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Human Resource Limitations and Their Impact on Teacher Competence and Quality Assurance in Islamic Education in Indonesia

Sajidin[1*], Muaripin[2], Ary Maulana Muaripin[3], Muhammad Rifqi Fathurrahman[4], Muhamad Hanif Al-Haya Muaripin[5]

[1*, 5]UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung
[2, 3]Universitas Bunga Bangsa Cirebon
[4] Universitas Islam Bandung
[*1]email: sajidin@uinsgd.ac.id
[2]email: muaripinn69@gmail.com
[3]email: muaripin95@gmail.com
[4]email: rifqifr22@gmail.com
[5]email: hanifalhaya2@gmail.com

Abstract

Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly in institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, continues to encounter challenges in maintaining educational quality. This study aims to examine the factors influencing teacher competence in madrasas and analyze their impact on educational quality. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews involving teachers, school principals, and relevant government officials. The findings reveal that limited access to professional development programs, uneven policy implementation, and inadequate incentive systems are the primary factors contributing to low teacher competence. These constraints hinder the effectiveness of instructional practices and negatively affect student learning outcomes. Furthermore, disparities in resource distribution between regions exacerbate the issue, particularly in marginalized areas. In conclusion, improving teacher competence is essential to enhancing the quality of Islamic education. This study recommends expanding access to continuous professional development, ensuring equitable policy implementation, and strengthening incentive mechanisms for educators. These efforts are expected to support sustainable improvements in teaching quality and student achievement within madrasas in Indonesia.

Keywords: Teacher Competence; Islamic Education; Madrasah; Educational Quality; Human Resources.

Abstrak

Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia, khususnya pada lembaga di bawah Kementerian Agama, masih menghadapi tantangan dalam menjaga mutu pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi kompetensi guru di madrasah serta

Kata Kunci: Kompetensi Guru; Pendidikan

menganalisis dampaknya terhadap kualitas pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam yang melibatkan guru, kepala sekolah, dan pejabat pemerintah terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterbatasan akses terhadap program pengembangan profesional, ketimpangan implementasi kebijakan, serta sistem insentif yang belum memadai menjadi faktor utama rendahnya kompetensi guru. Kondisi ini berdampak pada kurang optimalnya proses pembelajaran dan hasil belajar siswa. Selain itu, ketimpangan distribusi sumber daya antar wilayah turut memperparah permasalahan, terutama di daerah marginal. Kesimpulannya, peningkatan kompetensi guru merupakan kunci dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan perluasan akses pelatihan berkelanjutan, pemerataan implementasi kebijakan, serta penguatan sistem insentif bagi tenaga pendidik guna mendukung peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran dan capaian belajar siswa di madrasah.

Islam; Madrasah; Mutu Pendidikan; Sumber Daya Manusia.

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization and rapid technological development, the quality of Islamic education has become a strategic issue in strengthening national human resources. Madrasas, as formal Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, are expected not only to provide religious knowledge but also to develop students' intellectual competence, character, and adaptability to global challenges. In the context of contemporary education, improving the quality of Islamic education has become increasingly important, particularly in responding to globalization and the demands of Society 5.0 (UNESCO, 2020; Schleicher, 2018).

However, despite various policy reforms and educational programs, the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia still faces significant challenges, especially in terms of human resources and teacher competence. Teacher competence is widely recognized as a critical determinant of educational quality, as it directly influences teaching effectiveness, classroom management, and student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Hattie, 2009). In the context of madrasas, teachers are not only required to master pedagogical skills but also to integrate Islamic values into the learning process (Langgulun, 2012).

One of the major issues is the limited access to continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers. Although the government has implemented programs such as teacher certification and training initiatives, their distribution and effectiveness remain uneven (Syamsuddin, 2015; Avalos, 2011). Studies indicate that sustained professional development significantly contributes to improving teacher competence and instructional quality (Timperley, 2011; Desimone, 2009). Nevertheless, many madrasa teachers, particularly in rural and underdeveloped areas, still encounter barriers in accessing relevant and updated training programs (OECD, 2019; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019).

In addition, disparities in educational resources between urban and rural regions exacerbate the problem. Teachers in remote areas often lack adequate support systems, including infrastructure, training opportunities, and access to educational technology. This inequality leads to gaps in teacher competence and ultimately affects the quality of student learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2020; OECD, 2019).

Another crucial factor is teacher motivation, which is closely linked to incentive systems and professional recognition. Previous studies highlight that adequate incentives, career advancement opportunities, and institutional support significantly influence teachers' commitment and performance (Hargreaves, 2000; Guskey, 2002; Day, 1999). Without sufficient motivation, efforts to improve teacher competence may not achieve optimal results.

From a theoretical perspective, this study is grounded in theories of teacher professional development, educational change, and Islamic education. Continuous professional development theory emphasizes the importance of ongoing learning processes for teachers to adapt to curriculum changes and improve instructional practices (Avalos, 2011; Timperley, 2011). Meanwhile, educational change theory highlights the need for systemic support and consistent policy implementation to achieve sustainable improvement (Fullan, 2007; Schleicher, 2018). In the context of Islamic education, the integration of knowledge, values, and character formation becomes a distinctive aspect that differentiates madrasas from other educational institutions (Langgulun, 2012).

Despite numerous studies discussing teacher competence and professional development, there is still a research gap regarding how these factors specifically affect the quality of Islamic education in madrasas, particularly within institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Previous research tends to focus on general education settings, with limited attention to the unique characteristics of Islamic education and its contextual challenges.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the factors influencing teacher competence in madrasas and examine their impact on the quality of Islamic education. By addressing this gap, this research is expected to contribute to the development of more effective policies and strategies for improving teacher competence and strengthening the overall quality of Islamic education in Indonesia.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to investigate the limitations of teacher competence in madrasas and their implications for educational quality. A qualitative method is appropriate for exploring complex social phenomena and understanding participants' experiences within their real-life context (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009).

The research was conducted from January to March 2025 in several madrasas under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, including Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), and Madrasah Aliyah (MA). These locations were purposively selected to represent different levels of Islamic education and to capture variations in institutional conditions.

The population of this study included educators and stakeholders involved in Islamic education, while the sample consisted of teachers, school principals, and officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which allows the researcher to choose informants who have relevant knowledge and experience related to teacher competence and professional development (Sugiyono, 2017; Patton, 2002).

The primary data were collected through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. This method provides flexibility in exploring participants' perspectives while maintaining consistency with the research objectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In addition, document analysis of policy reports and training programs was conducted to support the interview findings.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, triangulation techniques were applied by comparing data from multiple sources and methods. Member checking was also conducted to validate the accuracy of the interpretations and to enhance credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis, involving data reduction, coding, categorization, and interpretation to identify key themes related to teacher competence and its impact on educational quality (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analytical approach enables systematic identification of patterns and meaningful insights derived from the data.

3. Result and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that teacher competence in madrasas is uneven and strongly influenced by access to professional development, policy implementation, and incentive systems. These findings are presented comprehensively and then discussed in relation to relevant theories and previous studies.

The first major finding shows a significant disparity in access to training between urban and remote areas. Teachers in urban areas tend to have greater opportunities to participate in workshops, seminars, and curriculum-related training compared to their counterparts in remote regions. This gap is reflected in the percentage of teacher participation in training programs, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of Teachers Attending Training

Region	Percentage
Urban Areas	75%
Remote Areas	35%

Source: Research Data (2025)

As shown in Table 1, approximately 75% of teachers in urban areas have participated in professional development programs, while only 35% of teachers in remote areas have had similar opportunities. This disparity indicates unequal distribution of training access, which contributes to differences in teacher competence.

In addition, qualitative findings from interviews reveal that teachers in remote areas often rely on conventional teaching methods due to limited

exposure to innovative pedagogical approaches. This condition affects the effectiveness of classroom instruction and reduces student engagement in the learning process.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings support the argument that continuous professional development (CPD) is a key factor in improving teacher competence and instructional quality (Desimone, 2009; Timperley, 2011). Limited access to CPD restricts teachers' ability to update their knowledge and adapt to curriculum changes, particularly in the context of Islamic education which requires integration of religious and general knowledge (Langgulun, 2012).

Furthermore, the study finds that uneven policy implementation contributes significantly to disparities in teacher competence. Although policies related to teacher development have been established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, their implementation varies across regions. This finding aligns with educational change theory, which emphasizes that successful reform depends on consistent execution, leadership, and systemic support (Fullan, 2007; Schleicher, 2018).

Another important finding is related to teacher motivation, which is influenced by incentive systems. The data indicate that insufficient financial and non-financial incentives reduce teachers' motivation to engage in professional development activities. This supports previous studies stating that motivation plays a crucial role in sustaining teacher performance and professional growth (Day, 1999; Guskey, 2002; Hargreaves, 2000).

These findings are consistent with prior research highlighting that teacher competence is a central determinant of educational quality (Darling-Hammond, 2017; OECD, 2019). In the Indonesian context, improving teacher competence remains a major challenge in enhancing national education quality (Suyanto, 2017; Mulyasa, 2013). Institutional support and effective leadership are also critical factors in strengthening teacher performance (Rivai & Mulyadi, 2012).

Novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on madrasas as institutions of Islamic education, which have unique characteristics compared to general schools. This study highlights how the combination of limited access to professional development, unequal policy implementation, and weak incentive systems creates structural barriers that hinder teacher competence in Islamic education settings.

The implications of this study suggest that improving teacher competence requires a comprehensive and integrated approach. Expanding access to training through digital platforms can help reach teachers in remote areas. In addition, ensuring equitable policy implementation is essential to reduce disparities between regions. Strengthening incentive systems is also necessary to enhance teacher motivation and encourage active participation in professional development programs.

Overall, the results demonstrate that teacher competence is not only an individual issue but also a systemic one, requiring coordinated efforts from government institutions, educational stakeholders, and the wider community to improve the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia.

These findings also indicate that improving teacher competence cannot rely solely on individual initiatives. Structural reforms in educational governance,

equitable allocation of resources, and sustainable institutional support are equally essential. Without comprehensive systemic improvements, disparities in teacher competence may continue to hinder the quality of Islamic education, particularly in marginalized regions. Therefore, educational reform should integrate professional development, policy consistency, and technological accessibility within a unified national framework.

4. Conclusion

This study reveals that limitations in human resources and teacher competence remain critical challenges in improving the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia, particularly in madrasas under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The novelty of this research lies in its integrated analysis of structural factors—namely unequal access to professional development, inconsistent policy implementation, and limited incentive systems that collectively shape teacher competence in Islamic education settings. Unlike previous studies that focus on general education, this study emphasizes the unique context of madrasas, where pedagogical competence must be aligned with Islamic values. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of teacher competence and educational change frameworks by highlighting the importance of systemic and contextual factors in Islamic education.

Based on these findings, this study recommends expanding equitable access to continuous professional development, strengthening consistency in policy implementation across regions, and improving both financial and non-financial incentive systems to enhance teacher motivation. These efforts are essential to support sustainable improvements in teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, thereby contributing to the overall advancement of Islamic education quality in Indonesia.

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