



Professionalism and Competence of Islamic Religious Education Teachers (Issues and Policies in Indonesia)

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Abstract

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are not only responsible for the transfer of knowledge, but also for guiding and shaping the character of students in order to internalize Islamic values in both speech and behavior. Therefore, it is important to discuss professionalism, competence, issues, and policies related to PAI teachers. The purpose of this study is to analyze the Professionalism and Competence of Islamic Religious Education Teachers related to Issues and Policies in Indonesia. This research uses the literature review method. The literature review method is done by collecting theories that are relevant to the research issues discussed. Islamic Education teachers are expected to have competencies in accordance with Islamic teachings. A PAI teacher must be able to evaluate student learning outcomes to determine the level of success in the learning process of PAI subjects. In addition, they must be professional educators who are able to face and solve the problems faced by PAI teachers today.

Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) tidak hanya bertanggung jawab dalam transfer ilmu pengetahuan, tetapi juga dalam membimbing dan membentuk karakter peserta didik agar dapat menginternalisasi nilai-nilai Islam baik dalam ucapan maupun perilaku. Oleh karena itu, penting untuk membahas mengenai profesionalisme, kompetensi, isu-isu, dan kebijakan yang berkaitan dengan guru PAI. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk menganalisis Profesionalisme dan Kompetensi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam terkait Isu dan Kebijakan di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kajian pustaka. Metode kajian pustaka dilakukan dengan mengumpulkan teori-teori yang relevan dengan masalah penelitian yang dibahas. Guru PAI diharapkan memiliki kompetensi yang sesuai dengan ajaran Islam. Seorang guru PAI harus mampu mengevaluasi hasil belajar siswa untuk mengetahui tingkat keberhasilan dalam proses pembelajaran mata pelajaran PAI. Selain itu, mereka harus menjadi pendidik profesional yang mampu menghadapi dan menyelesaikan masalah-masalah yang dihadapi guru PAI saat ini.

A. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping a quality future generation. A nation is considered developed if one of its key indicators is the advancement of its education system. Education can only function effectively if its essential components are fulfilled, one of which is the teacher. There is even a well-known saying: “No teacher, no education.”

During World War II, Japan was bombed with atomic weapons by the United States in the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, causing massive loss of life. After the bombing, the first question Japan’s Emperor asked was, “How many teachers are left?” This reflects the Emperor’s belief that teachers are invaluable and serve as the main pillar for rebuilding the nation. Once all surviving teachers were gathered, the Emperor ordered the entire population to begin learning. As a result, Japan was able to rise and become a world power in just 20 years—a process that was initially predicted to take 50 years.

This proves that teachers play an incredibly important role in a nation’s progress. Teachers are the bridge for students to achieve their dreams. Teaching is a noble profession, and the goodness of a teacher’s deeds continues to flow even after their death. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “When a person dies, all their deeds come to an end except three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, and a righteous child who prays for them.” (Hadith narrated by al-Tirmidhi). One of the greatest examples of a teacher throughout history is the Prophet Muhammad himself. The Qur’an affirms this in Surah al-Ahzab (33:21): “Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.” This verse highlights that the Prophet’s primary role was to serve as a role model. A teacher’s character and example can significantly impact students—positively or negatively—in shaping their personality and character (Arfandi, 2021).

According to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, Article 1, Clause 1, a teacher is defined as a professional educator whose main duties are to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, assess, and evaluate students in early childhood education, basic education, and secondary education within formal education pathways.

Therefore, in line with this legal mandate, teachers are required to possess a solid, stable, mature, wise, authoritative, and disciplined personality (Mulyasa, 2010).

The professionalism and competence of teachers are vital in achieving the goals of the national education system, namely to develop students' potential so they become individuals who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and responsible democratic citizens.

However, in practice, many teachers still fall short of meeting the expectations outlined in the law. Several factors contribute to this gap: (1) many teachers do not fully commit to their profession; (2) teacher professional development programs are still far from ideal; (3) higher education institutions preparing future teachers are unevenly distributed; and (4) there is a lack of motivation among some teachers to improve their personal quality (Djuanda, 2019).

This challenge is even greater for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, who bear a heavy moral responsibility. Besides imparting knowledge, PAI teachers are also expected to foster students' moral development. Because of their crucial role in character building, it is essential to have competent and professional PAI teachers who can help shape a morally upright generation (Zida Haniyyah, 2021).

There remains a gap between the duties and expectations of PAI teachers as stated in policies and the actual conditions in the field. Therefore, this paper aims to elaborate on these issues from various perspectives, referring to relevant literature, in the hope of enriching the discourse on the scope and role of PAI teachers. The discussion will be focused according to the title of this article: "Professionalism and Competence of Islamic Religious Education Teachers (Issues and Policies in Indonesia)".

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a literature review method. The literature review, or library research method, involves the study of theories relevant to the research problems. This section focuses on examining concepts and theories based on available literature, particularly from articles published in various academic journals. The purpose of a literature review is to construct the theoretical foundation that underpins the research study (Sujarweni, 2014). Data collection was carried out using both primary sources (those that provide data directly from the author or original source) and secondary sources (those that are not obtained directly from the original source)

(Anwar, 1998). The data collection technique involved a systematic examination of books, literature, notes, and reports related to the issue being studied (Nazir, 1988).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The role of a PAI (Islamic Religious Education) teacher is crucial in shaping students' character and fostering their understanding of religious teachings. A teacher is not only someone who delivers knowledge but also someone who nurtures moral and intellectual development, as seen in the roles of *murabbi*, *mu'allim*, and *muaddib* within Islamic educational literature. Professionalism in teaching is a key aspect of a teacher's role, where competence is essential for effective performance. Professionalism refers to individuals who demonstrate expertise in their tasks for compensation, with teaching being categorized as a soft profession due to its reliance on creativity and continuous skill development. For PAI teachers, professionalism includes not only knowledge of Islamic teachings but also the ability to guide students with care, respect, and ethical conduct.

Discussion

1. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teacher

A teacher is a position or profession that requires specific expertise as an educator (Roestiyah, 2001). According to Yusuf (2000: 54), a teacher is someone capable of carrying out educational actions in an educational setting to achieve educational goals, or an adult who is honest, physically and mentally healthy, moral, expert, skilled, open-minded, fair, and compassionate. Sardiman (2005: 125) adds that a teacher is one of the human components in the teaching and learning process who plays a role in the effort to develop human resources that are potential in the field of development.

In Islamic education literature, the term "teacher" refers to several designations such as *murabbi*, *mu'allim*, and *muaddib*, each having distinct functions (Minarti, 2013: 107). *Murabbi* comes from the word *rabba-yurabbi*, which means to guide, manage, care for, and educate. Meanwhile, *mu'allim* is derived from *'allama-yu'allimu*, meaning to teach (Kurniawan, 2014: 163), as reflected in Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 31: "And He taught Adam the names—all of them. Then He presented them to the angels and said, 'Tell Me the names of these if you are truthful.'" Allah taught Prophet Adam the names of all things, then presented them to the angels. Hence, *'allama* is interpreted

as "to teach." The term *mu'addib* is derived from *addaba-yuaddibu*, meaning to educate (Yunus, 2010: 39).

Islamic religious education is a conscious and planned effort to prepare students to recognize, understand, appreciate, believe in, be devoted to, have noble character, and practice the teachings of Islam derived from the Qur'an and Hadith through guidance, instruction, training, and experiential learning (Ramayulis, 2008).

From these definitions, it can be concluded that a teacher of Islamic Religious Education is an educator who is responsible for the physical and spiritual development of students in order to change their behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings. The goal is to achieve maturity and shape a Muslim personality with noble character who can understand, internalize, and apply the lessons learned in daily life, using Islamic teachings as a guide and life compass, ultimately attaining happiness in this world and the hereafter (Zida Haniyyah, 2021).

2. Professionalism of Islamic Education (PAI) Teachers

The term "professional" refers to a noun derived from the word "profession," which stands in contrast to amateur, and relates to someone who receives payment or compensation for performing a task or service. According to Philip Suprastowo, there are two types of professional work: hard profession and soft profession. A job is categorized as a hard profession when it can be detailed in specific and clear behaviors and steps. The education required for such professions aims to produce standardized educational outcomes, with clear and uniform graduate qualifications regardless of where the education is obtained. Medical and aviation education are examples of hard professions.

On the other hand, soft professions require a certain level of artistry in execution, which cannot be defined in exact or fixed steps. The implication is that education in soft professions does not demand graduates to possess minimum standard abilities alone; rather, those abilities must be continuously developed over time to remain relevant to societal changes (Suprastowo, 2001).

According to A. Suhaenah Suparno, the term professional refers to a trait of a job that is carried out with earnestness, reflecting the characteristics of a true profession. A professional individual demonstrates a sense of responsibility and is prepared to be held accountable if certain success criteria are not met. This accountability can take many forms, ranging from formal legal consequences to

psychological consequences such as expressions of dissatisfaction or even disdain from those who use the professional's services.

Law Number 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, Article 1 Paragraph 4, defines professionalism as an occupation or activity carried out by an individual as a livelihood that requires expertise, skill, or proficiency, in accordance with certain quality standards or norms and requires professional education.

According to Arifin, a professional teacher must have:

- a. A strong scientific foundation as a reflection of a technology and knowledge-based society.
- b. Mastery of professional techniques based on educational research and praxis, since education is not just theoretical but also a scientific process that occurs in real-life settings. Educational research must be directed toward practical applications in Indonesian society.
- c. Continuous development of professional abilities. Teaching is a profession that requires ongoing development in synergy between educational institutions and actual teaching practice.

From the above explanation, teaching is a professional occupation that requires expertise obtained through education and training, membership in professional organizations, and adherence to a code of ethics (Djuanda, 2019). Therefore, a professional teacher is one who possesses specialized abilities and expertise in teaching and learning activities to achieve specific educational objectives effectively (Ridla, 2008).

Consequently, a teacher of Islamic Education (PAI) is expected to be committed to professionalism in carrying out their duties. This means showing a high level of dedication, a commitment to the quality of processes and outcomes, and a mindset of continuous improvement—constantly seeking to enhance and innovate teaching methods according to contemporary demands. This is underpinned by the awareness that the task of educating is about preparing future generations to live in their own time (Muhaimin, 2003).

A committed Islamic Education teacher should reflect professionalism in all activities *as a murabbî* (mentor), *mu'allim* (teacher), *mursyid* (spiritual guide), *mu'addib* (moral educator), and *mudarris* (academic instructor). As a *murabbî*, the teacher nurtures and develops students' potential, interests, talents, and abilities step by step through research, laboratory experiments, problem-solving, and other

activities to produce rational-empirical and objective values. As a mu'allim, the teacher transfers knowledge and values, encouraging students to internalize and live them out with motivation. As a mursyid, the teacher facilitates the internalization of good character. As a mu'addib, the teacher is aware of their role in building future civilization through education. As a mudarris, the teacher aims to enlighten students, eliminate ignorance, and train their skills through education, instruction, and training (Muhaimin, 2003).

Characteristics of a Professional Islamic Education Teacher (Ridla, 2008):

a. Skilled in Preparing Teaching Programs

A well-prepared and thorough teaching plan increases the likelihood of achieving educational goals effectively and efficiently. Planning is an essential aspect of teaching, ensuring that instructional activities align with educational principles and steps. A competent teacher creates an effective learning environment and manages instruction to optimize student outcomes.

b. Skilled in Mastering Teaching Materials

Teaching materials are the substance conveyed during the learning process. These materials guide students toward the intended educational objectives. Without mastery of content, the learning process cannot be effective. Therefore, a teacher must first master the subject matter they intend to teach.

c. Skilled in Classroom Management

Classroom management is a constant responsibility of the teacher. It aims to create a conducive learning environment so that teaching goals can be achieved efficiently and effectively.

d. Skilled in Using Teaching Methods

Teaching methods refer to the approaches used by teachers to interact with students during instruction. Effective methods foster educational interaction—a reciprocal relationship between teacher and student that supports a successful learning experience (Sudjana, 1989).

e. Skilled in Using Teaching Media

The word “media” comes from Latin, meaning intermediary or messenger. Media are tools that transmit learning messages. Gagne describes media as components of the student environment that stimulate learning. Brings defines them as physical tools that present information and stimulate student learning (Arif S.

Sadirman, 1996). Media play a vital role in clarifying and enriching instruction, especially where words alone fall short.

f. Skilled in Evaluating Learning Outcomes

The term “evaluation” comes from the English word evaluation. Wand and Brown define it as an action or process of determining the value of something. Mehrent and Lehmann describe it as a process of planning, gathering, and providing information necessary for decision-making (Purwanto, 1994).

According to Arief Rachman (2015), elements inherent in a teacher who claims professionalism include:

- a. Value: A professional teacher upholds values they believe in, which are internalized and expressed through words and actions.
- b. Ethic: A professional teacher adheres to institutional rules and ethical standards agreed upon collectively.
- c. Attitude: A professional teacher creates a warm, responsible, and positive atmosphere in their community.
- d. Habit: A professional teacher has positive habits—intentional or unintentional—that contribute to ongoing growth and expertise.
- e. Knowledge: A professional teacher has strong subject-matter knowledge that forms the basis for fulfilling their academic responsibilities.
- f. Skill: A professional teacher is trusted for their advanced skills in addressing challenges within their responsibilities.

3. Competence of Islamic Education Teachers

The word competence originates from the English language, meaning proficiency or capability. Competence can also be defined as a fundamental characteristic inherent in a person that has a causal relationship with effective or superior performance in a particular job (Supardi, 2009).

Specifically, Islamic Education (PAI) teachers are expected to possess competencies that align with Islamic teachings. An Islamic religious teacher must be able to conduct evaluations of student learning outcomes in order to determine the success level of learning in Islamic Education subjects (Ahmad Nashir, 2020).

Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 16 of 2010, Article 16, states that Islamic Education teachers must possess leadership competence in addition to the four competencies already stated in Law No. 14 of 2005: pedagogical, personal, social,

and professional competence. Pedagogical competence, as mentioned in Regulation No. 16 of 2010, paragraph 1, includes (Ju'subaidi, 2011):

- a. Understanding students' characteristics in terms of physical, moral, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual aspects.
- b. Mastery of learning theories and principles related to religious education.
- c. Development of religious education curricula.
- d. Implementation of religious education development activities.
- e. Utilization of information and communication technology for organizing and developing religious education.
- f. Developing students' potential to actualize various abilities in religious education.
- g. Communicating effectively, empathetically, and politely with students.
- h. Conducting assessment and evaluation of religious education learning processes and outcomes.
- i. Using assessment and evaluation results to improve religious education learning.
- j. Engaging in reflective practices to enhance the quality of religious education instruction.

Professional competencies of Islamic Education teachers include:

- a. Mastery of subject matter, structure, concepts, and scientific thinking patterns relevant to religious education.
- b. Mastery of competency standards and basic competencies of Islamic Education subjects.
- c. Creative development of religious education learning materials.
- d. Continuous professional development through reflective actions.
- e. Utilization of information and communication technology for communication and self-development.

4. Islamic Education Teacher Policies

The policies concerning teachers are grounded in Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers. The following are some key points (Sunarto, 2015):

- a. Qualification, Competence, and Certification

Academic qualifications are obtained through higher education at the undergraduate level or a four-year diploma program. Teacher competencies include pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies, acquired through professional education. Educator certificates are awarded to teachers

who meet the requirements. These certificates are issued by accredited teacher education institutions designated by the government and conducted objectively, transparently, and accountably.

b. Rights and Obligations

In performing professional duties, teachers have the right to:

- 1) Receive income above the minimum standard of living and social welfare guarantees (including base salary, attached allowances, professional allowance, functional allowance, special allowance, and other benefits related to their duties based on merit).
- 2) Obtain promotions and rewards based on performance.
- 3) Receive protection while performing duties and retain intellectual property rights.
- 4) Access opportunities to improve their competencies.
- 5) Access and utilize learning facilities and infrastructure to support their professional tasks.
- 6) Exercise freedom in grading, determining graduation, giving awards, or imposing sanctions to students according to educational norms, professional code of ethics, and applicable laws.
- 7) Feel secure and receive safety guarantees while on duty.
- 8) Join professional organizations.
- 9) Participate in shaping education policies.
- 10) Have opportunities to develop and enhance academic qualifications and competencies.
- 11) Receive training and professional development in their field.

In performing professional duties, teachers are obligated to:

- 1) Plan lessons, implement high-quality learning processes, and assess and evaluate learning outcomes.
- 2) Continuously improve and develop academic qualifications and competencies in line with scientific, technological, and artistic advancements.
- 3) Act objectively and without discrimination based on gender, religion, ethnicity, race, physical condition, family background, or students' socioeconomic status.
- 4) Uphold laws, regulations, professional code of ethics, religious values, and aesthetic principles.
- 5) Maintain and promote national unity.

c. Mandatory Service and Civil Service Bond

In emergency situations, the government may impose mandatory service on teachers or other Indonesian citizens with the necessary academic qualifications and competencies to serve in special areas of the Republic of Indonesia. The central or regional government may also establish civil service bonds for prospective teachers to meet national or regional education development needs. The government can develop residential teacher education systems in institutions to ensure efficiency and quality.

d. Appointment, Placement, Transfer, and Termination

Appointment and placement of teachers are carried out objectively and transparently in accordance with laws. Teachers appointed by the central or regional government may be transferred across provinces, cities/regencies, districts, or schools based on the needs of educational units or for promotion. Teachers may be honorably discharged due to death, reaching retirement age (60 years), voluntary resignation, physical or mental illness preventing continued service for 12 months, or expiration of contract. Teachers may be dishonorably discharged for violating their oath of office, employment agreement, or neglecting duties for one month or more continuously.

e. Development and Training

Teacher development includes professional and career development in pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies.

f. Awards

Teachers who demonstrate exceptional achievement, dedication, or serve in special areas are entitled to awards. These may be conferred by the government, regional authorities, society, professional organizations, or educational institutions at local, regional, national, or international levels. Awards can include medals, special promotions, financial incentives, certificates, or other forms of recognition. The government may declare a national teacher day as an official tribute, regulated by law.

g. Protection

The government, local authorities, community, professional organizations, or schools must provide teachers with legal, professional, and occupational safety and health protection while carrying out their duties.

h. Leave

Teachers are entitled to leave as per applicable laws. They may also take study leave while retaining full salary benefits.

i. Professional Organizations and Code of Ethics

Teachers may form independent professional organizations. These organizations aim to advance the profession, improve competencies, careers, educational insight, professional protection, welfare, and social contributions.

5. Issues of Professionalism and Competence of PAI Teachers

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers must be able to instill the messages (awareness) contained in the material, such as equity, justice, respecting the rights of others, cooperation, and interdependence. Teachers provide students with the opportunity to build knowledge and perspectives on topics or areas of study (Achmad Fauzi, 2020).

There are several challenges of globalization that teachers must address by prioritizing their professionalism. These include:

First, the rapid and fundamental development of science and technology. In this situation, teachers must be able to adapt responsively, wisely, and prudently. Responsiveness means that teachers must be well-versed in scientific and technological products, especially those related to education. Without a solid understanding of science and technology, teachers will fall behind and become victims of these advances.

Second, the moral crisis in Indonesia. Due to the influence of science and technology and globalization, there has been a shift in values in society. Through education, teachers face the challenge of instilling moral values in the younger generation.

Third, social crises such as criminality, violence, unemployment, and poverty in society. As a result of industrial development and capitalism, various social issues have emerged. Those who are weak in terms of education, access, and economics are most likely to become victims. This is a challenge for teachers to respond to through the education system. Schools are formal educational institutions that have been trusted by society and must be able to produce students who are prepared to live in any condition or situation.

Fourth, the identity crisis of the Indonesian nation and state. Globalization has also diluted the national identity (nationalism) of the younger generation. Therefore, teachers, as guardians of values—including nationalism—must be able to raise awareness in the younger generation about the importance of nationalism in the life of the nation and state.

In the current era of information and communication technology, teachers are no longer just educators (transmitters of knowledge), but must also become learning managers. This means that every teacher is expected to create a learning environment that challenges students' creativity and activity, motivates students, and uses multimedia, multiple methods, and various resources to achieve the desired learning outcomes (Oviyanti, 2013).

D. CONCLUSION

PAI (Islamic Religious Education) teacher who is committed to professionalism should ideally reflect this commitment in all their activities. Therefore, a PAI teacher is expected to be dedicated to professionalism in carrying out their duties, with a strong sense of dedication to their work, commitment to the quality of the process and outcomes, and a mindset of continuous improvement. This means always striving to improve and update their methods and practices according to the demands of the times, based on a high level of awareness that the task of educating is to prepare the next generation to live in their future era. In general, teacher competencies, according to the mandate of Law No. 14 of 2005, include pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies. Specifically, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are expected to have competencies that align with Islamic teachings. An Islamic teacher must be capable of conducting evaluations of students' learning outcomes in order to assess the success of the teaching and learning process in Islamic Religious Education. The reality on the ground is that PAI teacher policies often do not align with expectations due to various reasons. Moreover, the issues faced by PAI teachers add more challenges to their responsibilities. It is difficult to overlook the fact that PAI teachers, who are striving to become professional educators in accordance with the law, are now also expected to address the issues that arise as the times continue to evolve.

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