



A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL HEADS, TEACHERS AND LEARNERS ON A MAKESHIFT CLASSROOM: ACCOUNTS ON BENEFITS, DRAWBACKS, AND INSIGHTS

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-----ABSTRACT-----

This phenomenological-cross sectional study navigates the views of school heads, teachers, and learners in Kapalong East District. This phenomenological study aims to describe and understand the experiences of school heads, teachers, and learners in makeshift classrooms. This perspective encourages educators, families, and schools to understand that learners develop and learn new skills and knowledge by reacting to their environment. Five school heads, five teachers, and five learners participated in the in-depth interview and focus group discussion, selected through the purposive sampling technique. The experiences of the school heads resulted in nine major themes, which include: the makeshift classroom is not safe and conducive to learners; the makeshift classroom is an immediate solution to lack of classrooms; a big challenge to face; accepting the situation; providing support and motivation to teachers; involvement of stakeholders in the improvement of classrooms; making use of available resources, and provision of the concrete classroom. Nine major themes also emerged for teacher-participants: the makeshift classroom is not conducive and not secured; teachers used varied teaching styles; a challenge to take; integrating different strategies in teaching; motivating one's self to do the best; being positive despite the present situation; needs for support from DepEd; integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching. Eight major themes revealed from learner-participants: not conducive to learning; willingness to learn; the desire to have a concrete and spacious classroom; determination to study; classroom cleanliness; learners should give their best to succeed, and government should provide additional concrete classroom. These results imply that having a good environment for learning can affect learners' learning, particularly and the quality of education in general. The results of this study are critical to school heads, teachers, learners, and stakeholders in promoting better education.

KEYWORDS - education, views of school heads, teachers and learners on makeshift classrooms, school heads, teachers and learners, qualitative-phenomenological research, cross-sectional analysis-----

INTRODUCTION

A school classroom occupies a substantial part of a child's time. This ideal location is where students will master the many abilities regarded required and appropriate for success in the competitive global arena. The classroom is where kids will learn about their role in the world and their gifts to contribute. It is where the student materializes their desired future and their proficiency in the abilities required to achieve that objective. With the classroom being an essential area in a child's development, it is critical to learn how to influence this setting to obtain the most effective education. Suppose schools do play a vital role in teaching the next generation how to be



successful and responsive citizens of society. In that case, every precaution should be taken into consideration to ensure that the learning environment aids students thrive.

Furthermore, several factors might have an impact on the ecosystem. There are physical aspects such as wall art, workstation layout, and resources. Intangible aspects include the atmosphere of the classroom, the regulations, and the sounds within the room. Each of these factors can have an influence on a student's concentration and success in class. They can also influence a teacher's demeanor in the classroom. The emotional environment is a component of each of these classroom components. How a teacher arranges or controls their courses will have good or bad repercussions for their students. If a teacher is uninspired or unpleasant, it will immediately affect the students in the classroom. Similarly, if a teacher is driven and optimistic, it is probable that they will have a favorable influence on their students (Grubaugh and Houston, 2013). Significantly, building a pleasant classroom atmosphere is a key element of effective teaching (Fleming and Younger, 2012). Students feel comfortable, feel connected with their peers and teachers, and add to students' educational progress in the long term (Barkley, 2010).

Meanwhile, education entails more than simply teaching a child to read and write. But, with a scarcity of classrooms, how can we meet the demands of the students? There are much too many students and a scarcity of classrooms. It's one of the most prevalent problems in schools, especially in public institutions. Many schools in the country are using improvised classrooms as a temporary solution owing to a variety of legitimate reasons, including a lack of national budget/funding, continuing building of a new facility, natural catastrophes, and an influx of registrants (DepEd, 2018).

Related Literature

A makeshift classroom is a concrete manifestation of a place not conducive to learning. Undoubtedly, the classroom setting is an essential, strong, and successful socializing tool in which individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds come together to study. For an effective teaching-learning process to occur within the school environment, necessary learning aids such as a conducive school physical environment, a well-painted classroom, adequate chairs, a moderate distance from an industrial area to avoid unwanted noise, and a well-experienced teacher must be provided (Apter, 2014).

On the contrary, learners and teachers settle for less for using the makeshift classrooms. As if reaching a star in heaven, wishing and desiring having a more conducive environment to learning. Instead, teachers strategically structure a classroom's physical environment by properly placing desks, students, and decorations. Proper desks arrangement gives the impression of sharing. The color of the walls and the decorations on the walls also send impressions. Importantly, classrooms should be a place where students feel respected and feel their contributions matter. No student should be singled out or secluded in the classroom. Every student should feel accepted, wanted, and respected.

Creating a good classroom atmosphere is undeniably a key part of effective teaching. Teachers have the chance to improve classroom discipline and management by building good school environments. In order to reduce behavior problems to a minimal, a well-structured classroom is important. It also gives children the chance to think and act in a good manner. Conducive classroom environments help to enhance, promote, and encourage students' learning in all academic settings. The classroom environment can be defined as the students' and teachers' shared perceptions in that environment (Falsario et al., 2014).

Meanwhile, the integration of Information, Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching tends to open up learning environments to both the digital world and the physical and social environment that helps the teachers create a more enticing learning atmosphere; in turn, learners participate and attentively listens to class discussions and activities. School is one of the venues where technology has had the most significant impact, which has affected the teacher's role and becomes a part of the school's everyday life.

Teachers establish their own ideas about the function of ICT as a teaching instrument, the value of ICT for student learning outcomes, and their confidence and competency as a result of the introduction of ICT in education. ICT has evolved into educational technologies that have the potential to increase student educational quality while also revolutionizing how information is collected, handled, and understood. As a result of the usage of ICT, conventional media, such as boards and pens, have given way to a teaching role based on the necessity for training in and upgrading one's understanding of teaching techniques based on current requirements (Granados, 2015).

Henceforth, the integration of ICT into education has become a process whose implications go far beyond the technological tools nurturing the educational environment. Teaching construction and how to develop and consolidate meaningful learning based on technology are increasingly being explored in strictly pedagogical terms, or the technological use of education. More importantly, due to ICT's importance in society and the future of



education, identifying the possible challenges to integrating these technologies in schools would be an essential step in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Balanskat, Blamire, and Kefala (2006) argue that although teachers appear to acknowledge the value of ICT in schools, they continue encountering obstacles during the processes of adopting these technologies into their teaching and learning.

Minnaar (2010) argues that the fundamental economic problem of scarcity provides a logical departure point for analyzing the role and functions of government. Due to unlimited human needs and wants and limited resources to fulfill these wants. Resources available to any society are limited in producing economic goods by both quantitative and qualitative constraints. The limited supply of resources available to society leads to the allocation function or problem of economics. The unlimited scope of aggregate human wants, alongside the limited resources that produce the economic goods, including intangible services capable of satisfying these wants, requires allocating scarce resources among alternative uses.

Similarly, the government will continue to provide a supportive environment by unifying different spheres of government for economic growth and social stability. This environment will ensure a value-adding relationship in terms of the vital role in establishing broad principles of governance that apply to all and setting the overarching rules of the game. Besides, the involvement of stakeholders in the improvement of classrooms is greatly emphasized. Allowing and encouraging parents to participate in the classroom can help to foster a pleasant atmosphere. Parental engagement in the classroom and their child's education are two important aspects in ensuring a successful school year and a pleasant classroom atmosphere.

Notwithstanding, learners, teachers, and school heads cried out to have a place where they can call it as their own, a place where they can fully share their feelings and thoughts, and a place where they can start putting the colors of their dreams. Looking into the silver lining is a must in creating a more enticing classroom environment. One of the most significant variables impacting student learning is the classroom atmosphere. Simply put, when students see their learning environment as pleasant and helpful, they learn more effectively. Students who have a feeling of belonging, trust others, and are encouraged to take on challenges, take chances, and ask questions thrive in a positive atmosphere. Relevant material, clear learning goals and feedback, chances to develop social skills, and techniques to assist students thrive are all part of such an atmosphere.

Additionally, it appears the most influential factors affecting the learning process are noise, temperature, and seat arrangement. Studies on the classroom environment revealed that the physical environment plays a vital role in the teaching-learning process (Suleman & Hussain, 2014). Thus, the study entitled, Effect of Classroom Environment on Achievement Motivation, provided information for parents, educators, and school administrators to reflect upon various aspects that help students achieve their academic goals. In doing so, they can investigate the possibility of introducing those factors to their school, which may consequently enhance students' educational outcomes in school. On the K-12 school level, the physical classroom environment has primarily focused on the impact of environment on student attitudes and success (Miller et al., 2016).

Indeed, achieving learning for all will be challenging, but it is the appropriate timetable for the coming decade. It is the information and skills that children and youth gain now, not just their attendance at school, that will drive their employability, productivity, health, and well-being in the decades ahead, and that will help their communities and countries prosper.

Theoretical Lens

It originates from Bandura's Social Learning Theory in 1977, as cited by Podgurski (2016), who explains that learners' shapes and behaviors of thought are reactions to the environment. This perspective encourages educators, families, and schools to understand that learners develop and learn new skills and knowledge by reacting to their environment. Behavior and learning are also believed to be responses to the environment. The development of learning theory changed the focus of causal analysis away from postulated interior causes and toward a thorough investigation of extrinsic effects on response (Allinson and Hayes, 1996; Dunn and Griggs, 2003; Spicer, 2004; Podgurski, 2016).

Furthermore, Moore (2013) stipulated the radical form of behaviorism, to view that the causes of students' behavior are found not in the students but environmental forces, especially a positive learning environment. The environment is an important factor in learning and the development of the young minds of the learners. When a child is in an environment not conducive to learning, he will not learn to the best of his abilities. Barrouillet (2015) added that Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development would explain how a child constructs a mental model of the world. He did not believe intelligence was a fixed attribute, instead seeing cognitive growth as a process that occurred as a result of bodily maturation and interaction with the environment. Children develop a grasp of the



world around them, then encounter discrepancies between what they already know and what they find in their surroundings.

In the twenty-first century classroom, this research is based on the notion of Learning Theory. Student-centered classrooms eventually lead to mastery, learning customization, and competence education as a path ahead in the classroom, regardless of where your educational journey takes you. Indeed, the physical environment has been one of the factors in the students' learning development in the sense that it can help them learn fully if the physical environment is conducive for learning where it is far from distraction and noise that can hamper the learning process of the students. The physical environment has always been a bridge that connects the information to the students based on their daily interaction and grasping of information from the different context of learning from school, teachers, parents, peers, and community that can lead to learning that can be a tool for their holistic development and maturity.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The qualitative phenomenological research method applying cross-sectional analysis has been used in this study. This method is utilized to describe how different individuals experience the same phenomenon. A phenomenological research tries to put prejudices and previous notions about human experiences, feelings, and responses to a given circumstance to the side. It enables the researcher to dig into the views, understandings, and sentiments of individuals who have personally encountered or lived the phenomena or situation of interest. As a result, phenomenology may be described as the study and description of occurrences as they are experienced by individuals who are living them.

Further, a cross-sectional analysis study involves looking at people who differ on one critical characteristic at one specific point in time. It is called cross-sectional because the information about X and Y represents what is going on at only one point in time. Involving the school heads, teachers and learners who differ on one key characteristic at one specific point in time. The data is collected simultaneously from these individuals who are similar in other characteristics but different in a critical factor of interest such as age, income levels, or geographic location.

Research Locale and Sampling

In this study, the key participants were taken from the Municipality of Kapalong, Davao del Norte, specifically in Kapalong East Districts. These participants were carrying confirmations to the methods of conducting testimonies in devices with tools used to gain consistent information. This form of qualitative investigation allows for a thoughtful understanding of both an individual and a shared experience. This is prescribed to work well with 5 to 25 individuals who have shared the same experience (Polkinghorne, 1989).

In this study, 15 participants composed of 5 school heads designated as principal, 5 teachers and 5 learners ages 10 to 12 years old of the identified school in Kapalong East District. Out of 15 participants, 3 were school heads, 3 were teachers and 3 were learner- participants for the in-depth interview, and 2 were school heads, 2 were teachers, and 2 were learners for the focus group discussion to share their views on makeshift classrooms. The criteria of the selection of the participants were purposive. School heads are designated as principals for around three years. Teacher-participants comprise three females and two males with at least 5-year experience having classes in makeshift classrooms and learners ranging the age of 10 - 12 years who experienced the makeshift classrooms.

Data Collection Procedure

As a researcher, I took careful steps and cautious analysis that will be gathered and collected to collect exact data. In this study, the researcher will follow the process to ensure precise outcomes in the study. The researcher wrote a letter of request to the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct study regarding the makeshift classroom in 5 selective schools in Kapalong, Davao del Norte and its significant impact and contribution to the learners and teachers. Likewise, the School Principal allowed the researcher to access records and conduct personal interviews and focus group discussion with the key participants of the study.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section discusses the implications of the major themes and core ideas that emerged from the key participants' in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, as well as the implications for practice for future research that are based on the investigation's emerging themes, a conclusion drawn from the research questions, and a facet of intervention needed to address the study's main focus. The main focus of this cross-sectional analysis is to present the various experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights of learners, teachers, and school heads under the makeshift classroom.

Experiences of Learners on a Makeshift Classroom Not Conducive to Learning

Learners emotionally shared their experience under the makeshift classroom that as much as they wanted to have a more conducive room to learning, they can't. Besides, using makeshift classroom is very daunting and stressful for them - the adjacent classrooms are noisy, the building structure is not friendly with dirty flooring, unstable roofing, poor ventilation, and unsafe are some prevailing problems experienced by the learners. This is to note that substantiating the learning learnt requires a conducive environment. In contrast, a conducive learning environment is somewhere favorable for education and varies from student to student. It is a tangible and abstract setting that allows for the free flow of ideas, an environment in which students may exercise their brains and minds while also incorporating their own personal experiences from home and school (Ahmed and Ahmed, 2011). Indeed, the key ingredients of a conducive learning environment include effective interaction between teachers and students; minimizes repetition and drop-out; allows students to explore their potentials for a learning environment and a place where children have rights.

Desire to Have Concrete and Spacious Classroom

Learners have dreamed of having a concrete and spacious classroom for them to explore more. In addition, the school that each learner attends sets their pillars that promote learning. Learners need to be in a classroom that motivates them, one that is bright, airy, and full of examples of work they want to achieve. In contrast, the schools that are not maintained well and poorly designed demotivate the students and negatively impact the student's outcomes. Significantly, children learn better when a concrete learning environment surrounds them. It is critical to consider the role that a school setting plays in establishing a healthy learning environment (Chisaka and Mavundutse, 2003).

Experiences of Teachers on a Makeshift Classroom Makeshift Classroom is Not Conducive to Learning and Not Secured

Teachers expounded that makeshift classrooms cannot cater to the number of students, and the area is too small for group activities. Consequently, a classroom is an important structure that helps the smooth teaching and learning process. Cohen et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of instructors establishing a good learning environment that serves as a second home for kids. That is, the environment has a good or bad influence on the outcomes of the students. Furthermore, if the school is safe, kids of all backgrounds can succeed in achieving their goals.

Teachers Used Varied Teaching Styles

Teacher-informant realized that despite having class under a makeshift classroom, they must use different strategies in encouraging students to engage participation and apply existing knowledge to real-world situations. The teacher must think out of the box, find connections of things, and make the learners think and provide solutions to problems. Further, the use of information, communication technology became the most effective teaching strategy. This is due to the emergence of the 21st century. Educators are required to ensure that all pupils satisfy the district and state requirements. Educators can satisfy all students' needs and help them reach and surpass specified requirements by using diversified teaching techniques. The goal is achieved by selecting appropriate teaching techniques that are tailored to each student's learning needs.



Experiences of School Heads on a Makeshift Classroom

Makeshift Classroom is Not Safe and Conducive to Learners

Responses from the school head generalized that the makeshift classroom is unsafe, not good for the health condition due to dust, poor ventilation, and learners are congested due to limited space. It is aching to think for the school heads to see the learners in their throes. Where in fact, learners deserve a better and caring environment. When children are in a caring atmosphere at school, they are more likely to achieve positive outcomes. Schools either aid students in achieving good outcomes or do not support them enough, causing them to fail. Students do better in an atmosphere that promotes learning and personal interactions between students and teachers.

Makeshift Classroom is an Immediate Solution to Lack of Classrooms

School heads' sole responsibility is to protect the school in general and treat the welfare of the teachers and learners as the top priority. In the same manner, it is his prime obligation to assure that the school is adequately managed; in turn, it is his fundamental right to maximize the use of resources to cater to the unanticipated flock of enrollees. Makeshifts are not designed to provide a safe and comfortable atmosphere but became an immediate solution and temporary shelter for the learners. Nonetheless, in the least perspective, a makeshift classroom may become a temporary place where learners felt cared for and involved. On the contrary, it must be an environment in which they feel secure, safe and will provide them with opportunities to socialize while learning interesting content (Lang and Hebert, 1995).

Coping Mechanism of Teachers under the Makeshift Classroom

Integrating Different Strategies in Teaching

With the teacher's inherent hardships and difficulties experienced by the teacher under the makeshift classroom, innovation and creativity are greatly encouraged. The teacher must apply new knowledge and skills to their day-to-day class sessions. McGregor (2004) stressed importantly that his means the teachers need to use the available resources wisely with the aim of supporting the students to achieve the good results and objectives of education. The problem of resource sufficiency must be examined in order to ensure the quality of education for all pupils. Students learn best and most profoundly when they apply their knowledge and abilities in a real-world setting, according to research. Hence, the integration of various strategies in teaching, contextualization and localizing the lesson is really in need to cover all learning style of the student. Significantly, teaching requires creativity. Helping students grapple with integration requires more than PowerPoint outlines and graphical summaries but must be more on experimental set-up (Bain, 2004).

Motivating One's Self to Do the Best

Amidst all struggles, teachers keep themselves motivated to unselfishly give themselves to the future of their learners. Additionally, teacher emotionally stressed the importance of being a committed educator - willing to sacrifice for the benefit of his learners. Teachers should be active participants in their students' learning, continuously seeking new information and developing new abilities. Teaching is no exception to this rule. Teachers' passion and commitment to increasing student performance is often acknowledged as a differentiating trait. Those who feel compelled to teach, or who see teaching to be a very significant part of their lives, have a passion for it. Learning enthusiasm is essential for a high-quality learner. Doors open, and the possibilities are infinite, when instructors find and develop their passions for teaching and learning, and begin to share them with others (Olson, 2003).

Coping Mechanism of School Heads under the Makeshift Classroom

Accepting the Situation

It is quiet challenging for a school head to manage a school and its stakeholders with the least resources. The utilization of makeshift classrooms may be against the will of the school head. He instead chose to use what was available rather than having nothing. They greatly motivate themselves that somehow makeshifts will be replaced with a concrete and conducive classroom. They pointed to the need for active support from the school head. Fullan (1992) suggested that the quality of leadership in a school can have a profound effect on the nature of that school's culture, while McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) concluded that the influence of school principals on teacher communities is related to their ability to set appropriate conditions through such activities as management of resources and relationships with teachers.



Insights of Learners under the Makeshift Classroom

Learner significantly pondered the importance of education and being educated. Learners are seen as volunteers seeking further education, having higher expectations, being more self-disciplined, mature, enjoying learning for its own sake, demonstrating good thinking skills, working independently with limited structure, and recognizing the value of interacting with others. Learners greatly concluded that education is the way to combat poverty. Education and poverty are inversely related. Education is a strong source for defeating poverty as it opens the doors of tremendous opportunities and gives an individual a chance to change his/her fate and many others of his community, country, and ultimately the world as a whole in the current information technology era. Educated people have more skills and knowledge, which makes them capable of earning more and contributing more to society's social welfare (Cremin and Nakabugo, 2012).

Government Should Provide Additional Concrete Classrooms

It has been an out cry of the learners to have a conducive and friendly classroom to learn effectively. In turn, the government became mute and deaf on this matter. The government should allocate enough budget to construct new school building to cater to the flock of enrolles. Education should be the top priority. Cookson (2005) emphasized that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that every child has access to quality education. However, school facility management and construction have traditionally been entirely the responsibility of the school. Many places, particularly those who have increased their funding to local school districts, are putting policies, procedures, and technical assistance to ensure that their public school facilities are educationally adequate.

Insights of Teachers under the Makeshift Classroom Being Positive Despite of the Present Situation

Teachers remain committed to their job despite of their sufferings. They greatly recognized that their oath is to nurture a child's mind, setting aside other factors. Teachers were able to embrace reality and experiment with new methods to better their teaching and create a more conducive learning atmosphere. Day (2000) summed up teaching as a difficult and challenging career. Teachers must retain their dedication to the profession in order to preserve their energy and passion for the job. In general terms, the most common role a teacher plays in the classroom is to teach knowledge to children. Teaching is a vocation more than a mere job; some termed it as a calling; concepts that are more associated with religion. Contextually, education is considered due to the extreme dedication to delivering the expectation or beyond at all cost (Bluestein, 2010).

Insights of School Heads on Makeshift Classroom Involvement of Stakeholders in the Improvement of Classrooms

The participants agreed that schools and communities should provide a nurturing environment for pupils. Families and communities, in turn, may collaborate with schools to offer parenting and enhance sociability among children. This can assist the school in reducing the number of kids with difficulties, as well as improving staff morale and ensuring that the school has adequate resources. Collaboration between the school and the community include not just collaboration, coordination, and teamwork, but also extends beyond that. The school head needs the skills and knowledge to interact and communicate with stakeholders to achieve the school's objectives. Hence, understanding the various public entities' roles, responsibilities, and capacity with authority over school facilities is crucial to effective stakeholder involvement.

IMPLICATIONS

The implication of Makeshift Classroom to Learners

The capacity of a kid to engage with his or her surroundings has a direct impact on his or her development. Through their encounters with events and objects outside of themselves, children get a better awareness of themselves. This process can be aided or hindered by any setting. Significantly, all children have the need to engage with their surroundings as a natural part of existence. Nonetheless, the quality of the interactions is determined by the environment's engagement opportunities (Piaget, 1951).

The implication of Makeshift Classroom to Teachers

In order to promote successful learning in schools, the quality of teaching is critical. Effective teaching necessitates a person who is both academically capable and concerned about the welfare of children and youth. A



excellent instructor may make a significant difference in a student's learning. The effective teacher is a master at managing a student's experiences in such a manner that they meet, at least in part, some of the needs he is experiencing at the moment. He can observe the individual and try to comprehend his current abilities, interests, and needs, stimulate and encourage him to explore them further, and assist in providing additional natural experiences that he can most likely use to satisfy the needs and curiosities he is experiencing at the time.

Implication for Future Research

There are several gaps in our knowledge around the views of learners, teachers, and school heads under the makeshift classrooms in research that follow our findings, and would benefit from further research. The research yielded a number of significant discoveries that have the potential to influence students' learning and behavior. Changes in technology and social culture are altering the dynamics of what is considered a classroom setting, thus this is a field of research that will continue to expand. Further research might compare, the impact of school environment and its impact to students' academic achievement. More methodological work is needed to robustly capture the impact and outcomes of the physical environment and internal and external stakeholders' involvement in learners' teaching-learning process.

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