

Perceptions of Teachers Towards Educational Supervision

Ms. Abigail A. Alviz

Abstract

This study examined the perceptions of secondary and tertiary level teachers towards educational supervision with reference to the National Competency-Based Teaching Standards (NSCBSSH) Questionnaire to obtain relevant data from 125 teachers in 5 selected public educational institutions (3 secondary schools and 2 universities) using convenience sampling technique. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test at 0.05 level of significance was used to analyze the data for further conclusions and recommendations. Findings revealed that communication in educational supervision is perceived to be highly needed among supervisors. Teachers perceived that their educational supervisors are open to innovation that reflect enhanced teaching-learning experience which shows through when teachers are provided the verbal support and objective feedback and/or evaluation to recognize their commitment and involvement in the achievement of key result areas. These can be done through staff development that target the actual needs of teachers in their own contexts.

Key Words: Educational Supervision, Teacher Perception, Supervisory Skills

Introduction

Education in the modern society is viewed as a powerful medium to uplift teachers, administrators and ultimately, the learners to achieve their highest potentials in the advent of technology and in the face of societal demands. In the school setting, the need for effective educational supervision is necessary in providing opportunities for teachers to plan reflectively, teach effectively, and develop professionally. Supervision takes many different forms and definitions considered in the educational spectrum. Educational supervision is ordinarily defined as the “improvement of the total teaching-learning situations and socialized functions by working with the people who are working with the students”. Harris (1998) posits that supervision can be described using five contemporary aspects of teaching and learning; countering changing external realities; giving teachers support, assistance, and feedback; understanding that teacher is the catalyst for encouraging school learning; and encouraging new, improved pioneering practices. In Glickman’s study (1990), a more complex definition of supervision, explained as “the glue that holds a successful school together... a process by which some person or group of people is responsible for providing a link between individual teacher needs and organizational goals that individuals within the school can work in harmony toward their vision of what the school should be.” Focused on administration (Harris and Bessent, 1969), curriculum (Cogan, 1973), instruction & human relations (Harris, 1975), leadership (Mosher & Purpel) and evaluation (Wiles & Bondi), supervision has many dimensions that are brought into context in the education spectrum. While these foci on supervision are defined in one length, the actualization of supervisors' roles is not confined in one dimension alone for it is encapsulated in one role with several sub-responsibilities.

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It is in these lines of thinking that supervision provides a continuum to support teachers and supervisors to work collaboratively through effective and flexible practices. A common form of interdependent educational working conditions is through Professional Learning Communities, deemed as a constructivist approach that sets the contexts and working interaction that are based on shared beliefs, targets and objectives (Hord, 2009). Anchored on these primary objectives, educational supervision is no longer perceived as a domineering, product-oriented and mechanical approach that triggers high levels of anxiety among teachers. Instead, it places teachers as valuable members of the teaching-learning community capable of directing their development through constructive feedback, teacher support, respect, mutual respect and professional accountability.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is directed towards addressing the perceptions of teachers regarding educational supervision and looking into the professional and pedagogical implications that can be generalized to attend to the weak perceptions that educators have of their supervisory counterparts.

This study is guided by the following questions:

Research Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions regarding educational supervision?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship of educational supervision with professional development?

This small-scale study serves as a school-based standpoint of how teachers perceived educational supervision in their local context and provided localized evidences that can be comprehensively discussed in future research outputs seeking to describe supervision in a national context. The understanding of commonly used supervisory practices as seen through the lenses of teachers, is essential in determining their effectivity in improving teachers' professional development and classroom teaching practices.

The drawn sample from this sample is based on convenience and does not seek to provide generalizations, implications and recommendatory approaches on a national scale due to the limited number of samples reached in the fulfilment of this study. Respondents were not subjected to a time-pressured manner of answering and thus, some may have comprehensively answered while others provided very little information regarding their supervisors' supervisory styles. The NCTBS, crafted as a single framework that seeks to provide informed decisions for the professional development of teachers, is an empirical –based tool that is useful in understanding how teachers perceive supervision in the light of their own teaching. It also serves as “guidepost for planning and professional development goals” (DepEd- Instructional Supervision Handbook, 2012)

Perceptions of Education Supervision

A plethora of studies regarding perceptions of supervision by different educational stakeholders have been focused on in different contexts. In a study by Minnear-Peplinski (2009), conclusions drawn showed that (1) professionalism is the most dominant form of supervisory strategy that administrators and teachers believe to be of utmost importance, (2) evaluation is perceived by teachers as the least common practice associated with supervision, (3) contrary to what empirical studies have been recommending, collaboration is not a widely-used form of supervisory strategy in terms of educational supervision and professional development; and (4) although clinical supervision is used, it is only normally done twice or thrice within an academic

year. Lowery (cited in Millon, 2010) posits that a good quality of an educational supervisor is the ability to understand the feelings of others and interact with them positively for harmonious and peaceful environment of the working area. Attention to these skills are prerequisite to establishing good relation between the supervisors and teachers and minimize conflict-related circumstances.

Teachers who perceived that they were empowered in their work environments had higher levels of interpersonal trust in their principals; and those who found their work personally meaningful, and who reported significant autonomy and substantial influence in their work environments, had higher levels of interpersonal trust in principals. (Moye, et al, 2005). Howard Ebmeier and Janice Nicklaus (1999), said that collaborative supervision can play a major role in increasing teacher's commitment, and collaboration. Research by Price (2012), finds that the attitudes of principals and teachers create an atmosphere for learning that influences school effectiveness. This is often referred to as school climate. Other research shows that atmosphere of trust, shared vision, and openness creates positive school climate conditions.

A number of studies reveal that supervision serves as a weapon for punishment rather than a tool for improvement. Sharma (2011) finds that there is a need for instructional supervision to be conducted in more systematic manner by involving teachers, principals, subject- teachers and subject- specialists. The teachers in the study, argue that supervisors do not consider instructional supervision as a platform to develop a sense of ownership for teachers and their professional growth and they are not at all benefited by the process. So as to make practices more meaningful, the principals need to upgrade themselves with skills of supervision. However, Akbasli (2010) recommends that supervisors should offer suggestions for overcoming existing problems rather than evaluating the teachers.

Methodology

In order to ascertain the responses of the sampled teachers in this small-scale study, the National Competency-Based Teaching Standards (NSCBSSH) Questionnaire was utilized “to gather data on the competency strengths and needs of teachers that serve to inform the design and conduct of continuing training and development programs for the improvement of teaching-learning practice” (NSCBSSH Guide and Tools, 2010). The data is pulled from key indicators that seeks to assess the teachers' perceptions of educational supervision and address to their needs. In this research, a convenient sample of two groups was drawn whereby the first group consisted of teachers from basic education while the second group represented teachers from the tertiary level.

Sampling Procedure

The teachers in this study were a sample of convenience. The groups, a mixture of beginning and seasoned teachers, assumed to have knowledge of supervision in schools. The NSCBSSH Questionnaire was sent to the sampled teachers from different fields of specialization and was chosen by the researcher due to the availability of their schedule and accessibility. Information was collected, based on the adapted domains in the NSCBSSH questionnaire, namely: (1) Educational Leadership, (2) Professional Development, (3) Student-Centered Learning Climate and (4) Personal and Professional Attributes and Interpersonal Effectiveness

The gathered data was subsequently organized and analyzed in SPSS to draw conclusions about the teachers' perceptions of supervision. Drawn responses were categorized to identify the most common forms of

supervision techniques used by the school heads and/or immediate superior of the sampled teachers as reflective of their educational practice and differences in supervision of beginning and experienced teachers.

Data Analysis and Organization

This study sought to examine the perceptions of teachers regarding educational supervision. This part discusses the presentation and analysis of the data gathered from the respondents through the NSCBSSH Questionnaire. This part covers the following sections: demographic data of respondents, teachers' perceptions of educational supervision and their implications to pedagogy and supervisory practice. Data from the NSCBSSH Questionnaire were aggregated and presented into themes anchored on the research questions. Discussions of these Tables are provided after the data presentation.

The sample for this study consisted of teachers teaching in the basic education and tertiary level. Majority of the teachers were represented by the accessible population from the Philippine Normal University (PNU), Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM), and Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST). Sampled teachers from the Basic Education representatives were from Lipa City National High School and Ramon Magsaysay High School.

The questionnaire was adapted from the National Competency-Based Teaching Standards for School Principals- Training and Development Needs Assessment (NCBSSH-TDNA) and was contextualized to suit the sampled teachers. Drafted as a tool for the improvement of the training and development needs support

Table 1 Demographic Data of Sampled Teachers			
Variables	Sub-variables	N=50	Percentages
Gender	(a) Male	18	36%
	(b) Female	32	64%
Age	(c) 21-25 years old	11	22%
	(d) 26-30 years old	14	28%
	(e) 31-35 years old	13	26%
	(f) 36 years and above	12	24%
Qualifications	(g) Bachelor's degree	35	70%
	(h) Master's degree	13	26%
	(i) Doctoral degree	2	4%
Experience	(j) Less than one year	2	4%
	(k) 1-5 years	7	14%
	(l) 5-10 years	27	54%
	(m) 10-15 years	8	16%
	(n) 16 years and above	6	12%
Affiliation	Junior High School	10	20%
	Senior High School	10	20%
	College/University	30	60%

improved practice of school heads. Developed through the STRIVE Project, the questionnaire contains a list of behavioral indicators that reflect the expected functions of a school head. The updated version of this tool had undergone a national validation, through a series of consultative reviews, and likewise, adapted for the purposes of this study. The NCBSSH-TDNA tool, adapted for this research, is composed of 5 Domains, specifically: Educational Leadership, School Management and Operations, HR Management and Professional Development, Student-Centered Learning Climate, and Parents' Involvement and Community Operations.

Domains and Competency Strands for School Heads'/Principals' Educational Leadership

Table 2 presents the perceptions of teachers to the Educational Leadership skills of their immediate superiors. Value-laden functions, such as use of empathic and encouraging words are perceived as the highest in the list ($M=3.62$, 3.18), which neutralizes circumstances that may entail a high emotional quotient in the presence of challenges. Supervisors were also perceived by the teachers to be innovative as they embrace change and in return provide avenues for these educators to be open to new matters in the teaching experience ($M=3.28$, 3.32). The Table also shows that supervisors engage in an average mean of 2.74 in the monitoring and evaluating aspect of their jobs.

Table 2 Perceptions of Teachers about Educational Leadership of Educational Supervisors		
Supervisory Strands/Domain	n=50	
Domain 1: Educational Leadership	M	SD
Monitors and evaluates teacher's performance and accomplishments	2.74	.80
Provides equal opportunities for professional growth and development	3.24	.62
Gives positive comments and suggestions on teacher's performance	3.22	.41
Correlates teachers' performance in students' retention and attrition rates	3.02	.65
Conducts meetings and round table discussion to resolve teaching-related problems	3.30	.46
Communicates politely and respectfully to teachers	2.90	.30
Motivates teachers to strive harder whenever they fail to meet the standards/expectations	2.86	.35
Uses kind words and objective criticisms in resolving problems with teachers who are frequently absent/tardy	3.62	.49
Empowers teachers and non-teaching personnel to embrace change	3.28	.57
Conducts post-conferences with teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses	3.18	.69
Instills accountability as teacher's mission in the development of their students	3.10	.54
Encourages teachers to try new teaching strategies and approaches	3.32	.47
Delegates tasks to teachers based on their inclinations and expertise	2.86	.60
Provides technical assistance/expertise and educational support to teachers	3.22	.41

Table 3 presents the professional development component that supervisors extend to their teachers. Majority of the teachers responded higher to the perceived expected manner of showing what professionalism is, in the school community ($M=3.16, 3.18, 3.32$) while the provision of in-school seminars/trainings were reported lower in the Table. One of the functions of a supervisor is facilitating human resource activities but this is not so often done in the duration of an academic year and within the educational institution. Seminars/Conferences done in the auspices of a school provide for a more contextualized and/or localized set-up whereby the topics can be customized to address the needs of the faculty. The context of “community” is posited as highly regarded for a supervisor to “encourage shared, more participatory decision-making, with regard to issues such as setting school goals, defining problems, designing solutions, managing resources, evaluating success, etc.” (Shaeffer, 1991).

Table 3 Perceptions of Teachers about Professional Development of Educational Supervisors		
Supervisory Strands/Domain	n=50	
Domain 2: Professional Development	M	SD
Creates a culture of professionalism in the school working community	3.16	.37
Addresses the need for professional development of teaching and non-teaching personnel	3.18	.52
Organizes school-based training and seminars/workshops	2.48	.50
Evaluates the appropriateness of trainings done in school	2.30	.46
Ensures alignment of teachers’ professional qualifications	3.32	.62

Table 4 presents the student-centered learning environment that supervisory creates within a school community. Standards leading to quality instruction ($M=3.84, 3.32$) is highly perceived of an educational supervisor by the teacher respondents. It is regarded in these aspects that the promotion of practices such as commendation of efforts ($M=3.24$) allows for a more interactive dimension to supervision that contributes to an effective student-centered learning approach. The modern concept of school administration and supervision

Table 4 Perceptions of Teachers about Student-Centered Learning Climate created by Educational Supervisors		
Supervisory Strands/Domain	n=50	
Domain 3: Student-Centered Learning Climate	M	SD
Benchmarks school performance	3.28	.45
Supports quality instruction by establishing high academic standards	3.32	.51
Recognizes outstanding learners and teachers	3.24	.43
Makes learning interactive by promoting the use of technology in classroom teaching	3.84	.37

on the other hand, recognizes the child and his growth and development as the center of administrative and supervisory activities. Modern administration and supervision promote the growth of the child and the teacher through stimulation, direction, and guidance.

Table 5 presents the personal and professional attributes and interpersonal effectiveness that are perceived of educational supervisors in the exigency of their functions. Compared with the previous domains adapted from the NCBSSH tool, this domain garnered the highest means for the remainder of the questionnaire. Systematic adherence to set standards ($M=3.52$) and organized manner of dealing with their subordinates based on evidence-based approaches ($M=3.56$) are perceived as supervisory competencies. The contexts by which a school/teacher operates is also perceived as a supervisory function that is attributed to interpersonal effectiveness. Teachers need the verbal support and physical attendance at sessions by the supervisors to verify their commitment. Teachers should be involved in the identification of their own staff development needs. The activities should be founded upon strong theoretical, conceptual, or research bases. The information must be related to practice with ample opportunities provided for modeling and coaching.

Table 5 Perceptions of Teachers about Personal and Professional Attributes and Interpersonal Effectiveness of Educational Supervisors		
Supervisory Strands/Domain	n=50	
Domain 4: Personal and Professional Attributes and Interpersonal Effectiveness	M	SD
Manifests genuine enthusiasm and pride in the nobility of the teaching profession	3.34	.47
Conducts himself/herself in a professional manner	3.48	.50
Conducts programs and projects that benefit the professional needs of the teaching and non-teaching personnel	3.44	.50
Fosters good relation within the educational community by encouraging dialogue and effective communication	3.46	.50
Considers the social contexts of situations when dealing with teachers	3.22	.41
Deals with integrity, honesty and fairness with different kinds of people	3.44	.50
Shows empathy and understands the perspectives of others	3.46	.50
Complies strictly with the set guidelines for awards and incentives for extraordinary efforts	3.56	.50
Provides systematic and evidence-based mechanisms in dealing with non-performing teaching and non-teaching personnel	3.52	.50
Cultivates a good reputation by handling matters with transparency and consistency	3.44	.50

While addressing the relationship of educational supervision with professional development, a two-way t-test (at 95% confidence interval) was applied to see the statistical difference between the variables. Findings revealed that there is an average significance in the relationship of educational supervision with professional development of teachers. Variables such as effective communication and appropriate delegation

Table 6 Relationship of Educational Supervision with Professional Development

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	SUPV	3.1329	50	.20612	.02915
	PROFDEV	2.8880	50	.24297	.03436

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	SUPV & PROFDEV	50	.391	.005

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	SUPV - PROFDEV	.2449	.24981	.03533	.1739	.3159	6.931	49	.000

of tasks based on qualifications were perceived as the lowest in the functions of supervisors. With regard to developmental supervision, educational supervisors are asked to do supervisory work from which teachers get immediate support for their professional development. However, interpersonal communication barriers signify all the factors preventing effective communication between people concerning negotiation of the same meaning (Gürüz & Eğinli, 2008, p. 209). Participative management to identify the good practices of teachers is needed to ensure personal and professional development of teachers in assessment, teaching and learning.

To test differences between two or more means among the variables, one-way ANOVA was applied in the data. Results show that among the three domains tested among the clusters, student-centered learning

Table 7 Differences among Educational Supervision Domains/Strands

ANOVA								
				Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SUPV	Between Groups	(Combined)		.510	5	.102	2.852	.026
		Linear Term	Weighted	.317	1	.317	8.885	.005
			Deviation	.192	4	.048	1.344	.269
	Within Groups			1.572	44	.036		
	Total			2.082	49			
STUDCENT	Between Groups	(Combined)		.098	5	.020	.443	.816
		Linear Term	Weighted	.008	1	.008	.180	.674
			Deviation	.090	4	.023	.509	.730
	Within Groups			1.957	44	.044		
	Total			2.055	49			
PERPROF	Between Groups	(Combined)		.492	5	.098	1.662	.164
		Linear Term	Weighted	.375	1	.375	6.338	.016
			Deviation	.117	4	.029	.493	.741
	Within Groups			2.603	44	.059		
	Total			3.095	49			

climates has the least difference ($p = .816, .674, .730$) in supervisory functions. Because of several concerns that a supervisor acts upon, their functions are spread out in both administrative and supervisory roles, which at times, limits the opportunities for them to look closely into the detailed weaknesses ascertaining to the improvement of teaching practice.

Conclusions/Implications and Recommendations

The perceptions of teachers involved in this study regarding educational supervision to provide efforts towards providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction involves educational leadership, professional development, student-centered learning climate, and personal and professional attributes and interpersonal effectiveness. Effective educational leaders help create a climate where teachers can teach and students can learn. Successful school leaders (and teachers) are both highly responsive and highly demanding of others. Contexts and effective communications are also perceived as variables that are necessary for skills which are necessary for an educational supervisor. Findings of this study revealed that teachers perceived that their educational supervisors are open to innovation that reflect enhanced teaching-learning experience which is shown through when teachers are provided the verbal support and objective feedback and/or evaluation to recognize their commitment and involvement in the achievement of key result areas. These can be done through staff development that target the actual needs of teachers in their own contexts. These activities demonstrate effective and efficient modeling and coaching based on theoretically, conceptually acknowledged evidences that relate to teaching practice. Supervision as perceived by the teachers must involve close collaboration and interfacing where classroom and community programs and projects are integrated and consulted through democratic leadership. These can be planned and materialized in a variety of approaches which can include, but not be limited to: utilization of strategic management in training teachers to create a culture of reflective practice and management, encouragement of teachers to be more participatory in the decision-making efforts and plans of the educational institution, provision of avenues whereby teachers are given ample amount of opportunities to grow professionally, alignment of teacher qualifications with actual teaching practice to improve teaching quality and address conflicts in mastery of subject matter, and incorporation of objective and empirically-sound evaluation in evaluating and addressing concerns that hinder teachers' professional development.

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