

Strengthening Teacher Performance through Professional Ethics: Evidence from Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT : Professional ethics has become an increasingly important issue in educational improvement, particularly in the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), where teachers are expected to serve not only as instructors but also as moral role models. Despite extensive discussions on teacher professionalism, limited research has explored how professional ethics contributes to teacher performance within Islamic educational settings. This study investigates the implementation of professional ethics among Islamic Religious Education teachers and its contribution to teacher performance at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis involving certified IRE teachers, school leaders, and relevant educational stakeholders. The data were analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation, prolonged engagement, and member checking. The findings reveal that professional ethics are consistently implemented across personal, social, pedagogical, and professional dimensions. Teachers demonstrate strong moral integrity, professional responsibility, collaborative behavior, and commitment to continuous professional development through participation in teacher professional forums. Furthermore, ethical practices significantly influence instructional planning, classroom management, assessment implementation, and overall teaching effectiveness. The study concludes that professional ethics function not only as a moral framework but also as a strategic mechanism for enhancing teacher performance and educational quality. These findings provide practical implications for teacher development programs and contribute to the broader discourse on ethics-based educational professionalism in Islamic education.

Keywords: Professional Ethics, Teacher Performance, Islamic Religious Education

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human need that plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of individuals, society, and the civilization of a nation. The rapid development of the modern era requires education to focus not only on cognitive achievement but

also on the development of values, character, and sustainable skills. Education is a complex and lifelong process aimed at developing human potential holistically to achieve a more dignified quality of life. This perspective is reflected in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create learning environments and learning processes that enable learners to actively develop their potential, including spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed for themselves, society, the nation, and the state. Therefore, education encompasses not only intellectual dimensions but also moral, social, and spiritual dimensions that are essential for national development.

Within the context of Indonesian education, various challenges continue to emerge, including disparities in educational quality, unequal access to educational services, and the limited development of skilled human resources. For Muslims, who constitute the majority of Indonesia's population, education is expected not only to produce individuals who excel in science and technology but also those who possess strong faith, piety, and noble character. Consequently, the principle of exemplary conduct becomes an essential foundation in the educational process. As emphasized in Surah Al-Ahzab (33:21), the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) serves as an excellent role model for humanity (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017). This principle of role modeling is particularly relevant in education, especially for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, who are expected not only to teach academic content but also to guide students in developing moral and ethical values.

Teachers are central figures in the educational process because they directly influence students' academic achievement and character formation. According to Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, teachers are professional educators whose responsibilities include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students. Teacher professionalism is reflected in the mastery of pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. Hamalik (2002) argues that a profession requires specialized expertise acquired through systematic education and training. Therefore, professional teachers are expected to possess adequate competencies and a strong commitment to fulfilling their professional responsibilities. Mastery of subject matter, pedagogical skills, and moral integrity are important indicators of teacher professionalism.

Despite the strategic role of teachers, various studies and practical realities indicate that teacher professionalism still faces significant challenges. Mulyasa (2010) notes that some teachers have not fully optimized their professional roles, demonstrate limited motivation for continuous professional development, and often operate within educational systems that lack strong professional support mechanisms. Economic pressures and increasing workloads frequently compel teachers to engage in additional occupations outside their primary responsibilities, thereby reducing opportunities for professional growth. Such conditions may negatively affect teacher performance and the quality of instruction delivered to students. Given that teachers are key actors in the educational process, their performance significantly influences educational outcomes and institutional quality.

To maintain professionalism, professional ethics constitutes a critical component of the teaching profession. The term ethics originates from the Greek word *ethos*, meaning character, habit, or moral disposition, and refers to standards used to evaluate human behavior as right or wrong (Salam, 1997). Suherman and Saondi (2010) explain that normative ethics provides guidance regarding appropriate behavior in carrying out professional duties and responsibilities. Within the teaching profession, professional ethics is embodied in a code of ethics that serves as a moral and professional guideline. Rahman and Amri (2014) argue that the teacher's code of ethics regulates behavioral standards to ensure that educators perform their duties responsibly in accordance with legal, moral, and social values.

Teacher performance is one of the primary indicators used to assess educational effectiveness. Mangkunegara (2000) defines performance as the achievement of work outcomes based on established standards and responsibilities. Similarly, Simamora (2005) explains that performance is influenced by knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation in carrying out professional duties. In the educational context, teacher performance includes the ability to plan instruction, implement effective learning activities, evaluate student learning outcomes, and provide appropriate follow-up actions. Therefore, improving teacher performance is essential for achieving high-quality and competitive education.

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in schools also encounters various internal and external challenges. Harun Nasution (2005) criticizes the tendency of religious education to focus primarily on cognitive aspects while paying insufficient attention to moral and character development. Furthermore, globalization and advances in information technology have introduced both opportunities and

challenges that influence students' development. In this context, PAI teachers are required to demonstrate strong work ethics, moral integrity, and professional competence to guide students effectively in navigating contemporary social realities. Muhaimin (2004) further argues that Islamic education faces challenges related to improving human resource quality, responding to global competition, and adapting to increasingly complex social dynamics. Consequently, strengthening the professional ethics of PAI teachers becomes an important strategy for enhancing teacher performance and educational quality.

As one of the formal educational institutions in Enrekang Regency, SMP Negeri 1 Baraka plays a significant role in developing students' character and competencies through Islamic Religious Education. The effectiveness of PAI instruction at the school is closely linked to the professionalism and performance of its teachers. Therefore, examining the implementation of professional ethics among PAI teachers is essential for understanding how ethical principles are applied in professional practice and how they contribute to improving teacher performance.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the implementation of professional ethics among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers represents a strategic factor in enhancing teacher performance and educational quality. PAI teachers function not only as instructors but also as moral exemplars who embody Islamic values in their daily lives. Consistent adherence to professional ethical standards is expected to strengthen professionalism, improve performance, and create effective and meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, this study focuses on "The Implementation of Professional Ethics among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers in Improving Teacher Performance at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency" to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between professional ethics and teacher performance within the context of Islamic education.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural settings, particularly regarding the implementation of professional ethics among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in improving teacher performance. Qualitative research emphasizes meaning, understanding, and interpretation of human behavior, attitudes, and professional practices. As noted by Denzin and Lincoln, qualitative research seeks

to interpret phenomena through various methods in natural contexts (Satori & Komariah, 2011).

The research design adopted in this study was a single-case design, focusing intensively on one specific case, namely SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency. This design was chosen because the study aimed not to generalize findings but to develop a contextual and holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Case study research allows researchers to explore a particular case comprehensively and in depth. According to Bungin (2015), case studies provide flexibility for researchers to investigate research objects from multiple perspectives and sources of evidence.

This study employed pedagogical, managerial, and theological approaches. The pedagogical approach was used to analyze teachers' roles in the instructional process and student development. The managerial approach was applied to examine professional practices and teacher management within the school environment. Meanwhile, the theological approach served as an analytical framework for understanding the Islamic values underlying the professional ethics of PAI teachers in carrying out their responsibilities (Djabidi, 2016; Engineer, 1999).

The research was conducted over a period of approximately three months, from October to December 2025. The study took place at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency, Indonesia. This location was selected because it was relevant to the research focus and provided opportunities to obtain rich and in-depth data directly from the field.

The sources of data consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews and direct observations involving PAI teachers and classroom learning activities. Secondary data were collected through documentation, including school records, policy documents, and relevant literature concerning professional ethics and teacher performance. In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the primary research instrument responsible for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data, supported by interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation protocols (Moleong, 2019).

Data collection techniques included interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to explore participants' perspectives, experiences, and understandings regarding professional ethics and teacher performance. Participant observation was used to directly observe classroom instruction and teachers' professional behavior within the school setting.

Documentation served as supporting evidence to strengthen and validate findings obtained from interviews and observations (Arikunto, 2013).

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively following the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The analytical process began during data collection and continued throughout the study. Collected data were categorized, interpreted, and analyzed to identify patterns and meanings relevant to the research focus. In accordance with case study methodology, the analysis involved category aggregation, direct interpretation, pattern matching, and the development of naturalistic generalizations (Bungin, 2008; Stake & Creswell, 1998).

The trustworthiness of the data was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, source and method triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking. Transferability was achieved by providing detailed descriptions of the research context and participants. Dependability and confirmability were ensured through systematic data auditing, rechecking research findings, and minimizing researcher bias throughout the data analysis process (Arikunto, 2006).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

A. Professional Ethics of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency

1. Personal Competence of PAI Teachers

The findings indicate that the quality of teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency, can be categorized as good. This is evidenced by the fact that most teachers have obtained professional teaching certification and demonstrate personal competencies that align with professional teaching standards. These competencies are reflected in teachers' behaviors, which conform to religious, legal, social, and national cultural norms while upholding the professional code of ethics for teachers.

PAI teachers, as well as teachers of other subjects, demonstrate religious and nationalistic attitudes through routine practices such as praying before and after classroom instruction, actively participating in religious activities including Dhuha prayers and Friday religious talks (kultum), and attending weekly flag ceremonies every Monday. These practices reflect the internalization of both Pancasila values and Islamic teachings in teachers' professional conduct.

2. Collaboration and Social Relationships Among Teachers

Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka foster cooperation and collegiality without discrimination based on social or cultural backgrounds. Such collaboration is manifested through the implementation of the 3S culture (smile, greet, and salute), teacher duty schedules, monthly meetings, social support activities during times of celebration and bereavement, holiday savings programs, teacher social gatherings, sports and arts events, and participation in the Indonesian Teachers Association (PGRI).

These activities contribute to harmonious working relationships and strengthen solidarity among teachers. Furthermore, mutual respect and appreciation among colleagues have become part of the school culture, supporting the creation of a positive and conducive educational environment.

3. Teacher Role Modeling and Professional Maturity

Teachers demonstrate exemplary personal qualities through polite communication, appropriate appearance, and respectful interactions with students, parents, and other members of the school community. During classroom instruction, teachers exhibit professional maturity through effective classroom management, the use of diverse instructional methods, and the provision of both verbal and nonverbal motivation to students.

Teachers are also receptive to feedback from students and encourage active participation in the learning process. The instructional approaches employed tend to be contextual and dialogic, thereby promoting greater student engagement and participation.

4. Work Ethic, Responsibility, and Teacher Professionalism

Teachers' work ethic is reflected in their discipline in starting and ending lessons on time, fulfilling their teaching responsibilities, and completing both administrative and non-administrative duties in accordance with established standards. In cases where teachers are unable to attend school, instructional activities continue through assigned learning tasks supervised by duty teachers.

Teachers also contribute to school development through the guidance and mentoring of students in both academic and non-academic achievements. All participants expressed pride in their profession, viewing teaching as a form of service and responsibility in educating future generations.

5. Implementation of the Professional Code of Ethics

The results of interviews and observations reveal that teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka have implemented the professional code of ethics effectively. Teachers perform their duties and responsibilities in accordance with professional regulations, maintain respectful communication, and demonstrate both moral and professional accountability in all educational activities.

The findings further indicate that the professional ethics of Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka have been consistently implemented across personal, social, pedagogical, and professional dimensions. Teachers function not only as instructors but also as moral role models and agents of character development for students. These findings support the view that teaching is a noble profession grounded in service, ethical responsibility, and dedication rather than merely material considerations.

B. Teacher Performance of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency

Teacher performance auditing is a systematic evaluation process of teachers' professional duties aimed at obtaining objective information regarding teacher competencies and the effectiveness of the learning process. In this study, the performance audit focused on certified Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and examined four main aspects: (1) lesson planning, (2) instructional implementation, (3) learning assessment, and (4) follow-up actions resulting from performance audits.

1. Teacher Performance in Lesson Planning

The findings indicate that PAI teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka have implemented lesson planning systematically and in accordance with current curriculum requirements. All teachers prepare complete instructional documents at the beginning of each semester, including Learning Outcomes (CP), Learning Objectives (TP), Learning Objective Flow (ATP), annual programs, semester programs, teaching modules, and assessment instruments.

Document analysis revealed that instructional planning documents were properly organized, archived, and formally approved by the school principal. Furthermore, the school actively supports teachers through workshops, training programs, and technical guidance related to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). These efforts demonstrate the institution's commitment to strengthening teachers' planning competencies.

Teachers acknowledged that lesson planning serves as a fundamental guide for organizing learning activities effectively and efficiently. Although the preparation of

instructional documents often requires personal financial resources, teachers consistently demonstrate a strong commitment to completing these requirements. In addition, the school's learning facilities and infrastructure are generally adequate and well maintained, providing substantial support for the implementation of planned instructional activities.

2. Teacher Performance in Instructional Implementation

Instructional implementation represents the core component of teacher performance. Based on classroom observations and interview findings, PAI teachers conducted learning activities in accordance with the stages outlined in their teaching modules, including introductory, core, and closing activities.

Regarding instructional content, teachers demonstrated efforts to align learning materials with curriculum standards and students' characteristics. Learning materials were presented systematically, following appropriate learning sequences and incorporating contextual examples relevant to students' daily experiences.

Teachers employed a variety of instructional methods, including lectures, question-and-answer sessions, group discussions, demonstrations, practical activities, and assignments. The selection of teaching methods was generally aligned with the learning objectives and content being taught. Teachers also adhered to the allocated instructional time of two 45-minute periods, initiated lessons through apperception activities, and concluded learning sessions with summaries and reflective discussions.

The findings further indicate that teachers attempted to create interactive classroom environments by encouraging student participation and engagement during learning activities. However, opportunities remain for further enhancement of active learning strategies and innovative pedagogical practices that promote greater student-centered learning experiences.

Overall, instructional implementation among PAI teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka can be categorized as effective and consistent with curriculum expectations, although continuous improvement remains necessary to address the evolving demands of contemporary education.

3. Teacher Performance in Learning Assessment

The findings demonstrate that PAI teachers conducted learning assessments comprehensively by evaluating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Assessment techniques varied according to instructional objectives and the characteristics of the learning materials.

Assessment documentation was maintained systematically through student grade records and other evaluation documents. Teachers generally returned assessed assignments and examination papers to students, reflecting principles of transparency and accountability in the evaluation process. Assessment outcomes were also discussed during school meetings as part of academic reporting and quality assurance procedures.

In addition, teachers implemented remedial and follow-up programs for students who had not achieved the expected learning outcomes. Remedial activities included additional assignments, repeated instruction, and individualized guidance. Nevertheless, the implementation of remedial programs was not always conducted consistently and could be further strengthened to ensure that all students receive adequate academic support.

These findings indicate that assessment practices among PAI teachers have generally fulfilled professional standards and contribute positively to monitoring student learning progress and achievement.

4. Follow-Up Actions from Teacher Performance Audits

Teacher performance audits are conducted regularly by school supervisors according to scheduled semester-based supervision programs. The school principal also plays an active role in evaluating and monitoring teacher performance through classroom observations, performance reviews, and collaboration with senior teachers and educational supervisors.

The follow-up actions resulting from performance audits primarily focus on professional coaching, mentoring, and continuous improvement of teaching performance. Audit findings are used as valuable sources of information for identifying strengths and areas requiring development among teachers.

Furthermore, performance audit results provide the school with a comprehensive profile of teacher competencies and instructional effectiveness. This information serves as an important basis for designing future professional development programs and implementing strategies aimed at improving educational quality.

Overall, the findings suggest that the performance of PAI teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka is generally satisfactory across the areas of lesson planning, instructional implementation, learning assessment, and professional accountability. Continuous supervision, professional development initiatives, and constructive

feedback mechanisms contribute significantly to maintaining and enhancing teacher performance in support of educational quality improvement.

C. Implementation of Professional Ethics in Improving the Performance of Islamic Religious Education Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency

1. Teacher Qualifications and Educational Background

Educational qualifications constitute an important indicator of teacher professionalism, reflected in the implementation of teachers' duties as educators, mentors, and role models for students. The findings reveal that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency, possess adequate educational qualifications and demonstrate a strong sense of professional responsibility in carrying out their roles.

The profile of PAI teachers is not solely assessed based on academic credentials but also on personal characteristics, attitudes, and exemplary conduct. Teachers are expected to demonstrate mature personalities, effective communication skills, responsibility, self-confidence, and concern for students' well-being. Interview findings indicate that PAI teachers recognize the importance of serving as role models, particularly in religious practices such as congregational prayer and maintaining discipline in worship activities within the school environment.

Overall, the PAI teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka fulfill both personal and professional dimensions of teaching. They function not only as instructors but also as exemplary figures who contribute significantly to the development of students' religious character and moral values.

2. Teacher Competencies as an Implementation of Professional Ethics

Teacher competence is a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The findings demonstrate that PAI teachers possess relatively strong pedagogical, personal, social, professional, and leadership competencies. These competencies serve as the foundation for the consistent implementation of professional ethics in classroom practice.

PAI teachers apply professional integrity by recognizing and respecting students' diverse abilities and learning needs. Strategies employed include grouping students according to their levels of understanding, providing individualized guidance, and adapting instructional methods to students' characteristics. These practices reflect the implementation of professional ethics based on fairness, equity, and a commitment to supporting student development.

Through adequate professional competence, teachers are able to improve instructional performance, which ultimately contributes positively to students' academic achievement and overall learning outcomes.

3. Teachers' Roles as Motivators and Administrators

As part of the implementation of professional ethics, PAI teachers play significant roles as both motivators and instructional administrators. Their responsibilities extend beyond the transmission of knowledge to include the cultivation of students' moral and spiritual values. Consequently, PAI teachers are regarded as central figures in fostering students' character development and discipline.

The findings indicate that teachers strive to serve as role models in their daily conduct both inside and outside the classroom. Such exemplary behavior is reflected in their discipline, consistency in practicing religious obligations, and commitment to professional responsibilities. These roles strengthen the function of professional ethics as a moral guideline in carrying out educational duties.

4. Implementation of Professional Ethics in Teaching Practices

a. Lesson Planning

PAI teachers systematically prepare instructional plans through the development of learning documents, including Learning Outcomes (CP), Learning Objectives (TP), Learning Objective Flow (ATP), and teaching modules. The planning process begins with an analysis of students' characteristics, including their social backgrounds, learning needs, and cognitive developmental stages.

This planning process reflects teachers' professional responsibility to provide meaningful and student-centered learning experiences. Careful preparation enables teachers to align instructional activities with curriculum requirements and students' needs.

b. Instructional Implementation and Classroom Management

In implementing instruction, PAI teachers establish conducive classroom environments through personal approaches, motivational strategies, and educational solutions to learning difficulties. Teachers demonstrate the ability to maintain orderly, active, and participatory classroom atmospheres.

Various instructional methods are employed, including question-and-answer sessions, discussions, demonstrations, and the use of learning media such as student worksheets (LKPD) and LCD projectors. The use of diverse

methods and media contributes to increased student engagement, motivation, and participation in Islamic Religious Education classes.

These practices illustrate how professional ethics are translated into concrete teaching behaviors that prioritize students' learning experiences and educational development.

c. Interaction Patterns and Learning Environment

Interactions between teachers and students are generally characterized by harmonious and balanced relationships. Teachers maintain professional boundaries while remaining approachable and supportive. This balance enables teachers to establish authority without creating excessive distance between themselves and their students.

Additionally, well-organized classroom environments and flexible seating arrangements contribute to a positive learning atmosphere. Such conditions facilitate effective communication, collaboration, and active student participation during learning activities.

5. Adaptation and Professional Development Through MGMP

Professional adaptation and continuous development are pursued through active participation in the Subject Teacher Consultation Forum (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran/MGMP). MGMP serves as a strategic platform for teachers to exchange experiences, develop instructional strategies, deepen subject-matter knowledge, and collaboratively design learning materials and assessment tools.

The findings reveal that the PAI MGMP in Enrekang Regency plays an active role in enhancing teacher professionalism through instructional training programs, curriculum development activities, and discussions on innovative teaching approaches. These activities support teachers in improving their competencies while maintaining alignment with national curriculum standards.

Participation in MGMP strengthens the implementation of professional ethics by promoting continuous professional growth, instructional innovation, collaboration, and a collective commitment to educational quality improvement. Through these professional development activities, teachers are better equipped to respond to educational challenges and enhance their performance in fulfilling their professional responsibilities.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of teacher personality that aligns with religious, legal, social, and national cultural norms demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency, have positioned the values of Pancasila as an ethical foundation in their professional practice. Respect for the principles of Belief in One Supreme God and National Unity is reflected through habitual worship activities, discipline, and active participation in civic and national events. These findings indicate that teachers perform not only pedagogical functions but also serve as agents of moral and national character development. Kaelan (2016) argues that Pancasila values represent the crystallization of the nation's religious and cultural values, serving as a guideline for social life. Similarly, Wahyudi (2018) found that teachers' internalization of Pancasila values significantly influences the development of students' national character. Therefore, a teacher personality grounded in the nation's ideological values constitutes an essential foundation for improving instructional quality and strengthening professional work ethics.

Collaboration and solidarity among teachers regardless of social or cultural backgrounds represent a concrete manifestation of the principle of just and civilized humanity. Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka cultivate professional relationships through positive communication, mutual respect, and the implementation of the "3S" culture (smile, greet, and salute). These practices foster a harmonious work environment that supports collective performance improvement. Satori and Komariah (2011) emphasize that professional relationships among educators contribute significantly to school organizational effectiveness. Likewise, Mulyasa (2019) found that teacher collaboration positively affects instructional quality and professional development. Consequently, teachers' social competence not only benefits individuals but also contributes to the overall organizational culture of the school.

Teachers' roles as exemplary figures are reflected in their attitudes, speech, appearance, and commitment to maintaining the school's reputation. The findings reveal that teachers consistently demonstrate polite behavior, effective communication, and harmonious relationships with students and parents. Sardiman (2010) states that the quality of teacher–student interactions is one of the primary determinants of successful learning. This finding is reinforced by Kusmayadi (2015), who highlights the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication in establishing teacher authority and charisma. Furthermore, Lickona (2013) argues that teacher role modeling is one of the most effective instruments in character education. Therefore, PAI teachers function not only as providers of knowledge but also as role models whose behavior positively influences students' character development.

Teachers' professional maturity is demonstrated through their ability to manage learning activities effectively, participatively, and reflectively. Teachers serve not only as sources of information but also as facilitators who help students internalize values through meaningful learning experiences. According to Majid (2008), instructional management is a systematic educational interaction designed to achieve educational objectives. Research conducted by Dimyati and Mudjiono (2009) indicates that active learning significantly contributes to the improvement of students' competencies. Through explaining, guiding, providing feedback, and facilitating discussions, teachers transform learning into a process of knowledge, attitude, and behavioral development. These findings suggest that teachers' professional maturity is closely associated with the quality of student learning outcomes.

The implementation of learning activities, including introductory activities, motivational strategies, language use, and effective time management, reflects strong pedagogical competence. Teachers clearly communicate learning objectives and conduct apperception activities to connect students' prior knowledge with new learning materials. Mulyasa (2013) asserts that introductory learning activities play a crucial role in preparing students mentally and emotionally for learning. Furthermore, both verbal and nonverbal motivation provided by teachers contribute positively to student engagement. Janawi (2012) found that teacher motivation significantly influences students' participation and academic achievement. Therefore, teachers' ability to manage instructional activities systematically is an important factor in achieving learning objectives effectively.

The use of contextual approaches, diverse instructional methods, and questioning techniques demonstrates teachers' adaptive pedagogical competence. Small-group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, demonstrations, and assignments provide students with opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and learning responsibility. Solihatin and Raharjo (2009) argue that discussion-based learning is effective in enhancing students' social and cognitive abilities. The probing questions employed by teachers are consistent with Mulyasa's (2013) view that follow-up questioning is essential for deepening students' understanding. Winarno (2013) also found that contextual learning approaches increase the relevance of instructional content to students' real-life experiences. Consequently, the variety of instructional strategies employed by teachers serves as a key factor supporting successful learning processes.

Classroom management and the use of instructional media reflect teachers' efforts to create engaging, interactive, and dynamic learning environments. Variations in teaching styles, interaction patterns, and the utilization of environmental resources as learning materials help maintain students' attention and motivation. Mulyasa (2013) emphasizes that instructional variation is necessary to reduce boredom and enhance learning effectiveness. However, the findings indicate that the use of instructional media remains relatively limited and has not fully incorporated available digital technologies. This finding suggests the need for further improvement in teachers' competencies related to educational technology integration. Arsyad (2017) highlights that the use of diverse instructional media can enhance student motivation, conceptual understanding, and learning outcomes. Therefore, strengthening teachers' technological competencies should become a strategic priority in professional development programs.

Learning assessment practices and teachers' work ethics demonstrate a strong commitment to professional responsibilities. Teachers systematically conduct assessments, particularly in the cognitive domain, and implement follow-up actions through assignments and remedial instruction. According to Dimiyati and Mudjiono (2009), effective assessment should comprehensively address cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Nevertheless, the findings reveal that affective and psychomotor assessments require further enhancement to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of student development. In addition, punctuality, administrative responsibility, and adherence to professional codes of ethics reflect a high level of professional commitment among teachers. Handoko (1994) and Mulyasa (2019) emphasize that teacher performance evaluation serves as an important mechanism for improving educational quality and professional competence. Therefore, the implementation of professional ethics not only shapes teachers' professional behavior but also contributes significantly to improving the performance of Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of professional ethics among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka, Enrekang Regency, has been carried out comprehensively and consistently. Teachers demonstrate personal integrity by acting in accordance with religious, legal, social, and national cultural norms while upholding

the values of Pancasila. This is reflected in their ability to foster mutual respect, maintain collegial cooperation without discrimination, strengthen unity, and embrace diversity within the school environment. Furthermore, PAI teachers exhibit exemplary character, maturity, openness to students' feedback, a strong work ethic, and a high sense of professional responsibility, all of which align with the professional code of ethics for teachers.

The performance of PAI teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Baraka can be categorized as good. This is evident from the systematic preparation of instructional planning, including annual programs, semester programs, Learning Outcomes (Capaian Pembelajaran), Learning Objectives (Tujuan Pembelajaran), Learning Objective Flow (Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran), teaching modules, and assessment instruments. These findings indicate that teachers perform their professional duties effectively and demonstrate a strong commitment to educational quality. The implementation of learning activities, classroom management, and evaluation processes further reflects the teachers' competence in carrying out their instructional responsibilities.

The findings also reveal that the implementation of professional ethics contributes significantly to improving teachers' work performance. Teachers possess educational qualifications that meet professional standards and demonstrate adequate pedagogical, social, professional, and leadership competencies. Their roles as educators, motivators, mentors, and learning administrators strengthen the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. In addition, active participation in professional development activities, particularly through the Subject Teacher Forum (MGMP), supports continuous professional growth and enhances instructional quality.

This study highlights that professional ethics function not only as a moral guideline but also as a strategic foundation for improving teacher performance and educational quality. The integration of ethical values into professional practice enables teachers to perform their responsibilities more effectively while fostering a positive learning environment. Therefore, strengthening professional ethics should remain a priority in teacher development programs, particularly for Islamic Religious Education teachers, to support sustainable improvements in educational practice and student character development.

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