



CLINICAL SUPERVISION AS A CATALYST FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

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Abstract

This study explores the implementation of clinical supervision as a means to enhance teaching quality. Utilizing a qualitative approach and a case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis involving teachers who had experienced clinical supervision, supervisors, and the school principal. The data analysis employed qualitative methods, including open, axial, and selective coding, to identify key themes related to the role of clinical supervision in teacher professional development. The findings reveal that clinical supervision significantly improves teaching quality, particularly in lesson planning, implementation, and evaluation. Teachers reported notable enhancements in their teaching strategies and classroom management following feedback from supervisors. However, the study also uncovered challenges such as time constraints and a lack of sufficient training for supervisors. Despite these challenges, teachers generally held positive perceptions of clinical supervision, recognizing it as an essential tool for their professional growth. In conclusion, this study affirms that clinical supervision is an effective approach to enhancing teaching quality. The study provides recommendations for improving supervisor training and optimizing supervision time to maximize the benefits of the clinical supervision process.

Keywords: Clinical Supervision, Catalyst, Educational Improvement

INTRODUCTION

The quality of teaching is a determining factor in achieving optimal educational goals, especially in an era of globalization that increasingly demands competent and adaptive individuals. However, efforts to realize this commitment are often hindered by various challenges, such as limited resources and differences in students' abilities. This makes improving the quality of teaching a complex challenge for the madrasah. According to Hattie (2009), the effectiveness of teaching has a profound impact on student achievement, emphasizing the importance of continuously improving instructional practices in all educational settings.

Previous research has shown that clinical supervision can be an effective solution for improving the quality of teaching. Humairoh et al., (2016.) reveals that this approach encourages the professional development of teachers through structured evaluations and feedback, which can improve teaching practices. In line with this, Glickman et al. (2014) argue that clinical supervision fosters reflective teaching practices and enhances the collaboration between teachers and supervisors, leading to improved instructional strategies. However, most of these studies were conducted in public schools or madrasahs with more adequate resources. Few focus on the context of private madrasahs with limited



facilities. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by exploring the effectiveness of clinical supervision in a madrasah setting with limited resources.

The key question this study seeks to answer is: How can an appropriate clinical supervision model be applied to address existing challenges and enhance teacher competence? Through a qualitative approach and an in-depth case study, this research will directly observe the ongoing clinical supervision process at the madrasah. This study is expected to produce a supervision model that is relevant to the context of private madrasahs in Indonesia and serves as a reference for best practices in improving the quality of teaching.

The uniqueness of this research lies in several key aspects: This study specifically examines the unique challenges and opportunities within the context of Islamic madrasah, which often have different characteristics from public schools. Second, Through an in-depth case study, this research will provide a richer portrayal of the experiences of teachers and supervisors in the clinical supervision process, revealing deeper dynamics from the perspectives of those directly involved. Third, This study will identify internal and external factors that influence the success of clinical supervision implementation, such as support from madrasah leadership, teacher involvement, and the availability of resources.

Thus, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the professional development of teachers, as well as provide relevant policy recommendations to improve the quality of education in other private madrasahs facing similar challenges.

METHOD

The approach used in this research is qualitative, which aims to deeply understand phenomena from the perspective of the research subjects. Qualitative research is particularly suited to the social sciences and humanities, as it focuses on human behavior and the meanings behind it, which are often difficult to measure quantitatively (Harahap, 2020). In the context of this study, a qualitative approach was chosen to explore the clinical supervision. This approach allows the researcher to delve into the experiences, perceptions, and views of teachers, supervisors, and other related parties regarding the supervision process (Glickman et al., 2014; Creswell, 2013).

His study adopts a case study design aimed at examining the implementation of clinical supervision. Case studies are highly effective for exploring specific phenomena within a particular context, especially when the boundary between the phenomenon and its context is not clear (Yin, 2018). The main focus is on the subjective experiences of teachers and supervisors during the clinical supervision process and its impact on teaching quality.

Data collection methods include: In-depth interviews and Semi-structured interviews are used to explore the perceptions, experiences, and views of teachers, supervisors, and management regarding clinical supervision. This type of interview allows flexibility for deeper exploration of important aspects raised by the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The researcher will directly observe the clinical supervision process, including interactions between supervisors and teachers, as well as the impact on teaching practices. Documents such as lesson plans and supervision notes will be analyzed to complement the data obtained from interviews and observations.



Qualitative data analysis is conducted systematically and iteratively, following a thematic analysis approach. Data from interviews, observations, and documents will be thoroughly analyzed to identify key themes and patterns related to the implementation of clinical supervision. This analysis will help understand the factors influencing the effectiveness of clinical supervision, such as management support, teacher involvement, and resource availability (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The chosen qualitative data analysis approach aims to uncover deeper meanings from the rich and complex data. By using a systematic and cyclical approach, the researcher can ensure that the analysis reflects the realities experienced by the research subjects and provides meaningful insights into the implementation of clinical supervision.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Implementation of Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision is a structured and collaborative approach designed to enhance teachers' professional growth through reflective practices. In this study, conducted during the 2024/2025 academic year, qualitative data was collected from 16 teachers through in-depth interviews, direct classroom observations, and written responses. The clinical supervision process was conducted as scheduled and followed several key phases to ensure systematic improvement in teaching quality.

a. Pre-Observation Phase

The pre-observation phase is crucial for laying the groundwork for the supervision process. In this phase, the supervisor and teacher collaboratively plan the upcoming classroom observation session. This includes discussing instructional goals, identifying specific teaching practices to be observed, and determining the criteria for assessment. By involving the teacher in setting these objectives, the process becomes more transparent and mutually supportive (Glickman et al., 2014).

The primary aim of the pre-observation discussion is to foster a collaborative relationship between the supervisor and teacher, making supervision less evaluative and more developmental. Teachers are encouraged to express their concerns, teaching challenges, and areas they want feedback on, which allows the supervisor to tailor the observation process according to individual needs. This collaborative dialogue builds trust, reduces anxiety around being observed, and sets the stage for more meaningful post-observation feedback.

b. Observation Phase

During the observation phase, the supervisor directly observes the teacher in their classroom environment. The observations are guided by the goals and criteria established during the pre-observation meeting. The supervisor collects data on various aspects of teaching, such as the methods employed, the interaction between the teacher and students, the use of instructional materials, and classroom management techniques. The observation should be non-intrusive, allowing the teacher to conduct the lesson as naturally as possible, without feeling pressured to perform in a specific way.

The observation phase is not merely about identifying areas of weakness but also about recognizing strengths. Effective supervisors take a balanced approach by noting both the teacher's competencies and areas for growth. The data collected here forms the foundation for the post-observation feedback session, where teachers are guided in reflecting on their instructional methods.



c. Post-Observation Phase

The post-observation phase is perhaps the most critical part of clinical supervision. It is during this phase that feedback is given, reflection is encouraged, and strategies for improvement are jointly discussed. After the observation, the supervisor meets with the teacher to analyze the data gathered and to provide constructive feedback. This feedback session is a two-way dialogue where both parties engage in identifying the strengths and weaknesses observed during the lesson.

The feedback provided by the supervisor should be specific, actionable, and focused on improving teaching practices (Creswell, 2013). Rather than merely pointing out what went wrong, the supervisor should offer solutions and discuss potential strategies that the teacher can implement in future lessons. Additionally, supervisors should encourage teachers to engage in self-reflection, which helps them internalize the feedback and apply it meaningfully to their teaching practices. This reflective process enables teachers to think critically about their instructional choices, classroom management, and student engagement strategies, leading to deeper professional growth.

Supervisors and teachers often create action plans during this phase, outlining concrete steps the teacher will take to address the areas of improvement. These plans also set measurable goals for future teaching sessions, providing clear benchmarks for progress. Supervisors should offer follow-up support to ensure that the teacher feels guided throughout the implementation of these improvement strategies.

2. Impact of Clinical Supervision

The findings of this study underscore the significant positive impact of clinical supervision on the quality of teaching. Through direct feedback and reflection, teachers have been able to enhance their instructional practices, develop more effective classroom management strategies, and foster a more student-centered learning environment.

a. Improved Teaching Strategies and Classroom Management

One of the most noticeable outcomes of clinical supervision is the improvement in teaching strategies and classroom management. Teachers reported that the feedback they received from supervisors helped them refine their instructional approaches. This often involved adopting more student-centered teaching methods, such as differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, and inquiry-based learning (Zepeda, 2017).

In terms of classroom management, teachers felt more equipped to handle various challenges, such as student behavior, time management, and resource allocation. The supervisor's observation provided insight into how teachers could maintain a more organized and productive classroom environment, leading to smoother lesson flow and improved student engagement.

b. Encouraging Teacher Reflection

Another major benefit of clinical supervision is its ability to encourage teachers to reflect critically on their practices. Reflective teaching is a process where educators analyze their teaching methods, assess the outcomes, and make necessary adjustments to improve their effectiveness. The study found that clinical supervision promotes this reflective mindset by offering teachers structured opportunities to engage in self-assessment.

Through reflection, teachers are able to identify their strengths and areas of growth. For instance, some teachers recognized that they were not giving enough attention to struggling students, prompting them to adopt more inclusive instructional strategies. Others discovered that their classroom management techniques could be



improved, leading to adjustments that resulted in a more controlled learning environment. The reflective process empowers teachers to take ownership of their professional development, making them more proactive in seeking out new strategies to enhance their effectiveness.

c. Strengthening Collaborative Relationships

Clinical supervision also plays a pivotal role in strengthening the professional relationship between teachers and supervisors. The collaborative nature of the process, where supervisors and teachers work together to achieve common goals, fosters a sense of trust and mutual respect. This collaborative environment not only motivates teachers to improve their instructional practices but also encourages them to be open to feedback and new ideas.

Many teachers in this study reported feeling more supported and motivated after engaging in clinical supervision. They appreciated the constructive feedback and felt more confident in implementing new teaching techniques. The positive working relationship between teachers and supervisors contributes to a more dynamic and innovative teaching culture, where educators are encouraged to experiment with new approaches and take risks in their instructional practices.

3. Challenges in Implementation

Despite the numerous benefits of clinical supervision, the study also highlighted several challenges that hinder its effective implementation.

a. Time Constraints

One of the most frequently mentioned challenges was the issue of time constraints. Many teachers expressed that their already busy schedules made it difficult to allocate sufficient time for the clinical supervision process. Between lesson planning, grading, and administrative duties, finding time for pre-observation meetings, classroom observations, and post-observation feedback sessions can be challenging. Supervisors, too, face similar time limitations, as they often have to balance their supervisory duties with other responsibilities.

To address this challenge, schools could consider restructuring schedules to provide dedicated time for supervision activities. Alternatively, reducing the frequency of supervision sessions while maintaining their quality could help alleviate the time burden on both teachers and supervisors.

b. Lack of Training for Supervisors

Another challenge is the lack of proper training for supervisors. Effective supervision requires not only observational skills but also the ability to provide constructive feedback, foster reflection, and support teachers in their professional growth. Some supervisors in this study expressed a need for further training in these areas, particularly in delivering feedback that is both supportive and critical (Glickman et al., 2014).

Investing in professional development for supervisors is crucial to ensure that they are equipped with the skills necessary to carry out their roles effectively. Workshops, seminars, and mentoring programs could be implemented to enhance supervisors' abilities to conduct meaningful and impactful supervision.

Discussion

The findings of this research resonate with several prominent theoretical frameworks that underscore the value of clinical supervision in fostering teacher



professional development. By examining the results through the lenses of Developmental Supervision Theory, Reflective Practice Theory, and Instructional Leadership Theory, we gain a deeper understanding of how clinical supervision can influence teaching practices and professional growth. These theories offer valuable perspectives on the differentiated nature of supervision, the reflective process in teaching, and the leadership dynamics that promote continuous improvement.

1. Developmental Supervision Theory (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon)

The Developmental Supervision Theory proposed by Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2014) highlights the need for supervision to be adapted to the individual developmental stages and needs of teachers. This framework posits that supervision should not be a one-size-fits-all model but rather should consider the varying levels of expertise and professional readiness among educators. In this study, the individualized approach to clinical supervision strongly aligns with the principles of this theory.

The findings illustrate that the pre-observation discussions played a critical role in tailoring the supervision process to each teacher's unique context. Teachers had the opportunity to communicate their specific challenges and goals, which allowed supervisors to customize their observations and feedback accordingly. For example, less experienced teachers were provided with more directive support, focusing on basic classroom management and instructional techniques. In contrast, more experienced teachers engaged in reflective dialogues that focused on fine-tuning advanced pedagogical strategies. This adaptive approach to supervision is supported by Glickman et al.'s (2014) assertion that supervisors must adjust their strategies to meet the developmental needs of individual teachers, ensuring that the process fosters growth rather than simply enforcing standard practices.

The developmental nature of supervision was also evident in the post-observation phase, where feedback was personalized and aimed at addressing each teacher's strengths and areas for improvement. This process allowed for a differentiated approach, where novice teachers received more concrete guidance, while experienced teachers were encouraged to engage in deeper reflective practices and self-directed learning. The study supports the idea that supervision should not only focus on correcting deficiencies but also on nurturing professional growth by providing feedback that aligns with the teacher's current level of expertise and readiness for change (Glickman et al., 2014).

b. Reflective Practice Theory (Schön)

The Reflective Practice Theory proposed by Schön (1983) emphasizes the importance of reflection in professional learning, particularly through the concepts of "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action." This theory suggests that effective professional development occurs when individuals are given structured opportunities to reflect both during and after their professional activities.

In this study, clinical supervision encouraged teachers to reflect on their teaching practices in both real-time and post-observation settings. During the observation phase, teachers engaged in "reflection-in-action," where they were able to adjust their instructional practices in response to classroom dynamics and feedback provided by supervisors. This form of reflection is immediate and allows for on-the-spot adjustments, enhancing the teacher's ability to respond to the diverse needs of their students.

The post-observation feedback facilitated "reflection-on-action," where teachers had the opportunity to analyze their instructional practices after the fact. This deeper reflection allowed teachers to critically evaluate their teaching methods, classroom



management strategies, and student engagement techniques. As Schön (1983) highlights, reflection-on-action is crucial for professional growth, as it enables educators to systematically review their experiences, identify patterns in their teaching, and explore alternative strategies for improvement.

The study's findings confirm that clinical supervision provides a structured framework for reflection, which is essential for transformational learning—a process where teachers move beyond superficial changes and engage in meaningful pedagogical adjustments. Reflective practice not only helps teachers identify what worked well in their lessons but also allows them to recognize areas that require improvement. This aligns with Schön's theory, which asserts that structured reflection, guided by supervision, leads to greater self-awareness and more thoughtful teaching practices.

International research supports the importance of reflection in professional development. A study by Larrivee (2000) demonstrated that reflective teachers are more likely to engage in continuous professional learning and are better equipped to adapt to the changing needs of their students. Similarly, Fendler (2003) emphasized that reflection helps teachers challenge their assumptions and biases, leading to more equitable and inclusive teaching practices. The findings from align with these studies, showing that clinical supervision not only promotes technical improvements but also fosters deeper reflective thinking among teachers.

c. Instructional Leadership Theory (Blase & Blase)

The Instructional Leadership Theory developed by Blase and Blase (1999) focuses on the role of school leaders—specifically supervisors and administrators—in enhancing the quality of teaching through collaboration, feedback, and guidance. According to this theory, effective instructional leaders provide constructive feedback, promote reflective practice, and foster a supportive environment where teachers feel encouraged to innovate and take risks in their teaching.

In this study, supervisors played a pivotal role as instructional leaders by facilitating collaborative discussions and providing meaningful feedback that motivated teachers to improve their practices. Teachers reported feeling supported and encouraged by the feedback they received, which was not only critical but also constructive. This is consistent with Blase and Blase's (1999) findings, which suggest that when instructional leaders provide feedback that is both supportive and challenging, teachers are more likely to be motivated to implement new and innovative teaching strategies.

The collaborative nature of the supervision process observed in this study is a key element of instructional leadership. Supervisors worked closely with teachers to identify areas for improvement and to co-create action plans aimed at addressing specific instructional challenges. This collaborative approach is crucial for fostering a culture of continuous improvement, where teachers feel empowered to take ownership of their professional development.

Blase and Blase (1999) also emphasize that instructional leaders must create an environment where teachers feel safe to experiment with new approaches without fear of judgment. This study's findings suggest that the supervisors successfully created such an environment, as teachers reported being more open to trying innovative strategies after receiving positive and constructive feedback from their supervisors. This aligns with the broader literature on instructional leadership, which highlights the importance of trust, collaboration, and support in promoting teacher growth (Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2020).



Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study not only reaffirm the importance of existing educational theories but also expand on their relevance in the practical application of clinical supervision in the school context. Several key theoretical implications emerge from the study's results, highlighting how clinical supervision can serve as a powerful tool for enhancing teacher development and improving educational outcomes.

a. Support for Differentiated Supervision (Developmental Supervision Theory)

This study provides robust support for Glickman's Developmental Supervision Theory, which emphasizes the need for differentiated supervision tailored to the varying developmental stages and individual needs of teachers (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2014). One key theoretical implication is that one-size-fits-all supervision is insufficient for fostering meaningful improvements in teaching practices. Instead, this research demonstrates that supervisors must adjust their approach based on the teacher's level of experience, skills, and readiness to engage in reflective and professional learning.

For instance, novice teachers may benefit more from directive feedback that focuses on building foundational skills in classroom management, lesson planning, and basic instructional techniques. Conversely, more experienced teachers often require more nuanced and reflective dialogues that encourage them to critically examine their teaching practices and explore innovative approaches to engage students. This aligns with Glickman's assertion that supervision must be developmentally appropriate and tailored to meet teachers where they are in their professional journey, fostering continuous growth rather than focusing solely on addressing deficiencies.

Furthermore, the collaborative nature of clinical supervision—emphasizing joint goal setting and open dialogue—illustrates the practical application of this theory. By engaging teachers in reflective conversations about their teaching practices during both the pre-observation and post-observation phases, supervisors create an environment where teachers feel empowered to take ownership of their professional growth. This highlights a critical theoretical implication: differentiated supervision not only improves immediate teaching practices but also promotes a culture of self-directed learning and long-term professional development.

b. Strengthening Reflective Practices (Reflective Practice Theory)

The findings also reinforce Schön's Reflective Practice Theory, particularly the role of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action in supporting ongoing professional learning (Schön, 1983). The study reveals that clinical supervision provides a structured framework for teachers to engage in both real-time reflection (while teaching) and post-event reflection (after teaching). This reflective process is essential for teachers to critically evaluate their practices, make necessary adjustments, and refine their instructional strategies based on feedback from supervisors.

A key theoretical implication here is that reflective practice should not be viewed as an isolated activity, but rather as an integral component of professional development facilitated through structured supervision. The study highlights that clinical supervision encourages teachers to become reflective practitioners—those who continuously analyze their own teaching to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This process supports Schön's argument that professional growth is inherently tied to reflection, where teachers must continuously cycle between action and reflection to develop a deeper understanding of their teaching and how it impacts student learning.



In addition, the study suggests that clinical supervision fosters a culture of critical reflection, where teachers are encouraged not just to reflect on their teaching in isolation, but to engage in dialogue with supervisors and peers. This collaborative reflection process can deepen teachers' self-awareness, allowing them to move beyond surface-level improvements and engage in more transformative pedagogical changes. In this sense, the findings expand Schön's theory by showing that supervised reflection, supported by constructive feedback, can enhance not only individual teaching practices but also promote collaborative professional learning communities within schools.

c. Instructional Leadership as a Catalyst for Change (Instructional Leadership Theory)

The study extends Blase and Blase's Instructional Leadership Theory (1999), which posits that effective instructional leaders play a crucial role in fostering teacher motivation, engagement, and professional growth through constructive feedback and collaborative support. In the context of this study, clinical supervisors served as instructional leaders who not only observed and evaluated teachers but also coached them through reflective dialogues and targeted feedback sessions.

A significant theoretical implication is that instructional leadership—when integrated with clinical supervision—acts as a catalyst for meaningful pedagogical change. This goes beyond the traditional view of supervision as merely evaluative. Instead, instructional leaders who adopt a collaborative and supportive role can actively promote teacher innovation, creativity, and willingness to take risks in their instructional methods. This collaborative leadership style is crucial for developing professional trust, where teachers feel safe to experiment with new strategies without fear of punitive consequences.

The study underscores the importance of instructional leadership in creating an environment that supports continuous professional development. Teachers reported feeling more motivated and engaged when they received feedback that was both constructive and supportive—reinforcing Blase and Blase's theory that effective feedback fosters a positive professional relationship between supervisors and teachers. This collaborative relationship, in turn, encourages teachers to embrace change and adopt more innovative teaching strategies, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes.

Additionally, the study highlights the role of instructional leaders in fostering a shared vision for improvement within the school community. Supervisors who engage in clinical supervision not only provide individual feedback but also contribute to building a collective commitment to high-quality teaching and learning. This suggests that instructional leaders, through clinical supervision, can play a critical role in shaping the professional culture of a school, promoting continuous improvement and a shared responsibility for student success.

d. Integration of Theoretical Frameworks for Comprehensive Supervision

An important broader implication is the integration of these three theoretical frameworks—Developmental Supervision Theory, Reflective Practice Theory, and Instructional Leadership Theory—to form a comprehensive approach to clinical supervision. The study demonstrates that clinical supervision is most effective when it incorporates elements of differentiated supervision, structured reflection, and instructional leadership. This suggests that schools should adopt an integrated approach to supervision that addresses both the individual needs of teachers and the broader institutional goals of fostering continuous improvement and professional growth.



By aligning these theoretical frameworks, supervisors can create a holistic supervision model that not only enhances immediate instructional practices but also promotes long-term professional development. This model recognizes that teacher growth is a dynamic process that requires ongoing reflection, tailored support, and collaborative leadership. In practice, this means that supervisors must be flexible and responsive to the unique needs of each teacher while also promoting a shared vision for school-wide improvement.

CONCLUSION

Clinical supervision offers a powerful strategy for improving teaching quality by fostering collaboration, encouraging reflection, and providing targeted feedback. The findings from this study demonstrate the significant positive impacts of clinical supervision, particularly in improving teaching strategies, classroom management, and strengthening the professional relationship between teachers and supervisors. However, challenges such as time constraints and insufficient training for supervisors must be addressed to maximize the effectiveness of the supervision process. By overcoming these obstacles, clinical supervision can become an even more effective tool for enhancing the quality of education.

In summary, the findings from this study align with the theoretical frameworks of Developmental Supervision Theory, Reflective Practice Theory, and Instructional Leadership Theory, all of which emphasize the importance of tailored supervision, structured reflection, and collaborative leadership in promoting teacher professional development. The individualized and reflective nature of clinical supervision has contributed to significant improvements in teaching practices, demonstrating the value of these theoretical approaches in practical settings.

The theoretical implications of this study highlight the need for a nuanced and multifaceted approach to clinical supervision. The findings support and extend key educational theories by demonstrating that differentiated supervision, reflective practices, and instructional leadership are essential components of effective teacher development. Schools and educational leaders should consider adopting these frameworks in tandem to create a supervision model that is not only adaptive to individual teacher needs but also collaborative and focused on continuous improvement. By doing so, clinical supervision can serve as a powerful mechanism for enhancing both teaching quality and student learning outcomes.

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