

Implementation of Teacher Competency Standards at Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Islamic education plays a vital role in shaping students' character and moral values in accordance with Islamic teachings. In this context, teachers serve as key actors in the educational process, requiring competency standards aligned with Islamic educational principles. This study aims to analyze the implementation of teacher competency standards at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia Lubuklinggau, an Islamic elementary school that integrates Islamic values into its learning practices. Using a qualitative approach and a case study method, data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results reveal that teachers at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia implement competency standards encompassing strong Islamic understanding, morality and ethics, character education, pedagogical skills, involvement in the Muslim community, professional development, openness to diversity, academic qualifications, and concern for students' safety and health. These findings demonstrate that the integration of Islamic values into teacher competency standards effectively strengthens the holistic educational role of teachers. The implications of this study provide valuable insights for the development of teacher competency models in other Islamic schools and serve as a reference for policymakers in enhancing the quality of Islamic education.

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1. Introduction

Islamic education serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as an instrument for character building and moral values based on Islamic teachings. The role of teachers in Islamic educational institutions is very strategic, as they are not only educators but also spiritual and moral guides

for the students. Therefore, teacher competency standards become a crucial aspect in ensuring the quality of ideal and sustainable Islamic education. (Mustajib; Roikhanatus, 2021).

Integrated Islamic Elementary School (SDIT) is one form of Islamic educational institution that integrates the general curriculum with Islamic curriculum. Teachers in this institution are expected not only to master the teaching material but also to possess pedagogical skills, Islamic spirituality, and a personality that can serve as a role model for the students. (Edy & Maryam, 2022). Teachers' competencies in Islamic-based schools must encompass religious, social, professional, and personal dimensions as a whole, in order to produce graduates who are not only intellectually intelligent but also strong in ethics and faith. (Wulandari et al., 2023).

However, there is still not much research specifically discussing how teacher competency standards are implemented in the context of integrated Islamic schools. In some cases, the implementation of these standards is still general and has not fully been adapted to the specific needs of educational institutions based on Islamic values. (Husni et al., 2023). This condition raises an important question: to what extent have teachers in Islam-based schools internalized and implemented the competency standards that align with the vision of Islamic education?

This research focuses on SDIT Mutiara Cendikia Lubuklinggau, as one of the Islamic schools committed to the integration of Islamic values in the learning process. This study seeks to explore in depth how teacher competency standards are designed and implemented within that school environment, as well as how it contributes to the achievement of Islamic education goals.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of formulating teacher competency standards that are not only based on national regulations but also rooted in Islamic values that serve as the philosophical foundation of education in integrated Islamic schools. By conducting empirical studies based on case studies, this research is expected to provide both conceptual and practical contributions to the development of Islamic education policies in Indonesia, particularly in strengthening the role of teachers as the main agents of transforming Islamic values in the lives of students.

2. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study research type. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of teacher competency standards in the specific context of an Islamic-based school, namely SDIT Mutiara Cendikia Lubuklinggau (Yin, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Case studies are considered relevant to describe phenomena holistically, in their natural context, and allow for the exploration of various dimensions of teacher competencies comprehensively.

The research was conducted at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia Lubuklinggau, South Sumatra, from May to June 2024. The selection of this location was based on the school's characteristics that implement the integration of general curriculum and Islamic curriculum, as well as having a systematic teacher competency strengthening program.

The research subjects include: 1 school principal, 2 class and subject teachers, and 2 educational staff. Informants were selected using purposive sampling with the criteria: 1) having at least two years of teaching experience at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia, 2) actively involved in school activities and teacher competency development programs, 3) willing to provide information openly. The purposive sampling technique was used to select key informants who are considered to have relevant and in-depth information related to teacher competency standards at the school (Sugiyono, 2021).

Data collection techniques include: Semi-structured interviews conducted with school principals and teachers to explore their understanding of teacher competency standards and its implementation in the learning process; Participatory observation, in order to directly observe classroom learning activities and the interaction between teachers and students; Documentation study, in the form of analysis of school documents such as curricula, teacher competency guidelines, evaluation results, and teacher training programs.

The data obtained was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which include stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The researcher performed open coding to identify the main themes related to teacher competency standards, followed by systematic categorization and interpretation of the data. To maintain the validity and reliability of the data, several verification techniques were employed, including: source and method triangulation, member

checking with key informants to ensure data consistency, and peer debriefing with colleagues to obtain feedback on the interpretations produced (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Research Results

This research found that the teacher competency standards at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia Lubuklinggau have been comprehensively implemented in educational practices. Based on the results of interviews, observations, and document analyses, nine main dimensions were identified in the implementation of teacher competency standards, namely: understanding of Islam, morality and ethics, character education, pedagogical skills, involvement in the Muslim community, professional development, openness to diversity, academic qualifications, and attention to student safety and health.

a. In-depth Understanding of Islam

The teachers at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia have a strong understanding of Islamic teachings, both in aspects of fiqh, aqeedah, ethics, and worship. This is reflected in the teachers' ability to relate Islamic values to classroom learning and their exemplary behavior in daily practices. One teacher stated, 'We do not only teach the subject material, but also incorporate Islamic values into every teaching and learning process' (Interview, 5th Grade Teacher, June 2, 2024). Observations also indicated that the learning activities begin with a group prayer, recitation, and reinforcement of ethics.

b. Morality and Ethics as the Pillars of Education

The aspects of morality and ethics are a primary concern in the teacher competency standards. The principal emphasizes that teachers are expected to serve as role models of noble character for students in their behavior, speech, and dress (Interview, Principal, June 3, 2024). Teachers play the role of respected figures and are seen as examples, allowing the character formation of students to occur naturally through their exemplary behavior.

c. Strengthening Islamic Character Education

Teachers not only teach cognitive aspects, but are also active in strengthening character education based on Islam. In one classroom activity, the researcher observed how the teacher integrated values such as honesty, responsibility, and compassion in group discussions (Observation, June 3, 2024). In addition, the school also holds habituation programs such as congregational prayer, daily charity, and Friday sharing activities.

d. Structured Pedagogical Ability

Teachers demonstrate good pedagogical skills, such as in lesson planning, method selection, use of teaching media, and evaluation of learning outcomes. The analyzed Lesson Plan (RPP) documents show alignment between learning objectives, strategies used, and active and participatory learning approaches (RPP Document, Even Semester 2023/2024). Teachers also use question-and-answer techniques, discussions, and simulations in explaining the material.

e. Active Participation in the Muslim Community

Most teachers are active in religious activities within the community, such as being speakers in religious teachings, prayer leaders, or youth mosque mentors. These activities strengthen the relationship between schools and the community and enhance the credibility of teachers as religious figures outside of the school environment (Interview, Religious Teacher, June 4, 2024).

f. Continuous Professional Development

Teachers at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia regularly participate in training, seminars, and workshops organized by both the foundation and external parties. According to one teacher, "We are encouraged to continue learning, both in the field of education and Islam" (Interview, Grade 4 Teacher, June 5, 2024). The school also provides mentoring and peer teaching programs to enhance internal competencies.

g. Openness to Diversity

Although based on Islam, this school is open to differences in ethnicity, culture, and social background of students. Teachers are required to create an inclusive atmosphere, appreciate differences, and not be discriminatory. This aligns with the school's vision to produce moderate and tolerant students in religious life (School Vision and Mission Document, 2023).

h. Academic Qualifications According to Field

All observed teachers have an undergraduate education background relevant to their subjects, and some have even pursued postgraduate education. The principal mentioned that the selection of teachers is conducted rigorously, considering their graduation from Teacher Education Institutions (LPTK) and understanding of Islamic values (Interview, June 3, 2024).

i. Attention to the Safety and Health of Students

Teachers play an active role in maintaining the safety of the learning environment, including supervision during breaks, extracurricular activities, and the health of students. The school has established safety SOPs and health protocols that are consistently implemented, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic (Health SOP Document, 2023).

Tabel 1.
Summary of the Implementation of Teacher Competency Standards
at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia Lubuklinggau

Competency Dimension	Implementation Indicators	Data Source
Understanding Islam	Teachers are able to relate Islamic values in learning, practice worship consistently	Grade 5 Teacher Interview (June 2, 2024), Observation
Morality and Ethics	Teachers are examples of noble morals, discipline, polite language, and dress according to syariat	Principal Interview (June 3, 2024)
Character Education	Integration of the values of honesty, responsibility, and compassion in learning activities; congregational prayer program, daily infaq, Friday Sharing	Observation (3 June 2024), School Program Document
Pedagogical Abilities	Planning of lesson plans according to the curriculum; use of active methods such as discussion and simulation	RPP Document (2023/2024)
Muslim Community Involvement	Teacher active in studies, imam, mosque youth coach	Religious Teacher Interview (June 4, 2024)
Professional Development	Participating in trainings, seminars, workshops; Internal Mentoring Program	Grade 4 Teacher Interview (June 5, 2024)
Openness of Diversity	Respect differences in ethnicity, culture, social background; creating an inclusive environment	Vision and Mission Document (2023)
Academic Qualifications	All teachers who graduated from S1 according to their fields; 20% continue S2	School Staffing Data (2024)
Student Safety and Health	Safety SOPs and health protocols are implemented; supervision during extracurricular activities	Health SOP Document (2023)

3.2 Discussion

The research results indicate that teachers at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia not only meet the national competency standards (Ministerial Regulation No. 16 of 2007) but also integrate Islamic values as the foundation of learning. This is in line with Edy & Maryam (2022) who emphasize that spiritual and moral competencies are the main pillars of teachers in Islamic education. The role of teachers as *uswah hasanah* contributes to the character formation of students through exemplification and habituation (Gunawan et al., 2023).

a. Integration of Islamic Competence and Teacher Professionalism

A strong understanding of Islam is a fundamental element in shaping the competencies of teachers in Islamic-based schools. This aligns with the view of Edy & Maryam (2022) that teachers in Islamic education are not only required to have pedagogical and professional competencies, but also spiritual competencies that reflect morals and Islamic values. As a role model (*uswah hasanah*), teachers play a role in shaping students' character through exemplification, habituation, and the holistic delivery of values (Gunawan, Riyadi, & Musthofa, 2023).

The practices found at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia are also in accordance with the national teacher competency standards as formulated in the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 16 of 2007,

which includes four basic competencies: pedagogical, personality, professional, and social. However, in the context of Islamic education, the spiritual and moral aspects of teachers become crucial and inseparable additional components (Susilawati, Ridwan, & Madyan, 2023).

b. Character Education Based on Islamic Values

Findings on the integration of character education in teaching and learning activities show that teachers are not only responsible for transferring knowledge but also for shaping the character and morals of students. This is in line with Kamaruzzaman's (2017) view that character education in Islam positions the teacher as a *murabbi* (spiritual educator) who shapes a complete human being, not merely as an instructor (*mu'allim*).

Characteristics such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline instilled by teachers demonstrate their relevance to the national education goals and Islamic principles, which aim to shape individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble character. This approach also supports the idea of Ramdhani & Adawiyah (2023) that character education should be contextual, integrated into learning, and consistently implemented by all elements of the school.

c. Improvement of Pedagogical and Professional Competencies

The teacher's ability to design learning, use active methods, and evaluate learning outcomes reflects the achievement of pedagogical competence. Teachers are not only able to manage the classroom but also turn learning into a space for the interaction of Islamic values. This reinforces the findings of Aliyah & Assa (2022) that continuous training and professional development greatly contribute to the improvement of the quality of teachers' learning in Islamic schools.

Professional development activities such as regular training, mentoring, and workshops conducted by the school demonstrate the institution's commitment to enhancing human resource capacity. In line with Wijaya (2023), teachers who continuously improve their competencies tend to have high self-confidence and are capable of responding to the challenges of the times, including in the era of digitalization and globalization.

d. Social Role and Spiritual Leadership of Teachers

Teachers who are active in the Muslim community and act as figures in the social environment show that their social competence is also well-developed. In the context of Islam, a teacher is a *muwajjih* (guide) who not only teaches but also leads morally in society. This aligns with the perspective of Cholid, Santi, & Hasbi (2007), which emphasizes the importance of teachers' involvement in social religious life as part of the character development of the Islamic education community.

In addition, the involvement of teachers in the community also helps strengthen the relationship between schools, parents, and society. This is in line with the concept of school-community partnership in Islamic educational theory, where education is a shared responsibility among schools, families, and the environment (Bagenda, Pettalongi, & Mashuri, 2023).

e. Commitment to Inclusivity and the Welfare of Students

An open attitude towards diversity and concern for the health and safety of students shows that teachers not only perform academic functions but also play the role of protectors and companions of students. This supports the view of Sijabat et al. (2022) that modern teachers must be able to create an inclusive, child-friendly learning environment and ensure the well-being of learners..

This finding also shows that Islamic values do not contradict modern principles in child education, such as the protection of children's rights, equality, and social justice. On the contrary, these values strengthen the inclusive principles and welfare mandated in the national education system. Referring to various theories and previous studies, it can be concluded that the implementation of teacher competency standards at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia Lubuklinggau has been effective and contextual. The practices applied demonstrate a combination of national regulations with distinctive Islamic education principles, resulting in meaningful and transformative education for the learners.

4. Conclusion

This research aims to analyze the implementation of teacher competency standards at the Integrated Islamic Elementary School (SDIT) Mutiara Cendikia Lubuklinggau. The results show that teachers have internalized and implemented nine dimensions of competency, namely: (1) deep understanding of Islam, (2) morality and ethics, (3) character education, (4) pedagogical skills, (5) involvement in the Muslim

community, (6) continuous professional development, (7) openness to diversity, (8) relevant academic qualifications, and (9) attention to student safety and health. The application of these dimensions demonstrates a synergy between national regulations and the principles of Islamic education, resulting in a holistic, religious, and inclusive educational process.

These findings reinforce the theory of teacher competence from the perspective of Islamic education, which emphasizes the integration of pedagogical, professional, social, and personality aspects with the spiritual dimension. The contextual approach implemented at SDIT Mutiara Cendikia contributes to the development of a teacher competence model based on Islamic values that is adaptive to the demands of the times.

Practically, the results of this research can serve as a reference for other integrated Islamic schools in designing and implementing teacher competency standards. The model produced shows that successful implementation relies not only on regulations but also on school culture, institutional support, and continuous teacher development programs.

This research is limited to one location and a relatively short data collection period, thus it cannot yet illustrate the variation in the application of teacher competencies in other integrated Islamic schools. Future research is recommended to involve more locations, use a longitudinal approach, and examine the relationship between teacher competencies and student learning outcomes both quantitatively and qualitatively.

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