

Academic Supervision Strategies of School Principals in Improving Teacher Performance: A Case Study in Junior High Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of academic supervision by school principals in improving teacher performance and to identify the obstacles encountered during its implementation. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design conducted in two junior high schools in Banguntapan, Bantul Regency. The data sources consisted of school principals, teachers, and school academic supervision documents. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that Junior High School X implemented a humanistic and flexible academic supervision approach through informal supervision, learning communities, and daily monitoring to support changes in teachers' instructional behavior. Meanwhile, Junior High School Y applied a more structured academic supervision system through the establishment of the Teacher and Educational Staff Competency Improvement Team (Peningkatan Kompetensi Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan/PKGTK), the implementation of lesson study activities, and systematic supervision follow-up. The major obstacles found in both schools included differences in teachers' information technology mastery, low enthusiasm of several teachers toward supervision activities, and challenges in adapting to curriculum changes. The study concludes that the success of academic supervision is influenced by the flexibility of school principal leadership and the suitability of supervision approaches to school characteristics.

Keywords: academic supervision, school principal, teacher performance, educational leadership

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pelaksanaan supervisi akademik oleh kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru serta mengidentifikasi hambatan yang dihadapi dalam pelaksanaannya. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus pada dua sekolah menengah pertama di Banguntapan, Kabupaten Bantul. Sumber data penelitian meliputi kepala sekolah, guru, serta dokumen supervisi akademik sekolah. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa SMP X menerapkan pendekatan supervisi akademik yang bersifat humanis dan fleksibel melalui supervisi informal, komunitas belajar, serta pemantauan harian untuk mendukung perubahan perilaku guru dalam pembelajaran. Sementara itu, SMP Y menerapkan supervisi akademik yang lebih terstruktur melalui pembentukan tim Peningkatan Kompetensi Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan (PKGTK), *lesson study*, serta tindak lanjut supervisi yang sistematis. Hambatan utama yang ditemukan pada kedua sekolah meliputi perbedaan penguasaan teknologi informasi guru, rendahnya antusiasme sebagian guru terhadap supervisi, serta tantangan adaptasi terhadap perubahan kurikulum. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan supervisi akademik dipengaruhi oleh fleksibilitas kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan pendekatan supervisi yang sesuai dengan karakteristik sekolah.

Kata Kunci: supervisi akademik, kepala sekolah, kinerja guru, kepemimpinan pendidikan

PENDAHULUAN

Schools play an important role as institutions that facilitate students' intellectual, social, and personal development. In the contemporary educational era, schools are not only expected to achieve academic excellence but also to create adaptive, safe, and supportive learning environments for students. Student well-being is closely related to the school's ability to meet academic and psychological needs through meaningful educational experiences (Bozhani et al., 2025). Therefore, educational institutions are required to continuously improve the quality of learning and teacher professionalism in response to rapid social, technological, and curriculum changes (Khurtsidze et al., 2025).

The changing educational landscape has transformed the role of school principals from merely administrative supervisors into instructional leaders, learning facilitators, and professional mentors for teachers. Effective school leadership is closely associated with teacher development and student learning achievement (Pardosi & Utari, 2022). School principals are expected to coordinate educational resources, foster collaborative learning cultures, and supervise instructional processes to improve educational quality (Hu & Duyar, 2024).

One important strategy for improving teacher professionalism is academic supervision. Beyond monitoring administrative tasks, academic supervision provides professional assistance to enhance teaching practices and classroom learning quality (Okafor et al., 2024). Through observation, feedback, mentoring, and continuous professional development, effective supervision contributes to teacher development, organizational improvement, and student achievement (Desrianti & Asmendri, 2024). Previous studies have also shown that academic supervision improves instructional competence, classroom management, and pedagogical independence (Lorensius et al., 2022). Moreover, successful supervision requires a supportive environment where teachers feel safe to receive constructive feedback (Chipu, 2026) and reflects a shift from administrative inspection toward professional and consultative support systems (Dabisch, 2023).

However, the implementation of academic supervision in many educational institutions remains problematic. In Indonesia, supervision practices are frequently perceived as administrative formalities focused on completing documents rather than improving instructional quality (Revina et al., 2023). Nwafor & Ololube (2024) found that many schools still consider supervision merely as a bureaucratic requirement. Similar findings in Malaysia revealed that supervisors often spend excessive time on administrative tasks, reducing

opportunities for meaningful post-observation discussions and professional feedback (Hoque et al., 2020). These conditions may weaken teachers' motivation and reduce the effectiveness of supervision practices.

Educational challenges in junior high schools have become increasingly complex due to curriculum transitions, technological changes, and diverse student backgrounds. Schools located in suburban or peripheral areas often face additional challenges related to student discipline, limited resources, and social dynamics (Riouch et al., 2025). School principals are therefore required to create safe and adaptive school environments while maintaining teacher professionalism and instructional quality (He et al., 2024).

This study was conducted in two junior high schools located in Banguntapan, Bantul Regency, Indonesia, which possess different institutional characteristics. Junior High School X is a private school with limited infrastructure and financial resources that applies a more humanistic and informal supervision approach through learning communities and daily interactions. Meanwhile, Junior High School Y implements a more structured supervision system through the establishment of the Teacher and Educational Staff Competency Improvement Team (Peningkatan Kompetensi Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan/PKGTK), supported by an assessors team and collaborative lesson study activities that facilitate systematic observation, reflection, and professional development. These contrasting supervision models provide valuable insights into how school principals adapt supervision strategies according to school contexts and challenges.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze the implementation of academic supervision conducted by school principals in improving teacher performance and to identify the obstacles encountered during the supervision process in junior high schools. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of effective and contextual academic supervision practices in secondary education institutions.

METODE PELAKSANAAN

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design. Data collection and field investigations were conducted from September 2025 to April 2026. The qualitative approach was selected to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of academic supervision conducted by school principals in improving teacher performance within different school contexts. The case study design enabled the researcher to explore

supervision practices, leadership strategies, and challenges experienced in each school comprehensively (Sugiyono, 2023).

The research was conducted at two junior high schools located in Banguntapan, Bantul Regency, Indonesia, namely Junior High School X and Junior High School Y. These schools were selected purposively because they possessed different institutional characteristics and supervision approaches. Junior High School X implemented a more informal and humanistic supervision model, while Junior High School Y applied a structured and collaborative supervision system.

The primary data sources consisted of school principals and teachers from both schools. The participants included seven teachers from Junior High School X and five teachers from Junior High School Y. Secondary data sources included school profiles, supervision reports, supervision schedules, and other supporting documents related to academic supervision activities.

Table 1. Research Participants

No	Participants	Junior High School X	Junior High School Y
1	Principal	1	1
2	Teachers	7	5
3	Total Participants	8	6

Data collection techniques were conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain information regarding supervision implementation, teacher responses, leadership strategies, and obstacles encountered during the supervision process. Observations were carried out to examine classroom supervision activities, teacher interactions, and learning environments directly. Documentation techniques were used to support and validate the findings obtained from interviews and observations (Sugiyono, 2023).

Table 2. Data Collection Techniques

No	Technique	Purpose
1	Interviews	To obtain information about supervision practices, leadership strategies, and supervision challenges
2	Observations	To observe classroom supervision activities and teacher performance directly
3	Documentation	To collect supporting data such as supervision reports, schedules, and school documents

The research instruments consisted of interview guidelines and observation sheets developed based on indicators of academic supervision and teacher performance. To ensure data credibility and trustworthiness, the study applied data validity techniques including internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Sugiyono, 2023).

Data analysis employed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which involved data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was conducted continuously throughout the study to identify patterns, compare findings between schools, and interpret the implementation of academic supervision in improving teacher performance (Sugiyono, 2023).

Table 3. Data Analysis Procedures

No	Analysis Stage	Description
1	Data Collection	Gathering information through interviews, observations, and documentation
2	Data Reduction	Selecting and simplifying relevant research data
3	Data Display	Organizing data into descriptive narratives and tables
4	Conclusion Drawing	Interpreting findings and verifying conclusions

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Result

Implementation of Academic Supervision at Junior High School X

The findings revealed that academic supervision at Junior High School X was implemented through a humanistic and flexible approach, with the principal positioning himself as a colleague and adopting supportive leadership to foster trust, open communication, and teacher engagement (Karakus, Toprak, & Chen, 2026). Although formal supervision was conducted once per academic year, its implementation was often inconsistent due to teachers' discomfort, leading the principal to rely more on informal supervision through daily interactions, casual discussions, and indirect monitoring, which helped reduce stress and maintain a positive school climate (Ratanasiripong, Ratanasiripong, Nungdanjark, Thongthammarat, & Toyama, 2022). The school also uses workshops as teacher development activities. Unfortunately, the last implementation of workshops in 2024. Workshops was not continued because based on the results of the principal's evaluation stated that the workshops did not have much impact on the development of teachers'

performance and limited school funding problems. In addition, learning communities (KOMBEL) served as a platform for professional discussion, experience sharing, and curriculum implementation, supporting teachers’ psychological comfort and the development of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) (OECD, 2025).

Table 4. Academic Supervision Practices at Junior High School X

No	Supervision Aspect	Findings
1	Supervision Model	Humanistic and informal approach
2	Formal Supervision Frequency	Once per academic year, but inconsistent implementation
3	Monitoring Techniques	Daily observation, CCTV, casual discussions
4	Teacher Development	Learning communities and workshops
5	Focus	Improving teaching behavior and instructional methods

Academic supervision at Junior High School X contributed to positive changes in teachers’ instructional practices, encouraging the use of more varied teaching methods through learning community activities and supervision feedback. However, the use of instructional media remained limited, and conventional teaching methods were still frequently observed. Several challenges also affected the implementation of supervision, including differences in teachers’ information technology mastery and continuous curriculum changes that complicated instructional planning and classroom practices (Asante, Mohammed, & Tilibe, 2025). In addition, limited school funding, inadequate teacher compensation, and challenging student behavior continued to influence teacher performance (Dreer-Göthe, 2026).

Table 5. Obstacles of Academic Supervision at Junior High School X

No	Obstacles	Description
1	Information Technology Skills	Unequal IT mastery among teachers
2	Teacher Resistance	Senior teachers felt uncomfortable during supervision
3	Curriculum Changes	Difficulties adapting to curriculum transitions

Implementation of Academic Supervision at Junior High School Y

Different findings were identified at Junior High School Y. The school implemented a more structured and systematic academic supervision model. The principal established a Teacher and Educational Staff Competency Improvement Team (Peningkatan Kompetensi Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan/PKGTK) and an assessor’s team to support supervision activities and teacher professional development (Wiens, Vongkulluksn, Beckc, & Pearson, 2025). The assessors were responsible not only for evaluating teachers but also for mentoring them throughout the supervision process.

Academic supervision activities at Junior High School Y followed an annual supervision cycle consisting of planning, classroom observation, evaluation, and follow-up stages. The annual cycle was adopted due to the large number of teachers requiring supervision. The school also implemented collaborative lesson study activities during classroom observations.

Table 6. Academic Supervision Practices at Junior High School Y

No	Supervision Aspect	Findings
1	Supervision Model	Structured and collaborative approach
2	Supporting Team	PKGTK Team and assessors' team
3	Observation Method	Lesson study collaboration
4	Supervision Cycle	Planning, observation, evaluation, follow-up
5	Teacher Development	Regular workshops and regular study groups

The collaborative and structured supervision approach implemented at Junior High School Y showed positive impacts on teacher performance and school quality improvement (Wiyono et al., (2022)). The principal strengthened teacher competency development through Professional Learning Community activities conducted at least once every two months and workshops organized regularly according to school needs that contributed to teacher well-being and better teachers' competency (Veliz & Mainsbridge, 2025; Subagio, Waruwu, Enawaty, and Halida, 2024),). The learning quality in the school education report indicator improved from the yellow category (“adequate”) in 2024 to the green category (“good”) in 2025.

However, similar challenges were also identified at Junior High School Y. Differences in teachers' technology skills remained a significant issue. Nevertheless, the school's collaborative system enabled teachers with stronger digital competencies to assist their colleagues. Some teachers lacked enthusiasm during supervision activities, and not all teachers were able to adapt effectively to curriculum changes. Such challenges may hinder the effectiveness of academic supervision implementation in schools (Asante, Mohammed, & Tilibe, 2025).

Table 7. Obstacles of Academic Supervision at Junior High School Y

No	Obstacles	Description
1	Information Technology Skills	Variation in teachers' IT competencies
2	Teacher Motivation	Lack of enthusiasm during supervision
3	Curriculum Adaptation	Difficulties following curriculum changes

Comparison of Academic Supervision Models

The findings demonstrated differences in supervision approaches between the two schools. Junior High School X emphasized interpersonal relationships and informal supervision practices, while Junior High School Y focused on systematic supervision management and collaborative professional development.

Table 8. Comparison of Academic Supervision Models

Aspect	Junior High School X	Junior High School Y
Supervision Approach	Humanistic and informal	Structured and collaborative
Main Strategy	Learning communities and informal monitoring	PKGTK team, assessors team and lesson study
Teacher Interaction	Personal and flexible	Formal and systematic
Main Achievement	Improvement in teacher teaching behavior	Improvement in instructional quality and school performance
Main Challenges	Teacher resistance and IT skills	Teacher enthusiasm and curriculum adaptation

Overall, the findings indicate that both schools implemented different academic supervision strategies according to their institutional characteristics and educational needs. Despite differences in supervision models, both schools leader aimed to improve teacher professionalism and instructional quality through continuous supervision practices (Stefan Brauckmann & Ärlestig, 2023; Hudson, 2025).

Challenges in Academic Supervision

At Junior High School X, the challenges were more related to interpersonal and cultural factors. The principal attempted to minimize teacher resistance through informal supervision, casual discussions, and humanistic communication approaches. The use of learning communities also became an alternative strategy to maintain teacher engagement without creating excessive pressure during supervision activities. This decision was appropriate because it helped prevent the school environment from becoming a source of stress that could negatively affect teacher performance and ultimately impact students (Ratanasiripong, Ratanasiripong, Nungdanjark, Thongthammarat, & Toyama, 2022; Duraku et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, Junior High School Y experienced challenges associated with maintaining teacher consistency and participation in structured supervision programs. Although the school had established a formal supervision system through the Teacher and Educational Staff Competency Improvement (Peningkatan Kompetensi Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan/PKGTK) team, assessors team, and collaborative lesson study activities, not all teachers actively participated in reflective discussions and follow-up improvement

programs. One example is continuously reflecting on and improving existing supervision programs to better meet teachers' needs to improve the school (Sun et al., 2024; Johnson, Moyi, & Ylimaki, 2023).

Table 9. Comparison of Supervision Challenges Between Schools

Aspect	Junior High School X	Junior High School Y
Main Challenge	Teacher discomfort during supervision	Teacher participation consistency
Supervision Response	Humanistic and informal approach	Structured mentoring and collaboration
Technology Issue	Senior teachers' low IT skills	Unequal digital competencies
Curriculum Issue	Adaptation to policy changes	Consistency in curriculum implementation

Overall, the findings indicate that the challenges of academic supervision were influenced by teacher characteristics, school culture, leadership approaches, and institutional readiness in responding to educational changes. Despite these obstacles, both schools continued implementing supervision practices as an effort to improve teacher professionalism and instructional quality. Successful school leadership depends on understanding the school context (Hudson, 2025).

Discussion

Humanistic Academic Supervision at Junior High School X

The findings revealed that Junior High School X implemented a humanistic and flexible academic supervision approach through informal supervision, learning communities, and daily monitoring. This supervision model emphasized interpersonal relationships, collegial communication, and teacher psychological comfort. The implementation of informal supervision aligns with Hu & van Veen (2020), who emphasized that effective supervision requires a supportive and non-judgmental environment in which teachers feel safe to receive constructive feedback. The use of learning communities (Komunitas Belajar/KOMBEL) as a professional discussion platform also reflects collaborative supervision practices. Teachers were encouraged to exchange teaching experiences, discuss curriculum implementation, and improve instructional methods collectively. This finding supports Gordon (2023), who argued that effective supervision should involve informal collaboration and professional interaction within the school community.

The supervision strategy at Junior High School X was also intended to minimize teacher resistance toward supervision activities. Several senior teachers felt uncomfortable with

formal classroom observation, leading the principal to adopt a more personal and humanistic leadership approach. This condition reflects the transformation of supervision from bureaucratic inspection into professional support-oriented supervision, as highlighted by (Jørgensen, 2026).

Structured and Collaborative Academic Supervision at Junior High School Y

Unlike Junior High School X, Junior High School Y implemented well-planned supervision model with positive results improving the quality of schools (Naima, Retoliah, & Farida, 2023). The school established the Teacher and Educational Staff Competency Improvement Team (Peningkatan Kompetensi Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan/PKGTK) and assessors team with lesson study observations method to support supervision implementation and teacher professional development. The supervision process consisted of planning, classroom observation, evaluation, and follow-up activities conducted systematically within an annual supervision cycle.

The collaborative lesson study activities implemented at Junior High School Y strengthened teacher reflection and professional learning processes. Teachers actively participated in classroom observations, reflective discussions, and instructional evaluations. These findings are consistent with Sugiar et al., (2024), who stated that effective academic supervision should involve continuous guidance, mentoring, and follow-up activities to improve instructional quality.

The structured supervision system also contributed positively to teacher performance improvement. Teachers demonstrated better instructional preparation, classroom management, and curriculum implementation. These findings support Sari et al., (2025) and He et al., (2024), who found that effective instructional leadership and supervision significantly influence teacher professionalism and educational quality.

Challenges in Academic Supervision Implementation

Despite differences in supervision approaches, both schools experienced similar challenges related to information technology competence, teacher motivation, and curriculum adaptation. Unequal digital literacy among teachers became one of the major obstacles during the implementation of technology-based learning and curriculum changes. Several senior teachers experienced difficulties in adapting to digital instructional systems and new educational policies. Therefore, school principals are encouraged to develop professional development programs such as mentoring programs for the use of information technology in teaching and learning (Halliwell, Mitchell, & Boyle, 2022).

These findings align with Hoque et al., (2020), who found that supervision becomes less effective when teachers lack readiness and motivation toward educational transformation. In addition, teacher resistance toward supervision activities remained a challenge because some teachers still perceived supervision as a formal evaluative process rather than professional assistance.

Curriculum transitions also created additional supervision challenges. School principals were required not only to evaluate instructional practices but also to assist teachers in understanding and implementing changing curriculum policies (Brooks & Brooks, 2024).

Comparison of Academic Supervision Models

The comparison between both schools indicates that academic supervision should be adapted to each school's context and institutional characteristics. Accordingly, the principals of Junior High School X and Junior High School Y adopted different leadership approaches, with the former emphasizing humanistic leadership and interpersonal communication, and the latter focusing on systematic management and collaborative professional development (Freeman & Fields, 2023). These findings suggest that no single supervision model is suitable for all schools; informal approaches may be more effective in collegial environments, while structured systems are better suited for schools requiring systematic performance management and accountability. Therefore, effective supervision depends on leadership decisions that align with the actual conditions of the school (Lee et al., 2024).

Overall, this study confirms that effective academic supervision should function not merely as an administrative control mechanism but as a continuous professional assistance process aimed at improving teacher competence, instructional quality, and school performance. Leadership flexibility, collaborative culture, and adaptive supervision strategies are essential factors in achieving successful academic supervision practices (Hallinger, Liu, & Aung, 2025).

SIMPULAN

This study concludes that academic supervision implemented by school principals plays an important role in improving teacher performance and instructional quality in junior high schools. The findings revealed that both schools applied different supervision approaches according to their institutional characteristics and educational needs.

Junior High School X implemented a humanistic and flexible supervision model through informal supervision, learning communities, and daily monitoring. This approach emphasized interpersonal communication, teacher psychological comfort, and collegial

relationships to encourage positive changes in teaching behavior. Meanwhile, Junior High School Y applied a structured and collaborative supervision system through the Teacher and Educational Staff Competency Improvement Team (Peningkatan Kompetensi Guru dan Tenaga Kependidikan/PKGTK), lesson study activities, and systematic follow-up, which improved teacher performance and school quality.

The study identified several challenges in implementing academic supervision, including differences in teachers' information technology competence, low enthusiasm toward supervision activities, and difficulties in adapting to curriculum changes. These findings suggest that the success of academic supervision is strongly influenced by the flexibility of school principal leadership and the suitability of supervision strategies to school contexts. Therefore, effective supervision requires not only administrative procedures but also adaptive leadership, collaborative communication, and continuous professional support, positioning academic supervision as a professional assistance process aimed at improving teacher competence, instructional quality, and educational effectiveness rather than merely fulfilling administrative requirements.

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