

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL, INFORMATION, AND MEDIA LITERACY IN IMPROVING THE PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE OF PAI TEACHERS AT SMP MA'ARIF TUKDANA

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Abstract. Information, media, and digital literacy skills have become essential competencies for Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in the era of technological transformation. In Indonesia, although internet access has reached the majority of the population, the functional level of digital literacy required to support effective learning remains inadequate. PAI teachers often encounter challenges in utilizing digital media effectively due to limited infrastructure and insufficient specialized training. This condition creates a gap between the potential of digital technology and actual pedagogical practices, which are still largely instrumental in nature. Therefore, strengthening literacy competencies is an urgent necessity to develop teaching professionalism that is relevant to contemporary challenges. This study specifically aims to analyze the digital, information, and media literacy competencies possessed by Islamic Education teachers at SMP Ma'arif Tukdana. In addition, this research seeks to describe how teachers' pedagogical competence is demonstrated in the implementation of religious instruction at the school. The ultimate objective is to examine the extent to which these three forms of literacy contribute to enhancing the professional quality of PAI teachers. Through this analysis, appropriate strategies for developing teacher competence within the Ma'arif school environment are expected to be identified. This research focus is crucial to ensure that religious messages can be delivered effectively and remain relevant in the digital era. The study employed a descriptive qualitative research approach to obtain a holistic and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in the field. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants, direct participatory observation, and documentation studies related to instructional tools. The research subjects consisted of Islamic Education teachers actively teaching at SMP Ma'arif Tukdana who met specific criteria. Data analysis techniques included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification to ensure the credibility of the findings. This study was conducted within a defined time frame to capture the empirical reality of teachers' digital literacy practices. The findings indicate that PAI teachers have developed a strong awareness of digital ethics by integrating the principle of *tabayyun* (verification) in their online activities. In terms of information literacy, teachers have begun to utilize the internet and digital books as primary reference sources to enrich instructional materials. However, the use of technology in learning remains largely instrumental, such as the use of presentation slides, and has not yet reached a level of transformational innovation. Nevertheless, the use of digital tools has positively impacted students' learning interest and understanding of religious content. Overall, teachers have demonstrated initial efforts to integrate technology, although further technical development is still required. In conclusion, this study affirms that strengthening digital, information, and media literacy constitutes a fundamental foundation for the professional development of contemporary Islamic Education teachers. Teachers serve not only as instructors but also as digital moral educators who guide students in ethical online behavior. Strong institutional support is required through continuous training programs and adequate ICT infrastructure provision in schools. Enhancing these competencies will help teachers bridge Islamic teachings with modern life realities in a more contextual manner. Thus, appropriate literacy integration can foster adaptive, interactive, and spiritually grounded religious learning environments.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Information Literacy, Media Literacy, Pedagogical Competence, Islamic Education Teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, information, media, and digital literacy competencies have become essential for educators, particularly Islamic Education (PAI) teachers. Conceptually, information literacy encompasses the ability to recognize information needs, access information, and evaluate it effectively, while media literacy focuses on critically understanding various forms of media messages. Digital

literacy integrates these competencies with information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The urgency of mastering these literacies is increasingly evident, considering the national challenge that although internet access in Indonesia has reached approximately 77%, the overall level of digital literacy remains insufficient to support productive learning processes (Fitri et al., 2024).

For PAI teachers, digital literacy is not merely a technical complement but a manifestation of professional responsibility

in conveying religious truth. In line with the prophetic teaching that Allah loves those who perform their work with *itqan* (excellence and professionalism), professionalism in the contemporary era includes the ability to optimally utilize technology (Hadith narrated by al-Ṭabarānī). Media literacy also plays a strategic role in enabling teachers to analyze and produce critical content so that students can navigate information flows wisely (Potter, 2018). Furthermore, the principle of *da'wah bil-hikmah* in Qur'an Surah An-Nahl verse 125 implies that educators must employ appropriate and relevant media to effectively convey religious messages to the current generation.

Teachers' pedagogical competence—encompassing lesson planning, instructional implementation, and evaluation is strongly influenced by literacy levels (Jaya & Halik, 2023). Studies indicate that information literacy has a significant positive impact on teaching competence, as it enables teachers to enrich learning materials with credible Islamic sources such as contemporary Qur'anic exegesis and hadith studies. However, data from the Indonesian Ministry of Education in 2021 revealed that only around 40% of teachers felt confident using technology in teaching. This challenge is even more pronounced for PAI teachers, who must contextualize religious teachings within digital life dynamics without compromising spiritual substance.

Empirical conditions at SMP Ma'arif Tukdana indicate a gap between 21st-century competency demands and classroom realities. Although some teachers use laptops and projectors, technology utilization remains largely instrumental and has not yet reached transformative pedagogical innovation. Teachers tend to use technology merely as presentation tools, while digital content curation aligned with Islamic values remains limited. Major obstacles include unstable internet infrastructure, limited digital devices, and a lack of specialized training for PAI teachers in designing technology-based learning strategies.

Strengthening digital, information, and media literacy among PAI teachers is essential to their role as digital moral educators. Teachers are not only responsible for knowledge transfer but also for guiding students to think critically and behave ethically in cyberspace. Through strong literacy competencies, PAI teachers can create learning environments that are interactive and aligned with students' characteristics. Therefore, this study is crucial to comprehensively analyze the role of these literacies at SMP Ma'arif Tukdana in formulating adaptive strategies for enhancing teacher professionalism amid digital transformation. Ultimately, the integration of literacy is expected to strengthen teachers' pedagogical competence in shaping a generation that is both faithful and digitally literate.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was selected because the researcher sought to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects namely Islamic Education (PAI) teachers holistically through

descriptive narratives in the form of words and language (Moleong, 2017). The primary focus of this method was to explore in depth the role of digital, information, and media literacy in enhancing pedagogical competence within the context of SMP Ma'arif Tukdana. The use of a descriptive approach enabled the researcher to portray the empirical realities underlying teachers' behaviors and their utilization of information technology in the teaching and learning process of Islamic education.

The research site was SMP Ma'arif Tukdana, located in Indramayu Regency. The selection of this site was based on the school's characteristics as an institution under the auspices of the Ma'arif NU Educational Foundation, which faces unique challenges in harmonizing traditional Islamic values with the demands of digital transformation. The research subjects or informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves choosing participants based on specific considerations to ensure that the data obtained are representative (Sugiyono, 2019). The key informants in this study included Islamic Education teachers actively engaged in teaching, the school principal as a policy decision-maker, and several students to facilitate data triangulation regarding the effectiveness of teachers' pedagogical practices.

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through three main instruments: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out using a passive participatory approach, in which the researcher directly observed classroom learning activities, teachers' use of digital devices, and their practices of curating information from internet-based media. Interviews were conducted through in-depth interviews using structured yet flexible interview guidelines. The interview focus encompassed teachers' understanding of digital literacy, technical constraints encountered, and their perspectives on integrating Islamic values into digital media. Meanwhile, documentation techniques were employed to collect data in the form of lesson plans (RPP), school profiles, and records of teacher professional development activities.

The validity of data in this qualitative study was examined using triangulation techniques. The researcher applied source triangulation by comparing interview data obtained from teachers, the school principal, and students, as well as technique triangulation by verifying data consistency across observations, interviews, and documents (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This process was conducted to ensure that the data regarding the pedagogical competence of Islamic Education teachers were valid and not subjective. In addition, member checking was carried out by reconfirming interview transcripts with the informants to avoid misinterpretation of the narratives provided.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of four main stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, the researcher sorted raw data obtained from the field, focused on essential aspects related to information and media literacy, and discarded irrelevant data. Subsequently, the data were presented in the form of systematic narrative paragraphs to

enhance clarity and understanding. The final stage involved drawing conclusions or verification, in which the researcher interpreted the collected data to address the research questions concerning the role of literacy in enhancing the pedagogical competence of Islamic Education teachers at SMP Ma'arif Tukdana.

In conducting the research, ethical considerations were treated as a top priority. The researcher ensured the confidentiality of informants' identities (anonymity) where necessary and confirmed that all participants provided informed consent prior to data collection. The researcher also ensured that the presence of the researcher in the field did not disrupt the stability of teaching and learning activities at the school. Through these systematic methodological procedures, the study is expected to present an accurate, credible, and scientifically accountable depiction of the dynamics of digital literacy among Islamic Education teachers in the modern era.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that digital, information, and media literacy play a significant role in supporting the pedagogical competence of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers. Pedagogical competence, which includes understanding learners, lesson planning, the implementation of educative learning processes, and learning evaluation, is strongly influenced by teachers' ability to manage information and instructional technology effectively.

In the context of lesson planning, PAI teachers who possess adequate information and digital literacy tend to be more capable of developing lesson plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran / RPP*) that are varied and contextual. Teachers do not rely solely on printed textbooks but also combine them with relevant digital resources. This finding is consistent with the argument of Bukit and Tarigan (2022), who state that teachers' pedagogical competence can be enhanced when teachers are able to manage learning resources creatively and innovatively.

During the implementation stage of instruction, digital literacy contributes to teachers' ability to select instructional media that are appropriate to students' characteristics. Although the utilization of technology by PAI teachers at SMP Ma'arif Tukdana remains relatively simple, the use of visual media and digital resources has helped increase students' learning interest. Nevertheless, limited technological mastery remains one of the inhibiting factors in optimizing digital-based learning, as also reported in the study by Ngafifurrohman et al. (2024).

In terms of learning evaluation, digital literacy enables teachers to conduct assessments in a more flexible and efficient manner. However, the research findings show that the use of technology in learning evaluation is still not optimal and tends to remain conventional. This condition indicates the need for increased training and continuous mentoring for teachers so that they can utilize digital technology more effectively across all stages of the learning process.

Overall, this discussion confirms that digital, information, and media literacy are not merely supplementary skills, but rather integral components of the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers. Teachers who possess strong literacy competencies tend to be more adaptive to change, capable of designing learning experiences that are relevant to students' needs, and actively involved in shaping students' digital character based on Islamic values (Sutarmizi & Syarnubi, 2022).

The findings of this study were obtained through a descriptive qualitative approach using data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SMP Ma'arif Tukdana, Indramayu Regency. The focus of the study was directed toward teachers' information literacy, media literacy, and digital literacy competencies, as well as their role in supporting pedagogical competence in the digital era. The findings indicate that, in general, PAI teachers have developed a basic understanding of digital literacy as part of the professional demands of 21st-century teaching.

Based on the interview results, PAI teachers perceive digital literacy as the ability to utilize information technology to support the learning process, including lesson planning, implementation, and evaluation. Teachers have used digital devices such as laptops and projectors, as well as online learning resources such as digital books and instructional materials obtained from the internet. However, the utilization of this technology remains at a basic operational level and has not yet been fully integrated creatively into instructional strategies (Asari et al., 2019).

In terms of information literacy, the findings show that PAI teachers are fairly capable of accessing and selecting information sources relevant to instructional content. Teachers commonly use search engines and digital books as primary references in preparing teaching materials. The appropriate use of keywords in information searches indicates an initial understanding of effective information retrieval techniques. Nevertheless, the ability to critically evaluate the credibility of information sources still needs to be improved so that teachers are not merely information users but are also able to assess the validity and accuracy of the information obtained (Amaly & Armiah, 2021).

Meanwhile, in the aspect of media literacy, PAI teachers demonstrate a relatively good awareness of the importance of media ethics, particularly in guiding students to use digital media responsibly. Teachers emphasize Islamic values such as honesty, *tabayyun* (verification), politeness in language, and responsibility in digital interactions. This finding indicates that media literacy is understood not only in technical terms but also from a moral and Islamic value perspective (Arfandi, 2020).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SMP Ma'arif Tukdana, Indramayu Regency, possess digital literacy, information literacy, and media literacy

competencies at a basic to moderate level. These literacy competencies contribute to supporting teachers' pedagogical competence, particularly in lesson planning and instructional implementation. Teachers have utilized digital technology as learning resources and instructional media, although its use remains limited to basic operational aspects. Information literacy assists teachers in accessing and utilizing relevant learning resources, while media literacy strengthens teachers' roles in guiding students to behave ethically in digital spaces. Thus, digital, information, and media literacy have been shown to make an important contribution to improving the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers in the digital era. Based on the research findings, it is recommended that PAI teachers continue to enhance their digital literacy skills through ongoing training and professional development programs. Schools and policy makers are also expected to provide adequate technological infrastructure and sustainable mentoring programs. Furthermore, future research may explore more deeply the empirical relationship between digital literacy and student learning outcomes in Islamic Education

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