

## IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC SUPERVISION BY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO ENHANCE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' ABILITY IN UTILIZING DIGITAL MEDIA IN SOUTHWEST ACEH REGENCY

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### Abstract

*The rapid development of digital technology in education forces teachers, willingly or not, to enhance their digital skills. School principals, as supervisors, can conduct academic supervision over their teachers to improve their ability in utilizing digital media. The aim of this research is to investigate the implementation of academic supervision programs for teachers to enhance their digital skills in Southwest Aceh Elementary Schools, covering planning, execution, and follow-up. This qualitative research gathers data through observation, interviews, and documentation. The subjects include six teachers and the school principals from three elementary schools in Southwest Aceh District. The findings indicate that: (1) academic supervision planning to enhance teachers' digital skills in Southwest Aceh District starts at the beginning of the academic year, involving all teachers. Principals initiate planning by analyzing teachers' needs, followed by budgeting, scheduling, and scalable evaluation. (2) Academic supervision in Southwest Aceh Elementary Schools is executed through direct visits and group discussions such as training, workshops, and seminars. (3) Follow-up actions involve continuous evaluation at regular intervals. (4) Challenges faced by Southwest Aceh Elementary Schools include limited understanding among older teachers, inadequate facilities and funding, and limited time, all of which affect the achievement of academic supervision goals.*

**Keywords:** Digital Skills Enhancement, Academic Supervision, Primary Education.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the current digital era, a teacher must possess high creativity, extensive knowledge, and strong critical thinking skills. They also need to adapt quickly to changes and efficiently solve various problems. Moreover, their proficiency in mastering digital technology is crucial. The utilization of digital media in education holds great potential for enhancing students' learning experiences, increasing their engagement in the learning process, and creating a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to continuously develop their digital skills to make learning more interesting, relevant, and impactful for students. Data obtained from Kemdikbudristek's report indicates that there are still few teachers in Southwest Aceh District who utilize the Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) Platform to enhance their digital technology skills. Some teachers even refuse to participate in training sessions that require the use of laptops.

This is due to various factors, including a lack of understanding about the importance of digital skills, the perception that digital skills are not crucial, and challenges that may arise due to age-related factors. However, almost all teachers in Southwest Aceh District have Android smartphones that can be used as tools to leverage digital media, Kemdikbudristek Balai Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan Aceh, (2023). The role of school principals in supervising and developing teachers' skills is also crucial. They need to have a good understanding of academic supervision concepts to enhance the professionalism of teachers in their schools. Academic supervision conducted by school principals has been proven to have a positive influence on the performance of teachers. Therefore, it is essential for school principals to have adequate knowledge and skills to carry out supervision effectively, Hasanah and Kristiawan, (2019). According to laws regarding teachers and lecturers, teachers need to have good knowledge in science, technology, and the arts. The digital skills of teachers are very helpful in various aspects, such as managing administrative tasks, delivering learning materials, and

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*Mustika<sup>1</sup>, Niswanto<sup>2</sup>, Qismullah Yusuf<sup>3</sup>*

creating an active and engaging learning atmosphere. The utilization of digital media can also support the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar program in enhancing the overall quality of education, (Hartanto, 2019). The rapid advancement of technology demands that teachers continuously develop their digital skills. By optimizing their digital skills, individuals will become more efficient in various fields. Therefore, enhancing the digital skills of teachers is a crucial step in preparing students to face an increasingly digital and competitive future, Sulistianto Handayani, (2020). The objective of this research is to determine whether academic supervision can enhance teachers' ability in utilizing digital media in primary schools in Southwest Aceh District.

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD**

In this research, a qualitative research approach is employed. Qualitative research entails a commitment to naturalistic views, interpretative approaches to the subject matter of study, and an ongoing critique of positivist politics and methods (Denzin and Lincoln in Zakariah A, 2020). The qualitative approach is chosen for this study due to the consideration that the data used in this research leans more towards verbal and behavioral data of the research subjects, which involves the analysis related to academic supervision conducted by school principals to enhance the ability of primary school teachers in utilizing digital media in Southwest Aceh District.

### **2.1 Research Location and Time**

Based on the data obtained from the Department of Education and Culture of Southwest Aceh District, there are a total of 97 public primary schools in the district. For this research, the researcher selected 3 public primary schools from different districts as the research sites. The selection of research sites was based on the levels of achievement in teaching quality, categorized as good, moderate, and poor. This aligns with the data obtained by the researcher from the report of the educational unit and vocational schools in Southwest Aceh District in 2023. The selected schools are: SD Negeri Unggul Tunas Abdy, which has achieved good teaching quality; SD Negeri 1 Susoh, with moderate teaching quality; and SD Negeri 8 Blangpidie, with poor teaching quality. This research was conducted over a period of 3 (three) months, namely in January, February, and March 2024. The process of data collection, data processing and analysis, report writing, research result seminar, revision, and report printing were carried out in accordance with the research permit issued by the Chair of the Master of Education Administration Program at Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh.

### **2.2 Data Collection Techniques**

Observation (observation) conducted by the researcher is a data collection technique used to observe the facts that occur in the field, accompanied by observation sheets. According to (Fiantika F, 2022; Understanding Research Method Design, n.d.), Observation activities essentially involve observing using the senses to gather information. It involves observing (observing) the behavior of individuals and interactions directly in the research setting. The researcher conducted interviews with teachers and principals in order to collect data related to the research the researcher intended to conduct through conversations between the two parties. The third technique is Documentation, which involves analyzing documents that have been prepared, such as observation sheets, interview questionnaires, and photos of activity implementation.

### **2.3 Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and organizing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. This involves organizing data into predetermined categories, breaking them down into units, synthesizing, organizing into patterns, selecting what is important and what will be studied, and drawing conclusions that are easily understood by oneself and others. Data analysis obtained from interviews involves three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

#### **2.4 Data Validity Test**

In qualitative research, there are several criteria that can be used to test the validity of data, including:

1. **Credibility:** This criterion is used to ensure that the information collected contains values of truth, is reliable, and is acceptable to the respondents who provide information during the data collection process.
2. **Transferability:** This criterion is used to ensure that the results of research in a specific context can be applied or transferred to other contexts or rules to establish reliability in research.
3. **Dependability:** This criterion is used to assess whether the qualitative research process is of quality or not. To check whether the results of qualitative research are of quality or not, one should look at whether the researcher has been careful or not, even making mistakes in conceptualizing the research plan, collecting data, and interpreting the data or information that has been collected in a research report that is written.
4. **Confirmability:** This criterion is used to assess whether the research results are of quality or not, (Citriadin, 2020).

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the research findings, the following sections will further elaborate on the implementation of academic supervision by school principals to enhance the elementary school teachers' abilities in using digital media. The implementation of the academic supervision program to enhance the digital skills of elementary school teachers in the West Aceh Daya District begins with the program planning process, program implementation, evaluation, and follow-up of the academic supervision program, as well as the obstacles faced by school principals in conducting academic supervision.

#### **3.1 Planning the Implementation of Academic Supervision by School Principals to Enhance Teachers' Abilities in Using Digital Media**

In planning academic supervision implementation, school principals can utilize appropriate program development techniques. Various activities in the supervision process are necessary for the success of a planned program to achieve the set goals. Teachers are one of the most important components in education. To achieve educational goals effectively, teachers must have knowledge, understanding, and skills in the field of education in accordance with the National Education Standards, Article 28 paragraph 3 point a, which states that the ability to plan, manage, and evaluate learning lies in pedagogical competence, which is expected to encourage students' self-actualization. In this regard, the National Education Standards clearly state that teachers must have the ability to plan, manage, and evaluate learning effectively. The curriculum updates implemented by the government require teachers to enhance their skills according to these curriculum updates, which are aligned with the development of digital technology.

Therefore, every school aiming to achieve educational goals must continuously improve in all areas, especially in digital aspects. As leaders, school principals can choose the right strategies and techniques of academic supervision to enhance teachers' abilities in using digital media, (Isbianti & Andriani, 2021). The Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel in Isbianti and Andriani states that the selection of appropriate strategies and techniques can be done by setting supervision goals and effective achievement strategies for the desired targets. Supervision planning needs to be done objectively, responsibly, sustainably, refer to the National Education Standards, and be based on the school's needs. School principals in SD Aceh Jaya have planned using various techniques in academic supervision planning. Based on the research findings, it can be stated that in academic supervision planning, the school principal first identifies problems to make preparations, scheduling, and socialization before supervision is carried out. Then set academic supervision goals, budgeting, scheduling, and follow-up or evaluation. In this case, the School Principal of SD Aceh

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*Mustika<sup>1</sup>, Niswanto<sup>2</sup>, Qismullah Yusuf<sup>3</sup>*

Jaya uses group discussion techniques, classroom observation visits, and learning demonstration techniques as supervision techniques.

**3.2 Implementation of School Principal Guidance to Improve the Smoothness of Teaching and Learning Processes at Elementary Schools Using Digital Media**

The implementation of academic supervision activities on teachers' abilities in using digital media is a post-planning activity. In the implementation activities, the school principal will determine the appropriate steps of academic supervision to be used at the school. This implementation activity will help the school principal assess teachers' abilities in using digital media to achieve educational goals in line with the curriculum. The steps taken by the school principal of SD Aceh Jaya are carried out by appointing a team, schedule, and framework. Supervision can be carried out in the form of direct classroom visits, workshops/training, and discussions or evaluations outside the classroom focused on improving teachers' abilities in using digital media.

According to the structure of the Principal Development and Empowerment Institute (LPPKS), supervision techniques that can be used include individual supervision, which can be done through class visits, classroom observations, individual meetings, inter-class visits, and self-assessment. Subsequently, assessing the effectiveness of the supervision program's implementation to improve teachers' abilities in using digital media at SD Aceh Jaya can be done using various methods, including direct observation, learning outcome evaluation, surveys and interviews, engagement analysis, and learning quality evaluation, (Krisdiyanto & Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, 2019). The effectiveness of the program's implementation can be assessed through several steps, such as determining evaluation objectives, identifying performance indicators to measure program success, collecting data using various methods, including surveys, interviews, observations, or document analysis. After the data is collected, analyze it to evaluate the program's effectiveness, interpret the analysis results to understand the significance of the findings, and based on the assessment results, make recommendations to improve the program's effectiveness in the future.

**3.3 Follow-Up Actions of School Principals Regarding the Use of Digital Media in the Teaching and Learning Process to Achieve Learning Objectives**

Furthermore, the application of academic supervision results to improve teachers' competencies in utilizing digital technology can be implemented through various concrete steps to enhance learning and teaching in the classroom. Lantip and Sudiyono in Isbiati suggest that supervision activities should end with follow-up and reporting of results to teachers. The school principal is advised to review the summary of assessment results, and if the academic supervision goals and learning standards have not been achieved, the supervisor should reassess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers targeted for guidance or redesign academic supervision programs for the next period, create next academic supervision action plans, and implement these action plans in the future, (Isbianti & Andriani, 2021).

Based on the interviews conducted at SD Negeri Tunas Abdya and SD Negeri 1 Susoh, it can be concluded that short-term evaluation planning for the effectiveness of academic supervision programs can be done using various methods such as direct monitoring of implementation in the learning process, surveys, and interviews on the benefits and satisfaction levels of the supervision conducted. For the long term, continuous adjustments and improvements according to the development of time are needed, continuous coaching, and additional training for teachers who may require further support, as revealed in the interviews by the school principals.

**3.4 Challenges and Barriers Encountered in the Implementation of Academic Supervision in Fostering the Use of Digital Media in Elementary Schools**

In every program to be implemented, there will inevitably be obstacles and challenges that may arise. To overcome these, steps and strategies need to be established. Building an open

communication culture, encouraging collaboration between school principals and teachers, conducting regular evaluations, providing appropriate support and guidance to teachers facing challenges, flexibility to adjust mentoring programs to individual or group needs, which may require different approaches, and efforts to enhance the capacity of school principals and teachers to provide effective support to teachers, including through training, professional development, and collaboration with external parties. Halimatussa'diyyah in Aisyahrani et al. states that some common obstacles in the academic supervision process are: a) Inaccurate timing between the school principal and the teachers to be supervised, due to the busy schedule of the school principal with internal and external tasks, resulting in limited time for supervision, b) Teachers or educators who are still unwilling to be supervised due to the ingrained perspective that supervision does not help them but rather seeks to find faults, c) Constraints in the implementation of academic supervision due to the lack of funds allocated in the School Operational Assistance Budget (RAPBS) for academic supervision and their weaknesses in teaching, (Aisyahrani et al., 2023). Based on the interviews above, it can be concluded that the challenges and barriers that may be encountered include limited time, lack of enthusiasm from older teachers to learn using digital media, mismatch between the guidance given and needs, failure to develop knowledge according to curriculum changes and evolving times. These challenges can be overcome by fostering open communication, collaboration between school principals and teachers, conducting regular evaluations, providing support and guidance according to teachers needs, and efforts to enhance the capacity of school principals and teachers to provide effective support to teachers.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussions on academic supervision in the Elementary Schools of Aceh Barat Daya District at SDN Unggul Tunas Abdya, SDN 1 Susoh, and SDN 8 Blangpidie, it can be concluded that:

1. The planning of academic supervision to enhance teachers' digital skills in Aceh Barat Daya District begins at the beginning of the school year involving all teachers. The school principal initiates the planning by analyzing the teachers' needs, followed by budget allocation, scheduling, and scale evaluation. It is then followed by the determination of appropriate steps and strategies.
2. The implementation of academic coaching in the Elementary Schools of Aceh Barat Daya District is conducted through direct visits, group discussions such as providing training, workshops, and seminars.
3. Follow-up Educational Supervision is carried out through continuous evaluation. The use of instruments will greatly assist the school principal in monitoring the Elementary Schools in Aceh Barat Daya District. The results of these assessments will serve as guidelines for subsequent supervision activities.
4. The obstacles faced by the Elementary Schools in Aceh Barat Daya District include not only lack of understanding and motivation among senior teachers but also inadequate facilities and funding, as well as limited time, which affect the achievement of academic supervision goals.

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***IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC SUPERVISION BY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO ENHANCE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' ABILITY IN UTILIZING DIGITAL MEDIA IN SOUTHWEST ACEH REGENCY***

*Mustika<sup>1</sup>, Niswanto<sup>2</sup>, Qismullah Yusuf<sup>3</sup>*

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