



CENDEKIAWAN:
JURNAL PENDIDIKAN DAN STUDI KEISLAMAN

Volume 4 Nomor 2 Tahun 2025 Page 710-716

<https://zia-research.com/index.php/cendekiawan>



The Role of Social Competence of Islamic Education Teachers in the Formation of Student Character at MAN 1 Mojokerto

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers' social competence on the character development of students at MAN 1 Mojokerto. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews with PAI teachers, and document analysis using a qualitative approach. The findings indicate that teachers play a significant role in shaping students' character through effective communication skills, fostering positive social relationships, and demonstrating exemplary behavior. Strategies employed include role modeling, collaborative learning such as discussions on "The Exemplary Companions of the Prophet," and collaboration with parents through parenting seminars. Identified challenges include the negative impact of digital technology, lack of parental supervision, and the critical nature of Generation Z students. Supporting factors involve the active roles of both teachers and families, while inhibiting factors include disharmonious family environments, students' innate character traits, and technological influences. The study concludes that enhancing teachers' social competence, fostering school-parent synergy, and adapting to digital era challenges are vital for successful character education.

Keywords: MAN 1 Mojokerto, Role Model, Student Character, Teacher's Social Competence.

PRELIMINARY

Education plays a crucial role in ensuring the survival of a nation and society. Through education, human resource potential can be maximized and developed (Nadziroh, et.al., 2016). Wardiman Djojonegoro also emphasized that a qualified individual is not only characterized by mastery of science and technology, but also by strong faith and devotion to God Almighty. With this knowledge, it is hoped that a person can make a positive contribution to others by disseminating and applying beneficial knowledge.

A teacher's abilities extend beyond delivering course material, including the ability to connect knowledge to students' real-life situations. Social competence is crucial for teachers, given that they constantly interact directly and intensively with students throughout the learning process (Muspiroh, 2016). Furthermore, teachers have a broader responsibility, namely guiding students to become religious, responsible, and morally upright individuals. Teachers also play a significant role in shaping students' character in a positive direction (Narahaubun, 2024).

An educator is responsible for imparting knowledge and skills, while also guiding students to grow into independent, wise, knowledgeable individuals, who believe in and obey God Almighty, according to their respective talents and potential (Djollong, 2017). In the eyes of the public and students, a teacher is a role model who should be used as an example and inspiration in everyday life (Arfandi & Samsudin, 2021).

However, in practice, many educators, particularly Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, still face difficulties in maximizing their social competence, especially when faced with the demands of the digital era. Some of the challenges that arise include the digital literacy gap, where not all teachers have the

skills or access to use technology optimally. Furthermore, there is often resistance to adopting modern teaching approaches, with some educators still relying on conventional methods that are less relevant in today's learning context. Furthermore, existing curricula are often not aligned with technology-based education, thus limiting the integration of digital tools into classroom teaching and learning activities (Makassar, 2024; Setiawan, 2024).

Teachers also face significant challenges in maintaining the relevance of Islamic teachings amidst the onslaught of modernization and globalization. Several previous studies, such as (Siburian et al., 2023) and (Kinas & Nilawati, 2024), have discussed the link between Islamic Religious Education teachers' social competence and student character development. However, these studies are still general in nature and have not specifically explored the practical strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers in madrasah-based schools to shape student character, especially in the context of Generation Z, who are more critical, responsive to technology, and difficult to direct. Therefore, this study has novelty in the form of an integrative approach between teacher social competence, collaborative learning, and parental involvement through parenting seminars, as well as a contextual focus on Generation Z and how Islamic Religious Education teachers adapt their approaches to their character and dynamics. Furthermore, this study specifically examines these practices at MAN 1 Mojokerto, which has not been the subject of previous research. By addressing these challenges, Islamic Religious Education teachers are expected to be able to create an inclusive, communicative learning environment oriented toward holistic character development. Therefore, this research is significant as a basis for designing relevant and adaptive character learning strategies in the digital era (Ramadani, et.al., 2024).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a field research design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in its natural setting. The primary objective of this study is to determine how the social competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers contributes to student character development at MAN 1 Mojokerto.

The research subjects were Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers actively teaching at MAN 1 Mojokerto. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with the teachers, and analysis of relevant supporting documents. The interviews were conducted in person to explore the teachers' perspectives, experiences, and actual practices in implementing social competencies during the character education process.

The data analysis process consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Relevant data are identified based on thematic patterns discovered during data collection and then presented in descriptive narrative form. The data are then analyzed inductively to generate valid conclusions. This method draws on the qualitative data analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman, which is suitable for social practice-based educational studies.

This research emphasizes data validity through technical triangulation, combining interviews, observations, and documents to validate the findings. As noted by Rosaliza et al., 2023, field research was conducted directly on-site and with the objects under study to maintain the overall credibility of the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Social Competence of Islamic Education Teachers

Understanding Social Competence

Social competence is an essential aspect that educators must possess to carry out their duties professionally. This competence reflects a teacher's ability to establish healthy social relationships with various stakeholders in education, such as students, colleagues, educational staff, the community, and parents around the school. The social interactions teachers foster reflect an open, empathetic, communicative, and tolerant attitude toward social and cultural differences (Nawaji, 2016).

In practice, social competence is seen from the behavior of teachers who are polite, able to listen actively, and able to respond to social situations in the school environment wisely and adaptively (Nita, et.al., 2023). Teachers are also required to adapt to the diverse backgrounds of their students, ensuring inclusive learning without discrimination. In the modern educational era, the role of teachers extends beyond teaching to moral guidance and values, fostering positive character in students.

A teacher's social skills are crucial to successfully creating a learning environment that fosters values such as mutual respect, cooperation, and social awareness. Teachers with strong social competence are more likely to be accepted by students, enabling the learning process to develop not only cognitive but also affective and social dimensions in students.

Principles of Social Competence

Social competence refers to an individual's ability to establish productive and harmonious relationships with others in various social contexts. In education, the principles of social competence include effective communication skills, the ability to understand others' perspectives (empathy), and adaptation to differences in culture, values, and backgrounds of students.

Teachers who master the principles of social competence are able to create a humanistic and democratic learning climate. They not only interact in formal teaching contexts but also build deep emotional connections, so that students feel valued, supported, and motivated. This strengthens trust and closeness between teachers and students, which are crucial for character education.

This principle also emphasizes the importance of social justice and non-discrimination. Teachers must be able to act as facilitators who bridge diversity in the classroom and act as fair mediators in conflict resolution. Thus, the principle of social competence not only supports the quality of the learning process but also fosters values of social civility in the school environment (Zumrotun, 2024).

The practice of these principles reflects the teacher's ability to develop positive interpersonal communication, build teamwork in a multicultural environment, demonstrate empathy and tolerance towards differences, and provide examples of ethical and inspiring social behavior in everyday life in the educational environment (Ahmad, 2019).

The Relationship between Social Competence of Islamic Education Teachers in Character Formation

The social competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers plays a significant role in shaping students' character. PAI teachers are not only responsible for delivering religious material but also serve as role models and moral guides, implementing Islamic values in daily life. Therefore, the quality of social interactions between teachers and students is a crucial aspect of the character education process.

Islamic Religious Education teachers' ability to communicate effectively, respond to students' emotional states, and build a learning environment based on ethical values plays a crucial role in fostering traits such as discipline, responsibility, empathy, and tolerance. When teachers consistently demonstrate positive social behavior—both during classroom activities and in informal interactions—students are more likely to adopt those behaviors in constructive ways (Nawaji, 2016).

Teachers with social competence enable a fair and inclusive learning process, ensuring that every student feels valued and cared for. This encourages increased student participation in learning activities and fosters character development through the internalization of positive values. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers who are actively involved in the social life of the school environment can also foster increased student social awareness of the importance of living responsibly in society.

Therefore, the social competence of Islamic Education teachers is a key factor in shaping the character of students, because through meaningful social interactions, Islamic values can be instilled contextually and not only theoretically.

The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Character Formation of Students

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' character, particularly in educational settings that emphasize religious values, such as MAN 1 Mojokerto. Their role extends beyond delivering religious instruction, serving as role models, spiritual mentors, and moral guides for students in their daily lives. In this context, character education is not merely theoretical, but rather more effectively instilled through the consistent practice of instilling values in daily interactions, both in the classroom and in various school activities (Fasya, 2022).

Interviews with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at MAN 1 Mojokerto revealed that character building for students is carried out through a humanistic approach based on role models. The process of internalizing character values is not sufficient through lectures or verbal instructions alone; it requires ongoing interaction and empathy from teachers. When students commit violations, the approach

used is not harsh punishment, but rather through personal, educational dialogue aimed at fostering awareness and responsibility in students.

Role modelling is a key aspect teachers implement in their daily activities. Values such as honesty, discipline, trustworthiness, and politeness are not only taught theoretically but also directly embodied in teachers' attitudes. At MAN 1 Mojokerto, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers promote character-building activities through activities such as congregational prayer, morning recitation, and active involvement in socio-religious activities. These activities serve as a medium for internalizing the values of religiosity, social empathy, and spiritual discipline, which can be observed in real-life situations by students (Fasya, 2022).

Based on field observations, Islamic Religious Education teachers also act as moral advisors when students exhibit deviant behavior, such as misuse of gadgets or lack of manners. In dealing with these situations, teachers prefer an empathy-based counseling approach rather than repressive action. This strategy is considered more effective in building moral awareness and strengthening the emotional bond between teachers and students.

The teacher's role extends beyond being an advisor, but also as a role model who consistently demonstrates positive behavior. Teachers' exemplary behavior in terms of punctual attendance, politeness, and consistent behavior serve as a model for students to directly emulate. Students tend to emulate their teachers' attitudes, both in terms of discipline and responsibility. If teachers demonstrate inconsistency, this can negatively impact students' perceptions and behavior.

In carrying out their roles, Islamic Religious Education teachers also demonstrate social skills such as patience, humility, and the ability to maintain open communication. These characteristics make the values they convey more easily accepted and emulated by students (Santi, et.al., 2023). In addition, a pleasant, open classroom atmosphere that respects each student creates a learning space that is conducive to the development of complete character.

Through their roles as educators, mentors, counselors, and role models, Islamic Religious Education teachers play a crucial role in guiding students to become individuals who are not only religious and virtuous, but also socially responsible. This multifaceted role serves as a fundamental pillar in fostering a generation that excels intellectually while demonstrating maturity in moral and spiritual aspects (Rahadian Rahmadi, Erjati Abas, 2023).

Social Competence Development Strategy in Character Building of Students

The strategy for developing teachers' social competence in shaping student character at MAN 1 Mojokerto emphasizes role models, cooperation, and collaboration with parents. In this context, the teacher's role extends beyond delivering learning materials to serving as a role model in implementing character values through daily behavior and interactions.

One of the main strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers is through role models, or *uswah hasanah*, where teachers act as role models in implementing values such as honesty, discipline, courtesy, and responsibility. As explained by one Islamic Religious Education teacher, character building for students will not be effective if teachers do not start with themselves (Ibda' Binafsik). The current generation, especially Generation Z, tends to be critical and responsive to inconsistencies between words and actions. Therefore, teachers are required to be consistent in their daily behavior to be trusted and emulated by students.

This exemplary behavior is manifested in simple things like attending class regularly, dressing neatly, speaking politely to students, and keeping promises. This is done with the belief that students will emulate what they see in the teachers they respect. Exemplary behavior is the primary foundation of character education because it cannot be replaced by technology or other instructional methods.

The second strategy is the implementation of a collaborative learning model. Islamic Religious Education teachers at MAN 1 Mojokerto implement thematic discussions that actively engage students, for example, discussing the theme "The Exemplary Companions of the Prophet." Through these discussions, students are encouraged to work in teams, express their opinions, listen to others, and learn to be responsible for their respective roles within the group. The teacher acts as a facilitator, overseeing the discussion process and providing constructive feedback. This model not only trains students' social competence but also strengthens character values through interactions between students.

The third strategy is to build partnerships with students' parents. Islamic Religious Education teachers recognize that character building cannot stop at school but must continue within the family. Therefore, schools regularly hold meetings with students' guardians, at least twice a year. During these meetings, parenting seminars are held, aimed at establishing a common understanding between teachers and parents regarding the character values that should be instilled in children.

Because the family is a child's first social environment, establishing cooperation with parents is essential. Continuity in character development is expected, both at school and at home, through effective communication between teachers and parents.

These strategies illustrate that developing teachers' social competence is not only done theoretically, but also through a practical approach that involves role models, active participation, and synergy between schools and families. In facing the challenges of the digital generation, these strategies are relevant to ensuring that character values remain firmly embedded in students amidst the currents of modernization and globalization (Wijaya & Amiruddin, 2019).

Factors that Encourage and Inhibit Student Character Formation

Students' character is formed through the influence of various factors, both within themselves and from their surrounding environment, which are interconnected. In the context of MAN 1 Mojokerto, interviews with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers revealed that successes and obstacles in the character-building process are greatly influenced by the family environment, teacher involvement, and the influence of technology (Aini, 2021).

Supporting Factors

The primary supporting factor in shaping students' character comes from the active role of teachers and families. Within the school environment, Islamic Religious Education teachers play a central role in fostering students' morals and attitudes. This role is manifested not only through classroom instruction but also through ongoing moral guidance. Teachers act as mentors, consistently guiding students toward understanding and practicing values such as responsibility, discipline, and social empathy.

Outside of school, parents play a crucial supporting role. Teachers explain that a child's character is greatly influenced by parenting styles and habits established at home. For example, when a child prefers playing to doing homework, the parent's role in reminding and guiding them is a key factor in fostering responsibility. Therefore, collaboration between teachers and parents is a crucial foundation for ongoing character education.

Inhibiting Factors

Conversely, the character-building process also faces several inhibiting factors. One of these is a less than harmonious family environment, such as conflict between parents, broken homes, or students living with grandparents without adequate supervision. These conditions often result in emotional instability and a lack of self-control in students.

Furthermore, teachers also identify children's basic character as a challenge in itself. Some students, despite counseling and coaching, tend to revert to their original behavior after some time. Therefore, character building requires a long process, perseverance, and a consistent approach, including providing role models and repeated advice.

Another significant factor is the negative impact of technological advancements, particularly unsupervised use of gadgets. Teachers report that many students are influenced by age-inappropriate digital content, from speech styles to clothing styles. Uncontrolled exposure to social media and the internet can undermine the character values instilled in schools. This poses a serious challenge to character education in the digital age.

Taking these supporting and inhibiting factors into consideration, it is important for educational institutions to design a comprehensive character-building strategy that is adaptive to the times and based on collaboration between schools, teachers and families.

CONCLUSION

The strategy for developing teachers' social competence in shaping student character at MAN 1 Mojokerto focuses on role models, cooperation, and collaboration with parents. Within this framework, a teacher not only serves as a transmitter of subject matter but also as a role model who implements character values through daily behavior. Strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers include providing exemplary behavior, implementing collaborative learning through religious-themed discussions, and building strong partnerships with parents through parenting programs. These efforts not only deepen the emotional bond between teachers and students but also support the gradual and contextual internalization of values such as discipline, responsibility, and tolerance.

However, the character-building process also faces obstacles, including the negative influence of digital technology, lack of parental supervision, and the critical and difficult-to-direct characteristics of Generation Z students. The main supporting factors come from teachers' consistency in guiding students and the active role of families in the home environment. While the biggest obstacles arise from unstable family conditions, individual student characteristics, and uncontrolled exposure to information through digital media.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the success of character education is highly dependent on the quality of Islamic Education teachers' social competence. Therefore, strengthening teachers' social capacity, intensive collaboration between schools and parents, and readiness to face the challenges of the digital era are crucial factors in realizing effective and sustainable character education.

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