



Educational Supervision as a Strategic Mechanism for Improving Instructional Quality

Intan Nurhasanah*, Eva Dianawati Wasliman

Universitas Islam Nusantara, Indonesia

Email : : Intansundachexo2021@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

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*Corresponding Author

This study aims to examine the implementation of educational supervision based on Edward Deming's Total Quality Management (TQM) principles in improving learning quality. A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing interviews, observations, and document analysis to capture supervisory practices. Data were analyzed using the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle as a framework for supervision quality management. The findings reveal that educational supervision is implemented systematically through structured planning, professional execution, evidence-based evaluation, and continuous follow-up. The Check and Act stages play a critical role in strengthening teacher professionalism, fostering reflective practices, and sustaining a culture of quality improvement. These stages enable supervisors to use evaluative data as a basis for corrective actions and continuous development. The study implies that integrating TQM principles into educational supervision can transform supervision from a predominantly administrative function into a strategic mechanism for enhancing instructional quality. This research contributes both conceptually and practically to the development of supervision quality management in secondary education.

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INTRODUCTION

The organization of national education is fundamentally directed toward developing learners' full potential, including intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual capacities, as mandated by Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. In this context, educational quality is not merely an institutional concern but a strategic societal issue, as it determines the readiness of human resources to participate productively in social, economic, and cultural life. The state bears a constitutional responsibility to ensure educational quality through the fulfillment of National Education Standards as regulated in Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 and its amendments. At the senior secondary level, learning quality plays a decisive role in shaping graduates'

competencies for higher education and the labor market. Consequently, effective quality assurance mechanisms are essential to guarantee that instructional processes meet established standards. Educational supervision is positioned as a key instrument within this framework, functioning to ensure instructional compliance and to foster continuous professional development among teachers (Rosa et al., 2024). Therefore, strengthening supervision practices is crucial not only for schools but also for broader societal development.

Despite clear policy mandates, improving educational quality remains a persistent challenge in many educational systems. One major issue lies in the gap between regulatory expectations and practical implementation at the school level. Educational supervision, which is intended to serve as a mechanism for quality assurance and professional guidance, often fails to function optimally as envisioned by policy frameworks. Instead of supporting instructional improvement, supervision is frequently reduced to procedural compliance and documentation requirements. This condition weakens its potential contribution to enhancing teaching quality and learning outcomes. Studies indicate that when supervision lacks a developmental orientation, it does not significantly influence teachers' pedagogical competence or instructional effectiveness (Mukhtamiroh et al., 2024; Nur et al., 2024). As a result, schools struggle to establish sustainable quality improvement processes. This systemic problem highlights the need to reconceptualize supervision as a strategic, value-driven practice aligned with continuous improvement principles. Addressing this issue is essential, as ineffective supervision undermines national efforts to achieve equitable and high-quality education for all learners.

Empirical conditions at the school level further illustrate these challenges. Preliminary observations at SMA Negeri 1 Cicalengka reveal that educational supervision is conducted regularly by school principals and external supervisors; however, its implementation remains constrained by structural and procedural limitations. Supervision activities tend to emphasize administrative completeness rather than reflective academic guidance. Classroom observations are often conducted as formal requirements, with limited dialogical interaction or collaborative reflection between supervisors and teachers. Moreover, follow-up actions based on supervision findings are not consistently implemented, resulting in minimal impact on instructional improvement. Consequently, changes in teachers' professional behavior and classroom practices occur sporadically rather than systematically. These conditions reflect a broader pattern in which supervision functions more as control than as professional support. Such phenomena underscore the urgency of reorienting supervision toward a model that emphasizes continuous improvement, reflective practice, and collaborative problem-solving to effectively enhance learning quality.

Previous studies have extensively examined educational supervision as a mechanism for improving teaching quality and teacher professionalism. Research indicates that systematic supervision planning, collaborative approaches, and structured feedback can positively influence instructional practices (Tambunan et al., 2024; Wijayanti et al., 2025; Yunus et al., 2025). Other studies highlight the importance of humanistic and clinical supervision models that prioritize dialogical interaction, coaching, and reflective practice (Effendi & Sahertian, 2023; Wiyono et al., 2021). Furthermore, scholars emphasize that supervision aligned with quality management principles can strengthen school accountability and professional learning cultures (Wibowo et al., 2025). However, much of this research focuses on supervision from a general managerial or leadership perspective, without explicitly positioning supervision within a comprehensive quality management cycle. As a result, the strategic role of supervision in sustaining continuous improvement processes remains underexplored, particularly in the context of public senior secondary schools.

Several studies have introduced Total Quality Management (TQM) principles into educational contexts, demonstrating their potential to enhance organizational effectiveness and instructional quality (Ramlawati, 2020). The Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle proposed by W. Edwards Deming has been widely recognized as a systematic approach to continuous improvement. While some research acknowledges the relevance of PDCA in school management, empirical investigations rarely examine how educational supervision specifically functions as the “Check” and “Act” components within this cycle. Existing studies tend to address planning and implementation stages more prominently, leaving evaluation and follow-up mechanisms insufficiently analyzed (Mukhtamiroh et al., 2024; Rusdiana et al., 2026). This gap limits understanding of how supervision can effectively translate evaluation findings into sustainable instructional improvements. Therefore, a focused examination of supervision through the lens of TQM and PDCA is necessary to advance both theoretical and practical insights in educational quality assurance.

This study offers novelty by positioning educational supervision explicitly within the TQM framework, emphasizing its function as an integral component of the PDCA cycle. Unlike previous studies that treat supervision as an isolated managerial activity, this research conceptualizes supervision as a systemic mechanism for continuous quality improvement. By examining supervision as both an evaluative (Check) and corrective (Act) process, the study advances a more holistic understanding of how supervision contributes to instructional quality. This approach represents a state-of-the-art perspective in educational supervision research, as it integrates quality management theory with empirical analysis of supervisory practices. Addressing this gap is critical, given the increasing demand for accountability and evidence-based improvement in education systems. The study’s focus on sustained follow-up and

institutionalized improvement further distinguishes it from prior research, offering a model that aligns supervision with long-term quality culture development in schools.

Based on the identified gaps and field conditions, this study addresses the following research problem: how does educational supervision, when implemented based on TQM principles and the PDCA cycle, contribute to improving learning quality in senior secondary schools? The central argument of this study is that supervision grounded in systematic planning, data-based evaluation, and consistent follow-up can function as a strategic driver of continuous instructional improvement. By integrating supervision into the PDCA cycle, schools can move beyond administrative compliance toward reflective and collaborative quality enhancement. This research contributes theoretically by enriching supervision literature with a quality management perspective and empirically by providing contextual evidence from a public senior secondary school. The findings are expected to inform policymakers, school leaders, and supervisors in designing more effective and sustainable supervision models that foster a culture of quality and continuous improvement in education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the role of educational supervision in improving instructional quality. A case study approach was selected because it allows for an intensive and contextual exploration of complex educational phenomena within their real-life settings. This design is particularly appropriate for examining supervisory practices as ongoing processes shaped by institutional culture, leadership dynamics, and policy implementation. By adopting a descriptive qualitative orientation, the study sought to capture empirical conditions as they naturally occurred, without manipulating research variables, in line with qualitative inquiry principles (Sugiyono, 2020).

The research was conducted at a public senior high school selected due to its established supervisory practices and its relevance to the study's focus on instructional quality improvement. The site was chosen purposively to enable a comprehensive examination of educational supervision within an authentic school context. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with key informants—including the principal, vice principal for curriculum, and teachers—and document analysis of supervision reports, instructional planning records, and quality assurance documents. These multiple data sources were used to ensure a holistic understanding of supervisory implementation.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), encompassing data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data condensation, relevant information was selected, focused, and simplified to address the research objectives. The organized data were then presented in narrative and matrix displays to facilitate pattern identification. Verification was conducted continuously throughout the analysis process to ensure analytical rigor. Data trustworthiness was enhanced through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, achieved by applying source, technique, and time triangulation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Planning of Educational Supervision for Instructional Quality Improvement

The findings indicate that educational supervision was planned in a systematic, programmed, and continuous manner as part of instructional quality improvement efforts. The supervision program was designed at the beginning of the academic year with clearly defined objectives aimed at enhancing classroom learning processes. Supervision activities were scheduled over a specific period, allowing for gradual and controlled implementation aligned with teachers' workloads and school activities. This structured planning reflects an understanding of supervision as a long-term professional development process rather than an incidental administrative task.

The supervision planning process involved the formation of a supervision team consisting of school leaders and senior teachers with subject-matter expertise. This collaborative structure was intended to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of supervision activities, particularly in evaluating instructional practices. Task distribution and scheduling within the team enabled proportional coverage of all teachers, ensuring equity and consistency in supervision implementation. The involvement of multiple actors also fostered shared responsibility in maintaining instructional quality.

In addition, the supervision program was formally communicated to teachers prior to implementation. This socialization process aimed to clarify objectives, procedures, and supervision stages, while also encouraging openness and cooperation. Clear communication helped reduce resistance and positioned supervision as a professional support mechanism rather than a control-oriented activity.

Implementation of Educational Supervision in Instructional Practice

The implementation of educational supervision followed structured stages, including pre-observation, classroom observation, and post-observation.

During the pre-observation stage, supervisors engaged teachers in professional dialogue to discuss instructional readiness. This stage focused on reviewing lesson plans, teaching materials, instructional strategies, and learning media to ensure preparedness before classroom implementation.

Classroom observation was conducted through direct visits to observe authentic instructional practices. Supervisors focused on lesson delivery, teacher–student interaction, classroom management, and the use of instructional methods and media. Observations were conducted objectively using standardized instruments, such as rubrics and checklists, to ensure data accuracy and consistency. This approach enabled supervisors to capture real instructional conditions without disrupting the learning process.

The post-observation stage served as a reflective forum for providing constructive feedback. Supervisors highlighted instructional strengths while also identifying areas requiring improvement. Feedback was delivered dialogically to support teacher reflection and professional growth. This structured implementation demonstrates that supervision functioned as a professional learning process rather than a purely evaluative activity (Wiyono et al., 2021; Yunus et al., 2025).

Evaluation of Educational Supervision Outcomes

Evaluation activities focused on assessing teacher performance based on empirical data obtained during classroom observation and document review. The evaluation process examined alignment between instructional planning and classroom implementation, adherence to process standards, and achievement of learning objectives. This data-based evaluation emphasized professional judgment rather than administrative compliance (Rusdiana et al., 2026).

Supervision instruments, including assessment rubrics and checklists, functioned as quality control tools that enabled consistent and measurable evaluation. These instruments facilitated the identification of teachers' strengths and weaknesses in areas such as classroom management, content mastery, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. Such systematic evaluation aligns with scientific supervision principles that prioritize empirical evidence in instructional improvement (Hayati et al., 2025; Mulyanti, 2024).

From a Total Quality Management perspective, the evaluation stage reflects the *Check* phase of the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle. Evaluation served to detect performance variation, identify gaps between standards and practice, and establish a foundation for corrective action. This process positioned supervision as a strategic quality assurance mechanism within the school system (Ramlawati, 2020).

Follow-Up Actions in Educational Supervision

Follow-up actions constituted a critical component of the supervision process and were directed toward continuous instructional improvement. These actions were based on evaluation findings and aimed at addressing identified instructional gaps. Follow-up activities emphasized that supervision extended beyond assessment toward actionable professional development (Effendi & Sahertian, 2023).

Professional development support was delivered through both individual and group-based approaches. Individual coaching focused on specific instructional weaknesses, while group development activities included workshops, training sessions, and subject-teacher forums (MGMP). This differentiated approach ensured that professional development aligned with teachers' specific needs (Fatmawati et al., 2024).

The follow-up stage reflects the *Act* phase of the PDCA cycle, emphasizing continuous improvement and systemic change. In line with Deming's TQM principles, corrective actions were data-driven, structured, and integrated into school culture (Ramlawati, 2020). As a result, supervision evolved into a strategic mechanism for organizational learning and the development of a reflective, collaborative, and quality-oriented instructional culture.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that educational supervision functions most effectively when embedded within a systematic quality management framework. Consistent with previous studies, structured supervision planning provides clear direction, coherence, and purpose for professional development activities, ensuring alignment between instructional goals and school improvement priorities (Faiz et al., 2026; Hanafiah et al., 2025; Wijayanti et al., 2025). Systematic planning also enables supervision to move beyond procedural compliance toward purposeful instructional enhancement. The involvement of multiple stakeholders in the planning process reflects humanistic and collaborative supervision principles that emphasize shared responsibility, mutual trust, and transparency (Alhabsyi et al., 2022). Such collaborative planning fosters teacher ownership of the supervision process, reduces resistance, and promotes a professional climate conducive to continuous learning. Within the PDCA framework, the planning phase establishes a strong foundation for subsequent implementation and evaluation, reinforcing supervision as a strategic mechanism for sustaining instructional quality improvement rather than a short-term administrative routine.

The implementation of supervision through structured pre-observation, observation, and post-observation stages reinforces the conception of supervision as professional assistance rather than inspection. This approach aligns with clinical supervision models that emphasize dialogical interaction, reflective practice, and professional support as central elements of teacher development (Wiyono et al., 2021; Yunus et al., 2025). Pre-observation conferences provide opportunities to clarify instructional goals and expectations, while classroom observation enables supervisors to gather authentic data on teaching practices. Post-observation feedback then functions as a reflective space for professional dialogue and growth. The use of standardized instruments, such as rubrics and checklists, further enhances objectivity, consistency, and accountability in supervision processes (Hayati et al., 2025). Consequently, supervision becomes a structured learning process that supports teachers in refining instructional strategies and improving classroom practices in a sustainable manner.

Evaluation findings highlight the strategic importance of the *Check* phase within the PDCA cycle as a core component of instructional quality assurance. Data-based evaluation allows supervisors to systematically identify instructional strengths and gaps, providing a reliable foundation for informed decision-making and targeted professional development (Rusdiana et al., 2026). This evidence-driven approach aligns with Deming's assertion that sustainable quality improvement must be grounded in continuous measurement, analysis, and reflection rather than intuition or routine compliance (Ramlawati, 2020). By utilizing empirical data derived from classroom observation and instructional documentation, supervision supports objective assessment and minimizes subjectivity. Moreover, the evaluative function of supervision contributes to the development of a reflective professional culture in which teachers engage in continuous self-assessment. Within this framework, evaluation serves not as a punitive mechanism, but as a constructive process that informs improvement and strengthens instructional accountability.

Finally, follow-up actions emerge as the most decisive factor in transforming supervision outcomes into tangible instructional improvement. Consistent with Effendi and Sahertian (2023), supervision that incorporates structured and sustained follow-up promotes meaningful changes in teachers' professional practices. Follow-up activities, implemented through individualized coaching and collaborative professional development, ensure that evaluation findings translate into concrete instructional improvement. By integrating the *Act* phase into supervision practices, schools reinforce the principle of continuous improvement that lies at the core of Total Quality Management. This process enables supervision to function as an engine for

organizational learning rather than a one-time evaluative event. As argued by Murtyaningsih and Utami (2024), consistent follow-up strengthens a sustainable culture of quality, positioning educational supervision as a strategic driver of long-term instructional improvement.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that educational supervision grounded in the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle within the Total Quality Management framework provides meaningful lessons for improving instructional quality. The key insight gained is that supervision becomes effective when it is implemented as an integrated and continuous process rather than as an isolated administrative activity. Systematic planning enables structured implementation through professional pre-observation, observation, and post-observation stages, while data-based evaluation in the Check phase generates reliable evidence of teaching performance. These findings demonstrate that the Act phase, when informed by empirical data, is essential for fostering changes in teachers' professional practices and for cultivating a reflective and collaborative culture of instructional quality.

In terms of scholarly contribution, this study strengthens the conceptual linkage between educational supervision and quality management theory by empirically positioning supervision as a core mechanism within the PDCA cycle. The findings extend existing supervision literature by emphasizing the strategic roles of the Check and Act stages in sustaining continuous improvement. Nevertheless, this research is limited by its single-case qualitative design, which restricts the generalizability of findings. Future research is recommended to examine PDCA-based supervision across different school contexts and educational levels, and to investigate its long-term impact on student learning outcomes using mixed or longitudinal research designs.

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