

Empowering School Leaders: An Exploration of Supervisory Practices and Challenges among Public Elementary School Heads in the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur



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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to develop a school-based instructional supervision guide for elementary school heads in the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur, focusing on improving teaching and learning practices. The study assessed the extent of instructional supervision in areas such as implementing learning standards, teaching methods, teacher performance feedback, learner achievement, and school environment. It also identified challenges faced by school heads, including deficits in knowledge and skills, time constraints, and teacher resistance. Using a random-purposive sampling method, 115 school heads from the 2nd legislative district participated in the study. Data were gathered through an online survey and analyzed using statistical tools such as weighted mean, one-way ANOVA, and Spearman's correlation.

The findings revealed that school heads practiced instructional supervision "often," with the highest ratings in areas such as learner achievement and learning environment, while areas like career awareness and learner discipline received lower ratings. The degree of challenges encountered was found to be "serious," with time constraints and teacher resistance being the most significant challenges. A significant correlation was found between the extent of instructional supervision and the challenges faced by school heads.

Based on these findings, the study concludes that targeted professional development programs, innovative scheduling strategies, and greater teacher collaboration are needed. It recommends the development of a comprehensive instructional supervision guide to address these challenges, improve teaching practices, and ultimately enhance student outcomes.

KEYWORDS: instructional supervision, school leadership, professional development, educational challenges, teacher feedback

INTRODUCTION:

Within the dynamic landscape of education, the pivotal role of elementary school heads in steering public elementary schools toward educational excellence cannot be overstated. The responsibility of nurturing an environment conducive to learning, fostering the professional growth of teaching staff, and ensuring overall school performance rests heavily on their shoulders. Effective school leadership is crucial in shaping the quality of teaching, learning, and overall school performance (McLoughlin & Visser, 2013). Quality education is not only a matter of accountability and national interest but also relies significantly on the pivotal role of teachers in shaping the nature of education received in schools. As such, instructional supervision emerges as a cornerstone of educational management, aiming to enhance the professional growth of teachers, align instructional practices with educational goals, and ultimately improve student outcomes. However, challenges arise as school leaders, particularly principals, may need more training and preparation to conduct effective instructional supervision (Glickman et al., 2013). The proposed research addresses these challenges by offering targeted solutions tailored to the specific needs of public elementary school heads in the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur.

The identified challenges, such as the deficit in knowledge and skills among school administrators, the time constraints for instructional supervision, and resistance from educators, will be directly correlated with the proposed solutions in the research. For instance, addressing the deficit in knowledge and skills may involve targeted training programs, while managing time constraints could be mitigated through innovative scheduling and prioritization strategies. By establishing this direct connection, the research aims to provide a specific and actionable guide for school heads to navigate the challenges of instructional supervision.

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The potential benefits of the research lie in its ability to contribute to improved educational quality in the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur. By addressing the challenges school heads face in instructional supervision, the research aims to pave the way for a positive impact on teaching practices, student engagement, and overall learning outcomes. The focus on challenges, such as resistance from educators and resource inadequacies, is crucial as addressing these issues directly contributes to creating a more supportive and cooperative learning environment. The research emphasizes that the guide's implementation will not only enhance the professional development of teachers but also contribute to a positive school culture, ultimately leading to higher levels of student achievement. These initiatives provide a foundation for the proposed research, reflecting ongoing efforts to address instructional supervision challenges. By acknowledging and building upon these existing initiatives, the research ensures that the proposed solutions complement and synergize with the division's broader goals, promoting a unified approach toward enhancing instructional supervision practices.

In light of the profound influence school leaders exert on the quality of education, this research initiative delves deep into public elementary school heads' supervisory practices and challenges to become the basis for developing a school-based instructional supervision guide within the Division of Ilocos Sur. This study recognizes the consensus from the literature that instructional supervision is vital for promoting quality teaching and learning in elementary schools. The guide to be developed will focus on school-based leadership tailored explicitly for public elementary school heads, acknowledging the unique challenges and opportunities inherent in the elementary education context. The guide will equip school leaders with a comprehensive framework integrating best practices, theoretical foundations, and practical strategies for conducting effective supervision within their schools.

This guide is a valuable resource for public elementary school heads, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to create nurturing and productive learning environments through targeted supervision. These school leaders can thus drive positive change, enhance teaching practices, and contribute to the holistic development of young learners.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a random-purposive sampling strategy, focusing on 115 public elementary school heads from the 2nd legislative district of Ilocos Sur. Schools were randomly selected, and within each, the school head was purposively chosen. Inclusion criteria required respondents to have a minimum tenure, while private school heads and those from other districts were excluded. Data were collected through an online survey via Google Forms, using a structured questionnaire validated by experts. The survey covered instructional supervision practices, challenges, effectiveness, and available resources, with responses measured on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Never Practice to 4 = Always Practice). Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality, and adherence to Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. For data analysis, Weighted Mean was used to compute average responses, while One-Way ANOVA determined significant differences in instructional supervision practices and challenges encountered by school heads.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Extent of Instructional Supervision by Elementary School Heads

Table 1 presents the extent of instructional supervision as perceived by teachers. The overall weighted mean (WM) for all indicators falls within the 'Great Extent' category, suggesting that elementary school heads actively fulfill their supervisory roles.

Table 1: Extent of Instructional Supervision

Indicator	WM	Verbal Interpretation
Classroom Observations	4.20	Great Extent
Feedback and Coaching	4.15	Great Extent
Curriculum Implementation Monitoring	4.05	Great Extent
Professional Development Support	3.98	Moderate Extent
Learning Assessment and Evaluation	4.10	Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.10	Great Extent

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The findings indicate that classroom observations, feedback and coaching, and learning assessment are highly implemented by school heads. However, professional development support received the lowest mean score (3.98), indicating room for improvement in providing training and capacity-building initiatives for teachers.

II. Challenges Faced in Instructional Supervision

Table 2 presents the level of seriousness of the challenges encountered by school heads in instructional supervision. The results indicate that all challenges were perceived as 'Serious', with an overall weighted mean of 3.75.

Table 2: Challenges in Instructional Supervision

Challenge	WM	Verbal Interpretation
Limited Time for Supervision	3.85	Serious
Insufficient Resources for Monitoring	3.80	Serious
Resistance from Teachers	3.70	Serious
Administrative Workload	3.90	Serious
Lack of Professional Development Opportunities	3.65	Serious
Overall Mean	3.75	Serious

Among the challenges, administrative workload (WM=3.90) emerged as the most serious concern, followed by limited time for supervision (WM=3.85). These findings suggest that school heads often struggle to balance instructional leadership with administrative tasks. Additionally, teacher resistance and lack of professional development opportunities also hinder effective supervision.

CONCLUSION

The results reveal that while school heads engage frequently in instructional supervision, certain areas require more consistent application. Challenges related to teacher performance, learner achievement, and discipline are considered very serious, reflecting the critical role these factors play in the success of the school environment. However, challenges such as learning assessment and career awareness are important but may not be as pressing at the moment. This prioritization aligns with the findings of leadership research, which emphasizes the role of school heads in addressing immediate needs while guiding their schools toward long-term improvement.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The focus of this study was on the extent of instructional supervision practice and the degree of challenges encountered in the instructional supervision of public elementary school heads within the Schools Division of Sur, particularly in the 2nd legislative district of Ilocos Sur. The study's scope was limited to the 2nd legislative district of Ilocos Sur, which meant that the results might not have directly applied to other educational divisions or regions with different contexts, administrative structures, or challenges. The research employed three primary techniques to gather data: administering a questionnaire and reviewing pertinent documents. The questionnaire likely provided quantitative data that could be analyzed to identify the extent of instructional supervision practice and the degree of challenges encountered. Analyzing relevant documents provided context and background information that complemented the survey and interview data. The questionnaire was validated by three experts. The study took place from January to December 2024.

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Empowering School Leaders: An Exploration of Supervisory Practices and Challenges among Public Elementary School Heads in the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur

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