



Principal Strategies for Developing Teachers' Pedagogical Competence and Performance in a Small Indonesian Primary School: A Qualitative Case Study

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Abstract

Small primary schools rely on principals to turn limited resources into teacher development, yet accounts of how principals sequence and adjust strategies remain scarce. This qualitative single-case study examined how the principal of SD Negeri 03 Gumeng, Karanganyar, Central Java, developed teachers' pedagogical competence and performance, and what supported or constrained them. Data were collected from April to June 2026 during five field visits through semi-structured interviews with six informants (the principal and five teachers), observation, field notes, and documents, and analysed using the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014) with source and technique triangulation. The principal's strategy appeared as an adaptive, iterative cycle of reading needs, setting priorities, supervising, giving feedback, mentoring, monitoring again, and reflecting. Open communication, collaboration, and openness to feedback supported the cycle; limited resources, workload, and differing teacher needs constrained it. Teachers' practices developed gradually and unevenly, but change was not measured.

Keywords: case study; pedagogical competence; principal strategies; small school; teacher performance

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1. Introduction

Teachers' pedagogical competence and performance are central to the quality of primary education, because learning is enacted through teachers' decisions about planning, instruction, classroom management, assessment, and reflection. Indonesia's national standards for educators that were in force during this study list four competence dimensions: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional (He et al., 2024) and qualitative studies in Indonesian elementary schools link principals' roles to the development of teachers' pedagogical and professional competence (Ansori et al., 2021) and to teacher performance (Aditya et al., 2025). In this study, pedagogical competence refers to teachers' capacity to manage learning: understanding learners, planning and implementing lessons, managing the classroom, assessing, following up on assessment results, and reflecting. Teacher performance refers to the enactment of professional tasks and responsibilities in practice. The two are related but not identical, and they were analysed separately.

Principals can shape how this competence and performance develop. Instructional leadership frameworks locate the principal's work in defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme, and promoting a positive learning climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Mu'alimin et al., 2026), a concept that has persisted and been revisited over several decades (Dhakal & Panta, 2026; Flores et al., 2026), and a survey-based study reported that principals' instructional leadership was associated with teachers' professional development (Huang et al., 2024). Syntheses of international research add that leadership influences student outcomes more when it centres on teaching and learning, with promoting and participating in teacher learning and development showing the largest effect among five leadership dimensions (Davis et al., 2019; Pujianto et al., 2020), and that leader practices linked to student achievement cluster in five domains (Andriani et al., 2022; He et al., 2024). These syntheses concern student outcomes, which this study does not measure. Recent studies in Indonesia describe

different routes. Ansori et al. (2021) portray principals as managers, leaders, and innovators in developing teachers' competence. Aditya et al. (2025) examine transformational leadership and teacher performance in a primary school. Nurlela et al. (2025) report managerial, supervisory, motivational, and professional development strategies in a remote junior high school with limited resources, and Doda et al. (2026) describe planning, supervision, competence development, and resource support in a senior high school.

Small schools add distinctive conditions. Studies of principals in small rural or remote schools in China, Portugal, Nepal, and Australia show that leadership practice is shaped by local context, scarce resources, close relationships with the community, and the need to adjust actions as conditions change (Dhakal & Panta, 2026; Flores et al., 2026; Ramadhan, 2017). In under-resourced community schools in Nepal, for example, principals faced teacher shortages, unstable funding, and limited infrastructure while drawing on community involvement and resource mobilisation (Aprida et al., 2020; Dhakal & Panta, 2026; Rismawan, 2017). Schools with few pupils are also a policy concern in Indonesia. In July 2026 the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education reported that it had mapped schools with fewer than 100 pupils, including schools with fewer than 60, attributing small enrolments to demographic change, population movement, residential development, community school choice, and geography, and naming stronger learning quality and teacher competence among its responses (Palinata, 2023). The thresholds were used for data mapping and not as a formal definition of a small school.

SD Negeri 03 Gumeng, a public primary school in Jenawi District, Karanganyar Regency, Central Java, illustrates this situation. Enrolment was 42 pupils two years before the most recent period, 44 in the 2025/2026 school year, and 36 in the latest pupil administrative data obtained by the researcher. The pattern is a fluctuation followed by a recent decline, not a steady decrease. Informants also mentioned few applicants in the new-student admission process (*Sistem Penerimaan Murid Baru*, SPMB), few new pupils, pupils moving away, and concern about possible school regrouping. The school's 2026/2027 curriculum document, which includes an analysis of the 2026 Education Report (*Rapor Pendidikan*), classified literacy as weak, with 33.33% of pupils reaching the minimum competence level, and named teachers' reflection and improvement of learning, together with learning activities for teachers and the principal, among the root problems (SD Negeri 03 Gumeng, 2026). This information serves only as documentary context. It is not a measure of teachers' competence or performance, and enrolment is not treated as an outcome of the principal's strategies.

Among the studies cited here, research on small schools comes largely from rural and remote settings outside Indonesia, whereas the Indonesian studies of principals, pedagogical competence, and teacher performance mainly report the roles or strategies principals use. They say less about how those strategies are linked, carried out, monitored, and adjusted over time in a very small public primary school, which this study addresses.

This study therefore examines a single small primary school to answer three questions: (1) what strategies does the principal use to develop teachers' pedagogical competence; (2) what strategies does the principal use to develop teacher performance; and (3) what conditions support or constrain these strategies? Instructional leadership is used as an interpretive lens after data analysis, not as a construct that was measured. The contribution is contextual and descriptive: an account of how identifying needs, supervision, feedback, mentoring, follow-up, and reflection relate to one another in the adaptive practice of one principal.

2. Method

The study used a qualitative single-case design (Yin, 2018). The case was SD Negeri 03 Gumeng, and the unit of analysis was the principal's strategies for developing teachers' pedagogical competence and performance. The principal and teachers were sources of data about that unit, and the school's

enrolment, admission situation, and continuity were treated as context, not as results to be tested. The school is located in Jenawi District, a rural, hilly area on the slopes of Mount Lawu, and the school had 36 pupils in the latest pupil administrative data. The principal had served since 2019, so informants described strategies that had developed over several years, whereas the researcher observed practice only from April to June 2026.

Research permission and coordination were arranged on 3 February 2026, and a preliminary study took place on 11 March 2026. Data were collected from April to June 2026 during five field visits, and the report was prepared in July 2026. The first visit covered general school conditions and the principal's activities. The second focused on the principal's strategies, communication, and coaching of teachers. The third concentrated on classroom observation, the fourth on follow-up coaching, teacher collaboration, and evaluation, and the fifth on reflection, evaluation, and confirmation of emerging findings.

Six informants were selected purposively for their knowledge, experience, and involvement in the focus of the study (Table 1). The sample was intended to provide rich information about the case, not to represent a population. GK teaches Grade IV and is involved in curriculum work; GK was interviewed because of this curriculum role, not as a representative of Grade IV teachers. Grade VI teachers were not interviewed because of limited time during the five visits, and no conclusion is drawn about the perspectives of Grade IV or Grade VI teachers as such. Parents, the school committee, and community members were not informants; statements about their involvement come from the principal and teachers.

Table 1
Informants and Their Roles in the Analysis

Code	Informant	Information sought	Reason for selection
KS	Principal	Strategies, decisions, supervision, coaching, evaluation, follow-up, and teacher development	Responsible for school strategy
G1	Grade I teacher	Experience of coaching, teaching practice, and performance	Directly involved in teaching
G2	Grade II teacher	Experience of coaching, teaching practice, and performance	Directly involved in teaching
G3	Grade III teacher	Experience of coaching, teaching practice, and performance	Directly involved in teaching
G5	Grade V teacher	Experience of coaching, teaching practice, and performance	Directly involved in teaching
GK	Grade IV teacher involved in curriculum work	Teaching practice, pedagogical competence, performance, experience of coaching, and curriculum management	Involved in curriculum work

Three techniques were used. First, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted face to face, recorded, and transcribed. The principal was asked about school conditions, enrolment, priorities, decisions, admission-related efforts, the development of pedagogical competence and performance, supervision, mentoring, evaluation, follow-up, adaptation, and supporting and constraining factors. Teachers were asked about their experience of the principal's strategies, supervision and feedback, lesson planning and implementation, classroom management, assessment, reflection, task performance, and their practice before and at the start of coaching and its later development. Second, observations were carried out mainly during visits II to IV, covering the principal's practices, teachers' activities, classroom learning, teacher–pupil interaction, and the school environment, and were recorded in field notes. Observation was not used to infer the principal's reasons or to reconstruct teachers' practice in earlier years. Third, documents were limited to those actually obtained: the school's 2026/2027 curriculum document, including its 2026 Education Report analysis, and the latest pupil enrolment data. Documents provided context and were not used as evidence that teachers' practice had changed. The researcher acted as the key instrument and as a non-participant observer, guided by an instrument grid linking the research questions to dimensions, indicators, interview questions, and observation aspects.

Analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014) : data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, carried out during and after data collection. Interview, observation, and document data were read repeatedly, selected, focused, and grouped by relevance to the research questions. Coding was primarily inductive: a tentative framework guided the initial reading but was not forced on the data; codes that the data did not support were not reported. Related codes were grouped into categories and then themes that answered the research questions. Teachers' starting position was reconstructed from informants' accounts, and development in practice was read from interviews and checked against observation during the study. The study had no pretest–posttest design and produced no measure of improvement, so the findings are described as development, change, or indications of improved practice in the context of the principal's strategies. After the themes were identified, instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) was used to help interpret their meaning.

Trustworthiness was supported by source triangulation, comparing the accounts of the principal and the five teachers, and by technique triangulation, comparing interview, observation, and documentary data. Each source and technique was assigned a role according to the type of finding, so that no finding is claimed to be supported by a source or technique that was not relevant to it. Differences between sources or techniques were checked again against transcripts and field notes. The fifth visit was used to confirm the researcher's understanding of the information obtained.

Permission to conduct the study at SD Negeri 03 Gumeng was obtained from the principal. This is institutional permission; it is distinct from participants' individual consent and from formal ethical approval. The study did not obtain formal approval from a research ethics committee, and no ethics approval number is available. In this article, informants are identified only by codes, but because the school has few teachers, their roles may make some informants recognisable.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The principal's strategies for developing pedagogical competence

Across interviews and observations, the principal's strategy for pedagogical competence took the form of repeated coaching, not a fixed sequence. The most consistent pattern was reading teachers' conditions and needs, supervising or monitoring, giving feedback, mentoring and discussing, implementing improvements, monitoring again, and reflecting and following up (Table 2; Fig. 1).

Table 2
The Principal's Strategies for Developing Pedagogical Competence

Stage	Principal's actions	Teachers' responses or developments	Data sources
Reading conditions	Communication, observation, identifying needs	Teachers recognise classroom and learning needs	KS; teachers; observation
Setting priorities	Direction on objectives, pupils' characteristics, and engagement	Planning attends more to pupils' conditions	KS; G1; G3; observation
Supervision and monitoring	Monitoring of teaching and teachers' practice	Learning problems are more easily identified	KS; teachers; observation
Feedback	Direction, correction, alternative actions	Teachers adjust methods, activities, or classroom management	KS; teachers; observation
Mentoring	Discussion and problem solving	Teachers receive support to improve practice	KS; teachers
Assessment and follow-up	Direction to use assessment results	Results begin to be used for reinforcement, practice, mentoring, or remediation	G1; G2; G3; G5; GK
Reflection	Discussion of results and needed improvement	Reflection begins to inform the next lesson	KS; G1; G3; GK

The principal read teachers' needs through conversation, observation of lessons, and discussion of problems that arose. These needs were not limited to technical teaching skills; they also concerned pupils' characteristics, classroom conditions, available resources, and teachers' development needs. The principal's account indicated that coaching followed the needs identified, and teachers confirmed that guidance and discussion took place when learning problems appeared. Teachers were not treated as a uniform group: differences in experience, work habits, ability, and classroom conditions shaped the form of guidance. Priorities centred on the quality of learning and teachers' responsiveness to pupils. The principal stressed that planning should not stop at covering content but should consider learning objectives, pupils' characteristics, classroom conditions, ability levels, and pupils' active engagement.

Supervision was an important part of the strategy. Interviews and observations showed that it took the form of monitoring teachers' activities, observing teaching practice, communicating about problems that arose, and giving direction. It was not treated only as an administrative check. The principal used it to obtain a picture of the learning process and to decide which parts needed improvement. Monitoring and communication between the principal and teachers were observed during the study, which corroborated that monitoring and communication took place; the link between supervision and subsequent feedback rests on informants' accounts.

Feedback followed once the principal had a picture of classroom practice. It addressed pupils' engagement, classroom management, variety of activities, use of assessment results, and adjustment of lessons to pupils' conditions. When teachers faced classroom problems, the principal discussed them, explored alternatives, gave direction, and then monitored implementation. One recurring pattern can thus be described as identifying a problem, giving feedback, teachers adjusting their practice, monitoring again, and then reflecting or following up. Where pupils' engagement was uneven, for example, the principal directed teachers to give pupils more room to be active, and teachers adjusted through question-and-answer, pupil activities, or other more engaging forms of learning. Later monitoring was used to see how the adjustment had been carried out.

Informants' reconstructions of the starting position, supported by observation during the study, suggest gradual developments in teachers' practice (Table 3). Lesson planning had been done but did not always consider pupils' characteristics and needs in depth; during the study, more attention was given to objectives, pupils' characteristics, classroom conditions, ability levels, and active engagement. Teachers had kept lessons going, but pupils' attention and engagement were not always even; classroom management became more planned, and teachers began to adjust activities when pupils were not engaged or needed help. Assessment had been used to learn about outcomes. The five teachers collectively described beginning to use results to identify pupils' difficulties, content not yet understood, and needs for mentoring, additional practice, reinforcement, or remediation, although the form and consistency of follow-up varied. Reflection had been informal, and discussion of what worked, pupils' difficulties, less effective methods, and needed improvements became more visible during the study, through teachers' own experience and discussion with the principal and colleagues.

Table 3
Development in Teachers' Pedagogical Practice

Aspect	Starting position (reconstructed from informants)	Development during the study	Sources
Planning	Done, but not always in depth regarding pupils' characteristics and needs	More attention to objectives, pupils' characteristics, classroom conditions, and engagement	G1; G3; KS; observation
Implementation	Variety of methods and activities uneven; some use of habitual patterns	More purposeful lessons; some variety of activities suited to the class	Teachers; observation
Classroom management	Pupils' attention and engagement not always even	Management more planned; more attention to the class's response	Teachers; observation

Aspect	Starting position (reconstructed from informants)	Development during the study	Sources
Assessment	Done, but results not always used for follow-up	Results begin to identify difficulties and to decide reinforcement, practice, mentoring, or remediation	G1; G2; G3; G5; GK
Follow-up	Not consistent	Begins through adjusted activities and learning support	Teachers; KS; observation
Reflection	Mostly informal; not systematic for all teachers	Begins to be used to discuss problems and decide improvements	G1; G3; GK; KS

Developments were not uniform. Adjustment of activities to pupils' characteristics was described more clearly by G1 and G3, and reflection by G1, G3, and GK. These differences are reported to show variation in practice, not to rank teachers. The comparison between starting position and later practice is not a pretest–posttest measure and shows no amount of improvement. What the evidence supports is gradual and uneven development in practice, most visible in the use of assessment results for follow-up, in planning that takes pupils' characteristics into account, and in growing attention to reflection.

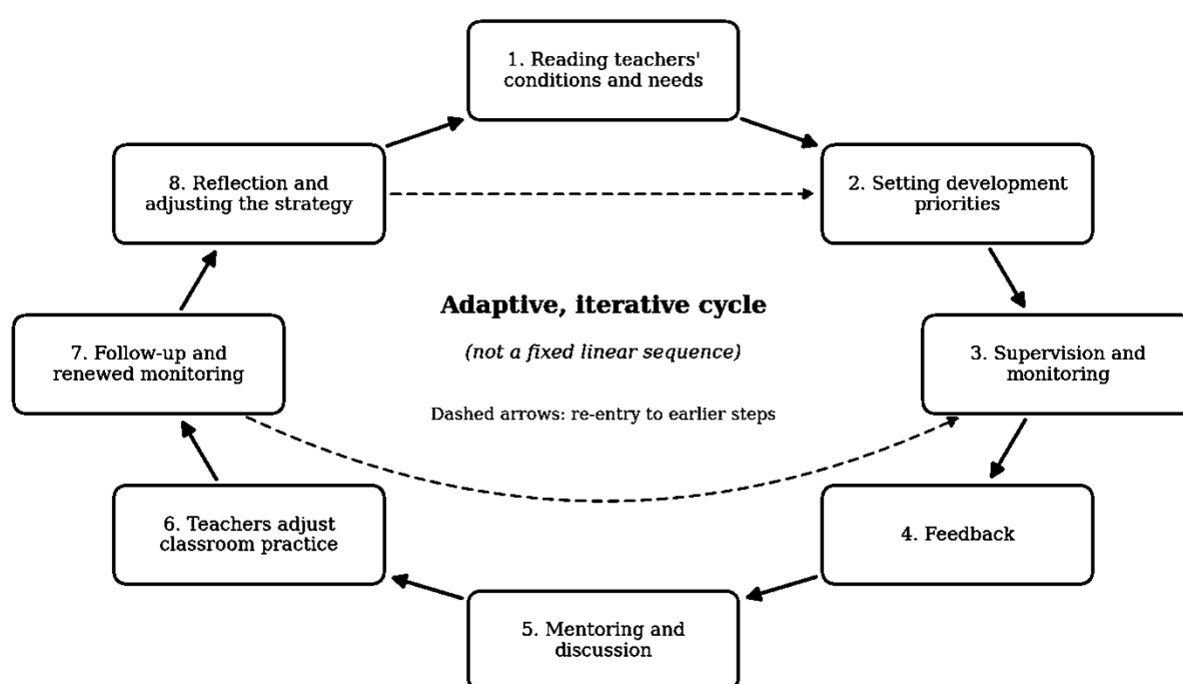


Figure 1

The Adaptive, Iterative Cycle of the Principal's Strategies (Conceptual Model of the Case)

3.2. The principal's strategies for developing teacher performance

Strategies for teacher performance centred on monitoring tasks, giving direction, communicating, coaching, collaborating, evaluating, and following up (Table 4). The principal monitored task completion through communication, observation of work activities, and discussion of work to be completed, in order to see how regularly tasks were carried out and where direction was needed. Teachers said that the principal's direction helped them understand their tasks and follow up on the work they were responsible for. At the starting point, tasks had been carried out but not with equal regularity in timeliness and completeness. During the study, task performance became more directed after monitoring and direction, and responsibility was visible in completing tasks and taking part in school activities. This does not mean that all teachers changed to the same degree.

The principal also encouraged communication and cooperation through discussion of learning, pupils, school activities, and problems teachers faced. Collaboration was not always a formal meeting; because the school has few staff, much of it happened through daily communication, with teachers exchanging information about pupils and helping one another with particular problems. Evaluation of task performance had taken place but was not always routine at the start. During the study, teachers became more used to discussing obstacles and reflecting in order to decide on improvements, and the principal used evaluative communication and follow-up so that problems did not stop at discussion but were followed by corrective action.

Table 4
The Principal's Strategies for Developing Teacher Performance

Performance aspect	Principal's strategy	Development found	Sources
Task performance	Monitoring, direction, and communication	Tasks carried out in a more directed way	KS; teachers
Responsibility	Monitoring and follow-up	Responsibility more visible in completing tasks and taking part in school activities	KS; teachers
Regularity of tasks	Direction, monitoring, and evaluation	Completion of tasks begins to be more regular	KS; teachers
Collaboration	Discussion, communication, and mutual help	Collaboration more open and not only formal	Teachers; observation
Evaluation and reflection	Discussion of obstacles, feedback, and follow-up	Teachers more used to evaluating and reflecting	KS; teachers; observation

Conditions that supported and constrained the strategies

The conditions identified are treated as circumstances that influenced how the strategies were carried out, not as variables that were tested (Table 5). Supportive conditions were open communication between the principal and teachers, cooperation among teachers, openness to feedback, willingness to discuss and reflect, and the principal's flexibility in coaching. The small number of staff allowed closer working communication, and the small number of pupils allowed teachers to know pupils individually and give closer support; these are understood as context that made interaction easier, not as direct causes of competence development. Constraining conditions were limited resources, low enrolment, differing teacher experience and needs, workload, and differing ability and work habits. The principal responded by making use of available resources, coaching flexibly, communicating directly, and adjusting strategy to needs. Constraints therefore influenced the form and intensity of the strategies more than they stopped them.

Table 5
Conditions Supporting and Constraining the Strategies

Type	Condition	Role in implementation
Supporting	Open communication	Allowed learning and task problems to be discussed directly
Supporting	Cooperation among teachers	Teachers discussed and helped one another with learning and school tasks
Supporting	Openness to feedback; willingness to discuss and reflect	Teachers accepted direction and discussed what needed improvement, which supported dialogic coaching
Supporting	Principal's flexibility	Direction and mentoring were adjusted to teachers' needs and classroom conditions
Supporting (context)	Few staff and few pupils	Closer working communication; teachers knew pupils individually (context, not a direct cause)
Constraining	Limited resources	Teachers adapted learning and development to available facilities and learning resources
Constraining	Low enrolment	Contextual pressure on continuity of service; considered in reading the school's needs
Constraining	Differences in teacher experience, needs, abilities, and work habits	Coaching could not be uniform; consistency of improvements differed among teachers
Constraining	Workload	Limited time for more systematic reflection and development

The principal also responded to the school's enrolment situation. Informants described communication with parents and the community, sharing information about the school, introducing its activities and services, and attention to new-student admission. This is indirect information from internal informants, because parents and community members were not interviewed. These efforts are read as contextual responses to pressure on the school. The study has no evidence that they raised enrolment, and concern about regrouping reflects informants' perceptions, not an official decision concerning the school. Teacher development is therefore best described as one internal strategy the principal regarded as important for maintaining the quality of service in a challenging situation. The study does not conclude that stronger competence or performance caused changes in enrolment or in the continuity of the school.

3.3. Strategy as an adaptive cycle

The findings show that developing pedagogical competence did not rest on a single action. Needs reading, supervision, feedback, mentoring, renewed monitoring, and reflection formed a pattern of repeated coaching in which the principal used information from classroom practice to decide the next action. Fig. 1 summarises this as a conceptual model of the case. It is not a causal model or a hypothesis; it is the researchers' analytic synthesis of this one case and has not been validated beyond it. The dashed arrows indicate that steps were revisited: follow-up monitoring could return to supervision, and reflection could change priorities. Describing the strategy as a cycle, and not as a programme of activities, keeps attention on the links between steps, which is where the case adds detail to existing accounts of principals' roles.

Through the lens of instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), the most visible element in this case was management of the instructional programme through supervision, feedback, coaching, and follow-up, together with attention to the learning climate through communication and collaboration. The lens helped to interpret the pattern after the themes were developed; no dimension of instructional leadership was measured. The pattern is consistent, at the level of process, with the association between instructional leadership and teachers' professional development reported by (Andriani et al., 2022; Dorukbaşı & Cansoy, 2024; Gurr et al., 2026; He et al., 2024), but that study used a survey to test relationships, and this study tested none. It also points in the same direction as (Ansori et al., 2021) and (Doda et al., 2026), who place the principal's role or strategy at the centre of teachers' competence and performance. The sequence of observing practice, giving feedback, and following up also resembles teacher coaching, which a meta-analysis of 60 causal studies defines as in-service development in which coaches or peers observe instruction and provide feedback, and for which it reported a pooled effect of 0.49 SD on instruction (Aditya et al., 2025; Amzat et al., 2022; Widiyan & Takayoshi, 2024). Because the present study measured no effects, the resemblance concerns the form of the practice only. (Widiyan & Takayoshi, 2024), in an interview-based case study of 24 principals in a US urban district, reported that the quality of feedback principals give depends on the time and training available to them. The setting and scale differ, but the limit on time for systematic reflection reported here (Table 5) is consistent with that concern, although this study did not examine the quality of feedback directly. What the present case adds is a closer description of how one principal's actions were linked and repeated in a small primary school, with a context of low enrolment.

3.4. Teacher performance, collaboration, and context

The strategies for teacher performance resemble those reported by (Aditya et al., 2025), who examined principal leadership and teacher performance in an Indonesian primary school, and by Nurlela et al. (2025), who studied principals' strategies under resource limits in a remote school, particularly in the importance of direction, monitoring, communication, and strengthened responsibility. Because this study relied on qualitative accounts and observation, it makes no claim that the strategies caused better

performance. In a school with few staff, collaboration worked both as a mechanism that supported the strategies and as part of the performance practice that developed, since teachers' tasks were not carried out in isolation. Because classroom practice can also be read as performance, the two were separated by analytic focus: Table 3 concerns the quality of learning practice, and Table 4 concerns the discharge of tasks and responsibility.

The conditions identified agree with research on small and under-resourced schools. Close relationships and easier communication in small organisations, alongside scarce resources and the need to adapt, appear in the studies by (Hikmah et al., 2025; Klar & Brewer, 2013; Mustofa et al., 2026; Rofiki, 2025; Setiawan et al., 2024; Stosich et al., 2024) emphasise that context shapes leadership practice and conceptions of school success. In the present case, low enrolment formed pressure that coloured the principal's reading of the school's needs, but it was not used to infer a single cause of the school's condition, and the effect of context on the strategies is described rather than estimated. One link is suggested by the tables but was not tested: workload was reported to limit time for more systematic reflection (Table 5), and reflection was described as mostly informal at the start and only beginning to be used for deciding improvements (Table 3). The data do not allow this to be read as cause and effect.

3.5. Implications and limitations

Theoretically, the findings suggest that, in a small school with limited resources, a principal's strategy can be understood as an adaptive and repeated process linked to instructional practice, and that the interpretation of leadership practice benefits from attention to resources and school conditions. Practically, principals in similar settings may find it useful to keep the cycle of supervision, feedback, mentoring, renewed monitoring, and reflection, and to document follow-up after feedback so that the cycle can be traced. Teachers may strengthen the use of assessment results for follow-up and develop a habit of systematic reflection, and education offices may consider the resource and professional development needs of schools with few pupils. These implications are drawn from one case and remain to be tested elsewhere.

Several limitations should be noted. The study covered one school and six informants, Grade VI teachers were not interviewed, and GK was interviewed for a curriculum role rather than as a Grade IV teacher, so the experience of all teachers is not represented. Data were also collected in a short period, April to June 2026, through five field visits, which limits what can be said about how practice changes over a longer time. Teachers' starting position was reconstructed from informants' recollections, and the researcher did not observe teachers in earlier years. Documents were limited to those obtained and mainly served as context, so not every change in practice has a comparison document. Development in practice was not measured by scores or quantitative instruments, and the study was not designed to test causal relationships among the principal's strategies, teachers' competence and performance, and the continuity of the school. Parents, the committee, and community members were not interviewed, so information about them comes from internal informants. Because the study covers one case, it makes no statistical generalisation; as (Mu'alimin et al., 2026; Yuliarti et al., 2026) argues, a single case can still contribute through depth and detail, and its value here lies in an account that later studies can compare against. Future research could pair teachers' accounts with a common conceptual framework for professional development impact studies (Huang et al., 2024) and could include several schools with similar or different characteristics, use longitudinal designs to follow development over a longer period, and involve parents, the committee, or community members if trust in the school and its continuity become part of the research focus.

4. Conclusion

The principal of SD Negeri 03 Gumeng developed teachers' pedagogical competence and performance through an adaptive, iterative cycle of reading needs, setting priorities, supervising, giving feedback, mentoring, monitoring again, and reflecting, not through a fixed programme. For teacher performance, strategies centred on task monitoring, direction, communication, collaboration, evaluation, and follow-up. Open communication, collaboration, and openness to feedback supported these strategies. Limited resources, workload, and differing teacher experience and needs shaped their form and consistency, and low enrolment formed a contextual pressure that informed how the principal read the school's needs. Teachers' practices appeared to develop gradually and unevenly. As a single-case qualitative study without measurement of change, it supports no causal or generalised claim about teacher improvement or school continuity.

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