



Beyond Monitoring: The Principal's Role in Teacher Performance Improvement

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v5i5.3261>

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Academic
Supervision; Principal
Leadership; Teacher
Performance;
Professional
Development;
Qualitative Research

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Academic supervision plays an important role in improving teacher performance by providing systematic monitoring, evaluation, and professional support. However, its effectiveness depends on how these functions are implemented and integrated into continuous professional development. This study aims to describe and analyze the principal's roles as an observer, evaluator, and successor in improving teacher performance. A qualitative descriptive design with a phenomenological approach was employed to explore the experiences and perspectives of the principal, vice principal, and teachers. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and documentation, and analyzed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Source and methodological triangulation were used to strengthen the credibility of the findings. The results indicate that the observer role involves monitoring instructional activities, identifying teaching difficulties, and maintaining communication with educational stakeholders. The evaluator role encompasses assessing teaching practices, reviewing learning outcomes, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging teacher reflection. The successor role involves follow-up supervision through professional guidance, mentoring, competency development, and continued performance monitoring. These findings suggest that academic supervision should be implemented as an integrated and continuous developmental process rather than merely an administrative assessment. The study implies that school principals should align supervision findings with teachers' professional needs, ensure systematic follow-up, and evaluate progress regularly to support sustainable improvements in instructional quality.

Article History:

Received: July 2026; Revised: August 2026; Accepted: September 2026

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Pramudya, K. D., Riyuzen, Dermawan, O. (2026). Beyond Monitoring: The Principal's Role in Teacher Performance Improvement. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 5(5), 6594-6608.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in developing human resources and preparing individuals to respond to the increasingly complex demands of

modern society (Dehalwar & Sharma, 2023). The quality of education influences not only students' academic achievement but also their capacity to think critically, solve problems, and participate productively in social and economic life. Teachers are central to this process because they translate educational objectives into meaningful learning experiences through lesson planning, classroom instruction, and learning assessment (Joseph et al., 2025; Nurhayati, 2025). However, the effectiveness of these responsibilities depends on continuous professional development and adequate institutional support. Schools therefore need effective mechanisms to monitor instructional practices and identify opportunities for improvement. Academic supervision is particularly important because it connects the management of educational institutions with the professional development of teachers (Furqon & Ramadani, 2025; Zahroh & Furqon, 2025). Consequently, strengthening academic supervision is essential for improving instructional quality and ensuring that education contributes meaningfully to broader societal development.

The importance of academic supervision becomes more evident when educational institutions face increasing expectations regarding teaching quality, accountability, and student learning outcomes (Khoiriah & Sujanto, 2026; Riau, 2026). Teachers must continually adapt their instructional strategies, develop appropriate learning materials, manage classroom interactions, and evaluate students' progress. Nevertheless, these responsibilities cannot always be fulfilled optimally without constructive feedback and professional guidance. Inadequate supervision may allow instructional weaknesses to persist, limit opportunities for professional reflection, and reduce the effectiveness of teaching practices. School principals therefore have a strategic responsibility to establish supervision processes that are systematic, supportive, and oriented toward continuous improvement (Arifin et al., 2025; Khoiriah & Sujanto, 2026). Effective supervision should extend beyond administrative inspection to include classroom observation, performance evaluation, constructive feedback, and appropriate follow-up activities. When these functions are implemented coherently, supervision can help teachers recognize their strengths, address instructional difficulties, and improve their professional competencies. Thus, academic supervision represents an important institutional strategy for strengthening teacher performance and educational quality.

Despite its strategic importance, implementing effective academic supervision remains challenging because supervision requires more than scheduling classroom visits or checking teachers' administrative documents. School principals must understand classroom conditions, assess instructional performance objectively, communicate evaluation results constructively, and ensure that recommendations lead to practical improvements (Ferrando et al.,

2025; Snow et al., 2025). These responsibilities may become disconnected when supervision emphasizes procedural compliance rather than sustained professional development. Observation without meaningful evaluation provides limited direction, while evaluation without follow-up may fail to address identified weaknesses. Similarly, professional guidance may have limited value when it is not based on documented classroom needs. Such challenges highlight the importance of examining supervision as an interconnected process rather than a collection of separate administrative activities (Batara et al., 2026; Zazin et al., 2025). Understanding how principals perform their supervisory responsibilities in actual school settings is therefore necessary to identify the relationship between monitoring, evaluation, and subsequent improvement efforts and to determine how these activities support teachers' professional performance.

At An Nuur Al Madani Junior High School in Bandar Lampung, preliminary observations conducted on December 15–18, 2025, identified several supervisory activities undertaken by the principal (Li et al., 2023; Ruloff & Petko, 2025). These activities included observing classroom instruction, reviewing the completeness of teaching materials, monitoring teachers' fulfillment of professional responsibilities, communicating evaluation results, and providing guidance and mentoring. Preliminary interviews with the principal, vice principal, and a teacher suggested that post-supervision guidance helped strengthen discipline in preparing instructional materials and improve teaching practices (Apriyono, 2026; Putri et al., 2026). Supporting documentation included supervision schedules, classroom observation sheets, supervision records, and teacher coaching programs. Nevertheless, these initial findings do not establish how consistently the principal performs each supervisory function or how evaluation results are translated into subsequent professional development. The extent to which observation, evaluation, and follow-up operate as an integrated process therefore requires further investigation. This situation provides a contextual basis for examining supervisory practices and their contribution to teacher performance.

Previous studies have examined academic supervision through several complementary perspectives (Manurung et al., 2026; Sahlin, 2025). Research investigating supervision and principal leadership has identified significant relationships between these factors and teacher performance, while other studies have considered supervision alongside teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Qualitative investigations have also described supervision procedures involving instructional planning, administrative review, classroom observation, assessment of learning instruments, and follow-up activities. Other research has explored supervisory implementation as a means of developing teachers'

competencies and improving professional performance in different educational institutions. Collectively, these studies establish the relevance of academic supervision to educational management and provide useful insights into its implementation. However, their differing analytical approaches mean that the relationships between supervisory monitoring, performance evaluation, and subsequent professional development are not always examined together within a single contextual analysis (Snow et al., 2025; Uraguchi, 2025). Further investigation is therefore needed to clarify how these functions are implemented and connected in particular school environments.

A critical synthesis of previous research indicates that the principal's supervisory responsibilities can be understood through related activities, including observing teachers' instructional practices, evaluating their performance, and organizing follow-up support. Nevertheless, existing discussions do not necessarily provide an integrated explanation of how these responsibilities operate together in the specific context of An Nuur Al Madani Junior High School. The research gap is therefore contextual and analytical rather than a claim that these supervisory functions have never been studied. This distinction is important because supervisory effectiveness depends not only on the presence of individual activities but also on their continuity and alignment with teachers' actual needs. Addressing this gap can contribute a more context-sensitive understanding of academic supervision by examining how evidence gathered during observation informs evaluation and how evaluation findings guide subsequent professional support. Such an analysis can also help educational managers identify opportunities to strengthen supervision as a continuous process of instructional improvement.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated analysis of the principal's supervisory role through three indicators: observer, evaluator, and successor, with the latter referring to the provision of follow-up support after supervision. These indicators are used to examine the continuity between classroom monitoring, performance assessment, and professional development at An Nuur Al Madani Junior High School in Bandar Lampung. The research addresses three questions: how does the principal perform the role of observer in monitoring teachers' instructional practices and professional responsibilities; how does the principal perform the role of evaluator in assessing teacher performance and providing constructive feedback; and how does the principal perform the role of successor through coaching, mentoring, and other follow-up activities? The study argues that teacher performance improvement is more likely to be supported when observation, evaluation, and follow-up function as interconnected supervisory activities. By examining these functions within their actual institutional context, the research seeks to provide a more comprehensive

understanding of principal supervision and inform efforts to strengthen systematic, continuous, and improvement-oriented educational management.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a phenomenological approach to explore the principal's role as a supervisor in improving teacher performance (Dinca et al., 2026; Lim, 2025). This design was selected because the research aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of supervisory practices, informants' experiences, and the meanings they attributed to supervision within the school environment. Rather than measuring relationships between variables, the study focused on describing how supervision was implemented through observation, evaluation, and follow-up activities. The phenomenological orientation enabled the researcher to examine the perspectives of individuals directly involved in supervisory practices, while the descriptive approach supported a systematic presentation of the findings based on empirical evidence. The principal, vice principal, and teachers served as key informants because of their involvement in or knowledge of academic supervision and its implementation.

The research was conducted at An Nuur Al Madani Junior High School in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. This location was selected because preliminary observations identified several academic supervision activities undertaken by the principal, including classroom observation, examination of teaching materials, evaluation of instructional practices, and provision of professional guidance. These activities provided a relevant context for investigating how the principal performed supervisory responsibilities and how the different stages of supervision were implemented in practice (Sitorus et al., 2026; Villamin et al., 2025). The school was also considered suitable because preliminary information indicated the availability of supporting documentation, including supervision schedules, classroom observation sheets, supervision records, and teacher coaching programs. The presence of these activities and documents enabled the researcher to examine supervision through multiple sources of information. The selection of this research site was therefore based on its relevance to the research objectives and the need to understand supervisory practices within an actual educational setting.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with the principal, vice principal, and selected teachers using purposive sampling based on their involvement in and understanding of academic supervision (He et al., 2024; Imansyah et al., 2025). The interviews explored the implementation of supervision, the assessment of teacher performance, the communication of

evaluation results, and the follow-up activities provided to support professional improvement. Direct observations were undertaken to obtain contextual information about relevant supervisory practices and teachers' instructional activities. Documentation was used to examine available records, including supervision schedules, classroom observation sheets, evaluation records, teaching materials, and teacher coaching programs. Combining these techniques enabled the researcher to compare information obtained through verbal accounts, observed activities, and written evidence. This approach supported a more comprehensive understanding of the research context and helped identify consistencies and differences among the collected data.

Data analysis followed an interactive process comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, organizing, simplifying, and focusing the collected information according to the research objectives and the three analytical indicators: observer, evaluator, and successor. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and relevant documents were reviewed to identify meaningful patterns and information related to each indicator. Data display involved organizing the condensed information into descriptive narratives and thematic categories to clarify the implementation of supervisory activities and the connections between observation, evaluation, and follow-up. Conclusion drawing involved interpreting the identified patterns and formulating findings concerning the principal's supervisory role in improving teacher performance. Verification was conducted by repeatedly examining the evidence and comparing information across data sources and collection techniques. Source triangulation and methodological triangulation were applied to assess the consistency of the findings and strengthen the credibility of the interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Role of the Principal as an Observer

The findings indicate that the principal's role as an observer at An Nuur Al Madani Junior High School in Bandar Lampung involves three main activities: monitoring the learning process and teachers' professional responsibilities, identifying instructional obstacles and coordinating their resolution, and communicating with teachers, students, and parents. These activities provide information about instructional implementation, teachers' working conditions, and challenges requiring further attention. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation indicate that the principal's observation extends beyond classroom instruction to include teachers' administrative preparation, attendance, discipline, and fulfillment of assigned responsibilities.

The interview results revealed that the principal monitors lesson preparation, material delivery, teaching methods, classroom management, teacher attendance, instructional readiness, administrative completeness, and compliance with assigned duties. The principal explained, "These observations help me identify what is already going well and what needs improvement, serving as the basis for providing guidance and coaching." The vice principal responsible for curriculum and teachers confirmed that supervision also examines instructional documents, discipline, adherence to teaching schedules, and the fulfillment of professional obligations. These accounts indicate that the principal uses observation to identify existing strengths and areas requiring improvement.

The observation results supported the interview findings by showing the monitoring of teachers' activities and the progression of classroom learning. Photographic documentation of the principal conducting morning rounds through classrooms provided additional evidence of direct monitoring within the school environment. The findings demonstrate that observation encompasses both instructional activities and the broader fulfillment of teachers' professional responsibilities. However, the available evidence primarily establishes that monitoring activities occur; it does not independently establish the extent to which every identified weakness is subsequently resolved.

The interview results further revealed that the principal identifies instructional obstacles through direct observation and communication with teachers. The principal stated, "I identify problems through direct observation and communication with teachers to understand challenges, such as classroom management, differences in student abilities, teaching methods, or limited resources." After identifying these difficulties, the principal discusses possible solutions with teachers and coordinates with relevant parties when necessary. The vice principal responsible for curriculum explained that discussions are also conducted when problems arise concerning teaching schedules, instructional materials, teaching strategies, or curriculum implementation. Teachers described communication with the principal as an opportunity to express difficulties and obtain guidance regarding possible solutions.

The findings also indicate that the principal communicates with teachers, students, and parents to obtain information about learning difficulties and issues affecting educational activities. The interview results showed that communication with teachers occurs through meetings, coordination, and direct conversations concerning task implementation and instructional improvement. Communication with students helps identify difficulties experienced during learning, while communication with parents takes place when academic progress or student behavior requires joint attention. Teachers reported that

communication among the principal, teachers, students, and parents helps identify problems and determine appropriate interventions. Observations confirmed communication and coordination activities supporting the learning process. However, the available photographs document classroom monitoring rather than direct communication with parents. Consequently, evidence concerning parental communication relies primarily on informants' statements.

The Role of the Principal as an Evaluator

The findings indicate that the principal's role as an evaluator encompasses assessing instructional implementation, reviewing teachers' professional responsibilities, providing feedback, evaluating learning programs, and encouraging teacher reflection. Evaluation considers lesson preparation, material delivery, classroom management, discipline, administrative responsibilities, and student learning outcomes. The principal explained, "Evaluation does not focus solely on final outcomes but also on the processes teachers employ to achieve learning objectives." The interview results from the vice principal responsible for curriculum and teachers showed a similar understanding of evaluation as a process for identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching practices. Teachers also viewed evaluation as a means of recognizing successful practices and determining aspects requiring improvement.

The interview results revealed that the principal provides feedback through direct communication and group discussions, taking teachers' circumstances and challenges into consideration. The principal stated, "Feedback is not merely an evaluation but also serves as guidance for teachers to improve and enhance the quality of instruction." The vice principal confirmed that feedback may be delivered individually or through collective discussions. Teachers reported that feedback helps them recognize weaknesses and identify improvements in their instructional practices. The findings indicate that feedback addresses teaching methods, classroom management, lesson preparation, and administrative documentation. Thus, evaluation is accompanied by communication intended to help teachers understand assessment results and determine appropriate adjustments to their professional practices.

The findings further show that the principal evaluates learning programs by examining the alignment between lesson planning and classroom implementation, difficulties arising during instruction, and the achievement of learning objectives. The interview results indicated that teachers are encouraged to reflect on student understanding, the effectiveness of teaching methods, and classroom management. The vice principal responsible for curriculum explained that evaluation findings can be discussed through curriculum coordination and joint meetings with teachers. Teachers also emphasized the importance of

reviewing instructional content, teaching methods, and student learning outcomes when planning subsequent lessons. Observations of teachers' activities and classroom conditions provided contextual evidence of the monitoring process, although the photographic documentation alone does not establish the full implementation of teacher performance evaluation.

The Role of the Principal as Successor

In this study, the principal's role as successor refers to continuing the process of improving teacher performance through supervision follow-up, competency development, and ongoing monitoring. The findings indicate that supervision does not end with evaluation but continues through discussions, guidance, coaching, and mentoring. The principal explained, "Teachers not only become aware of their shortcomings but also receive solutions and support to improve their performance and the quality of learning." The vice principal responsible for curriculum confirmed that follow-up also addresses instructional materials, curriculum implementation, and learning administration. Teachers viewed post-supervision feedback as an opportunity to recognize weaknesses and improve their teaching practices. These findings indicate that follow-up is intended to help teachers translate supervisory recommendations into instructional improvements.

The interview results further revealed that the principal encourages teachers to participate in training, workshops, professional development activities, and experience-sharing with colleagues, depending on their needs and available opportunities. The vice principal responsible for curriculum emphasized that training should correspond to teachers' actual professional needs so that acquired competencies can support classroom instruction. Teachers reported that training and sharing experiences could help improve teaching methods and adapt instruction to students' needs. The findings therefore indicate that competency development is pursued through both organized professional development activities and collaboration among teachers. However, the available evidence primarily describes these opportunities and their perceived benefits rather than systematically measuring the extent to which training outcomes are applied in classroom practice.

The findings also indicate that the principal continues monitoring teachers' performance after supervision by examining daily task implementation, discipline, instructional readiness, and the application of feedback. The principal emphasized the importance of a conducive school environment, effective coordination, adequate facilities, and learning programs tailored to students' needs. The vice principal responsible for curriculum reported that changes in teacher performance could be identified through adjustments made after

feedback, while teachers considered ongoing monitoring necessary for identifying and addressing professional challenges. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the principal's follow-up role involves guidance, competency development, and continued monitoring. Nevertheless, the consistency of these activities and the extent to which they produce sustained improvements in teacher performance require further examination.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that academic supervision at An Nuur Al Madani Junior High School operates through interconnected activities involving observation, evaluation, and follow-up. This pattern is broadly consistent with previous discussions of instructional supervision that emphasize systematic monitoring, performance assessment, and professional assistance. However, the present findings provide a contextual account of how these functions are expressed through classroom monitoring, administrative review, communication, feedback, and teacher development. The principal's supervisory role extends beyond checking compliance with professional responsibilities because the information gathered is also used to identify instructional difficulties and determine appropriate support (Gechere et al., 2025; Manurung et al., 2026). Theoretically, these findings reinforce an integrated understanding of academic supervision as a developmental process rather than an isolated administrative procedure. The contribution lies in demonstrating how the three supervisory functions can be examined together within a specific school context, while recognizing that their presence does not automatically establish measurable improvements in teaching quality.

The observer findings indicate that classroom monitoring, administrative review, and communication provide complementary sources of information about teacher performance. This is consistent with literature emphasizing the importance of direct observation and communication in understanding instructional practices. Nevertheless, the present findings highlight that observation also encompasses attendance, discipline, instructional readiness, and task fulfillment. Such breadth suggests that the principal understands teacher performance as involving both pedagogical practices and professional responsibilities (Arifin et al., 2025; Weddle, 2022). Communication with teachers, students, and parents further broadens the information available for identifying learning difficulties. However, the evidence concerning parental communication relies primarily on interview accounts rather than direct observational documentation. Practically, schools should therefore maintain systematic observation records and document communication outcomes. This would strengthen the evidentiary basis for identifying problems, determining priorities,

and ensuring that supervisory decisions reflect actual instructional conditions rather than administrative assumptions alone.

The evaluator findings show that performance assessment encompasses instructional processes, learning outcomes, administrative responsibilities, feedback, and teacher reflection. These findings correspond with established perspectives that regard supervision as an opportunity to identify professional strengths and address weaknesses through constructive evaluation. The specific contribution of this study is its demonstration that feedback at the research site is described as guidance rather than merely criticism (Joseph et al., 2025; Snow et al., 2025). Direct conversations and group discussions provide opportunities for teachers to understand evaluation results and consider instructional adjustments. Theoretically, this supports the interpretation of evaluation as a formative component of supervision, connecting assessment with professional learning. In practical terms, principals should ensure that feedback is specific, understandable, and linked to identifiable instructional needs. Evaluation should also be documented so that subsequent reviews can determine whether recommendations have been implemented and whether the adjustments have meaningfully addressed the difficulties identified during supervision.

The findings concerning the successor role indicate that follow-up involves coaching, mentoring, training, workshops, experience-sharing, and continued monitoring. These activities are consistent with literature that identifies professional development and supervisory follow-up as important mechanisms for strengthening teacher competence. However, the findings also reveal an important distinction between providing development opportunities and demonstrating their effectiveness. Informants described the perceived benefits of training and feedback, but the available evidence does not systematically establish the extent to which these activities produce sustained changes in classroom practice. Theoretically, this distinction highlights the importance of connecting professional development with observable instructional outcomes. Practically, schools should assess teachers' needs before selecting development activities and subsequently examine how acquired knowledge is applied. Follow-up observations, reflective discussions, and documented progress reviews could help determine whether professional assistance leads to meaningful improvements rather than simply increasing participation in training programs.

Taken together, the three supervisory functions suggest that improvement depends on the continuity between identifying instructional conditions, evaluating performance, and providing appropriate follow-up. This interpretation is consistent with integrated approaches to educational supervision, which emphasize coordination among monitoring, assessment, and

professional development. The present study contributes a context-specific explanation of how these functions are represented in the practices reported at An Nuur Al Madani Junior High School. Its analytical value lies in examining their interconnections rather than treating each activity as an independent responsibility. Nevertheless, the evidence supports conclusions about supervisory processes and informants' reported experiences more strongly than claims about causal effects on teacher performance (Hamid, 2024). The study does not establish that supervision alone produced measurable improvements. Future supervisory practice should therefore combine integrated procedures with clearer performance indicators, documented follow-up, and periodic assessment of changes in teaching practices.

The practical implications concern the need to strengthen supervision as a continuous, evidence-informed process tailored to teachers' professional needs. Principals can use classroom observations to identify instructional priorities, evaluations to communicate specific recommendations, and follow-up activities to support implementation and monitor progress. School management can reinforce this process by maintaining complete records, scheduling regular feedback sessions, coordinating relevant professional development, and reviewing the outcomes of previous recommendations. Theoretically, the study contributes to a contextual understanding of the observer, evaluator, and successor roles as related dimensions of academic supervision. Its principal contribution is not the introduction of entirely new supervisory activities but the integrated interpretation of these functions within one school setting. The findings should be interpreted within this contextual scope because they do not establish universal applicability or independently verify the long-term effects of supervision on teacher performance.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that improving teacher performance through academic supervision requires an interconnected process involving the principal's roles as observer, evaluator, and successor. The principal's observation of instructional practices and professional responsibilities provides a basis for identifying challenges, while evaluation, constructive feedback, and reflection help determine areas requiring improvement. Follow-up activities, including guidance, mentoring, competency development, and continued monitoring, support the translation of evaluation findings into professional development efforts. The principal contribution of this study lies in its integrated, context-specific interpretation of these three supervisory roles, offering a more comprehensive understanding of supervision as a continuous developmental process rather than merely an administrative assessment. However, the findings

are limited to one school and rely on qualitative evidence that does not establish causal relationships or measure long-term improvements in teacher performance. Future research should examine multiple educational institutions, involve broader participant groups, and investigate supervisory practices longitudinally. Practically, school principals should ensure that supervision findings inform targeted professional development, systematic follow-up, and regular assessments of teachers' progress to strengthen instructional quality and professional competence.

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