Handling Obstacles to Improving Continuing School Services at Regional High School XI Ministry of Education of West Java Province

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study aims to identify obstacles in assisting school supervisors in an effort to improve the quality of sustainable services. Using a qualitative approach of a case study, data was obtained from ten school supervisors in two Branch Offices of the Education Office through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The analysis was carried out with the help of Atlas.ti through the stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The results of the study show that mentoring planning is still dominated by administrative patterns and is not based on data on school needs. Implementation emphasizes document examination rather than reflective dialogue, while monitoring and evaluation are still reporting-oriented. Reflections tend to be sporadic and not well documented. Structural barriers such as uneven superintendent-school ratios, budget constraints, and geographical constraints exacerbate the situation. These findings show a structural-cultural circle that makes mentoring more procedural. The implications of this study confirm the need for data-based mentoring strategies, collective reflection, and strengthening supervisory capacity to get out of administrative traps into transformative roles. *This is an open access article under CC BY-NC-SA license.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the important aspects in the development of a country. Good quality education is the basis for creating competent human resources and able to adapt to the challenges of the times. In the Indonesian context, improving the quality of education is one of the main focuses of the government. Based on Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, the quality of education in Indonesia must continue to be improved in order to produce qualified graduates who are ready to compete at the global level. One way to achieve this is to improve the quality of educational

services at the school level through mentoring carried out by school supervisors (Mausethagen et al., 2020).

School supervisor supervision and assistance play a very important role in ensuring that the learning process in schools runs according to the set standards. As an institution that has the task of monitoring and transmitting school performance, school supervisors not only function as administrative controllers, but also as companions who play a role in improving the quality of pedagogy in schools (McNamara et al., 2021). However, the practice of mentoring carried out by school supervisors often encounters obstacles, both structural and procedural. This affects the effectiveness of mentoring and the quality of education produced in schools (Brown & Lee, 2022)

School supervisor assistance should not only focus on administrative aspects and document supervision, but should also pay attention to aspects of capacity building of principals and teachers in carrying out their pedagogical duties. Therefore, assistance based on reflective data such as the results of the Education Report and the Minimum Competency assessment (AKM) is very important to design a more targeted intervention strategy (Mausethagen et al., 2020). However, in practice, this reflective data is often not optimally used in the planning and implementation of mentoring, resulting in mentoring becoming more procedural and irrelevant to the real needs in the field (Rodriguez & Silva, 2023).

One of the big challenges in mentoring school supervisors is the limited time and resources. School superintendents often have a heavy workload, with many schools to build, which makes it difficult for them to give enough attention to each school individually. In addition, the low motivation of school principals in participating in the mentoring process is also one of the inhibiting factors in improving the quality of education in schools (Yurkofsky et al., 2020). In some cases, principals show a passive attitude toward mentoring, which affects the quality of their interactions and involvement in the process of improving the quality of education (Wang & Zhao, 2024). In addition, structural barriers such as unbalanced supervisor-school ratios and budget constraints further increase the effectiveness of mentoring in schools located in remote areas (Handriadi & Supriyanto, 2025).

In order to overcome these obstacles, this study aims to identify the obstacles faced by school supervisors in implementing effective mentoring, as well as to find solutions that can improve the quality of school supervisor mentoring. This research is focused on Regional High School XI of the Ministry of Education of West Java Province, which is an area that has various challenges in terms of resources and distribution of school supervisors. Through this research, it is hoped that a better understanding of the obstacles faced by school supervisors in each stage of the management cycle can be found, including planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reflection.

The approach used in this study is qualitative with a case study design. This approach allows researchers to dig into in-depth information about the school supervisor's experience and the factors that affect the effectiveness of mentoring. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis related to supervisory work plans and mentoring reports. Data analysis was carried out using Atlas.ti software to identify key themes related to barriers in mentoring and to explore the relationships between themes found (Williams & Moser, 2019).

Improving the quality of education through the assistance of school supervisors is very important to create a better education system. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the development of a more effective and data-reflective mentoring system. In addition, the results of this study are expected to provide recommendations for better education policies in terms of assisting school supervisors, so as to improve the quality of education in schools throughout Indonesia.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design to analyze the obstacles faced by school supervisors in improving the quality of educational services at Regional High School XI of the Ministry of Education of West Java Province. The research subjects consisted of ten school supervisors selected through purposive sampling, each representing two Branch Offices of the

Education Office. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis such as mentoring activity reports and supervisory work plans. In-depth interviews allow for the collection of information related to the superintendent's experience, while participatory observation provides a first-hand view of the interaction between the superintendent and the school. Document analysis helps researchers understand how mentoring planning and evaluation is carried out.

The collected data is analyzed using Atlas.ti software with qualitative coding levels, i.e. open, axial and frequency coding. Open coding is used to identify initial categories, while axial coding connects those categories to find broader patterns. The stage of scanning the data screening to produce key findings related to barriers in mentoring. The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation and member checking to ensure the accuracy and accuracy of the research results.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Planning Barriers Findings

Qualitative data analysis from interviews with ten school supervisors divided into two KCDs shows that obstacles to school assistance arise throughout the management cycle from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, to reflection. At the mentoring planning stage, the research findings show a number of significant obstacles. First, the mentoring plan is still more directed at fulfilling administrative obligations than the actual needs of the school. Superintendents and principals tend to use the same standard format for all their target schools, so the strategies developed are general and less relevant to the concrete problems faced in each school. Second, reflection data such as Education Report cards and AKM results are rarely used as a basis for planning, so mentoring plans are less evidence-based and it is difficult to determine the most urgent intervention priorities.

Third, the lack of stakeholder involvement, especially teachers and school committees, so that the planning process is more top-down and reduces opportunities for reflection and collective participation in determining school needs. Fourth, mentoring targets and indicators are not always clearly defined, especially due to the limited time to develop a plan, which ultimately reduces the supervisor's ability to assess the effectiveness and success of mentoring. Overall, these barriers show that mentoring planning is still focused on formal procedures and administrative routines, so it cannot fully reflect the specific needs of schools and limits the potential effectiveness of mentoring in the field.

Finding Obstacles at the Aid Implementation Stage

At the implementation stage, school supervisor assistance faces various obstacles that affect its effectiveness. One of the main obstacles is the low motivation of school principals, which varies between individuals. Some school principals show a passive attitude and lack of enthusiasm in participating in the mentoring process, in addition, time constraints are a significant obstacle in the implementation of mentoring. School superintendents are often hampered by busy schedules and limited work hours, which makes it difficult for them to give enough attention to each of their target schools. This has an impact on the quality of interaction and support that can be provided to school principals and educators.

Limited resources are also a holding factor. The limited number of supervisors and the heavy workload make it difficult for supervisors to provide optimal assistance. In addition, changes in data such as the rotation of principals and teachers that are not properly recorded can hinder the monitoring and evaluation process of the program. Overall, these obstacles show that the implementation of mentoring still faces challenges that need to be overcome to increase its effectiveness and impact on improving the quality of education in schools.

Finding Obstacles at the Monitoring and Evaluation (Monev) Stage of Assistance

At the monitoring stage, the study found several significant obstacles in the implementation of school supervision. First, the lack of consistent use of reflective data, such as Education Report Cards,

AKM results, and records of previous activities. This data is often not updated or used as a basis for evaluating school progress, making monitoring less evidence-based and difficult to identify real changes. Second, limited supervisory capacity is the main obstacle. The high workload, the number of target schools, and the busy visit schedule reduce the intensity of interaction between the supervisor and the principal. This causes the evaluation process to be incomplete and in-depth, so the potential for help to provide constructive feedback is limited.

Third, the participation of teachers and school committees in the monev is still low. Without their involvement, the evaluation process tends to be top-down and less reflective of real perceptions and needs in the field. Fourth, there are obstacles in terms of coordination and communication. Evaluation reports or findings are not always delivered in a timely manner, and follow-up mechanisms for monitoring results have not been consistently implemented. This condition makes continuous improvement difficult to implement. Overall, these obstacles show that the monitoring and evaluation stage of mentoring still faces structural and procedural challenges. Lack of data utilization, limited supervision capacity, lack of stakeholder involvement, and coordination constraints are the main inhibiting factors that can reduce the effectiveness of school mentoring.

Finding Obstacles in the Mentoring Follow-Up Stage

Research shows that at the follow-up stage of mentoring, there are a number of obstacles that affect the effectiveness of the process of reflection and implementation of improvement in schools. First, the reflections carried out are still sporadic, unstructured, and have minimal documentation. This condition causes the school's self-evaluation process to be unsystematic, making it difficult to track the progress or success of mentoring follow-up. In addition, teachers are rarely involved in the reflection process, so the perspective of practitioners in the field is less reflected and reflections are more from the top down from the supervisor and the principal. The absence of service quality standards as a reference further weakens the direction and focus of reflection, while some still consider reflection as an additional burden rather than an integral part of improving school quality.

In addition to reflection barriers, there are significant structural and cultural barriers. The unbalanced supervisor-school ratio causes the supervisor to be unable to provide optimal follow-up to each school. Limited operating funds, including transportation costs that are mostly borne privately by the superintendent, add to logistical constraints, especially for schools located in remote locations. In addition, the culture of collaboration in schools is still weak, and the relationship between superintendents, principals, and teachers tends to be top-down, making it difficult to build effective communication and cooperation.

Another factor that exacerbates these obstacles is the varying motivation of school principals, with some showing a passive attitude, so that the follow-up process and implementation of mentoring recommendations are less consistent. Overall, these obstacles show that the follow-up stages of mentoring still face obstacles in terms of reflection processes, supervisory capacity, logistics, and institutional culture, which together limit the effectiveness of school mentoring.

Discussion

This study shows that school supervisor assistance faces complex and multidimensional obstacles, including aspects of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, reflection, and structural and cultural barriers. At the planning stage, it was found that the mentoring plan was still administrative and less data-based. Reflective data such as Education Report cards are rarely used as a basis for decision-making (Mausethagen et al., 2020), and mentoring strategies are structured in general without adjusting to the diversity of school needs (Yurkofsky et al., 2020).

The lack of stakeholder engagement, including teachers and school committees, reinforces top-down planning patterns that limit collective participation (McFerran et al., 2019). This condition causes the plan to tend to be general and does not reflect real problems in the field.

At the implementation stage, mentoring focuses more on document checks and compliance with the program (Rodríguez & Silva, 2023) Reflective dialogue is rare, interaction is limited to the principal, while teachers and school committees are less involved (Wang & Zhao, 2024). Excessive workload makes supervisor visits sporadic and cannot adequately reach all school needs (Kim et al., 2023). These barriers indicate that implementation tends to be procedural and less responsive to the specific context of the school.

In monitoring and evaluation, the research found that the orientation was more on the completeness of administrative reports than on the quality of learning services (Bueno, 2019). Standard evaluation instruments are not yet available, and evaluation results are rarely communicated back to schools (Brown et al., 2023), making the monitoring process less meaningful. The lack of stakeholder participation, including teachers and school committees, makes evaluations less representative and difficult to trigger sustainable improvement (Niyivuga & Niyonzima, 2019).

The reflection stage also faces significant obstacles. Reflections are sporadic and rarely documented (Rodriguez & Silva, 2023). Teachers are rarely involved, so the experience of direct learning is not reflected in the reflection process. Service quality standards that are the reference for reflection are not yet available (Chamdani et al., 2022), and some parties still consider reflection to be an additional burden rather than an integral quality improvement mechanism.

Mapping in the form of network coding shows that these obstacles are interconnected to form a cycle that hinders the effectiveness of mentoring. Constraints at the planning stage have implications for the implementation of administration, weak implementation has an impact on superficial monitoring and evaluation, and sporadic reflection further weakens the quality culture. Structural and cultural barriers such as limited human resources, budgets, and geographical conditions are at the root of the problems that reinforce the entire chain of barriers. This relationship pattern can be seen in Figure 1.
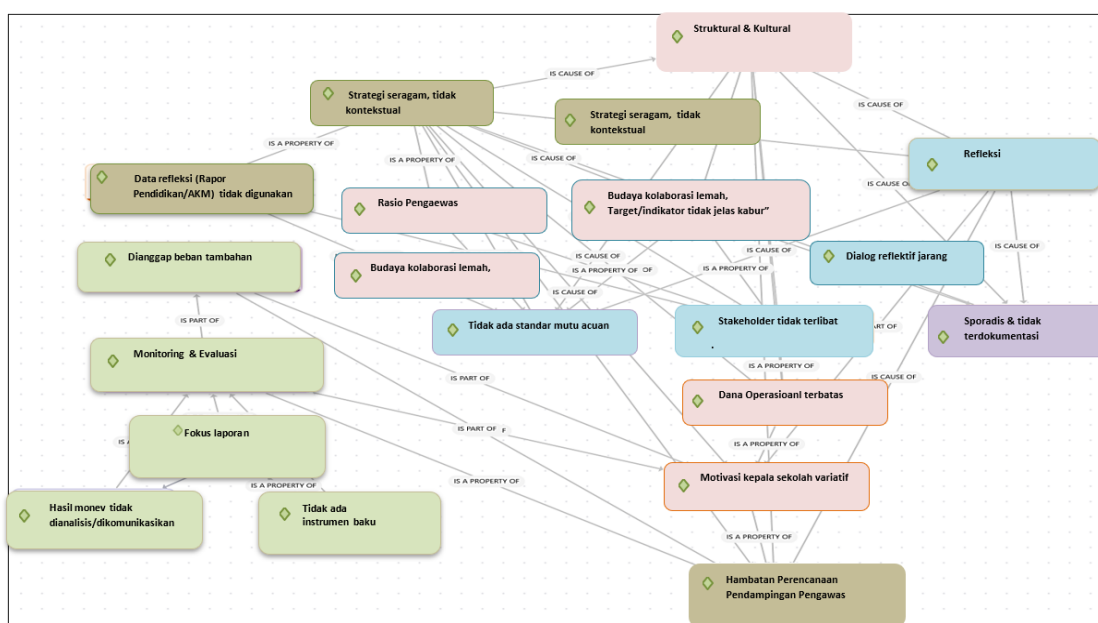

Figure 1.Network Obstacle Management Supervisor Assistance
(Source: Atlas.ti Processing)

In addition to process barriers, this study found structural and cultural barriers that reinforce the limitations of mentoring. Unbalanced supervisor-school ratios and budget constraints reduce the intensity of visits and follow-ups (Handriadi & Supriyanto, 2025). Geographical constraints further worsen school conditions in remote areas (Handriadi et al., 2025). A culture of collaboration and weak relationships that tend to top-down, plus the motivations of principals that vary partly passively limit

the effectiveness of interactions between supervisors and schools (Coburn et al., 2012; Niyivuga & Niyonzima, 2019).

Overall, these findings point to circular structural-cultural barriers: administrative planning → procedural implementation → formalistic monitoring → sporadic reflection. This circle traps the superintendent in the administrative routine (Rodriguez & Silva, 2023), making it difficult to function as an agent of school transformation. In fact, the literature emphasizes that ideal mentoring demands a reflective, participatory, and data-driven approach (Ahmed et al., 2024; Ghamrawi & Al-Hroub, 2024).

The implications of these results show the need to strengthen supervisory capacity in data utilization, facilitate collective reflection, and utilize technology for monitoring. Policy support is also needed to balance the supervisor-school ratio, budget allocation, and the formation of a collaborative culture, so that mentoring can function as a strategic instrument to improve the quality of education services in a sustainable manner.

The discussion of the results of this study shows that there is a tension between the role of school supervisors as agents of administrative control and as pedagogical supporters. This is in line with the findings of Arlestig & Johansson (2022) who emphasize that school supervision often faces a tug-of-war between the demands of administrative accountability and the need for teacher learning support. In the context of this research, the supervisor not only ensures administrative compliance, but is also present as a facilitator of teacher capacity building.

Furthermore, DeMatthews, Knight, & Edwards (2023) affirm the importance of a balance between accountability and support in key oversight practices. These findings reinforce the findings that follow-up supervision assistance needs to be designed as a reflective cycle that balances performance evaluation with providing space for professional development.

Meanwhile, an international study by Ehren & Baxter (2021) shows that an effective accountability policy is not only oriented to evaluation results, but should also encourage continuous improvement. This is contextual with the results of the study that the follow-up of supervision in schools is not just an administrative report, but also an instrument to trigger a change in the collective work culture.

In the perspective of leadership, Hallinger & Hosseingholizadeh (2022) emphasize that instructional-oriented principals' leadership practices have a significant effect on improving the quality of schools. This is in line with the results of research that places supervisors as a catalyst in directing school principals to be able to develop annual quality strategies based on reflective data.

Furthermore, Liu & Hallinger (2022) through their systematic review emphasized the need for a sustainable and adaptive instructional supervision model. This confirms the study's findings that surveillance follow-up should be viewed as an ongoing process, not an incidental activity.

In addition, in the context of crisis and uncertainty, Netolicky (2021) shows that trust-based, caring, and collaborative leadership greatly determines the effectiveness of schools. The results of this study found a similar pattern, namely the follow-up of mentoring involving teachers and school principals collaboratively was able to strengthen the sense of shared ownership.

Finally, Sun & Xia (2023) highlight the role of collaborative reflection in learning communities as the key to sustainable school building. These findings are in line with the practice in the field that joint reflection after mentoring is an important means to foster collective awareness, strengthen institutional capacity, and ensure the continuity of school quality improvement.

The results of the data analysis show that the assistance of school supervisors at Regional High School XI of the Ministry of Education of West Java Province faces various obstacles that occur at each stage of the management cycle, namely planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reflection. At the planning stage, the most glaring obstacle is the reliance on a uniform administrative format and the non-use of reflective data such as Education Report cards and AKM results. This shows that mentoring planning focuses more on the provision of administrative obligations than on analyzing the real needs of each school. Reflective data, which should be the basis for designing more targeted interventions, are often overlooked (Mausethagen et al., 2020; Brown et al., 2023). The lack of involvement of stakeholders, such as teachers and school committees, in the planning process also

slows this down. This top-down planning limits the collective participation required to formulate strategies that are more appropriate to local needs and specific conditions on the ground (McFerran et al., 2019; Yurkofsky et al., 2020). In addition, mentoring indicators and targets are often not clearly defined, given the limited time available to plan a comprehensive plan ((Rodriguez & Silva, 2023)

At the implementation stage, although school supervisors have tried to provide support to principals and teachers, a number of obstacles still arise. One of the most significant is the low motivation of the principal, which can vary between individuals. Some principals show a passive attitude towards mentoring, which affects the quality of their interaction and involvement in the process of improving the quality of education (Rodriguez & Silva, 2023; Wang & Zhao, 2024). In addition, the limited time available to school supervisors to provide in-depth mentoring is a major obstacle, considering the very heavy workload of supervisors and the large number of target schools (Kim et al., 2023). Limited resources are also a major bottleneck, with supervisors struggling to give enough attention to each school. This causes mentoring to be more likely to be procedural and less responsive to specific needs in the field (Bueno, 2019). Therefore, there needs to be an adjustment in the way mentoring is carried out so that it focuses more on pedagogical and reflective development, not just administrative (Brown et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2023).

4.   CONCLUSION

This research shows that school supervisor assistance faces various significant obstacles at each stage of the process. At the planning stage, the mentoring plan is more directed to fulfill administrative obligations, the use of reflective data such as Education Report Cards and AKM is minimal, the strategies prepared tend to be uniform, stakeholder involvement is low, and targets and indicators are unclear due to time constraints. At the implementation stage, mentoring activities are more oriented towards document checks, reflective dialogue with teachers and principals is rare, committees and teachers are less involved, and sporadic supervisor visits due to high workload. Monitoring and evaluation (monev) still emphasizes the completeness of reports, standard instruments linking monitoring to school quality are not available, evaluation results are rarely analyzed or communicated back to schools, and stakeholder participation is low.

At the reflection stage, the process runs sporadically, unstructured, lacks documentation, teachers are rarely involved, service quality standards have not been used as a reference, and reflection is more considered an additional burden. Structural and cultural barriers are also quite significant, including an unbalanced supervisor-school ratio, limited operational funds with transportation costs borne by individuals, geographical constraints that make it difficult to access remote schools, a weak culture of collaboration with top-down relationships, and varied and partly passive motivations of principals.

To overcome planning constraints, it is necessary to prepare a mentoring plan based on reflection data such as Education Report and AKM, so that the strategy is not uniform but adjusts to the actual school conditions. Planning also needs to involve key stakeholders of teachers, committees, and principals and set clear targets and indicators to make the direction of the program more measurable. At the implementation stage, the supervisor does not only focus on examining documents, but prioritizes reflective dialogue with teachers and principals, so that mentoring becomes a means of joint learning.

The involvement of school committees also needs to be strengthened in order to create ecosystem support. For monitoring and evaluation, it is very important to prepare a standard instrument that not only checks the completeness of reports, but also measures their impact on the quality of schools. The monitoring results need to be analyzed and communicated back to the school so that they become material for reflection for continuous improvement. At the reflection stage, it is necessary to create a structured reflection mechanism with clear documentation, involve teachers, and use service quality standards as a reference.

Reflection should also be placed as part of the organization's learning cycle, not just an additional burden. Structural and cultural barriers can be overcome through more proportionate superintendent-

school ratios, adequate operational funding support, and the provision of special transportation incentives for superintendents serving in remote areas. Strengthening the culture of collaboration can be done by establishing regular communication forums that place teachers and principals as equal partners, while increasing the motivation of school principals can be facilitated through performance-based coaching and award programs.

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