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The Path to Walk Through: Politics of Professional Development in Supportive Supervision

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Abstract

Grounded on the aim of this paper to treat all the teachers and staff equally without labeling their political affiliations, it seems appropriate that the traditional professional development for teachers should slowly be diminished while more innovative approaches shall be increased to improve the quality of the graduates. Anchored on the central question, “What are the strategies employed by supervisors to ensure the implementation of long-term planning for teachers’ professional development?” or “What are the various approaches to professional development that support teachers in developing their teaching instructions?,” the researchers employed a phenomenographical design using open-ended and semi-structured interviews [44] with 24 respondents consisting of the supervisors and classroom teachers of selected secondary schools in the Philippines. Field texts were subjected to data reduction using repertory grid and dendrogram as well as the Colaizzi’s steps analysis. Interestingly, the cool and warm analysis revealed a model called SAGE which stands for Strategies, Approaches, Goals and Effects to strengthen the professional development program in supportive supervision.

Keywords: Politics of professional development; supportive supervision; collaborative, supportive, directive; and Philippine secondary schools.

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1. Introduction

What has become an urgent need for every educational institution is the teachers' continuing professional growth. Rightly posited as a core concern, it relates to how teachers could grow professionally and transform their acquired knowledge in the context of the classroom for the benefit of their students [4]. The utmost demand of our time is for the strengthening of the teachers' accountability [58], which serves as a key to reforms in teaching and learning [42]. The continuous professional development of teachers thus becomes seminal for the well being of the school [47]. Such quality improvement in teaching as a result of effective professional development activities is expected to bring about significant changes over the course of time on the basis of the prevailing educational context [43],[51], changes which have specially to do with improvements in student performance [3]. Naturally, the professional development of teachers begins with the existing knowledge and understanding that either assists or hampers the attainment of new knowledge as well as new teaching approaches and strategies [33]. Everyone is looking forward to an educational reform where teachers are significantly and fundamentally challenged to shift direction and practice for the achievement of appropriate goals.

Knight [47] and Glickman et al. [9,10] affirm that the continuing professional development of teachers should be facilitated by supervisors who are willing to assume the full responsibility in the face of institutional goals. It should be kept in mind that new teachers are not sufficiently equipped with all the information they need, particularly the procedural ones whereby they learn how to translate the new knowledge in the actual classroom performance, knowledge which itself grows only in the course of practice [43,47]. In addition, teachers are expected to be aware of the process of life-long learning, which in turn motivates and inspires the students toward academic performance [3]. Therefore, they look at continuous professional development as essential in the promotion of the human investment, rendering our education more competent and competitive nationally and even internationally [47].

Studies have also shown that a long-term, school-based program, if focused on student learning, benefits from a well prepared professional development plan [3]. Additionally, [3] speak about the advantages of a professional development plan, such as providing opportunities for teachers to discuss among themselves their own challenges and concerns, sharing common curriculum resources and evaluation procedures, discussing the students' needs at every grade level, and sharing with peers general perspectives for developing instructional materials, methods of teaching, and solutions to problems encountered during the teaching-learning process.

However, [34] disclosed that professional development will be deemed unsuccessful if caused by too traditional, too much top-down approach, and if too isolated from school and classroom realities. Furthermore, [34] argues that a cause of the failure of professional development reform efforts in the past is that supervisors failed to take into account the existing knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of teachers. In addition, there was no proper documentation describing the effects and contributions as well as the effectiveness of professional development on the part of supervisors [54]. If, through critical reflection and adult learning, the quality of supportive supervision programs is ultimately to emerge, these points may be viewed as essential elements to begin the journey of the teaching staff.

Otherwise, support for change in the school can be withdrawn and, as a result, professional development plan will cease.

Additionally, even though the focal point is placed on the context, content and quality of teacher learning opportunities, the least effective aspects could become the most common forms of practice whose harmful effects remain unnoticed [33]. Much of so-called professional development is still associated with conventional in-service approaches which, even when relying on external experts, focus on facilitating specific methods that lack effective follow-ups on the part of the supervisor [67,33].

Conventional learning seems to be seen as a process of transferring information from those who are knowledgeable to those who are not. In this sense, it incorporates approaches and strategies that are opposed to recent researches on teachers' professional development. From the perspective of a constructivist theory, most of today's teachers are expected to learn professionally by obtaining and creating new learning by themselves on the basis of previously obtained knowledge [10]. It seems appropriate, then, that the traditional scheme of professional development should slowly be diminished while more innovative approaches for improving student performance should be accepted.

2. Research Method

2.1 Design

This study used the phenomenographic approach, a type of descriptive research concerned with different ways of experiencing and understanding a phenomenon. This approach started to develop in Sweden in the 1970s primarily in the field of education [20,22] cited by [19]. The varied ways of understanding represent specific perspectives in the viewing, thinking and interpreting of some aspects of the world. The authors in [22,19,52] continually observed that phenomena are aspects of reality, experienced and understood in a relatively limited number of qualitatively different ways. Marton in [21] revealed that phenomenography differs from phenomenology in that it is concerned with variation, not with essence or similarity, in its outcome. On the one hand, [28] pointed out that the nature of phenomenographic design remains constant even if the research outcomes may vary. On the other hand, [16] described phenomenology as using different approaches according to some chosen philosophic perspectives, such as those of Husserl and Heidegger. In this sense, phenomenography is different from phenomenology.

2.2 Sample Selection.

Sample participants were constituted among those involved and affected by supportive supervision, particularly the school supervisors and teachers who were selected from some secondary schools in the Philippines. There were inclusion criteria for each respondent group. Two or three respondents were chosen from each school and they were the principal respondents of this research. The supervisors, who had more or less five years of service, were known for their successful contributions to the academic performance of their institutions, and for having performed satisfactorily in their tasks and responsibilities. Teachers who had been in the teaching profession for at least five

years were also considered qualified in this research. The selection of respondents was based on the recommendation of [48] who showed preference for those who have had experiences concerning the phenomenon to be investigated and whose views could therefore be taken as ‘fact’. Consequently, respondents were chosen only if they had lived the experience under study [12]. Additionally, the selected schools should have at least practiced or implemented the Understanding by Design (UbD) curriculum which was introduced by the Department of Education in 2009.

Data Gathering Procedure. As a major data collection technique [49], in-depth interviews were conducted with a select group of supervisors and teachers from different secondary schools in the Philippines. The researcher used open-ended questions to extract individual answers in the sharing of lived experiences, including the interviewees’ experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about the theme’s questions [30]. Patton [44] suggests that additional qualitative interviewing, such as informal, conversational and semi-structured interviews, would add to the needed information. Rapport with interviewees was established to avoid the feeling of “strangeness” and hesitation that could stand in the way of sharing their inner thoughts and real experiences as supervisors or teachers. The objective of the research then is to reveal and describe the subjects’ perspectives and/or experiences with respect to supportive supervision in the Philippine secondary schools.

The researcher personally conducted the interviews. As a protocol, the researcher introduced himself to the respondents before the interviews took place. The nature and purpose of the study were thoroughly explained. The listening skills of the interviewer were applied to assure the respondents of the confidential nature of their sharing so that neither hesitation nor apprehension could stand in the way of the needed information. The interviewer humbly requested the permission of the interviewees to use a tape-recorder during the interview proper in order to capture the whole interview without missing any important information.

Mode of Analysis. The researcher personally transcribed the recorded information to lessen some errors in the transcription, as Poland [5] disclosed that the accuracy of the transcriptions strengthens the trustworthiness of the data gathered. Further, the study followed the steps of the descriptive phenomenological method of inquiry as outlined by Swanson-Kauffman and Schonwald [39] as cited [18]. This includes bracketing, analyzing, intuiting and describing. Bracketing pertains to the researcher’s way of achieving the “state of transcendental subjectivity” [15] as cited by [18] by setting aside previous preconceptions on supportive supervision. Thorough data analysis constitutes several subcomponents such as (1) reading and rereading of the interview transcriptions to grasp the whole ideas or opinions of the interviewees; (2) extraction of the significant statements or key responses (Lebenswelt) of each participant; (3) formulation of the meaning of significant statements to find the key words and phrases within each response (here the researcher transformed each meaning unit from the language of the interviewees to the language of the researcher); (4) categorization of the formulated meanings into themes to describe ‘how’ (noesis) the phenomenon expresses itself and ‘what’ (noema) the phenomenon is; (5) integration of the findings into an exhaustive description of supportive supervision; (6) validation of the findings; and lastly (7) incorporation of any changes in the subjects of investigation [18]. Intuiting involves the conscious effort of the

researcher to place himself in the situation of the subjects without citing his own interpretations of the phenomenon Swanson-Kauffman & Schonwald [39] as cited by [18]. The emerged categories and themes will then be subjected to triangulation, or member checking procedure [37], as well as to the critical–firmed technique [24], to establish the validity of the data and ensure the trustworthiness of the findings of the study.

3. Findings

The findings of this study described the outcome of the lived experience of a selected group of supervisors and teachers surveyed about the state of supportive supervision in Philippine secondary schools. The repertory grid and dendogram analysis of the gathered information led to the identification of the interesting and relevant themes, as specified by the participants in Table 1. The SAGE model served as a guide to describe the political dynamics of the efforts toward professional development in the Philippine secondary schools. Said model is illumined by the collective experience and practice of the supervisors and teachers as they respond to the challenges facing our schools in this fast changing world.

Table 1: SAGE model for professional development

Strategies	Approaches	Goals	Effects
Collaborative Building strong team work and cooperation by sitting down together with the teachers for career planning to improve the performance of the learners	Dialoguing Having constant communication with the subordinates to determine their field of interest for further career development Sharing Distributing power and knowledge to the subordinates based on trust , responsibility and skills	Increased willingness to facilitate cooperation and team work	Empowerment Teachers are given and provided with special skills, knowledge and authority to hold certain positions of responsibility and to be accountable for the quality of the outputs of classroom teaching and learning.
Supportive Encouraging and assisting the teachers to undergo certain trainings and seminars for the career of teaching	Mentoring: Helping the teachers to progress in their careers and increase their effectiveness in classroom teaching. Observing Building and creating a positive environment for the teachers to deliver their lessons and manage the classroom well	Increased teaching potentials and outcomes	Transformation Having adequate knowledge and skill in teaching enables the teachers to deliver the latest classroom information to the learners and bring change in teaching environment.
Directive Giving the order and instruction to the subordinates to acquire more knowledge for the benefit of school and the learners	Structuring Emphasizing the hierarchical structure in the institution to strengthen professional development Ruling Implementation of the rules and regulations for professional development in order to achieve the goals of the school	Increased number of quality and qualified teachers	Reformation Improving the present teaching practice based on the knowledge and skills acquired through further studies and ongoing trainings for better learning outcomes.

3.1 Collaborative Strategy for Professional Development

Interestingly, the infusion of knowledge and skills, when accompanied by appropriate strategies, helps our teachers in facing the challenges embedded in the political landscape of professional development. The said strategy, which

has a direct and positive impact on supervision, ensures the confidence, creativity and flexibility in the performance of the teachers. The extent to which the supervisors are able to provide the opportunity for the teachers to enhance their skills depends on this collaborative strategy intended to build among them a strong sense of teamwork and cooperation by their sitting down together for career planning. As verbalized by the respondents, "I always believe in team work and cooperation where we collaboratively plan and discuss together the faculty professional development of the school."(AMT) "You know, in the school we have to be creative while looking for the best strategy for faculty development because there are teachers who refuse to go for further studies."(BC)

By and large, increased willingness to cooperate and work as a team could prepare better facilitators inside the classroom, which is one of the major educational goals, despite the strong individualistic (kanya-kanya) attitude of the teachers and their inadequate involvement in professional planning. According to them, "We are not involved too much in professional development planning." (EB) As a remedy, dialoguing has been increasingly used by the supervisors as a strategy to engage their subordinates in constant communication so as to determine their fields of interest for their own professional development. The respondents shared their experiences, like:

"For me, constant dialogue serves as the best approach in dealing with teachers, although sometimes there are teachers who are very evasive when we are discussing matters for the students' benefits. There are times that I cry when I see too much individualistic attitude among the teachers." (AF) "No matter what, dialoguing is still the best way to approach the teachers. I always seek the collaboration of the council before I come up with any decision to send teachers for further studies."(EFP)

This dialogical encounter helps create a warm and friendly ambiance that lightens the apparently unbearable burdens of the teachers. As articulated by the respondents, "My superior listens to our suggestions pertaining to our fields of interest and we feel happy with him." (JOP) "I create a friendly ambiance for my teachers so that we can freely talk about the school plan for our training and seminars." (ED)

Motivated by this pivotal collaborative strategy for supportive supervision, a supervisor cannot possibly underestimate the importance of responsibility sharing. This can be best expressed through the supervisor's distribution of power and knowledge to his or her subordinates, based on trust and responsibility as well as personal skills. As expressed by the respondents, "If I did not share my responsibility to my subordinates, I think I would have already resigned long ago due to the volume of work. Power can also shorten our life if we always cling to it. I do not intend to use power for purposes of my security in the school." (BC)

Notably, the sharing of power and responsibility actually provides the supervisor with an avenue for the expression of her/his trust and confidence in her/his subordinates. It empowers the teachers who possess the special skills, knowledge and authority to acquire certain responsibility and be accountable for the outcomes of classroom teaching and learning. As expressed by some informants, "I was happy that I have been given the chance to improve in my profession through higher studies in UST. This trust and confidence of my supervisor empowered and prepared me

for my present position as a science coordinator.” (DM) “I have to be prudent in giving the responsibility to my teachers, which should be based on his/her qualifications and competence, in order to maximize the knowledge he/she acquired during his/her studies.” (HM)

3.2 Supportive Strategy for Professional Development

Becoming a teacher of teachers, as an element of supportive supervision, challenges the supervisors to guide and direct the teachers to develop themselves in their teaching profession. The capability of the supervisors to persuade the teachers to pursue further studies and undergo certain trainings and seminars is seen as a supportive strategy for professional and career development. The role of supervisors to care for his/her teachers eventually becomes an act of wisdom to motivate and strengthen the teachers’ commitment to their mission.

As voiced by the interviewees,

“When I send my teachers for studies or seminars, they always have my full support; it is my way of encouraging them to join such seminars or trainings.” (EFL) “We are well supported by our admin whenever we attend a seminar or training. Sometimes, he is the one who follows up everything for us, even the small things.”(RN) “Actually, I’m very grateful to the school because our supervisors really show us their support. Our school has programs and scholarships which give us the opportunity to develop ourselves professionally. Financial support is available, especially if you are a tenured teacher. Secondly, they give us time during the weekends to pursue our studies. That is also their way of helping us to become better classroom teachers.”(HD) “To a large extent, we are made to attend a lot of seminars here, and they are willing to pay for our seminar fees. We have been sent abroad - to Singapore - to observe classes there and to update ourselves on the trends. I am very thankful because the school is very supportive in terms of professional development. They offer us a lot of programs, such as sessions on oral and written communication, classroom management and the like.”(DM)

Although the potentials and promises of supportive strategy have already been enthusiastically expressed, this study revealed another side of the coin, namely, that supportive strategy had not been as smooth as expected by many. There were some curtailments encountered by both supervisors and teachers, such as lack of support from the supervisor, ignorance of the teachers, time constraint, and some financial concern. As shared by the respondents,

“Our supervisor does not support our plan for master’s studies, and so we manage ourselves and do it on our own (bahala na kayo diyay).” (EFB) “There is ignorance on the part of the teachers when it comes to professional development, and they are satisfied with their board examinations. This is obvious among the senior teachers; they are happy in their comfort zones.” (HB) “Right now I’m supposed to take the comprehensive exam and I’m done with my academic requirements. But the schedule would not allow me; we have classes every Saturday, and I also need to update myself on the subjects before I take the exam.” (BG) “Professionally, I’m planning to pursue my Master’s Degree, but only if I can find the money for it. I will really need money/budget to be able to study. To

me, professional development means completing my Master's Degree and attending more seminars.”(AT)

Moved by increased career prospects as teachers, the respondents of this study recognize the value of the mentoring approach for supportive supervision. This approach helps the teachers to progress in their career and become increasingly competent in their teaching performance. They said,

“The mentoring system helps the teachers a lot, particularly the newly hired teachers. The teachers are happy with the assigned mentors who help them every week.” (AMT) “As a classroom teacher, I feel honoured that I have a mentor who understands my situation and who helps me a lot when it comes to classroom management, lesson planning, class records etc.” (HD) “We need to challenge them to use the new technologies, like the computer and other gadgets, so that students can participate more fully and find their subjects more interesting. Yet, we have to guide the teachers from time to time until they get themselves familiarized with the technology.” (EFB)

Undoubtedly, observing has become an effective approach for supportive strategy in professional development, resulting in the building and creating of a positive environment for the teachers to deliver their lessons and manage their classrooms well. Most importantly, observing can enrich the teaching method and strategy. As the informants averred,

“Every time we have a new teacher, I always ask her/him to observe the class of one of my senior and best teachers, so s/he can pick something for implementation in his/her own classroom. This s/he does for at least one month.” (AMT) “I remember that, when I was newly hired here, I was asked to observe the class of my senior teacher every week until I imitated almost all her styles of teaching. I was helped by that experience at that time.” (EB)

Facilitated by these approaches, the supervisor and teacher acquire sufficient knowledge and skills for their respective tasks within the bounds of professional liberty and accountability. Having adequate knowledge and skills in teaching enables the teacher to deliver the most recent information to the learners and eventually bring appropriate changes in the teaching environment. Confirming this are the following statements:

“The different seminars and trainings that we have attended helped a lot to boost our self-confidence and also our skills in classroom management.” (EFB) “As a teacher it is a big help for me that we attend the trainings, aside from reading books, because our students become more active and our interaction become more alive when we use the technology. Sometimes students ask us about things that catch their attention, and here, thankfully, I am able to apply my new learning.” (AMT)

3.3 Directive Strategy for Professional Development

Intended to increase the number of quality and qualified teachers in the classroom, the directive approach is being proposed for their professional development. This is done by giving order and instruction to the subordinates, demanding that they acquire more knowledge for the benefit of the school and the learners. The supervisor in this

context, by virtue of her/his legitimate administrative power and authority, will thereby be able to enforce the plan for the professional development of the teachers. As shared by the respondents, “I have to use my power to force them to go for further studies in the nearest universities; otherwise they don’t want to study.” (SR) “It was indeed a directive because we were not involved in the decision making; we were only informed when the decision was already made. Planning and decision-making seem to be solely administrative matters.’ (RB)

However, this study also revealed that the approach which emphasizes the hierarchical structure of an institution in the hope of strengthening professional development has become frail due to the nature of politics in the Philippines, which is essentially a politics by convenience rather than by conviction or principles. As admitted by the interviewees, “Politics is always there. The thing we need to do now is to use politics to meet the VMG and, of course, achieve our standard, namely, the quality of the output.”(GOM) The structuring approach has unfortunately degenerated into a procedure for choosing the teachers. As verbalized, “It is difficult for us to have a chance because in our school the ‘padrino or palakasan system’ prevails. It is whom you know that counts, not what you know. This we call our internal politics.” (JOP)

Ruling, as an approach, can be a powerful tool to materialize a supervisor’s desire of becoming a teacher of teachers. Thus, it can become a weapon to attain the goals of the school. As shared by the respondents, “When our supervisor asks us to attend a seminar or training workshop, or when s/he sends us for further studies, s/he first presents to us the faculty manual, as well as the relevant memos, school policies and even the constitution, so that we will not argue with her/him.” (JOP) “I think it is not ok to prioritize the seniors and only later to attend to the juniors because regardless of how long you’ve been staying in the school, you have the right to professional development. Opportunity should be given equally to all, and in the same way.” (HM)

For the improvement of the present teaching practice, aimed at providing the knowledge and skills relevant to the learners, the supervisor and teachers in this study have signified their interest and eagerness not only in the use of the structuring and ruling approaches but also in making the directive strategy inclusive, genuine, and focused on critically examining the students’ outcomes. As articulated by the respondents,

“It is really my desire to improve myself in math because I know there are a lot of things that I haven’t learned about mathematics. I have to continue my studies and consider a certain goal. I guess it is important for a teacher to continue improving herself. I know there is always a room for improvement, and doing my Master’s is one way for me to improve.”(RB) “We are trying to express the teachers’ desire by encouraging them to go for further studies. This will be for the benefit of the students and school.” (BC) “The administration expects that the teachers now are better than during the time they first entered the school. Teachers are expected to have learned from their three-year development program. For example, on my part, when I was new in this school, I had difficulty using the technology, but because of the three-year development program I improved myself and now I am already using the technology as a source of learning for my students.” (RB)

4. Discussion

Professional development, as a challenging and rewarding aspect of supportive supervision, is vital for renewing and reforming the career paths of both supervisors and teachers. Interestingly, the nature of professional development as drawn from the lived experiences of a select group of educators in Philippine secondary schools has unveiled the ability of the team players to strategize according to the educational direction. Teachers constantly need to upgrade their skills and develop new teaching strategies for the sake of the learners in today's world of dynamic values and rapid mobility [3]. Professional development is a fundamental need of teachers dealing with students inside the classroom. However, while the reality requires teachers with high competence to mold the youth, those dealing with professional development, saddled as they are with practical concerns, are no strangers to politics [41,23]. The ideal of teacher involvement is generally believed to be a key source of their professionalism, and this requires good strategy Day et al. [8,25].

In this study, collaborative strategy as portrayed by the respondents can be of great help to the key players in developing the career path of their subordinates. To draw inspiration from supervision, professional development as a process should become a visible and viable process for the empowerment of teachers and to promote professional growth and learning for the academic development of all students [32,65]. Collaborative strategy therefore involves the whole school community and encourages teachers to discuss their ongoing formation dialogically with their supervisors. Professional development should be seen as an active and constructive process that is problem-oriented, grounded in social settings and circumstances, and taking place throughout the teachers' lives Coppola et al. [3,55]. As a professional, a teacher continues to learn throughout her career path, deepens her knowledge and expertise, keeps herself updated with current developments in her area of specialization, and keeps in touch with the latest innovations in order to put them into practice inside the classroom Day et al. [8,25]. During the in-depth interview, respondents of this study have highlighted the notion of continuing and lasting professional learning as an important component of teachers' professional development activities, serving as a key factor for improving the quality of the school in a healthy political ambiance of dialogue and sharing.

Interestingly, dialoguing for professional development has become a fascinating hallmark of an effective supervisory practice. It has become the focus of teacher learning for professional activities in schools and for participation in a community of learners [40]. Career development implies that teachers are the main actors in the context of supervisory practice and interpersonal relationship [65]. Likewise, they are the main actors for the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills whereby to increase the scope of their participation and involvement in the school as their workplace [55]. By dialoguing, the professional development of teachers can derive their own stimulus and thus develop the learners' input while increasing their output [61]. In this juncture, both supervisor and teachers, as professionals, introduce a healthy political atmosphere through dialoguing mantled with freedom, justice and fairness as they acquire new knowledge, skills and values for the betterment of the learners and school.

This results in the most significant factors that determine the kind of competence, care and commitment which enable teachers and supervisors to learn at a high level of professionalism and with a profound clarity of continuous reflection, dialogue and learning [60]. Thus, the ability to facilitate dialogue among teachers can result in a collaborative team whose members learn from one another while creating momentum to fuel improvement [50,40].

Engaging in the process of professional development to become brothers for others, the supervisor and teacher create a space and place for openness which allows for academic sharing among the key players. Sharing, whose goal is instructional efficacy and professional growth [64], Glickman et al. [9,57], can give the teacher an enhanced opportunity to impart her knowledge to the students [65]. Thus, the sharing of experience is formative in nature and provides a basis for teachers to improve classroom instruction. Hirsh and Killion in [56] as cited by [40] are convinced that, when teachers work collaboratively, build on one another's experience, and use those experiences as a source of learning, they have the potential to meet nearly every challenge they face related to teaching and learning because they have the opportunity both to share expertise and to learn from colleagues. By sharing their expertise, supervisor and teacher are demonstrating their best moral fiber by gallantly assuming responsibility and respecting the human dignity of others, especially the voiceless teachers [11]. Additionally, it should be kept in mind that the sources of authority for supervision are embedded in shared ideas, not in power and position [66] as cited by [61].

As expressed by the supervisors and teachers in this study, supportive strategy as an aspect of professional development encourages the teachers to grow professionally. Supportive strategy would be meaningful and important if the initiative directly comes from the supervisor; changes in the teacher's learning can occur when the supervisor is very much supportive of her [6] as cited by [36]. This can be concretely shown by providing teachers with the resources they need for implementing and sustaining their career paths [27], such as mentoring and observing.

In this study, the power of mentoring has been found to be an effective way for a teacher to grow professionally and be an agent of change in teaching and learning. This is consistent with the findings of [13] as cited by Copriady [29], who regard mentoring as an innovative approach to develop the professionalism and competencies of teachers. Mulyana [62] cited by Copriady [29] also admitted the efficiency of this approach which provides assistance for teachers to innovate so that they gain confidence and become more competent inside the classroom. Moreover, the authors in [3] are convinced that mentoring can be a deeply rewarding experience and offer an exceptional professional development opportunity for many teachers. Although mentoring is a daunting task, yet one can reap from it powerful benefits for professional development; it can serve in all learning experiences as a key to the role of supervisors, the authenticity of their guidance and the value of their support [40].

The respondents of this study revealed that observing is a source of career opportunity for growth in the profession of teaching provided that the atmosphere is conducive. [40] Suggested that the ability to learn by observing others is rooted in a trusting environment which the participants must accept with mature and open minds and observe without judgment. In the same vein, [3] highlighted that observing a master teacher can be a powerful professional

development activity which can do much to help teachers improving their knowledge of teaching and develop skills for the excellence classroom instruction.

However, observing is not always smooth because messages could be misinterpreted or entirely lost [59]. Yet, even if the players do not listen well [38], when the key players in professional development are able to create an environment of understanding, educators will find it easier to keep the negative thoughts from interfering with the new thinking [40]. All these activities signify that the school's effort to find feasible mechanisms for supportive strategy and the teachers' endeavour to learn from them are geared towards professional development and instructional transformation.

Directive strategy demonstrates the exercise of power in professional development for the benefit of the school and the best output of the learners. This power indicates and monitors the level of success in getting others to comply with the directives [68]. This is to ensure the achievement of the vision, mission and goals of the school, particularly in the aspect of professional development [47]. Thus, teachers, in the process of carrying out their duties, should be given the opportunity to pursue their professional development even if this means getting out of their comfort zone by engaging them in various activities designed to enhance their faculty profile [35]. This research showed the effectiveness of directive strategy in stimulating the subordinates to follow the hierarchy and its policies (structuring and ruling strategies) for their own professional development. As shown by the findings, the structuring aspect of professional development still possesses impediments, such as the gap between the supervisor and teachers and the discrepancies in the selection process where political interest and favouritism are still dominant. This is a call for key players in professional development to respond wherever political interests begin to manifest themselves [17] as cited by [63]. Structuring as an approach should produce a hierarchy of authorities as a system of super ordination and subordination which aims to guarantee teachers' compliance to the directives of their supervisors; this is necessary for the implementation of the various plans for professional development [68]. Interestingly, this study noted that the professional development process emphasizes the gradation of authority in a system which pushes the subordinates to implement the career plan of the school. Rules and regulations can be exercised to eradicate the political (read: merely personal) interests of both the supervisor and teacher. The system of ruling covers the rights and duties inherent in each position and helps coordinate activities in the bureaucracy; it provides continuity of operations when there are changes in the personnel so as to ensure stable and collective action among the teachers [68]. This mode of operation is encouraged by the key players who advocate for a form of democracy which is aware of and obedient to the rules and regulations and enable them to organize themselves for the fulfilment of the institutional goals. [1] Disclosed that structuring and ruling are appropriate to professional development as a way of communicating to and showing respect for the people in position. Therefore, reform as revealed in this study should be seen from the points of view the teachers and students obtain their knowledge [31] as cited by Copriady [29], coupled with the promise of academic achievement [3]. Consequently, reform must be accompanied measuring their efforts for the improvement their professionalism in teaching [14] and focused on the call for teachers' professionalism through a continuous restructuring and revisioning of their occupational identity [8].

5. Conclusion

The fundamental role of strategic planning for professional development in supportive supervision should not be taken for granted. It can serve as the groundwork for the development and personal growth of the teaching staff and their supervisors. Providing good strategies and opportunities for lifelong learning without worrying about the political affiliation of a person can eventually achieve the desired output, which consists in the quality of the delivery of teachers and the product quality of the learners as well. Thus, collaborative, supportive and directive should be the mainstream characteristics of strategic planning. Considering these awesome and challenging responsibilities, it is believed that educational supervision can play a vital role in promoting excellence in instruction [64].

Grounded on the elements of dialoguing, sharing and mentoring, the approaches can maximize the potentials of the teachers and staff for supportive supervision. These approaches will eventually lead to the attainment of the goal of the school to promote continuous learning for the teacher as well as continuous achievement for all students [32,64].

Empowerment, transformation and reformation as the direct effects of professional development in supportive supervision provide opportunities for the key players to be more fully engaged in shaping the supervisory norms of practice in Philippine secondary schools. Effective approaches to teacher professional development are meant to develop the quality of teaching etched in the life and work of these key players in the school [2]. Everything should thus be grounded on community participation and equality.

Great teachers are great learners who are always ready to acquire new skills and knowledge, always enthusiastic in finding new ways to grow competently and adequately [3]. They do not shirk from the opportunities to introduce changes for the improvement of the quality of education for the sake of the learners.

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