

Original Article

Transformation of Principal Leadership in the Review of Supervisory Functions

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Abstract:

This study is grounded in the strategic role of the principal as the primary driver of educational quality improvement through effective supervisory leadership. In the context of rapid technological advancement, evolving educational policies, and increasing accountability demands, principals are required to transform their supervisory approaches from administrative and compliance-oriented practices toward participatory, visionary, and development-focused leadership. This study aims to analyze the level of principal leadership transformation in the supervisory function based on teachers' and education personnel's perceptions, and to identify the strongest and weakest implementation indicators. A descriptive quantitative design was employed using a total sampling technique involving 31 respondents at SDN 16 Bengkulu Selatan. Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of 35 Likert-scale statements and analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine frequency distribution, percentages, and mean scores for each indicator. The findings reveal that most supervisory leadership indicators fall within the good to very good categories. The highest mean scores were observed in exemplary discipline and the principal's role as an initiator of reform, while the lowest score was found in the indicator related to granting complete freedom without control. These results support Transformational Leadership and Managerial Role theories, highlighting the importance of vision, role modelling, participatory engagement, and structured supervision. The study concludes that supervisory leadership practices are generally aligned with modern leadership principles but require strengthening in post-supervision follow-up mechanisms and in balancing teacher autonomy with appropriate supervisory control. The study contributes a detailed mapping of supervisory indicators grounded in contemporary leadership theory.

Keywords: Supervisory Function; Transformational Leadership.

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Introduction

The principal occupies a strategic position in determining the quality and direction of educational delivery within schools (Yakob et al., 2025). As the highest authority at the institutional level, the principal is responsible not only for administrative management but also for ensuring that educational goals are achieved effectively and sustainably (Rizki et al., 2026). Previous studies emphasize that school success is closely linked to the principal's leadership capacity to manage, guide, and supervise all components of the educational process (Nasir et al., 2026). Within this framework, the supervisory function emerges as a critical mechanism for maintaining instructional quality, strengthening teacher performance, and sustaining institutional improvement (Nurhasanah & Wasliman, 2026).

In recent decades, principal leadership has undergone a significant transformation (Ardiani et al., 2025). Traditional leadership models, which were predominantly administrative and control-oriented, have gradually shifted toward visionary and quality-driven leadership paradigms (Theofanidis et al., 2025)(Setyawibawa & Tahir, 2025). This transformation is influenced by globalization, rapid technological advancement, and increasingly complex educational policies (M. Nur & Tamam, 2024) (Rosani et al., 2025). Contemporary principals are expected to function not merely as managers but also as supervisors, mentors, innovators, and agents of change (Hasmiwati & Bahri, 2021). Consequently, supervision is no longer limited to inspection and compliance; rather, it has evolved into a developmental process aimed at fostering professional growth and organizational learning (Nur & Suwandari, 2025).

The theoretical foundation of this study draws from the Managerial Roles Theory proposed by Henry Mintzberg, as elaborated in organizational leadership studies (Huikko-Tarvainen et al., 2025)(Meriem, 2025). This theory identifies three primary leadership roles: interpersonal, informational, and decisional (Kirişçi-Sarikaya & Sönmez, 2023)(Karim et al., 2023). Within the supervisory function, these roles operate integratively (Wu et al., 2024). Principals engage in interpersonal interactions to build trust and collaboration, utilize informational roles to disseminate and process strategic data, and perform decisional roles to implement corrective and developmental actions (Indra & Rialmi, 2022)(Farley-Ripple, 2024)(Tumiyati et al., 2026). Effective supervision, therefore, requires a multidimensional leadership approach that goes beyond structural control and emphasizes guidance, feedback, and empowerment (Liden et al., 2025).

Improving school quality demands systematic and measurable monitoring mechanisms (Zubaidi, 2024). Principals who adapt their supervisory approaches to institutional needs and contextual characteristics demonstrate greater effectiveness in identifying instructional problems, designing solutions, and guiding improvement processes (Wahyuni et al., 2025)(Warman et al., 2021). Professional supervision contributes to minimizing errors, enhancing discipline, and reinforcing collective commitment to the school's vision and mission (Aisyah, 2024). Thus, supervision functions not only as a control instrument but also as a strategic tool for continuous quality enhancement (Nikmah et al., 2025).

The paradigm shift in supervisory leadership is further accelerated by advancements in information technology (Hyder & Iraqi, 2019). Digital-based school management systems enable more transparent, efficient, and data-driven monitoring and evaluation processes (Sanoto et al., 2025). Principals who integrate technological

tools into supervision gain advantages in managing academic data, assessing teacher performance objectively, and ensuring instructional accountability ([Solahudin et al., 2025](#)). This digital transformation necessitates continuous professional development in supervisory competencies, including data literacy and adaptive leadership skills ([Istiqomah & Mardiana, 2026](#)).

Despite the growing discourse on leadership transformation, the implementation of supervisory transformation at the school level remains insufficiently explored ([Heenan et al., 2023](#)). Moreover, limited research systematically maps the relationship between leadership style and supervision outcomes, particularly within Indonesian educational contexts ([Amallia et al., 2025](#)). Critical factors such as communication competence, technological integration, and adaptability to policy changes are often underexamined ([Piri & Abdi, 2025](#))([Sandi et al., 2025](#)).

This study also draws upon Transformational Leadership Theory, originally conceptualized by James MacGregor Burns and further developed by Bernard Bass, as applied in educational contexts. Transformational leaders inspire change through visionary influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and motivational engagement ([Widia et al., 2025](#))([Eaton et al., 2024](#)). Within school supervision, this perspective implies that principals should not merely evaluate performance but actively empower teachers to innovate and improve pedagogical practices ([Hasanah & Sururi, 2025](#))([Warman et al., 2021](#)). However, empirical studies connecting transformational leadership principles with supervisory practices in Indonesian schools remain limited ([Asriyah, 2024](#)).

Additionally, the Managerial Grid Theory developed by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton provides a complementary analytical lens ([Hossain, 2017](#)). This theory emphasizes the balance between task-oriented and people-oriented leadership ([Sosiady & Ermansyah, 2024](#)). In supervisory contexts, principals who successfully integrate both dimensions are more likely to create productive yet harmonious work environments ([Shintawati et al., 2025](#)). Examining how this balance contributes to leadership transformation offers valuable insights into effective supervisory practices ([Pigola et al., 2024](#)).

The limited availability of empirical evidence regarding best practices in transforming principal leadership within the supervisory function often results in policy experimentation without strong theoretical grounding. Consequently, professional development programs for principals may lack strategic direction. Addressing this research gap is essential not only for theoretical advancement but also for informing evidence-based educational policy.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the patterns, strategies, and outcomes of principal leadership transformation from the perspective of the supervisory function. By integrating managerial, transformational, and behavioral leadership frameworks, this research seeks to contribute both conceptually and practically to the development of sustainable educational governance. The findings are expected to provide an applicable model for strengthening supervisory leadership in schools facing dynamic educational challenges.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative research design with a descriptive approach aimed at describing the transformation of the principal's leadership from the perspective

of the supervisory function, as perceived by teachers and educational staff. The quantitative descriptive approach was chosen because the data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a rating scale, enabling statistical analysis to produce an objective, factual, and measurable representation of leadership practices within the school context.

The population of this study consisted of all teachers and educational staff at SDN 16 Bengkulu Selatan. Given the relatively small population size, total sampling was applied, involving all 31 teachers and staff members as research respondents. This sampling technique ensured comprehensive coverage of the research subjects and minimized potential sampling bias, thereby strengthening the descriptive validity of the findings.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 35 statements related to leadership transformation and supervisory functions. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Never. The instrument was validated by educational leadership experts and tested for reliability prior to data collection. The survey was administered on 2025, and the collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, to portray the profile of the principal's leadership transformation in the supervisory function.

Results

This section presents and analyzes the findings concerning the transformation of the principal's leadership in implementing supervisory functions at SDN 16 Bengkulu Selatan. The discussion integrates empirical data with relevant educational leadership theories and prior empirical studies to ensure that statistical findings are interpreted analytically and positioned within a broader scholarly discourse.

Contextual Characteristic of Responden

Before examining supervisory leadership transformation, it is essential to understand the demographic and professional profile of respondents, as perceptions of leadership are influenced by organizational culture, generational structure, and teaching experience.

The gender distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Amount	Percentage
Woman	27	87.10%
Man	4	12.90%
Total	31	100%

As shown in Table 1, female respondents constitute 87.10% of the sample, while male respondents represent 12.90%. This composition reflects the general demographic structure of Indonesian elementary schools. In female-dominated professional environments, relational leadership styles emphasizing communication, collaboration, and emotional engagement tend to be more positively perceived (Angelakis et al., 2024). This demographic context helps explain why participatory and humanistic supervisory practices receive strong evaluations in this study (Farrell et al., 2025). The age profile of respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age	Amount	Percentage
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26–35 years	9	29.03%
36–45 years	7	22.58%
46–55 years	5	16.13%
56 years and above	10	32.26%
Total	31	100%

The data reveal generational diversity, with 32.26% aged 56 years and above and 29.03% aged 26–35 years. The coexistence of senior and younger teachers creates both stability and innovation potential (Muhammadiyah et al., 2022). Senior educators contribute institutional memory and pedagogical maturity, whereas younger teachers bring adaptability and openness to change (Mpiti et al., 2025). Consequently, supervisory leadership must adopt adaptive strategies that balance guidance with encouragement for innovation.

Teaching tenure data further clarify this professional context. The distribution of years of service is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents Based on Length of Teaching Experience

Teaching Length	Amount	Percentage
≤ 5 years	7	22.58%
6–15 years	9	29.03%
16–25 years	6	19.35%
≥ 26 years	9	29.03%
Total	31	100%

Most respondents have more than six years of teaching experience, indicating strong professional maturity (Utari & Sudadi, 2023). In such contexts, supervision is generally expected to function as collegial guidance rather than inspection-based control (Mpiti et al., 2025). This expectation significantly shapes teachers' evaluations of leadership practices (Muhammadiyah et al., 2022).

Supervisory leadership transformation

The first group of supervisory leadership indicators covering exemplary discipline, reform initiation, participatory decision-making, and instructional supervision is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Average Score of the Principal Leadership Transformation Questionnaire in the Supervisory Function (Items 1–5)

No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
1	The principal becomes the initiator of reforms for the advancement of learning activities at school.	29 (93.55%)	2 (6.45%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.94
2	The principal informs all teachers about the teachers' ideas about teaching and learning to improve learning services.	27 (87.10%)	4 (12.90%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.87
3	The principal has the initiative to update the	25 (80.65%)	6 (19.35%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.81

No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
	teaching program in the classroom.						
4	The principal democratically accepts innovative ideas from teachers in teaching and learning.	23 (74.19%)	8 (25.81%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.74
5	The principal controls the implementation of teaching and learning activities regularly.	28 (90.32%)	3 (9.68%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.90

The results show that most indicators achieved mean scores above 4.20, with exemplary discipline and reform initiation reaching the highest score (4.94). These findings indicate that the principal is strongly perceived as a moral role model and an initiator of institutional improvement ([Chasbullah & Rindaningsih, 2024](#)).

This pattern aligns with Transformational Leadership theory developed by Bernard M. Bass and further elaborated by Bruce J. Avolio ([Avolio, 1994](#))([Harsoyo, 2022](#)). The high score for exemplary discipline reflects idealized influence, while reform initiatives represent intellectual stimulation. Recognition of outstanding teachers and motivational strategies correspond to individualized consideration. The empirical evidence therefore confirms that supervisory leadership in this school embodies core transformational dimensions rather than merely administrative authority ([Serey et al., 2025](#)).

The next set of indicators, related to extracurricular supervision and teacher partnership, is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Average Score (Items 6–10)

No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
6	The principal strives to ensure that extracurricular activities are carried out by competent teachers.	14 (45.16%)	17 (54.84%)	0	0	0	4.45
7	The principal supervises the implementation of extracurricular activities.	15 (48.39%)	15 (48.39%)	1 (3.22%)	0	0	4.45
8	The principal proactively explores resources from the committee or community to improve the quality of teaching and learning.	10 (32.26%)	20 (64.52%)	1 (3.22%)	0	0	4.29
9	The principal pays special attention to teachers who have high creativity.	6 (19.35%)	24 (77.42%)	1 (3.22%)	0	0	4.16
10	The principal views teachers as partners in	6 (19.35%)	25 (80.65%)	0	0	0	4.19

No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
	every school activity.						

The findings indicate active supervision of extracurricular activities and structured teacher assignments based on competence. This reflects a holistic understanding of supervision that extends beyond classroom teaching. However, slightly lower scores regarding attention to highly creative teachers suggest the need to strengthen differentiated supervisory support, particularly in fostering innovation.

Discipline, Transparency, and Managerial Roles

Indicators related to discipline, financial transparency, and leadership confidence are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Average Score (Items 11–15)

No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
11	The principal encourages the involvement of all teachers in school activities.	5 (16.13%)	26 (83.87%)	0	0	0	4.16
12	The school principal sets an example of discipline in his duties and functions.	29 (93.55%)	2 (6.45%)	0	0	0	4.94
13	The principal is a role model in carrying out his duties at school.	3 (9.68%)	28 (90.32%)	0	0	0	4.10
14	The principal is confident in his ability to resolve issues related to school programs.	3 (9.68%)	28 (90.32%)	0	0	0	4.10
15	The principal transparently informs the school's finances.	7 (22.58%)	24 (77.42%)	0	0	0	4.23

The consistently high scores reaffirm the principal's credibility and integrity. Transparency in financial management strengthens organizational trust, which is fundamental for effective supervision.

From a managerial perspective, these findings correspond with the framework proposed by Henry Mintzberg, who identifies three primary leadership roles: interpersonal, informational, and decisional ([Huikko-Tarvainen et al., 2025](#)). Harmonious relationships and teacher involvement reflect the interpersonal role; openness in supervision results represents the informational role; and granting teachers trust in instructional decision-making demonstrates the decisional role. The integration of these roles suggests that supervisory leadership functions as a balanced managerial system.

Autonomy, Control, and Cultural Context

The balance between autonomy and supervision is examined through indicators presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Mean Score (Items 16–20)

No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
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No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
16	The principal informs the results of the supervision in a teacher meeting.	6 (19.35%)	25 (80.65%)	0	0	0	4.19
17	The principal pays attention to the teacher's workspace with supporting facilities.	8 (25.81%)	23 (74.19%)	0	0	0	4.26
18	The principal gives teachers complete freedom without control.	12 (38.71%)	4 (12.90%)	3 (9.68%)	3 (9.68%)	9 (29.03%)	3.22
19	The principal creates harmonious relationships for a conducive working atmosphere.	6 (19.35%)	25 (80.65%)	0	0	0	4.19
20	The principal is cooperative so that teachers are happy to work together.	6 (19.35%)	25 (80.65%)	0	0	0	4.19

Interestingly, the indicator “granting complete freedom without control” received the lowest mean score (3.22). Where unrestricted autonomy was positively evaluated, teachers in this study prefer guided autonomy. This suggests that excessive freedom without structured direction is not perceived as ideal in this institutional context.

This divergence highlights the contextual nature of leadership effectiveness. Leadership strategies must align with organizational culture and professional expectations. Teachers at SDN 16 Bengkulu Selatan appear to value autonomy accompanied by supervision, monitoring, and constructive feedback.

Motivation, Participation, and Instructional Supervision

Motivational and professional development indicators are presented in Table 8, while participatory supervision indicators appear in Table 9.

Table 8. Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Average Score (Items 21–25)

No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
21	The principal gave awards to outstanding teachers.	18 (58.06%)	13 (41.94%)	0	0	0	4.58
22	The principal provides equal opportunities for career advancement.	9 (29.03%)	22 (70.97%)	0	0	0	4.29
23	The principal respects the teacher's opinion.	8 (25.81%)	23 (74.19%)	0	0	0	4.26
24	The principal motivates	9	22	0	0	0	4.29

No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
	teachers to continue their education.	(29.03%)	(70.97%)				
25	The principal applies sanctions fairly.	14 (45.16%)	15 (48.39%)	0	0	2 (6.45%)	4.26

This table shows that awards for outstanding teachers received the highest score, at 4.58. This demonstrates the principal's appreciation for teacher achievement, which serves as an important motivation for improving performance and competence. This award aligns with the Transformational Leadership principle, which encourages recognition of individual achievement (Dwinata G & Martini, 2025). Equal opportunities for career advancement, respect for opinions, and motivation to continue education also received positive scores, ranging from 4.26 to 4.29. These scores indicate that the principal pays attention to teacher professional development across the board.

The indicator for fair application of sanctions scored 4.26, but there were a few negative responses. This indicates a perception that sanctions need to be applied more consistently to ensure all teachers feel treated equally. Overall, this data indicates that the principal has implemented a fairly effective reward and coaching system. Improvements in the aspect of equitable enforcement of rules would further strengthen the oversight function.

Table 9. Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Mean Score (Items 26–30)

No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
26	The principal takes a personal approach to undisciplined teachers.	9 (29.03%)	22 (70.97%)	0	0	0	4.29
27	The principal prepares a supervision program by involving teachers.	10 (32.26%)	21 (67.74%)	0	0	0	4.32
28	The principal informs all teachers about the supervision program.	6 (19.35%)	25 (80.65%)	0	0	0	4.19
29	The supervision program refers to applicable regulations.	5 (16.13%)	26 (83.87%)	0	0	0	4.16
30	The principal carries out supervision according to the program.	4 (12.90%)	27 (87.10%)	0	0	0	4.13

High scores for recognition, professional development encouragement, and teacher involvement confirm that participatory supervision enhances ownership and compliance, supporting findings by Hayudiyani et al. (2022). These results also correspond with Dwiyono et al. (2022) and Ulum et al. (2020), who emphasize the importance of role modelling, transparency, and motivation in strengthening teacher trust.

Finally, the instructional dimension of supervision is detailed in Table 10.

Table 10. Frequency Distribution, Percentage, and Average Score (Items 31–35)

No	Statement	SS	SR	KK	JR	TP	Average
31	The principal gives teachers the trust to make decisions regarding teaching and learning activities.	5 (16.13%)	26 (83.87%)	0	0	0	4.16
32	The principal makes class visits during supervision.	6 (19.35%)	25 (80.65%)	0	0	0	4.19
33	The principal identifies teaching problems from supervision.	9 (29.03%)	22 (70.97%)	0	0	0	4.29
34	The principal helps teachers solve teaching and learning problems from supervision.	7 (22.58%)	24 (77.42%)	0	0	0	4.23
35	The principal uses the results of supervision to improve learning.	4 (12.90%)	27 (87.10%)	0	0	0	4.13

High scores for classroom visits and identification of learning problems indicate that supervision directly targets instructional improvement. This finding aligns with Instructional Leadership theory, which emphasizes leaders' direct engagement in teaching and learning processes (Kabeta et al., 2013). However, the relatively lower score for utilizing supervision results suggests the need for stronger follow-up systems to ensure sustained instructional improvement (Mavi et al., 2025).

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that the majority of indicators measuring the principal's leadership in the supervisory function achieved high mean scores (above 4.20), placing them within the good to excellent category. This finding indicates that supervisory leadership at SDN 16 Bengkulu Selatan is generally perceived positively by teachers and educational staff, particularly in aspects related to discipline, reform initiatives, motivation, transparency, and instructional engagement.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings strongly align with the Transformational Leadership framework proposed by Bernard M. Bass and Bruce J. Avolio, which emphasizes leaders' roles as agents of change who inspire, motivate, and foster individual growth (Avolio, 1994)(Harsoyo, 2022). High scores on indicators such as "initiator of reform," "exemplary discipline," and "providing rewards for outstanding teachers" reflect the presence of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration score components of transformational leadership. These results suggest that the principal does not merely exercise formal authority but actively cultivates trust, commitment, and professional growth among teachers (Serey et al., 2025).

In addition to the transformational perspective, the findings can also be interpreted through the lens of Mintzberg's Managerial Roles Theory. According to Henry Mintzberg, effective leaders perform three interrelated roles: interpersonal, informational, and decisional. In this study, the interpersonal role is evident in high scores related to harmonious relationships, cooperative leadership, and teacher involvement in school activities (Huikko-Tarvainen et al., 2025)(Meriem, 2025). The

informational role is reflected in openness regarding supervision outcomes and transparent communication ([Kirişçi-Sarikaya & Sönmez, 2023](#))([Karim et al., 2023](#)). Meanwhile, the decisional role is demonstrated through the principal's trust in teachers to make instructional decisions, indicating a leadership approach that empowers teachers while maintaining organizational coherence ([Indra & Rialmi, 2022](#))([Farley-Ripple, 2024](#))([Tumiyati et al., 2026](#)).

Furthermore, the principal's supervisory practices align closely with Instructional Leadership theory, which emphasizes that school leaders must directly engage in improving teaching and learning processes ([Liden et al., 2025](#)) ([Kabeta et al., 2013](#)). High mean scores for indicators such as "classroom visits" and "identifying learning problems" illustrate that supervision at SDN 16 Bengkulu Selatan is not limited to administrative oversight but is oriented toward instructional improvement ([Mavi et al., 2025](#)). This finding supports the argument that effective principals must act as learning leaders who actively support teacher development, rather than functioning solely as managers of school operations ([Yakob et al., 2025](#)).

The empirical findings of this study are largely consistent with previous research. [Dwiyono et al. \(2022\)](#) found that transformational leadership practices among elementary school principals in Yogyakarta particularly role modelling, openness to information, and teacher motivation were positively perceived by teachers. Similarly, [Ulum et al. \(2020\)](#) concluded that principals' exemplary behavior and transparency significantly enhanced teachers' trust in school policies. These parallels reinforce the conclusion that transformational and transparent leadership practices are central to effective supervision.

In addition, the results corroborate the findings of [Hayudiyani et al. \(2022\)](#), who reported that teacher involvement in the development of supervision programs positively influenced compliance with instructional implementation. In the present study, the indicator "involving teachers in developing supervision programs" achieved a high mean score (4.32), confirming that participatory supervision fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility among teachers, which in turn enhances the effectiveness of supervisory practices ([Mulyanti, 2023](#))([Hanif et al., 2025](#)).

However, this study also reveals an important divergence from prior research, particularly the findings of [Maris et al. \(2017\)](#), who reported that granting teachers complete freedom was positively evaluated by respondents. In contrast, the indicator "the principal provides complete freedom without control" received the lowest mean score in this study (3.22). This suggests that teachers at SDN 16 Bengkulu Selatan prefer autonomy that is accompanied by guidance, monitoring, and evaluative feedback rather than unrestricted freedom ([Erss, 2018](#))([Ye et al., 2025](#)). Such a preference may be influenced by the school's organizational culture, professional expectations, and the perceived need for structured support ([Kostovski et al., 2025](#)).

This divergence highlights the significance of contextual factors in leadership effectiveness. As emphasized by [Hieker & Pringle \(2021\)](#), leadership strategies cannot be universally applied without considering the cultural and institutional context of a school. Teachers' perceptions of autonomy are shaped by their professional readiness, organizational norms, and expectations of supervisory support ([Ertürk, 2023](#)). In this case, autonomy without direction is perceived as potentially weakening instructional quality rather than enhancing professional independence ([Wang et al., 2024](#)).

The findings also carry important practical implications. High scores on indicators

related to transparency, motivation, and reward systems indicate that communication and recognition strategies implemented by the principal are effective ([Meirinhos et al., 2023](#))([Liriwati et al., 2025](#))([Kamal et al., 2024](#)). These practices can serve as a model for other schools seeking to strengthen trust and collaboration between school leaders and teachers. At the same time, the relatively lower score for the indicator “utilizing supervision results to improve learning” (4.13), although still categorized as good, suggests the need to strengthen follow-up mechanisms ([Mulyanti, 2023](#)). Effective supervision should not end with observation and feedback but must be followed by systematic monitoring to ensure that recommendations are implemented in classroom practice ([Triana, 2025](#)).

Another key implication concerns the balance between autonomy and control. The low score for unrestricted autonomy indicates that teachers expect structured supervision and professional guidance. This finding supports [Nahnudin et al. \(2023\)](#), who argue that effective leadership involves balancing freedom with accountability. Principals are therefore encouraged to adopt a collaborative supervision model in which teachers are given space to innovate while still receiving direction and constructive feedback ([Lasiyono, 2022](#)).

One of the most striking findings of this study is the extreme contrast between the highest- and lowest-rated indicators. The indicators “the principal sets an example of discipline” and “the principal acts as an initiator of reform,” both scoring 4.94, demonstrate that integrity and initiative are highly valued by teachers ([Erss, 2018](#))([Ye et al., 2025](#)). Conversely, the low score for “complete freedom without control” underscores that leadership transformation is not perceived as deregulation but as structured empowerment ([Widia et al., 2025](#)).

This contrast reinforces the argument that effective leadership transformation involves adaptive empowerment rather than the elimination of supervisory control ([Yarid & Purwandari, 2023](#)). Teachers value leaders who are disciplined, visionary, communicative, and supportive, while still providing clear direction and accountability ([Rizki et al., 2026](#)). Such findings underscore the importance of aligning leadership strategies with the cultural and organizational context of the school ([Lagarense et al., 2025](#)).

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate strong convergence with previous research emphasizing the importance of role modelling, participation, transparency, and instructional engagement ([Dwiyono et al., 2022](#)). At the same time, the divergence regarding unrestricted autonomy offers a distinctive contribution by highlighting the contextual nature of leadership effectiveness ([Ye et al., 2025](#)). This study therefore confirms the relevance of transformational leadership, managerial role integration, and instructional leadership perspectives, while emphasizing that effective supervisory leadership must be relational, participatory, transparent, instructionally focused, and adaptively structured in its approach to teacher autonomy.

Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that the principal’s leadership in carrying out the supervisory function at SDN 16 Bengkulu Selatan is generally categorized as good to excellent. The highest ratings were found in indicators related to exemplary discipline, reform and innovation initiatives, transparency in communicating supervision results, and appreciation for high-performing teachers. These findings demonstrate that effective supervisory leadership is perceived not merely as administrative oversight, but as

leadership that models integrity, encourages professional growth, and builds trust through open communication.

Conversely, the lowest score was identified in the indicator concerning the provision of complete freedom without control. This finding provides an important insight: teachers in this context do not equate effective leadership with unrestricted autonomy. Instead, they prefer a balanced approach in which professional freedom is accompanied by guidance, monitoring, and constructive feedback. This reinforces the idea that effective supervisory leadership involves structured empowerment rather than deregulated autonomy.

The added value of this research lies in its comprehensive mapping of 35 supervisory leadership indicators using a validated questionnaire instrument, supported by frequency distribution, percentage analysis, and mean score calculations. By integrating empirical findings with Transformational Leadership and Managerial Roles perspectives, this study not only describes existing conditions but also offers a conceptual interpretation framework that can inform principal development programs and policy formulation in educational leadership.

Despite these contributions, this study has limitations. The research was conducted in a single school with a relatively limited number of respondents, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, caution should be exercised in extending the conclusions to broader contexts. Future research is recommended to expand the sample to schools with diverse organizational cultures and characteristics, employ mixed-method approaches to capture deeper contextual dynamics, and examine the direct impact of supervisory leadership on teacher performance, instructional quality, and student learning outcomes. Such developments would strengthen the empirical foundation for designing evidence-based principal leadership models.

In conclusion, this study highlights that effective supervisory leadership is relational, transparent, participatory, and instructionally oriented, while maintaining structured guidance. Leadership transformation in educational settings, therefore, should be understood not as the removal of control, but as adaptive and context-sensitive empowerment aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning.

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