

A Friendly Learning Environment: A Framework for a Responsive Guidance and Counseling Services

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Abstract

Physical facilities significantly influence counseling effectiveness and student achievement. This participative research addressed the poor condition of the Guidance and Counseling classroom at Cebu Technological University Main Campus. Specifically, the study determined the existing condition of the classroom's physical features and identified the most urgent area for repair and improvement. Universal sampling was employed involving six faculty members and one hundred twenty graduate students enrolled in the Master of Education major in Guidance and Counseling during Academic Year 2016-2017. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to assess the classroom environment. Findings revealed that the flooring system obtained the lowest weighted mean of 1.71, interpreted as "Less Developed," making it the highest priority for renovation. The intervention involved the installation of 60cm x 60cm granite tiles covering the entire classroom floor area. After renovation, respondents perceived the classroom as more conducive to counseling, learning, and student interaction. The study concluded that targeted renovation of physical facilities contributes to the creation of a friendly learning environment and strengthens responsive guidance and counseling services. Regular monitoring and maintenance are recommended to sustain the effectiveness of the improved learning environment.

Keywords: classroom environment; flooring system; guidance and counselling; participative research; physical facilities

1. Introduction

The learning environment plays a vital role in shaping students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and social interaction. Educational facilities influence not only the quality of instruction but also the effectiveness of support services such as guidance and counseling. According to Lyons (2002), students thrive in environments that are conducive to learning because such environments positively affect motivation, concentration, and behavior. Educational institutions therefore have the responsibility to provide physical facilities that promote comfort, safety, and productivity.

In guidance and counseling services, the physical setting is especially important because counseling sessions require privacy, warmth, and emotional security. The counseling environment should function as a "healing space" where students feel relaxed and encouraged to communicate openly. Villar (2014) emphasized that the appearance and condition of counseling facilities reflect the institution's commitment to student welfare and support services.

At Cebu Technological University Main Campus, the Guidance and Counseling classroom identified as TB 311 experienced deterioration in its flooring system. Cracked and damaged floor tiles created discomfort

and negatively affected the atmosphere needed for effective counseling and learning activities. The condition of the classroom limited students' comfort during lectures, counseling sessions, and group activities. Recognizing the importance of a favorable physical environment, the researchers initiated a participative research project aimed at improving the classroom through targeted renovation.

This study sought to determine the existing condition of the physical facilities of TB 311, identify the most urgent area requiring repair, and implement an intervention that would create a more responsive and student-friendly learning environment. The findings of this research may serve as a framework for improving guidance and counseling facilities in higher education institutions.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed participative research using the descriptive-survey method to determine the existing condition of the classroom facilities and gather the perceptions of faculty members and students regarding areas requiring improvement. Participative research encouraged collaboration among stakeholders in identifying problems and implementing solutions. Universal sampling was utilized in the study, involving six professors and one hundred twenty graduate students enrolled in the Master of Education major in Guidance and Counseling during Academic Year 2016–2017 at Cebu Technological University Main Campus, with a total of one hundred twenty-six respondents. A researcher-made questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data gathering. The instrument consisted of two parts: the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and the assessment of the physical features of the classroom. Eight physical features were evaluated using the following scale: 4 – Well Developed, 3 – Moderately Developed, 2 – Developed, and 1 – Less Developed. Respondents were likewise asked to rank the physical features according to urgency of repair and renovation. Prior to the implementation of the project, the researchers conducted ocular inspections and informal interviews with faculty members and students to identify the problems affecting the classroom environment. After identifying the flooring system as the major concern, a proposal for renovation was submitted to the university administration for approval. Upon approval from the University President, the renovation project was implemented from December 2016 to April 2017. The renovation activities included clearing debris, removing damaged ceramic tiles, and installing 60 cm x 60 cm granite tiles throughout the classroom floor area, with a total project cost of ₱52,500.00. After completion of the project, the Director for General Services conducted a quality inspection to ensure compliance with institutional standards. Frequency count, weighted mean, and ranking were used as statistical tools in analysing the data to determine the perceived condition of the classroom facilities and identify the priority areas for intervention.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Existing Condition and Priority for Repair

The respondents assessed the existing condition of the physical features of the Guidance and Counselling classroom (TB 311). Results revealed that the flooring system received the lowest weighted mean of 1.71, interpreted as “Less Developed.” This indicates that the flooring system was the most problematic aspect of the classroom environment.

On the other hand, the lighting system received the highest weighted mean of 3.85, interpreted as “Well Developed.” This suggests that the classroom lighting adequately supported teaching and learning activities.

The results further showed that eighty respondents ranked the flooring system as the top priority for repair and renovation.

Table 1. Existing Condition and Repair Priority of TB 311 Physical Features

| Physical Features | Weighted Mean | Verbal Description | Rank in Urgency |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Lecture Area | 3.11 | Moderately Developed | 2 |
| Shop/Laboratory Area | 3.04 | Moderately Developed | 3 |
| Masonry & Plumbing | 3.31 | Well-Developed | 4 |
| Ceiling/Walls | 3.33 | Well-Developed | 6 |
| Doors & Windows | 3.61 | Well-Developed | 6 |
| Lighting System | 3.85 | Well-Developed | 6 |
| Ceiling/Walls Painting | 2.88 | Moderately Developed | 5 |
| Flooring System | 1.71 | Less Developed | 1 |

The findings indicate that the deteriorating condition of the flooring system negatively affected the classroom atmosphere. Uneven and damaged flooring may contribute to discomfort, reduced concentration, and negative perceptions among students and faculty members. Since counselling sessions require a calm and welcoming environment, improving the flooring system became a necessary intervention.

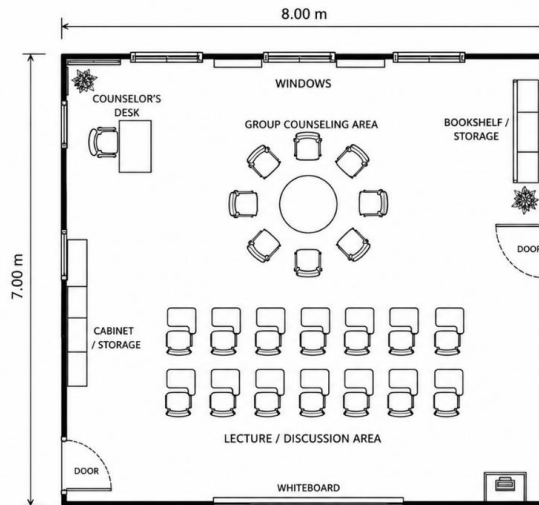
3.2 Participative Research Output

The renovation project successfully covered one hundred percent of the classroom floor area using granite tiles. The installation improved the appearance, cleanliness, and functionality of the Guidance and Counselling classroom.

The renovation process included the following activities:

- a. Clearing and cleaning of debris;
- b. Removal of damaged ceramic floor tiles;
- c. Surface preparation;
- d. Installation of granite tiles; and
- e. Final inspection and finishing.

The Participative Research Committee evaluated the completed project and rated it as “Satisfactorily Completed.” Faculty members and students observed significant improvements in the classroom environment after the renovation.

Figure 1. Floor Plan of the Guidance and Counseling Classroom (TB 311)**Figure 1. Floor Plan of the Guidance and Counseling Classroom (TB 311)**

The renovated flooring created a more professional and welcoming atmosphere conducive to counselling sessions, classroom instruction, and group activities. The improvement also enhanced the overall aesthetic value of the classroom and promoted better maintenance practices among users.

3.3 Discussion

The findings of the study support the claim of Tanner (2000) that school architecture and physical facilities influence academic achievement and student behavior. A well-maintained classroom environment contributes positively to learners' motivation and engagement. Likewise, Sanoff (2001) emphasized that school facilities affect the quality of educational experiences and should therefore receive continuous attention and assessment.

The poor condition of the flooring system prior to renovation created discomfort and an uninviting atmosphere within the Guidance and Counselling classroom. Day and Spoor (2004) noted that unpleasant physical environments may contribute to fatigue, monotony, and negative emotional responses among learners. Conversely, attractive and comfortable learning spaces encourage positive interaction and improved psychological well-being.

The concept of the counselling room as a "healing space" was further supported by Witzling, Childress, and Lackney (2004), who emphasized the emotional and spiritual dimensions of counselling environments. In the context of this study, the installation of granite flooring improved the overall ambiance of the room, thereby promoting comfort, relaxation, and openness among counselling clients.

The participative nature of the project also contributed to its success. Involving stakeholders such as faculty

members, students, and administrators strengthened collaboration and encouraged a sense of ownership toward the facility. The study demonstrates that even low-cost physical interventions can significantly improve the quality of guidance and counselling services in educational institutions.

Furthermore, the study validates Villar's (2014) assertion that physical facilities are integral components of comprehensive guidance programs. Guidance services cannot be fully effective if counselling facilities fail to provide comfort, confidentiality, and emotional security for clients.

4. Conclusion

The participative renovation of the flooring system of the Guidance and Counselling classroom (TB 311) successfully established a friendly and conducive learning environment at Cebu Technological University Main Campus. The study identified the flooring system as the most urgent physical feature requiring improvement based on the assessment of faculty members and graduate students.

The renovation project significantly improved the appearance, comfort, and functionality of the classroom. The enhanced environment contributed positively to counselling effectiveness, student interaction, and overall learning experiences. The study therefore concludes that targeted improvement of educational facilities serves as an effective framework for responsive guidance and counselling services.

The findings further demonstrate that participative research is an effective approach in addressing institutional concerns because it promotes collaboration, shared responsibility, and stakeholder involvement in problem-solving and project implementation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Conduct regular monitoring and maintenance of the Guidance and Counselling classroom to preserve the quality of the renovated facilities.
2. Replicate participative research projects for other physical features identified as priority areas for improvement.
3. Encourage students and faculty members to observe proper maintenance practices such as cleanliness, proper disposal of waste, and prevention of vandalism.
4. Develop instructional and training materials for pre-service counsellors utilizing the renovated counselling classroom.
5. Strengthen institutional support for facility improvement projects that contribute to student welfare and responsive counselling services.

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