

Professional and Pedagogical Competence of Islamic Education Teachers and Its Function in Students' Learning Motivation and Achievement

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the professional and pedagogical competencies of Islamic Religious Education teachers as determinants of students' motivation and academic achievement. Using a qualitative library research approach, this study synthesizes concepts from various relevant theoretical sources. The findings indicate that professional competence contributes through mastery of Islamic subject matter, the ability to provide satisfactory explanations, the establishment of teacher credibility, and the development of high-quality teaching materials and assessment instruments. Its influence on motivation operates through stimulating students' curiosity, enhancing self-efficacy, and fostering positive perceptions of the value of Islamic Religious Education, pedagogical competence contributes through the ability to create engaging learning environments, establish effective communication, manage classrooms efficiently, design systematic instruction, utilize appropriate media, conduct authentic assessment, address individual differences, and develop students' potential. Its influence on motivation occurs through fulfilling students' need for affiliation, creating a sense of security, providing experiences of success, and strengthening self-efficacy. Both competencies are complementary and mutually reinforcing in determining students' motivation and achievement in Islamic Religious Education. This study implies the need for a balanced development of both competencies within teacher quality improvement programs and teacher education curricula.

Keywords: Competence, Pedagogical Competence, Islamic Education Teacher

A. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in schools plays a central role in shaping the character of students who are faithful and devout. This subject aims not only to transfer religious knowledge but also to instill Islamic values that serve as the foundation for daily behavior. The success of the PAI learning process is largely determined by the quality of the teachers, who spearhead the implementation of education in the classroom.¹ Islamic Education teachers are required to have adequate

¹ J Anderson dan S Lee, "Teacher competence and student engagement in faith-based schools," *Journal of Educational Research* 117, no. 2 (2024): 145.

competencies to be able to carry out this mandate.²Two key competencies highlighted in teacher education discourse are professional competency, related to mastery of subject matter, and pedagogical competency, related to the ability to manage learning. These two competencies serve as the foundation for determining the extent to which teachers can create meaningful learning experiences for their students.³

The professional competence of Islamic Education teachers includes mastery of the broad and complex substance of Islamic religious material.⁴ A professional PAI teacher is expected to understand the Quran and hadith, moral beliefs, jurisprudence, Islamic cultural history, and the Arabic language well and correctly. This mastery is not just memorization, but a deep understanding that allows the teacher to explain Islamic teachings comprehensively and contextually.⁵When teachers master the material well, they can answer students' questions with appropriate arguments, provide relevant illustrations, and connect religious teachings to the realities of life. Furthermore, pedagogical competence requires teachers to be able to design, implement, and evaluate learning using approaches that are appropriate to the characteristics of their students. The ability to choose appropriate methods, manage the classroom effectively, and conduct authentic assessments are integral to this competency.⁶

In daily learning practices, these two teacher competencies combine to influence the dynamics of student learning. Teachers who master the material but are unable to convey it effectively will struggle to arouse student interest. Conversely, teachers who are pedagogically skilled but have a shallow grasp of the material will be trapped in procedurally engaging presentations that lack substance. Ideally, these two competencies work hand in hand and complement each other. Professional and pedagogically sound Islamic Religious Education teachers are able to create a lively, challenging, and enjoyable learning environment. Students feel engaged and motivated to actively participate in learning.⁷They do not feel bored or forced to follow the lessons, but rather enthusiastically look forward to each meeting because the teacher is able to present religious material in a way that is inspiring and relevant to their lives.⁸

²M Alamsyah and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Teacher Competence on Student Learning Outcomes at Madrasah Tsanawiyah," *Tsaqofah* 5, no. 1 (2025): 13.

³A Latif, D Darmawan, and M Y M El Yunusi, "The Influence of School Environment, Teacher Competence and Parenting Patterns on Student Learning Motivation," *Journal of Innovative and Creativity* 5, no. 2 (2024): 11313.

⁴J Wang dan K Chen, "Differentiated learning strategies and critical thinking skills," *Educational Studies* 51, no. 4 (2025): 450.

⁵M N A M N Akmal et al., "The Influence of Teacher Competence, Internet Use, and Learning Motivation on Student Learning Outcomes at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid Waru Sidoarjo," *Journal of the Veranda of Knowledge* 26, no. 2 (2025): 250.

⁶M Musyaibin dan D Darmawan, "Unraveling the Impact of Teacher Competence and Parenting Styles on Student Motivation," *Hikamatzu: Journal of Multidisciplinary* 1, no. 1 (2024): 355.

⁷A B S Romli and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Teachers' Pedagogical Competence on Student Learning Outcomes at Vocational High School Level," *Journal of Islamic Religious Education and Management* 3, no. 2 (2025): 130.

⁸M Yusuf and D Darmawan, "The Influence of the Use of Learning Technology and Teaching Style on Students' Learning Interest," *Hikamatzu: Journal of Multidisciplinary* 1, no. 1 (2024): 195.

The learning motivation that grows in students is one of the early indicators of the success of the learning process.⁹ Motivated students will demonstrate interest, attention, and genuine effort in learning Islamic Religious Education. They ask questions when they don't understand something, complete assignments responsibly, and seek additional learning resources outside of class hours. This motivation will ultimately impact academic achievement, both in the form of exam scores and understanding and practice of religious teachings in everyday life. Thus, the professional and pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers serves as a determinant that triggers motivation, which then leads to optimal academic achievement. This chain of causality demonstrates how strategic the position of teachers is within the overall education ecosystem.¹⁰ Several studies also confirm that learning motivation, self-efficacy, and learning habits have a strong relationship with students' academic success at various levels of education.¹¹

B. Literature Review

The issue of teacher competence has become a central concern in educational research, particularly in the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), where teachers are expected not only to transmit knowledge but also to shape students' moral and spiritual character. Two core competencies professional and pedagogical are consistently identified as crucial determinants of learning quality, student motivation, and academic achievement. Professional competence refers to a teacher's mastery of subject matter, especially Islamic teachings, along with the ability to contextualize them in students' daily lives, design meaningful learning experiences, and develop quality instructional materials and assessments. This competence strengthens teacher credibility and fosters students' curiosity, positive attitudes, and deeper engagement, which ultimately contribute to improved academic achievement.

Meanwhile, pedagogical competence relates to a teacher's ability to effectively manage the learning process, including planning, implementation, evaluation, and understanding student characteristics. In Islamic education, it also involves integrating moral and spiritual values into classroom practices. Strong pedagogical competence enables teachers to create engaging, interactive, and student-centered learning environments, supported by effective communication, appropriate use of media, and adaptive teaching strategies that accommodate individual differences. These practices significantly influence students' learning motivation by fulfilling their psychological needs, such as a sense of belonging, security, and achievement, while also enhancing their self-efficacy.

The relationship between professional and pedagogical competence is inherently interconnected and complementary. Professional competence primarily ensures the depth and accuracy of content delivery, while pedagogical competence determines how effectively that content is conveyed and internalized by students. Together, they create a synergistic effect in which pedagogical competence enhances motivation and professional competence strengthens achievement, with motivation

⁹ A Verma dan R Lopez, "Motivation, self-efficacy, and academic achievement in secondary education," *Journal of School Psychology* 89 (2025): 110.

¹⁰ Y Nengseh, N D Aliyah, and D Darmawan, "Learning Motivation, Self-Efficacy and the Use of Social Media as Drivers of Independent Academic Learning," *Journal of Islamic Religious Studies* 8, no. 3 (2024): 65.

¹¹ M I Asrofi et al., "The Influence of Reading Interest, Study Habits, and Character Education on High School Students' Learning Achievement," *Journal of Narrative Science* 6, no. 2 (2025): 155.

often acting as a mediating factor. In the context of Islamic education, this relationship is particularly significant because learning outcomes extend beyond cognitive achievement to include affective and spiritual development.

However, existing literature also reveals several challenges, including an imbalance in teacher training programs that tend to emphasize theoretical knowledge over practical pedagogical skills, as well as limited studies that examine the integrated impact of both competencies within Islamic education settings. Therefore, it is essential for teacher education institutions to design integrative curricula that balance subject mastery with pedagogical training, while also promoting continuous professional development through reflective practice, training programs, and collaborative learning communities. In addition, the integration of technology and innovative teaching approaches is increasingly important to address the demands of contemporary education. Overall, the literature underscores that the balanced and integrated development of professional and pedagogical competencies is fundamental to enhancing students' motivation and academic achievement in Islamic Religious Education, this literature review aims to systematically examine how Islamic Religious Education teachers' professional and pedagogical competencies play a role in determining student motivation and achievement. The study focuses on understanding the mechanisms by which these two competencies influence motivation and achievement, both directly and through specific pathways. Various literature from experts in education and learning psychology will be reviewed to build a comprehensive understanding.¹²The results of this study are expected to contribute insights into the development of policies to improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education teachers and serve as a reflection for educators to continue developing their competencies to achieve the goal of higher-quality religious education. Improving the quality of human resources in education also requires innovation, creativity, and an academic culture that adapts to changing times.¹³

First, there remains a gap between the ideal competency requirements for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and the reality of competency mastery in the field. Normatively, PAI teachers are required to have a broad and in-depth mastery of Islamic material and be skilled at managing effective learning.¹⁴However, in practice, not all Islamic Religious Education teachers meet these competency standards. Some teachers may be strong in mastering the material but weak in teaching methodology, resulting in dry and monotonous delivery.¹⁵Others may be pedagogically skilled but have a shallow understanding of Islam, resulting in procedurally engaging learning but lacking substance. It's not uncommon to find teachers who are weak in both competencies. This situation raises questions about how each competency actually contributes to student motivation and achievement. Is mastery of the material more

¹² J A Rojak, "Digital Technology as a Driver of Innovative Culture and Creative Engagement of Higher Education Human Resources," *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology* 7, no. 3 (2025): 11.

¹³ T Sajjapong, M Irfan, dan J A Rojak, "Fostering Multicultural Collaboration in Higher Education Through Inclusive Communication," *Journal of Science, Technology and Society (SICO)* 6, no. 1 (2025): 25.

¹⁴ M B Alam and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Teacher Competence on Student Learning Outcomes in Elementary Madrasahs," *NUSRA: Journal of Research and Educational Sciences* 6, no. 1 (2025): 48.

¹⁵ T Nguyen dan J Taylor, "Teacher pedagogical competence and adaptive instruction for diverse learners," *Learning Environments Research* 28, no. 1 (2025): 55.

decisive, or is pedagogical skill more dominant? Or is there an interaction between the two that produces optimal impact? The lack of clear answers to these questions complicates efforts to improve teacher quality in a targeted and measurable manner. Consistency of data and evaluation of educational institution performance are also crucial for understanding and improving the quality of learning.¹⁶

Second, the relationship between teacher competence, learning motivation, and student achievement in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has not been systematically mapped in the existing literature. Many studies have discussed the influence of teacher competence on learning achievement in general, but few have simultaneously examined the role of motivation as a mediating variable. However, theoretically, teacher competence is thought to influence achievement indirectly, but rather through prior increases in learning motivation. Competent teachers are able to arouse students' interest and enthusiasm, and these motivated students are the ones who then strive hard, achieving high achievement.¹⁷ However, this mechanism still requires theoretical proof through a systematic literature review. If this indirect pathway proves significant, then interventions to improve Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning achievement will not be sufficient by simply improving teacher competency but must also consider factors that influence motivation.¹⁸ Failure to understand the complexity of this relationship can lead to suboptimal educational quality improvement programs due to misdirected targeting or poor strategy. In addition to school factors, family support and the social environment are also frequently reported to play a role in shaping children's life values and motivation to learn.¹⁹

Nowadays, attention to the quality of education is getting stronger along with the demands of society for graduates who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have noble character.²⁰ Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in character formation. However, this contribution can only be realized if the Islamic Religious Education learning process is effective and meaningful. Teachers are the key to achieving this effectiveness.²¹ Therefore, a proper understanding of how teacher competency influences student motivation and achievement is crucial. Without this understanding, efforts to improve teacher quality may be directionless. Teacher certification, for example, which aims to improve competency, needs to be based on a mapping of which competencies have the greatest impact on student learning outcomes. This study is expected to provide a theoretical foundation for more focused and evidence-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher professional

¹⁶ G Seran dan Y Kurniawan, "Data Consistency and Optimization of Performance Evaluation in Educational Institutions," *Journal of Science, Technology and Society (SICO)* 6, no. 2 (2025): 59.

¹⁷ R Lopez dan S Martinez, "Family support, social environment, and student motivation in learning contexts," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 116, no. 5 (2024): 788.

¹⁸ M E Safira et al., "Parental Education in Shaping Children's Life Values at Home," *Journal of Social Science Studies* 2, no. 1 (2022): 131.

¹⁹ M E Safira et al., "Fostering Pro-Environmental Learning through Family-Centered Education," *Journal of Social Science Studies* 2, no. 2 (2022): 243.

²⁰ J Park dan H Chen, "Teacher certification and student learning outcomes: Evidence from faith-based schools," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 33, no. 12 (2025): 25.

²¹ J A Rojak dan M Irfan, "Urban-Rural Educational Access Inequality within Economic Structure and Policy Frameworks," *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology* 8, no. 1 (2025): 29.

development policies.²² Efforts to equalize the quality of education also need to consider the gap in access to education in various regions and the policy structures that influence it.²³

Furthermore, the challenges of learning in the digital age require Islamic Religious Education teachers to continuously develop their competencies. Today's students have extensive access to religious information through the internet and social media.²⁴ They can easily find various interpretations, opinions of scholars, and even religious content that may not align with moderate Islamic teachings. In this situation, Islamic Religious Education teachers are required to be credible facilitators and guides. Professional competence is required to provide accurate explanations and strong arguments when students raise questions about religious issues.²⁵ Pedagogical competence is needed to manage healthy and critical classroom discussions, as well as to guide students in filtering information wisely.²⁶ Studies on the relationship between teacher competency and motivation and learning achievement are relevant to ensuring that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are prepared to face the challenges of the times and remain able to optimally guide the younger generation. The use of learning technology, e-learning readiness, and digital literacy are also increasingly important to support the success of student learning in the information age.²⁷

This literature review aims to comprehensively analyze how Islamic Religious Education teachers' professional competence determines student motivation and achievement, and systematically examine how Islamic Religious Education teachers' pedagogical competence determines both variables. By reviewing various literature and theoretical thinking from experts in education and learning psychology, this study seeks to build an integrated understanding of the mechanisms by which teacher competence influences motivation and achievement in Islamic Religious Education. The theoretical contribution of this study is to enrich the body of Islamic education knowledge, particularly in understanding the strategic role of teacher competence in the causal chain that leads to student learning outcomes. Its practical contribution is to provide a conceptual foundation for policymakers, teacher training institutions, and Islamic Religious Education educators to design targeted professional development programs, and to serve as a reflection for teachers to continuously improve their competence for the realization of quality Islamic Religious Education learning.

²² Suwito et al., "Regulatory Effectiveness in Ensuring Access to Education and Child Health in Low Income Communities through Scholarship Equity," *Journal of Social Science Studies* 1, no. 2 (2021): 181.

²³ N L B Ramle dan R Mardikaningsih, "Empowering Rural Women: Addressing Barriers to Education and Entrepreneurship for Family Economic Welfare," *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology* 5, no. 1 (2024): 27.

²⁴ Y P Wardayanti, F M Amin, dan A Permadi, "Analysis of Measurement of Readiness and Success of E-Learning Using the Method of TRAM," *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology* 2, no. 1 (2022): 14.

²⁵ T Lewis dan V Kumar, "Digital literacy and online learning effectiveness in secondary schools," *Computers & Education* 195 (2025): 104.

²⁶ R A Zahid dan D Darmawan, "Reconceptualizing Digital Literacy Dimensions as Predictors of Academic Engagement and Success in Contemporary Higher Education," *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology* 7, no. 3 (2025): 18.

²⁷ M Masfufah dan D Darmawan, "Developing Pedagogical Standards and AI Policies for Adaptive Learning in Equitable and Safe School Education," *Journal of Practice Learning and Educational Development* 3, no. 4 (2023): 400.

C. Method

This research uses a library research approach in accordance with the Zed guidelines.²⁸, because it is considered most suitable for building a theoretical synthesis based on existing literature without having to go directly into the field.²⁹The initial stage of the research was conducted by collecting relevant literature on the professional competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers, the pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers, student learning motivation, and student achievement, through various sources, such as international scientific databases, digital libraries, and physical library collections. Each source was then classified by theme, critically analyzed, and synthesized to form a complete understanding of the relationships between the variables studied.³⁰In this process, researchers emphasize three important principles: the suitability of the literature content to the research focus, evaluation of the quality and credibility of sources, and the systematic arrangement of argumentative logic.³¹.

Data analysis follows a qualitative content analysis approach, which requires in-depth interpretation of the text so that the meaning of the concept can be captured accurately.³²The analysis stage begins with data reduction, namely selecting the most relevant literature, followed by presenting the findings in the form of categories or concept maps, and ending with formulating a synthesis in the form of final conclusions.³³With this approach, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive and complete understanding of how the professional and pedagogical competencies of Islamic Education teachers influence student motivation and learning achievement, in line with Shulman's findings.³⁴ about the importance of teacher mastery of material and pedagogy, as well as Hattie³⁵ which emphasizes the influence of teachers and motivation on student learning outcomes.

D. Result and Discussion

Professional Competence of Islamic Education Teachers as a Determinant of Student Motivation and Learning Achievement

Learning motivation is a drive that arises from within or from outside the student that creates enthusiasm, desire, and perseverance to follow the learning process so that learning objectives can be achieved. Indicators of learning motivation

²⁸ M Zed, *Library Research Method*(Jakarta: Obor Indonesia Foundation, 2008).

²⁹ A J Onwuegbuzie, N L Leech, dan K M T Collins, "Qualitative analysis techniques for the review of the literature," *The Qualitative Report* 17, no. 56 (2012): 28, <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1742>.

³⁰ H Snyder, "Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines," *Journal of Business Research* 104 (2019): 333, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>.

³¹ J Webster dan R T Watson, "Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: Writing a literature review," *MIS Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2002): xiii–xxiii.

³² V Braun dan V Clarke, "Using thematic analysis in psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

³³ R Mardikaningsih and D Darmawan, *Quantitative Research Methods*(Bandung: IntiPresindo Pustaka, 2013).

³⁴ L S Shulman, "Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform," *Harvard Educational Review* 57, no. 1 (1987): 22, <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.57.1.j463w79r56455411>.

³⁵ John Hattie, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* (Routledge, 2009).

are: First, the desire to succeed, namely the presence of targets or hopes within the student to achieve good learning outcomes. Second, persistence in learning, namely the student's sincerity in understanding the material despite facing difficulties. Third, interest in the lesson, namely the student's interest in the material being studied so that they are more focused and serious in following the learning. Fourth, participation in learning activities, namely the active involvement of students in the learning process such as asking questions, answering questions, or participating in discussions. Fifth, enthusiasm for learning, namely the student's enthusiasm in following learning activities from beginning to end.

Learning discipline is a student's attitude of obedience and compliance with rules and responsibilities in carrying out learning activities. Learning discipline shows how students are able to regulate themselves and comply with the provisions that apply in the learning process. There are 5 indicators of learning discipline, namely: First, obedience to class rules, namely student compliance in following the rules during learning activities. Second, punctuality in attending lessons, namely student discipline in attending on time and participating in learning activities regularly. Third, consistency in doing assignments, namely student sincerity in completing assignments or homework according to the specified time. Fourth, regularity in learning activities, namely student habits in studying on a schedule and regularly. Fifth, responsibility for learning activities, namely student awareness to carry out learning obligations without having to be constantly reminded by the teacher.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning outcomes are the level of achievement of students' abilities after participating in the learning process, reflecting their mastery of knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to the material being studied. There are 5 indicators of PAI learning outcomes, namely: First, understanding of the subject matter, namely the student's ability to understand the concepts or material that has been taught. Second, the ability to re-explain the material, namely the student's ability to re-express the material that has been learned in their own words. Third, the application of knowledge in learning activities, namely the student's ability to use the knowledge they have to solve problems or assignments given. Fourth, the value or score of learning evaluation, namely the results obtained by students through tests or assessments conducted by teachers. Fifth, the development of learning abilities, namely the increase in student understanding or learning achievement over time.

Table 1. Conceptualization of Learning Motivation, Learning Discipline, and Learning Outcomes

Variables	Operational Definition	Indicator
Motivation to learn	Internal and external motivation that creates enthusiasm in students to participate in learning activities	1. The desire to succeed 2. Perseverance in learning 3. Interest in Education 4. Participation in learning 5. Enthusiasm for following learning
Learning Discipline	Student compliance with rules and responsibilities in learning activities	1. Compliance with class rules 2. Punctuality in attending lessons 3. Consistency in completing assignments 4. Regularity in learning

Variables	Operational Definition	Indicator
		5. Responsibility for learning activities
Islamic Religious Education Outcomes	Level of student achievement after participating in Islamic Religious Education learning	1. Understanding the material 2. Ability to re-explain material 3. Application of knowledge 4. Learning evaluation scores 5. Development of learning abilities

The professional competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers refers to a comprehensive mastery of Islamic material. The professional competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers refers to a mastery of the Islamic material within their field of work. An Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher is required to understand the Qur'an and its interpretation, hadith and hadith science, creed, morals, jurisprudence, the history of Islamic civilization, and Arabic with an adequate level of mastery. This mastery encompasses factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge that enables teachers to explain Islamic teachings comprehensively. When teachers master the material well, they have high self-confidence in teaching. This confidence in their abilities indirectly influences the quality of material delivery in the classroom. Confident teachers tend to be more open to student questions, better prepared to provide relevant illustrations, and better able to connect religious teachings to the various life problems faced by students.³⁶ Teachers' competence in understanding students, giving appropriate assignments, and being friendly can help students be more motivated to learn.³⁷ Good mastery of the material increases teacher confidence and motivates students to learn.³⁸

Mastering Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material without pedagogical skills does not guarantee effective delivery to students. A teacher may have a strong grasp of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material, but without adequate pedagogical skills, that mastery of the material will not reach students effectively.³⁹ In the realm of learning motivation, a teacher's in-depth mastery of the material provides inspiration for students. Students naturally have a curiosity about religious teachings. When a teacher is able to answer their questions with strong arguments and satisfying explanations, that curiosity is further nurtured. Students feel that Islamic Religious Education lessons provide answers to the questions they're pondering. They begin to see the relevance of Islamic teachings to real life. This fosters an intrinsic interest in continuing to learn and delving deeper. Conversely, when a teacher frequently hesitates, provides vague

³⁶Latif, Darmawan, and El Yunusi, "The Influence of School Environment, Teacher Competence and Parenting Patterns on Student Learning Motivation."

³⁷ N Kurniati dan M Y M El-Yunusi, "Methods for Cultivating Students' Personality and Morals Through Islamic Religious Education," *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society* 2, no. 2 (2023): 25.

³⁸ A Gani, "Character Education and Children's Socio-Emotional Development," *Indonesian Social Science Studies* 5, no. 1 (2025): 103.

³⁹F Imanuddin, N D Aliyah, and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Learning Independence, Learning Facilities, and Teacher Competence on the Learning Effectiveness of Students at SMK Teknik PAL Surabaya," *Journal of Innovative and Creativity* 5, no. 2 (2024): 12491.

answers, or is even unable to answer students' questions, interest in learning can decline. Students feel it's futile to ask questions because they don't receive intellectual satisfaction. Initial motivation to learn can be extinguished because the teacher is unable to meet their cognitive needs. A teacher who can answer clearly fosters intrinsic interest, while hesitation actually dampens learning motivation.⁴⁰

A teacher's ability to organize material coherently and systematically is a crucial pillar in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. A PAI teacher's professional competence is also reflected in their ability to present material with a clear and systematic structure. A good grasp of the material allows teachers to design a logical sequence of presentation, from easy to difficult, from concrete to abstract. Structured presentation helps students build a gradual and solid understanding. They don't feel confused or disoriented in the lesson. This clear structure reduces students' cognitive load and makes the learning process feel easier. When students feel capable of following the lesson well, their self-efficacy increases. They believe they can understand PAI. This increased self-efficacy is an important source of motivation. Motivation to learn is key to helping students develop their full potential.⁴¹ Students who are confident in their abilities tend to be more motivated to actively engage in learning. Structured presentations increase students' self-efficacy and motivate them to learn actively. Furthermore, teachers' skills in managing learning time, communicating with students, and controlling the classroom are also important factors in supporting a smooth learning process in the classroom.⁴²

The professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers is evident in their ability to present Islamic teachings with concrete examples that are relevant to students. The quality of Islamic Religious Education teaching is influenced by the extent to which teachers understand and apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives.⁴³ In daily learning interactions, professional Islamic Religious Education teachers often provide concrete examples from real life that are relevant to the material. This ability to provide appropriate illustrations is only possible if the teacher truly understands the essence of the material being taught. A teacher who masters Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh muamalah*), for example, can provide examples of modern economic transactions that are or are not in accordance with Islamic law. A teacher who understands morals can illustrate commendable and reprehensible behavior in today's youth. These concrete examples make religious material feel alive and close to students' daily lives. They no longer view Islamic Religious Education as a dry subject that is far from reality. This closeness arouses interest and attention. Students become interested in learning more about how Islam regulates various aspects of life. Concrete examples from

⁴⁰D Darmawan, Y C A Putri, and R A Solichah, "The Role of Inquiry Models and Interactive Media in Developing Critical Thinking Skills of MI Students: A Literature Review," *Takuana: Journal of Education, Science, and Humanities* 4, no. 4 (2026): 1429.

⁴¹A Juaini, N D Aliyah, and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Learning Facilities and Teacher Teaching Styles and Learning Environment on Student Learning Motivation," *Mandalika Light Journal* 3, no. 3 (2024): 1890.

⁴²E Masnawati and D Darmawan, "Time Management, Communication Skills, and Classroom Control in Supporting Teacher Discipline in the Teaching Process," *Hijri* 15, no. 1 (2026): 85

⁴³A Yulianto, E Masnawati, and D Darmawan, "Application of Teacher Teaching Skills, Religious Practices, and Independence to Islamic Religious Education Learning Outcomes," *Journal of Education* 12, no. 1 (2024): 139.

teachers' experiences make the material feel relevant, arouse interest, and bring students closer to Islamic teachings.⁴⁴

The credibility of Islamic Religious Education teachers is established through mastery of the material, the accuracy of their arguments, and the ability to answer students' critical questions. The professional competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers also plays a role in building their credibility in the eyes of students. Students will naturally assess the extent to which a teacher is worthy of being a reference in religious matters. When a teacher demonstrates a broad and in-depth mastery of the material, when they are able to cite arguments accurately and explain their meaning well, and when they can satisfactorily respond to critical questions, their credibility is established. Students view the teacher as someone worthy of being listened to and followed. This credibility forms the foundation for the teacher's influence in shaping students' attitudes and behavior. Teachers who understand moral and ethical values can incorporate these values into their lessons, deliver material that encourages moral reflection, and serve as role models for good behavior.⁴⁵In Islamic religious education, which is steeped in values, a teacher's credibility significantly determines the extent to which students are willing to accept and internalize the values taught. Without credibility, the moral messages conveyed by the teacher will be easily rejected or ignored. Without credibility, moral messages are easily ignored; with credibility, religious values are more easily internalized.

Student achievement is greatly influenced by the quality of material delivered by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. In the realm of learning achievement, the professional competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers contributes directly through the quality of their delivery. Teachers who master the material are able to explain abstract concepts in a way that is easier to understand. Teacher professional competence plays a crucial role in determining the quality of teaching.⁴⁶ He can use analogies, metaphors, or examples to facilitate understanding. When students understand the material well, they more easily remember and apply it to answer exam questions. A solid understanding also enables them to answer questions that require analysis and synthesis, not just memorization.⁴⁷The academic achievements achieved are also high-quality. The grades obtained reflect true mastery, not merely short-term success due to memorization without understanding. In the long term, this solid understanding will endure and become a valuable asset for students' future religious lives. Solid understanding leads to meaningful achievements and provides valuable provisions for students' religious lives.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ R K Khayru, "Educational and Communicative Determinants of Public Attitudes Toward Vaccination and Health Recommendations Across Diverse Societies," *Journal of Science, Technology and Society (SICO)* 4, no. 2 (2023): 31.

⁴⁵B Firmansyah, N D Aliyah, and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Islamic Education Teacher Competence, Parental Attention, and Peer Relationships on the Formation of Student Character," *TEACHING: Journal of Innovation in Teaching and Educational Sciences* 4, no. 3 (2024): 203.

⁴⁶ J Fischer, H Ghadiri-Mohajerzad, dan J Schrader, "Teaching Quality and Teachers' Professional Competences," *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 2025, 22.

⁴⁷ N L B Ramle, "Developing Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills Through Art Education," *Journal of Social Science Studies* 1, no. 1 (2021): 169.

⁴⁸D Darmawan, F Shofa, and H Sholikhah, "The Effects of Story-Based Learning Methods and Learning Media on Elementary School Students' Reading Ability in the Era of Globalization," *Pendas: Scientific Journal of Elementary Education* 11, no. 1 (2026): 120.

A teacher's ability to select and develop appropriate teaching materials significantly determines the quality of student learning achievement. A teacher's professional competence also influences learning achievement through their ability to select and develop appropriate teaching materials. Teachers who master the material well can distinguish between essential concepts to emphasize and those that are complementary. Teaching materials not only influence teachers' teaching styles and their professional development, but the freedom to choose and adapt learning resources also strengthens teaching and encourages long-term growth.⁴⁹ He can sort through materials from various sources, selecting the most authoritative and appropriate to the students' developmental level. Appropriate teaching materials facilitate independent learning. They can read, understand, and review the material at home without confusion. The availability of quality teaching materials also helps students who may have missed lessons catch up. All of this contributes to better academic achievement. Conversely, teachers who lack mastery of the material tend to teach perfunctorily, rely on a single textbook, and struggle to provide enrichment. As a result, students' horizons become narrow and learning achievement is limited. Relevant teaching materials broaden horizons, support independent learning, and improve academic achievement.

The professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers is evident in their ability to design valid and reliable evaluation instruments. In the assessment process, Islamic Religious Education teachers' professional competence is reflected in their ability to develop valid and reliable evaluation instruments. Teachers who understand the material can design questions that accurately measure students' mastery of the targeted competencies. Teachers' understanding of validity and reliability helps them align exams with learning outcomes and design questions that assess various aspects of students' knowledge.⁵⁰ The questions we construct not only test memorization, but also understanding, analysis, and application. Accurate assessment results provide useful feedback for students. They know what they have mastered and what they need further study. This feedback motivates them to improve their weaknesses. Conversely, if the questions are constructed carelessly and don't measure what they should, the assessment results can be misleading. Students can feel smart when they actually aren't, or feel stupid when they have actually mastered the material. Both negatively impact motivation and subsequent learning achievement. Accurate assessments provide accurate feedback, while careless evaluations are misleading and weaken learning motivation.⁵¹

The professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers is evident in their ability to connect Islamic teachings with real-life issues. The professional competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers is also related to their ability to integrate Islamic values into various aspects of life. Teachers who understand Islamic teachings comprehensively can demonstrate that Islam is not simply a collection of worship rituals, but rather a value system that encompasses all dimensions of life. They can relate subject matter to contemporary issues such as environmental ethics, social

⁴⁹ L G Abad dan John Hattie, "The Impact of Teaching Materials on Instructional Design and Teacher Development," *Frontiers in Education*, 2025, 12.

⁵⁰ A Yeboah dan A K Arhin, "Teachers' Conceptualization of Validity and Reliability in Classroom Assessment in Ghana," *African Journal of Teacher Education* 14, no. 1 (2025): 87.

⁵¹ I D Nurdiansah dan D Darmawan, "Academic Procrastination among Students: Psychological Factor Contributions of Academic Stress, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Control," *QALAMUNA: Journal of Education, Social, and Religion* 17, no. 2 (2025): 899.

justice, interfaith tolerance, and scientific advancement. This connection helps students see the relevance of Islamic Religious Education to the real-life issues they face or those around them. This view that Islam is relevant for all times and places strengthens their motivation to learn. Students with high learning motivation tend to be serious, enthusiastic, and focused, leading to more active discussions, questions, and a deeper understanding of the material.⁵² Students no longer view Islamic Education as an outdated legacy of the past, but rather as a guide to life that is always up to date.⁵³ This awareness serves as a powerful source of motivation to continue learning and practicing religious teachings. Integrating Islamic values into reality makes Islamic Religious Education relevant, fosters motivation, and strengthens students' understanding.⁵⁴

The exemplary behavior of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in their daily behavior is a concrete manifestation of their professional competence. Professional Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are able to demonstrate spiritual depth and exemplary behavior in their daily behavior. A good mastery of the material should be directly proportional to the quality of practice. Teachers who understand noble morals will strive to display noble morals in their interactions with students. Teachers who understand the essence of sincerity will teach sincerely without expecting praise. The competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers serves as an internal drive that can influence students' behavior and morals.⁵⁵ Teachers who understand patience will be patient with their students' various behaviors. This role model has a powerful impact on building motivation and shaping students' character. Students tend to imitate what they see, not just what they hear. When teachers not only talk about Islamic values but also live them in their daily lives, the message becomes more convincing. Students are inspired to emulate their teachers. The motivation to become better individuals grows naturally. The Islamic values brought to life by teachers stimulate natural motivation and shape students' character.

A conducive classroom climate stems from the flexibility of Islamic Religious Education teachers in responding to learning dynamics. The professional competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers also influences the overall classroom climate. Teachers who master the material tend to be more flexible and responsive to classroom dynamics. They don't stick rigidly to lesson plans but are able to capture moments that can be leveraged for more meaningful learning. Teachers' teaching strategies directly and indirectly influence student engagement through how students

⁵²A H D Alfiyani, N D Aliyah, and D Darmawan, "Learning Strategy: Observation of the Dynamics of Student Motivation at SD Negeri Paseseh 01 Tanjungbumi Bangkalan Madura through Class Management, Learning Media, and Teacher Ethics," *Bilqolam Journal of Islamic Education* 5, no. 2 (2024): 13.

⁵³R K Khayru et al., "Ecological Awareness of Generation Z Through Academic Literature and Interdisciplinary Perspectives," in *Proceeding of International Management Conference and Progressive Papers*, vol. 3, 2025.

⁵⁴R Mardikaningsih et al., "The Influence of Social Media Use on Students' Knowledge of Green Management and Pro-Environmental Attitudes," in *Proceeding of International Management Conference and Progressive Papers*, vol. 3, 2025.

⁵⁵N F Zalillah and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Islamic Education Teacher Personality Competence on the Morals of High School Students," *CENDEKIA: Journal of Social Sciences, Language and Education* 5, no. 1 (2025): 240.

perceive the teacher's emotional involvement.⁵⁶ When spontaneous questions arise from students, he doesn't ignore them for fear of deviating from the plan, but responds well and even develops them into interesting discussions. This flexibility makes the class lively and dynamic. Students feel valued because their questions and opinions are listened to. This feeling of being valued increases their emotional engagement with the lesson and with the teacher. Positive emotional engagement is an important factor influencing learning motivation. Students who feel comfortable and valued are more motivated to actively participate and do their best. A lively and respectful classroom fosters emotional engagement and student motivation to learn.

Continuous interaction with competent Islamic Religious Education teachers shapes students' perceptions of the importance of this subject. In the long run, the professional competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers shapes students' perceptions of the importance of this subject. When students consistently interact with competent teachers who consistently provide satisfactory explanations and demonstrate depth of knowledge, they will view Islamic Religious Education as a serious and valuable field of knowledge. Teachers who meet students' needs for competence and interpersonal relationships create a classroom atmosphere that encourages active student engagement.⁵⁷ This perception differs from that of a less competent teacher. In the latter case, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) may be viewed as an easy subject that doesn't need to be studied seriously, or even as a boring subject with no benefits. Positive perceptions about the value of a subject are an important determinant of learning motivation. Students will invest more time and energy in learning something they deem important and valuable. Conversely, they will ignore subjects they deem unimportant, regardless of the value offered as external rewards. Positive perceptions encourage students to invest time and energy seriously, while negative perceptions weaken learning motivation. In many cases, students' perceptions of a subject are also influenced by the support of their social environment, family, and the educational opportunities they receive in the community.⁵⁸

Identification with a competent Islamic Religious Education teacher is an important psychological mechanism in shaping students' motivation and character. The influence of professional competence on motivation and learning achievement also occurs through identification. Without motivation, students struggle to maintain interest in learning, face challenges with discouragement, and tend to experience a decline in academic achievement.⁵⁹ Students, especially adolescents, tend to seek identification figures who can serve as role models. Competent and insightful Islamic Religious Education teachers often become idolized figures. Students may be inspired by their teacher's breadth of knowledge, their firm principles, or their ability to explain complex matters simply. This admiration leads them to identify with their teacher. They aspire to be like their teacher. In this identification process, they unconsciously adopt their teacher's values, attitudes, and interests. If a teacher loves religious

⁵⁶ H Zhang, J Yang, dan Z Liu, "Effect of Teachers' Teaching Strategies on Students' Learning Engagement: Moderated Mediation Model," *Frontiers in Psychology* 15 (2024): 10.

⁵⁷ X Chen, S Samad, dan W Kim, "Teacher Competence and Students' Motivation for Learning in Chinese Higher Education," *BMC Psychology* 13 (2025): 18.

⁵⁸ M Hariani dan E Masnawati, "Assessing the Impact of Poverty on Children's Access to and Quality of Education," *Journal of Social Science Studies* 2, no. 2 (2022): 6.

⁵⁹ M Hariani et al., "Efforts to Increase Student Learning Motivation through a Collaborative Approach in Modern Education," *Journal of Education, Research, and Community Service* 4, no. 2 (2024): 35.

knowledge, students are influenced to do so. If a teacher diligently reads and studies, students are inspired to study diligently. This identification process is a powerful psychological mechanism in the formation of motivation and character. Admiration for a teacher encourages students to emulate values and attitudes, so that motivation to learn grows naturally. This phenomenon also demonstrates that positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students can be a crucial factor in building a supportive and meaningful learning environment.⁶⁰

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher competence plays a role in maintaining student motivation through the ability to diagnose and address learning difficulties. The professional competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers interacts with other factors to determine motivation and learning achievement. Competent teachers create a supportive and participatory learning environment, thereby improving academic achievement while developing student leadership.⁶¹ Competent teachers are better able to diagnose students' learning difficulties and provide appropriate support. They can identify whether a student's difficulties are caused by a lack of understanding of basic concepts, misinterpretations, or affective factors such as anxiety. With a proper diagnosis, interventions are more effective. Students who were previously behind can be helped to catch up. Successfully overcoming these difficulties increases self-confidence and restores previously low motivation. Thus, a teacher's professional competence plays a role not only in building initial motivation but also in maintaining and restoring motivation when students encounter obstacles. Competent teachers are able to act as facilitators, helping students through difficult times in their learning journey. Responsive teachers help students overcome obstacles, restore motivation, and improve academic achievement.

Islamic Education Teachers' Pedagogical Competence as a Determinant of Student Motivation and Learning Achievement

The pedagogical competence of Islamic Education teachers is the professional ability of teachers to plan, implement, and evaluate the learning process so that students can learn effectively and achieve optimal learning outcomes. This competence includes several indicators, namely: First, learning planning, namely the teacher's ability to prepare a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), set objectives, and prepare teaching materials and media systematically so that the learning process is structured. Second, mastery of subject matter, namely the teacher's ability to understand concepts and learning materials so that they can explain them clearly, relevantly, and easily understood by students. Third, learning methods and strategies, namely the teacher's ability to choose and apply learning methods that are appropriate to the characteristics of students and the subject matter, so as to increase motivation and learning participation. Fourth, classroom management, namely the ability to create a classroom atmosphere that is conducive, safe, orderly, and comfortable for all students. Fifth, learning assessment and evaluation, namely the ability to design and implement evaluations to measure student competency achievement and provide constructive feedback. Finally, understanding student characteristics, namely the ability to recognize

⁶⁰ M Irfan, Y R Al-Hakim, dan D S Sigita, "Personal Values and Job Satisfaction: A Qualitative Perspective on Employee Performance in the Education Sector," *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society* 3, no. 3 (2024): 6.

⁶¹ M Marwan dan D Deviyantoro, "Unlocking Excellence: The Impact of Teacher Competence on Learning and Leadership," *Digital Innovation: International Journal of Management* 2, no. 2 (2025): 172.

the needs, interests, abilities, and potential of each student so that the learning approach can be tailored personally and effectively. All these aspects together support students' learning motivation and improve overall learning achievement.

Table 2. Conceptualization of Pedagogical Competence

No	Pedagogical Competence Indicators	Operational Definition
1	Learning Planning	The teacher's ability to prepare a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), set learning objectives, prepare teaching materials and media systematically so that the learning process is structured and focused on achieving learning outcomes.
2	Mastery of Subject Matter	The teacher's ability to understand concepts, materials, and learning content so that they can explain clearly, relevantly, and answer students' questions appropriately.
3	Learning Methods and Strategies	The teacher's ability to use various learning methods and strategies that suit student characteristics and materials, thereby increasing participation, motivation, and learning effectiveness.
4	Classroom Management	The teacher's ability to create a conducive, safe, orderly, and comfortable classroom atmosphere for all students, including time management and interaction between students.
5	Assessment and Evaluation of Learning	The teacher's ability to design and implement learning evaluations to measure student competency achievement and provide constructive feedback for learning improvement.
6	Understanding Student Characteristics	The teacher's ability to recognize the needs, interests, abilities, and potential of each student so that the learning approach can be adjusted personally and effectively.

Islamic Religious Education teachers' pedagogical competence encompasses the skills to manage learning and build effective educational interactions. Islamic Religious Education teachers' pedagogical competence refers to their ability to manage student learning.⁶² These abilities include understanding student characteristics, designing learning, implementing educational learning processes, developing curriculum, utilizing learning technology, evaluating learning outcomes, and developing student potential.⁶³ In contrast to professional competence, which focuses on mastery of material, pedagogical competence is more concerned with how the material is delivered and how educational interactions are structured. An Islamic Education teacher may possess a strong grasp of Islamic jurisprudence or interpretation.⁶⁴ However, without adequate pedagogical skills, their extensive

⁶² M Khairi, "Technology Optimization for Equitable Access to Education and Health Services in Poverty Alleviation," *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society* 2, no. 2 (2023): 51.

⁶³ Y Kurniawan dan G Seran, "The Role of Education in Reducing Stigma of Mental Health Problems in Schools and Increasing Support for Students," *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society* 3, no. 2 (2024): 64.

⁶⁴ I Ismail et al., "Establishing a Digital School Environment Friendly to Children with Special Needs Through Inclusive Policies and Practices," *Journal of Social Science Studies* 4, no. 1 (2024): 261.

knowledge will not be effectively conveyed to students. Pedagogical competence serves as a bridge connecting the richness of the teacher's material with the cognitive and affective world of students. Teachers with strong professional and pedagogical competence can create an effective learning environment, facilitate understanding of the material, and encourage active student participation.⁶⁵The synergy of professional and pedagogical competencies creates an active, easy-to-understand learning environment and encourages student participation.⁶⁶.

The pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers plays a crucial role in creating a fun and motivating learning environment for students. In the realm of learning motivation, Islamic Religious Education teachers' pedagogical competence plays a role through their ability to create an engaging and enjoyable learning environment. Teachers who understand student learning psychology will design varied activities, rather than monotonous lectures.⁶⁷. He uses discussion methods, question and answer sessions, group assignments, educational games, or the use of audio-visual media according to the learning objectives and characteristics of the material. This variety of methods prevents boredom and keeps students' attention focused. When students feel happy participating in lessons, they will come to class with positive feelings. Teachers' pedagogical competence plays a crucial role in creating a conducive classroom through systematic lesson planning, varied teaching strategies, humanistic behavior management, and dialogic educational interactions.⁶⁸The anticipation of this enjoyable learning experience creates a unique appeal that fuels motivation. They don't feel forced to attend class, but rather look forward to the learning experience. This positive atmosphere is valuable capital for building long-term intrinsic motivation. A positive classroom atmosphere fosters long-term intrinsic motivation and makes students enthusiastic about participating in learning.⁶⁹.

Early diagnosis of student characteristics is an important part of the pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. Pedagogical competence is also reflected in the ability to conduct an initial diagnosis of student characteristics and learning needs. High pedagogical competence allows teachers to adapt learning methods and strategies to suit student needs and characteristics.⁷⁰Before designing learning, a pedagogically competent teacher will strive to understand the students' backgrounds, their level of cognitive development, their interests and talents, and any learning difficulties they may experience. This understanding forms the basis for designing learning that is tailored to the students' real-world conditions, rather than

⁶⁵H N Bayhaqi, M Z Rafsanjani, and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Learning Discipline and Teacher Competence on Student Learning Achievement," *FONDATIA: Journal of Elementary Education* 9, no. 2 (2025): 393.

⁶⁶J Lee dan H Kim, "Teacher pedagogical competence and student engagement in faith-based education," *Journal of Educational Practice* 45, no. 3 (2023): 212.

⁶⁷Darmawan, Putri, and Solichah, "The Role of Inquiry Models and Interactive Media in Developing Critical Thinking Skills of MI Students: A Literature Review."

⁶⁸D Fitriyani et al., "The Role of Teachers' Pedagogical Competence in Managing Classrooms to Increase Student Learning Motivation," *IJOBBA: International Journal of Bunga Bangsa Cirebon* 4, no. 2 (2025): 267.

⁶⁹S Martinez, "Motivational strategies and pedagogical effectiveness in secondary classrooms," *International Journal of Learning and Instruction* 58 (2024): 87.

⁷⁰W C Dewi and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Pedagogical Competence on Student Learning Outcomes at MI Level," *Morphology: Journal of Educational Sciences, Language, Literature and Culture* 3, no. 1 (2025): 16.

simply implementing the curriculum mechanically. When learning materials and methods are appropriate to students' abilities, they will not find it too difficult to the point of frustration, nor too easy to the point of boredom. The alignment between task demands and students' abilities creates a flow experience, a state where a person is fully engaged and enjoys the activity they are doing. This flow experience is highly motivating and makes students want to repeat similar experiences. The alignment of methods with students' abilities creates a flow experience that motivates them to continue learning.⁷¹

Effective communication between Islamic Education teachers builds emotional closeness that encourages active student engagement. Communication in learning must create an atmosphere that motivates students to actively participate and develop their potential independently.⁷² In the daily learning process, a pedagogical Islamic Religious Education teacher is able to build effective communication with students. He or she uses language that is easy to understand, provides examples relevant to the world of teenagers, and responds positively to students' questions or opinions. Effective communication creates a warm interpersonal relationship between teacher and students. Students feel close to the teacher, feel comfortable asking questions, and are not afraid to make mistakes when expressing their opinions. This close relationship fulfills students' affiliation needs, namely the need to feel accepted and valued within a social group. When affiliation needs are met, students feel at home in the classroom and emotionally bonded with their learning community. This emotional bond becomes a powerful source of motivation. They learn not because of demands, but because they want to maintain positive relationships with the teacher and their friends. Warm relationships in the classroom fulfill students' affiliation needs and foster strong learning motivation.⁷³

The pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers plays a crucial role in creating a safe, orderly classroom climate that supports learning motivation. Pedagogical competence also contributes to building a classroom climate that supports motivational growth. A teacher's motivational style and positive relationships with students increase classroom participation, while learning motivation serves as an indirect link between the two and student engagement.⁷⁴ A pedagogically skilled teacher is able to manage a classroom well, create clear rules, and enforce discipline fairly and consistently. He or she is also able to resolve conflicts between students tactfully. An orderly, safe, and fair classroom climate makes students feel psychologically comfortable. They don't have to worry about being disturbed by friends, don't fear being treated unfairly, and don't feel anxious facing uncertain situations. This sense of security frees up their mental energy to devote to learning. Conversely, a classroom climate that is chaotic, unclear in its rules, or filled with conflict drains students' mental energy. They spend more of their minds dealing with anxiety and discomfort than learning. Teachers who are able to create a positive climate have laid the necessary foundation for the growth of learning motivation. A

⁷¹ T Nguyen, "Diagnostic teaching and adaptive instruction: Effects on student flow experience," *Teaching and Teacher Education Review* 72 (2025): 145.

⁷² D Darmawan et al., "The Role of School Environment and Teacher Communication Skills on Student Learning Motivation," *Simki Pedagogy Diary* 4, no. 1 (2021): 23.

⁷³ R Almeida, "Teacher-student communication and socio-emotional engagement in diverse classrooms," *Educational Psychology International* 39, no. 1 (2024): 33.

⁷⁴ F Xu, L Wang, dan J Xu, "The Impact of Teachers' Motivating Style and Student-Teacher Relationships on Adolescents' Class Participation," *Acta Psychologica* 257 (2025).

positive climate frees up students' mental energy to focus on learning, while a chaotic climate weakens motivation.⁷⁵

Islamic Religious Education teachers' pedagogical competence directly contributes to learning achievement through systematic and structured learning designs. Teacher pedagogical competence is essential for developing students' abilities and improving the quality of their learning and achievement.⁷⁶ In the realm of learning achievement, Islamic Religious Education teachers' pedagogical competence contributes through their ability to design systematic and structured learning. Pedagogically competent teachers will develop lesson plans with clear objectives, logical steps, and appropriate time allocation. They consider introductory activities that can arouse interest, core activities that facilitate competency achievement, and closing activities that solidify understanding. This well-thought-out plan guides the learning process so that it does not deviate from its objectives. Students also feel that learning is taking place in an orderly and directed manner. They know what to achieve, how to achieve it, and how they will be assessed. This clarity reduces confusion and helps students organize their learning strategies. When students can learn efficiently due to a good lesson plan, their learning achievement is optimal. A clear and directed lesson plan facilitates efficient learning and optimal achievement.⁷⁷

The pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers is evident in their ability to select and utilize appropriate learning media. Pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers is also reflected in their ability to select and utilize appropriate learning media. Learning media, whether in the form of images, videos, models, or computer simulations, can help explain abstract concepts in Islamic Religious Education in a more concrete and understandable way. For example, to explain the procedures for the Hajj, an animated video depicting the series of Hajj rituals will be more effective than a simple lecture. To explain the history of Islamic civilization, a concept map or interactive timeline will help students see the chronological development of events. The use of appropriate media facilitates understanding and improves information retention. Digital media is more effective than traditional methods in increasing conceptual understanding, student engagement, and motivation.⁷⁸ Students more easily remember material presented through engaging media. Good comprehension and strong memory contribute directly to high academic achievement, especially when facing assessments that measure mastery of the material. Relevant media make abstract concepts more concrete, improving student understanding, retention, and achievement.

The pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers determines the quality of authentic assessments, which encompass cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. In the learning evaluation process, the pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers determines the quality of the assessments conducted. Teachers' mastery of pedagogical competence improves the

⁷⁵ D Patel, "Classroom climate and motivation: A longitudinal study of pedagogical influence," *Learning Environment Research* 27, no. 2 (2025): 123.

⁷⁶ A Lestari, B Jabu, dan A Halim, "The Impact of Pedagogical Competence on Students' Learning Achievement Under the Merdeka Curriculum," *International Journal of Language, Education, and Literature* 1, no. 2 (2024): 8.

⁷⁷ P Singh, "Systematic lesson design and student achievement: A meta-analysis," *Review of Educational Research* 94, no. 4 (2024): 455.

⁷⁸ N Nurhidayah, M Syahri, dan A Tinus, "Effectiveness of Digital Learning Media on Students' Achievement in Science Education," *Journal of Physics Education* 13, no. 3 (2025): 400.

accuracy and quality of authentic assessments.⁷⁹ A pedagogical teacher understands the principles of authentic assessment, namely assessment that measures student competencies comprehensively, not only cognitive but also affective and psychomotor aspects. They use various assessment techniques such as written tests, observations, assignments, portfolios, and self-assessments. This variety of assessment techniques provides a more complete picture of student learning outcomes. Furthermore, a pedagogical teacher also provides constructive feedback on assessment results. They go beyond simply assigning grades to explain students' strengths and weaknesses, and offer suggestions for improvement. This informative feedback helps students understand where they stand and what needs to be done to improve their performance. Thus, assessment not only measures achievement but also encourages further improvement. Varied assessment and constructive feedback not only measure achievement but also encourage improvement.

The pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers plays a role in training students to think critically, analytically, and creatively. It also plays a role in developing students' higher-order thinking skills. Pedagogically skilled teachers are not satisfied with simply transferring knowledge but also train students to analyze, evaluate, and create.⁸⁰ Integrating higher-order thinking skills assessment with in-depth learning has been shown to improve critical thinking skills and student learning outcomes. It poses challenging questions, encourages discussion, and provides project assignments that require creative thinking.⁸¹ In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, for example, students can be asked to analyze the factors causing the decline of Islamic civilization, evaluate various opinions of Islamic scholars on a fiqh issue, or design a religious activity program for teenagers in their environment.⁸² These activities train students to think critically and creatively. These higher-order thinking skills are not only beneficial for academic achievement but also provide valuable tools for navigating the complexities of life. Students who are trained in critical thinking will be better prepared to become independent, lifelong learners. Higher-order thinking exercises improve academic achievement while equipping students to face the complexities of life.

The pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers is evident in their ability to manage individual student differences through differentiated learning. Pedagogical competence also encompasses the ability to manage individual student differences. In the classroom, teachers encounter students with diverse backgrounds, abilities, learning styles, and interests. Pedagogical teachers are able to accommodate this diversity with a differentiated learning approach. A differentiated learning approach can meet the diverse needs and learning styles of students, thereby improving learning

⁷⁹ A Afdal dan D Sukenti, "Enhancing Authentic Assessment through Pedagogical Competence: Insights from Indonesian Language Teachers in Riau," *Al-Ishlah: Journal of Education* 16, no. 4 (2024): 5232.

⁸⁰ E Setiyowati, A M I Puspita, dan N Mariana, "Teachers' Pedagogical Competence in Designing Deep Learning and HOTS Assessment in Elementary Schools," *Journal of Innovation and Research in Primary Education* 4, no. 4 (2025): 4011.

⁸¹ J Holt dan T Nguyen, "High-order thinking and pedagogical competence in secondary classrooms," *Journal of Learning and Instruction* 62 (2024): 89.

⁸² M F Alfaaza and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Learning Motivation, Learning Creativity, and Teacher Competence on Students' Achievement in Learning Aqidah and Ekhlak," *Atta'dib Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 6, no. 2 (2025): 166.

outcomes and critical thinking skills.⁸³ He provides a variety of activities tailored to students' interests, assigns assignments of varying difficulty levels according to ability, or uses a variety of learning modalities to accommodate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles. This attention to individual differences makes each student feel cared for and valued. Slow learners don't feel neglected or left behind, and fast learners don't feel held back. Each student can learn at their own pace and in their own way. This sense of being valued and cared for fulfills the need for recognition, which is an important source of motivation in learning. Attention to diversity makes students feel valued, thus strengthening their motivation to learn.⁸⁴

The pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers plays a role in optimizing students' potential, not only academically but also in their talents and interests. The pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers relates to the ability to optimally develop students' potential. Pedagogical teachers focus not only on academic achievement but also on developing students' talents, interests, and other potential.⁸⁵ He observes the uniqueness of each student, provides encouragement and opportunities to develop that potential. A competent teacher is sensitive to students' needs and potential, able to create a positive learning environment, and design strategies that encourage achievement motivation.⁸⁶ In Islamic Religious Education (PAI), for example, teachers can facilitate students who are talented in reading the Quran to participate in MTQ competitions, students who are good at giving sermons to perform in religious activities, or students interested in Islamic studies to join study groups. Developing this potential makes students feel that the school cares about all aspects of themselves, not just test scores. This feeling strengthens the emotional bond with the school and with Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Motivation to achieve also grows naturally because the achievements are in line with their potential and interests. Developing potential makes students feel cared for, strengthens emotional bonds, and fosters motivation to achieve.⁸⁷

The pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers is reflected in their ability to reflect on and continuously improve their teaching practices. This is also reflected in their ability to reflect on and continuously improve their teaching practices. Good teachers never stop learning. They continually evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching, seek feedback from students, and strive to improve themselves. By consciously reflecting on their teaching practices, teachers can recognize their strengths and weaknesses and strive to improve as needed.⁸⁸ This openness to criticism and willingness to continuously improve serve as

⁸³ K Putri dan E Elizar, "Implementing a Differentiation Approach in Teaching to Accommodate Diverse Learning Styles of Primary School Students," *Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies* 8, no. 1 (2025): 119.

⁸⁴ Wang dan Chen, "Differentiated learning strategies and critical thinking skills."

⁸⁵ K Robinson dan D Patel, "Optimizing student talent through differentiated instruction," *International Journal of Educational Research* 117 (2023): 88.

⁸⁶ M Ya'lu, E Masnawati, and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Self-Concept, Social Support and Teacher Competence on Student Achievement Motivation," *Teaching and Learning Journal of Mandalika* 5, no. 1 (2024): 258.

⁸⁷ J Alvarez dan R Singh, "Student potential development and pedagogical practices," *Journal of Educational Research* 118, no. 1 (2024): 55.

⁸⁸ Y Rozimela, S Fatimah, dan N Fudhla, "EFL Teachers' Practices and Perspectives on Self-and Collaborative Contextualized Reflective Practice," *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education* 10, no. 35 (2025): 20.

valuable role models for students. They learn that perfection is not a final goal, but rather a process of continuous improvement. They are inspired to be reflective about their own learning process. They learn to identify weaknesses, seek improvement strategies, and persevere when faced with failure.⁸⁹This attitude is crucial for building academic resilience, the ability to bounce back after setbacks. This resilience is a crucial factor in maintaining motivation and achieving long-term success. Reflective behavior fosters students' academic resilience, maintains motivation, and supports long-term achievement.⁹⁰.

The pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers plays a role in building educational partnerships with parents and the community. In their interactions with parents and the community, Islamic Religious Education teachers' pedagogical competence plays a role in building educational partnerships. Teachers with pedagogical competence understand that education is a shared responsibility between the school, family, and community. They proactively communicate with parents, report on students' learning progress, and seek their support in the educational process.⁹¹He also involves community leaders or other relevant learning resources in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This partnership creates a richer and more supportive educational environment. Through interactions at school, students can develop positive attitudes such as responsibility, hard work, honesty, and independence, which are essential for social life.⁹²Students feel that everyone cares about their education. This sense of support strengthens their motivation and commitment to achievement. They don't feel alone in their learning journey. When they encounter difficulties, many people are ready to help. This strong social support is a protective factor that prevents students from dropping out of school or losing motivation along the way. Strong social support strengthens students' motivation, prevents dropout, and maintains their commitment to achievement.

Islamic Religious Education teachers' pedagogical competence plays a role in improving students' self-efficacy through successful experiences and positive support. The influence of pedagogical competence on learning achievement also occurs through increased student self-efficacy.⁹³When teachers are able to create successful experiences for students, when they provide challenging but achievable tasks, when they provide positive reinforcement for students' efforts and achievements, students' self-efficacy increases. Teacher self-efficacy influences students' emotional well-being, social inclusion, and academic self-concept in inclusive classrooms.⁹⁴They believe they are capable of achieving. This belief drives them to set higher goals and work harder. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, teachers can design a series of increasingly

⁸⁹ R Jensen dan M Ortiz, "Reflective teaching and continuous professional development," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 129 (2024): 101.

⁹⁰ E Torres dan Y Nakamura, "Reflective practices and academic resilience in high school students," *Educational Psychology International* 41, no. 2 (2025): 142.

⁹¹ S Martin dan R Lopez, "Parent-teacher partnerships and student outcomes," *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 52, no. 3 (2024): 415.

⁹² N N I Nafisa and D Darmawan, "The Influence of Teacher Personality Competence on Character Formation," *Character: Journal of Islamic Education Research* 2, no. 2 (2025): 307.

⁹³ A Smith dan S Ullah, "Teacher influence on student self-efficacy and academic success," *Learning and Instruction* 72 (2024): 101.

⁹⁴ E Eren et al., "Teacher Student-Specific Self-Efficacy and its Impact on Students' Academic Self-Concept, Emotional Well-Being and Social Inclusion," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 165 (2025): 10.

complex tasks, providing assistance at the beginning, and gradually reducing assistance as students' abilities improve. This scaffolding process helps students reach higher levels of competence than they could achieve on their own. Successfully achieving increasingly difficult goals strengthens self-efficacy, and strong self-efficacy drives even higher achievement. This circle of virtuosity is an important contribution of pedagogical competence to learning achievement. Islamic Religious Education teachers' pedagogical competence plays a role in increasing students' self-efficacy through successful experiences and positive support.⁹⁵

Islamic Religious Education teachers' pedagogical competence serves as a catalyst that optimizes the contribution of professional competence to motivation and learning achievement.⁹⁶ Teacher competence, both in professional and pedagogical aspects, has a real, measurable influence on improving student learning outcomes.⁹⁷ A teacher may possess a strong grasp of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material, but without adequate pedagogical skills, that mastery will not effectively reach students. Rich material will be presented in a dry and boring format. Conversely, a teacher with good pedagogical skills can present even ordinary material as an engaging and meaningful learning experience. Pedagogical competence serves as a channel through which the teacher's rich material flows into the minds and hearts of students. Thus, these two competencies are complementary and mutually reinforcing. The ideal Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher is one who possesses both material mastery and pedagogical skills. Only by simultaneously mastering these two competencies can a teacher be a powerful determinant of student motivation and optimal learning achievement in Islamic Religious Education.⁹⁸ Strong mastery of the material and skilled pedagogical skills complement each other, making Islamic Education teachers the main determinant of student motivation and achievement.

⁹⁵ L Andrews dan H Park, "Scaffolding and self-efficacy in secondary education," *Educational Psychology Review* 37, no. 2 (2025): 190.

⁹⁶ L Chen dan P Romero, "Teacher professional and pedagogical competence as predictors of student achievement," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 130 (2024): 104.

⁹⁷ A P Yunanti and A Amaliyah, "The Effect of Teachers' Professional and Pedagogical Competencies on Students' Mathematics Learning Outcomes at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *Indonesian Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning* 2, no. 1 (2025): 81.

⁹⁸ M Diaz dan Y Wang, "Integrating professional knowledge and pedagogical skill in faith-based education," *International Journal of Educational Development* 89 (2025): 101.

Conclusion

The professional and pedagogical competencies of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are two main pillars that simultaneously and integratively determine the level of student motivation and learning achievement. Professional competency is not only reflected in a deep mastery of Islamic material, but also in the teacher's ability to contextualize the material into real life, present it logically and systematically, and build academic and moral credibility before students. Through these competencies, teachers are able to foster students' trust, stimulate curiosity, and strengthen the belief that the material being studied has value and relevance in their lives. On the other hand, pedagogical competency plays a strategic role in managing the learning process so that it is effective, interactive, and student-centered. Teachers' ability to design varied learning, use appropriate methods and media, create a conducive classroom atmosphere, and understand the characteristics and individual needs of students are important factors in building active student engagement. Pedagogical competency also enables teachers to create meaningful learning experiences, provide positive reinforcement, and create a sense of security and comfort that ultimately encourages the emergence of intrinsic motivation in students, these two competencies are complementary and inseparable, as mastery of material without the ability to convey it effectively will reduce student absorption, while pedagogical skills without strong mastery of the material will weaken the substance of the learning. Synergy between the two is key to building sustainable learning motivation, which in turn has direct implications for improving student learning achievement, both in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Therefore, efforts to develop the quality of Islamic Religious Education teachers must be carried out proportionally and in a balanced manner between improving professional and pedagogical competencies. Educational institutions need to design an integrative curriculum, which not only emphasizes mastery of Islamic material, but also strengthens teaching skills based on modern pedagogical approaches. Schools, as institutions that use teachers, also need to provide space for continuous professional development through training, workshops, academic supervision, and teacher learning communities. Support from the social environment, including parents and the community, is also an important factor in creating an educational ecosystem conducive to improving student motivation and learning achievement.

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