

# PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION DURING THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW NORMAL

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplor tantangan yang dihadapi oleh kepala sekolah dalam mengimplementasikan supervisi instruksional pada masa transisi sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada sekolah menengah pertama di Yogyakarta. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pada masa transisi sekolah ke new normal, kepala sekolah tetap melakukan supervisi. Proses supervisi dilakukan dengan kombinasi metode daring dan tatap muka. Kepala sekolah menemukan tantangan pada setiap tahap supervisi. Pada perencanaan, kepala sekolah memiliki keterbatasan sumber daya yang memiliki kompetensi untuk menjadi supervisor. Pada tahap pelaksanaan, tantangan yang teknis berupa buruknya koneksi internet sekolah membuat proses pembelajaran dan supervisi tidak optimal. Sedangkan pada tahap tindak lanjut, program yang disusun sekolah untuk pengembangan kompetensi guru berjalan kurang optimal ketika dilaksanakan secara daring.

**Keywords:** *supervisi instruksional, kepala sekolah, masa transisi*

## Abstract

*This study explores the challenges that the school principal faced in implementing instructional supervision during the transition period from pandemic era to new normal era. This study uses a qualitative method. This research was conducted at a junior high school in Yogyakarta. The results of this study indicate that during the school transition to the new normal, the principal continues to conduct instructional supervision. The supervision process is carried out using online and face-to-face methods. Principal found various challenges at each stage of supervision. In planning, principal found that there was lack of human resources that are qualified and competent to be a member of instructional supervision team. At the implementation stage, technical problems in the form of poor internet connections available at school made the learning and supervision process became less optimal. Meanwhile, at the follow-up stage, some of programs prepared by the school for teacher competency development were not optimal when that were carried out online.*

**Keywords:** *instructional supervision, principal, new normal*

## INTRODUCTION

The practice of online learning in Indonesia and other countries has been going on for more than a year. Various dynamics of online learning such as obstacles faced by teachers (Fernando et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020), students (Barrot et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021), schools (Kavrayıcı & Kesim, 2021; Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021) or parents (Gelir & Duzen, 2021; Ribeiro et al., 2021) have been studied from various

perspectives. There are various learning systems and management changes in formal and non-formal education.

Issues and policies related to school re-opening finally emerged after many scientific studies. Re-opening schools requires many considerations, such as social aspects, regulations, school infrastructure, and others, to reduce risks in the future (Levinson et al., 2020). Thus, the school needs to rearrange the regulations and technical implementation related to the face-to-face process. Schools

and government policies must also accommodate those supporting the school re-opening implementation. Viner et al. (2021) stated that school re-opening should be a priority through several stages by introducing new regulations to avoid danger and optimize the educational function of schools.

Schools must also prepare for changes and shifts in the learning process in schools, especially from online learning to limited face-to-face learning. These changes include various aspects such as student attendance, learning schedule (number of hours and days of study), classroom layout, learning media used, and learning methods implemented. (World Health Organization, 2020) revealed that there are 12 actions that schools must prepare for school re-opening. This aspect starts from feasibility assessment, personnel and attendance policies, physical distancing rules, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, use of masks, adequate ventilation, school layout, communication materials, health supplies, daily checks, health education, and pedagogical sessions, and engagement with students, parents, and staff.

In the context of Indonesia, this process is carried out through two phases: the transition phase and the new normal phase. In the transition period, 'limited face-to-face learning' in the first month is attended by 50% of the total number of students. 100% of students then follow it in the next month. Furthermore, the new habit period phase begins when health and personal safety behaviors against the transmission of COVID-19 have been formed in school members. In the new normal phase, 100% of students can participate in learning.

Responding to this, school principals have a crucial role in the transition period. Referring to government regulations, school principals are responsible for several things. Such as school readiness in carrying out limited face-to-face learning, formation of a task force for handling

COVID-19 in schools, preparing activity plans and school budgets, and prevention and handling of COVID-19 cases at school. This was previously explained by Pollock (2020), who states that the school leader has two roles. The first role is to keep schools safe and to prepare schools for the future. Principals are crucial for improving organizational conditions that support high-quality teaching and other equity-related outcomes (DeMatthews et al., 2021).

Specifically, the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia issued a regulation in 2021 explaining school principals' main duties. One of the main tasks is to supervise teachers and staff in schools. Furthermore, the regulation states that implementing the principal's duties aims to: develop learner-centered learning; create a safe, comfortable, and inclusive learning environment; and improve the quality of the process and student learning outcomes. Supervision carried out by the principal directly, regularly, and continuously is needed to improve teacher competence and academic achievement of students (Ngole & Mkulu, 2021) as well as to deal with changes that occur in learning (Mohammed et al., 2015).

The process of supervision in online learning does not always run well. The supervision process tends to be done through various online tools. The lack of a standardized application or tools by the government makes it difficult for school principals to supervise. Teachers not skilled at operating information technology devices are also significant in the less than optimal learning process (Fendi et al., 2021; Prestiadi et al., 2022). Also, school principals need to adjust the standard of supervision instruments during a pandemic due to differences in learning contexts (Dewi & Dwikurnaningsih, 2022).

During the re-opening school transition period, the dynamics and shifting of supervision methods need to be

redesigned. It is because the implementation of learning has changed drastically. The principal also needs to change the strategy and practice of instructional supervision in schools. This aims to optimize supervision so that supervision results can be followed up to improve the quality of schools after re-opening.

Several studies on principal supervision have focused on the implementation of supervision during a pandemic (Brock et al., 2021; Jaenem & Zulkifli, 2022). Other studies also analyze the level of effectiveness of supervision and the factors that influence the implementation of supervision (Rusdiana et al., 2020). However, supervising the re-opening school transition will have a different method. This study aims to uncover the challenges principals face in implementing instructional supervision in their schools during the transition to the new normal.

## METHODS

The method used in this research is qualitative to understand the meaning of a phenomenon about what is experienced by the research subject holistically. This method is based on the consideration that the information and symptoms studied in this study will be more appropriate when presented as a descriptive narrative to support the integrity and depth of the discussion.

This research was conducted in a public junior high school in Yogyakarta. This study's target informants were the personnel involved in the instructional supervision process. The characteristics are the principal as a supervisor, vice-principal, and teachers.

Data collection techniques consist of observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies. Observation focuses on the implementation of supervision, learning activities, school situations and conditions, and the availability of supporting facilities and infrastructure.

The interview was conducted with the following aspects of the question.

Table 1. Interview guidelines

| No | Indicator                  | Question(s) |
|----|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1  | General description        | 5           |
| 2  | Supervision planning       | 11          |
| 3  | Supervision implementation | 6           |
| 4  | Supervision evaluation     | 5           |

Meanwhile, documentation is carried out to observe, identify, and as supporting data. The supervisory activity files observed were annual and semester programs, syllabus, academic calendars, class schedules, daily agendas, grade lists, attendance lists, teacher manuals, and others.

In the data analysis stage, the data in this study were analyzed using interactive data analysis techniques developed by Miles et al. (2014), which consisted of data collection, data presentation, data condensation, and drawing conclusions or verification. In addition, to ensure the validity of the data, this research also carried out two kinds of triangulation: technical and source.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Instructional supervision specifically aims to improve the quality of learning carried out by teachers. So that, in the end, it can enhance the quality of schools and education. Based on the research results by Alemayehu (2022), teachers benefit from instructional supervision for continuing professional growth. Maisyarah et al. (2021) found that instructional supervision has a dominant effect on variations in learning models and teacher learning materials in schools.

The supervision process analyzed in this study is divided into planning, implementation, and evaluation.

### Planning

The instructional supervision program for teachers begins with the formation of a

supervisory team by the principal. The team consists of the principal, the vice-principal for the curriculum affairs, and three teachers who already have supervision certificates. This criterion refers to the regulation of the Ministry of Education, which stipulates that supervisor must have an audit certificate for supervisors. If the supervision certificate has expired, it must be re-assessed (Haris et al., 2018). The challenge for principals in planning for academic supervision is that few teachers have a supervision certificate, so the supervision process of each supervisor teacher must carry out supervision for 6-7 teachers. The essence of the existence of a supervisory team is to work together to influence and complement each other to achieve a common goal (Sumarsih, 2019).

The supervisor team compiles a supervision schedule and supervision instruments. The preparation of the supervision schedule is carried out by involving all teachers. With the supervision schedule, the teacher can prepare for the supervision process (Setyaningsih & Suchyadi, 2021). After the supervisor team has compiled the supervised program, the principal, as the main person in charge, invites all teachers and the supervisor team to participate in the socialization of the supervision program. The aim is to increase understanding between all relevant parties regarding the supervision program that will be implemented.

The supervision instrument to be used is adjusted to suit the learning context to be supervised, for example, related to learning methods (online or offline) and the duration of the learning hours. This is due to the many changes during the transition to the new normal. In addition, although the supervisory team has guidelines for supervision instruments issued by the government, the team still has to make edits and adjustments to suit school learning conditions.

At this planning stage, the principal acts as the main person in charge but involves various parties, such as senior teachers, to assist in implementing academic supervision at the school. The principal becomes integral to creating a strong school and improving teaching quality (E. B. Goldring et al., 2018). This method is also part of optimizing the performance of the principal (E. Goldring et al., 2020).

### Implementation

Supervision is carried out in three stages: pre-observation, observation, and post-observation. The implementation of supervision in online learning focuses on online supervision techniques. The goal is to control the quality of learning during a pandemic (Permatasari et al., 2022).

Pre-observation is conducted through interviews by the supervisor with the teacher who will be supervised. This activity discusses the preparations the teacher will make for implementing learning.

The second stage is observing the learning process. This activity is carried out in various ways, such as class visits, class observations, and teacher group discussions. Class visits and class observations are conducted both online and offline. The technique will depend on the teacher's teaching and learning process implementation. Jeremiah & Matete (2022) explained that school-based supervision could be carried out through classroom visits and lesson observation.

Post-observation is carried out after the observation process. Teachers are allowed to get the results of the assessment as well as supervisor notes. Supervisors also provide motivation, input, and suggestions to overcome teacher shortages.

Permatasari et al. (2022) stated that implementing supervision in online learning focuses on online techniques. The goal is to control the quality of learning during a pandemic. The obstacle faced in implementing supervision during the

school transition period is a technical problem, namely internet correction. The lack of internet network capacity in schools impacts teacher performance for teachers who teach online.

#### Follow-up

Follow-up is an activity that aims to respond to the results of supervision. The form of follow-up on the findings of this study is individual coaching by the principal. This strategy is implemented in informal settings, such as discussions with teachers on technical matters that need to be improved. The challenge found at this stage is the condition of implementing work from home. So, the schedule of teachers and supervisors does not fit. Though ideally, follow-up is given directly to the teacher's face to face. This constraint causes the feedback provided cannot be immediate/delayed. Thus, the teacher cannot understand the essence of the feedback given. Zaheer & Munir (2020) explained that supervisors face several challenges in distance learning in Asia. These challenges include time constraints, official restrictions, irregular contacts, and technology.

The second strategy is mentoring teachers in groups. This strategy is carried out if there are similarities in the problems/issues the teacher faces in the learning process. During the pandemic, the school has held training and workshops to increase the use of information technology in learning. However, training and workshops are conducted online due to restrictions on activities at school. Thus, teachers are not optimal to attend training and workshops. Research results by Abu-Tineh & Sadiq mention that online training programs are a form of teacher professional development that is less effective than other methods. Another activity that has not been implemented is benchmarking to other schools (Abu-Tineh & Sadiq, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Instructional supervision is essential for school principals to maintain the quality of the learning process in schools, especially during a pandemic. In the learning transition process and re-opening of school, the learning process is carried out in two modes: online and face-to-face. This encourages principals to have strategies for conducting instructional supervision.

However, in its implementation, the principal has problems with instructional supervision during the transition period at school. In the planning process, limited human resources qualified to become supervisors cause the supervision process not to run optimally. In the implementation process, the supervision of the challenges faced in the form of technical obstacles. Because of the internet connection, the supervision process cannot be carried out optimally for teachers who carry out online learning. Meanwhile, at the follow-up stage, the obstacle faced was the delayed input given. This constraint arises when the schedule of teachers and supervisors is not the same at school. In addition, the competency development process for teachers does not run well because it is carried out online.

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