

Strategy of the Dikdasmen Council of PDM Asahan to Improve the Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers

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Abstract

This study discusses the strategies of the Dikdasmen Council of PDM Asahan to enhance the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers at Muhammadiyah schools in the East Kisaran District. The issue addressed in this study is the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers in performing their duties, which does not meet the professional standards expected, particularly in pedagogical skills and teaching administration, as assessed by the Dikdasmen Council of PDM Asahan. The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the strategies used by the Dikdasmen Council to improve the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers. This study employs a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is designed to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts, both individually and in groups. One type of descriptive qualitative research is case study research. The findings obtained from the field, both from interviews and library research, indicate that the root of the problem is that the pedagogical competence of teachers, including Islamic Religious Education teachers, is not entirely satisfactory, with a percentage of 70%. The common issues related to teacher professionalism include limited use of IT-based learning media among teachers, understanding student characteristics during teaching, the delivery of learning materials that do not engage students, and teaching administration issues, such as teaching not aligning with their qualifications and insufficient mastery of the curriculum.

Keyword: Professionalism, Strategy, Learning Media

Introduction

The issue addressed in this study is the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers in performing their duties, which does not meet the professional standards expected, particularly in pedagogical skills and teaching administration (Sulastri et al., 2020). The Dikdasmen Council is an auxiliary body within the Muhammadiyah organization that oversees educational matters from elementary to secondary levels. It plays a crucial role in implementing the ideological education of Muhammadiyah. As stated in the central leadership regulations of Muhammadiyah, the role and function of the Dikdasmen Council include providing ideological education in Muhammadiyah schools, madrasahs, and pesantren .

It is crucial to understand the strategies developed by the Dikdasmen Council of PDM Asahan to enhance teacher professionalism in the schools under its jurisdiction. In today's context, successful institutions are integrated with excellent systems and management, encompassing everything from facilities to teaching, including students and teachers (Afifa & Fatoni, 2019; Basiroh, 2018). Teachers have a strategic role and position in national development. Their professional role is to implement the national education system and achieve national education goals, which aim to develop students' potential to become faithful and pious individuals, with noble character, health, knowledge, skills, creativity, independence, and

responsible citizenship. Teachers must be able to create a calm, clean, stress-free, and highly supportive classroom environment for the learning process. Teachers must possess the expertise and awareness of their duties, known as professionalism (Bafadal, 2008; Kristiawan & Rahmat, 2018).

In addition to providing ideological education, the Dikdasmen Council also functions as a quality assurance body for facilities and the quality of teaching provided by teachers and educational staff in Muhammadiyah schools. This role is similarly undertaken by the Dikdasmen Council of PDM Asahan. In an interview with Mr. Prianda Pebri, the head of the Dikdasmen Council of PDM Asahan, he mentioned that there are four schools under the council's supervision: SMA Muhammadiyah 8 Kisaran, SMK Muhammadiyah 10 Kisaran, SMK Muhammadiyah 5 Kisaran, and SMP Muhammadiyah 22 Kisaran. Across these four schools, there are a total of 195 active teachers, with 14 teachers specifically teaching Islamic Religious Education.

Modern educational institutions place significant emphasis on educational development, particularly 21st-century learning, which incorporates critical thinking skills, digital literacy, information literacy, media literacy, and proficiency in information and communication technology (Yunus, 2016; Zaini, 2017). Teachers are required to have competencies to keep up with technological advancements. The advancement of technology is expected to play a significant role in schools and universities in enhancing the effectiveness of learning (Yunus, 2016). In facing the era of the 4.0 industrial revolution, teachers must always prepare themselves to synergize, collaborate, and connect with fellow teachers, students, educational staff, and all educational elements, both within and outside the school environment (Irmayani et al., 2018; Sutirna, 2020).

The main issue identified is that the pedagogical competence of teachers, including Islamic Religious Education teachers, is not entirely satisfactory, with a competency achievement rate of around 70%. Common issues related to teacher professionalism include inadequate use of IT-based learning media, insufficient understanding of student characteristics during teaching, and less engaging delivery of teaching materials. Additionally, teaching administration problems such as teaching subjects outside their qualifications and lack of curriculum mastery are prevalent. These issues highlight the need for improved teacher professionalism.

However, professional standards require teachers to have high pedagogical competence to create an effective learning environment. The findings indicate that many teachers have not yet reached the expected level of competence. Additionally, a good understanding of student characteristics is essential to tailor effective teaching methods and build positive relationships with students. A lack in this aspect can hinder the process of personalized and effective learning. Another factor is that engaging and interactive learning materials can enhance student involvement in the learning process. This gap indicates the need for increased creativity and innovation in teaching methods to make learning more engaging and effective. Although the Dikdasmen Council is responsible for the quality of education, the research results show that there are still shortcomings in teacher professionalism. This indicates a gap in the implementation and effectiveness of the Dikdasmen Council's supervisory and quality improvement functions. This is why the researcher is interested in conducting this study.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach. This approach is designed to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts, both

individually and in groups. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) One type of descriptive qualitative research used is case study research. A case study involves a detailed, in-depth examination of a particular case or cases within a real-world context. It focuses on observing and analyzing a specific case meticulously until all aspects are thoroughly understood.

Research Subjects

In this study, the case being examined is the Dikdasmen Council of PDM Asahan. The research subjects include individuals, groups, institutions, or communities involved with the Dikdasmen Council and Muhammadiyah schools in the East Kisaran District, specifically the Islamic Education teachers at these schools (Syahrum, 2015).

Data Collection Techniques

1. Preliminary Survey
 - a) Conducted to understand the role of the Dikdasmen Council in enhancing the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers at Muhammadiyah schools in the East Kisaran District.
 - b) Involves meetings with the leadership of the Dikdasmen Council to gather information about the natural situation to be studied.
2. Field Observations
 - a) Grand Tour, General observations to gain an overall understanding of the role of the Dikdasmen Council in enhancing the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers.
 - b) Mini Tour, More focused observations, converging on the processes and dynamics of the Dikdasmen Council in executing its programs.
 - c) Data obtained during observations are recorded as field notes, which can be either descriptive or reflective.
3. Interviews
Conducted with the leadership of the Dikdasmen Council and Islamic Religious Education teachers to gain in-depth perspectives on efforts made to enhance professionalism.
4. Documentation
Collection of relevant documents such as program reports, policies, and training materials used by the Dikdasmen Council.

Data Analysis Techniques

1. Analysis of Field Notes
 - a) Descriptive Notes, Concrete observations made in the field.
 - b) Reflective Notes, The researcher's thoughts, ideas, and comments based on field notes.
2. Coding and Categorization
 - a) Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation are coded to identify themes and patterns.
 - b) Categorizing data based on emerging themes to facilitate further analysis.
3. Thematic Analysis
 - a) Identifying key themes related to the efforts of the Dikdasmen Council in enhancing the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers.
 - b) Linking these themes to relevant theories and literature.
4. Data Triangulation
Comparing and combining data from various sources (observations, interviews, documentation) to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the findings.
5. Conclusion
 - a) Summarizing the research findings based on the data analysis.
 - b) Identifying gaps and providing recommendations for further improvement.

This study aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of the state and condition of teacher professionalism at Muhammadiyah schools in East Kisaran, where the Dikdasmen Council's programs are implemented.

Result

Implementation of the Dikdasmen Council in Improving the Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers

On May 15, 2024, an interview was conducted with one of the leaders of the Dikdasmen Council, Mrs. Elva Yuliana Nasution, SPd, who is the head of the council's program division. From the interview, the following data were obtained about the implementation of the Dikdasmen Council's programs:

1. Workshops
Regarding workshops, the Dikdasmen Council's work plan for 2023 included workshops related to IT, specifically on the use of Canva and Quizi.
2. Coordination Meetings
The Dikdasmen Council conducts coordination meetings both internally within the council and externally with school principals from schools under the council's jurisdiction.
3. Pedagogical Knowledge Training
There is no specific training from the Dikdasmen Council on improving teachers' pedagogical skills. However, each semester, teachers in schools under the Dikdasmen Council are tested to assess their teaching and pedagogical abilities.
4. Creation of Differentiated Videos
The creation of differentiated videos is not routinely conducted and is only held as a competition among teachers from different schools. So far, it has only been held once, during the even semester of the 2023 academic year.
5. Participation of Teachers in Regional Dikdasmen Training
In this program, the Dikdasmen Council of Asahan has only sent teachers to regional level training once, in 2022. There has been no participation in the current period due to the lack of instructions from the regional Dikdasmen Council.

SMA Muhammadiyah 8 Kisaran

From the interview with the school leadership of SMA Muhammadiyah 8 Kisaran, various programs aimed at enhancing teacher professionalism are running well and all have been implemented, such as:

- a. Merdeka Curriculum
The Merdeka Curriculum has been implemented at SMA Muhammadiyah 8 Kisaran since 2022, following instructions from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (KEMENDIKBUD RI).
- b. Driving School
After implementing the Merdeka Curriculum for a year, in 2023, SMA Muhammadiyah 8 Kisaran became a driving school.
- c. Driving Teachers
Several teachers at SMA Muhammadiyah 8 Kisaran also became driving teachers, achieved in April 2023. Some of these teachers received driving teacher certificates, aiding in their professional certification.

- d. Pancasila Student Action
Pancasila Student Action is also implemented at SMA Muhammadiyah 8 Kisaran. In August 2023, a Malay cultural festival was held, attended by Mr. Syamsul Arifin, a prominent Malay figure and former Governor of North Sumatra.
- e. Monthly Religious Study
Monthly religious study sessions are still regularly held in the homes of each teacher, conducted door-to-door each month.
- f. Google Form
Google Forms have been phased out for teacher and student use in exams, transitioning to other applications, namely CBT (Computer-Based Testing).

SMP Muhammadiyah 22 Kisaran

Based on data from an interview with the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 22 Kisaran, the following information about the school's programs was obtained:

- a. Merdeka Curriculum
SMP Muhammadiyah 22 Kisaran has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum since 2022, following the instructions of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud RI).
- b. Driving Teachers
Several teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 22 Kisaran are driving teachers.
- c. Google Form
Google Form is a multifunctional application used for teaching materials. SMP Muhammadiyah 22 Kisaran consistently uses Google Forms for student exams.
- d. Pancasila Student Action
Pancasila Student Action is manifested through cultural parades and traditional dress by the students of SMP Muhammadiyah 22 Kisaran.
- e. Monthly Religious Study
Monthly religious study sessions are still held regularly, conducted door-to-door, rotating from one teacher's home to another.
- f. Tanoto Foundation Webinar
The last Tanoto Foundation webinar was held in 2023, with no continuation of the program as it depends on central instructions.
- g. Leimina Institute Webinar
The last Leimina Institute webinar was held in 2022, with no further sessions afterward.

SMK Muhammadiyah 5 Kisaran

Based on data from an interview with the principal of SMK Muhammadiyah 5 Kisaran, several school program implementations were noted, including:

- a. Merdeka Curriculum Implementation
The Merdeka Curriculum has been the school's curriculum at SMK Muhammadiyah 5 Kisaran since 2022.
- b. Workshop on 4.0 Learning
Workshops on 4.0 learning have been conducted three times: twice in 2023 and once in 2024. These workshops aim to provide insights to teachers on modern teaching and the 4.0 industrial world.
- c. Digital Learning Workshop
A digital learning workshop was also held, inviting experts in digital learning and introducing new learning support applications. This workshop was held once in 2023.
- d. Training and Strengthening Muhammadiyah Teachers for 2045
This program is still in the planning stage and has not been fully realized.

SMK Muhammadiyah 10 Kisaran

From an interview with Mr. Izhar MH, the principal of SMK Muhammadiyah 10 Kisaran, the following implementations of various programs were noted:

- a. **Merdeka Curriculum Socialization**
SMK Muhammadiyah 10 Kisaran conducted socialization of the Merdeka Curriculum and adopted it as the school's curriculum.
- b. **Participation in Competency and Major-Specific Training**
This program is intended for teachers teaching vocational subjects at SMK Muhammadiyah 10 Kisaran. It usually involves collaboration with automotive companies like Astra and Honda, as well as IT companies like Axio. After gaining knowledge from IT and automotive experts, teachers implement it with their students.
- c. **Curriculum Development through MGMP**
In the curriculum development program through the MGMP forum, teachers regularly meet to form a forum, hold discussions, exchange ideas, and develop teaching skills.
- d. **Participation in Training Organized by the Education Office**
There are several trainings organized by the Education Office related to the development of vocational schools, such as training on the industrial world (DUDI) for schools under the Department of Education and Culture.
- e. **Participation in Training Organized by the Dikdasmen Council**
SMK Muhammadiyah 10 Kisaran is under the responsibility of the Dikdasmen Council, and therefore follows all policies related to the Dikdasmen Council, including training programs. The last training session attended by SMK Muhammadiyah 10 Kisaran teachers was about the use of applications like Canva and Quizi.

Strategies of the Dikdasmen Council in Improving the Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers

From various observations and data collected in the field, both from interviews and library research, several key points have emerged. The main issues related to the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers within the Dikdasmen Council include:

1. **Mismatch of Teachers' Qualifications**
Some teachers are not teaching subjects that align with their academic qualifications.
2. **Limited Use of IT-Based Learning Media**
There is insufficient use of IT-based learning media among teachers.
3. **Classroom Management and Pedagogical Skills**
Only about 70% of teachers exhibit proficient classroom management and pedagogical skills.
4. **Understanding Student Characteristics**
Many teachers, including Islamic Religious Education teachers, struggle to understand the diverse characteristics of their students.

The Dikdasmen Council has made various efforts to address these issues through programs aimed at enhancing teacher professionalism. These include:

1. **Pedagogical Training**
Training programs are designed to improve teachers' teaching skills. However, these trainings are conducted annually as part of a teacher competency test, which may not be sufficient for continuous improvement.
2. **IT Mastery through Differentiated Video Competitions**
Competitions for creating differentiated videos serve as IT training for teachers. However, this is often implemented inconsistently, sometimes being held and sometimes not, rather than being a continuous practice.

Schools under the Dikdasmen Council also strive to enhance teacher professionalism through various programs. However, interviews and observations suggest that these efforts have not resulted in significant improvements in addressing the existing issues within the Dikdasmen Council.

Strategies for Addressing Issues in the Dikdasmen Council of PDM Asahan to Enhance the Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Muhammadiyah School Complex in Kisaran Timur

1. Regular and Continuous Training
Implement regular and continuous pedagogical and IT-based training sessions to ensure ongoing development and adaptation to modern teaching methods.
2. Mentorship Programs
Establish mentorship programs where experienced teachers can guide and support less experienced or underqualified teachers.
3. Collaborative Learning Communities
Create collaborative learning communities among teachers to share best practices, resources, and provide mutual support.
4. Enhanced Use of IT in Teaching
Encourage and facilitate the integration of IT in teaching by providing necessary resources, training, and continuous support.
5. Periodic Evaluation and Feedback
Conduct regular evaluations of teaching practices and provide constructive feedback to help teachers improve their skills and techniques.
6. Focus on Understanding Student Characteristics
Provide training specifically aimed at helping teachers understand and cater to the diverse characteristics of their students.

By implementing these strategies, the Dikdasmen Council can more effectively address the issues at hand and enhance the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers, leading to better educational outcomes for students.

Expository Teaching Strategy

The Expository Teaching Strategy emphasizes the verbal delivery of material by a teacher to a group of students with the aim of ensuring optimal mastery of the subject matter by the students. Roy Killen, the originator of the Expository Teaching Strategy, refers to it as a direct teaching strategy, as it is teacher-centered.

Several principles guide the use of the Expository Teaching Strategy:

- a. Goal-Oriented
Like any other criterion, learning objectives must be formulated in measurable behavioral terms or competencies that students are expected to achieve.
- b. Communication Principle
The learning process can be viewed as a communication process, involving the transmission of messages from a source (the teacher) to a recipient or group of recipients (the students). In this communication process, the teacher serves as the message source, and the students act as the message recipients.
- c. Readiness Principle
According to the theory of connectionism, "readiness" is a fundamental law of learning. This principle implies that, before students can receive information as a stimulus, they must be positioned to be physically and psychologically prepared for learning.

d. Continuity Principle

The expository learning process should encourage students to continue studying the learning material beyond the initial presentation. Effective expository teaching results in students experiencing a state of disequilibrium, which motivates them to seek, discover, and expand their knowledge through independent learning.

From the theory of the Expository Teaching Strategy, it is evident that this strategy focuses on the teacher as the primary agent of knowledge transfer. Therefore, this strategy is highly suitable for developing and addressing issues related to teacher professionalism, such as enhancing pedagogical delivery, understanding student characteristics during teaching, and presenting learning materials in a way that captures students' interest.

Multiplatform Learning Strategy

The Multiplatform Learning Strategy emphasizes the use of IT-based resources as learning tools, such as Google Meet, Google Classroom, Google Scholar, Ruang Guru, and others. This strategy offers the advantage of being unrestricted by time and space during learning sessions.

Given the benefits of the Multiplatform Learning Strategy, it is particularly suitable for addressing issues related to teacher professionalism within the Dikdasmen PDM Asahan, especially regarding the insufficient IT proficiency among teachers.

Curriculum Implementation Strategy

In implementing a curriculum, teachers must master several key skills. First, they need to understand the essence of the curriculum goals. Second, they must translate these goals into more specific objectives. Third, they must convert specific objectives into learning goals. These abilities form the foundation for devising strategies for curriculum implementation. The strategy for implementing a curriculum involves two main programs: the syllabus and the Lesson Plan.

a. Syllabus

The syllabus is a detailed operational curriculum for educating students. It is a comprehensive learning plan for a specific subject, serving as a guide in the learning process. The syllabus provides direct guidance for student learning groups under certain conditions. It is crucial as a reference for teachers in the learning process because it contains the learning materials that need to be delivered within a specific timeframe. As a reference, the syllabus must be clearly formulated, both in terms of its content and construction. The syllabus should be definitively implementable and capable of continuously enhancing the quality of the learning process and outcomes.

b. Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan is derived from the syllabus and serves as a more specific instructional planning document. The Lesson Plan is a daily guide for teachers in the teaching and learning process to achieve the established competencies. Effective lesson planning is the most crucial step in a systematic learning process. With good planning, the teaching actions of teachers can be systematically organized according to the conditions faced. These strategies, when effectively implemented, ensure that the curriculum goals are met and that the teaching and learning process is conducted efficiently, leading to improved educational outcomes.

The curriculum implementation strategy focuses on developing teachers' skills in teaching and delivering learning materials, as teachers are the primary target of this strategy. Several positive outcomes result from this strategy:

1. Changing the Teacher Mindset

It shifts teachers from a conventional, static paradigm to a modern, dynamic one. This is essential in the era of Industry 4.0, where IT and technology-based learning are prevalent.

2. Creating a Positive School Culture

The curriculum includes well-structured plans that make school programs more directed and organized, fostering a positive school culture.

3. Teachers as Curriculum Developers

Teachers' roles extend beyond classroom teaching to include curriculum development. As curriculum developers, teachers are responsible for creating and modifying learning materials to suit the needs of students and their environments. This dual role ensures that the curriculum is relevant and adaptable to changing conditions.

By implementing this curriculum strategy, the following issues related to the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers within the Dikdasmen PDM Asahan can be addressed:

1. Mastery of the Curriculum

Teachers will be better equipped to understand and effectively deliver the curriculum, ensuring that learning objectives are met.

2. Understanding Student Diversity

Teachers will develop a deeper understanding of student characteristics, allowing for more tailored and effective teaching methods.

In conclusion, the curriculum implementation strategy is a comprehensive approach that addresses the challenges faced by the Dikdasmen PDM Asahan, enhancing the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers in terms of curriculum mastery and understanding the diversity of students.

The Primary and Secondary Education Council's program aimed at improving the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers at various Muhammadiyah schools in Kisaran includes conducting workshops, organizing coordination meetings, providing pedagogical knowledge training, producing differentiation videos, and encouraging teacher participation in regional-level training. Muhammadiyah high schools in Kisaran have implemented the Independent Curriculum, the Teacher Movement program, Pancasila Student activities, and have participated in the Tanoto Foundation program, 4.0 learning workshops, curriculum workshops, as well as training on the use of Canva and Quizi applications.

From the above explanation, the strategy of the Primary and Secondary Education Council in enhancing the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers can be identified as holding competency training, IT training, and ongoing professional development. However, some of the obstacles faced include the mismatch between teacher qualifications and the subjects they teach, limited IT facilities, only 70% of teachers possessing adequate classroom management skills, and a lack of teacher understanding of student characteristics.

Discussion

Implementation of the Dikdasmen Council in Improving the Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers

The background of the problem in this thesis concerns the professionalism Islamic Religious Education teachers in the Muhammadiyah school complex in Kisaran Timur district. This includes:

1. Pedagogical competence, which is only at 70%
2. The limited use of IT-based learning media among teachers
3. Understanding student characteristics during teaching
4. The delivery of learning materials that are not engaging for students
5. Teaching administration that does not align with their educational qualifications

6. Insufficient mastery of the curriculum

Several efforts have been made to address these issues, one of which is the implementation of programs by the Majelis Dikdasmen and the school authorities. (Huang & Lajoie, 2021) The implementation programs by Majelis Dikdasmen include workshops, coordination meetings for pedagogical knowledge training, the creation of differentiated videos, and involving teachers in Majelis Dikdasmen training at the regional level.

For improving the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers in the four schools under Majelis Dikdasmen SMA Muhammadiyah 8 Kisaran, SMK Muhammadiyah 10 Kisaran, SMK Muhammadiyah 5 Kisaran, and SMP Muhammadiyah 22 Kisaran the programs include the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, becoming a driving school, becoming driving teachers, participating in MGMP programs, attending training organized by Majelis Dikdasmen, and applying applications and webinars for school activities.

However, these programs do not fully address the existing problems. Therefore, several strategies have been identified to solve these issues, including the Expository Strategy, Multiplatform Strategy, and Curriculum Implementation (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018; Taylor, 2016).

1. Expository Strategy

This strategy emphasizes the development of teaching competencies focusing on upgrading teachers' teaching skills. It is suitable for addressing issues such as inadequate pedagogical delivery, understanding student characteristics during teaching, and the unengaging presentation of learning materials.

2. Multiplatform Learning Strategy

This strategy focuses on developing IT-based learning processes. It is deemed suitable for solving professionalism issues among teachers, such as the lack of IT proficiency

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From various observations and data collected in the field, both from interviews and library research, several key points have emerged. The main issues related to the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers within the Dikdasmen Council include:

1. Mismatch of Teachers' Qualifications, Some teachers are not teaching subjects that align with their academic qualifications.
2. Limited Use of IT-Based Learning Media, There is insufficient use of IT-based learning media among teachers.
3. Classroom Management and Pedagogical Skills, Only about 70% of teachers exhibit proficient classroom management and pedagogical skills.
4. Understanding Student Characteristics, Many teachers, including Islamic Religious Education teachers, struggle to understand the diverse characteristics of their students.

The Dikdasmen Council has made various efforts to address these issues through programs aimed at enhancing teacher professionalism. These include:

1. Pedagogical Training, Training programs are designed to improve teachers' teaching skills. However, these trainings are conducted annually as part of a teacher competency test, which may not be sufficient for continuous improvement.
2. IT Mastery through Differentiated Video Competitions, Competitions for creating differentiated videos serve as IT training for teachers. However, this is often implemented inconsistently, sometimes being held and sometimes not, rather than being a continuous practice.

Schools under the Dikdasmen Council also strive to enhance teacher professionalism through various programs. However, interviews and observations suggest that these efforts

have not resulted in significant improvements in addressing the existing issues within the Dikdasmen Council.

Strategies for Addressing Issues in the Dikdasmen Council of PDM Asahan to Enhance the Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Muhammadiyah School Complex in Kisaran Timur:

1. Regular and Continuous Training, Implement regular and continuous pedagogical and IT-based training sessions to ensure ongoing development and adaptation to modern teaching methods.
2. Mentorship Programs, Establish mentorship programs where experienced teachers can guide and support less experienced or underqualified teachers.
3. Collaborative Learning Communities, Create collaborative learning communities among teachers to share best practices, resources, and provide mutual support.
4. Enhanced Use of IT in Teaching, Encourage and facilitate the integration of IT in teaching by providing necessary resources, training, and continuous support.
5. Periodic Evaluation and Feedback, Conduct regular evaluations of teaching practices and provide constructive feedback to help teachers improve their skills and techniques.
6. Focus on Understanding Student Characteristics, Provide training specifically aimed at helping teachers understand and cater to the diverse characteristics of their students.

By implementing these strategies, the Dikdasmen Council can more effectively address the issues at hand and enhance the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education teachers, leading to better educational outcomes for students.

(Putri Puspa Dewi et al., 2022) The criteria for becoming a professional Islamic Education teacher include mastering the subject matter or teaching materials to be taught to students, being able to master methods or develop teaching materials, and being capable of preparing learning tools such as Lesson Plans, Syllabus, Annual Programs, and Semester Programs. The strategies employed by the school principal involve including teachers in educational and training activities for Teachers and Education Training, supervision, providing motivation, giving awards, participating in workshops, and conducting training seminars. (Yoyo Rodiya & Suklani Suklani, 2022) Coaching and development of Islamic Religious Education teachers' professionalism with strategies such as 1) Self-development, in the form of functional/technical education and training through training, coaching, technical guidance, internships, courses and so on, as well as teacher gathering activities through scientific activities in teacher professional organizations, seminars, workshops, colloquiums, discussion panels, in-house training and so on. 2) Scientific publication activities in the form of reporting in scientific forums, publication of research results, publication of textbooks, teacher guides and so on in the field of formal education. 3) Innovative works in the form of discoveries of appropriate technology, creation of works of art, making or modifying teaching aids and practical tools and so on. (Ati Rohmawati, 2020) The strategy of the head of the Madrasah in improving the professional competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers at MAN 1 Kota Kediri involves organizing group discussions and conducting In-Service Training.

(Fakrurridha & Nurdin, 2019) The enhancement of teachers' professional abilities through the Subject Teachers' Working Group (MGMP) is oriented towards guidelines and also based on field needs. Additionally, it is innovated to adjust the program in accordance with the demands of educational reforms. (Sohim et al., 2021) Improving professionalism is done by a) Participating in training, seminars, and workshops; (b) Further study; (c) Revitalizing MGMP; (d) Forming a forum for friendship between teachers; (e) Improving teacher welfare; (f) Adding supporting facilities; (g) Optimizing counseling guidance; (h) Comparative studies to other schools, and (i) teacher certification. (Gusman, 2022) Optimizing Islamic Religious Education

teachers to support professionalism involves providing motivation and appreciation to mentored teachers, optimizing the Islamic Religious Education teachers' working group platform, and promoting the use of the Smart Tendik application.

Conclusion

The objective of this research is to identify and analyze the strategies implemented by the Dikdasmen Council of PDM Asahan to enhance the professionalism of Islamic Education teachers at Muhammadiyah schools in the East Kisaran District. The aim is to address the shortcomings in pedagogical competence and teaching administration, particularly in the effective use of IT-based learning media, understanding student characteristics, and engaging delivery of learning materials.

From the findings obtained in the field, both from interviews and library research, the root of the problem identified is that the pedagogical competence of teachers, including Islamic Religious Education teachers, is not entirely satisfactory, with a competence level of only 70%. The key issues related to teacher professionalism include:

1. Limited use of IT-based learning media among teachers.
2. Insufficient understanding of student characteristics during teaching.
3. Unengaging delivery of learning materials.
4. Teaching administration issues, such as teaching subjects not aligning with their qualifications and insufficient mastery of the curriculum.

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