

MANAGING TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the management of teachers' pedagogical competence across three junior high schools in Ambon City using a qualitative multisite case study. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed interactively with triangulation. Findings reveal distinct management patterns: school-based planning (SMPN 9), professional learning communities (SMPN 12), and reflective academic supervision (SMPN 13). Implementation integrated curriculum training, collaborative workshops, and technology adoption, evaluated through supervisory mechanisms. The specific contribution of this research is the formulation of a contextualized, tripartite framework synthesizing managerial, collaborative, and reflective approaches to optimize teacher development in decentralized settings. Ultimately, sustainable pedagogical enhancement necessitates integrated planning, school-based synergy, and evidence-based evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

Pedagogical competence is a core competence that enables teachers to understand learners, design meaningful learning, conduct interactive instruction, and evaluate learning outcomes systematically. In Indonesian education, pedagogical competence is closely related to the professional duties of teachers as stated in the teacher and lecturer regulatory framework. In contemporary schooling, pedagogical competence is no longer limited to mastery of teaching techniques. It also includes the ability to design student-centered learning, apply differentiated instruction, use educational technology, adapt instruction to learner characteristics, and create classroom environments that encourage active participation.

The need to develop teachers' pedagogical competence has become increasingly urgent in the context of curriculum reform and digital transformation. The Merdeka Curriculum requires teachers to implement differentiated learning, project-based learning, formative assessment, and flexible learning strategies. These demands cannot be fulfilled only through individual teacher initiative. They require systematic school management that can plan development programs, organize professional learning activities, provide academic supervision, and evaluate the impact of teacher development on classroom practice.

Teacher professional development literature emphasizes that effective professional learning must be continuous, collaborative, context-based, and connected to classroom practice. Guskey (2002) explains that professional development should generate change in teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and classroom practices. Avalos (2011) similarly argues that teacher development is shaped by learning opportunities that are relevant to teachers' work. Desimone and Garet (2015) further underline that effective professional development should focus on content, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. These ideas indicate that school-level management plays a strategic role in transforming training activities into sustainable professional learning.

School leadership also has an important role in developing teachers' pedagogical competence. Instructional leadership encourages principals to focus on learning improvement, teacher support, curriculum implementation, and supervision. Hallinger (2011), Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008), and Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) show that leadership has a significant relationship with teacher learning and student outcomes. In this context, principals are not only administrative managers but also learning leaders who build professional culture, encourage teacher collaboration, and use evaluation data to guide improvement.

Despite extensive literature on instructional leadership and professional learning communities, a critical gap remains in understanding the integrative management mechanisms that bridge macro-level curriculum reforms with micro-level classroom practices. Previous studies predominantly examine these elements in isolation or rely on single-site contexts, overlooking how school management dynamically adapts to policy demands across varying institutional ecologies. Furthermore, empirical evidence on pedagogical competence management in decentralized, non-Javanese contexts like Eastern Indonesia remains critically scarce, limiting the generalizability of existing educational management theories and highlighting the need for context-specific empirical validation.

The selection of SMP Negeri 9, 12, and 13 Ambon is scientifically strategic, employing a "maximum variation" multisite design within a controlled macro-environment. Operating under the same district education office and national curriculum mandates, these schools exhibit distinct micro-ecologies—varying significantly in teacher demographics, resource availability, and organizational size. This controlled variation allows for the isolation of school-specific management variables, enabling a rigorous comparative analysis of how divergent institutional contexts shape the translation of educational policy into sustainable pedagogical practices.

Preliminary observations in the three schools showed that they had implemented various programs to improve teachers' pedagogical competence, such as school work meetings, school-based subject teacher forums, workshops, curriculum training, and academic supervision. However, the schools also faced challenges, including uneven use of technology, limited learning facilities, administrative workload, limited time for training, and budget constraints. These conditions indicate that pedagogical competence development requires a more systematic, collaborative, and evaluative management approach.

Consequently, this study makes a distinct contribution to school-level educational management by formulating a contextualized, integrative framework for teacher development. Theoretically, it advances the discourse by demonstrating how managerial, collaborative, and reflective approaches interact to mediate policy implementation in diverse school settings, moving beyond mere administrative compliance. Practically, it provides school leaders and policymakers with an evidence-based blueprint for designing resilient, context-responsive professional development systems that ensure sustainable pedagogical transformation.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with a multisite case study design. The design was selected because the research aimed to understand in depth how the management of pedagogical competence development was practiced in three different schools located in the same district context. A multisite case study allows comparison across schools so that similarities, differences, and management patterns can be identified more systematically.

The research sites were SMP Negeri 9 Ambon, SMP Negeri 12 Ambon, and SMP Negeri 13 Ambon in Baguala District, Ambon City. The study was conducted from November 2025 to March 2026. The three schools were selected purposively because they had implemented teacher competence development programs and represented different

institutional conditions. SMP Negeri 9 Ambon had 1,227 students and 76 teachers; SMP Negeri 12 Ambon had 268 students and 28 teachers; and SMP Negeri 13 Ambon had 629 students and 47 teachers. These variations provided a basis for comparing management practices across different school contexts.

The research subjects were selected purposively because they were directly involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating teacher competence development programs. The informants consisted of three principals, three vice principals for curriculum, and fifteen subject teachers, with a total of twenty-one informants. Principals provided information about policy direction and leadership support. Vice principals for curriculum provided information about curriculum planning, supervision, and teacher development programs. Teachers provided information about their participation, experiences, challenges, and perceived impact of development activities.

Data were collected through three techniques. First, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals, vice principals for curriculum, and teachers to explore the planning, implementation, evaluation, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors of pedagogical competence development. Second, non-participant observation was carried out to examine learning activities, MGMP meetings, supervision practices, and teacher development activities. Third, documentation was used to review school work programs, curriculum programs, MGMP schedules, supervision reports, training reports, teaching modules, and other learning documents.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). To ensure a systematic and rigorous thematic organization, a two-cycle coding procedure was employed. In the first cycle, in vivo and descriptive coding were utilized to capture participants' exact expressions and initial observational notes. In the second cycle, pattern coding was applied to group these initial codes into broader conceptual categories aligned with the research focus, such as instructional leadership, collaborative planning, and reflective supervision. For the multisite comparison, a cross-case synthesis matrix was constructed, organizing the data by school (cases) and by thematic variables. This matrix facilitated a structured comparison to systematically identify convergent and divergent management patterns across the three schools before drawing final conclusions.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study applied Lincoln and Guba's criteria for qualitative rigor. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement (five months of fieldwork), methodological triangulation, and member checking, where preliminary findings were presented to a subset of informants to verify accuracy. Additionally, peer debriefing was conducted with two independent experts in educational management to challenge the researcher's analytical assumptions and mitigate bias. Transferability was supported by providing "thick descriptions" of the school contexts, allowing readers to determine the applicability of the findings to other settings. Dependability and Confirmability were maintained through a comprehensive audit trail, which systematically documented all raw data, codebooks, analytical memos, and decision-making processes throughout the research.

Strict ethical protocols were observed throughout the research process, guided by the principles of respect, beneficence, and justice. Prior to data collection, formal written informed consent was obtained from all participants. Recognizing the hierarchical nature of school settings, specific measures were taken to mitigate power dynamics; teachers were explicitly assured that their participation, or refusal to participate, would not affect their professional standing or performance evaluations by the principals. To ensure confidentiality, all data were anonymized using pseudonyms and role-based identifiers. Data security was strictly maintained: digital transcripts and recordings were stored on password-protected, encrypted drives accessible only to the research team, while physical documents were kept in locked cabinets. Furthermore, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings show that the three schools had implemented management processes for developing teachers' pedagogical competence, but each school demonstrated a distinctive pattern. These patterns can be understood through four aspects: planning, implementation, evaluation, and supporting and inhibiting factors.

Table 1. Research Sites and Informants

School	Students	Teachers	Teacher Composition	Key Informants
SMP Negeri 9 Ambon	1,227	76	31 civil servants, 37 PPPK, 8 honorary	Principal, vice principal for curriculum, 5 teachers
SMP Negeri 12 Ambon	268	28	17 civil servants, 9 PPPK, 2 honorary	Principal, vice principal for curriculum, 5 teachers
SMP Negeri 13 Ambon	629	47	18 civil servants, 29 PPPK	Principal, vice principal for curriculum, 5 teachers

Source: Field documentation, 2026.

Table 2. Cross-Site Findings on Pedagogical Competence Development Management

Aspect	SMP Negeri 9 Ambon	SMP Negeri 12 Ambon	SMP Negeri 13 Ambon
Planning	School work meeting, curriculum work program, MGMP, and supervision planning; school-based management model	Curriculum program integrated with MGMP, internal training, and professional discussion; professional learning community model	Planning based on previous supervision and learning reflection; reflective or evidence-based model
Implementation	Learning workshops, school MGMP, academic supervision, and technology-based learning media training	School MGMP, internal Merdeka Curriculum training, academic supervision, and teacher professional discussions	Teacher training, MGMP, academic supervision, differentiated learning training, and teaching module workshops
Evaluation	Academic supervision, learning evaluation meetings, training reflection, and analysis of student learning outcomes	Academic supervision, curriculum evaluation meetings, and reflective discussion in MGMP	Academic supervision, professional discussion in MGMP, and reflection on teacher learning practices
Supporting factors	Principal support, active MGMP, teacher participation, and supervision	Principal support, teacher collaboration, curriculum training, and MGMP	Principal support, MGMP, training, and supervision
Inhibiting factors	Limited facilities, limited time, teacher administrative workload	Limited budget, facilities, and time for teacher development	Limited learning facilities, limited time, and administrative workload

Source: Research findings, 2026.

Planning of Pedagogical Competence Development

Pedagogical competency development planning in the three schools demonstrates a variety of management paradigms that reflect different responses to organizational dynamics. Rather than simply executing administrative routines, each school constructs its plan based on its cultural strengths and contextual needs.

SMP Negeri 9 Ambon represents a managerial-strategic approach through the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM). In the context of a large school, planning focuses on structural alignment between curriculum programs, MGMP forums, and academic supervision. Theoretically, this approach emphasizes the importance of bureaucratic rationality in creating organizational coherence. The practical significance of this model is mitigating program fragmentation; with centralized and measurable managerial direction, teacher development does not proceed sporadically but has a clear schedule, accountability structure, and resource support.

In contrast, SMP Negeri 12 Ambon adopts a collaborative-constructivist paradigm through the formation of a Professional Learning Community (PLC). Planning at this school is not imposed unilaterally from the top (top-down), but rather is organically integrated into curriculum discussions, internal Independent Curriculum training, and reflections on classroom practice. This finding practically shifts the position of teachers from mere "objects" of development to "subjects" or strategic partners. From a distributed leadership perspective, this model is crucial because it ensures that competency development interventions are rooted in authentic classroom issues, thereby increasing teacher relevance and buy-in to the school program.

Meanwhile, SMP Negeri 13 Ambon implements an evidence-based reflective approach (evidence-based/reflective planning). This school transforms the function of academic supervision from a mere compliance evaluation tool to a diagnostic instrument. Data from supervision and learning reflections are used as an empirical basis for designing specific interventions, such as differentiated learning training and the development of teaching modules. This aligns with the concept of Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM) in instructional leadership. The significance of these findings suggests that effective planning must be preceded by an objective needs diagnosis, so that competency development programs are not based on assumptions but on measurable competency gaps.

The synthesis of these three planning models indicates that no single approach is ideal. The managerial model (SMPN 9) excels in strategic direction and accountability, the collaborative model (SMPN 12) is strong in building teacher agency and participation, and the reflective model (SMPN 13) is precise in identifying needs. Therefore, in ideal school management practice, pedagogical competency development planning should holistically integrate these three dimensions: data-driven diagnosis to determine needs, managerial direction to provide structure and resources, and professional collaboration to ensure contextual and sustainable implementation.

Implementation of Pedagogical Competence Development

The implementation across the three schools reveals a critical shift from isolated training events toward a systemic, school-managed approach to pedagogical development. Rather than relying on one-off workshops, the schools utilized a combination of collaborative and evaluative mechanisms to sustain the Merdeka Curriculum. For instance, the school-based MGMP in SMPN 9 and SMPN 12 functioned not merely as administrative discussion forums, but as incubators for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

By providing a structured space for collective inquiry and shared practice, the MGMP helped build social capital and distributed leadership among teachers (Stoll et al., 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). From a management perspective, this highlights that fostering teacher collaboration is a strategic mechanism to decentralize instructional improvement and reduce reliance on external, top-down training.

Furthermore, the integration of academic supervision with targeted capacity-building—particularly evident in SMPN 13—demonstrates a strategic alignment between formative evaluation and professional growth. When supervision results are directly utilized to identify learning gaps and inform subsequent MGMP discussions or differentiated learning training, evaluation transitions from a mere compliance exercise into a catalyst for instructional improvement. This reflects Timperley's (2011) assertion that professional development is most effective when it is embedded in a continuous cycle of practice, feedback, and reflection, driven by school-level data.

Ultimately, these findings underscore that enhancing pedagogical competence requires robust school management systems rather than just individual teacher effort. While the observed improvements in lesson design, project-based learning, and digital integration signify positive pedagogical shifts, the varying depth of implementation across the schools exposes structural vulnerabilities.

The sustainability of these practices was heavily contingent upon structural support, such as manageable teacher workloads, adequate facilities, and budget allocation. Therefore, from a managerial standpoint, sustainable professional development demands strategic resource allocation, protected time, and strong instructional leadership to embed these collaborative and evaluative practices into the school's core improvement system (OECD, 2019).

Evaluation of Pedagogical Competence Development

Evaluasi pengembangan kompetensi guru di ketiga sekolah (SMPN 9, 12, dan 13 Ambon) menunjukkan pergeseran paradigma dari pengawasan administratif menuju evaluasi reflektif. Namun, secara analitis, praktik ini masih terjebak pada compliance-based evaluation (penilaian kepatuhan program) dan belum bertransformasi menjadi impact-based evaluation (penilaian berbasis dampak). Setiap sekolah memiliki dinamika manajerial yang berbeda dalam merespons celah evaluasi ini.

Di SMPN 9, integrasi supervisi akademik dan analisis hasil belajar menunjukkan kesadaran manajerial untuk mengaitkan pengembangan guru dengan dampak di kelas. Namun, ketidakhadiran umpan balik yang spesifik mengindikasikan lemahnya fungsi coaching dalam supervisi. Dalam manajemen mutu pendidikan, umpan balik yang bersifat umum tidak akan memicu perbaikan pedagogis yang terukur, melainkan hanya memenuhi syarat administratif. Guru membutuhkan umpan balik yang preskriptif untuk memetakan area pedagogis mana yang secara eksplisit memerlukan intervensi.

Sementara itu, SMPN 12 mengoptimalkan forum MGMP tidak hanya sebagai wadah pengembangan, tetapi juga sebagai ruang refleksi kolegiel. Praktik ini sejalan dengan konsep Professional Learning Communities (PLC) yang efektif memperkuat kolaborasi. Akan tetapi, absennya dokumentasi sistematis dan mekanisme tindak lanjut merupakan celah kritis dalam manajemen pengetahuan (knowledge management). Tanpa rekam jejak yang terstruktur, refleksi guru bersifat episodik; pengetahuan tacit yang dihasilkan dari diskusi MGMP tidak terkonversi menjadi kebijakan perbaikan sekolah yang berkelanjutan.

Keunggulan manajerial SMPN 13 terletak pada integrasi hasil supervisi ke dalam perencanaan selanjutnya, yang mencerminkan penerapan siklus evaluasi yang utuh. Meskipun demikian, ketiadaan indikator empiris yang kuat untuk mengukur perubahan kompetensi membuat evaluasi ini rentan terhadap bias subjektivitas. Dalam teori evaluasi program, tanpa rubrik atau metrik yang jelas, sekolah tidak dapat memvalidasi apakah peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran benar-benar terjadi secara observable, atau hanya berdasarkan persepsi guru dan pengawas semata.

Secara komprehensif, temuan ini mengonfirmasi bahwa evaluasi di ketiga sekolah masih berfokus pada level implementasi (apakah program berjalan) dan belum menyentuh level transformasi praktik (apakah perilaku mengajar berubah). Jika ditinjau melalui lensa model evaluasi Guskey (2002), ketiga sekolah baru berhasil mengevaluasi hingga level Participant Reaction dan Organizing Support. Mereka belum secara sistematis mengukur Use of New Knowledge (transfer praktik ke kelas) dan Student Learning Outcomes (dampak akhir). Oleh karena itu, ke depan, manajemen sekolah harus merekonstruksi instrumen evaluasi agar berorientasi pada bukti (evidence-based), di mana keberhasilan pengembangan guru tidak lagi diukur dari kelengkapan laporan kegiatan, melainkan dari perubahan nyata pada praktik pedagogis dan dampaknya terhadap hasil belajar siswa.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Comparatively, the findings across the three schools reveal that teacher competence development does not operate in a vacuum; rather, it is deeply contingent upon the ecosystem of school leadership and management. The supporting factors—principal support, active subject teacher forums (MGMP), training participation, and academic supervision—should no longer be viewed as isolated variables, but as an integrated instructional leadership system. In this context, principal support acts as a policy catalyst, creating a psychological climate that encourages teachers to engage in professional learning. Meanwhile, MGMP activities transcend their role as routine meetings, functioning as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that build social capital and foster peer-to-peer collaboration. Academic supervision, on the other hand, serves as a quality assurance mechanism that bridges the theoretical knowledge gained from training with the realities of classroom practice, ensuring that professional development does not remain merely rhetorical.

Conversely, the inhibiting factors expose significant structural and cultural bottlenecks within school management. Heavy administrative workloads and the scarcity of time for professional development are not merely time-management issues; they indicate that schools have yet to position teacher development as a core task, instead treating it as a peripheral burden. This implicitly fosters an exhausting compliance culture, which strips the reflective essence from MGMP discussions and workshops. Furthermore, limited facilities and budget constraints restrict the

space for pedagogical innovation. Through the lens of the Resource-Based View (RBV), this lack of resources forces teachers to rely on conventional methods and hinders the adoption of technology-enhanced learning, ultimately limiting the transfer of training impact to actual classroom improvement.

These findings fundamentally shift the paradigm of teacher competence development: moving away from a deficit model—which focuses on individual shortcomings—towards organizational capacity building. Teacher development can no longer be reduced to a personal responsibility; rather, it demands the transformation of schools into learning organizations. The managerial implications are clear: without structural interventions—such as workload redistribution, strategic budget allocation, and the provision of adequate infrastructure—professional development programs will remain ceremonial activities that fail to produce a sustainable impact on the quality of classroom instruction.

DISCUSSION

The cross-site findings reveal that the management of teachers' pedagogical competence development is not merely a technical exercise of organizing training programs, but a systemic process that requires the deliberate integration of planning, implementation, and evaluation into a coherent cycle of continuous improvement. This finding is significant because it challenges the prevailing tendency in many Indonesian schools to treat professional development as discrete, episodic events—such as isolated workshops or one-off seminars—rather than as an embedded, ongoing organizational process. When planning begins with a needs analysis grounded in supervision data, teacher reflection, and curriculum demands, it shifts professional development from a supply-driven model (what is available) to a demand-driven model (what is actually needed), thereby increasing both relevance and impact.

The integration of sustained professional learning mechanisms—MGMP, coaching, mentoring, and technology-enabled collaboration—demonstrates that pedagogical competence cannot be developed through knowledge transmission alone. Rather, as Schön's (1983) theory of reflective practice and Wenger's (1998) communities of practice suggest, competence develops through socially situated, iterative engagement with real classroom challenges. This has a critical implication for school management: principals must move beyond the role of administrative coordinator to become instructional leaders who cultivate the conditions for collaborative inquiry. However, leadership alone is insufficient without the structural and cultural infrastructure—such as MGMP and professional learning communities—that sustains teacher agency and collective efficacy over time. The findings thus reinforce that effective school management operates at the intersection of top-down direction and bottom-up professional ownership.

The comparison among the three schools reveals a deeper analytical insight: each school's approach reflects a distinct organizational logic shaped by its context, and each logic carries both affordances and risks. SMP Negeri 9 Ambon's managerial approach ensures policy coherence, resource allocation, and accountability—elements essential for systemic coordination—but risks reducing professional development to compliance if not paired with meaningful teacher engagement. SMP Negeri 12 Ambon's collaborative approach fosters shared practice and professional trust, yet may lack the strategic alignment needed to address school-wide priorities without strong managerial scaffolding. SMP Negeri 13 Ambon's reflective approach grounds decisions in evidence, making interventions more targeted, but requires a level of supervisory capacity and data literacy that may not be readily available in all contexts. Recognizing these as complementary rather than competing logics is essential for developing a more robust management framework.

The contextual variability across schools further underscores a principle often underappreciated in policy discourse: there is no universally optimal model for competence development. A large school's complexity demands stronger managerial coordination to prevent fragmentation, while a smaller school's intimacy creates natural conditions for intensive collaboration. This finding aligns with contingency theory in organizational management, which posits that effective structures must align with environmental and internal conditions rather than conform to standardized templates. For school management practice, this means that district and national policies should establish

minimum quality standards and enabling conditions while granting schools the autonomy to calibrate their development strategies to local needs, teacher profiles, and resource availability.

Drawing on these analytical insights, this study proposes a tripartite integrative framework for managing pedagogical competence development. The managerial dimension provides strategic direction, resource allocation, and accountability structures. The collaborative dimension cultivates professional learning communities where teachers engage in shared inquiry and peer-supported experimentation. The reflective dimension ensures that planning and evaluation are anchored in supervision evidence and student learning outcomes rather than procedural compliance. Critically, the value of this framework lies not in adding more programs, but in creating coherence among existing practices—transforming fragmented initiatives into a self-reinforcing system in which planning informs practice, practice generates evidence, and evidence refines planning. This cycle is what makes competence development not only systematic and participatory, but genuinely sustainable.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the management of teachers' pedagogical competence necessitates a paradigm shift from fragmented, administrative compliance to a cohesive framework integrating managerial direction, collaborative inquiry, and evidence-based reflection. Rather than treating professional development as isolated events, schools must embed it within a continuous cycle where supervision data dictates planning, collaborative forums drive implementation, and reflective evaluation measures actual classroom transformation.

Specifically, principals and curriculum managers must institutionalize a "data-to-practice" protocol by mandating that every academic supervision finding directly generates targeted, peer-led MGMP action plans within a structured cycle, while simultaneously restructuring teacher administrative workloads to protect dedicated time for this collaborative reflection. This strategic alignment ensures that pedagogical development transcends ceremonial training and translates into sustainable, measurable improvements in classroom practice and student learning outcomes.

Future research should employ mixed-methods designs across broader geographical contexts to empirically quantify the impact of this integrated management framework on student learning outcomes.

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