



TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES ON CLASSROOM OBSERVATION (COT): GROUNDWORK FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explored teachers' lived experiences with classroom observation as a basis for policy recommendations. Employing a qualitative phenomenological design, the study secured responses through extensive interviews using a researcher-developed instrument refined with adviser feedback. Ethical protocols were observed, including obtaining institutional permissions and obtaining informed consent from participants. Findings revealed that classroom observation fostered inner motivation, enhanced teaching strategies, and elicited feelings of tension. Challenges encountered included time management, learner misbehavior, and insufficient instructional materials. Teachers addressed these difficulties through coping strategies such as preparing supplementary learning resources, adopting varied pedagogical approaches, and maintaining positive dispositions. These insights underscore the complex dynamics of classroom observation and highlight the need for responsive policies that support teachers' professional growth.

Keywords: *Teachers' Experiences, Classroom Observation, Policy Recommendation*

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INTRODUCTION

Effective principal practices for classroom observation shift from mere inspection to supportive professional development, emphasizing improvements in teaching quality, student engagement, and learning outcomes.

Altinok (2024) argues that a key component of the leadership role is teacher evaluation, which serves not only to maintain higher educational standards but also to catalyze teacher professional learning. Among the various evaluation methods, classroom observation is particularly valued for its ability to provide principals with real-time insights into instructional practices, enabling them to offer targeted feedback and instructional support (Brady & Wilson, 2021).

Skews (2022) believed that principals' observations are an important part of the teacher evaluation process and, as such, are a valuable tool for securing high-quality teaching. The goal of observation is to help teachers grow by giving them performance feedback so they can do better in the future.

While evidence suggests that factors such as teacher experience, school characteristics, and administrative support influence classroom observation effectiveness, a critical issue in the literature is the tension between oversight and teacher autonomy (Ranjan, 2023).

Teachers often perceive their classrooms as private spaces where they exercise professional discretion, develop personalized teaching strategies, and build rapport with students (Cohen, Berlin, & Wiseman, 2022).

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However, the value of classroom observation in enhancing teaching quality also underscores the tensions associated with the formal role of school principals in this process (Bellibas, 2023).

Moreover, Brouskelis (2024) said that a significant tension lies in navigating the delicate balance between fulfilling evaluation duties and maintaining a positive, supportive relationship with teachers. The requirement for principals to conduct classroom observations positions them to assess instructional quality and provide feedback, while being mindful of the potential impact on teacher autonomy and the classroom environment (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2023). Teachers may feel inspected and assessed rather than supported when their principal is present as an observer, upsetting this sense of autonomy.

The researcher observed that gaps in classroom observation often stem from observers focusing on evaluation rather than support, leading to teacher anxiety, a disconnect between policy and practice, and issues with tool validity due to observer bias. The incident happened in Muntinlupa, Las Pinas, where one teacher died during the observation of classes, prompting the researcher to conduct the study.

Thus, the present study was based on teachers' classroom observation experiences as groundwork for policy recommendations in the Schools District of Banate during the school year 2025-2026.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

In this chapter, the study's methodology is presented, detailing the research method, design, respondents, instruments, data collection techniques, and analytical procedures.

This study employed a qualitative research method aimed at exploring and comprehending the depth and complexity of human experiences, behaviors, and social realities. It focused on collecting non-numerical data to uncover meanings, interpretations, and contextual factors influencing the subjects under investigation. Qualitative research methods focus on collecting and analyzing textual or visual data, such as interviews, focus groups, observations, documents, and artifacts (Creswell, as cited by Norman, 2021).

The Researchers used a variety of methods to analyze and make sense of this data, discovering patterns, themes, and narratives that help advance a deeper understanding of the research study on navigating teachers' tensions in principals' classroom observation practices as groundwork for professional development.

Research Design

A qualitative design was adopted to explore teachers' viewpoints, lived experiences, and contextual realities related to principals' observation practices, which inform the creation of a professional development plan. The study utilized phenomenological and interpretive methods.

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A phenomenological approach was adopted to examine the lived realities of Alternative Learning System mobile educators and graduates, providing insight into their feelings, perspectives, and the meanings they attribute to their experiences.

Phenomenological research design requires the researcher to bracket any a priori assumptions about the experience or phenomenon (Ayton, 2025).

Interviews were conducted to obtain comprehensive insights into teachers' experiences, principals' observation practices, and how these practices are handled among teachers in the 4th Congressional District of Iloilo.

This research method is best suited to the present study, as it aimed to offer a deeper comprehension of teachers' risks/experiences, perceptions, and contexts, contributing to the development of a comprehensive professional development plan.

Participants of the Study

The study involved 10 teachers from the Banate Schools District during the 2025–2026 academic year.

One teacher per school was purposively selected to serve as a participant.

The participants were chosen by the researcher, who determined which individuals were most useful for the required data.

Participants of the study are essential for advancing knowledge in the field of education. Whereas, participation was voluntary, confidential, and involved informed consent, with opportunities for compensation.

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Sampling Design

Purposive sampling was adopted as the sampling design for this research and used to gather data.

According to Nikolopoulou (2022), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling procedure in which units are selected based on traits the researcher requires in the sample. The approach depends on the researcher's discretion in choosing participants or cases that can provide the most relevant information to meet the study's aims.

Research Instrument

Data on teachers' experiences with classroom observation were gathered through in-depth interviews, which informed the development of policy recommendations.

The study used in-depth interviews as a qualitative approach, engaging participants in structured yet flexible conversations to explore their experiences, perspectives, beliefs, and emotions regarding the subject under investigation. These interviews will typically be one-on-one and can be conducted face-to-face, by phone, or via video conferencing (Briggs, 2020).

Validity of the Research Instrument

Among the essential measures of test quality is validity, which pertains to the appropriateness, accuracy, and significance of the interpretations researchers derive from their data. In content-related validity, the content and format must be consistent with the definition of the variables and the sample of subjects to be measured, and this is also helpful in validating the questionnaire items (Biddix, 2020).

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Three interview questions were developed by the researcher and submitted to the thesis adviser and a panel of experts for evaluation. The panel assessed the items for relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and correctness, and their recommendations were incorporated into the finalized instrument.

Data Gathering Procedures

To align with its qualitative design, the study employed in-depth interviews using a questionnaire crafted by the researcher. Selected teachers responded to the same set of questions, and their answers provided baseline data on experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and observation practices, which guided the formulation of policy recommendations. The procedure was divided into three stages — pre-interview, interview, and post-interview—conducted under the supervision of the research adviser.

Approval for the interviews was secured from the Dean of the Graduate School, the thesis adviser, the school heads, and the Public Schools District Supervisor of Banate. Teachers and principals were purposively selected as participants, and consent forms were presented before interviews were conducted.

The researcher provided participants with ample time to answer honestly, encouraging them to share their insights, experiences, and life challenges. Each interview was video-recorded for transcription purposes.

The data were subsequently examined using thematic analysis, which allowed the identification and reporting of patterns within the responses.

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Data Analysis

Through phenomenological research, the study sought to capture the essential nature of a phenomenon by interviewing individuals who had experienced it. The researcher selected meaningful statements from participants' accounts, clustered them into themes, and integrated these into a narrative (Biddix, 2020).

The gathered data were examined using thematic analysis.

On the other hand, Braun and Clark (2023) discussed that thematic analysis involves six steps to find patterns in qualitative data: 1) familiarization (reading data thoroughly); 2) generating initial codes (labeling interesting features); 3) searching for themes (grouping codes into potential themes); 4) reviewing themes (checking themes against data); 5) defining & naming themes (clarifying theme meaning); and 6) writing up the analysis, creating a coherent narrative.

Prior to the conduct of the study, respondents signed informed consent forms. Their involvement was voluntary, and they retained the right to withdraw at any stage. Research information was treated with confidentiality, and individual identities were not revealed in publications or presentations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Conducted in the Schools District of Banate during the 2025–2026 academic year, this study investigated teachers' experiences with classroom observation to inform policy recommendations.

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It adopted a qualitative methodology, utilizing in-depth interviews and guided by a phenomenological research design.

Ten teachers from the Schools District of Banate participated in the study during the 2025–2026 school year, with one teacher selected from each school.

The researcher used purposive sampling, selecting those who could provide the most useful information.

The research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide that used questions within a predetermined thematic framework.

The researcher developed three interview questions, which were submitted to the thesis adviser and a panel of experts for face and content validation. Each item was evaluated for appropriateness, relevance, clarity, and grammatical accuracy. The panel's corrections and recommendations were integrated into the final version of the instrument prior to data collection.

The researcher considers all suggestions regarding the tool's validation. To ensure accurate documentation, the researcher used voice and video recorders during data collection, with participants' permission. Such instruments were used for analysis, including the field notes taken during the interview.

Before checking if the interview schedule was valid, the researcher asked the adviser and a panel of jurors to review each question and suggest changes.

Necessary permits were obtained from authorities and participants, and the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews at convenient locations.

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Once the interviews were completed, the researcher compiled all the data and analyzed it using a thematic approach.

Considering the study's results, the teachers' experiences during classroom observation included building inner motivation, improving teaching strategies, and feeling tense. The challenges they encountered included time management, learners' misbehavior, and a lack of teaching materials. However, the coping approaches educators employed to address the hindrances they encountered included providing learning materials, using various learning strategies, and maintaining positive behavior.

Through classroom observation, information is gathered by watching teaching and learning unfold, followed by reflection to understand better how effective instruction is, how engaged students are, and how the classroom operates. Although often used for evaluation, classroom observation can also support teacher growth and fairer learning opportunities when included in a consistent coaching process.

Classroom observation, usually conducted by school heads and master teachers, can be challenging but is intended to provide teachers with helpful feedback to improve their teaching and classroom management. It often includes a consultation before the observation, watching the class in action, a discussion afterward, and reflection. This process not only helps teachers grow in knowledge but also supports their personal improvement. Since effective teaching requires a wide range of skills, classroom observation plays a key role in helping teachers develop those skills while also providing a structured way to record and measure their performance.

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The policy recommendations were based on the research results. It aimed to inform and influence the policy-making process by proposing actionable solutions to the challenges identified by teachers through the classroom observation tool.

CONCLUSION

Grounded in the study's findings and derived insights, the following recommendations are presented:

To improve classroom observation, the school shall implement a three-step cycle of pre-observation, active observation, and post-observation, focusing on actionable, objective feedback rather than just evaluation.

Use of standards-based instruction as the foundation of the lesson. Teaching the standards ensures that teachers use grade-level content relevant to the subjects they teach. Teachers shall understand what the key areas are expected to teach throughout the school year.

School heads and teachers shall be mindful of the importance of printed materials and textbooks in the classroom.

Build a habit of being mindful of the surroundings, especially those that teachers think they are already familiar with.

School heads shall provide regular analysis to achieve the organizational goals that prioritize direct engagement with teachers and learners.

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A similar study shall be conducted in other school districts to ascertain the findings of this study using the same variables.



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