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ENHANCING TEACHER COMPETENCE THROUGH KKG PAI'S ROLE: A CASE STUDY IN LUMBANG, PROBOLINGGO

Article Info

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Abstract

The role of the Islamic education teacher work group is very important in building the quality of teacher competence. The purpose of this research is to find out the work program of the Islamic Education Teacher Work Group (KKG) in building the quality of Islamic Education teacher competence, to know the strategies of the Islamic Education KKG in building the quality of teacher competence, and to know the contribution of KKG in building the quality of Islamic Education teacher competence in Lumbang District, Probolinggo Regency. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Data collection methods consist of observation and interviews with teachers who are members of the KKG. The informants are members of KKG in Lumbang District, Probolinggo Regency. The existence of a Work Program organized by the Islamic Education KKG means the competence possessed by Islamic Education teachers in Lumbang District, Probolinggo Regency. The results of this study indicate that the development of pedagogical competence of Islamic Education teachers in Lumbang District, Probolinggo Regency in terms of: 1) Mastering learning theory and principle, teachers develop various teaching techniques, motivate students with responsive and reciprocal stimulus. 2) Curriculum development, teachers are able to formulate, organize, design lesson planning programs, use media and learning models by using information and communication technology media. 3) In the development of educational activities, teachers have been able to pay attention to the level of needs, environment, opportunities, intellectuality, spirituality, psychology, and emotional aspects of students by applying skills.

Keywords: *PAI KKG, Competencies, PAI Teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher competency is a critical factor that influences student learning outcomes. The importance of teachers' social and emotional competence in developing supportive teacher-student relationships and effective classroom management, which have a positive impact on student learning outcomes. A strong correlation exists between teacher quality, as measured by test scores, and student failure rates on competency exams, indicating that higher teacher quality leads to

improved student performance. In addition, Istiqomah (2019, p. 1-16) shows the direct impact of teacher competence on student learning outcomes, a finding that is further supported by Sari (2020, p. 508) , which emphasizes the positive influence of teacher competence on student achievement.

Furthermore, studies by Septiani (2021, p. 143) and {Formatting Citation} emphasize the importance of teacher competence, including pedagogical skills and subject knowledge, in positively influencing students' academic performance and motivation. Suarta (2022, p. 244–264) also shows that local knowledge and cultural competence of teachers contribute to improving student learning outcomes.

Continuous professional development is essential for teachers to improve their competence and have a positive impact on student learning outcomes. Maintaining teacher quality involves ongoing participation in professional development activities throughout their careers. This continuous learning ensures that teachers stay current with the latest pedagogical approaches, subject knowledge, and instructional strategies, ultimately leading to improved instructional quality and student development. In addition, Istiqomah (2019, p. 1-16) emphasizes the importance of teacher competency development programs in improving student learning achievement. Continuous professional development programs, both at the government and school levels, are important to improve teacher competency, which directly correlates with improved student learning outcomes. Yangambi (2021, p. 2283–2300) emphasizes that in the current educational landscape, characterized by a focus on improving student achievement, ongoing professional development is not only beneficial but essential for school systems committed to improving learning outcomes. Engaging in ongoing professional development allows teachers to refine their skills, explore innovative teaching practices, and address emerging challenges in education, ultimately benefiting student achievement.

Other research also highlights that the concept of professional agency, which includes motivation, self-efficacy, and teacher skills to improve learning. Continuous professional development plays an important role in fostering teachers' professional agency, empowering them to take responsibility for their professional growth, adapt to changing educational contexts, and increase their effectiveness in the classroom. Apart from that, Suwartono (2020, p. 3230-3235) emphasize the importance of teacher professionalism and performance in encouraging the quality of education. Teachers who engage in ongoing professional development significantly contribute to improving the overall quality of education. In conclusion, teacher competency is fundamental to the quality of education, enabling teachers to create engaging learning environments, encourage student growth, and improve the overall quality of education.

Continuous professional development and support mechanisms such as the PAI KKG (Islamic Religious Education Teacher Working Group) play an important role in improving the pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers. The implementation of clinical supervision, as highlighted by Bustami (2022, p. 7339–7344) has been effective in increasing the professional competence of PAI teachers by increasing their mastery of teaching material, planning and implementing learning activities, as well as assessing learning outcomes.

In addition, academic supervision and participation in Teacher Working Groups, as discussed by Saleh (2021, p. 18-25) have played an important role in improving the pedagogical competence of school teachers base. These activities have contributed to improving teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes in Islamic religious education. In addition, student-based education, as explained by (Tambak et al., 2022, p. 52), has been proven to have a positive impact on the pedagogical competence of madrasa teachers in teaching Islamic religious education. By focusing on student needs and engagement, teachers can improve their teaching strategies, classroom management, and assessment practices, ultimately improving the quality of education and student achievement. The collaborative nature of the PAI KKG provides a platform for teachers to exchange best practices, engage in professional dialogue, and work collectively to improve their pedagogical skills and effectiveness in delivering Islamic education.

Through collaborative efforts within the PAI KKG and the implementation of effective supervision and support structures, Islamic Religious Education teachers can continue to improve their pedagogical competence, adapt to evolving educational practices, and create a more engaging and effective learning environment for their students. These initiatives make a significant contribution to improving the overall quality of education in schools, especially in the context of Islamic religious education. KKG PAI functions as a platform that encourages increased collaboration and support among Islamic Religious Education teachers through various initiatives and activities. Research by Hakiman (2021, p. 139-158) emphasizes the importance of collaboration between Islamic Religious Education teachers, class teachers, accompanying teachers, parents, psychologists, counselors, therapists, pedagogues, and compliance with school policies to achieve optimal results in religious instruction. This collaborative approach ensures that teachers work together effectively to support student learning and development.

Furthermore, the significance of developing Islamic teacher education programs to standardize pedagogy and curriculum based on the principles of Islamic education. Such a program would contribute to raising the standards of Islamic schools and promote collaboration among teachers to improve the quality of education. By establishing a standardized pedagogical model,

teachers can align their practices and collaborate more effectively to improve educational outcomes. Additionally, collaborative practices, as highlighted by Rickard (2019, 309-326) not only enhance the vision for greater collaboration among teachers but also contribute to a stronger emphasis on collaborative practices among teacher educators. By engaging in collaborative projects and initiatives within the PAI KKG framework, teachers can share best practices, exchange ideas, and work collaboratively to improve their pedagogical skills and effectiveness in delivering Islamic education. Tabroni (2022, p. 779–786) emphasizes the role of PAI teachers in instilling the values of interreligious tolerance in students through collaborative efforts in the school environment. By organizing students to respect each other, promoting cooperation regardless of religious background, and creating a conducive environment with the support of school leadership, PAI teachers contribute to fostering a culture of tolerance and understanding among students.

Thus, PAI KKG has an important role in promoting collaboration and support among Islamic Religious Education teachers by providing a platform for sharing knowledge, implementing best practices, and working together to improve the quality of education. Through collaborative efforts, teachers can improve their pedagogical competence, create an inclusive learning environment, and contribute to the holistic development of students in Islamic education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe in depth the phenomena that occur in the field, especially regarding the role and function of the Teacher Working Group (KKG) in improving teacher competence. This approach was chosen because it is able to display data naturally and contextually according to the subject's views Miles & Huberman (1994, p. 71). The study was conducted in Lumbang District, Probolinggo Regency, with eight research subjects, consisting of five active teachers in KKG activities and three core KKG administrators, who were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted based on relevant theories regarding teacher professional development, while observation was used to directly observe the implementation of KKG activities. Documentation was obtained from archives, minutes, and activity reports. The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, thus producing new information related to the contribution of KKG in improving teacher competence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher Competence Theory

Teacher competence includes various aspects such as content knowledge, content pedagogical knowledge, practical competence, and cognitive competence (Supriyadi, 2022, p. 76–

87). This involves the ability to adapt teaching methods to meet the needs of individual students, especially in inclusive education settings (Majoko, 2019, p. 1-14) . Competencies such as pedagogical, cognitive, personality and social competencies are very important for teachers to become effective educators and role models (Supriyadi, 2022, p. 76–87) . In addition, teacher competency is a combination of knowledge, practice, and attitudes necessary for successful teaching (Song, 2019, p. 131–146) .

In the field of education, teacher competence is very important because it directly influences student progress and learning outcomes (Wurdiman & Fitriasari, 2020, p. 238-242) . Teachers with strong competencies can effectively manage learning, understand students, plan and implement educational strategies, and evaluate student development (Lamanauskas et al., 2020, p. 1-18) . Furthermore, teacher competency is related to professional development, because it functions as a tool for continuous improvement and learning (Ardilla et al., 2021, p. 310-315) . Ownership of competencies by teachers reflects the quality of the teaching and learning process.

In addition, teacher competence extends to areas such as ethical competence, digital competence, and health care competence, which are important for teachers to address the complexity of their role responsibly and effectively (Chorosova et al., 2022, p. 295-307) . Continuous development and assessment of teacher competency is essential to ensure that educators are ready to meet the demands of the ever-evolving educational landscape.

competency is a multifaceted concept that encompasses a wide range of skills and knowledge areas that are essential for effective teaching. It plays a critical role in student learning outcomes, professional development, and the overall quality of the educational system. Thus, pedagogical competency encompasses a variety of interrelated elements that are essential for teachers to excel in their role and promote student learning. By having a combination of teaching preparation, delivery, evaluation, professional development, innovation, pedagogical skills, and communication skills, educators can create impactful learning experiences and support the academic growth of their students.

Role and Function of KKG

To understand how Teacher Working Groups (KKG) help improve teacher professionalism and competence through their activities, we can draw insights from the available literature. KKG plays an important role in enhancing teachers' professional competence by providing a platform for collaboration, professional development and pedagogical improvement. Activities in the KKG aim to strengthen teacher competence in various aspects of teaching, such as pedagogy, subject mastery, and problem solving in the learning environment (Sholeh, 2021, p. 167–179). By being

involved in KKG activities, teachers can improve their skills in determining appropriate teaching models, strategies and approaches, which ultimately leads to improved student learning outcomes (Sholeh, 2021, p. 167–179).

In addition, KKG activities are designed to increase teachers' mastery in certain subjects or areas, which contributes to their overall competency and effectiveness in the classroom (Kusumaningrum & Suharno, 2019, p. 203). Through participation in KKG, teachers have the opportunity to deepen subject knowledge, perfect their teaching practices, and collaborate with colleagues to improve their professional skills (Kusumaningrum & Suharno, 2019, p. 203). Research shows that KKG activities, together with academic supervision, can significantly improve teachers' pedagogical competence (Saleh et al., 2021, p. 18-25) . By engaging in KKG forums and receiving academic supervision, elementary school teachers have demonstrated improvements in their teaching practices and pedagogical skills, resulting in improved student learning outcomes (Saleh et al., 2021, p. 18-25). The KKG functions as a professional development forum, where teachers can engage in inductive training models tailored to address their specific needs and increase their competence within the organization (Zakiah, L., Ms & Edwita, 2021, p. 483) . The collaborative nature of KKG activities allows teachers to share best practices, learn from each other, and collectively work to improve their professional skills and knowledge (Zakiah, L., Ms & Edwita, 2021, p. 483) .

In conclusion, KKG activities play a vital role in improving teacher professionalism and competence by providing opportunities for collaboration, professional development and skills improvement. Through participation in KKG, teachers can strengthen their pedagogical competence, subject mastery, and problem-solving skills, ultimately resulting in better teaching practices and better student outcomes.

The Teacher Working Group (KKG) has an important role in developing the school curriculum and contributing to improving the quality of education through various activities and initiatives. By utilizing the collaborative nature of KKG, teachers can actively participate in the curriculum design, implementation and evaluation process, thereby influencing the quality and effectiveness of educational programs (Usman et al., 2019, p. 97–108). One of the key aspects of the KKG's involvement in school curriculum development is the opportunity it provides for teachers to engage in professional dialogue, share best practices, and collectively design curriculum frameworks that are aligned with educational goals and standards (Hermita et al., 2021, p. 26) . Through Communities of Practice (CoP) facilitated by KKG, teachers can collaborate to develop innovative teaching strategies, integrate new pedagogical approaches, and adapt curriculum content to meet diverse student needs (Hermita et al., 2021, p. 26).

Additionally, the KKG serves as a platform for continuous professional development, where teachers can improve subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, and teaching practices to ensure the quality of education delivery (Usman et al., 2019, p. 97–108) . By participating in KKG activities, teachers can stay up to date on curriculum advances, educational trends, and best practices, ultimately contributing to improved learning and teaching outcomes (Hermita et al., 2021, p. 26). The involvement of teachers in KKG activities also encourages a culture of quality improvement in education by promoting accountability, self-evaluation and continuous improvement (Masoumi & Lindström, 2011, p. 27-41). Through the exchange of ideas, experiences, and feedback in a CoP, teachers can work collectively to refine curriculum structures, assessment methods, and teaching approaches to improve the overall quality of education (Hermita et al., 2021, p. 26).

Furthermore, the role of KKG in school curriculum development can lead to the creation of a more student-centred and engaging learning environment, where the curriculum is tailored to meet the needs and interests of learners. By incorporating student feedback, innovative teaching practices, and interactive learning experiences, teachers within the KKG framework can contribute to the development of high-quality educational programs that promote student success and academic achievement. Therefore, KKG has an important role in developing the school curriculum by facilitating collaboration, professional development and quality improvement among teachers. Through active participation in KKG activities, educators can contribute to the design, implementation and improvement of curriculum frameworks that support the delivery of high-quality education and student learning outcomes. KKG plays an important role in facilitating collaboration among teachers to share best practices and solutions to challenges in teaching. By utilizing the collaborative platform provided by the KKG, educators can engage in professional dialogue, exchange ideas, and collectively work to address common teaching issues.

In this case, the KKG serves as a valuable platform for teachers to collaborate, share best practices, and jointly overcome challenges in teaching. By engaging in professional dialogue, exchanging experiences, and working collaboratively within the framework of the KKG, educators can improve their teaching practices, improve student learning outcomes, and contribute to the overall quality of education.

Definition of KKG and KKG PAI

Teacher Working Groups (KKG) are collaborative forums where educators gather to share best practices, discuss teaching experiences, and jointly seek solutions to challenges faced in their respective schools. KKG in the educational context is to increase teacher professionalism, improve pedagogical competence, and encourage continuous professional development among educators.

The KKG serves as a platform for teachers to engage in professional dialogue, exchange ideas, and collaborate on various educational initiatives. By sharing experiences, observing each other's practices, and participating in discussions, teachers in KKG can improve their teaching skills and knowledge. Through collaborative efforts, KKG promotes a culture of continuous learning and improvement among educators (Adning et al., 2019, p. 1-11)

KKG plays an important role in strengthening teacher subject mastery and pedagogical competence (Wachjuni et al., 2022, p. 82-94) . By participating in KKG activities, educators can deepen their expertise in specific subjects, improve their instructional practices, and learn from each other's innovative strategies (Wachjuni et al., 2022, p. 82-94). The KKG also provides opportunities for teachers to be involved in training programs, workshops and professional development activities to improve their competence.

In addition, KKG contributes to the development of a supportive professional community where teachers can share insights, provide mutual assistance, and overcome teaching challenges together. By encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing, KKG helps educators overcome obstacles, improve their teaching practices, and improve the quality of education delivery. KKG is a valuable forum and tool for educators to collaborate, share best practices, and work together to improve teaching practices and student learning outcomes. By promoting a culture of continuous learning, professional development, and collaboration, KKG plays an important role in enhancing teacher professionalism and creating a supportive educational environment. The Islamic Religious Education Teacher Working Group (KKG PAI) is a special forum in the education system that focuses on professional development, collaboration and knowledge sharing among Islamic Religious Education teachers. The main objective of the PAI KKG is to improve the quality of teaching, pedagogical competence, and mastery of material related to Islamic education in the school context.

Compared to general KKG, the role of PAI KKG is more specific and tailored to the unique needs and challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education teachers. Lumbang District PAI KKG is a place for educators to discuss and share best practices related to teaching Islamic values, developing emotional intelligence, promoting discipline, and increasing students' understanding of religious teachings (Alimni et al., 2022, p. 1881; Harianto & Kandedes, 2023, p. 18–26; Nasution et al., 2022, p. 4325–4332) . The focus of the PAI KKG is on developing teacher competency in delivering Islamic education, transmitting Islamic values, and promoting interfaith tolerance among students (Bustami et al., 2022; Nurfuadi, 2020, p. 7339–7344) .

Apart from that, the PAI KKG sub-district. Lumbang plays an important role in integrating Islamic values and teachings into the curriculum, utilizing Information and Communication

Technology (ICT) in teaching, and adapting to the challenges posed by events such as the pandemic several years ago, (Cahyono et al., 2022) . Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the PAI KKG are tasked with instilling religious moderation, promoting multiculturalism, and increasing students' understanding of Islamic principles (Wahyuningsih et al., 2022, p. 4756–4763) . This forum also emphasizes the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing emotional intelligence, discipline and character

In short, the Islamic Religious Education Teacher Working Group (KKG PAI) serves as a special platform for Islamic Religious Education teachers to collaborate, share best practices, and address unique aspects of teaching Islamic values and principles. By focusing on the special needs of Islamic education, KKG PAI contributes to the professional development and pedagogical competence of teachers in delivering high quality Islamic Religious Education in the education system.

Strategies and Methods for Developing PAI Teacher Competence Through KKG Activities

The collaborative learning strategy implemented by the Lumbang District Islamic Religious Education Teacher Working Group (KKG PAI) can significantly increase teacher competency and facilitate professional growth in the context of Islamic education. By utilizing a collaborative learning approach tailored to the specific needs of Islamic Religious Education teachers, Lumbang District PAI KKG can create a supportive environment for professional development and knowledge sharing. The following are several collaborative learning strategies that can be implemented by the Lumbang District PAI KKG to improve teacher competency and encourage professional growth:

First, Peer Coaching and Mentoring: Establishing a peer coaching and mentoring program within the PAI KKG can provide an opportunity for experienced teachers to support and guide their colleagues in improving their teaching practices. Collaboration between colleagues allows sharing of expertise, feedback and best practices, which ultimately increases teacher competency (Sinaga et al., 2022, p. 757-766).

Second, Action Research Groups: Encouraging teachers in PAI KKG to form action research groups can promote collaborative inquiry into effective teaching strategies and pedagogical approaches specific to Islamic education. By engaging in action research projects, teachers can reflect on their practice, experiment with new methods, and collectively contribute to professional growth (Nguyen & Ng, 2020, p. 638–651)

Third, Professional Learning Community: Forming a professional learning community in PAI KKG can facilitate collaborative learning and knowledge sharing among educators. This

community provides a platform for teachers to engage in discussions, share resources, and collaborate on curriculum development, ultimately enhancing teacher competency and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Fourth, Collaborative Lesson Planning: Encouraging teachers to collaborate in lesson planning and curriculum design can promote the exchange of ideas and innovative teaching practices in PAI KKG. By working together to develop lesson plans that integrate Islamic teachings and values, teachers can improve their pedagogical skills and contribute to professional growth

Fifth, Training and Seminars: Organizing training and seminars that focus on Islamic pedagogy, values-based education, and subject-specific content can provide opportunities for teachers in PAI KKG to improve their knowledge and skills. By participating in collaborative learning experiences, educators can expand their competencies and stay abreast of best practices in Islamic education (Mantra, 2019)

Sixth, Digital Learning Platform: Utilizing digital learning platforms in PAI KKG can facilitate collaborative learning and knowledge sharing between teachers. Online forums, webinars, and virtual communities can provide a space for educators to engage in discussions, share resources, and collaborate on professional development initiatives, thereby increasing teacher competency (Tammets et al., 2022, p. 620-633) .

Seventh, Al Qur'an, tartil and qiro'ah literacy program. Al-Qur'an literacy is the ability to read, understand and practice the teachings of the Al-Qur'an. The tartil and qiro'ah program aims to improve the ability to read the Koran correctly and beautifully. Which aims to improve the quality of Al-Qur'an reading among teachers and students, as well as fostering love for the Al-Qur'an.

The following are the conclusions from the research findings as presented in the table below.

Table 1. Key Methods for Developing PAI Teacher Professionalism Through KKG PAI

No.	Strategy / Method	Brief Description	Purpose / Benefits
1	Peer Coaching and Mentoring	A program where experienced teachers guide and support their peers in improving teaching practices.	Enhances competency through sharing best practices and constructive feedback.
2	Action Research Groups	Groups of teachers conduct collaborative action research on teaching strategies and pedagogical approaches specific to Islamic education.	Facilitates reflection and experimentation with new methods for professional development.
3	Professional Learning Community	A professional learning community where teachers engage in discussions, share resources,	Improves teacher competency and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

		and collaborate on curriculum development.	
4	Collaborative Lesson Planning	Teachers work together to design lesson plans and curriculum that incorporate Islamic values and teachings.	Enhances pedagogical skills and fosters innovative teaching practices.
5	Training and Seminars	Organized trainings and seminars focusing on Islamic pedagogy, values-based education, and subject-specific content.	Expands knowledge, updates teaching competencies, and improves instructional quality.
6	Digital Learning Platform	Utilization of online platforms such as forums, webinars, and virtual communities for discussions and collaborative professional development.	Facilitates collaboration across regions and broadens access to educational resources.
7	Al-Qur'an Literacy, Tartil, and Qiro'ah Program	Activities designed to improve the ability to read the Qur'an correctly (tartil) and melodiously (qiro'ah), and to understand and practice its teachings.	Enhances Qur'anic reading quality among teachers and students and nurtures love for the Qur'an.

So, by implementing collaborative learning strategies that are tailored to the needs of Islamic Religious Education teachers in particular, PAI KKG can effectively improve teacher competency, encourage professional growth, and contribute to the continuous improvement of Islamic education practices. Through peer coaching, action research, professional learning communities, collaborative lesson planning, training and seminars, as well as digital learning platforms, as well as Al Qur'an, tartil and qiro'ah literacy programs, the PAI KKG program can create a supportive and collaborative environment that empowers educators to excel in their roles and improve the quality of Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

The Islamic Religious Education Teacher Working Group (KKG PAI) of Lumbang District, Probolinggo Regency, plays an important role in improving teacher competence through various activities such as training, workshops, discussions, and collaborative learning strategies. These activities have proven effective in improving teacher pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies. In addition, the creation of a collaborative and supportive learning environment also strengthens the quality of Islamic Religious Education learning in the region, despite challenges such as limited resources.

This study still has limitations, especially in the scope of the study which only focuses on one region and has not explored the long-term impact of KKG activities on the quality of student

learning outcomes. For this reason, it is recommended for further researchers to conduct comparative studies in other regions, as well as to disseminate the effectiveness of the KKG program in the long term. Further research can also explore the role of technology and digital innovation in supporting KKG PAI activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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