

Power Dynamics in Instructional Supervision: Experiences of New School Principals in Pagadian City

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the power dynamics embedded in instructional supervision as experienced by newly appointed school principals in the Philippine basic education system. Anchored within the context of the Department of Education (DepEd), the study investigates how novice principals negotiate authority, influence, and relationships with teachers while performing supervisory functions. Using interpretative phenomenological research design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with newly appointed principals in SDO Pagadian City. Findings reveal that power in instructional supervision is not merely positional but relational, shaped by experience, trust, resistance, and institutional expectations. Themes include negotiated authority, relational tensions, adaptive leadership strategies, and evolving professional identity. The study contributes to leadership discourse by highlighting the complex interplay of power and practice in instructional supervision and offers implications for leadership development and policy enhancement.

Keywords: instructional supervision, power dynamics, school leadership, interpretive phenomenology

Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Instructional supervision is a fundamental function of school leadership that directly influences teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. It is widely recognized as a key component of instructional leadership, wherein school principals are expected to guide, support, and evaluate teachers to enhance classroom practices (Zepeda, 2025; Sergiovanni et al., 2014). Within the Philippine educational system, this expectation is institutionalized through policy frameworks such as the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, which emphasize the role of school heads in fostering professional development, reflective practice, and instructional improvement (Department of Education, 2017). Empirical studies have consistently shown that effective instructional supervision contributes to improved teacher performance and, ultimately, better student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Glickman et al., 2017).

Despite these expectations, instructional supervision is not merely a technical or procedural task; rather, it is a complex social process embedded within organizational structures and interpersonal relationships. Contemporary scholarship highlights that supervision involves ongoing interactions shaped by communication, trust, and professional norms (Glanz, 2018). One of the most critical yet often underexamined aspects of instructional supervision is power dynamics—the ways in which authority,

influence, and interpersonal relationships shape supervisory interactions between school heads and teachers. Power dynamics affect how feedback is delivered and interpreted, how decisions are negotiated, and how trust is either established or undermined within the school environment (McGhee & Stark, 2021; Blase & Blase, 2004). These dynamics underscore the reality that instructional supervision is not neutral but inherently relational and influenced by existing hierarchies and social contexts.

For new school principals, navigating these power dynamics presents a significant challenge. Transitioning from the role of teacher or teacher-leader to that of school head entails a shift in authority, responsibility, and professional identity (Daresh, 2007). However, this transition does not automatically confer legitimacy or acceptance among teachers. Instead, new principals must negotiate their authority through demonstrated competence, effective communication, and the ability to build trusting relationships (Spillane & Lee, 2014). Research suggests that novice principals often encounter resistance, role ambiguity, and challenges in asserting leadership, particularly when supervising former peers (Oplatka, 2017). As a result, instructional supervision becomes a site where leadership is not only exercised but also contested and socially constructed.

Existing literature on instructional supervision has largely focused on its effectiveness in improving teacher performance and student outcomes (Zepeda, 2025; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). While these studies provide valuable insights, there remains a significant gap in understanding how power relations influence supervisory practices, particularly from the perspective of new school principals. Issues such as teacher resistance, authority negotiation, role conflict, and relational trust are often underexplored, despite their critical role in shaping the success or failure of supervisory processes (Glanz, 2021; Blase & Blase, 2004). Moreover, much of the existing research tends to emphasize technical aspects of supervision, overlooking the socio-political dimensions that characterize real-world school settings.

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the power dynamics in instructional supervision as experienced by new school principals in DepEd SDO Pagadian City. By focusing on principals with limited tenure in their leadership roles, the study aims to capture the complexities of transitioning into positions of authority and the strategies employed to navigate supervisory challenges. It recognizes that instructional supervision is not a purely procedural activity but a socially constructed practice shaped by power, relationships, and contextual realities (Sergiovanni et al., 2014).

Through a qualitative inquiry, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how new principals experience, interpret, and manage power dynamics in their supervisory roles. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of more context-sensitive and relationally grounded supervisory practices, inform leadership preparation and professional development programs, and support policy enhancements within the Department of Education. Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of examining instructional supervision through a critical lens—one that acknowledges the central role of power in shaping educational leadership and seeks to promote more equitable, reflective, and effective supervisory practices.

Review of Related Literature

This section critically synthesizes literature on instructional supervision, instructional leadership, and power dynamics in education. Rather than treating these constructs as independent, this review advances the argument that instructional supervision is fundamentally a site of power negotiation, particularly for newly appointed school principals. The discussion integrates global and Philippine-based studies, emphasizing theoretical tensions, empirical inconsistencies, and contextual gaps.

Instructional Supervision as a Relational and Power-Laden Practice

Instructional supervision has undergone a significant conceptual shift from a predominantly technical and bureaucratic function toward a more complex, relational, and contextually embedded practice. Early models framed supervision as a structured process of observation, evaluation, and feedback aimed at ensuring instructional quality and accountability (Glickman et al., 2020; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). While these models provided a systematic foundation, they have been increasingly critiqued for their mechanistic assumptions and limited attention to the social and relational dimensions of teaching and leadership. Contemporary scholarship instead positions instructional supervision as a developmental, dialogic, and socially situated practice that extends beyond procedural compliance to encompass professional learning, reflective engagement, and relational influence (Glanz, 2018; Zepeda, 2025).

Within the Philippine educational system, instructional supervision is formally institutionalized through policy frameworks of the Department of Education, particularly the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS). These frameworks articulate a developmental vision of supervision, emphasizing continuous professional growth, reflective practice, and instructional improvement (Department of Education, 2017, 2018). Recent policy directions further reinforce this orientation by promoting flexible classroom observation approaches, coaching, and formative feedback mechanisms (Department of Education, 2026). However, despite these policy intentions, empirical evidence suggests a persistent disjunction between the normative ideals of supervision and its practical enactment.

Studies conducted in the Philippine context reveal that instructional supervision often remains compliance-driven and documentation-heavy, shaped by bureaucratic demands and accountability pressures (Saycon & Muegna, 2026). This misalignment reflects a broader structural tension inherent in supervisory systems: the dual role of supervision as both a developmental support mechanism and an evaluative accountability tool. While instructional leadership theory emphasizes the role of supervision in improving teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2005), its integration with performance management systems can transform it into a form of surveillance, thereby altering its meaning and impact in practice. From a Foucauldian perspective, this duality reflects the operation of disciplinary power, where observation and evaluation function as mechanisms of control, normalization, and regulation (Foucault, 1977). Consequently, teachers may exhibit outward compliance while simultaneously disengaging from the developmental intent of supervision. This contradiction underscores a critical insight in the literature: the effectiveness of instructional supervision is not determined solely by its structural design but by the relational conditions under which it is enacted. Research consistently demonstrates that supervision is most effective when grounded in trust, professional respect, and meaningful dialogue (McGhee & Stark, 2021). When principals engage teachers through collaborative and reflective interactions, supervision becomes a vehicle for professional growth. Conversely, when supervision is perceived as punitive or evaluative, it may generate resistance, anxiety, and diminished motivation (Glanz, 2021). These findings highlight the inherently relational nature of supervision and the central role of interpersonal dynamics in shaping its outcomes.

The literature further suggests that instructional supervision is a key site of power negotiation within schools. While principals occupy formal supervisory roles, their authority is neither absolute nor automatically accepted. Instead, it is mediated by teachers' perceptions of legitimacy, competence, and fairness (Blase & Blase, 2004). This aligns with sociological and distributed leadership perspectives, which emphasize that authority is socially constructed and enacted through interaction rather than merely

derived from positional status (Spillane, 2006; Weber, 1947). In practice, this means that principals must continually negotiate their authority through relational engagement, professional credibility, and contextual sensitivity. These dynamics are particularly pronounced among newly appointed principals, who often enter leadership roles without established relational capital or institutional legitimacy.

Empirical studies indicate that novice principals frequently encounter challenges in asserting authority, especially when working with more experienced teachers or within established school cultures (Spillane & Lee, 2014). In the Philippine context, recent research highlights the tension experienced by new school leaders as they attempt to balance policy enforcement with relationship-building, often navigating competing expectations of authority and collegiality (Prestoza & Naldoza, 2025). This transitional phase underscores the importance of understanding supervision not merely as a leadership task but as a process of identity formation and legitimacy construction.

The literature further reveals a strong connection between power dynamics and teacher responses, particularly in the form of resistance. Rather than being viewed solely as an obstacle, resistance can be interpreted as a form of professional agency, reflecting teachers' interpretations of supervisory intent and organizational conditions. This perspective aligns with Foucauldian theory, which posits that power inevitably generates counter-power, making resistance an inherent feature of social interaction (Foucault, 1977).

In supervisory contexts, resistance may manifest as compliance, negotiation, or subtle disengagement, each representing different forms of response to perceived authority.

In addition to relational and power-related factors, organizational and systemic conditions significantly shape supervisory practices. Variations in school context, teacher readiness, leadership capacity, and resource availability influence how supervision is implemented. Time constraints, administrative workload, and limited professional development opportunities further constrain the ability of principals to engage in meaningful supervisory practices (Cansoy et al., 2024). These challenges highlight the need to situate instructional supervision within its broader institutional environment rather than treating it as an isolated leadership function.

The literature points to a reconceptualization of instructional supervision as a multidimensional, relational, and socio-political practice. It is simultaneously shaped by policy frameworks, enacted through interpersonal relationships, and mediated by power dynamics and institutional conditions. The persistent gap between policy and practice, the tension between development and evaluation, and the centrality of trust and legitimacy all suggest that supervision cannot be understood through technical models alone.

This body of research provides a strong foundation for the present study, which seeks to examine how newly appointed school principals experience and navigate power dynamics in instructional supervision. By foregrounding lived experiences and relational processes, the study contributes to a more nuanced and context-sensitive understanding of instructional leadership in the Philippine setting.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is widely recognized as a central dimension of school leadership, positioning principals as key agents in improving teaching and learning. Contemporary scholarship conceptualizes instructional leadership not merely as administrative oversight but as a developmental and relational practice that directly and indirectly influences student outcomes through its impact on teacher quality and professional collaboration (Hallinger, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008). In this sense, instructional supervision

is not an isolated function but a core enactment of instructional leadership, where school heads guide, support, and evaluate instructional practices.

Scholars consistently emphasize that instructional supervision is embedded within instructional leadership and reflects both its technical and moral dimensions. Sergiovanni et al. (2014) argue that supervision extends beyond managerial tasks, constituting a moral and intellectual responsibility that fosters a culture of continuous improvement. Similarly, Zepeda et al. (2020) highlight that effective supervision integrates classroom observation, feedback, coaching, and professional dialogue, thereby aligning teacher development with broader school goals. These perspectives reinforce the idea that instructional leadership is enacted through ongoing engagement with teaching practice rather than episodic evaluation.

A critical strand in the literature underscores the relational foundation of instructional leadership. Leadership effectiveness is mediated not only by formal authority but by the quality of relationships established within the school. Leithwood et al. (2004) emphasize that leadership influences student outcomes indirectly through its impact on teacher motivation, collaboration, and commitment. Likewise, Robinson (2011) identifies trust, communication, and professional dialogue as key mechanisms through which instructional leaders improve teaching practices. These findings suggest that instructional leadership operates less through control and more through influence, trust-building, and shared meaning-making.

Within the Philippine context, instructional leadership is institutionalized through policy frameworks of the Department of Education, particularly the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH). These frameworks define the principal's role as one that supports teacher development, promotes reflective practice, and ensures alignment of instruction with curricular standards (Department of Education, 2017, 2020). While these policies provide a formal structure for instructional leadership, empirical studies suggest that their implementation is shaped by contextual factors such as school conditions, leadership capacity, and interpersonal dynamics. As a result, instructional leadership in practice often reflects a dynamic interplay between policy expectations and relational realities.

The literature also highlights the importance of leadership identity development in shaping instructional leadership practices. Leadership is not a fixed set of competencies but an evolving process influenced by both personal and contextual factors (Day et al., 2009). Tschannen-Moran (2004) further emphasizes the role of trust and self-efficacy in leadership effectiveness, suggesting that leaders' beliefs about their capabilities influence how they engage with teachers and enact supervision. From this perspective, instructional leadership is not only about what principals do but also about how they understand and position themselves within their leadership role.

This developmental dimension is particularly significant for newly appointed principals. Transitioning from the role of teacher to school leader requires a redefinition of professional identity, relationships, and authority. Instructional supervision becomes a critical context through which new principals construct and negotiate their leadership identity. Through supervisory interactions, they interpret their roles, test their authority, and refine their leadership approaches. As Komives et al. (2005) argue, leadership identity is not automatically established upon appointment but develops through experience, reflection, and interaction.

Recent studies in the Philippine context further reinforce the importance of reflective practice in leadership development. Principals who engage in reflection are better able to adapt their supervisory approaches, respond to contextual challenges, and align their practices with both institutional expectations and personal

leadership values. This suggests that effective instructional leadership requires not only technical competence but also continuous learning, reflexivity, and relational awareness.

The literature presents instructional leadership as a multidimensional and evolving practice that integrates supervision, relationships, identity, and context. While policy frameworks define its structure, its effectiveness depends on how principals enact supervision through trust, communication, and adaptive leadership. For newly appointed principals, instructional leadership is not simply a role to be performed but a process of becoming, shaped by their experiences in instructional supervision and their ongoing negotiation of authority and identity.

Power Dynamics in Educational Supervision

Power is a central, though often implicit, dimension of educational leadership. Traditional perspectives conceptualize power as hierarchical and derived from formal authority; however, contemporary theories—particularly those influenced by Michel Foucault—reframe power as relational, dynamic, and embedded in everyday practices (Foucault, 1977). In educational settings, power is not merely exercised through formal designation but through everyday interactions, decision-making processes, and institutional routines.

In the context of instructional supervision, power is enacted through practices such as classroom observation, feedback, evaluation, documentation, and policy implementation. Within the Philippine public school system, these practices are strongly shaped by frameworks of the Department of Education, including the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS). While these frameworks provide structure and standardization, local studies suggest that their implementation often reflects a tension between compliance and professional support. For instance, Honculada (2023), in a BERF-funded study, found that teachers respond more positively to supervision when it is perceived as supportive and developmental rather than evaluative or compliance-driven. Similarly, Prestoza (2023) reported that instructional supervision in Philippine schools is frequently constrained by administrative workload and policy demands, which may limit meaningful engagement between principals and teachers.

Empirical evidence further indicates that supervisory power operates through both positional authority and relational influence, with relational forms of power—such as expert and referent power—being more effective in promoting teacher cooperation and professional growth (Cook et al., 2018; Moshtari et al., 2025). In the Philippine setting, this is reinforced by studies showing that teachers' acceptance of supervision depends largely on the principal's instructional competence, interpersonal skills, and ability to foster trust (Wairimu, 2016; Honculada, 2023). These findings highlight that authority in schools is not simply exercised but must be earned and sustained through relationships.

The sociological perspective of Max Weber provides further insight, emphasizing that authority is effective only when it is perceived as legitimate by followers (Weber, 1947). This is particularly relevant in Philippine schools, where cultural values such as *pakikisama* (harmonious relationships) and respect for interpersonal dynamics shape leadership practices. Complementing this, Distributed Leadership Theory (Spillane, 2006) underscores that leadership is co-constructed through interactions among school actors rather than exercised solely by the principal. Local research supports this view, noting that instructional leadership in Philippine schools often involves collaboration with master teachers, coordinators, and teacher leaders, thereby diffusing authority across the organization (Prestoza, 2023).

For newly appointed principals, these dynamics become more complex. Although they hold formal authority, their legitimacy is often still being established. Philippine-based studies on novice school leaders reveal that new principals frequently encounter challenges in asserting authority, particularly when supervising more experienced teachers or former colleagues. Prestoza and Naldoza (2025) observed that beginning principals experience significant tension between enforcing policies and maintaining collegial relationships, highlighting the relational demands of leadership in local school contexts. Similarly, studies conducted in Philippine divisions indicate that new school heads often rely on relationship-building, communication, and gradual influence rather than immediate assertion of authority.

This situation creates a critical paradox: newly appointed principals are expected to exercise authority as instructional leaders, yet they must simultaneously negotiate legitimacy and build trust to make that authority effective. As a result, instructional supervision becomes a process of negotiated authority rather than imposed control. Teachers do not automatically accept supervisory authority; instead, their responses are shaped by perceptions of fairness, competence, and relational sensitivity (Blase & Blase, 2004; Honculada, 2023).

The literature further reveals a strong linkage between power dynamics and teacher responses, particularly in the form of resistance. In Philippine schools, resistance may not always be overt but can manifest as passive compliance, minimal engagement, or subtle forms of disagreement. Rather than viewing resistance solely as a barrier, recent scholarship interprets it as a form of professional agency, reflecting teachers' interpretations of supervisory intent and institutional conditions. This aligns with Foucault's assertion that power inevitably generates counter-power, suggesting that resistance is an inherent feature of supervisory relationships (Foucault, 1977).

Taken together, both international and Philippine studies underscore that instructional supervision is not merely a technical or procedural activity but a relational and socio-political practice shaped by context, culture, and interaction. In the Philippine setting, where policy expectations intersect with relational norms and institutional realities, power in supervision is continuously constructed, contested, and redefined. For newly appointed principals, navigating these dynamics is not only a challenge but a critical aspect of developing effective instructional leadership.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in an integrated theoretical framework that conceptualizes instructional supervision as both a leadership function and a site of power negotiation. It draws from Power Relations Theory (Foucault, 1977), Instructional Leadership Theory, Weber's sociocultural theory of authority, and Leadership Identity Development. Collectively, these perspectives provide a robust lens for examining how newly appointed school principals experience, exercise, and negotiate authority within the context of instructional supervision.

At the foundation of this framework is Power Relations Theory, influenced by Michel Foucault, which suggests that power is not a fixed attribute held solely by those in formal positions but is instead relational, dynamic, and embedded in everyday interactions (Foucault, 1977). Power operates through discourse, practices, and institutional routines, shaping how individuals act, respond, and relate to one another. In the context of instructional supervision, this perspective suggests that supervision is not merely a top-down process of evaluation but a socially constructed interaction in which authority is continuously exercised, interpreted, resisted, and negotiated. This is particularly relevant for newly appointed principals, whose formal authority may not automatically translate into influence or acceptance within the school setting.

Complementing this perspective is Instructional Leadership Theory, which emphasizes the principal's central role in improving teaching and learning through supervision, feedback, and professional development. Instructional leadership frames supervision as a deliberate and strategic practice aimed at enhancing instructional quality and student outcomes (Hallinger, 2005; Zepeda, 2025). Within this framework, the principal is not merely an evaluator but a pedagogical leader who supports teachers through coaching, monitoring, and capacity-building. However, while instructional leadership highlights what principals are expected to do, it does not fully explain the complexities of how authority is enacted in practice—an area addressed by power relations theory.

The framework is further enriched by Weber's Sociocultural Theory of Authority, which distinguishes between different forms of legitimate authority. According to Max Weber, authority is sustained not only by formal position (legal-rational authority) but also by the extent to which it is recognized and accepted by followers (Weber, 1947). In school settings, this implies that while newly appointed principals hold formal authority, their effectiveness depends on their ability to establish legitimacy, credibility, and trust among teachers. This perspective is crucial in understanding why new principals often encounter resistance or must negotiate their authority in supervisory situations.

In addition, the study draws on Leadership Identity Development Theory, which explains how individuals come to see themselves as leaders through experience, reflection, and interaction. Leadership identity is not immediately acquired upon appointment but develops over time as individuals engage with the expectations and realities of their role (Komives et al., 2005). For newly appointed principals, instructional supervision becomes a key context through which they construct, test, and refine their leadership identity, particularly in relation to authority, relationships, and decision-making.

These theoretical perspectives are situated within the Philippine educational context, where instructional leadership is guided by policy frameworks that emphasize collaboration, teacher development, and shared responsibility. The Department of Education promotes standards such as the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and School Heads (PPSSH), which underscore the importance of reflective practice, professional support, and participatory leadership (Department of Education, 2017, 2020). These policies suggest that effective supervision is not purely hierarchical but involves collaborative and developmental approaches, further reinforcing the relevance of examining power dynamics in practice.

Taken together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon under study. Power Relations Theory explains the fluid and negotiated nature of authority; Instructional Leadership Theory establishes supervision as a core leadership function; Weber's theory clarifies the importance of legitimacy in authority; and Leadership Identity Development explains how new principals evolve in their roles.

In this integrated view, instructional supervision is understood not simply as a procedural task but as a dynamic, relational, and context-bound practice. Newly appointed principals do not succeed by merely asserting authority; rather, they succeed by earning trust, building relationships, adapting to context, and continuously negotiating their role as instructional leaders. This theoretical framework therefore provides a strong foundation for analyzing how power dynamics shape the experiences and practices of new school principals in instructional supervision.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to explore the power dynamics in instructional supervision as experienced by newly appointed school principals in selected public schools under the Department of Education, particularly

within the Schools Division Office of Pagadian City. It seeks to generate an in-depth understanding of how novice school leaders experience, interpret, and navigate supervisory practices within the context of authority, relationships, and policy implementation.

Central Question

How do newly appointed school principals experience and navigate power dynamics in instructional supervision?

Sub-Questions

1. How do newly appointed school principals describe their lived experiences in conducting instructional supervision, particularly in relation to classroom observation practices, feedback processes, and day-to-day supervisory routines?
2. How is authority constructed, exercised, and negotiated in their supervisory interactions with teachers, including situations where authority is accepted, challenged, or resisted?
3. What challenges do new school principals encounter in exercising authority during instructional supervision, particularly in managing resistance, role ambiguity, and professional relationships?
4. What strategies do principals employ to negotiate power, build trust, and maintain collaborative relationships with teachers while fulfilling their supervisory responsibilities?
5. How do newly appointed principals make meaning of their role as instructional supervisors and develop their leadership identity over time, including their perceptions of power and the influence of policies such as RPMS and PPST on their practices?

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on exploring the power dynamics in instructional supervision as experienced by newly appointed school principals in selected public elementary and secondary schools under the Department of Education, specifically within the Schools Division Office of Pagadian City. The participants consisted of school heads with one (1) to three (3) years of experience in the principalship, representing the early stage of leadership transition. All participants had prior professional experience as classroom teachers, teacher-in-charge, head teachers or program specialists, providing them with foundational knowledge of school operations prior to assuming leadership roles.

The study examined the participants' lived experiences in instructional supervision, with particular emphasis on how they navigate authority, interact with teachers, implement supervisory policies, and construct their leadership identity. It specifically investigated dimensions such as the exercise and negotiation of power, teacher responses to supervision, challenges in asserting authority, and strategies employed to build trust and maintain professional relationships.

As a qualitative study, the scope was limited to in-depth exploration rather than generalization. The findings were based on the perspectives of ten (10) purposively selected participants and, therefore, reflect context-specific experiences within the selected division. The study did not aim to measure the effectiveness of instructional supervision in terms of quantitative outcomes such as student achievement or teacher performance ratings.

Several limitations are acknowledged in this study. First, the study was confined to newly appointed principals, excluding veteran school heads with longer leadership experience. As such, the findings may not capture the perspectives and practices of more experienced principals who may have developed

different approaches to supervision over time. Second, the study was limited to public school settings and did not include private schools, which may operate under different governance structures and supervisory expectations. Third, the reliance on self-reported data through interviews may be subject to biases such as social desirability or selective recall, although efforts were made to encourage openness and ensure confidentiality.

Additionally, the study was conducted within a specific geographic and institutional context, which may limit the transferability of findings to other divisions or educational systems. However, by providing rich and detailed descriptions of the context and participants, the study allows readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar settings.

Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the complexities of instructional supervision and contributes to a deeper understanding of how power dynamics shape leadership practices among new school principals.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to contribute meaningfully to both theory and practice by providing a deeper understanding of power dynamics in instructional supervision, particularly from the perspective of newly appointed school principals. The insights generated may benefit the following stakeholders:

School Heads. For practicing and aspiring school leaders, this study provides valuable insights into the complexities of instructional supervision beyond its technical aspects. It highlights the importance of relational, adaptive, and reflective leadership strategies in managing power, building trust, and navigating resistance. The findings may serve as a practical guide for new principals in strengthening their supervisory practices and developing a more nuanced approach to leadership.

Teachers. The study underscores the significance of collaborative, trust-based supervisory relationships in fostering professional growth. By bringing attention to how power dynamics influence feedback, communication, and engagement, the findings may contribute to more supportive and empowering supervisory environments. This can enhance teachers' openness to feedback, professional dialogue, and continuous improvement.

For Policy Makers and Educational Institutions. This study offers empirical evidence on how instructional supervision policies are enacted in real school contexts, particularly within the Schools Division Office of Pagadian City. By illuminating the gap between policy intentions and actual supervisory practices, the findings may inform the refinement of existing frameworks such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and for School Heads (PPSSH). Moreover, the study may support the development of more context-responsive leadership policies and capacity-building programs that recognize the relational and socio-political dimensions of supervision. Institutions involved in the preparation and development of school leaders may benefit from the study by integrating its findings into training curricula. Specifically, the results may inform the design of programs that emphasize relational competence, emotional intelligence, and leadership transition, particularly for newly appointed principals. This can help bridge the gap between theoretical preparation and the realities of school leadership practice.

Future Researchers. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on instructional supervision and leadership within the Philippine educational context. By focusing on power dynamics and lived experiences, it opens avenues for further research on the socio-cultural and organizational aspects of school leadership. Future researchers may build on these findings by exploring similar phenomena in

different contexts, employing alternative methodologies, or examining related variables such as teacher motivation, school climate, and leadership effectiveness.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodological framework used to explore power dynamics in instructional supervision as experienced by newly appointed school principals in Schools Division Office (SDO) Pagadian City.

Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological qualitative research design, specifically grounded in interpretive phenomenology. Phenomenology seeks to understand how individuals construct meaning from their lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Unlike descriptive phenomenology, interpretive phenomenology allows for deeper analysis of context, language, and power structures, aligning with the study's theoretical grounding in Foucauldian power relations. This design was appropriate as the study sought to understand the lived experiences of newly appointed principals in navigating instructional supervision, particularly in relation to authority, resistance, policy, and identity.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected public elementary and secondary schools under the Department of Education, specifically within the Schools Division Office in Pagadian City. This locale was deliberately chosen as it reflects the researcher's own professional context as a newly appointed school principal. Being directly immersed in the supervisory environment provided a deeper, first-hand understanding of the realities,

challenges, and complexities of instructional supervision. It also allowed the researcher to closely examine how power dynamics unfold in actual practice, particularly within the framework of DepEd policies such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), thereby making the inquiry both relevant and grounded in lived experience.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study consisted of ten (10) newly appointed school principals from selected public elementary and secondary schools under the Department of Education, specifically within the Schools Division Office in Pagadian City. These participants were purposively selected based on criteria aligned with the objectives of the study.

First, all respondents had 1 to 3 years of experience as school principals, placing them within the early stage of their leadership tenure. This period is widely considered critical, as newly appointed principals are still transitioning into their roles and actively negotiating their authority, identity, and leadership practices. Their limited tenure makes them particularly suitable for examining the dynamics of instructional supervision, especially in terms of how power is exercised, perceived, and managed.

Second, the respondents were actively engaged in instructional supervision as part of their official duties. This includes conducting classroom observations, providing feedback to teachers, implementing supervisory tools such as the Classroom Observation Tool (COT), and aligning practices with DepEd

frameworks like the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH). Their active involvement ensured that the data gathered would be grounded in current and authentic supervisory experiences.

Third, participation in the study was voluntary, and all respondents expressed willingness to share their experiences. This willingness is essential in qualitative research, as it promotes openness, honesty, and depth in the data collection process. The participants' readiness to reflect on their supervisory practices allowed for richer insights into the complexities of power dynamics within instructional supervision.

The selection of the respondents was guided by the principle of purposive sampling, ensuring that participants possessed the relevant experiences and characteristics necessary to provide meaningful and context-rich data. Their shared profile as newly appointed principals, combined with their active supervisory roles, made them well-positioned to articulate the challenges, strategies, and realities of navigating power dynamics in instructional supervision within the local school context (Patton, 2015).

For confidentiality and ethical considerations, participants were assigned codes from SP1 to SP10.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument utilized in this study was a semi-structured interview guide designed to elicit rich, in-depth descriptions of the participants' lived experiences in instructional supervision. The use of a semi-structured format was deemed appropriate for this qualitative inquiry, as it allowed for both consistency across participants and flexibility to explore emerging insights relevant to the study's focus on power dynamics.

The interview guide was systematically developed based on the statement of the problem, existing literature on instructional supervision and power relations, and the study's theoretical framework. It consisted primarily of open-ended questions, allowing participants to articulate their experiences, perceptions, and insights in their own words. Probing questions were strategically used to clarify responses, elicit elaboration, and deepen reflection, thereby enhancing the richness and depth of the data. This approach is consistent with qualitative research principles that prioritize participants' voices and meanings.

The interview guide was structured into several key sections to ensure comprehensive data collection. The first section focused on the participant profile, gathering background information such as role, years of experience, prior positions, and school context. This provided essential contextual grounding for interpreting the participants' responses.

The core section of the interview guide was organized around thematic domains directly aligned with the research objectives. These included: (a) lived experiences in instructional supervision, which explored participants' supervisory practices such as classroom observations and feedback mechanisms; (b) manifestations of power in supervision, which examined how authority is perceived, exercised, and received; (c) challenges in exercising authority, which captured issues such as resistance, role ambiguity, and supervisory difficulties; (d) negotiation and management of power, which focused on strategies used by principals to balance authority and relationships; and (e) meaning-making and leadership identity, which explored how participants interpret their roles and develop their leadership approaches over time. Additionally, a set of reflective and deepening questions was included to probe participants' perspectives on policy influences, as well as their recommendations for improving supervisory practices.

To ensure content validity, the interview guide underwent a thorough review and questions were carefully aligned with the study's objectives to ensure that each item contributed meaningfully to addressing the

research problem. The interview maintained a flexible structure, enabling the researcher to follow relevant lines of inquiry that emerged during the interviews while still maintaining coherence and comparability across participants. The semi-structured interview guide served as a robust and context-sensitive instrument, allowing for a nuanced exploration of power dynamics in instructional supervision as experienced by newly appointed school principals.

Research Procedure

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher secured formal permission from the appropriate authorities within the Department of Education, particularly the Schools Division Office of Pagadian City. A formal letter of request was submitted to the Schools Division Supervisor, clearly outlining the purpose of the study, its scope, and the ethical considerations involved. Approval was obtained before any data collection activities commenced.

Following institutional clearance, the researcher identified and purposively selected ten (10) newly appointed school principals who met the inclusion criteria of the study. Each potential participant was personally contacted and formally invited to participate. They were provided with an informed consent form detailing the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw at any time, and the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Upon securing informed consent, interview schedules were arranged at a time and platform most convenient for the participants. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through online platforms, depending on accessibility and participant preference. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, allowing sufficient time for participants to share detailed accounts of their experiences in instructional supervision.

With the participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate capture of responses. In addition, the researcher maintained field notes to document non-verbal cues, contextual details, and initial analytic reflections that could support data interpretation. The use of both audio recordings and field notes enhanced the depth and reliability of the collected data.

After the completion of each interview, the recorded data were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were then carefully reviewed and cross-checked against the audio recordings to ensure completeness, accuracy, and fidelity to the participants' original responses. This process ensured that the data were prepared systematically and rigorously for subsequent analysis.

Treatment of Data

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method was selected for its flexibility and suitability in examining participants' lived experiences, particularly in exploring the nuanced and socially constructed nature of power dynamics in instructional supervision.

The analysis began with data familiarization, wherein all interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. The researcher engaged in repeated and careful reading of the transcripts to gain a deep understanding of the content and to become immersed in the data. This initial phase allowed the identification of preliminary insights and patterns relevant to the research objectives.

Following familiarization, the researcher proceeded to initial coding. Significant statements and meaningful segments of the data were identified and systematically labeled with codes. These codes captured key ideas related to the study, particularly concepts associated with power, authority, resistance,

relationships, and supervisory practices. Coding was conducted iteratively, allowing new codes to emerge as the analysis progressed.

The next phase involved theme development, where related codes were grouped into broader categories. Through this process, patterns and recurring ideas across participants' responses were identified. These patterns reflected common experiences and perspectives, such as negotiation of authority, experiences of conflict, and the development of trust within supervisory relationships.

The researcher then undertook theme review and refinement to ensure that the identified themes accurately represented the data. This involved revisiting the coded extracts and the full dataset to verify coherence, consistency, and distinctiveness among themes. Themes were refined, merged, or redefined as necessary to ensure analytical clarity and alignment with the study's focus.

The final stage involved interpretation, wherein the themes were analyzed in relation to the study's theoretical framework, including perspectives on power (e.g., Foucauldian concepts) and instructional leadership. This process enabled the researcher to move beyond description and provide deeper insights into how power dynamics are experienced and managed by new school principals.

Through this rigorous and iterative analytic process, five major themes emerged:

1. Negotiated Authority
2. Teacher Resistance and Power Struggles
3. Relational Leadership as a Strategy
4. Tension Between Policy and Practice
5. Evolving Leadership Identity

These themes served as the foundation for the presentation, analysis, and discussion of findings in Chapter 4, providing a coherent and meaningful interpretation of the participants' experiences.

Ethical Consideration

This study adhered to established ethical standards to ensure the protection, dignity, and rights of all participants throughout the research process. Given the sensitive nature of exploring power dynamics in instructional supervision—particularly within professional and institutional contexts—special attention was given to minimizing potential risks, ensuring voluntary participation, and safeguarding participants from any possible professional or relational consequences. Ethical research practice is essential in qualitative inquiry, as it fosters trust, protects participants, and enhances the credibility of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Informed Consent. Prior to data collection, all participants were provided with a detailed informed consent form. This document clearly explained the purpose of the study, the research procedures involved, and the intended use of the data for academic purposes. Participants were explicitly informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without any penalty or negative consequences. The use of audio recording during interviews was also explained, and consent was obtained before any recording took place. This process ensured that participants made informed decisions regarding their involvement in the study (Orb et al., 2001).

Confidentiality and Anonymity. To ensure confidentiality, the identities of all participants were protected throughout the research process. Each participant was assigned a code (SP1 to SP10), which was used in all transcripts, analyses, tables, and reports. No identifying personal or professional information was included in the documentation of findings. This measure was particularly important given that the study involved reflections on supervisory practices and institutional dynamics, which could be sensitive

in nature. Protecting anonymity helps prevent potential repercussions and encourages participants to share their experiences openly and honestly (Patton, 2015).

Voluntary Participation. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Participants were informed that their decision to participate or withdraw would not affect their employment status, professional relationships, or standing within the Department of Education. No form of coercion, pressure, or undue influence was applied during recruitment or data collection. This ensured that participants' responses were authentic and freely given, which is essential for maintaining ethical integrity in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Privacy and Data Security. All data collected in this study were handled with strict confidentiality. Interview recordings, transcripts, and field notes were securely stored in password-protected digital files accessible only to the researcher. Audio recordings were used solely for transcription purposes, and identifying information was removed during the transcription process. All data were used exclusively for research purposes and were not shared with unauthorized individuals. These measures ensured compliance with ethical standards for data protection and privacy (Miles et al., 2014).

Respect for Participants and Institutional Sensitivity. Throughout the study, participants were treated with respect, professionalism, and sensitivity. Their experiences, perspectives, and insights were valued and represented faithfully in the analysis and reporting of findings. The researcher remained mindful of the institutional context and ensured that the presentation of results did not harm the reputation of individuals or the organization. Ethical research conduct was maintained at all stages, recognizing the importance of protecting both participants and the institutional environment in which the study was conducted (Patton, 2015).

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the rigor and quality of this qualitative inquiry, the researcher employed strategies aligned with the four criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These criteria serve as standards for evaluating the validity and reliability of qualitative research.

Credibility. In this study, credibility was established through prolonged engagement with participants and the use of in-depth, semi-structured interviews that allowed school principals to articulate their lived experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding instructional supervision. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and repeatedly reviewed to ensure accuracy. Additionally, selected verbatim excerpts were used in the presentation of findings to faithfully represent participants' voices. Clarifications were sought when necessary to ensure that interpretations accurately reflected participants' intended meanings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Transferability. This was achieved by providing rich, thick descriptions of the research setting, participants, and context of the study. Detailed information about the school environment, participant characteristics, and supervisory practices enables readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings, particularly within the Philippine public school system (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability. In this study, dependability was ensured through a systematic and transparent approach to data collection and analysis. The procedures for conducting interviews, transcribing data, coding, and developing themes were clearly documented. An audit trail was maintained to provide a detailed account

of how data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted. This allows other researchers to follow the process and assess the consistency of the findings (Miles et al., 2014).

Confirmability. Interpretations and conclusions were based on the participants' actual responses, supported by direct quotations and systematic coding. The researcher also engaged in reflexivity, continuously reflecting on personal assumptions and potential biases throughout the research process. This practice helped ensure that the findings emerged from the data and not from preconceived notions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Chapter 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the lived experiences of newly appointed school principals in instructional supervision. Through thematic analysis of the interview data, five major themes emerged: (1) Negotiated Authority, (2) Teacher Resistance and Power Struggles, (3) Relational Leadership as a Strategy, (4) Tension Between Policy and Practice, and (5) Evolving Leadership Identity. These themes highlight the complex, contextual, and relational nature of instructional supervision, particularly among novice school leaders. The discussion integrates verbatim excerpts from participants.

Negotiated Authority

The findings indicate that authority among newly appointed principals is not automatically conferred by position; rather, it is continuously negotiated through interactions with teachers. Participants consistently described authority as something that must be earned through demonstrated competence, consistency in decision-making, and the ability to build professional relationships. During their early years in the role, many principals encountered skepticism, particularly from teachers with longer tenure or prior collegial relationships with them.

As one principal reflected, *"When I started, I thought being principal meant automatic authority. But I realized quickly that teachers were observing me first—how I speak, how I decide, how consistent I am"* (SP 3). This highlights how authority is initially tested through everyday leadership practices. Similarly, principals who were promoted within the same school faced challenges in redefining professional boundaries. As shared by another principal, *"I came from the same school, so some teachers still saw me as their co-teacher. I had to slowly establish boundaries without damaging relationships"* (SP 6). These experiences demonstrate that authority is not imposed but gradually established through relational work. Further experiences reveal that authority is scrutinized even in routine decisions. As one participant noted, *"Even small decisions were being observed... I had to be consistent, or else they would question my leadership"* (SP 7). Another principal emphasized the importance of professional competence, stating, *"There are times when I have to prove that I know the curriculum well... that's when they start respecting my feedback"* (SP 2).

Participants further emphasized that legitimacy develops over time through fairness and expertise. As one principal explained, *"Authority, for me, is something you prove over time. If they see you are fair and knowledgeable, that's when they start to follow"* (SP 1). Others recognized the importance of communication in strengthening legitimacy, with one noting, *"If I listen first and explain my decisions, they are more willing to accept them"* (SP 10). Such accounts reinforce the idea that leadership authority is grounded in trust and professional credibility rather than formal designation alone.

These findings affirm that authority is socially constructed and context-dependent. Consistent with James Spillane (2006), leadership emerges through interactions rather than formal designation. Similarly, Max Weber (1947) asserts that authority becomes legitimate only when recognized by followers. In this study, principals transitioned from positional authority to relational legitimacy, underscoring that authority is continuously negotiated within the school setting.

This relational dimension of leadership is particularly salient in the Philippine context. Evidence suggests that school heads' effectiveness in instructional supervision depends largely on their ability to establish trust, demonstrate competence, and engage teachers collaboratively (Dioso, 2024). This reinforces the conclusion that authority is not a fixed attribute of the position but a negotiated outcome of daily interactions, professional conduct, and sustained relational engagement.

Teacher Resistance and Power Struggles

Another prominent theme is the presence of teacher resistance and subtle power struggles. New school principals recounted experiences where senior teachers questioned their decisions, challenged feedback, or exhibited passive resistance. These dynamics were particularly evident when principals were younger or newly promoted within the same school.

The findings suggest that resistance is not merely oppositional behavior but may reflect deeper concerns about trust, competence, and change. Thus, power struggles become part of the adjustment process between new principals and established teaching staff.

The principals shared the following experiences of being challenged:

SP 2: *"Some senior teachers would say, 'We've been doing this longer than you.' It's not direct resistance, but you can feel it."*

SP 8: *They would nod during conferences but not apply the suggestions."*

SP 4: *"I had one teacher who openly questioned my observation notes. It made me doubt myself at first."*

Resistance was often indirect, reflecting deeper relational dynamics. One principal observed, *"They don't openly disagree, but you can see it in their actions—delays, avoidance"* (SP 6). Another added, *"There are times when teachers only comply when I am present"* (SP 9), indicating a gap between compliance and genuine engagement.

Comparisons with previous leadership also emerged, as one principal shared, *"They compared my supervision with the previous principal... they were still adjusting"* (SP 1). These experiences highlight that resistance is not merely oppositional but reflects adjustment, identity, and trust issues.

These experiences align with the work of Fullan (2007), who argues that resistance is a natural response to change, particularly when professional identity is challenged. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) further explain that teachers' experience and professional capital influence their responses to leadership.

Philippine studies echo these findings, noting that teachers may resist supervisory practices when they perceive them as evaluative rather than developmental (Torres, 2024). However, principals in this study also reframed resistance, as explained by the statement: *"I realized it's not about disrespect. Sometimes, it's just that they are adjusting to new leadership."* (SP 5) This suggests that resistance is part of the negotiation process rather than outright opposition.

Relational Leadership as a Strategy

In response to authority challenges and resistance, principals consistently adopted relational leadership strategies grounded in trust, empathy, and collaboration. Rather than relying on authority alone, they emphasized supportive supervision and professional dialogue.

Many school principals described shifting away from authoritative supervision:

SP 7: *"Instead of pointing out mistakes immediately, I ask them how they felt about their lesson. That opens the conversation."*

SP 1: *"I learned that if teachers trust you, they are more open to feedback. So I invest time in building that trust."*

SP 9: *"I want them to feel supported."*

Relational leadership extended beyond formal supervision. One principal noted, *"Even simple recognition made them more open during feedback"* (SP 3), while another emphasized informal interactions: *"During breaks, teachers become more honest"* (SP 8). These insights highlight the importance of informal spaces in building trust within the Philippine school context.

Principals also encouraged teacher agency. As one participant explained, *"I ask them what they think will work... it gives them ownership"* (SP 5). Differentiated leadership was also evident: *"With experienced teachers, I ask for their insights so they feel respected"* (SP 4).

These findings affirm that leadership effectiveness is rooted in relationships rather than authority alone. This aligns with research emphasizing trust and collaboration as central to instructional leadership (Leithwood et al., 2004; Robinson, 2011).

In the Philippine setting, relational leadership is equally emphasized. Studies highlight that collaboration, mentoring, and professional learning communities significantly enhance teacher performance and instructional quality (Dacer et al., 2025). DepEd frameworks such as the PPST also promote collegiality and continuous professional development, reinforcing the developmental nature of supervision (Department of Education, 2017).

Tension Between Policy and Practice

Principals also reported a persistent tension between formal supervisory frameworks and the realities of school implementation. While frameworks such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) provide structure for supervision, principals found them rigid and compliance-driven.

Several principals expressed frustration:

SP 10: *"Sometimes I feel like I'm just completing forms instead of really helping teachers improve."*

SP 3: *"The indicators are there, but real teaching situations are more complex than what is written."*

SP 6: *"We are required to follow the process strictly, but in reality, I need to adjust depending on the teacher and situation."*

This tension highlights the gap between policy intent and practical application. Principals often adapted policies to better fit their context, just like the comment *"I follow the required tools, but I make my feedback more conversational, so it becomes meaningful."* (SP 8)

Additional experiences highlight workload constraints. One principal shared, *“During busy periods, supervision becomes rushed... I am complying, not supporting”* (SP 7). Another noted limitations of tools: *“Forms cannot capture everything I observe”* (SP 4).

Despite these constraints, principals exercised agency. As one explained, *“I simplify the process because teachers are overloaded”* (SP 2). These findings illustrate the interaction between institutional structures and leadership agency, where policies guide practice but are actively interpreted and adapted.

Many school principals expressed that compliance requirements often overshadow meaningful instructional support. This reflects a broader concern in the literature regarding the bureaucratization of instructional supervision. Richard Elmore (2004) argues that accountability systems may limit instructional improvement if they focus more on compliance than capacity-building.

Similarly, Helen Timperley (2008) emphasizes that effective supervision should prioritize professional learning over procedural adherence. In this study, principals attempted to reconcile these tensions by adapting policies to fit their school context, demonstrating the need for flexibility in implementation.

RPMS provides a structured framework for teacher evaluation and development. However, studies indicate that its implementation often varies depending on school context, resources, and leadership capacity (Department of Education, 2018; Ulit, 2025). This highlights the need for flexibility in policy implementation to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Evolving Leadership Identity

The final theme highlights the evolving leadership identity of new principals. Respondents described a gradual shift from their previous roles as teachers or specialists to becoming instructional leaders. This transition involved redefining their understanding of power, authority, and responsibility.

Initially, many principals struggled with self-doubt and role ambiguity.

SP 9: *“At first, I still felt like a teacher. I was not confident giving feedback to those who were more experienced than me.”*

SP 3: *“I struggled with making decisions because I didn’t want to offend anyone.”*

Over time, they developed greater confidence and a clearer sense of purpose. They began to view leadership not as control, but as influence and service:

SP 2: *“Now I see myself not just as a supervisor but as someone who guides and supports growth.”*

SP 5: *“I learned that leadership is not about control. It’s about influence and responsibility.”*

Growth was also reflected in handling difficult situations. One principal noted, *“Before, I avoided difficult conversations. Now, I understand that it is part of my role, but I try to handle it with respect.”* (SP 6), while another emphasized decision-making maturity: *“I learned that being a principal is not about being liked all the time, but about making decisions that are fair and beneficial for the school”* (SP 1).

Confidence was reinforced through observed improvements: *“Over time, I became more confident because I saw small improvements in teachers. That gave me assurance that I am doing my role well.”* (SP 8) and *“I am more comfortable now asserting decisions, but I still make sure I listen.”* (SP 10) These experiences reflect leadership as a developmental process shaped by interaction and reflection.

This finding aligns with the work of Becky Tschannen-Moran (2004), who underscores the importance of trust and self-efficacy in leadership development. Additionally, Christopher Day and colleagues (2009) highlight that leadership identity evolves through experience, reflection, and contextual challenges. The study demonstrates that becoming an effective instructional leader is a developmental process shaped by both internal growth and external interactions.

The Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) underscore leadership as a developmental process requiring continuous learning and capacity-building (Department of Education, 2020). Local studies further affirm that leadership effectiveness is linked to communication, visibility, and adaptability (Daing & Mustapha, 2023).

The findings of this study, when examined across themes, reveal that instructional supervision among newly appointed principals is best understood as a dynamic process of negotiated authority shaped by interrelated dimensions of power, relationships, institutional structures, and identity formation. Rather than functioning as discrete categories, the five themes interact in a mutually reinforcing manner, forming a coherent pattern of leadership experience.

At the core of this interaction is the theme of negotiated authority, which serves as the central organizing concept linking all other themes. Authority is not statically held but continuously constructed through everyday supervisory interactions. This process is directly influenced by teacher resistance and power struggles, which act as catalysts in shaping how authority is asserted, challenged, and refined. Resistance, as revealed in the data, is not merely oppositional but reflects deeper concerns about professional identity, trust, and experience. It functions as a form of feedback that compels principals to reassess their leadership approaches and adapt accordingly.

In response to these tensions, principals employ relational leadership strategies, which emerge as the primary mechanism for navigating power dynamics. The shift from authoritative supervision to trust-based engagement illustrates how leadership evolves from positional control to relational influence. This transition highlights that authority becomes effective not through imposition, but through the ability to build credibility, foster dialogue, and create shared understanding. Thus, relational leadership does not operate independently but is directly shaped by the presence of resistance and the need to negotiate authority.

Simultaneously, the tension between policy and practice introduces a structural dimension to the analysis. While supervisory frameworks such as RPMS and PPST provide formal guidelines, they also impose constraints that influence how supervision is enacted. These institutional structures represent forms of regulated or disciplinary power, shaping expectations and behaviors within the school system. However, principals are not passive recipients of these structures; instead, they exercise agency by adapting policies to fit contextual realities. This interplay demonstrates that power operates both top-down (through policy) and horizontally (through relationships), reinforcing the complexity of supervisory practice.

These experiences collectively contribute to the evolving leadership identity of new principals. Identity development emerges as both an outcome and a process shaped by the interaction of authority, resistance, relational strategies, and institutional constraints. Initially marked by uncertainty and self-doubt, principals gradually reconstruct their understanding of leadership—from control-oriented to influence-based. This transformation reflects a deeper internalization of leadership norms and an increasing capacity to navigate complex social and organizational dynamics.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings strongly align with Michel Foucault's conception of power as relational, circulating, and productive. Power is not concentrated in the principal's role but is continuously negotiated through interactions with teachers and mediated by institutional structures. At the same time, the findings support Max Weber's assertion that authority depends on legitimacy, which is earned through recognition rather than imposed by position.

These interconnected dynamics underscore that effective instructional leadership is not achieved through rigid adherence to structure or unilateral authority, but through the principal's ability to navigate complexity, balance power, and adapt to context.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study on the power dynamics in instructional supervision as experienced by newly appointed school principals in the Schools Division Office of Pagadian City. It synthesizes the key findings derived from the qualitative analysis and situates them within the study's theoretical framework and research objectives.

Summary

This study explored the power dynamics in instructional supervision as experienced by newly appointed school principals in the Schools Division Office of Pagadian City. Grounded in an interpretive phenomenological design, the research sought to understand how novice school leaders experience, interpret, and navigate authority, relationships, and institutional expectations within their supervisory roles.

Anchored in an integrated theoretical framework drawing from Michel Foucault's Power Relations Theory, Max Weber's concept of legitimate authority, instructional leadership theory, and leadership identity development, the study conceptualized instructional supervision as a relational and power-laden practice rather than a purely technical function.

Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with ten (10) newly appointed principals with one to three years of leadership experience. Using thematic analysis, five major themes emerged: Negotiated Authority, Teacher Resistance and Power Struggles, Relational Leadership as a Strategy, Tension Between Policy and Practice, and Evolving Leadership Identity.

The findings revealed that instructional supervision is not simply an administrative task but a complex social process shaped by power relations, trust, resistance, and contextual realities.

Findings

The findings of the study provided a complex understanding of instructional supervision as a dynamic interplay of authority, relationships, and institutional structures.

First, the theme of negotiated authority highlighted that leadership legitimacy is not automatically granted by position but must be continuously earned. Consistent with distributed leadership perspectives, authority emerged through interaction, competence, and relational trust. This supports Weber's assertion that authority becomes effective only when recognized by followers and aligns with contemporary views that leadership is socially constructed.

Second, the presence of teacher resistance and power struggles underscored that supervision is inherently political. Resistance was not merely oppositional but reflective of deeper issues related to professional identity, experience, and trust. From a Foucauldian lens, resistance is inseparable from power, serving as a mechanism through which authority is questioned, reshaped, and negotiated.

Third, relational leadership emerged as a critical strategy for navigating these dynamics. Participants shifted from authoritative supervision toward collaborative, trust-based approaches. This reinforces the

argument that effective instructional leadership operates through influence rather than control, with dialogue and professional respect serving as key mechanisms for change.

Fourth, the study revealed a tension between policy and practice, particularly in the implementation of frameworks such as RPMS and PPST. While these policies aim to standardize and improve supervision, they are often experienced as compliance-driven. This reflects the operation of disciplinary power, where institutional systems regulate behavior through monitoring and evaluation. However, principals exercised professional agency by recontextualizing these frameworks, underscoring the coexistence of institutional control and adaptive leadership practice.

Finally, the theme of evolving leadership identity illustrates that becoming an instructional leader is a developmental process. New principals initially experience uncertainty and role ambiguity but gradually develop confidence, clarity, and a more relational understanding of leadership. This evolution reflects the internalization of leadership norms and the ongoing construction of professional identity through experience and interaction.

Altogether, the findings affirm that instructional supervision is best understood not as a linear or technical process, but as a relational, contextual, and power-mediated practice.

Conclusion

This study affirms that instructional supervision is a relational and dynamic practice rather than a purely technical function. For newly appointed principals, authority is not automatically granted but continuously negotiated through competence, trust, and professional relationships. Power operates as a shared and evolving process, consistent with Michel Foucault, where both influence and resistance shape supervisory interactions.

Teacher resistance emerges not as a barrier but as a constructive element that informs and refines leadership practice. In response, relational leadership—grounded in trust, empathy, and collaboration—proves essential in fostering effective supervision. At the same time, the gap between policy intent and practice highlights the need for context-sensitive implementation of supervisory frameworks.

Ultimately, leadership identity develops over time as principals move from uncertainty to confidence, redefining leadership as influence rather than control. Instructional supervision, therefore, is best understood as a continuous process of negotiated authority shaped by power, relationships, and context.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are advanced to enhance instructional supervision practices and leadership development within the Philippine educational context.

For School Heads. Newly appointed and aspiring principals should prioritize open dialogue, coaching, and collaborative decision-making as central approaches to supervision. Resistance from teachers should be reframed not as opposition but as valuable feedback that can inform and improve supervisory practices. Additionally, school heads are encouraged to cultivate reflective practice, enabling them to continuously refine their leadership approaches and strengthen their evolving professional identity.

For Teachers. The study underscores the value of active engagement in professional dialogue with school leaders. Teachers are encouraged to participate collaboratively in shaping supervisory practices, fostering a more supportive and growth-oriented environment. Reframing instructional supervision as a developmental process rather than purely evaluative can enhance openness to feedback and promote continuous professional improvement.

For Policy Makers and Educational Institutions. There is a need to strengthen policy responsiveness and flexibility in the implementation of supervisory frameworks such as RPMS and PPST. While these systems provide essential structure, their effectiveness can be improved by allowing school leaders to adapt them to local contexts. Reducing bureaucratic demands associated with documentation and compliance will enable school principals to focus more on meaningful instructional support and teacher development. It is also encouraged to institutionalize relational leadership training within leadership development programs, with emphasis on communication, trust-building, and conflict management—skills that are critical in navigating power dynamics in schools.

For future researchers. This study opens several avenues for further inquiry. Comparative studies involving both novice and experienced principals may provide deeper insights into how power dynamics evolve over time. There is also value in exploring quantitative approaches that examine the relationship between power dynamics, teacher performance, and student outcomes. Expanding research across different regions and institutional contexts can enhance the generalizability of findings. Moreover, examining the influence of cultural factors, such as interpersonal relationships and hierarchical norms, can provide a richer understanding of supervisory practices within the Philippine setting.

The recommendations provided aim to promote a more responsive, relational, and context-sensitive approach to instructional supervision, ultimately supporting more effective school leadership and improved teaching and learning outcomes.

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