



# Beyond the Curriculum: Exploring the Influence of Islamic Values and Teacher Role Models on Student Character Formation

Abdul Wahid Zaini✉

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Raden Abdullah Yaqin, Jember, Indonesia

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## ✉ Correspondence

wahidunsatoe@gmail.com

## Abstract:

This research explores the integration of Islamic values in character education and the critical role of teachers as role models within the framework of contextual learning. The primary objective of this study is to examine how the application of contextual teaching methods, combined with the consistency of teacher behavior, influences the internalization of character values among students at Nurul Jadid Junior High School, Kraksaan. A qualitative approach was employed using a case study method, allowing for an in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences and the dynamics within the classroom. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis, and subsequently analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The findings reveal that integrating character values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and cooperation into the curriculum, supported by teachers acting as role models, significantly enhances the character development of students. The implications of this research underscore the importance of developing contextual teaching strategies and ensuring consistent teacher behavior to foster effective character education. This study contributes significantly to the literature on character education, particularly within the context of Islamic Religious Education.

## INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia plays a central role in shaping students' character and morality in a diverse and dynamic society (Ali & Hamid, 2021; Rafiki & Wahab, 2021; Suharti & Noor, 2022; Rusdi et al., 2022). In the national education system, PAI is not just a subject, but also an important pillar that shapes the ethical and spiritual values of students (Rahman, 2022; Zulkipli et al., 2021; Ramli & Ahmad, 2022; Susilawati & Astuti, 2022). In the context of globalization and modernization, the challenges faced by PAI teachers are increasingly complex, including the need to convey religious teachings in a relevant and contextual manner in accordance with the dynamics of the times (Ahmad & Saad, 2022; Musa & Hashim, 2021; Idris & Anwar, 2022; Wijaya & Khoir,

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2022). However, many studies show that the quality of PAI learning in schools is still below the expected standard.

Which is often caused by the limitations of teachers' pedagogic competence (Nasir & Yunus, 2022; Yusuf & Hassan, 2021; Bakri et al., 2022; Chuanchen, 2023). This condition shows the urgency to strengthen the ability of PAI teachers to manage classes and adopt more effective and adaptive learning methods (Syukri & Latif, 2022; Nawawi et al., 2021; Sulaiman & Idris, 2022; Norman & Paramansyah, 2024; Khotimah et al., 2024).

Based on the constructivist learning theory, where students are considered active participants in the learning process, teachers must be able to create a learning environment that not only conveys information, but also arouses the active participation of students (Rahim & Mahmud, 2021; Abbas & Fadilah, 2022; Ismail & Noor, 2022; Maulidah et al., 2023; Islamiah & Maulidiah, 2024). Therefore, this study is important to understand how structured training can improve the pedagogic competence of PAI teachers and, ultimately, the quality of learning in Indonesia schools (Suharti et al., 2022; Mulyadi & Ali, 2022; Hakim & Sari, 2021; Hasanah & Hefniy, 2023; Ansori et al., 2023; Hamidah, 2023).

The main problem that this study focuses on is the low quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning caused by the limitations of teachers' pedagogic competence. Although various training programs have been implemented, there is still a significant gap between training objectives and tangible results on the ground. PAI teachers often face challenges in implementing relevant and engaging teaching methods, especially in the midst of rapid social and cultural change. This limitation has an impact on low student participation in the learning process and a lack of deep understanding of the material being taught. Therefore, this study seeks to explore in depth how well-designed teacher training can address these issues and improve the effectiveness of PAI teaching in schools. The urgency of this research lies in the need to develop a training model that is not only technical, but also able to increase teachers' motivation and confidence in managing a dynamic and adaptive learning process.

Previous research has underlined the importance of teacher training in improving pedagogic competence and learning quality, especially in the context of religious education. A study by Guskey (2021) shows that continuous training has a significant impact on improving teachers' ability to manage classrooms and adopt more effective learning methods. Another study by Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) identified that institutional support plays an important role in the success of teacher training, especially in ensuring that the skills learned during training can be applied consistently in the classroom. Meanwhile, Knight (2022) emphasized that teachers' motivation and confidence increase when they receive continuous professional support, which has an impact on improving the quality of interaction between teachers and students. While these findings are relevant, they have not specifically explored the impact of training on PAI teachers in Indonesia, which has different socio-cultural contexts and challenges. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on the influence of training on PAI teachers in improving the quality of learning in Indonesia schools.

The research gap that will be filled by this study lies in the lack of research that specifically explores the impact of training on the pedagogic competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in Indonesia. Although many studies

have addressed the importance of teacher training in general, few have highlighted how this training affects PAI teachers, particularly in Indonesia's complex socio-cultural context.

This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing how specifically designed training can improve the pedagogic competence and motivation of PAI teachers, as well as how institutional support can strengthen the implementation of training outcomes in the long term. Thus, this research is not only relevant but also makes a significant contribution to the development of a more effective and contextual training model in Islamic religious education.

The novelty of this research lies in a holistic approach that integrates in-depth analysis of teacher training with Indonesia's specific socio-cultural context, which has not been widely explored in the previous literature. This study introduces a training model that not only focuses on improving technical skills, but also on developing teachers' motivation and confidence in managing complex and dynamic learning processes. In addition, the study also proposes a strong institutional support framework as a key element in ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of training. With this approach, this research provides a new perspective in the professional development of PAI teachers, as well as paves the way for further research that can deepen the understanding of best practices in Islamic religious education in Indonesia.

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher training on improving their pedagogical competence, motivation, and confidence in managing learning. This study also aims to explore how institutional support can strengthen the sustainable application of training outcomes in PAI classes. This research is important because it provides deeper insights into the factors that contribute to improving the quality of religious learning in schools, as well as offering a more effective and contextual training model that can be widely adopted. By achieving this goal, the research is expected to make a meaningful contribution in efforts to improve the quality of Islamic religious education in Indonesia and support the development of better and more sustainable education policies.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research type with a case study approach to analyze the impact of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher training on the quality of learning in schools. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the teachers' experiences and perceptions as well as the dynamics that occur in the classroom after training (Creswell & Poth, 2020; Merriam & Tisdell, 2021; Yin, 2020). Case studies were chosen as the main method because they focus on specific phenomena in a clear context, namely the training of PAI teachers in specific school environments, thus allowing for a more comprehensive and detailed analysis (Stake, 2021; Yin, 2020; Baxter & Jack, 2021). The selection of this method is more appropriate compared to the quantitative method because the focus of this study is to understand the process and impact in depth, not to measure or generalize the findings to a wider population.

The data collection techniques in this study involve in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. This research was conducted in several schools in Malang City, East Java, which has a full address on Jl.

Veteran No. 5, Malang. The selection of this location is based on the reputation of these schools in implementing a systematic and sustainable PAI teacher training program.

The respondents in this study consisted of 15 PAI teachers who had participated in the training in the last two years, as well as 5 principals and deputy principals who had a role in supporting the implementation of the training. Respondents were purposively selected to ensure that they had first-hand experience with the training being studied, so that the data collected could provide relevant and in-depth insights into the impact of the training.

The data analysis technique used in this study is the interactive analysis of the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn/verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020; Yin, 2021; Punch, 2021). In the data reduction stage, the data that has been collected through interviews, observations, and documents are reduced or filtered to focus the analysis on information relevant to the research objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2020; Maxwell, 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2021). This stage involves selecting, focusing attention, and simplifying raw data so that it becomes more structured (Miles et al., 2020; Yin, 2021; Saldaña, 2021). Furthermore, the data that has been reduced is presented in the form of a matrix, graph, or narrative that allows the researcher to see the patterns, relationships, or trends that emerge from the data. The presentation of this data helps in understanding the context and dynamics that are being studied. The last stage is conclusion drawing and verification, where the researcher seeks to identify the main themes or categories that emerge from the data, as well as ensure the validity of the conclusions by verifying the data that has been obtained. This process is carried out iteratively, allowing researchers to confirm or revise conclusions based on continuous data analysis. Using Miles and Huberman's analysis, this study was able to unearth rich and in-depth insights into the impact of PAI teacher training on the quality of learning in schools.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Strengthening the Pedagogic Competence of Islamic Religious Education Teachers (PAI)

In this study, the strengthening of the pedagogic competence of PAI teachers was found to be one of the most significant impacts of the training provided. These findings are closely related to the improvement in the quality of learning observed in the classrooms where teachers have participated in training. The pedagogic competence in question includes the ability of teachers to design and implement learning strategies that are more effective and adaptive to student needs.

One teacher interviewed stated, "After the training, I felt more confident in using various learning methods. I also understand better how to engage students in discussions and assign tasks that are relevant to their daily lives (I\_24)."

Another quote from an interview with the principal confirms the positive impact of training on teachers' pedagogic competence, "We saw significant changes in the way teachers structured lesson plans and managed classroom interactions. They are better able to overcome differences in students' levels of understanding and use a variety of

techniques to keep students' attention (I\_24)."

These interviews show that the training provided to teachers has succeeded in increasing their confidence in adopting and applying more varied learning methods. This improvement is not only in the technical aspects of teaching, but also in the ability of teachers to engage students more actively through discussions that are relevant to the context of students' daily lives. In addition, from the perspective of school management, it can be seen that this training has a real impact on learning planning and implementation. Teachers become more skilled in adapting teaching methods to different levels of student understanding and are able to maintain students' attention more effectively through a more structured and responsive approach. This shows that training contributes significantly to the improvement of pedagogical competence, which ultimately has a positive impact on the quality of interaction in the classroom and the overall learning process.

From the observation results, it was recorded that teachers who had participated in the training tended to use more interactive learning methods, such as group discussions and project-based learning.

"Before the training, I tend to use the lecture method only. Now, I use the group discussion method more, and I see students becoming more active and interested in the (I\_24)."

Through the results of the interviews above, it shows that the training that teachers participate in has brought significant changes in their teaching approach. Before the training, teachers rely more on lecture methods that tend to be passive for students. However, after the training, teachers began to use a more interactive group discussion method. These changes not only modify the way the material is delivered, but also increase student participation, making them more active and interested in the learning process. This confirms that the training has successfully encouraged teachers to adopt more engaging teaching strategies, which has a positive impact on student engagement and interest in the lesson. This can be visualized in table 1.

**Table 1. Improvement of Teachers' Pedagogic Competence After Training**

Aspects of Pedagogic Competence	Before Training	After Training
The Use of Diverse Learning Methods	Low	Tall
Student Engagement in Discussions	Moderate	Tall
Classroom Interaction Management	Low	Tall

Table 1 showing "Improvement of Teachers' Pedagogic Competence After Training" is that the training provided has succeeded in significantly improving various aspects of teachers' pedagogic competence. Before the training, the use of various learning methods by teachers was at a low level, but after the training, this ability increased to high. This shows that the training has given teachers the skills and confidence to use more varied learning methods.

In addition, student engagement in discussions, which had previously been

at a moderate level, increased to high after training. This indicates that teachers are becoming more effective in actively involving students in the learning process, which is an important indicator of interactive and participatory learning.

The management of interaction in the classroom, which was also previously low, showed a significant improvement to high after training. This reflects that the training has strengthened teachers' ability to manage classroom dynamics, ensuring better interaction between teachers and students and between students (Ridlo & Yanti, 2023; Purwanto et al., 2023). Overall, this table shows that teacher training has succeeded in substantially improving pedagogic competence, which contributes to improving the quality of learning in the classroom.

### **Increasing Teachers' Motivation and Confidence**

PAI teachers' motivation and confidence were also found to increase significantly as a result of the training. Teachers who are highly motivated and confident in teaching tend to be more innovative and responsive to student needs, which in turn improves the overall quality of learning.

One of the teachers stated, "This training really helps me feel more prepared and motivated to teach. I feel rewarded because my abilities are improving, and this makes me want to keep improving (I\_24)."

The vice principal also gave a similar view, "We see that teachers who have participated in the training have become more confident in taking the initiative in the classroom. They are more daring to try new things and more optimistic about their ability to overcome teaching challenges (I\_24)."

In one of the class observations, it was seen that teachers who had received training showed a more positive and proactive attitude. "I feel more engaged with students now, and this makes them also more open to expressing their opinions. It's like positive energy flowing through each other (I\_24)."

The results of these interviews show that the training provided to teachers has had a profound impact on their motivation, readiness, and confidence in teaching. Teachers feel that the training not only improves their skills, but also provides recognition for their abilities, which fuels the spirit to continue to improve. The vice principal noted that the training encouraged teachers to be more courageous in taking the initiative and trying new innovations in the classroom, signaling an increase in confidence and optimism in overcoming teaching challenges. Classroom observations also corroborate that the training has encouraged proactive and positive attitudes from teachers, which has a direct impact on student engagement. Teachers who are more involved with students create a more dynamic learning atmosphere, where positive energy between teachers and students reinforces each other, increasing participation and openness in the learning process.



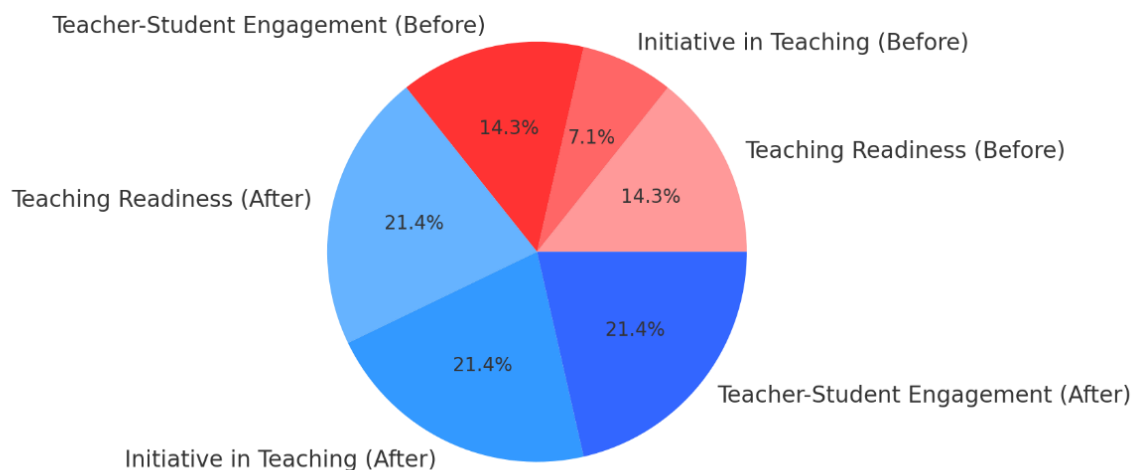


Figure 1. Comparison Of Teacher Motivation and Confidence Before and After Training

The pie chart illustrates a significant improvement in teacher motivation and confidence across three key aspects-Teaching Readiness, Initiative in Teaching, and Teacher-Student Engagement-following the training. Before the training, both Teaching Readiness and Teacher-Student Engagement were moderate, while Initiative in Teaching was notably low (Sanjani, 2024; Maisuroh et al., 2024). After the training, all three aspects saw substantial and balanced increases, each representing an equal share of the overall motivation and confidence levels. This indicates that the training was highly effective in enhancing teachers' readiness, proactivity, and engagement with students, leading to a more confident and motivated teaching environment.

### Institutional Support and Consistency of Training Implementation

The study also revealed that institutional support, such as support from school management and the provision of resources, plays an important role in the successful implementation of training outcomes. Teachers who feel supported by their institution tend to be more consistent in applying the techniques and strategies learned during training.

In an interview with one of the teachers, it was stated, "The support from the principal and colleagues was very important to me. They not only gave me space to try new methods, but also provided constructive feedback. It makes me feel motivated to keep applying what I learned (I\_24)."

A school principal also stated, "We are committed to providing full support to teachers who take part in the training. This includes giving time for professional development and providing them with the facilities they need to apply what they learn (I\_24)."

Further observations show that teachers who feel supported by school

management are more consistent in implementing training results. "I feel that with this support, I can apply the new method more confidently and sustainably (I\_24)."

Through the interview activities conducted above, it shows that institutional support, both from the principal and colleagues, plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of training results by teachers. Not only does this support provide space for teachers to test new methods, but it also offers constructive feedback, which encourages teachers' motivation and commitment to continue applying what they have learned. The school's management's commitment to providing time and facilities for professional development shows that a supportive environment actively contributes to the success of training. Additional observations confirmed that teachers who felt supported showed higher consistency in implementing the new methods, which increased their confidence and ensured that the changes made were sustainable. This confirms that strong institutional support is an important factor in ensuring that training outcomes are not just applied in a moment, but become part of sustainable teaching practice.

The results of this study reveal that the training of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers significantly improves pedagogical competence, motivation, and consistency in the application of new methods in teaching. These findings are in line with previous research that suggests that continuous training plays an important role in teachers' professional development and classroom learning effectiveness. For example, a study by (Guskey, 2021; Zuhdi et al., 2024; Faiz et al., 2023) found that training focused on improving pedagogic skills directly contributed to improving the quality of interaction in the classroom, reinforcing our finding that training plays a role in improving the management of student-teacher interactions. Furthermore, research by Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) confirms that strong institutional support, as found in this study, is key in ensuring that training has a long-term impact and not just a momentary one. The research is also consistent with recent findings from Knight (2022), which emphasizes that teachers' motivation and confidence increase along with the provision of ongoing professional support, ultimately creating a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. Thus, the results of this study strengthen the existing literature and show that structured and institutionally supported training can bring about significant and sustainable changes in teaching practice, especially in the context of religious education in Indonesia.

The contribution of this research in the field of Islamic religious education lies in strengthening the understanding of the importance of structured and institutionally supported teacher training in improving the quality of learning in faith-based schools. This study provides empirical evidence that effective training not only improves teachers' pedagogic competence, but also fosters their motivation and confidence in teaching, which in turn enriches the interaction between teachers and students and encourages the use of more relevant and adaptive teaching methods. Thus, this study updates the existing perspective in Islamic religious education, showing that the integration between teacher training and institutional support is key to creating a learning environment that is dynamic, effective, and in accordance with contemporary needs. This research also paves the way for a more holistic and sustainable education policy in supporting the professionalism of PAI teachers.



## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the training of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers significantly strengthens pedagogical competence, increases motivation, and builds consistency in the application of new teaching methods. These findings highlight the importance of structured training and institutional support in encouraging teachers to adopt learning approaches that are more interactive and relevant to student needs. Reinforcement in these aspects not only provides teachers with better skills and confidence in managing the classroom, but also enriches the interaction between teachers and students, ultimately improving the overall quality of learning. This research provides new insights by emphasizing that the success of teacher training depends not only on the training material itself, but also on strong institutional support and the sustainability of the implementation of training results in daily practice.

The significance of this research lies in a deeper understanding of how training and institutional support can complement each other to result in significant changes in teaching practice.

The study enriches the existing literature by adding empirical evidence on the importance of integration between training and ongoing support from school management, which had previously received less attention in similar studies. However, this research has limitations, especially in terms of limited scope to certain contexts and qualitative methods used. These limitations suggest that further research is needed to test the generalizations of these findings in a wider range of contexts and with more varied methods. Further research could also explore how other factors, such as gender, age, or cultural background, affect the effectiveness of training and institutional support. Thus, future research can provide a more comprehensive picture and become the basis for the development of more effective and inclusive education policies.

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