

Struggle of Long-Serving Teachers in Classroom Observation

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the struggles experienced by long-serving teachers in classroom observations. Classroom observation is widely recognized as an important process for assessing teacher performance, improving instructional practices, and providing constructive feedback to teachers. However, for teachers who have spent many years in the profession, classroom observation may also bring feelings of pressure, discomfort, and self-consciousness, especially when new standards, administrative expectations, and observation rubrics are involved. Using a qualitative research design, the study sought to identify the common challenges long-serving teachers encounter before, during, and after classroom observations. The participants were long-serving teachers who had undergone multiple classroom observations in their teaching careers. Data were gathered through interviews or focus group discussions and were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that the teachers experienced anxiety, fear of judgment, difficulty adjusting to updated observation criteria, pressure to perform, and emotional stress during the observation process. Despite these challenges, the study also found that classroom observations could become meaningful when accompanied by supportive feedback, respectful communication, and professional development opportunities. The study concludes that classroom observation should be strengthened as a developmental tool rather than a purely evaluative requirement.

Keywords: Student Centered Growth, Observation related pressure, Supportive non-punitive observation.

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Classroom observation is a core component of teacher evaluation and professional development, intended to strengthen instructional quality, support student learning, and promote reflective practice (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2020). However, standardized observation frameworks often emphasize short lesson segments and visible behaviors, which can fail to capture the cumulative contributions and nuanced practice of experienced teachers (Filmer et al., 2020; Buchanan & Killeen, 2021). In the Philippine context, national guidance and recent scholarship have prompted debates about whether existing observation policies fairly account for years of service and professional contributions, with calls for policy review and local adaptation (Department of Education Philippines, 2021; Reyes & Santos, 2024).

Long-serving teachers frequently shoulder multiple roles—advisory duties, committee work, and mentoring younger colleagues—while carrying full teaching loads. These additional responsibilities, together with age-related health considerations and entrenched professional identities, can render formal observation processes especially burdensome for seasoned educators (Cruz & Delos Santos, 2022; Reyes & Santos, 2024). When observation is experienced as highly evaluative or bureaucratic, it can provoke anxiety, defensive teaching behaviors, and reduced openness to feedback, thereby undermining the developmental aims of observation (Goldhaber, Krieg, & Theobald, 2020; Cortes & Molina, 2021). Philippine studies also highlight operational constraints—scheduling conflicts, overcrowded classrooms, and limited resources—that challenge the fairness and feasibility of standardized observation in public schools (Lim & Navarro, 2023).

Despite these concerns, much empirical research on observation focuses on early-career teachers or treats teachers as a single, undifferentiated group, leaving a gap in career-stage-specific evidence (Huberman, 2019; Reyes & Tan, 2023). There is limited Philippine research examining how veteran teachers interpret

observation policies, how these policies interact with accumulated workload and health considerations, and what coping strategies long-serving teachers employ during observation cycles (Reyes & Santos, 2024; Cruz & Delos Santos, 2022). Evidence also indicates that observation is more likely to improve practice when it is linked to meaningful professional development rather than ratings alone (Kraft & Gilmour, 2020).

This study investigates the struggles and lives experiences of 15 long-serving teachers at Malapag High School (junior and senior high), Cotabato Division, Carmen, Cotabato. Using in-depth, site-specific qualitative methods, the research examines how standardized observation practices are enacted and experienced in this school setting, with attention to workload, scheduling, and resource constraints documented in the local context. The study's findings will provide empirical data on veteran teachers' perspectives that can be used to inform local discussion and decision-making about observation procedures and support measures within the division.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Classroom observation remains a central practice in teacher evaluation and professional development because it is used to monitor instructional quality, support student learning, and guide reflective teaching practice. Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2020) emphasized that effective professional development should be sustained, practical, and closely connected to teachers' daily instructional needs, which aligns with the developmental purpose of classroom observation. In the same way, Kraft and Gilmour (2020) argued that teacher evaluation becomes more meaningful when it is linked to professional support rather than used only for rating performance. These studies suggest that classroom observation is most valuable when it is designed to improve teaching practice rather than simply document compliance.

Several foreign studies also point out the limitations of standardized observation frameworks. Filmer et al. (2020) noted that such tools often focus on brief lesson segments and visible behaviors, which may not fully reflect the complexity of teaching or the long-term contributions of experienced educators. Buchanan and Killeen (2021) similarly discussed the limits of "snapshot" evaluations, explaining that short observations may overlook lesson continuity, teacher responsiveness, and the broader classroom climate. Diversitas Journal Authors (2025) likewise reported that classroom observation may fail to capture the wider cycle of teacher practice when the assessment period is too limited. These studies are important in understanding why long-serving teachers may feel that their work is not fully represented during observation.

Another important issue in the literature is the professional role and workload of long-serving teachers. Huberman (2019) described teacher career stages as distinct and noted that evaluation systems should consider differences between early-career and experienced teachers. Long-serving teachers often take on responsibilities beyond classroom instruction, including advisory work, committee participation, and mentoring younger teachers. This broader role makes them more likely to experience observation as demanding, especially when they already have established responsibilities and professional expectations. The literature therefore supports the view that the experiences of long-serving teachers should not be treated in the same way as those of newer teachers.

Research also shows that classroom observation may create emotional pressure for teachers. Goldhaber, Krieg, and Theobald (2020) explained that evaluation systems can produce unintended consequences when teachers become more focused on being rated than on improving instruction. Cortes and Molina (2021) found that teachers under formal observation may feel anxious, overly self-conscious, and less open to feedback. These findings suggest that observation may become a stressful experience when it is perceived as highly evaluative rather than supportive. This emotional burden may be stronger when teachers believe that a single observed lesson will strongly affect judgments about their competence. Observation is also more effective when it is linked to professional growth rather than ratings alone. Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2020) emphasized that teacher learning improves when feedback is practical, relevant, and sustained. Kraft and Gilmour (2020) likewise found that evaluation systems support improvement more effectively when they include coaching and developmental feedback. In contrast, when observation is seen mainly as a requirement for compliance, teachers may focus on meeting formal indicators rather than on authentic instructional

improvement. This distinction is important in understanding how observation affects long-serving teachers who already have established teaching practices.

In the Philippine context, classroom observation is often tied to compliance, performance monitoring, and administrative requirements. Department of Education Philippines (2021) provides guidance on teacher observation and performance management, but implementation at the school level may still vary depending on local conditions. Lim and Navarro (2023) reported that practical constraints such as scheduling difficulties, crowded classrooms, and limited resources affect how observation is carried out in Philippine public schools. These conditions show that observation is not experienced in the same way across schools, especially where teachers are managing heavy workloads and limited support.

Local studies also show that long serving or veteran teachers may experience classroom observation differently from their younger counterparts. Cruz and Delos Santos (2022) found that workload and well-being are closely related among Philippine public-school teachers, particularly when teachers balance multiple school duties. Reyes and Santos (2024) also noted that veteran teachers may view classroom observation as more demanding because they already carry established responsibilities and professional expectations. Reyes and Tan (2023) further observed that research on teacher development often lacks a strong career-stage focus, which leaves veteran teachers underrepresented in observation-related studies. Together, these studies indicate that Philippine classroom observation practices should be examined in relation to teachers' workload, career stage, and lived experience.

The Philippine literature also highlights the emotional dimension of observation. Reyes and Santos (2024) found that experienced teachers may view observation as both a professional requirement and a source of stress. This is consistent with the broader literature showing that observation can become burdensome when teachers perceive it as a judgment rather than a developmental process. In the Philippine setting, this pressure may be intensified by administrative demands, large class sizes, and limited instructional resources. As a result, classroom observation may be experienced not only as a technical requirement but also as a personal and professional challenge.

The literature reviewed shows that classroom observation is intended to support teacher development, instructional quality, and reflective practice. Foreign studies emphasize that observation is most effective when it is developmental, sustained, and connected to meaningful feedback. However, these same studies also show that standardized observation frameworks often rely on brief lesson snapshots that may not capture the full complexity of experienced teachers' work. This limitation is especially relevant for long-serving teachers, whose instructional practice is shaped by years of experience, broader school responsibilities, and accumulated professional judgment.

The Philippine literature presents similar concerns but places greater attention on local implementation issues such as compliance, workload, class size, and resource limitations. Studies conducted in the Philippine context indicate that veteran teachers often shoulder multiple responsibilities while still being subject to formal observation requirements. The literature also shows that observation can create stress, self-consciousness, and anxiety when it is experienced as highly evaluative. Despite these findings, there remains limited research focusing specifically on the struggles of long-serving teachers during classroom observation in a single school context. The present study will address this gap by examining the lived experiences of long-serving teachers during classroom observation. By focusing on a specific school setting, the study seeks to provide detailed evidence on how classroom observation is experienced by veteran teachers and how existing practices may affect their professional life.

INTRODUCTION

Classroom observation is an essential component of teacher evaluation and professional growth. It allows school leaders to observe actual teaching practices, assess instructional effectiveness, and provide feedback that can help improve classroom management and learner engagement (Renos & Pontillas, 2024; Sidiqua, 2019). In many schools, classroom observation is also linked to teacher performance appraisal and professional development programs, making it significant part of a teachers' career (Barrogo, 2020; Dela Cruz, 2019). For-

long serving teachers, however, classroom observation may not always be experienced as supportive. Even experienced educators may feel pressured when being observed, especially when the process is tied to strict criteria, formal rating systems, or administrative expectations (De Lima & Silva, 2018; Visitacion & Salazar, 2022). While these teachers already possess years of knowledge and practical classroom experience, they may still struggle with adapting to changing observation tools, digital requirements, and evolving teaching standards (Barrogo, 2020; Riego de Dios, 2020). This situation can create stress and may affect their confidence during the observed lesson (Torres et al., 2024; Aljay & Jajalla, 2024).

The struggle becomes more evident when long-serving teachers feel that the observation focuses more on compliance than on professional growth. Some teachers may perceive observation as an additional burden rather than an opportunity for reflection and improvement (Angeles et al., 2023; Fayó & Hilario, 2023). When feedback is not delivered constructively, the process may cause frustration instead of motivation (Renos & Pontillas, 2024; Halim et al., 2018). Because of this, it is important to examine the lived experiences of long-serving teachers so that schools can better understand their concerns and improve observation practices (Barrogo, 2020).

This study is anchored on idea that classroom observation should support teachers in refining their practice and strengthening their professional competence (Ramos & Anonuevo, 2024); Siddiqua, 2019). By identifying the struggles of long-serving teachers, the research aims to contribute insights that may help school administrators design a more respectful, supportive, and development-oriented observation system (Visitacion & Salazar, 2022; Renos & Pontillas, 2024). Ultimately, the study seeks to highlight the need for classroom observations that promote growth, reduce anxiety, and recognize the experience of veteran teachers (Barrogo, 2020; Torres et al., 2024).

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore the struggles of long-serving teachers in classroom observations at Malapag High School, Cotabato Division, Carmen, Cotabato.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What strategies do long-serving teachers use in preparing for classroom observations?
 2. What insights can long-service teachers share based on their experiences with classroom observations?
 3. What challenges do long-serving teachers encounter during the classroom observation process?
 4. What recommendations can long-serving teachers offer to make classroom observations more effective for teachers?
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1. What strategies do you use in preparing for classroom observations?
 2. What insights can you share based on your experiences with classroom observations?
 3. What challenges have you encountered during classroom observation process?
 4. What recommendations can you offer to make classroom observations more effective for teachers?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2016). This approach was chosen to systematically identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data gathered from semi-structured interviews with long-serving teachers during classroom observation. It allows the researchers to explore participants' views in their natural school

context and capture the meanings they assign to their experiences. The design is appropriate because the study aims to understand the lived experiences of long-serving teachers rather than measure variables numerically. Through this approach, the researchers can gather detailed accounts of how teachers prepare for classroom observations, the challenges they encounter, and the recommendations they can offer to improve the observation process. As a qualitative method, it provides a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives and experiences. Thematic analysis is particularly suitable for this study because it enables the researchers to identify, organize, and interpret recurring patterns in the participants' responses. By grouping similar responses into themes, the study can present a clear and meaningful picture of the struggles, coping strategies, insights, and suggestions shared by long-serving teachers. The findings may also provide evidence-based recommendations for schools and policymakers to improve classroom observation practices.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted at Malapag High School, which offers both Junior High School and Senior High School programs. The school is in Barangay Malapag, Municipality of Carmen, Province of Cotabato, Philippines. It provides secondary and senior high school education to students from various socio-economic backgrounds. The institution has several teachers who balance instructional duties with other academic responsibilities, making it an appropriate setting for this research. Malapag High School is known for its commitment to academic excellence and student development, which makes it a relevant venue for examining the challenges of long-serving teachers during classroom observations. The study focused on long-serving classroom teachers. The findings of this research contribute to understanding the unique struggles of long-serving teachers in classroom observation.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were the 15 long-serving teachers in Malapag High School within Carmen, Cotabato. Complete enumeration sampling technique were employed to gather significant data and responses for the school year 2026-2027.

Research Instruments

This study utilized qualitative research instruments, particularly semi-structured interviews and standardized, validated survey questionnaires containing both open-ended and close-ended items, to collect data from long-serving teachers at Malapag High School in Carmen, Cotabato. The semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to share their personal experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms during classroom observations. This method provided flexibility in their responses while capturing detailed insights into their lived experiences. The standardized and validated survey questionnaires with both open-ended and close-ended items were used to gather information on teachers' strategies and teaching performance during classroom observation. The validity and reliability of the research instruments were ensured through expert evaluation. These instruments were used to document the specific experiences of the participating teachers during classroom observation.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process was conducted systematically to ensure accuracy and reliability. First, permission to conduct the study was sought from the school principal of Malapag High School in Malapag, Carmen, Cotabato. Upon approval, the researchers identified the long-serving teacher participants through purposive sampling, focusing on classroom teachers who had significant teaching experience and exposure to classroom observation. Before the data collection began, the participants were informed about the objectives of the study, the nature of their involvement, and the ethical considerations involved. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interviews were conducted. The researchers also explained that participation was voluntary and that the respondents could withdraw at any time without any negative consequence.

Semi-structured interviews were then conducted to allow the teachers to freely share their experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and insights regarding classroom observation. The interviews were carried out in

a setting and schedule convenient to the participants to ensure comfort and openness in their responses. With the participants' permission, the responses were recorded and later transcribed for accuracy and completeness. After the interviews, the collected data were checked, organized, and prepared for analysis. The researchers ensured that confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the process by using codes instead of the participants' names. All gathered information was handled with care and used solely for academic purposes. The data obtained from the participants served as the basis for analyzing the struggles and strategies of long-serving teachers and for developing the study's conclusions and recommendations.

Data Analysis

This study will employ thematic analysis to examine the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews and survey responses of long-serving teachers at Malapag High School. The analysis will focus on the participants' responses to the four research questions, particularly their strategies for preparing for classroom observations, their insights from observation experiences, the challenges they encountered, and their recommendations for making classroom observation more effective. All interview responses will first be transcribed and organized systematically. The researchers will then read the transcripts repeatedly to become fully familiar with the data. After this, initial codes will be generated by identifying significant words, phrases, and statements related to the participants' preparation strategies, experiences, challenges, and recommendations. These codes will then be grouped into categories based on similarities and recurring ideas. The categorized data will next be reviewed and organized into broader themes that reflect the common patterns found in the participants' responses. For instance, responses related to lesson preparation, classroom organization, and emotional readiness may be grouped under the theme of preparation strategies, while statements concerning stress, time pressure, and evaluation concerns may be categorized under challenges in classroom observation. The researchers will then review and refine these themes to ensure that they accurately represent the data collected. Once the themes have been finalized, the researchers will interpret and describe each theme in relation to the study questions and related literature. Representative statements from the participants may be included to support and illustrate each theme. The survey responses will also be used to complement and verify the interview data by identifying common patterns among the participants. Finally, the findings will be presented in narrative form, highlighting the main strategies, insights, challenges, and recommendations shared by the long-serving teachers during classroom observation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies use in preparing for classroom observations

Emerging theme: Lesson planning aligned to standards and objectives

The participants described classroom observation preparation as a planned instructional process grounded in standards alignment, rubric awareness, and learner-centered delivery. Participant 1 explained that the lesson plan is prepared ahead of time and refined through prior teaching in other sections to improve the likelihood of meeting the target goal. Participant 3 emphasized a clear lesson plan aligned with learning competencies, objectives, visual aids, and time allotment, while Participant 4 highlighted reviewing the observation rubric, aligning the lesson with standards, preparing materials and technology, and anticipating possible challenges. Participant 5 stated that observation indicators are intentionally woven into the lesson plan, and Participant 7 described reviewing the lesson plan, preparing materials, checking objective attainment, and aligning assessments before the observation. Participant 10 also stressed rubric alignment, lesson clarity, classroom organization, learner engagement, and formative assessment. These responses reflect DepEd's RPMS-PPST expectation that classroom observation should be supported by lesson planning, learner engagement, and assessment alignment (Department of Education, 2022; Department of Education, 2024).

Other participants focused on classroom readiness and instructional delivery. Participant 6 mentioned sharing the lesson plan and supporting documents with the observer, establishing classroom routines, and normalizing the observer's presence to avoid disruption. Participant 8 noted the use of attention-catching activities that involve all learners and support classroom management, while Participant 9 stressed lesson plan readiness, learner preparedness, active participation, and life-skill development. Participant 11 emphasized that necessary

materials should be in place, especially a standards-based lesson plan, relevant activities, and resources suited to learners' needs. Participant 12 underscored thorough preparation through aligned lesson planning, engaging activities, a conducive classroom environment, and ready documents and assessments. Participant 13 highlighted proper time management and advance preparation of the lesson plan and teaching materials. Participant 14 described mastering the topic, aligning objectives with competencies, using real-life examples, integrating ICT, and promoting group work, while Participant 15 stated that the lesson plan should be prepared simply so students can easily understand the lesson. Taken together, the statements show that observation preparation was framed as organized planning, instructional coherence, and attention to learner engagement (Department of Education, 2022; Department of Education, 2024; Department of Education, n.d.).

This theme can also be strengthened by the broader literature on standards-based planning and observation. Hattie and Zierer (2019) emphasized that clear learning intentions and success criteria improve instruction when they guide lesson planning and assessment. Flygare, Hoegh, and Heflebower (2021) argued that standards-based planning requires teachers to translate curriculum expectations into purposeful lesson design, reinforcing the idea that observed lessons are shaped by deliberate planning rather than spontaneous delivery. Graduado (2019) similarly noted that preparation for classroom observation should include proactive communication, standards-based goals, differentiation, and clear ways for students to demonstrate mastery. In addition, IRIS Connect (2024) explained that lesson observation is most useful when it supports teaching quality through purposeful planning, student engagement, and reflective improvement, while Opportunity Education (2024) described observation frameworks as most effective when teachers and observers focus on what happened, what it means, and what comes next. For Philippine-based support, DepEd's RPMS-PPST implementation materials remain the strongest local anchor because they connect observation with lesson planning, learner-centered instruction, and assessment alignment. Department of Education (2022) and Department of Education (2024) both stress that teachers are expected to demonstrate competence through lesson plans that reflect standards, classroom management, and learner engagement. The Classroom Observation Tool also indicates that observed teaching should demonstrate accurate content, appropriate strategies, and assessment practices, which directly fits the participants' accounts of rubric awareness and structured planning (Department of Education, n.d.). These sources support the interpretation that the theme reflects intentional preparation through standards alignment and responsive instruction.

Insights and experiences during classroom observations

Emerging Theme: Student-Centered Growth

Student-centered growth shows that classroom observation is most valuable when it supports natural teaching, learner engagement, and improvement through feedback rather than pressure. The participants agree that observation works best when it reflects real classroom teaching and helps teachers grow professionally. This view is consistent with Reños and Pontillas (2024), who found that classroom observation supports teachers' professional development by improving knowledge, skills, and practice.

This theme means that observation should focus on student learning and participation. Participant 4 said, "Through observations, I have learned the importance of student-centered learning, effective questioning techniques, and maintaining an engaging classroom environment." Participant 5 stated, "observers aren't looking for flawless, scripted lecture; they want to see active student learning," while Participant 10 noted that "the best classroom observations aren't about a flawless performance by the teacher, they are about the visible learning of the students." Participant 15 added that "time constraint and encouragement of students' participation is one of biggest factor during the discussion." These statements show that effective observation is judged by learner involvement, not by a flawless teacher performance.

The theme also shows that observation should act as coaching. Participant 1 wanted realistic feedback, saying, "Teach /facilitate learning process the way you do it every day, so that the observers can give realistic feedback/technical assistance." Participant 3 shared that "classroom observation has taught me the importance of flexibility and adaptability feedback from observers during the post conference provides valuable ideas which can help improve my teaching practices." Participant 7 explained that "classroom observations help me improve my teaching practices through the feedback I receive the importance of being flexible and responsive

to learners' needs," while Participant 9 said, "It helps me improve on the areas you're not so good feedback make it more productive next time around." Participant 11 added that "classroom observation is also essential for it also helps me improve my teaching strategies constructive criticism and /or feedback," and Participant 12 concluded that "teaching is not about having a perfect demonstration lesson but about responding to the needs of learners" Participant 13 encouraged teachers to be "confident and be natural," and Participant 14 reminded them that "observation preparation is not about putting on a flawless show, but about being flexible" Together, these responses present observation as a process for honest teaching and practical improvement.

Recent literature supports this view. Reños and Pontillas (2024) found that classroom observation helps teachers improve knowledge, skills, and practice. Teachers also respond better when observation is developmental, collaborative, and feedback-based rather than punitive (Teachers' attitudes towards classroom observations, 2024; Seasoned teachers' views on classroom observations as a learning opportunity, 2024). Philippine learner-centered materials further support teaching that is responsive, authentic, and centered on student needs (Application of learner-centered education in the Philippines, n.d.; Learner-centered education in the Philippines, 2026).

Challenges encountered during classroom observation

Emerging theme: Observation-Related Pressure

It shows that classroom observation becomes stressful when observers, time limits, learner anxiety, behavior issues, and technology problems interrupt normal teaching. The participants' responses suggest that observation often feels high stakes because both teachers and learners act differently than they do in ordinary classes. This interpretation is consistent with Torres et al. (2024), who reported that classroom observation in the Philippine DepEd setting can be stressful and anxiety-producing. This theme is reflected in repeated mentions of pressure, nervousness, and disruption. Participant 1 said observers make learners feel pressured and can shift teachers' focus from learning quality to the time schedule. Participant 4 pointed to nervousness, time limits, and technology issues. Participant 5 described the "observer effect," where students become self-conscious when someone is watching. These responses show that observation can change classroom behavior and make authentic teaching harder to sustain. Similar concerns appear in Torres et al. (2024) and Alay and Jajalla (2024), who both described observation as emotionally demanding when teachers feel evaluated rather than supported.

The theme also includes workload pressure and lesson instability. Participant 3 mentioned problems with time management and diverse student behaviors. Participant 6 noted that unpredictable behavior and sudden technology failure can disrupt the lesson. Participant 12 stressed the pressure to perform well while handling participation, time, and technical difficulties, and Participant 14 highlighted ICT problems such as power loss, weak signal, and limited device access. Taken together, these responses show that observation-related pressure is both emotional and practical. This aligns with Ramos and Anonuevo (2024), who emphasized that smoother classroom observation depends on collegiality, confidentiality, honesty, and useful feedback. The findings suggest that observation should be made less stressful and more supportive. If teachers and learners behave differently because they are being watched, the observation may reflect pressure rather than normal teaching. A more formative and collaborative process would place greater value on feedback, flexibility, and authentic classroom practice. This direction is also consistent with Sevillano (2026), who reported that DepEd is reviewing classroom observations to reduce unnecessary pressure on teachers. Observer presence also appears to reduce learner participation. Participant 10 said students may become silent, timid, or act out when observers are present. Participant 11 noted that learners hesitate to share ideas when visitors are watching. Participant 15 added that observers should focus on whether learners are learning, not on rigid indicators. These statements suggest that observation should account for the observer effect and avoid judging a lesson from a single snapshot. This concern also appears in the reform discussion reported by Escosio (2026), which said DepEd's classroom observation changes are meant to make the process more supportive.

Recent Philippine and international studies support this pattern. A 2025 Philippine study reported that classroom observation often feels stressful and anxiety-producing when linked to performance expectations. A 2024 study found that teachers experience pressure and emotional adjustment during observation. Another

2024 study in the Philippine DepEd context emphasized that smoother observation depends on honesty, confidentiality, collegiality, and useful feedback. A 2026 report also noted that DepEd has relaxed the policy to reduce unnecessary pressure and make observation more supportive.

Recommendations offered to make classroom observations more effective for teachers

Emerging theme: Supportive, Non-Punitive Observation

The single emerging theme is supportive, non-punitive observation, showing that classroom observation should help teachers improve through feedback, mentoring, and collaboration rather than serve mainly as a stressful evaluation. Participant 1 said classroom observation should be for technical assistance, not to impress the observer. Participant 3 emphasized that it should support professional development and build trust. Participant 4 added that expectations should be clear beforehand and that observation should be seen as a chance to improve rather than simply to be judged. Participant 6 asked for clear and specific feedback, Participant 7 requested constructive suggestions, Participant 9 stressed advance notice and useful improvement points, Participant 10 described observation as something that should move from compliance to real growth, Participant 12 called for a meaningful and collaborative process, and Participant 15 said teachers should be allowed to teach naturally as long as students are learning. This theme suggests that observation should be less intimidating and more trust-building. Observers should explain criteria clearly, provide timely feedback, and include pre- and post-observation conferences, while also keeping the process flexible enough to fit different teaching contexts. It also implies that teachers should be allowed to teach authentically, since several participants wanted observers to focus on learning quality rather than rigid indicators or staged performance. A supportive model would likely make teachers more open to feedback and more willing to improve.

Barrogo (2020) found that teachers' perceptions of classroom observation depend on whether it supports their practice, while Visitacion and Salazar (2022) reported that the observation tool is useful when it supports development rather than compliance. Angeles et al. (2023) also highlighted the importance of preparation, delivery, and clear support in observation. More recent Philippine studies point in the same direction. Torres et al. (2024) found that classroom observation can be stressful and anxiety-producing, which helps explain teachers' request for support; Alay and Jajalla (2024) found that neophyte teachers feel emotionally burdened when observation feels like judgment; Ramos and Anonuevo (2024) emphasized collegiality, confidentiality, honesty, and useful feedback; and a 2025 Dumanjug study showed that observation is more effective when paired with guidance. International literature agrees, with De Lima and Silva (2018) arguing that resistance to observation comes from control and high-stakes evaluation, and Halim et al. (2018) describing classroom observation as a tool for continuous professional development, not just appraisal.

SUMMARY FINDING, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary finding

The study found that long-serving teachers prepare for classroom observation through careful lesson planning, standards alignment, rubric awareness, and attention to learner engagement. Their experiences show that classroom observation is most meaningful when it supports student-centered teaching, flexible instruction, and constructive feedback. However, they also encounter pressure from time limits, learner anxiety, classroom disruptions, and technical difficulties, which can make observation stressful and less reflective of normal teaching. Based on their responses, the teachers recommended a more supportive and non-punitive observation process that provides clear criteria, useful feedback, and room for authentic teaching.

Conclusion

The findings show that classroom observation is experienced by teachers as a process with both developmental value and emotional demands. In preparation, teachers described a strong emphasis on lesson planning aligned with standards, objectives, rubrics, and learner needs, which suggests that observation often shapes how instruction is organized, delivered, and assessed. In their experiences, teachers also identified classroom observation as most meaningful when it supports student-centered teaching, natural classroom interaction, and

feedback that helps improve practice. At the same time, they reported pressure from time limits, observer presence, learner anxiety, behavior concerns, and technology problems, indicating that observation can become stressful when it feels more evaluative than supportive. The recommendations they offered consistently point to a classroom observation process that is collaborative, developmental, and focused on authentic teaching rather than performance for compliance.

Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that classroom observations should be framed as professional support rather than solely as evaluation. Their primary purpose should be to improve teaching practice through technical assistance and constructive feedback. This approach aligns with the Department of Education's (DepEd) policy on teacher development, which emphasizes that classroom observation should contribute to professional growth and not merely serve as a performance rating. Clear criteria, expectations, and observation indicators should be explained to teachers before the observation so they can prepare without unnecessary anxiety. Pre-observation and post-observation conferences should be strengthened to allow teachers to discuss their lesson plans, receive specific feedback, and reflect on ways to improve instruction. This practice is consistent with DepEd's RPMS–PPST guidelines, which encourage collaborative dialogue between teachers and observers to support continuous improvement. Observers should focus on learner engagement, lesson delivery, and evidence of student learning rather than on flawless performance or rigid compliance with indicators. Teachers should be encouraged to teach naturally and authentically during observations, if learning objectives are met and students remain actively involved. Observation practices should also be flexible enough to account for differences in teaching contexts, learner behavior, class size, and available resources. Such flexibility is important in the Philippine public-school setting, where DepEd recognizes that classroom conditions vary across schools and divisions. School leaders should provide mentoring and coaching for teachers who feel pressured by classroom observation, particularly neophyte teachers and those who face difficulties with classroom management or ICT-related issues. Schools should also minimize avoidable disruptions by ensuring that technology, classroom materials, and scheduling concerns are addressed before observations. These measures support DepEd's vision of a learner-centered and supportive observation system that promotes teacher well-being alongside instructional quality. Future studies may explore how observation practices can be redesigned to balance accountability with teacher well-being. They may also examine how specific observation strategies—such as feedback conferences or peer observation—affect teacher confidence, lesson quality, and student participation.

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