

# Principal Leadership Strategies for Strengthening Teacher Competence in Elementary Schools

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## Abstract

The principal, as an educational leader, holds a decisive role in developing the quality of teachers and, through them, the quality of learning. This study aims to analyze the principal's strategy in strengthening the pedagogic and professional competence of elementary school teachers. A qualitative approach with a descriptive method was employed, with the researcher serving as the key instrument. Informants were determined through *purposive sampling* and comprised the principal, the vice principal, and selected teachers, while data were gathered through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using the interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The credibility of the findings was secured through *triangulation* of the three data sources. The results show that the principal strengthened teachers' competence not through any single programmed but through three interlocking strategies: continuous training and professional forums, regular academic supervision and coaching, and the provision of technology-based facilities. These strategies functioned as a coordinated system in which each reinforced the others. The findings imply that, viewed through the lens of *transformational education and learning*, school leadership develops teachers most effectively when it moves beyond transmitting discrete skills toward reshaping their pedagogical perspectives and cultivating a sustained disposition for professional self-renewal.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education occupies a decisive place in determining the direction of a nation's progress, since the advancement of a country rests not only on its natural resources but on the quality of its human resources (Zhang & Wang, 2021). Within the education system, the teacher is the agent who most directly shapes that quality, because the learning a school can offer is ultimately bounded by the capacity of those who deliver it (Kolovou et al., 2024). For this reason, the competence of teachers has become a central concern of education policy and a recurring object of school improvement efforts (Kumar & Wiseman, 2021). However, teacher competence does not develop on its own. It requires deliberate cultivation, and the responsibility for that cultivation falls in large part on the school principal, who stands as the educational leader closest to the daily work of teaching (Huang et al., 2024). How a principal chooses to develop teachers, and whether that choice is systematic or incidental, therefore has consequences that extend well beyond administration into the quality of learning experienced by students in every classroom (Highfield & Rubie-Davies, 2022; Li et al., 2023).

The principal is not merely an administrator but the formal leader of education within the school and the manager responsible for improving the quality of its human resources (Medrano-Chan et al., 2025). In this capacity the principal is expected to plan, guide, and evaluate the professional growth of teachers, and to do so in a manner oriented toward quality rather than quantity alone (Hallinger et al., 2025). Lumban Gaol (2023) identifies the principal as the

educational component that most determines the quality of education, a claim that places considerable weight on the strategies a principal adopts. A strategy, in this organizational sense, is a coherent pattern of decisions and actions through which a leader directs available resources toward a defined goal (Ahmed et al., 2022). When applied to teacher development, such a strategy is expressed through planning, implementation, and evaluation, and its success depends on the principal's understanding of school conditions and capacity to see clearly what can realistically be improved. Where this strategic capacity is absent, teacher development tends to become a series of disconnected activities with little lasting effect on practice.

The competence that a principal's strategy must address is commonly divided into pedagogic and professional dimensions. Pedagogic competence refers to the teacher's ability to manage learning, encompassing the understanding of students, the design and implementation of instruction, and the evaluation of learning outcomes (Sitanggang et al., 2021). Professional competence refers to the mastery of subject matter in breadth and depth, together with the capacity for continuous self-development in line with advances in knowledge and technology (Shi et al., 2025). These two competencies are interdependent, since command of content is of little value without the ability to convey it, and skillful classroom management is hollow without secure knowledge of what is being taught. National regulation reinforces their importance by requiring teachers to hold both pedagogic and professional qualifications as a condition of realizing national education goals. The strengthening of these competencies, however, cannot be assumed to follow automatically from regulation. It must be actively pursued through leadership, which returns the question to how principals translate their formal responsibility into effective developmental practice (Alazmi & Hammad, 2023).

Despite the recognized centrality of the principal's role, practice on the ground frequently falls short of this ideal, and SD Annur Pekanbaru is no exception. A preliminary study at the school revealed concrete weaknesses in teaching practice that competence development is meant to address. Some teachers taught without following a coherent instructional sequence, relying on continuous drilling so that students, when faced with examinations, struggled to answer questions that demanded understanding rather than repetition (DeCuir-Gunby & Bindra, 2022). Others were reluctant to develop alongside technology and continued to rely on traditional methods even where digital facilities were available. These problems are significant because they touch both competence dimensions at once. The disorganized instructional sequence reflects a weakness in pedagogic competence, while the reluctance to adopt new tools and approaches signals a stalled capacity for professional self-development (Fair, 2025). Such conditions indicate that the gap between the expected and the actual quality of teaching is real, and that the principal's strategy for closing it deserves close and systematic examination rather than assumption.

Previous studies have examined the principal's role in developing teacher competence, yet they leave an important gap that this study addresses. (Oppi & Eisenschmidt, 2022), among others, have documented the principal's contribution to improving teachers' pedagogic competence, but such studies tend to treat individual strategies, whether supervision, training, or the provision of facilities, as separate good practices reported in parallel. Much of this literature also presents leadership strategies as uniformly successful, paying limited attention to where they fail or stall. What remains underexamined is how these strategies interlock as a coordinated system, and what their boundary conditions are when entrenched teaching habits resist change. The present study addresses this gap by analyzing the principal's strategy as an integrated whole rather than a list of discrete efforts, and by attending honestly to its uneven results, particularly the persistence of a digital competence gap among senior teachers. This integrative and critically realistic orientation constitutes the novelty of the study.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze in depth the principal's strategy in strengthening the pedagogic and professional competence of teachers at SD Annur Pekanbaru. It seeks not only to identify the strategies the principal employs but to explain how those strategies operate together to develop both competence dimensions, and to assess the extent to which they succeed. By doing

so, the study intends to contribute a more integrated and evidence-based understanding of how school leadership strengthens teacher competence, one that may inform the practice of principals facing similar challenges in comparable school settings.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, chosen because the aim was to understand and portray the principal's strategy in strengthening teachers' competence as it actually unfolded in its natural setting rather than to measure it through numerical variables (Mathope et al., 2023). The research was conducted as field research, meaning that the data were drawn directly from real conditions at the site rather than from a controlled or artificial environment. A qualitative descriptive design was appropriate here because the phenomenon under study, namely the strategic decisions and developmental practices of a school principal, is contextual, processual, and embedded in the meanings that participants attach to their work (Sevilla-Liu, 2023). Such a phenomenon cannot be adequately captured by statistical generalization but is better understood through detailed description and interpretation. The researcher therefore acted as the key instrument of the study, gathering data through direct engagement with the setting and its participants, and interpreting that data in relation to the context in which it was produced. This orientation allowed the study to attend not only to what strategies were used but to how and why they operated.

The research was carried out at SD Annur Pekanbaru, an Islamic elementary school selected because it presented the concrete problems of teaching practice that the study sought to examine, including weaknesses in instructional sequencing and uneven adoption of learning technology. The informants were determined through purposive sampling, a technique in which participants are chosen deliberately on the basis of their direct knowledge of and involvement in the issue being studied. On this basis, the principal was selected as the central informant, since the principal is the originator and coordinator of the strategies under investigation, while the vice principal and senior teachers were included for their direct role in implementing supervision and mentoring, and two teachers were selected to represent those who experienced the strategies as recipients, including a senior teacher able to speak to the challenge of adapting to technology (Hermansson, 2025). This deliberate selection ensured that the data reflected both the design and the lived experience of the principal's strategy. The full profile of the informants is presented in **Table 1**.

**Table 1. Profile of Research Informants**

No	Code	Role	Reason for Selection
1	KS	Principal	Originator and coordinator of the strategies under study
2	WK	Vice Principal	Directly involved in implementing supervision and mentoring
3	G1	Senior Teacher	Recipient of the strategy; represents the challenge of adapting to technology
4	G2	Teacher	Recipient of the strategy; speaks to coaching through regular meetings

Source: Primary research data, processed by the author (2025)

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews with the principal, vice principal, and teachers explored the rationale behind each strategy and the participants' experience of its implementation. Observation was used to witness strategies in practice, including workshop activities, the use of learning facilities in classrooms, and the monthly meetings through which coaching was sustained. Documentation provided a third stream of evidence, encompassing the annual training schedule, attendance records, supervision schedules, observation instruments with recorded feedback, and meeting minutes. The use of three techniques was deliberate, since each compensated for the limits of the others: interviews captured intentions and meanings, observation verified whether those intentions were enacted, and documents established whether the practices were systematic and

traceable over time. Together these techniques generated a body of evidence rich enough to support not only description of the principal's strategy but interpretation of how its several components functioned as an integrated whole.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which proceeds through three concurrent activities: data condensation, data display, and the drawing and verification of conclusions. (Kara, 2023) In the condensation stage, the raw material from interviews, observation, and documentation was selected, focused, and simplified so that the information most relevant to the principal's strategy was brought to the fore. In the display stage, the condensed data were organized into coherent categories corresponding to the strategies identified, allowing patterns and relationships among them to become visible. In the final stage, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified against the data to ensure that the interpretations were grounded in evidence rather than imposed upon it. To safeguard the credibility of these findings, the study applied triangulation, comparing and cross-checking the three data sources against one another. A claim about a given strategy was treated as trustworthy only where the principal's account, the researcher's observation, and the relevant documentation converged, and it is this convergence that underpins the credibility of the findings reported in this study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The principal of SD Annur Pekanbaru is positioned not merely as an administrative figure but as the central agent who shapes the professional growth of teachers. A school principal is essentially a functional teacher entrusted with the additional responsibility of leading the institution where teaching and learning take place. From this position derives the authority and obligation to develop the quality of human resources within the school, particularly the competence of teachers. Two competencies became the focus of this study. Pedagogic competence concerns the teacher's ability to manage learning, from understanding students and designing instruction to implementing and evaluating it. Professional competence concerns the mastery of subject matter in breadth and depth together with the capacity for continuous self-development. The findings below show how the principal's strategy operated across both domains, and how each strategy was corroborated through interview, observation, and documentation, as summarized in **Table 2**.

**Table 2. Summary of the Principal's Strategies and Data Source Triangulation**

No	Strategy	Concrete Activities	Interview	Observation	Document	Competence Targeted
1	Training and professional development	Lesson-design workshop, ICT training, participation in KKG and MGMP	✓	✓	✓	Pedagogic and Professional
2	Coaching and academic supervision	Administrative and classroom supervision, delegation to senior teachers, regular meetings	✓	✓	✓	Pedagogic
3	Provision of facilities and infrastructure	Procurement of projectors, smart TV, laptops, and digital media in every classroom	✓	✓	✓	Pedagogic

Source: Primary research data, processed by the author (2025)

### Strengthening Pedagogic Competence Through Training and Professional Development

The first strategy pursued by the principal was the continuous development of teachers through structured training and professional forums. This strategy rested on a clear assumption that pedagogic competence cannot be improved individually or left to develop on its own, but must be cultivated through deliberate intervention grounded in the actual needs of teachers. The

principal began by identifying the obstacles teachers faced before designing any activity, so that the development programmed answered documented weaknesses rather than following a generic calendar of events. This diagnostic orientation is what separated the school's training from the routine, attendance driven model that often reduces professional development to a formality. By treating each activity as a response to an identified gap, the principal ensured that the time teachers invested translated into measurable change in their classroom practice. The principal articulated this logic directly: *"I do not send teachers to a workshop simply because there is one available. I look first at what they struggle with in the classroom, then I choose the activity that answers that need (KS)."*

This account was confirmed through observation. During the researcher's visits, teachers attended an internal workshop on lesson design facilitated by a supervisor from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the material addressed precisely the planning weaknesses recorded in the previous semester's supervision notes. The documentation reviewed, including the school's annual training schedule and attendance records, showed that workshops were held at the beginning of each semester and involved all teachers rather than a selected few. The convergence of these three sources, namely the principal's stated rationale, the observed activity, and the documented schedule, indicates that the workshop programmed was genuinely needs based rather than ceremonial. This convergence matters methodologically as well as substantively, because it demonstrates that the strategy was not merely claimed by the principal but visible in practice and traceable in the school's records, which is the standard by which a qualitative finding earns its credibility.

Beyond workshops, the principal involved teachers in training oriented toward the use of information and communication technology in learning. Observation showed teachers being guided to operate the *smart TV* and projector units installed in each classroom and to integrate digital media into their lessons. The benefit was uneven, however. Younger teachers adapted quickly, while several senior teachers continued to treat technology as a supporting aid rather than as a central instructional strategy. One senior teacher acknowledged this candidly: *"I can use the laptop and the projector, but to design a whole lesson around them is still difficult for me. I am still learning (G1)."*

This finding is significant because it qualifies the success of the strategy rather than overstating it. The training improved pedagogic capacity overall, yet it also exposed a digital competence gap concentrated among senior teachers that ongoing mentoring would need to address. Far from undermining the strategy, this candid admission strengthens the credibility of the finding, because it shows the data capturing resistance and difficulty rather than only success. It also points to an important boundary condition: a single round of training is insufficient to convert long established teaching habits, and durable change in the use of technology depends on sustained follow up rather than one off exposure. The principal extended this development further by connecting teachers to professional forums beyond the school, namely the *Kelompok Kerja Guru (KKG)* and the *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP)*. These forums function as spaces for collaboration, shared reflection, and the exchange of teaching practice. Teachers reported that participation broadened their methodological repertoire and gave them access to approaches they would not have encountered within the school alone. Here the principal acted primarily as a facilitator, ensuring that teachers were registered, scheduled, and released to attend, and the result was a widening of pedagogic insight that complemented the internal training described above.

### **Strengthening Pedagogic Competence Through Coaching and Academic Supervision**

The second strategy was the regular coaching and academic supervision of teachers. Supervision in this school was not understood narrowly as inspection but as a professional mentoring process aimed at helping teachers plan, deliver, and evaluate learning more effectively. The principal conducted supervision in a structured manner, covering both administrative documents and direct classroom observation, and deliberately delegated part of this responsibility to the vice principal and senior teachers. This delegation produced a collaborative pattern of development in which experienced teachers guided their peers, and it carried a second benefit beyond efficiency: it distributed the work of professional growth across the staff and made

supervision a shared responsibility rather than a top-down audit. By positioning senior teachers as mentors rather than the principal as sole evaluator, the school lowered the anxiety that often accompanies observation and reframed it as an ordinary part of professional life. The principal described this orientation in plain terms: *"Supervision is not me catching mistakes. The senior teachers help the younger ones, and after I observe a class, we sit together to discuss what can be improved (KS)."*

Observation supported this description. Following a classroom visit, the researcher witnessed a follow up discussion in which the teacher and principal reviewed the lesson against the planned objectives and agreed on concrete adjustments for the next session. The supervision documents examined, including the supervision schedule and the observation instruments with recorded feedback, confirmed that the process was both periodic and directed rather than occasional. Taken together, these three sources show that supervision operated as a continuous cycle of observation, feedback, and improvement, which is the condition under which supervision actually develops pedagogic competence rather than merely recording its absence. The presence of a written feedback trail is particularly telling, because it indicates that observations were converted into actionable guidance and revisited over time, rather than ending at the moment the principal left the classroom.

This coaching function was reinforced through a structured rhythm of meetings that sustained the work of supervision between individual observations. The school held a planning meeting at the start of each semester, an evaluation meeting at its close, and shorter monthly meetings throughout, so that attention to learning quality was distributed across the year rather than concentrated in occasional events. The monthly meetings, observed directly by the researcher, served as a forum for collective reflection in which teachers shared difficulties and the principal monitored progress and reminded staff of pedagogic priorities. What gave these meetings their developmental value was their two-way character, since they functioned less as a channel for instructions than as a space in which teachers learned from one another's experience. One teacher captured this quality directly: *"The monthly meeting is where we talk openly about what is not working. It is not only the principal giving instructions, we learn from each other's experience (G2)."* The meeting structure therefore complemented individual supervision by keeping pedagogic improvement a collective and continuous concern, ensuring that the gains identified during classroom observation were reinforced, shared, and sustained across the whole teaching body rather than fading once a single observation cycle had ended.

### **Strengthening Pedagogic Competence Through Facilities and Infrastructure**

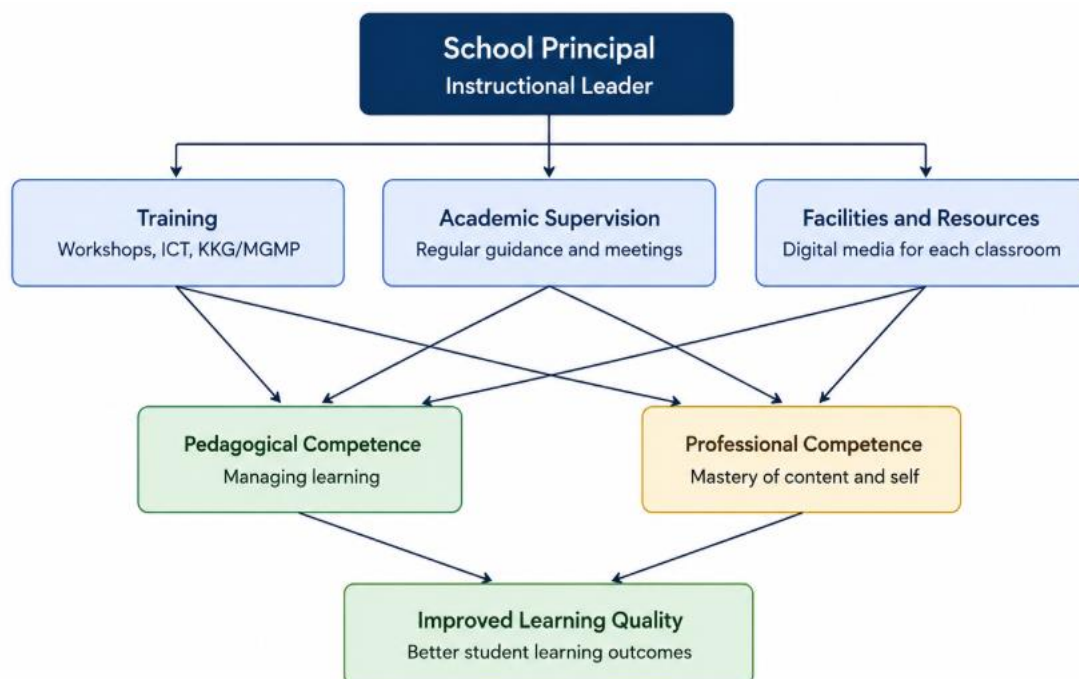
The third strategy concerned the provision and optimization of learning facilities, which the principal treated not as a complement to teaching but as a strategic precondition for it. Adequate facilities enable teachers to be more creative and effective in managing learning, because the range of methods a teacher can realistically employ is constrained by the tools available in the room. The principal equipped each classroom with projectors, speakers, laptops, and *smart TV* units, signaling a deliberate commitment to technology-based learning rather than a piecemeal response to occasional requests. Observation confirmed that these facilities were in active use, with teachers presenting visual material and interactive media rather than relying solely on the whiteboard, and the asset inventory and procurement records examined during the study documented the systematic provision of this equipment across classrooms. The significance of this strategy lies in its direct link to pedagogic competence: by removing the material constraint, the principal created the conditions under which teachers could design and apply more varied instructional methods. Yet the facilities functioned as an enabling structure rather than a guarantee, since their pedagogic value depended, as the training findings made clear, on each teacher's readiness to use them well. This interdependence explains why the school paired the provision of equipment with continuous training, because hardware without the capacity to exploit it pedagogically would have remained an underused asset rather than an instrument of improved learning.

### Strengthening Professional Competence

While the three strategies above bear most directly on pedagogic competence, the findings also show their contribution to teachers' professional competence, understood as the mastery of subject matter in breadth and depth together with the capacity for continuous self-development. The professional forums in particular, KKG and MGMP, deepened teachers' command of their subject content and not only their teaching methods, because these forums brought teachers into contact with peers from other schools who taught the same material and surfaced content questions that rarely arise within a single institution. Teachers reported returning from these forums with a firmer grasp of the material they taught and greater confidence in handling difficult content, which suggests that the benefit extended past technique into the substance of what was being taught. Equally important was the orientation the principal worked to instill, namely the expectation that mastery is never finished and must be renewed as curricula and learners change. The principal stated this expectation explicitly:

"I always tell the teachers that mastering the lesson material is not enough for one year. The curriculum changes, the children change, so they must keep developing themselves." (KS)

Observation and documentation reinforced this orientation. The training schedule included subject focused sessions alongside pedagogic ones, and the principal's encouragement to pursue further qualifications and certification, recorded in the meeting minutes, framed professional growth as a continuous obligation rather than a finished achievement. The convergence of the principal's stated expectation, the documented programmed, and the teachers' own reports indicates that the strategy fostered not only better classroom management but also a culture of ongoing professional self-development. This cultural dimension is arguably the most durable outcome of the principal's strategy, because where pedagogic gains can be tied to specific tools or activities, an internalized commitment to self-development continues to operate after any particular programmed has ended, sustaining improvement through the staff's own initiative rather than through external prompting alone.



**Figure 1. The Flow of the Principal's Strategy Toward Strengthening Teachers' Two Competencies**

Source: Processed by the author (2025)

The interconnection among these strategies and the two competencies is presented in Figure 1. Rather than functioning as separate programmers, training, supervision, and the provision of facilities each contribute to teachers' pedagogic and professional competence, and these competencies in turn translate into improved classroom learning.

Taken as a whole, the findings demonstrate that the principal's strategy at SD Annur Pekanbaru was planned, systematic, and sustained rather than incidental. Training and professional forums widened teachers' methodological and subject knowledge, supervision and coaching embedded a cycle of feedback and improvement, and the provision of facilities created the material conditions for innovation. The persistence of a digital competence gap among some senior teachers shows that the strategy was effective without being complete, and that its gains depended on the combination of structural support and human mentorship rather than on any single intervention working in isolation. It is precisely this combination, in which structural provision, professional forums, and sustained personal guidance reinforce one another, that accounts for the observed improvement in both the pedagogic and the professional competence of teachers, and that distinguishes a coherent leadership strategy from a loose collection of well-intentioned activities.

## Discussion

The findings of this study show that the improvement of teachers' competence at SD Annur Pekanbaru did not result from any single programmed but from the way the principal coordinated several strategies into a coherent system (Julianti et al., 2021). Training answered documented weaknesses, supervision converted observation into actionable feedback, and the provision of facilities removed the material constraints on classroom practice (Fraidlin et al., 2023). The explanation for why this combination worked lies in its internal logic rather than in the strength of any one component. Each strategy compensated for the limits of the others, so that the provision of *smart TV* units, for instance, only translated into improved learning because training and mentoring developed the capacity to use them (Luong, 2025). This interdependence is the central explanatory finding of the study. It indicates that leadership effectiveness in strengthening teacher competence is less a matter of launching individual initiatives than of ensuring that structural provision, professional development, and sustained guidance reinforce one another over time. Where these elements operate in isolation, as the persistence of a digital competence gap among senior teachers suggests, improvement remains partial.

A further explanation concerns the diagnostic orientation that preceded each strategy. The principal identified the obstacles teachers faced before designing any activity, which meant that development was grounded in evidence rather than routine (Asterhan & Lefstein, 2024). This finding helps explain why the workshops produced visible change while much in-service training elsewhere does not. The difference was not the activity itself but the prior step of locating the actual gap, so that the time teachers invested addressed a real deficiency rather than a generic agenda (Leroy, 2025). The same orientation appeared in supervision, where written feedback was revisited over time rather than ending at the classroom door, and in meetings, where collective reflection kept improvement a shared concern (Carless, 2023). Taken together, these patterns suggest that the effectiveness observed here is best explained by the principal's consistent move from diagnosis to targeted response, a cycle that turned each strategy into a continuous process of improvement rather than a discrete event with no lasting consequence for practice.

When these findings are read against the relevant theory, they confirm and extend established positions on educational leadership. Said & Sharif (2023) identifies the principal as the educational component that most determines the quality of education, and the present study supports this claim while specifying the mechanism through which it operates, namely the coordination of complementary strategies rather than the exercise of authority alone (Midha, 2024). The findings also align with the conception of supervision as professional guidance rather than inspection. Consistent with the view that supervision exists to assess teachers' abilities and

help them improve their shortcomings through their own effort, supervision at SD Annur Pekanbaru functioned as mentoring that produced concrete adjustments to practice (Nielsen et al., 2022). The delegation of supervision to senior teachers further reflects a distributed understanding of leadership, in which the principal multiplies developmental capacity by positioning experienced staff as mentors rather than retaining evaluation as a personal monopoly (Murphy & Brennan, 2024). In this respect the findings move beyond a purely positional account of the principalship toward a relational and collaborative one.

The findings likewise speak to the theory of pedagogic and professional competence that frames the study. Pedagogic competence, defined as the ability to manage learning from planning through evaluation, was strengthened most directly by supervision and facilities, whereas professional competence, understood as the mastery of subject matter and the capacity for self-development, was advanced primarily through the external forums of *KKG* and *MGMP* (Idammatussilmi & Utaminingsih, 2023). This division is theoretically significant because it shows that different competencies respond to different leadership levers, and that a strategy targeting only one channel would develop teachers unevenly. The principal's insistence that mastery is never finished also resonates with the literature on teacher professionalism, which holds that professionalism is determined not only by qualifications and certification but by an ongoing commitment to development (Yuliansyah & Herman, 2023). The study therefore lends empirical weight to the argument that professional growth is best understood as a culture to be cultivated rather than a status to be certified, since the most durable outcome observed was an internalized disposition toward continuous learning (De León Sautú et al., 2025).

Framed within transformational education and learning, this study makes three specific contributions. The first is conceptual by repositioning the principal from a manager of discrete programmed into an agent of transformational learning. This study demonstrates that the coordinated use of training, supervision, and facilities did not merely add skills but reshaped how teachers approached their practice to move them from routine delivery toward reflective teaching. The second contribution is theoretical because it extends transformational learning from the individual learner to the institutional level. The findings show that peer mentoring and monthly collective reflection operate as dialogic spaces where teacher perspectives are examined and revised so that transformation becomes an organizational process rather than a private awakening. The third contribution is empirical and corrective. By documenting the persistent digital competence gap among senior teachers, the study specifies a boundary condition of transformational leadership. Perspective change remains uneven because entrenched habits resist rapid reshaping, an insight that tempers the literature's tendency to portray leadership strategies as uniformly successful. Together these contributions establish that the principal's strategy strengthened teacher competence through transformation rather than mere accumulation, thereby reframing school leadership as a vehicle of transformational education.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the principal's strategy in strengthening the pedagogic and professional competence of teachers at SD Annur Pekanbaru, and the findings show that this strengthening was achieved not through any single programmed but through the coordinated interlocking of training and professional forums, regular academic supervision, and the provision of technology-based facilities. The principal's consistent move from diagnosis to targeted response turned each strategy into a continuous process that not only improved teachers' ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning but also cultivated a durable disposition toward continuous self-development, so that competence was strengthened by transformation rather than by mere accumulation. The study is nonetheless limited by its single-site qualitative design and by the persistence of a digital competence gap among senior teachers, which indicates that the transformation it documents remained uneven and incomplete. Future research should therefore examine the principal's strategy across multiple schools and over a longer period, and give

particular attention to how sustained mentoring can close the digital competence gap, so that the transformative potential of school leadership can be tested and strengthened beyond the boundaries of a single institution.

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