

Supervisory Practices of Department Heads and Teachers' Performance: Towards A Proposed Enhancement Program

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Abstract

The study investigated the effects of department heads' supervisory practices on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in the Schools Division of Tarlac Province. A descriptive-correlational quantitative design was used, with a standardized instrument serving as the primary data-gathering tool. To reduce bias, the five (5) statements in each indicator on supervisory practices were arranged at random. Informal interviews and documentary analysis were used to substantiate the primary instrument. The findings revealed that: (1) the department heads, as validated by themselves, by teachers, and by school heads, are generally performing very well among the domains of supervisory practices with grand means of 3.59, 3.57, and 3.51, respectively, and an overall grand mean of 3.56 which constituted a Proficient verbal description except for one, that is, Domain 3: Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement which constituted an Approaching Proficient verbal description; (2) the greater majority of teachers are performing within the Very Satisfactory level; and (3) supervisory practices are generally statistically significant to teachers' performance, with the exception of Domain 2: Strengthening Shared Accountability and KRA 3: Curriculum and Planning, which is statistically not significant because the p -value of 0.088 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Among the recommendations are: 1) Department heads are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for research skill development, such as training workshops and conducting action and/or applied research; and 2) Recalibrate department heads' supervisory practices, particularly in classroom observation and appraisal of teachers using features of practice; and 3) Hold a Department Heads Summit to encourage open communication among department heads.

Keywords: Supervisory practices, Department Heads, Enhancement Program, Descriptive method

Introduction

Scholars agree that education is vital for achieving social and economic growth and technological progress. This is why Onyesom and Ashibogwu (2013) asserted that education is the bedrock upon which the industrialized world's progress is formed. For this reason, the Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly recognizes quality education as a stand-alone target and a significant component of the global goals. However, our education system was already in peril before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The quality of basic education worldwide has worsened significantly over the last decade. The most significant

decline happened in Southeast Asia, the region with the highest levels of school satisfaction before. Regional satisfaction fell from 85% in 2019 to 63% in 2020 (Crabtree, S., & Saransomrurtai, C., 2021).

The diminishing quality of basic education is not a new problem for the Philippines; it has been a constant source of contention for many years. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) corroborates this assertion, revealing in 2018 that 15-year-old Filipino schoolchildren ranked last in reading comprehension among 79 participating countries and economies. Additionally, they were ranked 78th in science and math.

Recognizing the multiple and intricate factors contributing to the decline in the quality of basic education, the government is taking a proactive role in creating the educational agenda through Ambisyon Natin 2040. Teachers can't make significant changes without effective supervision, despite the fact that international research and anecdotal evidence shows that high-quality educators are crucial to improving student outcomes. Supervision is vital to improving education quality, including teacher development and, as a result, learner achievement. While the top executives of a firm play an essential role in a company's overall success and growth, as well as its productivity and motivation, the middleman, the supervisor, plays an equally important role. Supervision is one of the primary responsibilities of the department heads or those who have Head Teacher I to VI positions.

It could be argued that department heads can play an essential role in implementing the school's vision. They act as a go-between in ensuring that teachers are aligned with the school head's vision. And since the school is bureaucratic in nature, the department heads have more contact with the school heads because they are the second-in-command in terms of teaching positions. They also have more contact with teachers than the school head because they oversee a specific learning area. However, the department heads are well trained to provide teachers with the most nuanced supervision possible.

This paper described the supervisory practices of the department heads. The use of four (4) domains of supervision outlined in DepEd Order No. 25, s. 2020, makes this study a significant contribution to the field of educational research. These four domains are interconnected and interdependent on one another, making them equally important to the success of the schools.

Moreover, particular attention was given to department heads' supervisory practices and their significant impact on teachers' performance. The study's findings were expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the department heads' supervisory practices and how they impacted teachers' performance. This guided them to strengthen their practices or modify them when and where necessary. Hopefully, the findings of this study will serve as a springboard to setting performance standards for department heads, thereby improving basic education.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to determine the supervisory practices of the department heads of junior high schools and their possible relationship to teachers' performance in all secondary schools in the Division of Tarlac Province for the school year 2020–2021.

Specifically, the researcher sought answers to the following questions:

1. To describe the supervisory practices of the department heads as assessed by themselves, by school heads, and by teachers on the following domains:
 - 1.1. Supporting Curriculum Management and Implementation,
 - 1.2. Strengthening Shared Accountability,

- 1.3. Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement,
- 1.4. Developing Self and Others.
2. To describe the teachers' performance based on their Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) along the areas of:
 - 2.1. Content Knowledge and Pedagogy,
 - 2.2. Diversity of Learners & Assessment and Reporting,
 - 2.3. Curriculum and Planning,
 - 2.4. Community Linkages and Professional Engagement & Personal Growth and Professional Development.
3. To determine the significant relationship between the supervisory practices of the department heads and teachers' performance.
4. To propose enhancement program to improve the least performed indicators of supervisory practices of the department heads.
5. To identify the implication of the findings of the study to educational management.

Methodology

The supervisory practices of the department heads and their possible significant relationship with teachers' performance were evaluated using a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design. The descriptive method was employed to ascertain the supervisory practices of the department heads in the Schools Division of Tarlac Province, as rated by themselves, by school heads, and by teachers. Furthermore, the correlational design was used to explore the relationship between the supervisory practices of the department heads and their extent of relationship along the four (4) Key Result Areas (KRAs) of the teachers' performance. The variables were analyzed without manipulation. The correlational design demonstrates which two variables are connected. This design is appropriate for the study since it is a statistical technique that demonstrates the link between the variables. The data from these surveys were used to make critical suggestions and develop an enhancement program to help department heads improve their least supervisory practice areas.

Sampling Design and Participants. There were four hundred nine (409) research participants made up of eighty-seven (87) department heads in the Schools Division of Tarlac Province. The researcher, who is also a department head, excluded himself as a participant so that the study was not compromised. Likewise, the eleven (11) school heads and three-hundred eleven (311) teachers representing the 1,395 secondary school teachers as of May 2022 were included as research participants. Purposive sampling was also used to select school heads who served as research participants. Teachers who participated as research participants, on the other hand, were chosen using Slovin's sampling technique and proportionate random sampling.

Research Instruments. A survey questionnaire was the primary data gathering instrument. It was based on the literature review and related studies presented in Chapter 1. It was adopted from DepEd Order No. 25, s. 2020 to gather the needed data on the supervisory practices of the junior high school department heads as rated by themselves. The variables to measure the supervisory practices of the department heads were based on the four (4) domains of supervisory competence stated in DepEd Order No. 25, s. 2020. During the data gathering, only the researcher and the validators were aware of the correct order of the statements on the five-point Likert Scale: 5 – Advanced, 4 – Proficient, 3 – Approaching

Proficient, 2 – Developing, and 1 – Beginning. The instrument was checked and validated by the three experts in supervision.

The instruments that were used for the school heads were identical to the instrument that was used for department heads, except that the items were modified to suit the nature of the research participants. Meanwhile, the instrument used for the teachers was almost identical to the instrument used for the department heads, with the exception of an additional section in their questionnaire, which included the four (4) Key Result Areas (KRAs) of their performance in their Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF). The survey questionnaires were thoroughly explained to the research participants regarding their instructions and purpose before the administration. Moreover, informal interviews were used to elicit clarification and confirmation of the responses to bolster the data that had been acquired. The survey questionnaires were pilot-tested in a national high school not included as actual participants in the study to check content, direction, and understandability. The participants that were chosen had the same characteristics as the planned research participants. Items that were verified in the dry run were reviewed and revised. After validation and revision, the final form was reproduced and distributed to the participants.

Results And Discussion

1. Department Heads' Levels of Practice on the Four Domains of Supervisory Practices as Rated by Themselves, Teachers, and School Heads

Table 1
Summary of the Department Heads' Rating on the Four Domains of Supervisory Practices

Domains of Supervisory Practices	Department Heads		Teachers		School Heads		Composite Mean	Verbal Description
	Strands	WM	VD	WM	VD	WM	VD	
Supporting Curriculum Management and Implementation	3.68	Proficient	3.65	Proficient	3.61	Proficient	3.65	Proficient
Strengthening Shared Accountability	3.53	Proficient	3.61	Proficient	3.55	Proficient	3.56	Proficient
Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement	3.35	Approaching Proficient	3.48	Approaching Proficient	3.36	Approaching Proficient	3.40	Approaching Proficient
Developing Self and Others	3.80	Proficient	3.57	Proficient	3.53	Proficient	3.63	Proficient
Supporting Curriculum Management and Implementation	3.68	Proficient	3.65	Proficient	3.61	Proficient	3.65	Proficient
Grand Mean	3.59	Proficient	3.57	Proficient	3.51	Proficient	3.56	Proficient

It is irrefutable that 'developing self and others' has the highest weighted mean of the four supervisory practices rated by department heads. This could mean that the department heads see every situation as a chance to learn and act as role models by spending time on their own development, took part in formal as well as informal learning and development activities, improve their professional or specialist skills, took part in appraisals in a positive way, and ask for, accept, act on, and learn from feedback (University of Bristol). The teachers and school heads are in accordance with the self-rating of the department heads in this domain, so they rated the department heads' level of practice in this domain with a weighted mean of 3.57 and 3.53, respectively. This means that the department heads are helping the teachers improve their knowledge, skills, and behaviors to benefit the entire school. Department heads can help teachers grow professionally by praising good work, giving constructive feedback to colleagues,

ensuring that everyone has equal access to professional development opportunities, and using delegation to develop others (University of Bristol).

Conversely, the table reveals that the department heads, teachers, and school heads are in consonance in terms of 'fostering a culture of continuous improvement' as this is the lowest domain rated by the three groups of participants. They rated this domain 3.35, 3.48, and 3.36 with a verbal description of Approaching Proficient. Although this implies that they use appropriate instructional leadership, relevant technology-based innovations, and research findings to improve practice, communities of practice, and communication platforms, it is time for department heads to move up to the next level by mentoring and coaching colleagues in adapting relevant instructional leadership support strategies, technology-based innovations such as ICT, and mentoring. This could be attained through an enhancement program for department heads.

Further analysis of the table reveals that the department heads are in consonance with the assessment of the teachers and school heads in the domain 'supporting curriculum management and implementation,' with weighted means of 3.68, 3.65, and 3.61, respectively, and is verbally described as **Proficient**. Notably, the appraisal of the three groups of participants in this domain is marginally closed. This means that there is an agreement that the department heads are consistently exhibiting in-depth knowledge and remarkable skills in supporting curriculum implementation, innovation, contextualization, as well as learning resource development, management, and outcomes assessment.

Similarly, the department heads concur with the teachers' and school heads' assessments in the domain of 'strengthening shared accountability,' with weighted means of 3.53, 3.61, and 3.55, respectively. Although it is verbally described as Proficient, we can see that the appraisals of the three groups of participants in this domain are approaching the Approaching Proficient description, ranging from 2.50 to 3.49. This result suggests that despite being verbally described as Proficient, there is still a need to further the department heads' supervisory practices in this domain.

In general, department heads, teachers, and school heads posted a grand mean of 3.59, 3.57, and 3.51, respectively, and are described verbally as Proficient. As a result, it can be concluded that the department heads are generally performing their supervisory practices admirably, and the teachers and school heads are aware of it. However, scrutinizing each strand and domain, one can notice that there are strands and domains that the department heads need to improve their practice.

2. Description of the Teachers' Performance Based on the Four Key Result Areas (KRAs) of Individual Performance Commitment and Review for School Year 2020-2021

Table 2
Teachers' Performance Based on the Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR)

Range	Adjectival Rating	Frequency	Percentage
4.500 – 5.000	Outstanding	116	37.22%
3.500 – 4.499	Very Satisfactory	187	60.21%
2.500 – 3.499	Satisfactory	8	2.57%
1.500 – 2.499	Unsatisfactory	0	0
Below 1.499	Poor	0	0
Total		311	100

Table 2 reveals that out of 311 public secondary teachers in the Schools Division of Tarlac Province, the bulk (187; 60.21%) of the public secondary teachers received a **Very Satisfactory** rating, ranging from 3.500 to 4.499. Interestingly, some of the department heads interviewed by the researcher in Cluster III claimed that "scheduled" classroom observations (CO 1 and CO 2) as the primary basis of teachers' performance in the IPCRF seem to be ineffective. CO 1 and CO 2 do not reflect teachers' performance over a single school year. They are hoping that, in addition to classroom observations, the Department of Education (DepEd) will consider regular walk-throughs.

On the other hand, 116 (37.22%) teachers obtained an *Outstanding* rating ranging from 4.500 to 5.000 based on the IPCRF for the school year 2020–2021. Meanwhile, a small percentage (2.57%) of the teachers were rated within the *Satisfactory* rating, ranging from 2.500 to 3.499.

A closer look at the IPCRF ratings showed *none* of the teacher participants received an IPCRF rating of 1.500 to 2.499 and below 1.499 with adjectival ratings of *Unsatisfactory* and *Poor*, respectively.

The Department of Education's ultimate goal in measuring teacher performance is to improve teacher effectiveness. Apparently, the level of teacher performance in the Schools Division of Tarlac Province indicates that teachers are performing in accordance with the goals, objectives, and targets of the Division.

3. Correlation of the Supervisory Practices of the Department Heads and Teachers' Performance

Table 3
Correlation of the Supervisory Practices of the Department Heads and Teachers' Performance Based on Individual Performance Commitment and Review

Variables	Degree Freedom	of Computed Pearson's <i>r</i>	p Value	Decision	Remarks
Supervisory Practices of Department Heads and Teachers' Performance	310	0.746*	0.000	Reject the Hypothesis	Null Statistically significant

Table 3 reflects the correlation between the supervisory practices of the department heads in junior high school and teachers' performance based on the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) in the Schools Division of Tarlac Province. The statistically significant relationship between the two variables implies that the department heads' supervisory practices influence the teachers' performance. According to the data, there is a *high positive correlation and statistically significant relationship* between the level of supervisory practices of department heads and the overall performance of teachers. The null hypothesis, therefore, is hereby rejected. Department heads' supervisory practices and teacher performance are generally directly related. It denotes the existence of a significant relationship between the department heads' supervisory practices and the teachers' performance in the four Key Result Areas and that as one improves, the other should improve as well. The researcher proposed an enhancement program to improve department heads' supervisory practices on the least performed indicators among the four domains.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the salient findings of the study:

1. The junior high school department heads of the Schools Division of Tarlac Province *Proficient* that they supervise their teachers in terms of the following: Domain 1: Supporting Curriculum Management and Implementation, Domain 2: Strengthening Shared Accountability, and Domain 4: Developing Self and Others. However, the teachers and school heads are of one mind, with the department heads' self-rating that there is a need to improve their level of practice in Domain 3: Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement, as this is the least performed domain. This only entails that the Division must provide more intensive training and activities, particularly in the area of research, in order to improve their overall supervisory practices.
2. The majority of teachers exemplifying *very satisfactory* performance in their Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) for the school year 2020 – 2021 poses a strong indication that the teachers' performance exceeded expectations. Although this implies that the level of teacher performance indicates that they are performing in accordance with the goals, objectives, and targets of the Division, it is time to move up to the next level of teaching performance. By recalibrating the department heads in terms of the PPST-based classroom observation tool, there is a good chance of avoiding discrepancies in rating teachers, which will pave the way for identifying and providing technical assistance tailored to each teacher's needs. With these, there is a good chance that teachers' performance will continue to improve in the coming school years.
3. In general, the supervisory practices of the department heads *have a statistically significant relationship* to teachers' performance based on the IPCRF for the school year 2020–2021 at a 0.05 level of significance. Department heads' supervisory practices are indeed important contributory factors to teachers' performance.
4. Based on the study's findings, an enhancement program consisting of the *enhancement matrix*, *enhancement action plan*, and *enhancement monitoring plan* was proposed. The enhancement matrix was divided into 3 areas: current, transition, and future states. The enhancement action plan included areas of concern, enhancement program goals, programs and projects (PAPs), enhancement program activities, resources needed, and expected output, whereas the enhancement monitoring plan will be used to track the mentee's progress. This assists department heads in improving their least performed indicators across the four supervisory practice domains.

Recommendation

From the aforementioned results and discussion of the essential variables of the study to one another, the following premises are hereby recommended to form policy guidelines for the purpose of improving the performance indicators of supervisory practices among department heads.

1. Department heads are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for research skill development, such as training workshops and conducting of action and/or applied research. They may also seek advice from department heads and other research experts on how to apply research findings to improve practice.
2. The PSDS in-charge and school head may assess the department heads' level of practice in the four domains of supervision on a quarterly or semestral basis and provide assistance as needed. The school head may use the tool crafted by the researcher and validated by three supervisory experts as the rubric for evaluating the department heads' supervisory practices.

3. The Schools Division of Tarlac Province, through the Human Resource Development (HRD), may recalibrate department heads' supervisory practices, particularly in classroom observation and appraisal of teachers using the "features of practice."
4. The Schools Division of Tarlac Province, through the Human Resource Development (HRD), may hold a Department Heads Summit at least once a year to encourage open communication among department heads.
5. The Schools Division of Tarlac Province, through the Office of the Assistant Schools Division Superintendent in charge of the Curriculum Implementation Division (CID), may set up a division-wide organization for department heads, with the Chief Education Supervisor in charge of CID as the adviser of the group.
6. The Schools Division of Tarlac Province may implement the proposed enhancement program, which aims to improve the least performed indicators across the four domains of department heads' supervisory practices and, eventually, teacher performance.
7. Future researchers may take into account specific variables that interplay with department heads' supervisory practices, particularly in Domain 2: Strengthening Shared Accountability, and teachers' performance in KRA 3: Curriculum and Planning.

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