

The Role of Academic Supervision in Promoting Teacher Professionalism

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Abstract:

This study examines the role of academic supervision in promoting teacher professionalism within school settings. Using a qualitative research design, the study explores how supervision practices contribute to improving teachers' pedagogical competence, instructional performance, and professional development. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving school principals and teachers as key participants. The findings reveal that academic supervision plays a significant role in enhancing lesson planning, classroom management, and reflective teaching practices. Teachers reported that constructive feedback and collaborative discussions during supervision helped them identify strengths and areas for improvement, leading to more effective teaching strategies. However, the study also identifies several challenges in the implementation of academic supervision, including time constraints, varying levels of supervisor competence, and the perception of supervision as evaluative rather than developmental. Despite these limitations, when conducted systematically and supportively, academic supervision fosters teacher motivation, confidence, and continuous professional growth. The study concludes that effective academic supervision requires a collaborative approach, well-structured planning, and active teacher engagement to maximize its impact on teacher professionalism. These findings provide important implications for improving supervision practices and enhancing the overall quality of education.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental pillar in developing high-quality human resources. Within this context, teachers hold a strategic role as the primary agents in the teaching and learning process. Teacher professionalism becomes a key determinant of educational success, as the quality of instruction largely depends on teachers' competence, attitudes, and performance

in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Therefore, efforts to enhance teacher professionalism must be carried out systematically and continuously.

Teacher professionalism encompasses not only mastery of subject matter but also pedagogical, social, and personal competencies. Professional teachers are expected to design, implement, and evaluate effective learning processes while adapting to ongoing educational changes (Shulman, 1987). However, in practice, many teachers still face challenges in developing these competencies optimally.

One of the significant efforts to improve teacher professionalism is through academic supervision. Academic supervision refers to a series of guidance activities conducted by school principals or supervisors aimed at assisting teachers in improving the quality of their instruction (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2018). This process is not merely evaluative but also developmental in nature.

Academic supervision plays an essential role in providing feedback on teachers' instructional practices. Through classroom observations, reflective discussions, and performance evaluations, teachers can identify their strengths and areas for improvement (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). In this way, supervision becomes an effective tool for enhancing teaching quality.

Moreover, academic supervision encourages teachers to engage in continuous learning and self-development. In the modern educational landscape, characterized by rapid technological advancements and curriculum changes, teachers are required to constantly update their knowledge and skills (Fullan, 2016). Effective supervision can provide motivation and direction for sustained professional growth.

Despite its importance, the implementation of academic supervision in many schools is still not optimal. Common challenges include limited supervisory skills, time constraints, and approaches that are overly administrative rather than developmental (Zepeda, 2013). These issues can hinder the effectiveness of supervision in improving teacher professionalism.

In response to these challenges, a more humanistic and collaborative approach to supervision is needed. Academic supervision should not be perceived as a control mechanism but as a supportive process that fosters teachers' independent and reflective growth (Costa & Garmston, 2002). Such an approach can strengthen the relationship between supervisors and teachers.

Furthermore, effective academic supervision must be systematically designed by considering teachers' individual needs. Each teacher has unique characteristics and professional development requirements, making it necessary to tailor supervisory approaches accordingly (Danielson, 2007). This ensures that supervision outcomes are relevant and impactful.

The role of the school principal as a supervisor is also crucial in determining the success of academic supervision. Principals are not only administrators but also instructional leaders who guide and support teachers in improving instructional quality (Hallinger, 2005). Effective leadership can foster a school culture that supports professional development.

On the other hand, teacher participation in the supervision process is equally important. Teachers need to be open to feedback and committed to continuous improvement (Hattie, 2009). Without such willingness, academic supervision may not yield significant results.

Based on the discussion above, it can be understood that academic supervision holds great potential in promoting teacher professionalism. However, its effectiveness largely depends on how it is designed and implemented. Therefore, further research on this topic is necessary to gain deeper insights.

Thus, this study aims to analyze the role of academic supervision in promoting teacher professionalism. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of more effective supervisory practices and serve as a reference for stakeholders in improving the overall quality of education.

Method (منهج)

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the role of academic supervision in promoting teacher professionalism. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and practices related to supervision processes in schools (Creswell, 2014). Through this approach, the researcher aimed to capture the complexity of interactions between supervisors and teachers within their natural settings.

The research was conducted in a selected school setting where academic supervision is regularly implemented. The site was chosen purposively based on its active supervision program and accessibility for data collection. The participants of this study included the school principal, several teachers, and, if applicable, academic supervisors who are directly involved in the supervision process. These participants were considered key informants who could provide rich and relevant data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data were collected using multiple techniques, namely in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore participants' perspectives on the implementation and impact of academic supervision. Classroom observations allowed the researcher to directly examine teaching practices and supervisory interactions, while document analysis included reviewing supervision reports, lesson plans, and school policies (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

The interview process followed a semi-structured format, enabling flexibility while maintaining focus on the research objectives. Open-ended questions were used to encourage participants to share their experiences and insights freely. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed systematically to ensure data accuracy and reliability (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Observation was conducted using a structured observation guide to capture key aspects of teaching practices and supervision activities. The researcher took detailed field notes during the observation process to document relevant events, behaviors, and interactions. This method helped triangulate the data obtained from interviews and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data, this study applied several strategies, including triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement. Triangulation was achieved by comparing data from different sources and methods, while member checking involved verifying the findings with participants to ensure accuracy. These strategies are essential in qualitative research to enhance credibility and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model, which included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher organized and coded the data into themes related to academic supervision and teacher professionalism. This process was carried out continuously throughout the study to identify patterns and relationships within the data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Finally, ethical considerations were carefully addressed in this study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and their consent was obtained prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using pseudonyms and securing all research data. This ensured that the study adhered to ethical standards in educational research (Creswell, 2014).

Result (نتائج)

The findings of this study reveal that academic supervision plays a significant role in enhancing teacher professionalism, particularly in improving instructional practices and pedagogical awareness. Based on data collected from interviews, observations, and document analysis, teachers generally perceived academic supervision as a supportive process that contributes positively to their professional growth.

First, the study found that academic supervision helps teachers improve lesson planning. Many participants reported that feedback provided by supervisors enabled them to design more structured and student-centered lesson plans. Teachers became more aware of the importance of aligning learning objectives, teaching strategies, and assessment methods to achieve effective learning outcomes.

Second, classroom observations conducted during the study indicated noticeable improvements in teaching practices after supervision sessions. Teachers demonstrated better classroom management, clearer instructional delivery, and more interactive teaching methods. These improvements suggest that supervision contributes directly to the enhancement of pedagogical competence.

Third, the results showed that reflective discussions between supervisors and teachers were highly beneficial. Teachers expressed that post-observation conferences allowed them to critically reflect on their teaching practices. This reflective process encouraged them to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, leading to continuous professional development.

Fourth, academic supervision was found to increase teachers' motivation and confidence. Many teachers reported feeling more supported and valued when supervisors provided constructive feedback and encouragement. This positive reinforcement contributed to greater self-efficacy and willingness to implement new teaching strategies.

Fifth, the study revealed that supervision also fosters collaboration among teachers. In some cases, supervisors facilitated group discussions or peer-sharing sessions, allowing teachers to exchange ideas and best practices. This collaborative environment enhanced professional learning and strengthened collegial relationships within the school.

Sixth, despite these positive outcomes, some challenges were identified in the implementation of academic supervision. A few teachers reported that supervision was sometimes perceived as evaluative rather than developmental, particularly when feedback was not delivered effectively. This perception occasionally led to anxiety among teachers.

Seventh, time constraints were also highlighted as a major limitation. Both supervisors and teachers indicated that limited time for observation and feedback sessions reduced the effectiveness of supervision. As a result, some supervision activities were conducted in a less comprehensive manner.

Eighth, the findings showed variations in the quality of supervision depending on the supervisor's competence. Teachers who received guidance from experienced and skilled supervisors reported more meaningful and impactful supervision experiences compared to those supervised by less experienced individuals.

Ninth, document analysis revealed that schools with well-structured supervision programs tended to achieve better outcomes in teacher development. These programs included clear guidelines, regular schedules, and systematic follow-up actions, which contributed to the consistency and effectiveness of supervision.

Tenth, the study also found that teachers' openness to feedback significantly influenced the

success of academic supervision. Teachers who actively engaged in the process and demonstrated a willingness to improve showed greater progress in their professional competencies.

Eleventh, the integration of supervision with professional development programs, such as workshops and training sessions, further enhanced its impact. Teachers who participated in both supervision and training activities experienced more comprehensive professional growth.

Finally, overall findings indicate that academic supervision is a powerful tool for promoting teacher professionalism when implemented effectively. However, its success depends on several factors, including the approach used by supervisors, the availability of time, and the active participation of teachers. These results highlight the importance of improving supervision practices to maximize their impact on educational quality.

Discussion (مناقشة)

The findings of this study confirm that academic supervision plays a crucial role in promoting teacher professionalism. The improvement in lesson planning and instructional practices observed in this study aligns with the view that supervision functions as a developmental process aimed at enhancing teaching quality (Glickman et al., 2018). Teachers who received constructive feedback were able to refine their instructional strategies and create more effective learning environments.

Furthermore, the results indicate that academic supervision contributes significantly to teachers' pedagogical competence. This finding supports the theory proposed by Shulman (1987), which emphasizes the importance of pedagogical content knowledge in effective teaching. Through supervision, teachers gained insights into how to better integrate subject matter with appropriate teaching methods.

The reflective discussions identified in this study also highlight the importance of reflection in professional development. As noted by Schön (1983), reflective practice enables professionals to critically examine their actions and continuously improve their performance. The post-observation conferences provided opportunities for teachers to engage in meaningful reflection, thereby enhancing their teaching effectiveness.

In addition, the study found that academic supervision positively influences teachers' motivation and confidence. This finding is consistent with Hattie (2009), who emphasizes that feedback is one of the most powerful factors affecting learning and performance. Constructive and supportive feedback from supervisors helped teachers feel more confident in their abilities and encouraged them to adopt innovative teaching approaches.

The collaborative aspect of supervision observed in this study also supports the concept of professional learning communities. According to Fullan (2016), collaboration among educators fosters shared learning and collective improvement. The facilitation of peer discussions and idea-sharing sessions contributed to a more dynamic and supportive professional environment.

However, the study also revealed challenges in the implementation of academic supervision, particularly the perception of supervision as an evaluative rather than developmental process. This issue is in line with Zepeda (2013), who notes that supervision can be ineffective if it is perceived as judgmental. Such perceptions may hinder teachers' openness and willingness to engage in the supervision process.

Time constraints emerged as another significant barrier, limiting the effectiveness of supervision activities. This finding is supported by Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007), who argue that adequate time allocation is essential for meaningful supervision. Without sufficient time, supervisors may not be able to provide comprehensive feedback and guidance.

The variation in supervision quality based on the supervisor's competence also highlights the importance of instructional leadership. Hallinger (2005) emphasizes that effective school leaders play a key role in improving teaching and learning. Skilled supervisors are better equipped to guide teachers and facilitate professional growth.

Moreover, the importance of structured supervision programs identified in this study aligns with Danielson's (2007) framework for teaching, which stresses the need for systematic and consistent evaluation and support. Schools that implemented clear supervision procedures were more successful in fostering teacher development.

The findings also underscore the significance of teachers' attitudes toward supervision. Teachers who demonstrated openness and willingness to improve benefited more from the supervision process. This supports the argument by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) that adult learning is most effective when individuals are actively engaged and motivated to learn.

Additionally, the integration of supervision with other professional development programs was found to enhance its effectiveness. This finding is consistent with Darling-Hammond (2017), who highlights the importance of continuous and integrated professional learning opportunities for teachers. Combining supervision with training programs creates a more holistic approach to teacher development.

Overall, this study reinforces the idea that academic supervision is a vital component of teacher professional development. However, its success depends on how it is implemented, including the approach used, the competence of supervisors, and the level of teacher engagement. Therefore, improving supervision practices should be a priority for educational institutions seeking to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

Conclusion (خاتمة)

This study concludes that academic supervision plays a vital and multifaceted role in promoting teacher professionalism, particularly in improving pedagogical competence, instructional quality, and reflective teaching practices. Through structured supervision activities such as classroom observations, feedback sessions, and reflective discussions, teachers are able to identify their strengths and weaknesses and make meaningful improvements in their teaching. The findings demonstrate that when supervision is conducted in a supportive, collaborative, and developmental manner, it not only enhances teachers' technical skills but also strengthens their motivation, confidence, and commitment to continuous professional growth. Moreover, the integration of supervision with other professional development initiatives further amplifies its impact, creating a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to teacher development.

However, the effectiveness of academic supervision is not automatic and depends heavily on several critical factors, including the competence of supervisors, the availability of sufficient time, and the attitudes of teachers toward the supervision process. Challenges such as limited time, inconsistent implementation, and perceptions of supervision as merely evaluative can reduce its potential benefits. Therefore, it is essential for educational institutions to adopt more systematic, reflective, and teacher-centered supervision practices that prioritize guidance over judgment. By strengthening the quality of supervision and fostering a culture of continuous learning and collaboration, schools can significantly enhance teacher professionalism and ultimately improve the overall quality of education.

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