SEMPOA
Vol. 1, No. 1, (2026), pp. 33-39
ISSN: 3165-1798
https://doi.org/10.58905/sempoa.v1i1.578

Enhancing Educational Process Standards through Strategic Instructional Leadership

Vima Rahmawati[1], Imam Sujono[2], Yepi Sedya Purwananti[3], Sulastri Rini Rindrayani[4]

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Bhinneka PGRI, Tulungagung, Indonesia
vimarahmawati22@gmail.com[1], imam.sujono@ymail.com[2], yepisedya@gmail.com[3], sulastristkippgrita@gmail.com[4]

Abstract. This study examines the strategies employed by school principals in improving educational process standards in primary school clusters. The research was conducted in Cluster 1 of Panggul Subdistrict and aims to analyze the forms of leadership strategies implemented, the supporting and inhibiting factors, and their implications for enhancing instructional quality. A qualitative case study design was applied, involving data collection through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The participants included school principals, teachers, and relevant stakeholders within the cluster. Data were analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while credibility was ensured through triangulation techniques.The findings reveal that principals implemented strategic leadership practices through academic supervision, collaborative planning, teacher professional development, monitoring of instructional processes, and reinforcement of school-based management principles. Supporting factors included teacher commitment, collaborative culture, and administrative support, while constraints were related to limited resources and varying teacher competencies. Overall, strategic instructional leadership significantly contributed to strengthening the implementation of educational process standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning practices. The study highlights the importance of transformational and instructional leadership approaches in sustaining quality assurance within primary education contexts.

Keywords: Leadership, instruction, supervision**,** standards, quality

1 Introduction

Education constitutes a fundamental foundation for the development of qualified human resources and national progress. As stated in *Undang-Undang Nomor 13 Tahun 2025 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*, national education aims to educate the nation and develop Indonesian citizens who are faithful, knowledgeable, creative, independent, and responsible (PGRI, 2025). Education is an essential process experienced by learners as a form of learning experience that shapes behavioral maturity, both directly and indirectly (Daheri & Warsah, 2020). Through proper educational

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)

ISSN: 3165-1798
https://doi.org/10.58905/sempoa.v1i1.578

processes, individuals are expected to develop wisdom in decision-making as part of their intellectual and personal growth (Warsah, 2018). Therefore, education must be managed systematically to ensure that its objectives are achieved effectively.

In the twenty-first century, education faces increasingly complex challenges due to rapid technological development, information expansion, and globalization. The educational paradigm no longer focuses solely on content mastery but also emphasizes the development of higher-order thinking skills, namely critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration (4C). Learners are expected not only to receive information but also to process, evaluate, and generate solutions to real-life problems (Lailiyah & Widiyono, 2023). In this context, improving the quality of the learning process becomes imperative, particularly at the primary school level, which serves as the foundation for students' cognitive, affective, and skill development (Gule et al., 2024; Hafifa et al., 2025).

Educational quality cannot be separated from the concept of standards. Quality in education encompasses input, process, output, and outcomes that must be managed systematically and consistently (Suryani, 2021). As part of the National Education Standards, process standards regulate how learning should be planned, implemented, supervised, and evaluated to ensure effective instructional practices (Qadafi et al., 2023). Quality is also closely related to user satisfaction, as educational services are considered high-quality when they meet or exceed stakeholder expectations (Harsoyo, 2021; Darif et al., 2023). Therefore, strengthening process standards is a strategic effort to ensure that learning activities are conducted effectively and aligned with established regulations.

The principal holds a central role in managing and improving the quality of instructional processes in primary schools. According to *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Republik Indonesia Nomor 7 Tahun 2025*, a principal is a teacher assigned to lead and manage a formal educational institution. This definition emphasizes that principals are not merely administrative managers but educational leaders responsible for ensuring quality learning services. Research indicates that principal leadership significantly influences the implementation of process standards through academic supervision and teacher capacity building (Budiman et al., 2026; Hafifa et al., 2025). As instructional leaders, principals must formulate strategic policies, foster professional culture, and supervise instructional practices to achieve educational goals (E. Mulyasa, 2013a; Wahjosumidjo, 2011).

2 Methods

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design, as outlined in the uploaded document (BAB III). The qualitative case study was selected to obtain an in-depth understanding of principal strategies in enhancing educational process standards within primary schools in Cluster 1 of Panggul Subdistrict. A case study design enables researchers to explore complex social phenomena within their real-life context and to capture participants' perspectives comprehensively (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018). The research subjects consisted of school principals, teachers, and

License: CC BY 4.0

ISSN: 3165-1798
https://doi.org/10.58905/sempoa.v1i1.578

relevant stakeholders directly involved in the implementation of instructional processes. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that the informants possessed adequate experience and knowledge regarding the implementation of process standards.

Data were collected through multiple techniques to ensure credibility and data triangulation. The primary methods included in-depth interviews, direct observation of instructional practices, and documentation analysis of lesson plans, supervision records, and school policy documents. Interviews were conducted to explore leadership strategies, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the implementation of academic supervision. Observations were used to examine the actual implementation of instructional processes in classrooms, while document analysis provided supporting evidence of compliance with established standards. The use of multiple data sources strengthens research validity and allows cross-verification of findings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, as proposed by Miles et al. (2014). Data were organized, coded, and categorized to identify recurring themes related to strategic instructional leadership and process standard enhancement. The analysis was conducted continuously throughout the research process to ensure depth and accuracy of interpretation. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied credibility techniques such as triangulation of sources and methods, prolonged engagement, and member checking. This systematic methodological approach was designed to generate reliable findings regarding the role of strategic instructional leadership in strengthening educational process standards within the selected school cluster context.

3 Results and Discussion

The findings of this study are based on qualitative data collected from twelve primary schools within Cluster 1 of Panggul Subdistrict, comprising schools located in Banjar, Nglebeng, and Ngrambingan villages. The institutional distribution and research participants are presented in Table 1. The data demonstrate that the study involved principals and teachers who were directly responsible for implementing educational process standards.

Table 1. Profile of Research Sites and Participants

No	School	Village	Principal	Key Informants
1	SDN 1 Banjar	Banjar	Principal A	Principal, Teachers
2	SDN 2 Banjar	Banjar	Principal B	Principal, Teachers
3	SDN 3 Banjar	Banjar	Principal C	Principal, Teachers
4	SDN 4 Banjar	Banjar	Principal D	Principal, Teachers
5	SDN 1 Nglebeng	Nglebeng	Principal E	Principal, Teachers
6	SDN 2 Nglebeng	Nglebeng	Principal F	Principal, Teachers
7	SDN 3 Nglebeng	Nglebeng	Principal G	Principal, Teachers

License: CC BY 4.0

ISSN: 3165-1798
https://doi.org/10.58905/sempoa.v1i1.578

8	SDN 4 Nglebeng	Nglebeng	Principal H	Principal, Teachers
9	SDN 5 Nglebeng	Nglebeng	Principal I	Principal, Teachers
10	SDN 1 Ngrambingan	Ngrambingan	Principal J	Principal, Teachers
11	SDN 2 Ngrambingan	Ngrambingan	Principal K	Principal, Teachers
12	SDN 3 Ngrambingan	Ngrambingan	Principal L	Principal, Teachers

The results indicate that principals implemented strategic instructional leadership through structured planning, academic supervision, teacher coordination meetings, and monitoring of instructional documents. Most principals ensured that teachers prepared lesson plans aligned with process standards, including learning objectives, teaching methods, assessment procedures, and learning media. This finding supports the argument that instructional leadership directly influences the quality of classroom practices (Hallinger, 2011) and significantly contributes to student learning outcomes (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). The structured planning practices observed in the cluster demonstrate the principals' commitment to strengthening compliance with national process standards.

Furthermore, the study reveals that academic supervision was conducted periodically, although its implementation varied across schools. Some principals carried out classroom observations followed by reflective feedback sessions, while others relied primarily on administrative document checks. Effective supervision practices were found to enhance teachers' pedagogical competence and encourage innovation in instructional delivery. These findings align with previous research emphasizing that leadership practices closely connected to teaching and learning have the strongest impact on school effectiveness (Robinson et al., 2008). In addition, transformational leadership elements—such as motivating teachers, fostering collaboration, and building shared vision—were evident in schools where instructional improvement was more consistent (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). This suggests that combining instructional and transformational approaches strengthens process standard implementation.

The research also identified supporting and inhibiting factors affecting the enhancement of educational process standards. Supporting factors included teacher commitment, collegial collaboration within the cluster, and routine coordination meetings among principals. These collaborative practices reflect professional learning community characteristics that promote continuous improvement. However, inhibiting factors included limited facilities, uneven teacher competence, and time constraints in conducting intensive supervision. Similar challenges have been documented in studies on school quality assurance, which note that resource limitations and capacity disparities often hinder the full realization of instructional reforms (Day et al., 2016). Therefore, sustainable improvement requires not only leadership commitment but also systemic support and capacity building.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that strategic instructional leadership plays a significant role in strengthening educational process standards within primary school clusters. The integration of structured planning, systematic supervision, collaborative professional development, and continuous monitoring contributes positively to improving instructional quality. In line with Hallinger (2011), effective leadership is characterized by its direct focus on teaching and learning processes. Thus, the impli-

License: CC BY 4.0

ISSN: 3165-1798
https://doi.org/10.58905/sempoa.v1i1.578

cations of this study highlight the necessity of reinforcing principals' leadership capacity through targeted training programs and structured supervision models to ensure consistent implementation of process standards across schools.

4 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that strategic instructional leadership plays a pivotal role in strengthening educational process standards within primary school clusters. The findings indicate that leadership practices directly focused on instructional planning, academic supervision, professional collaboration, and systematic monitoring contribute significantly to improving teaching quality and ensuring compliance with established standards. The effectiveness of these strategies, however, is contingent upon the consistency of implementation and the presence of supportive organizational conditions.

The study contributes to the instructional leadership literature by contextualizing its application within a cluster-based primary education setting. It confirms that leadership impact is most substantial when principals engage directly with pedagogical processes rather than limiting their role to administrative management. The integration of structured supervision cycles and collaborative professional forums emerges as a key mechanism linking regulatory standards to classroom-level instructional improvement.

Practically, the findings underscore the necessity of strengthening principals' supervisory competence, reflective feedback skills, and capacity for data-informed decision-making. Sustainable enhancement of process standards requires not only regulatory compliance but also continuous professional development and institutional support systems. Future research may extend this inquiry by examining longitudinal impacts of strategic instructional leadership on student learning outcomes and exploring comparative models across different educational contexts.

DECLARATIONS

Author Contributions

[To be completed by the authors using CRediT roles for V.R., I.S., Y.S.P., S.R.R. — e.g. Conceptualization, …; methodology, …; investigation, …; formal analysis, …; writing—original draft preparation, …; writing—review and editing, …; supervision, …] All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Funding

The authors received no specific funding for this research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in the preparation and publication of this article.

License: CC BY 4.0

ISSN: 3165-1798
https://doi.org/10.58905/sempoa.v1i1.578

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Disclosure

[To be confirmed by the authors] The authors declare that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

Research Ethics

[To be completed by the authors] The study was conducted in accordance with applicable ethical standards and was approved by [Name of Ethics Committee/Institutional Review Board], Approval No. [XXXX], dated [Date]. — or — Ethical review and approval were not required for this study because [brief justification].

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study.

Acknowledgments

The authors express their sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Director of the Postgraduate Program at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI, Dr. Ajar Dirgantoro, M.Pd., and to the Head of the Master of Social Studies Education Program, Dr. Imam Sukwatus Suja'i, M.Si., for their institutional support. Special thanks are also extended to the principals and teachers in Cluster 1 of Panggul Subdistrict for their participation and cooperation, which made this research possible.

References

1. PGRI, U. B. (2025). Undang-Undang Nomor 13 Tahun 2025 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional.
2. Daheri & Warsah. (2020). No Title.
3. Warsah. (2018). No Title.
4. Lailiyah, N. N., & Widiyono, A. (2023). Pengembangan Media Diorama berbasis STEAM untuk Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berpikir Kritis Siswa di Sekolah Dasar. BASICA Journal of Arts and Science in Primary Education, 3(1), 95–108.
5. Gule, A., Alawiyah, T., Nainggolan, A. S., & Elfrianto, E. (2024). The Principal's Leadership Role in Improving School Quality. Indonesian Journal Education, 3(2), 35–42.
6. Hafifa, I., Wahyuni, D., & Desyolina, H. (2025). Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Efektivitas Pendidikan di Sekolah Dasar. Journal of Multidisciplinary Inquiry in Science, Technology and Educational Research, 2(1b), 2298–2307.
7. Suryani, I. (2021). Implementasi kebijakan strategi kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan. Jurnal Gentala Pendidikan Dasar, 6(1), 65–82.
8. Qadafi, M., Sumarni, A., Dina, A., & Fransiska, S. (2023). Pemenuhan Standar Nasional Pendidikan melalui Pelaksanaan Sistem Penjaminan Mutu Internal.
9. Harsoyo, R. (2021). Model Pengembangan Mutu Pendidikan.

License: CC BY 4.0

ISSN: 3165-1798
https://doi.org/10.58905/sempoa.v1i1.578

10. Darif, M., Wahyudin, U., & Yuhana, Y. (2023). Strategi Kepala Sekolah dalam Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan di Sekolah Dasar.
11. Budiman, H., Pratiwi, I., & Elfisa, Y. (2026). Peran Kepala Sekolah sebagai Instructional Leader.
12. Mulyasa, E. (2013). Manajemen dan Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah.
13. Wahjosumidjo. (2011). Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah.
14. Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.).
15. Yin, R. K. (2018). Case Study Research and Applications (6th ed.).
16. Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). Qualitative Data Analysis (3rd ed.).
17. Hallinger, P. (2011). Leadership for Learning.
18. Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The Impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes.
19. Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2006). Transformational School Leadership.
20. Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P. (2016). The Impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes.

License: CC BY 4.0