

PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP AS AN EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISOR IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the strategic role of the principal as an educational supervisor in improving the sustainable quality of teaching and learning at Tabgha Mulia School, Batam. The main focus is on implementing academic supervision through a collaborative and reflective leadership style. The study method used is a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. The data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the principal's leadership, which emphasizes collaboration, reflection, and mentoring, positively contributes to improving teacher professionalism, particularly in lesson planning, reflective thinking, and participation in quality development programs. However, several challenges were identified, including the lack of preparedness of instructional materials and unexamined teaching routines. It is concluded that effective academic supervision requires a substantive and contextual approach, along with the principal's role as a facilitator in fostering an evaluative culture within the school environment. The implication of this research highlights the importance of strengthening the principal's capacity in conducting pedagogical supervision to achieve adaptive and sustainable teaching and learning quality.

Keywords: leadership, principal, academic supervision, teacher professionalism, teaching and learning quality

INTRODUCTION

Education, as a non-profit entity, possesses institutional and managerial characteristics that differ from those of profit-oriented organizations. In this context, Tabgha Mulia School Batam represents a new paradigm of strategic educational management that focuses not only on academic outcomes but also on values of service, humanity, and character development. The principal's leadership serves as a key factor in executing these strategic functions, particularly in the regular implementation of academic supervision at the end of each calendar month within the academic year [1], [2], [3].

The principal of Tabgha Mulia School Batam plays a central role as a visionary leader and academic supervisor, not only directing the school's strategic course but also shaping a collaborative work ecosystem that holistically supports teacher performance. From a strategic management perspective, this reflects a unique substantial point of the educational institution, positioning the principal as the primary driver in integrating the educational vision with the implementation of academic supervision [4], [5], [6].

In line with this, Taufik Nor and Ahmad Suriansyah [7] emphasized in their study that the visionary leadership of the principal has a strong influence on improving the quality of education through the cultivation of a shared vision, team collaboration, and the courage to adopt innovative policies. This research underscores the importance of the principal's role as a strategic leader in responding to the dynamics and challenges of 21st-century education [8], [9].

However, the reality observed at Tabgha Mulia School Batam, indicates a persistent gap between academic supervision policies and their implementation in practice. Teachers have not yet fully optimized their mastery of subject matter, consistency in preparing instructional modules, as well as discipline and professionalism in

carrying out their duties. This gap creates a multiplier effect, namely the lack of alignment between the principal's directives, the implementation of teaching by teachers, and student learning outcomes.

The study conducted by Wafiq Azizah and Andi Mappincara [10] reinforces this condition by concluding that the implementation of instructional supervision is often merely administrative and has yet to comprehensively address the professional development of teachers. Therefore, a participatory and reflective supervision design is needed to create a dynamic learning environment.

The researcher's preliminary observations at Tabgha Mulia School Batam, indicate that teachers constitute an essential part of the school's institutional image. School branding is inseparable from the quality of teachers who are disciplined, professional, and highly committed to their responsibilities. In this regard, the principal has undertaken mitigative measures through a supervision approach grounded in awareness and competence development, as part of a strategy to build sustainable teacher performance.

Rina Sya'diyyah, Abu Bakar, and Diding Nurdin [11] in their study on visionary and transformational leadership styles at SMP Annihayah Karawang, they indicated that the combination of both styles can lead to behavioral changes among teachers, enhance work motivation, and promote the achievement of higher educational quality. This finding is relevant to the context of Tabgha Mulia School Batam, which is currently undergoing institutional transformation based on strategic management.

Strategic management in the context of education, as mandated by Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, requires teachers to be professional educators capable of teaching, guiding, and evaluating students within the formal education system [12]. The transformation of educational resources cannot be achieved without a strategic management system that is

resilient and adaptive to change. Therefore, the management strategy implemented at Tabgha Mulia School Batam is considered urgent to be refined, not only by formulating plans, but also by executing policies based on accurate internal and external analyses. The principal is expected to optimize academic supervision as part of a long-term institutional strategy through solid teamwork, structured planning, and the use of informative data to support effective decision-making [9], [13], [14].

Based on the academic issues described above, this study is urgently conducted to analyze in depth how the implementation of strategic management through the principal's academic supervision can improve teacher performance at Tabgha Mulia School Batam. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of educational management studies and practical contributions for educational institutions in implementing supervision strategies oriented toward the quality of teaching and learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Approach

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach [15], [16], which aims to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the realities in the field, particularly those related to the implementation of strategic management through academic supervision by the principal. This approach was selected as it is suitable for exploring the meaning, patterns, and dynamics of the principal's role in guiding teachers and improving the quality of teaching and learning in a sustainable manner [17], [18].

2. Data Sources

The research data consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from interviews with the principal, teachers, and education personnel involved in the academic supervision process. Secondary data were collected from school documents, such as supervision instruments, work programs, lesson plans (RPP), and teacher performance evaluation documents.

3. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out using three main methods:

- Observation, to directly observe the implementation of supervision and classroom teaching practices
- In-depth interviews, to explore the experiences, perceptions, and strategies used by the principal, as well as teachers' responses to the supervision process.
- Document analysis, to obtain administrative information and support data validity through the examination of institutional documents [19], [20], [21].

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved identifying key themes from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. The analysis consisted of the following steps:

- Data reduction, which refers to the process of filtering important and relevant data.

- Data display, presented in the form of narratives and thematic matrices.
- Conclusion drawing, aimed at identifying patterns, relationships, and implications of academic supervision on teacher performance [22], [23].

The validity of the data was reinforced through technique and source triangulation by comparing results across different methods and informants.

This study also enriched the analysis by including a comparative case study from another institution with similar practices, to provide a broader and deeper perspective on the effectiveness of the principal's role in facilitating academic supervision as a strategy for improving educational quality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The principal's understanding of strategic management at Tabgha Mulia School Batam, as part of the school's branding and marketing strategy, aligns with the view that strategy is considered a decision-making action formulated to achieve specific targets or goals by optimizing all organizational resources. This approach enables the organization to respond to opportunities, challenges, and risks within its external environment.

1. The Principal as a Driver of Supervision in the School Education System

The results of the study indicate that the principal of Tabgha Mulia School Batam plays a central role as an educational supervisor, not only in administrative aspects but also as an instructional leader. The principal strives to guide the school's learning vision through well-planned academic supervision activities. In practice, the principal conducts regular coaching, monitors the teaching and learning process, and evaluates teachers' instructional materials.

This role reflects the concept of quality-oriented strategic leadership, in which the principal serves as a bridge between managerial policies and classroom practices, while also serving as an agent of change within the educational institution [24], [25], [26]. The principal's role as an educational supervisor in the context of learning has shifted from mere oversight to becoming a strategic agent in developing educational quality. This is consistent with the theory of Instructional Leadership proposed by Hallinger and Murphy [27], which positions the principal as a key actor in directing, supporting, and evaluating the teaching and learning process. The model emphasizes that principals must be actively involved in formulating academic visions, developing curricula, and mentoring teachers through constructive supervision. Within this framework, the principal is not merely a monitor of administrative compliance, but an instructional leader accountable for student learning outcomes [12], [28], [29], [30].

Furthermore, the principal's strategic role in supervision is also grounded in the Transformational Leadership approach [31], [32], which emphasizes the importance of visionary inspiration, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation toward organizational members. A principal who internalizes these values is capable of shaping a collegial work culture,

strengthening teachers' intrinsic motivation, and creating a dialogical space that supports the continuous improvement of teaching and learning quality. Thus, academic supervision initiated by the principal functions not merely as a control mechanism, but as part of a leadership strategy that is integrated with the institution's quality-oriented educational vision [33], [34], [35].

2. Supervisory Leadership Strategy: Collaborative and Reflective

The results of the study show that the principal of Tabgha Mulia School Batam applies a collaborative and reflective leadership strategy in carrying out educational supervision functions. Teachers feel actively involved in decision-making processes, particularly in quality development forums such as routine meetings, group discussions, and post-supervision reflective sessions. This involvement not only fosters a democratic working atmosphere but also strengthens teachers' sense of ownership over the quality of teaching and learning processes within the school [36], [37].

The principal does not position themselves as an authority figure exercising full control, but rather as a facilitator and mentor who accompanies the process of teacher competence development. In practice, supervision is not conducted in a one-way or evaluative manner only, but is framed as a dialogical process, in which the principal and teachers collaboratively evaluate teaching practices and formulate improvement strategies. This strategy reinforces a professional relationship built on mutual trust and fosters a spirit of continuous improvement among teachers [38], [39].

This approach aligns with the theory of transformational leadership, which emphasizes the importance of the leader's role in motivating, inspiring, and nurturing subordinates to grow both personally and professionally [40]. The principal encourages teachers to engage in self-evaluation, identify strengths and weaknesses in their instructional practices, and design more effective learning innovations. The reflective culture fostered through this form of leadership serves as a vital foundation for achieving sustainable learning quality that remains adaptive to contemporary challenges.

3. Challenges in the Implementation and Effectiveness of Supervision

Although the implementation of academic supervision at Tabgha Mulia School Batam has been active and structured, the study revealed several key challenges:

- a. Teachers were not fully optimal in preparing instructional materials,
- b. Core learning content was not entirely aligned with students' needs,
- c. Teaching routines remained uncritically examined.

These conditions indicate that the supervisory role has not yet fully reached the substantive pedagogical dimension. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen content-based supervision tailored to the actual needs of teachers, rather than relying solely on formal administrative monitoring. Despite the active and organized implementation of academic supervision, the

findings highlight critical barriers that hinder its effectiveness as an instrument for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Among the main issues is the suboptimal readiness of teachers in developing instructional tools aligned with both the curriculum and student characteristics. Many teachers still encounter difficulties in designing lesson plans (RPP) that are contextual, adaptive, and responsive to student needs, resulting in a learning process that is less targeted and not fully effective [41].

In addition, the core learning materials being taught were not fully relevant or integrated with students' real-life contexts and actual needs. This resulted in weak student engagement during the learning process and low achievement of competency indicators. On the other hand, teaching routines tended to be carried out mechanically, without critical reflection on the effectiveness of the strategies used. Teachers were not yet accustomed to conducting systematic reflection on their instructional practices, leading to stagnant and incidental improvements.

These findings indicate that although supervision has been conducted regularly, the pedagogical substance dimension remains insufficiently addressed. Supervision tends to focus on administrative aspects and compliance with formats rather than meaningful support for content and pedagogy. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the supervision model to be more content-based, analytical, and responsive to the actual needs of teachers in the field. Supervision should not merely serve as a formality of control, but rather as a critical dialogical space to continuously develop teachers' pedagogical capacity [42].

4. The Impact of Supervision on Teacher Professionalism and Learning Quality

Academic supervision has been proven to have a positive impact on teacher professionalism. Teachers showed improvements in the following aspects:

- a. More systematic lesson planning,
- b. Reflective ability in teaching practices,
- c. Discipline and active participation in school quality improvement programs.

The implementation of academic supervision by the principal at Tabgha Mulia School Batam, has had a significant impact on enhancing teacher professionalism. The most prominent indicator is the improvement in teachers' ability to design lesson plans that are more systematic, well-structured, and aligned with students' learning needs. This reflects a shift in teachers' orientation from merely fulfilling administrative requirements toward engaging in planned and reflective pedagogical practices. Teachers no longer refer solely to the curriculum, but have also begun to consider student characteristics and adopt more innovative learning strategies [43], [44].

Another impact can be observed in the increased teacher awareness of reflective teaching practices. The academic supervision conducted by the principal creates a dialogical evaluation space, encouraging teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching. In addition, improvements were found in teachers' discipline, sense of responsibility, and participation in

school quality development programs. This indicates that supervision not only strengthens the technical aspects of instruction but also influences teachers' professional attitudes and work culture.

These findings are in line with the theory of clinical supervision developed by Goldhammer, Anderson, and Krajewski [45], which emphasizes professional interaction between supervisors and teachers to improve instructional practices through observation, feedback, and reflection. Furthermore, the theory of instructional leadership by Hallinger and Murphy [46] reinforces that effective principals serve as instructional leaders, those who directly influence teacher performance and student learning outcomes through curriculum management, staff development, and well-structured supervision. In this context, the principal's leadership at Tabgha Mulia School Batam can be categorized as transformational supervision that inspires teachers to grow both professionally and personally.

Thus, the academic supervision strategy implemented by the principal significantly contributes to the improvement of teaching and learning quality. Supportive, reflective, and collaborative leadership emerges as a key factor in shaping a high-quality and sustainable learning ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the principal's leadership as an educational supervisor plays a central role in improving the quality of teaching and learning at Tabgha Mulia School Batam. The leadership style applied is collaborative and reflective, in which the principal does not merely carry out administrative functions but also acts as a mentor who accompanies teachers in their professional development process. Through structured academic supervision focused on competency development, the principal has successfully fostered an evaluative culture and continuous improvement in the learning process. However, several challenges were identified that hinder the effectiveness of supervision, including teachers' limited preparedness in developing instructional tools, learning materials that are not fully aligned with students' needs, and teaching routines that lack critical reflection. These findings indicate that supervision still requires substantive strengthening, particularly in pedagogical and content-related aspects. Effective supervision must be responsive to the real needs of teachers and directly support the enhancement of learning quality.

Overall, the results of this study affirm that principal leadership grounded in the principles of educative and transformational supervision has a positive impact on enhancing teacher professionalism and the quality of education. These findings align with the theories of clinical supervision and instructional leadership, which position the principal as an agent of change in instructional development. Therefore, a supervision strategy that is collaborative, reflective, and responsive to field-based needs is essential to realizing high-quality education that is adaptive to contemporary challenges.

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