

## **STRATEGIES OF THE HEAD OF MUHAMMADIYAH 1 PALEMBANG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN IMPROVING THE PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE OF ISLAMIC TEACHERS**

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**Abstract:** The principal, as the person responsible for the quality of education, is required to act as a motivator, stabiliser and administrator. The principal is the driving force behind the implementation of quality education management. This study aims to determine the strategies employed by the headmaster in an effort to improve the pedagogical competence of Al Islam teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, and the respondents in this study are the headmaster and Al Islam teachers. Data collection techniques used triangulation methods, namely interviews, observation and documentation. The findings of this thesis are: (1) The principal's strategies for improving the pedagogical competence of Al Islam teachers are: First, motivating Al Islam teachers to be creative and innovative in Al Islam learning; Second, improving the professionalism of Al Islam teachers; Third, conducting continuous supervision; Fourth, developing a culture of good character among all school members through exemplary behavior; Fifth, improving the quality of facilities and infrastructure. (2) The obstacles faced by the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang in his efforts to improve the pedagogical competence of Al Islam teachers are: First, Al Islam teachers are still not united in implementing religious programmes; second, students are not yet committed to practising religious activities at home; Third, there is still a lack of

awareness among parents in motivating students to learn.

**Keywords:** Headteacher, Pedagogical Competence, Islamic Teachers.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In an educational institution, the head teacher plays a very important role in determining the progress and success of the institution. This is because the head teacher has a very important role in developing an educational institution. To that end, one of the ways that can be pursued is through improving the quality of educational learning, because improving the quality of educational learning will be able to accelerate the development of the world of knowledge and even change society.

In the Muhammadiyah educational environment, Islamic Religious Education is known as Al Islam Education (Muhammadiyah, 2024). In an effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially Islamic teaching and learning at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang, the school principal must be aware of all changes and developments that occur in the school or institution. The existence of professional and non-professional teaching staff in an effort to

improve the quality of teaching and learning will influence the teaching and learning process. This is because they must be able to realise the objectives of education and also produce graduates who are capable of mastering knowledge and technology, as well as being pious and devoted to Allah SWT.

The headteacher is the key to the success of the school in achieving its objectives. The headteacher is required to continuously improve the performance of the staff at the school (Sahertian, 2008). The principal and the principal's strategy in realising the school's objectives require the principal to have the ability to build good synergistic relationships with all members of the school community, so that the school's objectives and educational goals can be achieved optimally. The school principal is the central figure in the school, like a pilot who flies a plane from take-off to landing, bringing the passengers safely to their destination.

Therefore, the role of the school principal in improving the quality of Islamic education is very important, because it can influence the success or failure of the quality of Islamic education in the school. The school principal, as the backbone of quality education, is required to act as a motivator, leader, facilitator, and administrator. In other words, the school principal is the driving force behind the implementation of quality education, including the quality of teachers and the quality of the learning process.

The headteacher is expected to be able to improve the productivity of the school, provide guidance to educators and educational staff in improving their competence, which will support them in

carrying out their responsibilities with higher quality (Jaya & Halik, 2023).

Essentially, in order to mobilise and motivate others to take actions that are always directed towards achieving organisational goals, leaders must possess the knowledge, abilities and skills necessary to carry out their leadership. This knowledge and these skills are acquired through theoretical learning and practical experience gained while serving as a leader. Operationally, school principals must have a standard level of competence in managing and leading institutions (Mahanis & Hasan, 2022).

Teachers greatly influence the success of the learning process and the creation of quality learning outcomes. Teachers implement strategic policies and are the most influential factor in the creation of quality learning processes and outcomes. Given the importance of teachers in the education system, teachers are required to continuously improve their abilities as competent and professional educators. Therefore, any efforts made to improve the quality of education will not be significant without the presence of competent, professional, dignified, and dedicated teachers. Teachers are professional educators. According to Muslich, their main duties are teaching, guiding, directing, training, evaluating, and assessing students in formal education, basic education, and secondary education (Muslich, 2007).

In order to carry out their duties well in accordance with their field of expertise, teachers need to have a high level of expertise. It is not enough for teachers to simply understand the material that must be conveyed; they also need to have the ability and understanding of other

knowledge and skills, for example, an understanding of human psychological development, an understanding of the stages of change, the ability to design and utilise learning resources and tools, the ability to develop learning strategies, evaluation and so on.

Pedagogical competence is the practice of teacher performance in the learning process. Teacher performance in the learning process is based on the theoretical foundations of pedagogical competence components as follows: Student characteristics, learning theories and educational learning principles, curriculum development, educational learning activities and student potential development. Students can actualise their potential as optimally as possible through the learning process.

According to Ad. Rolviljakkelrs selpelrttil, quoted by Suryol Subroltol, it is stated that the duties and roles of teachers, through the development of professional competence, should be such that academic mastery can be integrated with teaching ability. With this in mind, teachers are expected to be able to make professional decisions in carrying out their duties (Suryosubroto, 2001).

The principal is the leader of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang and is responsible for the learning process at the school. The principal is required to provide guidance, motivation, supervision and evaluation in the learning process in order to achieve good quality learning. Based on an interview with one of the Al Islam teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang, it was revealed that the principal leaves everything related to teaching tools, learning activities, and learning evaluation entirely to the subject

teachers. Therefore, teachers must strive on their own to create a conducive learning process that can run as it should (GPA, Personal Communication, 2024).

Berdasarkan Based on the preliminary study results above, it can be concluded that the principal's performance in carrying out his duties as a supervisor has not been effective. He has not played a maximal role in providing guidance and supervision to teachers. This result is characterised by school principals still leaving everything to teachers and not providing maximum guidance and direction in relation to planning, implementation and evaluation of learning. Meanwhile, school principals as supervisors are required to provide guidance, supervision, and evaluation in the learning process in order to achieve quality learning (Observation, 2024).

This then encourages school principals to improve the pedagogical competence of Al Islam teachers in the educational institutions they lead. The headmaster understands the needs of the school he leads, so it is hoped that the pedagogical competence of teachers will not only be based on the pedagogical competence they previously possessed, but will also increase and develop well so that they not only master the field of knowledge, teaching materials, and appropriate methods, but are also able to motivate students, have high skills and broad insight into the world of education (Anam & Malikkhah, 2020).

Based on observations at Muhammadiyah 1 Junior High School in Palembang, it was found that teachers still have shortcomings in delivering Islamic studies lessons, namely when the learning process is conducted in class and students

are not fully engaged. For example, some students still do not pay attention to the teacher when he is explaining, some students still leave the classroom during the learning process, and it is necessary to provide guidance to these students.

Based on the results of the initial observation study above, the author wrote a paper entitled "Strategies of the Principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 in Improving the Pedagogical Competence of Al-Islam Teachers".

This study is related to the strategies implemented by the principal as the school leader in improving the pedagogical competence of Al-Islam teachers so that they can perform well and achieve their goals.

## METHOD

### Research Types and Approaches

Qualitative research is a form of field research with a qualitative description approach. In qualitative research, the data collected is not in the form of numbers, but rather words or descriptions. The data referred to comes from interviews, field notes, photographs, personal documents and so on (Moleong, 2016). Therefore, in this study, the researchers used a qualitative descriptive model.

Qualitative research is research that explains certain phenomena or populations that are studied by qualitative researchers from subjects that are diverse, organic, or other types. The aim is to explain aspects that are relevant to the phenomenon being studied and to explain the characteristics of the phenomenon or issues at hand. According to Bolgadad and Taylor, qualitative research is a research process that produces descriptive data in the form of words or statements from people or

actors who can be interviewed (Moleong, 2016).

The qualitative research method is used to reveal descriptive data from information about what they do and what they experience in relation to the focus of the research, which is related to the strategy implemented by the school principal as a means of improving teacher competence and the quality of Islamic education.

### Data Source

The data obtained in the study is divided into two parts, as follows:

- a. Primary data sources are data sources that are directly related to the research topic and the data is obtained directly from the head of the madrasah and Islamic education teachers, as well as data obtained through interviews.
- b. Secondary data sources, namely supporting data in the study obtained from reading materials such as books and documents, as well as the results of observations of the school environment at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang.

### Research Informant

Information officers are individuals who disseminate information and control information in the form of letters and circulars in a particular field. The informants in this study were the principal of Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Palembang, Tafik Hidayat, and Islamic teachers at Muhammadiyah Junior High School 1 in Palembang, Nashrullah Abdi Negara, Arafatsyah, and Mrs Suwaibatul Islamia. In determining the informants, the researcher first conducted observations, then the informants were selected based on various criteria through interviews, in

order to obtain information related to the research topic.

### Data Collection Techniques

To collect data in the field, researchers use several techniques to gather the data needed for the study, as follows:

#### a. Interview

An interview is a conversation with a specific purpose. The conversation is conducted by two parties, namely the interviewer who asks the questions and the interviewee who provides answers to those questions (Moleong, 2016).

The interview approach used by the interviewer is a general approach. The interview questions require the interviewer to make a framework and outline the points to be asked in the interview process, namely data on the principal's strategy, teacher competence and the quality of Islamic religious education. During the interview, the order of questions was adjusted based on the responses given in the actual interview context (Annur, 2018).

#### b. Observation

Observation is the systematic observation and recording of symptoms or phenomena that are being studied. Observation is defined as the systematic observation and recording of symptoms that are visible in the object being studied. Observations and recordings made on objects at the place where the phenomenon occurs or takes place, so that the observation is in the same place as the object being observed, are called direct observations. Indirect observation is observation that is not carried out at the time of the event to be observed (Margono, 2005).

In the study, the researchers used a non-observational approach, which is data collection conducted by researchers without using observation instruments. It was then decided that the research would continue by seeking more complete and in-depth data and information. This technique was used to collect data as initial support for the collection process.

#### c. Documentation

Documentary research is a method of data collection through written records, archives, and books containing opinions, laws, arguments, or laws, and other matters related to the issue of documentation, referred to as documentation technology or documentation studies (Margono, 2005). In qualitative research, technology is the main data collection tool because it is carried out logically and rationally through observations, interviews, or laws that are established to support or refute the hypothesis (Arikunto, 2006).

The use of dolkumelntasil in educational research is intended to collect data in written form, such as descriptions of the research area, data on teachers and students, the geographical location of the school, as well as data related to the field of study.

### Data Validity Techniques

Before analysing the data, it is necessary to first verify the validity of the data by comparing it with the results of the analysis that has been obtained. The technique used to verify the data is triangulation, and refers to Sugiyono's opinion (Sugiyono, 2016) There are three steps, namely as follows:

- a. Data validity is tested by cross-checking data that has been collected through several sources, such as interviews with teachers, then cross-checked with the results of interviews with the school principal and other relevant parties.
- b. Verify the reliability of the data by cross-checking the data from the same source using different techniques. For example, data collected through interviews is then verified through observation and documentation.
- c. Testing the credibility of the data by checking the data at different times, such as checking the results of interviews conducted in the morning with the results of interviews conducted in the afternoon.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Telknik analyses data in pelnelliltilan ilnil using the Millels and Hubelrman model, namely reductive data (data reduction), display data (data presentation), and drawing conclusions/verification (drawing conclusions/verification) (Sugiyono, 2016), that is:

#### a. Data Reduction

The amount of data collected from the field is quite large, so it needs to be recorded accurately and carefully. If the data collection process in the field is not carried out accurately, the amount of data to be collected will be even greater, complex and complicated. Therefore, it is necessary to immediately analyse the data through data reduction (Sugiyono, 2016). With diligence, summarise the data, focus on the important matters, concentrate on

the essential things, and discard what is unnecessary.

#### b. Data Display

Data display is carried out to facilitate the analysis of data in order to create a complete picture or a specific part of the analysis. After the data has been reduced, the next step is to present the data, which is to convey information based on the data that has been collected and compiled in a narrative.

It can be concluded that data presentation is a collection of structured information that enables the drawing of conclusions and the taking of action. Therefore, data presentation is intended to reveal meaningful patterns and enable the drawing of conclusions and the taking of action. With data presentation, researchers will be able to understand various things that have happened and enable them to work on analyses or other actions based on that understanding. Data presentation can include various work networks related to activities as well as tables.

#### c. Conclution drawing/verification

The collection of data is carried out by continuously recording data throughout the data collection process, from the beginning of data entry to the end of data collection. The process of drawing conclusions/verifying conclusions is a continuous activity, because it involves understanding and analysing various matters that are learned from the start of recording regulations, policies, statements, directives, causes, and various processes, the conclusions that need to be verified are in the form of a repetition with a quick glance, as a second thought that arises

when writing down the conclusions or field notes.

Data analysis is carried out using an interactive model. The process of interactive analysis begins at the time of data collection, always involving data reduction and data review, meaning that the data in the form of field notes collected from one source is summarised into a description of the existing situation through data reduction. After completion, the researcher begins to draw conclusions based on the data reduction and data analysis. If the data in the data reduction and data analysis is incomplete, it is necessary to collect additional supporting data. In this study, the researcher collected primary data from the school principal and secondary data from Islamic education teachers and students.

## RESULTS

### Principal's Strategy in Improving the Pedagogical Competence of Islamic Education Teachers

The principal motivated Al Islam teachers to be creative and innovative in using active learning strategies in the Al Islam education learning process at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang, as revealed in interviews with Al Islam teachers, that:

The headmaster motivated us, the Al Islam teachers, by approving the programme we proposed, one of which was a practical lesson on how to perform the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. This is one of the learning strategies using the demonstration method employed by Al Islam teachers to improve Al Islam education so that students can understand and comprehend how to perform the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. This strategy has led to significant improvement compared

to the year before 2025, when such activities were not yet implemented (GPA, Personal Communication, 2024).

Effective leadership requires total commitment with a creative approach to work, independence, clear goals, authenticity, flexibility, and broad interests. In the future, education will require the principle of creativity. Creative leaders are passionate, enthusiastic, steadfast, flexible, and effective. Creative leaders are able to serve others, dare to uphold the truth, dare to try new things, take initiative and make it happen.

In addition, improving the professionalism of Islamic education teachers through seminars, workshops, training sessions, MGMP (Teacher Working Groups), English and computer training. As revealed in interviews with Islamic teachers, the following:

The implementation of teacher professionalism improvement at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang has shown improvement from year to year. This improvement is indicated by the results of its implementation, namely that Islamic education teachers are able to provide good educational services to students and improve their performance in refining the learning materials and methodologies (GPA, Personal Communication, 2024).

The effectiveness of the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang in implementing this strategy is that teachers can apply the ten basic competencies required in carrying out their teaching duties, namely mastering teaching materials, being able to manage learning resources, managing the classroom, using media, mastering educational foundations, managing teaching and learning interactions, assessing student learning

achievements for teaching purposes, understanding principles and applying research results for teaching purposes. Thus, the principal's activities encourage Islamic education teachers to attend seminars and training so that they are always aware of the latest developments and improve their professionalism.

Another strategy is to enforce discipline among teachers, staff, and students (stakeholders) when arriving at and leaving school, as well as during the teaching and learning process. Interviews with Islamic Education teachers revealed that enforcing discipline is part of a teacher's professionalism in carrying out their teaching duties. The learning process runs according to the schedule set out in school regulations, and work productivity has increased (NAS, Personal Communication, 2024)

Based on field observations, it was found that school principals conducting supervision was an indicator of improvement made by school principals to provide better services in the quality of Islamic education, which was realised in Islamic schools that were highly competitive in shaping a pious, intelligent and independent generation in the fields of science and technology.

Thus, academic supervision in the context of improving teacher professionalism, using appropriate approaches and techniques, and following up on the results of academic supervision of teachers in the context of improving teacher professionalism.

Supervision is an activity carried out by the principal in an effort to improve the professionalism of Islamic education teachers, which focuses on guidance, direction, and assistance to Islamic

education teachers so that the teaching and learning process runs well. This means that by supervising Islamic education teachers, the learning outcomes of students will be good and improve.

The method used by the principal in providing guidance to Islamic Education Teachers is to develop a culture of good character among all members of the school community at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang through exemplary behaviour. As stated in an interview with the headmaster, morals are a reflection of the actions and behaviour of the entire school community. Good morals can shape good character in their daily interactions and encourage them to do good and prevent evil. Morals cover various aspects of life because a person is judged by their daily behaviour (morals) (TFK, Personal Communication, 2024)

This has been implemented by the principal as evidence of improvement as outlined in one of the missions of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang, namely to improve Islamic education so as to enhance understanding, appreciation and practice of Islamic teachings in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah. In addition, the researcher's observations found that the exemplary behaviour of the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang was evident in the form of his attitude, which was respected by teachers, employees and students alike, as he set a good example by arriving at school earliest and leaving latest, and greeting teachers and students (Observation, 2024).

Thus, what the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang has done is an implementation of the principal's competence in the dimension of personality, namely having noble

character, developing a culture and tradition of noble character, and being a role model of noble character for the school community. Therefore, the principal, as a manager, is a means of improving personal competence, including by setting an example for teachers and staff, encouraging good behaviour, noble character, honesty, and being a role model for students. In this case, as observed by the researcher, the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang has improved the quality of basic and adequate facilities and infrastructure for the smooth running of education, such as a 3-storey building with 12 classrooms, 1 al-Islam laboratory room, 1 computer laboratory room, 1 cooperative and UKS room, 1 mosque, and 1 library room.

Thus, the principal pays sufficient attention to managing the classroom, facilities, and infrastructure. The management of facilities and infrastructure as teaching aids is the principal's responsibility.

In addition, with democratic leadership, the principal is the one who determines the focus and rhythm of a school. The principal is the determinant of the success of a school institution. Every headmaster must pay close attention to improving the quality of education at their school. This attention must be demonstrated in the willingness and ability to develop themselves and their school democratically, as well as in their dedication, high achievements, and initiative for all parties in an effort to improve the quality of teaching.

In this case, the headmaster of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang has the potential for a democratic attitude. This means that the principal addresses

problems and makes decisions through deliberation or by involving all members of the school community. In addition, the principal also gives teachers/staff the confidence to carry out their duties and planned programmes and motivates teachers to be more creative and innovative in all learning activities, especially in Islamic education, in order to improve the quality of Islamic education.

Islamic Education teachers prepare lesson plans based on interviews with the principal, who stated that teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang always prepare lesson syllabi as reference materials for analysing lesson content and creating lesson plans before delivering lessons. Teaching modules include learning outcomes, learning objectives within the material, relevance, and time allocation (TH, Personal Communication, 2024)

Based on the interview results, teachers stated that in preparing their learning materials, they always refer to the official curriculum and supporting documents. Suwaibatul Islamiya, an Islamic Education teacher, emphasised the importance of following the established curriculum when compiling lesson materials (GPA, Personal Communication, 2024). Similarly, Nashrullah also explained that material analysis always refers to the official syllabus, supporting books, and the applicable curriculum (NAS, Personal Communication, 2024).

The results of the interviews indicate that Islamic Education teachers have a good understanding of the importance of aligning teaching materials with the syllabus in the learning process. They demonstrate an awareness of the need to follow official guidelines in

preparing teaching materials. This attitude reflects the teachers' competence in preparing the necessary learning tools, while also demonstrating their seriousness in carrying out their teaching duties in accordance with established standards.

According to Arafatsyah, a teacher of Islamic Education, mastery of the material is a top priority before delivering it to students. He emphasises the importance of preparing oneself by mastering the material thoroughly in advance. This approach aims to ensure a smooth learning process and avoid difficulties that may arise due to a lack of understanding of the material being taught. Thus, Arafatsyah demonstrates his commitment to providing effective and quality teaching to his students (AFS, Personal Communication, 2024).

Based on the results of the interviews above, it can be seen that teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 create a calm classroom atmosphere by controlling the classroom and understanding the students' situation. How to create a learning atmosphere that is not boring The interviews with informants revealed that in order to create a learning atmosphere that is not boring for students, they must be involved so that they are always active. In addition, Muhardi (an eighth-grade student) said that in order for the learning atmosphere not to be boring for students, they must be encouraged to participate actively in the teaching and learning process (AY, Personal Communication, 2024)

The interview results show the approach taken by Islamic Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang in creating an engaging learning environment. They encourage

active student participation to avoid boredom. In delivering the material, teachers utilise various learning resources, including textbooks, student worksheets, the Qur'an, and relevant books. This teaching method aims to maintain student engagement and improve the effectiveness of Islamic Education learning in the classroom (GPA, Personal Communication, 2024).

In an interview, teachers of Islamic Education at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang revealed that they consistently use a variety of learning resources in their teaching. They utilise Islamic textbooks, the Qur'an, and tajwid books as the main supports for the learning process. Furthermore, the learning resources that have been developed are designed to comprehensively meet the learning needs of students. For example, for Islamic history material, the learning approach is enriched with the use of audiovisual media. Students are given the opportunity to watch reconstructions of important events from the golden age of Islam, providing a more in-depth and engaging learning experience.

According to interview information from Islamic Education teachers, the topics taught have been adapted to the curriculum guidelines. For example, in muamalat lessons, the learning objective is to ensure that students understand the concepts and rules of buying and selling. The syllabus, competency standards, and basic competencies have been established as references. Based on these guidelines, teachers then develop appropriate learning materials to be delivered to students (NAS, Personal Communication, 2024).

The interviews revealed that the learning content delivered by Islamic

Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang was in accordance with the applicable syllabus. This alignment was made possible by the provision of guidelines, which were then used as a basis for developing relevant learning materials and resources.

According to one of the Islamic Education teachers, the effectiveness of the learning process can be assessed positively. This is reflected in the students' performance in various forms of final assessment, such as essay exams and question and answer sessions. The students demonstrated good ability in completing these tasks. For example, when tested on the topic of prayer, they were able to provide satisfactory answers. A similar opinion was also expressed by another source, Arya Saputra (an eighth-grade student), who said that the material presented, such as the Qur'an, fasting, prayer, and Islamic history, was well received because the average student scores were satisfactory (SNZ, Personal Communication, 2024).

Based on the author's findings from interviews, it appears that the Islamic Education material taught at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang has been successfully absorbed by the students. This success is evident from the satisfactory learning evaluation scores. The supporting factors for this success are the adjustment of the material to the existing syllabus and the use of available guidelines for content and teaching material development. The syllabus serves as the main reference in this process. For example, in the topic of morals, the guidelines used cover discussions on ethics, behaviour, and manners.

The syllabus serves as a reference

framework for planning learning in one or more subjects or specific themes. This document contains various important components, including competency standards, basic competencies, learning substance, learning activities, achievement indicators, evaluation methods, time allocation, as well as references and learning aids. In essence, the syllabus is a detailed elaboration of competency standards and basic competencies, which are broken down into learning materials, learning activities, and indicators used to measure competency achievement in the assessment process.

The results of the observation show that Islamic Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang apply various approaches in delivering material. They do not stick to just one method but utilise various teaching techniques. Some of the methods used include:

- a. Oral presentation (lecture)
- b. Group discussion
- c. Question and answer session
- d. Assignments and exercises
- e. Live demonstration

This multi-method approach aims to improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process (AS, Personal Communication, 2024). Furthermore, based on the interview results, teachers' ability to develop student learning evaluation methods can be described as follows. An interview with Suwaibatul Islamia revealed that the type of assessment is adjusted to the material being taught, such as:

1. For Al-Qur'an lessons, evaluation is conducted through practical reading tests.

2. For prayer material, assessment is carried out by observing students practising prayer movements and recitations.

Meanwhile, Islamic Education teachers also apply a different approach. They use group assignments to assess students' understanding of topics related to the development of Islam. This assessment strategy shows that teachers strive to adapt evaluation methods to the characteristics of the subject matter, combining direct practical assessment and group work as needed (GPA, Personal Communication, 2024).

Based on the results of the interviews above, the determination of the type of assessment of student learning outcomes in Islamic Education at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang is adjusted to the subject matter being taught, so that optimal assessment can be achieved. An interview with one of the teachers revealed that:

The process of developing indicators to measure student learning success involves collaboration between subject teachers. This consultative approach assists teachers who may have difficulty formulating indicators independently. Basically, the indicators of success refer to the guidelines set at the central Ministry of Education and Culture level. However, teachers have the flexibility to adjust these indicators to the specific conditions of their schools. If any discrepancies are found, the indicators can be discussed again for adjustment. As an illustration, for the subject matter 'Faith in Allah', one indicator that can be used is the ability of students to understand and believe in the attributes of Allah. This type of indicator combines guidance from the central curriculum with contextual

considerations at the school level (NAS, Personal Communication, 2024)

As also stated by Arafatsyah, in formulating success indicators, competency standards and basic competencies must be reviewed, because that is where the indicators are derived from. For example, in muamalat material, students are expected to understand the laws of buying and selling in Islamic sharia that are permitted (AFS, Personal Communication, 2024).

The results of an interview with Nashrullah, an Islamic Education teacher, regarding the process of formulating indicators of student learning success for the Islamic Education subject at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang revealed several important points:

1. Collaborative approach: The indicators were compiled through deliberations between teachers of the relevant subjects.
2. Contextual relevance: One of the class teachers emphasised the importance of adjusting the indicators to the subject matter and student conditions.
3. Effectiveness objective: This adjustment is considered crucial to achieving teaching success.
4. Concrete example: For the subject of the Hajj pilgrimage, the indicators formulated include the ability of students to identify the pillars of Hajj, the obligations of Hajj, and other related aspects.

This approach demonstrates an effort to ensure that assessment indicators are not only in line with curriculum standards, but also relevant to the local context and student capacity, thereby increasing the chances of achieving

The results of interviews related to the assessment of student learning success indicators for Islamic education subjects at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang show several aspects, namely:

1. Contextual adjustment: Assessment indicators have been aligned with learning materials and student capacity.
2. Effectiveness objectives: This adjustment is considered essential to achieve optimal learning success and completion.
3. Policy implementation: The determination of learning resources and evaluation methods at this school reflects the implementation of Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards.
4. Scope of standards: This implementation is particularly related to the aspects of facilities and infrastructure as well as the education assessment system.

This approach demonstrates the school's efforts to integrate national standards with local needs, ensuring that the learning and evaluation processes not only comply with regulations but are also effective in the specific context of the school. This reflects a balance between compliance with national standards and adaptation to local conditions in an effort to improve the quality of Al Islam education at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang.

## DISCUSSION

### Strategies of the Principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang in Improving the Pedagogical Competence of Islamic Education Teachers

- a. Encourage Islamic Education Teachers to be creative and innovative in using active learning strategies.

The principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang has fully supported efforts to improve the quality of learning, especially in the field of Islamic education. This support is manifested through the approval of various innovative programmes proposed by Islamic education teachers. One of the flagship programmes that has been given the green light is the Hajj simulation. This programme is an application of the demonstration method, an active learning strategy that aims to improve students' understanding of the procedures for performing the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. The implementation of this programme in the 2023-2024 academic year has shown very positive results. A significant improvement is clearly evident when compared to previous years, when similar activities were not held.

This strategy is in line with Sudrajat's view that the main task and function of a school principal as an educational leader is to motivate staff through internal marketing and set an external example (Sudrajat, 2004). Mulyasa also believes that motivation is a dominant factor that can drive other factors towards the effectiveness of educational personnel (Mulyasa, 2007).

Thus, an effective headteacher is more than just an administrator or manager. Effective headteacher leadership requires total commitment with a creative

approach to work, independence, clear goals, flexibility and a broad interest in emulating, developing and improving the school. In the future, education will require the principle of creativity. A creative school principal is a leader who is passionate, enthusiastic, steadfast and effective. School principals serve others, dare to uphold the truth, dare to try new things, take initiative and realise the school's vision and mission.

b. Enhancing the professionalism of Islamic education teachers through seminars, workshops, training sessions, and teacher working groups.

The professionalism of teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang Islamic School continues to improve over time. This is reflected in the increased quality of educational services provided by teachers and staff to students. In addition, teachers have also shown progress in terms of improving teaching materials and applying more effective learning methods.

The leadership of the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang has proven to be effective in implementing strategies that encourage teachers to master the ten essential basic competencies listed in the pedagogical competencies in the teaching and learning process. These competencies include mastery of learning materials, the ability to manage educational resources and classrooms, optimal use of learning media, a deep understanding of the basics of education, facilitation of effective educational interactions, evaluation of student achievement to improve teaching quality, and the ability to apply the latest research results in their teaching practices.

This strategy is in line with the strategy proposed by Suhardan, namely that in improving the quality of learning, a colleague tutor strategy is needed, which is a forum among fellow teachers aimed at exchanging experiences and knowledge in improving the quality of teaching, sharing knowledge from one teacher to another or to a group of teachers (Suhardan, 2010).

This is in line with Mulyasa's opinion that improving the professionalism of teachers with specialised subjects can be done by school principals by involving teachers in seminars and training organised by the Ministry of Religious Affairs or outside the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Mulyasa, 2007).

This was done to improve teachers' performance in refining teaching materials and methodologies. Patterson, as quoted by Daryanto, stated that to improve teachers' professionalism, the principal paid attention to their abilities. Thus, the principal's activities encouraged Islamic education teachers to attend seminars and training sessions so that they would always be aware of the latest developments and improve their professionalism (Daryanto, 2005).

c. Enforcing discipline among teachers, staff, and students (stakeholders) both when arriving at and leaving school, as well as during the teaching and learning process.

There has been an improvement in discipline among teachers, staff and students at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang. The implementation of discipline is part of the professionalism of teachers and staff in carrying out their duties. The implication of this improvement is that the learning process

runs according to the schedule set out in school regulations and work productivity has increased.

This discipline is in line with Mulyasa's statement that school principals must be able to foster discipline among educational personnel, especially self-discipline (Mulyasa, 2007). Similarly, Jorgenson, as quoted by Daryanto, believes that schools can be successful if headteachers are given full authority to maintain a culture of discipline among all teachers and staff (Daryanto, 2005).

#### d. Carrying out supervision

Supervision became an indicator of improvement carried out by the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang to provide better services to improve the pedagogical competence of Islamic education teachers and the quality of Islamic education learning was realised in Islamic schools that were highly competitive in forming a pious, intelligent, superior and independent generation in the fields of science and technology.

The strategy of the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang is in line with Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2007 concerning Standards for Principals/Schools in the dimension of supervision, namely planning academic supervision programmes in order to improve teacher professionalism, implementing academic supervision of teachers using appropriate approaches and supervision techniques, and following up on the results of academic supervision of teachers in order to improve teacher professionalism.

Thus, supervision is an activity carried out by the head teacher in an effort

to improve the professionalism of Islamic education teachers, which focuses on guidance, direction and assistance to Islamic education teachers so that the teaching and learning process runs well. This means that by supervising Islamic education teachers, the learning outcomes of students/pupils will be good and improve.

e. Improving student quality by participating in both curricular and extracurricular competitions.

In relation to this, Muhammadiyah Junior High School students are facilitated by Islamic teachers who are competent in their fields. In its implementation, there has been an improvement in the 2023/2024 academic year compared to the previous academic year, resulting in numerous achievements by Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang Junior High School students, such as in district, city, and national events, even at the national level of the Muhammadiyah association in the Al Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan and Arabic Language (ISMUBA) Olympiad (Ahmad Dahlan Olympiad) competitions and the national MTQ competition.

f. Developing a culture of good character (akhlakul karimah) among all school members (stakeholders) through exemplary behaviour.

Morality is a reflection of a person's actions and behaviour. Good morals can shape a person's character in their daily interactions and encourage them to do good and refrain from evil. Morality encompasses various aspects of life because a person is judged by their daily morals.

This has been implemented by the

principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang as evidence of improvement as outlined in one of the missions of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang, namely with the slogan 'Smart and good character', which is an effort to cultivate the practice of Islamic teachings that shape a person with good character. In addition, the friendliness and exemplary nature of the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang can be seen in his attitude, which is respected by teachers, employees and students alike, as he sets a good example by arriving at school earliest and leaving latest, and greeting teachers and students.

As has been done by the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang, this is in line with the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2007 concerning the Competence of School/Madrasah Principals in the dimension of personality, namely having noble character, developing a culture and tradition of noble character, and being a role model of noble character for the community in schools/madrasahs.

As managers, school principals can improve their personality competencies by setting an example for teachers and staff. This includes encouraging good behaviour, noble character, honesty, and being a role model for students. This approach is important given the principal's great responsibility for the reputation of teachers and the school environment. A positive image of teachers reflects well on the school, while a negative image has a detrimental effect. Principals must maintain a positive image of all school stakeholders, including teachers, staff, and students, by ensuring good behaviour.

g. Improving adequate facilities and infrastructure to enhance the quality of Islamic education.

Improvements and development of educational institutions will not run smoothly if they are not supported by adequate facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, efforts to provide educational facilities are one of the functions that must be continuously developed.

In this regard, the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang has improved the quality of basic and adequate facilities and infrastructure for the smooth running of education, particularly in the process of Islamic religious education, such as a 3-storey building with 18 classrooms, 1 al-Islam laboratory room, 1 computer laboratory room, 1 cooperative and UKS room, 1 mosque, and 1 air-conditioned library room.

The strategy implemented by the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang is in line with Suhardan's opinion on improving the quality of learning, namely the provision of adequate facilities to support the smooth running of teaching and learning (Suhardan, 2010). Patterson (2008) states that in order to improve teacher professionalism, head teachers need to pay attention to several important aspects. These aspects include teachers' ability to manage classrooms and educational facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, Patterson emphasises that the responsibility for managing facilities and infrastructure, which serve as teaching aids, lies with the head teacher.

The subject matter delivered by the Islamic Education teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang can be mastered and understood well. In delivering the subject matter to students, it

goes well and the questions given to him can be answered well too. In addition, the subject matter delivered by the Islamic Education teacher can be implemented well. This is evidenced by the completion of the material within the specified time, and the material delivered can be understood by students through their answers to questions.

According to Usman, as demonstrators, teachers should always master the subject matter they are going to teach and continuously develop it in the sense of improving their knowledge, because this will greatly determine the learning outcomes achieved by students (Usman, 2007).

Based on the above conclusions, field observations indicate that students at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang are able to understand Islamic Education learning materials effectively. This is reflected in their ability to answer questions accurately and complete group assignments satisfactorily. This phenomenon shows the success of Islamic Education teachers in delivering learning materials during the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the results of the study show that in delivering learning materials, Islamic Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang use teaching methods that are appropriate for the learning materials to be delivered. This is evidenced by the fact that in delivering material to students, they do not focus on just one method, but vary according to the learning material being delivered. In other words, Al Islam teachers do not only use one method in delivering subject matter, but use various teaching methods, including lectures, discussions, question and answer sessions,

assignments/exercises, and demonstrations.

As stated by Sanjaya, 'A good teacher should have the ability to apply various learning methods (Sanjaya, 2016).' Therefore, teachers should not focus on just one teaching method, but should be able to use a variety of methods in teaching. Thus, the methods used by teachers in teaching can be accepted by students in the classroom, because these methods can be used in a variety of ways according to the subject matter presented in the teaching and learning process.

The learning atmosphere in the classroom when the Islamic Education teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang delivered the material was not entirely orderly. Some students appeared to be unfocused, as indicated by behaviours such as leaving and entering the room, joking around, and not listening to the lesson properly during the teaching and learning process. However, when faced with this less than conducive classroom situation, the Islamic Education teacher tried to handle it effectively.

According to Dimyati and Mudjiono, 'an optimal learning condition can be achieved if the teacher is able to manage the students and teaching facilities and control them in a pleasant atmosphere to achieve learning objectives (Dimyati and Mudjiono, 2009).

Good interpersonal relationships between teachers and students are also a prerequisite for successful classroom management. Effective classroom management is an absolute prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. Thus, this skill relates to the teacher's ability to take initiative and respond to continuous student disruptions

with the aim of taking remedial action to restore optimal learning conditions.

Islamic Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang have demonstrated their ability to select learning media that is appropriate for the material being taught. They have succeeded in aligning the use of media with the lesson content, making it easier for students to understand the material being presented. This success can be seen from the effectiveness of the media used in explaining concepts to students. Thus, Islamic Education teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang have demonstrated their skills in adapting learning media to align with the subject matter to be discussed in class.

From the results of the above study, according to Ibrahim and Syaodih, in the learning process, 'teachers should consider the effectiveness and selection of appropriate teaching tools (Ibrahim & Syaodih, 2003). The concept of teaching as a system is an approach to teaching that emphasises the systematic relationship between various components in teaching, including media.

Based on the above descriptions, it can be understood that a teacher is required not only to master the learning material to be taught, but also to be able to use the available media and learning resources.

The results of the above analysis show that Islamic Education Teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang apply fair and appropriate learning evaluation methods. They adjust the form of assessment to the content of the lessons taught and take into account the learning capacity of each student. Islamic Education teachers at SMP

Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang consistently conduct evaluations every time they complete a chapter of material. This assessment process includes various forms, such as written exams, oral tests, and practical demonstrations. This comprehensive evaluation approach aims to measure students' overall understanding of the material that has been studied.

## CONCLUSION

The principal's strategy in improving the pedagogical competence of Islamic Education Teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang is as follows: First, motivating teachers to be creative and innovative. Second, improving teacher professionalism. Third, enforcing discipline among teachers, staff, and students (stakeholders). Fourth, conducting supervision. Fifth, improving student quality by participating in curricular and extracurricular competitions. Sixth, developing a culture of good character (akhlakul karimah) among all school members (stakeholders) through exemplary behaviour. Seventh, improving the quality of facilities and infrastructure for Al Islam learning. The obstacles faced by the principal of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Palembang in his efforts to improve the pedagogical competence of Al Islam teachers are: First, curriculum changes: The Al Islam education curriculum continues to undergo reforms. Second, Islamic education teachers are still not united in implementing religious activities or programmes; third, students are not consistent in practising religious activities at home; fourth, differences among students can be an obstacle to the development of these students themselves;

fifth, there is still a lack of support from parents in motivating students to learn.

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