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Impact Study of Walk-in Classroom Observations in Schools under Trashi Yangtse District

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of walk-in classroom observations on teaching and learning processes, encompassing its five key dimensions: planning and preparation, learning experiences, assessment, classroom management, and motivation and capacity beliefs. The study adopted the mixed-methods approach, with quantitative data gathered from 150 teachers across 15 schools, and qualitative data collected through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving 15 teachers and 15 students. The newly developed survey instrument, the Impact of Classroom Observation Survey Questionnaire (ICOSQ) measured five key dimensions. Findings revealed that walk-in observations significantly improved learning experiences and classroom management. Teachers became more reflective, diversified instructional approaches, and promoted student-centered learning. Findings also indicated increased student engagement, structured learning, and improved classroom discipline, though some aspects of spontaneity were reduced. Additionally, constructive feedback also enhanced teachers' confidence and promoted professional growth. However, it was also found that observation processes triggered anxiety in teachers and students.

Keywords: walk-in observation, instructional methods, feedback, student engagement, classroom management

Introduction

Classroom observation has long been recognised as a fundamental key to improving the quality of teaching and learning across education systems. Research indicates that classroom observation is not only a powerful tool for accountability but also a means of supporting teachers' professional development and fostering reflective practices (Marzano et al., 2011; Range et al., 2014).

In Bhutan, beginning the 2022 academic session, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) established the practice of walk-in classroom observation as a part of education reforms and policies to improve the quality of teaching-learning and guide teachers' professional growth (DCRD & RSPN, 2013; MoESD, 2023). Through this, principals were mandated to observe lessons incorporating a standardised observation form developed by the MoESD in close consultation with principals across Bhutan. The form emphasises four key dimensions of effective teaching: planning and preparation, learning experiences, assessment, and classroom management. In addition to these dimensions, the form also included a general comments section, allowing observers to provide holistic feedback that may not fit neatly within the four categories.

Research suggests that systematic classroom observations can improve instructional effectiveness, guide professional development, and foster supportive learning environments (Pianta, 2003; Zaare, 2012; Kosgei, 2012). Similarly, Winsor et al. (2022) state that when observational feedback is combined with structured discussions, it strengthens teachers' reflective practices and positively impacts student engagement.

With such initiatives firmly embedded in the Bhutanese education system, it is anticipated that improvements in teachers' instructional practices and students' learning outcomes will begin to take root. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers feel more accountable, motivated, and confident when subject to walk-in observations, systematic research on their effectiveness within Bhutan remains limited. Much of the existing discourse assumes a positive relationship between observation and teacher performance without empirically testing this claim in depth (MoESD, 2023). Moreover, literature cautions that the link between observation and improved learning outcomes is complex, as teaching effectiveness cannot be measured solely by observational data (Tarusa & Busi, 2024). There are no empirical studies examining how walk-in observations affect teachers' instructional practices, student engagement, and broader school improvement in the Bhutanese context.

Schools in Trashi Yangtse face challenges related to limited resources, varying teacher experience levels, and changing leadership practices. Therefore, this study aimed to explore how walk-in classroom observations in Trashi Yangtse district schools affect teaching practices across the four mandated dimensions and the general comment space, as well as their impact on teacher motivation and perceptions of their own capacity.

Research Questions

The overarching research question guiding this study was:

How do walk-in classroom observations influence teaching practices, student engagement, and school improvement in the Bhutanese context?

To operationalise this inquiry, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. What immediate changes occur in instructional methods and classroom management practices following walk-in observations?
2. In what ways do walk-in observations affect student engagement, participation, and classroom behavior?
3. How do teachers and students perceive the effectiveness and relevance of walk-in observations?

Literature Review

Classroom observation plays a crucial role in a "socially established cooperative human activity setting" (Kemmis et al., 2013, p. 30). It involves systematically collecting evidence to assess instructional quality and student learning outcomes, thereby helping teachers and school leaders improve pedagogical practices (Kruer, 2003; Kane & Staiger, 2012). Panigrahi (2012) suggests that classroom observation offers principals unique insights into teaching and learning processes that cannot be gained through other assessment methods.

Extensive research underscores classroom observation as a powerful tool for improving teacher effectiveness and professional practice (Earl & Timperley, 2009; Ure, 2010; Kriewaldt & Turnidge, 2013; Douglas, 2017). Hallinger and Murphy (2012) emphasise that systematic observation is essential for fostering effective, motivated, and committed teachers, who in turn, have a direct influence on classroom outcomes. In the same vein, Zaare (2012) identifies three primary objectives of classroom observation: equipping teachers with knowledge and skills, enhancing instructional delivery through feedback, and promoting reflective practice. These objectives align closely with the aims of walk-in observations as implemented by the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD, 2023).

Classroom observation has been empirically linked to multiple dimensions of teacher and student performance. It contributes to improvements in lesson planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, and student-centered pedagogies (Manaseh, 2016; Lerner & Tetlock, 1999; Tarusa & Busi, 2024). Observations have also been associated with enhanced collaboration between teachers and school leaders (Louis et al., 2010), increased teacher motivation, higher student engagement, and a strengthened sense of professional value among educators (Manaseh, 2016; Graczewski et al., 2009; World Bank, 2018). Moreover, observations facilitate continuous adaptation of teaching strategies and can reinforce instructional impact (Timperley, 2015). Kosgei (2012)

further emphasises that regular classroom observations by principals encourage teachers, enhancing both their morale and performance.

Evidence suggests that classroom observation has a positive influence on student behavioural outcomes and academic achievement (Tarusa & Busi, 2024; Winsor et al., 2022; Manaseh, 2016). Observations also foster collegiality among teachers, providing opportunities to collaboratively address classroom challenges and share successful pedagogical practices (Kamoto et al., 2019). In addition, observation practices enhance teachers' capacity beliefs and professional commitment (Pietsch et al., 2019), which are strongly associated with innovative instruction, effective classroom management, and support for student autonomy (Cousins & Walker, 1995; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Allinder, 1994; Henson, 2001b; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Classroom observation is not merely evaluative; it is a tool for reflection and inquiry that empowers teachers to refine instructional practices (Overton, 2018). Effective evaluation systems provide actionable feedback, introduce new teaching strategies, and offer guidance from administrators and peers, promoting the adoption of evidence-based pedagogical practices (Boyd, 1989, cited in Tarusa & Busi, 2024). Coaching – be it direct, facilitative, or transformational – further enhances the capacity of teachers to implement and sustain instructional improvements (Aguilar, 2013a; Carraway & Young, 2014; Beattie et al., 2014). Such interventions at the school level have been linked to improved student outcomes (Elmore, 2000; Spillane et al., 2000; Day et al., 2000; King, 2002).

In the Bhutanese context, walk-in classroom observations have been institutionalised as a tool for both accountability and professional development (MoESD, 2023). Reports indicate that teachers generally perceive walk-ins as opportunities to remain prepared, enhance lesson quality, and demonstrate authentic instructional practices. However, some teachers have expressed concerns that observations may disrupt teaching or cause anxiety, highlighting the need for empirical investigation into their impact (MoESD, 2023). Since walk-in observation is relatively new in Bhutan, particularly in districts such as Trashi Yangtse, its effects on teaching practice, student engagement, and school improvement remain underexplored.

Existing literature, both international (Fullan, 1996, 1999; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991) and national (Sherab, 2001, 2013), suggests that educational reforms, including classroom observation initiatives, require sustained time and systemic support to effect meaningful changes in teacher beliefs and practices. Consequently, this study aimed to address the gap by investigating the impact of walk-in classroom observations in schools of Trashi Yangtse district, with a particular focus on teachers' perceptions, instructional practices, and their implications for student learning and professional development.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed methods design, defined as a methodology that systematically integrates quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained inquiry

programme (Wisdom & Creswell, 2003, p.2). The mixed methods approach was selected due to its advantages over single-method approaches, as it allows researchers to leverage the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Target Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Procedures

The study population included all 27 schools, 288 teachers, and 4,121 students in Trashi Yangtse district, Bhutan. A probability sampling technique was employed for the quantitative survey, with stratification applied to select 15 schools and 150 teachers. For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was used to select 15 students from upper Yangtse and 15 teachers based on their prior quantitative responses (see Table 1).

Table 1: Population and sample distribution

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Sampling Procedure	% of Population
Schools	27	15	Stratified	55.6%
Teachers	288	150	Stratified	52.1%
Teachers	288	15	Purposive	5.2%
Students	4121	15	Purposive	0.4%
Total Sample		**195**		

Instrumentation and Data Collection

A new survey instrument called the Impact of Classroom Observation Survey Questionnaire (ICOSQ) was developed. It was reviewed by an expert from Paro College of Education, pilot tested and then finalised for administration to teachers. The ICOSQ comprised five areas with four adapted from MoESD-endorsed classroom observation forms and one newly developed to align with Bhutanese educational practices, covering various aspects of teachers' classroom practices (see Table 2).

Table 2: Areas of the teacher's classroom observation

SL.NO.	AREAS OF OBSERVATION	ITEMS
1	Planning and preparation	1-6
2	Learning experiences	11-15
3	Assessment of students' learning	16-21
4	Classroom management	22-26
5	Motivation and capacity beliefs	27-31

The survey data were collected from September 1, 2025, to September 15, 2025, and it was administered only once due to the limited timeframe. In the second phase, semi-structured interviews, observation of teachings (n=5), and review of documents were carried out. The purpose of the interviews, observations, and document analysis was to get wider perspectives and rich information. Interviews lasted for 30 – 40 minutes per interviewee, and it was recorded with a digital recorder and later transcribed verbatim. After the data collection, the researcher applied some of the strategies suggested by Merriam (1998), such as "member check, peer examination, triangulation, and research bias". To check credibility (especially with 15 interviewed teachers and students), they were asked to clarify their responses that were reflected in previous data.

Data Analysis

A mean score for each respondent was computed for all 5 measurement scales. All, 150 respondents were ranked in order of their mean Z-scores from highest (M=1.60- slightly more than one and a half standard deviations above the sample mean) to the lowest (M=-1.80-more than one and three-quarters standard deviations below the sample mean (see Table 2)

Table 3: Interview and teaching observation participants

SURVEY ID	RESPONDENT	Z-SCORE	MEAN (N=150)	RANK	IMPACT LEVEL
7		1.6	1st		Highest
11		1.47	2nd		Highest
129		0.98	17t		High
139		0.97	18t		High
133		0.24	69		Average
134		0.08	70		Average
111		-0.57	124		low
116		-0.73	125		low
123		-1.39	147		lowest
143		-1.8	148		lowest

During the first phase, data gathered through the survey questionnaires were analysed and interpreted using descriptive statistical tools to examine the impact of five dimensions: planning and preparation, learning experiences, assessment, classroom management, capacity beliefs and motivation. In the second phase, 15 teachers and 15 student participants' in-depth interviews and observation responses were analysed using content analysis. Multi-paradigm triangulation (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011) was carried out to compare and contrast data collected through various sources, including the available document. To maintain confidentiality, the participants are provided

pseudonyms in the report (For instance, Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 3…Teacher 15, respectively, and Student 1, Student 2, Student 3…Student 15).

Ethical Consideration

In this study, respect for participants' time, rights, privacy, and confidentiality were upheld throughout the research process (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The title of the research was endorsed by the Human Resource Division, MoESD, and the approval to collect data from schools was obtained from the Chief District Education Officer, Trashi Yangtse. Additionally, informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection.

Findings

Overview of the survey data

A total of 5 measurement scales were used to measure different areas of classroom observation. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The mean and standard deviations for each of these scales are provided in Table 4.

As shown in Table 4, the mean for all the dimensions is above average to 'agree' and very close to 'strongly agree', indicating that teachers of Trashi Yangtse district had highest degree of impact on teachers by classroom observation on learning experiences, classroom management and planning and preparation. However, comparative analysis of the 5 scales indicated that assessment of students' learning is lowest mean (M=3.74; SD=.35), followed by the motivation and capacity beliefs. On the contrary, the top-most scale was learning experiences (M=4.64; SD=0.2). Each of these measurement scales is further elaborated in the following section with item.

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation of different dimensions

DIMENSIONS	MEAN	SD	Level of Impact
Planning and Preparation	4.41	0.27	Highest
Learning Experiences	4.64	0.2	Highest
Assessment of students' learning	3.74	0.35	High
Classroom Management	4.44	0.3.	Highest
Motivation and Capacity beliefs	3.9	0.42	High

Note: 1.00-1.80=Strongly Disagree, 1.81-2.60=low Disagree, 2.61-3.40=Neutral, 3.41-4.20=Agree,4.21-5.0=Strongly Agree

According to Table 5, the overall level of planning and preparation is high, with a mean score

of M=4.1 (SD=0.27). The analysis of six dimensions shows overall positive perceptions. "I select and prepare appropriate teaching resources more carefully as a result of observation, as the highest scores recorded at M = 4.55 (SD = 0.58) and M = 4.43 (SD = 0.51), both categorised as *highest*. Dimensions with mean values of 4.20 (SD = 0.40)**,** 4.01 (SD = 0.41)**,** and 3.94 (SD = 0.57) fall under the *high* category, reflecting favourable responses with relatively consistent agreement. The lowest score was M = 3.47 (SD = 0.79)**,** also in the *high* range, but with greater variability in responses. Overall, the results indicate strong positive perceptions across all dimensions, with some variation in response consistency.

Table 5: Planning and preparation (N=150)

Sl. No.	Item	Mean	SD	Impact level
1	Classroom observation motivates me to set clear and measurable learning objectives in my lesson plans.	3.94	0.57	High
2	I organise and sequence instructional activities more effectively after receiving feedback from observations.	4.01	0.41	High
3	Observation encourages me to align lesson objectives with students' learning needs and abilities.	4.2	0.4	High
4	I select and prepare appropriate teaching resources more carefully as a result of observation.	4.55	0.58	Highest
5	I give greater attention to student-centered and engaging learning activities while planning lessons.	4.43	0.51	Highest
6	Observation feedback helps me plan for efficient time management and smooth classroom transitions.	3.47	0.79	High
	Total	**4.1**	**0.27**	**High**

Note: 1.00-1.80=lowest, 1.81-2.60=low, 2.61-3.40=Average, 3.41-4.20=High, 4.21-5.0=Highest

Table 6 reveals that the total average of classroom observation in learning experiences has the highest with an average mean M=4.64 (SD=0.2). There were five items in this dimension, and all received the highest mean scores, as vividly shown in the table below, with mean and standard deviation for each item.

Table 6: Learning experiences (N=150)

Sl. No.	Items	Mean	SD	Impact level

1	Classroom observation motivates me to create more interactive and engaging learning experiences for students.	4.58	0.49	Highest
2	I create more opportunities for student participation and teamwork following my observations.	4.5	0.5	Highest
3	Observation feedback helps me to create a supportive environment that promotes active learning.	4.92	0.3	Highest
4	I design learning activities that foster critical thinking and problem-solving as a result of observation.	4.63	0.57	Highest
5	Classroom observation encourages me to employ a range of instructional methods to enhance students' learning experiences.	4.6	0.49	Highest
	Total	**4.64**	**0.2**	**Highest**

Note: 1.00-1.80=lowest, 1.81-2.60=low, 2.61-3.40=Average, 3.41-4.20=High, 4.21-5.0=Highest

Table 7 shows the assessment dimensions in classroom observation, the overall impact across the five items rated at a high level (M=3.74; SD=0.35). There were five items, and all the mean scores were high (M=4.15; SD=0.44),(M=4.05; SD=0.73), (M=3.67; SD=0.69), (M=3.6; SD=0.36), (M=3.51; SD=0.88). "Observation feedback helps me to use a wider variety of assessment methods (formative, summative, peer, and self-assessment)" has the highest score with a mean M=4.15 (SD=0.44), and "Classroom observation motivates me to design assessments that are more closely aligned with learning objectives" lowest score with the mean M=3.51 (SD=0.88).

Table 7: Assessment (N=150)

Sl. No.	Items	Mean	SD	Impact level
1	Classroom observation motivates me to design assessments that are more closely aligned with learning objectives.	3.51	0.88	High
2	Observation feedback helps me to use a wider variety of assessment methods (formative, summative, peer, and self-assessment).	4.15	0.44	High
3	I place greater emphasis on ongoing formative assessment after classroom observation.	4.05	0.73	High

4	Classroom observation strengthens my ability to provide timely and constructive feedback to students	3.67	0.69	High
5	Observation feedback encourages me to design assessments that measure higher order thinking skills.	3.6	0.56	High
	Total	**3.74**	**0.35**	**High**

Note: 1.00-1.80=lowest, 1.81-2.60=low, 2.61-3.40=Average, 3.41-4.20=High, 4.21-5.0=Highest

Table 8 shows that the total average of the impact of classroom observation on classroom management is highest with the mean M=4.44 (SD=03). Out of five items, three items showed highest level and two items showed high. "Classroom observation has helped me establish clearer classroom rules and expectations" has the highest mean score M=4.98 (SD=0.14). and "Walk-in classroom observations guide me in addressing disruptive behaviors more effectively" has the lowest mean score M=4.06 (SD=0.57).

Table 8: Classroom management (N=150)

Sl. No.	Items	Mean	SD	Impact level
1	Classroom observation has helped me establish clearer classroom rules and expectations.	4.98	0.14	Highest
2	Observation has encouraged me to create a safe, supportive, and orderly classroom environment	4.52	0.55	Highest
3	Walk-in classroom observations guide me in addressing disruptive behaviors more effectively.	4.06	0.57	High
4	Classroom observation has contributed to fostering more positive teacher–student relationships.	4.58	0.54	Highest
5	My classroom routines have become more structured and consistent due to observation insights.	4.07	0.76	High
	Total	**4.44**	**0.3**	**Highest**

Note: 1.00-1.80=lowest, 1.81-2.60=low, 2.61-3.40=Average, 3.41-4.20=High, 4.21-5.0=Highest

Analysis of Teachers' Interviews

Classroom observation supports teachers in reflecting on their practice, improving instruction, and engaging students more effectively. This analysis highlights how walk-in observations shaped teaching approaches, classroom management, and teachers' experiences. The analysis of interview data revealed that walk-in classroom observations prompted both immediate changes in instructional practice and influenced teachers' perceptions of teaching effectiveness. One teacher

remarked, "I became more aware of my teaching styles and started planning my lessons with clearer objectives with specific activities to be achieved at the end of my lesson" (Teacher 7). Teachers acknowledged that observations helped them recognise their strengths and weaknesses, which encouraged professional growth and career development (Teacher 3).

Most teachers indicated that observations prompted them to diversify and refine teaching approaches. As Teacher 13 noted, "they mostly used well-planned learner-centered methods," and Teacher 14 reflected, "I began using more interactive discussions and inquiry-based tasks. It wasn't just about covering content; it was about engaging students meaningfully." These strategies demonstrated deliberate efforts to design learning experiences that were active, purposeful, and responsive to students' interests and capacities.

Classroom management also improved, with teachers implementing clearer rules, fostering stronger teacher-student relationships, and enhancing overall discipline. Teacher 8 explained, "Before I begin the lesson, I check the attendance of students, cleanliness of the class, all workbooks, notebooks, and ensure that water bottles, etc. are arranged appropriately." Observations also indicate that classrooms are now neatly maintained, with books neatly shelved along the windows and bookshelves organised by subject. Students' Continuous Formative Assessment (CFA) files are kept inside high-quality silk pockets. Walls are neatly covered with Chinese wallpaper. The findings further show that the classrooms are furnished with basic utility equipment designed to promote health and sanitation values among students. This equipment, such as nail clippers, tissue paper, and Dettol soaps, is neatly stored in improvised containers made from used K-5 wine covers. Water bottles filled with clean water are placed on tables for easy access by students (Field notes).

Teachers reported using non-punitive approaches to manage disruptive behaviour (Teacher 4) and incorporating humour and open communication to encourage student participation (Teacher 10). Interview data showed that feedback from walk-in observation accelerated the use of modern tools, such as projectors, TV screens, and interactive boards, for administering quizzes and multiple-choice questions, making assessments more interactive and engaging. Such tools have provided more opportunities for teachers to frame higher-order thinking questions.

Despite these positive outcomes, teachers expressed mixed emotions about the observation process. While they valued the reflective and professional growth aspects, many reported anxiety, nervousness, and fear of judgment. Some noted that the presence of an observer disrupted the natural flow of teaching and initially lowered their confidence. However, repeated exposure and constructive feedback helped teachers manage these emotions. Teacher 11 reflected, "With more experience and feedback, I am learning to manage the anxiety and focus on delivering quality lessons."

Analysis of Student Interviews

The analysis of student interviews indicated that walk-in classroom observations were beneficial, noting that teachers became more responsive and supportive during observed lessons. Findings indicated that teachers clarified doubts, incorporated more group activities, and promoted

collaborative learning through presentations and the use of ICT tools such as projectors, interactive boards, and TV screens. As Student 6 remarked, "They give us more time to do ourselves, guide us properly, and care for our work…" These changes provided opportunities for peer learning, active engagement, and increased support, making lessons more interactive and meaningful.

Many disapprove of physical punishments, with comments highlighting fear and a lack of understanding under strict teachers. While most students preferred supportive teachers, a few felt that strictness was necessary to manage disruptive behaviours. Student 7 states, "Teachers should scold and punish us, as there are a few classmates who don't listen to teachers and disturb others in the class". During observations, teachers tended to enforce stricter discipline, which, although promoting order, limited spontaneous participation. Overall, students recognised improvements in peer behaviour and classroom discipline following the observations.

Discussions

Planning and preparation

Of the five dimensions measured through the survey questionnaire, the impact of classroom observation on teachers' planning and preparation was the third highest (M = 4.41, SD = 0.27), indicating that observation encouraged teachers to set clear learning objectives, organise instructional activities more effectively, and select resources more carefully.

Interview findings further substantiated the survey results, as all participants overwhelmingly explained that observation encouraged them to set measurable objectives, sequence activities more carefully, and reflect more deeply on their teaching strategies. This finding is consistent with the findings of Danielson (2013), Sullivan and Glanz (2013), and other studies that found that systematic observation strengthens teachers' reflective practice and motivates them to refine lesson plans to ensure clarity and coherence (MoESD, 2023; Zaare, 2012). Hopkins (2008) states that reflection enables teachers to unify, integrate, and elevate their classroom management skills and personal teaching attributes into a strategy that is meaningful for students.

The document analysis confirmed myriad use of strategies such as questioning methods, discussion, demonstration, presentation, inquiry learning, cooperative methods, explanation, group work, deductive and inductive strategies, field trips, project method, role play, simulation, and lecturing in the lesson plans. This finding aligns with the findings of the Royal Education Council [REC] (2022), which emphasises that teachers are expected to deliberately plan lessons that integrate inquiry-based learning, cooperative strategies, differentiated instruction, and inclusive methods to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Kyriakides et al. (2019) posit that a well-prepared lesson plan enables teachers to set clear learning objectives, sequence activities logically, allocate time appropriately, and select relevant resources. When teachers know they may be observed, they tend to be more intentional in designing activities and preparing resources (Kyriakides et al., 2019; Winsor et al., 2022), eventually resulting

in improving the overall quality of instruction.

Learning experiences

Learning experiences emerged as the dimension with the highest mean score (M=4.64, SD=0.20), indicating that observation motivated teachers to create interactive, engaging, and student-centered learning opportunities. This finding was echoed in both the interview and observation data. Teachers have shifted from teacher-centered teaching approaches to child-centered methods such as cooperative learning, constructivist approaches, inquiry-based approaches, and interactive discussions. This finding is consistent with the goals of the Environmental Science Curriculum Framework (ESCF), which advocates creating a "learning environment built around students in the constructivist approach that complements the textbooks" (Department of Curriculum Research and Development (DCRD) and the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN), DCRD & RSPN, 2013, p.19).

Wangmo (2021) notes that when Bhutanese teachers use think-pair-share, role-plays, or small-group discussions, students become more confident in sharing their opinions, especially on socially important topics like environmental conservation or community well-being. This transition from teacher-centered instruction to more interactive, student-focused activities is viewed as vital for developing thoughtful, responsible citizens.

Students' interview findings also reveal that lessons involved more group activities, use of ICT, and collaborative learning tasks. According to Hopkins (2008, p.171), "cooperative group work has a powerful effect in raising pupil achievement because it harnesses the synergy of collective action". He further states that cooperative group work encourages active participation in learning and collaborative behaviours by developing social as well as 'academic' skills (Hopkins, 2008).

In the Bhutanese context, the National Education Framework: Curricular Perspective (MoE, 2009) emphasises that teachers should adopt constructivist approaches to teaching students. This is an interesting development in the Bhutanese context and one worth emulating, as Bhutanese classroom teachings has traditionally been known to be teacher-centric (REC, 2009; Sherab, 2013; Sherab & Dorji, 2013). Such teaching approaches are likely to promote values such as teamwork, collaboration, sharing, and creativity.

Assessment practices

While classroom assessment is regarded as a vital component of the teaching-learning process, it is surprising that it received the lowest mean score among the five dimensions (M=3.74, SD=0.35), as presented in Table 4. These scores suggest that teachers in the 15 schools of Trashi Yangtse practiced assessment-related activities – such as using appropriate assessment tools, evaluating students' work, providing timely feedback and intervention, and utilizing assessment data – the least. This finding corroborates the earlier findings of Burns & Darling-Hammond (2014), who argue that most observation frameworks focus heavily on instructional delivery and classroom management**,**

while dimensions like assessment literacy, feedback practices, and use of assessment data are underemphasised. This finding is further reinforced by the findings of BCSEA (2021) National Education Assessment reports, which indicate that while teachers regularly assess students' work, the use of assessment data for timely intervention and feedback remains inconsistent.

The teachers' minimal practice of assessment could be due to large class size, heavy workload, teachers' lack of professional development, little instructional time, and lack of resources. It has been found that in Bhutan, the common barriers to effective implementation of assessment are class size, workload, and limited professional training (Rinchen, 2022; Dendup & Tshering, 2024).

However, half of the participants believed that assessment practices in the classroom play a crucial role in enhancing students' learning outcomes. Findings indicate that classroom observation encourages teachers to use a range of formative assessment methods, such as exit tickets, rubrics, checklists, quizzes, short tests, and different levels of questioning to monitor students' understanding. According to the MoESD (2023), this practice enables teachers to adjust subsequent lessons in tandem with learners' needs, ensuring that classroom instruction remains responsive and student-centered. Heritage (2010) states that formative assessment enhances student engagement and self-reflection, encouraging learners to take ownership of their progress and develop critical thinking skills.

The study also indicates that classroom observation has a strong influence on how teachers incorporate modern instructional tools that foster interactive and student learning. The majority of teachers were found to integrate 21st century teaching and learning resources, such as projectors, interactive boards, and televisions into their instructional practices. This result is in tandem with the findings of OECD (2013), which posit that the presence of observers can motivate teachers to utilise available digital equipment more effectively to demonstrate innovation, align with curriculum standards, and meet students' learning needs. For example, interactive boards and projectors can transform abstract concepts into visual experiences, while multimedia resources accessed through television or digital platforms can enhance motivation and comprehension.

In the Bhutanese classrooms, where integration of ICT is a national education priority, initiatives like walk-in classroom observation have been found to encourage teachers to use projectors and digital tools more frequently, making a paradigm shift from a purely chalk-and-lecture approach. These innovations in Bhutanese classrooms appear to enhance teaching efficiency while sustaining students' interest and participation. In the Bhutanese context, the Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA, 2021) also reported that the use of diverse assessment strategies, including both traditional and technology-based approaches, contributes positively to student learning when teachers are able to provide timely feedback and interventions.

Classroom management

Both the survey (M=4.44, SD=0.30) and interview data revealed that classroom management was another area of strong impact, with the highest-rated item being the establishment of clearer

classroom rules and expectations. Teachers described improvements in fostering safe, supportive environments and in structuring routines more consistently. Furthermore, interview findings also affirm that a nurturing and caring classroom climate promotes social and emotional bonding between teachers and students. The teachers believed that any child who is loved and cared for is likely to care for others, and any child whose perspectives are appreciated is likely to appreciate other perspectives.

Tshewang and Lhamo (2020, p.24) claim that "teaching is a very humanistic profession that requires genuine values like compassion and care", which is one of the core values of Gross National Happiness (GNH). Moreover, meaningful learning is ensured if teachers possess these qualities (Sherab & Dorji, 2013). This finding is also consistent with the findings of UNESCO (2023), which states that a nurturing ambiance fosters inclusive practices, ensuring that learners from diverse backgrounds feel respected and valued, which aligns with the call for equity and inclusivity in education.

Physical arrangement and preparedness of the classroom (e.g., cleanliness, safety, accessibility of learning materials, organised files, and ensuring students maintain personal hygiene) have strongly influenced student learning and well-being. This result is consistent with the findings of Marzano and Pickering (2003**),** who argued that classroom observations often encourage teachers to ensure that classrooms are not only academically supportive but also safe and hygienic. This finding is further supported by Evertson and Weinstein (2006), who stressed that observation feedback helps teachers refine their practices, including the organisation of physical space and learning materials, which directly impacts classroom climate and student engagement.

A conducive classroom ambiance plays a critical role in enhancing both teaching and learning by shaping the physical, emotional, and social environment in which learning occurs. All such practices by the teachers are a part of positive initiatives in the Bhutanese classrooms that must be cherished and emulated. Royal Education Council (2017) emphasises nurturing safe and supportive classrooms that promote both academic and socio-emotional growth.

The lack of emphasis on positive discipline in the classroom, as reported by students, starkly contrasts with the physical and emotional well-being that is clearly advocated throughout the year (The Bhutanese, March 29, 2025). The MoESD mandates that positive discipline should eliminate "corporal punishment and instead implement non-violent, constructive disciplinary methods" (The Bhutanese, March 29, 2025, p. n.d.). The results of this study indicate a significant mismatch between the key regulations consistently emphasised in the revised school policy guidelines and the implementation of the discipline policy at the school level.

Motivation and capacity beliefs

Motivation and capacity beliefs received a 'high' impact score (M=3.90, SD=0.42), indicating that walk-in classroom observations play a significant role in shaping teachers' professional growth, motivation, and instructional practices. Teachers' interview findings indicate that walk-in classroom

observations increased their awareness of instructional styles and reinforced their beliefs in their professional capacity to improve. These results are consistent with those of Renos and Pontillas (2024), who indicated that classroom observations positively influence teachers' skills, professional efficacy, and instructional motivation.

The study also showed that the majority of teacher respondents reported anxiety, nervousness, and fear of judgment when being observed, which sometimes disrupted the natural flow of instruction. This finding corroborates the findings of Sullivan and Glanz (2013), who claimed that evaluative or judgmental approaches can undermine confidence and create stress. This finding is further supported by Wangchuk (2020), who said that walk-in observations often trigger discomfort due to hierarchical dynamics and the perception of surveillance. Teacher anxiety can be attributed to several factors: perceived evaluative nature (Ho & Tan, 2013), self-doubt and lack of confidence (Shrestha, 2019), unpredictability of student behaviour, and presence of senior staff or school leaders (Dorji, 2023).

However, as teachers gained experience, they reported increased motivation and stronger beliefs in their capacity to deliver effective lessons. These findings confirm those of Pantoja (2025), who found that teacher anxiety diminishes over time as educators develop capacity beliefs and utilise feedback constructively to enhance their teaching. In the Bhutanese context, studies indicate that walk-in observations, when implemented systematically and coupled with supportive feedback, positively contribute to teachers' reflective practices, motivation, and beliefs about their capacity (Bass, 2025; BCSEA, 2021).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, the evidence suggests that walk-in classroom observations, when systematically implemented with supportive feedback, play a crucial role in enhancing planning, pedagogy, assessment, classroom management, and teacher motivation. These processes align with Bhutan's GNH-inspired vision of holistic education, emphasising both academic rigor and socio-emotional growth. As we advance, sustained institutional support, particularly through collaborative planning, professional learning communities, effective use of ICT resources, and mentorship, will be essential to maximising the benefits of classroom observations. With such integrated efforts, schools will not only improve teaching and learning but also nurture learners who are competent, reflective, and socially responsible citizens. Based on the findings and the triangulated discussion, several recommendations are proposed that may be of use for other schools and stakeholders.

First, teachers should continue to enhance their lesson planning practices and implement constructivist approaches while teaching, which promote critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork. Such approaches are central to the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered pedagogy highlighted in the National Education Framework.

Second, although some progress has been observed in formative assessment practices, teachers need to enhance their assessment literacy. This includes employing a range of assessment formats such as exit tickets, quizzes, checklists, and providing timely feedback that informs subsequent instruction.

Third, teachers should align their disciplining techniques with Bhutan's revised school discipline policy. Corporal punishment must be consistently discouraged, as it is typically a conventional approach. Such practice is not expected in GNH-infused schools.

Fourth, teacher motivation and capacity beliefs should be nurtured through supportive observation and feedback systems. School leaders are advised to adopt a dialogic approach to post-observation feedback, one that emphasises professional reflection and growth rather than evaluation alone. Such practices can reduce observation-related anxiety and foster teacher effectiveness, intrinsic motivation, and confidence.

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