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Becoming a Professional Islamic Education Teacher through PPG

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ABSTRAK

The Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program is designed to ensure teachers possess pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies aligned with national standards. This article analyzes how PPG contributes to the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers through a multi-site case study in three secondary schools. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis (RPP/CP, open modules, assessment instruments). Results indicate that PPG encourages improved learning planning based on the Independent Curriculum, strengthening TPACK (Teacher-Based Assessment), implementing authentic assessments, and integrating the value of religious moderation. However, challenges such as time constraints, administrative burdens, and varying school support remain. Practical implications include strengthening teacher learning communities (KLG/MGMP), ongoing clinical supervision, and developing evidence-based microteaching.

1. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play a strategic role in shaping the character, critical religious reasoning, and social skills of students in diverse Indonesia. This aligns with the mandate of four teacher competencies (pedagogical, professional, social, and personality) within the national regulatory framework (Law No. 14/2005; Minister of National Education Regulation No. 16/2007). In an educational ecosystem undergoing digital transformation, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, and the emphasis on the Pancasila Student Profile, PAI teachers are required to master not only Islamic content but also differentiated pedagogy, digital literacy, and multicultural sensitivity (Kemendikbudristek, n.d.; Kemenag RI, 2019). Teacher Professional Education (PPG) is positioned as a professionalization pathway that strengthens competencies through practice-based learning (microteaching, PPL) and structured performance assessments.

Prior to participating in PPG, common challenges that often emerged included teaching materials that were not fully based on Learning Outcomes (CP), the dominance of teacher-centered learning, less authentic assessments, and cosmetic technology integration. PPG, designed with a PCK framework (Shulman, 1986) and expanded to TPACK (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), has the potential to shift practices toward active learning (project/case/problem-based) and authentic assessments that assess real performance (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie, 2009/2012). The backward design approach encourages teachers to start from the objectives and expected learning evidence before developing activities (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), while differentiation ensures that diverse learning needs are facilitated through adjustments to content, process, and product (Tomlinson, 2014). In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the principles of religious moderation, balance, justice,

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and welfare need to be internalized in the objectives, materials, methods, and assessments so that learning about sensitive issues (differences in schools of thought, ethics in social media) takes place in a dialogical and inclusive (Kemenag RI, 2019).

Theoretically, this study combines PCK/TPACK, authentic assessment, and religious moderation into a single model of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) practice. These findings are expected to serve as a reference for strengthening post-PPG mentoring (clinical supervision, lesson study, teacher learning communities) and digitizing portfolios to reduce administrative burdens (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer et al., 1980; Wenger, 1998).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Professionalism of Islamic Education Teachers in the National Framework

Teacher professionalism in Indonesia is based on four competencies: pedagogical, professional, social, and personality, as stipulated in Law No. 14 of 2005 and reinforced by Minister of National Education Regulation No. 16 of 2007 concerning Academic Qualifications and Teacher Competency Standards (UU 14/2005; Permendiknas 16/2007). In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), professionalism is not only about the accuracy of religious material, but also the ability to manage diversity, develop critical religious reasoning, and exemplify a moderate attitude in learning practices (Kemenag RI, 2019). In line with the Independent Curriculum policy, the orientation of professionalism has shifted to student-centered, competency-oriented, and evidence-based learning(Kemendikbudristek, n.d.).

2.2 Teaching Knowledge: PCK and Its Evolution to TPACK

Shulman (1986) introduced Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), a type of knowledge that combines content with pedagogy so that material can be represented effectively, anticipatory of misconceptions, and contextually (Shulman, 1986). Along with the digital ecosystem, this framework evolved into Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), which emphasizes the synergy of content knowledge, pedagogy, and technology to achieve learning goals meaningfully rather than merely cosmetically (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). In Islamic Education, TPACK helps teachers orchestrate normative material into dialogic learning experiences through LMS, digital formative quizzes, and multimodal media that are directly related to objectives and assessments (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Hattie, 2012).

2.3 Evidence-Based Learning Design: Backward Design

The backward design approach prioritizes goal setting and evidence of achievement, then cascades down to relevant learning activities and experiences (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). For Islamic Religious Education teachers, this approach ensures alignment between Learning Outcomes (CPs), indicators, and activities, such as social media ethics projects, so that authentic assessment becomes organic, not tacked on. (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

2.4 Active Strategies and Differentiated Learning

Meta-synthesis of Visible Learning shows that clarity of objectives, quality of feedback, and explicit instruction are highly correlated with improved learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009; Hattie, 2012). Active strategies such as problem-based learning, case studies, role-play, and project-based learning have been shown to strengthen engagement, higher-order reasoning, and transfer of learning (Hattie, 2012). In heterogeneous Islamic Religious Education classrooms, differentiated instruction allows for the adjustment of content, process, and product to suit students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles, resulting in more equitable participation and a safer environment for sensitive issues. (Tomlinson, 2014).

2.5 Formative, Authentic Assessment, and Feedback

Classic reviews show that formative assessments that provide specific feedback toward objectives consistently improve student learning outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 1998). In Islamic Religious Education (PAI), authentic assessments capture actual performance through ethical debates, social service portfolios, social service reflection journals, and digital literacy campaign projects, all of which are assessed using analytical rubrics for fairness and transparency (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Brookhart, 2013). Prompt, action-oriented feedback has a significant impact on learning improvement (Hattie, 2009).
2.6 Microteaching, Clinical Supervision, and Lesson Study

Microteaching provides space for short-cycle teaching practice with a focus on specific skills and intensive feedback (Allen & Ryan, 1969; Hattie, 2009). Clinical supervision structures mentoring in three data-based stages: pre-observation, observation, and post-observation, so that teacher reflection is directed and ongoing (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer et al., 1980). Lesson study builds a school professional community to collectively plan, observe, and reflect on lessons, which impacts instructional quality improvement (Lewis, 2002). These three approaches are crucial in the PPG and post-PPG ecosystems.

2.7 Religious Moderation in Islamic Education Practice

Religious moderation, based on the principles of justice, balance, and welfare, needs to be internalized from the formulation of objectives, content selection, strategies, and assessments to ensure productive and inclusive religious dialogue in the classroom (Kemenag RI, 2019). This framework is relevant to the Pancasila Student Profile project (e.g., global diversity, critical reasoning), which provides space for thematic project-based learning based on local contexts. (Kemendikbudristek, n.d.).

2.8 Teacher Professional Development: From PPG to Communities of Practice

Effective professional development is characterized by content focus, active learning, coherence, adequate duration, and collective participation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Post-PPG, the impact will be more sustainable if teachers are involved in communities of practice (MGMP/KLG) that practice video lesson analysis, peer coaching, and data-based rubric revision (Wenger, 1998). Regular clinical supervision and classroom action research strengthen the evidence-based cycle of continuous improvement (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer et al., 1980; Wenger, 1998).

3. Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach with a multi-site case study design in three secondary schools (two public, one private) to understand the process and context of the transformation of Islamic Religious Education Teacher practices post-PPG in depth (Yin, 2018; Stake, 1995; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design was chosen because it allows exploration of the phenomenon of “post-PPG professionalization” in a real setting, involves multiple data sources and produces thick, transferable descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). The locations were selected using purposive maximum variation to capture variations in managerial support and ICT infrastructure. The participants were 6 Islamic Religious Education Teachers who were PPG alumni (1–3 years of pre-service and in-service), 3 school leaders (principals/curriculum vice-chairs), and 18 students (three focus groups; each with 6 students). The data collection techniques used were in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. To analyze the data, the researcher used observation, interviews, and documentation, thus using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. Data analysis activities require data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The collected data is then summarized to accurately and clearly describe the various problems based on the information received. After conducting data collection, researchers conduct anticipatory research before performing data reduction. The data in this research was analyzed using data reduction. Data reduction means summarizing all the information obtained and selecting the main points and the most important points. We look for themes and patterns and discard unnecessary data for summarization. Reduced and selected data will provide a clearer picture and make it easier for researchers to conduct further data collection. Next is data presentation. Data presentation in qualitative research can be explained or described in short, easy-to-understand sentences or can be conveyed using a chart or relationship between categories, a flowchart, and the like. Finally, verification and conclusion drawing are carried out. With the data obtained, conclusions will be drawn. The plan for testing data validity uses source triangulation, which is to test the credibility of the data obtained by checking data obtained from several predetermined sources. Then, method triangulation, which is to test the credibility of the data, can be done by checking the data obtained from the same source but using different techniques to obtain information. And the last is technical triangulation, which is used by researchers to test the credibility of data by checking the data with the same source using different techniques.

4. Results and Discussion

The research was conducted in three secondary schools (two public, one private) with six Islamic Religious Education Teachers (PAI) who were alumni of PPG in the last 1–3 years, three school leaders, and three student FGDs. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observations of 12 learning sessions, and analysis of 18 teaching materials (ATP, teaching modules, rubrics). Thematic analysis resulted in six main themes: (1) achievement-based planning and backward design; (2) integration of TPACK and shift to active strategies; (3) formative-authentic assessment and feedback quality; (4) differentiation and inclusion; (5) internalization of religious moderation; (6) post-PPG ecosystem: microteaching, clinical supervision, lesson study, and community of practice. The reliability of the findings was maintained through triangulation of method sources, brief member checking, and procedural audit trails (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer et al., 1980; Wenger, 1998).

Outcome-Based Planning and Backward Design. All teachers demonstrated a shift in the development of tools from “content-centric” to “objective and evidence-centric.” The teaching module documents clearly outlined Learning Outcomes (CP), indicators, evidence of learning, and assessment rubrics before activities were developed. The flow of learning objectives (ATP) was mapped more logically, with anticipation of misconceptions (e.g., on topics such as discussion etiquette and differences in schools of thought). This pattern is consistent with the principle of backward design, which begins with objectives and evidence of achievement and then progresses to activities (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), and with PCK, a content representation strategy that considers students’ conceptual difficulties (Shulman, 1986). This research demonstrated an increased consistency in the alignment of objectives, activities, and assessments; the teaching tools incorporated remedial and enrichment scenarios, including student reflection sheets (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Shulman, 1986).

TPACK Integration and the Shift to Active Strategies. Observations revealed a shift from predominantly lecture-based learning to problem-based learning, case studies, role-playing, and project-based learning. Technology was used not only for video playback, but also for initial schema activation (entry ticket quizzes), discussion boards, and exit ticket reflections. This integration demonstrated that technological TPACK reinforcement was aligned with objectives and strategies, not cosmetic additions (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Short formative assessments through the LMS accelerated feedback and instructional decision-making (Hattie, 2012). This research demonstrated increased student engagement (question frequency, argument quality, project independence), and teacher confidence in facilitating sensitive issues also increased (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Hattie, 2012).

Authentic Formative Assessment and Quality Feedback. Assessment instruments shifted to performance tasks: argument-based and context-based ethical debates, reflective journals (social media etiquette), social service portfolios, and a digital campaign themed "Be Wise on Social Media." Teachers assessed using an analytical rubric and provided specific feedback based on indicators, then followed up with differentiated enrichment remediation. This pattern aligns with evidence that formative assessment with feedback clearly improves learning outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 1998) and aligns with meta-synthesis findings on the robust effects of feedback (Hattie, 2009). This research demonstrated an increase in the quality of assignment products (coherence of arguments, consistency of references), more equitable participation during debates, and a decrease in the number of negative posts in classes that implemented digital ethics projects (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie, 2009).

Differentiation and Inclusivity. Teachers adopt differentiated instruction through variations in content (leveled reading), process (minor tutoring/learning clinics), and products (essays, posters, short videos). Dialectical ethical learning contracts are created to safely manage differing perspectives. This practice affirms that differentiation increases access and participation for students with diverse readiness/interests (Tomlinson, 2014) and supports the goals of the Independent Curriculum, which centers on learning needs (Kemendikbudristek, n.d.). This research shows a more equitable distribution of participation; students with different learning profiles remain productive on project assignments (Tomlinson, 2014; Kemendikbudristek, n.d.).

Internalizing Religious Moderation in Classroom Practice. Sensitive topics regarding differences in sects, religious relations in the public sphere, and social media ethics are addressed through dialogic discussions and local case studies. Teachers emphasize the values of justice, balance, and welfare as a framework for taking positions, rather than simply memorizing evidence. This integration of values aligns with the Religious Moderation guidelines (Kemenag RI, 2019) and intersects with the Pancasila Student Profile project (global diversity, critical reasoning). This research demonstrates that the classroom is more conducive to addressing differences; students' argumentation integrates normative references and social ethical considerations (Kemenag RI, 2019; Kemendikbudristek, n.d.).

Post-PPG Ecosystem: Microteaching, Clinical Supervision, Lesson Study, and Communities of Practice. All schools practiced video-based microteaching for targeted feedback (Allen & Ryan, 1969; Hattie, 2009). Two schools implemented clinical supervision cycles (pre-observation-post) focused on agreed-upon indicators; one school initiated small-scale, cross-subject lesson studies on positive discipline issues. These activities were institutionalized within the MGMP/KLG (Center for Teacher Development) to ensure ongoing professional learning (Wenger, 1998). This study demonstrated rapid improvements in instructional clarity, higher-order questioning, and time management; and the formation of a reflective culture among teachers (Allen & Ryan, 1969; Cogan, 1973; Lewis, 2002; Wenger, 1998).

Supporting factors include: first, the principal's instructional leadership. Principals who establish clear instructional expectations (such as classroom observation schedules and regular reflection forums) encourage the sustainability of post-PPG practices. This is evident in two schools providing monthly clinical supervision calendars and short assessment clinics; teachers reported improved feedback quality and clarity of lesson objectives (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer et al., 1980; Hattie, 2012). Second, an active community of practice (MGMP/KLG). Teacher groups facilitate co-planning, video lesson analysis, and rubric sharing. This knowledge-sharing practice strengthens the transfer of PPG outcomes into professional habits (Wenger, 1998). This is evident in teachers conducting module reviews and rotating microteaching, which teachers often refer to as "learning from peer videos" as a key factor in improving instructional clarity (Allen & Ryan, 1969; Wenger, 1998). Third, basic ICT access and the school's LMS. Minimal access (projector, Wi-Fi in the teacher's room, and an LMS account) allows for rapid formative assessment and timely feedback, two components that have a high impact on learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009/2012). This is evident in LMS-based entry/exit ticket quizzes, which accelerate remedial/enrichment sessions, and increase student engagement in project-based classes (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Hattie, 2012). Fourth, curriculum coherence (Independent Curriculum) and religious moderation. The alignment of the Pancasila Student Profile project with the PAI theme (social media ethics, tolerance) facilitates the integration of authentic contexts (Kemendikbudristek, n.d.; Kemenag RI, 2019). This is evident in the school linking the digital literacy theme with the rahmah/justice value campaign, where the rubric assesses knowledge, attitudes, and skills in an integrated manner (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Fifth, a reflective culture through clinical supervision and lesson study. The pre-observation–observation–post-observation cycle fosters a reflective habit of mind, while lesson study deepens the analysis of a single lesson (Cogan, 1973; Lewis, 2002). This is evident in post-observation notes containing specific recommendations (HOTS questions, time management) that are adopted at the next meeting (Goldhammer et al., 1980; Hattie, 2012). And the inhibiting factors are high administrative burden, variations in managerial support and ICT policies, limited ICT devices in certain classes, limited formal collaboration time and limited formal collaboration time.

5. Conclusion

The Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG) has proven to be a catalyst for the professionalization of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. Cross-site findings demonstrate a marked shift from content-centered teaching practices to outcomes-oriented, evidence-based, and dialogic learning. PPG alumni consistently develop CP-based planning with stronger alignment of objectives, activities, and assessments, implement active strategies (problem/case/project-based learning) supported by meaningful TPACK integration, and adopt authentic formative assessment with analytical rubrics and specific feedback. These practices strengthen student participation, the quality of learning products, and an inclusive classroom climate, especially when managing sensitive issues through a framework of religious moderation.

Successful implementation is influenced by the post-PPG ecosystem in schools. Instructional leadership that sets clear expectations, an active community of practice (MGMP/KLG), the availability of minimum ICT and LMS, and a professional development cycle (video-based microteaching, clinical supervision, and lesson study). On the other hand, administrative burdens, inconsistent ICT policies, limited devices in certain classes, limited collaboration time, and uneven readiness for differentiation are key obstacles. Overall, PPG is effective when it is not merely a one-time training but is integrated into a culture of ongoing reflection in schools, supported by policies, infrastructure, and collaboration that maintain the continuity of good practices in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) classes.

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