

Strategic Management of Teacher Professional Competence Development: A Multi-Site Case Study in State Schools

M. Sukron Suwarno Sundoro^{1*}, Abdul Majid²

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda'wah, Pasuruan, Indonesia

¹msukronss@uiidalwa.ac.id, ²abdulmajid@uiidalwa.ac.id

*Correspondence

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Abstract

While teacher professional competence is the core driver of educational quality, its effective management across different schooling levels remains a complex challenge. This study aims to explore and compare the strategic management of teacher professional competence development. Utilizing a qualitative multi-site comparative case study, data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis at SMPN 1 Kraton (Junior High) and SDN Gerongan (Elementary). The findings reveal divergent yet effective approaches: SMPN 1 Kraton employs an external expansion strategy, utilizing formal external forums, financial incentives, and technology-assisted supervision. Conversely, SDN Gerongan focuses on internal standardization, leveraging in-house peer mentoring and symbolic recognition to build a highly disciplined professional culture. Both institutions rely heavily on proactive leadership and adequate physical infrastructure to navigate external disruptions. In conclusion, effective competence management requires aligning coaching strategies with the specific pedagogical demands of the educational tier. This research contributes an adaptive, cross-level strategic management model that institutional leaders can replicate to systematically elevate teacher professionalism in basic education.

Keywords: *Strategic Management, Teacher Competence, Professional Development, Educational Quality, Comparative Study.*

Abstrak

Meskipun kompetensi profesional guru merupakan pendorong utama mutu pendidikan, efektivitas manajerialnya di berbagai jenjang sekolah tetap menjadi tantangan yang kompleks. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dan membandingkan manajemen strategis pengembangan kompetensi profesional guru. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus komparatif multi-situs, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipan, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumen di SMPN 1 Kraton (SMP) dan SDN Gerongan (SD). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan pendekatan yang berbeda namun efektif: SMPN 1 Kraton menerapkan strategi ekspansi eksternal menggunakan forum formal (MGMP), insentif finansial, dan supervisi berbantuan teknologi. Sebaliknya, SDN Gerongan berfokus pada standarisasi internal melalui pendampingan sejawat dan penghargaan simbolis untuk membangun budaya disiplin. Keduanya sangat bergantung pada kepemimpinan proaktif dan pemanfaatan infrastruktur yang memadai untuk menavigasi disrupsi eksternal. Kesimpulannya, manajemen kompetensi yang efektif memerlukan penyelarasan strategi pembinaan dengan kebutuhan pedagogis spesifik pada setiap jenjang pendidikan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi memberikan model manajemen strategis adaptif lintas jenjang yang dapat direplikasi oleh pimpinan institusi untuk meningkatkan profesionalisme guru pendidikan dasar secara sistematis.

Kata Kunci: *Manajemen Strategis, Kompetensi Guru, Pengembangan Profesional, Mutu Pendidikan, Studi Komparatif.*

INTRODUCTION

Nationally and globally, education must have a positive, tangible impact on society, functioning as a strategic instrument to eradicate ignorance, alleviate poverty, and reduce unemployment. In the 21st century, the transformation of education is the primary key to shaping superior, competitive human resources ready to face complex global challenges.¹ Consequently, the competitive advantage of a nation is no longer solely dependent on natural wealth but is intrinsically linked to the quality of its education. This educational quality is, in turn, heavily reliant on the effective management and continuous revitalization of its human resources, particularly the educators who stand at the forefront of the system.²

Within the educational ecosystem, teachers serve as the central axis and the primary change agents in the learning process.³ While infrastructure, curriculum, and funding are essential components, they act as passive resources; it is the teacher's professional competence—encompassing pedagogical skills, extensive subject mastery, and robust character—that directly dictates instructional quality and student achievement.⁴ However, a persistent challenge in Indonesia's national education system is the uneven distribution and frequently inadequate level of teacher professional competence. This deficiency often fails to meet the rigorous standards mandated by national regulations, directly impeding the overall quality of education, particularly in regions facing complex socio-cultural and administrative constraints.⁵ Therefore, strategic management interventions are urgently required to continuously upgrade teacher professionalism.

To address these competency gaps, various institutional approaches have been explored in recent literature. Studies indicate that strong transformational leadership from school principals, characterized by inclusive collaboration, significantly enhances teacher

¹ Asep Saepurokhman et al., "Strategies for Transforming 21st Century Education to Realise Competitive Human Resources Towards the Golden Generation: A Literature Review," *Berajah Journal* 5, no. 3 (2025): 305–14, <https://doi.org/10.47353/bj.v5i3.611>.

² Madaniyah and Nunu Mahnun, "Education Quality Management Based on Human Resource Revitalization at MTs Al-Ma'arif Jemaja," *Sosioedukasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Sosial* 15, no. 1 (2026): 2045–50, <https://doi.org/10.36526/sosioedukasi.v15i1.7736>.

³ Anders Berglund, "Design Thinking: Catalysing Change in the Educational Ecosystem – a Framework for Future Challenges," *Design Science* 10 (January 2024): e34, <https://doi.org/10.1017/dsj.2024.39>; Chris Brown et al., "Teachers as Educational Change Agents: What Do We Currently Know? Findings from a Systematic Review," *Emerald Open Research* 1, no. 3 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1108/EOR-03-2023-0012>; Juana M. Sancho-Gil and Maria Domingo-Coscollola, "Expanding Perspectives on Secondary Education Teachers' Learning Ecosystems: Implications for Teachers' Professional Development," *European Journal of Teacher Education* 45, no. 3 (2022): 414–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1832985>.

⁴ Tri Mulyono Budi Hartanto et al., "The Influence of Teacher Professional Competence on Education Quality Through Infrastructure as an Intervening Variable," *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (2022): 245–60, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v3i2.269>.

⁵ Yulianika, "Professional Competence and Pedagogical Challenges: A Systematic Study of Non-Degree Teachers in Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Education Management Research* 2, no. 2 (2024): 181–93, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jiemr.2024.22-08>.

competence, despite persisting structural limitations.⁶ The critical role of school leadership is further emphasized in advancing pure pedagogical competence through direct, continuous instructional supervision.⁷ Moreover, structured continuous improvement strategies spearheaded by management are vital for sustaining teacher professionalism over time.⁸ Beyond traditional leadership, the integration of technology has emerged as a paramount intervention for maintaining and developing teacher competence, particularly in adapting to post-pandemic educational demands.⁹ Globally, there is also a noted paradigm shift toward integrating advanced pedagogical frameworks and continuous professional learning starting from the most foundational education levels.¹⁰

Despite the wealth of existing research highlighting leadership and technological interventions, a critical gap remains. Prior studies predominantly focus on single-level educational institutions, isolate specific competency domains, or rely heavily on technology-centric interventions without sufficiently addressing the broader, holistic strategic managerial framework required for institutional change. There is a distinct scarcity of empirical research utilizing a cross-level comparative approach to investigate how strategic management for teacher professional competence development is adapted across different fundamental educational tiers within the same socio-cultural region. This study fills that gap by comparatively analyzing the strategic management practices at two distinct educational levels: SMPN 1 Kraton (a junior high school) and SDN Gerongan (an elementary school). Driven by the complex challenges these schools face in managing educator performance, this research aims to describe the forms of coaching utilized and analyze the application of quality management in improving teacher professional competence. The novelty of this study lies in its multi-site synthesis, which is expected to construct an adaptive strategic management model for teacher professional development that can be effectively replicated across various basic education environments.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach utilizing a multi-site comparative case study design to deeply explore the strategic management of teacher professional competence development across different tiers of basic education. The

⁶ Erny Erny, "School Principal Leadership in Enhancing Teacher Competence: A Qualitative Case Study in Merauke Secondary Schools," *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, ahead of print, November 10, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.21831/jpka.v16i2.89446>.

⁷ Dewi Sartika, "Role of the Principal on Teacher Pedagogic Competence," *Journal of Education Method and Learning Strategy* 1, no. 01 (2023): 29–34, <https://doi.org/10.59653/jemls.v1i01.14>.

⁸ Mufti Nawang Prastiko et al., "The Strategi Kepala Sekolah untuk Meningkatkan Kompetensi Guru Melalui Peningkatan Berkelanjutan di SDN Banjaran 2: Principal's Strategies for Enhancing Teacher Competence through Continuous Improvement," *Scholaria: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* 14, no. 3 (2024): 232–44, <https://doi.org/10.24246/j.js.2024.v14.i3.p232-244>.

⁹ Lingyun Huang et al., "A Systematic Review of Technology-Enabled Teacher Professional Development during COVID -19 Pandemic," *Computers & Education* 223 (December 2024): 105168, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2024.105168>.

¹⁰ Adane Hailu Herut, "Global Trends of Research on Advancing the Pedagogical Competence of Preschool Teachers: A Bibliometric Analysis," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 10 (January 2024): 100947, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100947>.

research was conducted at two distinct public educational institutions in East Java, Indonesia: SMPN 1 Kraton, a junior high school, and SDN Gerongan, an elementary school. These sites were purposively selected due to their active efforts in implementing continuous improvement strategies amidst complex regional educational challenges. To obtain rich and contextualized data, the primary informants—comprising school principals, vice-principals of curriculum, administrative heads, and a representative cohort of teachers—were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data collection was systematically executed through three primary qualitative methods: active participant observation of daily managerial activities and pedagogical training sessions (such as Subject Teacher Forums), in-depth semi-structured interviews focusing on strategic planning and the application of quality management, and a thorough analysis of institutional documents, including strategic development plans, quality assurance records, and academic supervision logs. The gathered data were subsequently analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis model involving a rigorous two-phase process. Initially, a within-case analysis was performed for each school through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. This was followed by a cross-case comparative synthesis to identify recurring themes, managerial similarities, and context-specific differences between the primary and secondary education levels. Finally, to guarantee the trustworthiness and empirical validity of the findings, the study applied rigorous methodological and source triangulation by cross-verifying the observational, interview, and documentary data, complemented by member checking to ensure the accuracy and resonance of the interpretations drawn from the stakeholders' perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies for Professional Competence Development: A Cross-Level Comparison

The empirical data gathered from SMPN 1 Kraton (a junior high school) and SDN Gerongan (an elementary school) indicates that while both institutions place a high priority on the continuous development of teacher professional competence, their strategic management approaches diverge significantly. This divergence is not arbitrary; rather, it reflects a conscious adaptation by the school leadership to the specific pedagogical demands, institutional culture, and structural constraints inherent to their respective educational levels. The analysis reveals two major comparative themes: the orientation of capacity-building interventions and the design of motivational reward systems.

1. Capacity Building: External Expansion vs. Internal Standardization

At the secondary education level, SMPN 1 Kraton adopts an “external expansion” strategy. The school actively encourages teachers to participate in the Subject Teacher Deliberation forum (MGMP) and external workshops. This is designed to deepen teachers' subject-specific mastery. The importance of this external networking was confirmed by the school's English MGMP Coordinator:

“I, along with other English teachers, always optimize the MGMP organization to improve the quality of English learning, specifically on how to implement the latest teaching methods and effective instructional media.” (Interview,

L.I.A., SMPN 1 Kraton)

This outward-facing strategy is designed to deepen teachers' subject-specific mastery, which is crucial for secondary education. This finding is highly consistent with the research conducted by Mustaidah et al. (2026)¹¹ and Janafi and Satria (2023)¹² which asserts that active participation in MGMP significantly enhances subject-specific pedagogical competence and collaborative problem-solving among secondary school teachers, particularly in adapting to advanced, discipline-focused curriculums. Through MGMP, teachers at SMPN 1 Kraton can bridge the gap between theoretical subject matter and practical, updated learning methods.

Conversely, SDN Gerongan employs an "internal standardization" strategy. Because elementary education requires a more holistic, cross-disciplinary pedagogical approach, the leadership at SDN Gerongan relies heavily on In-House Training (IHT) and a structured "delegation system." When specific teachers are sent to external pieces of training (such as those organized by the LPMP), they are strictly mandated to return and disseminate the acquired knowledge to their peers through IHT sessions. This peer-to-peer knowledge transfer acts as a catalyst for collective competence acceleration. This localized approach strongly aligns with the findings of Aditama (2023),¹³ who demonstrated that In-House Training is a highly effective, context-sensitive intervention for elementary settings. IHT allows for the immediate, uniform standardization of foundational pedagogical skills across the entire school faculty without disrupting the intensive daily teaching schedules typical of primary schools.

2. Motivation and Reward Systems: Financial Incentives vs. Symbolic Recognition

A striking similarity between the two institutions is the leaders' recognition that professional competence is intrinsically linked to teacher welfare and motivation. However, the synthesis of the interview data reveals distinct implementations of reward management.

At SMPN 1 Kraton, the management of motivation is heavily structured around tangible financial incentives. This approach addresses the complex, multi-tasking nature of secondary school educators. The principal explicitly stated:

"As part of my effort to improve the professional competence of educators here, I focus on improving their welfare. Educators who receive additional teaching duties, or are involved in intra-curricular and extra-curricular activities, are given additional incentives and transportation allowances on top of their basic monthly honorarium." (Interview, A.P., Principal of SMPN 1 Kraton)

In contrast, at SDN Gerongan, the motivation strategy is heavily rooted in

¹¹ Mustaidah Mustaidah et al., "The Role Of The English Subject Teachers Conference (MGMP) In Improving The Professional Competence Of Senior High School Teachers In Pemalang Regency," *Islamic Management: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 01 (2026): 113–26, <https://doi.org/10.30868/im.v9i01.9810>.

¹² Ozi Janafi and Rengga Satria, "Peran Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran Dalam Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam SMA," *An-Nuha* 3, no. 3 (2023): 372–79, <https://doi.org/10.24036/annuha.v3i3.421>.

¹³ Madya Aditama, "Peningkatan Kompetensi Mengajar Guru Dengan Pembelajaran Berbasis Kompetensi Melalui In House Training," *Madani: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Dan Kewirausahaan* 2, no. 1 (2023): 10–17, <https://doi.org/10.37253/madani.v2i1.7871>.

symbolic recognition. The principal institutionalizes motivation through an annual reward system that evaluates character traits, specifically loyalty and early attendance, rather than just academic output. A teacher at SDN Gerongan detailed this policy:

“For the awards, usually on Teachers’ Day, we announce the ‘Favorite Teacher’ and the ‘Inspirator Teacher’. The reward given by the school last year was a precious metal [gold] pin... It is based on high loyalty, like arriving early consistently. The principal looks for a ‘plus value’ beyond just good teaching performance.” (Interview, A.H. & F., SDN Gerongan)

When synthesized with existing literature, these diverging approaches highlight the adaptive nature of transformational leadership. As argued by Erny (2025),¹⁴ successful principals must tailor their reward and motivation systems to the socio-cultural fabric of their institutions. For SMPN 1 Kraton, financial incentives serve to validate the expanded workload of subject specialists. Meanwhile, the symbolic recognition at SDN Gerongan is instrumental in building a close-knit, role-model-centric culture. Because elementary school teachers act as the primary behavioral models for young children, rewarding discipline and loyalty serves as a strategic reinforcement of the professional attitudes required at the foundational education level.

Quality Control: Continuous Monitoring and Academic Supervision

While strategic planning lays the foundation for developing teacher competence, the actualization of these plans depends entirely on robust quality control mechanisms. The empirical data reveals that both SMPN 1 Kraton and SDN Gerongan utilize continuous monitoring and academic supervision as the core pillars of their quality management. However, their execution methods differ significantly, reflecting their distinct institutional cultures and resource allocations.

1. Daily Monitoring and Management by Walking Around (MBWA)

A shared characteristic between the two leaderships is the heavy reliance on daily, direct monitoring. Both principals personally patrol the school grounds to ensure teacher attendance and active classroom engagement.

At SMPN 1 Kraton, this direct monitoring serves a highly pragmatic and corrective function: preventing vacant classes. When a teacher is absent, the principal proactively steps in to fill the instructional void, demonstrating a strong “leading-by-example” approach. A student at SMPN 1 Kraton confirmed this daily routine:

“Indeed, every day the principal does that, walking back and forth to check for empty classes. If he finds an empty room, he comes in and fills the void, and we are happy because he is pleasant to us.” (Interview, Student, SMPN 1 Kraton)

Meanwhile, at SDN Gerongan, the daily patrol functions as a mechanism for informal communication and morale-boosting, effectively breaking down bureaucratic barriers between the principal and the educators. A teacher at SDN Gerongan explained this communication style:

“Regarding communication, it is quite good; the leader or principal does not

¹⁴ Erny, “School Principal Leadership in Enhancing Teacher Competence.”

set boundaries... the principal often walks around the school or goes directly to the field to monitor the performance of his teachers.” (Interview, M.Z., SDN Gerongan)

2. Formal Tech-Assisted Supervision vs. Collaborative Peer Mentorship

The most pronounced difference emerges in the structure of formal academic supervision. SMPN 1 Kraton adopts a highly centralized, evaluation-driven, and technologically assisted approach. The principal conducts weekly supervisions focusing on the rigorous evaluation of teaching methodologies. Due to the large scale of the secondary school, the principal supplements direct classroom visits with technological aids. The principal stated:

“To observe the improvement in the educators’ competence, especially in the teaching and learning process in the classroom... specifically for the ninth grade, I monitor the educators through CCTV. The use of CCTV is temporarily only for the ninth-grade classrooms due to limited funding.” (Interview, A.P., Principal of SMPN 1 Kraton)

This finding is strongly supported by Ninthia et al. (2025),¹⁵ whose study confirmed that integrating technological tools such as CCTV in school supervision allows principals to effectively monitor learning implementation and student engagement without physically disrupting the instructional flow. Furthermore, the supervision at SMPN 1 Kraton is tightly linked to formal performance appraisals (e.g., DP3 for civil servant teachers). This centralized approach aligns with the quantitative findings of Singerin (2021),¹⁶ which demonstrated that intensive, principal-led academic supervision has a direct and significant positive impact on both teacher pedagogical competence and overall performance metrics when tied to formal accountability.

In stark contrast, SDN Gerongan implements a decentralized, hierarchical, and collaborative model of supervision. Recognizing the value of peer support, the supervision process here is less about formal grading and more about fostering an atmosphere of mutual care (*mengayomi*), where senior educators guide junior teachers. A language teacher at SDN Gerongan highlighted this collegial atmosphere:

“It is certainly very good because this supervision makes the teachers’ performance even better, and the senior teachers here are very nurturing [mengayomi] towards the teachers who are considered still young here.” (Interview, Ida, SDN Gerongan)

This collegial, low-pressure approach perfectly mirrors the findings of a recent evaluation by Khofifah et al. (2025).¹⁷ Their comprehensive study concluded that

¹⁵ Devita Sindy Ninthia et al., “The Principal’s Management in Developing Teachers’ Pedagogical Competence for Quality Improvement at PAUD Terpadu KB Dan TK Melati Putih Plus Samarinda,” *EduLine: Journal of Education and Learning Innovation* 5, no. 2 (2025): 256–61, <https://doi.org/10.35877/454RI.eduline3865>.

¹⁶ Sarlota Singerin, “The Impact of Academic Supervision on Teacher Pedagogical Competence and Teacher Performance: The Role Moderating by Teacher Efficacy,” *International Journal of Elementary Education* 5, no. 3 (2021): 496–504, <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijee.v5i3.34072>.

¹⁷ Juliani Musti Khofifah et al., “Enhancing Teacher Professionalism through Academic Supervision: A CIPP Model Evaluation,” *Indonesian Journal of Educational Development (IJED)* 6, no. 2 (2025): 380–92, <https://doi.org/10.59672/ijed.v6i2.4727>.

academic supervision transitions from a mere administrative obligation into a transformative professional tool when it involves senior teachers in a collaborative, dialogic manner. This peer-supported system significantly boosts teacher confidence and sustains a culture of quality, making it an ideal fit for the elementary school environment where continuous pedagogical adaptation is required.¹⁸

Contextual Challenges and Facilitating Factors

The strategic management of teacher professional competence does not operate in a vacuum; rather, it is continuously shaped by the complex interplay of internal facilitating assets and external hindering constraints. The empirical data collected from both SMPN 1 Kraton and SDN Gerongan highlights several critical factors that act as either catalysts or barriers to the successful implementation of professional development coaching. A comparative synthesis of these factors provides a comprehensive understanding of how basic education institutions navigate continuous improvement.

1. Internal Facilitating Factors: The Crucial Role of Physical and Digital Infrastructure

A major facilitating factor explicitly identified by informants in both institutions is the proactive provision and optimization of school infrastructure. At SMPN 1 Kraton, the principal's initiative to provide robust internet connectivity and continuously update pedagogical library resources directly enables teachers to independently enhance their knowledge and integrate digital literacy into their teaching. Similarly, SDN Gerongan benefits immensely from adequate physical infrastructure, specifically noting its expansive spatial capacity, which comfortably accommodates internal coaching sessions like In-House Training (IHT).

This empirical finding heavily underscores the theoretical consensus that physical and digital assets are inseparable from human resource development. This is strongly corroborated by Hidayati & Gunawan (2024),¹⁹ whose qualitative research at the elementary level demonstrates that the availability of adequate educational facilities and infrastructure acts as the primary catalyst for the successful implementation of educational workforce innovations. Their study found that when infrastructure is supportive, teachers exhibit significantly less psychological resistance to professional development programs (such as curriculum workshops) and can seamlessly translate newly acquired theoretical knowledge into active classroom practice. Furthermore, this dynamic aligns perfectly with the structural equation

¹⁸ To-Ken Lee and Aaron Chia Yuan Hung, "Implementing Differentiated Instruction through Lesson Study: Reflections from Taiwanese EFL Teachers," *International Journal of Educational Research* 133 (January 2025): 102720, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2025.102720>; Leroy Robinson Jr, "Exploring Determinants of Online Learning Acceptance: The Role of Readiness, Peer Support, and Instructional Support," *Electronic Journal of E-Learning* 23, no. 2 (2025): 130–42, <https://doi.org/10.34190/ejel.23.2.4048>; Tong Lin et al., "Inclusive Pedagogy in Practice within the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Framework: A Design-Based Research in a Chinese EFL Classroom," *Instructional Science* 54, no. 1 (2026): 19, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11251-025-09754-3>; Hijjatul Qamariah and Maria Hercz, "The Impact of Professional Development Programs on English as a Foreign Language Instructors in Higher Education Institutions," *Education Sciences* 15, no. 8 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsei15081071>.

¹⁹ Silmi Hidayati and Dani Gunawan, "Analisis Inovasi Ketenagaan Pendidikan Dalam Pengembangan Profesionalisme Guru Di SDN 3 Sukajaya," *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 11, no. 01 (2026): 161–73, <https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v11i01.43755>.

modeling conducted by Hartanto et al. (2023),²⁰ which verified that infrastructure functions as a critical “intervening variable.” According to their findings, attempts to improve educational quality purely through teacher competence interventions will stagnate unless directly supported and mediated by modernized school infrastructure.

2. Internal Facilitating Factors: Adaptive Leadership and Open Communication Channels

Beyond physical assets, the socio-emotional infrastructure established by the school principals serves as a vital supporting pillar. Both schools exhibit a “low-distance” power dynamic where the principals actively mingle with the teaching staff (Management By Walking Around). The qualitative data from SDN Gerongan specifically highlighted the principal’s approachability, emphasizing that open communication channels—whether through formal briefings or informal conversations—provided continuous psychological motivation for the teachers.

This style of leadership mitigates the stress often associated with performance evaluation and professional coaching. It transforms the school environment into a “learning organization.” This phenomenon supports the recent systematic review by Bahtiar et al. (2025),²¹ which concluded that 21st-century educational leadership must move beyond traditional, rigid instructional mandates. Their review emphasizes that modern school principals must act as adaptive facilitators who integrate organizational management agility with value-oriented, empathetic communication to sustain teacher professionalism over the long term.

3. External Hindering Factors: Systemic Disruptions and the Pandemic Context

Despite possessing strong internal foundations, the execution of strategic management models frequently collides with severe external constraints. Informants at SDN Gerongan explicitly cited the ongoing structural and logistical adjustments required due to the COVID-19 pandemic as a significant hindering factor. This systemic disruption severely restricted traditional face-to-face coaching, routine internal mass *briefings*, and the frequency of external training activities (such as those hosted by LPMP), forcing the school to navigate unprecedented limitations in executing its conventional quality management blueprints.

This localized challenge mirrors the broader national educational landscape documented extensively in recent literature. Fatmawati (2021)²² highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally disrupted traditional Teacher Professional Development (TPD) opportunities, particularly within Indonesian elementary school contexts. The sudden shift acted as a major barrier for institutions unaccustomed to digitized coaching, causing temporary stagnation in competence upgrades. Moreover, a robust study published in *Englisia* by Atmojo (2020)²³ found that during such

²⁰ Hartanto et al., “The Influence of Teacher Professional Competence on Education Quality Through Infrastructure as an Intervening Variable.”

²¹ Hikmanisa Bahtiar and Muhammad Kholidinna Qasabandiyah, “21st-Century Educational Leadership: A Review of Core Theories, Managerial Perspectives, and Emerging Trends,” *Journal of Teaching and Education for Scholars* 2, no. 2 (2025): 88–102, <https://doi.org/10.59065/jotes.v2i2.236>.

²² Latifah Fatmawati et al., “English Teachers’ Professional Development During COVID-19: Indonesian Elementary English Teacher Context,” *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 14, no. 4 (2022): 4979–86, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i4.1746>.

²³ Arief Eko Priyo Atmojo, “EFL Teachers’ Online Teacher Professional Development Experiences amidst

systemic disruptions, educators experienced severe hurdles in accessing continuous professional development due to a lack of pre-existing institutional support systems and network constraints. The pandemic essentially neutralized standard operational supervision.²⁴

To overcome these external hindering factors, institutional resilience is paramount. As evidenced by SDN Gerongan's reliance on the peer-to-peer delegation system, schools must pivot toward decentralized training when centralized systems fail. To fully immunize teacher development against future disruptions, the integration of technology-enabled TPD is no longer an option but a necessity. This imperative is confirmed by Huang et al. (2024),²⁵ whose systematic review identified that transitioning to technology-enabled professional learning communities is the most effective paradigm shift for maintaining teacher competence and educational quality during and after systemic global disruptions.

In synthesis, the ability of SMPN 1 Kraton and SDN Gerongan to maintain their strategic management of teacher competence, despite severe external disruptions, lies in their capacity to intelligently leverage internal physical infrastructure and foster an adaptive, communicative, and mutually supportive institutional culture.

CONCLUSION

The strategic management of teacher professional competence is an indispensable driver for elevating the quality of basic education. This comparative study reveals that while the foundational goals of professional development remain universal, the strategic execution must be highly contextualized to the specific educational tier. At the secondary level, SMPN 1 Kraton effectively utilizes an "external expansion" strategy, leveraging subject-specific forums (MGMP), structural financial incentives, and technology-assisted academic supervision to manage its specialized educators. Conversely, at the elementary level, SDN Gerongan thrives on an "internal standardization" model, fostering a close-knit professional culture through peer-to-peer In-House Training, symbolic recognition of loyalty, and collaborative mentoring by senior teachers. Both institutions demonstrate that successful quality management hinges on establishing a core culture of discipline during the planning phase and maintaining direct, consistent monitoring during the control phase, all while optimizing available physical infrastructure to mitigate external disruptions like the pandemic.

Despite providing valuable insights into the multi-site dynamics of teacher development, this study acknowledges several limitations. The research was confined to two public schools within a specific socio-cultural setting in East Java, which may limit the broader generalizability of the strategic models identified. Furthermore, the qualitative nature of the study captures the managerial processes comprehensively but

the COVID-19 Pandemic: Practices and Perceptions," *Englisia : Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities* 9, no. 1 (2021): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v9i1.9127>.

²⁴ Oktio Frenki Biantoro and Asep Rahmatullah, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Pembinaan Moral Siswa Di Sekolah," *Pelita: Jurnal Studi Islam Mahasiswa UII Dalwa* 2, no. 2 (2025): 225–41, <https://doi.org/10.38073/pelita.v2i2.3019>.

²⁵ Huang et al., "A Systematic Review of Technology-Enabled Teacher Professional Development during COVID -19 Pandemic."

does not quantitatively measure the long-term impact of these coaching interventions on student learning outcomes. Therefore, future research should consider employing mixed-methods approaches to quantify the effectiveness of these management strategies. Additionally, expanding the scope to include private educational institutions across wider geographic regions, or conducting longitudinal studies on the ongoing impact of digitized professional development post-pandemic, would significantly enrich the existing literature on global educational management.

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