

Academic Supervision Using Professional Learning Community (PLC) by Principals of Public Elementary Schools in Enrekang Regency

Evy Segarawati Ampry^{1,2,*}

¹Educational Administration Department, School of Postgraduate Studies

¹Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, ²Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar

¹Bandung, ²Makassar Indonesia

*evysegarawatiampri@upi.edu

Aan Komariah, Lili Abdullah Rozak, Aslam

Educational Administration Department, School of Postgraduate Studies

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Bandung, Indonesia

Nadir G

UPT SDN 102 Pudukku Enrekang
Enrekang, Indonesia

Abstract—The present study aims to examine the implementation of academic supervision using Professional Learning Community (PLC) empowerment by principals of elementary schools in Enrekang Regency. The data was gathered from observations, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects were teachers, principals, and school supervisors in Enrekang Regency. Data was analyzed in several steps, i.e. data reduction, data display, data verification, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicated that academic supervision using Professional Learning Community (PLC) empowerment in Enrekang Regency could be improved. Some factors that negatively affected academic supervision in Enrekang Regency were principals' lack of understanding about academic supervision using Professional Learning Community (PLC) empowerment and teachers' tendency to fear or worry about supervision. Teachers' reluctance to be supervised was because they erroneously thought that supervision was identical to evaluation. Supervision, ideally, was a learning process and opportunity, rather than an evaluation of teachers by the principals.

Keywords—*academic supervision, professional learning community*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Minister of National Education's Regulation No. 13 Year 2007 about the Standards for School/Islamic School Principals states that to be appointed as a school/Islamic school principal, an individual is required to satisfy the national standards of school/Islamic school principal. The standards mention five core competencies that a principal should possess, i.e. personal, managerial, entrepreneurship, supervision, and

social competencies. Of the five competencies, academic supervision has been the most problematic. Academic supervision competency is comprised of (1) designing academic supervision program to improve teachers' professionalism, (2) implementing academic supervision on teachers using appropriate supervision approach and technique, (3) following up the results of academic supervision on teachers in order to improve teachers' professionalism [1].

Meanwhile, Indonesian Law No. 14 Year 2005 about Teachers and Lecturers required teachers to: (i) possess minimum academic qualification of S1/D4 levels (bachelor degree); (ii) possess the competencies of agent of education, i.e. pedagogic, personal, social, and professional competencies; and (iii) possess certificate of educator [2]. The implementation of this Law is expected to provide a perfect opportunity for teachers to improve their professionalism through training, academic writing, Teachers' Work Group meetings, and Subject Teachers' Forum meeting. Both teacher groups are critical in promoting teachers' professional development. Teachers' Work Group (TWG) is a professional forum for elementary school teachers at sub-district level. The members of this group are teachers from various schools in that sub-district. Subject Teachers' Forum (STF), on the other hand, is a professional forum for teachers of a certain subject at middle and high school levels. The scope of STF is wider, facilitating subject teachers from various middle and high schools in a regency/city.

Once teachers undergo a training, they are expected to possess at least four main competencies, i.e. personal, pedagogic, professional, and social competencies. Meanwhile, principals are expected to possess or develop five competencies

after a training, i.e. personal, managerial, entrepreneurship, supervision, and social competencies. These competencies will allow principals to manage and lead their schools as a system. They have to be able to play the roles of educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator simultaneously.

School supervisor training will equip supervisors with personal, social, managerial supervision, academic supervision, educational evaluation, and research and development competencies. These trainings serve to improve teachers', principals', and school supervisors' quality, productivity, efficiency, and innovation. In other words, these trainings will develop educators' and staff's competencies.

In order to improve educators' and staff's competencies, especially school principals, Indonesian Department of National Education has provided various trainings, through its quality development project. However, those trainings were often ineffective because training materials were not integrated into its implementation. In short, these trainings have traditionally been theoretical. After the training, principals seldom had an opportunity to implement the training result in a controlled way, because the training was not followed up by monitoring and evaluation process.

Professional Learning Community is a process of knowledge acquisition through collaborative inquiry in order to solve problems arising in and from the profession. It is based on teachers' learning needs and is implemented collaboratively in accordance with teaching-learning goals and teachers' experiences [3]. The primary characteristics of professional learning community are professional culture, leadership, focus on students, focus on professional learning, and performance and development.

Academic Supervision is the effort of school staff to leading teachers and other education officers in improving teaching. Including developing teacher growth, completing and revising educational goals. Teaching materials and teaching methods and teaching assessment [4].

The purpose of academic supervision is to assist teachers in developing the teaching learning process, help teachers translate the curriculum into teaching languages, help teachers develop school staff [5].

The present study aims to examine the general profile of principals' academic supervision using PLC in Enrekang Regency.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study employed qualitative descriptive method since it was as study that investigated an existing symptom, condition, or situation. In this case, the researchers conducted in-depth investigation on real phenomena in the field, i.e. principals' academic supervision.

Data gathered for this study consisted of primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through

interviews with School Supervisors and Principals while secondary data was collected via documents concerning teacher's supervision and PLC activities.

Data collection techniques employed in this study were observations, interviews, documentation reviews, and literature studies. Observation was conducted to gather data on the general overview of academic supervision performed by the principals using PLC in Enrekang Regency. Interview was employed to explore the problems in an open way through respondents' opinions and ideas. To achieve this purpose, the researchers employed in-depth interviews. Meanwhile, documentation review was performed to verify the academic supervision and literature study was employed to find out the results of previous studies on this topic.

Data analysis procedure implemented in the present study included data reduction, data display, data verification, and conclusion drawing [6].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicated a lack of academic supervision on teachers' performance by the principals using PLC. It was because academic supervision that had been conducted mainly focused on the examination of how teachers teach. In terms of teaching implementation, it was found that the principals had not fully master several aspects, including teaching strategy implementation, learning resources utilization, learning media utilization, teaching skills implementation, and classroom management.

Elementary school principals did not have a fixed format for supervising teaching implementation, including its indicators, so that they had difficulties in guiding teachers. In addition, principals were not fully able to diagnose the problems of classroom teaching, which made it hard for them to identify teachers' difficulties in providing academic guidance. It was also found that the principals did not master supervision techniques. For instance, (a) when teaching learning activities were ongoing, the principals engaged teachers in conversation, (b) the principals left the classroom before teachers finished teaching, and (c) principals did not bring any supervision form into the classrooms.

Academic supervision by the principals using PLC in Enrekang Regency was not optimal due to several factors, such as their unfamiliarity with the concept of PLC, their lack of understanding about academic supervision, and teachers' tendency to fear or worry about supervision because they thought supervision was identical to evaluation. Supervision, ideally, was a learning process rather than a process in which principals evaluated teachers.

Even though monthly PLC through Homeroom Teachers Discussion (HTD), which involved all homeroom teachers in a sub-district, had been conducted, it needed to be improved to at least twice a month. Other programs that had been held in this region to support academic supervision were Technical Counseling/Guidance and seminars, in which the principals

attended as participants. In the future, sustainable professional development should be improved, through both self-development and academic publication or innovative works.

These problems could have been avoided if the supervisors were highly professional. High level of professionalism in the part of principals and school supervisors, coupled with willingness to work together to improve quality of education, would solve teachers' problems in performing their duties as educators. This could be done through academic supervision.

Another aspect that had to be improved to promote PLC in this region had to do with the Regional Office of Education. Enrekang's Office of Education should make it compulsory for the schools to make some efforts that would ensure the implementation of quality education service. In this case, principals should form a quality management team at their schools to achieve the national standards of education.

In addition, to build PLC at their schools and to optimize academic supervision, principals should design an academic supervision program, implement it, reflect upon its result, and follow it up with solutions. Academic supervision via clinical supervision was also necessary to develop practical skills of inexperienced teachers. It could be done by providing support and guidance from an experienced supervisor. Clinical supervision would be recorded in a systematic and detailed record about supervisors' activities with their clients. Clinical supervision was a collaboration between an experienced practitioner and an inexperienced practitioner. It might also involve two experienced senior practitioners [7].

Clinical supervision provided various benefits for the supervisors and the organization. Among the benefits were: 1) the availability of support for supervised individuals and availability of a forum for discussing clinical problems; 2) maintaining the quality of clinical skills and their implementation; 3) stimulating performance standardization of main skills across organizations; 4) improvement and/or achievement of complex clinical skills; 5) an increase in work satisfaction and confidence; 6) improvement of communication among teachers; 7) an increase in teachers retention rate; and 8) a decrease in the costs of professional development and administration.

Clinical supervision was focused on the betterment of teaching/instructions by implementing a systematic cycle. The cycle consisted of planning, supervision, and intellectual and intensive analysis on real teaching performance. It aimed to modify teaching practice in a rational way. It was in line with Bolla's statement in Nirmala [7] that "We define supervision as the process of helping teachers reducing the discrepancy between actual teaching behavior and ideal teaching behavior".

IV. CONCLUSION

Implementation of academic supervision using Professional Learning Community (PLC) empowerment in Enrekang Regency was not optimal due to several factors. First, principals were not familiar with PLC even though it had been conducted monthly in the form of sub-district level of Homeroom Teachers Discussion (HTD). Second, principals participated in seminars only as attendees. Third, principals did not fully understand academic supervision using Professional Learning Community (PLC) empowerment. Fourth, teachers tended to fear or worry about supervision because they thought supervision was an evaluation.

Ideally, supervision was a learning process, rather than an evaluation process of teachers by the principals. The purpose of academic supervision is to assist teachers in developing the teaching learning process, help teachers translate the curriculum into teaching languages, help teachers develop school staff [5].

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