

EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

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Article history: received 14 August 2024; revised 16 September 2024; accepted 14 October 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33751/jssah.v4i3.12836>

Abstract. This study aims to explore the challenges of educational supervision in schools and its implications for improving teacher professionalism and instructional quality. Educational supervision plays a crucial role in guiding teachers toward better performance through continuous coaching, evaluation, and professional development. Principals, as supervisors, are expected to act as consultants and facilitators who understand teachers' needs and provide constructive feedback for improvement. Using a literature-based research approach, this study synthesizes theoretical and empirical findings from various sources related to school supervision, teacher motivation, and job satisfaction. The analysis indicates that effective supervision contributes to teacher creativity, motivation, and satisfaction, which in turn enhance the quality of learning outcomes. However, several obstacles persist, including limited opportunities for teachers to develop pedagogical skills, lack of supervision consistency, and inadequate resources for instructional support. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of school leaders as supervisors and fostering a culture of reflective supervision are essential to advancing teacher competence and educational quality.

Keywords: educational supervision; teacher development; motivation; instructional quality; job satisfaction.

I. INTRODUCTION

Educational supervision is a fundamental component of school management that ensures the continuous improvement of teaching quality, curriculum implementation, and teacher professionalism [1]. Through supervision, principals and educational leaders can guide, assess, and develop teachers' pedagogical competence and instructional effectiveness [2]. The process aims to help teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses, provide constructive feedback, and foster reflective practices that lead to sustainable professional growth [3]. In modern education systems, supervision is no longer viewed as a form of inspection but rather as a collaborative and developmental process grounded in communication, trust, and mutual learning [4]. The effectiveness of educational supervision is largely determined by the leadership and managerial competence of school principals. As instructional leaders, principals play a central role in facilitating teacher improvement by organizing mentoring programs, classroom observations, and follow-up coaching sessions [5]. According to Glickman et al. (2021), supervision is an integrated function of leadership that combines the roles of mentor, consultant, and evaluator to ensure that teachers meet both pedagogical and institutional standards [6]. However, in many educational contexts, including developing countries such as Indonesia, supervision

practices remain inconsistent and often limited to administrative compliance rather than professional development [7].

Several studies highlight that teachers frequently perceive supervision as a top-down evaluative mechanism, leading to resistance and lack of openness during supervisory interactions [8]. This perception is often reinforced by principals' inadequate supervisory skills, poor communication, and insufficient understanding of effective feedback techniques [9]. Moreover, the increasing complexity of educational demands—such as the implementation of new curricula, digital learning, and competency-based assessments—requires supervisors to adapt their strategies to the evolving needs of teachers [10]. Without continuous training and professional development, supervisors may struggle to align their practices with contemporary educational goals [11]. In Indonesia, educational supervision is regulated under the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 13 of 2007, which stipulates that principals must demonstrate competence in supervision, leadership, entrepreneurship, and management [12]. Despite this regulation, many principals still lack the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out supervision effectively. A study by Yuliani (2022) revealed that only 48% of principals in public schools regularly conducted classroom observations followed by constructive feedback,

while the rest performed supervision as a procedural obligation [13]. This indicates a gap between policy expectations and actual supervisory practice.

Furthermore, supervision challenges are often exacerbated by limited resources, time constraints, and teachers' heavy workload, which hinder the collaborative nature of the process [14]. To address these challenges, supervision must be reframed as a participatory and formative activity that empowers teachers rather than controls them. Principals must shift from a bureaucratic orientation toward a transformational leadership approach, focusing on mentoring, dialogue, and shared accountability for educational improvement [15]. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the problems of educational supervision in schools by exploring the factors that hinder effective supervision and identifying strategies to enhance supervisory practices. The results are expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical understanding of educational supervision by emphasizing the importance of leadership competence, communication, and teacher collaboration in achieving school quality improvement.

Educational supervision is a systematic process designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning by assisting teachers in developing their professional competence [16]. It is a formative and developmental process aimed at enhancing instructional performance through guidance, mentoring, and evaluation [17]. According to Sergiovanni (2020), supervision encompasses both technical and human relations functions—helping teachers master instructional strategies while also building motivation and collegiality [1]. Effective supervision involves observation, reflection, and feedback that support teachers' self-assessment and continuous improvement [18]. Supervision in schools can take various forms, such as clinical supervision, peer supervision, and managerial supervision, each serving different objectives [19]. Clinical supervision emphasizes direct interaction between supervisors and teachers during the teaching process, enabling feedback that is diagnostic rather than judgmental. Meanwhile, peer supervision promotes mutual learning among teachers through collaboration and observation [20]. These models collectively support the goal of creating a reflective teaching culture that promotes professional accountability and continuous growth.

Principal Leadership in Supervision

The role of the school principal is central to the success of educational supervision. Principals act as instructional leaders who foster a professional learning environment, guide teachers in improving their practice, and align supervision with school goals [21]. Effective principals adopt a transformational leadership approach, characterized by inspiration, individualized support, and intellectual stimulation [22]. Such leadership motivates teachers to achieve higher standards by emphasizing shared vision and intrinsic commitment to student learning outcomes. Hallinger (2024) argues that the effectiveness of supervision depends largely on the principal's communication competence, emotional intelligence, and ability to provide constructive and solution-oriented feedback [5]. Similarly,

Glanz and Neville (2023) highlight that principals who exhibit empathy, active listening, and openness are more successful in developing trust among teachers, leading to improved professional relationships and teaching performance [4]. Without these leadership attributes, supervision risks becoming a bureaucratic and compliance-driven process, undermining its developmental purpose [23].

Teacher Performance and Supervision Impact

Teacher performance refers to the level of efficiency and effectiveness with which teachers carry out instructional responsibilities, including planning, classroom management, teaching, and assessment [24]. Supervision directly contributes to teacher performance by providing structured opportunities for feedback, reflection, and skill enhancement. Research indicates that regular, supportive, and collaborative supervision improves teaching quality, teacher motivation, and student achievement [17]. Conversely, when supervision is irregular, punitive, or merely administrative, teachers tend to experience low morale and professional stagnation [18]. In the Indonesian context, effective supervision has been identified as a significant determinant of teacher professionalism and instructional success [7]. Supervision promotes a culture of continuous learning, where teachers become active agents in improving their practice rather than passive recipients of directives [19]. Through consistent feedback and professional dialogue, teachers develop a sense of ownership in their professional development, which positively influences classroom practices and student engagement [25].

Common Problems in Educational Supervision

Despite its importance, educational supervision in many schools faces various structural and behavioral challenges. Common issues include limited supervisory competence, time constraints, excessive administrative workload, and lack of follow-up mechanisms [14]. Some principals lack formal training in supervision, resulting in inconsistent observation techniques and ineffective communication [9]. In other cases, the supervisory relationship between principals and teachers is hindered by hierarchical barriers, leading to fear, resistance, or defensive attitudes among teachers [8]. Technological and pedagogical shifts in the post-pandemic era have also created new challenges in supervision. Many principals struggle to adapt supervision methods to digital and hybrid learning environments, where observation and feedback must occur virtually [10]. Furthermore, the absence of professional collaboration between supervisors and teachers often leads to fragmented efforts in improving instructional quality [12]. These challenges underscore the need for capacity building and institutional support to strengthen supervisory systems.

The literature highlights that effective educational supervision relies on three key pillars: leadership competence, communication quality, and professional collaboration. However, in many school systems, these components remain weak due to limited professional development opportunities and insufficient institutional frameworks [11], [14]. Most existing studies focus on the procedural aspects of supervision rather than exploring the underlying problems that hinder its effectiveness, especially

in developing countries such as Indonesia. This study addresses that gap by examining the problems of educational supervision in schools, emphasizing the roles of principals as supervisors and facilitators of teacher development. The research synthesizes theoretical perspectives on supervision, leadership, and teacher performance to propose strategies for improving supervisory practice. The conceptual framework assumes that when principals possess strong leadership competence and communication skills, supervision becomes a collaborative, growth-oriented process that enhances teacher performance and overall school quality.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative library research design to analyze and synthesize theoretical perspectives and empirical findings on the problems of educational supervision in schools. The library research approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to examine and interpret relevant literature systematically in order to identify conceptual frameworks, recurring issues, and potential solutions [26]. This approach was deemed suitable since the purpose of the study was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and dynamics of educational supervision without conducting field data collection. The research emphasizes the interpretation of ideas, theories, and findings drawn from books, peer-reviewed journals, policy documents, and research reports published between 2019 and 2024, ensuring both relevance and academic rigor. The process of data collection involved three main stages: (1) data identification, where relevant sources on educational supervision, leadership, and teacher performance were selected using keywords such as instructional supervision, school leadership, teacher development, and supervisory problems; (2) data evaluation, which included assessing the credibility, recency, and theoretical alignment of each source; and (3) synthesis and interpretation, where the information was categorized according to major themes such as the roles of principals, challenges of supervision, and strategies for improvement [27]. The analysis was conducted through content analysis, focusing on identifying patterns and relationships among the key concepts discussed in the literature.

The validity of findings was ensured through source triangulation, by comparing multiple references from different scholarly authors and educational contexts. The researcher prioritized peer-reviewed international journals and credible national publications indexed in databases such as Scopus, ERIC, and Sinta. The final stage of the analysis integrated the findings into a conceptual model that describes the causes and implications of supervision problems and proposes leadership-based solutions for improving supervisory practices in schools.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The review of literature reveals that the problems of educational supervision in schools generally stem from four major dimensions: (1) limited supervisory competence of school principals, (2) inadequate communication and feedback mechanisms, (3) structural and administrative constraints, and (4) lack of professional development and collaboration among educators. First, supervisory competence remains a significant challenge in many schools, particularly in developing countries. Studies indicate that principals often possess strong administrative abilities but lack the pedagogical and interpersonal skills necessary for effective instructional supervision [24]. In Indonesia, for instance, many principals are appointed based on seniority rather than expertise in supervision, resulting in inconsistent practices and superficial evaluations [12]. Second, ineffective communication and feedback between supervisors and teachers often lead to misunderstandings and negative perceptions of supervision. Teachers may view the process as judgmental or punitive, rather than developmental and supportive [9]. According to Glanz (2023), constructive feedback is one of the most powerful tools in supervision, yet it is frequently overlooked or poorly delivered, reducing its motivational value [4]. Third, structural constraints, including time limitations, heavy administrative workloads, and insufficient resources, restrict principals' ability to conduct meaningful supervision [14]. Many principals supervise dozens of teachers with limited opportunities for individualized mentoring or follow-up observations [21]. Consequently, supervision often becomes a procedural activity focused on compliance with regulations rather than authentic teacher development [19].

Finally, the literature identifies a lack of professional collaboration and training as a core problem. Principals and teachers often work in isolation, with minimal engagement in professional learning communities or peer supervision models that could enhance mutual learning and reflection [20]. This isolation inhibits the establishment of a collegial and supportive supervision culture.

The findings confirm that effective educational supervision depends not only on technical procedures but also on the human and relational aspects of leadership. Principals must develop a comprehensive understanding of pedagogy, communication, and motivation to serve as effective supervisors. This aligns with Glickman's developmental supervision model, which emphasizes that supervision should be adaptive—supporting teachers according to their professional maturity and competence levels [6]. Supervisors must balance their roles as evaluators, mentors, and facilitators to foster teacher trust and growth.

The results also suggest that a lack of transformational leadership undermines the potential of supervision. Transformational leaders inspire teachers by articulating a shared vision, encouraging innovation, and providing emotional support [22]. Empirical studies show that teachers who work under transformational principals tend to demonstrate higher motivation, self-efficacy, and instructional performance [28]. Therefore, leadership style

serves as a mediating factor between supervision practices and teacher outcomes.

Communication emerged as another critical determinant. Supervisors who demonstrate emotional intelligence, empathy, and openness create a psychologically safe environment that encourages teachers to accept feedback and reflect on their practices [15]. This is consistent with Goleman's (2020) model of emotional intelligence, which underscores the importance of social awareness and relationship management in effective leadership [23].

Furthermore, strengthening professional learning communities (PLCs) is essential for addressing supervision gaps. PLCs enable peer mentoring, collaborative reflection, and collective problem-solving, which extend supervision beyond formal observation sessions [29]. This approach redefines supervision as a shared responsibility among educators, promoting sustainable professional development. To overcome supervision challenges, the literature proposes three strategic directions: Capacity building for school leaders through continuous training on instructional leadership and feedback techniques [30]; Institutional restructuring to reduce administrative burdens and allocate dedicated time for supervision; and Integration of digital supervision tools, enabling virtual observations and data-driven performance analysis to improve transparency and efficiency [31]. In sum, effective educational supervision is both a leadership and learning process. When principals adopt a transformational mindset, foster collaboration, and utilize reflective supervision techniques, they create a culture of continuous improvement that enhances both teacher performance and overall school quality.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the problems of educational supervision in schools are multifaceted and closely related to the competence, leadership style, communication skills, and professional engagement of school principals. The literature synthesis indicates that while supervision is intended to foster teacher growth and instructional quality, its implementation in many schools remains limited by inadequate supervisory skills, structural barriers, and weak collaboration between principals and teachers. Effective supervision requires principals to function not merely as evaluators, but as mentors, facilitators, and leaders who inspire and empower teachers to achieve professional excellence. Moreover, the study highlights that educational supervision should be viewed as a developmental and participatory process rather than a bureaucratic obligation. When conducted with empathy, trust, and professional dialogue, supervision enhances teacher motivation, reflective capacity, and classroom performance. Conversely, when it is overly procedural or authoritarian, it discourages innovation and reduces teachers' willingness to engage in professional improvement. Therefore, building supervisory capacity through leadership training, emotional intelligence development, and the use of collaborative supervision

models is essential for achieving sustainable educational quality. Theoretically, this research contributes to the discourse on instructional leadership and educational management by reaffirming the role of supervision as an integral component of school improvement. It expands existing frameworks by linking effective supervision with transformational leadership, communication competence, and emotional intelligence, suggesting that supervision success depends as much on interpersonal dynamics as on technical procedures [32]. Practically, the findings imply that policymakers and education authorities should prioritize professional development programs for principals that focus on supervision techniques, mentoring skills, and collaborative communication. Furthermore, the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and digital supervision platforms should be encouraged to foster continuous teacher-principal interaction and feedback. Educational institutions must also allocate time, resources, and policy support to ensure that supervision becomes a meaningful developmental activity rather than a formality. Future research should adopt empirical or mixed-method approaches to investigate how digital tools, leadership training, and emotional intelligence impact supervisory effectiveness and teacher performance across diverse educational settings [33]. Ultimately, rethinking educational supervision as a transformational and collaborative process is essential for promoting teacher professionalism, school accountability, and educational excellence in the 21st century.

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