On the most significant change of teachers' evaluation: A descriptive-narrative research

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore transformative shifts resulting from teacher evaluations. Employing a descriptive-narrative research design, sixteen teachers in Bontoc I and II districts, Southern Leyte, Philippines were purposively sampled using thematic analysis on survey questionnaires. The instruments aimed to capture participants' experiences related to classroom physical aspects, teaching methods, and teaching portfolios. Data gathering involved formal permissions sought from the Division Office, District Supervisors of Bontoc Districts I and II, and school principals. Findings revealed noteworthy changes, including the promotion of child-friendly environments, enhanced readiness and creativity, the perceived irrelevance of evaluations during the pandemic, and the emotional, financial, and physical strains experienced by teachers. Significant changes in instruction were identified, such as competence enhancement, the promotion of coaching and mentoring culture, and observations of pandemic-related ineffectiveness. Notable changes in teacher portfolios included self-reflection spurred by evaluations and challenges in the teacher evaluation process. The study concluded that while teacher evaluation positively impacted teaching environments, fostering creativity, it also imposed strains on teachers, presenting both positive and negative effects. Recommendations included encouraging teachers to view evaluation positively for professional development and proposing a Department of Education (DepEd) training program to enhance the mentoring and coaching capabilities of school heads, recognizing their pivotal role in the teacher evaluation process.

Keywords: Child-friendly, classroom evaluation, competence enhancement, creativity enhancement, transformative learning

Introduction

The Global Competitiveness Report, which aimed to measure the skills competitiveness of the citizens, ranked the Philippines as 64th out of 141 countries in 2018 (Schwab, 2019). Competitiveness reflects on the quality of education in a country. The results suggest that there is a need to reinvent the educational system of the Philippines to enhance its global standing and equip its citizens with the skills necessary for the rapidly evolving job market. To address this challenge, the Philippines must focus on comprehensive reforms in its educational policies and practices. This includes a reassessment of the curriculum to ensure it aligns with the demands of the modern economy, incorporating more practical and skills-oriented learning experiences (Irmano et al., 2023).

Investments in teacher training and professional development are also crucial to enhance the quality of instruction. Teachers should be equipped with the latest pedagogical methods and technologies to effectively impart knowledge and foster critical thinking among students (Aithal & Shubhrajyotsna Aithal, 2023). Furthermore, fostering collaboration between educational institutions and industries can bridge the gap between academic knowledge and real-world applications. Establishing partnerships with businesses and encouraging internships can provide students with practical experience and a better understanding of industry needs (Rawlinson & Dewhurst, 2013). The success in student learning lies in the quality of teachers. Quality teacher evaluations also produce quality teachers. Teacher evaluation is an essential component in the professional life cycle of

teachers. It has been proposed as a crucial method for ensuring and enhancing educational quality (Joosten & Cusatis, 2019). Consequently, it holds the teachers accountable for the learning results of their students (Darling-Hammond, 2019). In educational contexts, teacher evaluation is a constant, mandated process that has a huge impact on student learning outcomes and school accountability. Teachers are increasingly being evaluated in ways that encourage their professional progress (Klatt et al., 2022). Teachers identified collaborative communication and evaluation feedback as the most helpful aspects of their evaluation process (Correia et al., 2021).

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines employs a comprehensive evaluation framework to ensure continuous improvement and accountability in educational standards among educators (Abay & Morallo, 2019). Key aspects of these practices include a range of assessment criteria, such as professional knowledge, instructional skills, classroom management, student engagement, and professionalism. Evaluations are conducted periodically, including annual summative reviews and regular formative assessments to provide ongoing feedback (Papadakis, 2021). Teacher evaluations play a crucial role in professional development by identifying strengths and areas for improvement, guiding targeted training programs, and encouraging reflective practice (Jamilus, 2022). Additionally, the evaluation system ensures accountability by monitoring teacher performance, informing personnel decisions, and ensuring compliance with national standards. (Mintz & Kelly, 2021). DepEd's evaluation practices are designed to enhance the quality of education and teacher effectiveness in the Philippines, with ongoing research and policy adjustments aimed at addressing emerging educational challenges and opportunities (Dayrocas & Junsay, 2023).

Despite greater flexibility in how teachers are assessed, many remain divided on how to improve teacher professional practice and student learning. Teacher evaluation failed to achieve its objectives because principals may not have the time or knowledge to assist teachers in analyzing and synthesizing evaluation data (Doyle, 2022). Moreover, teacher evaluation creates tensions between accountability and improvement (Goodwin et al., 2023). The teachers' evaluation faces several problems and challenges that highlight a significant gap in the existing research. Firstly, the lack of clarity regarding the specific nature of the significant change in teachers' evaluation poses a challenge. Without a well-defined and articulated understanding of what constitutes a significant change, the study may lack precision and could lead to ambiguous findings (Sherman & Teemant, 2020). Additionally, the challenge is the potential oversight of contextual factors influencing teachers' evaluation. The study may not adequately address regional differences, socio-economic factors, or cultural variations that can significantly impact the implementation and outcomes of changes in the evaluation process. This oversight could limit the study's applicability and relevance to diverse educational contexts (Cheung & Kulasegaram, 2022). The absence of a comprehensive exploration of stakeholder perspectives is also a notable problem. The study may not adequately capture the viewpoints of various stakeholders involved in the teachers' evaluation process, including teachers, administrators, students, and parents. Failing to consider these perspectives could result in an incomplete understanding of the implications and consequences of the identified changes (Butler et al., 2021). Furthermore, the study may not sufficiently address the broader policy implications of the significant changes in teachers' evaluation. A lack of attention to the impact on educational policies at different levels (local, regional, national) and the alignment of these changes with broader educational goals and objectives could limit the study's utility for policymakers and educational authorities (Chan, 2023). A significant gap in the study lies in its potential neglect of the impact on teaching practices. Without a thorough investigation into how the identified changes affect teaching methods, instructional approaches, and professional development, the study may miss crucial insights into the practical implications for educators and the overall quality of education (Cáceres et al., 2020).

The current teacher evaluation framework has several limitations that impact its effectiveness. Firstly, evaluations are often perceived as punitive rather than developmental, which can discourage teachers and hinder their professional growth. Additionally, there is significant variability in the quality and consistency of feedback provided to teachers, affecting the reliability and usefulness of evaluations (Podolsky et al., 2019). This inconsistency can result in evaluations that fail to accurately reflect teachers' performance or provide meaningful guidance for improvement. Another critical issue is the lack of adequate training for evaluators. Without proper training, evaluators may struggle to deliver constructive and actionable insights, further diminishing the value of the evaluation process. Effective training programs for evaluators are essential to ensure that feedback is both supportive and targeted, helping teachers to identify areas for growth and development (Ferdous & Okunade, 2020). Addressing these challenges is crucial for maximizing the transformative potential of teacher evaluations. By shifting the perception of evaluations from punitive to developmental, ensuring consistent and high-quality feedback, and providing comprehensive training for evaluators, teacher evaluations can more effectively contribute to professional growth and improved educational outcomes (Harrison et al., 2020). This holistic approach will help to create a more supportive and effective evaluation system that benefits both teachers and students.

Because of the different views, challenges, and gaps in teacher evaluations, the researcher tries to explore the most significant change in teachers' evaluation, particularly in the two districts of Bontoc. The study can provide insights into the development of a teacher evaluation tool that can effectively appraise teachers for the success of the educational system. The result of the study is primarily beneficial to the teachers since the

information derived from this study can become a basis for formulating a tool that can effectively assess teachers' competence. The students can also benefit from the study since they are the teaching beneficiaries; competent teachers can produce capable learners. The study can also help the curriculum planners, and the school heads craft guidelines and interventions to improve teachers' competence. Lastly, the study results can provide additional insights into teacher evaluations' current information to constantly update information for future researchers. Additionally, the study provides valuable insights which can help in refining evaluation methods, tailoring professional development programs, and enhancing overall educational quality. Future research can build on these findings to explore deeper correlations and develop more effective evaluation strategies.

Conceptual framework

The Transformative Learning Theory provides a valuable lens through which to understand the dynamics in this study. It centers on the idea that individuals undergo a profound shift in their perspectives, beliefs, and behaviors through a reflective and critical examination of their experiences (Menon, 2022). Applying this theory to the study of teachers' evaluation can illuminate how this process contributes to meaningful and lasting changes in educators' practices. In the context of teacher evaluation, it suggests that the assessment and feedback received by teachers prompt them to engage in deep reflection on their instructional methods, classroom management, and overall teaching approaches (Casinillo & Casinillo, 2021; Casinillo & Guarte, 2018; Wang et al., 2019). The evaluation process catalyzes educators to question and reassess their assumptions, teaching philosophies, and pedagogical choices. Teachers may experience a transformative shift in their understanding of effective teaching methods, student engagement strategies, and the broader goals of education (Eynon & Gambino, 2021). For instance, if the evaluation process highlights areas of improvement or successful teaching practices, teachers may undergo a transformative learning experience by critically examining their approaches and adjusting them accordingly.

The most significant change identified in teachers' evaluation experiences can be seen as a manifestation of transformative learning (Raikou, 2019). Teachers may recognize and embrace novel perspectives, instructional techniques, or assessment methods that have a profound impact on their overall teaching philosophy. This transformative process, triggered by the evaluation, can lead to sustained changes in teaching practices, ultimately benefiting both educators and students (Olivier & Rambow, 2023). Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of a supportive learning environment and dialogue. In the context of teacher evaluation, fostering open communication, collaboration, and a culture of continuous improvement can enhance the transformative potential (Nwafor et al., 2023). By creating spaces for reflective discussions and professional development based on evaluation findings, educational institutions can further facilitate transformative learning experiences among teachers.

Research objectives

In general, this study determined the most significant change in teachers' evaluation of Districts of Bontoc I and II selected teachers. Specifically, the study tried to: (1) determine the socio-demographic profile; (2) determine the most significant change brought by teachers' evaluation in terms of (i) classroom physical aspects, (ii) classroom teaching, and (iii) teacher's portfolio.

Methodology

Research design

The study employed a descriptive-narrative research design, a qualitative methodology focused on observing the implementation of teachers' evaluations. Survey questionnaires fit well with this approach as they systematically collect detailed data on the experiences and perspectives of participants. In this case, the researcher used questionnaires to gather information on the significant changes experienced by sixteen selected teachers in Bontoc I and II districts. The participants were chosen through purposive random sampling, following the recommended qualitative research sampling size by Bhardwaj (2019). The survey questionnaire, designed to capture teachers' experiences in classroom aspects, teaching methods, and portfolios, provided a structured yet flexible means to document individual narratives. This approach allowed the researcher to obtain in-depth insights into the teachers' evaluation processes while adhering to qualitative research principles. The use of questionnaires facilitated the collection of comprehensive data that could be analyzed thematically.

Administering the questionnaires via Messenger adhered to local COVID-19 restrictions, ensuring the safety and well-being of participants. The step-by-step data collection process began with the creation of open-ended questionnaires, which were subsequently reviewed by three experts. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the distribution of the questionnaires. Participants were provided ample time to complete the questionnaires, with the flexibility to respond either through chat on the Messenger platform or by submitting

typed documents. This approach ensured convenience and accessibility, accommodating participants' preferences. The open-ended questions were carefully designed to capture detailed, narrative responses, allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences and provide rich, descriptive data. Follow-up questions were included to ensure comprehensive data collection, continuing until data saturation was achieved. This iterative process allowed for the continuous refinement of responses, ensuring that all relevant information was gathered. Throughout the data collection process, the emphasis was on creating an environment where participants felt comfortable and encouraged to share their experiences in depth. This methodical approach ensured that the collected data were robust and detailed, laying a strong foundation for subsequent analysis.

The collected data were meticulously analyzed using thematic analysis with open coding. This method entailed several systematic steps: initially, labeling concepts within the data to capture the essence of each response; subsequently, defining categories to group similar concepts together; and finally, building dimensions to further refine these categories into broader themes and sub-themes. This thorough process facilitated the organization of responses into coherent themes and sub-themes, allowing for a detailed examination of the data. Thematic analysis with open coding was instrumental in identifying recurring patterns within the dataset. This approach not only highlighted commonalities among the teachers' experiences but also brought to light the subtle nuances and differences. By categorizing and dimensioning the data, the analysis provided a structured framework that enabled a deeper understanding of the various aspects of the teachers' professional lives (Benavides-Lahnstein & Ryder, 2019). Furthermore, this method ensured that the identified themes were closely aligned with the actual data, thereby maintaining the authenticity of the participants' perspectives. Through this rigorous analytical process, the study was able to generate rich, detailed insights, contributing significantly to the overall understanding of the teachers' experiences and informing future research and practice in the field (Anderson et al., 2023). The study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences with evaluations. Data verification ensured the credibility of the findings by validating assumptions based on the coded transcripts. This rigorous approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of the impact of evaluations on teaching practices and informed recommendations for improvement. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Key principles included obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and securing formal approval from relevant authorities. Participants' well-being was prioritized, with psychological support offered for those discussing challenging aspects of their professional lives. Adherence to COVID-19 protocols underscored the safety of data collection. Transparent communication about data handling and a sensitive approach to thematic analysis contributed to participant trust. Addressing these ethical considerations ensured research integrity and provided valuable insights into teachers' evaluation experiences.

Table 1 outlines the coding of participants in a research study. The table comprised two columns: "Participants" and "Coding." In the "Participants" column, individuals involved in the study were listed as "Participant 1" through "Participant 16." The corresponding "Coding" column assigned unique codes to each participant, ranging from "SS1" for "Participant 1" to "SS16" for "Participant 16." This coding system, a standard in qualitative research, served the dual purpose of maintaining participant confidentiality and facilitating data analysis. The codes functioned as pseudonyms, allowing researchers to reference specific participants in their analysis without disclosing their real identities. The structured format, featuring a consistent prefix ("SS" followed by a numerical identifier), streamlined data organization throughout the research process. Table 1 presents the participants and the corresponding coding.

Table 1

The Coding System

Participants	Coding
Participant 1	SS1
Participant 2	SS2
Participant 3	SS3
Participant 4	SS4
Participant 5	SS5
Participant 6	SS6
Participant 7	SS7
Participant 8	SS8
Participant 9	SS9
Participant 10	SS10
Participant 11	SS11
Participant 12	SS12
Participant 13	SS13
Participant 14	SS14
Participant 15	SS15

Findings and discussions

Classroom environment's most significant change: Child-friendly environment promotion

In the teaching and learning process, highly qualified and competent teachers are critical. This is why assessments are conducted to ensure the quality of teachers and the provision of quality education to students. Teacher quality is characterized not only in terms of a teacher's educational, professional, and personal qualities but also in terms of how the classroom environment supports a conducive, child-friendly learning environment. In this light, the DepEd requires teachers to structure classrooms to make them conducive to learning to achieve quality education (Biñas et al., 2023). Teacher assessment ratings on the physical components of the classroom are vital because they motivate teachers to create a favorable physical learning environment for students. Some teachers support the claim that teacher evaluation inspires them to change their classrooms into conducive learning environments: "Classroom preparation makes my classroom well-arranged, well-ventilated, and complete with the needed materials, thus making my classroom pleasant and conducive for learning" (SS2).

Teacher quality relates to student performance positively (Ambussaidi & Yang, 2019; Casinillo et al., 2020). Some teachers also reported how teacher evaluation on the physical component of the classroom enabled them to improve themselves and their students' accomplishments. Beukman (2021) stressed that transforming the physical learning space into a more dynamic and adaptive space aligned with technological affordances significantly positively affected student perceptions of their learning. Furthermore, de Borba et al., (2019) recommended the importance of conducting an assessment on classroom redesign initiatives as it improves learner engagement.

> The yearly evaluation of the physical aspect in my classroom has always given me a chance to improve and enhance its physical layout and most of all, it did help my students feel at home and comfortable, thus making the learning environment more effective. (SS4)

Aside from classroom structure, teachers should organize child-friendly classrooms to give safety and comfort to learners. It is the right of all children to have a safe environment and accessible quality education (Cobanoglu & Sevim, 2019). A child-friendly school provides every child with a physically safe, emotionally secure, and psychologically enabling environment (Suharsiwi Suharsiwi et al., 2023). To promote a child-friendly learning environment, various areas of the school require necessary arrangements (Jansson et al., 2022). One participant mentioned that one of the factors to consider while designing a child-friendly classroom is comfort and safety:

> Classroom physical aspects are tangible and can be observed by students' senses. This room should be designed & furnished in a way that suits students' needs, interests, and aspirations. As a teacher, I must consider the comfort and safety of my learners. (SS5)

If all criteria meet the conditions for a child-friendly atmosphere, it can lead to academic, emotional, and behavioral growth in learners (Xiao et al., 2023). The following teachers' responses reflect the claim that a child-friendly learning environment increases learning and overall development:

> For me, it [classroom evaluation] is essential because having a safe and accessible environment leads to better learning. For example, the seating arrangement is one of the powerful ways of minimizing distractions. (SS6)

The responses of the educators had a significant impact on the academic learning of the students. It can serve as a baseline for educational policymakers to assist teachers in fostering a positive, child-friendly learning environment.

Classroom environment's most significant change: ***Readiness and creativity enhancement***

Facilitating classroom learning necessitates a teacher who is competent and prepared. The teacher's task is to prepare the teaching materials because it is one of the essential competencies of a teacher (Phelps & Vlachopoulos, 2020). Due to the complexity of the teaching and learning process, teachers can be ready by facilitating their professional development and continuously assessing their abilities to ensure the teaching process is effective. Apart from a supportive classroom atmosphere, artifacts that provide information about student's performance can assess the teacher's readiness. Lesson plans, assessments, activities, assignments, scoring rubrics, student work, and other materials contribute to determining the quality of education. Several teachers recounted their experiences exhibiting the impact of teacher evaluations on their preparation,"… [classroom evaluation] enables us to prepare classroom programs, bulletin boards, signages, attendance charts, DepEd forms in designated racks, and the physical arrangement of teachers' chairs and tables, cabinets, and others" (SS3).

Additionally, several studies stated that evaluation empowers teachers to manage their classroom arrangements. It enables teachers to structure their classrooms in ways that are compatible with the pedagogical

approaches and the needs of their students. Effective classroom instructional management is essential to ensure student academic and social success (Nazari et al., 2021). It is comparable with teachers' responses to the considerable change brought about by teacher assessment in terms of the physical components of the classroom, "The most significant change brought by classroom observation is that evaluating the classroom learning environment can lead to the improvement of instruction…" (SS5).

Secondly, evaluation motivates teachers to create instructional materials appropriate for the type of learning activities used in the lesson. The use of instructional materials draws the learner's attention and focuses their efforts on the lesson (Nabayra, 2022). Education practitioners highly value teacher-made materials for promoting meaningful learning and enhancing professional development (Banegas et al., 2020). A teacher shared her viewpoint that exemplifies her experiences in preparing her instructional materials, "Classroom evaluation is a challenge for me. There are many things to be considered in preparing the classroom [for evaluation]. For example, the instructional materials must be displayed in an area where all students can read them to easily understand the discussion" (SS6).

Teacher assessment results instill confidence in the teacher. When teachers receive feedback following an evaluation, they typically conduct self-evaluations and evaluate their strengths and limitations. Boosting teachers' beliefs in their ability to effectively handle the tasks, obligations, and challenges related to their professional activity plays a key role in influencing important academic outcomes and well-being in the working environment (O'Brien et al., 2020). The degree of student engagement proved to be intricately tied to the teachers' self-efficacy (Sökmen, 2019). One teacher expressed her belief that appraisals instill confidence in the ability to perform the job, "This [classroom evaluation] makes me more confident in rendering the job" (SS7).

Being assessed creates creativity and innovation among teachers. It was evident in the way they structure their classrooms, where they ensure that the physical appearance of their classrooms is conducive to learning. It essentially encourages teachers to be receptive to whatever the outcomes may be. Žarnauskaitė (2023) observed that teacher's creativity has a significant relationship with teaching effectiveness. Moreover, Starko (2017) stressed that younger teachers are more creative as they frequently use methods and techniques that encourage creative thinking in the classroom, "This motivated me to become more creative…" (SS1) and "…helps teachers to procreate and recreate beautiful and functional realia that are of great use…" (SS2).

The teachers' responses expanded substantially to the amount of evidence regarding the effects of teacher evaluation on teacher competency. It can serve as a benchmark for school administrators in developing evaluation models to enhance teachers' instructional effectiveness further.

Classroom environment's most significant change: Shift from physical evaluation to focus on learner development and quality materials

The epidemic of COVID-19 prompted a paradigm shift in nearly all educational systems. Educational planners and policymakers need to adopt new methods of teaching children. This created tension for teachers as they transitioned from face-to-face instruction to remote, distance, flexible, and mixed learning. Teacher evaluation is another potential source of stress. The Department of Education released the DepEd Memorandum 45, s. 2020 stressing the importance of recalibrating teacher evaluation systems (Republic of the Philippines Department of Education, 2020). However, there are no adjustments made in the evaluation guidelines on the classroom's physical features in light of COVID-19 condition. It causes concern for some teachers, as learning no longer occurs in classrooms under the new normal, "Classroom physical evaluation should not be prioritized in this new normal of education. Instead, teachers must allot more time assessing learners' development and preparing quality learning materials during this time [of pandemic]" (SS1).

Classroom environment's most significant change: Emotional and financial burden of evaluation

Evaluation requires teachers to expend financial, emotional, and physical resources. Zhang et al., (2020) discovered that a lack of teaching and learning resources causes teachers to cut part of their income to support classroom activities. Although the government contributes significantly to school maintenance and operational costs some teachers must pay for classroom renovations not covered by school finances. The presence of downloaded funds from the national government does not guarantee reimbursement for the expenses incurred in improving their classrooms. To an extent, teachers took out loans to renovate their classrooms. Moreover, the lack of resources causes some stress to the teachers (Bushra Inayat Raja & Fatima Saddique, 2023). This scenario is evident in the sentiment shared by a participant on the cost of classroom structuring, "[classroom evaluation is an]…additional burden, emotionally and financially" (SS1).

Furthermore, the resources complying with guidelines' requirements ultimately burden teachers emotionally and physically. The time allotted for teaching is sometimes compromised since the demand for evaluation is naturally demanding.

Instruction's most significant change: Competence enhancement evaluation

Classroom observation is the most practical method of evaluating classroom instruction since the evaluator can view the actual teaching process. Some teachers shared their experiences on the impacts of classroom observation in their teaching practices, "This helps me grow professionally. Feedback and suggestions after the observation made me become wiser, bolder, more creative, effective, and competent in developing quality, sustainable life-long learners" (SS1).

There are several pieces of literature emphasizing the benefits of feedback regarding how it can support teachers' instructional development when they receive positive and effective feedback from their principals and school heads (Collin & Smith, 2021). When teachers receive proper feedback on their teaching practices, this method will likely result in substantial gains in teaching quality (Matherne & Blackwell, 2023). The responses of the teachers support the claim that classroom observation promotes teacher competence if given proper feedback from their superiors. In addition, competent teachers can provide high-quality instruction, which in turn affects student progress (Wedel, 2021). Teachers with improved competence use instructional strategies that develop higher-order thinking skills in students. Some teachers commented on the effects of classroom observation on students' learning development:

> The classroom observation tool helps us in our teaching by serving as a guide. Additionally, it serves as a guide for the School Head and Master Teacher during classroom observations in developing activities that strengthen my students' critical and creative thinking abilities, as well as their higher-order thinking abilities. (SS1)

Instruction's most significant change: Culture of coaching and mentoring promotion

Coaching is a method of facilitating learning and development, which can lead to improved performance. On the other hand, mentoring is support provided by a superior to a teacher intended to assist them in making suitable changes in their knowledge, skills, or attitude (Mullen & Fallen, 2022). Further, classroom observation enables teachers to demonstrate their instructional skills while also allowing coaches to assess their particular strengths and weaknesses. This process enables school administrators and master teachers to improve their performance by strengthening their positive teaching practices and correcting faulty practices. Several teachers expressed their perspectives on the effects of teacher evaluations on their instructional competence, "This [classroom observation] identifies which teaching behavior needs coaching support. The coaches then use this information to set goals to improve my teaching capacity & ability" (SS1).

Teaching is a complex profession, and feedback on teacher practices is required for teacher improvement (Warr & Mishra, 2023). Meaningful teacher assessment can allow teachers to participate in productive discussions about classroom instruction and learners' progress. These conversations can motivate teachers to self-reflect and to thoroughly evaluate information about student learning. According to some of the teachers interviewed, the comments from post-conference may be the most beneficial impact of better teacher evaluation procedures, and teachers gain from the opportunity to reflect. As a result, school principals can have discussions about improving teaching practice and student learning in the classroom. It can help high-performing teachers sustain their high performance and develop continuous improvement. Consequently, this could be a way to build succession plans and career development opportunities for well-performing and high-potential teachers seeking promotion, "As a master teacher, our ultimate goal is to improve the quality of instruction by establishing expectations for effective teaching and helping other teachers in meeting those expectations" (SS6).

Even if the indications used in an evaluation process are compelling, many evaluators cannot adequately discuss the results with teachers. Chen & Guo (2018) underscored that principals' personnel skills can influence instructors' classroom management. However, school leaders face a daunting challenge in leading teachers toward the common goals of increased student achievement, increased skill, and knowledge development (Spillane & Lowenhaupt, 2019). This situation can pose risks to teachers if coaches do not implement coaching and mentorship effectively. A participant shared her thoughts on a particular case in which there was no further follow-up after providing feedback:

> The observation tool helps me in accomplishing the tasks. However, on the process of feedback, there is no specific advice on how to improve the teaching and learning process, and there seems to be a lack of mentoring to address non-performing teachers. (SS8)

Finally, most of the responses present teachers' positive experiences with learning and development. It demonstrates that the existing evaluation system is effective in improving and increasing teachers' work performance. On the other hand, education planners should include training for superiors conducting conferences with teachers to address mentorship appropriately.

Instruction's most significant change: Ineffectiveness of classroom observation in the new normal

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected teachers' teaching practices. There were amendments to the guidelines to accommodate teachers' needs in educating students in the new normal. However, authorities made sure that the adjustments did not jeopardize the delivery of effective education to students. In the case of classroom observations, some principals advised having demonstration teaching even without the presence of students to see if teachers had improved in response to previous remarks and suggestions. Other school principals urge some teachers to create a video of themselves teaching. The students will watch the recordings and be given assessments to evaluate the teacher's instructional competence. However, some teachers find it unrealistic because not all students can watch the videos due to a lack of available technologies in their homes and several connectivity issues on the internet which does not ensure a suitable and effective means of evaluating teachers. One participant expressed her thoughts on the matter, "Classroom observation is ineffective and unreliable during the new normal since there are no learners and classroom management cannot be evaluated well" (SS1).

Teacher portfolios' most significant change: *Self-reflection spurred by evaluations*

In the process of teacher evaluation, the school heads also require the teachers to develop a portfolio that includes artifacts and documents that will define the accomplishment of a teacher. Based on the teacher's responses, the portfolio has brought positive impacts on themselves:

> The portfolio showcases my development in terms of pedagogical content knowledge, learning environment, curriculum planning, assessment, and reporting. With this, I can evaluate myself, and I can be certain my efforts are rewarded after seeing my results. (SS1)
> Creating my portfolio motivates me to complete the artifacts that will demonstrate my accomplishment. It also helps me become more organized so that I can improve my abilities as an effective teacher. (SS6)

Making a portfolio makes the teachers reflect on their achievements in the school year. When teachers self-evaluate, they realize that their teaching strategies could be improved. Portfolios allow the teachers to collect and analyze data to improve their teaching strategies if necessary. Most of the participants shared that the portfolio has brought positive impacts on their professional development:

> Teaching is a challenging profession. However, knowing that my students have become better citizens in our country fills me with joy and fulfillment. Every year, I submit a portfolio that summarizes my accomplishments and the challenges I face. It has helped me in identifying, evaluating, and recollecting my teaching experiences to become a better teacher. (SS8)

Aithal & Shubhrajyotsna Aithal (2023) revealed that teachers would adopt active teaching practices when practicing self-evaluation. Personal teaching assessment, according is an excellent technique to increase teacher professional growth and student accomplishment (Harrill & Smith, 2020). Aderet-German (2021) also shared that self-evaluation balances both the teacher's autonomy and accountability. Similarly, teacher evaluation holds the educators to account for students' learning outcomes. In this way, teachers become highly aware of their primary duties and responsibilities, especially towards their learners. Furthermore, Anwar Al Rashidi (2023) emphasized the importance of self-evaluation in developing self-esteem, teaching abilities, and classroom management,

> A portfolio intends to evaluate learners' progress and achievement in a specific course. Additionally, it serves as evidence of my teaching practices. It also shows my improvements and shortcomings. It guides me to be on the right track. For example, my DLL is one of the pieces of evidence that will monitor my teaching practice. (SS5)

Teacher portfolios' most significant change: Teacher evaluation challenges

In accomplishing the teacher's portfolio as part of the teacher evaluation, the participants answered that the portfolio consumes more time and adds a burden to the teachers. The preparation of the portfolio requires Means of Verification (MOVs) to support the teacher's accomplishment. In this manner, the teachers found this practice burdensome. Teacher evaluation has been put forward as an essential strategy for assuring and developing educational quality in many countries (Espino & Zambrana, 2019). Teachers should gather appropriate evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, in preparation for evaluating teaching (Tracy, 2020). However, some teachers found the current evaluation system that incorporates evidence too onerous on their part, "Preparing the portfolio is time-consuming and burdensome …"(SS2), "…Creating the portfolio takes time and adds burden to the teachers…" (SS11) and "Preparing the portfolio is time-consuming" (SS14).

The checklist of documents needed to accomplish the portfolio seems inflexible in this pandemic. A participant responded that some indicators are only applicable to face-to-face classes. Although the revised Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) considers some constraints brought by the pandemic in accomplishing the usual activities done by teachers, still some teachers view those activities as irrelevant and

impractical during this time when there is a restriction on mobility among the learners and the teachers, "…other MOVs are difficult to accomplish because some indicators are only applicable to face-to-face classes" (SS10).

Generally, teacher evaluation: (1) enables teachers to foster a child-friendly learning environment, (2) promotes teacher's readiness and creativity, (3) irrelevant during the pandemic, (4) burdens the teachers emotionally, financially, and physically, (5) improves the teacher's instructional competence, (6) promotes a coaching and mentoring culture, (7) stimulates self-evaluation, (8) ineffective during pandemic, (9) time-consuming and burdensome, and (10) impractical to accomplish during pandemic. Evaluating physical classroom components motivates teachers to create an optimal learning environment. A dynamic and adaptive learning space enhances student perceptions and engagement. Organizing child-friendly classrooms fosters safety, comfort, and academic, emotional, and behavioral growth. Teachers recognize the crucial role of the physical classroom setting in the teaching and learning process, providing support for school improvement initiatives. In addition to a supportive atmosphere, artifacts assessing students' performance indicate teacher readiness. Lesson plans, assessments, and other materials contribute to determining the quality of education. Teacher evaluation encourages the creation of appropriate instructional materials, fostering creativity and innovation. The use of diverse teaching strategies enhances teacher effectiveness and student creativity. The shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 surge prompted a recalibration of the teacher evaluation system. However, guidelines for evaluating physical classroom features remain unchanged, lacking relevance in the current environment. Revisiting these guidelines is necessary to align with the prevailing situation. Teacher evaluation demands financial, emotional, and physical resources, causing stress among teachers. Despite the challenges, positive feedback improves instructional competence, impacting student progress. Open communication between school heads and teachers is crucial for effective feedback. Teacher evaluation promotes a coaching and mentoring culture. Classroom observation allows assessment of teaching practices, emphasizing the importance of coaching and mentoring skills for school heads.

Conclusions and recommendations

The study concluded that effective implementation of coaching and mentorship is essential to mitigate risks for teachers. Strengthening coaching and mentoring programs among school heads is vital for a successful evaluation process. In fact, teacher evaluation enables teachers to foster a child-friendly learning environment, promotes teachers' readiness and creativity, irrelevant during the pandemic, burdens the teachers emotionally, financially, and physically, improves the teacher's instructional competence, promotes coaching and mentoring culture, and stimulates the teacher's instructional competence self-evaluation. Teacher evaluation also poses positive and negative effects to the teachers. The study recommends that teachers should take the teacher evaluation positively as it only gears to promote teaching quality and professional development. Moreover, the DepEd may consider a training program to improve the mentoring and coaching capabilities of the school heads since they play a crucial role in the teacher evaluation process. Hence, future investigations should focus on the sustained impact of teacher evaluations on child-friendly learning environments, teacher well-being, and navigating challenges, especially during crises like the pandemic. In-depth studies are needed to understand the emotional, financial, and physical strains experienced by teachers, providing insights into effective coping mechanisms and support systems. The changes in instruction, including competence enhancement and coaching culture promotion, offer an opportunity to explore effective integration into professional development programs, establishing best practices for sustained teacher growth. Additionally, research on pandemic-related ineffectiveness in evaluations can guide adaptations for unforeseen circumstances. Further exploration into teacher portfolios, addressing challenges, and understanding self-reflection's role, can inform improvements in the evaluation framework.

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