

# Analysis of Teacher Professionalism and the Effectiveness of Principal Supervision in Determining Teaching Quality in Elementary Schools throughout Muara Padang District

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana profesionalisme guru dan efektivitas supervisi kepala sekolah berkontribusi terhadap kualitas pembelajaran di sekolah dasar se-Kecamatan Muara Padang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara mendalam dengan guru dan kepala sekolah, serta analisis dokumen terkait kegiatan supervisi dan program pengembangan profesional guru. Sebanyak 15 guru dan 5 kepala sekolah berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa supervisi yang bersifat instruksional dan reflektif mendukung peningkatan profesionalisme guru dan mendorong praktik pembelajaran yang lebih inovatif, sedangkan supervisi administratif memiliki pengaruh yang terbatas. Kegiatan Komunitas Belajar (Kombel) ditemukan berjalan selaras dengan siklus supervisi kepala sekolah melalui ruang kolaborasi dan refleksi. Penelitian ini juga menekankan pentingnya penyesuaian program pelatihan dengan kebutuhan lokal serta pergeseran supervisi dari evaluasi menuju pemberdayaan dan pendampingan untuk mendukung pengembangan guru secara berkelanjutan.

**Kata kunci:** Profesionalisme guru, supervisi kepala sekolah, kualitas pembelajaran, supervisi instruksional, komunitas belajar

## Abstract

This study examined how teacher professionalism and the effectiveness of principal supervision contributed to teaching quality in elementary schools throughout Muara Padang District. A qualitative case study design was applied. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with teachers and principals, and document analysis of supervision records and teacher development programs. Fifteen teachers and five principals participated. The findings showed that instructional and reflective supervision supported teacher professionalism and encouraged more innovative teaching practices, while administrative supervision showed limited influence. Community Practice activities were found to work in alignment with the principal's supervision cycle by providing space for collaboration and reflection. The study also identified the importance of adapting training modules to local needs. The results suggested that supervision should shift from evaluation toward empowerment and instructional guidance to support sustainable teacher development.

**Keywords:** Teacher professionalism, principal supervision, teaching quality, instructional supervision, community practice

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher professionalism is widely viewed as a key lever for improving the quality of schooling because it shapes how teachers plan, teach, assess, and reflect on learning in everyday practice (Liston, 2023). In many systems, strengthening professionalism is pursued through structured professional learning programs such as Indonesia's Program Pendidikan Profesi Guru (PPG) that aim to support teachers' pedagogical knowledge, classroom decision-making, and commitment to continuous improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021). Effective professional development is generally characterized by sustained duration, active learning, and coherence with teachers' classroom needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Alongside formal training, teachers' growth also depends on whether schools provide

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conditions that sustain learning over time rather than treating development as a one-off activity (Day & Gu, 2021).

However, improving teacher quality is not only a matter of training access, but also of how schools organize support for teacher learning within the workplace (Muijs & Reynolds, 2022). Research on professional learning suggests that meaningful growth tends to occur when teachers can connect new ideas to classroom realities, test them in practice, and receive feedback that helps refine instruction (Guskey, 2020). Instructional coaching and supervision practices have also been shown to influence classroom improvement when they focus on instructional dialogue rather than compliance (Kraft et al., 2018). Because these processes happen inside schools, leadership and supervision practices become important mechanisms that may either strengthen or limit teacher learning opportunities (Robinson, 2022).

In the school setting, supervision by the principal has traditionally been positioned as a formal process to monitor instruction and ensure alignment with curriculum expectations (Nugroho, 2022). Yet contemporary views of supervision emphasize that instructional improvement is more likely when supervision focuses on guidance, dialogue, and professional support rather than purely administrative checks (Zepeda, 2023). Leadership research consistently indicates that instructional leadership practices are associated with improved teaching conditions and school effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2020). Evidence from supervision scholarship also highlights the importance of collegial supervision cultures that align supervision, teaching, and learning as mutually reinforcing elements in effective schools (Gordon, 2023).

At the same time, the quality of supervision is shaped by what happens during core supervision interactions, including classroom observation feedback. Studies that examine post-observation conferences show that principals' feedback can support teacher learning when it attends to learning opportunities and instructional improvement, but it can also remain limited if it avoids deeper instructional content (Lavigne et al., 2023). Teachers' perceptions of supervisory qualities in these conferences also matter, because they shape trust, openness, and the likelihood that supervision is experienced as professional support rather than control (Gordon et al., 2025).

Beyond supervision, many recent approaches to teacher development highlight collaborative professional learning as a practical pathway for strengthening teacher professionalism (Fullan, 2020). Collaboration is often described as "collaborative professionalism," where teachers learn through shared inquiry, joint work, and collective responsibility for improvement rather than isolated individual effort (Quinn, 2023). In this context, professional learning communities and communities of practice are increasingly seen as useful structures because they provide routines for discussing teaching problems, exchanging ideas, and building shared knowledge (Wenger, 2023).

For contexts with limited resources, the design of professional development becomes even more critical. Studies of teacher development in resource-constrained settings argue that programs should be contextualized, practical, and sensitive to local constraints rather than simply importing generic training models (Abedi & Gholizadeh, 2021). Broader cross-country evidence also suggests that many large-scale teacher professional development programs do not consistently reflect features associated with stronger outcomes such as practice, follow-up, and incentives highlighting a gap between policy expectations and classroom realities (Breeding & Arancibia, 2022). International policy analyses also stress

that school leadership plays a crucial role in ensuring that professional learning initiatives are effectively implemented at the school level (OECD, 2020).

Recent research further suggests that instructional leadership is not separate from teacher development, but can function as a predictor of teachers' professional growth when principals prioritize instructional focus and teacher learning support (He et al., 2024). This aligns with the idea that professional learning is not only an individual teacher matter, but a school-level process shaped by leadership, norms, and routines that encourage teachers to improve together (Stoll & Fink, 2021). Within such routines, reflective practice becomes important because it helps teachers evaluate their own teaching decisions and adjust instruction based on evidence from classroom experiences (Schön, 2021).

In teacher professional learning literature, conceptual clarity is also needed about what counts as professionalism. Professionalism is often framed as a combination of knowledge, skills, identity, and agency that develops over time through structured support and self-directed growth (Avidov-Ungar, 2025). In practice, professionalism becomes visible through classroom planning, instructional choices, and teachers' willingness to innovate and adapt strategies to student needs (Hattie & Clarke, 2021). Teacher autonomy can also shape innovation, but it may be constrained by accountability pressures and contextual demands, which makes supportive leadership and supervision more significant in encouraging constructive experimentation (Smith et al., 2019).

Although many studies discuss supervision and teacher performance, a practical gap remains about how different supervision orientations operate in specific contexts especially the contrast between reflective, coaching-oriented supervision and administrative-procedural supervision (Brown, 2020). Research on conceptualizing teacher professional learning emphasizes that learning is shaped by interacting layers of the teacher, the school, and the wider system, meaning that supervision effects may depend on how school structures support sustained learning cycles (Opfer & Pedder, 2021).

This qualitative case study therefore examines teacher professionalism, principal supervision effectiveness, and the role of Community of Practice (Kombel) within elementary schools in Muara Padang District. By situating supervision within collaborative professional learning practices, the study seeks to provide locally grounded evidence on how instructional leadership and community-based learning structures can jointly support sustainable improvement in teaching quality (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2022; Jones, 2018).

## **2. METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach using an intrinsic case study design to obtain an in-depth and contextual understanding of teacher professionalism and the effectiveness of principal supervision in Muara Padang District. The intrinsic case study was selected because the research aimed to explore a specific local context rather than to generalize findings to other settings.

The study involved five principals and five teachers from five different public elementary schools in Muara Padang District, Indonesia. The teachers represented both lower and upper grade levels. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select participants who met specific criteria. Teachers were selected if they had more than fifteen years of teaching

experience and had participated in professional development activities. Principals were selected if they had held their position for at least three years, ensuring sufficient experience in implementing supervision programs.

The research was conducted in five state elementary schools located in different areas of the district. These schools were chosen because they represent educational environments with varied infrastructure conditions and limited access to external training opportunities. This variation allowed the researcher to capture differences in the implementation of supervision and Community of Practice (Kombel) activities.

In qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary instrument. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant classroom observations, and document analysis. Interview guidelines were prepared using open-ended questions. For teachers, the interviews focused on experiences of supervision, classroom practices, and perceptions of professionalism. For principals, the interviews explored supervision philosophy, implementation challenges, and the impact of Kombel activities.

Classroom observations were conducted two to three times for each teacher. The observations focused on teaching strategies, classroom management, student engagement, use of instructional media, and reflective practices. Descriptive field notes were used to record observation results. The researcher categorized observations into descriptive levels (such as highly effective, effective, moderately effective, and less effective) to support qualitative interpretation rather than numerical measurement.

Document analysis included reviewing supervision records, Kombel meeting reports, lesson plans, and teacher professional development certificates from the past five years. These documents were examined to verify and complement the interview and observation data.

Data collection continued until data saturation was reached, indicated by the absence of new themes or significant information emerging from additional interviews and observations.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process involved several steps: transcribing interview recordings verbatim, coding meaningful data segments relevant to the research questions, grouping codes into broader themes, reviewing and refining themes, and interpreting the findings based on the identified patterns. Data triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents was applied to enhance the credibility and consistency of the findings.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Result**

The findings from this intrinsic case study conducted in five public elementary schools in Muara Padang District highlight three major themes: (1) teacher perceptions of supervision, (2) teacher professionalism, and (3) the role of Community of Practice (Kombel) in improving teaching practices.

#### ***Teacher Perceptions of Supervision***

Teachers reported two main types of supervision: administrative/procedural and instructional/reflective. Administrative supervision, which focused primarily on checking

documentation, lesson plans, and adherence to formal requirements, was perceived as less effective. Teachers felt that this type of supervision did not offer substantial feedback to enhance their teaching practices, and it did not foster professional growth. Conversely, instructional and reflective supervision, where principals engaged in dialogues with teachers, provided constructive feedback, and discussed teaching challenges, was seen as more supportive. Teachers who experienced this form of supervision felt more motivated to adopt new teaching strategies and felt confident in refining their instructional methods.

### ***Teacher Professionalism***

Teacher professionalism was demonstrated in classroom practices and reflective capacity. Teachers with higher professionalism showed greater capacity for designing student-centered activities, addressing instructional problems, and engaging in consistent discussions during *Kombel* meetings. They exhibited a deeper understanding of subject content and pedagogical approaches. However, the study also found that the integration of technology into classroom practices remained a common challenge, signaling a need for further professional development in this area.

### ***Role of Community of Practice (Kombel)***

*Kombel* played a significant role in enhancing the impact of supervision. When supervision feedback was shared and discussed in *Kombel* meetings, teachers could collaboratively reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, and come up with solutions together. This collaborative process made supervision more impactful and sustained the implementation of feedback. However, when *Kombel* was not directly linked to the supervision outcomes, the feedback provided remained less effective and less likely to be implemented.

## **Discussion**

The findings from this study provide several key insights into the effectiveness of supervision, teacher professionalism, and the role of Communities of Practice in enhancing teaching quality in Muara Padang District.

The results highlight that instructional and reflective supervision is perceived as more effective than administrative supervision. Teachers in this study valued supervision that was focused on learning dialogue and instructional improvement, rather than mere compliance with formal requirements. This finding aligns with Robinson (2022), who argues that leadership practices that center on instructional dialogue and constructive feedback have a greater influence on improving teaching quality than compliance-based monitoring. When principals act as coaches and facilitators rather than evaluators, teachers are more likely to view supervision as a supportive developmental tool rather than an evaluative process. The study supports Guskey's (2020) notion that supervision should prioritize feedback that is specific, practice-centered, and growth-oriented to ensure teachers feel supported and encouraged to improve.

Teacher professionalism in this study was not only reflected in formal qualifications but also in teachers' reflective practices and their willingness to innovate. Teachers who engaged in reflection and participated actively in collaborative discussions demonstrated stronger professional growth and instructional development. This is consistent with Liston's (2023) perspective that professionalism is an ongoing process of learning, adaptation, and reflection, rather than a static concept tied solely to formal certification. Reflective dialogue during supervision empowered teachers to improve their practices, strengthen their professional identity, and take responsibility for their continuous improvement.

The integration of Community of Practice (Kombel) proved to be an essential factor in sustaining the impact of supervision. Teachers' engagement in Kombel meetings allowed them to transform supervision feedback into actionable insights by engaging in collective problem-solving and shared learning. This collaborative model supports Wenger's (2023) theory of Communities of Practice, which emphasizes that professional development is most effective when it is collaborative and occurs within the school context. Fullan (2020) also highlights the importance of school-based professional learning communities in enhancing teaching practices, and this study supports that view. When Kombel activities were connected to supervision outcomes, teachers could reflect, share strategies, and support one another in implementing improvements. However, the study found that in situations where Kombel was not linked to supervision, feedback often went unimplemented and lost its potential impact.

Contextual factors also emerged as important in understanding the effectiveness of professional development. The study found that in Muara Padang, where access to external professional development was limited, school-based supervision and collaborative learning played a central role in teachers' ongoing professional growth. This is in contrast to more resource-rich environments, where teacher autonomy alone may drive innovation (Smith et al., 2019). In the context of Muara Padang, structured supervision and Kombel discussions became even more critical for sustaining professional development.

Additionally, although external training programs can have a short-term positive impact (Brown, 2020), this study suggests that they are not enough to ensure lasting change. The continuous supervision and collaborative learning in Kombel were necessary for embedding new teaching strategies into daily practices. External training programs may introduce new concepts, but without follow-up through internal mechanisms such as supervision and collaborative forums, these concepts may not translate into long-term instructional behavior.

Overall, this study reinforces the importance of instructional leadership, reflective practices, and collaborative learning in enhancing teacher professionalism. Supervision that emphasizes guidance, reflection, and dialogue, coupled with active Kombel engagement, contributes significantly to the improvement of teaching quality. For contexts like Muara Padang, where access to external resources may be limited, these school-based mechanisms are crucial in sustaining professional growth and ensuring ongoing improvements in instructional practices.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the quality of teaching in elementary schools in Muara Padang District is closely influenced by the interaction between teacher professionalism and the effectiveness of principal supervision. The findings show that teachers perceive supervision as effective when it emphasizes instructional guidance and reflective dialogue rather than administrative compliance. Instructional and coaching-oriented supervision encourages teachers to improve classroom practices, experiment with new strategies, and engage in continuous reflection. In contrast, supervision that focuses mainly on documentation and procedural requirements does not significantly contribute to professional growth.

The study also finds that teacher professionalism is reflected in reflective practice, student-centered learning design, active problem-solving, and participation in collaborative forums. The integration of Community of Practice (Kombel) strengthens the impact of supervision by providing a structured space where supervision feedback can be discussed, interpreted, and translated into collective action. When supervision and Kombel are connected, professional development becomes more sustainable and contextual

Based on these findings, several practical suggestions can be proposed. For school principals, supervision practices should prioritize instructional dialogue, coaching skills, and constructive feedback that supports teacher growth. For teachers, active participation in Kombel activities should be maintained as a space for collaborative reflection and shared learning. For local education authorities, leadership training programs should emphasize coaching-based supervision and allocate formal time within teachers' workloads for structured Kombel meetings. Integrating supervision results into collaborative professional forums may strengthen long-term instructional improvement.

Future research may explore the long-term impact of integrated supervision and Kombel practices on student learning outcomes and compare similar models in other rural contexts to identify factors that support sustainable teacher professionalism.

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