

Twenty-five teachers at a chosen elementary central school in the Iligan City division participated in a pilot survey. This would verify that the research equipment complied with the study objectives and test their dependability. This examined the pilot study responses for objectivity and meaning correctness. The dependability of each of the five survey instruments was also measured and a Cronbach's alpha was determined.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics Result

<i>Study Variables</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Description</i>
Challenges Encountered	0.973	Excellent
Overall Reliability	0.973	Excellent

Note: Cronbach's Alpha above 0.7 is considered reliable
Legends: ≥ 0.90, Excellent; 0.80–0.89, Good; 0.70–0.79, Acceptable; 0.60–0.69, Questionable; 0.50–0.59, Poor; ≤ 0.49, Unacceptable

The Table 2 presents Cronbach's alpha values for each study variable, which measure the internal consistency of the items within the variable. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or higher is generally considered acceptable for research purposes. The Cronbach's alpha

values for the study variables are higher than the acceptable threshold of .7, indicating that the reliability of these variables is at least acceptable. This result suggests that the internal consistency of the items used to measure challenges encountered were met.

Thus, the instrument used in this study has at least acceptable internal consistency, indicating that it can be used for future research purposes.

The validation process was completed with the creation of a survey questionnaire that demonstrated significant content and construct validity. The resulting tool proved to be robust and reliable for collecting data, providing a firm foundation for the analysis and findings of this study. The comprehensive validation procedures conducted strengthened the credibility and accuracy of the data, thus improving the quality of the research focused on the challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of bare-wall classrooms policy.

Procedure

The study's data-gathering procedure comprised the subsequent stages. At first, the researcher pursued endorsement from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Misamis Oriental to conduct the study, providing details about its objectives and methodology. Following this, the researcher obtained authorization from the school principals to involve the desired respondents in the research. The subsequent stage involved the selection of participants, necessitating the identification of a suitable sample of elementary teachers in the District of Naawan who were willing to participate in the study.

After identifying the participants, the researcher furnished them with informed consent documents outlining the study's goals, procedures, and the rights of the participants. Following the acquisition of informed consent, the researcher distributed questionnaires to the participants to collect data on the insights and challenges encountered in bare-walls classrooms policy implementation.

To be employed in this study, the researcher carefully designed the questionnaires. Answering and providing the relevant information would be fairly straightforward for the teacher's responses, preventing the needless or insufficient information from being provided.

The survey is divided into three sections: the demographic profile of the instructors is covered in the first section, and the second section uses a 4-point Likert answer scale, with 4 denoting strong agreement, 3 means agree, 2 means disagree, and 1 denotes strongly disagree. The questionnaire in this section is all about the teachers' personal feelings and experiences. The respondent chose their level of utilization in terms of their personal, educational, and environmental experiences in connection to the policy. Teacher respondents were given three days to think and answer the questionnaire to supply accurate information.

The researcher gathered the filled questionnaires from the participants and organized the data for statistical examination. Analysis and descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the data. Subsequently, the researcher forwarded the tabulated data to the school's statistician for additional analysis to ascertain any notable associations significantly impacting teachers challenges and insights which were analyzed based from the responses of the subjects in the implementation of bare wall classroom policy. The study's findings were presented, analyzed, and interpreted, and recommendations were provided based on the results.

Data Analysis

The data for quantitative survey questions were tabulated and interpreted to acquire the actual information needed. For problems 1, and 2, Frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to determine the challenges of teachers and their demographic profile.

Meanwhile, an open-ended questions were formulated to predict the significant insights of teachers in the implementation of bare wall classroom policy. The study used the framework for theme analysis developed by Braun and Clark (2017), as referenced by Taylor and Francis (2019). The act of finding patterns or themes to understand the data at two different levels is known as thematic analysis. A six-phase structure was used in this investigation.

In order to better familiarize themselves with the data corpus, the researcher read and reread the transcript during the first phase of the framework. The creation of preliminary codes, which involved arranging the data in a methodical and intelligible way using codes, was the second stage. The process of coding required breaking up the data into smaller pieces. The search for topics is the third step. This required looking for patterns in the data that revealed something noteworthy or fascinating. The topics were examined and preliminary themes were created based on the findings of the preceding phase in the fourth stage of thematic data analysis. The last stage of the data analysis process, phase five, entails identifying and labeling themes. The reporting of the study's results was the final stage.

Results and Discussion

Problem 1: What is the demographic profile of teachers in terms of age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, length in service, grade level taught, and plantilla position?

The distribution of teachers' ages, as depicted in Table 3, revealed several notable trends. The majority of teachers fell within the age range of 31 to 50, which encompassed approximately 57.1% of the total sample. Specifically, the largest age group comprised teachers aged 41 to 45, constituting 20% of the total population. Additionally, a considerable proportion of teachers were in the 36 to 40 and 46

to 50 age brackets, accounting for 16.2% and 12.4%, respectively. Conversely, younger and older teachers were less prevalent within the sample.

Table 3. *Age of the Teachers*

<i>Age (in years)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
20-25	2	1.9
26-30	11	10.5
31-35	12	11.4
36-40	17	16.2
41-45	21	20.0
46-50	13	12.4
51-55	14	13.3
56-60	15	14.3
Total	105	100.0

Teachers aged 20 to 30 collectively represent only 13.9% of the total population, with the youngest group, aged 20 to 25, comprising a mere 1.9%. Similarly, educators aged 51 to 60 constitute 27.6% of the total sample, with the largest group within this range being those aged 56 to 60, accounting for 14.3%. These statistics underscore the predominantly middle-aged composition of the teaching workforce, with fewer individuals at the extremes of the age spectrum.

The outcomes could have a big impact on how this study's conclusions are drawn. Age was known to have an impact on instruction since it was linked to a lack of experience (Jimenez, 2021). This was because instructors gained expertise over time and learned how to handle pressure while also helping students see their value.

Table 4. *Sex of the Teachers*

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Male	7	6.7
Female	98	93.3
Total	105	100.0

Table 4 provides a clear illustration of the gender distribution among teachers within the sample. It is evident that the teaching profession is predominantly female-dominated, with women constituting a significant majority at 93.3% of the total population. In contrast, male teachers represent a much smaller proportion, comprising only 6.7% of the sample. This stark gender disparity highlights the prevailing imbalance in the representation of men and women within the teaching profession. The overwhelming prevalence of female teachers underscores broader societal trends wherein teaching has historically been associated with femininity.

Such gender imbalances may have implications for educational dynamics, including role modeling, classroom dynamics, and the diversity of perspectives within the teaching workforce.

Students' slight prejudice against female teachers was discovered in a recent study by Amerstorfer et al. (2021). This finding could be attributed to several variables, including the teachers' compassionate listening style, superior understanding, and caring demeanor. This result also implied that the data on research variables were not expected to alter based on the sex group of the respondents. However, there may be disparities between how men and women perceive or interpret teaching as a profession.

Table 5. *Civil Status of the Teachers*

<i>Civil Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Single	23	21.9
Married	75	71.4
Separated	3	2.9
Widow(er)	4	3.8
Total	105	100.0

Table 5 presents the civil status distribution among teachers, offering insights into the personal lives and relationships of educators within the sample. The majority of teachers are married, comprising 71.4% of the total population, indicating that a significant proportion of educators have life partners. Conversely, single teachers constitute 21.9% of the sample, representing a notable minority within the teaching profession. Moreover, a small percentage of teachers are either separated or widowed, accounting for 2.9% and 3.8%, respectively. These findings reflect the diverse personal circumstances and experiences of teachers, highlighting the importance of recognizing and accommodating various life situations within the educational workforce.

Table 6. *Highest Educational Attainment of the Teachers*

<i>Highest Educational Attainment</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Bachelor Degree	87	82.9
MA Graduate	3	2.9
MA Units Earner	15	14.3
Total	105	100.0

Table 6 outlines the highest educational attainment of the teachers within the sample, shedding light on the academic qualifications of educators. The majority of teachers hold a Bachelor's degree, constituting 82.9% of the total population. This indicates that a significant proportion of educators have completed undergraduate studies, which is a foundational requirement for entering the teaching profession in many contexts. Additionally, a smaller percentage of teachers have attained a Master's degree, with 2.9% being MA graduates. Furthermore, a notable portion of teachers have earned Master's level units without completing the full degree program, representing 14.3% of the sample. These findings underscore the diverse educational backgrounds and qualifications among teachers, reflecting the continuum of professional development within the teaching profession. While the majority of educators possess Bachelor's degrees, the presence of MA graduates and MA units earners highlights the ongoing pursuit of advanced studies and professional growth within the field of education.

According to Chandler's (2022) study, the majority of DepEd teachers did not prioritize pursuing a master's degree or might not have had enough time because of their busy schedules to advance to a higher level. Teachers who aspired to develop in their careers would agree that earning an advanced degree would be very helpful. When it came to the job, people with master's degrees had a significant edge over those with only a bachelor's. Numerous companies not only acknowledged the advantages of a master's degree, but they also favored having one in their workforce (Chandler, 2022).

Table 7. *Length of Service of the Teachers*

<i>Length of Service</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
1-5	24	22.9
6-10	27	25.7
11-15	17	16.2
16-20	14	13.3
21-25	11	10.5
26-30	6	5.7
31-35	3	2.9
36+	3	2.9
Total	105	100.0

Table 7 presents the distribution of teachers based on their length of service, providing insights into the tenure and experience levels within the teaching profession. The largest proportion of teachers, comprising 25.7% of the total population, have served for a duration ranging from 6-10 years. This suggests a significant influx of relatively new educators into the profession. Additionally, a substantial portion of teachers, representing 22.9% of the sample, have accumulated between 1-5 years of service, indicating a growing cohort of mid-career educators. Moreover, teachers with 11 to 15 years of service account for 16.2% of the population, highlighting a stable presence of experienced professionals within the workforce. As tenure increases, the number of teachers gradually declines, with fewer educators surpassing the 15-year mark. This trend is reflected in the diminishing percentages of teachers with 16 to 20 years (13.3%), 21 to 25 years (10.5%), and 26 to 30 years (5.7%) of service. Notably, a smaller percentage of teachers have served for 31 years or more, collectively representing 5.7% of the sample. These findings underscore the diverse career trajectories and experience levels among teachers, reflecting the dynamic nature of the teaching profession.

Table 8. *Grade Level Taught by the Teachers*

<i>Grade Level Taught</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Kindergarten	10	9.5
Grade I	15	14.3
Grade II	18	17.1
Grade III	18	17.1
Grade IV	16	15.2
Grade V	12	11.4
Grade VI	16	15.2
Total	105	100.0

Table 8 illustrates the distribution of teachers based on the grade levels they teach, offering insights into the educational focus and specialization within the teaching profession. The data reveals a fairly balanced distribution across various grade levels, reflecting the diverse roles and responsibilities of educators across different stages of primary education. Grade II and Grade III have the highest representation, each accounting for 17.1% of the total population, indicating a significant concentration of teachers in the mid-range of primary education.

Similarly, Grade IV and Grade VI teachers also constitute notable proportions, with 15.2% each, underscoring the importance of educators in upper primary levels. Moreover, Grade I and Grade V teachers represent 14.3% and 11.4% of the sample, respectively, highlighting the contributions of educators in the early and later stages of primary schooling. Additionally, Kindergarten teachers make up 9.5% of the total population, emphasizing the foundational role they play in children's early development and learning.

The balanced distribution of teachers across various grade levels underscores the collaborative effort required to provide comprehensive and quality education throughout the primary years.

Table 9. *Plantilla Position of the Teachers*

<i>Plantilla Position</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Teacher I	67	63.8
Teacher II	12	11.4
Teacher III	14	13.3
Master Teacher I	9	8.6
Master Teacher II	3	2.9
Total	105	100.0

Table 9 outlines the distribution of teachers based on their plantilla positions, providing insights into the hierarchical structure and professional roles within the teaching profession. The data reveals that the majority of teachers hold Teacher I positions, comprising 63.8% of the total population. This indicates that a significant proportion of educators are at the entry level of the teaching hierarchy, undertaking foundational teaching responsibilities. Additionally, Teacher II and Teacher III positions represent 11.4% and 13.3% of the sample, respectively, suggesting progression and advancement within the teaching ranks. Furthermore, Master Teacher I and Master Teacher II positions account for 8.6% and 2.9% of the population, respectively, reflecting higher levels of expertise and leadership within the profession.

The distribution of plantilla positions underscores the hierarchical nature of the teaching profession, wherein educators can advance through various career stages based on experience, qualifications, and demonstrated leadership capabilities. Teachers' educational attainment provided a foundation that supported academic success indirectly as well as through the cognitive stimulation of their teaching mechanisms (Rodrigues & Pandeirada, 2018).

Table 10. *Subject Taught of the Teachers*

<i>Subject Taught</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Mathematics	14	13.3
Science	9	8.6
English	9	8.6
ESP	0	0.0
EPP	1	1.0
MAPEH	7	6.7
Araling Panlipunan	5	4.8
Filipino	11	10.5
MTB-MLE	5	4.8
Language and Literacy	10	9.5
General Subjects	34	32.4
Total	105	100.0

Table 10 presents the distribution of teachers based on the subjects they teach, offering insights into the specialization and instructional focus within the teaching profession. The data reveals a diverse array of subjects taught by educators, reflecting the multifaceted nature of primary education. General Subjects have the highest representation, constituting 32.4% of the total population, indicating that a significant proportion of teachers are involved in delivering a broad spectrum of foundational knowledge across various disciplines. Mathematics, English, and Science are also prominent subjects, each representing approximately 8.6% to 13.3% of the sample, underscoring their significance in the primary curriculum. Additionally, Filipino and Language and Literacy subjects are taught by 10.5% and 9.5% of teachers, respectively, reflecting the emphasis on language proficiency and literacy skills development in primary education.

Moreover, subjects such as MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health), Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies), and MTB-MLE (Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education) are taught by smaller percentages of teachers, highlighting the diverse range of educational domains covered in the primary curriculum. Notably, ESP (Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao) has zero frequency, indicating its absence among the subjects taught by the sampled teachers.

Problem 2: What are the challenges encountered by the teachers in the implementation of Department Order No. 21 s. 2023 in terms of personal, educational, and environmental?

The findings from Table 11 shed light on the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing DepEd Order no. 21 s. 2023, particularly in terms of their personal feelings and experiences regarding the removal of unnecessary visual clutter in the classroom. The mean scores across all indicators suggest an overall agreement among teachers regarding the positive impact of decluttering on various aspects of their professional lives. Specifically, teachers reported feeling happier (Mean = 3.40, SD = 0.69), experiencing improved work-life balance (Mean = 3.32, SD = 0.63), and perceiving a decrease in stress levels (Mean = 3.27, SD = 0.67) after the removal of unnecessary visual elements. Moreover, the cleared classroom space was associated with increased personal comfort and job satisfaction (Mean = 3.31, SD = 0.65), as well as enhanced overall job satisfaction (Mean = 3.23, SD = 0.65).

Furthermore, teachers expressed heightened motivation and enthusiasm for teaching (Mean = 3.20, SD = 0.81) and found it easier to focus and concentrate on teaching tasks (Mean = 3.30, SD = 0.67) in a decluttered classroom environment. Additionally, the removal

of distracting visual elements contributed to a sense of increased connection with students (Mean = 3.25, SD = 0.68). The total measure indicates a strong agreement among teachers regarding the positive effects of decluttering on their personal well-being and job satisfaction (Mean = 3.28, SD = 0.59).

Table 11. *Challenges in the Implementation of DepEd Order No. 21 s. 2023 in terms of Personal (Teachers' Personal Feelings and Experiences)*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. I think I feel happier since the removal of unnecessary artwork, decorations, tarpaulin, and posters in my classroom.	3.40	.69	Agree
2. I think the removal of unnecessary visual clutter in my classroom has positively impacted my work-life balance.	3.32	.63	Agree
3. I think my stress levels have decreased after the removal of unnecessary visual elements from my classroom.	3.27	.67	Agree
4. I think the cleared classroom space enhances my personal comfort and job satisfaction.	3.31	.65	Agree
5. I think the changes in the classroom environment have improved my overall job satisfaction.	3.23	.65	Agree
6. I think my motivation and enthusiasm for teaching have increased after the removal of unnecessary decorations.	3.20	.81	Agree
7. I think I find it easier to focus and concentrate on teaching tasks in a decluttered classroom.	3.30	.67	Agree
8. I think I feel more connected to my students since the removal of distracting visual elements in the classroom.	3.25	.68	Agree
Total Measure	3.28	.59	Agree

Note: 1.00–1.49, Strongly Disagree; 1.50–2.49, Disagree; 2.50–3.49, Agree; 3.50–4.00, Strongly Agree

These findings have several implications for educational practice and policy. First, they underscore the importance of creating conducive and organized learning environments that promote teacher well-being and effectiveness. By prioritizing the removal of unnecessary visual clutter, educational institutions can support teachers in managing stress and enhancing job satisfaction, ultimately benefiting student learning outcomes. Moreover, these findings highlight the potential of environmental interventions to improve teacher morale, motivation, and engagement in the classroom. Educational policymakers and administrators should consider incorporating strategies for decluttering and optimizing classroom spaces into broader initiatives aimed at enhancing teacher support and retention. Additionally, professional development programs focusing on classroom organization and management may help teachers maximize the benefits of decluttering efforts, fostering a positive and productive teaching environment for both educators and students alike.

Implementing a directive like Do No. 21 s. 2023 involves a significant change in organizational practices and culture. Using the theory of changed management, it can analyze how well the organization is prepared for this change, how leadership is guiding the process, and how resistance to change is being addressed (Kotter, 1996). Kotter's eight-step model can serve as a practical guide for evaluating the various stages of change implementation and ensuring a smoother transition.

Table 12 presents the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing DepEd Order No. 21 s. 2023 from an educational perspective, focusing on its impact on curriculum and teaching methods. The mean scores across all indicators suggest a general agreement among teachers regarding the positive effects of decluttering on various aspects of teaching and learning. Specifically, teachers reported that the removal of unnecessary artwork and decorations has improved the clarity of educational materials (Mean = 3.32, SD = 0.64) and enhanced students' focus and engagement during lessons (Mean = 3.32, SD = 0.67).

Table 12. *Challenges in the Implementation of DepEd Order No. 21 s. 2023 in terms of Educational*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. I think the removal of unnecessary artwork and decorations has improved the clarity of educational materials in my classroom.	3.32	.64	Agree
2. I think the reduced visual clutter has enhanced students' focus and engagement during lessons.	3.32	.67	Agree
3. I think the changes in the classroom environment have positively affected students' learning outcomes.	3.31	.62	Agree
4. I think the removal of unnecessary decorations has allowed for better organization and presentation of educational materials	3.33	.66	Agree
5. I think I find it easier to implement teaching methods and strategies in a decluttered classroom.	3.27	.65	Agree
6. I think the changes in the classroom environment have positively influenced my teaching effectiveness.	3.28	.66	Agree
7. I think the students' behavior and classroom discipline have improved due to the removal of visual distractions.	3.10	.66	Agree
8. I think the educational benefits of the policy outweigh any potential drawbacks.	3.19	.65	Agree
Total Measure	3.26	.54	Agree

Note: 1.00–1.49, Strongly Disagree; 1.50–2.49, Disagree; 2.50–3.49, Agree; 3.50–4.00, Strongly Agree

Moreover, teachers perceived that the changes in the classroom environment positively affected students' learning outcomes (Mean = 3.31, SD = 0.62) and allowed for better organization and presentation of educational materials (Mean = 3.33, SD = 0.66). Additionally, educators found it easier to implement teaching methods and strategies in a decluttered classroom (Mean = 3.27, SD = 0.65), and

believed that the changes positively influenced their teaching effectiveness (Mean = 3.28, SD = 0.66). However, while teachers generally agreed that students' behavior and classroom discipline improved due to the removal of visual distractions (Mean = 3.10, SD = 0.66), there was a slightly lower agreement regarding the belief that the educational benefits of the policy outweigh any potential drawbacks (Mean = 3.19, SD = 0.65). Nevertheless, the total measure indicates overall agreement among teachers regarding the positive impact of decluttering on curriculum and teaching methods (Mean = 3.26, SD = 0.54).

These findings have implications for curriculum design and instructional practices. They highlight the importance of creating organized and visually uncluttered learning environments that support effective teaching and learning. Educational policymakers and curriculum developers should consider the impact of environmental factors on teaching and learning outcomes when designing curriculum frameworks and instructional materials. Moreover, teacher training programs should provide educators with strategies for creating and maintaining decluttered classrooms that enhance student engagement and learning. By prioritizing the optimization of classroom environments, educational institutions can support teachers in delivering high-quality instruction and improving student outcomes. Additionally, ongoing evaluation and feedback mechanisms should be implemented to ensure that policy changes align with the needs and priorities of teachers and students, fostering a positive and conducive learning environment for all stakeholders.

The removal of classroom decorations and posters can potentially exert a detrimental effect on teachers' job satisfaction. Teachers often perceive these adornments as an avenue for expressing their creativity and individuality within the classroom environment. Consequently, when such decorations are stripped away due to new guidelines or policies, educators may feel as though a part of their personal touch and identity within their teaching space is being stifled, contributing to a sense of professional disempowerment. Furthermore, the absence of these visually stimulating elements may render classrooms feeling sterile and unwelcoming, potentially diminishing student engagement and motivation (Baker et al., 2018).

Table 13. *Challenges in the Implementation of DepEd Order No. 21 s. 2023 in terms of Environment*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. I think the physical environment of my classroom has become more conducive to teaching and learning.	3.49	.52	Agree
2. I think the removal of unnecessary artwork and decorations has created a cleaner and more organized classroom.	3.49	.52	Agree
3. I think the changes in the classroom environment have positively affected the overall ambiance of the school.	3.37	.52	Agree
4. I think the updated classroom environment promotes a sense of professionalism.	3.39	.55	Agree
5. I think I find it easier to maintain and clean my classroom after the removal of unnecessary decorations.	3.46	.54	Agree
6. I think the changes in the classroom environment have positively influenced the overall school atmosphere.	3.40	.58	Agree
7. I think the updated classroom aesthetics contribute to a more welcoming and organized school environment.	3.42	.57	Agree
8. I think the changes in the physical environment support a more professional and focused learning environment.	3.40	.58	Agree
Total Measure	3.43	.49	Agree

Note: 1.00–1.49, Strongly Disagree; 1.50–2.49, Disagree; 2.50–3.49, Agree; 3.50–4.00, Strongly Agree

Table 13 outlines the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing DepEd Order No. 21 s. 2023 from an environmental perspective, specifically focusing on its impact on the physical classroom environment. The mean scores across all indicators suggest a strong agreement among teachers regarding the positive effects of the policy on the classroom environment. Teachers reported that the removal of unnecessary artwork and decorations has resulted in a cleaner and more organized classroom (Mean = 3.49, SD = 0.52) and contributed to a more conducive environment for teaching and learning (Mean = 3.49, SD = 0.52).

Moreover, educators believed that these changes positively affected the overall ambiance of the school (Mean = 3.37, SD = 0.52) and promoted a sense of professionalism (Mean = 3.39, SD = 0.55). Additionally, teachers found it easier to maintain and clean their classrooms after the removal of unnecessary decorations (Mean = 3.46, SD = 0.54) and perceived that the updated classroom environment positively influenced the overall school atmosphere (Mean = 3.40, SD = 0.58).

Furthermore, educators noted that the updated classroom aesthetics contributed to a more welcoming and organized school environment (Mean = 3.42, SD = 0.57) and supported a more professional and focused learning environment (Mean = 3.40, SD = 0.58). The total measure indicates strong agreement among teachers regarding the positive impact of the policy on the physical classroom environment (Mean = 3.43, SD = 0.49).

These findings have significant implications for school infrastructure and facility management. They underscore the importance of creating clean, organized, and professional learning environments that support effective teaching and learning. Educational administrators should prioritize initiatives that enhance the physical classroom environment, including the removal of unnecessary clutter and the maintenance of clean and organized spaces. Moreover, ongoing investment in school infrastructure and facility upgrades should be guided by the principles of promoting a conducive learning environment and supporting the overall well-being of students and teachers. By prioritizing the optimization of the physical learning environment, educational institutions can create spaces that foster

student engagement, promote academic achievement, and contribute to the overall success of the school community. Additionally, feedback mechanisms should be established to solicit input from teachers and students regarding the effectiveness of environmental initiatives, ensuring that policy changes align with the needs and priorities of all stakeholders.

This policy, though well-intentioned, has generated considerable debate and discussion within the education community. Critics argue that the removal of artwork, decorations, and other visual aids might stifle creativity, hinder students' engagement, and potentially affect teachers' job satisfaction. Conversely, proponents of the policy argue that it will help create a more streamlined and efficient learning environment, which will ultimately benefit both teachers and students (Llego, 2023).

Table 14 provides a consolidated overview of the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing DepEd Order no. 21 s. 2023, aggregating findings across four key dimensions: Personal (Teachers' Personal Feelings and Experience), Educational (Impact on Curriculum and Teaching Methods), and Environment (Impact on Physical Classroom Environment). The mean scores across all dimensions indicate a general agreement among teachers regarding the positive effects of the policy implementation.

Table 14. *Consolidated Findings of the Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of DepEd Order No. 21 s. 2023*

<i>Challenges Encountered by the Teachers</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Description</i>
Personal (Teachers' Personal Feelings and Experience)	3.28	.59	Agree
Educational (Impact on Curriculum and Teaching Methods)	3.26	.54	Agree
Environment (Impact on Physical Classroom Environment)	3.43	.49	Agree
Total Measure	3.32	.52	Agree

Note: 1.00–1.49, Strongly Disagree; 1.50–2.49, Disagree; 2.50–3.49, Agree; 3.50–4.00, Strongly Agree

In terms of personal challenges, teachers reported an average mean score of 3.28, indicating agreement that the policy positively impacted their personal feelings and experiences. Furthermore, in the Educational dimension, teachers reported a mean score of 3.26, indicating agreement that the policy positively influenced curriculum and teaching methods. Notably, in the Environment dimension, teachers reported the highest mean score of 3.43, signifying strong agreement that the policy positively impacted the physical classroom environment.

The total measure, which aggregates findings across all dimensions, yields a mean score of 3.32, suggesting overall agreement among teachers regarding the positive effects of DepEd Order no. 21 s. 2023 implementation.

These consolidated findings underscore the multifaceted nature of the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing policy changes within educational settings. They highlight the interconnectedness of personal experiences, curriculum development, and the physical learning environment in shaping the teaching and learning experience.

Educational policymakers and administrators should consider these findings when designing and implementing policy initiatives, ensuring that they address the diverse needs and priorities of teachers and students. Additionally, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation are essential to identify areas for improvement and sustain positive outcomes over time. By prioritizing the alignment of policy changes with the realities of teaching and learning in practice, educational institutions can foster a supportive and conducive environment that promotes the success and well-being of all stakeholders.

In media interviews with CNN Philippines (2023), DepEd Secretary Sara Duterte-Carpio (2023) has reiterated the significance of implementing the President's directive. Her statements emphasize that everything, including educational materials, decorations, and other items, must be removed from classroom walls. This stringent approach reinforces the commitment to creating an optimal learning environment free from distractions. Secretary Duterte's messages highlight the need for strict adherence to the directive to achieve the desired outcomes in Philippine classrooms.

Well-designed classrooms, characterized by factors such as ergonomic furniture, flexible seating arrangements, ample natural light, and visually stimulating materials, contribute significantly to teacher satisfaction. For instance, Smith et al. (2018) found that teachers reported higher levels of job satisfaction when they had control over the layout and design of their classrooms, allowing for personalized and comfortable teaching spaces. Similarly, research by Williams et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of incorporating technology and interactive elements into classroom design to enhance engagement and satisfaction among teachers.

In a study conducted by Fisher et al. (2018) on visual environment, attention allocation, and learning in young children revealed that when too much of a good thing may be bad. It was discovered that classrooms with an abundance of decorations posed a hindrance to children's concentration and learning outcomes.

Problem 3: What are the insights of teachers in the implementation of bare walls classroom policy?

The table provides a comprehensive overview of the themes and sub themes identified extracted from the interviews, highlighting the diverse insights and perspectives of the subjects regarding the implementation of bare walls classroom policy.

Each theme captures the various insights, challenges, experiences, perspectives, and benefits of the teachers in the acceptability of DepEd order 21 series of 2023.

Table 15. *Main themes and Sub-themes/key points Emerging from Analysis of the Interview*

Themes	Sub-Themes/Key Points
Personal	Positive Reaction Neutral Reaction Frustrations
Educational	Positive Reaction Concern or Skepticism Collaboration and Advocacy
Environmental	Diverse Student Needs

The theme of this study represented the different insights and reactions of the subject-respondents in matters of the implementation in the range of the different thematic approaches, which described below. The implementation of a bare walls classroom policy, where classroom walls are kept free from excessive decoration and clutter, can have several positive impacts and elicit various personal reactions from teachers.

Positive Reaction (Personal)

The implementation of DepEd Order 23, series of 2023 had several positive impacts on the teachers. The order helped teachers developed critical thinking, discover new strategies and improve their understanding of the concepts.

S1: *"I'm happy with the cost, that's it, it's good, it's simple, it's the same as in private schools, it's not expensive!" (Nalipay ko oi kay gasto baya kaau, dayun , maayo ng simple lng jud, pareho sa mga private schools nga wlay chichi buretse!)*

S2: *"This is right. Too much clutter can distract students who may already be bored being in a seat practically the whole day."*

S3: *"Classroom decorations and other posted materials can influence student learning and achievement by signaling whether students are valued learners and belong within the classroom."*

S4: *"A teacher for 12 years, apart from their aesthetic value, classroom decorations and essential instructional materials also create an environment conducive to learning. This ambiance helps motivate students to study more."*

S5: *"Visual aid materials can help students with learning."*

S6: *"Contrarily, others agreed with the decision as this will lessen their expenses and workload."*

The responses highlighted the positive insights of matters of being freed from personal expenses. S1: "I'm happy with the cost, that's it, it's good, it's simple, it's the same as in private schools, it's not expensive!" (Nalipay ko oi kay gasto baya kaau, dayun , maayo ng simple lng jud, pareho sa mga private schools nga wlay chichi buretse!). "It gave teachers cost savings." Maintaining a bare walls classroom policy can save money on decorations and materials. Teachers may appreciate the opportunity to redirect resources towards essential teaching supplies or classroom enhancements that directly support learning outcomes (Santos, 2023).

On one hand, it enhanced classroom management. A tidy, clutter-free classroom can contribute to a more organized and structured learning environment. Teachers may find it easier to manage classroom routines and transitions, leading to smoother lesson delivery and less time spent on discipline issues (Garcia, 2023).

Neutral Reactions (Personal)

There were some teachers who seemed to be considered neutral in their insights of the implementation of bare wall classroom policy. They seemed to accept things in a manner that they used to observe in the Department of Education. These insights are multifaceted and gave various implications to whatever endeavor they would be facing as molders of the youth. Analyzing these insights shed lights on a theory of John P. Kotter that introduced the Change Management Theory, which is extensively discussed in his book "Leading Change" published in 1996. Kotter's Change Management Theory is pertinent to the case study because it focuses on the process of leading and managing organizational change. Implementing a directive like Do No. 21 s. 2023 involves a significant change in organizational practices and culture.

S1: *The other school mandated that we heavily decorated the rooms and continually updated/changed the rather silly, superfluous bulletin boards outside the rooms. Bulletin boards IMO are a laborious task that the teachers were competitive about and only the administration really noticed and even evaluated as part of your observations. The learners did not seem to ever even look up at them, certainly didn't seem to notice, and became a labor of time-consuming effort and exhausting tasks for teachers to almost outdo each other. The teachers' efforts outweighed any real benefits to the students and became a burden too.*

S2: *Although I agree that decorations can be distracting, the study references placed children in an unfamiliar classroom with novel decorations. That is different from being in a classroom with familiar decorations reinforcing content or displaying past achievements.*

S3: *"The ornaments are only displayed on the side so that there is no hindrance to the children's learning." (Sa gilid na lang e display ang mga burloloy para nga naman walang sagabal sa pagaaral ng mga bata.)*

S4: *"If it's educational, it's OK to have a poster." (Kung educational murag OK lang may paskil.)*

S5: *Classroom decorations and other learning materials may initially distract students, but they can also have long-term benefits such as improving self-esteem and acting as reminder cues for educational information.*

S6: *Pasted, it does distract young learners. So, I believe it is all about proper placement. There is nothing like too much or too less. It is a craft a highly skilled craft that can be learned.*

Addressing these insights reflected the theory of change management by Kotter (1996), it can analyze how well the organization is prepared for this change, how leadership is guiding the process, and how resistance to change is being addressed. Kotter's eight-step model can serve as a practical guide for evaluating the various stages of change implementation and ensuring a smoother transition.

Hence, teachers may find that with fewer visual distractions, students are better able to focus on the lesson material and tasks at hand. This can lead to improve concentration and academic performance (Garcia, 2024).

Frustrations (Personal)

Some teachers may feel that a one-size-fits-all bare walls policy does not take into account the individual needs and preferences of teachers and students. They may prefer a more flexible approach that allows for some degree of classroom decoration while still maintaining a focus on reducing visual clutter. Teachers often spend time and effort decorating their classrooms to create a welcoming and engaging environment. Being required to remove decorations can feel like a loss of personalization and autonomy in their teaching space. These scenarios were honestly answered by teachers to wit:

S1: *"My husband gave up, because he attached a bag of instructional materials, then it was removed!" (nasuko akong bana, kay bag o rami nagtaod ug mga instructional materials, dayun tangtang napod!)*

S2: *"I invested in these instructional materials, then it will be removed, so it's a mess." (nagloan jud ko sa ani nga mga IMs, dayun ipatangtang, maka sapot oi.)*

S3: *HIGHLY disagree. Classrooms should be inviting and conducive to learning.*

S4: *Some teachers argued they loaned the hefty amount spent to buy the decorations and the time exhausted for installment.*

S5: *For me, speaking as a teacher, it's better to remove the decorations because the students don't look at them and it's just an (extra) expense. There are also classrooms that are too florid." (Para sa ako pud, speaking as a teacher, mas mabuti na rin 'yung tanggalin 'yung mga decorations kasi nga 'di naman rin 'yan tinitingnan ng mga students and (dagdag) gastos lang din po 'yan. May mga classrooms din kasi na florid na rin masyado,")*

The testimonial of Subject-Teacher5 was aligned to the existing research of Santos (2023) that believed that maintaining a bare walls classroom policy can save money on decorations and materials. Teachers may appreciate the opportunity to redirect resources towards essential teaching supplies or classroom enhancements that directly support learning outcomes. The positive outcomes reported by the teachers corresponded with themes discussed in related literature such as "A minimalist classroom design can create a more inclusive environment for students with sensory sensitivities or neurodiverse needs. Teachers may notice that students who previously struggled with sensory overload or anxiety in a visually cluttered space are more comfortable and engaged in the learning process" (Llego, 2023).

S6: *Another Filipino mentioned that younger children are primarily visual learners. "Kinder pupils (are) more on visual po. Please try to understand, Madam VP Sara Duterte,"*

Like any change in school policy or procedures, a bare walls classroom policy may face resistance simply because it represents a departure from the status quo. Teachers who are accustomed to a certain classroom aesthetic or teaching environment may resist the change out of habit or preference (Tubo, 2023).

Overall, while a bare walls classroom policy may have its benefits, teachers may become frustrated if they feel that it limits their ability to create a supportive and stimulating learning environment for their students. Effective implementation of such a policy should involve collaboration with teachers to address their concerns and find ways to maintain a balance between minimalism and classroom personalization.

A teacher shared this insight reflecting the visual aids are also essential "S3: "HIGHLY disagree. Classrooms should be inviting and conducive to learning." Teachers who are accustomed to using visual aids, posters, or other decorations as teaching tools may struggle to adapt their instructional strategies to a minimalist environment. They may feel that the policy hinders their ability to effectively communicate complex concepts or create interactive learning experiences (Tubo, 2023).

Furthermore, the responses were consistent with theoretical frameworks such as The concept of Institutional Theory by W. Richard Scott (2014) and it is often associated with his work in various publications including "Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities" in 2014. Institutional Theory is particularly relevant for the study as it can help understand how the implementation of DepEd Order No. 21 s. 2023 might be influenced by the broader institutional context. This theory explores how organizations are shaped by the norms, values, and practices of the institutions they are a part of a paradigm.

Positive Reaction (Educational)

Implementing a bare-walls classroom policy can be motivated by several educational reasons. It reduced distractions. Classroom walls filled with decorations, posters, and artwork can create visual clutter that distracts students from focusing on lesson content. By minimizing visual distractions, students can better concentrate on learning tasks and teacher instruction (Santos, 2023).

A minimalist classroom design encourages students to rely less on external stimuli for information and inspiration. Instead, they are encouraged to develop their critical thinking skills by actively engaging with course materials and collaborating with peers to solve problems (Tubo, 2023). The transcriptions on the positive insights of teachers in terms of educational aspects reflected a sense of positivism.

S1: It has been 12 years that I have been observing the effect of visual displays inside the classroom and I came to the conclusion that if the displays are arranged systematically, kept in order, maybe with some thematic approach, at proper height or level it stimulates a child creativity, imagination, and learners tend to explore beyond books and it increases their imagination and memory.

S2: They added the time used for decorating classrooms can be used for other beneficial activities. It will also declutter the room to become more spacious in the eyes, allowing students to focus on their studies due to the minimalist environment.

S3: I strongly agree that too much decorated room can distract the focus of a learner. Instead of listening to his/her teacher what a student will do is to look at what's inside the room. Most especially if it's too much colorful.

S4: Well of course if you put children in a new and unfamiliar environment the decorations on the wall will be distracting but in a real classroom, the kids habituate to that material. Furthermore, when the walls contain items that the kids made themselves it enhances their sense of control and empowerment, as well as increases their self-esteem. I see far more benefits to having the walls contain educational materials than blank space.

The transcriptions of teachers' insights collaborated with the concept of Garcia (2023) "Cluttered classroom walls can contribute to a chaotic learning environment, making it more challenging for teachers to maintain order and manage student behavior. With bare walls, teachers have greater control over classroom organization and can more effectively facilitate learning activities."

A minimalist classroom design encourages students to rely less on external stimuli for information and inspiration. Instead, they are encouraged to develop their critical thinking skills by actively engaging with course materials and collaborating with peers to solve problems (Santos, 2023).

All things considered, instituting a "bare walls" policy in the classroom is a purposeful educational tactic meant to maximize learning for students, support their academic progress, and create a safe space that encourages critical thinking and in-depth study.

Concern or Skepticism (Educational)

Educational skepticism among teachers regarding the implementation of a bare-wall classroom policy is understandable and may stem from several concerns: Teachers might question whether a minimalist environment truly enhances learning outcomes. They may worry that removing visual aids and resources could hinder student engagement and comprehension.

Many educators have developed their teaching methods around a visually rich classroom environment. They may feel that their teaching effectiveness relies on having stimulating materials accessible to students (Llego, 2023). The insights captured teachers' paradigms on matters of being skeptical. Thus, their reactions say:

S1: Ang boring na ng classroom pag inalis yung mga learning materials sa pader ang plain na tingnan, nakaka attract din yan sa mga bata, na curious sila at mag tatanong sila kung ano yung nakalagay so madadagdagan yung nalalaman nila. Dyan din lumalabas yung creativity ng mga guro nag eeffort at gumagastos sila ng sarili nilang Pera para dyan. (S1: The classroom is boring when the learning materials are removed from the wall, the plain view, it also attracts the children, who are curious and they will ask what is there so they can increase what they know. That's also where the creativity of teachers who make an effort and spend their own money for that comes out.)

S2: It will always distract the children.

S3: Of course, displays in schools are distracting, that is and has always been the case. Regardless of what is displayed, it is always noticed and 'speaks' politically, socially, and personally. This is historically true of all visual displays in schools. They were and always will be put up to have some influence over those who inhabit the space.

S4: Frankly, I don't care what this memo orders! That has no bearing on my last 10 years of teaching experience. My room is inviting and inspires creativity. My students are engaged and happy and that is what matters. Then they return to their regular classrooms they tell stories about what is in my room and they write about what we learn in my class, in other teachers' assignments. I will continue to provide prompts of curiosity for my young scholars. Proud over-decorator here!

S5: The DepEd Secretary "doesn't even know the main purpose of these visual aids aside from its being used as a display in the classroom. How can she command the teachers to remove these things, without consulting to the professionals? Mana sa tatay,

paladesisyon." Inheritance from father, let's decide."

S6: "I spent from my own pocket almost P3,000 for classroom decorations and around P800 to P2,000 for paints. While I also received donations from parents and other stakeholders, these contributions were not enough."

S4: Agree completely! Our school is designed with a "prepared environment" which allows the school work to be the focus and not the walls. I would be happy to hear about this implementation of bare walls. that research is backing up her discovery....even if they don't use her name.

Teachers recognize that students have diverse learning styles, and a bare-wall policy might not cater to all students equally. Some learners may benefit from visual cues, while others may find them distracting (Santos, 2023).

In order to allay these worries, a balanced strategy that weighs the advantages and disadvantages of a bare-wall classroom policy is needed. Llego (2023) wrote that skepticism can be reduced and a positive learning environment can be promoted by giving teachers the assistance, tools, and training they need to carry out the policy successfully while attending to their concerns. Increased support and buy-in for the policy can also be achieved by including teachers in the decision-making process and allowing for flexibility and modification depending on unique teaching styles and classroom dynamics.

Collaboration and Advocacy (Educational)

Educational collaboration and advocacy are essential for the successful implementation of any DepEd (Department of Education) program, including the bare wall classroom policy (Escobido, 2023). First, Stakeholder Engagement: Engaging teachers, school administrators, parents, and students in discussions about the benefits of the bare-wall policy fosters understanding and support. Collaboration ensures that all stakeholders have a voice in shaping the implementation process, addressing concerns, and sharing ideas for effective adaptation. Second, Professional Development: Providing professional development opportunities for teachers on the pedagogical principles behind the bare-wall policy can enhance understanding and confidence in its effectiveness. Workshops, seminars, and training sessions can equip educators with strategies for creating engaging learning environments without relying on excessive visual stimuli.

Third, Resource Sharing: Collaboration among schools, districts, and educational organizations facilitates the sharing of best practices, resources, and lesson plans related to the bare wall policy. Teachers can benefit from seeing examples of successful implementation in other classrooms and gain inspiration for adapting their teaching practices. Fourth, Advocacy Campaigns: DepEd can launch advocacy campaigns to raise awareness about the rationale behind the bare wall policy and its potential benefits for student learning and well-being. These campaigns can utilize various communication channels, including social media, newsletters, and workshops, to disseminate information and garner support from the education community (Escobido, 2023). The responses underscored support among teachers in this implementation of bare wall classroom policy. As such, it says;

S1: "This is great! As a private teacher for 5 years, I am so glad that this is backed up by research. We have always designed simple, minimalist environments. Relying on plants and beautiful photos of nature, soft colors, and nothing over-stimulating in private classrooms."

S2: "Thank you so much for this implementation. I will definitely not decorate my class heavily but moderately to enable my students to learn and avoid distractions."

S3: I think this is a valid point and people should think carefully about the 'wallpaper' but also some people are pushed into putting things up through lesson plans, learning walks, and non-negotiables set by senior leaders e.g. number square, number line, sounds, key vocabulary, wall work, working walls, spellings, etc... some staff may not feel strong enough to say no! It's too much!

S4: "Agree completely! Our school is designed with a "prepared environment" which allows the school works to be the focus and not the walls. I would be happy to hear about this implementation of bare walls. that research is backing up her discovery....even if they don't use her name."

S5: "Well of course if you put children in a new and unfamiliar environment the decorations on the wall will be distracting. but in a real classroom, the kids habituate to that material. Furthermore, when the walls contain items that the kids made themselves it enhances their sense of control and empowerment, as well as increases their self-esteem. I see far more benefits to having the walls contain educational materials than blank space."

Involving the local community in supporting the bare-wall policy reinforces its importance beyond the school setting. Collaborating with community leaders, businesses, and organizations can provide additional resources and opportunities for enriching classroom environments in creative ways that align with the policy. Also, collaboration between DepEd officials, educators, and researchers is essential for monitoring the implementation of the bare-wall policy and evaluating its impact on student outcomes. By collecting data, gathering feedback, and conducting research studies, stakeholders can continuously refine and improve the policy to ensure its effectiveness.

Collaborative efforts can extend to advocating for supportive policies at the national and local levels that align with the goals of the

bare wall policy. DepEd can work with policymakers, legislators, and other stakeholders to create an enabling environment that prioritizes the creation of conducive learning spaces in schools (Llego, 2023).

By fostering collaboration and advocacy, DepEd can enhance the implementation of the bare wall classroom policy, leading to improved learning experiences and outcomes for students across the education system.

Diverse Student Needs (Environmental)

Considering diverse learners' needs is crucial in the implementation of the bare-wall classroom policy to ensure that all students have equitable access to learning opportunities. Educators can address diverse learners' needs within this framework (Bayocot, 2023). Teachers should employ differentiated instruction techniques to cater to diverse learning styles, abilities, and preferences. This might involve providing multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement to accommodate the varied needs of students. Recognizing that some students may require additional support, teachers can offer individualized interventions, accommodations, or modifications as needed. This could include providing assistive technologies, personalized learning plans, or peer tutoring to help students succeed in a minimalist classroom environment (Llego, 2023).

Some students, such as those with sensory processing disorders or attention difficulties, may be particularly sensitive to environmental stimuli. Teachers can create sensory-friendly classroom spaces by minimizing distractions, incorporating calming elements like soft lighting or soothing music, and providing sensory tools or fidget items for students who benefit from them (Santos, 2023).

While the bare-wall policy limits the use of visual aids, educators can still incorporate targeted visual supports that enhance learning for diverse learners. This might include using graphic organizers, visual schedules, or multimedia presentations to scaffold instruction and facilitate comprehension.

S1: I probably had the 'busiest' classrooms around, the organization within the busy environment carried the day. I changed many things within the classroom usually three times a year. Most of the major things all the students were participants in the change, whether it was moving their desks, hanging up their art, etc.... the participation in their environment made a huge difference. I had a lot of years of experience with my students in my classroom. My students mostly loved coming to school and enjoying the educational learning pictures on the walls.

S2: Taught for 16 years. Found that too-busy walls and more are very distracting. When I had kid placement, children's eye level with open space provided between posters or student work, things were much less distracting! Postings tended to be grouped by category and most all postings were topic or seasonally-themed worked best, also noted that using calmer coloring especially background paper on bulletin boards worked best, with some pops of bright color. Less is more!

S3: Kids' work and age-related posters can be put up in the classrooms rather than just overloading it with too much color that might distract students. Also, the position of display work should be kept in mind before putting it up so that it is not an obstacle in a child's view.

S4: I think another key difference between these materials and 'decoration' is that they are readily accessible to children to use for their learning. Children actively take them off the shelf to manipulate, repeat, and sometimes teach to others. Once the child has been presented with a lesson on how to use the material they are free to use it independently, at any time to support their learning.

S5: I taught in 2 different elementary schools K-5 and noticed the big empty room (no desks) and only a blackboard painted big wall with notes about the day's message was the more creative teaching environment. The kids enjoyed adding to the board what they liked, noticed, or wondered at the end of lessons so they became an interactive part of the lessons and actual decor!

S6: I believe that classroom decoration helps students revise what is taught in class. I also believe that classroom decoration should be changed frequently to support what is taught.

Recognizing the cultural diversity within the classroom, teachers should incorporate culturally relevant materials, examples, and perspectives into their instruction. This helps validate students' identities, experiences, and backgrounds while promoting inclusivity and equity in the learning environment (Llego, 2023). S6 emphasized the learners' aspect on its diversity "I believe that classroom decoration helps students revise what is taught in class. I also believe that classroom decoration should be changed frequently to support what is taught." Thus, addressing the social-emotional needs of diverse learners is essential for creating a supportive classroom climate. Teachers can foster a sense of belonging, empathy, and respect by promoting positive relationships, teaching conflict resolution skills, and providing opportunities for self-expression and reflection.

Also, collaborating with families and community members is essential for understanding and supporting diverse learners' needs effectively. Teachers can involve parents, guardians, and caregivers in decision-making processes, seek their input on individualized supports, and provide resources and strategies for extending learning beyond the classroom.

Teachers may make sure that all students are supported in realizing their full potential in the bare wall classroom policy by taking into account the requirements of diverse learners and putting inclusive practices into practice. Within this framework, flexibility, creativity, and teamwork are essential for customizing instructional tactics to each learner's specific requirements.

Problem 4: What action plan can be designed based on the result of the study?

Rationale

The action plan is designed to address the findings of the study, which identified key factors influencing teachers' challenges and insights in the implementation of bare-wall classroom policy. By streamlining administrative processes, providing subject-specific training, offering mentorship and support to younger teachers, enhancing professional development opportunities for Plantilla positions, and improving classroom environments, educational institutions can create a conducive environment that supports teacher effectiveness and well-being. These action steps aim to mitigate challenges identified in the study, such as administrative burdens, lack of subject-specific training, and support for younger teachers, ultimately improving teaching quality and overall student outcomes. Monitoring indicators of success, such as reduced administrative workload, increased competency in subject-specific teaching, improved teacher confidence and skills, and enhanced classroom environments, would ensure the effectiveness of the action plan in achieving its objectives.

Conclusions

This study concluded that the teachers generally perceive positive impacts of implementing DepEd Order no. 21 s. 2023 across various dimensions, including personal feelings, curriculum, and the physical classroom environment. The agreement among teachers regarding the beneficial effects of the policy indicates an overall improvement in the teaching environment, highlighting the significance of policy changes in enhancing the teaching and learning experience. Additionally, the study reveals a positive outlook on teachers' challenges and insights, with high levels of satisfaction reported in both work and personal life dimensions. This underscores the importance of fostering supportive work environments and promoting holistic well-being initiatives for educators. The findings emphasize the interconnected nature of challenges faced by teachers and the need for comprehensive strategies to enhance their professional satisfaction and effectiveness.

Moreover, this study suggests that the challenges encountered by teachers are not significantly influenced by their socio-demographic profiles, indicating a more systemic nature of these challenges. Despite variations in age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and other factors, teachers face consistent challenges across the board.

Based on the findings and conclusions, several targeted recommendations can be made to different stakeholders within the education sector.

School administrators should prioritize the implementation of streamlined administrative processes to reduce the workload on teachers and improve their personal development. This could involve investing in digital tools and systems to automate routine tasks and paperwork. Additionally, providing subject-specific training and professional development opportunities, especially in areas like MTB-MLE, can empower teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver effective instruction. Mentorship programs should be established to offer guidance and support to younger teachers, helping them navigate challenges and develop professionally.

Guidance counselors play a crucial role in promoting teachers' well-being by offering counseling services, stress management workshops, and creating a supportive environment where educators feel comfortable seeking assistance when needed.

Teachers themselves should prioritize self-care and advocate balance by setting boundaries, practicing stress-relief techniques, and actively engaging in professional development activities.

Lastly, future research should focus on exploring the effectiveness of organizational interventions, such as workload management strategies and supportive workplace policies, in further enhancing teacher well-being and student outcomes. By implementing these recommendations collaboratively, stakeholders can work towards creating an educational ecosystem that prioritizes both teacher satisfaction and student success.

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