Classroom walkthrough observations in a state university: On grounded theory

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The primary goal of this classroom walkthrough observation study was to come up with a theoretical framework that improves the instruction process in a public university in Region 02, Philippines. Walkthroughs in classrooms are done quickly and unexpectedly, usually by school administrators in the facility. In addition to deans and program chairpersons, nine educational leaders (deans and program co-chairs) and 37 faculty members took part in the study by the chain or snowball sampling. A core category (phenomena) was formed, conceptual tags were assigned, and a theoretical model that describes the causal elements influencing the phenomenon was developed through extensive discussions. Strategies that arise as a result of the occurrence, processes affected by context, processes that are influenced by intervening conditions, and implications of the system when employed. A detailed description of the many categories and subcategories are given, and participants' statements in support of the theory.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Having walkthroughs of classrooms in place for improved educational practices is prevalent. A systematic and regular approach to monitoring and evaluating the progress of students and teachers is essential to assist educators and students in fulfilling the continually increasing requirements and accountability present in federal and state laws such as no child left behind [1]. Even though there has been very little research on observation procedures and forms, there is a pressing need to investigate training activities for observing and supervisory purposes. To learn about instructional practices, this study provides descriptive data that illustrates the instructional leader's use of short supervision and evaluation to offer feedback, pose questions, and establish a collaborative relationship with instructors to improve teaching practices. In general, the purpose of this grounded theory was to build a theoretical model to help teachers better use walkthrough observations in the classroom. New research may provide light on educational leaders as instructional leaders.

This research is guided by previous research on instructional leadership, which looks to form the study's goal, how walkthroughs are done, the purpose of walkthroughs, and offering feedback. "Walkthrough observation" in this exploratory study describes a "series of brief classroom observations". School officials could do these tests (directors, department heads, faculty leaders, mentors, coaches, and other administrators). Additionally, observations of walkthroughs include: "i) They are short, lasting approximately 15 to 20 minutes (maybe longer); ii) They can happen at the beginning, middle, or end of a period; and iii)

They can occur anywhere during the school year" [2]. The best faculty members look to the educational leader for feedback and growth.

Instructional leadership is critical to efforts to improve and elevate student attainment. To get a complete grasp of the teaching processes at their institutions, educational leaders must observe teaching firsthand. According to Downey *et al.* [3], administrators are expected to consider their primary responsibility as that of an educational leader, to raise the success of their students. Evidence suggests that school leaders who are well-versed in sound educational techniques positively impact school performance. Previous study explained that educational leader leadership has been demonstrated to correlate with higher student accomplishment scores [4]. Based on what is found in the literature, we can assume that skilled educational leaders drive institutions to prosper. According to Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston [5], educational solid leader leadership correlates significantly with more outstanding student achievement scores.

Walkthroughs intend to aid educators in becoming critically reflective, self-directed, and thinking critically to be able to improve their education continually [6]. Cameras used in the classroom walkthrough observation may help teachers develop their reflective thinking, give information on the teacher's instructional setting, and allow observers and teachers to establish relationships. When evidence becomes more abundant, educational leaders can be better able to evaluate its success. One of the benefits of walkthroughs is that the instructional leader can learn about pedagogical techniques and strategies, get to know the institution's learning climate, and impact instruction within classrooms [7]. Regular monitoring could also lead to debates that help to enhance classroom delivery by promoting comparable teaching views. Unobtrusively informally observing the class can aid student performance by laying the groundwork for developing a shared educational vocabulary and stimulating dialogue around instructional techniques.

The quick observation could discover a diverse range of approaches and organizations, all laid out in the walkthrough literature [8]. A walkthrough is a visit to a classroom that is focused and brief. Classroom walkthrough observations can be structured in many different ways. The time dedicated to each statement is highly variable, but so is the level of supervision required and the quantity and type of information obtained throughout the observation. In theory, supervisors are in charge of deciding what to focus on, collecting data, and interpreting the information. Then, supervisors assess it, either formally or informally, to one or more groups. According to Kachur, Stout, and Edwards [6], most supervisors advocate for giving teachers feedback that empowers them. In the vast majority of walkthrough models, teachers are expected to get follow-up after walkthroughs.

Schomburg [9] suggested, "Be forceful about your aims and the consequences." For bringing about instructional change, establishing the alignment required to drive instruction is critical. For defining a focus for a walkthrough observation, a goal and target should be established. Research on learning techniques that will favorably influence student learning claims that walkthroughs will be most beneficial if they are based on "research-based on learning strategies that help students."

Focusing on each observation at an institution with laser-like focus is a sequence of brief observations. Effective decision-making is a result of knowing exactly what to focus on. Teachers and learners can suffer if educational leaders do not know their aim. Several methods are being employed for classroom walkthrough observation, but each incorporates different concepts or approaches to observe.

The insights and feedback provided by teachers and educational leaders allow for more excellent monitoring and critique of classroom approaches and strategies. When supervisors use walkthrough instruments and use formal educational evaluations based on a 3 to 10-minute informal snapshot of a class, the effects can be notable. Use walkthroughs to help teachers cultivate an active approach to personal development. Regular, frequent, and quick walkthrough observations are designed to prompt contemplation. The system can be simplified to make it easier for teachers to comprehend [10]. In a walkthrough, the instructor taking personal responsibility for improving their practice should be supported. The frequently modest amounts of information delivered by walkthrough observations allow us enough opportunities for reflection. You can modify this system to make it easier for teachers to accept it.

Classroom visit observations are implemented correctly if they are meant to enhance instruction rather than serving as a tool. Teachers can benefit from instructional feedback to improve their teaching practices. Open to observation and feedback, the most effective educational tools and forms of professional recognition are readily observable and lend themselves to both positive and negative feedback [11]. According to the literature, one of the main improvements in academic accomplishment is giving feedback to students [12]. A directive, one-on-one technique of giving feedback on conduct should be used to change behavior [3]. Teachers must be followed up on after each walkthrough to encourage learning and teaching. It can be written or spoken (follow-up) or informal.

To successfully conduct educational observations, leaders should be familiar with the necessity of communicating the findings. Once that has been done, it is critical to brainstorm what ideas and approaches would be beneficial. Feedback is crucial for efficient learning, but only a little progress is attainable for

highly driven learners. Due to this, performing the same task repeatedly will not provide positive results. According to Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston [5], "Teachers, especially superstars, need feedback, no matter how positive or negative it is. This is why ensuring an effective feedback system is an important part of the work of monitoring or reviewing."

The researchers wanted to build a theoretical model to show how university faculty teach their classes using classroom walkthroughs. It is hoping to respond to the following kinds of questions: i) What is essential to the process of using classroom walkthrough observations to improve instruction? ii) Who controls the process of improving instruction through the use of classroom walkthrough observations? iii) What controls the process of improving instruction through the use of classroom walkthrough observations? iv) What strategies develop from the process of using classroom walkthrough observations? v) In what context are these strategies employed? and vi) What are the results of the use of classroom walkthrough observations?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

According to Tschannen-Moran [13], school leaders are critical agents in school reform by raising academic standards for faculty and students. Administrators needed to be visible in the classroom as educational leaders. One way for the educational leader to be visible is through a walkthrough. Grounded theory developed in the 1960s by Glaser and Strauss is a standard research methodology. By using systematic analysis processes, this methodology derives theory directly from facts. This architecture was used since, by definition, it is an inductive analysis system that is more open-minded and content-sensitive. Grounded research is the most preferable in this regard because researchers tend to interpret their findings inductively.

The research study was conducted at Quirino state University in Cagayan Valley, Philippines, with its three campuses: Diffun, Cabarroguis, and Maddela. The study was participated by the educational leaders and faculty in the university's different colleges. Information about the phenomena was collected through purposive sampling. Three participants were initially selected as the primary source of data, and they were invited to participate in an interview. As a panel of experts with expertise and competency in institutional monitoring and observation methods, they were used to identify potential research suppliers. As a panel of educators, the group was asked to identify educational leaders who have high levels of relational trust and have established high relationships with faculty. They are also being asked to recognize instructional coaches who employ their understanding of curriculum, instruction, and evaluation processes. Several people who could potentially participate in the study were contacted to invite them to take part.

Additionally, educators from their respective buildings were asked to identify up to four staff members who have received evaluations and suggestions via classroom walkthrough observation processes. These individuals might say something like, "They will talk about how classroom overview observations helped to the improvement or growth of instructional practices." The researcher sought approval from the academic members and had extensive discussions with them.

Creswell [14] refers to this sampling method as "snowball" or "chain" sampling. According to Dukes [15], researchers should have between 20 to 30 participants in a grounded theory study. To ensure that everyone had a chance to evaluate the information for accuracy and gain a greater understanding of the prior conversation, the researcher gave everyone a copy of the electronic transcripts of the interview and encouraged them to do so. Until a theoretical model was built, semi-structured interviews were used. The theoretical saturation of data collecting is marked by the moment at which no more data might be added. The model was created and saturated until participants were found.

This study used semi-structural interviews as its primary data collection method. To help construct the idea, the researcher also used walkthrough observation forms. During walkthroughs, educational leaders use a document to gather data. Some of these forms are made using new technology, while others use the traditional printing process. For the data collected, the participants' survey forms were analyzed and used to help identify probable groups, which allowed the researchers to give information that assisted in the design of follow-up questions. During all of these observations, discussions, staff meetings, and informal encounters, any written communication that originated from their interactions with professors was also collected.

The university conducted pilot research. These professors, with extensive experience in administering college or programs, were interviewed. A set of interview questions were created ahead of time and utilized to collect information from the participants. With their rapport established before the interview, the researcher and the participants in the study found the interview process straightforward. The interview was not recorded and transcribed since the program was not available. Instead, a tape recorder was utilized to collect the participants' quotes. After a discussion that lasted about 20 minutes, the interviewer's material included establishing a theoretical framework to show the classroom walkthrough observation method. Only two interviews were conducted during the initial study, so only a small amount of information was obtained.

No records or findings were compiled. This pilot study supplied details that helped with the protocol redesign for both faculty and administrative personnel.

Participant interviews were the primary way of data acquisition. The interview was conducted with the president's consent and permission obtained from the institution's president. To begin the face-to-face interviews on-site, researchers gathered participants and then set up on-site interviews at the participants' place of work. According to Creswell [14], researchers should ensure that participants are comfortable speaking and make sure they are not apprehensive. Our goal was to meet educational leaders and academics at their building and in a place where they preferred to be interviewed. Making sure the environment was pleasant guarantees that the location was chosen well. The participants in this study, including the researcher, can comfortably talk about supervision and observation procedures comfortably because these activities are routine inside the institution.

The researchers used a digital recorder to document the information obtained from the participants. A list of standard terms and phrases was used to help the search engine recognize and categorize the material. The process of coding and classifying the data was also used. Only the researcher had access to the acquired and recorded data, which was safeguarded by a password. A set of interview protocols was devised and applied for each interview to facilitate the educational leader and faculty interview process. The interview questions, initial comments about the study, and a closing statement regarding the study were included. At the outset, the researcher provided the study's motivations and intentions, along with the study's other relevant details such as respondents' anonymity and further information. Educational leaders' interviews lasted on average four minutes longer. While faculty interviews were lasted about 25 minutes.

Data collection and analysis were performed simultaneously [16]. Start with interview, data collecting, and then returning to the existing theory to elaborate on how it works constitute the procedures involved [14]. Using the concept of similarities and links, the researchers group the numerous bits of information as they are discovered. As the codes were being developed and polished, axial coding was done. The researcher found that the phenomena known as the "core" were present. When the researchers recognized the primary phenomena, they were able to identify the fundamental causes, methods, settings, and effects linked with them.

The "core" or central phenomenon in this study was discovered to be classroom walkthrough observations and the steps involved in that process, including collection, clarification, and reflection. It is helpful for both students and lecturers because it is filled with educational leaders' ideas and professors' responses. Faculty and academic leaders worked together to define the existing classrooms and teaching techniques in the building. Discussions were sparked by the method, which provided educational leaders with an opportunity to discover strengths and possible growth areas.

The core phenomenon was described by identifying the causal factors. This study sought to determine if a causal relationship existed between ineffective teaching criteria or an instructional framework and decreased student achievement. Educational leaders created a framework that identified topics of interest and provided a focal point for observations. This framework served as a starting point for gathering background knowledge and information. It was also used as a guide to making decisions about best practices and areas for growth.

To meet the "core" phenomenon, approaches occur. In response to classroom instructional practices, educational leaders have generated educational resources to help educators improve their skill sets. External funding, such as funding from educational service units, or funding that originates within the university, was utilized to help execute programs that allowed academics to pass on the excellent teaching approaches they learn from each other to everyone who works within the institution. Teachers regularly supported the deployment of new strategies with encouragement and comfort.

External factors interfered with the procedure, which made things complicated. Examples of observations include the faculty's and educational leaders' knowledge and qualities, the spontaneousness of the observations, and communication between educational leaders and faculty. The results of applying the methods were called the product. Teaching methods and activities and frequent faculty reflection on their instructional practices are included in this study. Finally, the researcher drew a chart to demonstrate how the categories were linked. In this instance, the analysis was focused on the selective coding of data.

The emergent theory was hypothesized by gathering data from the open, axial, and selective coding stages, during which the researcher collected notes on thoughts about the theory's concept. As data was obtained from the participants, all possible ideas and hypotheses were tested. Discriminant sampling was utilized to see whether theories produced during the early stages of the study were relevant and correct. According to Creswell [14], getting more information from people other than the study's specified original participants to check if the theory holds for them is referred to as gathering additional information.

Coding shortly followed the initial round of interviews, and all materials were gathered. Coding and memoing happened throughout the study, with further coding and memoing taking place as the experiment progressed. Once the data was collected, the study team had ample opportunity to review and categorize the data. The entire interviewing procedure was "zig-zagging" since data gathering and processing occurred at different stages [13]. Following interviews, basic codes and themes began to emerge, and then the research process started. To offer information on how the preliminary codes and themes are related, initial codes and themes were developed. Aided by the preliminary memoing that resulted in a series of inquiries and investigations, the interview process was headed by the question-and-answer sessions.

This research acquired data that served as a foundation for developing a theoretical framework for understanding and improving instruction by implementing a classroom walkthrough observation method. Using a walkthrough technique, school leaders enhanced instruction and instruction delivery. Through the classroom tour observation process, an understanding of how classroom tour observation leads to excellent instructional approaches emerged. Creswell [14] emphasized that the theory could now be developed with grounded theory as a data-gathering process. At a substantive level, the theory originated due to the collecting and analysis of data, and the chosen and organized data categories were there to showcase the methodology.

Creating a grounded theory starts with organizing data, combining strategies, and constructing a story that connects the information categories. Once the constructed theory is compiled, researchers can draw upon the conclusions they've found to expound on new theoretical propositions. Grounded theory is precious for addressing the process, as explained by Merriam [17]. This comprehensive classroom walkthrough study included a significant deal of detailed information on the classroom walkthrough method and how it was used to facilitate instructional improvements in school.

Researchers face a moral dilemma while gathering and disseminating findings in qualitative investigations. Observations and interviews were used to record the experiences of the individuals. As a result, participants' confidence or perspectives have not been affected. The participants' anonymity was secured using coded language to describe themes and phrases. When the researcher first declared that participation was wholly voluntary, no one was coerced into participating. In the case of this study, most of the processes and dangers that were identified to participants were explained to them. Participants were also given a consent form that stated they might withdraw at any point before the trial began. Personal and confidential information was kept out of the way, and all pertinent records were stored in a secure area. Every piece of data is available to the researcher.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following emerged as a consequence of data collection and analysis. The study tried to construct a theoretical model that outlines enhancing instructional practices through classroom walkthrough observations in a state university in Region 02. In a grounded theory study, the coding method involves open, axial, and selective coding strategies that are employed to develop a theoretical model that explains how different data categories connect to one another. The conclusions reached by this research and analysis are the foundations of a theory. Relationships between and among elements are necessary for the theory to work. Next, the theory focuses on providing parsimonious, focused explanations that are made from interrelated concepts that have been developed to a higher-order abstraction than raw data or themes [18].

The researchers began by gathering data from the participant and looking for common themes or categories that arose from their responses. As a result, the researchers constructed a framework to describe how classroom walkthroughs improve instruction. The workflow is shown in Figure 1. This illustration depicts movement from one segment to the next, as well as movement inside other segments by employing loops. To complete the procedure, certain critical parameters and conditions were also necessary. The classroom walkthrough observation process model in the figure was used to summarize the following interconnected concepts.
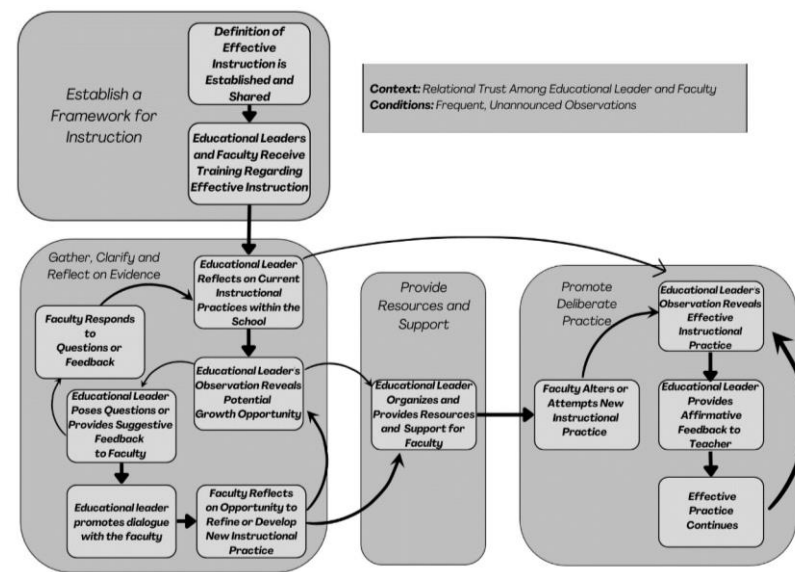
Figure 1. Classroom walkthrough observation process model

3.1. Establish a framework for instruction

As mentioned by Steeg *et al.* [19], the classroom walkthrough observation technique depends on a list of criteria that serves as a framework for defining successful teaching. Developing a more focused concentration for observations, creating targeted feedback offered to teachers, and directing internal and external resources to professional development was a crucial aspect in ensuring educational leaders understood the specified requirements. An educational framework helps faculty better aware of the expectations of their students, and this aids faculty in self-reflection regarding their strengths and areas of growth [20].

All research participants identified an educational framework inside the institution, and virtually all participants reported in some way that the framework provided a focus for the classroom walkthrough observation procedure. The research presents powerful instructional frameworks that educational leaders might review to decide what might be noticed within classrooms. Adequate supervision relies upon creating and clarifying evaluating criteria or the "what" to be evaluated [21]. Making accurate decisions based on observations is mostly contingent upon knowing what to look for.

An instructional framework gives a focus for feedback. Through the development and execution of a framework for instruction, educational leaders and faculty have a guideline for the direction of the observation and a guideline for feedback upon the classroom walkthrough observations [22]. The feedback is considerably more tailored to teaching and teaching strategies. Further, it stimulates discourse concerning instruction.

3.2. Gather, clarify, and reflect on evidence

Inspecting classes frequently and performing walkthrough observations provided teachers with feedback that could be communicated as encouragement and assistance [7]. For educational leaders, giving affirmative feedback to teachers on current effective methods in the classroom helps reinforce and improve them [23]. The study's researchers noticed that all educational leaders were reported to have delivered positive or favorable comments to their faculty. While the faculty members mentioned that classroom walkthrough observations were positive, they added that students' feedback was also positive. Faculty members were able to look back on their leader's feedback, look into the feasibility of a new instructional method, and see whether an existing strategy may be improved or modified. Walkthrough observations were facilitated by the faculty's ability to clarify observation data.

3.3. Provide resources and support

An educational leader integrated new instructional technique by connecting instructional resources to new strategies using classroom walkthrough observations and staff input. When instructional personnel share their best practices, it usually happens. According to Smith *et al.* [24], a classroom walkthrough was conducted to learn about the different growth areas and building practices that may be shared with

employees. A finding that arose from the interviews is that resources, such as educational leaders' allocations of such resources, affect the process for improving instruction. Educational leaders observe instructional improvement requirements and combine various educational resources to create classroom practices based on evidence from the revolution.

3.4. Promote deliberate practice

Enlightened educational leaders employed the classroom walkthrough observation approach, and this gave students confidence in their established findings as concluded by Schmidt *et.al.* [25]. This was followed by increased engagement in the proposed activities. Classroom staff's confidence in their work improved when educational leaders expressed their support for initiatives that were already underway [26]. A final benefit of classroom walkthroughs is that they enable teachers to monitor and assess their practices for strategies that have been proved to benefit the class [27].

As highlighted by Rowat *et al.* [28], the results of classroom walkthrough observations offered instructors a structure that encouraged them to apply new tactics until the approach was common. In addition, the classroom walkthrough observations process forced teachers to follow through on their commitments to adopt new instructional practices. Similar to the findings of Abraham and Singaram [29] in their study, instructors interview frequently mentioned the walkthrough process during classroom observation, which holds faculty accountable to continue new practices that are compatible with the instructional framework. Faculty within the research evaluate their teaching approaches in an effort to provide strategies that they can apply in their teaching. The administration was supportive of teachers devoting time to intentional practice when using unique instructional tactics.

3.5. Context and conditions

In the study of Senol and Lesinger [30] as well as Cook [31], an important factor in the classroom walkthrough observation procedure's efficiency was the degree of relational trust between the educational leader and the faculty, as well as the frequency and spontaneous structure of the process. The academic leader welcomes this trust, encouraging teachers to open out about new instructional techniques. The study found that when staff have positive working relationships with their supervisors, they feel empowered to contact them for queries or issues in the future. Another explanation as observed by Danielson and McGreal [32] is that faculty anticipated discussions in class on classroom observations and other instances would provide them an opportunity to expand their argument. Because of the constant meetings, the educational leaders had a better relationship with professors.

In interviews and with participants from the various colleges and programs, it became clear that trust existed between these educational institutions. According to Cook [31], having an extremely high number of classroom walkthroughs per week helped educational leaders and professors understand each other better, which in turn promoted a closer working connection. A trusting relationship between educators and school administrators supported a campus climate where classroom walkthroughs were viewed as non-threatening and which produced discussion about instructional methods.

Similar to the study of Senol and Lesinger [30] even if walkthroughs are not an attempt to catch faculty by surprise, a number of educational leaders in the survey shared the notion that walkthroughs should not be used as a "gotcha" or to catch faculty unaware. They developed a workplace culture where classroom walkthrough observations were viewed as a strategy to help students grow as professionals, rather than as a tool to focus on and disclose teacher and student inefficiencies. Classroom walkthrough interviews revealed that the process was friendly and not scary. It is simply when the educational leader enters any door that it feels cozy.

Trust was reportedly linked to the frequency of faculty communications with school leaders. Participants explained that by facilitating talks through their classroom walkthrough approach, they got a better knowledge of one other. Faculty stated that they feel more comfortable approaching their educational leader because of the connection that has formed through time.

The faculty members were motivated to integrate effective teaching approaches into their regular routines because of frequent classroom visits. This method of studying might be done by leaders of educational institutions, who could then view "real" or "day-to-day" training. Faculty and administrative officials agreed that the spontaneous classroom walkthrough observations were noteworthy as mentioned by Gillespie [22]. The classroom walkthrough observations are said to be unannounced in every college. Faculty members who took part in the study saw that classroom walkthroughs needed to be spontaneous. Because the classroom tour observations occurred spontaneously, they allowed for some thought. Teachers reported that classroom walkthroughs often made them aware of strategies to always be effective while using instructional practices.

4.   CONCLUSION

This study explored classroom walkthrough observation as a strategy for instruction improvement. Further, classroom walkthrough observation improves student outcomes by strengthening the instructional prowess of the teacher and performing a quick investigation into possible inequities in instruction among the students. Research revealed that setting out a definition of observation criteria and encouraging discourse about these criteria allowed professionals to follow best practices for learning in the classroom and employ cutting-edge teaching tactics. The educational institution illustrated how leaders help students who work hard by regularly keeping tabs on their behavior and provide constructive feedback that boosts their continuous adoption of good practices. Faculty members agreed that the method gave them helpful information that they could use to develop their strengths and opportunities for future improvement. Once the classroom walkthrough observation procedure took the student teaching methodology under consideration, it leads to introducing a new instructional approach to better promote student learning.

While this study provides evidence and a strategy for institutions that seek to build an efficient monitoring procedure in the classroom, further research should support the results. This may include more qualitative researches on examining how trust is built and maintained by observing the classroom and examining faith development would provide crucial information to foster more open discussions on strengths and progress in schools. On the other hand, a quantitative investigation may be undertaken to examine the theoretical model offered in this paper. A more diversified population to examine the perspectives of professors and educational leaders may be considered and include a review on the strategies for the development of an educational framework thereby collecting and assessing the perception of academics and leaders of education concerning the development of the said educational framework. Additional researches in examining more closely the techniques and processes that provide personnel with professional learning opportunities and determining how data received from observations in the classroom can be aggregated and evaluated for individual faculty and building employees. Aside from the educators, student perceptions of the observation procedure in the classroom may also be undertaken for students could contribute insight into innovative instructional practices in the classroom development and implementation.

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