

Experiences of School Heads in Conducting Instructional Supervision: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

School heads play a significant role in ensuring that classroom teachers deliver quality education to achieve the target learning outcomes for learners. This study explored school heads' experiences in conducting instructional supervision. It was conducted in the District of Calamba, Division of Misamis Occidental, Philippines. The study used a phenomenological research design. Ten school heads were selected as participants through purposive sampling technique. A semi-structured Interview Guide was used in gathering the data, which were analyzed using Colaizzi's method of data analysis (1978). The study yielded the following themes: providing instructional supervision as a developmental and support process for teachers; facing multifaceted challenges in instructional supervision; adopting supervisory strategies and responsive practices; and fostering continuous development and sustained instructional effectiveness. Conducting instructional supervision requires school heads to have a clear understanding of its goals and to be ready to proactively address the challenges they encounter, as well as the challenges experienced by teachers, ensuring the sustainability and empowerment of educators in their profession. Instructional supervision serves as an opportunity for teacher advancement. It is recommended that school heads continue to perform the supervisory function in accordance with academic standards and in consideration of the welfare and interests of teachers and learners alike.

Keywords: Challenges, Practices, School Heads, Supervision, Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Teaching performance, academic achievement, and instructional delivery are all greatly influenced by school principals' intensive instructional supervision, including assistance and support, creative strategies, monitoring, and evaluation, both collectively and individually (Mejia-Tiamwatt, 2021). They play a crucial role in determining students' academic success (Ngole & Mkulu, 2021). It is crucial that these school administrators equip themselves with the skills and abilities to manage their institutions and ensure that students receive a high-quality education, as they are accountable for the overall operations of their schools (Peregrino et al., 2021).

School heads can encourage teamwork, offer assistance to educators, and involve parents as partners in enhancing student learning (Dellomas & Deri, 2022). The former oversee and direct high-quality teaching methods in their roles as managers, facilitator, and educational leaders. Excellent educators who focus their work on learning, teaching, and ongoing school improvement are also effective school leaders (Peregrino et al., 2021). To successfully navigate the complex obligations of school heads, critical leadership abilities are essential. These competencies include strategic vision, effective communication, skillful decision-making, teamwork, and flexibility in responding to changing educational environments (Ambon et al., 2025).

Effective instructional supervision improves teachers' performance in their regular teaching duties, thereby increasing school productivity (Andala, 2024). The core of instructional supervision is regular and continuous observation of classrooms and the teaching-learning process (Arsad et al., 2025). Teachers must continue to improve their performance and professionalism since schools place a high priority on teacher competency (Wardani et al., 2021).

A study conducted in Pakistan disclosed that principals engaged in dialogue and took action to raise the standard of instruction. Teachers who perform well are acknowledged and rewarded (Arsad et al., 2025). However, research conducted in Uganda revealed that some teachers refused to acknowledge their limitations; supervisors face difficulties due to teachers' lack of time; and some supervisors are limited in their ability to provide services (Catherine & Andala, 2024). To develop better teaching-learning practices that will lead to a more effective education, schools must give instructional monitoring adequate attention (Bernahu, 2024).

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 9155, also known to as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, requires school administrators to have the power, accountability, and responsibility to oversee all school operations (Department of Education, 2023). As a result, they need to be excellent at instructional supervision, which is crucial for monitoring, assessing, and assisting teachers (Go & Rey, 2024). Teachers who receive instructional supervision are better able to design lesson plans, employ a variety of teaching techniques, and perform better in the classroom (Mwakajitu & Lekule, 2022).

Several studies have examined instructional supervision and its effects on teacher performance, using quantitative and mixed-method approaches. However, there is still a limited number of qualitative studies that fully captured the lived experiences of school heads when conducting supervision. This methodological gap emphasizes the need for a phenomenological study to reveal school heads' complex experiences, feelings, coping mechanisms, and perspectives when handling their supervisory responsibilities.

This study explored the experiences of school heads as they supervised teachers in their respective schools. It aimed to offer practical ideas to make instructional supervision more meaningful and useful. This phenomenological study holds deep significance because it provides a venue for the often-unheard professional experiences of school heads who provide instructional supervision to teachers, specifically those who need more monitoring and guidance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored in Humanistic Theory by Carl Rogers (1951) and the Constructivist Theory of Lev Vygotsky (1930).

The Humanistic Theory (1951) by Carl Rogers claimed that teachers, like everyone else, do best in settings that promote psychological safety, empathy, and respect, conditions that are frequently questioned or strengthened through instructional supervision. This idea offers a perspective on how school administrators respond psychologically and emotionally when providing instructional supervision to instructors. It implies that school administrators can support educators in thriving in settings where they feel valued, understood, and supported, conditions necessary for genuine professional development. This study uses Rogers' principles to investigate how, depending on how the process is experienced and facilitated, supervision can either support or undermine a teacher's feeling of self-worth, autonomy, and motivation.

The study by Gunadi et al. (2025) claimed that principal supervision often remains administrative and compliance-oriented, limiting teacher development and fostering a disempowering educational environment. Hence, the research reconceptualized supervision through a humanistic lens, emphasizing empowerment over control, based on Carl Rogers' (1951) person-centered philosophy. Findings highlight the centrality of principal personality and a supportive school climate in empowering teachers.

Furthermore, Lev Vygotsky's Constructivist Theory (1930), especially the sociocultural viewpoint, describes how people build knowledge through directed learning, cultural resources, and social interaction. Because it emphasizes the importance of guided support in helping people realize their potential, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept is particularly pertinent relevant. Vygotsky's constructivist theory offers a framework for understanding how instructors learn and grow through social interaction and guided support. Feedback, mentoring, and group reflection are common components of instructional supervision and essential to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory. This idea clarifies how supervision can act as a

scaffold for professional development, enabling educators to push their limits with the assistance of more experienced individuals.

Anchored in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1930), the study by Gading (2024) emphasized that school administrators are responsible for monitoring the teaching-learning process to ensure its effectiveness. Through routine observation and evaluation, they can make recommendations and provide teachers with focused assistance.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This qualitative study identified the following theme clusters as its findings: providing instructional supervision as a developmental and support process for teachers; facing multifaceted challenges in instructional supervision; adopting supervisory strategies and responsive practices in instructional supervision; and fostering continuous development and sustained instructional effectiveness.

Providing Instructional Supervision as a Developmental and Support Process to Teachers. Through ongoing coaching, assessment, and professional development, educational supervision is essential in helping instructors perform better. As supervisors, principals are supposed to serve as advisors and facilitators who understand teachers' needs and offer constructive feedback for development (Desrianti & Asmendri, 2024). Like other institutions, educational institutions rely heavily on the efficiency of their human resources, among other factors, to achieve their institutional objectives. Positive learning outcomes in schools are facilitated by the caliber of teachers employed by a particular educational system (Oluwakemi, 2023). A democratic and welcoming environment that guarantees teacher-supervisor participation in decision-making and a professional working relationship must be developed within institutions for supervision to have pedagogical value. If they wish to make positive changes, all parties involved must reevaluate the supervision issue and treat it more seriously by allocating enough funds and time (Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2022).

Facing Multifaceted Challenges in Instructional Supervision. Prompt and helpful criticism is essential for instructors' professional growth and, in turn, improves students' educational experiences (He et al., 2024). However, instructional supervisors faced different challenges that influenced effective implementation of supervision, which included a lack of adequate budget, facilities, and materials, resistance of teachers to supervision due to a lack of awareness among teachers in the importance of supervision, excessive workloads of principals, and a lack of the right training for supervisors (Terra et al., 2019). Persistent systemic barriers related to overstretched capacities, resource deficits, overloaded work demands, and disengaged stakeholders constrain administrators' supervision effectiveness (Arif et al., 2023). A qualitative study highlighted challenges in instructional supervision, including time management, classroom procedures, pedagogical approaches, and managing teachers' reactions to feedback (Andal, 2024).

Adopting Supervisory Strategies and Responsive Practices in Instructional Supervision. One way to determine which areas teachers need training is through supervision (Oluwakemi, 2023). Since school heads have an equally important, although more indirect, influence on the educational environment, even if teachers are at the frontline of delivering instruction (He et al., 2024), the former need to model effective teaching techniques, provide constructive feedback, and foster a collaborative learning environment that enhances teachers' job effectiveness (Difoni et al., 2025). Supervisory practices may be applied based on the kinds of teachers: instructions for lazy teachers, consultation for unfocused teachers, involvement for storytelling teachers, and delegation for professional teachers. If the four methods and behaviors for teachers' character development are used in the supervisory practice, the intended results will be obtained (Prasetia et al., 2022).

Fostering Continuous Development and Sustained Instructional Effectiveness. Quality supervision entails supervising, counseling, supporting, and guiding teachers. After undergoing several supervisions, educators progress in their careers (Mwakajitu & Lekule, 2022). Through instructional supervision, teachers can upskill and deepen their knowledge, helping them adapt to new teaching methods. By providing constructive criticism,

modeling effective teaching techniques, and fostering a cooperative learning environment, these strategies promote professional development and improve student learning outcomes (Difoni et al., 2025).

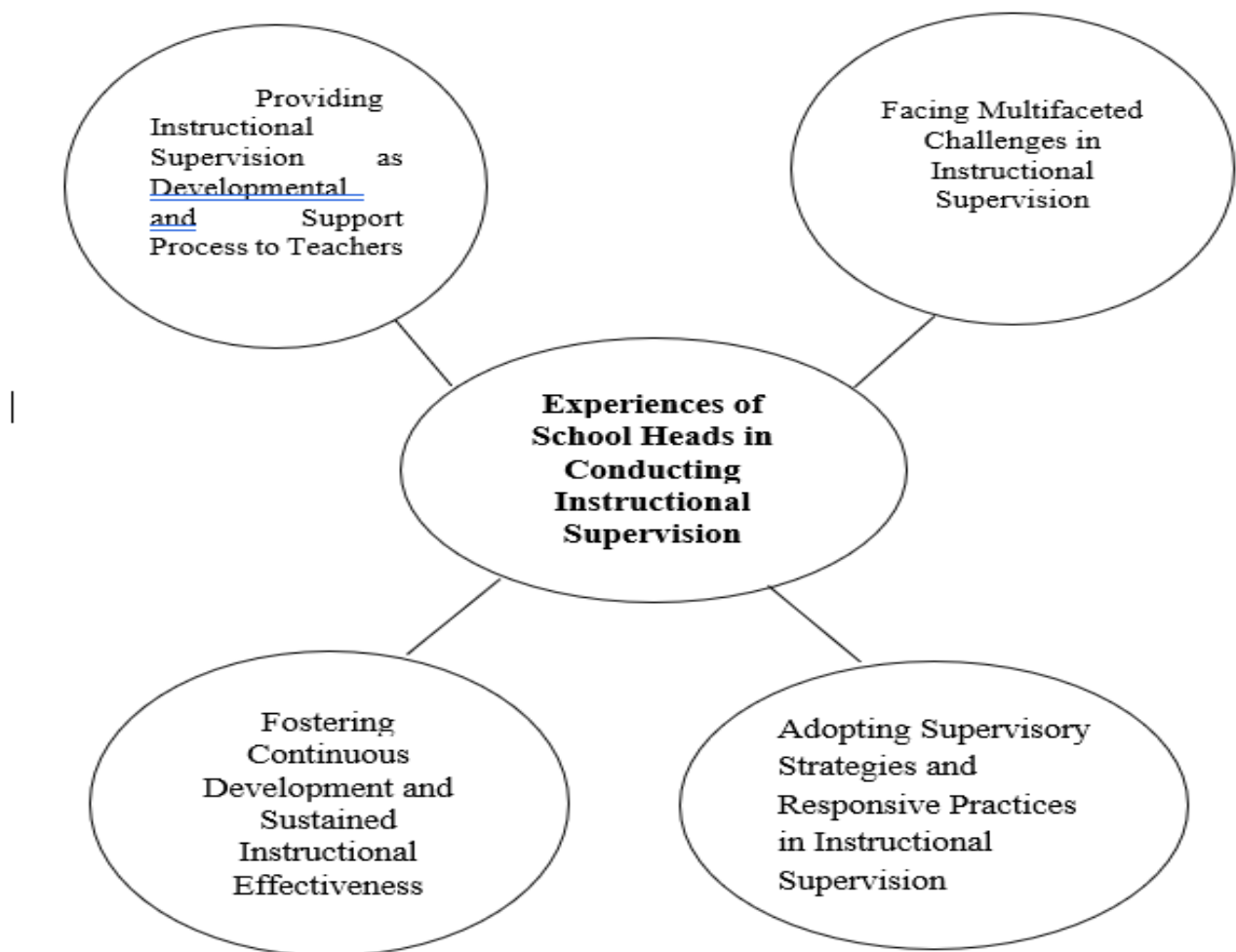


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the experiences of school heads in conducting instructional supervision. It was conducted in the District of Calamba, Division of Misamis Occidental, Philippines. This study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of school heads in conducting instructional supervision?
2. What challenges do school heads encounter in the process of supervising instruction?
3. How do school heads cope with or address the challenges they face during instructional supervision?
4. What meanings and insights do school heads derive from their experiences in conducting instructional supervision?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

The study utilized the phenomenological design. Phenomenology is a research design that describes the common meaning of the lived experiences of several individuals about a particular phenomenon (Webb & Welsh, 2019). This design was considered appropriate for the study, which explored school heads' experiences in performing instructional supervision of teachers.

Setting

The study was conducted in selected elementary schools in Calamba District, Division of Misamis Occidental, Philippines. This municipality is known as the Journalism Capital of Misamis Occidental, where learners reach the National Schools Press. The Municipal LGU extends evident support to all the projects and programs of the Department of Education.

Participants

There were fifteen school heads as target participants of the study. However, data saturation was reached with the tenth participant, when no new responses were generated during the interviews conducted. The ten school heads from the public elementary schools were selected for having conducted follow-up instructional supervision with a number of teachers in their respective schools. The following were the inclusion criteria in selecting the participants: 1) school heads for at least 2 years; 2) provided follow-up instructional supervision to a number of teachers; and 3) gave consent to participate in the study.

Instrument

The study used the semi-structured Interview Guide to allow the participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and personal stories related to instructional supervision. Pilot interviews were conducted to establish the validity and reliability of the Instrument Guide used in gathering the data. The Opening Question focused on the participants' perceptions of the importance of instructional supervision. The Core Questions explored the participants' lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and reflections on providing instructional supervision to selected elementary teachers. The Exit Question examined participants' additional insights related to instructional supervision.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before gathering the data, the main author/researcher sought permission from the Dean of the Graduate School of Misamis University and the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Misamis Occidental for the conduct of the study. After approval was obtained, the researcher informed the District Supervisors regarding the study. After obtaining the necessary approvals, the researcher prepared the consent form for the school heads as the participants. The researcher personally conducted the interviews among the participants. Data collection was conducted within the school premises and outside school hours as preferred by the participants. The responses were audio-recorded and transcribed carefully for analysis and interpretation. The draft of the manuscript was presented back to the participants for validation.

Ethical Considerations

The paper was reviewed by the Misamis University Research Ethics Committee before data collection. The researcher sought voluntary participation from the participants who were not harmed in any way. Respect was prioritized to protect the dignity of participants, who were assured of the confidentiality of research data. Anonymity of research participants was likewise guaranteed. Deception and exaggeration about the aim and

objectives of the research were avoided. Affiliations in any form, sources of funding, and any possible conflicts of interest were declared. Finally, all communication about the research was done with honesty and transparency.

Data Analysis

The study used Colaizzi's method of phenomenological analysis to explore the participants' lived experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation. This method involves the following steps:

Making sense of or acquiring a feeling for the protocol. The first step in Colaizzi's (1978) data analysis method was to acquire a deep understanding of the research protocol.

Extracting Significant Statements. The second step involved extracting significant statements (SS) from the transcriptions. The researcher identified phrases or sentences directly related to the phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978) and selected the most relevant ones that capture participants' experiences in instructional supervision.

Formulation of Meanings. After extracting the significant statements (SS), the researcher formulated meanings (FM) that remained faithful to participants' original intentions, avoiding misinterpretation.

Organizing the Cluster Themes. This step involved organizing the formulated meanings into cluster themes. The researcher re-read the transcripts, reviewed the significant statements (SS) and formulated meanings (FM), and identified key themes.

Integration of Results and Exhaustive Description. The fifth and sixth steps of Colaizzi's method involved integrating the results into a comprehensive description of the phenomenon. The researcher synthesized the theme clusters and meanings into a coherent narrative, carefully reviewing the data to ensure all aspects are captured.

Validation. The final step in Colaizzi's method involves the validation of the findings. To ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the results, the researcher returned to the participants and asked them to validate the descriptive findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Colaizzi's Seven-Step Method of Data Analysis

Step 1. Making sense of or acquiring a feeling for the protocol.

Before conducting the data analysis, the protocols formulated for this study were properly reviewed. The data were transcribed from the actual interviews, and the transcripts were reviewed several times to ensure consistency on what was being transcribed and what was recorded during the interviews. This process involved ensuring that participants' intended messages were not lost during transcription. The participants, as school heads, could speak English, being teachers themselves. Hence, the interviews were done in English, and the participants used the same language in their responses. The written transcriptions of the participants did not contain their names for privacy and confidentiality.

Step 2. Extracting significant statements.

The second step was lifting the significant statements from the transcriptions. Relevant statements were identified and extracted from each transcript for each participant, according to the phenomenon under investigation. The significant statements were placed in a table format to align with the transcription of the participants' responses. Each transcription was analyzed after every interview, and the Significant Statement [SS] coded or numbered consecutively from Participants 1 to 10. A total of 111 Significant Statements [SS] were extracted from the ten participants of the study.

Step 3. Formulation of meanings.

After extracting the significant statements from the transcriptions, the third step was to get the Formulated Meanings [FMs] taken from the Significant Statements. Since the formulation of FMs was intricate, the researcher ensured she did not deviate the meanings to other meanings not related to the study. Therefore, the researcher always checked and verified the Significant Statements for the accuracy and consistency of the FMs that were numbered from 1 to 111. According to Colaizzi (1978), in finding these Formulated Meanings, the researcher had to discover and illuminate the hidden meanings, considering the various contexts and horizons of the phenomenon as described in the original transcripts. To be always guided and stay focused on formulating meanings, the researcher consulted her adviser for validation. After all the FMs were formulated, the researcher identified theme clusters.

Step 4. Organizing the cluster of themes.

The fourth step was organizing the theme clusters from the Formulated Meanings. This was achieved by re-reading the transcripts and reviewing the Significant Statements (SS). It meant focusing on the statements of the research participants mentioned / uttered during the interview process, from which the Formulated Meanings (FM) were derived. The Significant Statements (SS) served as an extension (particular), while the Formulated Meaning (FM) was taken as a comprehension (universal idea) from the extension. The researcher consulted her adviser regarding the Significant Statements, Formulated Meanings, sub-themes, and Theme Clusters. The following were the Theme Clusters and corresponding sub-themes identified in the study:

Theme Cluster 1: Providing Instructional Supervision as Developmental and Support Process to Teachers

Theme 1: Instructional Impact

Theme 2: Professional Support and Leadership

Theme Cluster 2: Facing Multifaceted Challenges in Instructional Supervision

Theme 1: Time Constraints

Theme 2: Teacher Resistance

Theme 3: Teacher Anxiety

Theme 4: Feedback Hesitancy

Theme 5: Artificial Teaching

Theme 6: Teacher Mindset

Theme Cluster 3: Adopting Supervisory Strategies and Responsive Practices in Instructional Supervision

Theme 1: Reflective Coping and Coaching

Theme 2: Collaborative Approach/Support

Theme 3: Trust Building

Theme 4: Evidence-Based feedback

Theme 5: Strategic Supervision

Theme Cluster 4: Fostering Continuous Development and Sustained Instructional Effectiveness

Theme 1: Continuous development

Theme 2: Supportive environment

Theme 3: Teacher empowerment

Steps 5 & 6. Integration of results and exhaustive description.

Providing Instructional Supervision as Developmental and Support Process to Teachers

Providing instructional supervision as a developmental and support process emphasizes the role of school heads as facilitators of teacher growth rather than mere evaluators of performance. In this approach, supervision centers on guiding teachers through constructive feedback, continuous coaching, and reflective practice, helping them refine their instructional strategies over time. It fosters a positive, collaborative environment where teachers feel supported and motivated to enhance their teaching for the benefit of learners. When school heads focus on teachers' strengths while addressing areas for improvement, the former may encourage the latter to seek professional learning and exposure, thereby developing a better, more confident sense of themselves in their teaching performance. Viewing supervision as a development process fosters continuous professional development aimed at achieving the desired student learning outcomes.

Instructional Impact. Through systematic classroom observations, constructive feedback, and continuous support, school heads help teachers refine their instructional strategies. The former can enhance the delivery of the subject matter and cater to learners' diverse needs. Instructional supervision promotes reflective practice, encouraging teachers to assess and improve their own teaching methods. Hence, school heads strive to support teachers in ensuring that classroom instruction aligns with curriculum standards and learning objectives.

Three of the participants gave the following statements:

"Instructional supervision is very important because it directly influences the quality of teaching and learning in the school." (P1)

"Instructional supervision is critically important in education, acting as a backbone for school improvement. It bridges the gap between teacher performance and learner outcomes." (P3)

"We can identify the strengths and areas for development." (P8)

Participant 1 emphasized that instructional supervision directly influences the quality of classroom instruction and student learning. School heads can help teachers identify areas of their teaching that need improvement. For Participant 3, instructional supervision serves as a compass to teachers' teaching effectiveness, with feedback that can lead to improved teaching and better student outcomes. On the other hand, Participant 8 claimed that supervision involves recognizing the teachers' strengths and identifying weaknesses that require scaffolding. In this vein, the diagnostic function of supervision is demonstrated and designed to assist teachers in their teaching competence. The participants emphasized the direct influence of instructional supervision on classroom instruction and student learning, underscoring its central role in ensuring the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Thus, school head supervision identifies both strengths and areas for development to achieve the desired educational goals.

Professional Support and Leadership. School heads provide assistance, guidance, and capacity-building opportunities to help teachers improve their instructional practices and professional growth. The supervision conducted may not view the evaluation results as an indication of the actual level of the teachers' teaching competence, but rather as a venue for professional feedback. Some teachers may need guidance and support to improve their teaching skills, and school heads can be valuable for professional scaffolding. The constructive feedback provided during the post-observation conference may be a meaningful and useful opportunity for teachers who are willing to improve in their teaching competence. The following statements were given by two of the participants:

"Through instructional supervision, I am able to provide teachers with guidance, feedback, and support, that improve instructional practices." (P1)

"I help teachers refine classroom management and assessment strategies." (P8)

Participant 1 emphasized that instructional supervision serves as a platform for offering teachers guidance, feedback, and support that directly improve their instructional practices. This suggests that supervision is not merely evaluative but also developmental. Teachers can be assisted to improve professionally and be more effective in teaching learners. Participant 8 highlighted the importance of guiding teachers to manage their classes more effectively and to use appropriate assessment strategies to facilitate the teaching-learning process. School heads can strengthen their teachers' instructional competence by specifically identifying the aspects of teaching that require proactive attention.

School heads guide, inspire, and support teachers in improving instructional quality. This role involves being a coach, mentor, and instructional leader who fosters collaboration, builds trust, and promotes professional growth. Effective school leaders set clear instructional goals, provide evidence-based feedback, and create a positive school culture that values continuous improvement.

Participant 9 gave the following statement:

"As a school principal, instructional supervision is more than management; it is the lifeblood of effective school leadership. Guiding instruction is not simply an obligation; it is the defining responsibility of a principal." (P9)

The statement above underscores the central and transformative role of instructional supervision in school leadership. It highlights that supervision is not merely an administrative or managerial task to be performed as part of a school head's responsibilities. It is the driving force behind the school's overall effectiveness through demonstrated teachers' teaching performance. The participant underscored that guiding teaching and learning is essential to ensuring school success and improving learner outcomes. With the evident instructional leadership of the school heads, who go beyond routine obligations, they serve as a valuable resource for classroom teachers to enhance their teaching competence.

School supervisory services are tasked to contribute to the creation of a unified and standardized quality school system (Abera, 2020). For the teaching-learning process to be successful, supervisors' guidance, support, and assistance are vital (Andal, 2024). According to a study, teacher professional growth is significantly predicted by school administrators' instructional leadership (He et al., 2024). Carl Rogers' Humanistic Theory emphasizes personal growth, self-actualization, and the importance of supportive relationships. The theory is closely aligned with school heads' experiences in instructional supervision.

Facing Multifaceted Challenges in Instructional Supervision

The theme reflects the complex, interconnected challenges school heads face in carrying out effective supervision. These challenges include time constraints due to heavy administrative workloads and the competing responsibilities of school heads. There are also issues related to teacher competence and instructional readiness, which may indicate educators' anxiety, reluctance toward supervision, and unwillingness to accept feedback. Thus, school heads are confronted with a number of concerns they need to grapple with, and sometimes, simultaneously.

Time Constraints. The participants highlighted how competing demands hinder effective supervision, as school heads are often overwhelmed by administrative workload, mandatory seminars and trainings, and various division, district, and school-related activities that consume much of their time. The following statements were given by three of the participants:

"One of the common challenges I face is limited time due to administrative workload, seminars and training, and other related division / district and school activities." (P1)

"Many times that the scheduled IS could not be pushed through because I had calls from higher office regarding seminars, meetings, and the teachers' preparedness was affected especially when short notices of postponement happened." (P2)

“Common challenges include teacher anxiety, time constraints, diverse teacher competence, communication barriers, limited resources, and weak follow-up.” (P3)

The participants emphasized how heavy administrative workloads, seminars, meetings, and other school-related responsibilities often limited the time available for conducting instructional supervision. These competing demands not only delayed or canceled scheduled observations but also disrupted teachers' preparedness, especially when changes occurred on short notice. As conveyed by Participant 1, one had to handle multiple tasks and work-related activities, which affected the time spent supervising teachers. For Participant 2, the scheduled instructional supervision was canceled due to unexpected demands from higher offices, compromising the teachers' preparation. On the other hand, Participant 3 conveyed challenges related to how teachers' teaching skills, with others showing anxiety regarding the conduct of supervision. Other concerns included the scarcity of school resources and communication issues.

Teacher Resistance. This theme involves fear of evaluation as a major barrier to instructional supervision. The following were the sample statements given by the participants. Resistance is often compounded by workload pressures. As expressed by Participant 3 and 10, teachers may become hesitant, defensive, or uncooperative when they associate supervision with performance ratings rather than professional growth. This resistance is further intensified by contextual pressures such as heavy workloads and limited time. The following statements were given by two participants:

“One major challenge I encountered was teacher resistance due to fear of evaluation.” (P3)

“Limited time, heavy administrative work, and teachers' resistance or anxiety towards supervision.” (P10)

The participants expressed that teachers may become hesitant, defensive, or uncooperative when they associate supervision with performance ratings rather than professional growth. This resistance is further intensified by contextual pressures such as heavy workloads and limited time.

When teachers are already burdened with numerous responsibilities, supervision may be viewed as an added stressor rather than a supportive opportunity, leading to avoidance behaviors such as postponing observations or disengaging from feedback.

Teacher Anxiety. This theme underscores the emotional dimension of instructional supervision, where teachers often experience pressure and self-doubt during the observation process. The presence of a school head can heighten performance-related stress and fear of not meeting expectations. This anxiety is further aggravated when supervision is not conducted as scheduled, prolonging teachers' apprehension about the possible outcome and the consequent feedback from the school heads. The following statements were given by three of the participants:

“During instructional supervision, teachers are anxious that they may not perform quality teaching.” (P6)

“Poorly conducted IS can create anxiety for teachers.” (P8)

“Some teachers may feel apprehensive about supervision; resource constraints and balancing encouragement with accountability add complexity.” (P9)

Participant 6 emphasized that teachers often experience anxiety during supervision with their school heads giving them the results of the evaluations. The teachers are expected to demonstrate their best skills, which puts pressure on them to teach as expected. This may affect the teacher's delivery of instruction and, in turn, their natural classroom performance. Participant 8 pointed out that when instructional supervision is poorly conducted, as a result of postponement, teachers are observed at short notice of the final schedules. Such can intensify teachers' anxiety. Participant 9 conveyed that teachers may feel apprehensive about being supervised, which leaves school

heads torn between serving as a source of encouragement and posing a source of stress while acting as an evaluator of teaching performance.

Feedback Hesitancy. This challenge encountered by school heads often occurs when teachers feel anxious, defensive, or uncertain about how feedback will affect their performance rating or professional standing. Teachers may avoid reflecting on or implementing suggested improvements, which can hinder their professional growth and instructional development. Three participants gave the following statements:

“Hesitant to accept feedback.” (P4)

“This challenge exists because she did not apply the technical assistance being provided during the pre-conference.” (P5)

“I encountered situation where a teacher misunderstood feedback and felt discouraged, requiring clarification and support.” (P10)

Participants 4, 5, and 10 pointed out teacher hesitation in accepting feedback, which may stem from fear of criticism, lack of confidence, or misunderstanding of the purpose of supervision. The difficulties arise when teachers do not apply the technical assistance given during pre-conference sessions. It suggests a gap between supervisory guidance and classroom implementation, which can hinder instructional improvement.

Artificial Teaching. This condition often occurs when teaching is done merely for compliance, observation, or performance - such as when a teacher delivers a scripted or overly rehearsed lesson during evaluation rather than facilitating meaningful learning. In this regard, school heads may not be able to assess teachers' teaching effectiveness clearly. The conduct of classes may not be delivered consistently with the manner teachers apply on other days in school. Two participants stated:

“During a scheduled classroom observation, teachers became visibly anxious and altered their usual teaching strategy.” (P3)

“Teachers’ and learners’ behavior change during Instructional Supervision... it’s no longer the real scenario.” (P8)

Participants 3 and 8 claimed that during instructional supervision, the teachers change their ways of teaching. When school heads conduct classroom visits, teachers and students demonstrate a different teaching-learning presentation. They feel obligated to act differently to meet the perceived expectations, resulting in performances that do not accurately reflect everyday teaching and learning conditions.

Teacher Mindset. Teachers hold beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions that about teaching, learning, and their own abilities as educators. It influences how they approach instruction, respond to challenges, accept feedback, and support student learning. The following statements were given by two of the participants:

“The attitude of teachers, fixed mindset, will not do revisions of LPs as agreed.” (P4)

“Some teachers have fixed mindset... even if how many times I will provide technical assistance but still as if nothing happens.” (P8)

Participants 4 and 8 pointed out that some teachers demonstrate resistance to change by refusing to revise lesson plans even after agreements have been made, indicating a lack of openness to improvement and feedback. Despite repeated technical assistance and support from the school head, some teachers show little to no improvement, suggesting that their fixed mindset prevents them from applying new learning or modifying their instructional practices.

Effective classroom instruction is encouraged by instructional supervision, which also enhances student learning outcomes and assists teachers in covering work schedules. However, school heads deal with issues including excessive workloads, a lack of resources and financing, and teachers' unfavorable attitudes (Kubura, 2022). Challenges identified by this study included multiple responsibilities, lack of qualification, negative attitude of teachers toward supervision, inadequate training among heads of schools and large number of teachers as well as poor communication skills. Heads of schools have to be relieved with multiple responsibilities (Chiwamba & Kigobe, 2022). Vygotsky's theory (1930) highlights the importance of the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*, where individuals can perform more effectively with assistance from more knowledgeable others such as school heads, supervisors, mentors, and colleagues. Effective instructional supervision requires school heads to employ intentional, adaptive, and relationship-centered strategies that promote teacher growth and improve instructional quality.

Adopting Supervisory Strategies and Responsive Practices in Instructional Supervision

The theme highlights how school heads respond to the complexities of instructional supervision by adopting flexible, responsive, and partnership-oriented leadership approaches. Instead of viewing instructional supervision solely as teacher evaluation, they may foster open communication to build trust and support shared decision-making, thereby supporting teachers. School heads can actively involve the latter in reflective dialogue and problem-solving processes, making supervision a collaborative effort toward improvement for learners' benefit.

Reflective Coping and Coaching. School heads encounter issues and concerns during instructional supervision. They need to be keen to examine their experiences and challenges to identify areas for improvement, not only for teachers but also for themselves as administrators. School heads become more cognizant of teachers' strengths as a valuable contribution to the teaching profession, rather than focusing on the limitations demonstrated by teachers. Reflective coping highlights the school heads' acceptance of the realities in the school setting, which require a proactive response, with teachers to be mentored as deemed necessary, for the benefit of the learners. The following statements were given by four of the participants of the study:

"When I encountered challenges in supervising instruction, I responded by maintaining a supportive, collaborative and solution-focused approach." (P3)

"I responded by being calm, reflective, flexible, and focused on improving learning outcomes." (P4)

"Be calm and listen to the teacher. Orient also the teachers of the tool so that they would really know how you rated him or her and by then they could realize and reflect on their teaching." (P5)

"I respond by communicating openly, listening to teachers' concerns, and providing constructive and supportive feedback." (P10)

Participant 3 highlighted the importance of fostering a proactive, supportive approach to instructional supervision. School heads may foster empathy for what may be experienced and establish a collaborative atmosphere toward achieving a common goal, as conveyed by Participant 4. As expressed by Participants 5 and 10, it is also essential for school heads to listen to the teachers, who may have work-related concerns. This may inform teachers on how they will be evaluated, giving them an idea of the areas they are to be evaluated in.

Collaborative Support/Approach. School heads and teachers need to work together to address challenges and improve instructional practices. Rather than relying on top-down decision-making, this approach values shared responsibility, open communication, and mutual support in achieving common educational goals. Through collaboration, school heads and teachers can share ideas, reflect on their practices, and develop strategies together that enhance student learning, particularly in complex areas such as teaching writing in the age of artificial intelligence. Effective problem-solving and professional growth are strengthened when individuals

engage in dialogue, provide constructive feedback, and build a supportive learning community grounded in trust and cooperation. Four participants gave the following statements:

“Collaborative, reflective, and focused on learners needs.” (P4)

“I adopt a structured collaborative approach, focusing on problem solving, relationship building, and continuous improvement.” (P8)

“This collaborative approach empowers teachers and creates meaningful learning experiences for learners.” (P9)

“Collaborative Pre- and Post-observation conferences and focus on strengths before addressing areas for improvement.” (P10)

Participants 4, 8, 9, and 10 highlighted that collaboration should be grounded in reflection and centered on learners’ needs, showing that teamwork is most effective when it directly supports student outcomes. Collaboration is used to provide balanced feedback - recognizing strengths first before addressing areas for growth.

Trust Building. School heads and teachers need to establish trust between them. It is a crucial leadership practice that fosters a positive, productive, and growth-oriented school environment. It involves establishing open and honest communication, showing respect for teachers’ professional judgment, and consistently demonstrating fairness, transparency, and integrity in decision-making. When school heads actively listen to teachers’ concerns, provide constructive and supportive feedback, and involve them in collaborative processes, they create a sense of psychological safety where teachers feel valued and heard. Participants 3, 6, 7, and 8 gave the following statements:

“Build trust, provide clear feedback, follow up consistently, adapt to teacher needs, and celebrate improvements to foster a culture of continuous learning.” (P3)

“When facing challenges, I initiated open dialog to build trust and reframe supervision as collaborative support rather than criticism.” (P6)

“Building connection to my teachers. By strengthening relationship and improving instructional practices enhance the overall quality of teaching and learning.” (P7)

“Target the root cause and find solution. Build trust and maintain respect.” (P8)

Participant 3 highlighted a comprehensive approach to supervision. It emphasizes that effective supervision is not a one-time event but an ongoing process that involves clarity, responsiveness, and recognition of progress. By adapting to teachers’ needs and acknowledging improvements, school heads help create a positive environment that motivates teachers to continuously grow. On the other hand, Participant 6 underscored the importance of communication in reducing resistance and anxiety. Open dialogue allows teachers to express concerns and understand that supervision is intended to support rather than judge them. Supervision is viewed a shared process, encouraging cooperation and openness to feedback. For Participant 7 as a school head emphasized the role of relationships in supervision. Establishing strong connections with teachers fosters mutual respect and trust, which are essential for effective collaboration. When teachers feel valued and supported, they are more likely to engage in reflective practices and improve their instructional methods, ultimately benefiting student learning. Lastly, Participant 8 reflected a problem-solving orientation grounded in professionalism and empathy. Instead of addressing surface-level issues, school heads focus on identifying underlying problems and working collaboratively with teachers to develop appropriate solutions.

Evidence-Based Feedback. School heads need to provide teachers with clear, objective, and specific feedback grounded in actual classroom observations. Student outputs and measurable teaching practices are considered

evidence of objectivity when evaluating. This type of feedback focuses on concrete evidence such as observed instructional strategies, student engagement levels, and assessment results to highlight both strengths and areas for improvement. By using data and observable facts, school heads ensure that feedback is fair and transparent for teachers, thereby establishing credibility.

Participants 1 and 2 gave the following statements:

"I focus on strengths before areas for improvement and align the feedback with professional standards." (P1)

"Focus on instructional improvement with data-driven discussion ensuring alignment with standards." (P6)

Participants 1 and 6 highlighted the need to ensure that comments given were anchored on professional standards to maintain fairness and consistency. Supervision was not based on subjective judgment but on objective, structured, and supportive feedback that could promote continuous instructional improvement and professional growth.

Strategic Supervision. School heads need to carefully plan the monitoring to be conducted by teachers and the improvements to teaching and learning aligned with the school's goals and standards. Rather than conducting routine or isolated classroom observations, the school head uses data, clear objectives, and long-term priorities to guide supervision practices. This includes identifying specific areas for instructional improvement while supporting teachers through coaching and professional development and ensuring that all supervisory actions contribute to better learner outcomes. Two participants gave the following statements:

"To make Instructional Supervision more effective despite difficulties, enhance the process of pre-conference to set collaborative goals. Have a perspective that prioritizes learner-centered approaches, fostering active exploration and real-life application to boost engagement and retention." (P6)

"Challenges can be addressed through strategic planning and leadership. By scheduling regular but manageable classroom visits and fostering a culture of trust, supervision is seen as developmental process, and providing differentiated feedback tailored to each teacher's strengths and needs, principals can turn supervision into an opportunity for growth." (P9)

As conveyed by Participant 6, giving feedback after classroom observations informs teachers of their strengths and limitations, enabling them to address areas for improvement. For Participant 9, strategic supervision also involves being proactive, adaptable, and collaborative. They need to engage teachers in reflective dialogue and continuous improvement so that supervision becomes a meaningful process that drives sustained educational quality rather than just compliance.

Supervisions may entail providing constructive feedback, modelling effective instructional techniques, and fostering a collaborative teaching environment, leading to teachers' job performance enhancement (Difoni et al., 2025). A study disclosed that timely feedback is essential for efficient instructional supervision, particularly for inexperienced teachers (Kiilu et al., 2023). Lev Vygotsky's constructivist theory (1930) supports the claim that adopting supervisory strategies and responsive practices lies in its emphasis on social interaction, guided learning, and the role of support in developing competence. The theory provides support to responsive practices by school heads, with supervision tailored on teachers' needs, experiences, and readiness to improve.

Fostering Continuous Development and Sustained Instructional Effectiveness

The theme underscores the evolving perspective of school heads that supervision is not merely a procedural or evaluative task but a powerful means of fostering meaningful change in teaching and learning. It highlights how supervision becomes transformative when it is grounded in trust, shared responsibility, and continuous professional growth, enabling teachers to reflect, improve, and innovate in their practice. Through collaborative engagement, school heads and teachers work as partners in a learning community, where open dialogue, mutual

respect, and collective problem-solving are emphasized. Moreover, by adopting a developmental orientation, supervision prioritizes guidance, evidence-based feedback, and learner-centered improvement, ultimately contributing to enhanced instructional quality and better educational outcomes.

Continuous Development. School heads can provide support to teachers in improving their instructional competencies through regular observation and professional development activities. It emphasizes that supervision is a continuous process of implementing activities to improve teachers' teaching practices. Through this process, teachers are guided to refine their instructional strategies, address learning gaps, and adapt to emerging educational needs, resulting in continuous improvement in teaching quality. The following statements were given by three of the participants:

"These experiences have taught me that teaching and learning are continuous processes that require support, reflection, and collaboration." (P1)

"Effective teaching is a continuous learning process." (P4)

"These experiences help me realize that teaching and learning improve best through continued support, collaboration, and reflection." (P10)

These statements above collectively emphasize the theme of continuous development in teaching and learning as understood through instructional supervision. Participant 1 highlighted that teaching and learning are ongoing processes that require consistent support, reflection, and collaboration, suggesting that improvement is achieved through shared efforts and thoughtful practice. Similarly, Participant 4 asserted that effective teaching is not static but involves continuous learning, in which teachers must constantly refine their skills and adapt to changing learner needs. Participant 10 recognized that meaningful improvement occurs when teachers are supported, engage in collaborative practices, and reflect on their experiences.

Supportive Environment. Instructional supervision needs to foster a school culture where teachers feel respected and valued. School heads make teachers feel safe to engage in professional dialogue about their teaching practices, fostering an environment that provides constructive, non-threatening feedback. Open communication during pre- and post-observation conferences may serve as a venue for school heads to show support, especially for teachers who are manifesting difficulties in teaching. Four participants gave the following statements:

"Instructional Supervision showed me that learning improves when teachers feel supported rather than judged." (P3)

"Building trust and elevating learning outcomes." (P6)

"I would like to share with my fellow school heads that we should strongly build harmonious relationship with teachers so that they may no longer anxious during IS." (P7)

"These experiences have shaped my perspective that teaching and learning flourish most in an environment of care, collaboration, and support." (P9)

Participant 3 emphasized that learning improves when supervision is perceived as supportive rather than judgmental, underscoring the importance of shifting from evaluative to developmental approaches. Participant 6 reinforced this by linking trust-building directly to improved learning outcomes. There is a need to establish positive relationships between school heads and teachers to enhance instructional effectiveness. Participant 7 stressed the need to establish harmonious relationships to reduce teachers' anxiety during instructional supervision, indicating that emotional safety is crucial for genuine engagement and improvement. Participant 9 underscored that teaching and learning thrive in an environment characterized by care, collaboration, and support.

Teacher Empowerment. School heads need to give teachers the authority, confidence, and support to actively participate in decision-making and instructional practices toward professional growth. Instead of being seen only as subjects of evaluation, teachers are treated as partners in the teaching and learning process. Their insights and experiences during instructional supervision. Participants 1, 7, and 9 gave the following statements:

“I would encourage fellow school heads to view instructional supervision as tool for empowerment rather than evaluation alone.” (P1)

“Let us make IS a teacher-friendly manner. Allow them to feel comfort during the IS process.” (P7)

“I can provide immediate guidance and practical strategies for teachers, while the school ensures their needs are met through resources, classroom improvements, adviser adjustments, and caring follow-up monitoring.” (P9)

The participants highlighted the need for school heads to reframe instructional supervision as a tool for empowering teachers - helping them build confidence, improve their practice, and take ownership of their professional growth instead of merely assessing their performance. Effective supervision goes beyond giving feedback by providing teachers with immediate, practical strategies they can apply in the classroom to improve instruction.

As the main educational leaders, principals are in charge of providing teachers with direction, assistance, and advice to improve their teaching methods (Magdaraog, 2025). School administrators should place a high priority on instructional leadership strategies that promote collaborative learning opportunities and serve as models for successful teaching methods (Kilag & Sasan, 2023). According to a study, there is an urgent need for improved methods to give educators valuable insights for their professional development (Gading, 2024). The Humanistic Theory by Carl Rogers provided an anchor for the study, fostering continuous development and sustained instructional effectiveness among teachers as individuals. Applying humanistic principles in instructional supervision means that school heads must create a supportive, empathetic environment where teachers feel valued, respected, and motivated to improve.

Exhaustive Description

Instructional supervision was viewed not as an evaluation tool. School heads considered it a process that was both supportive and developmental. They actively supported instructors in enhancing classroom methods suited to their needs by providing direction, feedback, and instructional support. Coaching and mentoring for teacher development enhanced supervision.

School heads faced interrelated challenges when implementing instructional oversight. Managing administrative workload and time constraints may affect how classroom observations and follow-up are conducted. Supporting teachers who struggled with lesson planning, lacked subject-matter understanding, or exhibited poor preparation for instruction addressed concerns about teacher competency and instructional readiness. School heads managed teacher attitudes, resistance, and emotional barriers, where teachers' willingness to accept supervision was affected by anxiety, fear of evaluation, and reluctance to receive feedback.

School heads demonstrated adaptive and collaborative leadership practices that enabled them to sustain effective supervision. They needed to establish open communication and trust-building practices, with school heads prioritizing listening, transparency, and reassurance to reduce teacher anxiety and foster a positive supervisory atmosphere. School heads used coaching, mentoring, and teacher development strategies, providing structured, continuous support tailored to individual teacher needs.

School heads emphasized that supervision should be seen as a supportive and developmental process. They reinforced the idea that supervision should nurture growth rather than instill fear or compliance. They recognized

looking at instructional supervision as a core leadership responsibility and professional obligation, acknowledging its central role in improving teaching quality and learner outcomes.

Step 7: Validation

Colaizzi's data analysis process ended with the validation of findings. It was attained by referring back to participants who confirmed the accuracy of the descriptive findings or the full description of their experiences. As part of the validation process, participants were provided with a copy of the comprehensive description to review what was written and affirm whether the manuscript was based on their actual experiences. After reading the study's findings, interpretation, and discussion, the participants concurred that everything written was consistent with their claims.

CONCLUSIONS

The instructional supervision provided by school heads to classroom teachers serves as valuable input for teachers' professional development. Feedback from classroom observation supports teachers in developing better teaching competencies. However, school heads face various challenges due to the multifaceted roles they take on in the school setting. With the use of adaptive, collaborative leadership that encourages flexibility, problem-solving, and active teacher involvement, instructional supervision serves as a venue for classroom teachers' continuous professional development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that school heads continue to provide instructional supervision, prioritizing coaching, mentoring, and sustained professional development to support teachers' continuous growth. They may set specific schedules for instructional supervision, allocate resources, and display systemic support mechanisms to effectively address the multifaceted challenges in the process. School heads sustain adaptive and collaborative supervisory practices that promote flexibility, shared decision-making, and solution-focused engagement with teachers, thereby fostering teacher professional growth and empowerment. Future researchers may conduct further studies on instructional supervision, specifically focusing on the factors contributing to the challenges school heads encounter.

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