

Professional Competence of Teachers in the Islamic Religious Education Learning Process

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Abstract: This study aims to determine the professional competence of teachers in the learning process of Islamic Religious Education at Baiturrahim Junior High School, Jambi City. This type of research is field research with a qualitative approach through descriptive methods. Data collection techniques include interviews, observation and documentation, while data analysis uses data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the learning process of Islamic Religious Education at Baiturrahim Junior High School, Jambi City is carried out through the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. Teachers' professional competence is already visible in several aspects, but has not been fully achieved so that it cannot be said to have complete professional competence.

Keywords: Professional Competence; Teachers; Learning; Islamic Education; SMP Baiturrahim.

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana kompetensi profesional guru dalam proses pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di Sekolah Menengah Pertama Baiturrahim Kota Jambi. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian lapangan dengan pendekatan kualitatif melalui metode deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data yakni wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan reduksi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa proses pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di SMP Baiturrahim kota jambi dilaksanakan melalui tahap perencanaan, Pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Kompetensi Profesional guru sudah terlihat dalam beberapa aspek, namun belum sepenuhnya tercapai sehingga belum dapat dikatakan memiliki kompetensi

profesional yang utuh.

Kata Kunci: Kompetensi Profesional; Guru; Pembelajaran; Pendidikan Agama Islam; SMP Baiturrahim.

A. Introduction

In the era of globalization and increasingly rapid advances in information technology, education plays a crucial role in producing superior and highly competitive human resources. The success of a nation is largely determined by the quality of its education, as education is not merely a process of transferring knowledge but also a process of shaping the character, morals, and spirituality of students. Therefore, quality education must be well-managed, planned, and implemented by professional educators to achieve national education goals. (Safitri et al., 2022)

Teachers hold a highly strategic position in the education system, as they are the direct implementers of the learning process in the classroom. Teachers function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as guides, motivators, and facilitators, helping students develop their potential optimally. Therefore, the quality of education depends heavily on the quality of teachers in carrying out their professional duties. Teachers with professional competence will be able to create active, innovative, and student-centered learning. (Arifah et al., 2023)

In line with this, education is understood as a human endeavor to cultivate and develop innate physical and spiritual potential in accordance with the values prevailing within society and culture. Therefore, education needs to be supported by a positive educational environment. Because the educational environment is everything around humans in their interactions, whether inanimate objects, living creatures, or things that occur, it serves as a place to channel abilities to shape the development of each individual. (Tsauri, 2015)

In the Indonesian education system, as stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, education is defined as a conscious and planned effort undertaken by an individual to create effective teaching and learning activities so that students can develop their potential. Education aims to provide students with good spiritual and religious strength and increase student intelligence and

be able to improve existing skills that will benefit themselves specifically and the wider community in general. (Isriwal et al., 2024)

Education is a fundamental or fundamental phenomenon in human life. Where there is life, there must be education. Education is both a symptom and an effort to humanize humanity itself. With the development of demands for better, more organized education to develop human potential, theoretical thinking about education has emerged. (Hidayat, 2019)

Education is closely linked to teachers. Teachers are educators who are expected to develop their students into a superior, well-mannered generation. Teachers serve as substitutes for parents in educating their students. Parents face limitations in their educational roles, particularly limited time and resources. Therefore, the task of educating in the morning is entrusted to teachers within the school framework. One subject teacher whose role is particularly crucial is the Islamic Religious Education teacher. (Ika, 2018)

Discussing teaching in the learning process is inseparable from the teacher's duties. Teaching skills and professionalism are essential in the learning process, especially in Islamic Religious Education. Teaching is essentially guiding students' learning activities. Student activity in learning is essential for effective learning and optimal outcomes. To teach effectively, teachers must improve their teaching quality and actively involve students in the learning process. Starting and ending lessons on time, and demonstrating a commitment to teaching can increase student interest and motivation. The more students are actively involved in learning, the higher the likelihood of their academic achievement. (Rahmadhon et al., 2022)

Teachers play a crucial role in determining the quantity and quality of instruction. To achieve this, teachers must be able to manage the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The success of student education depends heavily on a teacher's accountability in carrying out their duties. Student learning outcomes are largely determined by a teacher's professional competence. Teachers with professional competence are better able to manage their classes, ensuring optimal student learning outcomes. (Amalia & Maiziani, 2023)

Teachers fought both physically and non-physically during the war of independence. They also played a significant role in defending the republic, fighting selflessly, and many even lost their lives. Non-physically, teachers' struggles were evident in imparting knowledge to their students, fostering intelligence and brilliance, and many of them have gone on to become great figures. (Syahroni et al., 2022)

Teacher professionalism is crucial, without it teachers will not be able to improve the quality of learning. Professional teachers are a determining factor in a quality educational process, and a professional teacher is essential in realizing a knowledge-based school, namely an understanding of learning and curriculum. Therefore, a professional teacher in the field of Islamic Religious Education is a teacher who can create an effective teaching and learning process to arouse student interest in learning and achieve educational goals. Therefore, teachers are needed who have professional competence in carrying out the learning process, so they can make students achieve, be active, and have good morals that can benefit the success of the learning process. (Rahim et al., 2023)

As a teaching staff, every teacher must possess professional skills in the field of learning. With these skills, teachers can fulfill their role as facilitators who provide conveniences for students in the teaching and learning process. They also act as guides who help students overcome difficulties in the teaching and learning process. They also serve as environmental providers who strive to create a challenging learning environment for students so that they engage in learning activities actively and enthusiastically. They also serve as role models, able to provide good examples to students so that they behave in accordance with applicable norms. Furthermore, teachers act as motivators who help disseminate innovations to the community, especially to the subjects of education, namely students. Furthermore, teachers act as managers who lead groups of students in the classroom so that the teaching and learning process is successful. What must be seen as a professional teacher is how to create, enrich, and adapt their teaching methods to attract and maintain the interest of their students. (Anwar, 2018)

The quality of education is largely influenced by the quality of the learning process carried out by teachers. Therefore, improving teachers' abilities to manage learning activities in schools is the responsibility of the principal, as supervisor, coach, and direct superior. As is commonly understood, professional issues will always exist and continue to arise along with advances in science and technology, therefore, teachers need ongoing professional guidance and development from the principal.

In the teaching and learning process, teachers are generally considered professional if they possess teaching skills, demonstrated by effective teaching methods, a diploma or educational degree, learning planning, specifically the Lesson Implementation Plan (RPP), and training tailored to educational needs. These teaching skills include developing active, creative, and innovative lesson plans to optimize the environment and utilizing technology or other methods appropriate to the context. Given the crucial role of teachers in the learning process, teacher quality should be considered. Teachers must be able to adapt the methods they use to the students' circumstances to achieve maximum learning achievement. (Ebtida, 2021)

To determine the extent of efforts made by teachers in developing their professional competence, it can be seen from various things such as how often they participate in training activities, workshops or seminars, including whether they really study all textbooks for both teachers and students to improve their knowledge competence in the fields of science they teach. Furthermore, the activities carried out by teachers in their professional development can also be seen from whether teachers actively participate in scientific discussion forum activities.

In the era of globalization and the advancement of science and technology, demands on teachers are increasingly complex. Teachers are not only required to master subject matter but also to be able to integrate technology, adapt to curriculum changes, and understand the needs and characteristics of students. This demonstrates that teacher professional competence encompasses pedagogical, personality, social, and professional skills, which are interrelated to create effective learning for students. (Fitratullah et al., 2024)

Furthermore, developing teachers' professional competencies is not only formal through education and training, but also through teaching experience, self-reflection, and participation in scientific forums or professional communities. Teachers who actively develop themselves tend to be more innovative, creative, and able to deliver challenging and enjoyable learning. This is crucial so that students do not merely passively receive knowledge but are also motivated to think critically and creatively, and are able to apply knowledge in their daily lives. (Pahmi, 2025)

Furthermore, teachers with high professional competence can serve as role models for students, both academically and morally. The teacher's role as a role model and motivator makes the learning process not merely a transfer of knowledge but also a development of student character. With adequate professional competence, teachers can adapt learning methods and media to meet needs, build positive interactions, and create a conducive learning environment. This directly impacts student achievement, motivation, and the optimal development of student potential. (Anwar, 2020)

Based on initial observations conducted at Baiturrahim Junior High School in Jambi City, it was found that teachers need to have good teaching skills and improve the quality of their teaching. Several teachers were found to require skills in applying various learning methods because in the learning process, teachers rarely use varied methods and tend to use conventional methods without adapting more varied methods. In addition, the method of delivering material is often not adapted to the characteristics of students because understanding student characteristics is very important. Teachers also rarely use learning media, especially technology-based media because with the development of the times, teachers are required to be able to apply technology in the learning process. The lack of professional competence of teachers in delivering learning materials causes the learning process to be less targeted. As a result, students become less active and experience difficulties in understanding the subject matter.

When linked to Sandi Muji Kurnia's research, "Teacher Professionalism in the Teaching and Learning Process at SMP PGRI 2 Kediri City," there are similarities and differences. The study shows that teachers at the school are already in the good category in developing professionalism, for example by mastering teaching materials, managing

classes, using media, and conducting assessments. Supporting factors include the availability of references, learning media, and teachers' creative attitudes, while inhibiting factors are financial constraints and teachers' perspectives that the use of varied methods will be difficult and costly (Sandi, 2021). This condition aligns with the findings at SMP Baiturrahim, where teachers' challenges were more limited in method variation, adapting to student characteristics, and minimal use of technology-based media. This means that, despite the differences in context, both initial observations and previous research emphasize the importance of improving teachers' professional competence to make the learning process more effective and aligned with objectives.

This issue demonstrates that teacher professional competence plays a crucial role in the success of learning. Therefore, efforts to improve teacher professionalism are essential to ensure more effective learning and a positive impact on students. This also emphasizes that teachers are not only required to master the material but also to be able to innovate in learning methods and media to meet current developments and student needs.

B. Methods

The research approach used is a descriptive qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is a research approach that utilizes data obtained in the field (Field Research) which requires researchers to go into the field to conduct observations of a phenomenon in a natural setting (Moleong, 2018), through observation, interviews and documentation activities conducted at Baiturrahim Junior High School, Jambi City. Therefore, the data collected is not in the form of numbers but rather words or information needed by the researcher. The purpose of a qualitative approach is to provide a clear, detailed and complete picture of the empirical reality behind a phenomenon. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif.

Descriptive qualitative research is a method for discovering knowledge about a research topic at a specific point in time. Descriptive qualitative research aims to explain existing signs or conditions, namely the state of symptoms according to the symptoms at the time of the investigation. Because this study uses a descriptive

analytical approach, we use a qualitative approach to provide answers to the problems being described. In other words, this study describes the ongoing situation based on facts and information from the region to develop spiritual intelligence and improve students' academic achievement.

To understand this, data collection techniques were then conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation of the research subjects. A research subject is a specific unit that exists and is attached to, or something that becomes the target and focus of the researcher (Anshori, 2017). The research subjects used in this study are educators and educational staff and students. The data analysis for this study uses qualitative data, which is analyzed non-statistically with only descriptive sentences that can be understood from the results of the author's observations and interviews with data sources. Sugiyono states that data analysis in qualitative research is carried out during direct data collection and after completing data collection within a certain period. (Sugiyono, 2017)

Data analysis is a step that requires critical thinking in research. In this case, researchers must be confident in the analytical patterns they will use (Dimyati, 2020). Data analysis in qualitative research is carried out before the researcher enters the field or research location and after completion. However, in this case, the research is more focused during the fieldwork, concurrent with data collection. Therefore, the research will continue throughout the data collection process. Data analysis in this qualitative research uses the Miles and Huberman data analysis model. Analisis data merupakan suatu langkah yang membutuhkan pemikiran kritis dalam penelitian. Dalam hal ini, peneliti harus yakin dengan penggunaan pola mengenai analisis yang akan digunakan (Dimyati, 2020).

C. Results and Discussion

1. Islamic Religious Education Learning Process at Baiturrahim Middle School Jambi

The Islamic Religious Education learning process at Baiturrahim Junior High School in Jambi City takes place through systematic planning, implementation, and evaluation stages designed to achieve learning objectives while simultaneously shaping

students' religious character. During the planning stage, teachers first develop a Lesson Implementation Plan (RPP), which serves as the primary reference for organizing learning activities. This RPP is based on the Merdeka Curriculum currently implemented in the school, although the school is also in a transition period adapting to the latest national curriculum policies. In practice, teachers formulate learning outcomes, set specific and measurable goals, and select materials relevant to students' daily lives. The formulated learning objectives are not limited to knowledge but also emphasize the development of students' attitudes, social skills, and spirituality, for example, in areas such as honesty, discipline, and noble character.

Teaching materials are selected from government-provided textbooks, student worksheets (LKS), and other supplementary sources, and are ensured to align with curriculum outcomes. Furthermore, teachers consider the relevance of the material to current situations so that students can apply Islamic values in their lives. In terms of methods, teachers choose a variety of approaches according to the characteristics of the material, such as interactive lectures for faith topics, question-and-answer sessions to check student understanding, or demonstrations when discussing religious practices such as prayer. Meanwhile, the learning media used are still dominated by conventional media, namely whiteboards and textbooks. Although occasionally, teachers have begun to utilize simple technology such as presentation slides or instructional videos, although this has not been done routinely.

The implementation phase of the learning process is the core of the entire teaching and learning process and is carried out through three activities: opening, main, and closing. In the opening activity, the teacher builds students' readiness to learn by emphasizing classroom cleanliness, praying together, taking attendance, and reviewing the previous meeting's material so that students are better prepared to receive new material. This also serves as a means of fostering religious habits and instilling discipline from the beginning of the lesson. In the main activity, the teacher delivers material according to the lesson plan (RPP) that has been prepared, using the interactive lecture method as the main method, combined with questions and answers so that students can immediately clarify things that are not yet understood. The teacher also

strives to connect the teaching material to the realities of students' daily lives so that Islamic values can be applied contextually, for example when discussing prayer procedures or the value of honesty in life. In this activity, the main media used are Islamic Religious Education textbooks and whiteboards, as they are considered the most practical and appropriate to the conditions of school facilities, although technology-based media are still rarely used. Next, in the closing activity, the teacher invites students to summarize the learning material together, emphasizes important points that need to be remembered, and assigns assignments as a form of follow-up to the learning.

Learning evaluation is conducted to assess the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved and to serve as a reflection for teachers. Evaluation is conducted comprehensively, encompassing three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The cognitive domain is assessed through daily tests or written assignments, the affective domain through observation of attitudes such as honesty, discipline, and politeness, and the psychomotor domain through observation of religious practices, such as the ability to read the Quran or perform prayers correctly. Teachers also provide feedback in the form of corrected assignments and brief notes so that students are aware of any deficiencies that need to be addressed. Furthermore, teachers conduct reflections after the lesson to assess the effectiveness of the methods, media, and strategies used, so that improvements or adjustments can be made in the next meeting to meet students' needs.

2. Professional Competence of Teachers in the Islamic Religious Education Learning Process at Baiturrahim Middle School Jambi

Competence generally refers to the ability or capacity possessed by a person to carry out a particular task or job well. Competence includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to achieve optimal results in an activity or profession (Soepriyanto, 2017). Meanwhile, Professional comes from the word profession, namely a position or job that requires expertise from members. As a profession, it cannot be done by just anyone who is not trained and not specifically prepared to carry out the job (Fathul & Rijal, 2018). The professional competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers at Baiturrahim Junior High School, Jambi City is reflected in several important aspects,

namely mastery of material, application of methods, use of technological media, learning evaluation and continuous professional development. From the results of observations and interviews, Islamic Religious Education teachers already have a good mastery of the material. The delivery of material does not only refer to textbooks, but is also enriched with interpretations, hadiths, and other relevant sources, so that learning is more meaningful, easy to understand, and related to the real life of students.

In terms of methods, teachers still predominantly use lectures. This method is considered effective in conveying information quickly, but it doesn't encourage student engagement. Students often feel bored or passive, resulting in suboptimal understanding. This highlights the need for a variety of methods, such as discussions, demonstrations, or simulations, to make learning more engaging and interactive.

The use of technological media is also suboptimal. Teachers rely more heavily on textbooks and whiteboards, while projectors, instructional videos, and interactive applications are rarely used. Obstacles include time constraints, lack of technological expertise, and technical challenges like unstable internet signals. Yet, students feel more motivated and engaged when learning is supported by technology-based media.

On the other hand, Islamic Religious Education teachers have implemented comprehensive assessments and evaluations, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Evaluations extend beyond tests and assignments to attitudes and skills, such as Quran recitation and religious discipline. These evaluations are then followed up with additional learning for students who have not yet achieved completion.

In an effort to develop professionalism, Islamic Religious Education teachers regularly participate in Subject Teacher Conferences (MGMP) and study groups at school. These activities are useful for sharing experiences and teaching strategies, although they are still limited to discussions and do not delve into technology mastery or method innovation. Cost, time, and information constraints also limit teachers' ability to participate in other training or seminars.

Based on the description above, it is clear that Islamic Religious Education teachers at Baiturrahim Junior High School in Jambi City have demonstrated several

aspects of professional competence, particularly in mastery of teaching materials and implementation of learning assessments and evaluations. Teachers are able to deliver material well and conduct comprehensive evaluations across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. However, when viewed overall, these teachers cannot be said to fully possess complete and optimal professional competence. This is evident in the still limited variety of learning methods, the less than optimal utilization of technological media, and professional development that is limited to discussion forums without in-depth training. Thus, efforts are needed to improve the application of more varied methods, mastery of learning technology, innovative teaching strategies, and involvement in intensive training and scientific activities.

3. Obstacles and Efforts of Teachers in Improving Their Professional Competence in the Islamic Religious Education Learning Process at Baiturrahim Middle School Jambi

Islamic Religious Education teachers at Baiturrahim Junior High School in Jambi City face various obstacles in improving their professional competence. These obstacles can be viewed from two perspectives: internal factors originating from the teachers themselves and external factors arising from the school environment and applicable educational policies.

Internally, a common obstacle is limited opportunities to participate in training and self-development programs. Not all teachers have access to workshops, seminars, or training programs focused on improving professionalism. This situation limits teachers' insight and skills in designing innovative learning. Furthermore, their mastery of modern learning technology is also suboptimal. Some teachers feel unfamiliar with using digital applications, e-learning platforms, or internet-based media to support the learning process. Another obstacle is a lack of creativity in designing varied learning methods. Many teachers ultimately rely on simpler methods such as lectures or direct question-and-answer sessions, as they are considered more practical and time-saving. Limited experience and preparedness also influence this choice. As a result, Islamic Religious Education lessons often take place in a monotonous manner, preventing students from experiencing creative and enjoyable learning experiences.

Meanwhile, externally, several other obstacles also exist. One of these relates to the suboptimal welfare of private teachers, both financially and in terms of professional recognition. This situation forces some teachers to divide their attention between their primary duties as educators and other work. This situation undoubtedly impacts their focus and motivation in developing the quality of learning. Furthermore, the relatively conventional learning culture in schools is also a hindering factor. Although schools have provided facilities such as notebooks, LCD projectors, and infocus, their use is not optimal. Some teachers feel that using technological media requires additional preparation and is considered cumbersome, so they prefer traditional methods, which are considered more efficient. However, these conventional methods are often less suited to the needs of today's students, who are already familiar with digital technology.

To address these challenges, various steps are needed. First, increased training and self-development efforts need to be enhanced, both through government programs and school initiatives. Second, mastery of learning technology needs to be further optimized by providing practical guidance to help teachers become accustomed to and confident in using it. Third, teacher creativity can be fostered through school support, for example by providing awards or appreciation for teachers who introduce innovative learning methods. Fourth, improving teacher welfare is also crucial to maintaining motivation and professional enthusiasm. Fifth, schools need to cultivate a modern learning culture that encourages the use of technology, collaborative collaboration, and the implementation of active and participatory learning strategies.

Islamic Religious Education Teachers' efforts to improve their professional competence have actually been carried out, although they are still in stages. First, teachers are trying to participate in the in-service Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG) as a form of structured competency strengthening, although they are still awaiting the official schedule from the government regarding its implementation. Second, teachers are actively involved in the Subject Teachers' Consultation Forum (MGMP) and Study Groups (Kombel), as a forum for discussion, sharing experiences, and aligning perceptions regarding learning strategies. Third, teachers are also pursuing independent learning paths, including reading literature, deepening material before

teaching, and reflecting on learning experiences in the classroom. Fourth, teachers are starting to strive to utilize technology in learning, for example by using digital presentation media, learning videos, or other supporting applications, so that the learning environment is more interesting, relevant, and in line with current developments.

Through these various steps, it is hoped that Islamic Religious Education teachers at Baiturrahim Junior High School in Jambi City can continue to develop their professional competencies. Given the complex challenges they face, teachers' commitment to learning and adapting, school support, and government attention to facilities and welfare will be crucial foundations for developing professional, creative Islamic Religious Education teachers capable of meeting the demands of modern education.

D. Conclusion

The conclusion of the study shows that the Islamic Religious Education Learning Process at Baiturrahim Junior High School, Jambi City has been implemented according to the stages, namely through the planning, implementation and evaluation stages. Teachers' Professional Competence has been seen in several aspects, but has not been fully achieved so that it cannot be said to have complete and optimal professional competence. This is indicated by the still limited variety of methods, the lack of utilization of technological media and self-development is still limited. Obstacles faced include internal factors such as minimal training, lack of mastery of technology and limited creativity, then external factors such as teacher welfare and conventional learning culture. Efforts to improve are carried out through the in-service Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program, Subject Teacher Deliberations (MGMP), Study Groups (Kombel), independent learning and gradual utilization of technology. Thus, it can be concluded that the Professional Competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers at Baiturrahim Junior High School, Jambi City has not been fully achieved, so it needs to be improved so that the learning process can take place more effectively and according to the needs of students.

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