

## **Implementation of the Tirta Coaching Model in the Development of Elementary School Teachers' Professionalism**

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**Abstract:** This study examines the implementation of the TIRTA Coaching model (Goal, Identification, Action Plan, Responsibility) in developing teacher professionalism at SD Negeri 1 Sumber Marga Telang, Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra, within the context of Merdeka Curriculum implementation in a peripheral school setting. A phenomenological qualitative approach was employed to explore teachers' lived experiences during coaching. Purposively selected informants included the principal, seven certified teachers, and a school supervisor. Primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews, passive participatory observation, and documentation, analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, with validity ensured through source and technique triangulation. Findings reveal that the TIRTA model shifts supervision from evaluative to reflective-dialogic approaches, fostering trust and psychological safety. Teachers internalized professionalism as ongoing reflection, contextual innovation, and independent commitment. However, constraints included administrative burdens, limited facilities, and swamp geography challenges. This study provides contextualized evidence of the TIRTA model's applicability in a geographically isolated Indonesian elementary school, an underrepresented setting in coaching literature. The model offers a replicable framework for school principals to conduct non-evaluative, empowering coaching that sustains teacher professional growth despite infrastructural limitations. This research contributes empirical insights that the TIRTA Coaching model effectively supports curriculum reform and teacher development in peripheral schools, demonstrating that relational, reflective coaching can overcome geographic and resource constraints to enhance professional practice and educational quality.

**Keywords:** Reflective Supervision, Teacher Professionalism, TIRTA Coaching

### **A. Introduction**

The professionalism of elementary school teachers is a crucial foundation for the quality of learning in the era of curriculum transformation in Indonesia. Although the Merdeka Curriculum mandates student-centered, humanistic learning, a significant gap remains between the ideal design and actual implementation. The 2023 Education Report from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, and Technology shows that

only 61.53% of elementary school students achieved the minimum standards for reading and comprehension skills, indicating substantial challenges in learning management (Nasrullah et al., 2024; Rizkiah, 2025). Empirical research reveals that teachers experience significant difficulties implementing differentiated, project-based learning and authentic assessment, core components of the Merdeka Curriculum (Waly et al., 2025). The root of this problem lies not simply in teachers' technical competence but also in the development system, which still predominantly employs traditional, evaluative, and hierarchical supervision.

Research in various elementary schools has shown that the academic supervision process remains superficial and mechanistic, focusing primarily on identifying errors rather than providing supportive and reflective guidance (Mekarsari et al., 2025; Surbakti, 2024; Widatin et al., 2025). Principals, as primary supervisors, are often burdened with numerous administrative tasks without an adequate, systematic approach to providing meaningful professional guidance. As a result, teachers feel isolated in their efforts to improve their teaching practices, lack a forum for reflection and sharing experiences with colleagues, and receive less than constructive feedback. This phenomenon creates a stagnant cycle that is difficult to break: without adequate guidance support, teacher capabilities tend to stagnate; without capability enhancement, the quality of learning remains limited and unresponsive to student needs. At this point, a coaching paradigm centered on continuous professional development is urgent and cannot be postponed any longer. Teacher certification is a formal indicator of teacher professionalism that has become standard in the Indonesian education system (Anggraini & Syaifullah, 2025; Sholihah et al., 2020).

However, a meta-analysis of 35 articles related to teacher competency development policies showed that possessing a teacher certificate alone does not guarantee improved classroom learning quality (Anggraini & Syaifullah, 2025). While certification does have a positive impact on pedagogical and professional competence, its effectiveness is heavily influenced by individual commitment and ongoing institutional support. These findings reveal a significant gap between the administrative status of a certified teacher and the actual quality of classroom learning practices. Teacher professionalism should be understood not as a static formal status but as a dynamic process involving ongoing reflective capacity, ongoing pedagogical development, and independence in learning decision-making that is responsive to student needs.

At this point, the educational coaching approach emerges as an alternative strategy with the potential to shift the paradigm of teacher development from hierarchical evaluative supervision to collaborative mentoring based on reflection and teacher professional empowerment (Saripah & Suwandari, 2025; Stoetzel & Taylor-Marshall, 2022; Tanggulangan & Sihotang, 2023). Research shows that coaching provides individualised support focused on developing pedagogical skills, facilitating critical reflection, and helping teachers independently find solutions to learning challenges

(P. Handayani, 2025; Ivanova et al., 2022). The TIRTA coaching approach also creates more open communication between principals and teachers, builds supportive working relationships, and enhances teachers' capacity to implement reflective and responsive learning (Mardiana et al., 2025; Mawarni et al., 2025). Furthermore, coaching-based academic supervision has a strong positive relationship with improving the quality of teacher learning (Matinul Haq & Hariyati, 2025).

The TIRTA coaching model, consisting of Objectives, Identification, Action Plan, and Responsibility, was developed as a contextual adaptation of the GROW model, integrating the philosophical values of Merdeka Belajar (Emy, 2025; Mawarni et al., 2025). This model helps teachers build awareness of professional development needs, identify learning challenges, develop action plans, and implement systematic follow-up. The TIRTA coaching approach is considered more effective than traditional supervision because it is able to build open communication, a collaborative work culture, and continuous teacher professional development (Handayani et al., 2025). Although previous studies validate the effectiveness of the TIRTA model, significant research gaps remain. First, the majority of studies focus on measuring end results or short-term impacts, such as increased competency or learning outcomes, without delving into the subjective meaning of teachers' experiences during the coaching process itself. In-depth qualitative perspectives on how teachers concretely experience, interpret, internalize, and transform their self-understanding as educational professionals are rarely explored.

Second, research on TIRTA has been conducted in various locations and at various levels, but specific in-depth study of the sociocultural context of elementary schools in semi-urban or rural areas such as South Sumatra remains very limited, even though these locations have highly heterogeneous student populations, limited access to learning infrastructure, and local school community dynamics that differ significantly from urban schools. Third, previous research has not holistically analyzed how contextual factors within the school work environment, such as organizational culture, leadership style, school policies, stakeholder involvement, and material resource conditions, facilitate or hinder the effective implementation of the TIRTA coaching model and its institutionalization as a sustainable coaching culture. The specific conditions of SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang, located in the Sumber Marga Telang District, Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra, represent a relevant and unique empirical context.

This school is located in a tidal water area with different geographic and social characteristics than most urban elementary schools. Based on 2025 school data, SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang has 11 teachers, of which 8 are ASN (PNS/PPPK) and 3 are non-ASN. In terms of certification, 7 teachers have teacher certificates while 4 others are not certified. This composition indicates that the majority of educators at the school have administratively met formal indicators of professionalism. However, as shown by various previous studies, having a certificate does not automatically correlate with

the quality of learning practices that take place in the classroom. Teachers still require ongoing, reflective, and contextual professional development to be able to develop creative, innovative, and responsive learning to the needs of students. This in-depth qualitative research at SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang has the potential to fill this research gap in three important dimensions.

First, from a theoretical perspective, this study will enrich the educational management literature with an in-depth qualitative perspective on how a humanistic and reflective coaching model facilitates the transformation of understanding of teacher professionalism at the elementary school level, going beyond the mere mechanical measurement of competency. Second, from a practical perspective, this study will provide concrete insights for principals, supervisors, and other educational leaders on how to effectively implement, maintain, and institutionalize the TIRTA coaching model as a culture of sustainable professional development, including identifying specific challenges and formulating contextualized local adaptation strategies. Third, from a public policy perspective, this study's findings can inform the development of teacher development policies at the education office level to better align with the characteristics of elementary schools in South Sumatra and similar local contexts.

The novelty of this study lies in its perspective, which views TIRTA coaching not solely as an academic supervision technique but as a professional development process that shapes teachers' reflective experiences within the context of real-life schools. This study places SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang as an empirical context with its own unique characteristics: tidal waters, limited learning facilities, and the dynamics of a developing supervision culture. Thus, this study provides a new contribution in understanding the implementation of TIRTA coaching as a humanistic, reflective, and contextual strategy for developing teacher professionalism in elementary schools with unique local conditions. Based on the overall description above, research on the implementation of the TIRTA coaching model in developing teacher professionalism at SD Negeri 1 Sumber Marga Telang is important and urgent to be conducted in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the process of implementing TIRTA coaching by the principal, its implications for the transformation of teacher behavior and professional competence, and the factors that influence the success of its implementation in the field.

## **B. Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type, which was chosen because it aims to understand in depth the experiences, responses, perceptions, and meanings constructed by teachers in participating in the TIRTA coaching process, not to test hypotheses or measure relationships between variables statistically. The qualitative descriptive approach allows researchers not only to describe the TIRTA coaching implementation procedure but also to capture how the principal and

teachers experience, understand, and interpret the process in the context of teacher professional development so that this study produces data in the form of words, narratives, interview quotes, observation notes, and documents that are analyzed in depth. The study was conducted at SD Negeri 1 Sumber Marga Telang, located in Dusun I, Talang Lubuk Village, Sumber Marga Telang District, Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra Province, with the location selection based on strong contextual considerations, considering that the school is located in a water/coastal area that provides its own characteristics in school management and teacher professional development and has a diverse teacher composition in terms of employee status and teacher certification.

This relatively new public elementary school, accredited B, is currently in the process of establishing a work culture, strengthening human resource management, and developing teacher professionalism. It is also implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, where the principal and leading teachers have begun using dialogic academic supervision in line with TIRTA coaching principles. This makes it an ideal natural laboratory for examining coaching implementation in a real-world context in a developing coastal school. This research was conducted in the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year for six months, specifically from January to June 2026. This phase encompassed pre-research, permit processing, data collection, data analysis, and report preparation. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to observe the coaching process in depth and fully understand the dynamics of its implementation. The data sources in this study did not use a rigid population approach but rather a purposive sampling technique that positions participants as co-researchers, in accordance with the principle of Creswell & Creswell (2018), which emphasizes that participant selection in qualitative inquiry should be based on who is most capable of helping the researcher understand the central phenomenon.

The main informants of the research were the principal as the implementing coach who was chosen because of his strategic role as the initiator of coaching culture, as well as the teachers who participated in the coaching process to provide a real picture of the effectiveness of the implementation of the action plan in the classroom, with selection criteria including having direct experience in supervision or coaching, being active in learning activities, and being willing to provide open information about their experiences, responses, and perceived changes in professional practice. Of the total of eight certified ASN (PNS/PPPK) teachers at the school, seven were selected as key informants based on strict criteria, namely, having directly participated in the TIRTA model coaching process, actively teaching in regular classes, and being willing to share in-depth reflections on changes in their learning practices, while one teacher was not involved due to limited interview access or not meeting the criteria for consistent supervision involvement so that the composition of this informant ensures that the data obtained is narratively rich, includes perspectives across school hierarchies, and truly reflects the dynamics of TIRTA coaching implementation in the field.

The quality of the findings in this study is not measured by the number of informants but rather by the depth and richness of the data obtained, data collection will be stopped when it has reached saturation point, namely, a condition where additional information no longer provides significant new insights, and if necessary, the scope of information will be expanded using snowball sampling techniques to involve school supervisors to ensure that the portrait of the implementation of the TIRTA model is depicted in a complete, credible, and accountable manner. Within the framework of qualitative methods, the researcher acts as the primary research instrument, collecting, reading, and interpreting meaning, attempting to capture non-verbal cues, emotional atmosphere, and the school cultural context that accompanies each coaching session, as the literature confirms that in qualitative educational research, data quality is largely determined by the researcher's sensitivity, preparedness, and reflective capacity.

Therefore, the researcher in this study is required to master the theory of educational human resource management and the TIRTA coaching concept while maintaining a balance between empathy for teachers and principals and academic objectivity to minimize subjective bias and being able to build a warm yet professional rapport with informants, ask open-ended questions that stimulate reflection, and flexibly adjust data collection strategies to suit the dynamics of the school situation. The researcher's full involvement in the field allowed for a natural process of observation, interviews, and document study, allowing for honest disclosure of teachers' and principals' experiences with coaching and professionalism. Recent methodological studies position the researcher as the key instrument controlling the direction, depth, and quality of the data and emphasize the importance of researcher self-reflection as part of efforts to maintain the validity of the research (Yoon & Uliassi, 2022).

The data in this study comprises primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from informants through in-depth interviews and observations of the TIRTA coaching process and teacher professional development practices in schools. These data include the principal's experience in implementing coaching, teachers' experiences participating in coaching, teachers' responses to the coaching process, and perceived changes in professional practice after participating in coaching. These data are captured in the form of in-depth interview transcripts, non-verbal behaviors such as facial expressions, intonation, and interpersonal communication patterns at each stage of the TIRTA process (Objectives, Identification, Action Plan, and Responsibilities), and field notes compiled by the researcher during participant observation to capture the atmosphere of supervision meetings and implicit meanings that do not always emerge in formal interviews. Secondary data was used to strengthen and enrich the analysis of primary data, which was obtained indirectly through official school documents and archives, such as the School Profile, data on teacher and education staff conditions, the school work plan, academic supervision instruments, minutes of teacher council meetings, and the Teaching Module/RPP documents of teachers who were the subjects of coaching.

To understand the phenomenon holistically, three main data collection techniques were used: participant observation focused on the interactions between coaches and coachees at each stage of the TIRTA process; in-depth semi-structured interviews developed based on indicators of TIRTA coaching model implementation and aspects of teacher professionalism; face-to-face recording and verbatim transcription after obtaining permission from the informants; and documentary studies that collected and analyzed relevant documents. These three techniques were combined through the principle of method triangulation to gain a deeper understanding of the social situation, reduce researcher subjectivity bias, and increase data credibility. The data validity test in this study refers to four main criteria of trustworthiness, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, with triangulation as the main strategy, consisting of source triangulation by comparing information from the driving teacher, class teacher, and principal and technical triangulation by contrasting data from interviews, observations, and documentation.

To ensure that the researcher's interpretation does not deviate from the meaning intended by the informant, member checking is carried out by communicating the temporary findings back to the informant for correction, which allows the informant to provide clarification, correction, or additional information to improve data accuracy, as well as extended observations in the field to ensure the collected data is truly accurate and stable by identifying and verifying consistently emerging patterns. The researcher also compiled an audit trail in the form of systematic methodological notes that document the entire research process, from planning, data collection, and analysis to drawing conclusions, thus allowing other researchers to track and re-evaluate each step that has been taken as part of an effort to maintain the validity of the research.

The data analysis technique in this study adopted the interactive data analysis model developed by Miles et al. (2020) as a basic framework with contextual adjustments, which consists of three main components that occur simultaneously and interactively: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing with verification. In the data condensation stage, the raw data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation in large and diverse quantities were selected by sorting data relevant to the research focus, simplified by summarising field notes and interview transcripts, abstracted by identifying main themes and making initial categorisations, and transformed through continuous coding and labelling throughout the data collection process. The data presentation stage was carried out by systematically organising information in the form of tables and matrices based on themes and categories; coherent and informative descriptive narratives, diagrams and charts to visualise the relationships between themes; and direct quotations in the form of verbatim statements from informants as supporting evidence to fully describe the dynamics of the implementation of the TIRTA coaching model, teacher responses, and changes in professional practice that occurred.

The final stage is drawing conclusions based on the patterns that have been identified from the data that has been condensed and presented, which is done in stages while remaining open to the possibility of revision if new inconsistent data is found and verified through discussions with informants (member checking); checking between data sources (triangulation); critical reflection on the findings; and consultation with the supervising lecturer and methodology experts so that the data analysis process is interactive and iterative, in which the researcher moves back and forth between the three components of the analysis until valid, credible findings are obtained and provide a deep understanding of the implementation of the TIRTA coaching model in developing teacher professionalism at SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

This section critically discusses the research findings regarding the implementation of TIRTA coaching in developing teacher professionalism at SD Negeri 1 Sumber Marga Telang by linking them to educational coaching theory, the TIRTA model, academic supervision, teacher professionalism, and relevant previous research. The discussion is structured into three main focuses, namely the implementation of the TIRTA coaching model by the principal, the implications of its implementation on the transformation of teacher behavior and professional competence, and teacher responses and perceptions of the experience of participating in TIRTA coaching.

#### **Implementation of the TIRTA Coaching Model by the Principal in Developing Teacher Professionalism**

The implementation of the TIRTA coaching model at SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang demonstrates a significant shift from administrative supervision to professional coaching that is more dialogic, reflective, and oriented toward teacher development. In the context of an elementary school located in a tidal area with limited resources, the principal is not simply present as a teacher performance assessor; he needs to act as a learning facilitator, helping teachers understand problems more clearly and find solutions appropriate to the classroom conditions. This finding aligns with research showing that the TIRTA coaching model is effective when the principal is able to build equal relationships, provide a safe space for teachers, and direct coaching toward professional growth, rather than solely assessment (Tanggulungan & Sihotang, 2023). In the Objectives stage, the principal begins the conversation with open-ended questions so that teachers can convey development needs that are most relevant to the classroom learning situation.

This stage is crucial because goals that arise from teachers' own awareness tend to be more meaningful and easier to achieve than unilaterally set goals. In this study, the principal did not provide direct guidance but instead encouraged teachers to formulate areas for improvement, such as making students more active, understanding the material better, or engaging in learning. This approach

demonstrates that TIRTA coaching operates with an empowering logic, making teachers the subjects who determine the direction of their own development (Hanik et al., 2024). In the identification stage, the principal helped teachers explore the causes of learning problems in more depth, including classroom conditions, student characteristics, media limitations, and the school environment that impact the learning process. This stage demonstrates that coaching is not directed at finding fault with teachers, but rather at understanding the work situation holistically and contextually. In the context of SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang, identification is crucial because learning challenges stem not only from pedagogical aspects but also from the school's limited material conditions. In this way, the principal helps teachers view obstacles as realities that need to be managed together, rather than as personal burdens to be borne alone (Darmawan et al., 2025).

In the Action Plan stage, teachers are encouraged to develop realistic, simple, and appropriate improvement steps within the school's resources. This stage demonstrates that TIRTA coaching positions teachers as action planners, not simply implementers of instructions. In this study, the action plans that emerged tended to be closely related to the classroom context, for example, utilizing objects around the school as learning media, linking material to students' life experiences, or adapting teaching strategies for easier implementation under limited conditions. These findings align with research showing that TIRTA coaching is effective when improvement plans are developed collaboratively, contextually, and can be implemented effectively in the classroom (Hanik et al., 2024; Triasmani et al., 2024). In the Responsibility stage, the coaching process moves from conversation to a commitment to concrete action in learning. Teachers not only express a willingness to change but are also asked to be accountable for implementing the agreed-upon action plan through classroom practice.

This stage demonstrates that TIRTA coaching does not stop at verbal agreements but is directed towards ongoing, reflective habits. Although in practice, this stage still faces obstacles such as teacher administrative burdens and time constraints, the principal strives to maintain follow-up so that coaching does not cease to be a fleeting encounter but develops into a consistent coaching culture. This aligns with research confirming that coaching-based academic supervision will be effective if supported by scheduled evaluation and follow-up that is oriented towards learning improvement (Hanik et al., 2024). Overall, the implementation of the TIRTA coaching model by the principal at SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang demonstrates that supervision can shift from a controlling approach to more humane, participatory, and reflective professional development.

The principal acts as a learning leader who helps teachers build awareness, develop strategies, and maintain a commitment to continuous self-development. These findings corroborate the research findings of Tanggulangan & Sihotang (2023) and Hanik et al. (2024), which all confirmed that the TIRTA coaching model can create

more open communication, strengthen collaboration, and encourage teachers to be more reflective in carrying out their professional duties. Thus, the implementation of TIRTA coaching in this study not only demonstrates the implementation of the four technical stages but also demonstrates how teacher coaching can transform into a space for professional growth aligned with school needs and the real-world context.

### **Implications of Implementing the TIRTA Coaching Model for the Transformation of Teacher Behaviour and Professional Competence**

The implications of implementing the TIRTA coaching model at SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang are primarily evident in the changes in how teachers view learning, themselves, and their professional responsibilities. These changes did not occur suddenly in a major surge but rather developed gradually through the coaching experience, which provided space for teachers to rethink and reconsider their practices and develop more realistic improvements. In the context of elementary schools with limited facilities and environmental conditions that require adaptation, small but consistent changes are more meaningful because they directly impact teachers' daily work lives. This finding aligns with research by Astuti et al. (2025), which showed that academic supervision-based coaching encourages teachers to become more confident, more reflective, and more open to learning improvement strategies.

Regarding reflection on learning practices, TIRTA coaching encourages teachers to go beyond simply carrying out teaching habits and to begin evaluating what has worked well and what still needs improvement. This discussion demonstrates that teachers are gradually shifting from reactive thinking to reflective thinking, which involves reconsidering teaching decisions based on real-life classroom experiences. Research on teacher professional development indicates that reflection, observation, and feedback are essential elements for teacher professional development, not only technically but also pedagogically and personally (Li, 2025). In the context of SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang, this reflection is evident when teachers begin to consider whether the methods, they are using are truly appropriate for the students' characteristics, classroom conditions, and the school environment. In terms of lesson planning, TIRTA coaching encourages teachers to develop more focused and contextual learning steps. Teachers no longer merely prepare teaching materials as an administrative obligation but begin to view planning as part of their professional responsibility to help students learn more meaningfully.

This change is evident when teachers begin adapting learning activities to their surroundings, utilising simple objects as media, and incorporating students' life experiences as learning resources. These findings align with research that suggests coaching helps teachers develop the ability to develop more creative, flexible, and responsive learning activities to students' needs (Ivanova et al., 2022). Thus, TIRTA coaching not only changes the way teachers plan lessons but also shifts the planning

orientation from a document to a lived practice in the classroom. In terms of openness to feedback, teachers demonstrated significant changes after undergoing the coaching process. While previously feedback was often perceived as a stressful form of assessment, TIRTA coaching began to view feedback as part of a professional conversation that helps teachers improve. This change is crucial because teacher professionalism is measured not only by teaching ability but also by their willingness to accept input, process experiences, and adapt to changing learning needs. In a study at SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang, teachers who were previously defensive began to be more open about their difficulties, whether related to students, facilities, or time constraints. These results reinforce research findings that coaching-based academic supervision is effective when teachers feel valued and positioned as partners in the improvement process, not objects of correction (Widatin et al., 2025).

In terms of commitment to continuous self-development, TIRTA coaching fostered a new awareness that professionalism is not simply a status or certificate, but rather an ongoing learning process. Teachers began to see that being professional means having the courage to admit shortcomings, improve practices, and take responsibility for agreed-upon development steps. In this context, coaching encourages teachers not to stop at a single coaching session but to translate the results of the conversation into concrete actions and further reflection. These findings are consistent with research confirming that teacher professional development is stronger when accompanied by follow-up, ongoing mentoring, and a culture of collaborative learning in schools (Darmawan et al., 2025). Thus, the implications of TIRTA coaching are not only seen in changes in teaching behavior but also in the growth of teachers' internal commitment to continuous development as educators.

Overall, the implications of implementing the TIRTA coaching model at SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang demonstrate a gradual, contextual transformation rooted in the teachers' lived experiences. Coaching does not produce uniform changes in all teachers but rather opens up opportunities for each teacher to develop according to their readiness, needs, and the challenges they face. This aligns with research that academic supervision-based coaching is most effective when implemented collaboratively, empathetically, and sustainably, allowing teachers the space to grow without undue pressure (Khofifah et al., 2025). In the context of SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang, TIRTA coaching ultimately became not only a coaching technique but also a space for developing a more mature, reflective, and relevant professional awareness to the school's needs.

### **Teacher Responses and Perceptions of the TIRTA Coaching Experience**

Teachers' responses and perceptions of TIRTA coaching at SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang showed a gradual shift from doubt to openness and then to a more reflective understanding of the teaching profession. In the initial stages, some teachers still carried past experiences with supervision, which were synonymous with assessment,

so coaching was not immediately perceived as a safe coaching space. G-07 stated, "At first, I thought this coaching was just like regular supervision, Ma'am. When the principal comes into class, we usually feel like we're being assessed. So there's a fear that we'll find a lot of shortcomings." This situation aligns with research findings on teachers' perceptions of coaching-based supervision feedback, which show that teachers tend to receive feedback positively when the process is non-judgmental and allows for dialogue. Teachers' doubts also emerged in the form of suspicions that coaching was simply a new term for an old supervision practice. G-02 said, "At first I thought, 'What is this? Could it be just another form of supervision?'" while G-03 said, "Honestly, I was confused at first. I asked myself, 'What is this coaching?' Could it just be a rebranding of regular supervision?" These statements indicate that teachers' acceptance wasn't instantaneous; they first assessed whether this approach was truly different from the supervision they had previously experienced. In this context, changing the principal's approach to opening conversations was crucial for defusing initial tension and building trust.

The shift in perception began to emerge when teachers felt that the coaching took place in a more dialogical and humane atmosphere. G-01 said, "But it turned out to be different. It was more like a conversation." G-02 added, "The principal really listened," and G-01 also emphasized, "I felt safe speaking honestly." These quotes demonstrate that a sense of psychological safety is a key entry point for teachers to openly share their experiences. These findings align with research by Saripah & Suwandari (2025), which emphasized that coaching-based academic supervision is effective when teachers feel support, openness, and partnership in professional conversations. In subsequent developments, teachers began to perceive coaching as a space for growth, not simply a forum for scrutiny. G-01 stated, "For me, TIRTA coaching is like having a friend to talk to who accompanies me in developing as a teacher, not like a boss who comes in just to find fault." G-02 reinforced this view by saying, "For me, coaching is like a friend who accompanies me in growing, not a boss who supervises me from afar." G-03 added, "For me, coaching is like a friend who accompanies me through the tiring life of a teacher."

These statements demonstrate that the relationship between principals and teachers is shifting from a hierarchical relationship to a warmer and more productive partnership. From a professional perspective, teachers are also experiencing a significant shift in meaning. G-01 emphasized, "For me, a professional teacher is one who is willing to reflect continuously, thinking every day about what worked today, what was lacking, and what areas we want to improve tomorrow." G-02 said, "I used to think professionalism meant having a certificate, neat lesson plans, and complete administration. After participating in coaching, I see that professionalism is actually a teacher who is willing to reflect daily." G-03 added, "Certificates are important, but they don't automatically create a sense of security that makes me feel more professional when I'm willing to honestly identify my shortcomings and gradually improve them." This finding aligns with Tanggulungan & Sihotang's (2023) view that

TIRTA coaching shifts the orientation of coaching from administrative control to developing teacher professional awareness.

Thus, teachers no longer understand professionalism as merely administrative completeness but rather as a willingness to continuously learn, self-reflect, and gradually improve their teaching practices. This change is also evident when teachers begin to dare to try new strategies in the classroom. G-01 stated, "Now I am more courageous in trying new things." G-02 said, "After several coaching sessions, I am more courageous in experimenting," while G-04 said, "I am more courageous in relying on my storytelling skills, inviting children to draw or discuss, even though the raised globe is not suitable and the magazine rack is tilted." These statements show that coaching not only creates emotional comfort but also encourages pedagogical courage to innovate according to the real conditions of the school. This is in line with research on improving teacher performance in learning management through academic supervision and coaching, which confirms that coaching helps teachers develop learning strategies that are more responsive to class needs.

However, teachers did not deny that this process still faced structural obstacles. G-03 explained, "The most noticeable thing is the time and energy. Managing the School Operational Assistance, teaching 28 children in a hot room, and dealing with minor floods all drain our energy." G-04 also emphasized, "The biggest obstacle is the library itself, Sir." This demonstrates that coaching does not eliminate existing limitations but rather helps teachers view them more calmly and find solutions. In other words, TIRTA coaching serves as a strengthening space that keeps teachers thinking clearly amidst intense work pressure. Overall, teachers' responses and perceptions of TIRTA coaching at SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang shifted from anxiety to acceptance, from defensiveness to openness, and from administrative understanding to reflective understanding of teacher professionalism. The interview excerpts above demonstrate that the success of coaching depends not only on the TIRTA stages implemented but also on the ability to establish a safe, equal, and empowering dialogue space. In this way, TIRTA coaching becomes a coaching experience that not only changes the way the principal guides but also changes the way teachers see themselves as educators who continue to grow.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the research findings and discussion, this study conclusively establishes that the implementation of the TIRTA coaching model by the principal at SDN 1 Sumber Marga Telang significantly transforms teachers' professional behavior and competencies through a dialogical, reflective, and empowering approach. The coaching process unfolds through four interconnected stages objectives, identification, action plan, and responsibility with the principal positioning himself as a thinking partner rather than an evaluator, encouraging teachers to develop goals rooted in self-awareness rather than external pressure. While the responsibility and

follow-up stages remain inconsistent due to administrative burdens and geographic constraints, a fundamental paradigm shift from assessing supervision to empowering coaching has begun to take hold. This shift has profound implications for teacher professionalism, moving beyond administrative compliance and certification toward dynamic, ongoing reflective awareness. Evident changes include increasingly contextual learning practices, utilization of locally resource-based media, more adaptive planning tailored to student needs, and heightened willingness to experiment with new pedagogical approaches. Crucially, teachers' responses to the coaching experience were overwhelmingly positive, perceiving the process as a safe, non-judgmental space to share challenges and ideas. Coaching sessions were interpreted not as supervisory examinations but as professional mentoring that valued their voice, experience, and potential. This psychological safety emerged as a determining factor in fostering professional reflection and sustained commitment to continuous learning improvement. Practically, these findings mandate that principals and education authorities adopt coaching-based supervision models that prioritize dialogue, empowerment, and psychological safety over evaluative inspection. Principals require structured training in coaching competencies – particularly active listening, powerful questioning, and goal-setting facilitation – to effectively implement models like TIRTA. Schools should institutionalize regular coaching cycles as part of professional development routines, while minimizing administrative burdens that hinder consistent follow-up. Education offices must provide technical support and flexible policies that enable coaching practices to thrive even in geographically challenging contexts. For future research, it is recommended to conduct comparative studies across multiple schools and regions to test the generalizability of the TIRTA model's effectiveness. Longitudinal designs are essential to track the sustainability of behavioral and competency changes over time, particularly examining whether the observed paradigm shift persists beyond the initial coaching intervention. Investigating moderating factors such as teacher seniority, prior supervision experiences, or school culture would yield deeper insights into which conditions optimize coaching outcomes. Additionally, qualitative case studies exploring teachers' lived experiences across diverse contexts could reveal nuanced implementation challenges and facilitate model refinement. Finally, action research that involves teachers as co-researchers in adapting the TIRTA framework to local needs could enhance contextual relevance and ownership, ensuring that coaching practices remain responsive to the unique realities of rural and resource-constrained schools.

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