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Educational Transformation In The Independent Curriculum Era: A Systematic Review Of Digital Leadership, Teacher Adaptability, And Learning Quality

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Abstract

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum demands a fundamental transformation in the learning process, making it more flexible and student-centered. However, challenges in the field indicate significant gaps in teachers' pedagogical readiness and digital literacy. This study aims to analyze in depth how principals' digital leadership is a key variable in strengthening academic supervision to improve teacher adaptability and learning quality. Through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of 30 reputable scientific articles, it was found that effective digital leadership can shift the supervision paradigm from mere administrative oversight to a data-driven and reflective professional development process. The study results indicate that the use of the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM) and learning communities supported by humanistic instructional leadership significantly accelerate teachers' transition to differentiated learning. This study concludes that the synergy between leaders' digital literacy and an adaptive supervision model is a key determinant for the sustainability of educational transformation in the era of digital disruption.

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Keywords : Independent Curriculum, Digital Leadership, Teacher Adaptability, Learning Quality

INTRODUCTION

The world of education in Indonesia is currently undergoing a phase of reconstruction of the learning ecosystem through the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes character building and instructional flexibility. This shift requires teachers to move beyond the comfort zone of conventional methods and toward differentiated learning practices that are more responsive to individual student needs. According to Pransiska et al. (2025), academic supervision in this context must transform to be more adaptive and responsive to individual teacher needs so that curriculum changes are not merely administrative formalities. Empirical reality reveals that this transition often triggers structural confusion and psychological barriers for educators, particularly regarding the integration of digital technology, which requires teachers to have strong digital literacy.

The urgency of leadership in this digital era is emphasized by Susilowati et al. (2025), who stated that teacher readiness and pedagogical adaptation to learning are highly dependent on infrastructure support and guidance integrated with technology. Without systematic mentoring, this paradigm shift risks losing its essence in improving the quality of student learning. The principal's digital leadership presents a strategic solution to bridge this gap, where the leader acts not only as a manager but also as a provider of a technological vision capable of mobilizing all components of the school. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the synergy between adaptive academic supervision and school resilience amidst digital disruption through a systematic literature review.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach designed to identify, evaluate, and synthesize scientific findings regarding the contribution of digital leadership to learning quality. A comprehensive literature search was conducted through academic databases such as Google Scholar and SINTA, with publication dates limited to 2023 and 2026 to ensure data freshness. Thirty journal articles were selected based on strict inclusion criteria, including a focus on secondary school level and relevance to academic supervision and curriculum adaptation. The data analysis process was conducted using thematic analysis, where information was extracted based on research variables, methods used by previous researchers, and key findings related to

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leadership effectiveness in collectively improving teacher professionalism.

RESULT

Academic Supervision Planning and Implementation: The principal conducts academic supervision through three systematic stages: pre-observation, classroom observation, and post-observation. Supervision instruments have been modified to align with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, focusing on the readiness of differentiated teaching modules and the use of technology in learning.

Teacher Mentoring Strategy: Observations indicate a shift in strategy from a directive to a collaborative approach. Principals are utilizing internal learning communities and the Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) Platform as a means to independently develop teacher competencies.

Impact on Teaching Performance and Learning Quality: The implementation of adaptive supervision has had a positive impact on teacher creativity. Teachers have begun to consistently develop lesson plans oriented to individual student needs. This is evident in the increased use of digital-based learning media and Project-Based Learning methods in the classroom.

DISCUSSION

A literature analysis reveals that the principal's digital leadership plays a dual role as both an infrastructure facilitator and a pedagogical mentor, essential to the success of the Independent Curriculum. In terms of planning, effective principals have begun modifying supervision instruments to align with the principles of differentiated learning and the use of technology in the classroom. As Yulidar et al. (2025) noted, implementing coaching-based academic supervision can significantly improve learning quality by positioning the principal as a dialogue partner who helps teachers find independent solutions. This approach shifts the supervision strategy from a directive to a collaborative one, with the use of the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM) becoming the primary means for independent teacher competency development.

The impact of strong digital leadership is evident in increased teacher adaptability, characterized by consistency in developing lesson plans oriented to student needs. This aligns with the view of Yahya et al. (2026), who emphasized that humanistic group supervision techniques, when combined with the use of technology, can overcome socio-geographical and administrative barriers specific to Indonesia. The integration of technology into supervision not only accelerates the dissemination of curriculum understanding but also assists principals in making more accurate, digitally data-driven decisions regarding teacher performance. This success is reflected in the

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increasing use of digital-based learning media and Project-Based Learning methods in classrooms.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that creating a supportive school culture and collaborative communication are stronger determinants than mere technical supervision. Rahman et al. (2025) emphasized that supportive managerial support from the principal proved to be a determining factor in teachers' success in implementing learning innovations in the Independent Curriculum era. The transformation from conventional, inspection-based supervision to an adaptive-collaborative model allows teachers to engage in independent reflection to achieve continuous improvement in the quality of learning. Thus, digital leadership focuses not only on hardware procurement but also on developing human capacity to remain resilient amidst rapid changes.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that principals' digital leadership is a key factor in the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum through the strengthening of adaptive academic supervision. Findings from a Systematic Literature Review of 30 articles indicate that transforming supervision from an administrative approach to a collaborative, coaching-based model can improve teacher adaptability and learning quality. The use of the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM), learning communities, and digital data-driven decision-making have been shown to accelerate teachers' adaptation process in implementing differentiated learning and Project-Based Learning-based innovation. Thus, the synergy between principals' digital literacy and the support of a collaborative school ecosystem is a key determinant in driving the sustainability of educational transformation in the era of digital disruption.

However, this study has several limitations, particularly the limited scope of data sources within the Google Scholar and SINTA databases and the publication period of 2023 to 2026. Therefore, it may not represent all relevant global studies. Furthermore, this study relied solely on a qualitative literature synthesis approach without the support of empirical field data, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, further research is recommended to use a mixed methods approach or longitudinal studies to directly examine the relationship between digital leadership, teacher adaptability, and learning quality across various school contexts. Practically, the results of this study recommend strengthening digital leadership training for school principals, optimizing the use of structured PMM (Public Relations and Community Empowerment Program), and developing a coaching-based academic supervision program to continuously improve teacher professionalism.

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