
PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL PRINCIPLES IN BUILDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teacher professionalism plays a crucial role in improving the quality of early childhood education, while school principals, as educational leaders, determine the success of teacher development and competency enhancement. This study aims to analyze the implementation of participative management by the principal in fostering PAUD teacher professionalism at *RA Al Muawanah*, Tasikmalaya, using the theoretical frameworks of moral leadership (Sergiovanni), developmental supervision (Glickman), and self-efficacy (Bandura). A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed, involving one principal and four teachers as participants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, and then analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing techniques. Data validity was strengthened through source and method triangulation. The findings indicate that the integration of participatory planning, dialogic supervision, professional development through training and discussions, systematic performance evaluation, and motivation and rewards simultaneously enhances teacher professionalism. Teacher professionalism is most evident when the principal acts as a moral leader emphasizing ethical values, a supervisory facilitator supporting reflection and mentoring, and a provider of successful experiences that strengthen teacher self-efficacy. A supportive school culture further reinforces the effectiveness of these strategies. These findings contribute theoretically by expanding understanding of applying moral leadership, developmental supervision, and self-efficacy theories within the context of Islamic-based PAUD. Practically, this study provides guidance for school principals and policymakers in designing adaptive, value-oriented teacher development programs that sustainably enhance teacher professionalism.

Keywords: educational leadership; early childhood education; participative management; teacher professionalism

Introduction

Early childhood education serves as a fundamental foundation in shaping the cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development of learners. The quality of educational services at this level is strongly influenced by teachers' professionalism in implementing the learning process. Professionalism among early childhood education teachers includes pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies that are reflected in daily educational practices. From the perspective of educational leadership, Thomas J. Sergiovanni emphasizes that school leadership does not merely function structurally but also contains moral and cultural dimensions that shape

teachers' professional commitment (Sergiovanni, 2005). Kurniasari et al. (2025) explain that the development of teacher professionalism is closely related to the direction of the principal's leadership. Hasbi (2025) also positions the school principal as a key figure in establishing a professional work culture within educational institutions. These perspectives place school management as a crucial element in improving the quality of education, particularly at the early childhood level.

The development of the national education system encourages early childhood education institutions to enhance management standards and the quality of learning. Changes in educational policies require school principals to adjust management strategies to the continuously evolving educational environment. Dike and Antonius (2023) show that responding to policy changes requires adaptive and innovative leadership. Glickman et al. (2018), through the concept of developmental supervision, emphasize the importance of systematic professional mentoring tailored to teachers' competency levels. Professional development does not only occur through formal training but also through ongoing supervision and mentoring within the workplace. Research by Puspitasari et al. (2020) demonstrates that school management contributes significantly to improving teacher performance and professionalism by creating a work environment that supports the development of educators' competencies.

Research on the role of school leadership in enhancing teacher professionalism has developed across various educational levels. Helaria et al. (2025) identified a relationship between school management and improved teacher performance at the secondary education level. Warda et al. (2025) highlighted the role of leadership strategies in fostering professional attitudes among teachers in vocational schools. Maharani et al. (2023) emphasized supervision as an important instrument for developing teacher competence, while Mushthofa et al. (2022) linked teacher professionalism with students' character development through effective leadership. Psychological studies on self-efficacy developed by Albert Bandura explain that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities influence their commitment and the quality of their professional performance (Bandura, 1997). Most of these studies, however, have been conducted at primary, secondary, and vocational education levels, while research focusing specifically on early childhood education remains relatively limited.

The management of early childhood education institutions has characteristics that differ from other educational levels. Harefa et al. (2021) explain that leadership in early childhood education management requires a more humanistic and contextual approach. Rofingah et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of integrating Islamic values in developing character-based early childhood learning. Christy (2025) also highlights that educational supervision in early childhood institutions must be adapted to the characteristics of teachers and the developmental stages of young learners. Within the framework of moral leadership and professional learning communities, Sergiovanni (2005) places interpersonal relationships and shared values as the foundation for building teacher professionalism. Contextual factors such as the availability of facilities and infrastructure, community support, and the socio-cultural environment of schools also influence the effectiveness of school management (Neliwati et al., 2022; Sumarni et al., 2025).

RA AlMuawanah in Tasikmalaya Regency is one of the early childhood education institutions situated within a socio-religious community environment. This context influences both teacher development and institutional management practices. The school principal performs roles as a policy director, a developer of human resources, and a liaison between the educational institution and the surrounding community. Efforts to enhance teacher professionalism in this institution still face several challenges, including limited access to professional training, diverse educational backgrounds among teachers, and increasing administrative demands. The self-efficacy perspective

proposed by Bandura (1997) explains that limited professional support may affect teachers' confidence in their ability to carry out educational tasks effectively. Studies examining school management practices in faith-based early childhood education institutions at the local level remain scarce in the existing literature. Investigating school management practices aimed at improving teacher professionalism within the context of early childhood education is therefore important for gaining deeper insight into the management of early childhood education institutions.

Literature Review

This literature review discusses concepts, theories, and previous research related to school principal management and the professionalism of early childhood education teachers. The discussion focuses on the concept of school principal management, the professional competencies of early childhood teachers, the role of leadership in developing teacher professionalism, and the factors influencing it. This review is intended to strengthen the theoretical foundation of the study through the integration of perspectives on leadership, supervision, and human resource development. The reviewed literature serves as a basis for formulating the research focus and analyzing educational management practices at *RA Al Muawanah*.

Concept of principal management

Educational management is the systematic process of organizing all school resources to achieve educational goals effectively and efficiently. This process includes managing the curriculum, teaching staff, facilities, and community relations, all coordinated by the principal as the leader of the institution. Puspitasari et al. (2020) indicate that effective principal management is associated with improvements in teacher performance and professionalism, while Hasbi (2025) emphasizes that school leadership plays a key role in fostering a professional work culture in educational settings. In the context of early childhood education, school leadership requires a more adaptive approach due to children's developmental characteristics and teachers' professional needs. Harefa et al. (2021) note that leadership in early childhood education institutions must be responsive to the dynamic development of learners, while Rofingah et al. (2024) highlight the importance of integrating values and character in learning management. However, previous studies have largely focused on administrative aspects of leadership, leaving the professional development dimension of teachers less explored in management practice.

Conceptually, the functions of school management include planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising, which are interrelated in the administration of educational institutions. Kurniasari et al. (2025) argue that the success of school leadership is influenced by the consistency in executing these management functions. In practice, planning involves designing teacher development programs relevant to institutional needs, while organizing relates to the allocation of tasks according to the competencies of educators and staff (Heldayanti & Aswad, 2025). Implementation focuses on mobilizing school resources to execute the work plan, and supervision is carried out through ongoing monitoring and developmental guidance. Maharani et al. (2023) emphasize that developmental supervision can enhance teacher professionalism. Nonetheless, many prior studies have relied on quantitative survey methods, which do not fully capture the in-depth practices of supervision and leadership management in specific school contexts.

Teacher professionalism in Indonesia is normatively defined through four main competencies: pedagogical, professional, personal, and social, as stipulated in the Ministry of

National Education Regulation Number 16 of 2007 concerning Academic Qualification Standards and Teacher Competencies. These standards affirm that teachers are expected not only to have teaching skills but also personal integrity, social interaction abilities, and mastery of subject matter. [Heldayanti and Aswad \(2025\)](#) demonstrate that principals' managerial competence correlates with improved teacher performance in early childhood education, while [Rukmini et al. \(2022\)](#) highlight that effective leadership strategies contribute to building a professional work culture. Although there is agreement on the importance of school leadership in developing teacher professionalism, previous research has been largely descriptive and has not extensively examined management practices contextually in early childhood education institutions. This limitation creates an opportunity for research that investigates principal management practices more deeply in relation to teacher professional development at *RA Al Muawanah*.

Early childhood teacher professionalism

The professionalism of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers forms the foundation for delivering high-quality and holistic early childhood education services. Professionalism is understood as the teacher's ability to carry out educational duties competently, responsibly, and based on professional ethics, integrating four main competencies: pedagogical, professional, personal, and social Permendiknas No. 16 of 2007. Professional teachers not only master the subject matter and teaching methods but also adapt their strategies to the characteristics of the students, foster positive interactions, and create a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable learning environment ([Rukmini et al., 2022](#); [Rahmah, 2025](#)). [Heldayanti and Aswad \(2025\)](#) found that the professional competence of PAUD teachers directly affects the quality of educational services and student development, while [Anggraini \(2025\)](#) emphasizes the need for balance among the four competencies to support effective learning.

The personal and social aspects of teachers also play a crucial role in building professionalism, including discipline, responsibility, communication skills, and concern for students. [Firnando \(2023\)](#) emphasizes that mature personality serves as the foundation for work attitude and teacher commitment. The ability to adapt to children's characteristics and openness to feedback strengthens learning quality and promotes ongoing professional development ([Wahdah et al., 2023](#)). However, previous studies have tended to focus on pedagogical and professional aspects, leaving the teacher's adaptation to students' psychological and social needs less thoroughly analyzed.

Ethics and professional responsibility are essential elements in maintaining the quality of PAUD services, including respecting children's rights, fairness, and adherence to teacher competency standards. Teacher involvement in training, seminars, and reflective activities reinforces continuous competency development ([Sudarso et al., 2024](#)). This literature synthesis highlights that PAUD teacher professionalism is an integration of pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies supported by ethics and professional responsibility. This understanding serves as the basis for analyzing the relationship between teacher professional characteristics and school principal management practices in improving the quality of learning at *RA Al Muawanah*.

Principal management in developing teacher professionalism

Principal management in fostering teacher professionalism in early childhood education (PAUD) involves the implementation of planned and sustainable development strategies,

including mentoring, guidance, and strengthening commitment to professional responsibilities (Awaludin, 2020; Rusmalawati et al., 2024). The principal is responsible for identifying teachers' professional development needs based on performance evaluations and learning conditions, with a focus on improving pedagogical competence, subject mastery, and professional attitudes. The literature shows consensus that consistent and structured development positively affects teacher competence, yet previous studies have tended to emphasize administrative aspects and have not fully captured the contextual practice of supervision in PAUD.

Academic supervision serves as an important instrument to enhance professionalism, not only through oversight but also through mentoring and competency development in a dialogic manner (Pandi, 2021). Principals conduct classroom observations, provide constructive feedback, and discuss learning strategies tailored to student needs. Training and workshops also support the development of teachers' socio-emotional competencies (Gun, 2025). An objective, transparent, and data-driven performance evaluation system helps principals plan further professional development, while motivation and recognition strengthen teachers' professional commitment (Nurullah, 2024; Rusmalawati et al., 2024). Research synthesis indicates that the effectiveness of supervision and evaluation largely depends on the principal's ability to manage these processes systematically and communicatively.

Creating a professional school culture, including discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and commitment to educational quality, is an integral aspect of principal management (Awaludin, 2020; Nurullah, 2024). Principals act as role models and shape a conducive work climate that promotes the continuous professional development of teachers. The literature highlights agreement that humanistic, participative, and human-resource-oriented leadership is a key factor in improving teacher quality. Limitations in previous studies, such as a dominant focus on administrative aspects and the scarcity of contextual research in PAUD, indicate the need for analyses linking development strategies, supervision, evaluation, and school culture with principal management practices at *RA Al Muawanah*.

Factors Affecting Early Childhood Teacher Professionalism

PAUD teacher professionalism is influenced by internal factors such as motivation, professional commitment, character, and educational background. Work motivation serves as a primary driver for enhancing competencies and the quality of teaching (Adam et al., 2025), while professional commitment supports the consistency of teacher performance in the long term. Educational background and academic experience also affect mastery of pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies as stipulated in the Indonesian Minister of National Education Regulation No. 16 of 2007. The literature shows consensus that internal factors form the foundation for professional attitudes, behaviors, and work patterns, although some previous studies have emphasized academic and pedagogical aspects, leaving the dimension of adaptation to children's characteristics and teachers' social needs less thoroughly analyzed (Idris et al., 2020).

External factors also influence teacher professionalism, particularly the work environment and school leadership. Participative and supportive leadership creates a conducive atmosphere that enhances teacher motivation, engagement, and performance (Wola et al., 2024). Adequate facilities, support from the foundation and parents, as well as positive interactions with the community strengthen the effectiveness of teaching and the teacher's role. The literature shows agreement that leadership quality and the work environment directly affect teacher professionalism, although some studies remain limited to quantitative approaches that do not fully capture the real practices in PAUD settings (Fatimah & Azani, 2025).

Educational policies and school culture serve as structural and cultural factors that support teacher professionalism. Competency standards, certification, and professional development programs provide a framework for improving teacher quality (Rochaendi & Ma'mun, 2024; Ichwani et al., 2025), while a school culture that upholds discipline, cooperation, and responsibility reinforces teacher motivation and work ethic (Adam et al., 2025; Wola et al., 2024). The synthesis of the literature indicates that PAUD teacher professionalism is the result of a dynamic interaction between internal factors, managerial support, educational policies, and the school's socio-cultural context. Limitations in previous research, such as the scarcity of contextual studies in PAUD, highlight the need for an integrative analysis that links all these factors to understand the sustainable development of teacher professionalism at *RA Al Muawanah*.

Methodology

Research design and approach of the study

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine in depth the principal's management in developing early childhood teacher professionalism at *RA Al Muawanah*, Tasikmalaya Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables researchers to understand managerial phenomena based on the experiences, perspectives, and interactions of research participants in real-life situations (Creswell, 2014). Through this approach, researchers can directly explore leadership practices, mentoring patterns, and professional development strategies implemented in the school. The case study design was selected because the research focuses on a single institution that is analyzed intensively and comprehensively (Yin, 2018). The research focus is directed toward planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation processes carried out by the principal in the context of early childhood education management.

The study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative method with the aim of systematically and factually describing the principal's management practices (Sugiyono, 2019). Research procedures included determining research participants, collecting data through interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzing the data in stages. The researcher served as the main instrument in collecting and interpreting data according to field conditions (Moleong, 2018). Data collection and analysis were carried out simultaneously to maintain in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Each research stage was adjusted to field dynamics to ensure that the data obtained were authentic and relevant. Through this design and procedure, the study is expected to generate findings that support the achievement of the research objectives optimally.

Research site and participants

This study was conducted at *RA Al Muawanah*, located in Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java Province. The research site was selected because the institution is a private early childhood education center that has been operating since 2007 and has maintained a relatively stable management system. The long-term sustainability of the institution indicates the presence of management practices that are worthy of academic investigation. A conducive school environment supported in-depth and continuous data collection. The selection of the research site was based on its relevance to the focus of the study on principal management and teacher professionalism. According to Creswell (2014), site selection in qualitative research should consider its direct relevance to the phenomenon being investigated. Accessibility and the school's openness to

research activities were also key supporting factors. These conditions facilitated observation and interaction with informants.

The research participants consisted of one principal and four early childhood education teachers who were actively teaching at *RA Al Muawanah*. The principal was selected as the main informant due to her authority in planning, implementing, and evaluating teacher development programs. The teachers were selected as supporting informants because they were directly involved in the implementation of managerial policies and classroom practices. Participant characteristics included an educational background in education, a minimum of two years of teaching experience, and active involvement in school activities. These criteria were established to ensure that the informants had adequate understanding of the school’s working system and organizational culture. According to Moleong (2018), informant selection in qualitative research should be based on their ability to provide relevant and in-depth information. The diversity of teaching experience among teachers provided varied perspectives for data collection. Participation was voluntary in accordance with research ethics principles.

To provide a clearer description of participant characteristics, the demographic profile is presented in the following table.

Table 1. *Demographic profile of research participants*

No	Informant Code	Position	Gender	Highest Education	Teaching Experience
1	KS	Principal	Female	Ph.D in Education	12 Years
2	G1	PAUD Teacher	Female	Bachelor’s in PAUD Management (Aprilesma)	18 Years
3	G2	PAUD Teacher	Female	Bachelor’s in PAUD (STAI Al Hidayah)	5 Years
4	G3	PAUD Teacher	Female	Bachelor’s in PAUD (STAI Al Hidayah)	5 Years
5	G4	PAUD Teacher	Female	Bachelor’s in PAUD (Open University/UT)	18 Years

Participant selection used purposive sampling, which involves deliberately selecting informants based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. This technique was chosen because qualitative research emphasizes data quality and depth rather than the number of respondents (Sugiyono, 2019). The principal and teachers were selected due to their direct involvement in management and professional development processes. The selection process was conducted in coordination with the school to ensure appropriate participant characteristics. Each informant was provided with an explanation of the research objectives, procedures, and benefits prior to data collection. This approach supported the development of open and trusting relationships between the researcher and participants. Such relationships facilitated in-depth information gathering. Well-planned site and participant selection strengthened the credibility and relevance of the research findings.

Data collection and analysis

Data collection in this study was conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The observation applied was participatory in nature, in which the researcher was limitedly involved in school activities as an observer who interacted with

research participants without disrupting the learning process. Through participatory observation, the researcher was able to directly understand the dynamics of school leadership, the implementation of learning activities, and patterns of interaction among educators. In-depth interviews were conducted using an open and semi-structured approach to explore information related to the principal's management strategies, academic supervision, teacher development, and the professional experiences of early childhood educators. Document analysis was used to obtain supporting data in the form of work programs, supervision schedules, activity reports, learning instruments, and school administrative archives. The use of multiple data collection techniques aimed to obtain comprehensive and complementary information. This is in line with Creswell (2014), who states that methodological triangulation can enhance the accuracy and depth of qualitative research findings.

The researcher served as the main instrument and was directly involved in the processes of data collection and interpretation. Throughout the research, the researcher maintained an objective, reflective, and ethical attitude in interacting with informants. The collected data were then analyzed simultaneously from the early stages of data collection until the completion of the study. Data analysis referred to the model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process began with open coding, which involved identifying and labeling data units relevant to the research focus, such as planning, supervision, teacher development, and performance evaluation. This was followed by axial coding to group related codes into thematic categories. The next stage was selective coding, which aimed to determine the main themes representing patterns of relationships among categories. The results of the analysis were then presented in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic matrices. Data validity was strengthened through source, technique, and time triangulation, as suggested by Sugiyono (2019), ensuring that the research findings are academically credible and accountable.

Trustworthiness and research quality

The researcher acted as the primary instrument, maintaining objectivity, reflexivity, and ethical conduct in interactions with participants. Data validity was strengthened through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time (Sugiyono, 2019). This study involved five participants from a single institution, consistent with the characteristics of a qualitative case study, so the findings are descriptive and contextual. The limited number of participants affects the ability to generalize the results to other early childhood education contexts, making careful consideration of transferability necessary. The study focuses on an in-depth understanding of the principal's management practices and the development of teacher professionalism at RA Al Muawanab.

Findings

The findings are presented based on the research focus: the principal's management strategies, implementation of teacher professionalism development, and supporting and inhibiting factors in its development.

Principal's management strategies

The research findings indicated that the principal of RA Al Muawanab implemented management strategies oriented toward strengthening the competence and professional responsibility of early childhood teachers through integrated stages of planning, organizing,

implementation, and supervision. Each stage is designed based on teachers' needs and institutional conditions. The principal stated that "the development programs are arranged according to teachers' needs to continuously improve learning" (Principal, Interview, January 20, 2026). A teacher also explained that involvement in planning facilitates program implementation, noting that "we are involved in preparing school programs" (Teacher G2, Interview, January 20, 2026).

Program planning was conducted through coordination meetings that discussed teacher development, supervision, and performance evaluation. Organizing was implemented through task distribution according to each teacher's competence. Program implementation was carried out through classroom supervision, instructional mentoring, and reflective discussions. Supervision was conducted regularly through administrative reviews and attendance monitoring. A teacher stated that "the principal's supervision makes us more disciplined and well-directed" (Teacher G3, Interview, January 20, 2026). This management pattern establishes a structured and sustainable working system.

Table 2. *Principal management strategies in developing early childhood teacher professionalism*

Management Aspect	Activity	Purpose	Data Source	Informant
Planning	Preparing guidance and supervision programs	Improve teacher competence	Documents, interviews	Principal
Organizing	Assigning tasks and responsibilities	Optimize roles and performance	Observation	Teacher
Implementation	Classroom supervision and learning mentorship	Improve teaching process quality	Interviews, observation	Principal, Teacher
Supervision	Performance evaluation and administrative review	Maintain professionalism standards	Documents, observation	Principal

Based on Table 2, the principal's management strategy consists of four main aspects: planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision. The planning aspect focuses on designing development and supervision programs to enhance teacher competence. Organizing is conducted through task allocation to optimize teachers' roles and performance. Implementation is realized through classroom supervision and instructional mentoring to improve teaching quality. Supervision is carried out through performance evaluation and administrative review to maintain professional standards.

These four aspects are supported by data obtained from documents, interviews, and observations involving the principal and teachers as key informants. The integration of planning, implementation, and supervision forms a consistent professional development system. This management pattern strengthens teachers' competence, discipline, and sense of responsibility in performing their roles as early childhood educators. The strategy serves as a foundation for building a professional working culture at *RA Al Muawanah*.

Academic supervision of early childhood teachers

The results of the study indicate that academic supervision at *RA Al Muawanah* is implemented as part of continuous professional development for teachers. The principal views supervision as a form of instructional mentoring rather than merely a control mechanism. This is reflected in the principal's statement that "supervision is conducted to guide teachers toward

professional growth, not to find mistakes” (Principal, Interview, January 22, 2026). One teacher also stated that “through supervision, we receive clear guidance to improve our teaching practices” (G1, Interview, January 22, 2026). These statements demonstrate that supervision is directed toward improving the quality of lesson planning, instructional implementation, and learning evaluation.

Academic supervision is carried out through classroom observations, reviews of instructional documents, and reflective discussions. These activities are conducted on a scheduled basis as well as according to emerging needs. During classroom observations, the principal pays close attention to teaching methods, classroom management, the use of learning media, and teacher–student interactions. One teacher explained that “after classroom observations, we usually have direct discussions with the principal to review the results” (G3, Interview, January 22, 2026). This process encourages teachers to reflect on their instructional practices and to continuously enhance their pedagogical competence.

Table 3. *Implementation of academic supervision in enhancing teacher professionalism*

Supervision Type	Main Activities	Development Focus	Implementation Time	Data Source	Informant
Classroom Observation	Observing the learning process	Methods and classroom management	Every semester	Observation	Principal, Teacher
Administrative Review	Reviewing lesson plans and teaching journals	Learning planning	Monthly	Documents	Principal
Reflective Discussion	Feedback after observation	Improving teaching performance	After supervision	Interviews	Teacher
Individual Mentorship	Special guidance for certain teachers	Competence strengthening	As needed	Observation, interviews	Principal

Table 3 illustrates that academic supervision at *RA Al Muawanab* is implemented through various complementary activities, including classroom observations, administrative reviews, reflective discussions, and individual mentoring. Each form of supervision has a distinct focus, yet all are directed toward improving instructional quality and teacher professionalism. The supervision process is conducted regularly and continuously using multiple data sources, thereby supporting the establishment of a structured and accountable professional development system.

Teacher development and training

Teacher development and training at *RA Al Muawanab*, Tasikmalaya Regency, are implemented as a systematic strategy to enhance educators’ professionalism. The principal stated, “We design the development program based on the results of supervision so that each teacher receives guidance tailored to their classroom needs” (Principal, Interview, January 26, 2026). A teacher added, “Routine discussions with the principal and fellow teachers help me find solutions to problems that arise while teaching” (Teacher G1, Interview, January 26, 2026). The development activities aim to strengthen pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies while encouraging self-reflection and collaboration among teachers.

Internal development activities are carried out through group discussions, regular meetings, and instructional mentoring. The principal emphasized, “Mentoring is conducted continuously so that any changes in teaching practices can be monitored and improved” (Principal, Interview, January 26, 2026). In addition, teachers participate in external training such as workshops and seminars, while In-House Training is conducted at the school to enhance technical skills, such as developing learning media. Teacher G2 added, “External training expands my insight into new methods and ways to manage the classroom more effectively” (Teacher G2, Interview, January 26, 2026).

Table 4. *Teacher guidance and training in early childhood education*

Activity Type	Implementation Form	Guidance/Training Material	Purpose	Data Source	Informant
Internal Guidance	Regular discussions and mentorship	Early childhood teaching methods	Improve teaching quality	Observation, interviews	Principal, Teacher
External Training	Workshops and seminars	Curriculum and learning innovation	Professional competence development	Interviews, documents	Teacher
In-House Training	Training within the school environment	Learning media and assessment	Improve technical skills	Observation, documents	Principal
Learning Reflection	Joint evaluation after activities	Analysis of teaching practices	Continuous improvement	Interviews	Teacher

Table 4 illustrates that teacher development and training are conducted comprehensively through complementary activities, ranging from internal development, external training, and In-House Training to learning reflection. Each activity has a specific focus, whether to strengthen pedagogical competencies or technical skills, creating a comprehensive professional development system.

These activities are carried out regularly and continuously, with evaluation through joint reflection and monitoring of teacher performance changes. Documentation data indicate increased teacher creativity in designing learning activities, consistency in implementing teaching methods, and enhanced technical skills through both internal and external training. This process ensures the sustainability of professional development programs and builds a solid foundation for improving the quality of early childhood education teachers at *RA Al Muawanah*.

Teacher performance evaluation

Teacher performance evaluation at *RA Al Muawanah*, Tasikmalaya Regency, is conducted as part of efforts to improve the quality of learning and teacher professionalism. The principal emphasizes that evaluation is not merely a form of control but also a means of guidance: “We conduct evaluations to monitor teachers’ competency development and provide clear directions for improvement” (Principal, Interview, January 27, 2026). The evaluation covers planning, implementation, educational interaction, learning outcomes, and professional attitude, all tailored to the characteristics of early childhood education. Teacher G1 stated, “Discussing the evaluation results helps me understand my strengths and weaknesses in teaching” (Teacher G1, Interview, January 27, 2026). This system encourages teachers’ reflective awareness and reinforces a professional culture within the school.

The evaluation is carried out through classroom supervision, administrative checks, and observation of teacher-student interactions. The principal conducts direct observations to obtain an objective view, while teachers prepare learning tools as evaluation materials. Teacher G2 added, “Routine evaluations make me more disciplined in preparing lesson plans and teaching media” (Teacher G2, Interview, January 27, 2026). Evaluation results are then discussed in school meetings to support open dialogue between the principal and teachers.

Table 5. *Early childhood teacher performance evaluation system*

Evaluation Aspect	Assessment Form	Evaluation Instrument	Executor	Implementation Time	Data Source
Planning	Review of lesson plans	Administrative checklist	Principal	Beginning of semester	Documents, interviews
Implementation	Observation of learning	Classroom observation sheet	Principal	Periodic	Observation
Educational Interaction	Observation of teacher communication	Field notes	Principal	During learning	Observation
Development Evaluation	Assessment of learning outcomes	Child assessment format	Teacher, Principal	End of theme	Documents
Professional Attitude	Discipline assessment	Attendance records	Principal	Monthly	Documents

Table 5 illustrates that teacher performance evaluation is conducted systematically across five main aspects, with clearly defined instruments and executors. Each aspect has a specific objective, ranging from ensuring the quality of lesson planning to fostering teachers’ professional attitudes. The frequency and methods of assessment are tailored to the needs of guidance and the characteristics of teachers and students.

This evaluation system forms the basis for developing teacher coaching and professional development programs. Evaluation data are used to provide recommendations for improvement, guidance, and constructive feedback. Through consistent procedures, the evaluation strengthens accountability, discipline, and teaching quality. The close connection between assessment, coaching, and professional development demonstrates that evaluation serves as a strategic instrument in fostering early childhood teacher professionalism at *RA Al Muawanah*.

Teacher motivation and rewards

Motivation and rewards provided by the principal at *RA Al Muawanah* play an important role in developing the professionalism of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers. The principal implements various forms of motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, to enhance teaching enthusiasm, discipline, and teacher involvement in school activities. Motivational practices include direct praise, positive guidance, and personal support, while rewards are provided through certificates, “Teacher of the Year” awards, and recognition of achievements in staff meetings. One teacher stated, “The praise and recognition I received made me more confident and motivated to improve the quality of my teaching” (Teacher G2, Interview, January 27, 2026). Another teacher added, “The rewards and Teacher of the Year certificates encouraged me to be more consistent in implementing school programs” (Teacher G4, Interview, January 27, 2026). The following table

presents the findings on the implementation of motivation and rewards in enhancing PAUD teacher professionalism:

Table 6. *Teacher motivation and rewards in PAUD*

Type of Motivation/Reward	Implementation	Purpose	Data Source	Informants
Verbal praise and appreciation	Direct guidance and personal feedback	Increase work enthusiasm and teacher confidence	Observation, Interview	Principal, teachers
Award certificates	Issuance of Teacher of the Year certificates	Provide formal recognition of performance	Documentation	Principal
Performance rewards	Special rewards for high-performing teachers	Encourage healthy competition and work commitment	Observation, Documentation	Principal, teachers
Personal support	Individual mentoring and guidance	Strengthen teacher skills and preparedness	Interview	Principal

The table 6 shows that the principal implements motivation and rewards systematically to support teacher professionalism. Verbal praise and direct appreciation enhance teachers’ confidence in teaching, while certificates and Teacher of the Year awards provide formal recognition of their achievements. Consistent personal support helps teachers strengthen their instructional and classroom management skills. This approach fosters a positive work culture that promotes professional commitment and continuous development of teacher competencies.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the principal’s management strategies at *RA Al Muawanah*, Tasikmalaya Regency, play a crucial role in fostering the professionalism of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers through structured planning, coaching, supervision, evaluation, and motivation. The principal consistently involves teachers in the preparation of work programs, classroom observations, dialogic supervision, and performance evaluations. These findings support *Sergiovanni’s (2005)* concept of moral leadership, which emphasizes that principals, as moral leaders, are responsible for integrating professional values, ethics, and concern for human resource development. Practices at *RA Al Muawanah* confirm that value- and ethics-focused leadership not only enhances teacher performance but also strengthens a collaborative and participatory work culture.

The implementation of supervision and teacher development aligns with *Glickman’s (2012)* developmental supervision model, which emphasizes collaborative approaches, coaching, and mentoring. The principal acts not only as an evaluator but also as a facilitator who guides teachers in reflecting on teaching practices, providing constructive feedback, and developing adaptive instructional strategies. This practice extends *Glickman’s* theory by highlighting the importance of open dialogue, reinforcement of pedagogical and professional competencies, and adjustment of development programs to the characteristics of young children. Additionally, the use of reflective learning approaches supports teachers’ self-efficacy, in accordance with *Bandura’s (1997)* theory, as teachers gain successful experiences, positive feedback, and role modeling from the principal, thereby increasing their confidence in carrying out professional responsibilities.

Adaptive development strategies are also implemented through thematic training, internal discussions, and participation in district-level professional development forums, enabling teachers to enhance competencies in line with the needs of early childhood learning (Yuli, 2025; Anggraeni et al., 2025). These findings underscore that participatory and humanistic leadership strengthens teachers' intrinsic motivation, develops work ethic, and fosters a sustainable professional culture. Challenges include limited training resources, high teacher workload, and restricted time for intensive professional development. Opportunities arise from the principal's support, collaborative work culture, and teacher involvement in external training.

The study has several practical implications for PAUD practice. Principals in *RA* institutions and similar settings should: (1) strengthen teacher-centered planning by aligning development programs with the characteristics of young children, (2) optimize dialogic and reflective supervision emphasizing coaching and mentoring, (3) provide time and facilities for thematic training and socio-emotional competency development, and (4) embed moral and professional ethics as part of the school culture. From a policy perspective, the government and PAUD administrators are encouraged to develop certification programs, supervision frameworks, and funding schemes that emphasize teacher professionalism in early childhood education, including support for adaptive training, competency-based evaluation, and the reinforcement of collaborative culture in every PAUD institution.

This study has limitations, including a small number of participants (one principal and four teachers) and focus on a single institution, making the findings descriptive and contextual. These constraints highlight the need for further research involving more PAUD institutions, mixed methods approaches, and longitudinal studies to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the development of teacher professionalism.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings indicate that the principal's management at *RA Al Muawanah* effectively fosters the professionalism of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers through the integration of participatory planning, dialogic supervision, continuous professional development, performance evaluation, and motivation. The principal acts as a moral leader who reinforces ethical and professional values (Sergiovanni), a facilitator in developmental supervision supporting reflection and teacher mentoring (Glickman), and a provider of successful experiences that strengthen teachers' self-efficacy (Bandura). This study demonstrates that the application of moral leadership, developmental supervision, and self-efficacy enhancement can be adapted to the context of Islamic early childhood education, expanding the conceptual understanding of human resource management in early childhood education in Indonesia.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in integrating the frameworks of Sergiovanni, Glickman, and Bandura into the management practices of Islamic PAUD principals, showing that moral values, collaborative coaching, and self-efficacy enhancement simultaneously shape sustainable and adaptive teacher professionalism. These findings enrich the literature on educational leadership and professional development of teachers in the context of Islamic early childhood education.

Practically, this study recommends that PAUD principals: (1) optimize dialogic supervision and mentoring that emphasize pedagogical and professional development aligned with children's characteristics, and (2) develop teacher development programs based on specific needs that integrate moral values, ethics, and professional competencies. Policy recommendations include

providing ongoing training and adequate facilities from educational authorities and institutional managers to systematically strengthen the professionalism of PAUD teachers.

Disclosure statement

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