

REFLECTION-BASED ACADEMIC SUPERVISION: THE PRICIPAL'S EFFORT TO IMPTOVE LEARNING QUALITY AT SDN 02 SIDOREJO

Anita Ema Ridiyawati^{1a*}, Senowarsito^{2b}, Maryanto^{3c}

¹²³Manajemen Pendidikan, Pascasarjana, Universitas Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia, Semarang

^aanitaema83@gmail.com

^bsenowarsito@upgris.ac.id

^cmaryanto@upgris.ac.id

(*) Corresponding Author

anitaema83@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe how reflective-based academic supervision is implemented by the principal as an effort to improve learning quality at SDN 02 Sidorejo. In the context of increasing demands for improved educational quality and the critical role of school leadership in fostering teacher development, this research is important as it explores how reflective supervision practices can enhance both teaching quality and student learning outcomes. Using a qualitative descriptive case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The findings reveal that academic supervision is carried out through a reflective cycle consisting of planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. In the planning stage, teachers are involved in identifying instructional problems and determining improvement priorities. During implementation, supervision is conducted using clinical steps: pre-observation discussions, classroom observation, and reflective conferencing. The follow-up phase includes mentoring, lesson study, peer coaching, and reflective journals. The results show improvements in teacher pedagogical competence, including lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional media use. Student learning outcomes also increase, demonstrating positive instructional impact. Reflective academic supervision positions the principal as a coach and collaborator, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Improving the quality of learning is one of the primary objectives of educational institutions, especially at the elementary school level. Learning quality is not only reflected in students' academic outcomes, but also in the extent to which learning processes are meaningful, interactive, and aligned with students' developmental needs. As stated by Uno (2021), effective and high-quality learning encourages student engagement, critical thinking, and

creativity through an enjoyable learning environment. Therefore, achieving high-quality learning requires teachers to continuously improve their instructional practices through professional reflection and ongoing development.

To ensure that learning practices align with instructional standards and student needs, the school principal plays a strategic role as an academic supervisor. The essence of academic supervision lies not in inspection, but in coaching and guiding teachers through systematic and reflective processes (Risnawati, 2021). Supervisory practices enable teachers to analyze their instructional strengths and weaknesses, while principals facilitate improvement through collaborative mentoring. According to Cintya et al. (2015), reflective supervision supports teachers in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning by integrating reflection as a self-improvement cycle. This aligns with Mulyani and Fahrurrozi (2021), who assert that reflective, participatory supervision fosters intrinsic teacher motivation to innovate.

At SDN 02 Sidorejo, Comal District, Pemalang Regency, academic supervision is implemented through classroom observations, feedback, and structured reflective discussions between the principal and teachers. The principal also integrates supervision into the school's academic calendar and establishes a support team to carry out ongoing supervision. However, based on the school's Education Report (2023–2025), teaching quality has not shown optimal outcomes. Literacy decreased from 96.67% to 83.00%, numeracy from 100% to 70%, and overall learning quality dropped from 87.17% to 69%. These data indicate that although supervision has been performed, the approach did not yet fully lead teachers toward reflective improvement that affects student outcomes.

The decline in learning outcomes can be attributed to several factors, including limited teacher engagement in reflective practices, insufficient follow-up after supervision activities, and a lack of consistency in applying reflective feedback during classroom instruction. This highlights the need for a more systematic and continuous approach to reflective academic supervision that focuses on addressing specific instructional challenges.

Conversely, a significant increase occurred in the utilization of school resources, improving from 24.42% to 86%, which shows effective managerial and resource allocation skills by the principal. Yet the decline in program implementation consistency from 84.89% to 35.62% reveals that supervision has not been consistently directed toward continuous reflective instructional improvement. This situation demonstrates a gap between managerial success and pedagogical impact.

This gap emphasizes the urgency of implementing reflective supervision, as it not only addresses instructional practices but also ensures that improvements are sustained and have a direct impact on student outcomes. Reflective academic supervision, if implemented effectively, can bridge the gap by encouraging teachers to take ownership of their professional development and make continuous improvements to their teaching **strategies**.

Reflective academic supervision becomes essential to bridge this gap. Through reflection-based supervision, principals do not merely observe teaching but guide teachers to reflect on learning problems and formulate improvement actions. This approach aligns with Pertiwi and Suherman (2022), who state that supervision based on teachers' needs strengthens motivation, commitment, and willingness to change. Likewise, Mediatati and Jati (2022) confirm that systematic supervision significantly contributes to improved instructional quality and student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, as emphasized by Kompri (2017), effective supervision includes planning, implementation, and follow-up, all of which must foster reflection and continuous improvement. Mukni'ah (2024) adds that in the digital era, supervision needs to be data-driven and technologically adaptive, enabling principals to support teachers based on evidence and learning analytics.

Based on this rationale, reflective academic supervision is a powerful strategy for improving learning quality. It positions the principal not as an inspector, but as a mentor, facilitator, and partner for professional growth. Therefore, this study aims to describe and analyze Reflective Academic Supervision implemented by the principal of SDN 02 Sidorejo as an effort to improve learning quality. The study focuses on the planning, implementation, reflection-based mentoring, and follow-up supervision activities, as well as identifying the supporting and inhibiting factors.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the implementation of reflective-based academic supervision conducted by the principal at SDN 02 Sidorejo. A qualitative

approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to examine participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflective practices naturally within the school context. Creswell and Poth (2018) state that qualitative research enables the exploration of meanings constructed by individuals or groups within a particular social setting. This approach aligns with the objective of the study, which focuses on understanding how reflective-based supervision is planned, implemented, and evaluated by the principal.

The case study design was applied to investigate the phenomenon holistically in a real-life context. Yin (2018) explains that the case study strategy is appropriate when the research seeks to explore complex processes and when the boundary between the phenomenon and its context is not clearly defined. Similarly, Moleong (2021) asserts that case studies provide rich and in-depth descriptions of a particular social unit. In this research, the case unit refers to the reflective-based academic supervision practices carried out by the principal in improving learning quality. The research was conducted at SDN 02 Sidorejo, Comal District, Pemalang Regency, Central Java, over six months (July–December 2025). The school was chosen purposively because the principal consistently implements reflective practices in academic supervision, including post-observation reflection sessions with teachers. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement and knowledge of reflective-based supervision. The key informants consisted of the principal, classroom teachers, and the school supervisor. Informants were selected not based on quantity but on their capacity to provide rich and relevant information (Moleong, 2021). Data sources included primary data (interviews and observations) and secondary data (supervision documents, school planning documents, and evaluation reports). Gunawan (2017) emphasizes that multiple data sources are needed to ensure data credibility through triangulation.

In this research, the researcher served as the primary instrument (human instrument), responsible for collecting, interpreting, and validating the data. Supporting research instruments included semi-structured interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation checklists. Creswell and Poth (2018) describe researchers in qualitative studies as participant observers who interact directly with the research setting. Observation focused on three supervisory activities: classroom observation, feedback delivery, and reflective conferencing between the principal and teachers. Documentation involved collecting supervision reports, reflection notes, lesson plans, and school program documents (Sugiyono, 2019).

The indicators for each instrument are as follows: (1) Classroom Observation: The observation sheet included indicators: classroom management, teacher-student interaction, use of teaching aids, student engagement, and implementation of instructional strategies. (2) Interview Guide: The interview guide for the principal, teachers, and school supervisor included questions related to their perceptions of academic supervision, the challenges they face, and their experiences with reflective practices. Indicators in the interview include themes like the effectiveness of feedback, the role of reflection in teaching improvement, and the impact of supervision on student learning outcomes. (3) Documentation Checklists: The checklist for analyzing documents included reviewing supervision reports, reflection logs, and lesson plans for evidence of reflective practices, improvements in teaching strategies, and alignment with school goals.

Data were collected using three complementary techniques: (1) In-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, and the school supervisor to explore reflective-based supervision practices. (2) Participatory observation during supervision activities including pre-observation meetings, classroom observation, and reflective follow-up discussions (Sutrisno, 2019). (3) Documentation analysis of supervision reports, reflection logs, and school academic planning records (Santosa, 2020).

The collected data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2020) interactive data analysis model: (1) data reduction by selecting and categorizing findings related to reflective supervision, (2) data display in narrative and tabular forms to illustrate supervision stages, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification based on data consistency. This analytical process was conducted continuously from data collection to interpretation.

To ensure data credibility, source triangulation and technique triangulation were conducted by comparing interview results, observation findings, and documentation (Gunawan, 2017). Member checking was also conducted by presenting preliminary findings to informants to confirm accuracy and reduce potential bias. Research findings were presented using thematic narratives supported by summary tables to highlight the stages of reflective-based academic supervision and its contribution to improving learning quality. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2019),

qualitative findings should be presented descriptively, emphasize contextual meaning, and explain the relationships among social processes within the research setting.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study aimed to describe how reflective-based academic supervision was implemented by the principal to improve learning quality at SDN 02 Sidorejo. Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, the findings show that academic supervision at SDN 02 Sidorejo is not merely evaluative but emphasizes reflection as a means of professional growth. The supervision process encourages teachers to analyze challenges in their teaching practices and collaboratively design improvement actions with the principal. The findings are presented under four themes: (1) reflective-based supervision planning, (2) supervision implementation focusing on reflection, (3) evaluation and follow-up through reflective conferences, and (4) the impact of reflective supervision on learning quality.

Reflective-Based Supervision Planning

Reflective supervision planning is carried out at the beginning of the academic year through a coordination meeting involving the principal and all teachers. The principal develops an Academic Supervision Program (PSA) that includes objectives, schedules, assessment indicators, and instruments. Unlike conventional supervision focused on compliance, the PSA document at SDN 02 Sidorejo explicitly includes a reflection component as part of every supervision cycle.

Three priority areas of reflective supervision planning are: (1) strengthening teachers' pedagogical practices through reflective lesson planning, (2) optimizing instructional media and technology based on teachers' reflection logs, and (3) improving formative assessment and reflective evaluation of student learning. Teachers are grouped into coaching categories based on prior supervision results to determine the level of reflective mentoring needed. Teachers with lower performance scores receive intensive reflective mentoring. The principal incorporates the supervision plan into the academic calendar, scheduling three cycles each semester: initial supervision, mentoring sessions, and reflective follow-up.

Table 1. Reflective-Based Supervision Plan at SDN 02 Sidorejo

Activity	Time	Target	Purpose
PSA Coordination Meeting	July	All teachers	Formulating supervision plan and reflective schedule
Supervision Cycle I	Aug–Sept	Grades I–III	Observation & reflection on lesson execution
Supervision Cycle II	Oct–Nov	Grades IV–VI	Coaching and refinement of strategies based on reflection results
Reflective Follow-up	December	All teachers	Sharing session and reflection report

Implementation of Reflective-Based Supervision

Reflective supervision is implemented through three main stages: pre-observation, observation, and reflective conference (post-observation). (1) Pre-observation (Reflective Goal Setting). The principal conducts a pre-supervision dialogue to discuss lesson objectives and challenges teachers anticipate. Teachers are asked to prepare lesson plans and reflect on their prior teaching performance. The meeting shifts supervision from "checking compliance" to "identifying problems to be solved." (2) Observation (Data Gathering for Reflection). The principal observes classroom teaching using an instrument consisting of indicators such as: student engagement, instructional media use, formative assessment, and classroom interaction. Observation results show: 75% of teachers implemented active learning strategies, 83% used visual or digital learning media, the average observation score increased to 86 (good category). During observation, the focus is not on errors but on gathering evidence to support reflective discussion

afterward. (3) Post-Observation (Reflective Conference). The reflective conference is the hallmark of the supervision model at SDN 02 Sidorejo. Teachers analyze strengths and weaknesses, and together with the principal, formulate improvement plans. Teachers receive reflection feedback sheets documenting commitments for the next instructional cycle. Monthly reflective discussions are held informally in the staff room, creating a psychologically safe space for sharing.

Evaluation and Follow-Up

Reflective evaluation is conducted every semester. Data from observation sheets, teacher reflection journals, and supervision reports show continuous improvement in teachers' instructional performance: (1) completeness of lesson documents increased from 76% to 94%, (2) digital media skills improved from 62% to 89%, (3) formative assessment competence improved from 70% to 88%.

Follow-up activities emphasize teacher reflection and peer collaboration, including: (1) internal lesson study sessions, (2) reflective peer coaching, (3) digital learning workshops, and (4) reflection journals submitted after each supervision cycle. Thus, reflective supervision becomes a continuous professional development model, not a one-time assessment activity.

Impact of Reflective Supervision on Learning Quality

Reflective academic supervision resulted in improved teacher competence and student learning outcomes. Teachers demonstrated: (1) increased skills in preparing lesson plans (from 78% to 96%), (2) improved classroom management (from 74% to 91%), (3) increased use of innovative learning media (from 65% to 88%), (4) improved readiness and teaching discipline (from 80% to 95%). Students also benefited from reflective improvements in teaching. Learning outcomes increased across subjects:

Table 2. Increase in Average Student Learning Outcomes

Subject	Before Supervision	After Supervision	Increase
Indonesian	77.4	83.6	+6.2
Mathematics	74.8	81.5	+6.7
Science	75.2	83.7	+8.5
Social Science	76.1	82.0	+5.9

Qualitative Data Insights From the interviews, a teacher (T1) shared: *"The reflective discussions with the principal helped me realize that my teaching was not engaging enough. We discussed practical strategies, and now I can see more student participation."* This quote exemplifies how reflective supervision positively influenced teaching practices. Another teacher (T3) mentioned: *"I never thought to reflect on my assessment methods before, but now I see that it directly affects student learning."* These personal insights align with the overall positive impact of the reflective supervision process, as seen in the statistical improvements.

The school climate became more collaborative and open. Teachers no longer perceived supervision as an evaluation tool but as a mirror for professional growth. The internal Teacher Working Group (KKG) became more active, with a 95% teacher attendance rate.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that academic supervision at SDN 02 Sidorejo is not merely a monitoring activity but emphasizes reflective practices at every stage: planning, classroom observation, feedback, evaluation, and follow-up. The principal encourages teachers to critically examine their teaching actions, identify challenges, and collaboratively design improvement strategies. This supervision approach transforms teachers from passive recipients of evaluation into reflective practitioners committed to continuous improvement.

Supervision planning at SDN 02 Sidorejo integrates reflection from the beginning of the academic year. Teachers participate in planning meetings, review the previous year's evaluation results, and identify areas that require

improvement. The supervision schedule and indicators are designed collaboratively, allowing teachers to understand the objectives and develop reflective goals. This aligns with Fahrezi, Siahaan, and Nahar (2024), who stated that teacher participation in supervision planning fosters ownership and strengthens pedagogical improvement. The reflective nature of planning also resonates with Mustafa and Widodo (2021), who emphasized that collaborative supervision planning increases teacher accountability and willingness to implement agreed strategies. Rahman et al. (2022) further noted that supervision based on teachers' self-assessment or reflection improves instructional planning. International research echoes these findings. Smith and Harris (2019) demonstrated that partnership-based supervision planning strengthens professional relationships and teacher motivation. Lee and Choi (2020) argued that involving teachers in planning enhances affective commitment and lowers resistance to feedback. Thus, reflective supervision planning at SDN 02 Sidorejo serves as an initial step toward cultivating a supportive learning culture.

The reflective planning stage fosters interpersonal dynamics that go beyond just procedural collaboration. Through mutual discussions, teachers and the principal create a space for sharing ideas, challenges, and professional aspirations, which strengthens the professional relationship. This interaction also allows teachers to feel more empowered to make decisions about their professional growth. Teachers report feeling a greater sense of agency in shaping their instructional methods, which fosters a deeper level of commitment to the process. One teacher (T1) shared: *"In the planning meetings, I feel like my voice matters, and I'm not just following orders. It's a two-way discussion, which makes me more open to feedback."*

Classroom observation is conducted not to judge but to collect evidence for reflection. The principal observes instructional practices using structured indicators and engages teachers in reflective conferences post-observation. Teachers are encouraged to analyze what worked, what did not, and why, turning supervision into a reflective dialogue. This practice aligns with Nguyen and Hunter (2021), who found that supervision that incorporates reflective dialogue positively affects the development of professional learning culture. Rahimi and Hosseini (2020) emphasized that teachers are more receptive to feedback when delivered in a collaborative—not evaluative atmosphere. Similarly, Hallinger, Wang, and Chen (2020) stated that observation followed by constructive feedback strengthens teachers' instructional readiness. Studies also confirm that reflective feedback improves instructional quality. Beringuel et al. (2025) found that structured observation combined with reflection improves student learning outcomes, while Fitri, Nurzen, and Munawir (2025) demonstrated that consistent monitoring and coaching enhance teacher competence even in resource-limited schools. Al-Mahdi and Al-Wadi (2019) further noted that feedback supported by evidence helps teachers modify their teaching strategies more effectively. Thus, at SDN 02 Sidorejo, reflective feedback becomes the heart of supervision, fostering continuous self-evaluation and growth.

The reflective conference becomes a pivotal moment for interpersonal dynamics where feedback is not just delivered but jointly analyzed. Teachers do not simply receive feedback—they actively engage in the process, discussing their teaching strategies and identifying areas of improvement together with the principal. This two-way interaction creates a safe space for teachers to express their challenges and seek guidance in a non-judgmental manner. One teacher (T2) commented: *"The reflective sessions are more like a partnership. I feel safe to admit when something didn't go well and get support on how to improve it."*

Reflective supervision at SDN 02 Sidorejo continues beyond observation. Evaluation is conducted twice a year, followed by mentoring, lesson study, and peer coaching. Teachers maintain reflection journals and share them during reflective discussions. This ensures that improvements are measurable and sustained. These findings reinforce the study of Fahrezi, Siahaan, and Nahar (2024), who emphasized that systematic supervision follow-up enhances mastery of teaching methods and creativity in managing instruction. Supriyadi, Baharuddin, and Sufiah (2024) found that lesson study within the supervision cycle strengthens lesson planning quality and instructional accuracy. Avalos (2019) also highlighted that reflective professional learning communities accelerate instructional transformation. From an instructional coaching perspective, Lawrence and Chong (2020) argued that post-observation coaching ensures meaningful instructional changes. Bush and Glover (2023) further demonstrated that peer mentoring builds professional solidarity and reduces teacher resistance to supervision. Therefore, reflective follow-up at SDN 02 Sidorejo shows that supervision is not an evaluative endpoint but an ongoing professional growth cycle.

The follow-up stage emphasizes deepening interpersonal relationships through collaborative professional development. Peer mentoring, lesson study, and reflective journals allow teachers to learn from one another, sharing

best practices and offering support. These activities also encourage teachers to view supervision as an ongoing process rather than a one-off event. By continuously engaging with their peers and principal in these reflective processes, teachers maintain an open mindset toward professional growth.

Data in this study show a notable increase in teacher competence, including lesson planning quality, classroom management, instructional media use, and readiness to teach. Student learning outcomes and engagement also improved significantly. These improvements highlight the connection between reflective supervision and instructional effectiveness. Karaca and Ocak (2019) stated that reflective supervision enhances teachers' ability to design differentiated instruction that meets student needs. Abdullah and Kassim (2021) reported that supervision intensity increases teachers' use of instructional technology. On the student side, Yin et al. (2018) found that effective supervision improves students' motivation and engagement, while Sammons et al. (2021) showed that reflective teaching practices contribute to better academic performance. In the context of classroom interaction, Tsai and Ku (2022) concluded that coaching-based supervision enables teachers to create inclusive and student-centered learning environments. Thus, reflective academic supervision becomes a strategic driver for improving instructional and learning outcomes at SDN 02 Sidorejo.

These improvements in student outcomes are a direct result of the deepening reflective practices and interpersonal dynamics fostered through the ongoing process of supervision. Teachers' willingness to engage in open discussions about their challenges, combined with consistent follow-up and peer support, creates a cycle of continuous improvement that ultimately benefits student learning.

Despite the success, some challenges remain. Certain teachers continue to rely on lecture methods, and reflections are not always implemented consistently. Some teachers perceive supervision as administrative compliance rather than a learning process. This aligns with Alam, Haque, and Banu (2021), who reported that supervision is often hindered by time constraints and workload. Teachers may also feel defensive when supervision is perceived as evaluative (Orgoványi-Gajdos, 2016). Therefore, supervision at SDN 02 Sidorejo needs to continue shifting toward a coaching model. Knight (2019) explained that instructional coaching reduces teacher anxiety and strengthens collaborative learning. Increasing peer mentoring will also help sustain reflective practice among teachers.

Addressing these challenges will require ongoing efforts to cultivate a coaching culture that continues to prioritize interpersonal communication and reflective dialogue. By reinforcing these elements, the school can further deepen its commitment to reflective supervision, ensuring that all teachers fully embrace it as a tool for professional growth rather than an administrative requirement.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study conclude that reflective-based academic supervision implemented by the principal of SDN 02 Sidorejo plays a significant role in improving learning quality. Supervision is carried out through a reflective cycle, starting from planning, implementation, evaluation, to follow-up. In the planning stage, the principal engages teachers in reflective discussions to analyze previous supervision results and determine improvement priorities. The implementation stage emphasizes reflective clinical supervision, consisting of pre-observation, classroom observation using clear indicators, and post-observation reflective dialogue where teachers are guided to analyze their instructional strengths and weaknesses. This study confirms that reflective-based supervision does not place teachers merely as objects of evaluation, but as active and reflective partners in the improvement process. Through structured reflection, teachers develop greater awareness of their instructional practices, leading to improvements in lesson planning, classroom management, and the use of instructional media. The evaluation and follow-up stages are carried out through continuous mentoring, lesson study, peer coaching, and professional development activities, ensuring that supervision results lead to sustainable improvements.

The reflective supervision approach applied in this study has had a tangible impact: it strengthens teachers' pedagogical competence, stimulates instructional innovation, and increases teacher motivation. More importantly, it cultivates a reflective culture among teachers, encouraging collaborative problem solving and continuous improvement in learning quality. Positive impacts are also observed on student learning outcomes, especially in terms of engagement, participation, and activity during learning. The novelty of this study lies in developing a reflective-based academic supervision model that combines teacher self-reflection, peer collaboration, and coaching-based

feedback. This adaptive model accommodates individual teacher needs and encourages continuous learning, making supervision more meaningful and transformative compared to traditional administrative supervision.

However, this study has several limitations. First, it was conducted in one primary school, limiting generalizability to wider contexts. Second, qualitative data rely on teacher reflections, which may contain subjective interpretations. Third, the duration of the study was limited to one semester, making it difficult to observe long-term changes in teaching culture. Based on these limitations, future studies are recommended to: (1) apply mixed-method or experimental approaches to measure the quantitative impact of reflective supervision on student outcomes; (2) involve schools with different characteristics to support broader generalization; (3) explore digital-based or e-supervision platforms to facilitate reflective dialogue and documentation; and (4) conduct longitudinal research to examine the sustainability of reflective culture in transforming teaching practices

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