

THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS' SUPERVISION MANAGEMENT ON WORK STRESS LEVELS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract

Teachers' psychological health has become a critical issue in contemporary schooling, particularly as accountability demands and evaluative pressures intensify supervisory practices. Teachers' perceptions of how principals manage supervision are increasingly recognized as a key determinant of occupational stress and psychological well-being. This study aims to examine the influence of teachers' perceptions of principals' supervision management on work stress levels and psychological well-being. The study employed a quantitative correlational design using a cross-sectional survey approach. Data were collected from teachers through standardized questionnaires measuring perceived supervision management, work stress, and psychological well-being, and were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential techniques, including correlation and regression analyses. The results indicate that teachers' perceptions of supervision management significantly predict both outcomes. Positive perceptions of supportive, transparent, and developmental supervision are associated with lower work stress and higher psychological well-being, whereas negative perceptions of controlling supervision correspond to increased stress and reduced well-being. Supervision management demonstrates a meaningful explanatory contribution to teachers' psychological conditions. Enhancing principals' supervisory approaches with attention to teachers' perceptions may reduce occupational stress and promote sustainable psychological well-being. Such efforts strengthen leadership effectiveness and support healthier professional environments within schools through sustainable, ethical, and psychologically informed supervision practices nationwide implementation.

Keywords: Supervision Management, Teachers' Perceptions, Work Stress

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INTRODUCTION

Teacher well-being has emerged as a critical issue in contemporary educational discourse, particularly in relation to increasing professional demands, accountability pressures, and organizational expectations placed on teachers (van Doren et al., 2026). Educational reforms and performance-oriented policies have intensified teachers' workloads, often resulting in heightened psychological strain and diminished occupational satisfaction. In this context, work stress and psychological well-being are no longer peripheral concerns but central indicators of educational quality and sustainability.

School leadership plays a decisive role in shaping teachers' work experiences and psychological conditions (Müller et al., 2026). Principals, as instructional and managerial leaders, influence not only teaching practices but also the emotional climate of schools. Supervision management, when implemented as a developmental and supportive process, has the potential to reduce stress and promote teachers' psychological well-being. Conversely, supervision perceived as controlling, evaluative, or punitive may exacerbate stress and undermine teachers' mental health.

Teachers' perceptions of supervision management constitute a crucial mediating factor between leadership practices and psychological outcomes. Perception determines how supervisory actions are interpreted, internalized, and responded to by teachers (Šerić & Garbin Praničević, 2026). Understanding how teachers perceive principals' supervision management provides insight into the psychological mechanisms through which leadership practices influence work stress and well-being, particularly in educational systems where supervisory practices are closely tied to performance evaluation and accountability.

Despite the acknowledged importance of supervision in educational management, many teachers report experiencing supervision as a source of pressure rather than professional support (Ocak & Caskurlu, 2026). Supervisory activities are frequently associated with administrative compliance, documentation demands, and performance judgment, which may contribute to elevated levels of work stress. Such conditions raise concerns about the effectiveness of supervision management in fostering healthy and supportive work environments.

Teachers' work stress manifests in various forms, including emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and decreased motivation. Persistent stress not only affects teachers' instructional effectiveness but also threatens their psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and long-term professional commitment (Dai & Ran, 2026). When stress remains unaddressed, it may lead to burnout, absenteeism, and reduced educational quality.

A critical problem lies in the limited attention given to teachers' subjective perceptions of supervision management (Fogarty et al., 2026). Many studies focus on supervisory models or principals' perspectives, while overlooking how teachers interpret and experience supervision practices. This gap restricts understanding of why similar supervisory strategies may produce divergent psychological outcomes among teachers, highlighting the need to examine perception as a central analytical variable.

This study aims to analyze the influence of teachers' perceptions of principals' supervision management on teachers' work stress levels. The objective is to identify how perceived supervisory practices contribute to either the intensification or alleviation of stress within the teaching profession (Bieg et al., 2026). Work stress is conceptualized as a psychological response to perceived demands, pressures, and expectations embedded in supervisory processes.

Another objective of the study is to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of supervision management and their psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional balance,

sense of purpose, autonomy, and positive functioning at work (Rozy et al., 2026). The study seeks to clarify whether supportive and well-managed supervision is associated with higher levels of well-being among teachers.

The study also aims to explore the simultaneous influence of perceived supervision management on both work stress and psychological well-being (Wang, 2026). By examining these outcomes together, the research intends to provide a comprehensive understanding of how leadership practices shape teachers' psychological experiences and occupational health within school organizations.

Existing literature on educational supervision has predominantly emphasized technical supervision models, instructional improvement, and administrative effectiveness (Sadiku, 2026). While these studies contribute to understanding supervision as a managerial function, they often neglect its psychological implications for teachers. As a result, the emotional and mental health consequences of supervision practices remain underexplored.

Research on teacher stress and psychological well-being has largely focused on workload, classroom challenges, and external policy pressures. Leadership-related factors, particularly supervision management, are frequently treated as background variables rather than primary explanatory constructs (Cave, 2026). This limits the ability to identify specific leadership practices that contribute to teacher stress or well-being.

Few empirical studies integrate teachers' perceptions of supervision management with both work stress and psychological well-being in a single analytical framework. The absence of such integrative approaches creates a conceptual gap in understanding how leadership practices are psychologically processed by teachers (Yu et al., 2026). Addressing this gap is essential for developing supervision models that are not only effective but also psychologically sustainable.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on teachers' perceptions as a central analytical lens for examining supervision management (Scrivner et al., 2026). Rather than evaluating supervision solely based on formal structures or leadership intentions, the study emphasizes how supervision is subjectively experienced by teachers. This perspective offers a more nuanced understanding of the psychological impact of leadership practices.

The research also introduces an integrative framework linking supervision management, work stress, and psychological well-being. By positioning work stress and well-being as interconnected outcomes of perceived supervision practices, the study advances existing theories of educational leadership and organizational psychology (Dulić & Grbić, 2026). This integrative approach moves beyond fragmented analyses and highlights the systemic nature of teacher well-being.

The justification for this research is grounded in the growing need to promote sustainable teaching environments. Understanding how supervision management affects teachers' psychological health provides practical implications for leadership development, policy formulation, and school management (Maričić et al., 2026). The findings are expected to contribute to theoretical advancement and inform evidence-based supervision practices that support both professional performance and teacher well-being.

RESEARCH METHOD

The following sections detail the systematic approach used to investigate the relationship between school leadership practices and the psychological outcomes of educators.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design with a correlational approach to examine the influence of teachers' perceptions of principals' supervision management on work stress levels and psychological well-being (Somuah et al., 2026). The design was selected to identify the direction and strength of relationships among variables without manipulating the

school environment. A cross-sectional survey method was used to capture data at a single point in time. The conceptual framework positioned supervision management—encompassing planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating—as the independent variable, while work stress and psychological well-being functioned as the dependent variables.

Research Target/Subject

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the predictive relationships between supervisory practices and teacher mental health outcomes. The study targets evidence-based conclusions regarding how the quality of feedback and fairness of evaluation from principals can mitigate psychological strain. By assessing variables like emotional exhaustion and personal growth, the research aims to generate findings that can inform educational leadership training and institutional policies aimed at enhancing teacher well-being and professional purpose.

The population consisted of teachers in formal educational institutions who work under the direct supervision of school principals. Teachers were selected as the unit of analysis because they are the primary recipients of supervisory practices and directly experience the resulting psychological consequences. Using proportional random sampling, a diverse group of teachers from various subject areas and career stages was selected. To maintain data validity, only teachers who had actively participated in formal supervision activities conducted by their current principals were included in the final sample.

Research Procedure

The research procedures were initiated by obtaining approval from institutional authorities and school administrators. Following this, researchers coordinated with school leaders to distribute questionnaires in either printed or digital formats. Participants were provided with clear instructions regarding the study's purpose and were guaranteed anonymity to encourage honest responses. Once the individual and voluntary completion process was finished, the researchers collected the instruments and performed a screening for completeness (Baruh et al., 2026). The final step involved coding the data and entering it into statistical software for rigorous analysis.

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using standardized self-report questionnaires consisting of three main scales: the supervision management perception scale, the teacher work stress scale, and the psychological well-being scale (Basla et al., 2026). The supervision scale utilized a Likert-type format to evaluate feedback quality and supportive behavior. The work stress scale assessed emotional exhaustion and workload pressure, while the well-being scale measured autonomy and personal growth. Prior to the main study, all instruments underwent validity and reliability testing, including expert judgment for content validity and Cronbach's alpha calculations to ensure internal consistency.

Data Analysis Technique

The study utilized descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques processed through specialized statistical software. Correlation and regression testing were the primary methods used to identify the strength and direction of the relationships between supervisory perceptions and psychological states (Visentin & Prodi, 2026). To maintain analytical rigor, the researcher applied screening procedures to identify missing data and outliers, ensuring that the statistical inferences regarding predictive relationships were based on clean and accurate data sets.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis indicates that teachers' perceptions of principals' supervision management, work stress levels, and psychological well-being vary across respondents but show interpretable central tendencies. Overall, teachers reported moderate perceptions of supervision management, suggesting that supervisory practices were present but not uniformly experienced as supportive or developmental. Work stress levels appeared at a moderate range, while psychological well-being scores reflected a generally stable but not optimal condition among teachers.

The mean score for perceived supervision management suggests that teachers experience supervisory practices as partially supportive, with room for improvement in feedback quality and developmental guidance. The standard deviation indicates noticeable variation in teachers' experiences, implying that supervision is not implemented consistently across contexts.

Work stress scores reveal that teachers experience considerable job-related pressure, likely arising from workload demands, role expectations, and evaluative supervision processes. Psychological well-being scores suggest that while teachers maintain functional emotional balance, sustained exposure to stress may undermine long-term well-being if not addressed through supportive leadership practices.

The distribution of scores for all variables approximates normality, with skewness and kurtosis values within acceptable statistical thresholds. This distribution indicates balanced representation of low, moderate, and high responses across the sample, supporting the suitability of parametric analysis.

Response patterns show that teachers reporting higher-quality supervision management tend to cluster at lower stress levels and higher psychological well-being scores. Conversely, teachers perceiving supervision as rigid or evaluative are more frequently associated with elevated stress levels and reduced well-being.

Analytical examination reveals a systematic pattern linking supervisory perceptions to psychological outcomes. Teachers who perceive supervision as constructive and supportive report more positive emotional states and greater psychological stability. These findings suggest that supervision management functions as a contextual regulator of teachers' occupational experiences.

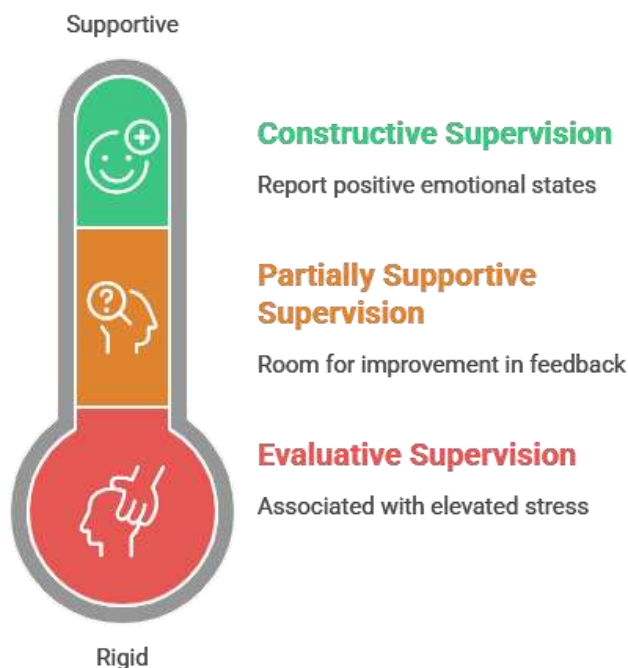


Figure 1. Teachers' Perceptions of Supervision Management Impact Psychological Well-Being

The data also indicate that supervision management may operate indirectly by shaping teachers' appraisal of job demands. Supportive supervision appears to buffer stress, while

perceived control-oriented supervision intensifies psychological strain, thereby affecting overall well-being.

Inferential statistical analysis using correlation and regression techniques demonstrates significant relationships among the study variables. Perceived supervision management shows a statistically significant negative relationship with work stress levels, indicating that more positive perceptions of supervision are associated with lower stress.

A statistically significant positive relationship is also observed between perceived supervision management and psychological well-being. Regression analysis further indicates that supervision management significantly predicts both work stress reduction and enhancement of psychological well-being, accounting for a meaningful proportion of variance in both outcomes.

The inferential results suggest that supervision management is not merely an administrative function but a psychologically influential leadership practice. Teachers interpret supervision quality as a signal of support, fairness, and professional respect, which directly affects their emotional responses to work demands.

The predictive strength of supervision management highlights its role as a key organizational factor influencing teacher mental health. Effective supervision appears to mitigate stress by clarifying expectations and offering constructive feedback, thereby supporting psychological well-being.

Relational analysis reveals a coherent linkage among perceived supervision management, work stress, and psychological well-being. Higher levels of perceived supervision quality correspond to lower stress and higher well-being, forming a consistent relational pattern across the dataset.

A reciprocal relationship between work stress and psychological well-being is also evident. Teachers experiencing high stress tend to report lower well-being, reinforcing the mediating role of stress in the relationship between supervision management and psychological outcomes.

The observed relationships indicate that supervision management shapes teachers' cognitive appraisal of their work environment. Supportive supervision reduces perceived threat and uncertainty, which in turn lowers stress and promotes emotional stability.

Psychological well-being emerges as an outcome of both reduced stress and positive leadership perception. These relationships underscore the importance of leadership practices that prioritize psychological safety and professional growth.

Case illustrations derived from selected teacher responses provide contextual insight into the quantitative findings. Teachers who described supervision as dialogic, transparent, and developmental reported feeling valued and psychologically secure in their professional roles.

In contrast, teachers who perceived supervision as inspection-oriented or fault-focused described heightened anxiety and emotional fatigue. These cases illustrate how similar supervisory structures can produce divergent psychological outcomes depending on perceived intent and implementation.

The case-based evidence demonstrates that perception acts as a critical interpretive filter through which supervision practices are psychologically processed. Supervisory actions perceived as supportive foster trust and emotional resilience, while those perceived as punitive intensify stress.

These qualitative insights reinforce the statistical findings by illustrating the lived experiences underlying the numerical patterns. Perception emerges as a decisive factor linking leadership behavior to teacher psychological health.

The results indicate that teachers' perceptions of principals' supervision management significantly influence work stress levels and psychological well-being. Supervision perceived as supportive and developmental reduces stress and enhances well-being, while negative perceptions amplify psychological strain.

The findings suggest that improving supervision management practices through attention to teachers' perceptions offers a strategic pathway for promoting healthier and more sustainable teaching environments. Leadership quality emerges as a central determinant of teacher psychological outcomes.

The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers' perceptions of principals' supervision management significantly influence both work stress levels and psychological well-being. Teachers who perceive supervision practices as supportive, transparent, and developmental tend to report lower levels of occupational stress. These perceptions are associated with clearer expectations, constructive feedback, and a sense of professional recognition within the school environment.

Work stress emerged as a critical outcome shaped by how supervision is experienced rather than by supervision activities alone. Teachers reporting negative perceptions of supervision management exhibited higher stress levels, characterized by emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and pressure related to evaluative demands. This indicates that supervisory processes may function as stressors when perceived as controlling or punitive.

Psychological well-being was found to be positively associated with favorable perceptions of supervision management. Teachers who experienced supervision as collegial and growth-oriented reported greater emotional balance, professional satisfaction, and a stronger sense of purpose at work. These findings suggest that supervision management extends beyond instructional oversight to influence teachers' mental health.

The combined results indicate that teachers' perceptions operate as a psychological lens through which supervision management affects occupational outcomes. Supervision management does not exert a uniform effect on teachers; instead, its impact depends on how supervisory practices are interpreted and internalized, positioning perception as a decisive factor in teacher well-being.

The findings align with existing research in educational leadership that highlights the influence of leadership practices on teacher stress and well-being. Studies in organizational psychology consistently demonstrate that supportive leadership reduces job strain and enhances psychological health, reinforcing the present findings within an educational supervision context.

Research on instructional supervision has often emphasized its role in improving teaching quality, with limited attention to teachers' psychological responses. The present findings extend this literature by demonstrating that supervision management also functions as a psychosocial factor influencing stress and well-being. This broadens the conceptualization of supervision beyond instructional effectiveness.

Comparisons with studies focusing on teacher stress reveal consistency in identifying leadership-related factors as significant stress predictors. While previous research has emphasized workload and policy pressure, the present findings underscore supervision management as an organizational process that mediates these stressors through perception.

Differences emerge when contrasted with studies that treat supervision as a neutral administrative practice. The present findings challenge such assumptions by demonstrating that supervision is inherently relational and interpretive. Teachers' subjective experiences of supervision produce divergent psychological outcomes, even within similar supervisory structures.

The findings indicate that supervision management serves as a symbolic representation of institutional care or control. Teachers interpret supervisory practices as signals of trust, respect, or surveillance, which shape their emotional responses to work demands. This reflection positions supervision as a relational practice rather than a purely technical function.

The prominence of perception highlights the psychological reality of teachers' work environments. Objective supervisory procedures may exist, but their psychological impact is

determined by teachers' interpretations. This suggests that leadership effectiveness cannot be assessed solely by formal compliance but must consider experiential dimensions.

The relationship between supervision perception and psychological well-being reflects the centrality of emotional safety in professional functioning. Teachers require environments where feedback is perceived as developmental rather than judgmental. Psychological well-being emerges as a marker of organizational health and leadership quality.

The findings also signal a shift toward human-centered educational leadership. Supervision practices that neglect teachers' psychological needs risk undermining professional sustainability (Celik et al., 2026). These results reflect broader trends emphasizing well-being as an essential component of educational effectiveness.

The findings carry important implications for school leadership practices. Principals should reconceptualize supervision management as a supportive and developmental process rather than a compliance-driven mechanism (McPherson et al., 2026). Emphasizing dialogue, clarity, and professional growth may reduce stress and promote teacher well-being.

Teacher professional development programs should include training on psychologically informed supervision practices (Borg & Fahlgren, 2026). Leaders equipped with interpersonal and emotional intelligence skills are better positioned to implement supervision that fosters trust and reduces anxiety. This implication highlights supervision as a leadership competency rather than an administrative task.

Educational policy frameworks may need to reconsider how supervision effectiveness is evaluated. Indicators of teacher well-being and stress levels could complement traditional performance metrics (Fu et al., 2026). Such integration would align accountability systems with sustainable workforce development.

The findings also suggest implications for teacher retention and organizational stability (Lei, 2026). Schools that manage supervision in psychologically supportive ways may reduce burnout and turnover. Investing in perception-sensitive supervision practices represents a strategic approach to maintaining a healthy teaching workforce.

The influence of supervision management on stress and well-being can be explained through cognitive appraisal processes. Teachers assess supervisory practices in terms of threat or support, shaping their emotional responses (Byrd O'Quin et al., 2026). Supportive supervision reduces perceived threat, while controlling supervision intensifies stress.

Psychological well-being is enhanced when supervision fulfills basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Li & Peng, 2026). Supervision perceived as respectful and constructive affirms teachers' professional identity, strengthening emotional resilience and confidence.

The mediating role of perception explains why similar supervision models produce different outcomes across contexts. Individual experiences, past interactions, and organizational culture shape how supervision is interpreted (Kuo et al., 2026). Perception thus operates as a psychological filter between leadership behavior and well-being.

The findings also reflect broader organizational dynamics in education. Increased accountability pressures heighten sensitivity to evaluative practices (Evans, 2026). In such environments, supervision management that fails to address emotional dimensions may inadvertently exacerbate stress, explaining the observed relationships.

Future research should empirically examine the mediating role of perception using advanced quantitative models such as structural equation modelling (Dimitros et al., 2026). Such approaches could clarify causal pathways linking supervision management, stress, and psychological well-being.

Longitudinal studies are needed to assess how perceptions of supervision evolve over time and how sustained leadership practices influence long-term teacher well-being (Moudden et al., 2026). Tracking changes across academic years would provide insight into cumulative psychological effects.

Comparative studies across different school types and cultural contexts could enhance generalizability (Msambwa et al., 2026). Investigating supervision perception in Islamic schools, public schools, and private institutions may reveal contextual variations in psychological outcomes.

Practical initiatives should focus on developing supervision frameworks that explicitly integrate psychological well-being principles (Tadesse et al., 2026). Pilot programs combining leadership training, reflective supervision, and teacher feedback mechanisms may offer scalable models for healthier school organizations.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is that teachers' perceptions of principals' supervision management play a decisive role in shaping both work stress levels and psychological well-being. Supervision perceived as supportive, transparent, and developmental is associated with lower occupational stress and higher psychological well-being, whereas supervision perceived as controlling or evaluative intensifies stress and undermines emotional balance. This finding underscores that the psychological impact of supervision is determined less by supervisory procedures themselves than by how those procedures are interpreted and experienced by teachers.

The primary contribution of this research lies in its conceptual advancement rather than methodological novelty. The study positions teachers' perceptions as a central explanatory construct linking supervision management to work stress and psychological well-being, thereby integrating educational leadership theory with organizational and occupational psychology. By framing supervision management as a psychologically consequential leadership practice, the research extends existing supervision models and offers a more human-centered perspective on school leadership and teacher well-being.

Several limitations should be acknowledged to contextualize the findings and guide future research. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inference and limits understanding of how perceptions and psychological outcomes evolve over time. The reliance on self-reported data may also introduce perceptual bias. Future studies are encouraged to employ longitudinal or mixed-methods designs, incorporate observational or qualitative data, and examine diverse school contexts to validate and deepen understanding of the mechanisms through which supervision management influences teacher stress and psychological well-being.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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