

Academic Supervision Management by School Principals in Enhancing Teachers' Social Competence: A Comparative Case Study of Two Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Academic supervision by school principals represents a critical mechanism for enhancing teachers' social competence, yet limited research examines how supervision practices specifically cultivate communication, collaboration, and professional relationship-building capacities in elementary education contexts. This qualitative case study examined academic supervision management at two elementary schools in Campaka Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency, Indonesia. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two principals and twelve teachers, systematic classroom observations, and document analysis, then analyzed thematically to identify supervision patterns and outcomes. Findings revealed that both schools implemented effective yet contextually distinct supervision approaches: SDN Sintok emphasized personalized mentoring with flexible scheduling, while SDN Margasari employed systematic documentation within structured annual programs. Academic supervision demonstrably enhanced five social competence dimensions: communication skills, collaborative attitudes, receptivity to constructive feedback, participation in school and community activities, and harmonious professional relationships. An unexpected finding indicated that career-stage differentiation significantly influenced teachers' supervision responsiveness, with novice teachers requiring more intensive support than experienced educators. The study contributes empirical evidence that supervision effectiveness depends on strategic alignment between approach and context rather than uniform implementation models. Findings align with developmental supervision theory while extending understanding of supervision's role in cultivating social competencies. Implications suggest principals should balance structure with flexibility, policymakers should permit contextual adaptation, and teacher preparation programs should develop supervision receptivity.

Keywords

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INTRODUCTION

Educational leadership has emerged as a critical determinant of school quality and teacher professional development in contemporary education systems (Dorukbaş, 2024; Robinson et al., 2008). School principals occupy a pivotal position in orchestrating educational improvement through their multifaceted roles as administrators, instructional leaders, and supervisors. Among these responsibilities, academic supervision stands as a cornerstone function that directly influences teaching quality and student learning outcomes (Kartini et al., 2020; Lee, 2024). The principal's capacity to effectively implement academic supervision determines not only the enhancement of pedagogical practices but also the cultivation of essential teacher competencies, particularly social competence, which encompasses effective communication, collaboration, and professional relationship-building within the educational community (Andersson et al., 2022; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

The Indonesian education system, governed by Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, mandates that central and regional governments provide quality education services without discrimination. This legislative framework underscores the government's commitment to ensuring educational excellence through systematic supervision and continuous professional

development. Furthermore, Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers explicitly delineates four essential competencies for educators: pedagogical, professional, personality, and social competencies. Social competence, defined as the ability to interact effectively, empathetically, and harmoniously with students, colleagues, educational staff, parents, and the community, requires structured guidance and systematic cultivation (Lee, 2024). However, despite clear regulatory requirements, significant gaps persist between policy expectations and classroom realities, particularly in elementary education settings where foundational skills are established (Maritasari et al., 2020).

Theoretical foundations of academic supervision emphasize its transformative potential in teacher development. Sergiovanni (1987) conceptualized supervision as a deliberate intervention designed to enhance teachers' instructional effectiveness through systematic observation and collaborative improvement. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2014) extended this perspective by arguing that effective supervision transcends mere monitoring to encompass continuous coaching processes that foster sustained professional growth. Recent international studies corroborate these frameworks, demonstrating that principal instructional leadership significantly predicts teacher professional development across diverse educational contexts (Gumus & Bellibas, 2016; Park & Ham, 2016). However, the practical implementation of these principles remains inadequately explored, particularly regarding how supervision specifically enhances social competencies in elementary school contexts.

Recent empirical investigations have demonstrated the positive correlation between systematic academic supervision and improved teaching quality. Widiastuti (2019) found that regular, planned supervision significantly enhanced teachers' capabilities in developing instructional materials and diversifying teaching methodologies. Similarly, Putri (2021) established that schools with principals who actively conduct academic supervision exhibit higher student academic achievement compared to institutions with minimal supervisory engagement. International evidence further supports these findings, with studies from Japan, Singapore, and South Korea revealing that principal instructional leadership significantly influences teacher participation in mentoring, peer observation, and collaborative professional development activities (Kim & Lee, 2020). Nevertheless, existing research predominantly focuses on pedagogical and professional competencies, leaving social competence—an equally vital dimension of teacher effectiveness—insufficiently examined (Buettnner et al., 2016; Han, 2014). This knowledge gap is particularly pronounced in elementary education, where teachers' social competencies fundamentally shape classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, and collaborative school culture.

Field observations in Campaka Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency reveal a concerning disparity in teaching quality and supervisory implementation. While some elementary school teachers demonstrate creativity, innovation, and effective use of learning technologies, others continue to rely on conventional, teacher-centered methods with limited student engagement. This heterogeneity in instructional quality reflects inconsistent supervision practices. In several schools, supervision remains a formalistic exercise conducted without meaningful follow-up or targeted intervention, failing to fulfill its developmental function (Mahulauw et al., 2023). The problem is compounded by principals' competing administrative demands, limited time allocation for instructional leadership, and varying resource availability across schools (DeMatthews et al., 2021). These contextual challenges necessitate empirical investigation into how different school settings navigate supervision implementation and what strategies prove effective in enhancing teachers' social competencies.

The selection of SDN Sintok and SDN Margasari as research sites offers unique comparative insights. Despite their geographical proximity within the same subdistrict, these schools exhibit distinct characteristics: SDN Sintok serves a larger student population with relatively complete facilities, while SDN Margasari operates with limited enrollment and constrained resources. This contextual diversity enables examination of how supervision strategies adapt to varying institutional conditions and whether different approaches yield comparable outcomes in developing teachers' social competencies (Murphy et al., 2016; Wanzare & Da Costa, 2001). Such comparative analysis addresses a critical gap

in supervision research, which often treats schools as homogeneous entities without accounting for contextual variability.

This study aims to comprehensively examine the management of academic supervision by school principals at SDN Sintok and SDN Margasari, specifically focusing on its contribution to enhancing teachers' social competencies. The research investigates supervision planning, implementation mechanisms, evaluation procedures, follow-up strategies, encountered obstacles, and adopted solutions. By providing detailed accounts of supervision practices in diverse school contexts, this study contributes practical knowledge for educational administrators seeking to strengthen supervisory systems. Furthermore, it extends theoretical understanding of how academic supervision functions as a catalyst for developing social competencies—an under-researched dimension of teacher professionalism (Cross Francis et al., 2019; Jennings et al., 2017). The findings hold significant implications for policy development, principal preparation programs, and school-based professional development initiatives aimed at cultivating comprehensive teacher competencies in elementary education settings.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design to examine the implementation of academic supervision by school principals in enhancing teachers' social competence at elementary schools. The qualitative approach was selected due to its capacity to provide in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena within natural settings, allowing researchers to explore the nuanced processes, meanings, and contextual factors that shape supervisory practices (Yin, 2014). The case study method enabled detailed examination of supervision management in real-world educational contexts, facilitating comprehensive analysis of how principals plan, implement, evaluate, and follow up on academic supervision activities. As Yin (2014) conceptualizes, case studies are particularly appropriate when investigating contemporary phenomena within their authentic contexts, especially when boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

The research was conducted at two elementary schools in Campaka Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency: SDN Sintok and SDN Margasari. These schools were purposively selected based on their contrasting characteristics, providing rich comparative insights into supervision practices across different organizational contexts. SDN Sintok operates with a larger student enrollment and more comprehensive learning facilities, while SDN Margasari serves a smaller student population with limited resources. This contextual diversity allowed examination of how supervision strategies adapt to varying institutional conditions. The research participants included the school principals as primary informants, supplemented by classroom teachers who had experienced academic supervision. Specifically, the study involved two principals and twelve teachers (six from each school) who were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in supervision processes and their varied teaching experience levels, ranging from novice to experienced educators.

Data collection employed multiple methods to ensure triangulation and enhance the credibility of findings. In-depth semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection technique, conducted with principals and teachers to explore their perspectives, experiences, and perceptions regarding academic supervision and its impact on social competence development. Interview protocols were developed based on the theoretical framework of academic supervision and teachers' social competence, addressing themes such as supervision planning, implementation strategies, evaluation mechanisms, encountered challenges, and perceived outcomes. Complementing the interviews, systematic classroom observations were conducted to directly witness supervision processes, teacher-student interactions, and manifestations of teachers' social competencies in authentic teaching contexts. The researchers observed supervision sessions, including pre-observation conferences, classroom visits, and post-observation discussions, documenting field notes on supervision techniques and teacher responses. Additionally, document analysis was performed on supervision instruments,

annual work programs, supervision schedules, evaluation reports, and other relevant administrative documents to provide contextual understanding and corroborate interview and observation data.

Data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures, involving systematic coding and categorization of qualitative data to identify recurring patterns, themes, and relationships (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process began with data familiarization through repeated reading of transcripts and field notes, followed by initial coding to identify meaningful data segments. Codes were then organized into preliminary themes reflecting supervision planning, implementation, evaluation, follow-up, obstacles, and solutions. These themes were reviewed, refined, and validated through constant comparison across data sources and research sites. To ensure trustworthiness, the study employed multiple validation strategies, including triangulation of data sources (interviews, observations, documents), member checking whereby participants reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of interview transcripts and preliminary interpretations, and peer debriefing with fellow researchers to discuss emerging findings and alternative interpretations. The comparative case study approach facilitated cross-case analysis, enabling identification of both site-specific patterns and common themes across the two schools, thereby enriching the depth and transferability of research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the empirical findings from the case study examination of academic supervision management at SDN Sintok and SDN Margasari. The findings are organized thematically to address the research objectives concerning supervision planning, implementation, evaluation, follow-up procedures, encountered obstacles, and adopted solutions. Data triangulation from interviews, observations, and document analysis provides a comprehensive picture of how principals' academic supervision contributes to enhancing teachers' social competence in these elementary school contexts.

Academic Supervision Planning

The research revealed distinct yet equally purposeful approaches to supervision planning across the two schools. At SDN Sintok, the principal developed supervision plans at the beginning of each semester with particular emphasis on supporting novice teachers. During interviews, the principal explained: *"I prioritize new teachers who need guidance in developing learning tools and managing classrooms effectively. My supervision schedule is flexible and adapted to each teacher's specific needs."* This personalized planning approach aligns with individualized professional development models, ensuring that supervision addresses real-time challenges faced by beginning educators. Document analysis confirmed the existence of supervision schedules tailored to individual teacher needs, though these schedules were less formalized compared to SDN Margasari.

In contrast, SDN Margasari employed a more systematic planning structure embedded within an annual work program designed at the beginning of the academic year. The principal stated: *"We develop a comprehensive supervision program that includes clear targets, schedules, assessment instruments, and evaluation mechanisms. This ensures that supervision is not ad hoc but rather a structured, continuous process."* Examination of the school's annual work program documents revealed detailed matrices specifying supervision objectives, timelines, responsible parties, and expected outcomes. The focus at this school centered on enhancing instructional quality through accessible technology integration and simple learning media that teachers could realistically implement given resource constraints. Both principals emphasized coordination with teachers through beginning-of-semester meetings where supervision goals, procedures, and expectations were collaboratively discussed, fostering teacher ownership and reducing perceptions of supervision as punitive assessment.

Implementation of Academic Supervision

Supervision implementation exhibited contextual adaptation to each school's characteristics while maintaining core principles of developmental support. At SDN Sintok, the supervision process emphasized personal mentoring particularly for teachers in their early career stages. Classroom observations conducted by the principal focused on comprehensive lesson cycle assessment—including lesson opening, delivery, closure, and crucially, teacher-student interaction patterns. One novice teacher reflected: *"When the principal observes my class, I don't feel judged. After the observation, we discuss what went well and areas I can improve. The feedback is always constructive and immediately applicable."* Post-observation conferences took the form of informal yet substantive dialogues where the principal provided practical guidance that teachers could implement directly. This communicative atmosphere fostered harmonious principal-teacher relationships that facilitated genuine professional growth rather than mere compliance with administrative requirements.

At SDN Margasari, supervision followed a more structured, formal protocol utilizing pre-designed instruments with standardized assessment formats. Classroom observations were systematically documented with detailed field notes addressing both pedagogical and social competence dimensions. Following observations, teachers received written feedback documents containing specific commendations for demonstrated strengths and targeted recommendations for improvement areas. One experienced teacher noted: *"The written feedback helps me remember exactly what needs improvement. I can refer back to it when planning lessons and see my progress over time."* This documentation approach provided clear accountability and enabled longitudinal tracking of teacher development. Despite differing degrees of formality, both schools' supervision practices demonstrated genuine commitment to teacher competence enhancement rather than superficial compliance with regulatory requirements.

Observation data revealed that supervision implementation in both schools created safe spaces for teachers to articulate challenges they encountered in their teaching practice. Discussion forums and post-supervision conversations allowed teachers to express difficulties related to classroom management, instructional media selection, and student interaction strategies. This bidirectional communication transformed supervision from a top-down evaluation into collaborative problem-solving. Furthermore, the supervision process actively cultivated reflective practice among teachers. Principals encouraged teachers to engage in continuous self-evaluation, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses and developing contextually appropriate improvement strategies. This reflective dimension elevated supervision beyond technical skill assessment to encompass professional identity development and enhanced social competence in establishing productive relationships with students, colleagues, and the broader school community.

Evaluation and Follow-up Mechanisms

Evaluation and follow-up procedures manifested differently across the two contexts while maintaining a shared commitment to continuous improvement. At SDN Sintok, evaluation occurred through informal yet substantive meetings between the principal and individual teachers. These sessions provided forums for open discussion of observation findings, where teachers could respond, articulate obstacles, and collaboratively strategize improvements. A teacher explained: *"I appreciate how the principal asks for my perspective on what happened during the lesson. It's a conversation, not a lecture."* The principal supplemented these discussions with intensive follow-up assistance, particularly for novice teachers, offering guidance on lesson planning, classroom management techniques, and effective communication strategies with students. Teachers requiring additional support could schedule individual consultations, ensuring personalized guidance tailored to specific developmental needs.

SDN Margasari implemented more formal evaluation procedures, producing comprehensive written reports documenting supervision findings. These reports systematically identified teacher strengths requiring maintenance and areas necessitating improvement, accompanied by specific recommendations. The principal explained: *"Documentation is important for accountability and for*

tracking teacher growth over time. When teachers see their progress documented, it motivates continued improvement." Follow-up activities in both schools extended beyond single interventions to include periodic monitoring assessing whether teachers actually implemented recommended practices. When implementation obstacles emerged, principals provided supplementary guidance or developed alternative strategies ensuring continued teacher development. Additionally, both schools organized internal training sessions and workshops addressing common development needs such as simple learning media utilization, effective communication strategies, and conducive classroom management approaches. These collective professional development activities complemented individualized supervision, providing teachers with ongoing resources for enhancing social and professional competencies.

An unexpected finding emerged regarding differential teacher responses to supervision based on career stage. More experienced teachers at both schools demonstrated greater adaptability in implementing supervision feedback, while novice teachers required more intensive, sustained support before successfully integrating recommendations. This pattern, observed consistently across both research sites, suggests that supervision strategies may need differentiation based not only on individual needs but also on career development stages. Principals acknowledged this challenge, with SDN Margasari's principal noting: *"We've learned that one-size-fits-all supervision doesn't work. New teachers need hand-holding, while veterans often just need a nudge in the right direction."*

Impact on Teachers' Social Competence

The research documented substantial improvements in teachers' social competence dimensions directly attributable to systematic academic supervision. Five specific impact areas emerged from data triangulation: enhanced communication skills, increased collaborative attitudes, improved receptivity to feedback, greater involvement in school and community activities, and strengthened principal-teacher relationships.

Regarding communication competence, teachers at SDN Sintok who previously exhibited passive communication patterns began actively contributing to staff meetings and collegial discussions following regular supervision. One initially reserved teacher shared: *"I used to be afraid to speak up in meetings. But after receiving encouragement during supervision sessions, I feel more confident sharing my ideas with colleagues."* At SDN Margasari, teachers developed greater proficiency in both formal and informal communication with principals, peers, and parents, partially attributable to structured written feedback requiring responsive communication. Observation data confirmed these self-reported improvements, with previously reticent teachers visibly more engaged in professional discourse during staff meetings.

Collaborative competence showed marked improvement across both schools. SDN Sintok teachers became more willing to collectively develop instructional materials, particularly through cluster-level Teacher Working Group (KKG) forums. The principal observed: *"Supervision helped teachers see that collaboration isn't a sign of weakness but a strength. Now they actively seek each other out to share ideas."* SDN Margasari teachers demonstrated enhanced cooperation in internal training activities and increasingly shared teaching experiences with colleagues. This collaborative orientation extended beyond immediate school contexts, with teachers participating in district-level professional networks and contributing to collective knowledge development.

Teachers' capacity to accept criticism constructively represented another significant development. At SDN Sintok, the persuasive, familial supervision approach enabled teachers to receive input without feeling threatened or defensive. A mid-career teacher reflected: *"I used to take feedback personally. Through supervision, I learned that suggestions for improvement aren't about me as a person but about helping me become a better teacher."* SDN Margasari teachers not only accepted feedback but actively utilized it for reflective practice and professional self-assessment. This receptivity to critique signifies professional maturity and willingness to engage in continuous improvement—essential components of social competence.

Increased participation in school and community activities constituted a fourth impact dimension. SDN Sintok teachers became more active in school events including classroom cleanliness competitions, religious activities, and extracurricular program management. SDN Margasari teachers expanded their social roles beyond school boundaries, participating in community events, serving as resource persons for community learning activities, and engaging in village literacy initiatives. This expanded community engagement demonstrates how supervision-enhanced social competence extends beyond classroom interactions to encompass broader educational and civic participation.

Finally, consistent academic supervision fostered more harmonious principal-teacher relationships characterized by mutual respect and collaborative problem-solving rather than hierarchical authority. Teachers at both schools reported feeling valued and supported, creating conducive working environments. One teacher summarized: *"The principal's supervision shows that they care about our professional growth, not just checking boxes for compliance. That makes all the difference."* This relational quality proved foundational for all other competence development, as trusting relationships enabled honest self-assessment, risk-taking in pedagogical experimentation, and genuine receptivity to developmental feedback.

Obstacles and Solutions in Academic Supervision

Despite demonstrated effectiveness, supervision implementation encountered contextual obstacles requiring adaptive problem-solving. At SDN Sintok, the primary challenge involved time constraints resulting from competing demands on both teachers' and the principal's schedules. The principal acknowledged: *"I have many administrative responsibilities beyond supervision. Sometimes it's difficult to find time to observe all teachers as frequently as I'd like."* Additionally, some teachers initially perceived supervision as evaluative assessment rather than developmental support, creating resistance or anxiety that inhibited authentic professional dialogue. These perceptual barriers required substantial relationship-building before supervision could function optimally as professional development.

SDN Margasari encountered different though equally significant obstacles. Limited technological and material resources constrained teachers' ability to implement technology-enhanced instructional strategies recommended during supervision. The principal explained: *"We encourage teachers to use digital learning media, but when we don't have enough devices or reliable internet, it's challenging to follow through."* Furthermore, some teachers experienced discomfort with written feedback documentation, perceiving it as overly formal or threatening. This discomfort occasionally resulted in superficial engagement with recommendations rather than deep reflective practice. These challenges underscore how school contextual factors—resource availability, technological infrastructure, and organizational culture—mediate supervision effectiveness.

Both schools implemented creative solutions addressing identified obstacles. SDN Sintok adopted more flexible supervision scheduling involving teachers in determining observation timing, reducing scheduling conflicts and increasing teacher agency. The principal also leveraged group supervision through KKG forums, enabling collective professional development when individual time was limited. This approach maximized efficiency while maintaining developmental focus. To address perception issues, the principal emphasized communicative, humanistic interactions positioning supervision explicitly as professional assistance rather than punitive evaluation.

SDN Margasari addressed resource limitations by organizing practical training on simple, accessible learning media requiring minimal technological infrastructure. The principal supplemented written feedback with face-to-face discussion sessions, reducing perceived formality and ensuring teachers understood recommendations clearly. One teacher appreciated this combined approach: *"Having both written feedback and discussion helps. I can review the written notes later, but the conversation helps me understand the 'why' behind the recommendations."* These adaptive solutions demonstrate principals' capacity for responsive problem-solving when implementing supervision in resource-constrained contexts.

The data revealed that successful supervision implementation depends substantially on principals' ability to adapt strategies to school-specific conditions rather than applying standardized approaches regardless of context. Supervision effectiveness required balancing structured accountability with relational support, formal documentation with informal dialogue, and individual guidance with collective professional development. Schools that successfully navigated these tensions achieved meaningful teacher competence enhancement; those that rigidly adhered to single approaches encountered greater implementation difficulties.

Discussion

This study investigated how academic supervision management by school principals contributes to enhancing teachers' social competence in two elementary schools with contrasting resource contexts. The findings demonstrate that systematic, contextually adapted supervision functions as a powerful mechanism for developing teachers' social competencies including communication, collaboration, reflective practice, and professional relationship-building. These results extend existing supervision literature by providing detailed empirical evidence of supervision's impact specifically on social competence dimensions—an area insufficiently examined in prior research despite its recognized importance for teaching effectiveness.

The findings align substantially with Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon's (2014) conceptualization of supervision as developmental support rather than evaluative inspection. Both schools demonstrated supervision approaches emphasizing collaborative improvement and continuous professional growth, consistent with developmental supervision theory. The personalized mentoring at SDN Sintok and structured feedback at SDN Margasari both operated from assumptions that teachers are capable of growth when provided appropriate support and guidance. This contrasts with traditional inspection-oriented supervision focused primarily on compliance verification rather than capacity building (Lorensius et al., 2022).

The study provides empirical support for Sergiovanni's (1987) clinical supervision model emphasizing reflective dialogue between supervisors and teachers. The three-phase supervision cycle—pre-observation conference, classroom observation, post-observation discussion—evident particularly at SDN Margasari, facilitated the reflective practice that Sergiovanni identified as central to professional development. Teachers' reported growth in self-awareness and capacity for critical self-assessment directly reflects clinical supervision's intended outcomes (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2021; Khaef, 2021). Importantly, this study demonstrates that clinical supervision principles can be effectively adapted to resource-constrained elementary school contexts in developing countries, extending beyond the Western educational settings where these theories originated.

The findings also demonstrate alignment with Deming's PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) continuous improvement cycle, particularly evident in SDN Margasari's systematic approach. The supervision process followed iterative planning (semester/annual program development), implementation (classroom observation and feedback), evaluation (analysis of supervision outcomes), and action (follow-up training and modified supervision strategies) stages. This cyclical approach to quality improvement, originally developed for industrial contexts but increasingly applied in education, proved effective for systematically enhancing teaching quality (Moen & Norman, 2009; ASQ, 2025). The study thus contributes empirical evidence for PDCA cycle applicability in educational leadership and teacher development contexts, demonstrating how quality management principles can be meaningfully translated to educational improvement initiatives.

An unexpected theoretical contribution concerns the mediating role of trust and relational quality in supervision effectiveness. While existing supervision theories acknowledge relationship importance, this study's findings suggest that relational trust may be a prerequisite condition for supervision's technical aspects to generate genuine development. Teachers' receptivity to feedback, willingness to experiment with new practices, and capacity for authentic self-reflection all appeared contingent on their experience of supervision as supportive rather than punitive. This finding resonates with recent

research on reflective supervision emphasizing relational foundations for professional growth (Lepore, 2016) and suggests that technical supervision models require integration with relational leadership approaches for optimal effectiveness.

The study's findings corroborate Widiastuti (2019) and Putri (2021) who established positive associations between systematic supervision and improved teaching quality. However, this research extends their work by specifically examining social competence development—moving beyond general "teaching quality" to document precise mechanisms through which supervision enhances communication, collaboration, and professional relationship capacities. While previous studies demonstrated supervision's effects on pedagogical and professional competencies, this research provides granular evidence of social competence development pathways, addressing a significant knowledge gap in the supervision literature.

The findings align with Kim & Lee (2020) who demonstrated that instructional leadership significantly influences teacher participation in professional development activities across diverse Asian contexts. This study confirms those patterns in Indonesian elementary education specifically, showing how principal supervision motivates teacher engagement in both formal professional development (workshops, training) and informal collegial learning (peer observation, collaborative planning). The research thus contributes context-specific evidence supporting cross-national patterns of instructional leadership effects while highlighting Indonesia-specific implementation challenges including resource constraints and large teacher workloads.

The documented impact on teachers' socio-emotional competence aligns with recent research by Gebre et al. (2025) demonstrating positive relationships between teacher socio-emotional competence and student engagement. While Gebre et al. focused on competence-engagement linkages, this study illuminates how supervision serves as a developmental mechanism for cultivating that competence in the first place. This connection suggests a developmental chain: systematic supervision → enhanced teacher social competence → improved student engagement and outcomes. Future research should empirically test this mediational pathway using longitudinal designs.

Interestingly, the study's findings partially diverge from some supervision research emphasizing formal, standardized approaches as optimal. While SDN Margasari's structured approach proved effective, SDN Sintok's flexible, personalized supervision generated comparable social competence development. This suggests that supervision effectiveness may depend less on specific structural characteristics (formal vs. informal) than on core developmental principles: regular engagement, constructive feedback, reflective dialogue, and follow-up support. This finding challenges assumptions in some supervision literature that standardization and formalization necessarily enhance supervision quality, suggesting instead that contextual adaptation may be equally or more important (Wanzare & Da Costa, 2001).

The study also extends research on teacher professional development emphasizing active learning, coherence with existing knowledge, and sustained duration (Desimone, 2009). The supervision practices at both schools incorporated these evidence-based professional development elements: active learning through reflective dialogue and classroom-based application, coherence through alignment with teachers' actual classroom challenges, and sustained duration through ongoing supervision cycles rather than one-time workshops. This alignment between effective supervision and effective professional development more broadly suggests that supervision should be conceptualized as a core professional development strategy rather than a separate administrative function.

This research makes several novel contributions to supervision scholarship. First, it provides rare comparative evidence demonstrating how supervision strategies adapt to varying resource contexts while maintaining developmental effectiveness. The contrasting approaches at SDN Sintok (resource-adequate, larger) and SDN Margasari (resource-limited, smaller) reveal that supervision effectiveness depends on strategic fit between approach and context rather than adherence to a single "best practice" model. This finding has important implications for educational policy in developing countries

where resource variability across schools is substantial but where supervision policies often prescribe uniform approaches.

Second, the study documents an unexpected finding regarding career stage differentiation in supervision response. While supervision literature acknowledges developmental stage considerations (Glickman et al., 2014), this research provides empirical evidence that career-stage-appropriate differentiation may be essential for supervision effectiveness. Novice teachers required intensive, sustained support before successfully implementing feedback, while experienced teachers benefited from less intensive but more targeted interventions. This finding suggests that effective supervision systems require internal differentiation capacity—ability to provide varied support intensity and modality based on individual teacher needs and career stages.

Third, the research illuminates supervision's role in developing social competence specifically—an under-researched supervision outcome despite its recognized importance. While most supervision research focuses on pedagogical skill development, this study demonstrates that supervision simultaneously develops interpersonal, communicative, and collaborative capacities that extend beyond classroom instruction to encompass professional relationships with colleagues, parents, and community members. This broader conceptualization of supervision outcomes has implications for how supervision is planned, implemented, and evaluated. Social competence development may require different supervisory strategies than pedagogical skill development, including more attention to relational dynamics, communication patterns, and collaborative structures.

Finally, the study contributes methodological insights for supervision research. The comparative case study approach enabled identification of both context-specific and common patterns across diverse settings. The triangulation of multiple data sources (interviews, observations, documents) provided rich, nuanced understanding of supervision processes and outcomes that single-method studies might miss. Future supervision research would benefit from similar multi-method, comparative designs that can capture both supervision's technical implementation and its relational, contextual dimensions.

The findings hold substantial practical implications for educational leadership and policy. For school principals, the research demonstrates that effective supervision requires balancing structure with flexibility, formal accountability with relational support, and individual guidance with collective professional development. Principals should view supervision not as administrative compliance but as strategic investment in teacher capacity development with cascading effects on student learning. The study provides concrete models—personalized mentoring (SDN Sintok) and systematic documentation (SDN Margasari)—that principals can adapt to their contexts.

For education policymakers, the findings suggest that supervision policy should emphasize core developmental principles rather than prescribing rigid implementation procedures. Policies should provide principals with frameworks and resources for conducting effective supervision while permitting contextual adaptation. Professional development for principals should focus on supervision as relational, developmental leadership rather than technical inspection. Additionally, policies should recognize that effective supervision requires time allocation—both for principals to conduct supervision and for teachers to engage in reflective practice and implementation of feedback. Without adequate time and resources, even well-designed supervision systems will fail.

For teacher education programs, the findings highlight the importance of preparing pre-service teachers for supervision as professional development opportunity rather than threatening evaluation. Teacher candidates should learn to engage productively with feedback, conduct self-assessment, and view professional growth as continuous rather than completed upon licensure. Furthermore, teacher educators should model the supervisory practices—constructive feedback, reflective dialogue, collaborative problem-solving—that effective principals employ, helping pre-service teachers internalize developmental supervision experiences.

Theoretically, the study suggests need for more integrated supervision frameworks incorporating technical, relational, and contextual dimensions. Existing supervision theories tend to emphasize either

technical procedures (clinical supervision) or relational dynamics (developmental supervision) but rarely integrate these dimensions with careful attention to contextual factors. A more comprehensive supervision theory would specify how technical supervision procedures, relational leadership practices, and contextual adaptation interact to generate teacher development outcomes. This study's comparative findings provide empirical foundation for such theory development.

This study's limitations warrant acknowledgment. First, the research focused on two elementary schools in one subdistrict, limiting generalizability to other educational contexts. Different supervision challenges and strategies may emerge in secondary schools, urban settings, or regions with different cultural contexts. Second, the six-month data collection period, while sufficient for identifying supervision patterns and short-term outcomes, could not assess long-term impacts on teacher development or student learning. Longitudinal research following teachers over multiple years would provide stronger evidence of supervision's sustained effects. Third, the study relied primarily on self-reported data from principals and teachers, which may be subject to social desirability bias. While observation data and document analysis provided triangulation, objective measures of teaching quality and student outcomes would strengthen causal claims. Finally, the research design cannot definitively establish causality between supervision practices and teacher competence development, as other factors (e.g., peer collaboration, external professional development) may have contributed to observed changes.

Synthesizing across findings and theoretical connections, this study demonstrates that academic supervision, when implemented as systematic, contextually adapted, relationally grounded developmental support, serves as a powerful catalyst for enhancing teachers' social competencies. The research extends supervision scholarship by empirically documenting supervision's impact specifically on social competence dimensions and by demonstrating how supervision effectiveness depends on strategic alignment between approach and context. The comparative findings reveal that supervision's developmental potential transcends specific structural features, instead residing in core principles: regular engagement, constructive feedback, reflective dialogue, relational trust, and sustained follow-up. These principles can be enacted through varied approaches—personalized mentoring, structured documentation, group supervision, or combinations thereof—as long as they remain grounded in genuine commitment to teacher growth rather than mere compliance verification. This conceptual contribution positions supervision not as technical procedure but as adaptive educational leadership practice requiring principals' capacity for relational connection, diagnostic assessment of teacher needs, contextual responsiveness, and sustained commitment to teacher and school development.

CONCLUSION

This study examined academic supervision management by school principals and its contribution to enhancing teachers' social competence in two elementary schools with contrasting resource contexts. The findings demonstrate that systematic, contextually adapted supervision functions as a powerful mechanism for developing teachers' communication, collaboration, reflective practice, and professional relationship-building capacities. Both personalized mentoring approaches and structured documentation systems proved effective when grounded in core developmental principles: regular engagement, constructive feedback, reflective dialogue, relational trust, and sustained follow-up. The research contributes empirically to supervision scholarship by documenting supervision's specific impact on social competence dimensions—an under-researched outcome despite its recognized importance—and by demonstrating that supervision effectiveness depends on strategic alignment between approach and context rather than adherence to uniform "best practice" models.

The study holds significant implications for educational practice and policy. School principals should conceptualize supervision as strategic investment in teacher capacity development rather than administrative compliance, balancing structure with flexibility and formal accountability with relational support. Education policymakers should emphasize core developmental principles in supervision policy

while permitting contextual adaptation, and allocate adequate time and resources for effective supervision implementation. Teacher preparation programs should cultivate pre-service teachers' capacity to engage productively with supervision as professional development opportunity.

Several limitations warrant acknowledgment. The two-school sample limits generalizability, the six-month timeframe could not assess long-term impacts, reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias, and the design cannot definitively establish causality. Future research should employ longitudinal designs examining sustained supervision effects on teacher development and student outcomes, investigate supervision in diverse educational contexts including secondary schools and urban settings, utilize objective teaching quality measures alongside self-reports, and empirically test the hypothesized developmental chain linking supervision to teacher social competence to student engagement and achievement. Such research would further illuminate supervision's role in comprehensive teacher professional development and educational quality improvement.

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