

Instructional Supervision, Feedback Quality, and Teacher Perceptions: A Multi-Method Synthesis

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ABSTRACT

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Instructional supervision and feedback are pivotal mechanisms for enhancing teacher competence and elevating instructional quality. This paper synthesizes peer-reviewed research to explain how supervision, feedback quality, and teacher perceptions interact within standards-aligned observation frameworks. Anchored on developmental supervision theory, social constructivism, and policy–practice alignment, the synthesis integrates quantitative findings and qualitative insights to illustrate why supervision succeeds when schools enact calibrated observation, goal-referenced, dialogic post-observation conferences, and timely, specific, actionable feedback. Across recent scholarship (2020–2025), supervision tends to produce larger competence gains when enacted as developmental coaching rather than compliance monitoring, and when feedback is practice-proximal; conversely, generic or delayed feedback and



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routine inspection often yield weak or null effects. The review identifies recurring implementation constraints (e.g., workload, time, supervisory expertise), delineates moderated-mediation pathways wherein feedback quality and teacher perceptions both mediate and amplify supervision's impact on competence, and offers actionable recommendations for codifying feedback standards, investing in observer calibration, embedding collaborative reflection, and resourcing supervision for follow-up. Methodologically, the synthesis adopts a convergent mixed-methods orientation, integrating quantitative moderated-mediation analyses with qualitative insights from post-observation conferences and feedback artifacts to illuminate mechanisms of impact. The manuscript contributes a publishable framework that shifts supervision from bureaucratic ritual to an engine of professional growth, and it outlines research directions for rigorous longitudinal and experimental designs and standardized measures of feedback quality and developmental perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

Instructional supervision (IS) is widely viewed as a cornerstone of school-level improvement. Yet decades of practice reveal a paradox: while supervision is almost universally present, its effects on teacher competence are uneven. Contemporary scholarship increasingly points to two process engines that determine impact: (1) feedback quality—timeliness, specificity, evidence linkage, and forward-looking guidance—and (2) teacher perceptions—whether teachers experience supervision as developmental coaching versus compliance-driven oversight. When feedback is practice-proximal, aligned to standards, and delivered through trust-centered dialogue, teachers report higher likelihood of changing practice; where supervision is experienced as evaluation or inspection, teachers tend toward impression management and surface compliance rather than deep instructional change (Filmer et al., 2020; Lavigne et al., 2023). This synthesis consolidates recent evidence (2020–2025) into a publishable framework that removes place-specific references while preserving generalizable mechanisms, measurement guidance, and implications for leadership and research. The overarching argument is straightforward: supervision alone is insufficient. What matters is how it is enacted—specifically, whether observation is calibrated, whether post-observation conferences are dialogic and goal-referenced, and whether feedback is specific and actionable. Equally, supervision's efficacy depends on how teachers perceive it; developmental perceptions mediate and moderate the supervision→competence pathway, amplifying gains when supervision is experienced as collaborative professional learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Observation frameworks, fidelity, and reliability. Comparative work on classroom observation frameworks—TEACH, CLASS, Stallings, SDI—shows that observation-derived indicators correlate with instructionally relevant outcomes when implementation is reliable and calibrated (Filmer et al., 2020). These tools, built around structured rubrics, create a common language of practice; however, the literature warns against treating tool selection as a panacea. In many studies, instrument effects collapse into broad “good practice vs. poor practice” dimensions unless observers maintain inter-rater reliability, recertification, and double-coding routines (Filmer et al., 2020). Studies in the Philippines (Honculada, 2022; Naguit, 2023) echo global findings, showing that supervision perceived as developmental and feedback-rich correlates with higher teacher motivation and performance.

Within such frameworks, post-observation conferences function as the primary vehicle for translating observational evidence into teacher learning. Empirical research finds that teachers’ self-reported likelihood of changing practice is strongly associated with conference quality, especially when principals or coaches provide specific guidance tied to standards and instructional goals (Lavigne et al., 2023). High-quality conferences foreground student learning opportunities, reference observable evidence, and craft concrete next steps that teachers can implement and revisit.

Developmental supervision and adaptive expertise. Beyond instrumentation, supervision’s underlying stance—developmental vs. compliance—shapes outcomes. Trust-centered initiatives and peer observation routines redefine supervision as “improving, not proving,” shifting the focus from evaluation to professional growth. Qualitative studies describe how goal clarity, dialogic feedback, and time structures help teachers build adaptive expertise (Bhagwandhin et al., 2025; Heneghan, 2024). Adaptive expertise flourishes in cultures where feedback is strengths-based and forward-looking, and where leaders explicitly de-stigmatize observation—normalizing classroom visits as collaborative inquiry rather than performance judgment. Comparative ASEAN evidence (Maisyaroh et al., 2021; Haris et al., 2018) demonstrates that supervision practices significantly shape teacher learning models, while also facing systemic challenges of time and supervisory expertise.

Structured, criterion-referenced feedback and reflective competence. Studies integrating lesson study with criterion-referenced feedback show improvements in teachers’ reflective competence and decision-making (Hummes & Seckel, 2024). In these approaches, teams observe lessons, analyze evidence

against agreed criteria, and co-design refinements; the supervisory role centers on facilitating dialogue and curating resources rather than merely generating ratings. Meta-commentary on reflective practice underscores that post-observation reflection and collaborative analysis are essential engines of professional learning, provided feedback is timely and specific and the process allocates protected time to enact changes (Miller, 2023; Pinnegar et al., 2023).

Feedback quality as the proximal mechanism. Across settings and models, feedback quality repeatedly emerges as the proximal mechanism that converts observation into changed practice. High-quality feedback typically demonstrates specificity, evidence-linkage, timeliness, and actionability—concrete recommendations and resources. When feedback is generic, delayed, or purely evaluative, teachers report lower uptake and weaker competence gains (Birdwell & Harris, 2022; Lavigne et al., 2023). Conversely, practice-proximal, goal-referenced guidance creates clear improvement trajectories that can be rehearsed, coached, and revisited.

Teacher perceptions as mediator and moderator. Teachers' perceptions of supervision shape the degree to which feedback is trusted, internalized, and enacted. Developmental perceptions—viewing supervision as coaching, mentoring, and collaborative reflection—increase professional self-efficacy, motivation, and engagement; compliance-driven perceptions tend to produce defensive behaviors and superficial accommodation rather than genuine change. Perceptions function both as mediators and moderators, consistent with dialogic supervision studies and reflective scholarship (Heneghan, 2024; Pinnegar et al., 2023).

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Developmental supervision theory reframes supervision as growth-oriented and collaborative: supervisors act as instructional coaches who design learning conversations around evidence and goals, aiming to build self-efficacy and professional identity. The social constructivist perspective treats feedback as both a social and cognitive scaffold—dialogue, reflection, and shared problem solving enable joint sense-making. Policy–practice alignment emphasizes that standards and rubrics raise quality only when enacted coherently through calibration, protocol clarity, time protection, and resourced follow-up. Synthesizing these perspectives, a moderated-mediation model posits that supervision produces evidence (S); feedback quality (FQ) mediates and moderates $S \rightarrow \text{Competence}$ (C); and teacher perceptions (TP) also mediate and moderate $S \rightarrow C$, amplifying effects under developmental perceptions and dampening them under compliance

perceptions.

Table 1
Moderated-Mediation Conceptual Framework

Component	Role in Framework	Key Features	Expected Effect on Teacher Competence
Supervision (S)	Independent variable	Observation, post-conference routines	Provides evidence base for feedback
Feedback Quality (FQ)	Mediator & Moderator	Specificity, timeliness, actionability, developmental tone	Converts supervision evidence into practice change
Teacher Perceptions (TP)	Mediator & Moderator	Developmental vs. compliance stance, trust, collaboration	Shapes uptake, amplifies or dampens supervision effects
Competence (C)	Dependent variable	Instructional skills, reflective competence, adaptive expertise	Outcome of effective supervision and feedback
Contextual Factors	Constraints/Enablers	Time, workload, supervisory expertise, calibration	Influence sustainability and fidelity of supervision ³

METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION FOR EMPIRICAL STUDIES

A convergent mixed-methods orientation can test and explain the proposed model. Quantitative strands estimate direct, indirect, and interaction effects among S, FQ, TP, and C (e.g., multilevel regression, moderated-mediation analysis), while qualitative strands illuminate mechanisms—trust building, goal clarity, feasibility—by analyzing conference transcripts, feedback artifacts, and supervisory routines. Measurement should include validated rubrics for feedback quality (specificity, timeliness, actionability, developmental tone) and reliable competence indicators (observational scores, instructional artifacts, learning-opportunity metrics). Designs should anticipate clustering and employ multilevel models or robust standard errors; longitudinal studies tracking competence trajectories across observation cycles are valuable for estimating sustained effects and lagged feedback impacts.

All empirical strands of the synthesis are envisioned to comply with institutional and national ethical standards governing educational research. Sampling procedures prioritized voluntary participation of teachers and supervisors, with informed consent obtained prior to data collection. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation across School Level (Elementary vs. Secondary), Location (Urban vs. Rural), and School Size (Small

<500; Medium 500–999; Large $\geq 1,000$), while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

Ethics compliance entails approval from relevant Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) or ethics committees, adherence to data protection protocols, and transparent communication of study purposes, risks, and benefits. Participants must retain the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty, and data should be stored securely with restricted access.

Measurement tools for feedback quality and competence are specified to enhance validity and reliability. Feedback quality was assessed using validated rubrics that capture specificity, timeliness, actionability, and developmental tone (e.g., adapted versions of post-observation conference rating scales). Teacher competence may be measured through structured observation rubrics (such as TEACH, CLASS, or locally validated instruments), supplemented by instructional artifacts (lesson plans, student work samples) and competence indicators (e.g., learning-opportunity metrics). Inter-rater reliability checks, calibration sessions, and double-coding routines are recommended to secure measurement fidelity.

By embedding ethical safeguards and rigorous measurement protocols, the study ensures that findings are both credible and respectful of participants' professional integrity.

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

Supervision alone is insufficient; effects depend on enactment quality. Calibrated observation, dialogic post-conferences, and practice-proximal feedback increase teachers' likelihood of change, whereas sporadic observation, generic or delayed feedback, and evaluative conferences yield limited gains (Lavigne et al., 2023; Birdwell & Harris, 2022). High-quality feedback is near-proximal to competence change: teachers consistently cite concrete guidance on sequencing, cognitive demand, formative questioning, and student discourse as more useful than broad climate remarks (Lavigne et al., 2023). Structured feedback embedded in collaborative cycles strengthens reflective competence and decision-making (Hummes & Seckel, 2024). Perceptions shape uptake: developmental experiences of supervision increase experimentation and reflection; inspectional experiences prioritize compliance signals over instructional refinement (Heneghan, 2024; Bhagwandhin et al., 2025). Common constraints—time, workload, supervisory expertise—often compress conferences or delay feedback; protocol clarity, time protection, and capacity building sustain developmental routines (Filmer et al., 2020; Miller, 2023). Embedding supervision within PLCs and lesson study

institutionalizes feedback as ongoing dialogue, supporting transfer from isolated events to sustained competence (Hummes & Seckel, 2024; Pinnegar et al., 2023).

Table 2
Moderated-Mediation Model of Instructional Supervision

Pathway	Mediator(s)	Moderator(s)	Mechanism	Expected Outcome
Supervision (S) → Competence (C)	Feedback Quality (FQ)	Feedback Quality (FQ)	Observation evidence is translated into actionable guidance; strength of effect depends on timeliness, specificity, and developmental tone	Higher competence when feedback is practice-proximal and actionable
Supervision (S) → Competence (C)	Teacher Perceptions (TP)	Teacher Perceptions (TP)	Teachers’ stance (developmental vs. compliance) shapes trust and uptake of feedback; moderates whether supervision is experienced as coaching or inspection	Amplified gains under developmental perceptions; dampened gains under compliance perceptions
Feedback Quality (FQ) → Competence (C)	—	Teacher Perceptions (TP)	Perceptions influence whether feedback is internalized and enacted	Stronger competence gains when feedback is trusted and collaborative
Contextual Factors (time, workload, supervisory expertise, calibration)	—	—	Surrounding conditions influence fidelity of supervision and sustainability of feedback routines	Constraints may weaken pathways; supportive conditions strengthen them

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERS AND SYSTEMS

Leaders should codify post-conference routines requiring pre-observation goal setting, evidence-linked commentary, practice-proximal guidance, timeliness benchmarks, and follow-up coaching. Systems should maintain observer calibration (certification, recertification, double-coding) to secure credibility; nest supervision within collaborative structures (PLCs, lesson study) for sense-making and problem solving; align standards to coaching through explicit learning pathways; resource supervision for timeliness and follow-up via protected time and distributed leadership; and monitor teacher perceptions and feedback quality through lightweight surveys and artifacts to guide continuous

improvement.

LIMITATIONS OF THE EVIDENCE BASE

Design constraints—prevalence of cross-sectional and quasi-experimental studies—limit causal claims; measurement heterogeneity complicates pooled effect sizes; implementation variability and potential publication bias warrant cautious interpretation. These limitations counsel focused future research that strengthens causal evidence and measurement coherence (Filmer et al., 2020; Lavigane et al., 2023).

DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Future work should: (1) implement longitudinal and experimental designs that manipulate feedback quality and supervision stance; (2) standardize feedback-quality rubrics with reliability and criterion validity; (3) validate perception instruments distinguishing developmental versus compliance stances and trust; (4) employ multilevel moderated-mediation to estimate pathways and interactions among S, FQ, TP, and C; (5) analyze process data (transcripts, artifacts) to identify talk moves and content features that predict competence change; (6) evaluate digital/hybrid models of supervision and technology-mediated feedback; and (7) assess sustainability and transfer of competence gains, linking changes to student learning.

CONCLUSIONS

Instructional supervision most effectively enhances teacher competence when enacted as developmental coaching and paired with high-quality, evidence-based feedback that is timely, specific, and practice-proximal.

Teachers' positive perceptions of supervision mediate and moderate the supervision→competence pathway, and—together with feedback quality—constitute the dual engines of effective supervision.

Applied in ASEAN schools, these findings underscore the importance of embedding calibrated observation, dialogic feedback, and developmental supervision into local supervisory practices to strengthen teacher competence and ensure culturally relevant professional growth. Beyond its theoretical contribution, these findings hold strong translational value for ASEAN schools, where diverse educational systems face common challenges of workload, supervisory expertise, and resource constraints.

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