

Implementing Teacher Competency Development Policies to Improve Educational Quality at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, Plupuh

Isnaini ^{a,1,*}, Siti Halimah ^{b,2}, Harun Joko Prayitno ^{c,3}, Indri ^{d,4}

^{*abcd} Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

¹q100250026@student.ums.ac.id, ²q100250026@student.ums.ac.id

*Correspondent Author; Email: q100250026@student.ums.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of teacher competency development policies in improving educational quality at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, Plupuh. The study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis. The participants included the principal, curriculum coordinator, teachers, administrative staff, and other relevant stakeholders selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that teacher competency development was integrated into school planning, academic supervision, teacher meetings, workshops, mentoring, professional working groups, peer discussions, and independent learning. The principal played a central role in identifying teacher needs, determining program priorities, facilitating professional development, providing feedback, and monitoring classroom implementation. These policies contributed to improvements in lesson planning, instructional strategies, digital media use, assessment practices, classroom interaction, professional collaboration, and the integration of Islamic values into learning. Policy implementation was supported by leadership commitment, collegial cooperation, organizational culture, and Muhammadiyah educational values. However, limited funding, high workloads, time constraints, uneven digital competence, and insufficient follow-up reduced the effectiveness of several programs. The study concludes that teacher competency development must be implemented as a continuous institutional cycle consisting of needs assessment, program planning, implementation, mentoring, classroom application, evaluation, and policy improvement. Sustainable policy implementation can strengthen teacher professionalism and gradually improve educational quality.

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Introduction

The quality of education at the Islamic elementary school level largely depends on the institution's capacity to manage its human resources in a systematic and sustainable manner. Teachers occupy a central position because they interact directly with students, translate the curriculum into classroom practices, create supportive learning environments, conduct assessments, and internalize Islamic values. Curriculum changes, rapid digital transformation, diverse student characteristics, and the demand for twenty-first-century skills have made teachers' professional responsibilities increasingly complex. Therefore, Islamic schools must not only recruit teachers who meet academic qualification standards but also implement competency development policies that respond to instructional needs and institutional development. Competent teachers can organize effective learning, facilitate students' potential, and contribute to the sustainable achievement of educational objectives (Wijaya, Ginting, Iswanto, Nadia, & Rahman, 2023).

Teacher competency comprises pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies. These four dimensions are closely interconnected. Pedagogical competency concerns teachers' ability to understand students, design learning activities, apply appropriate teaching strategies, and conduct assessments. Professional competency includes mastery of subject matter, disciplinary structures, and the ability to develop relevant learning materials. Personal competency is reflected in integrity, discipline, responsibility, emotional maturity, and exemplary conduct. Social competency concerns teachers' ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with students, parents, colleagues, and the wider community. Contemporary teacher development must also include digital literacy, classroom management, instructional leadership, reflective practice, and adaptability to educational change. The development of pedagogical, technological, managerial, and social capabilities is essential for improving the quality of teaching and learning (Akbar, 2024).

Teacher competency development cannot rely solely on occasional training activities. Effective professional development requires a clear focus on instructional content, active teacher participation, collaboration, modelling of effective practices, mentoring, feedback, reflection, and program continuity. Training that primarily fulfils administrative requirements rarely produces substantial changes in classroom practice. In contrast, professional development designed according to teachers' actual needs is more likely to improve their knowledge, practical skills, professional beliefs, and instructional performance. The effectiveness of professional development depends on the alignment between program design, participant needs, organizational support, and the specific conditions of the educational institution in which teachers work (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021).

International studies reveal a persistent gap between established knowledge about effective professional development and its implementation in educational practice. Many teacher training programs do not provide sufficient time for practice, mentoring, professional collaboration, and the application of new knowledge in authentic classroom settings. These limitations often prevent competency development activities from

producing meaningful changes in teaching practices and student outcomes. Consequently, teacher competency development policies must operate as an integrated process that begins with needs assessment and continues through program planning, implementation, mentoring, evaluation, and follow-up. Such policies should consider teachers' individual characteristics, professional responsibilities, students' needs, and the resources available within the institution (Popova, Evans, Breeding, & Arancibia, 2022).

In Indonesia, teacher professional development also faces challenges related to the relevance of programs to teachers' actual needs. Teachers generally consider continuous professional development important for updating their knowledge, improving instructional skills, expanding professional networks, and responding to educational policy changes. However, the benefits of professional development may remain limited when training materials are too general, disconnected from classroom problems, or unsupported by post-training assistance. Access to professional development is also influenced by leadership support, time availability, workload, funding, access to information, and the organizational learning culture. Teacher development policies should therefore provide opportunities for teachers to identify their needs and participate actively in program planning and evaluation (Widayati, MacCallum, & Woods-McConney, 2021).

Technological development has further expanded the range of competencies teachers need. Teachers must not only operate digital devices but also select technologies that support learning objectives, develop digital materials, manage online and classroom interactions, evaluate the credibility of information, and protect students from potential digital risks. Technology training that only introduces devices and applications is insufficient to improve instructional quality. Teachers need professional development that integrates technological knowledge, pedagogical competence, subject content, and student needs. Research on information and communication technology competency training indicates that teacher development should promote contextual, reflective, and pedagogically integrated uses of technology (Ekantiningasih & Sukirman, 2023).

Teacher competency development policies have a direct relationship with educational quality. Educational quality is not limited to students' academic scores. It also includes the quality of instructional processes, character development, educational services, institutional culture, stakeholder satisfaction, and the capacity of schools to implement continuous improvement. Previous research has shown that teacher competency can mediate the relationship between school leadership, infrastructure availability, and educational quality. This finding indicates that strong leadership and adequate facilities cannot produce maximum results when teachers lack the capacity to use institutional resources for effective learning (Sutrisno, Hayati, Saputra, Arifin, & Kartiko, 2023).

The school principal plays a strategic role in translating teacher development policies into practical and measurable programs. This role includes identifying competency needs, determining development priorities, allocating financial resources, facilitating participation in training, conducting academic supervision, establishing

professional learning communities, motivating teachers, and evaluating performance. Dialogical supervision can help teachers identify the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching practices. Clinical supervision, for example, may involve identifying instructional needs, observing classroom practices, analyzing findings, and providing constructive feedback. This process allows competency development to address specific problems that teachers experience in their daily teaching activities (Harahap & Fadhli, 2025).

In addition to leadership, successful policy implementation depends on communication, resources, implementers' attitudes, and organizational mechanisms. The formulation of a policy does not automatically guarantee its effective implementation. Teachers must clearly understand the policy's objectives, benefits, activities, and expected outcomes. Educational institutions also need adequate resources, including time, funding, facilities, qualified facilitators, and mentoring systems. Teachers' attitudes toward a policy determine their level of participation and willingness to apply new knowledge and skills in the classroom. Collaboration among teachers, school leaders, parents, educational organizations, and government authorities also strengthens competency development and educational quality improvement (Akbar, 2024).

Within Muhammadiyah Islamic schools, teacher competency development has an additional dimension because it must integrate professionalism, Islamic values, and institutional identity. Teachers do not only perform instructional duties. They also serve as role models who cultivate religious values, discipline, social responsibility, and students' character. Professional development in Islamic educational institutions should therefore connect pedagogical improvement with value orientation and institutional principles. Teacher development rooted in classroom practice, professional collaboration, and reflection can generate more meaningful changes in teaching behaviour (Assalihee, Bakoh, Boonsuk, & Songmuang, 2024). Teachers' beliefs in their own capabilities must also receive attention because self-efficacy influences their readiness to use technology, implement student-centred learning, and conduct reflection and assessment effectively (Wahdah, Mubarak, & Nurtianto, 2023).

Previous studies have examined the relationship between teacher competency and educational quality, competency development strategies, training effectiveness, principals' supervision, and technology-based professional development. Nevertheless, many studies have treated competency as a variable that influences educational quality or have merely described professional development programs in general terms. Limited research has specifically analyzed how teacher competency development policies are formulated, communicated, implemented, supported, evaluated, and followed up within private Islamic elementary schools. Earlier studies have also rarely examined the alignment among formal institutional policies, teachers' actual needs, Muhammadiyah organizational culture, and changes in educational quality within a single educational institution.

Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, Plupuh, provides a relevant context for examining these issues. As an Islamic primary educational institution,

the school must maintain academic quality while simultaneously strengthening students' Islamic character. These responsibilities require teachers who can design meaningful learning activities, use digital technology appropriately, conduct comprehensive assessments, communicate with parents, and demonstrate exemplary behaviour. Teacher competency development policies should not be understood merely as administrative arrangements for sending teachers to workshops. They should operate as an institutional system that integrates teachers' needs, capacity-building programs, academic supervision, professional collaboration, classroom application, and quality evaluation.

The implementation of teacher development policies must also consider the institutional conditions of private Islamic schools. Limited funding, teachers' workloads, differences in educational backgrounds, uneven digital competence, and restricted access to external training may affect policy implementation. At the same time, the school's organizational culture, collective commitment, leadership support, and cooperation with Muhammadiyah educational bodies may provide important institutional strengths. Evaluating these factors is necessary to understand why some teacher development initiatives produce sustainable changes while others only generate temporary participation. The success of a policy should therefore be assessed not only through the number of training activities conducted but also through changes in teachers' instructional competence, professional behaviour, collaborative culture, and contribution to educational quality.

The research gap lies in the limited analysis of teacher competency development as a comprehensive policy implementation process within the specific context of a Muhammadiyah Islamic elementary school. Most previous studies have emphasized the effect of competency on educational outcomes, the principal's leadership, or the effectiveness of individual training activities. They have not sufficiently examined the interaction among policy communication, institutional resources, teachers' commitment, organizational procedures, Islamic educational values, and quality improvement. This study addresses that gap by positioning teacher competency development as an institutional policy that requires coherent planning, implementation, monitoring, and follow-up.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the implementation of teacher competency development policies in improving educational quality at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, Plupuh. It specifically seeks to identify the forms of policies and competency development programs, examine their implementation processes, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and explain their contribution to educational quality. The novelty of this study lies in its analysis of teacher competency development as a policy implementation process situated within the organizational and cultural context of a Muhammadiyah Islamic school. The findings are expected to generate recommendations for a teacher development model that is needs-based, sustainable, collaborative, and aligned with the objectives of Islamic education.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine the implementation of teacher competency development policies at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, Plupuh. A qualitative approach was selected because the research focused on participants' experiences, interpretations, actions, and institutional practices related to teacher professional development. Qualitative research allows researchers to understand a phenomenon within its natural setting and to interpret the meanings constructed by individuals directly involved in the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This approach was relevant because policy implementation cannot be understood solely through numerical indicators. It requires an examination of communication patterns, leadership practices, organizational support, teacher participation, and institutional culture.

The case study design was applied because the research investigated a contemporary educational policy within the boundaries of a particular institution. A case study enables researchers to analyze a phenomenon comprehensively by considering its context, participants, processes, and institutional characteristics (Yin, 2018). The case in this study was the implementation of teacher competency development policies at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, Plupuh. The unit of analysis included policy formulation, development programs, implementation mechanisms, teacher participation, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the contribution of these policies to educational quality. This bounded focus allowed the researchers to produce a detailed description of policy implementation in a Muhammadiyah Islamic elementary school.

The study was conducted at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, located in Plupuh District, Sragen Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. The research site was selected purposively because the school implements various teacher development activities and represents a private Islamic educational institution that combines national educational standards, Islamic values, and Muhammadiyah organizational principles. Site selection in qualitative research should reflect the relevance of the setting to the research problem and its potential to provide rich information about the phenomenon being studied (Tisdell, Merriam, & Stuckey-Peyrot, 2025).

Research participants were selected through purposive sampling. This technique enabled the researchers to identify individuals who possessed direct experience, knowledge, and responsibility related to teacher competency development policies. Purposive sampling emphasizes the depth and relevance of information rather than statistical representation (Patton, 2015). The principal served as the key informant because of their authority in policy planning, program implementation, supervision, and evaluation. Other participants included the curriculum coordinator, classroom teachers, subject teachers, administrative personnel, school committee representatives, and representatives of the Muhammadiyah educational board when necessary. Participant recruitment continued until the data reached saturation, meaning that additional interviews no longer produced significant new information.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore participants' perspectives while allowing the researchers to ask follow-up questions based on emerging information. The interview topics covered policy objectives, needs assessment, program planning, training activities, academic supervision, teacher participation, resource allocation, institutional support, implementation barriers, follow-

up actions, and perceived changes in educational quality. Interviews were conducted individually, recorded with participants' permission, and transcribed for analysis. Flexible but systematic interviewing helps researchers obtain detailed accounts of participants' experiences and interpretations (Liang, 2019).

Non-participant observation was conducted to examine policy implementation in its natural institutional context. The researchers observed teaching practices, academic supervision, teacher meetings, internal training, professional collaboration, digital technology use, and interactions between the principal and teachers. Field notes recorded activities, communication patterns, participant responses, and relevant contextual conditions. Observation allowed the researchers to compare participants' statements with actual institutional practices. Direct engagement with the research setting also supported a more contextual interpretation of the phenomenon (Flick, 2018).

Document analysis was used to complement interview and observational data. The documents included the school work plan, teacher development programs, supervision instruments, training records, meeting minutes, teacher certificates, teaching modules, performance evaluation reports, school quality assurance documents, and institutional policy guidelines. Documents were examined to identify formal policy content, program continuity, teacher participation, evaluation mechanisms, and evidence of follow-up activities. The use of several data sources enabled the researchers to construct a comprehensive understanding of policy implementation and reduce dependence on a single participant's account (Sugiyono, 2016).

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection using the interactive model of qualitative analysis. The stages consisted of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, categorizing, and organizing information relevant to the research focus. Data display involved presenting the findings through thematic descriptions, matrices, and relationships among categories. Conclusions were developed gradually and continuously verified against interview transcripts, observational records, and institutional documents (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Coding was conducted in two stages. Initial coding identified meaningful units from the data, while focused coding grouped similar codes into broader categories and themes. Coding helps researchers transform raw qualitative data into organized analytical patterns without separating the findings from their context (Saldaña, 2021).

The credibility of the findings was established through source triangulation, technique triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement. Source triangulation compared information provided by the principal, teachers, administrative staff, and other participants. Technique triangulation compared interview findings with observations and documents. Member checking was conducted by confirming important interpretations with selected participants. Dependability was strengthened through an audit trail containing interview guides, transcripts, field notes, coding records, and analytical decisions. Qualitative validity requires transparent procedures and consistent evidence to ensure that interpretations accurately represent participants' experiences and institutional realities (Moleong, 2017).

Ethical principles were maintained throughout the research process. Participants received information about the study's objectives, procedures, voluntary nature, and use of data. Their consent was obtained before interviews and recording. The researchers protected confidential information, used data solely for academic purposes, and avoided

interpretations that could harm participants or the institution. These procedures ensured that the study maintained respect, transparency, responsibility, and academic integrity.

Results and Discussion

Results

The findings indicate that the implementation of teacher competency development policies at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, Plupuh, was conducted through a combination of formal institutional programs and informal professional learning activities. The policy focused on strengthening pedagogical competence, professional competence, digital literacy, classroom management, and teachers' ability to integrate Islamic values into learning. The school principal played a central role in identifying teacher needs, determining development priorities, facilitating participation in external training, and monitoring the application of acquired knowledge in classroom practice.

The first finding concerns the formulation of teacher competency development policies. The school did not treat teacher development as a separate activity from institutional planning. Instead, competency development was included in school work programs, academic supervision plans, teacher meetings, and annual quality improvement agendas. The principal identified teacher needs through classroom observations, evaluation meetings, supervision reports, and informal discussions. The results of this needs assessment were used to determine development priorities, particularly lesson planning, student-centred learning, digital media use, assessment practices, and classroom discipline.

The second finding relates to the forms of competency development programs. The school implemented several activities, including workshops, teacher working-group participation, academic supervision, peer discussions, internal mentoring, and independent learning. Teachers were encouraged to participate in external training organized by government institutions, Muhammadiyah educational bodies, and other professional organizations. Internal activities were generally conducted through routine teacher meetings, where teachers discussed instructional problems, curriculum implementation, student assessment, and classroom management. These activities allowed teachers to exchange experiences and identify practical solutions to common teaching challenges.

The third finding shows that academic supervision functioned as an important mechanism for competency development. The principal observed classroom practices, reviewed teaching documents, and provided feedback to teachers. Supervision did not only assess administrative completeness but also examined instructional strategies, student engagement, classroom interaction, and the use of learning media. Teachers generally perceived supervision as useful when it was followed by constructive dialogue and practical recommendations. However, the intensity of supervision remained dependent on the principal's available time and the density of institutional activities.

The fourth finding concerns teacher participation and response. Most teachers demonstrated positive attitudes toward competency development programs. They viewed training and professional discussions as necessary for improving teaching quality and adapting to curriculum and technological changes. Teachers who actively participated in training were more likely to apply digital media, varied learning methods, and formative assessment in their classrooms. Nevertheless, the level of implementation

differed among teachers. Some teachers immediately applied new knowledge, while others required further assistance and repeated practice.

The fifth finding involves supporting and inhibiting factors. Leadership support, collegial cooperation, organizational commitment, and a shared Islamic educational orientation supported policy implementation. Teachers were more willing to participate when the principal provided encouragement, time, and opportunities for professional learning. Muhammadiyah values also strengthened collective responsibility and commitment to school improvement. In contrast, limited funding, teachers' workloads, differences in digital competence, and limited time for follow-up activities restricted the effectiveness of several programs.

The final finding shows that teacher competency development contributed to improvements in lesson preparation, use of learning media, classroom interaction, assessment, and professional collaboration. Teachers became more aware of the importance of adapting instructional strategies to student needs. The school also experienced stronger professional communication among teachers. However, the contribution of the policy to educational quality depended on continuity, monitoring, and the teachers' ability to apply training outcomes in daily learning practices.

Table 1. Main Findings on the Implementation of Teacher Competency Development Policies

Research Focus	Main Findings	Supporting Evidence	Implications for Educational Quality
Policy formulation	Teacher development was integrated into school planning and supervision programs	School work plans, meeting records, and supervision documents	Competency development became part of institutional improvement
Needs assessment	Teacher needs were identified through observation, meetings, and informal discussions	Principal interviews and supervision records	Programs became more relevant to actual teaching problems
Development programs	Activities included workshops, mentoring, teacher groups, supervision, and peer discussion	Training documents, certificates, and teacher testimonies	Teachers gained pedagogical, professional, and digital skills
Academic supervision	Supervision included classroom observation and constructive feedback	Observation notes and supervision instruments	Teachers improved lesson planning and classroom practices
Teacher participation	Most teachers responded positively, although implementation varied	Teacher interviews and classroom observations	Active participation supported instructional innovation
Supporting factors	Leadership, collegiality, commitment, and Muhammadiyah values strengthened implementation	Interviews with school leaders and teachers	Professional culture became more collaborative

Inhibiting factors	Funding, workload, time, and uneven digital skills limited program effectiveness	Interviews and institutional documents	Development outcomes were not equally achieved
Policy contribution	Improvement was observed in planning, media use, assessment, and collaboration	Lesson plans, classroom observations, and meeting records	Educational quality improved gradually through better teaching practices

Overall, the results demonstrate that teacher competency development at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, Plupuh, operated as an institutional process rather than as a single training activity. Its effectiveness depended on the consistency of school leadership, relevance of programs, teacher participation, and the availability of continuous follow-up.

Discussion

The findings show that teacher competency development at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, Plupuh, has become part of the school’s institutional policy rather than an isolated training agenda. The school incorporated competency development into its work plans, academic supervision, regular meetings, and quality improvement programs. This pattern indicates that the school recognizes teachers as the central human resources responsible for translating institutional policies into classroom practice. Teacher development produces stronger results when the school integrates it with planning, implementation, monitoring, and continuous evaluation. Professional development should not function merely as a response to external instructions. It must become an internal quality improvement mechanism based on the school’s needs and educational objectives (Isa, Neliwati, & Hadijaya, 2024).

The integration of teacher development into school planning also reflects a systematic human resource management approach. Teacher competency development requires clear stages, including competency mapping, needs identification, program selection, implementation, monitoring, and follow-up. The findings show that the principal identified teachers’ needs through classroom observation, supervision records, evaluation meetings, and informal discussions. This mechanism allowed the school to determine specific priorities, such as lesson planning, student-centred learning, assessment, classroom management, and digital media use. A professional development program becomes more effective when it addresses teachers’ actual problems instead of offering general training that has little relevance to classroom conditions. Continuous professional development must therefore be based on teachers’ needs and connected to measurable improvements in pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies (Noviyanti, Wahananto, & Zikri, 2024).

The principal’s central role in competency development confirms that school leadership directly influences teachers’ professional growth. At Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, the principal acted as a policy maker, program coordinator, supervisor, motivator, and facilitator. These functions show that the implementation of competency development policies requires more than administrative approval. The principal must create professional learning opportunities, allocate time and resources, encourage teacher participation, and ensure that training outcomes are applied in classroom practice. At the Islamic elementary school level, principals also need to connect professional development with the school’s religious and institutional identity. Previous

research indicates that principals improve teacher professionalism by performing managerial, educational, motivational, and supervisory roles while providing teachers with coaching and training opportunities (Mariani, Wanto, & Yanto, 2022).

The findings also demonstrate the relevance of participatory leadership. Teachers showed stronger commitment when they were involved in identifying problems and discussing possible development programs. Participation strengthened teachers' sense of ownership because they did not perceive professional development as an additional obligation imposed by the principal. Instead, they viewed it as a shared response to instructional challenges. This condition is important because teacher development policies may fail when teachers only act as program recipients. Professional learning requires teachers to become active participants who identify their limitations, reflect on their practices, and formulate improvement strategies. Transformational leadership in Islamic educational institutions can strengthen commitment, encourage innovation, and establish a shared vision for institutional improvement (Humaisi, Thoyib, Nurdin, Rahmawati, & Ngoh, 2024).

The forms of competency development implemented by the school included workshops, teacher working groups, internal mentoring, peer discussions, academic supervision, and independent learning. This variation is a significant institutional strength. Teachers have different professional needs, learning preferences, educational backgrounds, and levels of experience. A single training format cannot adequately address these differences. Workshops can introduce new knowledge, while mentoring and peer discussions help teachers apply that knowledge to classroom problems. Teacher working groups expand professional networks and allow teachers to exchange teaching materials, assessment instruments, and practical experiences. Studies on human resource development in madrasahs have similarly identified internal training, workshops, seminars, professional forums, courses, and external programs as complementary strategies for strengthening educator competencies (Romzi, Farwati, Fariqi, & Kulsum, 2025).

The combination of internal and external development activities also reduces the school's dependence on formal government training. Internal programs can respond directly to school-specific needs, while external activities provide teachers with broader knowledge, professional networks, and policy updates. However, the school must maintain a clear connection between both types of development. Teachers who participate in external workshops should share the knowledge with colleagues through internal dissemination activities. Without such follow-up, the benefits of training may remain limited to individual participants. A structured human resource development strategy requires prior needs analysis, appropriate participant selection, program implementation, knowledge sharing, and evaluation of its effects on work practices (Romzi et al., 2025).

Academic supervision emerged as one of the most important mechanisms for converting development policies into changes in teaching practice. The principal did not limit supervision to checking lesson plans and administrative documents. Supervision also involved classroom observation, analysis of instructional strategies, student engagement, assessment, and media use. This broader focus places supervision as a professional development process rather than an administrative inspection. Constructive supervision provides teachers with evidence about their teaching strengths and weaknesses. It also creates a basis for determining the type of assistance each teacher needs. Principal supervision can improve educational services when it uses planned

observation, dialogue, documentation, and follow-up rather than one-directional evaluation (Susanti, Harahap, & Warlizasusi, 2024).

The effectiveness of supervision, however, depends on the quality of feedback. Teachers tend to accept supervision when feedback is specific, respectful, practical, and directed toward improvement. General criticism without examples may produce defensive responses. The findings suggest that teachers responded positively when the principal discussed observation results and offered realistic recommendations. This dialogical process supports reflective teaching because teachers can compare their instructional intentions with actual classroom evidence. Teacher performance assessment should follow systematic planning, implementation, and evaluation because it can strengthen motivation, professional relationships, teaching quality, and institutional performance (Huriah, Mudlofir, Aziz, Ma'arif, & Amaliati, 2025).

Nevertheless, the intensity of supervision was affected by the principal's workload and the number of school activities. This situation indicates the need to distribute instructional leadership. The school can involve senior teachers, curriculum coordinators, or peer mentors in classroom observation and professional assistance. Peer supervision may reduce the principal's workload while developing a collaborative professional culture. It can also make teachers more comfortable discussing instructional weaknesses. Such a mechanism should not replace the principal's supervisory responsibility, but it can strengthen the frequency and continuity of professional feedback. Teacher development becomes more sustainable when it operates through professional communities rather than depending entirely on one institutional leader.

The positive response of most teachers demonstrates that professional motivation supports policy implementation. Teachers understood that curriculum changes and technological development require continuous learning. They recognized that professional competence cannot remain static. However, the findings also reveal different levels of readiness and application. Some teachers directly applied digital media, formative assessment, and varied learning methods, while others needed repeated guidance. These differences show that participation in training does not automatically produce equal changes in classroom practice. Professional development policies must consider teachers' starting competencies, confidence, access to technology, and opportunities for practice.

The differences in teacher readiness are particularly visible in digital competency. Technology use requires more than the ability to operate devices. Teachers must connect digital tools with learning objectives, subject content, student characteristics, classroom interaction, and assessment. Teachers who have technical skills but weak pedagogical understanding may use digital media only for presentation. Conversely, teachers with strong pedagogical competence may hesitate to use technology because of limited confidence. Professional development should therefore combine technical training with instructional design and classroom mentoring. Research on technological pedagogical content knowledge emphasizes that teachers need integrated digital, pedagogical, and subject-matter competencies to use technology meaningfully in learning (Nugraha, Kuswandi, & Praherdhiono, 2022).

Interactive learning at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level also requires teachers to master the four core competencies while adapting their methods to twenty-first-century learning needs. Teachers must create engaging activities, facilitate communication and collaboration, encourage critical thinking, and maintain a conducive classroom environment. The findings at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto show

that teachers who actively joined professional development began to use more varied methods and learning media. This result confirms that competency development should be assessed through changes in classroom interaction, not only through certificates or training attendance. Interactive instruction depends on teachers' pedagogical, professional, social, and personal readiness to respond to students' developmental needs (Khairunisa & Aqida, 2023).

Professional collaboration was another important outcome of policy implementation. Routine meetings and peer discussions enabled teachers to share instructional problems and solutions. This collaborative process reduced individual isolation and created a collective responsibility for educational quality. In small Islamic schools, professional collaboration can become an efficient development strategy because it does not always require substantial funding. Teachers can jointly design lesson modules, discuss student difficulties, review assessment results, and develop learning media. Human resource management that supports collaboration, innovation, and creativity can encourage teachers to improve their instructional practices and respond more effectively to institutional change (Rosdiana, Zamrudi, Zainul, & Zuana, 2024).

Collaboration also strengthens informal professional learning. Formal workshops generally occur within limited periods, while teachers face classroom problems every day. Regular professional dialogue provides immediate support and allows teachers to reflect continuously. However, collaborative activities require clear agendas and documentation. Meetings that focus only on administrative announcements will not significantly improve competence. The school should allocate specific sessions for lesson study, peer feedback, student assessment analysis, and instructional innovation. This approach can convert routine meetings into professional learning communities that contribute directly to school improvement.

The findings identify leadership support, collegial relationships, institutional commitment, and Muhammadiyah values as major supporting factors. Muhammadiyah educational values provide an ethical orientation for teacher development. Teachers are expected not only to improve instructional skills but also to demonstrate Islamic character, responsibility, discipline, service, and exemplary behaviour. This characteristic distinguishes competency development in Islamic schools from development that focuses only on technical performance. Teacher professionalism in Islamic education requires the integration of knowledge, pedagogical capacity, moral integrity, and commitment to students' holistic development. Contemporary Islamic education teachers must continuously improve their qualifications, participate in training, strengthen professional networks, and develop a service-oriented work ethic (Nurdiyanto, Islam, & Marjany, 2024).

The integration of Islamic values into professional development also influences educational quality. Quality in an Islamic elementary school cannot be reduced to academic scores. It includes students' religious character, discipline, social behaviour, learning engagement, and emotional development. Therefore, teacher competency policies must support teachers in connecting subject content, instructional strategies, and value formation. Teachers need practical guidance on how to integrate Islamic values naturally into classroom communication, assessment, learning materials, and daily routines. This approach prevents religious values from becoming separate ceremonial activities that have little influence on instructional processes.

The implementation process nevertheless faced several barriers, including limited funding, workload, time constraints, and uneven digital competence. Limited funding

restricted teachers' participation in external training and the procurement of digital facilities. Workload reduced the time available for reflection, mentoring, and program follow-up. These problems show that policy success depends on institutional resources and organizational arrangements. Schools should therefore prioritize development activities according to urgency and potential impact. Low-cost internal mentoring, peer observation, teacher working groups, and online learning can complement expensive external programs. Competency-based human resource development should align program priorities with institutional capacity while preserving continuous professional growth (Hantoro, Yamin, & Rosadi, 2024).

The transfer of training outcomes into classroom practice also requires attention. Teachers may understand training materials but fail to apply them because of limited facilities, weak confidence, unsuitable training designs, or insufficient leadership support. Online and face-to-face training should therefore include practical assignments, mentoring, feedback, and post-training evaluation. The success of training should be measured by behavioural change and improved work practices rather than attendance. Studies of madrasah teacher training indicate that self-efficacy, training design, and the work environment jointly influence the transfer of learning into professional practice (Siswanto, Shofwan, & Prilianti, 2025).

The results further indicate that teacher development contributed to better lesson preparation, media use, assessment, classroom interaction, and professional collaboration. These improvements represent process-based indicators of educational quality. However, the school still needs a more systematic evaluation framework to connect development programs with student learning outcomes and institutional targets. Each program should have clear indicators, such as changes in teaching modules, frequency of interactive learning, use of formative assessment, student engagement, and follow-up supervision results. School quality management becomes more effective when planning, implementation, evaluation, and corrective action operate as a continuous cycle (Sari & Urcy, 2022).

Research-action training and cluster mentoring can also strengthen teachers' capacity to identify classroom problems and test practical solutions. Rather than treating teachers only as policy implementers, the school can encourage them to become reflective practitioners who collect classroom evidence and evaluate instructional innovations. Mentoring provides sustained assistance that short workshops often cannot offer. Competency development through cluster-based mentoring can improve teachers' ability to conduct classroom action research and address actual learning problems systematically (Mubin, Kim, & Fauziah, 2023).

Overall, the implementation of teacher competency development policies at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto demonstrates a developing institutional model based on needs assessment, leadership support, varied professional learning activities, academic supervision, collaboration, and Islamic values. Its main strength lies in the integration of development activities with school planning and daily professional practices. Its principal limitation concerns the continuity of mentoring, resource availability, and systematic measurement of program impact. Therefore, the school needs to establish a cyclical model consisting of competency mapping, program planning, implementation, mentoring, classroom application, performance evaluation, and policy improvement. Such a model would ensure that teacher development does not stop at participation but produces sustainable changes in teaching quality and institutional performance.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of teacher competency development policies at Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Sidokerto, Plupuh, has contributed positively to improving educational quality. The policy was implemented through institutional planning, academic supervision, workshops, teacher working groups, peer discussions, internal mentoring, and independent professional learning. These activities strengthened teachers' pedagogical competence, professional knowledge, digital skills, classroom management, assessment practices, and ability to integrate Islamic values into learning.

The principal played a central role in identifying teachers' needs, determining program priorities, facilitating development opportunities, monitoring implementation, and providing professional feedback. Teacher participation also became an important factor. Teachers who actively engaged in training and collaborative learning demonstrated greater readiness to apply varied teaching methods, digital media, and formative assessment. However, the level of implementation remained uneven because teachers had different levels of experience, digital competence, confidence, and access to professional support.

The policy implementation was supported by leadership commitment, collegial cooperation, institutional culture, and Muhammadiyah educational values. In contrast, limited funding, high workloads, time constraints, and insufficient follow-up reduced the effectiveness of several development activities. Therefore, teacher competency development should not end with training participation. The school needs a continuous cycle consisting of needs assessment, program planning, implementation, mentoring, classroom application, evaluation, and policy improvement. A systematic and sustainable model will ensure that teacher development produces measurable changes in instructional practices, professional collaboration, student engagement, and institutional quality. The study confirms that educational improvement depends on coherent policy implementation, strong leadership, active teacher participation, and continuous institutional support.

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