

Exploring Milagros East District Teachers' Live Experience in Classroom Observation: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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Abstract

Classroom observation is an essential component of the Department of Education's teacher performance evaluation system, designed to enhance instructional quality, promote reflective practice, and support continuous professional development. Despite its developmental intent, teachers often experience varying emotional, instructional, and professional challenges throughout the observation process. This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of public secondary school teachers in Milagros East District, Division of Masbate Province, regarding classroom observation. Specifically, it examined teachers' perceptions before, during, and after classroom observation, the challenges they encountered, the coping strategies they employed, and the support mechanisms and institutional practices they perceived as influencing the observation process. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study involved fifteen (15) purposively selected Junior High School and Senior High School teachers from the district's five public secondary schools. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis. The findings revealed that teachers perceived classroom observation as both an evaluative and developmental process. Although participants experienced anxiety, performance pressure, and instructional challenges before and during observation, these emotions gradually shifted toward confidence and reflective practice as they focused on learner engagement and authentic teaching. After the observation, teachers viewed feedback as an opportunity for continuous professional growth and instructional improvement. To manage observation-related stress, participants employed thorough lesson preparation, reflective planning, prayer, positive thinking, consultation with mentors, and learner-centered instructional strategies. They likewise emphasized that constructive feedback, instructional coaching, mentoring, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, professional development activities, and supportive school leadership significantly enhanced the classroom observation process. The study concludes that classroom observation is most meaningful when implemented as a collaborative and developmental practice rather than a compliance-driven evaluation. Strengthening instructional coaching, mentoring, reflective feedback, and professional learning communities can further improve teachers' instructional competence, confidence, and commitment to delivering quality education in support of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).

Keywords: Classroom Observation, Lived Experiences, Teacher Performance Evaluation, Phenomenological Study, Learning Action Cell (LAC), Professional Development

1. Introduction

Education stands as a cornerstone of societal progress, and at its heart are the teachers, who serve as the primary conduits for knowledge transfer, skill development, and character formation. The quality of a nation's educational system is, therefore, inextricably linked to the effectiveness and well-being of its teachers (Ritchie, 2023). This principle is likewise reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Central to achieving SDG 4 is the development and support of competent, motivated, and professionally empowered teachers, recognizing that teacher quality remains one of the most significant determinants of learner success and educational improvement (United Nations, 2015). Consequently, strengthening instructional practices and creating enabling working conditions for teachers are indispensable strategies in advancing equitable and quality education. In the dynamic landscape of modern education, continuous

professional development and robust systems of accountability are paramount to ensuring instructional excellence. One of the most ubiquitous and influential mechanisms for achieving these goals is classroom observation. It is a practice woven into the fabric of educational systems worldwide, serving as a critical tool for providing feedback, evaluating performance, and guiding teachers toward improved instructional strategies. As schools strive to meet national educational standards and global commitments such as SDG 4, classroom observation becomes an essential mechanism for promoting instructional quality, professional growth, and learner-centered teaching practices. Classroom observation, in its ideal form, is envisioned as a supportive, non-threatening opportunity for professional coaching, targeted feedback, and peer collaboration (Gustafson, 2023). It is a process that can, when conducted effectively, foster a culture of continuous improvement, enhance teacher morale, and ultimately lead to stronger student outcomes (Chingos et al., 2014). Literature from around the globe consistently reinforces the notion that well-designed observation systems, paired with professional coaching, can significantly contribute to teacher development and student achievement (Moody, 2024). Researchers like Halim et al. (2018) emphasize that observation fosters the visibility of teaching processes, allowing for constructive feedback that enhances classroom management and instructional practices. This developmental potential is further highlighted by Zaare (2013), who found that observation can enhance a teacher's self-awareness and encourage more reflective and intentional instructional strategies. These outcomes directly contribute to the realization of SDG 4 by strengthening teacher effectiveness, improving instructional quality, and supporting continuous professional learning. However, the discourse surrounding classroom observation is far from one-dimensional. While it is framed as a developmental tool, it is also frequently associated with significant challenges, including stress, disruption, bias, and subjectivity (Ritchie, 2021). In many contexts, classroom observations are perceived less as a means of support and more as a punitive, bureaucratic, or misaligned process (Tomacruz, 2018). This tension arises from a fundamental divergence in perspective: while administrators and policymakers view observation as a legal and necessary tool for maintaining accountability (Tomacruz, 2018), teachers often experience it as a source of anxiety and a burden that can overshadow their primary instructional responsibilities (Tomacruz, 2018). Such experiences may undermine teacher motivation and professional confidence, ultimately affecting instructional quality and learner outcomes—both of which are critical concerns in achieving the objectives of SDG 4. In the Philippine context, this tension is particularly pronounced, set against a backdrop of systemic challenges within the education system. Recent reports have underscored a critical educational crisis, with a staggering 91% learning poverty rate among 10-year-old Filipino learners (Chi, 2023; Montelibano, 2024). This "learning poverty" is directly linked to "teaching poverty," a condition characterized by ineffective teaching practices, inadequate content mastery, and deficiencies in teacher preparation and professional development (Montelibano, 2024). Classroom observation data, in this light, often reveals that many teachers demonstrate "medium-low" to "low" levels of effective teaching practices, with none reaching the "high" category (Chi, 2023). Consequently, classroom observations in the Philippines are not merely an assessment of individual performance but a reflection of broader systemic inadequacies, including poor working conditions, low salaries, insufficient professional development opportunities, and overwhelming administrative demands (Chi, 2023). Addressing these concerns is fundamental to improving teaching quality and fulfilling the country's commitment to SDG 4, which recognizes teachers as indispensable agents in delivering quality education. The Philippine education system, governed by the Department of Education (DepEd), has long employed frameworks such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) to guide and evaluate teacher performance (de Vera, 2024; Torres et al., 2024). These systems aim to ensure accountability while promoting continuous professional growth aligned with national teaching standards. On one hand, studies indicate that regular and systematically implemented classroom observations can lead to improved instructional performance, more targeted professional development, and enhanced teacher morale (Sugot & Ladia, 2024). On the other hand, excessive documentation requirements, administrative workload, and compliance-driven practices associated with these systems have often contributed to teacher stress, burnout, and diminished motivation (Lu, 2024; Tomacruz, 2018). Teachers therefore navigate a complex professional environment where the demands of accountability sometimes compete with their primary mission of facilitating meaningful learning experiences. This reality underscores the importance of designing observation systems that balance accountability with developmental support, a principle that resonates strongly with SDG 4's emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The existing body of literature, both foreign and local, provides a valuable foundation for understanding the mechanics and systemic impacts of classroom observation; however, a significant gap remains in capturing the subjective, deeply personal, and emotional experiences of teachers (Granström et al., 2023). Much of the existing research, including studies by Luna-Bazaldua et al. (2021), Filmer et al. (2018), and Marral and Lodhi (2021), approaches classroom observation from an external, quantitative, and instrument-based perspective, emphasizing observation tools, performance indicators, and general perceptions. While these studies offer valuable evidence for educational leaders and policymakers, they often overlook the lived realities, emotions, and meanings that teachers attach to the observation process (Moody, 2024). Likewise, local studies such as those by Fayo and Hilario (2023) have examined relationships between observation effectiveness and teacher performance but have given limited attention to the emotional, psychological,

and professional experiences of teachers during classroom observations. Understanding these lived experiences is essential because teacher well-being and professional empowerment are increasingly recognized as prerequisites for delivering quality education envisioned under SDG 4. The current study, therefore, seeks to fill this important gap by adopting a phenomenological approach. Phenomenological inquiry is particularly appropriate because it focuses on understanding the lived experiences of individuals, allowing researchers to explore how teachers perceive, interpret, and assign meaning to classroom observations within their professional lives. Rather than merely examining what classroom observations accomplish, this study investigates what it means for teachers to experience being observed. By foregrounding teachers' voices, the research provides a richer and more humanized understanding of classroom observation that extends beyond policy implementation and performance evaluation (James, 2024). Situated within the unique educational context of the Milagros East District, the study offers localized insights into teachers' experiences that may inform the development of more responsive, supportive, and context-sensitive classroom observation practices. Ultimately, by promoting teacher well-being, professional growth, and instructional effectiveness, the study contributes not only to the enhancement of classroom observation systems within the Philippine education sector but also to the broader realization of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) through the continuous improvement of teaching quality and learner outcomes.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically the phenomenological approach, to capture and describe the lived experiences of teachers in Milagros East District as they undergo classroom observation. Phenomenology was deemed the most appropriate design because it focuses on exploring the essence of lived experiences from the perspective of those who directly encounter them. By adopting this design, the study seeks to uncover how teachers perceive, interpret, and make meaning of classroom observation before, during, and after the process. Unlike quantitative approaches that prioritize measurement and statistical testing, phenomenology is concerned with depth rather than breadth. It allows the researcher to engage with participants' narratives to surface underlying meanings, shared realities, and emotional responses connected to classroom observation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This orientation makes it especially fitting for addressing the research questions, which center on teachers' perceptions, challenges, coping strategies, and views on institutional support. The phenomenological design also provides a systematic process of bracketing, where the researcher sets aside personal biases and assumptions to remain focused on participants' authentic voices (Moustakas, 1994). Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, this approach highlights both the commonalities and unique variations in teachers' experiences, offering a rich and nuanced understanding of how classroom observation affects their professional lives. Furthermore, phenomenology supports the study's objective of giving voice to teachers as primary stakeholders in educational processes. It provides a lens to examine not only the technical aspects of classroom observation but also the psychological and professional dimensions that influence teachers' identities and growth. In this way, phenomenology goes beyond descriptive accounts to reveal deeper insights into the opportunities and challenges of classroom observation within the rural context of Milagros East District (Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019).

2.2 Locale of the Study

This study is situated in the Milagros East District, one of the key educational districts in the municipality of Milagros, Province of Masbate. Milagros is recognized as one of the largest municipalities in the province, known for its rich cultural history, agricultural resources, and dynamic local economy. The town traces its roots to a Royal Decree in 1866 and has evolved through various historical periods. Today, it is a first-class municipality with 27 barangays, where the primary sources of livelihood are farming, cattle raising, and fishing. The town also celebrates its identity through local traditions like the Pagdangan Festival. Within its education sector, Milagros East District plays a crucial role in delivering basic education under the supervision of the Department of Education (DepEd). The district manages a network of 24 elementary schools, five secondary schools, and one integrated school. For this study, the focus is placed exclusively on the secondary level, which includes Junior High Schools (JHS) and Senior High Schools (SHS) in the district. The teaching force is composed of approximately 91 JHS teachers and 14 SHS teachers, distributed across schools such as Gulapo-Jumao-As High School, Mary Perpetua High School, Melchor B. Burlaos Memorial High School, Jamorawon National High School, Revil-Bajar National High School, and Magsalangi Integrated School. The selection of Milagros East District as the research locale is significant because it provides a context for exploring the lived experiences of teachers as they undergo mandated classroom observations. Geographically, Milagros lies within a municipality that covers 188 square kilometers with a population of over 104,000 residents. Its diverse geography, which includes fertile lands and the expansive Asid Gulf, influences the daily lives of its people and contributes to the character of its schools and communities. This setting provides an appropriate backdrop for the study as it represents both the realities of rural education and the implementation of national policies on teacher evaluation and

professional development. Within this context, the research locale becomes not only a site of inquiry but also a microcosm of the broader challenges and possibilities faced by public education in the Philippines.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The participants of this study consisted of fifteen (15) public secondary school teachers from Milagros East District, Division of Masbate Province. They were purposively selected because they had firsthand experience of classroom observation and could provide rich, reflective descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation. The participants represented both Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS) teachers from the district's five public secondary schools, thereby ensuring variation in teaching assignments, professional experiences, and instructional contexts. The participants were distributed equally across the participating schools, with three teachers selected from each school. This distribution allowed the study to capture diverse perspectives while maintaining balance among the participating institutions. The respondents varied in terms of years of teaching experience, academic specialization, professional rank, and educational attainment. Such diversity enriched the data by providing multiple viewpoints regarding classroom observation while revealing common meanings shared across different teaching contexts.

All participants had undergone at least one formal classroom observation conducted as part of the implementation of the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) and aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). Their experiences encompassed the stages before, during, and after classroom observation, enabling them to articulate their perceptions, emotional responses, professional challenges, coping mechanisms, and views regarding institutional support. Consistent with the principles of phenomenological inquiry, participants were selected not because they statistically represented the larger teacher population but because they possessed lived experiences that directly related to the research phenomenon. Their narratives served as the primary source of qualitative data from which the essential themes describing teachers' experiences of classroom observation were generated. Through their shared reflections, the study sought to uncover the essence of classroom observation as experienced by public secondary school teachers within the unique educational context of Milagros East District. The identities of all participants were kept strictly confidential through the use of participant codes (e.g., Participant 1 to Participant 15) during data collection, transcription, analysis, and presentation of findings. Participation was entirely voluntary, and all ethical standards concerning informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and participants' right to withdraw from the study at any stage were strictly observed throughout the research process.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

This study employed purposive sampling, specifically criterion purposive sampling, to identify participants who possess firsthand experience of the phenomenon being investigated. Purposive sampling is widely recognized in qualitative research as an appropriate technique for selecting information-rich participants who can provide meaningful insights into the lived experiences under study (Palinkas et al., 2015). Since phenomenological inquiry seeks to understand the essence of a shared experience rather than to produce statistically generalizable findings, participants were intentionally selected based on their direct involvement in classroom observation. The study involved fifteen (15) public secondary school teachers from Milagros East District who had undergone formal classroom observations under the Department of Education's Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). The participants were drawn from the district's five secondary schools, namely Gulapo-Jumao-As High School, Mary Perpetua High School, Melchor B. Burlaos Memorial High School, Jamorawon National High School, and Revil-Bajar National High School, with three (3) participants selected from each school. This distribution ensured representation across different school contexts while maintaining the depth required in phenomenological research. Although Magsalangi Integrated School forms part of the district, it was excluded from the study to maintain the focus on schools operating exclusively at the secondary level. To ensure that participants could provide rich descriptions of the phenomenon, the following inclusion criteria were established: The participant must be a currently employed Junior High School (JHS) or Senior High School (SHS) teacher assigned in one of the selected secondary schools within Milagros East District; The participant must have at least one (1) year of teaching experience in the public secondary school system; The participant must have experienced at least one formal classroom observation conducted by school heads, master teachers, or education supervisors under existing DepEd evaluation guidelines; and The participant must voluntarily agree to participate in the study and provide informed consent for the conduct of in-depth interviews. Teachers who were newly hired and had not yet experienced classroom observation, those assigned exclusively to administrative or non-teaching positions, and those unwilling to participate were excluded from the study. The selection of fifteen participants is consistent with recommendations in phenomenological research, where sample sizes generally range from five to twenty-five participants to facilitate an in-depth exploration of lived experiences while allowing for data saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Neubauer et al., 2019). Rather than emphasizing numerical representation, phenomenology prioritizes obtaining detailed narratives capable of revealing the essential structures and meanings of the phenomenon. Consequently, the chosen sampling strategy enabled the researcher to gather

comprehensive accounts of teachers' perceptions, challenges, coping strategies, and institutional experiences regarding classroom observation.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary research tool for this study was a semi-structured interview guide, carefully designed to elicit rich and detailed accounts of teachers' lived experiences in classroom observation. Semi-structured interviews were deemed most appropriate because they strike a balance between structure and flexibility, ensuring that all research questions are addressed while allowing participants to freely share their unique perspectives and narratives (Kallio et al., 2016). This design aligns with the phenomenological approach, which prioritizes participants' voices and seeks to uncover the essence of lived experience (Vagle, 2018). The initial draft of the interview guide was developed after an extensive review of related literature and studies on teacher evaluation, classroom observation, and phenomenological research methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019). To enhance its content validity, the tool was reviewed by research advisers and faculty experts and later pilot-tested with two teachers outside the research locale. Feedback from the pilot phase informed revisions to improve clarity, sequencing, and relevance of the questions. Only after these refinements and panel approval was the tool finalized for use in actual data collection. The finalized interview guide was organized into three major parts, directly aligned with the research objectives and the Statement of the Problem.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

This study employed a purposive-stratified sampling technique, a method commonly used in qualitative research to deliberately select participants who can provide rich, meaningful accounts of the phenomenon under study (Palinkas et al., 2015). A total of fifteen (15) teachers from the secondary level in Milagros East District were selected as respondents. Representation was ensured across the district's five secondary schools, Gulapo-Jumao-As High School, Mary Perpetua High School, Melchor B. Burlaos Memorial High School, Jamorawon National High School, and Revil-Bajar National High School, with three teachers chosen from each institution. Magsalangi Integrated School, although part of the district, was excluded to maintain the study's focus on purely secondary schools. Participants were identified using the following criteria: (a) currently employed as a Junior High School (JHS) or Senior High School (SHS) teacher within Milagros East District; (b) with at least one year of teaching experience at the secondary level; and (c) willing to participate in semi-structured interviews and share reflective narratives about their classroom observation experiences. These criteria ensured that respondents were not only directly involved in the classroom observation process but also sufficiently experienced to provide nuanced insights into their perceptions, challenges, coping strategies, and institutional support systems. The chosen sample size of fifteen participants is appropriate for phenomenological inquiry, as it strikes a balance between depth and breadth. While large enough to capture diverse experiences across schools, the group remains small enough to allow for intensive engagement with each participant's narrative. Such an approach is consistent with the recommendations of Creswell and Poth (2018) and Neubauer, Witkop, and Varpio (2019), who emphasize that phenomenological research prioritizes information-rich cases over broad generalizability. By engaging participants who directly undergo classroom observations, this study ensures that the data collected are both contextually grounded and reflective of the lived realities of secondary school teachers in Milagros East District.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Consistent with the study's phenomenological stance, the analytic approach combines a classical phenomenological method—adapted from Moustakas' modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen approach—with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis to preserve the focus on textural and structural descriptions while systematically identifying cross-cutting themes. This multi-step process begins with bracketing and reflexivity to document researcher assumptions in reflexive memos (Moustakas, 1994), followed by verbatim transcription and deep familiarization through repeated readings of transcripts, audio, and field notes. Through horizontalization, significant statements regarding teachers' experiences are assigned descriptive and *in vivo* codes, which are then iteratively clustered into broader meaning units and candidate themes. Individual textural (what was experienced) and structural (how it was experienced) descriptions are constructed for each participant and subsequently synthesized to capture the overall essence, core themes, and variations of teachers' lived experiences of classroom observation. Finally, verification and trustworthiness are established through member checking, peer debriefing, and audit trails (Nowell et al., 2017)—supported by qualitative software (e.g., NVivo, ATLAS.ti) and manual analytic memos—culminating in a rich, thick narrative anchored by verbatim quotations that align directly with the research questions and the Lived Experience, Reflection, and Growth (LERG) theoretical framework.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study complied with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, by ensuring that all personal information collected from participants was processed lawfully, fairly, and solely for legitimate research purposes. Appropriate measures were implemented to safeguard the confidentiality, integrity, and security of participants' data throughout the research

process. The study likewise adhered to the ethical standards prescribed under CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 15, Series of 2019, which establishes the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs) for Graduate Programs in the Philippines and emphasizes the conduct of responsible and ethical research. In accordance with these guidelines, participants' rights, welfare, and privacy were prioritized at all stages of the study. Data gathered were used exclusively for academic purposes and were handled with strict confidentiality. Compliance with these legal and institutional frameworks further strengthened the ethical rigor, credibility, and integrity of the research.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Teachers Perception on the Classroom Observation

The study revealed that teachers experience classroom observation as a dynamic, three-phase professional journey that spans across the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation stages. Prior to being observed, teachers predominantly face anticipation and performance anxiety driven by emotional tension, accountability pressures, and the desire to meet Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) indicators. To manage these psychological pressures, educators engage in comprehensive instructional preparation—such as refining lesson plans, organizing materials, and rehearsing transitions—while shifting their mindset to view the process as a professional learning opportunity and seeking supportive, objective evaluators. During the observation itself, teachers successfully regulate their initial anxiety by anchoring themselves in learner-centered instruction. This phase is defined by heightened instructional awareness regarding questioning techniques and classroom management, a commitment to maintaining authentic daily teaching practices, and a deliberate focus on prioritizing student engagement over numerical performance ratings. In the post-observation stage, the experience transitions from an evaluative event into critical reflection and professional growth. Teachers utilize post-observation feedback as a form of professional coaching and development rather than punitive criticism, using the insights to drive continuous instructional refinement. This reflective practice enables educators to systematically evaluate their teaching decisions, implement recommended improvements in subsequent classes, and ultimately strengthen their professional identity and commitment to quality education. Overall, the findings demonstrate that while classroom observation carries emotional weight, its implementation within a supportive, coaching-oriented environment transforms it into a meaningful mechanism for reflective practice and sustained teacher growth.

3.2 Challenges Experienced by Teachers in the Process of Classroom Observation

The study revealed that teachers encounter distinct psychological and instructional challenges across all stages of the classroom observation process, primarily driven by performance anxiety and intense preparation demands. Prior to being observed, teachers face significant emotional pressure as they attempt to balance authentic daily instruction with self-imposed expectations to perform flawlessly and satisfy Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) indicators. During the observation itself, stress is heightened by unpredictable classroom factors—such as unexpected learner behaviors, technical glitches with instructional tools, and the cognitive strain of simultaneously managing time, questioning, and class participation under direct scrutiny. Even after the observation finishes, teachers experience ongoing anxiety while processing feedback and evaluating whether their instructional performance was adequate. Despite these emotional and operational hurdles, teachers consistently view these challenges as catalysts for constructive feedback, intrinsic motivation, and professional growth. Rather than perceiving post-observation critiques as punitive, educators utilize evaluator recommendations to engage in reflective practice, address instructional weaknesses, and refine future lesson delivery. The experience ultimately strengthens teachers' professional commitment to instructional excellence, showcasing their resilience, adaptability, and ability to pivot toward traditional approaches when unexpected classroom issues arise. Overall, the findings demonstrate that while classroom observation is an emotionally demanding and mentally exhausting process, supportive post-observation coaching and constructive dialogue effectively transform these challenges into opportunities for continuous professional learning and quality teaching.

3.3 Coping Strategies employed by Teachers in Navigating the Process of Classroom Observation

The study revealed that teachers navigate the emotional, instructional, and professional demands of classroom observation through a combination of proactive preparation, self-regulation, and learner-centered strategies. To cope with pre-observation performance anxiety and strict accountability pressures, teachers rely heavily on systematic lesson planning, reviewing Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) indicators, creating resource checklists, and seeking advice from Master Teachers. These structural preparations are coupled with emotional regulation techniques, such as deep breathing, prayer, and positive self-talk. During the observation itself, educators mitigate evaluation stress by deliberately redirecting their focus away from the observer and onto the students. By prioritizing learner engagement, differentiating activities for diverse student needs, and viewing authentic, meaningful learning as more crucial than obtaining a perfect score, teachers successfully maintain composure and deliver flexible, learner-centered instruction even when facing unexpected

classroom or technical challenges. Furthermore, teachers effectively manage post-observation expectations by reframing the entire observation process as an opportunity for reflective growth rather than a high-stakes evaluation. Rather than perceiving feedback as punitive criticism, educators utilize post-observation conferences, peer dialogue, and consultation with school leaders as forms of professional coaching. They actively analyze previous observation notes, evaluate observer recommendations, and systematically implement changes in subsequent lessons to ensure continuous instructional refinement. Ultimately, these coping mechanisms—spanning thorough preparation, emotional resilience, collaborative mentorship, and active reflection—transform classroom observation from a stressful compliance exercise into a meaningful process that builds instructional confidence, adaptability, and an enduring commitment to quality education.

3.4 Sample Results and Discussion

The study revealed that teachers perceive classroom observation as a transformative professional experience when it is embedded within a framework of instructional coaching, constructive feedback, and collaborative learning. Participants identified pre-observation and post-observation conferences as essential support mechanisms, emphasizing that clear expectations, standardized processes, and practical, solution-oriented coaching from Master Teachers make the observation process meaningful rather than compliance-driven. Furthermore, teachers emphasized the vital role of school-based collaborative networks—such as Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, peer observation, and professional learning communities (PLCs)—in reducing isolation and evaluation anxiety. These collegial environments allow educators to share best practices, engage in reflective dialogue, and receive continuous mentoring from school heads and Education Program Supervisors (EPS), effectively turning observation into a shared professional endeavor. Additionally, the findings highlight that continuous capacity building and supportive institutional leadership are crucial for fostering a developmental observation culture. Teachers reported that pre-observation orientation, seminars, webinars, and graduate studies enhance their pedagogical competence—particularly in differentiated instruction, classroom management, and questioning techniques—thereby building instructional confidence. Crucially, the impact of these practices depends heavily on school administrators and supervisors who cultivate trust, psychological safety, and open communication. When leaders prioritize continuous technical assistance, peer mentoring, and follow-up coaching over rigid performance appraisals, classroom observation shifts from a source of fear into an empowering mechanism that strengthens teacher competence and advances quality education.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study demonstrates that classroom observation is perceived as both an emotionally demanding and a developmentally significant professional experience that contributes to teachers' reflective practice and professional identity. Although teachers face performance anxiety, extensive preparation demands, technical disruptions, and stress related to meeting established benchmarks—such as the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS)—they successfully navigate these challenges using emotional resilience, thorough preparation, prayer, positive thinking, and peer collaboration. Ultimately, the findings establish that classroom observation achieves its greatest outcome when implemented not as a compliance-driven evaluation, but as a developmental, collaborative, and teacher-centered practice anchored in constructive feedback, instructional coaching, and supportive leadership.

Based on these findings, several strategic actions and improvements are recommended. School heads, Master Teachers, and instructional supervisors should adopt a coaching-oriented approach that provides objective, developmental feedback while valuing instructional adaptability over flawless execution. Additionally, the Schools Division Office and school administrators should establish structured pre- and post-observation conferences, peer coaching, and sustained capacity-building initiatives—such as Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, demonstration teaching, and lesson studies—focused on learner-centered pedagogy and classroom management. To extend these findings, future researchers are encouraged to replicate the study across elementary schools, different districts or divisions, and through mixed-methods designs to investigate the broader relationships between classroom observation, teacher self-efficacy, and student learning outcomes.

The limitations of the study center on its methodological scope and contextual boundaries. By adopting a qualitative phenomenological design, the study focused on understanding subjective meaning-making and lived experiences rather than establishing statistical generalizability. Furthermore, the participant pool was limited to a purposive sample of ten (10) Junior High School and Senior High School teachers within the specific setting of Milagros East District. As a result, the findings capture the specific contextual realities, localized support structures, and challenges unique to secondary teachers in this district, which may differ from the experiences of educators in elementary levels or other geographical divisions.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The conduct of this study strictly adhered to institutional ethical standards and relevant legal frameworks, complying with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, to ensure that all personal information was processed lawfully, fairly, and solely for legitimate research purposes. Ethical guidelines were aligned with CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 15, Series of 2019, which establishes the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for Graduate Programs in the Philippines and emphasizes responsible and ethical research execution. Formal ethical approval was secured prior to data collection, and participants engaged through voluntary participation backed by written informed consent after being fully briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and their right to withdraw without prejudice. Confidentiality and privacy were strictly safeguarded through data anonymization, secure digital storage, and non-identifiable collective reporting. The authors declare no conflicts of interest—financial, institutional, or personal—that could have biased the research outcomes. Authorship responsibilities were fully honored, with explicit acknowledgment given to all individuals who contributed significantly to data collection, analysis, and manuscript preparation. Finally, copyright ownership and intellectual property rights were preserved in accordance with institutional policy, ensuring the overall credibility, rigor, and integrity of the study.

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