

Effectiveness of Academic Supervision by Principals in Improving Teacher Professionalism and Learning Quality

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ABSTRACT

Academic supervision is a crucial instrument for school principals in enhancing teacher professionalism. This study aims to analyze the planning, implementation, and supporting as well as inhibiting factors of academic supervision at SMP Pasundan Tanjungsari and SMP Plus Persatuan Islam Tanjungsari. A qualitative approach with a comparative case study design was employed, using interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings show that at SMP Pasundan, 78% of teachers felt actively involved in planning through collaborative forums, while at SMP Plus Persatuan Islam, 90% of decisions were made hierarchically by the principal. The implementation of clinical supervision at Pasundan improved teachers' classroom management and technology integration skills (85% of teachers), whereas the directive approach at Persatuan Islam increased compliance with standards (92% of teachers met the minimum competency criteria) but was less effective in fostering pedagogical innovation. Supporting factors included budget allocation and religion-based mentoring, while key challenges were principals' administrative burdens (35% of their time) and resistance from senior teachers (18% of cases). This study proposes an adaptive hybrid model of supervision that combines collaborative and directive approaches based on teachers' professional competence and school context.

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Introduction

1 Background and Previous Literature Review

Education in Indonesia continues to be a major concern in an effort to increase the competitiveness of human resources (HR) in the era of globalization and rapid technological development. Quality education is the key to creating a generation that is competitive, innovative, and adaptive to the various challenges of the times. In this context, effective leadership in educational institutions plays an important role because it has been proven to be able to produce significant changes in human resource management so that the quality of education and graduates can be improved (Nurdiana, 2023).

In line with that, the government's Freedom of Learning policy opens up space for the development of critical and creative thinking among students. This progressive approach is expected to produce graduates who have an entrepreneurial spirit and adaptive skills, which are important capital in global competition (Faiz & Kurniawaty, 2020). Human resource development in educational institutions also needs to be supported by continuous training, both internally and externally, so that educators have skills according to the needs of the digital era (Sholeh, 2023).

In addition, transformational leadership and character-based education are decisive factors in improving the quality of education. The combination of mastery of hard skills, soft skills, integrity, and ethics is believed to be able to produce graduates who are professional and have character (Komala, 2023). On the other hand, the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) is also increasingly playing a role in expanding access to education and increasing human resource capacity, even in previously marginalized areas (Nisa & Nainggolan, 2024). National policy support, such as "Making Indonesia 4.0", also strengthens the direction of vocational education development and competency-based training (Astuti & Stiawati, 2023).

In all these efforts, teacher professionalism is the main determinant of educational success. Professionalism includes not only teaching skills, but also a teacher's attitude, commitment, and moral responsibility in creating a conducive learning environment. Research shows that teacher professionalism has a significant effect on the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes (Barus & Rohman, 2023; Lisnawati et al., 2022; Raisal et al., 2022). Good school management support, competent principal leadership, and continuous professional development have been proven to increase teacher motivation and encourage the achievement of more optimal learning outcomes (Khoirunnisak, 2023; Lalu et al., 2024; Munawwaroh et al., 2024).

In this context, the academic supervision of the principal is one of the important instruments in ensuring the sustainability of the quality of learning. Nurdiana (2023) and said in her research that academic supervision not only functions as a supervision mechanism, but also as a means of coaching and mentoring teachers to be able to improve professional competence and implement the curriculum effectively. Juridically, the importance of academic supervision is emphasized in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 12 of 2007 concerning Standards for School/Madrasah Supervisors, which states that academic supervision is a mandatory competence of school principals to guide and develop teacher professionalism.

The relevance of academic supervision can also be seen in the education data in Sumedang Regency, written by Wijaya (2024) shows a significant increase in the Education Report Card for 2023-2024. Literacy achievement for the junior high school level increased from 70.10% to 80.73%, while numeracy achievement jumped from 48.25% to 76.26%. These figures show the great potential of effective academic supervision in improving the quality of learning in schools.

2 Empirical Studies and Research Novelty

A number of previous studies have shown the important role of academic supervision in improving teacher professionalism and learning quality. Nurhadi et al. (2023) emphasized that academic supervision carried out sequentially through pre-supervision, classroom observation, and post-supervision with constructive feedback, has been proven to be effective in improving teacher competence, especially in remote

areas. Similarly, research by Lorensius et al. (2022) emphasizes that systematic and planned academic supervision assists teachers in integrating pedagogic skills while facilitating collaboration with peers. Furthermore, research in an elementary school in Welahan District, Jepara Regency, showed a very strong correlation between academic supervision and teacher professionalism, with a correlation value of 0.862 and an influence of 74.3%.

However, previous studies have mostly focused on one type of school or educational environment with similar characteristics. There have not been many studies that have comparatively examined the effectiveness of academic supervision in schools that are in the same socio-cultural context, but have different organizational backgrounds. In fact, differences in school organizational backgrounds can affect the philosophy, approach, and practice of academic supervision carried out. In addition, there has been no research that specifically highlights academic supervision in the context of post-pandemic recovery, where the learning challenges faced by teachers and schools are of different complexity than normal situations.

Based on this description, this research presents novelty in three ways. First, it focuses on a comparative analysis of academic supervision in two schools with different organizational backgrounds (Pasundan and Persatuan Islam), but located in the same socio-cultural area, namely Tanjungsari, Sumedang. Second, placing academic supervision in a post-pandemic context, which demands special strategies in teacher development and improving the quality of learning. Third, this study not only describes the practice of academic supervision, but also formulates an academic supervision model based on local wisdom and school organizational characteristics, which is expected to be a practical and theoretical contribution to the development of educational supervision in Indonesia.

3 Research Objectives

This study aims to analyze the practice of academic supervision of school principals in improving teacher professionalism and learning quality at Pasundan Tanjungsari Junior High School and Tanjungsari Persatuan Islam Plus Junior High School. The focus of the study is directed at the planning, implementation, and evaluation of academic supervision, including the approaches, principles, and techniques used. In addition, this study is also intended to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation, as well as formulate an academic supervision model that is adaptive to the post-pandemic context, according to the characteristics of school organizations, and based on local wisdom. Thus, this research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of educational supervision science and a practical contribution to improving the quality of school management.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a comparative case study design to describe in depth the practice of academic supervision of school principals at Pasundan Tanjungsari Junior High School and Tanjungsari Persatuan Islam Plus Junior High School. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is appropriate to understand phenomena holistically in a real context (Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The research subjects include school principals, teachers, and education staff who are directly involved in the academic supervision process. Informants are

determined through purposive sampling techniques, which are the selection of participants based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2023).

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. The interviews were conducted to explore the perspectives of principals and teachers related to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of academic supervision (Moleong, 2017). Observations are used to photograph the real practices of supervision in the classroom, including pre-observation, observation, and post-observation conference interactions (Cogan, 1972; Goldhammer, 1969). Documentation was obtained from supervision instruments, Education Report Cards, and school policy documents related to supervision.

Data analysis was carried out interactively following the model of Miles et al. (2014) which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The theoretical frameworks used in the analysis are the developmental supervision approach of (Glickman et al., 1998), the Goldhammer (1969) model of clinical supervision, and the theory of supervisory discrimination of (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). These theories are used as a lens to understand variations in supervision styles, the role of principals, and their implications for teacher professionalism.

The validity of the data is guaranteed through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time (Denzin, 2012; Moleong, 2017). Validation is strengthened by member checking with informants and peer discussions to ensure consistency of interpretation (Lincoln et al., 1985).

Result

1 Academic Supervision Planning

This study found that Pasundan Tanjungsari Junior High School implemented participatory supervision planning. Through monthly deliberation forums, teachers are involved in the preparation of agendas, instruments, and determination of supervision focus. Interview data shows that 78% of teachers feel they play an active role in the process. This approach reflects a democratic leadership model, which emphasizes collaboration between principals and teachers. In contrast, SMP Plus Persatuan Islam Tanjungsari adopts a more hierarchical planning model. Most of the decisions (90%) are taken directly by the principal on the basis of the analysis of the Education Report Card. This shows a tendency towards more centralized and top-down supervision.

2 Implementation of Academic Supervision

In implementation, Pasundan Junior High School runs a complete clinical supervision cycle. The pre-observation stage is carried out by discussing lesson plans and innovative learning strategies, then continues with observation using a checklist based on the Independent Curriculum. The post-observation stage emphasizes critical reflection through problem-solving discussions between principals and teachers. The results of this pattern are quite positive, with 85% of teachers reporting improved skills in classroom management as well as the ability to utilize learning technology. Meanwhile, SMP Plus Persatuan Islam adopts more directive informational approach. The feedback given by the principal tends to be in the form of specific instructions to correct the teacher's weaknesses. As a result,

compliance with learning standards has increased, as evidenced by the 92% of teachers who are able to meet the KKM. However, this pattern does not provide space for the development of pedagogical innovations for teachers.

3 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

At Pasundan Junior High School, the main supporting factors include organizational commitment in the form of a 20% budget allocation specifically for supervision training, as well as a collaborative culture that encourages the formation of a community of practice between teachers. This condition strengthens the climate of cooperation and mutual learning between educators. Meanwhile, at SMP Plus Persatuan Islam, organizational support is manifested in the formation of a special supervision team and the implementation of a religion-based mentoring system. This encourages an improvement in the quality of supervision within the framework of religious values.

Nevertheless, some obstacles are still found in both schools. The administrative burden of the principal is quite large, taking up to 35% of the total working time thus reducing the intensity of supervision. In addition, at Pasundan Junior High School, there is resistance from some senior teachers (around 18% of cases) who are less enthusiastic about accepting new learning methods.

Discussion

1 Academic Supervision Planning

The results of the study showed that there was a significant difference in the pattern of supervision planning in Pasundan Tanjungsari Junior High School and Persatuan Islam Plus Junior High School. Pasundan Junior High School emphasizes collaboration and teacher participation through monthly deliberation forums, while Junior High School Plus Persatuan Islam relies more on a hierarchical pattern with dominant decisions from the principal.

These findings support the research's assumption that systematically and collaboratively designed academic supervision is able to improve teacher professionalism. The pattern in Pasundan Junior High School is in line with Glickman et al. (1998) developmental supervision theory, which emphasizes the importance of harmony of leadership style with the level of professional maturity of teachers. This also strengthens the findings of Nurhadi et al. (2023) that the pre-supervision process involving teachers has a positive impact on pedagogical competence.

However, the approach at SMP Plus Persatuan Islam shows the relevance of the hierarchical supervision model as explained by Lorensius et al. (2022), namely structured and planned supervision is able to provide a clear direction for teachers. However, this study fills the gap by showing that organizational background (Pasundan vs Persatuan Islam) has a real effect on supervisory planning patterns, something that has rarely been studied in the previous literature. This is where the novelty of this research lies, which is to relate supervision planning to the basis of different school organizations but in the same socio-cultural context.

2 Implementation of Academic Supervision

The implementation of academic supervision in the two schools shows different patterns. Pasundan Junior High School carries out a complete clinical supervision cycle with a reflective orientation, while Junior High School Plus Persatuan Islam emphasizes directive supervision with specific instructions.

These results reinforce the research's assumption that school principals with adequate supervision competencies can facilitate the improvement of teacher professionalism. Clinical supervision at Pasundan Junior High School has been proven to improve classroom management skills and the use of learning technology.

On the other hand, the directive pattern at SMP Plus Persatuan Islam has been shown to increase adherence to learning standards, in line with the findings of previous research in Jepara Barus & Rohman (2023) and Raisal et al. (2022) which showed a strong correlation between academic supervision and teacher professionalism. However, this study broadens the understanding by showing that the directive approach, while effective in raising minimum standards, leaves little room for pedagogical innovation. This is where the novelty of this research lies: it compares the effectiveness of two models of supervised implementation in different organizational contexts, while criticizing the limitations of the directive approach.

3 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The supporting factors found include organizational commitment, collaborative culture, and the existence of a special supervision team. The main inhibiting factors are the administrative burden of the principal and the resistance of senior teachers to changes in methods.

These findings are in line with the research's assumption that organizational factors also affect the effectiveness of academic supervision. In the context of Pasundan Junior High School, the budget commitment of 20% for training shows that there is structural support that strengthens the culture of collaboration. This is in line with the findings of Lisnawati et al. (2022) which emphasize the importance of philosophical and collective values in shaping teacher professionalism. Meanwhile, at SMP Plus Persatuan Islam, faith-based mentoring shows how religious values can become social capital in academic supervision.

The obstacles that arise, especially the resistance of senior teachers, emphasize the gap between theory and supervision practice. Some previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of supervision without addressing internal resistance factors. This research offers novelty by emphasizing that the effectiveness of supervision is not only determined by methods, but also by the readiness of individual teachers and the capacity of principals in managing administrative burdens.

Conclusion

This study shows that the practice of academic supervision at SMP Pasundan Tanjungsari and SMP Plus Persatuan Islam Tanjungsari have different characteristics but complement each other. In the planning stage, Pasundan Junior High School emphasizes a collaborative approach by actively involving teachers, while Junior High School Plus Persatuan Islam prioritizes a hierarchical pattern with the principal's dominant decision. This proves that the effectiveness of supervision is highly dependent on the suitability of the leadership style with the characteristics of the school organization.

In the implementation stage, Pasundan Junior High School implemented comprehensive clinical supervision that encouraged teacher reflection and pedagogical innovation, while Junior High School Plus Islamic Association emphasized directive supervision oriented towards compliance with learning standards. This distinction confirms that clinical supervision is effective in improving teachers' professional skills, while directive supervision is superior in ensuring standard consistency.

The main supporting factors for supervision in both schools include organizational commitment, collaborative culture, and mentoring based on religious values. However, supervision also faces obstacles in the form of the administrative burden of school principals and the resistance of senior teachers to innovation.

Theoretically, the study reinforces the relevance of Glickman's developmental supervision theory and Goldhammer-Cogan's clinical supervision model, but also finds that organizational context and religious background influence the chosen supervision pattern. The novelty of this research lies in the offer of a hybrid model of adaptive supervision that integrates a collaborative and directive approach based on the level of teacher competence and the characteristics of the school organization.

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