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Professional Competence of Islamic Religious Education Teachers to Improve Students' Mastery of Learning Material

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze Islamic religious education (IRE) teachers' professional competence to improve students' mastery of learning materials after the Covid-19 pandemic in one of the *madrasahs* at the junior-high-school level in Gorontalo City. The research method used is Venetian qualitative research. Data collection techniques were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data validity uses triangulation, and the data analysis is descriptive. The research results showed five categories related to the Islamic religious education teachers' professional competence to ensure students' mastery of learning material: different abilities in adjusting face-to-face learning, diversity of teacher professional competencies, the lack of teachers' reflective actions, the ease of learning being uneven among students, and insignificant change in student learning outcomes.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education Teachers, Learning Materials, Mastery Learning, Teacher Professional Competence

Introduction

Professional competence determines the teachers' success in ensuring students' mastery of the learning material. That is quite reasonable because there is a widespread assumption that teachers play a significant role in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students and promoting meaningful learning.¹ It indicates that teachers ought to execute professional competencies in the learning process, from design, teaching materials development, simulations, presentation of material through technological devices,

¹ Johannes König et al., "The Links between Pedagogical Competence, Instructional Quality, and Mathematics Achievement in the Lower Secondary Classroom," *Educational Studies in Mathematics* 107, no. 1 (May 1, 2021): 189–212, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10649-020-10021-0>; Sharon Kim, Mahjabeen Raza, and Edward Seidman, "Improving 21st-Century Teaching Skills: The Key to Effective 21st-Century Learners," *Research in Comparative and International Education* 14, no. 1 (March 1, 2019): 99–117, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499919829214>; Leslie S. Keiler, "Teachers' Roles and Identities in Student-Centered Classrooms," *International Journal of STEM Education* 5, no. 1 (September 14, 2018): 34, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-018-0131-6>.

and reflective actions.² That will make preparing, presenting, and developing student teaching materials easier after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The education world has undergone significant changes. One of those changes is that the transfer of technology in the last two decades has led to changes, including the presentation of online material. However, entering the post-pandemic does not mean switching to offline and online learning was abandoned altogether. Various online learning applications emerged before the pandemic and have been getting more robust since the Covid-19 pandemic in an all-digital form.³ Consequently, teachers in the post-pandemic era are no longer a source of information like conventional education models.

The image of the teacher as a figure of being admired and imitated (trusted and exemplary) is also fading. It seems from the shift of teacher's authority in learning, as the common assumption is that Google can provide information more ultimately and quickly than teachers. Even the fingers of millennials or Generation Z students have been very agile in finding answers to information from the internet. After the Covid-19 pandemic, the teacher's role, especially in presenting teaching materials, is inevitably directed to the use of technology in learning and the 4Cs: *critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity*.⁴

The independence of student learning during the Covid-19 pandemic is the initial capital for teachers in ensuring mastery of the material by their students through their professional competencies. Despite the controversy over learning methods during the

² Carlos Monzo et al., "Remote Laboratory for Online Engineering Education: The RLAB-UOC-FPGA Case Study," *Electronics* 10, no. 9 (January 2021): 1072, <https://doi.org/10.3390/electronics10091072>; La Sunra-La Sunra, Haryanto Haryanto, and Sahril Nur, "Teachers' Reflective Practice and Challenges in an Indonesian EFL Secondary School Classroom," *International Journal of Language Education* 4, no. 2 (October 13, 2020): 289–300, <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v4i2.13893>; Hidayah Nor, Nani Hizriani, and Nur Laila Kadariyah, "Teachers' Materials Development, Lesson Planning, and Teaching Skills Readiness in Teaching English," *Panyonara: Journal of English Education* 4, no. 1 (March 31, 2022): 32–64, <https://doi.org/10.19105/panyonara.v4i1.5909>; Nur Rizky Alfiany Suab, "Reflective Practice in Teacher Education: A Look into Past and Present Theories, and Some Pertinent Issues," *Tell: Teaching of English Language and Literature Journal* 10, no. 1 (April 30, 2022): 51–62, <http://dx.doi.org/10.30651/tell.v10i1.12137>; Hülya Kosar Altinyelken and Mark Hoeksma, "Improving Educational Quality through Active Learning: Perspectives from Secondary School Teachers in Malawi," *Research in Comparative and International Education* 16, no. 2 (June 1, 2021): 117–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499921992904>; Abid Haleem et al., "Understanding the Role of Digital Technologies in Education: A Review," *Sustainable Operations and Computers* 3 (January 1, 2022): 275–85, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.susoc.2022.05.004>.

³ Sir John Daniel, "Education and the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Prospects* 49, no. 1 (October 1, 2020): 91–96, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09464-3>; Tamer Sari and Funda Nayir, "Challenges in Distance Education During the (Covid-19) Pandemic Period," *Qualitative Research in Education* 9, no. 3 (October 28, 2020): 328–60, <https://doi.org/10.17583/qre.2020.5872>.

⁴ Waston Waston, "Masa Depan Kemanusiaan Dan Keberagamaan: Era Pasca Pandemi Di Indonesia Dalam Teropong Filsafat" (Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, July 28, 2022), 13–14, <http://eprints.ums.ac.id/102108/>.

pandemic, the world has received a worldwide response about the future of post-covid-19 education.⁵ Among other things, the information teachers and students felt during the Covid-19 pandemic ensures that the primary standard for learning is face-to-face traditionally, as much as online only the second best.⁶ There are positive aspects of Covid-19. For example, discovering new learning methods and presenting teaching materials and experiences online so that teachers tend to be forced to create, explore, and improvise, ensured continuous until after the Covid-19 pandemic.⁷

There are several studies related to Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers' competencies. From geographical view, studies on IRE teachers' competencies spread in many countries: Austria,⁸ Germany,⁹ Spain,¹⁰ United Arab Emirates,¹¹ and Indonesia.¹² These several studies could be categorized into some focuses. The first focus is that the IRE teacher's professionalization and recognition depended on many factors and impacted on the quality of IRE classes.¹³ The second focus is the professional learning practice of IRE

⁵ Aslam Fataar and Najwa Norodien-Fataar, "Towards an E-Learning Ecologies Approach to Pedagogy in a Post-COVID World," *Journal of Education (University of KwaZulu-Natal)*, no. 84 (2021): 155–68, <https://doi.org/10.17159/2520-9868/i84a08>.

⁶ Michael A. Peters et al., "Reimagining the New Pedagogical Possibilities for Universities Post-Covid-19," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 54, no. 6 (May 12, 2022): 717–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1777655>; Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope, "New Learning: A Charter for Change in Education," *Critical Studies in Education* 53, no. 1 (February 1, 2012): 83–94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2012.635669>.

⁷ Benjamin M. C. Fischer and Alexandru Tatmir, "A Snapshot Sample on How COVID-19 Impacted and Holds up a Mirror to European Water Education," *Geoscience Communication* 5, no. 3 (September 14, 2022): 261–74, <https://doi.org/10.5194/gc-5-261-2022>.

⁸ Mehmet H. Tuna, "The Professionalisation of Islamic Religious Education Teachers," *British Journal of Religious Education* 44, no. 2 (April 3, 2022): 188–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2021.1999905>; Fahimah Ulfat, "Empirical Research: Challenges and Impulses for Islamic Religious Education," *British Journal of Religious Education* 42, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 415–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2020.1711513>.

⁹ Ulfat, "Empirical Research."

¹⁰ Vicente Llorent-Bedmar, Verónica C. Cobano-Delgado Palma, and María Navarro-Granados, "Islamic Religion Teacher Training in Spain: Implications for Preventing Islamic-Inspired Violent Radicalism," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 95 (October 1, 2020): 103138, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103138>.

¹¹ Mariam Alhashmi and Jase Moussa-Inaty, "Professional Learning for Islamic Education Teachers in the UAE," *British Journal of Religious Education* 43, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 278–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2020.1853046>.

¹² Siti Solikah, Siti Rhoudlotul Jannah, and Gunawan Gunawan, "Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Fostering the Morals of Students," *Journal of Research in Islamic Education* 2, no. 1 (October 21, 2020): 18–25; Euis Rosita et al., "Kompetensi profesional dan karakteristik guru pada masa pandemik," *Ta'dibuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (October 19, 2020): 314–20, <https://doi.org/10.32832/tadibuna.v9i2.3124>; Riswadi Riswadi, "Kompetensi Profesional Guru Rumpun Mata Pelajaran PAI di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MIN) II Model Samarinda," *SYAMIL: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education)* 8, no. 1 (June 10, 2020): 35–61, <https://doi.org/10.21093/sy.v8i1.2447>; Destri Rahayu et al., "Korelasi Antara Pengalaman Mengajar Dengan Kompetensi Profesional Guru PAI Di Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 3 Palembang," *Jurnal PAI Raden Fatah* 2, no. 2 (April 30, 2020): 183–201, <https://doi.org/10.19109/pairf.v2i2.3734>.

¹³ Tuna, "The Professionalisation of Islamic Religious Education Teachers"; Ulfat, "Empirical Research"; Riswadi, "Kompetensi Profesional Guru Rumpun Mata Pelajaran PAI di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MIN) II Model

teachers.¹⁴ The third focus is IRE teachers training to prevent Islamic-inspired violent radicalism.¹⁵ Some of those studies are similar to this study. However, this study takes the context of Indonesia in the post-covid-19 and focuses on IRE teachers' professional competence to ensure students' mastery of learning material.

Methods

This study was conducted in the province of Gorontalo by using a qualitative research approach. The type of research used was descriptive to describe or analyze the study results in a natural setting, but not to draw broader conclusions. The data were collected through interviews with purposive sampling techniques, document study, and observation. Interviews were conducted with the *madrasah* principal, several students, and the Islamic religious education teachers: *Fiqh* teacher, *Aqidah Akhlak* teacher, the *Quran Hadith* teacher, and *Islamic Cultural History* Teacher, at one of Private *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs) in Gorontalo. The individual interviews were recorded with the informants' permission and transcribed for analysis.

The data analysis technique of this study consists of four steps: data collection, condensation, data presentation, and conclusion.¹⁶ Checking the study's validity consists of the persistence of observation and triangulation. Concluding was carried out consistently and continuously as long as the researcher was at the research location to obtain the answers to the research focus. Conclusions are drawn from data and information with known truth values called premises. Then the principles of logic were obtained using a new proposition to reach a conclusion derived from the existing premises. Such findings were also called arguments corroborated with facts and data.

Discussion

The study findings are presented under the following five categories related to the Islamic religious education teachers' professional competence to ensure students' mastery of

Samarinda"; Solikah, Jannah, and Gunawan, "Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Fostering the Morals of Students."

¹⁴ Alhashmi and Moussa-Inaty, "Professional Learning for Islamic Education Teachers in the UAE"; Rosita et al., "Kompetensi profesional dan karakteristik guru pada masa pandemik"; Rahayu et al., "Korelasi Antara Pengalaman Mengajar Dengan Kompetensi Profesional Guru PAI Di Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 3 Palembang."

¹⁵ Llorent-Bedmar, Cobano-Delgado Palma, and Navarro-Granados, "Islamic Religion Teacher Training in Spain."

¹⁶ Matthew B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, Third edition (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2014), 9–12.

learning material at Private *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs) in Gorontalo. The first is the efforts of face-to-face learning. The second is the diversity of teacher professional competency. The third is the lack of teachers' reflective actions. The fourth is that the ease of learning is uneven among learners. The fifth is the insignificant change in student learning outcomes.

Face-to-Face Learning Adjustments

After the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers experienced challenges adjusting professional competencies to face-to-face learning patterns that had just reopened, so there was awkwardness among teachers and participants. Before face-to-face, most learners adjust to spending time with family, entertainment, sleep, and learning less. While most learners face changes with friends and physical activity, they do not happen uniformly.¹⁷

Although students in learning feel many benefits from online learning, it still emphasizes the physical environment that can affect the adjustment to online learning.¹⁸ Overcoming the ice in traditional school settings is helpful as teachers make adjustments by engaging in face-to-face interactions, breaking down social barriers, and creating a rewarding learning environment.¹⁹ This pattern demands the implementation of teacher competencies in learning after the Covid-19 pandemic so that teachers ensure that the mastery of student learning materials does not decrease with online learning, especially in Islamic religious education subjects.

The observations showed that the teacher's ability was seen from mastery, development, and presentation to material evaluation. The product is both in the form of student worksheets and *handouts* known as printed and non-printed teaching materials in the form of learning videos given during observing activities on core activities. The presentation of the material through various teaching materials is then evaluated for success in the closing activity through learning.

¹⁷ Mark D. Slivkoff, Catherine Johnson, and Sean Tackett, "First-Year Medical Student Experiences Adjusting to the Immediate Aftermath of COVID-19," *Medical Science Educator* 31, no. 2 (April 1, 2021): 557–64, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-021-01213-1>.

¹⁸ Irene Nasihah Ibnu, Wan Hartini Wan Zainodin, and Faizah Din, "No Campus Life for Us: Personal Reflections of First-Year Students at a Malaysian University," *IAFOR Journal of Education* 9, no. 6 (December 18, 2021): 144–58, <https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.9.6.08>.

¹⁹ Ibnu, Zainodin, and Din.

Table 1. Professional Competence of Islamic Religious Education Teachers

Observed aspects	Observations Results
Material Mastery	Teachers seem to describe material based on its type, namely facts, concepts, principles, and procedures during learning after the Covid-19 pandemic
Material Development	The teacher displays the PowerPoint as a development of the material given to the task to the learners
Presentation of Material	The teacher applies a scientific approach in presenting material from easy to simple or intricate, from simple to complex material, and from concrete to abstract material
Material Evaluation	Teachers assess students' abilities through oral, written, observational, and portfolio tests, and are then evaluated by the teacher

Table 1 shows the professional competence of IRE teachers in all subjects that refer to their performance according to their respective fields of knowledge. The first aspect that becomes a reference for the professional competence of IRE teachers is mastery of learning materials. The second aspect is the development of learning materials sourced from various learning sources and following the stages of development. The third aspect is the presentation of learning material to make it easier for students to understand learning material. The fourth aspect is evaluating learning material, which assesses students' abilities with various tests.

It is sometimes difficult to make adjustments in teaching even though you have prepared teaching materials through power points and presented them with steps as written in the lesson plan (RPP). The teachers' activities are only able to demonstrate teaching materials. Still, they adjust the conditions of students to the face-to-face learning patterns that have been abandoned so that sometimes there is awkwardness in receiving material and learning achievements after an evaluation of the material that has been studied to find out their mastery of the learning material.²⁰

Teachers have difficulty adjusting face-to-face, which they no longer do, especially in preparing materials, including developing them in printed and non-printed form. Sometimes teachers have not adapted to the conditions after the Covid-19 pandemic, which requires limited abilities and difficulty meeting the needs of students even though they have been invited to surf in cyberspace to find material independently.²¹

The material developed and presented in learning involves critical thinking skills and requires students' independence and optimism. The teacher's professional competence depends on theory and practice in independently assigning tasks and exercises to learners. It

²⁰ Informant A1, Interview, April 21, 2022.

²¹ Informant B, Interview, April 23, 2022.

causes face-to-face learning to require adjustments in its application because it cannot optimize learning outcomes.²²

The preparation of teachers to develop and present teaching materials in the eyes of students has been adjusted to the abilities and needs of students and even delivered according to face-to-face learning methods. Teachers also sometimes ask questions and provide opportunities for opinions or examples so that students can quickly learn and get the material taught is also not difficult because the teacher to be mastered students have prepared it.²³

The professional competence of IRE teachers seems to be quite good in this regard, judging by their ability to expand and deepen the subject matter of learning shown through their efforts to strengthen the curriculum and syllabus implementation further. IRE teachers have done various things, including actualizing them based on facts, concepts, procedures, and metacognitive. Expansion and deepening are significant because if the teacher has broad and deep knowledge and experience, then, in turn, students also get knowledge and experience that is quite broad and deep.

Although the professional qualifications of religious teachers in learning through planning in the form of preparing learning implementation plans seem to have been carried out well, especially in developing materials equipped with methods and media, sometimes they are still inconsistent. Hope because of the importance between design and development of learning, which seems not to be implemented on time, and does not reflect seriousness because there is still a mismatch between planning and development and implementation.

Diversity of Teacher Professional Competencies

Every IRE teacher who teaches the subjects of *Fiqh*, *Qur'an Hadith*, *Akidah Akhlak*, and *Islamic Cultural History* shows professional competence that is not the same in its performance because of different backgrounds, for example, mastery of information and communication technology that he uses when presenting teaching materials to students which are supported by other aspects. That is where the IRE teacher's professional competence in learning is needed because it is proven to realize learning objectives, choose behaviors or learning activities that are believed to be able to know it,²⁴ motivate learning,

²² I. B. M. Astawa et al., "The Effect of Flipped Classroom Based on Disaster Map Visualization in Disaster Mitigation Learning on Students' Self-Efficacy and Critical Thinking Skills," *Jurnal Pendidikan IPA Indonesia* 11, no. 2 (June 30, 2022): 303–13, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jpii.v11i2.35308>.

²³ Informant C, Interview, April 27, 2022.

²⁴ Hara Permana, Farida Harahap, and Budi Astuti, "Hubungan Antara Efikasi Diri Dengan Kecemasan Dalam Menghadapi Ujian Pada Siswa Kelas IX Di MTs AlHikmah Brebes," *Hisbah: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Dan Dakwah Islam* 13, no. 2 (2016): 51–68, <https://doi.org/10.14421/hisbah.2016.132-04>.

increase better learning outcomes,²⁵ and reduce anxiety.²⁶ Even teachers can develop a collective understanding that is not demanding of students.²⁷

Utilizing the internet for learning, teachers of morals and jurisprudence have developed it from the simplest to the most complex after the Covid-19 pandemic to combine it with other abilities. The activity step begins with the teacher assigning assignments and optimizing the use of email when learners submit work. Next, the teacher gives them the mandate to browse and discuss a particular topic on a mailing list, *newsgroup*, or *bulletin board*. In addition, IRE teachers use software to create and present teaching materials, so all learners use information and communication technology (ICT) and the internet in learning.

Table 2. Utilization of ICT in *Fiqh* and *Aqidah Akhlak* Learning

Observed aspects	Observations Results
Classical	Shows joy at the time of receiving materials and conducting learning activities
Completeness	Enthusiastic about discussing and doing group work tasks with presentation <i>slides</i> both shared and displayed by the teacher
Student Activities	Teachers have not been evenly distributed in their mastery and ability to apply information and communication technology
Teacher Abilities	Teachers and learners seem to be unable to discuss teaching materials through applications and competency tests as well as indicators of competency achievement
Learner Response	

Table 2 shows the observations result of the use of ICT in *Fiqh* and *Aqidah Akhlak* learning. The four aspects of the observation focus show that using ICT in PAI learning can encourage student learning activities to be more exciting and fun. However, researchers found several teachers who lacked mastery of the application of ICT in learning. This problem boils down to adapting new learning patterns after the Covid-19 pandemic and the fact that some teachers find it challenging to operate ICT-based learning media because they rarely use it.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, IRE teachers have not used media in face-to-face learning because of its difficulty operating it. Considering his limited abilities, he took steps to use such media better not.²⁸ It is also recognized that IRE teachers rarely use the press, namely the teachers on the *Qur'an Hadith* and the *Islamic Cultural History* subject. Meanwhile, teachers who use many learning media are *Aqidah Akhlak* and *Fiqh* teachers. In

²⁵ Heidi Hytyinen, Auli Toom, and Liisa Postareff, "Unraveling the Complex Relationship in Critical Thinking, Approaches to Learning and Self-Efficacy Beliefs among First-Year Educational Science Students," *Learning and Individual Differences* 67 (October 1, 2018): 132–42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2018.08.004>.

²⁶ Diana P. Zwart et al., "Effects of Digital Learning Materials on Nursing Students' Mathematics Learning, Self-Efficacy, and Task Value in Vocational Education," *Nurse Education in Practice* 44 (March 1, 2020): 102755, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nep.2020.102755>.

²⁷ Zwart et al.

²⁸ Informant D, Interview, April 27, 2022.

addition to attracting attention and motivation to learn, it also makes it easier to learn and master the material provided by the teacher.²⁹

Theoretically, the conditions experienced by the teachers above may be due to their lack of optimism about the skills needed in face-to-face learning. It is directly proportional to their ability and skills to face challenges and obstacles after the Covid-19 pandemic.³⁰ This statement is understandable because in today's digital era, not only is media important as a tool to present material in the learning process, but it is also increasingly realizing and experiencing other aspects of being more meaningful. Because basically, the learning process is a communication process (*message process*), which must be done through communication and exchanging messages or information between teachers and students. A letter or information can include knowledge, expertise, skills, ideas, experience, etc. Students can absorb and internalize messages or information through communication, which other learning components support. Adjusting to learning after the Covid-19 pandemic requires knowledge, experience, and input from various parties so that the teaching planned and developed is relevant to its implementation.³¹

The teacher's task goes well, supported by professional competence in mastering, developing, presenting, and evaluating the material being taught, which affects learners' mastery of the material. It is just that because of the ability of IRE teachers, in this case, each has differences, which causes differences in the mastery of student learning materials. The material component does not stand alone but needs to be adjusted to the aspects mentioned earlier in the face-to-face application in class after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Lack of Teachers' Reflective Actions

Not all IRE teachers can reflect on the material taught before, especially in the Covid-19 era, so there are difficulties in finding difficulties and weaknesses in presenting material given to students to make improvements after the Covid-19 pandemic. Any action the teacher performs in applying professional competencies that require improvement after discovering difficulties found through reflective efforts.

Among the reflective measures is to recognize the difficulties encountered in presenting material due to post-Covid-19 pandemic collaboration by parents; parents and some students are often faced with technological limitations: online services, gadgets, and

²⁹ Informant E, Interview, May 10, 2022.

³⁰ Permana, Harahap, and Astuti, "Hubungan Antara Efikasi Diri."

³¹ Informant A2, Interview, May 15, 2022.

e-books because during the Covid-19 pandemic are not managed properly, and learning is carried out continuously until now. Students and parents also sometimes think that *homeschooling* did not have a good teaching system at that time, making it difficult for teachers to change this face-to-face learning even though after the pandemic, it was adjusted to the learning atmosphere with a pattern of learning, face-to-face.

Table 3. Recapitulation of Teacher Performance Assessment

Professional Competency Indicators	Value
Mastery of material structure, concepts, and scientific mindsets that support the subjects they are capable of	4
Developing professionalism through reflective actions	3

Table 3 contains information about the recapitulation of teacher performance assessments on aspects of professional competence. This information was confirmed by observational data and interviews, especially with IRE teachers, that the second indicator had not yet achieved the target. Meanwhile, in the part of mastering the material in the form of structure, concept material, and related to the scientific mindset that supports the supported subjects have obtained excellent grades.

As is known, the global pandemic that has hit all areas of human life, including education, has forced not only the closure of schools but also a sudden shift from physical (face-to-face) learning to e-learning.³² Digital technology is not the best solution to save education post-Covid-19 period. However, its centrality and position in learning cannot be denied or ignored.³³ Post-pandemic with the restart of face-to-face learning after approximately two years of e-learning forces teachers to be able to reflect on all the difficulties they have experienced before so that improvements can be made. Nevertheless, the fact is unexpected; the teacher has not taken reflective actions.

One aspect of professional competence is that teachers can act reflectively, which is an effort by teachers to create meaning to gain deep understanding through systematic and rigorous thinking processes by connecting between experiences, including the post-Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers with professional competence make themselves reflective thinkers, especially in the 21st century, which provides opportunities to enrich material from digital sources.³⁴

³² Zainab Olorunbukademi Abdulkareem, Sulyman Age Abdulkareem, and Ismail B. Mustapha, "Engineering Students' Perception of Online Learning During the Emergency Nationwide Lockdown in Nigeria," *SN Computer Science* 3, no. 4 (May 14, 2022): 288, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42979-022-01196-9>.

³³ Fataar and Norodien-Fataar, "Towards an E-Learning Ecologies Approach."

³⁴ Kim, Raza, and Seidman, "Improving 21st-Century Teaching Skills."

Reflective actions for IRE teachers in MTs. XX Gorontalo City, with the competence of students in the 21st century, should involve three essential elements, namely, looking at the previous learning experiences of students in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, understanding or feeling the situation and teaching materials that are reflected, and evaluating learning experiences during the post-Covid-19 pandemic.

IRE teachers who act reflectively can be seen from their active and diligent behavior and thoughtful development of teaching materials. In addition, teachers can develop the knowledge gained with their students with optimism and can conclude. Optimistic teachers always seem to appreciate the learner's potential when forming material and presenting it to not treat him as a "weak being" in a "feeding" way.

The Ease of Learning is Uneven among Learners

Not all students have experienced the ease of learning, making it challenging to master the material given by the teacher when presenting the teaching material. There are challenges in implementing learning after the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in applying the professional competencies of teacher skills-based students in MTs XX Gorontalo City regarding personnel, infrastructure, and technical implementation. As an example of students absorbing material online through digital-based learning resources, after the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers need to adjust to these habits by continuing to make digital learning resources in developing their teaching materials.

The possible relationship between the investment of mental effort that the learner can demonstrate through his ability to understand and capture information and channeled through different media and resources on various activities have been analyzed. The perceived ease of learning with the media and resources What exists is not because of the support of parents or teachers so that currently, with the enactment of face-to-face, it is ensured again by teachers the mastery of learning materials in learning after the Covid-19 pandemic.³⁵

Thus, the professional competence of teachers in their implementation in post-Covid-19 pandemic learning continues to be enriched, supported by *madrasah* policies that encourage teachers to make adjustments and continue to learn in bathing students without neglecting partnership cooperation with parents. Related parties always evaluate learning

³⁵ Julio Cabero-Almenara et al., "University Students' Perceptions of the Use of Technologies in Educational Activities and Mental Effort Invested," *RIED-Revista Iberoamericana de Educación a Distancia* 25, no. 2 (April 14, 2022): 305–26, <https://doi.org/10.5944/ried.25.2.32714>.

after the Covid-19 pandemic to achieve learning objectives according to the target. The learning load of learners is calculated and measurable, materially and timely.

After the Covid-19 pandemic, the ease of learning is still felt by students because of the weakness of parents in accompanying children to study at home. The problem of network disruption, for example, has become frequent, especially the lack of training and awareness of the ease of face-to-face learning, which is the main challenge for teachers in IRE subjects in making adjustments to students in *madrasah* after the Covid-19 pandemic.³⁶

Computer literacy, in this case, is essential, and the use of technology after the Covid-19 pandemic has been greatly emphasized in recent years. The ease of learning is still not felt by students in terms of mastery of learning materials because it is recognized that there are significant obstacles for teachers and students to learn programming among school-age students, especially in various developing countries or new industries.³⁷

Lack of awareness is why teachers and students find it challenging to make face-to-face adjustments in applying professional competencies to IRE learning after the Covid-19 pandemic. Not to mention a lack of interest and doubt about study habits and mastery of the material during the Covid-19 pandemic. The lack of attendance, personal touch, and interaction of teachers and students during the Covid-19 pandemic due to connectivity problems was a significant weakness in implementing the professional competence of IRE teachers.

It follows the author's findings: there are several obstacles for some students, teachers, and parents to realize teacher professional competence through learning, namely lack of mastery of technology, additional online learning costs, and additional work of parents teaching. Communication and interaction between learners, teachers, and parents are restricted. The teacher's working hours are not limited because they have to communicate and coordinate with parents, other teachers, and the head of the *madrasah*.

In addition, from the teacher's point of view, many problems have arisen over time after the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in face-to-face classes, when transforming professional competencies into learner-learning skills. Among the issues here, it is essential to note that the responsibility of IRE teachers is too great, and complaints about quotas and

³⁶ Informant F, Interview, May 21, 2022.

³⁷ Bishnu Goswami and Sarmila Pal, "Introduction of Two New Programming Tools in Bengali and Measurement of Their Reception among High-School Students in Purba Bardhaman, India with the Prototypic Inclusion of a Vector-Biology Module," *Education and Information Technologies* 27, no. 2 (March 1, 2022): 1585–1607, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10663-4>.

limited internet networks to access materials according to teacher requests developed by their learners.³⁸

Insignificant Change in Student Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes of students have not all IRE subjects have increased during the post-Covid-19 pandemic, so the professional competence of teachers is essential to ensure mastery of the material by students during the Covid-19 pandemic. Mastery of the learning material is one aspect of learning outcomes that is important to provide by the teacher, as stated that teachers in learning need to ensure better learning success.³⁹

To assess the ability of students, IRE teachers, in addition to providing pretests at the end of the meeting, also provide questions orally and in writing both essays and test objectives to be answered by students following competency achievement indicators; then respond sheets are collected and then checked by the teacher to convey the results to students and their parents at the next meeting.⁴⁰

Overall, students have obtained a learning outcome score above the minimum completion set at 80, which is a national standard value, so it can be concluded that all participants in Class XX students have achieved the minimum or complete completion standards in learning set out in IRE subjects for each learning material.

That is justified by IRE teachers that in authentic assessments to measure students understanding, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, in addition to being assessed from an affective aspect, students are also assessed from cognitive aspects through the provision of tests at the end of the learning meeting to measure mastery of concepts and application as well as students understanding and analysis of the material was taught in Class XX.⁴¹

Assessments to measure the understanding of each student are carried out by the teacher each time they finish presenting online and offline learning materials. By conducting objective and written tests, teachers can assess mastery of the subject matter based on established indicators. The value of learning outcomes obtained by learners related to the data on cognitive aspects above shows that it has generally reached minimal completion.

IRE teachers do not just give tasks but consider them carefully by taking reflective actions related to the material given as a basis for improvement. Teachers should not forget

³⁸ Informant G, Interview, Mei 2022.

³⁹ Zwart et al., "Effects of Digital Learning Materials."

⁴⁰ Informant H, Interview, May 27, 2022.

⁴¹ Informant I, Interview, May 27, 2022.

to appreciate students' achievements, including their ability to understand teaching materials. The curriculum does not appear to be developed flexibly. It is ready to be applied to learning after the Covid-19 pandemic, even though this is very much needed. So far, there seems to be a lack of adjustment due to the lack of socialization among teachers and the limited ability of teachers to access information via the internet.

The five research findings proved that the professional competence of IRE teachers could ensure mastery of learning materials for students after the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in IRE subjects. However, from the study, data on students' learning outcomes have not increased significantly after the Covid-19 pandemic.⁴² The findings of this study are possible because they align with previous research to be used for the development of educational policies, improve teachers' professional competence, and provide important social and technological support, especially for low-income families in meeting their needs to be able to adapt to the online learning environment after the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition, it is to increase digital equality for low-income families who tend to be educationally disadvantaged.⁴³ This research is essential because it supports government programs to improve the professional competence of teachers, making it easier for teachers to ensure that the mastery of student learning materials after the Covid-19 pandemic is better. Professional competence is an inherent ability of a teacher in terms of knowledge of teaching materials broadly and deeply so that it makes it easier for him to guide students to achieve competency standards in the National Education Standards as explained in Article 28 Paragraph (3) point c. However, the formulation is still inconsistent with reality, especially in adjusting to learning and learning habits after the Covid-19 pandemic.

In line with the above, it is essential to pay attention to the findings of previous studies that concluded that two stages of the online learning process after the Covid-19 pandemic could be adopted: processes that are managed individually and managed institutionally. Students learning commitment is significant to pay attention to because they play an active role in increasing their learning satisfaction. Interestingly in these findings, post-Covid-19 pandemic, most prospective undergraduates do not propose to continue online learning because it significantly reduces their academic performance and is said to harm their

⁴² Weli Weli and Julianti Sjarief, "E-Learning Acceptance Model in a Pandemic Period with an Expansion to the Quality of Work Life and Information Technology Self-Efficacy Aspects," *CommIT (Communication and Information Technology) Journal* 16, no. 2 (June 8, 2022): 117–27, <https://doi.org/10.21512/commit.v16i2.8145>.

⁴³ Hibah Khalid Aladsani, "The Perceptions of Female Breadwinner Parents Regarding Their Children's Distance Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Education and Information Technologies* 27, no. 4 (May 1, 2022): 4817–39, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10812-9>.

studies.⁴⁴ The research findings are essential to note in ensuring a good mastery of learning materials from learners over the professional competence of teachers that must be built by adding advanced knowledge about each learner's study commitment and providing scientific evidence for practitioners, planners, including policymakers, and even researchers to promote online learning throughout the school during the post-Covid-19 pandemic.

It is necessary to distinguish between professional teachers and teacher professional competencies so that adequate understanding and comprehensive research results relate to the problem in question when connected with post-Covid-19 pandemic learning and student learning ability. Professional teachers are certified teachers with at least undergraduates' competencies and academic qualifications. At the same time, professional competence is one of the four competencies of the experienced teacher, namely abilities related to mastery and development of teaching materials.⁴⁵ As is known, meaningful learning for IRE teachers must contain two dimensions, namely; (a) learners quickly adapt new knowledge into already possessed cognitive structures (assimilation), and (b) learners can use 114 experiences (cognitive structures) already possessed to interpret new knowledge (accommodation). Teachers are fun when they can generate enthusiasm for learning.⁴⁶

The observations prove that there is still a "distance" between teachers and students, so they have not materialized as learning companions. IRE teachers should be pleasant with charming, friendly, authoritative, and polite appearance and look neat, clean, and smiley, especially in presenting teaching materials while still showing academic and communicative attitudes. The professional competence of teachers in the 21st century will undoubtedly differ from previous teachers who have not had much contact with cyberspace and have not faced Generation Z students. IRE teachers in the 21st century face the rapid flow of information that must be addressed intelligently, quickly, and carefully so that the ability to develop teaching materials has shown themselves as key figures because they can be role models, especially in building a digital footprint. This professional competence supported by example is what makes the good name of the institution, and professional ethics maintained so that students' trust in it increases.

⁴⁴ Chealy Chet, Serey Sok, and Veasna Sou, "The Antecedents and Consequences of Study Commitment to Online Learning at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Cambodia," *Sustainability* 14, no. 6 (January 2022): 3184, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14063184>.

⁴⁵ Fieka Nurul Arifa and Ujianto Singgih Prayitno, "Peningkatan Kualitas Pendidikan: Program Pendidikan Profesi Guru Prajabatan Dalam Pemenuhan Kebutuhan Guru Profesional Di Indonesia," *Aspirasi: Jurnal Masalah-Masalah Sosial* 10, no. 1 (June 28, 2019): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.46807/aspirasi.v10i1.1229>.

⁴⁶ Rina Febriana, *Kompetensi Guru* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2019), 58–60.

The professional competence of teachers is evidenced by their ability to face the challenges of the 21st century, including adapting teaching materials to digital sources so that they do not just master religious disciplines from various texts and contexts. Still, the most important thing is that spiritual education teachers are sensitive to the development of the needs of students and society. In this case, spiritual education teachers must have high innovation and creativity, shown by their ability to formulate, construct, compile, modify, and present information or teaching materials.

Although IRE teachers have shown some of the aspects mentioned above at MTs XX Gorontalo City, professional competence must still be supported by their ability to adapt teaching materials to develop information and communication technology. The author thinks that this is where the vital point for the teacher's actions in realizing professional competence begins with his willingness and awareness to improve self-professionalism on an ongoing basis to enhance further the quality of the learning experience of his students.

It is interesting to borrow the term used in this regard that the teacher must have valuable empirical experience developed by him and even called very valuable in developing learning theories. The result of professional competencies carried out by teachers on an ongoing basis must rely on the perspectives and needs of the teachers by considering their respective socio-cultural backgrounds in the context of daily carrying out the profession accompanied by supervision.⁴⁷

IRE teachers in the 21st century continue proactively motivating themselves and their students to achieve the expected abilities. Because carrying out duties is not always following educational practice and the theory it understands. Still, all of that can be overcome when the teacher appears to be a teacher who learns and eventually becomes an independent, continuously *authentic professional learner* that puts more awareness and lies the responsibility of self-professional development lies with the teacher.⁴⁸

Independent learning, which has become a new habit in the Covid-19 era, seems less continued by teachers in the post-Covid-19 pandemic era. Researchers view IRE teachers as having to change their intention to make students master specific competencies that are not followed by the activities or behaviors of independent learning students.⁴⁹ It can happen only

⁴⁷ Ann Webster-Wright, "Reframing Professional Development Through Understanding Authentic Professional Learning," *Review of Educational Research* 79, no. 2 (June 1, 2009): 702–39, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308330970>.

⁴⁸ Tim Penyusun, *Panduan Pembelajaran Dan Asesmen* (Jakarta: Pusat Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022), 13.

⁴⁹ Penyusun, 61.

by providing students with an excellent opportunity to identify and search for teaching material information from digital sources by surfing freely in cyberspace even though they are physically in the real world (class). It is in line with the concept of self-regulated learning and self-motivated learning that promotes an active learning activity, not passive, as seen from teachers who often motivate their students to be able to master affective, cognitive, and psychomotor competencies. Teachers with professional competence are needed to provide knowledge according to their expertise.⁵⁰ After the Covid-19 pandemic, IRE teachers in MTs XX Gorontalo City have improved students' abilities, as shown by their learning outcomes.

In addition to teaching, of course, professional teachers, in improving their professional competence, must multiply published scientific works, including producing textbooks, enrichment books, teacher guidelines, and books in the field of education. IRE teachers can make other innovative creations at MTs XX Gorontalo City, which other teachers follow in other places, are discoveries in the field of Islamic religious education, the results of the development of teaching materials, or the results of modifications and adaptations from digital sources as a form of contribution of spiritual education teachers to improving the quality of education that is still awaited.

Conclusion

The professional competence of IRE teachers in this study is uneven, so not all teachers can ensure mastery of learning materials for their students. The findings of this study found several essential points concerning the professional competence of teachers to ensure knowledge of student material after the Covid-19 pandemic, namely efforts to adjust face-to-face learning, especially by continuing to apply online knowledge, professional competence every teacher are not the same, no reflective actions are taken by teachers towards previous knowledge, ease of knowledge is not the same felt by every student, there has not been a significant change in student learning outcomes, especially in mastering the teaching materials provided after the Covid-19 pandemic. The implications of research by improving mastery of student learning materials after the Covid-19 pandemic will give teachers confidence in developing professionalism when presenting and developing material and carrying out reflective actions that use independent learning patterns and produce published scientific work.

⁵⁰ Tim Penyusun, *Kajian Akademik Kurikulum Untuk Pemulihhan Pembelajaran*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Pusat Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022), 59.

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