



Teacher Performance Supervision in International Elementary Schools: Principal Challenges

Triyadi^{1✉}, Munawir Yusuf² & Subagya³

^{1✉}Universitas Sebelas Maret, triyadi.1985@student.uns.ac.id, Orcid ID: [0009-0007-4765-5951](https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4765-5951)

²Universitas Sebelas Maret, munawiryusuf@staff.uns.ac.id, Orcid ID: [0000-0003-0964-2029](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0964-2029)

³Universitas Sebelas Maret, subagya60@staff.uns.ac.id, Orcid ID: [0000-0002-0307-4908](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0307-4908)

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Abstract

Supervision conducted by school principals is an important element in improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools. Through the supervision process, principals provide support, feedback, and guidance that are essential for teachers' professional development. This collaborative approach to supervision that focuses on improving the quality of learning plays an important role in achieving the educational goals of the school. This study aims to describe and analyze the challenges faced by principals in conducting teacher performance supervision in international primary schools. This type of research is qualitative research with a narrative approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis of seven principals of international primary schools in Surakarta. The results of this study showed that principals in international primary schools face several challenges, including (1) the time of supervision; (2) communication; (3) the consistency of assessment; (4) perceptual differences; and (5) the skill for conducting supervision. This research provides an in-depth insight into the complexity of the principals' challenges in conducting teacher performance supervision in international primary schools. This research is expected to help understand the dynamics of supervision in international primary schools, which can be applied more broadly in improving teacher professionalism in the academic process.

Keywords:

Principal Challenges, Teacher Supervision, International Primary School

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Abstrak

Supervisi yang dilakukan oleh kepala sekolah merupakan unsur penting dalam meningkatkan efektivitas proses belajar mengajar di sekolah. Melalui proses supervisi, kepala sekolah memberikan dukungan, masukan dan bimbingan yang penting bagi pengembangan profesional guru. Pendekatan supervisi kolaboratif yang fokus pada peningkatan mutu pembelajaran ini memegang peranan penting dalam mencapai tujuan pendidikan sekolah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis tantangan yang dihadapi kepala sekolah dalam melakukan supervisi kinerja guru di sekolah dasar internasional. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan naratif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen terhadap tujuh kepala sekolah dasar internasional di Surakarta. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah di sekolah dasar internasional menghadapi beberapa tantangan, antara lain (1) waktu supervisi; (2) komunikasi; (3) konsistensi penilaian; (4) perbedaan persepsi; dan (5) keterampilan melakukan supervisi. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan mendalam mengenai kompleksitas tantangan kepala sekolah dalam melakukan supervisi kinerja guru di sekolah dasar internasional. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat membantu memahami dinamika supervisi di sekolah dasar internasional, yang dapat diterapkan secara lebih luas dalam meningkatkan profesionalisme guru dalam proses akademik.

Kata Kunci:

Tantangan Kepala Sekolah, Supervisi Guru, Sekolah Dasar Internasional

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INTRODUCTION

Educational supervision is an important aspect that contributes to the success of educational institutions, covering various elements such as learners, teachers, curriculum, and school environment (Tanjung, et al., 2021). The main goal of educational supervision is to ensure that all aspects of education, including teaching and learning processes, run effectively and efficiently (Kalalo & Merentek, 2023). One of the main ways to develop teacher professionalism and quality is through academic supervision, which is the primary responsibility of school principals. This supervision is not only related to performance evaluation but also to provide the necessary support for the continuous development of teacher competencies (Ajasan et al., 2016). Principals are leaders and are also responsible for the implementation of quality learning in schools (Karyati, 2020). Quality learning is characterized by good performance, which reflects the effectiveness of supervision at the primary school level.

Supervision is not only about monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning process, but also contributing to the development of teacher competencies, adapting the curriculum to international standards, and ensuring effective cultural integration in a diverse school environment (Maralih, 2014). Principals play a significant role in determining school progress through efficient administration, high commitment, and flexible adaptability in carrying out supervision tasks. However, research shows that there are several mistakes in the implementation of this task, which results in supervision not running effectively or efficiently (Iskandar, 2020). In addition, it was found that teacher performance has not been optimal in improving their professionalism, which indicates the need to improve the quality of supervision to assist teachers in developing their professional competencies (Sanglah, 2021).

International primary schools often offer a different curriculum from public schools, often with an emphasis on global and multilingual education. For example, many international schools adopt the International Baccalaureate (IB) or Cambridge curriculum,

which emphasizes the development of critical and creative skills (Elfrida et al., 2020). In addition, these schools usually have a very culturally diverse student population, which provides a unique and inclusive learning environment. In this context, educational supervision focuses not only on academic achievement but also on the social and emotional development of students in a multicultural environment.

The main difference between supervision in public and international schools often lies in resources and autonomy. International schools usually have more resources and flexibility in designing curricula and learning programs, which allows for the adoption of more innovative and tailored approaches to student needs (Elfrida et al., 2020). On the other hand, public schools may be more bound to the national curriculum and standards set by the government (Siagian & Siregar, 2018). Which can limit flexibility in teaching and supervision. However, both types of schools share the same goal of educating students, albeit through different approaches.

The Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia emphasizes the important role of school principals in carrying out supervision for teachers, intending to improve the quality of learning processes and outcomes (Karimulah & Ummah, 2022). The supervision competencies possessed by school principals include the ability to plan, implement, and follow up on the results of supervision, all of which aim to improve teachers' skills in managing learning (Evanofrita, et al., 2020). Research related to supervision conducted by school principals has been carried out by previous researchers, including research conducted by Karim, et. al. (2021), entitled *The Effect of The Supervision of The Principal and The Professional Competency of Teachers on Teacher Performance in Private MI in Pacet District*. Furthermore, research related to the influence of supervision conducted by school principals on the performance of school principals has been conducted by Suchyadi & Nurjanah (2022). Similar research was conducted by Putra and Hariri (2023) with an article titled *The Effect of Principal Supervision on Teacher Performance: Literature Review*. The authors of this study

focus on the principal challenges in conducting teacher performance supervision.

This study aims to explore the implementation of supervision in international primary schools, focusing on how supervision can be adapted to meet the unique needs of a global and multicultural educational environment. Through this research, it is hoped that insights into effective supervision practices in international primary schools will be gained, as well as recommendations for overcoming existing problems, to achieve improvements in the quality of education in line with international standards.

METHODS

This research was directed at identifying the challenges faced by principals of international primary schools in Surakarta in implementing supervision to teachers. The approach used is the narrative approach which is effective for understanding experiences through collaboration between researchers and participants in a particular context (Clandinin et al. in Werdiningsih & Hamid, 2022). This study specifically involved seven principals from international primary schools located in different cities in Central Java, each with unique experiences and backgrounds in teacher supervision.

The focus of this study lies on the narrative stories of the principals, hoping to gain in-depth insights into the challenges they face in the supervision process. Data were collected through two main methods: open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The open-ended questionnaire was designed to allow principals to express their experiences freely and in detail. In-depth interviews were conducted to confirm and deepen the information obtained from the questionnaires. Prior to the interviews, a list of questions was prepared and some principals were selected as interview participants.

Data analysis was conducted by applying the interactive model analysis technique developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, as described by Effendi & Bumbungan (2018). This technique allows researchers to effectively organize, compare, and interpret complex data, providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics of supervision in the International Primary School. Through

this approach, the research aims to dig deeper into the principals' narrative stories and explore the meaning behind their experiences, resulting in valuable and applicable findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Supervision Challenges

Supervision in international primary schools is a critical process in improving the quality of learning. However, the questionnaire results obtained from seven international primary school principals revealed a number of constraints that affect the effectiveness of supervision.

The Time of Supervision

Principals face challenges in determining the right time to conduct supervision, often clashing with other agendas.

"I schedule supervision once a month, but it has only been done twice" (P1, November 2023).

"When I have scheduled, there is an agenda to go out, etc" (P4, November 2023).

"For time constraints, usually if it has been planned, suddenly there is a sudden meeting or coordination" (P6, November 2023).

The challenge of timing supervision suggests a conflict between supervision duties and other administrative responsibilities. Principals often have to navigate busy and dynamic schedules, which limits their availability for effective supervision. This situation demands flexibility and the ability to prioritize tasks, taking into account the importance of supervision in teachers' professional development. Possible solutions include rescheduling routine activities, delegating certain administrative tasks, and using more efficient supervision methods, such as virtual sessions or group supervision, to optimize available time. Principals need to recognize supervision as an integral part of educational leadership and seek strategies to integrate it effectively into their work routines.

Communication in Supervision

Effective communication between principals and teachers is key in the supervision process.

“To communicate the results of supervision, it takes special time which issometimes difficult to organize” (P5, November 2023).

“Previously, it had not been conveyed in writing, only verbally” (P7, November 2023).

Communication effectiveness in supervision is critical to ensure that the goals and outcomes of supervision are well understood by teachers, especially in the context of international primary schools. The challenges in communication are often related to time and resource constraints, as well as the cultural and linguistic diversity typical of international schools. Principals in international schools need to develop clear and efficient communication methods, both oral and written, taking into account the different language and cultural backgrounds of teachers. This includes ensuring that there is dedicated time allocated for supervision discussions, which is not interrupted by other tasks, and using language that is inclusive and easily understood by all teachers.

The use of digital communication tools, such as email or learning management platforms, can help in conveying supervision information in a more consistent and documented manner and overcome language and time barriers. It is also important for principals to ensure that supervision communication is two-way, providing opportunities for teachers to provide feedback and input, thus creating a more collaborative and supportive supervision environment. In an international context, communication approaches that are sensitive to cultural diversity and consider different communication styles can enhance the effectiveness of supervision. This not only supports teachers' professional development but also strengthens inclusive and diverse school communities.

The Consistency of Assessment

Maintaining consistency in the supervision assessment of teachers is an important challenge. Principals face difficulties in ensuring that supervision assessments are conducted objectively and consistently, with no differences in standards from one teacher to another.

“There is already a new format for supervision assessment and it has also been conveyed to teachers” (P3, November 2023).

“So far, there is no consistency so objectivity during the assessment is still prioritized” (P5, November 2023).

“We already have a supervision format, namely supervision according to the independent curriculum” (P7, November 2023).

With 57.1% of schools not having clear standards for supervision implementation, the consistency of supervision assessment may be compromised. Consistency in supervision assessment is key to ensuring fairness and objectivity. The use of standardized assessment formats that are well communicated to all teachers can help reduce subjectivity and ensure that all teachers are assessed against the same criteria.

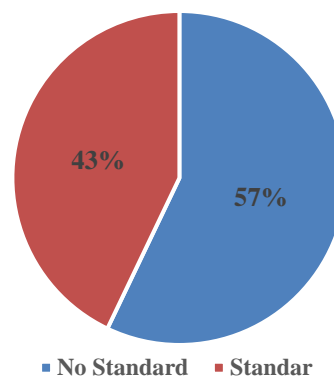


Figure 1. Percentage of Presence of Supervision Standards

This is important for building trust and transparency in the supervision process and for promoting continuous professional growth

among teachers. School principals need to continuously develop and adapt their supervision assessment tools to reflect best practices and applicable education standards

Perceptual Differences

Perceptual differences between principals (as supervisors) and teachers often arise in the supervision process. Sometimes, the purpose of supervision, which is intended as assistance and development by the principal, may be viewed by teachers as an additional burden or negative criticism.

“So far teachers have not accepted the results of supervision well and aren't ready to implement what I suggest” (P1, November 2023).

“Sometimes there are some things that cannot be explained so I have to go directly” (P4, November 2023).

“Resistance constraints also sometimes exist during this time” (P6, November 2023).

Differences in perceptions between principals and teachers in the context of international primary schools can lead to misunderstandings and resistance to the supervision process. In a multicultural and multilingual environment, principals need to convey the purpose of supervision clearly and sensitively to cultural diversity, i.e. as an effort to support and develop teachers' skills, rather than as a burden or criticism. Effective communication, an empathetic approach, and positive relationship building between principals and teachers are essential. Principals should use communication approaches that are accessible and understandable to all teachers, given their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This helps to reduce perceptual differences and promotes a shared understanding of the purpose of supervision.

Principals need to emphasize that supervision is a collaborative process aimed at improving the quality of learning and professional development of teachers, not simply an evaluation or assessment. In an international school environment, supervision should be conducted in a way that recognizes

and values diversity and adapts the approach according to the specific needs of teachers and the school context.

The Skill for Conducting Supervision

Constraints in the ability to carry out supervision often result from differences in experience and training among school principals. New principals often face different challenges compared to those who have longer experience and have received adequate supervision training.

“I have conducted supervision, but not often” (P2, November 2023).

“The obstacle is that there are things that I need to know in-depth, but I don't know the knowledge yet” (P3, November 2023).

“Previously, it has not been conveyed in writing, only verbally” (P7, November 2023).

42.9% of the principals have been in office for less than one year, which may affect their ability to carry out supervision effectively. This difference in experience and training may affect the effectiveness of the supervision conducted. Newer principals may not have fully mastered effective supervision techniques or may not fully understand the specific needs of the teachers they supervise. On the other hand, more experienced principals may be more adept at identifying and addressing issues that arise during the supervision process.

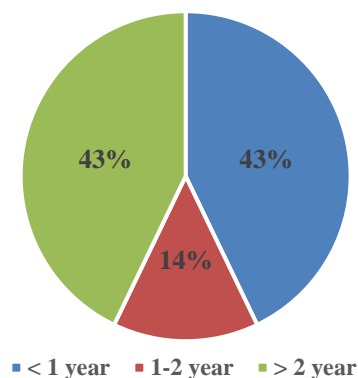


Figure 2. Data on Length of Service as Principal

Educational institutions need to provide ongoing supervision training and support resources for all principals, Regardless of their level of experience, to ensure that supervision is conducted in a supportive and effective manner. This includes training in communication, objective assessment, and developing supervision strategies that are adaptive and responsive to teachers' needs.

Discussion

These results make supervisors, especially school principals, have to introspect and prepare themselves to plan business processes in schools to run smoothly. Planning in the learning process and supporting environment is very important (Bararah, 2017). The effectiveness of the leadership and supervisory role of school principals is very urgent to face challenges that have the potential to arise in international schools. The increased burden on international elementary schools must also be anticipated with advanced readiness (Siahaan & Prasetia, 2023).

The challenges faced by principals in international elementary schools are slightly different and need to be responded to specifically with strong leadership. The principal's leadership and achievement motivation on the performance of elementary school teachers are very relevant and interrelated so strengthening the role of supervision will greatly support the success of the management process in schools (Yulianti, et al., 2023). These supervision challenges create new findings that must be anticipated (Hasnadi, 2021). Future research is expected to deepen toward alternative solutions and deeper variables from each challenge to support strengthening educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, this study identified a number of constraints including time constraints, principals' abilities or skills, effective communication, consistency of assessment, and differences in perceptions in the implementation of supervision in international primary schools. To improve the effectiveness of supervision, a number of recommendations can be made. First, it is

necessary to organize training and development programs for school principals to improve supervision skills, especially in assessing teacher learning. Second, it is important to improve communication between principals and teachers to ensure that evaluation and improvement can be delivered more effectively. Third, efforts are needed to maintain consistency in supervision assessment to maintain objectivity. Finally, concrete steps need to be taken to harmonize perceptions between principals and teachers regarding the purpose of supervision. In addition, this study also has the potential to develop more structured supervision guidelines and clearer standards of supervision assessment, which can contribute to improving the quality of education in international primary schools and have relevant implications for future educational research and practice.

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