

School Principal Supervision Management In Improving Teacher Pedagogical Competence

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the implementation of school principal supervision management in improving teacher pedagogical competence at two early childhood education institutions, namely RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka and RA Darussalam. This study aims to fill the research gap by comprehensively examining supervision from a management perspective, using George R. Terry's POAC theory. The importance of the principal's role as a supervisor in maintaining and enhancing teaching quality is often confronted with informal practices and administrative burdens that hinder teacher performance optimization. Employing a qualitative approach with a multiple case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document studies at both RAs. Research subjects were selected using maximum variation sampling to obtain rich contexts, comparing an organization-affiliated institution with complete facilities and a community-based local institution with limited resources. Data analysis was conducted interactively following the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The research findings indicate that both principals have implemented elements of the POAC theory, albeit with varying levels of formality and effectiveness. In the planning stage, supervision schedules and targets have been prepared, though often informally and not systematically documented. In organizing, RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka involves senior teachers informally, while the principal of RA Darussalam conducts supervision independently. Implementation of supervision at RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka is participatory and reflective, whereas at RA Darussalam it is more incidental and corrective. Evaluation is conducted through routine meetings at RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka and spontaneous feedback at RA Darussalam, though documentation remains a challenge for both. Key supporting factors include harmonious working relationships and teacher commitment, while obstacles are time limitations, the principal's dual roles, and the lack of standardized supervision administration systems. As solutions, RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka focuses on strengthening documentation and collaborative approaches, while RA Darussalam emphasizes supervision discipline, individual coaching, and encouragement for external training. The research concludes that although management principles and professional development have been applied, strengthening administrative systems, structured follow-up of supervision results, and stronger institutional support, in accordance with Permendiknas No. 13 of 2007, are crucial for enhancing supervision effectiveness in developing teacher pedagogical competence.

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Introduction

Background

Early childhood education plays a crucial role as the main foundation in preparing a quality generation (Dakir et al., 2022; Halimatussakdiah, 2023). In this phase, aspects of children's cognitive, affective, social, and psychomotor development begin to form fundamentally, often referred to as the golden age, namely the ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning appropriate to the unique characteristics of early childhood students (Akbar & Tohar, 2021; Hartini, 2017).

In the ecosystem of formal educational institutions, efforts to maintain and improve teacher pedagogical competence cannot be separated from the role of the school principal (Sari & Huzairin, 2021). The principal not only functions as an administrator but also holds a strategic role as an educational supervisor (Abednego & Rahabav, 2023; Cahyati et al., 2022). This supervision function aims to provide professional assistance, guidance, and coaching to teachers to overcome difficulties in learning and improve teaching quality (Hamka, 2023; Mutohar & Trisnantari, 2020). Ideally, planned and continuous supervision will positively correlate with improvements in teacher classroom performance (Warman et al., 2021; Weinberger & Libman, 2018).

However, there is a disparity between ideal expectations and real field conditions (Alzamil, 2021; Ngole & Mkulu, 2021). Based on initial observations at RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka and RA Darussalam, the principal's supervision practices have not been running optimally. Problem indicators are evident from teacher performance in conducting learning without thorough planning, resulting in monotonous and unengaging learning activities (Zhahira, 2022). Consequently, student engagement in the learning process is low. This phenomenon indicates weaknesses in teacher pedagogical competence aspects, particularly in lesson planning and classroom management (Ewo et al., 2023).

These teacher competence problems are closely related to the suboptimal managerial function of the principal in supervision (Permana et al., 2024; Susilawati et al., 2019). At both schools, principals face challenges in developing systematic formal supervision programs. Coupled with high administrative workloads, the intensity of teacher coaching becomes limited (Tamir & Grabarski, 2018). The absence of good supervision management from planning to follow-up implies slow improvements in

teaching quality, thus educational goals at these institutions have not been fully achieved(Kusumawati, 2016; Sunniyati, 2015).

Given this situation, a more structured approach in supervision implementation is needed, namely through supervision management approaches(N. Sari & Munastiwi, 2023; Y. M. Sari & Huzairin, 2021). The use of management functions is considered capable of unraveling supervision problems at the RAs(Nurhayati et al., 2024). Therefore, in-depth research on how school principal supervision management is carried out becomes very urgent to provide concrete solutions for improving teacher pedagogical competence at RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka and RA Darussalam(Nuraisyah & Nurjannah, 2023).

Previous Literature and Rationale

Reviews of previous literature consistently show that principal supervision plays a vital role in maintaining and improving teaching quality. Based on explorations of various relevant studies, it was found that principal interventions positively correlate with teacher quality. Research by (Rochayati et al., 2024) at the elementary school level emphasizes that the principal as a supervisor has strategic responsibility in developing teacher pedagogical competence. This finding is reinforced by (Marzuki et al., 2023) who elaborate on the impact of supervision in kindergartens, where success in improving pedagogical competence is heavily influenced by supporting and inhibiting factors in the supervision implementation itself. In line with this, (Sari et al., 2025) specifically highlights that intensive supervision coaching is very necessary for PAUD teachers to ensure pedagogical competence standards are met.

Although the urgency of supervision has been widely discussed, literature reviews reveal a significant research gap. Most previous studies tend to focus on end impacts or general supervision implementation, but few have examined it comprehensively from the complete supervision management perspective encompassing planning, organizing, implementation, to control, especially at the Raudhatul Athfal level. This research emerges to fill that void by offering novelty through the use of George R. Terry's management theory as an analytical tool. Its main focus is not only on supervision implementation but also diagnosing how that management cycle is applied in schools still facing challenges in improving teacher competence, as well as deeply identifying determinants of success and obstacles.

Based on the rationale above, this research is directed to analyze how school principal supervision management is implemented at RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka and RA Darussalam. This analysis aims to provide an empirical picture of the application of management functions in supervision and how it contributes to efforts to improve teacher pedagogical competence. By understanding the management flow and existing

obstacles, this research is expected to formulate constructive evaluations for improving learning quality in early childhood education institutions.

Method

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a multiple case study design to obtain a deep and comprehensive understanding of school principal supervision management in improving teacher pedagogical competence. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore social phenomena naturally, understand participants' perspectives, and build meaning from real-life contexts, as emphasized by Creswell (Creswell, 2007). This descriptive qualitative design is highly suitable for providing detailed descriptions of events, experiences, and social contexts as experienced by participants (Doyle et al., 2019; Sandelowski, 2000). The multiple case study, which involves investigating several cases to understand similarities and differences among them (Baxter & Jack, 2015), is highly relevant in this context. Robert K. Yin (Baxter & Jack, 2015) and Robert Stake (Glette & Wiig, 2022), key figures in case study methodology, emphasize systematic design to ensure thoroughness and validity, as well as enabling researchers to build theory from empirical case-based evidence (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Research subjects include principals and teachers from two early childhood education institutions, namely RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka and RA Darussalam, both located in Cimalaka Subdistrict, Sumedang Regency. The selection of these two institutions is based on a maximum variation sampling strategy, an approach recommended by Patton (Patton, 1999) to provide rich contextual variation and enable comparative analysis. RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka, with its affiliation to a large organization and relatively complete facilities, is contrasted with the community-based RA Darussalam with limited resources. These differences in institutional characteristics were intentionally chosen to explore supervision practices across varying conditions, thereby enriching the research findings. Key participants were selected using purposive sampling as they possess the most relevant knowledge and experience regarding the phenomenon under study.

Data collection was conducted through source and method triangulation to enhance the credibility and reliability of findings (Brink, 1993; Patton, 1999). The data collection techniques used include in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals and teachers to explore perspectives, experiences, understanding, challenges, and successes related to supervision management and pedagogical competence improvement. The interview guide was developed based on indicators of management functions and teacher pedagogical competence aspects. In-depth interviews serve as a crucial tool for obtaining rich narrative data from participants' viewpoints (Chand, 2025; Knox & Burkard, 2014). Participatory observation was performed by the

researcher on principals' activities during the supervision process and teachers' classroom learning activities. Participatory observation enables the researcher to understand behavioral contexts and events that may not be revealed in interviews, as well as to verify information from other sources, as explained by Chand (Chand, 2025) and Negou et al. (Negou et al., 2023). Structured observation sheets were used as guidelines to ensure consistency. Document analysis involved examining related documents such as supervision programs, lesson plans, supervision notes, and evaluation reports. Document analysis provides relevant secondary data, historical context, and supporting evidence for findings from interviews and observations (Mohajan, 2018; Negou et al., 2023).

In this qualitative research, the researcher acts as the primary instrument (human instrument), offering flexibility to be sensitive to the context and adapt to field situations. The researcher is assisted by supplementary instruments including interview guides, observation protocols, and documentation formats. To ensure instrument quality, the research grid was systematically developed according to the research focus, with validity checks conducted via expert judgment and a limited pilot study to confirm content and construct validity.

Data analysis was performed qualitatively following the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Qualitative Data Analysis, 2008; Venkatesh et al., 2023), involving three main interconnected activities that occur continuously. The first stage is data reduction, which entails selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting raw data from field notes and interview transcripts. Data reduction sharpens, classifies, directs, discards unnecessary elements, and organizes data to enable drawing and verifying final conclusions. The second stage is data display, where reduced data is presented in descriptive narratives, tables, or matrices. This presentation aims to provide a clear, organized, and systematic overview of findings, facilitating identification of patterns, trends, and relationships. The third stage is drawing conclusions and verification, involving interpretation of presented data to uncover meanings, patterns, and relationships. Conclusions are drawn and verified iteratively throughout the analysis, through cross-comparing findings from multiple sources, member checking with participants, and peer debriefing to ensure validity and trustworthiness of findings (Brink, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Patton, 1999).

Result

Research Results

a. RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka

In the supervision planning stage, the Principal of RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka has prepared a schedule and determined supervision aspects, but its implementation remains informal and unsupported by official documents. KS.1 stated,

“Every beginning of the semester, I make a supervision schedule and determine the teachers to be supervised, but the implementation sometimes gets delayed due to external school activities.” This indicates that the planning function has been operational, but not yet optimal administratively.

In the organizing stage, KS.1 involves senior teachers as an informal supervision team to assist with class observations.

“I involve senior teachers to help provide input, not to evaluate,” said KS.1. Although there is no formal decree, the harmonious coordination ensures supervision remains effective and aligns with Terry’s organizing principles.

In the implementation stage, supervision is conducted through class observations and reflective discussions. KS.1 explained,

“I go directly to the class, then discuss with the teacher to identify what can be improved.” Teachers view this activity as helpful in enhancing teaching skills and the use of simple learning media.

The evaluation stage is carried out through monthly meetings and individual guidance. KS.1 stated,

“Usually after supervision, I hold a meeting to discuss the results and provide personal guidance to specific teachers.” However, supervision results are not yet documented systematically.

The supporting factors for supervision at RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka include harmonious working relationships and teacher commitment, while the obstacles encompass time limitations, resources, and administrative documents.

“The teachers here are already like family, so they feel guided rather than monitored,” revealed KS.1.

As a solution, the principal improves the supervision schedule for greater flexibility and begins organizing documentation of supervision results.

“Now I write the supervision results in a simple format so they can serve as records.”

Additionally, coaching is conducted through reflective discussions and weekly inter-teacher meetings, as well as coordination with supervisors and the foundation for teacher training. These steps demonstrate ongoing improvement efforts through participatory and contextual supervision.

b. RA Darussalam

In the supervision planning stage, the Principal of RA Darussalam has prepared a simple supervision schedule at the start of each semester, but it has not been formalized in documents. KS.2 stated,

“I usually prepare a supervision plan at the beginning of the semester, but it’s still simple, just noting the schedule and who will be supervised.” Supervision is often delayed due to dense school activities, indicating that the planning function is operational but not yet optimal administratively.

In organizing, KS.2 carries out all supervision activities independently without forming a special team.

“For supervision, we don’t have a special team yet, so it’s still done by myself,” she said. Nevertheless, the supervision mechanism continues to function due to open communication between the principal and teachers.

The implementation stage is conducted incidentally through direct observations and immediate feedback. KS.2 explained,

“I conduct supervision when there is time or if there is a problem in learning, then directly provide input to the teacher.” Supervision is practical and contextual, although not yet documented.

In the evaluation stage, the principal provides oral assessments after observations without written reports.

“Usually after observation, I directly convey the results to the teacher, for example, the lesson plan needs improvement or the method changed,” said KS.2. The evaluation is direct but not yet systematic.

The supporting factors for supervision implementation at RA Darussalam include the principal’s commitment, teachers’ openness to guidance, and parental support.

“The teachers here are willing to accept input, even often asking me to come to class,” said KS.2. The obstacles include time limitations, the principal’s dual roles, and minimal documents and supporting facilities.

As a solution, KS.2 emphasizes supervision discipline, individual coaching, and encouragement for teachers to attend KKG training.

"Now I try to ensure the supervision schedule is not delayed, and I encourage teachers to attend training from IGTK or Kemenag." The principal also fosters a reflective culture through weekly teacher discussions. Overall, supervision at RA Darussalam operates with a simple approach but is oriented toward continuous coaching to enhance teachers' pedagogical competence.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the critical role of school principal supervision in improving teacher pedagogical competence, a theme consistently highlighted in previous literature (Marzuki et al., 2023; Rochayati et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2025). Our observations at RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka and RA Darussalam confirm that principals hold strategic responsibility in this regard, aligning with the assertions made by (Rochayati et al., 2024) at the elementary level and (Marzuki et al., 2023) in kindergartens, which emphasize that success is heavily influenced by implementation factors. This research specifically addresses the noted gap in the literature by examining supervision comprehensively through the lens of George R. Terry's POAC management theory, offering a detailed understanding of how these management functions are applied in real-world early childhood education settings.

In the **planning** aspect, both principals demonstrate efforts to prepare supervision schedules and targets. However, the informality and lack of systematic documentation, as observed in both RAs, reflect a common disparity between ideal expectations and real field conditions often burdened by administrative workloads, as pointed out in the introduction. This informal approach to planning, while indicative of the principals' commitment, also highlights a challenge in formalizing processes that could otherwise enhance the effectiveness and traceability of supervision, a point implicitly supported by Sari's (Sari et al., 2025) emphasis on intensive and consistent coaching.

Regarding **organizing**, RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka's informal involvement of senior teachers provides a collaborative, albeit undocumented, support system. In contrast, RA Darussalam's independent approach by the principal leads to a heavier workload, illustrating different strategies to overcome resource limitations. These organizational structures directly influence the capacity for providing the "professional assistance, guidance, and coaching" deemed essential for improving teaching quality.

The **implementation** stage further reveals variations in practice. RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka employs a participatory and reflective approach, including observations and post-supervision discussions, which aligns with Mulyasa's clinical supervision concept. This approach is more likely to foster continuous improvement in teacher classroom performance, correlating positively with the ideal expectations identified in the literature. Conversely, RA Darussalam's incidental and corrective supervision, while practical, indicates a less structured coaching pattern, which might limit sustained

pedagogical development. This difference underscores the importance of a structured management approach to overcome the "monotonous and unengaging learning activities" resulting from suboptimal teacher competence.

For the **evaluation** stage, both institutions face challenges in systematic documentation. RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka conducts reflections through routine meetings, while RA Darussalam relies on spontaneous, oral feedback. The absence of systematic documentation in both settings suggests a persistent challenge in formalizing the feedback loop, potentially hindering comprehensive follow-up and the ability to track long-term improvements in pedagogical competence, a crucial aspect for ensuring standards are met.

The primary supporting factors in both institutions harmonious principal-teacher relationships and commitment to improving learning quality are vital for fostering an environment conducive to professional growth. However, obstacles such as time limitations, principals' dual roles, and the lack of standardized supervision administration systems echo the broader challenges faced in ensuring optimal supervision, as highlighted in the background section regarding "suboptimal managerial function of the principal".

To address these challenges, both principals implement strategic solutions: RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka focuses on strengthening documentation and collaborative approaches, reflecting an understanding of systemic improvements, while RA Darussalam emphasizes supervision discipline, individual coaching, and encourages teachers to participate in external training, aiming to enhance individual teacher capabilities. These solutions indicate an active effort to bridge the gap between current practices and the more structured approaches needed for effective supervision management.

Overall, both institutions execute supervision based on management principles and professional coaching with humanistic and participatory approaches. However, to achieve higher effectiveness in enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence and to fully realize the potential of systematic supervision, strengthening administrative systems, more structured follow-up of supervision results, and stronger institutional support are required. This is in line with the mandates of Permendiknas No. 13 of 2007 on Principal Competency Standards, which implicitly calls for such comprehensive managerial oversight. The application of George R. Terry's POAC theory in this study not only confirms the critical role of supervision but also provides a granular understanding of the specific strengths and areas for improvement within each management function, thereby contributing meaningfully to the understanding of supervision management in early childhood education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the supervision management by the school principals at RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka and RA Darussalam has implemented George R. Terry's POAC theory, albeit with varying levels of implementation and formality. In the planning aspect, both principals have prepared supervision schedules and targets, but the documentation remains informal and not yet systematic. Regarding organizing, RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka informally involves senior teachers in supervision, while RA Darussalam conducts it independently, impacting the principal's workload. Implementation at RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka is participatory and reflective, aligning with clinical supervision, whereas at RA Darussalam it tends to be incidental and corrective. For evaluation, RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka conducts reflections through routine meetings, while RA Darussalam provides spontaneous evaluations without documentation. The main supporting factors in both institutions are harmonious principal-teacher relationships and commitment to improving learning quality. Identified obstacles include time limitations, the principals' dual roles, and the lack of standardized supervision administration systems. As solutions, RA Aisyiyah Cimalaka focuses on strengthening documentation and a collaborative approach, while RA Darussalam emphasizes supervision discipline, individual coaching, and encouraging teachers to attend external training. Overall, both institutions demonstrate efforts in executing management-based supervision and professional coaching with a humanistic approach. However, to achieve higher effectiveness in enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence, strengthening administrative systems, more structured follow-up of supervision results, and stronger institutional support are required, as mandated by Permendiknas No. 13 of 2007.

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