AL HIKMAH: JOURNAL OF EDUCATION
Vol. 7 No. 1 Tahun 2026 | 39 – 50
P ISSN 2723-0058, E ISSN 2775-3697
http://yphn.ac.id/ejournal/index.php/Alhikmah/index

The Role of School Supervisors in Differential Mentoring to Increase the Leadership Capacity of School Principals

Margiyanto[1]*, Taufiq Harris[2], Furqon Wahyudi[3]
Gresik University, East Java, Indonesia[1,2,3]
pa-01-0140@instruktur.belajar.id[1], taufiqharris@unigres.ac.id[2],
furqonwahyudi@unigres.ac.id[3]

ABSTRACT

Keywords:
Leadership Capacity, headmaster, Differentiated Assistance, School Supervisor

This study examines the role of school supervisors in implementing differentiated mentoring to enhance principals' leadership capacity. Variations in leadership capacity among principals are influenced by contextual, organizational, and individual factors, while supervisory practices often remain uniform. This study aims to develop an effective differentiated mentoring model tailored to principals' needs. A qualitative multi-site case study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Sidayu and SMA Muhammadiyah 10 GKB in Gresik Regency. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings indicate that effective differentiated mentoring begins with diagnostic mapping of principals' leadership capacity, followed by the selection of appropriate mentoring strategies such as facilitation, mentoring, and coaching. The results show that principals with high-capacity benefit from facilitative and coaching approaches, while those with moderate capacity require mentoring combined with coaching. The integration of reflection and growth mindset strengthens leadership development, and religious approaches are relevant in faith-based schools. This study contributes to educational management by proposing a contextual and adaptive differentiated mentoring model for improving principals' leadership capacity.

Received: 18-02-2026
Revised: 17-04-2026
Accepted: 25-06-2026

This is an open-access article under the CC–BY-SA license.

A. Introduction

The leadership capacity of school principals in Indonesia shows significant variation between educational units, which is influenced by the social, cultural, and organizational context of the school. Mustakim et al., (2020) explained that learning leadership is highly dependent on the context of the school environment, while emphasizing that the effectiveness of leadership is determined by the ability to adapt to change. In practice, there are still many school principals who have difficulty integrating the demands of education policies with digital dynamics and local school needs (Astuti, 2022; (Akhmad et al., 2021) . A number of previous studies have examined the leadership development of school principals through supervision and training. Navaridas-Nalda et al., (2020) emphasizing the importance of developmental supervision, while showing that mentoring can significantly improve leadership competence. However, most of the studies still use a uniform approach (Arifin et al., 2023) , so they have not been able to accommodate the different needs of individual school principals in diverse contexts (Bellibaş et al., 2020; Fatimah et al., 2025; Khamdiyah et al., 2026; Khulasoh and Fauziyah, 2026) .

The limitations of this conventional approach are becoming increasingly relevant in the context of the latest policy, namely the Regulation of the Director General of GTK Number 4831 of 2023 which affirms the transformation of the role of school supervisors from administrative controllers to professional companions. However, implementation in the field still shows a tendency to use the same approach for all school principals, so the effectiveness of mentoring is not optimal (Suheri, 2025; Susanti and Nugroho, 2026). Based on these conditions, Pineda-Báez et al., (2020) a new approach that is more adaptive is needed, namely differential assistance that is tailored to the needs, capacity, and context of each school principal. This approach is supported by those who affirm that differentiation in supervision increases the effectiveness of leadership development, as well as those that emphasize the importance of a growth mindset in dealing with change Lumban Gaol, 2023).

This research has a novelty in the development of a differential mentoring model based on mapping the needs of school principals which is integrated with reflection and growth mindset in the context of the latest policy implementation. This study aims to analyze the role of school supervisors in differential mentoring and formulate an effective model to improve the leadership capacity of school principals.

B. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a multisite case study design, Muktaf, (2019) referring to a concept that emphasizes the exploration of phenomena in real contexts in more than one location. The research was carried out for six months, namely July to December 2025, at SMA Negeri 1 Sidayu and SMA Muhammadiyah 10 GKB Gresik as a representation of public and private schools. The focus of the research includes the role of school supervisors in differential mentoring, the implementation process, and its impact on the principal's leadership capacity. The research subjects consisted of school supervisors, principals, and teachers who were selected purposively based on their involvement in the mentoring process. Data collection was carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies of documents such as RPPT, RKT, RKAS, and SNP. The validity of the data was tested through triangulation, member check, and trail audit (Moleong, 2007; Sugiyono, 2017). Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing using models, as well as cross-site analysis to find common patterns and differences between research sites (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, 2014) .

C. Result and Discussion

Based on data collection, both from interviews, direct observation and documentation, it can be explained objectively with details as in table 1 below.

Table 1. Similarities and Differences in Differential Assistance

School Name	Level of Awareness of Reflecting and Level of Capacity to Lead Change	Differential Mentoring Strategies and Methods	The Impact of Mentoring on Improving the Leadership Competence ff School Principals.	Equations	Differences	Research Findings
SMAN 1	High power,	Facilitation	The principal	Classificati	High-power	Differential

SIDAYU	Continuous change	coaching	understands how to effectively run the program, even in the process of running the program, innovative new ideas emerge	on of the level of consciousness of reflection including empowered	change lead capacity, sustainable change, more emphasis	mentoring adds the concept of growth mindset, reflection
MUH High School. 10 GKB	Moderately empowered, Gradual change	Mentoring Coahing	Principals understand how to effectively run the program, but sometimes experience doubts in making decisions related to finances.	Classification of the level of consciousness of reflection including empowered	Capacity to lead change is moderate, gradual change, flexible supervisors of the Muhammadiyah management council	Differential mentoring adds the concept of growth mindset, reflective and religious/ religious approach

Overview Location of a brief profile related to the leadership culture and the initial condition of the school that the principal's leadership capacity at SMA Negeri 1 Sidayu is high-powered, besides that the school is a batch 1 driving school which means that the principal has a vision that wants to continue to move

forward and be at the forefront, this is very conducive because teachers generally support the school program in accordance with the annual academic activity plan. In addition, the budget is sufficient to support academic activities for one academic year. Supervisory strategies in mapping the needs of school principals (diagnostics). Based on the results of the mapping by the school supervisor, it is known that the leadership capacity of the principal of SMA Negeri 1 Sidayu is in the high-power category, so it is included in the classification of sustainable change. If referring to the Director General of GTK no. 4831 of 2023, the actions taken are assisted with a facilitation strategy and followed up with coaching. (Ministry of Education and Culture.RI, 2013)

Implementation of differential assistance (methods, techniques, and media used by supervisors). After it was known that the results of the mapping were that the principal of SMA Negeri 1 Sidayu had a leadership capacity in the high-power category, the supervisor in the assistance used the facilitation method, namely coordinating and being acknowledged to equalize perceptions in running school programs. When the process of running the activity program is effective and obtains maximum results, assistance is carried out with the coaching method to explore what is felt so that the principal can be creative and innovate in developing creativity, ideas in solving the problems faced and future plans. (Mulyanto et al., 2023) . The impact of mentoring on improving the leadership competence of school principals, after facilitation and coaching assistance was carried out, the impact obtained was that the principal understood how to effectively run the program, even in the process of running the program, innovative new ideas emerged. To keep the enthusiasm in running the school program objective, we are given growth mindset insights and reflect to obtain feedback as material for future program improvement.

Summary of findings that, based on the data above, school supervisors mapped SMAN Negeri 1 Sidayu with the results of the high-power category meaning sustainable change, so the supervisor determined the differential mentoring model strategy in the form of facilitation and coaching models, the impact for the principal to understand how to effectively run the program, even in the process of running the program, new innovative ideas emerged. To keep them enthusiastic in running school programs, they were given growth mindset insights and reflections for recommendations for the preparation of the next year's program. Overview of the location of a brief profile related to the leadership culture and initial conditions at SMA Muhammadiyah 10 GKB that

the principal's leadership capacity is in the category of medium power, in addition to that the school is a driving school batch 2 which means that the principal has a vision that wants to continue to advance and be at the forefront, the age is relatively young, in some cases there is a problem of controlling mental emotions in social communication. The composition of young teachers is 95 percent, this is an asset that must be obsized. In general, support the school's program in accordance with the annual academic activity plan.

Supervisory strategies in mapping the needs of school principals (diagnostics). Based on the results of the mapping by the school supervisor, it is known that the leadership capacity of the principal of SMA Muhammadiyah 10 GKB is in the category of moderate empowerment, so it is included in the category of gradual change. If referring to GTK Regulation No. 4831 of 2023, the actions taken are assisted with mentoring strategies to support the improvement of the principal's competence and followed up with coaching to obtain new ideas or ideas to solve the problems faced by the principal's own creativity, but the strategy carried out by the supervisor above is flexible by paying attention to the situation and conditions so that it is right on target and maintains The atmosphere is safe, comfortable and conducive. The implementation of differential mentoring by school supervisors and it is known that the mapping results that the principal of Muhamadiyah High School has a leadership capacity in the medium empowerment category, so the supervisor in mentoring uses the mentoring method, which shows good practices experienced in solving relatively similar problems, so that it can be used as a reference. When the process of running the program that has been designed, the principal to be able to smoothly solve the challenges so that the process will be more effective and of course the results obtained will be maximized, then assistance is carried out with the coaching method where the supervisor asks weighty questions to the principal so that he can answer various innovative plans by developing creativity, ideas in solving the problems faced and for future plans.

The impact of mentoring on improving the leadership competence of school principals, After mentoring and coaching assistance was carried out, the impact obtained that the principal gained new experience on how to effectively run the program as planned, reducing doubt in making decisions related to finances by paying attention to RKAS. In order to remain enthusiastic, it is encouraged to remain objective according to the concept of growth mindset insight. A small note that the school supervisor understands that this school is

religious-based, so a religious approach is also applied to maintain the spirit so that it remains stable. Summary of findings that based on the results of the mapping of SMA Muhammadiyah 10 GKB including the category of moderate empowerment, it means gradual changes, the supervisor conducts differential mentoring and coaching assistance, the impact for the principal to gain new experience on how to effectively run the program according to plan, reduce doubt in making decisions related to finances by paying attention to the RKAS, even in the process of running the program new ideas emerge that innovative and even more excited after gaining growth mindset insights. Paying attention to the school's vision and mission, school supervisors understand that this school is religious-based, so a religious approach is also applied to maintain the spirit to remain stable. Differential mentoring by school supervisors is a strategic approach that allows school principals to obtain professional support according to their needs and institutional context. Differentiated approaches in educational supervision have been shown to increase the effectiveness of leadership development because they tailor interventions to the individual's level of competence and readiness. The adaptive mentoring model is also in line with the principles of learning leadership that emphasizes responsiveness to the needs of the school organization. (Bryant and Walker, 2024; Lian and Nopilda, 2018)

Differential mentoring contributes to leadership capacity building through a continuous process of coaching, mentoring, and reflective facilitation. Educational coaching encourages school leaders to develop reflective skills and data-driven decision-making. A systematic mentoring approach helps both novice and experienced school principals in strengthening managerial and pedagogical competencies. (Saputra et al., 2025; Thahir, 2023) The implementation of differential mentoring also supports the development of a growth mindset in school leadership. Leaders with a growth mindset are more open to feedback and changes in leadership practices. A reflective and supportive mentoring environment has been proven to increase the readiness of leaders in facing the complexity of educational change. (Willermark et al., 2023; Kawiana, 2023) . Needs-based mentoring allows school supervisors to more accurately identify leadership capacity gaps. Data-driven supervision improves the quality of school development planning and strategic decision-making. The use of school performance data as the basis for mentoring interventions increases the accountability and effectiveness of school leadership. (OECD, 2019; Raprap et al., 2025; Suttrisno, 2021).

In the context of changing education policies and digital transformation, differential mentoring helps school principals adapt to the demands of modern leadership. Digital leadership demands the ability to integrate technology, information management, and collaborative communication. Adaptive mentoring facilitates school principals in developing digital competencies that support the transformation of school organizations. (Malik et al., 2025; Hossain et al., 2025) . Differential mentoring also strengthens the collaborative culture and organizational learning in schools. Collaborative leadership increases teacher involvement in decision-making and learning innovation. A strong organizational learning culture contributes to the continuous improvement of school performance. (Karim et al., 2025; Supriadi et al., 2025) . Practically, the differential mentoring model provides a flexible and contextual framework for school supervisors to improve the quality of school principals' leadership. This approach allows for the integration of national policies with the local needs of schools resulting in more sustainable change. Sustainable, needs-based mentoring has been proven to strengthen leadership effectiveness and overall quality of educational services. (UNESCO, 2017; Hanafiah et al., 2023)

These findings are in line with those that suggest that effective supervision should be tailored to the individual's developmental level. On the other hand, it emphasizes that adaptive leadership requires a contextual approach according to the needs of the school organization. Ekawati et al., (2023); Lian and Nopilda, (2018) (Fatimah et al., 2025; Khulasoh and Fauziyah, 2026). The impact of mentoring shows an increase in the ability of school principals in decision-making, program innovation, and school management. Principals in the high-powered category showed stronger innovative abilities, while the moderately empowered category experienced increased confidence and reduced doubts in decision-making. This supports the findings) that mentoring and coaching contribute significantly to strengthening leadership capacity. (Bellibaş et al., 2020; Boateng and Olexová, 2023; Suheri, 2025) . The integration of growth mindset in mentoring has also been proven to strengthen the motivation and resilience of school principals in facing challenges. explains that individuals with Klijnstra et al., (2024) a growth mindset are more open to learning and change, while affirming that continuous reflection is key to effective educational leadership. Pransiska et al., (2025); Sutiadiningsih and al., (2026); Valentin et al., (2025) . In the context of a religious-based school, a religious approach is an important factor in maintaining the emotional stability and motivation of the principal. This

shows that differential mentoring is not only technical, but also pays attention to aspects of the values and culture of the school organization.

D. Conclusion

This study shows that differential mentoring by school supervisors is effective in increasing the leadership capacity of school principals through the process of mapping needs, selecting appropriate strategies, and integrating reflection and growth mindset. Facilitation and coaching strategies are effective for high-capacity principals, while mentoring combined with coaching is more appropriate for medium capacity, as well as relevant religious approaches in the context of religious-based schools. Although these findings contribute to the development of adaptive supervision models, the limitations of the study lie in the limited number of subjects and the narrow scope of the site. Further research is suggested to involve more supervisors and schools to obtain stronger generalizations and examine the influence of cultural and digital contexts on the effectiveness of differentiating mentoring.

References

Akhmad, F., Defa Rosana, O., Karim Damanik, N., Dhiya Ulhaq, K., 2021. The Influence of Principal Leadership on International Schools, Journal of Education.

Arifin, S., Sutama, S., Aryani, S.A., ..., 2023. Improving the Professional Teacher Competence Through Clinical Supervision Based on Multicultural Values in Pesantren. … Pendidikan Islam.

Astuti, I., 2022. Inclusive School Learning Leadership. Media Nusa Creative (MNC Publishing).

Bellibaş, M.Ş., Gümüş, S., Kılınç, A.Ç., 2020. Principals Supporting Teacher Leadership: The effects of learning-centred leadership on teacher leadership practices with the mediating role of teacher agency. Eur. J. Educ. 55, 200–216. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12387

Boateng, P., Olexová, C., 2023. Enhancing Organisational Agility by Means of Agile Complexity Leadership. Journal of HRM.

Bryant, D.A., Walker, A., 2024. Principal-Designed Structures that Enhance Middle Leaders' Professional Learning. Educational Management Administration & Leadership 52, 435–454. https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432221084154

Ekawati, W., Siti Masitoh, Mochamad Nursalim, 2023. A Study of the Philosophy of Essentialism on the Implementation of Managerial Supervision. HELPER : Journal of Guidance and Counseling 40, 14–21. https://doi.org/10.36456/helper.vol40.no1.a6321

Fatimah, H., Utami, F.S., Muhibbin, A., ..., 2025. The Role of the Principal's Leadership In Strengthening The Quality Of Learning Through Data-Based Academic Supervision In Schools.... Pendas: Scientific Journal ....

Hanafiah, H., Saadah, E., Suparman, S., ..., 2023. Management of School Supervisor Assistance to School Principals in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Journal of Education ....

Hossain, S., Fernando, M., Akter, S., 2025. Digital leadership: Towards a dynamic managerial capability perspective of artificial intelligence-driven leader capabilities. … & Organizational Studies. https://doi.org/10.1177/15480518251319624

Karim, A., Fathurohman, O., Sulaiman, S., Marliani, L., ..., 2025. How do principals act as leaders and managers in boarding and public schools in Indonesia? Cogent …. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2445354

Kawiana, I.G.P., 2023. Digital leadership: Building adaptive organizations in the digital age. Jurnal Multidisiplin Sahombu.

Kemendikbud.RI, P., 2013. RI Number 66 of 2013 concerning Educational Assessment. Ministry of Education and Culture. RI, Jakarta.

Khamdiyah, R., Harris, T., ..., 2026. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC SUPERVISION OF THE PRINCIPAL AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE AT SDN DERMO II BANGIL. Journal of Management ....

Khulasoh, S., Fauziyah, H., 2026. The Role of Principal Supervision on Teacher Professionalism in the Era of Independent Learning. Journal ....

Klijnstra, T., Stoel, G.L., Savenije, G.M., van Boxtel, C.A.M., 2024. Teachers' professional growth in teaching students' social scientific reasoning. Teach. Teach. Educ. 152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104783

Lian, B., Nopilda, L., 2018. Journal of Educational Management, Leadership, and Supervision. P-ISSN 3, 2548–7094 – 2614–8021.

Lumban Gaol, N.T., 2023. School leadership in Indonesia: A systematic literature review. Educational Management Administration & Leadership 51, 831–848. https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432211010811

Malik, M., Raziq, M.M., Sarwar, N., Tariq, A., 2025. Digital leadership, business model innovation and organizational change: role of leader in steering digital transformation. … : An International Journal.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J., 2014. Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook. SAGE Publication.

Moleong, L., 2007. Qualitative Research Methods. Bandung, Remaja Rosdakarya.

Muktaf, Z.M., 2019. Case Study Research Techniques, Ethnography and Phenomenology in Qualitative Methods. Journal of Education 3, 1–5.

Mulyanto, A., Saadah, E., Suparman, S., ..., 2023. Transformation of the Role of School Supervisors in Determining Strategies and Methods of Mentoring in the Independent Curriculum. Journal of Education ....

Mustakim, M., Ishomuddin, I., Winarjo, W., Khozin, K., 2020. Leadership Construction of the Giri Kedaton Tradition as the Socio-Cultural Identity of the People of Gresik Regency. FPIPS Communication Media 19, 11–27.

Navaridas-Nalda, F., Clavel-San Emeterio, M., Fernández-Ortiz, R., Arias-Oliva, M., 2020. The strategic influence of school principal leadership in the digital transformation of schools. Comput. Human Behav. 112, 106481. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106481

O.E.C.D., 2019. PISA 2018 Results (Volume 1). What Students Know and Can Do. . OECD.

Pineda-Báez, C., Bauman, C., Andrews, D., 2020. Empowering teacher leadership: a cross-country study. International Journal of Leadership in Education 23, 388–414. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2018.1543804

Pransiska, N., Salsabila, H., ..., 2025. ADAPTIVE ACADEMIC SUPERVISION IN THE ERA OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM. ... : PGSD Scientific Journal ....

Raprap, W.P., Ngabalin, M., Camerling, L.Y., Wahono, T.R., ..., 2025. Educational leadership 5.0: Managing schools in the era of disruption. books.google.com.

Saputra, M.I.W., Naja, A.F., Irfandi, A.S., Stone, E.B., Par, S.T., ..., 2025. Principals, Curriculum, and Students: A Complete Guide to Education Management. books.google.com.

Scott, 2017. Qualitative Quantitative Research Methods R&D. Alfabeta, Bandung.

Suheri, E., 2025. Principal Transformation: Training for Effective and Innovative Leadership. books.google.com.

Supriadi, D., Purbonuswanto, W., ..., 2025. Development of a literacy leadership model based on Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Leadership Trilogy at Tamansiswa College. Educational Journal ....

Susanti, M.M.I., Nugroho, M.T., 2026. Education Management: Innovation and Transformation Theory Towards Effective Schools. books.google.com.

Sutiadiningsih, A., Nurlaela, L., Kusstianti, N., Dwijuliani, R., 2026. Innovative

Leadership and Management Strategies: Theory and Practice in the Field of Beauty Education. books.google.com.

Suttrisno, 2021. The Effect of Social Studies Teaching Aids on Elementary School Teacher Performance. Scientific Journal of Basic Education VIII, 77–90.

Thahir, M., 2023. School Quality Management. Indonesia Emas Group, Bandung.

UNESCO, 2017. Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives; UNESCO: Paris, France, International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development. UNESCO, USA.

Valentin, N.N.N., Pradana, A., ..., 2025. Managing Educational Quality through SWOT Analysis: A Case Study at SMA Negeri 3 Ponorogo. At-Takwin: Journal of ….

Willermark, S., Gellerstedt, M., Nilsson, P., 2023. Surviving or thriving? Exploring school leaders' perception of initiated digital transformation. School Leadership and Management. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2023.2282618