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Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC): Integrating Academic Supervision and Internal Quality Assurance to Support SDG 4 Through Sustainable School Improvement

Hilmi Qosim Mubah*, Yatim Riyanto, Erny Roesminingsih, Nunuk Hariyati

State University of Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia



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ABSTRACT

Objective: To examine how academic supervision is integrated into the Internal Quality Assurance system to support sustainable school improvement and develops a conceptual model that explains the relationship between quality assurance, reflective supervision, professional learning, and continuous improvement. **Method:** A qualitative case study was conducted at a public Islamic junior secondary school in Pamekasan Regency, Indonesia. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis involving 11 participants selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. **Results:** Academic supervision was embedded within the Internal Quality Assurance system through five interconnected processes: quality diagnosis, academic supervision planning, reflective supervision, professional learning, and continuous improvement. These processes transformed supervision from a periodic evaluative activity into an evidence-informed organizational mechanism that strengthened instructional quality, professional capacity, and institutional learning. **Novelty:** The study proposes the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC) as a conceptual and operational framework that integrates academic supervision with Internal Quality Assurance. The model extends existing supervision literature by positioning supervision as the organizational mechanism that connects quality diagnosis, reflective practice, professional learning, and continuous improvement to advance sustainable school improvement and contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).

INTRODUCTION

Educational quality is no longer judged solely by expanding access but by schools' ability to sustain meaningful learning and institutional performance over time. UNESCO (2024) emphasizes that achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 depends on continuous improvement in education systems. This expectation has shifted attention toward institutional processes that sustain educational quality. Evidence suggests that schools implementing systematic quality management are better positioned to strengthen organizational learning and support long-term educational improvement (Bouranta et al., 2021; Brilliantov et al., 2025; Wulandari et al., 2023).

Sustaining educational quality increasingly depends on schools' capacity to drive improvement from within. This shift has reinforced the role of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) as a structured process for monitoring performance, identifying improvement priorities, and integrating evidence into school decision-making. Schools that adopt systematic quality assurance are more likely to cultivate a sustainable quality culture than those that rely primarily on external evaluation (Bouranta et al., 2021). However, in many educational settings, quality assurance implementation continues to emphasize procedural compliance and documentation more than professional learning and organizational improvement. In Indonesia, this approach is reflected in a recurring

cycle of quality mapping, planning, implementation, evaluation, control, and improvement that embeds quality enhancement into everyday school practice (Idris et al., 2022; Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023).

Translating Internal Quality Assurance into everyday school practice depends on mechanisms that directly influence teaching quality and professional growth. Among these, academic supervision has evolved beyond classroom inspection into a structured process that promotes teacher learning, instructional improvement, and evidence-informed decision making. Current evidence suggests that supervision is most effective when it encourages professional dialogue, reflective practice, and collaborative problem solving rather than compliance-oriented evaluation (Barokah & Raharja, 2025; Wulandari et al., 2023). When integrated into the Internal Quality Assurance process, academic supervision enables institutional priorities to be translated into sustained improvements in teaching practice and professional capacity (Kinyero et al., 2025).

Academic supervision has been examined from several complementary perspectives, each offering important insights into educational improvement. Some studies have linked supervision to higher teacher performance and instructional quality, while others have emphasized its contribution to professional competence and classroom effectiveness (Mulyantia et al., 2024). A different strand of research views supervision as a managerial instrument for strengthening educational quality through planning and monitoring (Anike & Umezulike, 2024). Although these perspectives demonstrate the value of supervision, they largely position it as a discrete instructional or managerial intervention. Less attention has been given to its role as an organizational mechanism through which Internal Quality Assurance is translated into continuous institutional learning and improvement.

Instructional supervision, professional learning, educational leadership, and quality assurance have each developed into well-established fields of educational research. Their respective contributions are substantial, yet they have largely been theorized within separate conceptual traditions. Leadership research explains how school leaders influence teaching quality, while reflective supervision emphasizes professional dialogue and teacher reflection (Bush & Ng, 2019; Wulandari et al., 2023). Professional learning focuses on strengthening teachers' capacity through collaboration and reflective practice (Hazizul et al., 2026; Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023; Zepeda, 2017), whereas research on school quality and quality assurance has concentrated on organizational governance, quality culture, and continuous improvement (Anam et al., 2025; Siagian et al., 2025; Stalmeijer et al., 2023). Although these perspectives offer valuable insights, they provide only partial explanations of school improvement because they have largely evolved independently. What remains underdeveloped is a conceptual explanation of how these interconnected processes operate as a single organizational quality cycle.

The conceptual fragmentation identified in previous studies is also evident in the Indonesian educational context. Internal Quality Assurance has become an integral component of school management through systematic quality mapping, planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement (Idris et al., 2022; Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023). Separate studies have likewise shown that academic supervision strengthens instructional practice, teacher professionalism, and collaborative learning, particularly when implemented as an ongoing developmental process (Posangi et al., 2025; Sari & Atikah, 2024). Yet these strands of evidence remain

only loosely connected, offering a limited explanation of how Internal Quality Assurance and academic supervision interact as a continuous organizational process for sustaining quality improvement in madrasahs.

Addressing this conceptual and empirical gap requires a framework that explains how academic supervision operates as part of an Internal Quality Assurance process rather than as an isolated evaluative activity. This study develops the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC), a model that integrates quality diagnosis, administrative readiness, reflective planning, collaborative observation, reflective dialogue, professional learning, and continuous improvement into a coherent organizational cycle. The RSLC explains how these interconnected processes transform supervisory evidence into professional learning, institutional improvement, and sustained school improvement, providing a conceptual foundation for understanding academic supervision as an organizational component of Internal Quality Assurance in Indonesian madrasahs.

This study aims to develop the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC) as a quality assurance-based framework for sustainable school improvement. Specifically, it examines how academic supervision is integrated into the Internal Quality Assurance process and how this integration supports continuous organizational improvement in Indonesian madrasahs. Two research questions guide the study: (1) How is academic supervision integrated into the Internal Quality Assurance process to support sustainable school improvement? and (2) How does the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC) explain the relationship between quality assurance, professional learning, and continuous improvement?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research design and approach

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine how academic supervision functioned within the Internal Quality Assurance process in an Indonesian public Islamic junior secondary school. A qualitative case study was appropriate because it enabled an in-depth understanding of supervisory practices as they were experienced and enacted in their natural organizational context rather than measuring predetermined relationships (Yin, 2021). This approach also supported the inductive development of the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC) from the interactions among quality assurance, academic supervision, and professional learning (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mynott & Kager, 2024).

Participants and participant selection

The study involved 11 participants from a public Islamic junior secondary school (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) in Pamekasan Regency, Indonesia, including the principal, vice principals, the quality assurance coordinator, academic supervisors, and teachers. Participants were selected through purposive sampling because they were directly involved in academic supervision and Internal Quality Assurance, enabling them to provide rich information relevant to the research questions (Dahal et al., 2024; Patton, 2015). Their diverse organizational roles provided multiple perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation (Alsadaan & Ramadan, 2025; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The school's identity was anonymized to protect institutional confidentiality.

Research instrument and the role of the researcher

The researcher served as the primary research instrument, using semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis to collect and interpret data. The interview protocol was developed from the research questions to ensure consistency while allowing participants to describe their experiences in depth. Observations examined the implementation of academic supervision and Internal Quality Assurance, whereas institutional documents were reviewed to verify policies, procedures, and quality assurance records. Combining these sources strengthened the interpretation of findings through multiple forms of organizational evidence.

Data collection procedures

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis between September 2025 and June 2026. Interviews explored participants' experiences of academic supervision, Internal Quality Assurance, professional learning, and continuous improvement. Observations focused on supervisory practices, while institutional documents were reviewed to verify policies, supervision records, meeting minutes, and quality assurance reports. Data collection and preliminary analysis proceeded iteratively, allowing emerging findings to inform subsequent data collection and enabling continuous comparison across multiple sources throughout the study.

Data analysis procedure

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), in which data collection, condensation, display, and conclusion drawing occurred iteratively. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were analyzed to identify recurring patterns related to academic supervision, Internal Quality Assurance, professional learning, and continuous improvement. The resulting themes were compared across participants and data sources before being integrated to explain how supervisory practices functioned within the Internal Quality Assurance process. This analysis informed the inductive development of the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Integration of academic supervision into the internal quality assurance process

The analysis generated five interrelated themes explaining how academic supervision was integrated into the Internal Quality Assurance process. These themes comprise (1) Quality Diagnosis, (2) Academic Supervision Planning, (3) the Reflective Supervision Process, (4) Professional Learning, and (5) Continuous Improvement. Rather than representing separate supervisory activities, the five themes illustrate how academic supervision functions as an integral component of the Internal Quality Assurance process to support sustainable school improvement.

Together, these themes describe a continuous quality cycle linking institutional quality diagnosis, supervision planning, reflective supervision, professional learning, and continuous improvement. Each theme contributes a distinct yet complementary role in supporting evidence-informed decision-making, teacher professional development, and sustained institutional improvement. Table 1 summarizes the core

processes, quality assurance functions, and contributions of each theme to sustainable school improvement.

Table 1. Themes of academic supervision integration within the internal quality assurance process

Theme	Core Process	Quality Assurance Function	Contribution to Sustainable School Improvement
Quality Diagnosis	Identifying quality priorities	Establishes supervision priorities based on institutional needs	Ensures supervision is evidence-informed
Academic Supervision Planning	Administrative readiness, scheduling, supervisory team	Aligns supervision with quality planning	Creates systematic supervision implementation
Reflective Supervision Process	Pre-observation, classroom observation, reflective dialogue	Generates evidence of instructional practice	Supports instructional quality improvement
Professional Learning	Clinical supervision, collaborative learning, coaching	Strengthens teacher professional capacity	Promotes continuous professional growth
Continuous Improvement	Monitoring, evaluation, follow-up	Integrates supervision outcomes into the next quality cycle	Sustains long-term school improvement

Development of the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC)

Analysis of the five empirical themes showed that academic supervision functions as a continuous organizational learning cycle rather than a sequence of isolated evaluation activities. The findings indicate that five interconnected components comprise the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC): (1) Quality Diagnosis, (2) Academic Supervision Planning, (3) the Reflective Supervision Process, (4) Professional Learning, and (5) Continuous Improvement. Each component generates evidence that informs the next stage, creating a recurring cycle that positions academic supervision as the operational core of the Internal Quality Assurance process for sustaining school improvement.

The five components operate as an integrated organizational mechanism in which each stage continuously informs and reinforces the next. Together, they explain how quality assurance, reflective supervision, professional learning, and continuous improvement function as mutually dependent processes within the Internal Quality Assurance system. Table 2 summarizes the conceptual structure of the RSLC, including the function of each component, its operational outputs, and its contribution to the Internal Quality Assurance process.

Table 2. Conceptual structure of the RSLC

RSLC Component	Function	Output	Contribution to Internal Quality Assurance
Quality Diagnosis	Identifies institutional	Supervision priorities	Evidence-based

RSLC Component	Function	Output	Contribution to Internal Quality Assurance
Academic Supervision Planning	priorities Organizes supervision	Administrative and instructional readiness	planning Quality planning
Reflective Supervision Process	Generates instructional evidence	Reflection and feedback	Quality monitoring
Professional Learning	Builds teacher capacity	Pedagogical improvement	Capacity development
Continuous Improvement	Integrates evaluation into the next cycle	Institutional learning	Sustainable quality improvement

The conceptual structure summarized in Table 2 is represented visually through the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC) shown in Figure 1. The model illustrates how the five components operate as a continuous cycle in which evidence generated at each stage informs subsequent supervisory, professional learning, and quality improvement processes. Figure 1 presents the operational relationship among these components as an integrated mechanism for sustainable school improvement.

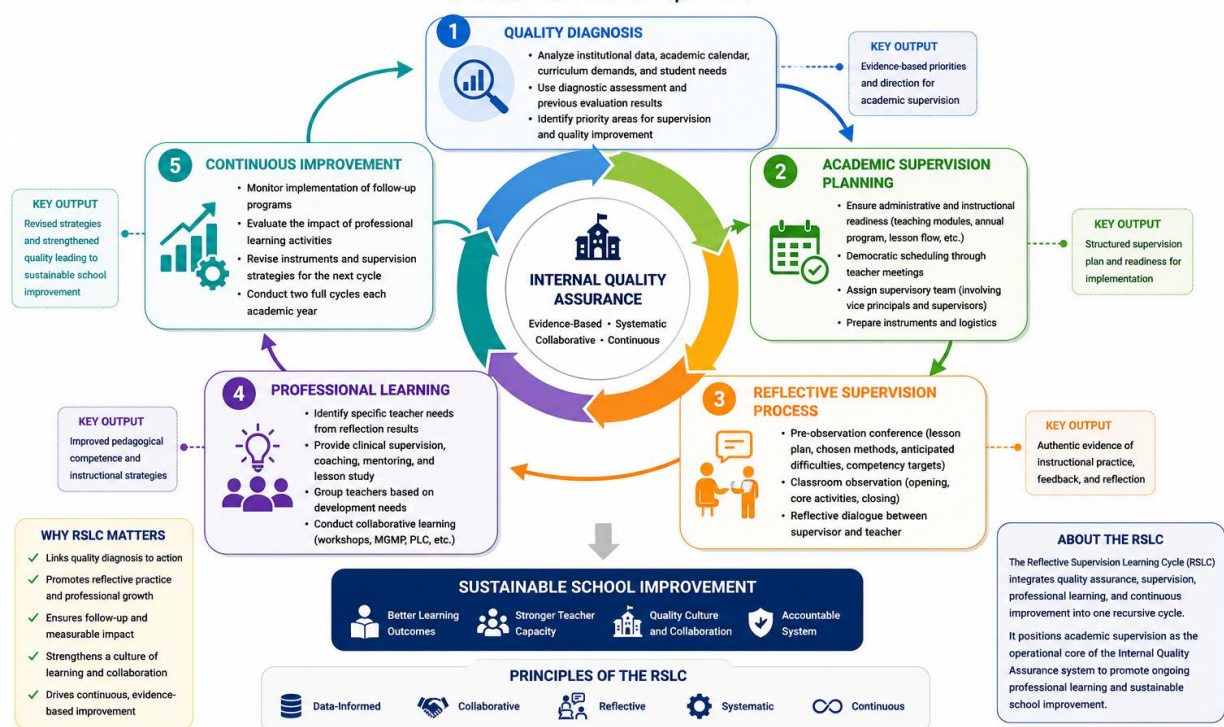


Figure 1. The RSLC cycle in internal quality assurance

Discussion

The findings indicate that academic supervision functions as an integral component of the Internal Quality Assurance system rather than as a periodic activity for evaluating teachers' instructional performance. This discussion examines how the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC) explains the relationship between academic supervision, organizational learning, and continuous quality improvement by drawing

on contemporary perspectives in educational supervision, quality assurance, distributed leadership, and sustainable school improvement.

Integration of academic supervision into the internal quality assurance process

Quality diagnosis

Quality diagnosis provides the strategic foundation for Internal Quality Assurance because organizational improvement depends on a clear understanding of institutional conditions before corrective actions are implemented. Positioning diagnosis at the beginning of the supervision cycle ensures that subsequent decisions are guided by organizational evidence and routine administrative practice. This interpretation aligns with the principles of Total Quality Management, which view systematic identification of quality gaps as the starting point for continuous improvement (Deming, 2000). Recent quality assurance research similarly emphasizes that reliable evidence enables schools to prioritize improvement according to institutional needs instead of administrative expectations (Oktarina et al., 2024; Suleiman, 2023; Sutiyono et al., 2025).

Organizational evidence not only identifies areas requiring improvement but also shapes the direction and legitimacy of supervisory decisions. When diagnostic information becomes the basis for determining priorities, supervision shifts from a routine administrative activity to a strategic process aligned with institutional needs. This evidence-based orientation enables school leaders to allocate professional support where it is most needed while maintaining coherence between instructional priorities and broader quality objectives (Nasikhah et al., 2024; The European University Association, 2007; Trisnantari & Jannah, 2025).

Educational quality is therefore strengthened not because supervision occurs more frequently, but because supervisory decisions are grounded in organizational evidence. This shifts the role of supervision beyond monitoring classroom practice toward supporting institutional learning and evidence-informed quality governance (Hanaris, 2025; Mulyanti, 2023; Usman et al., 2023). Within the RSLC, quality diagnosis functions as the point at which organizational evidence informs every subsequent stage of the supervision cycle, ensuring that continuous improvement is driven by institutional needs.

Academic supervision planning

Academic supervision planning acquires strategic significance when supervisory activities are explicitly connected to institutional quality priorities. The evidence indicates that planning is not treated as an administrative schedule prepared before classroom observations, but as a process through which organizational needs are translated into coordinated supervisory actions. Such an orientation explains why supervision becomes more responsive to institutional challenges instead of following predetermined routines. Bush, (2020) similarly argues that supervision contributes to educational improvement only when it is embedded within broader school planning, while Af'idah et al., (2025) and Supriatin & Iriantara, (2026) describe planning as a governance process that aligns instructional priorities with institutional objectives.

Planning also creates a common frame of reference for everyone involved in supervision. Once improvement priorities have been agreed upon, principals, supervisors, teachers, and quality assurance teams work from the same organizational agenda instead of pursuing separate initiatives. This shared understanding reduces

fragmented decision-making and allows supervisory activities to reinforce one another across different levels of the school. Recent studies similarly report that schools with coherent planning structures are better able to sustain instructional consistency because supervisory decisions remain connected to institutional goals (Af'idah et al., 2025; Nurhasanah & Wasliman, 2026)

The organizational value of supervision planning becomes even more evident when leadership responsibilities are distributed across the institution. Coordinating supervision through multiple professional roles enables expertise to circulate beyond formal leadership positions and encourages collective ownership of improvement initiatives. This pattern reflects contemporary perspectives on distributed leadership, which regard school improvement as the outcome of coordinated professional action instead of individual authority (Baştea et al., 2023; Lushaj & Shatri, 2026; Sjölund et al., 2025). Joseph & Sengul, (2025) and Ndidi et al., (2025) likewise show that collaborative planning strengthens institutional capacity because decisions emerge from shared professional expertise.

Within the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle, planning extends beyond organizational coordination by connecting quality diagnosis with reflective supervision. Institutional evidence is translated into shared supervision priorities before classroom observation begins, enabling supervisors and teachers to work toward clearly defined developmental goals rather than procedural compliance. This planning process establishes a common direction for subsequent supervisory activities and ensures that instructional improvement remains aligned with broader quality assurance priorities.

Reflective supervision process

Reflective supervision transforms classroom observation into a process of professional inquiry rather than teacher evaluation. This understanding of reflection is consistent with Schön's concept of reflection-on-action, which emphasizes critical examination of professional practice as a basis for continuous learning and improvement. Reflection encourages teachers to examine instructional decisions, reconsider established practices, and strengthen pedagogical judgment through critical inquiry (Derrington et al., 2026; Istiqomah et al., 2026) (Derrington et al., 2026; Istiqomah et al., 2026; Schön, 1983). This perspective shifts the purpose of supervision from performance assessment to professional learning, enabling instructional improvement to emerge through reflective practice instead of external control (Gordon, 2023; Istiqomah et al., 2026). Supervision strengthens Internal Quality Assurance by fostering continuous pedagogical development rather than procedural compliance (Astuti et al., 2025; Mulyanto et al., 2025).

Professional dialogue also changes the character of supervision itself. Conversations between supervisors and teachers become spaces where instructional problems are jointly interpreted instead of individually evaluated. The emphasis shifts from identifying isolated classroom weaknesses toward constructing shared understanding of how teaching can be improved across different learning situations. Recent research consistently associates reflective dialogue with greater professional openness, mutual trust, and sustained instructional development because teachers participate actively in analysing their own classroom experiences (Atkinson et al., 2022; Bayraktar et al., 2025; Derrington et al., 2026; Görtzen et al., 2025).

An equally important feature of reflective supervision lies in its capacity to generate professional judgement rather than immediate solutions. Teachers rarely improve simply because recommendations are provided. Improvement becomes more sustainable when reflective conversations encourage educators to question assumptions, compare alternative instructional responses, and justify pedagogical choices using classroom evidence. Le, (2026) and Li, (2025) describe this form of reflective reasoning as a key condition for continuous professional development because learning is constructed through critical inquiry instead of passive acceptance of supervisory advice.

From an organizational perspective, reflective supervision extends beyond individual teacher development by generating professional knowledge that can be shared, refined, and incorporated into subsequent quality improvement efforts. Reflection transforms classroom experience into collective professional learning, enabling supervisory evidence to inform broader organizational development. Within the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle, this process connects reflective inquiry with institutional learning, ensuring that professional knowledge continues to inform quality improvement across the school.

Professional learning

Professional learning marks the stage at which the supervision experience begins to reshape teaching practice through the ongoing development of knowledge. Evidence suggests that meaningful improvement stems not only from supervisory feedback but also from teachers' ability to interpret that feedback, connect it to classroom experiences, and transform it into informed pedagogical action. Learning becomes an active process of professional meaning-making, not a direct consequence of supervision. Similar conclusions are reported by Li & Gu, (2026) and Sacote-Labadan & Tantiado, (2025), who emphasize that sustained teaching improvement depends on teachers' active engagement with professional knowledge.

The value of professional learning becomes more apparent when individual reflection develops into collective professional inquiry. Teachers strengthen their instructional judgement by exchanging experiences, questioning established practices, and examining alternative responses to shared classroom challenges. Knowledge generated through these interactions gradually extends beyond individual classrooms and begins to influence broader professional practice across the school. Contemporary research likewise characterizes schools as learning organizations in which professional expertise evolves through collaboration, shared inquiry, and collective responsibility rather than through isolated individual development (Jong et al., 2022; Kools & Stoll, 2016; Wullschleger et al., 2023)

Another important implication concerns the way professional learning supports institutional capacity. As teachers repeatedly engage in collaborative learning, professional knowledge becomes increasingly embedded in everyday organizational routines, informing future supervisory decisions and instructional priorities. Continuous interaction among educators allows effective practices to be refined, adapted, and shared across different contexts instead of remaining as individual expertise. Sacote-Labadan & Tantiado, (2025), together with Shaheen et al., (2025), similarly observe that sustained professional interaction strengthens both teacher

development and the school's collective capacity to respond to changing educational needs.

Professional learning plays a role beyond enhancing teaching competency within the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle. It serves as a mechanism that transforms reflective supervision into organizational capability, ensuring that the knowledge generated from supervisory experiences continues to influence institutional decision-making. This position explains why professional learning links reflective supervision to continuous improvement. The RSLC conceptualizes learning as an institutional asset accumulated across successive supervision cycles, enabling schools to sustain improvement through organizational knowledge rather than isolated professional experiences.

Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement represents the organizational outcome of the entire supervision cycle, not a discrete phase following evaluation. Evidence suggests that improvement becomes sustainable only when supervisory experiences, professional learning, and institutional reflection are translated into subsequent organizational decisions. This explains why improvement cannot be understood as a single intervention or a completed program. Deming, (2000) philosophy also views improvement as a sustained organizational commitment, while improvement science emphasizes that meaningful educational change develops through iterative cycles of learning, evaluation, and refinement embedded in daily practice (Anderson et al., 2024; Carter et al., 2026; Endalamaw et al., 2024).

Institutional improvement also depends on the organization's ability to retain and reuse the professional knowledge generated through previous supervision activities. When successful practices are systematically documented, discussed, and incorporated into subsequent planning, each supervision cycle contributes to the school's long-term adaptive capacity. Improvement, in this sense, reflects organizational memory as much as organizational action. Similar arguments emerge from recent studies showing that sustainable educational development emerges when evidence, reflection, and professional learning become routine features of institutional decision-making (Fullan, 2023; Hepriyanti et al., 2023; Kools & Stoll, 2016; Nwosu et al., 2021).

Another implication concerns the dynamic nature of organizational improvement. Schools rarely experience linear progress because educational priorities, teaching challenges, and institutional conditions continue to evolve over time. Sustained improvement therefore relies on an adaptive process that allows supervisory priorities to be continuously re-examined as new evidence becomes available. Recent research likewise portrays improvement as an organizational capability that develops through ongoing learning and responsiveness to changing educational contexts (Rees et al., 2020; Shi & Liu, 2025). This adaptive orientation enables schools to preserve coherence while remaining responsive to emerging needs.

The most distinctive contribution of the Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle lies in its recursive structure. Improvement does not end the supervision process; rather, it generates organizational evidence that initiates the next cycle of quality diagnosis. Each completed cycle strengthens the next by expanding the institution's collective knowledge, refining supervision priorities, and informing future quality decisions. Savolainen (1999) and Schulze and Brusoni (2022) also emphasize that organizational

learning becomes sustainable when continuous improvement feeds subsequent learning processes. The RSLC describes continuous school improvement as a self-renewing organizational capability, rather than as a series of discontinuous supervision activities.

Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC) as a conceptual model

Educational supervision has long been recognised as an important mechanism for improving teaching quality, yet its contribution has largely been interpreted at the level of instructional practice. Most supervisory models explain how observation, feedback, and teacher development influence classroom improvement, while paying limited attention to how these activities contribute to broader institutional quality processes (Glickman et al., 2013). The present study suggests that this limitation does not arise from supervision itself, but from the absence of a conceptual explanation linking supervisory practice with the organizational processes through which schools continuously improve.

A similar gap can be observed in the quality assurance literature. Contemporary Internal Quality Assurance frameworks describe how schools set standards, evaluate performance, and monitor institutional progress, but the operational mechanisms linking these governance processes to day-to-day supervisory practices remain poorly articulated (Nurhasanah & Wasliman, 2026; Rini et al., 2025). This leads to supervisory and quality assurance often developing as parallel institutional activities despite pursuing the same goal of continuous educational improvement. This separation makes it difficult to explain how evidence generated through supervisory processes becomes organizational knowledge capable of informing subsequent quality decision-making.

The Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC) addresses this conceptual discontinuity by positioning academic supervision as the organizational mechanism through which Internal Quality Assurance is enacted in everyday school practice. The model integrates quality diagnosis, supervision planning, reflective supervision, professional learning, and continuous improvement into a coherent organizational cycle in which each component contributes a distinct function while reinforcing the others. Institutional learning emerges through the interaction of these interconnected processes, allowing supervisory evidence to inform continuous quality improvement across the school.

The explanatory strength of the RSLC lies in its capacity to bring together complementary theoretical perspectives into a coherent organizational framework. Continuous improvement provides the organizational logic for sustained institutional development (Deming, 2000), reflective practice explains how professional judgment develops through critical inquiry (Li, 2025; Sherwood, 2024), distributed leadership clarifies how responsibility for improvement is shared across organizational actors (Nadeem, 2024; Spillane & Ortiz, 2019), and professional learning explains how supervisory evidence develops into collective instructional capacity (Barokah & Raharja, 2025). Integrating these perspectives enables the RSLC to explain how continuous improvement becomes embedded within everyday organizational practice rather than remaining a series of disconnected supervisory activities.

The RSLC extends existing supervision and quality assurance literature by repositioning academic supervision as the organizational mechanism that connects Internal Quality Assurance with continuous professional learning and institutional improvement. This perspective broadens the role of supervision beyond instructional

support by explaining how supervisory evidence is transformed into organizational learning that sustains school improvement over time. From a practical standpoint, the model offers school leaders and quality assurance teams an integrated framework for aligning quality diagnosis, supervision planning, reflective dialogue, professional learning, and institutional evaluation within a coherent improvement strategy. Such integration strengthens evidence-informed decision-making, supports collaborative professional practice, and provides a foundation for future studies examining how supervision contributes to organizational learning and continuous quality improvement across diverse educational contexts (Fadhilah & Wasliman, 2026; Fullan, 2023; Nurhasanah & Wasliman, 2026).

Theoretical and practical contributions of the RSLC

The Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC) contributes to educational supervision scholarship by offering an integrated explanation of how academic supervision, Internal Quality Assurance, and organizational learning function as interconnected processes that sustain school improvement. Existing research has largely examined instructional supervision, teacher professional development, and quality assurance as related yet analytically separate areas (Glickman et al., 2013). The RSLC advances this literature by positioning academic supervision as the organizational mechanism through which supervisory evidence is translated into professional learning, leadership decision-making, and institutional quality development. This perspective extends conventional supervision models beyond instructional improvement and provides a conceptual explanation of how schools build continuous improvement capacity through an evidence-informed organizational learning cycle (Nurhasanah & Wasliman, 2026).

The Reflective Supervision Learning Cycle (RSLC) provides school leaders, supervisors, and quality assurance teams with a coherent framework for integrating quality diagnosis, supervision planning, reflective supervision, professional learning, and institutional evaluation into a unified improvement strategy. Aligning these processes strengthens evidence-informed decision-making, supports collaborative professional practice, and reinforces organizational coherence across successive quality improvement cycles (Elkaleh et al., 2025; Fadhilah & Wasliman, 2026; Fullan, 2023). Beyond its application in Indonesian madrasahs, the model offers a conceptual foundation for future research examining how educational supervision can strengthen organizational learning and continuous quality improvement across different educational settings.

Advancing sustainable development goal 4 through the reflective supervision learning cycle

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 requires schools to establish organizational conditions that sustain educational quality through continuous learning and evidence-informed improvement, rather than relying on isolated reform initiatives. UNESCO positions quality education as a systemic process that integrates institutional capacity, equitable learning opportunities, and continuous improvement across all levels of education (UNESCO, 2024). Recent scholarship similarly argues that progress toward SDG 4 depends not only on expanding educational access but also on strengthening schools' capability to continuously improve teaching quality through transformative

and sustainable organizational practices (Wang et al., 2025; Xiao et al., 2025). These perspectives provide an important context for interpreting the contribution of the RSLC beyond the immediate findings of this study.

The contribution of the RSLC to Sustainable Development Goal 4 lies in its capacity to strengthen educational quality through an integrated organizational learning process. By connecting quality diagnosis, academic supervision, reflective professional learning, and continuous improvement within the Internal Quality Assurance system, the model enables supervisory evidence to inform institutional decision-making across successive improvement cycles. This organizational approach strengthens evidence-informed leadership, collaborative professional practice, and institutional capacity, all of which are widely recognized as essential conditions for achieving sustainable educational quality (UNESCO, 2024; Wang et al., 2025; Xiao et al., 2025). In this way, the RSLC provides a practical framework for translating the aspirations of SDG 4 into sustainable school improvement while offering a conceptual foundation for educational systems seeking to build continuous organizational learning and long-term quality enhancement.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental finding: Academic supervision contributes more effectively to sustainable school improvement when it is embedded within the Internal Quality Assurance system rather than implemented as an isolated evaluative activity. The findings indicate that integrating quality diagnosis, supervision planning, reflective supervision, professional learning, and continuous improvement enables supervisory evidence to strengthen organizational learning, institutional capacity, and long-term educational quality. **Implication:** The proposed model offers school leaders and quality assurance teams a coherent framework for integrating academic supervision into Internal Quality Assurance through evidence-informed decision-making. Strengthening the connection between supervisory evidence and institutional improvement supports sustainable school development while contributing to the aspirations of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), particularly in advancing inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education. **Limitation:** The proposed model was developed from a qualitative case study conducted in a single Indonesian public Islamic junior secondary school. Although the findings provide rich contextual insights into the integration of academic supervision and Internal Quality Assurance, their transferability should be interpreted with caution because leadership practices, organizational structures, and quality assurance systems may differ across educational contexts. **Future research:** Future research should examine the applicability of the RSLC across diverse educational settings through comparative case studies, mixed-method designs, and longitudinal investigations. Additional empirical evidence would help refine the operational dimensions of the model, evaluate its adaptability to different institutional contexts, and deepen understanding of how academic supervision contributes to organizational learning, Internal Quality Assurance, and sustainable educational quality over time.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Hilmi Qosim Mubah: Contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, methodology, data collection, formal analysis, data curation, investigation, visualization, drafting of the original manuscript, and manuscript revision. **Yatim**

Riyanto: Contributed to the conceptualization, methodology refinement, validation, supervision, critical review of the manuscript, and intellectual input throughout the research and writing process. **Erny Roesminingsih:** Contributed to methodology development, validation, interpretation of findings, critical review of the manuscript, and refinement of the theoretical framework. **Nunuk Hariyati:** Contributed to the conceptual development of educational supervision, refinement of the supervisory framework, interpretation of the findings from the perspective of educational supervision, critical review of the manuscript, and improvement of the scientific arguments. All authors contributed to the interpretation of the results, reviewed the manuscript critically for important intellectual content, approved the final version of the manuscript, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, professional, or institutional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the design, conduct, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of this study. The authors confirm that the research was carried out independently and that the findings and conclusions presented in this article are solely based on the evidence obtained during the research process.

ETHICAL COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

The authors affirm that this manuscript complies with accepted standards of research and publication ethics. The study was conducted with academic integrity, and the manuscript represents original work that has not been published or submitted elsewhere. All sources have been appropriately acknowledged, and the authors confirm that the manuscript is free from plagiarism, data fabrication, data falsification, and any other form of unethical research or publication practice.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF AI OR DIGITAL TOOLS IN WRITING

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used only to support language editing and the preparation of graphical illustrations in this manuscript. Grammarly was employed to improve grammar, sentence clarity, and overall language readability, and ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used to assist in creating graphical illustrations based on conceptual frameworks developed by the authors. AI was not used to generate research ideas, collect or analyze data, interpret findings, develop theoretical arguments, or formulate the conclusions of this study. All AI-assisted outputs, including language revisions and graphical illustrations, were carefully reviewed, verified, and revised by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the manuscript.

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***Hilmi Qosim Mubah (Corresponding Author)**

Doctoral Student in Educational Management, State University of Surabaya
Jl. Unesa IDB, Lidah Wetan, Kec. Lakarsantri, Kota Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60213, Indonesia
Email: hilmi.22007@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Yatim Riyanto

Faculty of Education, State University of Surabaya
Jl. Unesa IDB, Lidah Wetan, Kec. Lakarsantri, Kota Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60213, Indonesia
Email: yatimriyanto@unesa.ac.id

Erny Roesminingsih

Faculty of Education, State University of Surabaya
Jl. Unesa IDB, Lidah Wetan, Kec. Lakarsantri, Kota Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60213, Indonesia
Email: ernyroesminingsih@unesa.ac.id

Nunuk Hariyati

Faculty of Education, State University of Surabaya
Jl. Unesa IDB, Lidah Wetan, Kec. Lakarsantri, Kota Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60213, Indonesia
Email: nunukhariyati@unesa.ac.id
