

Developing a Collaborative Managerial Supervision Model by Principals to Enhance Instructional Management Quality in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Effective learning management forms the foundation of quality education, but its implementation in primary schools remains inconsistent, particularly in areas with limited administrative oversight. This study explores the role of school principals' managerial supervision in enhancing learning management practices in State Elementary Schools in Gunung Kerinci District. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, structured observations, and document analysis involving principals, teachers, and administrative staff. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes stages of data condensation, presentation, and drawing conclusions. The findings reveal that principals who systematically carry out supervisory functions—including planning, monitoring, and providing evaluative feedback—significantly contribute to improving teachers' instructional planning, classroom material delivery, and assessment of learning outcomes. This study concludes that consistent and reflective managerial supervision strengthens the quality of learning and teachers' professional performance, and recommends enhancing capacity development programs for school principals to implement supervision functions at the basic education level.

Keywords: *managerial supervision; principal; instructional management; elementary school; qualitative*

ABSTRAK

Manajemen pembelajaran yang efektif merupakan fondasi utama pendidikan berkualitas, namun implementasinya di sekolah dasar masih belum merata, terutama di daerah dengan keterbatasan pengawasan administratif. Penelitian ini mengkaji peran supervisi manajerial yang dilakukan oleh kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan praktik manajemen pembelajaran di Sekolah Dasar Negeri di Kecamatan Gunung Kerinci. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan desain studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi terstruktur, dan analisis dokumen yang melibatkan kepala sekolah, guru, dan staf administrasi. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang mencakup tahap kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah yang menerapkan fungsi supervisi secara sistematis, meliputi perencanaan, pemantauan, dan umpan balik evaluatif, berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap peningkatan perencanaan instruksional guru, penyampaian materi di kelas, dan penilaian hasil belajar. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa supervisi manajerial yang konsisten dan reflektif memperkuat kualitas pembelajaran dan kinerja profesional guru, serta merekomendasikan penguatan program pengembangan kapasitas kepala sekolah dalam pelaksanaan fungsi supervisi di jenjang pendidikan dasar.

Kata Kunci: *supervisi manajerial, kepala sekolah, manajemen pembelajaran, sekolah dasar*

Article info

Submitted: May 1, 2026; Accepted: June 6, 2026; Published: June 6, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Quality education fundamentally depends on how effectively instructional processes are managed within the classroom and at the school organizational level. Research in educational administration consistently demonstrates that principals, as institutional leaders, occupy a central position in shaping the quality of teaching and learning through their supervisory functions (Dwi et al., n.d.; Susanti et al., 2024). In elementary schools, where foundational cognitive and socio-emotional competencies are developed, the quality of instructional management is particularly crucial. However, empirical evidence from developing-country contexts indicates that supervisory practices by school principals often remain informal, irregular, and insufficiently oriented toward instructional improvement (Af, 2025; Montales & Digo, 2024).

Scholarly attention to managerial supervision has evolved considerably over the past two decades. Early studies in the 2000s largely treated supervision as an administrative compliance function, focused on bureaucratic reporting and policy adherence (Glickman et al., 2001). By the 2010s, a paradigm shift emerged toward instructional leadership, where supervision was reframed as a tool for professional development and teaching quality improvement (Hallinger, 2011; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). More recent literature (2020–2025) has begun distinguishing managerial supervision as a distinct leadership practice that integrates planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating instructional systems at the school level, rather than focusing solely on individual teacher performance (Mwelase & Rapeta, 2025; Rapids et al., 2025). Despite this theoretical advancement, a persistent gap remains between supervisory roles mandated in educational policy and actual practices implemented in school environments.

This gap is especially evident in rural and under-resourced districts, where the disconnect between policy expectations and field realities manifests in concrete ways: principals are required by regulation to conduct systematic and periodic instructional supervision, yet they frequently lack the structured training to design and execute supervision programs, sufficient time due to overlapping administrative burdens, institutional support such as mentoring or supervisory tools from district authorities, and access to data-driven monitoring frameworks that would allow them to evaluate instructional quality systematically. As a result, supervision tends to be reactive and ad hoc rather than planned and developmental (Mwelase & Rapeta, 2025; Rapids et al., 2025). Moreover, much of the previous research has focused on secondary schools or urban educational settings, while elementary school contexts in regional areas remain relatively underexplored, and managerial supervision as a distinct leadership construct has received limited empirical attention.

Addressing this gap, the present study focuses on managerial supervision by principals and its contribution to improving instructional management in elementary schools. Managerial supervision is conceptualized as a leadership function that emphasizes the systematic coordination of instructional activities, resource allocation, and administrative support to enhance teaching effectiveness. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) analyze the forms of managerial supervisory practices implemented by principals in public elementary schools in Gunung Kerinci District; (2) evaluate the extent to which these practices contribute to improvements in instructional management quality; and (3) identify the key factors that facilitate or constrain effective managerial supervision in the studied context. The contribution of this study lies in its explicit focus on managerial supervision as a distinct leadership dimension—separate from instructional supervision—within the underexplored context of rural Indonesian elementary schools, thereby offering empirical evidence and contextual insights that extend beyond findings from urban or secondary school settings.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach within a case study design, which enabled an in-depth, contextually grounded examination of managerial supervisory practices as they naturally occur in school settings. Case study methodology was selected because the phenomenon under investigation — managerial supervision by principals — is inherently embedded in its institutional context, involves multiple actors (principals, teachers, and administrative staff), and cannot be adequately understood in isolation from the organizational and policy environment of each school. This approach is particularly suited to capturing the complexity of supervisory decision-

making, the informal dynamics between principals and teachers, and the gap between policy-mandated supervision and actual field practices in the elementary schools of Gunung Kerinci District.

The research was conducted at public elementary schools (Sekolah Dasar Negeri) in Gunung Kerinci District, selected purposively based on their representativeness of typical elementary school governance structures in the region. The research subjects included school principals, classroom teachers, and administrative staff, selected through purposive sampling to ensure depth of information and contextual relevance. Data were collected through three primary techniques: semi-structured in-depth interviews with principals and teachers to elicit perceptions and experiences related to supervisory practices; non-participant observation of supervisory activities and instructional processes within classrooms and school administrative settings; and document analysis of lesson plans, supervision records, school work programs, and evaluation reports.

To ensure the validity of research instruments, the interview and observation guidelines were subjected to expert judgment by two specialists in educational administration and qualitative research methodology. Revisions were made based on their evaluations prior to field implementation. Additionally, a pilot test of the interview protocol was conducted with one principal outside the primary research sites to assess clarity, relevance, and consistency of the instrument items. These procedures ensured that the instruments were both content-valid and practically applicable within the study context. Data analysis followed the interactive model, encompassing the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Asipi et al., 2022). The credibility of the findings was established through member checking and triangulation of data sources and methods. The overall research design is illustrated in the following figure:

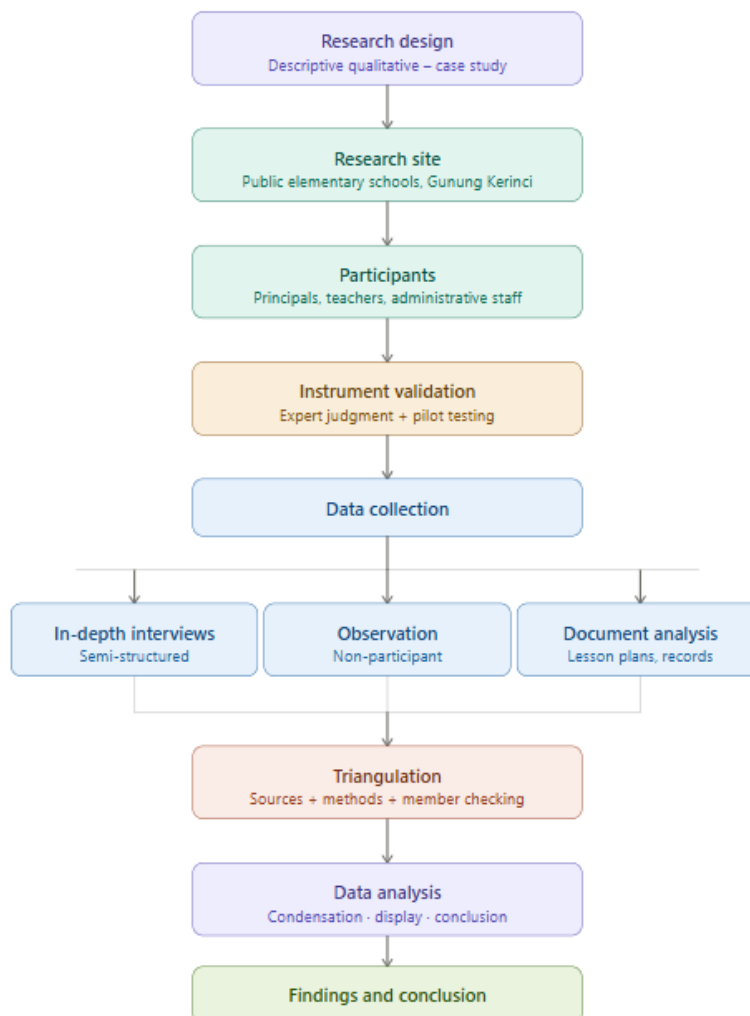


Figure 1. Flowchart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Principals' Managerial Supervisory Practices

Findings from interviews and observational data reveal that principals in Gunung Kerinci District engage in managerial supervision across three identifiable functional dimensions: instructional planning oversight, classroom process monitoring, and performance evaluation and feedback. In terms of instructional planning supervision, all participating principals reported conducting periodic reviews of teacher lesson plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran/RPP*). However, the frequency and depth of this supervision varied considerably across schools. In schools where principals maintained a structured supervisory schedule – reviewing RPPs at least once every two weeks and providing written feedback using standardized rubrics – teachers demonstrated more complete lesson plans, with clearly formulated learning objectives, contextually appropriate learning activities, and aligned assessment instruments. By contrast, in schools where no formal supervisory schedule existed, RPP reviews occurred sporadically, typically only before official school inspections (*akreditasi*), and feedback was delivered verbally without systematic documentation. This variation suggests that the structural regularity of supervisory engagement, rather than its mere occurrence, is the determining factor in instructional planning quality. These findings align with Hallinger and Heck (2010), who demonstrated that the frequency and consistency of principal supervisory routines significantly predict instructional quality outcomes, and with Bafadal et al. (2021), who found that structured supervisory scheduling is a key predictor of RPP quality in Indonesian primary schools.

Observational data further indicated that classroom supervision – comprising direct observation of instructional delivery – was conducted by only a minority of principals on a regular basis. In schools where classroom visits were frequent and followed by structured feedback sessions, teachers reported greater clarity regarding instructional expectations and a stronger sense of professional accountability. These findings are consistent with those of Pietsch (2025), who identified direct instructional leadership behaviors as significantly associated with student learning outcomes, particularly in primary school contexts. The supervisory approach observed in this study aligns with what Gunawan et al. (2023) describe as 'instructionally engaged leadership,' characterized by active principal involvement in monitoring pedagogical processes rather than exclusive attention to administrative tasks. Similar patterns have been documented by Susanti et al. (2024), who found that principals who allocate dedicated time for classroom observation produce measurable improvements in teacher instructional behavior in rural Indonesian schools.

Impact of Supervision on Instructional Management Quality

Analysis of interview transcripts and document reviews revealed that systematic managerial supervision contributed substantially to improvements in three key dimensions of instructional management: lesson preparation quality, classroom delivery effectiveness, and student assessment practices.

With regard to lesson preparation quality, documentary analysis employed a five-indicator RPP quality rubric adapted from the Ministry of Education's curriculum implementation guidelines (*Permendikbud No. 22 Tahun 2016*), encompassing: (1) specificity and measurability of learning objectives (*Indikator Pencapaian Kompetensi/IPK*); (2) alignment between learning activities and core competency standards (*Kompetensi Dasar*); (3) variety and contextual appropriateness of instructional strategies and media; (4) completeness and authenticity of assessment instruments; and (5) coherence of time allocation across lesson phases. Analysis across three successive supervisory cycles at well-supervised schools showed a progressive increase in mean rubric scores: from 61.4 (cycle 1) to 74.8 (cycle 2) and 83.2 (cycle 3) out of 100, indicating substantial improvement in lesson plan comprehensiveness and alignment. In contrast, minimally supervised schools showed marginal change across the same period (58.3 to 62.1). These findings corroborate those of Daniëls et al. (2019), who demonstrated that structured principal supervision positively mediates teacher instructional planning behavior by establishing clear professional norms, and of Montales and Digo (2024), who documented comparable RPP quality trajectories in Philippine elementary schools under systematic principal oversight.

Regarding classroom delivery, teachers in schools with active supervisory engagement used more varied instructional methods, incorporated more formative assessment during lessons, and managed time-on-task more effectively. The feedback mechanism was especially crucial: constructive, specific, and timely feedback from principals after classroom observations was seen by teachers as professionally empowering rather than threatening. This matches the focus on developmental supervision in modern educational leadership literature (Hariyadi et al., 2024; Mwelase & Rapeta, 2025). Concerning student assessment practices, principals who regularly reviewed assessment instruments and gave feedback on alignment reported greater consistency between learning objectives and assessment tasks used by teachers, a finding also supported by Sebastian and Allensworth in their study on instructional leadership and assessment quality.

Challenges and Contextual Factors Affecting Supervisory Effectiveness

Despite some positive contributions, several structural and contextual challenges limited the effectiveness of managerial supervision. First, administrative workload emerged as a major obstacle. Principals reported that bureaucratic and reporting duties—including school committee administration, financial reporting to district education offices, and managing the national data system (Dapodik)—greatly reduced the time available for direct instructional supervision. This finding aligns with Rapids et al. (2025) and Farley-Ripple (2024), who identify administrative overload as a systemic barrier to instructional leadership in developing-country school systems, and with Af (2025), who documented that Indonesian school principals spend less than 12% of their working hours on instructional supervision activities. Second, there was a noticeable lack of professional development opportunities for principals to improve supervisory skills. Several principals acknowledged that their supervisory practices were mostly self-taught, reflecting personal professional dispositions rather than systematically developed competencies. This gap highlights the need for targeted capacity-building programs for principals (Farley-Ripple, 2024; Buana et al., 2025). Similar evidence from Mwelase and Rapeta (2025) in South African rural schools showed that principal supervisory competence is strongly linked to the availability of structured mentoring and in-service training, which are mostly absent in the Gunung Kerinci context. Third, teachers' openness to supervision depended on the relational climate within their schools. In environments where trust and open communication were encouraged, supervisory feedback was received positively. However, in settings with clear hierarchical differences, supervisory visits caused anxiety among teachers, limiting their developmental benefits. These relational dynamics support findings from Roja et al. and Dwi et al. (n.d.), who emphasize that the emotional quality of supervisory relationships significantly influences their impact on teacher professional growth. This study places these dynamics within the specific socio-institutional context of Indonesian elementary schools, where hierarchical organizational cultures (*budaya hierarki*) may intensify these relational factors.

Comparison with Prior Research

The findings of this study broadly align with but also significantly expand upon previous research. While Hallinger and Heck established the empirical basis for the link between instructional leadership and student outcomes, this study provides detailed qualitative evidence of the specific supervisory mechanisms through which principals influence instructional management at the classroom level. Unlike research conducted in high-resource or Western institutional settings, this investigation emphasizes how contextual factors — such as administrative burden, limited principal training, and organizational culture — shape how managerial supervision is implemented in Indonesian rural elementary schools. Additionally, this study complements work by Buana et al. and Hariyadi et al. by showing that even in resource-limited environments, principals who focus on structured supervisory routines and foster supportive relational climates can achieve meaningful improvements in instruction, indicating that institutional practices, rather than material resources alone, determine supervisory success.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the findings of this study contribute to the instructional leadership literature by affirming and contextualizing the managerial supervision construct as a distinct and significant aspect

of principal leadership. The results offer qualitative evidence supporting Hallinger's (2011) distributed instructional leadership model, while expanding it by showing how the frequency, structure, and relational quality of supervisory practices each act as separate mediating factors in the supervision–instruction quality link. The study also adds to the growing research on leadership in low-resource educational settings (Mwelase & Rapeta, 2025; Rapids et al., 2025), emphasizing that adapting supervisory models to the context is crucial for their success. Practically, the findings point to several actionable steps. For district education authorities (Dinas Pendidikan), the study highlights the need to lessen administrative burdens on principals by assigning non-instructional tasks to administrative staff, freeing up time for supervisory roles. For school principal development programs (PPKSPS/CPPK), incorporating structured training modules on developmental supervision techniques—including classroom observation protocols, feedback methods, and RPP quality assessment rubrics—should be a core focus. At the school level, principals are encouraged to formalize supervisory schedules, develop collaborative supervisory relationships with senior teachers, and actively foster relational trust as a foundation for effective feedback.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted in a single district (Gunung Kerinci), which limits how well the findings can be applied to other regions with different administrative structures, resources, and cultural dynamics. Second, the qualitative design, while allowing for in-depth understanding, does not enable statistical generalization of the results to the broader population of Indonesian elementary school principals. Third, the study mainly depends on self-reported data from principals and teachers, which may be influenced by social desirability bias, especially when assessing the perceived effectiveness of supervisory practices.

Future research should explore three areas. First, mixed-methods studies that include quantitative measures of supervisory frequency, RPP quality scores, and student learning outcomes would help strengthen the causal links suggested by this study. Second, longitudinal studies that follow supervisory practices and instructional quality over multiple school years would provide stronger evidence of how managerial supervision affects development over time. Third, comparative research across districts with different levels of principal capacity-building support would help distinguish the effects of professional development from other contextual factors impacting supervisory effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that managerial supervision by principals plays a crucial and measurable role in improving the quality of instructional management in elementary schools in Gunung Kerinci District. Principals who adopt systematic supervisory practices — including oversight of instructional planning, classroom monitoring, and providing evaluative feedback — achieved documented improvements in lesson plan quality. This is demonstrated by a steady increase in mean RPP quality rubric scores from 61.4. 4 (cycle 1) to 74. 8 (cycle 2) and 83. 2 (cycle 3) out of 100 across three supervisory cycles in well-supervised schools, compared to only slight changes (58. 3 to 62.1. 1) in schools with minimal supervision. These results confirm that the structure, depth, and relational quality of supervisory engagement — rather than just its occurrence — are key factors in improving instruction.

Beyond the immediate findings, this study makes a unique theoretical contribution by establishing managerial supervision as an independently useful and important part of principal instructional leadership. It extends existing models — including Hallinger's distributed instructional leadership framework — into the less- studied context of rural Indonesian elementary schools. The study shows that supervisory effectiveness depends not only on material resources but also significantly on institutional routines, supervisory processes, and relational climates within schools. This positions managerial supervision as a flexible, context- sensitive tool for enhancing instructional quality, even in settings with limited resources. Challenges such as administrative overload, limited supervisory training, and hierarchical cultures can limit supervisory impact and need systemic attention. Therefore, this study recommends that district education authorities (Dinas Pendidikan) reorganize principal workloads by delegating non- instructional administrative tasks, incorporate

supervisory development skills into principal training programs (PPKSPS/CPPK), and foster school cultures that encourage professional trust as essential for effective supervisory feedback. Future research should use mixed- methods and longitudinal studies to produce stronger causal evidence of supervisory effectiveness across different regional contexts.

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