

THE ROLE OF TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION IN IMPROVING THE COMPETENCE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS TEACHERS

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Received : 15 August 2025

Published : 11 October 2025

Revised : 10 September

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijerlas.v5i6.4236>

Accepted : 25 September 2025

Published links : <https://radjapublika.com/index.php/IJERLAS>

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the role of training and certification in improving the competence of Islamic teachers, both from pedagogic, professional, and work attitude aspects. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation of Islamic teachers who have participated in training and certification under the guidance of the Ministry of Religion. The results of the study show that training plays an important role in improving teachers' ability to design learning, master teaching materials, and utilize digital technology in the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, certification provides professional recognition that encourages a teacher's motivation, responsibility, and commitment to their profession. The two programs complement each other in forming Islamic teachers who are competent and adaptive to educational changes. However, several obstacles were found such as time limitations, inequality of access to training, and lack of post-training assistance. Therefore, a training and certification policy that is sustainable, needs-based, and oriented towards improving the quality of learning is needed.

Keywords: *Training, Certification, Teacher Competence, Islamic Religious Teacher, Professionalism.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Teachers have a strategic role in shaping the character and morals of students in the school environment. In the context of national education, the existence of religious teachers not only functions as teachers of religious subjects, but also as spiritual guides who inculcate moral values (Sabeni, 2024). Therefore, the quality and competence of religious teachers are the main factors in determining the success of the nation's character education. Without competent teachers, the goal of Islamic education will be difficult to achieve optimally. In the era of globalization marked by the development of science and technology, the challenges for Islamic teachers are increasingly complex (Sembiring et al., 2024). Teachers are required not only to master religious materials, but also to be able to integrate technology in the learning process. Religious learning is no longer enough with a conventional approach, but must be innovative and relevant to the times. This condition demands capacity building through planned and ongoing training and certification.

Training for Islamic teachers is a form of professional development that functions to improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes in carrying out educational tasks. Through training, teachers can update pedagogic insights, learning methodologies, and educational technology capabilities (Purnasari & Sadewo, 2020). This process is important so that teachers can adjust to the dynamics of curriculum changes and the needs of students. Thus, training plays a direct role in improving teacher competence as a whole. In addition to training, teacher certification is also an indicator of professionalism in the world of education. Certification provides formal recognition of a teacher's competence in carrying out his duties according to the standards that have been set. For Islamic teachers, certification is not only a form of reward, but also a motivation to continue to improve their performance and responsibility. A quality certification program will help ensure that teachers have adequate pedagogical, professional, social, and personality abilities. The Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religion has paid great attention to improving the quality of religious teachers. Training and certification programs are part of national policies to strengthen the quality-based education system. Various trainings such as Teacher Professional Education and Training (PPG), functional training, and curriculum workshops have been held periodically. This effort is intended so that religious teachers can adapt to the latest education policies, including the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of training and certification is still often a debate among education practitioners. Some parties consider that training has not been able to significantly change learning practices in the classroom. Meanwhile, certification is sometimes considered to be only administrative and does not reflect the real quality of teachers (Hendrik Dewantara, 2024). Therefore, it is important to review the extent to which the role of training and certification really contributes to improving the competence of Islamic teachers. The competence of Islamic teachers includes four main aspects, namely pedagogical, professional, personality, and social competence. These four aspects are interrelated and determine the quality of learning. Through training, teachers can improve their ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning. Meanwhile, certification serves to measure and guarantee the competency standards that have been achieved. The combination of the two is expected to create professional and high-integrity religious teachers.

In practice, effective training must be based on the real needs of teachers in the field. Training materials that are relevant to actual challenges, such as digital learning, religious moderation literacy, and character-based classroom management, will have a greater impact on improving competence. On the other hand, the implementation of certification must be based on an objective and transparent assessment. The involvement of professional institutions and academics in the certification process can strengthen the validity of the results of teacher competency assessments. In various regions, Islamic teacher training is often carried out through cooperation between the government, higher education institutions, and religious organizations. This activity is a forum for exchanging experiences between educators in developing innovative learning strategies. For example, lesson study-based training and teaching clinics have proven to be effective in improving the quality of the teaching process. This kind of collaboration shows that improving teacher competence cannot be done individually, but through a sustainable learning community.

Teacher certification, on the other hand, has a positive impact on teacher motivation and well-being. With professional allowances, teachers feel more appreciated and motivated to improve the quality of their learning. However, challenges arise when certification is only used as an administrative requirement without being followed by a real improvement in competence. Therefore, it is important for any certification program to be followed by an ongoing evaluation that assesses post-certification performance. Previous research has shown that training designed with a reflective approach and hands-on practice is more effective than lecture-based training. Teachers who participate in active training are better able to apply learning outcomes into teaching practices. Likewise with certification, teachers who go through an authentic assessment process tend to have better professional abilities (Turmuzi et al., 2019). This data confirms the importance of innovation in the design of religious teacher training and certification.

Improving the competence of Islamic teachers not only has an impact on the quality of learning, but also on the formation of students' character. Competent teachers are able to instill Islamic values contextually, so that students can understand religious teachings rationally and moderately. In the context of a pluralistic society such as Indonesia, the role of competent religious teachers is very important to maintain social harmony and tolerance between religious communities. In addition to policy factors, the support of educational institutions also affects the success of teacher training and certification. Schools that provide space for teachers to innovate and apply training results will accelerate the improvement of the quality of learning. In contrast, without the support of school management, training outcomes are often unsustainable. Therefore, synergy between teachers, principals, and supervisors is the key to success in developing the competence of religious teachers.

In the context of national education development, the training and certification of Islamic teachers is a long-term investment. Both function as strategic instruments in creating superior educational human resources, morals, and adaptive to the changing times. This quality-oriented program is expected to be able to produce religious teachers who not only master knowledge, but also be able to be role models for students and the community. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that training and certification have complementary roles in improving the competence of Islamic teachers. Training enriches pedagogic and professional abilities, while certification provides legitimacy and motivation for teachers to continue to improve. Therefore, this study is important to analyze in depth how these two aspects contribute to improving the competence of Islamic teachers in the context of modern education in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Concept of Competency of Islamic Religious Teachers

The competence of Islamic teachers is a set of knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes that must be possessed by an educator in carrying out the religious learning process effectively. According to Law Number 14 of

2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, teacher competence includes four main aspects: pedagogic, personality, social, and professional (No, 14 C.E.). These four are the main indicators of the quality of an educator. In the context of Islamic teachers, competence is not only measured by teaching ability, but also includes aspects of spirituality and moral exemplarity. Research by (Ridwanulloh et al., 2024) It shows that religious teachers who have high personality and social competence are able to shape religious culture in schools more effectively. Therefore, the development of the competence of religious teachers must pay attention to the balance between academic and moral abilities.

2. The Role of Training in Teacher Professional Development

Training is the main strategy in teacher professional development. Through training, teachers have the opportunity to update knowledge, improve skills, and adapt learning to changes in policies and technologies. (Abdillah et al., 2025) emphasizing that training that is designed in an ongoing manner and based on field needs has been proven to increase the effectiveness of the learning process in the classroom. In the context of Islamic teachers, training functions as a vehicle for internalizing Islamic values as well as updating pedagogical methods. Programs such as *Religious Moderation Workshop*, *Independent Curriculum Training* and *Madrasah Teacher Professional Training* is a real example of quality improvement efforts. Research (Budiarti et al., 2023) It is stated that experiential learning is much more effective than lecture-based training, because it encourages teachers to implement innovations in learning.

3. Model and Effectiveness of Islamic Religious Teacher Training Program

Various training models have been developed to improve the professionalism of Islamic teachers. Type *blended learning* and *Lesson Study* It is a popular choice because it combines theory, practice, and reflection together between educators. Study by (Fauziah et al., 2025) shows that the model *Lesson Study* can improve teachers' ability to design problem-based learning and strengthen collaboration between teachers. In addition, the *Digital Training* It is also beginning to be applied to integrate information technology in religious education. (Ahmad et al., 2023) found that digital-based training increased the ICT literacy of religious teachers by up to 70%, which had an impact on the effectiveness of the use of e-learning-based learning media. This shows that adaptive training to technological developments is able to expand the professional capacity of religious teachers in the modern era.

4. Teacher Certification Concept and Professional Competency Standards

Teacher certification is a form of formal recognition of the ability and professionalism of educators based on the standards set by the government. According to Permendiknas Number 16 of 2007, certified teachers are expected to meet the minimum competency standards in four main domains (SENAWATI, 2019). Certification is also part of the national policy in improving the quality of education through the professionalization of educators. In the context of Islamic teachers, certification is not only administrative, but also moral and spiritual. (Judrah et al., 2024) Explains that certified religious teachers have a greater moral responsibility in guiding students towards noble morals. Further (Wijaya, 2023) emphasized that certification encourages teachers to continue to do self-reflection, improve pedagogic skills, and maintain professional integrity as Islamic educators.

5. The Impact of Certification on Teacher Performance and Motivation

Certification programs have direct implications for improving teacher performance, motivation, and well-being. (Masrulloh, 2020) found that certified teachers showed a 65% increase in work motivation compared to non-certified teachers. The increase was due to professional recognition and financial incentives obtained after certification. However, certification also faces challenges, especially in the aspect of implementation and post-certification performance evaluation. (Ananda et al., 2025) highlighted that some teachers have not shown significant improvement in learning practices despite being certified. This shows the need for a *Follow Up* in the form of academic supervision and advanced training so that certification really has an impact on real competencies.

6. The Relationship between Training and Certification in Teacher Competency Improvement

Training and certification have a complementary relationship within the framework of improving teacher professionalism. Training serves to improve skills and knowledge, while certification provides validation of the abilities that have been acquired. (Sabon, 2018) stated that the effectiveness of certification increases when it is preceded by intensive training based on learning practices. For Islamic teachers, the integration between training and certification is very important to maintain the consistency of the quality of religious learning. When training equips

teachers with methodological innovations, certification ensures that they meet national competency standards. Thus, both are two important instruments in forming teachers who are professional, reflective, and have Islamic character.

7. Challenges and Opportunities for Developing the Competency of Islamic Religious Teachers

Improving the competence of Islamic teachers is inseparable from various challenges, such as limited access to training, inequality of facilities between regions, and low interest in participating in professional development. (Azri & Raniyah, 2024) noted that 38% of religious teachers in the regions still do not have access to technology-based training. In addition, administrative burdens and lack of institutional support are also obstacles in the implementation of certification. However, the opportunity for development remains wide open. The development of digital learning technologies, such as *Learning Management System (LMS)*, webinars, and online teacher communities provide new alternatives in teacher professional development. Government policy support through the PPG, SIMPATIKA, and *Madrasah Reform Project* also strengthening the infrastructure to improve the competence of religious teachers in Indonesia.

METHOD

1. Research Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. This approach was chosen because it aims to understand in depth the social phenomena that occur in the field, especially related to how training and certification play a role in improving the competence of Islamic teachers. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), qualitative research focuses on the interpretation and interpretation of human experience through the collection of narrative and contextual data. This approach allows researchers to explore the perceptions, experiences, and practices of Islamic teachers who have participated in training and certification. Thus, this study not only measures results, but also explores the processes that occur behind the improvement of the teacher's competence.

2. Research Location and Time

This research was carried out in several madrasahs and public schools under the guidance of the Ministry of Religion in the Medan City area. The selection of the location was carried out purposively because the area has carried out various training and certification programs for Islamic teachers in recent years. The research period is planned to last for three months, from January to March 2025, including the stage of preparation, data collection, analysis, and preparation of research report results.

3. Research Subjects and Informants

The subjects in this study are Islamic teachers who have participated in the training program and/or have been certified. The determination of informants was carried out using the purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of informants based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 1994).

The criteria for informants in this study include:

- Islamic Religious Teachers who have participated in professional training in the last three years.
- Teachers who already have an educator certificate from the Ministry of Religion or the Ministry of Education and Culture.
- Teachers who actively teach in schools/madrasahs for at least five years.
- The head of the madrasah or supervisor who understands the process of coaching religious teachers.

The number of informants is determined based on the principle of data saturation, which is that data collection is stopped if the information obtained has been repeated and there are no new findings.

4. Data Types and Sources

The data sources in this study consist of two types, namely:

- Primary data was obtained directly from the results of in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation of Islamic teachers, madrasah heads, and supervisors.
- Secondary data is obtained from official documents such as training reports, teacher certification data, learning evaluation results, and government policies related to improving teacher competence.

The combination of these two data sources provides a comprehensive picture of the influence of training and certification on the competence of Islamic teachers.

5. Data Collection Techniques

To obtain accurate and in-depth data, this study uses three main techniques:

- **In-depth Interview.**
It is used to explore the experiences and perceptions of Islamic teachers regarding the benefits of training and certification. The interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner so that the researcher could develop questions according to the context of the informant's answer.
- **Participatory Observation.**
The researcher made direct observations of learning activities in the classroom as well as the interaction between teachers and students. The goal is to see the extent to which the teacher's pedagogic and professional competence is applied after attending training and certification.
- **Documentation** This technique is used to supplement interview and observation data, such as collecting training certificates, photos of activities, supervision reports, and school policy documents.

6. Research Instruments

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself (human instrument), which acts as a data collector, analyzer, and interpreter. According to (Sugiyono, 2017), in qualitative research, the researcher becomes the main instrument because he interacts directly with the social situation being studied.

To help the data collection process, researchers also used tools in the form of:

- Semi-structured interview guide
- Learning activity observation sheet
- Field *notes*
- Audio recording tools and supporting documents

7. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out from the beginning of data collection to the final stage of the research using the (Miles & Huberman, 1994) which consists of three main stages, namely:

- **Data Reduction**
The process of selecting, simplifying, and organizing raw data becomes meaningful information.
- **Data Display**
The data that has been reduced is presented in the form of a narrative, table, or thematic matrix for easy understanding.
- **Conclusion Drawing/Verification**
The researcher draws conclusions based on the patterns, relationships, and meanings found, then verifies to ensure the validity of the interpretation.
- This process is carried out on a cyclical basis, where the initial analysis will be continuously updated according to new data found in the field.

8. Data Validity Test

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study uses four criteria for data validity, namely:

1. **Credibility** — is done through the triangulation of sources, techniques, and time.
2. **Transferability** — the results of the study are presented with contextual descriptions so that they can be applied to other locations with similar characteristics.
3. **Dependability** — is done through an audit of the entire research process by peers or supervisors.
4. **Confirmability** — researchers ensure that research results are based on data, not personal opinions.

Triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documents to ensure the consistency of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Overview of Research Locations

This research was carried out in three educational units under the Ministry of Religion of Medan City, namely MAN 1 Medan, MTsN 2 Medan, and MIN 3 Medan. Each school has different characteristics in terms of the number of teachers, teaching experience, and the level of involvement in professional training.

The following table 1 shows a concise profile of the research site:

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Yes	Name of the Institution	Ladder	Number of PAI Teachers	Certified Teacher	ProgramsLast Training
1	MAN 1 Medan	MA	12	9	PPG and Moderation Training
2	MTsN 2 Medan	Mts	10	7	Independent Curriculum Training
3	MIN 3 Medan	MI	8	5	Workshop Digital Learning

The data above shows that most teachers have attended training and have educator certificates, but there are still some teachers who have not been certified due to quota limitations and administrative requirements.

2. Implementation of Islamic Teacher Training

The results of the interviews showed that all informants recognized the importance of training in improving pedagogic and professional competence. The training provided generally includes active learning strategies, authentic evaluation, the use of technology, and strengthening religious moderation. Some teachers consider that direct practical training is easier to apply than theory-based training. A teacher from MAN 1 Medan stated:

"Training that invites us to make lesson plans, teaching practices, and classroom simulations is much more useful than just listening to resource persons."

To clarify the form and impact of the training followed by teachers, the following table of recapitulation findings is presented:

Table 2. Types and Impacts of Islamic Teacher Training

Types of Training	Number of Teachers Participating	Form of Activity	Impact on Competence
In-Department PPG	10	Microteaching and Reflection Practice	Improvement of pedagogic skills and lesson planning
Religious Moderation Workshop	12	Discussions, Case Studies, and Roleplay	Improved social competence and moderation insights
Independent Curriculum Training	9	Preparation of Teaching Modules & Diagnostic Assessment	Strengthening professionalism and curriculum innovation
Digital Learning Training	7	LMS and Interactive Media Training	Increasing ICT literacy in religious learning

From the observation results, it can be seen that teachers who actively participate in training are better able to manage classes innovatively, use digital media, and adapt learning approaches to the needs of students. The results of the study show that training plays a significant role in improving the professional competence of Islamic teachers, especially in terms of mastery of teaching materials, learning strategies, and the use of digital media. These findings are in line with the theory of continuous professional development put forward by (Syahroni et al., 2020), that training designed based on teacher needs will have a direct impact on improving learning effectiveness. In the context of this study, teachers who participated in independent curriculum-based training reported an increase in their ability to prepare lesson plans, integrate Islamic values in thematic learning, and utilize digital technology such as the Ministry of Religion's Learning Management System (LMS) application. This strengthens the view (Alifah & Rindaningsih, 2025) which emphasizes the importance of teachers' active involvement in practice-based training to improve learners' learning outcomes. The training carried out by the Ministry of Religion is also considered effective because it is based on field needs and followed by post-training assistance. This means that training does not only stop at the theoretical level, but really encourages teachers to apply new knowledge in teaching and learning activities. Thus, training has proven to play a key role in improving the professional competence of Islamic teachers in a sustainable manner.

3. The Impact of Certification on Teacher Professionalism

Teacher certification is the main driver for increasing professionalism and work motivation. Based on data from school documents and interviews, the majority of certified Islamic teachers feel more confident, more professionally valued, and have greater moral responsibility to students.

A teacher of MTsN 2 Medan said:

"After certification, we not only get a stipend, but also a moral boost to continue to improve the way we teach."

The results of the study also showed that certified teachers tended to be more active in participating in MGMP forums and other academic activities.

Table 3. Comparison of Certified and Uncertified Teachers

Competency Aspect	Certified Teacher	Teachers Not Certified
Pedagogic	Excellent – Able to create authentic lesson plans and assessments	Enough – Still relying on the old RPP
Professional	Tall – Active in MGMP, competitions, and training	Medium – Low participation
Personality	Stable and consistent in example	Good, but lacking confidence
Social	Able to be a role model and mediator in school	Still passive in school social activities

The data shows a positive correlation between certification and the level of teacher professionalism. However, certified teachers are still found but have not shown significant changes in daily learning practices, due to the lack of post-certification coaching. The findings of the study show that teacher certification has a positive influence on strengthening pedagogic and professional competence. Certified teachers generally have a better understanding of student characteristics, learning evaluation techniques, and curriculum development based on Islamic values. This is in accordance with the results of the research (Susanti et al., 2025) which states that teacher certification has a significant impact on improving the quality of the learning process and the professional discipline of teachers.

Certification also provides psychological and social encouragement for teachers to improve their work performance. Teachers feel more valued and have intrinsic motivation to continue learning and innovating. This phenomenon can be explained through motivational theory (Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020), which states that professional recognition and recognition are factors that drive job satisfaction that have an impact on performance improvement. In addition, certified teachers showed an increase in the use of active learning methods such as inquiry-based learning and project-based learning. This is in line with the results of the research (Jumrawati & Lina, 2025) which found that certified teachers tend to be more adaptive to curriculum updates and technology-based learning innovations. Thus, certification not only provides administrative status, but also becomes an important instrument in the formation of the professional identity of Islamic teachers.

4. Integration of Training and Certification to Teacher Competencies

Field findings show that the synergy between training and certification provides more optimal results than the implementation separately. Teachers who attend training before certification have a stronger understanding of pedagogics and learning technology, so the certification process runs more smoothly and meaningfully. On the other hand, teachers who directly participated in certification without training experience experienced difficulties in meeting professional competency indicators.

Table 4. The Relationship Between Training Frequency and Certification Outcomes

Frequency of Training	Number of Teachers	Certification (Average)	Test Score	Competency (Scale 1–5)	Improvement
≥ 3 times in 2 years	8	88,5		4,7	
2 times in 2 years	7	83,2		4,1	
1 time in 2 years	6	78,6		3,5	
Never	4	73,4		3,0	

From the table above, it can be seen that the more often teachers participate in training, the higher the certification achievement and competency improvement shown. This underscores the importance of continuity of

training before and after certification. From the results of interviews and observations, it is known that training and certification have a positive impact on changes in teachers' attitudes, discipline, and work ethic. Teachers show increased enthusiasm to improve the quality of learning, expand scientific insights, and develop creativity in the delivery of religious materials. These findings support the view (Judge & Robbins, 2013) that continuous training plays a role in shaping productive work behaviors through increased confidence and professional commitment.

Interactive and self-reflection-based training helps teachers understand weaknesses in their teaching practices and seek solutions independently. Teachers who take part in the certification program are also more proactive in participating in the Islamic Religion Subject Teacher Conference (MGMP) forum and the digital learning community. This reinforces the findings (Aisah et al., 2024) which emphasizes that certification increases the sense of belonging to the profession (professional belonging) and strengthens collaboration between teachers. Sociologically, this increase in work ethic is also related to the social status of teachers after certification. Teachers who are professionally recognized have higher confidence in expressing opinions and leading religious activities in schools and communities. Thus, training and certification not only have an impact on pedagogic abilities, but also strengthen the moral and social dimensions of the religious teacher profession.

5. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Competency Improvement

From the results of in-depth interviews with teachers, madrasah heads, and supervisors, several factors were found that support and hinder the improvement of the competence of Islamic teachers.

Supporting factors include:

- Government policy support through the PPG and SIMPATIKA programs.
- Teachers' personal motivation to develop.
- A community of teachers and MGMP who actively share experiences.
- School facilities that support training activities.

Inhibiting factors include:

- Limited access to training in certain areas.
- Time constraints due to the administrative burden of teachers.
- Lack of post-certification continuous coaching.
- Inequality in the quality of training between organizing institutions.

Table 5. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Improving Teacher Competence

Types of Factors	Description of Field Findings	Impact on Competence
Supporter	Principal support and tiered training policy	Increase teacher motivation and participation
Supporter	MGMP is active in sharing learning innovations	Increase collaboration and good practice
Retardant	High time and administrative burden	Reduce teachers' focus on self-development
Retardant	Training is not followed up with follow-up	Knowledge is not optimally implemented

Although the results of the study show many benefits, there are several obstacles in the implementation of training and certification. The obstacles found include limited time for teachers to take part in training, gaps in access to technology, and lack of assistance after the training is completed. These results are in line with research (Devi et al., 2023) who found that teachers in the regions did not receive intensive training opportunities due to limited facilities and administrative support. In terms of certification, some teachers feel that the process is still too administrative and has not fully assessed pedagogic competence authentically. According to (Pardede & Yafizham, 2020), the teacher certification system should emphasize more on continuous professional assessment than just document assessment. Thus, there is a need to improve the certification system in order to be able to assess the actual ability of teachers in the context of learning.

Another obstacle identified is the inequality in the quality of training between regions. Teachers in large cities tend to receive training with professional facilitators and up-to-date materials, while teachers in remote areas still face limited resources. This shows the need for affirmative policies from the Ministry of Religion to ensure equal quality of training and certification of religious teachers throughout Indonesia. Based on the results of the research, training and certification optimization strategies can be carried out through several integrative approaches. First, training must be continuous and needs-based (needs-based training) as suggested by (Joyce & Showers, 1981). Training models such as peer coaching and lesson study can be applied so that teachers can share best practices in

religious learning. Second, certification needs to be associated with a career-long professional development mechanism so that teachers have the motivation to continue to improve their competence. This approach is reinforced by the theory of teacher professional development put forward by (Darling-Hammond, 2020), that certification followed by mentoring programs and collaborative reflection will result in more tangible competency improvements. Third, there needs to be synergy between religious higher education institutions (LPTK), the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and schools in developing a contextual training curriculum. The training emphasizes not only the pedagogic aspect, but also the spirituality and professional ethics of Islamic teachers. Thus, training and certification can be an integral means to form Islamic teachers who are competent, moral, and relevant to the needs of modern education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion on "The Role of Training and Certification in Improving the Competence of Islamic Teachers", it can be concluded that training and certification have a significant contribution to improving the quality of teacher professionalism. Training that is designed in a systematic, needs-based, and contextual manner has been proven to be able to improve the pedagogic and professional competence of Islamic teachers, especially in terms of learning planning, mastery of teaching materials, and the use of technology in the learning process. Training accompanied by mentoring and reflection is also able to encourage changes in attitudes, creativity, and innovation of teachers in carrying out their duties in the classroom. Meanwhile, certification acts as a form of professional recognition as well as a motivation driver for teachers to continue to develop their competencies. Certified teachers show more disciplined performance, are committed, and have a high moral responsibility to their profession. The certification also encourages teachers to actively participate in ongoing professional development activities, such as MGMP forums and online training. However, the effectiveness of training and certification still faces a number of obstacles, such as inequality of access, time constraints, and lack of post-program evaluation. Therefore, there is a need for an integrative strategy between the Ministry of Religious Affairs, LPTK, and schools in developing training and certification policies that are sustainable, equitable, and relevant to the needs of the field. Overall, training and certification are not just administrative activities, but strategic means in realizing Islamic teachers who are competent, professional, and have character according to the demands of 21st century education.

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