

The Role and Challenges of Supervisors in Improving the Quality of Education at SDN 06 Payaraman Ogan Ilir Regency

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran dan tantangan pengawas sekolah dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di SDN 06 Payaraman, Kabupaten Ogan Ilir, Sumatera Selatan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi lapangan melalui teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Partisipan penelitian meliputi pengawas sekolah, kepala sekolah, dan wakil kepala sekolah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengawas melaksanakan supervisi manajerial melalui kegiatan pemberian saran, pemantauan, dan koordinasi, serta berperan sebagai penilai, fasilitator, evaluator, dan penyedia informasi. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi beberapa tantangan, terutama keterbatasan sarana dan prasarana serta perlunya penguatan kolaborasi antara pengawas dan pimpinan sekolah dalam merespons tuntutan pembelajaran berbasis digital. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa praktik supervisi yang konsisten dan dukungan kelembagaan yang memadai menjadi faktor penting dalam mendukung upaya peningkatan mutu sekolah.

Kata kunci: supervisi pendidikan; peningkatan mutu sekolah; supervisi manajerial; kepemimpinan sekolah; keterbatasan infrastruktur

Abstract

This study explored the roles and challenges of school supervisors in improving educational quality at SDN 06 Payaraman, Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra. The research applied a qualitative field approach using observations, interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques. The participants included the school supervisor, principal, and vice principal. The findings showed that supervisors carried out managerial supervision through advisory, monitoring, and coordinating activities while functioning as assessors, facilitators, evaluators, and information providers. The study also identified several challenges, particularly limited infrastructure and the need for stronger collaboration between supervisors and school leaders in responding to digital learning demands. These findings indicated that consistent supervisory practices and adequate institutional support were essential in supporting efforts to enhance school quality.

Keywords: Educational supervision; School quality improvement; Managerial supervision; School leadership; Infrastructure constraints

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are increasingly required to improve instructional quality while responding to rapid policy shifts, accountability demands, and technological transformation. School improvement is no longer viewed as a short-term program but as a continuous and structured process that requires coordinated leadership, professional supervision, and institutional commitment (Thessin & Louis, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020). Research consistently indicates that school quality is influenced not only by student learning outcomes but also by the internal systems that regulate teaching practices, professional development, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms (Wallace Foundation, 2021; Educational Supervision

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and Quality, 2025). In this perspective, improvement depends on how leadership and supervisory functions operate in practice rather than on formal policy alone.

Supervision has been widely discussed as a strategic mechanism for maintaining instructional standards and supporting teacher professionalism. Studies show that structured supervisory practices contribute to better instructional planning, reflective teaching, and performance consistency when they involve dialogue, feedback, and follow-up evaluation (McGhee & Stark, 2021; Academic Supervision Study, 2023). A systematic review of supervision approaches further indicates that effective supervision integrates advisory, monitoring, coordinating, and evaluative dimensions rather than functioning merely as administrative inspection (Systematic Review of Supervision, 2024; Educational Supervision Techniques, 2025). These findings reinforce the argument that supervision plays a productive role in strengthening institutional quality when implemented with professional competence and organizational support.

Within the Indonesian education system, recent regulatory reforms have clarified the responsibilities of school supervisors in supporting quality assurance and school accountability (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2023; Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2024). Supervisors are formally tasked with guiding principals and teachers, monitoring program implementation, and ensuring alignment with national standards. Empirical evidence from elementary school contexts in Indonesia indicates that supervisory engagement contributes to teacher development and school program effectiveness when coordination mechanisms are clearly established (Yulidarna et al., 2025; Educational Supervision Review, 2024). However, supervisory effectiveness is not solely determined by formal authority; it is shaped by contextual conditions, professional readiness, and institutional collaboration.

From a theoretical standpoint, supervision is closely related to instructional leadership and school governance. Leadership research demonstrates that coherent organizational direction, shared accountability, and collaborative culture influence the effectiveness of school programs (Instructional Leadership and Supervision, 2024; Leithwood et al., 2020). Supervisors complement principals by ensuring that planning, implementation, and evaluation processes are systematically monitored and adjusted when necessary (Bentaouet Kattan & Patrinos, 2024; Educational Supervision and Quality, 2025). When supervisory roles are clearly enacted and supported by institutional structures, they contribute to sustained improvement rather than isolated corrective actions.

At the same time, schools operate in an era of digital transformation that introduces additional challenges for management and supervision. The integration of digital technologies into teaching and administrative systems requires adequate infrastructure, coordination, and professional adaptation (Timotheou et al., 2023; OECD, 2023). Research highlights that schools with limited digital readiness may struggle to align supervisory monitoring with technology-based learning environments (UNESCO, 2023; Pacheco et al., 2025). Studies on digital-era supervision emphasize that supervisors must adjust their guidance strategies to ensure that technological initiatives support pedagogical goals rather than create implementation gaps (Digital Supervision Strategies, 2024; Managerial Supervision in the Digital Era, 2023). These findings suggest that infrastructure and coordination are now integral to the effectiveness of supervisory functions.

Although a growing body of research addresses school leadership and instructional supervision, contextual investigations that explore how supervisory roles are enacted within specific elementary school environments remain limited. Much of the literature concentrates on leadership outcomes at a systemic level (Wallace Foundation, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020), while fewer studies describe the daily managerial and advisory practices performed by supervisors in particular school settings (Educational Supervision Techniques, 2025; Academic Supervision Study, 2023). Furthermore, variations in supervisory effectiveness across regions indicate that institutional capacity, professional competence, and collaborative culture influence how supervision contributes to school improvement (Yulidarna et al., 2025; Educational Supervision Review, 2024).

In practice, supervision may encounter structural and organizational constraints. Infrastructure limitations, inadequate learning resources, and coordination gaps between supervisors, principals, and teachers can reduce the impact of supervisory feedback (Timotheou et al., 2023; OECD, 2023). Research suggests that supervision becomes more effective when it is supported by systematic evaluation processes, collaborative leadership practices, and consistent follow-up mechanisms (McGhee & Stark, 2021; Instructional Leadership and Supervision, 2024). Without sustained institutional commitment, supervisory roles risk becoming procedural rather than transformative.

Preliminary observations conducted at SDN 06 Payaraman, Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra, revealed that supervisory activities were formally implemented through advisory, monitoring, and coordinating practices. However, practical challenges related to infrastructure readiness, digital integration, and stakeholder coordination were identified. Although supervision was intended to strengthen instructional and managerial quality, the extent to which supervisory roles effectively supported school improvement required deeper examination within this specific context.

Considering the theoretical perspectives and empirical findings discussed above, it becomes necessary to examine how supervisory functions operate at the school level and what contextual barriers influence their implementation. This study therefore addressed the following research questions: how are supervisory roles implemented in improving educational quality at SDN 06 Payaraman, and what challenges are encountered in implementing supervisory functions, particularly those related to infrastructure readiness and coordination?

To explore these questions, a qualitative approach was employed to capture detailed perspectives, interaction patterns, and contextual realities within the natural school setting (Creswell & Poth, 2023; Saldaña, 2021). Qualitative inquiry allows for in-depth examination of supervisory practices and institutional conditions that cannot be fully understood through quantitative measurement alone.

Accordingly, this study aimed to describe the roles performed by school supervisors in improving educational quality at SDN 06 Payaraman and to identify the primary challenges faced in implementing supervisory functions in supporting sustainable school improvement efforts.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore supervisory roles and challenges in improving educational quality at SDN 06 Payaraman, Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra. A qualitative design was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand supervisory practices, interaction patterns, and contextual constraints within a natural school setting rather than to measure variables statistically (Creswell & Poth, 2023). Field-based inquiry enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth descriptions of supervisory implementation and institutional conditions that shape school improvement processes.

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from individuals directly involved in supervisory and managerial activities, including the school supervisor assigned to the institution, the principal, and the vice principal. Participants were selected purposively based on their roles and responsibilities related to supervision, coordination, and quality improvement efforts within the school. Secondary data were derived from relevant school documents, supervisory reports, planning documents, and institutional records that supported the analysis of supervisory implementation and follow-up actions.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation review. Observation was conducted to examine supervisory interactions, coordination practices, and the condition of school facilities that support instructional activities. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to explain their experiences regarding advisory functions, monitoring mechanisms, coordination processes, and challenges encountered in improving educational quality. Documentation analysis was used to review supervisory reports and school planning records to verify the consistency between planned programs and their implementation. The use of multiple techniques aimed to strengthen data credibility through triangulation of sources and methods (Saldaña, 2021).

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During data reduction, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary findings were organized and coded into categories related to supervisory roles and implementation challenges. The coding process followed thematic identification to capture recurring patterns and meaningful units relevant to the research focus (Saldaña, 2021). Data display was performed by arranging categorized information into structured matrices and descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying relationships between supervisory practices, infrastructure readiness, and coordination mechanisms that influenced educational quality improvement.

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, the study applied triangulation by comparing information obtained from different participants and data collection techniques. Consistency between interview results, observational findings, and documentary evidence was examined to confirm the validity of interpretations. This procedure aimed to provide a reliable and contextually grounded account of supervisory roles and challenges in improving educational quality at SDN 06 Payaraman.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this study reveal key insights into the implementation of supervisory roles and the challenges faced at SDN 06 Payaraman in Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra. The supervisory roles were identified as falling into three main functions: advising, monitoring, and coordinating. The study also highlighted several contextual challenges, particularly those related to infrastructure readiness and institutional coordination.

Advising Function

The advisory function was the primary role of the school supervisor, who provided guidance to the principal and teachers regarding instructional planning, classroom management, and school administration. However, the effectiveness of this role was found to be inconsistent. Some teachers reported that they were still teaching subjects outside their area of expertise, which negatively impacted instructional focus and the quality of learning. Additionally, while supervisory visits were conducted, follow-up guidance was often not sustained, reducing the long-term impact of the advisory function.

Monitoring Function

The monitoring function involved reviewing the implementation of school programs, evaluating educational resource utilization, and assessing managerial performance. The supervisor conducted regular evaluations of planning documents and the execution of various programs. However, collaboration between the supervisor and school leadership was not fully optimized, especially in strengthening human resource management and improving overall institutional performance. This lack of coordination between supervision and managerial leadership limited the effectiveness of the monitoring function.

Coordinating Function

The coordinating role of the supervisor focused on facilitating communication between school management and stakeholders to support program implementation. The supervisor played a key role in ensuring that school plans aligned with supervisory recommendations. However, despite formal guidance being provided, its integration into daily school practices was inconsistent, largely due to gaps in internal management capacity and coordination among school leaders, teachers, and supervisors.

Challenges

The study also identified several significant challenges that affected the implementation of supervisory roles. Infrastructure limitations, particularly in terms of inadequate learning facilities and insufficient digital readiness, were major factors constraining the effectiveness of supervision. These limitations hindered the supervisor's ability to introduce instructional innovations effectively. Furthermore, gaps in institutional coordination between the supervisor, principal, and teachers contributed to the challenges in sustaining supervisory recommendations and ensuring that they were fully integrated into school practices. Overall, the supervisory roles were carried out, but their impact on improving educational quality was largely influenced by the school's infrastructure and the degree of coordination between institutional actors.

Discussion

This study explored the supervisory roles and challenges in improving educational quality at SDN 06 Payaraman, Ogan Ilir Regency. The findings illustrate how the supervisory functions advising, monitoring, and coordinating were implemented and how various contextual factors influenced their effectiveness. The results show that while the supervisory roles were conducted, their impact on educational improvement was limited by issues such as infrastructure constraints, lack of coordination, and insufficient follow-up.

The advisory function of the supervisor, which involves providing guidance to teachers and school leaders on instructional planning and management, was found to be inconsistent. Although guidance was provided, the lack of sustained follow-up and reflection hampered its long-term effectiveness. This is consistent with the findings of Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2017), who emphasize that supervision should involve continuous and reflective feedback rather than periodic inspections. McGhee and Stark (2021) also argue that the most effective supervision is one that fosters ongoing professional growth, suggesting that regular interactions and feedback could have a greater impact on instructional improvement at SDN 06 Payaraman.

The monitoring function at SDN 06 Payaraman, which focused on evaluating school programs and performance, was also identified as having limited effectiveness. While monitoring activities were conducted, the lack of a coordinated effort between the supervisor and school leadership prevented the findings from being fully integrated into human resource development and overall school improvement efforts. Leithwood et al. (2020) suggest that monitoring, when done in isolation, often fails to drive substantial change. They argue that monitoring should be coupled with coordinated leadership efforts to create a strong accountability structure that can lead to lasting improvements. The study's findings echo this argument, indicating that monitoring alone is insufficient without effective coordination among school leadership.

The coordinating function was similarly affected by gaps in institutional collaboration. While the supervisor worked to facilitate communication between stakeholders, the coordination efforts were not consistently integrated into the daily operations of the school. This finding aligns with Bentaouet Kattan & Patrinos (2024), who assert that effective supervision is rooted in strong collaborative relationships between all stakeholders. When coordination is not embedded in daily practice, the impact of supervisory efforts is weakened. Wallace Foundation (2021) also emphasizes that leadership effectiveness increases when there is shared responsibility for educational outcomes, highlighting the importance of sustained collaboration between principals, teachers, and supervisors.

Infrastructure readiness emerged as a major challenge affecting the effectiveness of supervision. Limited learning facilities and inadequate digital resources significantly constrained the supervisor's ability to support instructional innovations. This aligns with global research, such as OECD (2023), which highlights the critical role of digital transformation in education. Without the necessary infrastructure, the introduction of modern instructional practices, such as technology-enhanced learning, becomes increasingly difficult. UNESCO (2023) also underscores the need for systemic planning and investment in digital infrastructure to support educational reforms, especially in resource-constrained environments.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the lack of institutional coordination was a significant barrier to the sustained implementation of supervisory recommendations. This is consistent with Yulidarna et al. (2025), who argue that the effectiveness of supervision is highly dependent on the collaboration between supervisors, principals, and teachers. Without proper coordination and a shared commitment to improvement, even well-intentioned supervisory efforts can fail to translate into meaningful change. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) emphasize that collaborative leadership models, where all stakeholders are actively engaged, tend to produce more effective and sustainable educational improvements. In the case of SDN 06 Payaraman, the absence of strong collaboration between the supervisor, principal, and teachers limited the impact of supervision on overall educational quality.

In conclusion, while the supervisory roles at SDN 06 Payaraman were formally implemented, the effectiveness of these roles was hampered by infrastructural limitations and gaps in coordination. This study reinforces the importance of addressing these contextual factors to ensure that supervision leads to real improvements in teaching and learning. For supervision to be effective, it must involve sustained feedback, collaboration among all stakeholders, and the necessary resources to support instructional innovation. The findings suggest that educational leaders must prioritize building institutional capacity, improving coordination, and investing in infrastructure to create a conducive environment for continuous school improvement.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined how supervisory roles were implemented and what challenges influenced their effectiveness in improving educational quality at SDN 06 Payaraman. The findings show that supervisory functions were carried out through advisory, monitoring, and coordinating practices. Supervisors provided guidance to school leaders and teachers, monitored program implementation, and facilitated coordination within the school management structure. However, the effectiveness of these roles was not fully optimal due to contextual constraints. The study also identified that infrastructure limitations and gaps in coordination significantly influenced the impact of supervisory practices. Limited facilities and insufficient digital readiness restricted efforts to strengthen instructional quality. In addition, collaboration between supervisors, principals, and teachers was not consistently integrated into daily school management processes, which reduced the sustainability of supervisory recommendations.

These findings indicate that supervisory roles contribute to educational quality improvement when supported by adequate institutional readiness, structured follow-up mechanisms, and collaborative leadership. Supervision alone is insufficient without alignment between supervisory guidance, school management capacity, and infrastructure support. Based on these conclusions, several practical suggestions can be proposed. School supervisors are encouraged to strengthen continuous follow-up mechanisms after advisory and monitoring activities to ensure that recommendations are implemented effectively. Principals should enhance internal coordination and integrate supervisory feedback into strategic school planning to improve instructional consistency. Education policymakers and local education authorities are advised to prioritize infrastructure development and digital readiness to support supervisory and instructional processes. Furthermore, future researchers may expand this study by examining supervisory practices in different school contexts or by exploring comparative models of supervision to provide broader insights into effective quality improvement strategies.

Through these practical efforts, supervisory roles can function more effectively in supporting sustainable educational quality improvement at the elementary school level.

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