

THE IMPACT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINISTRY OF RELIGION'S POLICY ON THE COMPETENCE OF ISLAMIC TEACHERS IN NORTH SUMATRA

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the impact of the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policies on the competence of Islamic religious teachers in North Sumatra. The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The research informants included Islamic religious teachers, madrasah supervisors, and officials of the local Ministry of Religion who were selected purposively. The results of the study show that the policies of the Ministry of Religion, such as certification, Teacher Professional Education (PPG), and religious moderation training, have a positive impact on improving teacher competence, especially in pedagogic and professional aspects. Teachers who participate in PPG are able to develop innovative learning methods and master teaching tools better, while certification increases motivation and well-being. In the personality and social aspects, policies encourage teachers to be role models and instill the value of tolerance. However, policy implementation is not evenly distributed, especially in rural areas that face limited facilities, access to information, and bureaucracy. This study concludes that the Ministry of Religion's policies contribute significantly to improving the competence of Islamic religious teachers, but it is necessary to have equal access and strengthen infrastructure to be more optimal.

Keywords: *Ministry of Religion Policy, Implementation, Teacher Competence, Islamic Religious Teacher, North Sumatra.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic religious education has a strategic position in shaping the character, morals, and personality of students. The role of Islamic teachers is very important, not only as a teacher who transfers religious knowledge, but also as a moral example for the next generation of the nation (Faishol et al., 2021)Fa. In this context, government policies, especially the Ministry of Religious Affairs, are the determining factor in improving the quality and competence of Islamic religious teachers. The competence of Islamic religious teachers includes four main aspects, namely pedagogic, personality, social, and professional competencies (Jamin, 2018). These four aspects must be balanced so that teachers are able to carry out their duties well. However, facts in the field show that the quality of teacher competence is often influenced by regulations and policies implemented by the government, so that the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policies is a very relevant issue to be studied.

The Ministry of Religion as an institution that fosters Islamic religious education in Indonesia has issued various policies, ranging from teacher certification, improving academic qualifications, the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program, to strengthening the curriculum. These policies are designed to encourage the improvement of the quality of Islamic teachers to be able to face educational challenges in the global era. In North Sumatra, the policies of the Ministry of Religion have also received serious attention. This province has a high cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, so Islamic religious teachers are required to be not only competent in teaching, but also adaptive in building harmony between religious communities. Therefore, the successful implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policies in this area will greatly affect the quality of Islamic religious education. One of the most impactful policies is the teacher certification program that aims to improve teacher professionalism through certification benefits (Bintoro & Fitrianto, 2019). This program is expected to be able to motivate teachers to improve the quality of learning. However, in practice, the implementation of this policy still

leaves various problems, such as unevenness, complicated bureaucracy, and suboptimal supervision. In addition to certification, the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) policy is also an important instrument in improving the competence of Islamic religious teachers. Through PPG, teachers are required to deepen their pedagogic and professional abilities in accordance with applicable competency standards (Pratama et al., 2025). However, limited quotas, costs, and access are often obstacles for teachers in the regions, including in North Sumatra.

The curriculum policy issued by the Ministry of Religion also has an influence. Curriculum changes require Islamic teachers to continue to adapt to a more contextual, creative, and character-based approach to learning. Teachers are no longer only required to master the material, but must also be able to instill the values of tolerance, religious moderation, and 21st-century skills. The implementation of these policies in the field does not always go smoothly. Many Islamic teachers in North Sumatra still face challenges in accessing training, developing learning methods, and utilizing digital technology. This shows that there is a gap between policy objectives and real conditions on the ground. Internal and external factors also affect the success of policy implementation. Internal factors include motivation, educational background, and teaching experience. Meanwhile, external factors include local government support, school facilities, access to information, and supervision from madrasah supervisors or the Ministry of Religion.

In the regional context, North Sumatra has its own challenges due to the uneven distribution of teachers between urban and rural areas. Teachers in remote areas often face limited infrastructure, access to training, and lack of policy support, so that their competencies do not develop optimally. On the other hand, the Ministry of Religion's policies also have a significant positive impact. Many Islamic teachers feel an improvement in their well-being after obtaining certification, attending PPG, and receiving training. This has an impact on work motivation, learning quality, and the image of teachers in society. Research related to the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policy on the competence of Islamic religious teachers is very important, especially in North Sumatra. This study will provide a clear picture of the extent to which central government policies have an impact on improving the quality of teachers at the regional level.

With this research, it is hoped that inhibiting and supporting factors can be found for the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policies. In addition, the results of the research can be an input for policy makers so that the programs launched are more effective, on target, and in accordance with the needs of Islamic religious teachers in the field. This research is also expected to strengthen efforts to develop quality Islamic education in North Sumatra. This is because improving the competence of Islamic religious teachers is not only in the interest of the Ministry of Religion, but also part of efforts to educate the nation's life and strengthen the character of Indonesia's young generation. Thus, the study on the impact of the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policy on the competence of Islamic religious teachers in North Sumatra has academic, practical, and strategic relevance. This study not only contributes to enriching the literature on Islamic education, but also serves as a basis for the formulation of more effective policies in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Education Policy of the Ministry of Religion

The Ministry of Religion (Kemenag) is a government institution that has the authority to implement religious and religious education in Indonesia. Since its inception, the Ministry of Religion has formulated various policies aimed at improving the quality of religious education, including strengthening the role of Islamic religious teachers in schools and madrasas. According to (Nika & Rahayu, 2024), the Ministry of Religion's education policy includes aspects of the curriculum, teacher certification, improvement of academic qualifications, and professionalization of teachers through the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program. The implementation of this policy is expected to create Islamic religious teachers who are professional, competent, and able to face the challenges of the digital era.

2. Policy Implementation Concept

Policy implementation can be understood as the process of implementing decisions or rules that have been formulated by government authorities. According to Edwards III's theory (in (Riswandi, 2020)), the success of policy implementation is influenced by four main factors, namely communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. In the context of education, the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policies must pay attention to the distribution of information to teachers, the provision of facilities, the suitability of the attitude of the implementers, and the supporting bureaucratic structure. If one of the factors does not run optimally, then the impact will be seen on the effectiveness of policies in the field.

3. Competence of Islamic Religious Teachers

Teacher competence is a set of abilities that must be possessed to carry out duties as an educator. Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers states that teachers are required to have four competencies, namely pedagogic, professional, social, and personality (Darmawan, 2020). For Islamic teachers, this competence is coupled with the mastery of religious values and the ability to internalize Islamic teachings to students. According to (Susila, 2024), Islamic teachers are required not only to master the subject matter, but also to be able to be moral examples, mediators in the harmony of the people, and facilitators in the spiritual development of students.

4. Teacher Professional Certification and Education (PPG)

One of the strategic policies of the Ministry of Religion is teacher certification and PPG. Teacher certification aims to improve welfare as well as measure teacher professionalism. Meanwhile, PPG is an academic program to strengthen pedagogic and professional competence. Research results (NABIL, 2024) shows that Islamic religious teachers who take part in PPG have experienced a significant increase in terms of mastery of learning methods, reflective skills, and curriculum application. However, there are obstacles in the form of limited quotas, access to information, and differences in the quality of training between urban and rural areas.

5. Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

The curriculum is the main instrument in directing learning. The curriculum changes made by the Ministry of Religion, including the strengthening of Religious Moderation, have direct implications for the role of Islamic religious teachers. According to (Sapruddin, 2025), the Islamic religious education curriculum must be able to answer the challenges of globalization, build the nation's character, and foster an attitude of tolerance. Islamic teachers are required to be adaptive to curriculum developments, including the integration of information technology in the learning process.

6. Challenges of Policy Implementation in the Regions

The implementation of education policy cannot be separated from various challenges, especially in areas with socio-cultural diversity such as North Sumatra. Research (Wicaksono & Zakso, 2025) mentioned that Islamic teachers in rural areas face limited access to training, infrastructure, and supervision support. This condition results in a competency gap between urban teachers and rural teachers. Internal factors such as teachers' motivation, experience, and educational background also affect the success of policy implementation.

METHOD

1. Research Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive study type. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to understand the phenomenon in depth related to the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policy on the competence of Islamic religious teachers, especially in North Sumatra. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), qualitative research aims to explore the meaning, experience, and views of research subjects comprehensively, not just measure in the form of numbers.

2. Research Location and Time

This research was carried out in several madrassas and schools under the guidance of the Ministry of Religion spread across North Sumatra, both in urban and rural areas. The selection of locations was carried out purposively by taking into account variations in social conditions, educational facilities, and teacher distribution. The research time is estimated to last for 3 months, including the preparation stage, data collection, analysis, and reporting of results.

3. Research Subjects and Informants

The subject of the study is an Islamic religious teacher under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion in North Sumatra. The research informants were selected by purposive sampling, namely those who were considered to have direct understanding and experience of the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policies. The informant consists of:

- Islamic religious teacher (as the main informant)
- Madrasah/school supervisor (as a key informant)
- Officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the district (as additional informants)

The number of informants is not determined definitively, but follows the principle until data saturation, which is when the information obtained has been repeated and there are no new findings.

4. Data Collection Techniques

To obtain in-depth data, this study uses several data collection techniques (Jogiyanto Hartono, 2018) that is:

1. In-depth interviews with teachers, supervisors, and Ministry of Religion officials to explore experiences, obstacles, and policy impacts.
2. Participatory observation in schools/madrasas to see firsthand the learning process, curriculum implementation, and teacher professionalism.
3. The documentation study is in the form of regulations of the Ministry of Religion, training reports, supervision results, and relevant school documents.

5. Research Instruments

The main instrument in qualitative research is the researcher himself (human instrument). The researcher plays a role in designing interview guidelines, observation notes, and documentation sheets to guide the data collection process. Interview guidelines are semi-structured to allow for flexibility in digging deeper information from informants.

6. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out inductively using an interactive model (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 1994), which includes three main stages:

1. Data reduction: filtering, summarizing, and selecting data that is relevant to the focus of the research.
2. Data display: organize data in the form of narratives, matrices, or tables to make it easy to understand.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification: looking for patterns, relationships, and meanings from data to produce research conclusions.

7. Data Validity Test

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses several techniques, including:

- Source triangulation: comparing data from teachers, supervisors, and Ministry of Religion officials.
- Method triangulation: comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation.
- Member check: confirming the findings to the informant to match their intentions.
- Peer debriefing: discussing with other researchers or experts to assess the validity of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Policy in North Sumatra

Based on the results of interviews with Islamic teachers, madrasah supervisors, and officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the implementation of the policy in North Sumatra is going quite well, but it is not completely even. Teachers in urban areas have easier access to certification programs, PPG, and training, while teachers in rural areas still face obstacles to accessing information and facilities.

Table 1. Policy Implementation Findings

Informant	Perceived Form	Policy Implementation Constraints	Initial Impact
Teacher A (Medan)	Certifications & PPG	Complicated administration	Increased motivation and well-being
Teacher B (Deli Serdang)	Religious moderation training	Limited internet access	Curriculum competence increased
Teacher C (Mandailing Natal)	PPG	Limited quota	Not able to join the program
Supervisor	Curriculum supervision	Minimal resources	Supervision is not optimal
Ministry of Religion Officials	Socialization of regulations	Slow distribution of information	Not yet evenly distributed to the regions

The results of the study show that the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policies in North Sumatra is going well but unevenly. Teachers in urban areas have more access to certification programs, PPG, and training,

while teachers in rural areas still face barriers to information and facilities. This is in line with the theory of the implementation of Edwards III (in (Indah & Hariyanti, 2018)) which affirms that communication and resources are important factors in the successful implementation of policies. If the distribution of information is uneven, then the effectiveness of the policy will decrease. Research (Hendrik Dewantara, 2024) It also shows that limited access and bureaucracy hinder the effectiveness of teacher certification, especially in remote areas.

2. The Impact of Policies on Teachers' Pedagogic Competence

Teachers who participated in the PPG program and curriculum training admitted that they experienced an increase in pedagogic aspects. They are better able to use active learning methods, technology integration, and contextual approaches. However, teachers in rural areas still tend to use traditional lecture methods due to limited facilities.

Table 2. Impact on Pedagogic Competence

Location	Field Findings	Forms of Constraints
Terrain	Teachers are used to using digital applications (Zoom, Google Classroom)	Interactive learning Supporting infrastructure
Pematangsiantar	Teachers are able to vary methods (discussions, case studies)	Increased creativity Time limitations
South Tapanuli	Teachers are still dominant in the lecture	Lack of innovation Limited digital means
Stuttgart	Teachers apply contextual learning	Easier to understand material Need continuous assistance

Teachers who participated in PPG and training were proven to have better pedagogic skills, for example in using varied learning methods and technology integration. This finding supports the concept of pedagogic competence as stipulated in Law No. 14 of 2005, that teachers must be able to manage learning creatively and effectively (No, 14 C.E.). (Lie, 2022) emphasizing that the Islamic religious education curriculum requires teachers to not only master the material, but also to be able to develop contextual and character-based learning approaches. This is in line with the findings of the study (Mardhatillah & Surjanti, 2023) that PPG improves teachers' skills in implementing more innovative learning methods. However, the limited facilities in rural areas cause teachers to still be stuck in traditional methods.

3. The Impact of Policies on Teachers' Professional Competencies

The certification and PPG policies have been proven to improve teachers' professional competence, especially in mastery of teaching materials and teaching skills. Teachers who have participated in PPG are more confident in developing learning tools, while teachers who have not had the opportunity to participate in PPG still feel left behind.

Table 3. Impact on Professional Competence

Program	Positive Impact	Limitations
Certification	Increase motivation, well-being of teachers	Complicated administrative bureaucracy
PPG	Improved mastery of materials & methods	Limited quota, not all teachers are accommodated
Ministry of Religion Training	Providing an understanding of religious moderation	Short duration, minimal assistance

Certification and PPG policies make a real contribution to improving teachers' professional competence, especially in mastering teaching materials, teaching skills, and the preparation of learning tools. This is in accordance with the opinion (Pardede & Yafizham, 2020) which states that teacher certification not only improves welfare, but also spurs professionalism. Research (Nurgenti et al., 2025) also corroborated that PPG has a significant effect on improving the professional competence of Islamic teachers, although quota limitations are still a problem. This condition shows that although government policies are appropriate, the limited distribution makes the impact not optimal in all regions.

4. Policy Impact on Personality and Social Competence

The results of the study show that the Ministry of Religion's policies also contribute to the formation of teachers' personality and social competence. Religious moderation training encourages teachers to be more open, tolerant, and able to be role models in the school environment. Teachers are also more active in interacting with the community, although there are still those who are limited in social involvement due to age and motivation factors.

Table 4. Impact on Personality & Social Competence

Aspects	Indicators of Change	Field Findings
Personality	Example, religious attitude	Teachers are more disciplined, so they are role models for students
Social	Relationships with colleagues & the community	Teachers are more active in religious and social activities
Tolerance	Religious moderation	Teachers teach tolerance in the classroom
Constraints	Age and motivation factors	Some teachers are not actively adapting

The religious moderation training launched by the Ministry of Religion has proven to have a positive effect on the personality and social competence of teachers. Teachers are more disciplined, role models, and able to teach tolerance in the school environment. This supports the concept of personality and social competence as stated in Law No. 14 of 2005, which emphasizes the importance of teachers being moral role models. Research (Melisa et al., 2024) It also shows that Islamic religious teachers play an important role in building tolerance and harmony among religious people. However, this study found that some elderly teachers have difficulty adapting to increasingly complex social demands.

5. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Policy Implementation

The implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policies in North Sumatra is influenced by internal and external factors. Supporting factors include teacher motivation, central policy support, and the availability of training programs. The inhibiting factors include limited facilities, uneven access to technology, and complex administrative bureaucracy.

Table 5. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Factor	Details	Impact
Supporter	Teacher motivation, regulatory support, Ministry of Religion training	Teacher competence increases
Retardant	Minimal infrastructure, slow information distribution, limited PPG quota	Uneven implementation

Supporting factors for policy implementation in North Sumatra include teacher motivation, the existence of Ministry of Religion regulations, and continuous training. However, obstacles still arise in the form of limited infrastructure, slow information distribution, and administrative bureaucracy. Van Meter and Van Horn Theory (in (Teori, 2009)) stated that the success of policy implementation is influenced by resource variables, communication between organizations, and socio-political conditions in the field. Research (Ibrahim & Islamiah, 2024) It also found that Islamic teachers in rural areas face limited facilities and lack of supervision support, which has implications for low competence. This reinforces that policy implementation requires systemic support, not just formal programs.

6. Synthesis of Research Findings

Overall, the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policies in North Sumatra has had a positive impact on improving the competence of Islamic religious teachers, especially in pedagogic and professional aspects. However, the impact is not even because there is a gap between urban teachers and rural teachers. Access factors, facilities, and bureaucracy are the main issues that must be addressed immediately so that policies are truly effective.

Table 6. Summary of Research Findings

Competency Aspect	Positive Impact	Constraints
Pedagogic	Varied methods, technology integration	Uneven facilities
Professional	Mastery of teaching materials and tools	Limited PPG quota
Personality	Teachers are role models	Adaptation of some teachers is slow
Social	Increase tolerance & social relationships	Social engagement is not even

Overall, this study shows that the Ministry of Religion's policies have a positive effect on improving the competence of Islamic teachers, although they are not evenly distributed throughout North Sumatra. The strongest positive impact can be seen in the pedagogic and professional aspects, while the personality and social aspects are still influenced by the teacher's internal factors. Thus, the results of this study make a new contribution to the literature by emphasizing the importance of equitable access to policies and increasing infrastructure support for teachers in remote areas.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the implementation of the Ministry of Religion's policy has a significant effect on improving the competence of Islamic religious teachers in North Sumatra, although the implementation is not fully evenly distributed in all regions. Teachers in urban areas have more access to certification programs, PPG, and training, while teachers in rural areas still face obstacles in the form of limited facilities, access to information, and complex administrative bureaucracy. The positive impact of the policy is clearly seen in the aspects of pedagogic and professional competence. Teachers who participate in PPG programs and training are able to develop more innovative learning methods, utilize technology, and improve mastery of teaching materials. Certification also provides a motivational boost as well as an improvement in teacher welfare. In the personality and social aspects, the policy of religious moderation encourages teachers to be moral examples, more disciplined, and able to instill the value of tolerance in students, even though some senior teachers still experience limited adaptation. In general, this study emphasizes that the Ministry of Religion's policies have made a real contribution to improving the competence of Islamic teachers, but the equitable distribution of implementation is still the main challenge. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen infrastructure support, equal access to training, and simplify bureaucracy so that policies are truly effective and effective for all teachers in North Sumatra.

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