

Date Received : October 2024
Date Revised : November 2024
Date Accepted : November 2024
Date Published : November 2024

TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT MUHAMMADIYAH 02 PRIVATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL MEDAN

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Keywords:

Pedagogical
Competence, Islamic
Religious Education

ABSTRACTS

Education is a complex system, where education is not only about students but also about the learning process, media, and teachers. Teachers are a crucial component of education because they are responsible for designing the learning process so that lessons can be effectively received by students. Therefore, teachers are required to possess competencies that support their performance. This study aims to explore the pedagogical competence of teachers in the Islamic religious education learning process at Muhammadiyah Private High School 02 Medan. The focus of this research includes: (1) How is the pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in the learning process at Muhammadiyah Private High School 02 Medan, (2) How is the IRE learning process at Muhammadiyah Private High School 02 Medan, (3) What are the obstacles faced by IRE teachers in the learning process at Muhammadiyah Private High School 02 Medan. This research is a qualitative study. The data and findings obtained were processed and described based on the author's narrative. The data sources were primary sources, namely the Principal, IRE teachers, and students, as well as secondary sources obtained from documents and photographs related to Muhammadiyah Private High School 02 Medan. The researcher acted as a participant. Data collection procedures included observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that the pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers at Muhammadiyah Private High School 02 Medan is considered fairly good. Teachers are able to understand student characteristics, design learning materials, and manage the classroom effectively. The IRE learning process is carried out interactively with varied approaches such as lectures, discussions, and question-and-answer sessions, although there are still some limitations in utilizing innovative learning media. The obstacles faced by IRE teachers include a lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure, uneven student learning motivation, and limited time to cover material comprehensively. Nevertheless, teachers continue to strive to improve the quality of learning through reflection and independent competency development.

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is a complex system involving students, teachers, media, and the learning process. Teachers play a vital role as designers of instruction to ensure the material is delivered effectively. Therefore, teachers are required to possess competencies that support their professional performance.

Majid (2005) emphasizes that competence reflects a teacher's quality in teaching, which can be acquired through formal education and experience (Robotham, 1996). Competence refers to one's abilities or proficiencies (Syah, 2000; Usman, 1994) in knowledge, skills, and attitudes (McAhsan, as cited in Mulyasa, 2003). The Ministry of National Education (2004) defines competence as a habitual reflection of knowledge, skills, and core values in thought and action.

According to Law No. 14 of 2005, teachers must possess four core competencies: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional. Pedagogical competence refers to the ability to manage student learning, including understanding learners, planning and implementing instruction, assessing learning outcomes, and developing students' potential (Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005).

Personal competence reflects the teacher's character as a role model, while professional competence involves mastery of subject matter. Social competence refers to the ability to interact effectively with students, colleagues, parents, and the community.

The Ministry of National Education outlines ten key indicators of pedagogical competence:

1. Understanding students' characteristics in physical, moral, spiritual, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual aspects.
2. Mastering learning theories and educational principles.
3. Developing subject-specific curriculum.
4. Conducting effective learning.
5. Utilizing information and communication technology in learning.
6. Facilitating the development of students' potential.
7. Communicating effectively, empathetically, and politely.
8. Assessing the learning process and outcomes.
9. Using evaluation results to improve learning.
10. Reflecting to enhance the quality of learning (Habibullah, 2012).

Developing pedagogical competence requires continuous effort. According to Asmarani (Akbar, 2021), strategies include:

1. Reading educational literature.
2. Writing and reading scientific papers.
3. Staying updated with current news to understand social and technological changes.
4. Participating in professional training. These efforts help maintain a teacher's quality amid the evolving educational landscape.

Based on observations on July 29, 2023, at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan, several notable findings emerged:

1. The school implements a Center of Excellence program to enhance quality through partnerships with industry and to serve as a reference model for other schools.

2. Many alumni return to teach at the school, including the principal. A noticeable change is the improved Quran literacy among students.
3. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers arrive on time and follow a discipline system incentivized by the Muhammadiyah Education Council.
4. IRE learning processes are well-managed, with varied strategies and media, resulting in enthusiastic student engagement. Harmonious interactions among teachers and students were also observed.

Based on the review and observations, it is evident that pedagogical competence is essential for effective learning. Therefore, the researcher is motivated to conduct further investigation through a research proposal titled *“Analysis of Teachers’ Pedagogical Competence in the Islamic Religious Education Learning Process at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan.”*

Every human activity is inherently driven by a specific purpose, including this research, which aims to:

1. Describe the pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in the learning process at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan.
2. Analyze the IRE learning process at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan.
3. Identify the obstacles faced by IRE teachers in the learning process at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan.

The significance of this research can be seen in two aspects:

1. Scientific or Academic Significance.

This research can support academics in formulating educational policies aimed at improving the quality of education across various levels and institutions. It also contributes to the body of knowledge, particularly in the field of education science.

2. Practical Application.

The study offers insight into the role of teachers’ pedagogical competence, which can be used by the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and other relevant stakeholders as input for improving the learning process in schools—especially at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan—so that it becomes more effective and produces graduates who are globally competitive.

A. Teacher’s Pedagogical Competence

1. Definition of Competence

Competence is a person's ability to carry out tasks acquired through education and training (Hamzah B. Uno & Wibowo, 2012). According to Law No. 14 of 2005, teacher competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that a teacher must possess, internalize, and master in carrying out professional duties. Competence includes mastery of knowledge, skills, and values reflected in habitual thinking and acting, so that a teacher is not only knowledgeable but also capable of effectively transferring knowledge to students.

In the teaching context, teacher competence is a special ability that enables a teacher to perform tasks optimally. Teacher competence includes pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies acquired through professional education (Wibowo, 2012). Pedagogical competence is closely related to mastery of educational sciences and good teaching ability, including intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic aspects (Sagala, 2009).

Gordon (as cited by E. Mulyasa, 2007) identifies six aspects of competence: knowledge, understanding, skills, values, attitudes, and interests. Teacher competence reflects rational ability and observable behavior in carrying out educational tasks.

2. Definition of Pedagogics

The word pedagogics originates from the Greek words "Paedos" (child) and "Agogos" (to lead or guide). Pedagogics means the science of guiding children to become independent and responsible (Zurinal, 2006; Tilaar, 2015). Hoogveld defines pedagogics as the science that studies how to guide children to independently complete life tasks (Uyoh Sadulloh, 2011).

According to the National Board of Education Standards (BNSP), pedagogical competence is the ability to manage students, including understanding educational foundations, understanding students, curriculum development, designing and implementing educational and dialogic learning, evaluating learning outcomes, and developing students' potential (Jejen Musfah, 2011). This competence reflects a teacher's ability to teach effectively and develop students' potential.

3. Development of Teacher's Pedagogical Competence

Teacher education institutions play an important role in preparing competent prospective teachers at various education levels (Oemar Hamalik, 2002). Technological advances require teachers not only to be information providers but also facilitators, motivators, and guides who give students opportunities to actively seek and process information (Hamzah, 2008).

Pedagogical competence focuses on the ability to design learning, conduct educational and dialogic teaching, and evaluate learning outcomes (Suprihatiningrum, 2013). Teachers must understand students, overcome learning problems, design and implement learning, evaluate outcomes, and develop students' potential.

Indicators of Teacher's Pedagogical Competence

According to Zamania (2008), indicators include:

- a) Understanding students: recognizing cognitive development characteristics, personality development principles, and students' potential differences.
- b) Designing learning: formulating objectives, selecting methods, organizing materials, using media, managing the classroom, and designing assessments.
- c) Implementing learning: opening lessons with motivation, managing learning activities, using media, and communicating effectively with students.
- d) Evaluating learning outcomes: designing and conducting assessments, analyzing results, and using evaluation results to improve learning quality.
- e) Developing students' potential: facilitating academic and non-academic potential according to students' abilities.

B. Competence in the Learning Process

A professional teacher must act as a facilitator, motivator, and guide who provides opportunities for students to actively learn and process information independently. Teachers' expertise must continually develop beyond mastering teaching principles to include the ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning in a dialogic and educational manner (Harahap, 2018).

C. Learning Process

Learning is an activity process of teaching that results in behavioral changes and new knowledge acquisition in students (Aunurrahman, 2009). The learning process is

essentially an interaction between teacher and students aimed at achieving educational goals.

D. Islamic Religious Education

1. Definition

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) combines the concepts of education and Islam. Education is understood as a process to develop students' moral and intellectual potential, with teachers playing a crucial role in motivation and creating a conducive environment. Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle view education as the development of true knowledge and proper attitudes. Islamic scholars such as Al-Ghazali see education as an effort to remove bad morals and instill good ones, bringing students closer to God and achieving happiness in this life and the hereafter. Ibn Khaldun expands education as a lifelong process of awareness and absorption of life events.

Islamic education aims to form a complete Muslim personality by developing both physical and spiritual potentials based on Quran and Sunnah values. Education is a reciprocal process where students are free individuals with potential to be nurtured, and educators are key motivators and environment creators. The ultimate goal is to produce intelligent individuals with good character who find salvation and happiness.

Islam is defined as the religion revealed by God through His prophets, regulating human relations with God, others, and the universe. Islamic Religious Education is the process of developing human potential toward becoming a true Islamic personality, preparing individuals to live perfectly and happily with good morals, intellect, feelings, skills, and communication (Zakiah Daradjat). The education process includes teaching students to behave according to Islamic values and learn Islamic teachings deeply. As a subject, PAI is mandatory in Indonesian schools, aiming not just to transfer knowledge but to build students' faith, piety, and consistent practice of Islam.

2. Foundations

The implementation of Islamic education rests on three main foundations:

- a) Legal Foundation: Based on national laws including Pancasila's first principle (Belief in One God), the 1945 Constitution guaranteeing religious freedom, and the Education Law that mandates religious education in formal, nonformal, and informal settings.
- b) Religious Foundation: Rooted in Quranic verses and Hadiths commanding the call to God with wisdom and good preaching.
- c) Psychological Foundation: Addresses human psychological needs for spiritual peace and guidance in life.

3. Objectives

The objectives of Islamic Religious Education are to enhance students' faith, understanding, appreciation, and practice of Islam, producing Muslims who are faithful, pious, and morally upright in personal, social, national, and global life. Unlike general education which focuses on knowledge transfer, Islamic education holistically integrates awareness of human responsibility as God's creation and vicegerent on earth. It aims to develop "insan kamil" (perfect human beings) who embody religious, cultural, and scientific dimensions and fulfill their divine roles.

4. Functions

Islamic education functions to:

- a) Develop faith and piety rooted in family and community.
- b) Channel religious talents and correct misunderstandings.

- c) Prevent negative influences and help students adapt to their environment.
- d) Provide guidance for living a meaningful, balanced life in accordance with Islamic values.
- e) Equip students with both Islamic cultural understanding and mastery of science and technology.

5. Scope

The scope of Islamic education includes:

- a) Faith and spirituality.
- b) Intellectual understanding of Islamic teachings.
- c) Spiritual experiences.
- d) Practical application of Islamic values in personal and social contexts.

6. Methods

Various methods are employed to achieve educational goals, such as:

- a) Mutual education and storytelling.
- b) Guidance and exemplary behavior.
- c) Discussions, Q&A sessions, and parables.
- d) Encouragement, warnings, repentance exercises, drills, and lectures.

All methods aim to bring students closer to Allah SWT and foster internalization of Islamic values.

7. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Supporting factors include cooperation among teachers, a supportive religious community, availability of educational resources, students' hereditary and personality traits, family support, and conducive environment. Inhibiting factors involve peer pressure, lack of classroom attention, limited instructional time, busy or indifferent parents, and unsupportive surroundings.

This summary condenses the original detailed discussion into a concise form suitable for about five pages, while preserving the key ideas and concepts.

B. METHOD

1. Research Location and Time

The research was conducted from October 2023 to December 2024 at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan, following the announcement of the Internal Grant from Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi Medan. The location was chosen for several reasons: the researcher's frequent visits to the school and observation of teachers' pedagogical competence, a lack of previous specific studies on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers' pedagogical competence at this school, and the researcher's prior community service experience there.

2. Type and Scope of Research

This study uses a qualitative approach, which produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observed behavior. According to Kirk and Miller, qualitative research is a tradition in social sciences that relies on human observation. The aim is to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects-such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions-holistically and within their natural context, using descriptive language. In education, qualitative research helps to understand educators' and students' behaviors in the learning process. Thus, this

research employs qualitative methods to generate descriptive insights about the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers.

3. Data Collection Methods

The main research instrument is the researcher. Several data collection techniques are used:

a. Observation

Direct observation of the research setting, context, and meaning, focusing on space, actors, activities, events, and feelings. An observation guide is used to systematically record findings about PAI teachers' pedagogical competence during learning at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan.

b. Interviews

Interviews are conducted to gather in-depth information from a small number of respondents, including teachers and students. The researcher uses a structured interview guide to ensure data is collected in an organized and targeted manner.

c. Documentation

Document analysis involves collecting and examining relevant documents such as school profiles, vision and mission statements, academic works, photos, meeting records, and other materials that support research credibility.

4. Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis follows Miles and Huberman's model, which consists of three steps:

a. Data Reduction

Sorting and focusing data to highlight key points relevant to the research focus. Unnecessary data is discarded, and important information is organized for easier analysis.

b. Data Display

Organizing and presenting reduced data in narrative form, making it easier to interpret and draw conclusions. The data is systematically arranged and described to clarify findings related to the research questions.

c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification.

Drawing initial conclusions about teachers' pedagogical competence, which are then verified and refined as new data emerges. This process ensures that conclusions are objective and based on accurate information.

5. Research Procedures

The research is divided into four stages:

a. Preparation:

- 1) Designing the research plan
- 2) Assessing the research site conceptually and practically
- 3) Obtaining research permits
- 4) Identifying respondents
- 5) Preparing research equipment
- 6) Ensuring ethical conduct with school stakeholders

b. Fieldwork:

- 1) Conducting direct observations on the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers
- 2) Interviewing the principal, PAI teachers, and students

- 3) Collecting relevant data and documents
 - 4) Taking supporting photographs
- c. Data Analysis

Processing and analyzing collected data using the aforementioned methods
- d. Reporting

Writing and compiling the research findings.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Pedagogical Competence of Islamic Religious Education Teachers at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation conducted with the principal and PAI teachers at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan, the following findings were obtained regarding the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers in the learning process.

A. Learning Planning

1. RPP Development Process

According to Mr. Bambang Permadi, S.Pd.I, PAI teacher, lesson planning is carried out collaboratively at the beginning of the academic year through a workshop on preparing the Lesson Plan (RPP). The 2013 Curriculum is used as the basis, with Core Competencies (KI) and Basic Competencies (KD) aligned accordingly. Other components are developed by teachers based on available resources and school potential.

Mr. Bambang emphasizes that the RPP serves as a teaching guideline and must be prepared before teaching. However, its implementation may be adapted to the classroom situation, with possible adjustments or changes in learning models as needed.

2. Main Components of RPP

Analysis of the interviews and observations reveals that the RPP, in accordance with the 2013 Curriculum, must include:

- a) School identity (name, subject, class/semester, main material, time allocation)
- b) Core Competencies (KI) and Basic Competencies (KD) with indicators
- c) Learning objectives
- d) Exploration of learning materials
- e) Learning methods
- f) Media, tools, and learning resources
- g) Detailed learning steps
- h) Student assessment sheets

Some technical modifications are made to the RPP components, such as the use of LCD projectors, cards, learning trees, whiteboards, and internet networks. Learning resources include Islamic Religion and Character Education textbooks, student

worksheets, and other relevant books. These modifications are necessary due to limited facilities and the insufficient number of lesson hours for Islamic Religious Education.

3. RPP Assessment Results

An analysis and scoring of the RPPs created by PAI teachers show that most components are in accordance with the 2013 Curriculum and Ministry of Education regulations. The scoring table indicates that the teachers' RPPs achieve a high level of compliance, with an overall score of 89.9, classified as "appropriate."

B. Learning Implementation

1. Allocation and Facilities

As explained by Ms. Suriati Sirait, PAI teacher, PAI lessons are allocated three hours per week, divided into two sessions (90 minutes and 45 minutes). Each classroom is equipped with an LCD projector and Wi-Fi to support learning.

2. Classroom Management and Methods

Ms. Suriati highlights the importance of classroom control and the selection of appropriate learning models and methods. Creative teachers who vary their methods and models can keep students engaged and make religious lessons enjoyable.

The learning process typically begins with reciting short surahs, checking attendance, and communicating learning objectives verbally or via LCD. In the core activity, the teacher's role is limited to about 30% of the session, in line with the 2013 Curriculum, while students are encouraged to be active participants. The lesson ends with a summary, teacher reinforcement, or evaluation, and assignments for the next session.

3. Model Selection

Mr. Ricky Afriansyah, another PAI teacher, states that the choice of learning model depends on the material and classroom conditions. Not all classes can use the same model; it must be tailored to the students' average potential. He notes that traditional lecture methods are still common but should be varied to avoid monotony and keep students interested.

Mr. M. Hakimi Hamdani adds that starting with a short lecture helps create a conducive atmosphere, but teachers should combine several methods within a single lesson, depending on classroom needs.

4. Observed Learning Activities

Classroom observations reveal the following stages:

- a) Preparation of media and tools (e.g., videos about the Prophet Muhammad's life, speakers, laptops, LCD)
- b) Opening activities (greetings, recitation, attendance, stating objectives)
- c) Core activities (watching videos, group work, creative assignments such as composing songs about the Prophet's life, storytelling, group presentations)
- d) Closing activities (summarizing, Q&A, assigning homework, closing prayers)

C. Assessment of Learning Process and Outcomes

1. Assessment Methods

Assessment covers attitudes, knowledge, and skills, with a minimum passing grade (KKM) of 80. Attitude assessment is based on classroom and extracurricular observations, knowledge is assessed through tests and quizzes (daily, midterm, and final exams), and skills are evaluated through practical assignments.

Mr. Bambang Permadi notes that not all types of assessment are used for every lesson; self and peer assessments are only conducted if time allows. Attitude is mainly assessed during presentations, while Quran and tajwid skills are evaluated through practice. Knowledge is assessed via quizzes, remedial work, and assignments, with midterm and final exams graded separately.

2. Assessment Observations

Observation confirms that teachers assess students' attitudes, knowledge, and soft skills regularly, using daily, weekly, monthly, midterm, and final assessments. The assessment process is structured and comprehensive.

D. Supervision of Learning

1. Internal and External Supervision

Ms. Suriati Sirait explains that supervision is conducted by the principal through document checks and classroom visits. The Department of Religious Affairs (Depag) also supervises through periodic visits and discussions, typically every three months.

2. Professional Development

To improve PAI teacher quality, training is held every six months by the Muhammadiyah PAI Teachers' Working Group (MGM PPAI) across Medan. Monthly subject teacher meetings (MGMP) are also held, providing a forum for discussion and sharing best practices.

3. Continuous Evaluation

Regular evaluations are held by the school and the Department of Religious Affairs, involving training and meetings to ensure quality teaching and effective supervision, both internally and externally.

E. The Role of Pedagogical Competence in PAI Learning

1. Building Teacher-Student Relationships

Pedagogical competence is crucial for teachers to understand their students and build emotional connections, facilitating harmonious communication and effective teaching.

2. Principal's Perspective

According to Principal Mr. Taufik Pasaribu, S.Pd., PAI teachers at the school have good competence, which continues to improve due to their teaching experience. To enhance the quality of religious education, teachers are required to possess strong pedagogical competence.

F. Challenges and Recommendations

1. Challenges

- a) Limited facilities and learning resources
- b) Insufficient lesson hours for PAI

- c) Need for more varied and interactive teaching methods
- 2. Recommendations
 - a) Continue professional development and training for teachers
 - b) Improve school facilities and access to learning resources
 - c) Encourage teachers to innovate and diversify teaching methods

Strengthen supervision and evaluation systems.

Analysis/Discussion

In the landscape of modern education, the role of the teacher extends beyond mere transmission of knowledge. In religious education, particularly Islamic Religious Education (IRE), the teacher becomes not only a source of information but also a model of moral character, spiritual guidance, and personal development. At Muhammadiyah 02 Private Senior High School in Medan, the quality and effectiveness of IRE are closely tied to the pedagogical competence of its educators. Pedagogical competence encompasses the teacher's ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning processes effectively and meaningfully. This analysis explores the dimensions of pedagogical competence among IRE teachers at the school, emphasizing how it influences the overall quality of religious instruction and student outcomes.

Understanding Pedagogical Competence

Pedagogical competence refers to a set of abilities that enable teachers to manage the teaching-learning process professionally. According to the Indonesian National Education Standards (Permendiknas No. 16 Tahun 2007), pedagogical competence includes understanding students' characteristics, mastering learning theories and principles, developing lesson plans, utilizing learning technologies, and conducting assessments. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, this competence must also align with Islamic values and integrate religious concepts into everyday student experiences.

Teachers of IRE are expected not only to deliver content from the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, and Islamic history but also to instill values like honesty, discipline, and compassion. Pedagogical competence is thus central to fulfilling both the cognitive and affective dimensions of Islamic education.

The Role of Pedagogical Competence in the IRE Learning Process

The learning process of IRE involves complex interactions between content, context, methodology, and learners. The teacher must act as a facilitator who can bridge classical Islamic teachings with contemporary challenges faced by students. At Muhammadiyah 02 Private Senior High School Medan, pedagogical competence plays a vital role in ensuring this integration.

1. Planning Learning Activities
2. One of the key indicators of pedagogical competence is the ability to design learning activities that are structured, relevant, and student-centered. At Muhammadiyah 02, lesson plans (RPP) prepared by IRE teachers often reflect a balance between knowledge dissemination and character development. Effective

teachers construct objectives that include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, ensuring a holistic approach.

However, field observations and interviews suggest variability in planning quality. While some teachers adopt innovative models like inquiry-based learning or project-based approaches aligned with Islamic themes, others rely on traditional lecture-based methods. This inconsistency highlights the need for more standardized professional development initiatives.

3. Understanding Learner Characteristics

Students at the senior high school level are at a critical stage of moral and intellectual development. IRE teachers must understand their students' backgrounds, learning styles, and socio-emotional conditions. Teachers who exhibit high pedagogical competence at Muhammadiyah 02 are often those who engage students personally, recognize their needs, and provide differentiated instruction.

Teachers who fail to adapt their teaching strategies may find students disengaged or resistant, especially in a subject that requires internalization of values rather than rote memorization.

4. Mastery of Learning Theories and Methodologies

IRE teachers must be well-versed in contemporary educational theories—constructivism, multiple intelligences, socio-cultural learning—and translate these into effective practice. At Muhammadiyah 02, some teachers have made commendable efforts in applying these theories, for instance, using group discussions and case studies that encourage critical thinking about Islamic ethical issues.

However, the adoption of such methods is not yet widespread. A common challenge lies in the limited availability of training specifically tailored to religious education teachers. As a result, some continue to use one-way communication without providing opportunities for reflection or dialogue, which are essential in value-based education.

5. Utilization of Learning Media and Technology

In the digital era, the use of multimedia and technology in education has become indispensable. Pedagogically competent IRE teachers utilize PowerPoint, videos, online quizzes, and educational apps to enrich their teaching. At Muhammadiyah 02, some classrooms are equipped with basic digital infrastructure, and a few teachers have integrated YouTube Islamic lectures, online discussion forums, or educational platforms like Google Classroom.

Nevertheless, technological integration remains limited. Constraints include both the teachers' digital literacy and infrastructure gaps. Strengthening pedagogical competence in this area can significantly improve student engagement and the contextualization of Islamic teachings.

6. Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment in IRE should not only measure knowledge but also behavioral change and value internalization. Competent teachers at Muhammadiyah 02 employ a variety of assessment tools—written tests, observation sheets, student portfolios, and self-reflection journals. These tools help assess both the understanding and the practice of Islamic principles.

However, it is observed that standardized written tests still dominate. There is a lack of formative assessments aimed at tracking ongoing value development. Teachers need more training in designing authentic assessments that reflect the core objectives of Islamic education.

Challenges in Developing Pedagogical Competence

While the importance of pedagogical competence is well recognized, several challenges hinder its development among IRE teachers at Muhammadiyah 02:

1. **Lack of Continuous Professional Development (CPD).**
Many teachers report limited access to CPD programs, especially those focused on Islamic pedagogy. While general pedagogical training is occasionally offered, it often does not address the unique needs of religious education.
2. **Time Constraints and Workload.**
Teachers are often burdened with administrative tasks, leaving little time for innovation and lesson planning. This affects the depth and creativity of their instructional approach.
3. **Curriculum Overload.**
The national curriculum mandates a broad scope of topics in a limited timeframe. Teachers may feel pressured to cover content quickly rather than focus on in-depth discussion or student-centered activities.
4. **Resource Limitations.**
Some classrooms lack adequate learning media, books, or digital devices. This restricts the application of diverse teaching strategies and limits the potential of modern pedagogy.

Opportunities and Recommendations for Improvement

Despite the challenges, Muhammadiyah 02 has a strong foundation and institutional support that can be leveraged for improving pedagogical competence.

1. **Institutional Support for Training**
The school management should partner with universities or Islamic education training centers to provide structured, periodic training in pedagogy and curriculum innovation. Emphasis should be placed on contextualizing Islamic teachings in modern society.
2. **Peer Collaboration and Learning Communities**
3. **Establishing teacher learning communities (TLCs) or subject-based groups** can foster peer mentoring and collaborative lesson planning. This not only improves competence but also builds morale and reduces professional isolation.
4. **Technology Integration Programs**
Teachers need targeted support to integrate digital tools into their IRE classes. Workshops on educational technology tailored to religious subjects can bridge the digital gap.
5. **Monitoring and Reflective Practices**
Teachers should be encouraged to engage in reflective teaching practices—through teaching journals, peer observations, and student feedback—to continuously evaluate and refine their strategies.
6. **Student-Centered Curriculum Design.**
Curriculum adaptation at the local level should allow more flexibility for IRE teachers to develop modules that resonate with students' real-life situations.

Topics such as Islamic ethics in digital life, environmental responsibility in Islam, or interfaith tolerance can make the subject more relevant.

CONCLUSION

The pedagogical competence of PAI teachers at SMA Swasta Muhammadiyah 02 Medan is generally in accordance with the 2013 Curriculum and Ministry of Education standards. Teachers are proactive in planning, implementing, and assessing learning, with regular supervision and professional development activities in place. Despite some challenges, ongoing efforts are made to enhance the quality of Islamic Religious Education through collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement.

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