

Empowered or Restricted? Teachers' Voices on Micromanagement in Schools

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Abstract: This study aimed to understand how micromanagement affects teachers' professional autonomy, motivation, and creativity, while identifying the coping mechanisms they employ and the insights that can guide more empowering management practices. A qualitative phenomenological design was utilized to capture the real experiences of 10 elementary teachers in Magpet, North Cotabato. Using purposive sampling, ten teachers participated in in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) guided by semi-structured questions. Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis, ensuring trustworthiness through triangulation, member checking, and reflexivity. The study revealed four major challenges brought by micromanagement: loss of professional autonomy, increased work stress, feelings of being undervalued and distrusted, and limited opportunities for innovation. Teachers coped by seeking autonomy in classroom-level decisions, practicing self-care, building peer support networks, and integrating creativity within administrative boundaries. Insights showed that teachers regain confidence through small independent actions, manage pressure through self-care, find strength in peer relationships, and sustain creativity even within institutional rules. Findings highlight the importance of supportive leadership that balances accountability with trust and empowerment. School heads and policymakers should recognize that excessive control diminishes teacher motivation and innovation.

Keywords: *Empowered, Restricted Teachers' Voices, Micromanagement in Schools.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

This study is driven by the increasing discourse on administrative practices in schools and their profound effects on teaching staff. In many educational institutions, the way school heads manage and oversee teachers directly influences job satisfaction, professional autonomy, and overall instructional effectiveness. Excessive administrative control, particularly in the form of micromanagement, has been widely debated for its potential to either ensure accountability or stifle creativity and motivation among educators. Understanding these dynamics is essential for school administrators, policymakers, and educators, as it provides valuable insights into the balance between oversight and professional independence. By examining how micromanagement is perceived by teachers, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation on effective school leadership. The findings may serve as a foundation for refining leadership approaches and enhancing both teacher well-being and student learning outcomes.

In the global setting, micromanagement has been identified as a significant issue affecting various professions, including education. In the educational sector, excessive administrative oversight can lead to diminished teacher autonomy, reduced creativity, and heightened stress levels.

For instance, a 2021 study involving over 500 educators in Beijing revealed that teachers subjected to greater control from their schools were more likely to impose similar controlling strategies on their students, leading to a less engaging classroom environment. This trickle-down effect underscores the broader implications of micromanagement on the overall school culture and student experience.

Moreover, educators often report that micromanagement stifles their ability to innovate and respond effectively to their students' unique needs. Anecdotal evidence from various educational settings indicates that when teachers feel micromanaged, they experience decreased job satisfaction and motivation. For example, teachers have expressed frustration over being treated like children, leading to a desire to cut corners and a decline in morale. Such sentiments highlight the detrimental effects of micromanagement on teacher well-being and performance.

Additionally, micromanagement has been linked to higher teacher turnover rates. In some cases, educators have left their positions due to excessive administrative control, which they felt hindered their professional judgment and effectiveness. This trend poses a challenge for educational institutions striving to maintain experienced and dedicated teaching staff, ultimately affecting student learning outcomes.

In the Philippines, the educational landscape has undergone significant reforms, such as the implementation of the MATATAG curriculum. While these reforms aim to improve educational outcomes, they have also introduced challenges related to administrative practices. A study focusing on the MATATAG curriculum's implementation highlighted that teacher faced increased administrative tasks, leading to concerns about workload and support systems. These additional responsibilities can be perceived as forms of micromanagement, potentially impacting teachers' ability to focus on instructional duties (Bentayao, Quibod & Cagape, 2024).

Furthermore, research indicates that micromanagement can negatively affect teachers' job satisfaction and performance in the Philippine context. A study examining the effectiveness of micromanagement among teachers and middle managers found that while it promoted compliance and productivity, it had a slightly negative impact on job satisfaction (Ramos & Malangen, 2023). This finding suggests that while certain administrative controls may ensure adherence to policies, they can also lead to dissatisfaction among educators, which may affect their commitment and effectiveness.

Additionally, research on the innovative work behavior of principals in Davao City public schools by Caruz (2024) highlighted the importance of balancing administrative oversight with teacher autonomy. The study found that principals' innovative behaviors positively influenced organizational effectiveness, suggesting that supportive and empowering leadership practices can mitigate the negative effects of micromanagement.

Despite existing research on micromanagement and its effects on teachers, there remains a need for localized studies that capture the unique experiences of educators in specific contexts, such as North Cotabato. Understanding these localized experiences is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies that address the specific challenges faced by teachers in this region. This study aims to fill this gap by providing in-depth insights into how micromanagement is perceived and experienced by teachers in North Cotabato, thereby informing strategies to enhance teacher autonomy, job satisfaction, and overall educational outcomes.

➤ *Research Questions*

Understanding the challenges teachers face under micromanagement, their coping mechanisms, and the insights they gain from these experiences can provide valuable perspectives for school leaders and policymakers. To explore this issue, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What experiences do teachers encounter as a result of micromanagement in schools?
- What coping mechanisms do teachers employ to deal with micromanagement in schools?
- What insights about micromanagement can be generated from the study?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ *Micromanagement in Organizations*

Micromanagement, characterized by excessive control and scrutiny over employees' tasks and decisions, has been a topic of increasing interest in organizational research. Recent studies have explored its multifaceted impacts on both individual and organizational outcomes.

One significant area of focus is the effect of micromanagement on employee morale and job satisfaction. Research indicates that micromanagement can lead to feelings of powerlessness, reduced motivation, and disengagement among staff, often resulting in high turnover rates. For instance, Shuford (2021) found that micromanagement contributes to low employee morale by creating an environment where staff feel unmotivated and disengaged, which in turn leads to higher turnover.

The relationship between micromanagement and employee performance has also been examined. While traditionally viewed negatively, some studies suggest that in certain contexts, micromanagement may have a positive correlation with employee performance. A study by Galindez, Arias, and Bragas (2024) identified a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between micromanagement and employee performance, indicating that higher levels of micromanagement are associated with higher levels of employee performance in specific settings.

In clinical supervision, micromanagement has been conceptualized as ineffective supervisory practices, including undue scrutiny and excessive control. A scoping review by Gawronski et al. (2023) highlighted that such practices negatively impact trainees' professional development and well-being, suggesting that entrusting autonomy and providing effective supervision are crucial for positive outcomes.

The influence of micromanagement on followership styles, particularly among millennials, has also been explored. A study by McGregor and Doshi (2022) revealed that micromanagement is a harmful leadership style that can significantly affect millennial employees' engagement and productivity, emphasizing the need for organizations to mitigate such behaviors to protect business integrity.

Furthermore, micromanagement has been linked to counterproductive work behaviors. A study by Okafor and Osita (2023) found that micromanagement is associated with low employee morale, high staff turnover, and reduced productivity, highlighting the need for managers to adopt more empowering leadership styles to foster a positive work environment.

In the context of remote work environments, micromanagement poses unique challenges. Caise and Tucker (2023) explored approaches to reduce micromanagement behaviors among leaders of remote employees in the U.S. accounting industry, emphasizing the

importance of training initiatives to promote self-awareness and operational efficiency.

Gender differences in micromanagement tendencies have also been examined. Bwalya (2024) noted that while micromanagement can lead to precision and quality control, it also negatively impacts employee morale, creativity, and turnover rates, suggesting that these effects may vary across different demographic groups.

The scarcity of studies on micromanagement in certain regions has been highlighted. For example, a review by Yildiz (2024) pointed out that in Turkey, there is a lack of original scientific research on micromanagement, indicating a need for further exploration of this concept within different cultural contexts.

➤ *Micromanagement in Educational Institutions*

One prevalent issue is the excessive control over classroom environments. In many schools, administrators dictate specific layouts, wall displays, and seating arrangements, leaving little room for teachers to personalize their spaces. This rigid standardization often prioritizes uniformity over the unique needs of learners, leading to frustration among educators. As noted by educational commentator Walter Wendler, micromanagement becomes a form of theft as initiative is drained from those who labor (As cited in Caise & Tucker, 2023)

Another significant concern is the requirement for teachers to write detailed objectives or learning targets on the board daily. While intended to clarify lesson goals, this practice is often seen as redundant and time-consuming, especially when it serves more to satisfy administrative checks than to enhance student understanding. Critics argue that such mandates contribute to a culture of compliance rather than genuine instructional improvement (Bwalya, 2024).

The demand for meticulous documentation extends beyond lesson objectives. Teachers are frequently required to record every accommodation and modification provided to learners, a task that consumes valuable time and may detract from instructional planning. This level of oversight can be perceived as a lack of trust in teachers' professionalism and judgment (Galindez, Alias & Bragas, 2024).

Regular Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings are designed to foster collaboration among educators. However, when these meetings occur too frequently without clear objectives, they can become perfunctory and burdensome. Teachers may feel that their limited planning time is being encroached upon, leading to resentment and decreased morale (Gawronski, Bajwa & Tekian, 2023).

The insistence on submitting detailed lesson plans is another aspect of micromanagement that has drawn criticism. While planning is essential, overly prescriptive requirements can stifle teachers' creativity and responsiveness to learners' needs. Educators often question the efficacy of such

mandates, especially when they feel that the plans are not meaningfully reviewed or utilized by administrators (Baeder, 2021).

Professional development (PD) is crucial for teacher growth, but when PD sessions are mandated without considering teachers' interests or needs, they can become counterproductive. Mandatory attendance at irrelevant or poorly designed PD sessions can lead to disengagement and a perception that administrators are out of touch with classroom realities (Fordham Institute).

The practice of frequent classroom walkthroughs by administrators is intended to monitor instructional quality. However, when these visits are perceived as intrusive or punitive, they can undermine teachers' sense of autonomy and trust. Educational consultant Justin Baeder highlights that micromanagement is a significant factor driving teacher turnover, as it directly assaults teacher autonomy and competence (Morris, 2022).

In higher education, micromanagement can manifest as overbearing oversight of faculty activities, leading to diminished initiative and creativity. Wendler observes that such practices can "rob the life of an enterprise," as they stifle the very qualities that drive academic innovation and effectiveness (Wendler, 2022).

Policymakers also played a role in micromanagement through the imposition of stringent directives and procedures. While intended to ensure accountability, these measures led to rigidity and inefficiency within schools. The Thomas B. Fordham Institute noted that such micromanagement often resulted in "stifling directives, rules, and procedures," which rendered organizations ineffective. Teachers themselves also voiced concerns about micromanagement, sharing experiences of feeling undermined and distrusted. For example, educator Jane Morris recounted instances where supervisors' excessive oversight led to feelings of demoralization, prompting a desire to "start cutting corners and breaking rules" (Okafor & Osita, 2022). Similarly, excessive control from leadership reduced teachers' autonomy and hindered their ability to make timely and context-appropriate instructional decisions.

➤ *How Employees View Micromanagement*

A significant portion of employees have experienced micromanagement during their careers. According to a study by the Redline Group, 59% of surveyed individuals reported feeling micromanaged at some point. Among these, 55% indicated that micromanagement hindered their productivity, and 68% reported a decrease in morale. Notably, 39% had changed jobs to escape a micromanaging supervisor (Alijabri & Alharty, 2025).

The negative impact of micromanagement on employee morale is well-documented. Shuford (2019) highlighted that micromanagement disempowers, demotivates, and disengages staff, leading to a rift between management and employees. This disconnect often results in resistance to administrative changes and contributes to frustration and

stagnation within the organization (Fisher, Arias & Bragas, 2024).

Employee perceptions of micromanagement also vary across different cultural contexts. A study by Aljabri and Alharthy (2025) explored micromanagement in the Saudi labor market, revealing that employees perceive micromanagement negatively, associating it with increased stress, reduced job satisfaction, hindered creativity, and higher turnover intentions.

The relationship between micromanagement and employee performance is complex. While traditionally viewed negatively, some studies suggest that in certain contexts, micromanagement may have a positive correlation with employee performance. A study by Galindez, Arias, and Bragas (2024) identified a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between micromanagement and employee performance, indicating that higher levels of micromanagement are associated with higher levels of employee performance in specific settings.

The role of leadership in mitigating the negative perceptions of micromanagement is crucial. Fisher, Amabile, and Pillemer (2021) emphasized that leaders should time their assistance appropriately, provide help that empowers employees, and foster an environment of trust to avoid the pitfalls of micromanagement.

Micromanagement can also strain relationships between managers and employees, reducing a sense of relatedness or connection and team cohesion. Over time, it can prevent employees from developing their skills independently, leading to decreased morale and productivity.

The prevalence of micromanagement as a workplace concern is highlighted by a survey from Monster, which found that 73% of workers listed micromanagement as the biggest workplace red flag and a likely contributor to turnover.

➤ *How Teachers View Micromanagement of School*

Teachers often express frustration over excessive administrative control, feeling that their professional judgment is undermined. For instance, educators have reported being mandated to replicate teaching methods identically across classrooms, limiting their ability to tailor lessons to their learners' unique needs (Poepsel, 2024).

The physical classroom environment is also subject to micromanagement. Administrators often enforce uniform layouts and display, disregarding teachers' preferences and the specific dynamics of their classrooms. This standardization can stifle creativity and responsiveness, as teachers feel constrained by rigid guidelines that may not align with their learners' best interests (Shuford, 2019).

According to Fisher, Aria and Bragas (2024), frequent and prescriptive classroom walkthroughs by administrators are another aspect of micromanagement that teachers find problematic. While intended to monitor instructional quality,

these visits can be perceived as intrusive, especially when they focus on minor details rather than providing constructive feedback. Such practices can erode trust and contribute to a culture of compliance rather than collaboration.

The development of tools to assess micromanagement behaviors in educational settings has been a focus of recent research. Limon and Dilekçi (2021) developed a Micromanagement Scale for School Principals, identifying dimensions such as "unable to subordinate self," "time manipulation," "excessive control over methodology," and "excessive reporting." This scale provides a framework for understanding how micromanagement manifests in schools and its potential impact on teachers.

Moreover, teachers have voiced that micromanagement leads to feelings of demoralization and a lack of trust. One educator shared, "When supervisors feel the need to oversee even the smallest details... they are sending a clear message that we are not trusted to do our jobs." This sentiment highlights how micromanagement can diminish teachers' sense of professionalism and motivation (Poepsel, 2024).

The negative consequences of micromanagement extend beyond individual teachers to affect school culture and climate. Neopolitano-Salmon (2019) found that perceptions of being micromanaged lead to less effective teaching and harm the overall school environment. Teachers reported that such administrative behaviors result in decreased morale and hinder the development of positive teacher-principal relationships.

Further, micromanagement had also been linked to increased administrative burdens that detracted from instructional time. A report highlighted that Queensland state schools experienced an influx of policies, leading to teachers feeling overwhelmed with compliance tasks. This situation exacerbated stress and reduced the time available for effective teaching. The perception of micromanagement varied among teachers, but common themes included feelings of being undervalued and restricted in their professional autonomy. These perceptions led to decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions, posing challenges for school leadership in retaining experienced educators (Wendler, 2022). Teachers also reported that micromanagement stifled innovation and adaptability in teaching practices. When school heads imposed strict guidelines without considering teachers' insights, it limited the ability to implement creative solutions tailored to learners' needs. This rigidity hindered educational progress and student engagement. Moreover, it created a work environment where teachers felt less empowered to exercise professional judgment in their instructional decisions.

➤ *Synthesis*

Micromanagement is a leadership style characterized by excessive oversight and control over employees' tasks, decision-making, and work processes. While intended to ensure efficiency and adherence to standards, it often results in negative consequences for both employees and organizations. Studies suggest that micromanagement leads

to diminished job satisfaction, reduced autonomy, and increased stress among employees. When workers feel that their professional judgment is not trusted, motivation and productivity tend to decline.

In educational institutions, micromanagement is particularly problematic for teachers, as it limits their ability to exercise creativity in lesson planning and instructional methods. School heads who impose rigid policies, frequent monitoring, and unnecessary administrative requirements contribute to a culture of compliance rather than innovation. Teachers who feel micromanaged often experience burnout, disengagement, and, in some cases, a desire to leave the profession. This can have detrimental effects on the overall learning environment and student outcomes.

Despite its largely negative perception, micromanagement can have some short-term benefits in ensuring consistency and accountability. However, long-term reliance on excessive control stifles employee development and prevents the cultivation of a more collaborative and empowered workforce. Effective leadership should strike a balance between guidance and autonomy, allowing employees or teachers to take ownership of their roles while receiving necessary support. Encouraging open communication, trust, and professional growth can mitigate the damaging effects of micromanagement, fostering a more productive and positive work environment.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

➤ Philosophical Assumptions

In this study, I explored teachers' experiences of micromanagement by school heads through a qualitative lens, guided by four philosophical assumptions: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and rhetoric.

➤ *Ontology*

Ontologically, I operated under the assumption that reality is subjective and constructed through individual experiences. This perspective acknowledges that each teacher's perception of micromanagement is unique, shaped by personal interactions and contexts. Recognizing this multiplicity of realities allows for a comprehensive understanding of how micromanagement is experienced in diverse educational settings.

➤ *Epistemology*

Epistemologically, I embraced a constructivist stance, positing that knowledge is co-created through interactions between the researcher and participants. This approach emphasizes the importance of engaging with teachers to uncover the meanings they assign to their experiences with micromanagement. By valuing their narratives, I aim to generate rich, contextual insights that reflect their lived realities.

➤ *Axiology*

Axiologically, I acknowledge that my values and biases inevitably influence the research process. By practicing reflexivity, I continuously examined how my perspectives

shape data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This self-awareness ensures that the study remains ethically grounded and respects the participants' viewpoints.

➤ *Rhetoric*

Regarding rhetorics, I strived for a writing style that authentically represents the participants' voices while maintaining scholarly rigor. This involves presenting findings in a manner that is both accessible and faithful to the teachers' experiences, ensuring that their stories are conveyed with clarity and respect.

➤ *Qualitative Assumptions*

In conducting this qualitative study on teachers' experiences on micromanagement by school heads, I acknowledged several key assumptions inherent to qualitative research. First, I recognized that multiple realities exist, as each teacher's experience is subjective and influenced by personal contexts. This perspective aligns with the notion that qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with process and meaning, focusing on how individuals make sense of their experiences.

Second, I assumed that the meanings teachers assign to their experiences are central to understanding the phenomenon of micromanagement. This assumption emphasizes the importance of capturing the perspectives of those being studied, as qualitative research seeks to understand how people interpret their lives and experiences.

Third, I acknowledged that as the researcher, I am the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. This means that my interpretations and interactions with participants will shape the findings, highlighting the subjective nature of qualitative inquiry.

Finally, I recognized that this study is value-laden, as my own beliefs and biases may influence the research process. Being aware of this assumption allows me to practice reflexivity, continually examining how my values impact data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

➤ *Research Design*

In this study, I employed a qualitative research design using phenomenology to explore teachers' experiences on micromanagement by school heads. Phenomenology is a qualitative approach that focuses on understanding and describing the lived experiences of individuals concerning a specific phenomenon (Delve, n.d.). This methodology is particularly suitable for my study as it seeks to uncover the essence of teachers' experiences with micromanagement, capturing their perceptions, feelings, and interpretations.

By utilizing a phenomenological approach, I aim to gain insights into how teachers experience and interpret micromanagement within their professional environment. This method allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective realities of teachers, providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of micromanagement on their professional lives (Deakin University, 2023). Such an approach is essential for capturing the nuances of teachers'

experiences, which may not be accessible through other research designs.

➤ *Research Participants*

In this study, I focused on elementary teachers from Manobisa Elementary School/Magpet East, Magpet, North Cotabato, as participants. I engaged 10 teachers, aligning with the typical sample size for phenomenological research, which often ranges from 5 to 25 participants (Creswell, 1998). This sample size is deemed sufficient to achieve data saturation, where no new themes emerge from additional data collection.

I employed purposive sampling to select participants, a common technique in qualitative research that involved intentionally choosing individuals who were particularly knowledgeable about or experienced with the phenomenon of interest (Etikan & Bala, 2019). This approach ensured that the data collected was rich and relevant to the research objectives. The inclusion criteria for this study were as follows: Participants had at least five years of teaching experience at the elementary level. This criterion ensured that they had sufficient exposure to various administrative practices, including micromanagement. Secondly, participants were currently employed as elementary teachers in Manobisa Elementary School, Magpet East, Magpet, North Cotabato. This ensured that the data reflected recent and relevant experiences within the specific geographical context. Thirdly, participants were willing to share their experiences and perceptions openly. Voluntary participation was crucial for obtaining authentic and insightful data. By adhering to these criteria and employing purposive sampling, the study aimed to gather in-depth insights into how micromanagement by school heads was perceived by elementary teachers in this region.

➤ *Research Instrument*

In my research, I will utilize a researcher-made interview guide as the primary instrument for data collection. An interview guide is a structured framework used in qualitative research to direct the conversation during interviews. It typically consists of a list of open-ended questions or key topics designed to explore participants' experiences, opinions, and feelings related to the research topic. This approach ensures that all relevant areas are covered while allowing for flexibility in how questions are posed, enabling participants to share their perspectives in their own words.

➤ *Data Collection*

To explore elementary teachers' perceptions of micromanagement by school heads, I conducted in-depth interviews (IDIs) using a structured interview guide from October 15-30, 2025. IDIs are qualitative research methods involving direct, personal conversations between the interviewer and the participant. They allow researchers to ask open-ended, probing questions to gather comprehensive information about individual experiences, motivations, and decision-making processes. This approach is particularly effective in understanding the complex behaviors and perspectives of teachers regarding administrative practices.

Additionally, I facilitated focus group discussions (FGDs) from November 3-8, 2025 with groups of elementary teachers. FGDs are qualitative research methods that involve guided discussions among a small group of participants to explore their perceptions, opinions, and attitudes toward a specific topic. This method is frequently used to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues and is particularly useful for obtaining data from a purposely selected group of individuals.

Implementing both IDIs and FGDs allows for methodological triangulation, enhancing the credibility and validity of the research findings. Triangulation involves using multiple methods, sources, or perspectives to corroborate and validate research results, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

➤ *Data Analysis*

In analyzing the data collected from elementary teachers regarding their perceptions of micromanagement by school heads, I employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis process. This approach provides a systematic framework for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data.

• *Step 1: Familiarization with the Data*

I began by immersing myself in the data collected from elementary teachers in Magpet, North Cotabato, carefully reading and re-reading their interview transcripts. This process helped me fully grasp the depth of their experiences with micromanagement by school heads. Engaging deeply with the transcripts will allow me to identify initial patterns, key phrases, and significant insights that reflect the lived realities of the participants.

• *Step 2: Generating Initial Codes*

Next, I systematically coded the data by identifying and labeling significant features that align with the research questions. By carefully examining the teachers' responses, I categorized specific aspects of their experiences, such as the impact of micromanagement on autonomy, stress levels, and instructional methods. These initial codes served as the building blocks for developing broader themes.

• *Step 3: Searching for Themes*

After coding, I organized the data by grouping related codes into potential themes. This step involves examining how different aspects of teachers' experiences with micromanagement interconnect to form meaningful patterns.

• *Step 4: Reviewing Themes*

I then reviewed the identified themes to ensure they accurately represented the collected data and reflected the teachers' perspectives. This process required refining, merging, or even eliminating themes that did not fully align with the dataset. By doing so, I ensured that the final themes provided a coherent and authentic representation of the elementary teachers' experiences with micromanagement. This step also helped strengthen the credibility of the findings by ensuring that each theme was clearly supported by relevant

data extracts. It also enhanced the overall trustworthiness of the analysis by maintaining consistency between the data and interpretation.

- *Step 5: Defining and Naming Themes*

In this phase, I defined and named each theme, ensuring clarity and alignment with the research objectives. Each theme encapsulated a distinct aspect of teachers' perceptions of micromanagement, such as the emotional burden of excessive oversight, limitations on instructional freedom, or coping strategies used by teachers. This step refined the essence of each theme to ensure they effectively tell the participants' collective story.

- *Step 6: Producing the Report*

Finally, I synthesized the findings into a comprehensive research report, weaving together the themes to construct a narrative that answers the research questions. This involved selecting illustrative quotes from the teachers to support each theme, providing a rich, contextualized understanding of their experiences. Additionally, I integrated the findings with relevant literature to highlight how micromanagement influences elementary teachers' professional and emotional well-being.

- *Trustworthiness of the Study*

In conducting this qualitative study on elementary teachers' perceptions of micromanagement by school heads, I ensured the research's trustworthiness by addressing four key components: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and

- *Credibility*

To establish credibility, I used member checking, allowing elementary teachers in Magpet, North Cotabato to review and verify the accuracy of their responses and my interpretations. This ensures that the findings genuinely reflect their experiences with micromanagement by school heads. Additionally, I applied triangulation by collecting data through both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, ensuring a more comprehensive and validated understanding of the phenomenon.

- *Dependability*

To ensure dependability, I maintained a detailed audit trail documenting each step of the research process, from data collection to analysis. This includes recorded interviews, transcriptions, coding notes, and reflections on decision-making. This systematic documentation allowed the study to be replicated or assessed for reliability in future research on teacher experiences with micromanagement.

- *Confirmability*

To achieve confirmability, I engaged in reflexivity, keeping a journal to critically examine how my assumptions and biases may influence data collection and analysis. Additionally, I conducted peer debriefing sessions with other education researchers to ensure that my interpretations remain objective and are grounded in the teachers' actual experiences.

- *Transferability*

To enhance transferability, I provided rich, thick descriptions of the context, participants, and findings, detailing the specific experiences of elementary teachers facing micromanagement. This allowed readers to determine whether the study's findings can be applied to other educational settings where school heads exercise excessive administrative control.

IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The results are drawn from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted with elementary teachers in Magpet, North Cotabato. The discussion highlights the challenges teachers experience under micromanagement, their coping mechanisms, and the insights they have gained from these experiences. Each theme presented reflects the teachers' authentic voices and lived realities, providing a deeper understanding of how administrative control influences their professional lives.

- *Experiences Teachers Encounter as a Result of Micromanagement in Schools*

The findings revealed that elementary teachers in Magpet, North Cotabato encounter multiple challenges as a result of micromanagement in their schools. Teachers described experiencing loss of professional autonomy, feeling that constant supervision and rigid directives from school heads limited their ability to make instructional decisions. They also reported struggling with increased work pressure and stress, as excessive monitoring and administrative demands often led to exhaustion and frustration. Many felt undervalued and distrusted by their school heads, perceiving micromanagement as a sign of a lack of confidence in their professional competence. Furthermore, teachers expressed coping with limited opportunities for creativity and innovation, as the strict adherence to prescribed tasks hindered their ability to explore new teaching strategies.

- *Experiencing Loss of Professional Autonomy*

This theme highlights how elementary teachers feel restricted in exercising their professional independence due to excessive supervision and control from school heads. Many shared that their instructional choices, classroom strategies, and even minor decisions required administrative approval. This constant oversight created a sense of dependence, making teachers feel incapable of freely expressing their professional judgment and creativity.

"I used to plan creative lessons, but now I always have to wait for the principal's approval before I can try anything new." (IDI-P1)

"Our school head wants to see every detail of our lesson plans. It feels like we can't decide for ourselves anymore." (IDI-P2)

"Sometimes I just follow what's told even if I know a better way to teach the topic, because I don't want to be questioned." (IDI-P3)

“In our group, many teachers shared that we feel our ideas are disregarded when it doesn't match what the principal wants.” (FGD-P6)

“We want to be trusted more. It's like we are not given the freedom to use our own style in teaching.” (FGD-P8)

Participant 1 highlights the frustration of losing creative freedom, as they can no longer implement innovative lessons without prior approval. Participant 2 emphasizes the feeling of being overly controlled, where detailed monitoring of lesson plans limits their ability to decide independently. Participant 3 reveals a sense of silent compliance, choosing to follow directives despite knowing more effective teaching approaches. Meanwhile, Participant 6 reflects a shared experience among teachers of feeling disregarded, especially when their ideas do not align with the principal's preferences. Lastly, Participant 8 expresses a strong desire for trust, pointing out how restricted they feel in practicing their own teaching style. Taken together, these responses illustrate how teachers experience restricted autonomy and diminished professional trust under micromanagement.

The findings resonate with Morris (2022), who noted that teacher micromanagement diminishes educators' sense of agency and lowers morale, as it communicates a lack of trust in their professional competence. Likewise, Bwalya (2024) emphasized that micromanagement creates an environment where teachers feel restricted and undervalued, often resulting in reduced motivation and innovation in the classroom. The teachers' experiences in this study reflect these patterns, showing how the loss of autonomy leads to frustration and a weakened sense of professional identity among educators.

➤ *Struggling with Increased Work Pressure and Stress*

This theme captures how elementary teachers experience heightened stress and emotional strain due to the demanding and controlling nature of micromanagement in schools. Many participants described how constant monitoring, frequent reporting, and pressure to meet administrative expectations made their workload heavier and more exhausting. The lack of trust and autonomy added emotional tension, making teachers feel constantly evaluated and undervalued, which affected both their motivation and well-being.

“Our school head checks on us every day, even during class time. It's stressful because I feel like I'm always being watched.” (IDI-P1)

“There are so many reports to submit on top of teaching. It feels like I'm drowning in paperwork.” (IDI-P2)

“I sometimes bring work home because the deadlines are too tight, and I'm afraid of getting scolded.” (IDI-P3)

“Most of us in the group said we often feel drained and anxious because we want to please our school head.” (FGD-P4)

“We just want to teach well, but it's hard when we're always pressured to meet administrative demands.” (FGD-P5)

Participant 1 expresses a constant sense of pressure and stress due to frequent monitoring, making them feel as if they are always being watched even during class time. Participant 2 highlights the overwhelming burden of administrative tasks, describing how excessive reporting requirements add to their workload beyond teaching. Participant 3 reveals how tight deadlines and fear of reprimand push them to extend their work beyond school hours, bringing tasks home. Meanwhile, Participant 4 reflects a shared emotional exhaustion among teachers, as they feel drained and anxious in their efforts to meet the expectations of their school head. Lastly, Participant 5 conveys a sense of frustration, emphasizing how administrative pressures interfere with their primary goal of teaching effectively. Together, these responses illustrate how micromanagement contributes to increased workload, stress, and emotional strain among teachers.

The findings align with Caise and Tucker (2023), who found that micromanagement increases employee stress levels due to constant oversight and lack of autonomy, resulting in burnout and decreased job satisfaction. Similarly, Ramos and Malangen (2023) noted that excessive managerial control in educational settings leads to mental fatigue among teachers, as they struggle to balance instructional duties with administrative expectations. The experiences of the participants in this study mirror these findings, revealing that micromanagement not only limits teachers' performance but also negatively impacts their emotional well-being and overall job satisfaction.

➤ *Feeling Undervalued and Distrusted by School Heads*

This theme illustrates how elementary teachers feel that micromanagement communicates a lack of trust in their professional competence. Many participants shared that the constant monitoring and rigid supervision made them feel undervalued, as if their experience and judgment were not respected. This atmosphere of distrust caused emotional strain and lowered their morale, leading them to question their worth as professionals.

“It feels like our school head doesn't believe we can do things right without being checked all the time.” (IDI-P1)

“Even if we do our best, it's never enough. There's always something to correct or change.” (IDI-P2)

“Sometimes, I feel like I'm not trusted as a teacher, like they think I can't handle my work on my own.” (IDI-P3)

“We shared in our group that we often feel unappreciated because our efforts are rarely recognized.” (FGD-P4)

“Instead of encouragement, we usually receive criticism, which makes us feel small and demotivated.” (FGD-P5)

Participant 1 expresses a feeling of being distrusted, as constant checking makes them believe that their school head

lacks confidence in their abilities. Participant 2 highlights a sense of inadequacy, where despite giving their best effort, they feel that their work is never fully accepted. Participant 3 reveals a deeper emotional impact, describing how the lack of trust makes them question their competence as a teacher. Meanwhile, Participant 4 reflects a shared experience of feeling unappreciated, as teachers perceive that their efforts are rarely acknowledged. Lastly, Participant 5 conveys how frequent criticism, rather than encouragement, diminishes their confidence and motivation. Altogether, these responses show how micromanagement leads to feelings of being undervalued, distrusted, and emotionally discouraged among teachers.

These findings are consistent with Okafor and Osita (2023), who observed that micromanagement undermines employees' confidence and self-worth by fostering an environment of distrust and excessive control. Similarly, Shuford (2021) emphasized that micromanagement destroys staff morale and creates emotional exhaustion, as employees feel unappreciated and powerless. In this study, the teachers' experiences reflect these same patterns—demonstrating that when leaders fail to show trust and appreciation, teachers' motivation and sense of professional dignity decline, ultimately affecting their commitment to teaching.

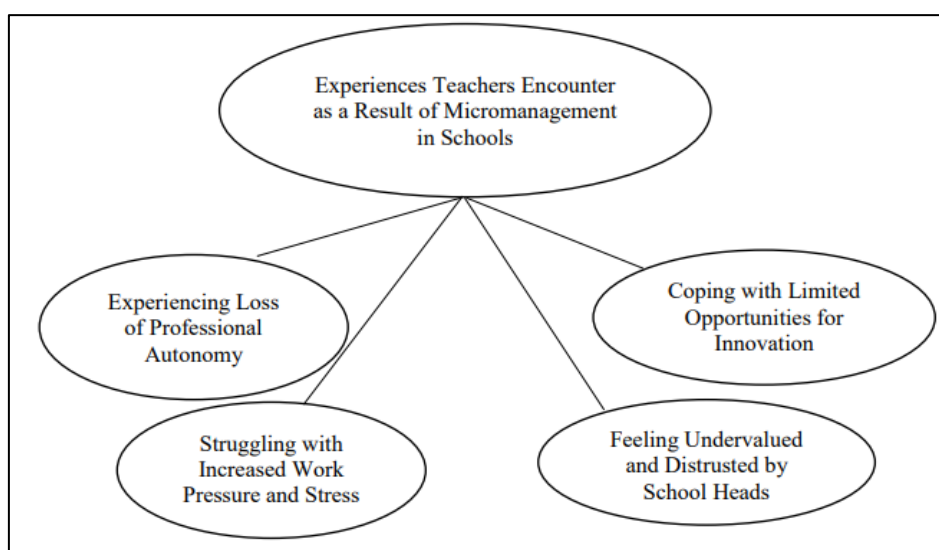


Fig 1 Experiences Teachers Encounter as a Result of Micromanagement in Schools

➤ *Coping mechanisms teachers employ to deal with micromanagement in schools*

The results revealed that teachers employed several coping mechanisms to manage the effects of micromanagement in their schools. Many teachers coped by seeking autonomy in classroom-level decisions, finding small ways to exercise control over their teaching methods and classroom routines despite administrative restrictions. Others focused on practicing self-care and stress-relief activities, such as taking short breaks, engaging in hobbies, or maintaining a positive mindset to reduce emotional strain. Teachers also emphasized the importance of building peer support and encouragement networks, relying on trusted colleagues to share frustrations, exchange advice, and provide emotional reassurance. Lastly, teachers coped by integrating creative strategies within administrative boundaries, finding innovative ways to make their lessons engaging while still adhering to prescribed guidelines. These coping strategies reflected the teachers' resilience and adaptability amid the challenges of working under micromanaged environments.

➤ *Seeking Autonomy in Classroom-Level Decisions*

This theme highlights how teachers attempt to regain a sense of independence and control within their classrooms despite experiencing micromanagement from school heads. Teachers shared that even though administrative restrictions limited their decision-making power, they found ways to

exercise autonomy through small but meaningful actions, such as adjusting lesson pacing, choosing examples that fit their learners' contexts, or introducing minor creative elements within approved plans. These small acts of control helped them feel empowered and reconnected to their professional identity.

"Even if our lessons are checked, I still make small adjustments in class to suit my pupils' needs." (IDI-P1)

"I follow the required format, but I also add my own examples so the lesson feels more personal." (IDI-P2)

"Sometimes I innovate quietly in class; as long as the result is good, I know I'm doing something right." (IDI-P3)

"In our group, we agreed that even small decisions like how to group students make us feel in control." (FGD-P4)

"We comply with what's required, but we still find small ways to teach in a way that works for us." (FGD-P5)

Participant 1 highlights how they subtly reclaim autonomy by making small adjustments during instruction to better address their pupils' needs despite checked lesson plans. Participant 2 shows a balance between compliance and individuality, following required formats while still

personalizing lessons through their own examples. Participant 3 reveals a quiet form of resistance, where innovation happens discreetly in the classroom as long as outcomes remain effective. Meanwhile, Participant 4 reflects a shared realization among teachers that even small decisions, such as grouping students, provide a sense of control. Lastly, Participant 5 emphasizes adaptive compliance, where teachers meet administrative expectations while still finding ways to teach according to what works best for them. Together, these responses illustrate how teachers navigate micromanagement by creating small spaces of autonomy within imposed structures.

The findings are consistent with Baeder (2021), who emphasized that effective instructional leadership should empower teachers rather than control them, as autonomy enhances commitment and instructional quality. Similarly, Bwalya (2024) explained that when teachers are allowed space for independent decision-making, they become more motivated, confident, and capable of adapting strategies that best serve their learners. These studies support the idea that even under restrictive conditions, teachers strive to reclaim autonomy as a means of preserving professional satisfaction and classroom effectiveness.

➤ *Practicing Self-Care and Stress-Relief Activities*

This theme reveals how elementary teachers respond to the pressures of micromanagement by prioritizing their well-being through various self-care and stress-relief activities. Teachers shared that when work demands and administrative supervision became overwhelming, they intentionally practiced activities that helped them stay calm and emotionally balanced. These included taking rest after work, engaging in hobbies, setting personal boundaries, and maintaining a positive mindset. Such practices became their way of coping with the emotional strain brought by continuous monitoring and pressure from school heads.

“After school, I make sure to rest or watch a show just to clear my mind from all the stress.” (IDI-P1)

“When things get too heavy, I take a short break, breathe, and remind myself not to take things personally.” (IDI-P2)

“I try to leave school issues at school and spend quality time with my family.” (IDI-P3)

“Most of us shared that we try to relax or talk to friends to release the stress from too many reports.” (FGD-P4)

“I’ve learned that self-care helps me stay patient even when the pressure from the principal is high.” (FGD-P5)

Participant 1 highlights the use of simple relaxation activities, such as watching shows, as a way to mentally detach and recover from daily stress. Participant 2 emphasizes emotional regulation, taking short breaks and reminding themselves not to internalize the pressure. Participant 3 shows the importance of boundary-setting, intentionally separating school concerns from personal life by spending time with family. Meanwhile, Participant 4 reflects

a shared coping strategy among teachers, where social support and conversations with friends help release accumulated stress. Lastly, Participant 5 recognizes self-care as essential in maintaining patience and emotional stability despite ongoing administrative pressure. Altogether, these responses illustrate how teachers manage the emotional toll of micromanagement through self-care, boundaries, and social support.

The findings reflect the observations of Ramos and Malangen (2023), who emphasized that teachers under micromanagement often resort to emotional and behavioral coping mechanisms to prevent burnout and sustain work performance. Likewise, Poepsel (2024) suggested that self-care is a vital leadership and employee strategy to counter the negative effects of overcontrol, allowing individuals to maintain mental clarity and resilience. The teachers’ experiences in this study confirm that engaging in self-care not only helps them manage stress but also strengthens their capacity to remain motivated and effective despite administrative constraints.

➤ *Building Peer Support and Encouragement Networks*

This theme highlights how teachers cope with the effects of micromanagement by seeking emotional and professional support from their colleagues. Many participants expressed that sharing experiences with fellow teachers provided them with comfort, validation, and reassurance that they were not alone in their struggles. Through informal conversations, collaboration, and collective problem-solving, teachers built a sense of community that helped them manage stress and maintain morale despite restrictive supervision from school heads.

“When things get stressful, I talk to my co-teachers, it helps knowing they understand what I’m going through.” (IDI-P1)

“We often share tips on how to handle the pressure from our principal so that no one feels left out.” (IDI-P2)

“Sometimes, just having coffee and talking with other teachers after class lightens the burden.” (IDI-P3)

“In our group, we said that helping each other with reports lessens the stress and makes the work manageable.” (FGD-P4)

“We find strength in each other. It’s easier to face the challenges when you know your peers have your back.” (FGD-P5)

Participant 1 highlights the importance of emotional support from co-teachers, finding comfort in shared understanding during stressful situations. Participant 2 emphasizes collaboration, where teachers exchange strategies to cope with pressure and ensure that no one feels isolated. Participant 3 reflects how simple interactions, like having coffee and conversations after class, help ease the emotional burden. Meanwhile, Participant 4 shows a practical form of support, where helping each other with reports makes tasks

more manageable and less overwhelming. Lastly, Participant 5 expresses a strong sense of solidarity, recognizing that collective support provides strength in facing challenges. Altogether, these responses illustrate how peer support serves as a vital coping mechanism, fostering connection, shared resilience, and emotional relief among teacher.

These findings are consistent with Ramos and Malangen (2023), who found that collaboration and emotional support among teachers reduce the negative psychological effects of micromanagement and promote resilience. Similarly, Okafor and Osita (2023) emphasized that peer relationships can buffer the impact of restrictive leadership styles, as supportive networks enhance motivation, morale, and job satisfaction. The teachers’ experiences in this study echo these observations, showing that solidarity among peers serves as a vital coping mechanism that helps educators stay motivated and emotionally stable even in micromanaged work environments.

➤ *Integrating Creative Strategies within Administrative Boundaries*

This theme describes how teachers cope with micromanagement by finding ways to remain creative within the confines of administrative rules and expectations. Despite the limitations set by school heads, teachers shared that they still introduced small innovations to make their lessons engaging and meaningful. They carefully balanced compliance with creativity—adapting teaching materials, using relatable examples, and modifying classroom activities while ensuring they stayed within official guidelines. This subtle creativity allowed them to express their individuality as teachers while maintaining harmony with school policies.

“Even if our school head checks everything, I still make my activities fun by adding examples that fit my pupils’ interests.” (IDI-P1)

“We follow the lesson plan, but I add games or short tasks to make it more interactive.” (IDI-P2)

“I use the same materials required by the school, but I present them in a more engaging way.” (IDI-P3)

“In our group, we said that we try to innovate quietly, so we can make lessons exciting without breaking the rules.” (FGD-P4)

“I find little ways to be creative, even if everything must be approved first.” (FGD-P5)

Participant 1 highlights how creativity is sustained by adapting activities to match pupils’ interests despite strict monitoring. Participant 2 emphasizes balancing compliance with innovation, following the lesson plan while incorporating games and interactive tasks. Participant 3 reflects resourcefulness, using required materials but presenting them in more engaging ways. Meanwhile, Participant 4 reveals a shared practice of subtle innovation, where teachers creatively enhance lessons without openly defying rules. Lastly, Participant 5 expresses determination to remain creative, finding small opportunities for innovation even within restrictive conditions. Collectively, these responses show how teachers preserve their creativity by working within, rather than against, the limits of micromanagement.

These findings align with Caruz (2024), who emphasized that teachers’ innovative behavior contributes to organizational effectiveness when creativity is exercised responsibly within institutional policies. Similarly, Galindez, Arias, and Bragas (2024) found that employees under micromanagement can still perform effectively when they adapt and introduce creativity within allowable boundaries. The teachers in this study demonstrated the same resilience, showing that innovation can coexist with compliance when educators are determined to make learning engaging despite administrative restrictions.

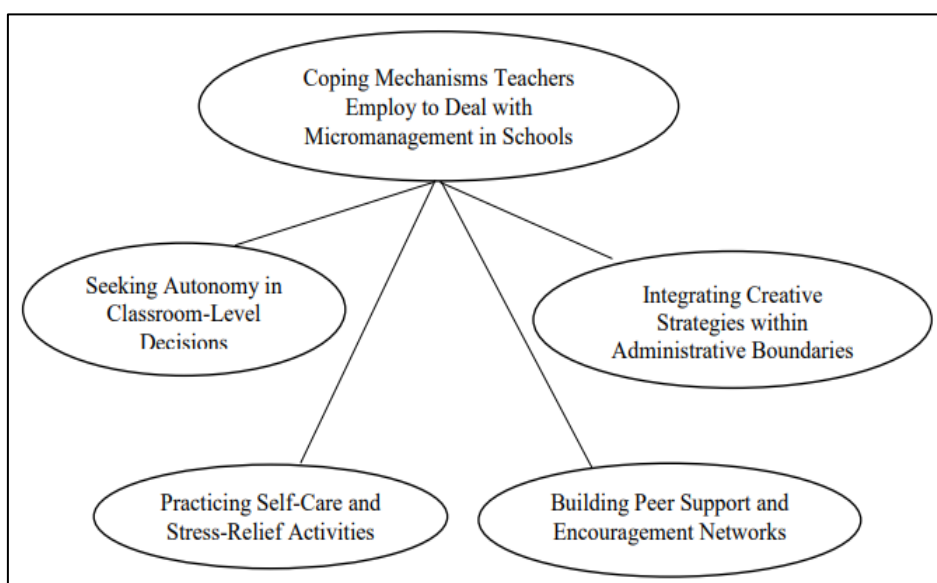


Fig 2 Coping Mechanisms Teachers Employ to Deal with Micromanagement in Schools

➤ *Educational Management Insights on Micromanagement*

The study generated several educational management insights that reflect teachers' adaptive responses to micromanagement. First, teachers regain confidence through small independent actions, showing that granting even limited autonomy can restore their sense of professionalism and control over their teaching practices. Second, teachers manage pressure by prioritizing self-care, highlighting the importance of promoting teacher well-being and emotional balance in school management. Third, teachers find strength in supportive peer relationships, emphasizing the role of collegial collaboration and open communication as buffers against the stress caused by administrative control. Lastly, teachers adapt creativity within existing school rules, demonstrating that flexibility and innovation can still thrive even within structured systems when teachers are encouraged to think resourcefully. These insights suggest that effective educational leadership requires balancing accountability with empowerment to sustain teacher motivation and performance. Teachers regain confidence through small independent actions.

➤ *Teachers Regain Confidence through Small Independent Actions*

This insight reflects how teachers rebuild their sense of professional confidence and control by taking small, independent actions within their classrooms. Despite the restrictive effects of micromanagement, teachers find empowerment in making minor instructional adjustments, choosing examples that suit their learners, or quietly modifying teaching strategies to fit classroom realities. These small but meaningful acts allow them to reclaim their professional identity and restore their confidence as capable educators.

“Even if we follow strict instructions, I still make small choices that help me feel in control of my class.” (IDI-P1)

“I’ve learned to decide on little things, like how I handle group work or how I explain lessons—it helps me feel confident again.” (IDI-P2)

“Whenever I try something that works, even if it’s not exactly what was told, I feel proud of my decision.” (IDI-P3)

“We all agreed that we can’t always defy the rules, but small actions still make us feel trusted and capable.” (FGD-P4)

“It’s those little choices in class that remind us we still have a voice as teachers.” (FGD-P5)

Participant 1 highlights how making small classroom decisions helps them regain a sense of control despite strict instructions. Participant 2 emphasizes that choosing how to manage group work or explain lessons restores their confidence as a teacher. Participant 3 reflects a sense of pride in making independent decisions, especially when these actions lead to successful outcomes. Meanwhile, Participant 4 shows a shared understanding among teachers that while they cannot openly resist rules, small actions still allow them

to feel capable and trusted. Lastly, Participant 5 expresses how these small choices serve as reminders that they still have a voice in their teaching practice. Collectively, these responses illustrate how teachers reclaim a sense of agency and professional identity through small but meaningful decisions in the classroom.

This finding supports Baeder (2021), who argued that effective leadership involves trusting teachers to make professional decisions rather than controlling every aspect of instruction. By exercising small acts of autonomy, teachers regain confidence and reaffirm their professional worth. Similarly, Aljabri and Alharthy (2025) noted that when employees are given opportunities to exercise discretion within their roles, their sense of empowerment and motivation increases significantly. The teachers' experiences in this study align with these ideas, showing that even in highly controlled environments, autonomy, no matter how limited, can foster confidence, ownership, and renewed professional enthusiasm.

➤ *Teachers Manage Pressure by Prioritizing Self-Care*

This insight emphasizes how teachers handle the stress caused by micromanagement by intentionally practicing self-care and maintaining emotional balance. They recognize that the constant administrative pressure and lack of autonomy can lead to burnout, so they prioritize personal well-being through rest, reflection, and positive coping habits. Teachers view self-care not as neglecting their duties but as a necessary strategy to remain calm, focused, and effective in their roles.

“I’ve learned to take breaks and rest my mind because if I don’t, the stress just builds up.” (IDI-P1)

“When things get overwhelming, I remind myself to slow down and take care of my health first.” (IDI-P2)

“Sometimes, I just detach from school work for a while so I can recharge.” (IDI-P3)

“We all agreed that self-care helps us handle the pressure better, it keeps us patient and motivated.” (FGD-P4)

“I make sure to relax after work because that’s the only way I can keep up with all the demands.” (FGD-P5)

Participant 1 highlights the importance of taking intentional breaks to prevent stress from accumulating and becoming overwhelming. Participant 2 emphasizes prioritizing personal health, recognizing the need to slow down during moments of pressure. Participant 3 reflects the use of temporary detachment from work as a way to mentally recharge. Meanwhile, Participant 4 shows a shared agreement among teachers that self-care is essential in maintaining patience and motivation amid demands. Lastly, Participant 5 expresses how relaxation after work becomes necessary to sustain their ability to cope with ongoing responsibilities. Altogether, these responses illustrate how teachers actively practice self-care as a way to manage stress and maintain their well-being under micromanagement.

This finding supports Poepsel (2024), who emphasized that managing stress through intentional self-care practices allows employees to maintain focus, clarity, and productivity even in highly controlled environments. Similarly, Ramos and Malangen (2023) highlighted that teachers under micromanagement benefit from psychological coping mechanisms such as relaxation and boundary-setting to prevent burnout. The teachers' experiences in this study mirror these observations, showing that self-care serves as an essential resilience strategy that helps educators sustain their mental health and teaching effectiveness despite administrative pressure. This further suggests that promoting well-being practices is important in maintaining teachers' overall performance and job satisfaction.

➤ *Teachers Find Strength in Supportive Peer Relationships*

This insight highlights how teachers rely on collegial relationships as a source of emotional and professional support in dealing with micromanagement. Sharing experiences, frustrations, and strategies with fellow teachers helps them feel understood and less isolated. Through mutual encouragement and collaboration, teachers develop a sense of solidarity that enables them to manage stress and maintain motivation despite administrative pressures.

“Talking with my co-teachers helps me realize I’m not alone in this situation.” (IDI-P1)

“We support each other whenever one of us feels pressured by the principal.” (IDI-P2)

“Sometimes, a simple conversation with a colleague makes the workload feel lighter.” (IDI-P3)

“We all agreed in our group that helping one another keeps us strong.” (FGD-P4)

“It’s easier to handle the pressure when you know your fellow teachers have your back.” (FGD-P5)

Participant 1 highlights how conversations with co-teachers create a sense of shared experience, helping them realize they are not alone in facing challenges. Participant 2 emphasizes mutual support, where teachers actively help one another during moments of pressure from the principal. Participant 3 reflects how simple interactions with colleagues can lighten the emotional weight of their workload. Meanwhile, Participant 4 shows a collective belief that helping each other strengthens their ability to cope. Lastly, Participant 5 expresses a sense of reassurance, knowing that peer support makes it easier to handle ongoing pressures. Altogether, these responses illustrate how collegial support fosters a sense of belonging, resilience, and emotional strength among teachers navigating micromanagement.

The findings are consistent with Okafor and Osita (2023), who explained that peer relationships play a crucial role in buffering the emotional strain caused by restrictive leadership styles. Supportive colleagues create a sense of belonging and shared purpose that reduces the negative effects of micromanagement. Similarly, Ramos and

Malangen (2023) observed that collaboration and mutual encouragement among teachers help sustain morale and foster resilience in highly controlled school environments. The teachers in this study reflected these ideas, demonstrating that peer support serves as both an emotional refuge and a professional strength in the face of micromanagement.

➤ *Teachers Adapt Creativity within Existing School Rules*

This insight captures how teachers demonstrate resilience and adaptability by finding ways to express creativity within the limitations set by school policies and administrative oversight. Despite strict supervision, teachers continue to modify lessons, use interactive techniques, and incorporate innovative ideas that align with existing rules. Their ability to balance compliance with creativity reflects their determination to maintain engaging instruction without violating school expectations.

“I still make lessons fun by adding small creative touches that don’t go against the guidelines.” (IDI-P1)

“Even if our plans are checked, I try to make activities more interactive to keep students interested.” (IDI-P2)

“I look for ways to innovate that still fit the school’s requirements.” (IDI-P3)

“We agreed that we can be creative as long as we stay within the rules given by our school heads.” (FGD-P4)

“We’ve learned to innovate quietly so we can make lessons meaningful while still following the system.” (FGD-P5)

Participant 1 highlights how they maintain creativity by adding small, acceptable touches that align with existing guidelines. Participant 2 emphasizes adapting instruction by making activities more interactive, even when lesson plans are closely monitored. Participant 3 reflects a strategic approach, finding ways to innovate while still meeting school requirements. Meanwhile, Participant 4 shows a shared understanding among teachers that creativity is possible as long as it stays within prescribed rules. Lastly, Participant 5 expresses a subtle form of innovation, where teachers creatively enhance lessons while quietly complying with the system. Altogether, these responses illustrate how teachers sustain their creativity by carefully balancing innovation with adherence to administrative expectations.

The findings support Caruz (2024), who explained that innovation in education thrives when teachers are empowered to adapt and exercise creativity within organizational structures. Similarly, Galindez, Arias, and Bragas (2024) emphasized that even in restrictive work environments, employees can maintain productivity and motivation when they find creative solutions that respect institutional boundaries. The teachers' experiences in this study reflect these insights, showing that creativity can coexist with compliance, serving as a practical strategy to enhance teaching quality despite micromanagement.

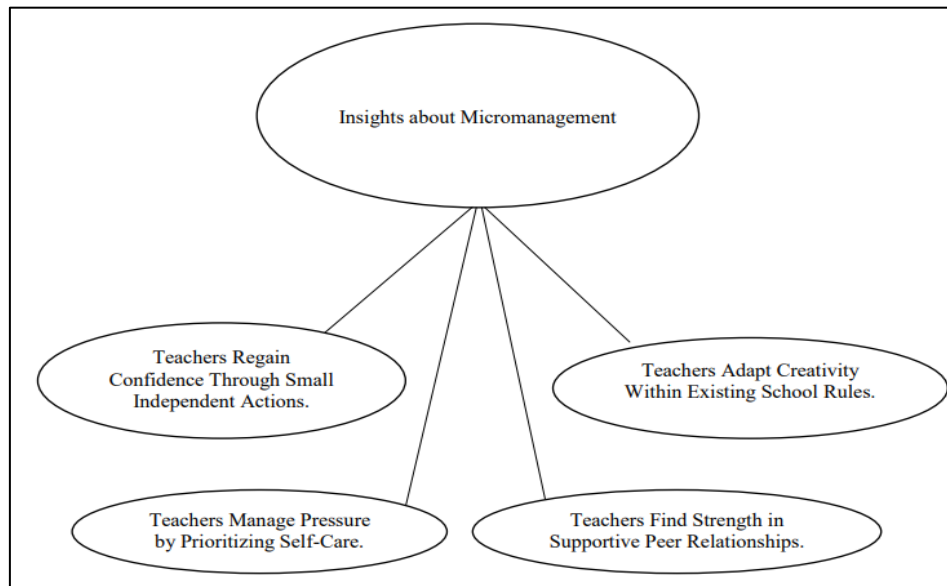


Fig 3 Insights about Micromanagement

V. IMPLICATIONS

➤ *Implications for Each Objective are as follows:*

The findings suggest that micromanagement negatively affects teachers' sense of autonomy, morale, and professional growth. For educational leaders, this implies the need to review management styles and adopt practices that encourage trust and shared decision-making. By minimizing unnecessary control, school heads can create an environment where teachers feel empowered to make instructional choices and contribute ideas freely. Institutions may also benefit from leadership training programs that emphasize emotional intelligence, delegation, and motivational supervision to reduce teacher stress and burnout.

The coping strategies teachers developed reflect their adaptability and resilience despite restrictive conditions. This implies that school administrators should recognize the importance of teacher well-being and incorporate wellness initiatives into the school system. Encouraging peer collaboration, mentoring programs, and mental health support can strengthen collective coping and lessen the emotional toll of administrative pressures. Furthermore, leadership practices that value teacher input and respect personal boundaries can help sustain teacher motivation and work-life balance.

The insights drawn from this study highlight the significance of balancing accountability with empowerment. For educational managers, this means fostering a culture of trust where teachers' professional competence is acknowledged and nurtured. Schools should encourage autonomy in classroom decision-making, promote collaboration among teachers, and support creative instructional practices within institutional standards. At the policy level, the findings imply that guidelines on school leadership should prioritize teacher empowerment as a means to enhance instructional quality, organizational harmony, and long-term educational improvement.

VI. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Department of Education should consider developing clear policies and leadership standards that discourage micromanagement and instead promote teacher empowerment, trust, and collaboration. Training programs and leadership frameworks may be strengthened to emphasize distributed leadership, emotional intelligence, and participative supervision. Moreover, DepEd can initiate wellness and professional development programs that support teachers' autonomy and mental health. A system for monitoring leadership practices could also be institutionalized to ensure that school management aligns with national goals of fostering innovation and teacher motivation.

School heads should strive to balance accountability with empowerment by practicing trust-based supervision. They are encouraged to delegate responsibilities, allow teachers to exercise discretion in instructional decisions, and foster an environment of open communication. Instead of closely controlling every task, school heads can focus on mentoring and providing constructive feedback. Future initiatives may include leadership workshops on motivational management and reflective practices that help school leaders become facilitators of growth rather than enforcers of control.

Teachers should continue to develop self-awareness and resilience in navigating micromanagement by focusing on professional growth and emotional well-being. Engaging in peer collaboration, seeking mentorship, and participating in capacity-building activities can enhance their confidence and teaching effectiveness. Teachers can also advocate for shared decision-making in schools and demonstrate professionalism that earns the trust of school leaders. Cultivating a mindset of adaptability and innovation will help teachers maintain creativity even within structured systems.

Learners stand to benefit most when teachers feel empowered and motivated. Hence, learners should be

encouraged to provide feedback on teaching strategies and classroom experiences, allowing teachers to adapt lessons that support student engagement. Schools may also promote learner-centered approaches that value creativity and participation, helping learners appreciate the benefits of a more flexible and supportive classroom environment. Ultimately, empowered teachers create a ripple effect that fosters empowered learners.

Future researchers are encouraged to expand this study by exploring micromanagement across different educational levels, regions, or school types. Quantitative or mixed-method studies could be conducted to measure the relationship between micromanagement and teacher performance or well-being. Further research may also investigate the long-term effects of administrative control on school culture and student outcomes. Additionally, comparative studies between schools with empowering leadership and those with micromanaged systems could provide deeper insights into effective educational management practices.

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