



Development of Islamic Education Teachers' Professionalism in the Digital Era

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Abstrak:

This study investigates the development of professional competence among Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SMA Islam Al Fattah, driven by challenges such as limited time for professional development, unequal digital literacy, and insufficient long-term external support. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation to analyze how institutional support, teacher motivation, and the school's religious culture contribute to professional growth. The findings show that the school implements three key strategies: continuous training and workshops, structured mentoring and academic supervision, and sustained self-development through religious activities and participation in professional communities. These efforts enhance teachers' pedagogical, professional, social, and spiritual competencies. The study also identifies the impact of managerial support, availability of technological facilities, and collaborative work culture as significant factors in strengthening teacher professionalism. However, constraints such as heavy workloads, limited technological mastery, and inconsistent external professional programs still hinder optimal development. The implications of this research highlight the need for integrated and collaborative policies between schools, government agencies, and professional communities to ensure continuous teacher development. Strengthening digital literacy, expanding long-term mentoring programs, and providing adequate incentives are essential to producing PAI teachers who are competent, ethical, and adaptive to educational changes

Kata Kunci: *Teacher Professionalism; Competency Development; Self-Development*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping students' character and personality so that they become faithful, virtuous individuals who are capable of facing the challenges of modern life (Amin, 2025; Munawarsyah, 2023; Nahuda & others, 2024). In the context of globalization and the rapid advancement of information technology, Islamic education is faced with the need to adapt its methods, media, and learning approaches to remain relevant and effective (As' ad, 2021; Sahri & Soleh, 2023; Sanusi, 2024). PAI teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge, but also spiritual and moral mentors who instill Islamic values amidst social change (As' ad, 2021; Mufid, Aminah, & Hafid, 2025; Sugianto, 2024). The challenges they face are no longer limited to the substance of religious teachings but also include the ability to utilize technology as a medium for da'wah and education. Therefore, the professionalism of PAI teachers becomes a key factor in maintaining the quality of learning (Masfufah, Utomo, Azizah, & Suwandi, 2024; Meinura, 2025; Taufik, Setiawan, & Mahmud, 2024). Enhancing professionalism must encompass pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies that are adaptive to contemporary developments. Without strengthening professionalism, the strategic role of PAI teachers risks being eroded by the wave of educational digitalization.

The digital era has brought significant changes to the field of education, including Islamic religious learning (Diana, Azani, & others, 2024; Sanusi, 2024). The use of digital technology such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), interactive videos, and social media has become a new medium for delivering religious content (Asdlori, 2023; Musa & Olowo, 2024; Zakiyyah & others, 2024). However, this shift demands that PAI teachers possess strong digital literacy to make learning engaging and meaningful for students. Many teachers still struggle to utilize technology effectively, whether due to limited facilities or the lack of appropriate training (Alenezi, 2017; Kundu & Bej, 2021). As a result, PAI learning often remains conventional, monotonous, and less interactive, reducing students' interest in deeply understanding Islamic values. Therefore, mastering information technology has become an integral part of the professionalism of today's PAI teachers. This transformation requires teachers to integrate Islamic pedagogical principles with innovative learning technologies.

The development of PAI teachers' professionalism involves not only improving technical skills but also strengthening character and moral commitment in fulfilling their educational duties. Good professionalism encourages teachers to continuously learn, innovate, and adapt to changing times.

Through training, workshops, and self-development activities, teachers can enhance the quality of learning in line with the needs of the digital generation. In addition, PAI teachers need to broaden their Islamic and pedagogical insights to address contemporary issues faced by students. In this regard, the support of educational institutions and the government is essential to create a learning ecosystem that fosters teacher professionalism. Thus, developing PAI teachers' professionalism is a strategic effort to maintain the relevance of Islamic education in the digital era.

SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan, as one of the Islamic-based educational institutions in Bojonegoro Regency, faces similar challenges in developing the professionalism of PAI teachers. Based on preliminary observations, some PAI teachers at this school still have limited ability in using digital media as learning tools. The teaching and learning process is still dominated by conventional lecture methods, relying mainly on textbooks as the primary source. Moreover, technological facilities such as projectors, internet access, and computers have not been optimally utilized in classroom activities. Limited training and mentoring opportunities for teachers have also hindered the improvement of professional competence. Consequently, students tend to be less enthusiastic about Islamic studies and perceive PAI subjects as theoretical and uninteresting. This condition highlights the need for concrete strategies to enhance the professionalism of PAI teachers in this school environment, so that the learning process becomes more dynamic, interactive, and relevant to the needs of the modern era.

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of developing the professionalism of PAI teachers in various educational contexts. Research conducted by Reistanti et al. indicates that 21st-century teachers are required to master pedagogical, technological, and character competencies to meet the challenges of digitalization and globalization. From the perspective of modern and Islamic education, the ideal teacher is someone who can integrate digital literacy with spiritual and moral values. The results affirm that the success of education in the current era depends on the teacher's ability to adapt technology without abandoning ethical and Islamic principles (Reistanti, Irchamni, Permatasari, & Sule, 2025). Research written by Zakiyah et al. states that the revitalization of Islamic Religious Education in the digital era heavily depends on improving teachers' professionalism in pedagogical aspects, digital competence, and moral exemplarity. The integration of technology with a learning approach based on Islamic values has been proven to enhance the effectiveness of the educational process. The results confirm that Islamic Religious Education teachers play an

important role as both innovators and spiritual guides in shaping students' character amid the rapid development of technology (Zakiyah & Arif, 2025).

However, most previous studies have focused on urban schools or madrasahs that already possess adequate digital facilities. Few studies have examined the efforts to develop the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in Islamic schools located in rural areas with limited technological resources, such as SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan. Moreover, there is a lack of research exploring internal factors such as teacher motivation, institutional support, and individual readiness in adopting learning technologies. In fact, understanding these factors is crucial for designing targeted and effective professional development programs. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study that not only identifies the level of professionalism among PAI teachers but also analyzes their development efforts within the context of Islamic schools that are still in the process of growth.

Based on the above explanation, there is a clear research gap concerning the development of PAI teacher professionalism in Islamic schools with limited facilities and digital literacy. Previous studies have not specifically explored how strategies for developing PAI teacher professionalism can be implemented in schools such as SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan, which face unique challenges. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on examining the development of teacher professionalism from the perspective of local needs, the use of simple technologies, and limited institutional support. This research also aims to provide a contextual and applicable model for developing professionalism in Islamic secondary education institutions. Thus, this study is expected to offer both theoretical and practical contributions to improving the quality of PAI teachers in the digital era, particularly in Islamic-based schools located in rural areas.

The objectives of this study are to analyze the professional condition of Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan and to identify strategies for developing their professionalism in the digital era. This study also aims to determine the supporting and inhibiting factors in the process of developing PAI teachers' professionalism in the school. In addition, it seeks to formulate a model or program recommendation that can be implemented to enhance the competence of PAI teachers in utilizing learning technologies. Through the results of this study, it is expected that a comprehensive understanding will emerge regarding the importance of developing teacher professionalism amid the dynamics of digital education. This study is also expected to serve as a foundation for Islamic educational institutions in designing

sustainable teacher capacity-building policies. Hence, PAI teachers can optimally fulfill their roles as professional, innovative, and morally upright educators in the modern era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, as it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of developing the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in the digital era, particularly at SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan (Wijaya, 2019). This approach was chosen to describe social reality as it is and to interpret the meanings behind teachers' behaviors, actions, and experiences within the context of technology-based teaching. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to interact directly with research subjects to obtain rich and contextual data. This study adopts a case study design because it focuses on a single research site with specific characteristics and problems that need to be comprehensively understood. The case study approach provides an opportunity to explore the processes, challenges, and strategies for developing the professionalism of PAI teachers in a real-life context. Therefore, the results of this research are expected not only to describe the phenomenon but also to provide deep insights into strategies for developing teacher professionalism in Islamic schools with limited digital conditions.

The subjects of this research include Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan, the school principal, and several students selected as supporting informants. The selection of informants was carried out using a purposive sampling technique, which involves intentional selection based on specific criteria such as teaching experience, the level of technology utilization, and participation in professional development activities. The research location, SMA Islam Al Fattah Pungpungan, was chosen because it represents an Islamic educational institution that is striving to adapt to the digital era while still facing limitations in technological infrastructure and literacy. The data for this study were collected through three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore informants' perspectives and experiences regarding their professional development. Observations were made to examine PAI teaching practices and the use of technology in the classroom, while documentation was used to gather written materials such as teacher training programs, teaching schedules, and school activity records. The collected data were then compiled into detailed field notes and revalidated through member checking to ensure data accuracy and

credibility (Gunawan, 2023; Majid, 2017).

Data analysis in this study was conducted interactively, following the model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and focused on data relevant to the theme of developing PAI teacher professionalism in the digital era. The data were then presented in the form of descriptive narratives, matrices, and thematic categories to facilitate interpretation. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns, relationships, and meanings from the data and linking them to relevant theories and previous research findings. To ensure data validity, triangulation of sources and techniques was applied by comparing results from interviews, observations, and documentation among different informants. In addition, member checking was conducted to verify that the researcher's interpretations aligned with the informants' perspectives. The research procedure consisted of three stages: the pre-field stage (instrument preparation and obtaining permissions), the fieldwork stage (data collection), and the post-field stage (data analysis and report writing). With systematic procedures and strong validation, this study is expected to produce credible findings that can serve as a foundation for developing policies to enhance the professionalism of PAI teachers in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Professionalism of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Digital Era

The professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers serves as the fundamental basis for shaping students who are faithful, pious, and possess noble character in accordance with Islamic teachings. A professional PAI teacher is not only expected to master religious knowledge but also to contextualize Islamic values through creative and humanistic pedagogical approaches. From the perspective of Islamic education, teacher professionalism encompasses four core competencies pedagogical, professional, social, and personal as stipulated in Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers. These four competencies must operate in balance for teachers to effectively serve as educators, mentors, and role models for their students. In the modern context, the professionalism of PAI teachers extends beyond teaching ability to include adaptability to the continuous advancement of science and technology. In other words, a professional PAI teacher is one who can integrate Islamic values with the progress of the times without losing their spiritual essence.

The digital era has brought profound changes to all aspects of life, including education. The emergence of information technology, social media, and artificial intelligence has transformed the teaching and learning paradigm from conventional systems to digital-based systems. For PAI teachers, this condition presents a complex challenge—how to convey Islamic values amid the flood of global information and cultures that often contradict moral and religious principles. On one hand, technology offers great opportunities for teachers to enrich learning methods and reach students more effectively. On the other hand, teachers are required to possess high digital literacy to manage information wisely and avoid technological misuse. Teachers who fail to adapt to digital developments risk losing relevance in the eyes of students who grow up as digital natives. Therefore, the professionalism of PAI teachers in the digital era must be manifested through adaptive, creative, and critical capabilities in responding to the changing times.

The professionalism of PAI teachers in the digital era is not only measured by their technological competence but also by their ability to integrate Islamic values in the use of such technology. According to Al-Attas (1980), Islamic education is not merely the transmission of knowledge but also the inculcation of adab (proper conduct) and wisdom (ta'dib). Therefore, the use of technology should aim to strengthen spiritual values, not merely efficiency or entertainment. PAI teachers must understand that technology is only a tool, while the essence of Islamic education lies in moral and character formation. The use of digital media such as Islamic video lectures, religious animations, e-learning platforms, and interactive applications can become effective tools when infused with strong educational and moral content. A professional PAI teacher is capable of selecting digital content that aligns with Islamic principles and creating learning experiences that are not only visually engaging but also spiritually uplifting. The integration of Islamic values with technology represents the hallmark of ethical and civilized PAI teacher professionalism in the digital age

The professionalism of PAI teachers also encompasses a broad range of competencies—academic, methodological, and moral. A professional PAI teacher must possess deep mastery of Islamic knowledge such as the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, Aqidah, and Akhlaq, along with pedagogical skills to present these subjects in an engaging and relevant manner. Moreover, effective communication, guidance, and the ability to build positive social relationships with students are integral components of teacher professionalism. In the digital context, professional competence extends to mastery of educational technology, including the design of

interactive media, the use of online learning platforms, and the utilization of digital learning resources. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) describe professional teachers as “moral agents of change” individuals who not only impart knowledge but also inspire moral and social transformation in their environment. Therefore, PAI teachers must position themselves as agents of transformation who wisely, courteously, and ethically bring Islamic values into the digital space

In the dynamic era of globalization, PAI teacher professionalism is not static but must be continuously developed through lifelong learning. Ongoing professional development includes capacity enhancement through training, workshops, research, self-reflection, and collaboration with fellow educators. PAI teachers must develop reflective awareness to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and actively seek solutions for improvement. The government and Islamic educational institutions play an essential role in providing facilities and policy support for professional development. The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) model emphasizes the importance of ongoing learning that aligns with technological advances and students’ needs. In the Islamic context, the spirit of **thalabul ‘ilmi** (pursuit of knowledge) aligns with this concept, making teacher professionalism not only a professional obligation but also a form of worship and moral responsibility. Thus, a PAI teacher who continuously learns and innovates embodies the implementation of Islamic values within modern educational practice

The professionalism of PAI teachers in the digital era has a direct impact on the overall quality of Islamic education. Professional teachers can create learning environments that are inspiring, contextual, and responsive to the needs of the digital generation. They serve not only as instructors but also as role models who demonstrate a balance between knowledge and morality, between technology and ethics. When PAI teachers fully optimize their professional roles, Islamic education will not lag behind modernization but rather emerge as a pioneer in shaping a morally upright and digitally intelligent generation. Conversely, neglecting teacher professionalism would lead Islamic education to lose its appeal and relevance among students. Therefore, improving the professionalism of PAI teachers is not merely a technical necessity but also a strategic agenda for advancing Islamic civilization in the future. In the digital era, PAI teachers must embody the spirit of “mujaddid” (reformer), spreading the values of Islam as “rahmatan lil ‘alamin” through the wise, innovative, and responsible use of media and technology.

Strategies for Developing PAI Teacher Professionalism in Schools

1. Training and Workshop

The strategy of conducting regular training and workshops is one of the main initiatives implemented by SMA Islam al Fattah to enhance the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. The school recognizes that improving the quality of learning cannot be separated from strengthening teacher competence as the forefront of educational implementation. Therefore, the training programs are systematically designed and scheduled every semester based on teachers' needs and the development of the national curriculum. The focus of the training is not only on pedagogical aspects but also on strengthening spiritual and moral values, so that PAI teachers can maintain a balance between teaching competence and moral exemplarity.

In practice, SMA Islam al Fattah organizes various forms of training, such as workshops on active learning methodologies, training on the creation of interactive digital learning media, and mentoring in the preparation of lesson plans (RPP) based on the Merdeka Curriculum. These activities involve professional facilitators from both within the school and external educational and religious institutions. Through these training sessions, teachers are encouraged to innovate in creating engaging, contextual, and student-centered Islamic Religious Education lessons suitable for the digital generation. Teachers are also given the opportunity to apply what they have learned directly in the classroom through micro teaching activities, ensuring that the training outcomes are immediately implemented.

The impact of this strategy of regular training and workshops is evident in the improvement of teachers' abilities to design and implement creative, student-oriented learning processes. Teachers have become more adaptive to curriculum changes and advancements in educational technology. The training also fosters a sense of collaboration among teachers, as each activity concludes with reflection and discussions about teaching experiences. Thus, training and workshops not only enhance technical competencies but also strengthen the culture of continuous learning and the overall professionalism of PAI teachers at SMA Islam al Fattah.

2. Academic mentoring and supervision

The second strategy implemented by SMA Islam al Fattah to develop the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers is through mentoring and academic supervision programs. This initiative is designed as a

continuous development effort aimed not only at enhancing teachers' professional competence but also at strengthening their moral and spiritual commitment as Islamic educators. The mentoring program involves the principal, vice principal for curriculum affairs, and senior teachers who have extensive experience in instructional management and curriculum development. During these sessions, PAI teachers receive direct guidance on lesson planning, effective teaching strategies, and the design of learning assessments tailored to students' characteristics. This approach emphasizes reflective dialogue rather than a purely instructive process, encouraging teachers to identify solutions to classroom challenges through critical reflection and collaboration.

The implementation of academic supervision at SMA Islam al Fattah is structured and scheduled to ensure that every teacher receives equal opportunities for professional guidance. The principal and mentor teachers conduct classroom observations to assess teachers' preparedness, creativity, and effectiveness in delivering Islamic Religious Education. However, supervision is not viewed merely as a control mechanism but as a form of humanistic and persuasive support. Following observations, feedback sessions are held to allow teachers to reflect on their teaching practices. In an open and constructive atmosphere, mentors provide suggestions, appreciation, and motivation to help teachers continuously improve. This process cultivates professional awareness that being a teacher is not just a career, but a calling to guide students toward noble character and spiritual integrity.

The impact of mentoring and academic supervision at SMA Islam al Fattah has been significant in improving the performance and confidence of PAI teachers. Through consistent mentoring, teachers have become more reflective about their teaching practices and more responsive to students' needs. They are encouraged to innovate in classroom management, apply diverse teaching methods, and create a learning environment that is both religious and engaging. Moreover, the relationship between the principal, senior teachers, and PAI teachers has become more harmonious, built on mutual respect and collaborative communication. Supervision that integrates spiritual values fosters an understanding that teacher professionalism is measured not only by academic competence but also by sincerity, responsibility, and exemplary character in practicing Islamic values. Thus, the mentoring and academic supervision program serves as a vital foundation for

building a culture of quality and sustaining teacher professionalism at SMA Islam al Fattah.

3. self-development through religious activities and professional communities

The third strategy for developing the professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMA Islam al Fattah is through continuous self-development, particularly by engaging in religious activities and active participation in professional communities. The school recognizes that teacher professionalism is not only cultivated through formal training but also through the internalization of spiritual values and constructive social interaction. PAI teachers at SMA Islam al Fattah regularly take part in religious activities such as Qur'an and Hadith studies, dhikr gatherings, and spiritual development sessions organized by the school or local religious institutions in Bojonegoro. These activities serve as a means to strengthen faith and foster a spirit of da'wah among teachers. With a strong spiritual foundation, teachers are not merely transmitters of religious knowledge but also role models of Islamic character and ethics for their students in daily life.

In addition to internal religious activities, PAI teachers actively participate in professional communities and academic forums such as the "Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran" (MGMP) PAI at the district level, Islamic education seminars, and scholarly discussions among educators. Such participation provides opportunities for teachers to share experiences, discuss teaching challenges, and develop innovative instructional strategies. Through the MGMP, teachers gain access to the latest educational policies, collaboratively develop teaching materials, and align their instructional methods with the competency standards set by the government. These activities not only enhance teachers' professional competence but also strengthen solidarity among educators, fostering a collaborative culture that supports the advancement of Islamic education at the secondary school level.

Self-development through religious engagement and professional community participation has had a positive impact on the personal and social quality of PAI teachers at SMA Islam al Fattah. Teachers have become more open to innovation, more critical in evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching, and more motivated to embody Islamic values within the school environment. Interaction with teachers from other institutions broadens their perspectives on effective educational practices that are relevant to today's learners. Moreover, involvement in professional communities reinforces their identity as intellectuals who hold a moral responsibility for the progress of

Islamic education. Thus, the strategy of self-development through religious activities and professional engagement not only enhances teachers' professional competence but also strengthens their spiritual and social integrity as educators who are knowledgeable, virtuous, and of noble character.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Development of PAI Teacher Professionalism

The professionalism of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers reflects their competence, responsibility, and integrity in carrying out their duties as educators, mentors, and role models for students. PAI teachers are required not only to master religious content in depth, but also to integrate Islamic values into learning processes that are contextual and relevant to students' lives. This professionalism is manifested through pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies that complement one another. A professional PAI teacher continually strives to improve their quality through training, reflection, and instructional innovation, while maintaining a strong commitment to the moral and spiritual development of students. Thus, the professionalism of PAI teachers is not merely related to technical teaching skills but also to moral exemplarity, which constitutes the essence of Islamic education. The development of PAI teachers' professionalism at SMA Islam al Fattah cannot be separated from various supporting factors that play an important role in creating a conducive and progressive learning environment. The supporting factors for the development of PAI teacher professionalism include the following:

1. Managerial support from the school

Managerial support from the educational institution—particularly from the principal and the curriculum team—plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher quality through continuous programs of training, supervision, and evaluation. The principal demonstrates a strong commitment by providing opportunities for PAI teachers to participate in various professional development activities, both internally and externally, and by allocating a specific budget to support training programs and the provision of learning facilities. This form of support serves as a key motivator for teachers to continuously learn, innovate, and improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction.

2. Motivation and self-awareness of PAI teachers

In developing their professional abilities, teachers at SMA Islam Al Fattah demonstrate a strong enthusiasm for enhancing their pedagogical,

professional, social, and spiritual competencies. They understand that the role of a teacher extends beyond merely transferring knowledge—it also involves serving as a moral and ethical role model for students. This awareness motivates them to actively participate in various discussion forums, Islamic education seminars, and *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran* (MGMP) activities at the district level. Moreover, the spirit of collaboration among teachers within the school is remarkably strong. They share experiences, teaching materials, and instructional strategies with one another, fostering a professional learning community that supports collective competence development.

3. the availability of adequate learning facilities and infrastructure

The provision of facilities and infrastructure serves as a key support for the integration of technology in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. The school provides resources such as multimedia rooms, internet access, and technological devices that enable teachers to develop digital learning media. Additionally, the school's religious and harmonious environment plays an essential role in shaping the professional character of PAI teachers. Regular religious activities—such as Qur'anic study sessions, congregational prayers, and spiritual development programs—help strengthen the teachers' moral and spiritual dimensions as educators of noble character. The combination of institutional support, personal motivation, and a conducive environment forms a strong foundation for the development of PAI teachers' professionalism at SMA Islam Al Fattah.

Professionalism in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers also requires adaptive capabilities in responding to the changing times, especially in facing educational challenges in the digital era. Teachers must be able to utilize information technology as a medium for da'wah and for delivering learning that is engaging, interactive, and aligned with the characteristics of today's learners. Professionalism does not end with mastery of religious knowledge alone, but also includes communication skills, collaboration, and effective classroom management. A professional PAI teacher serves as an agent of change who instills Islamic values in a moderate, contextual manner that touches the moral, social, and spiritual dimensions of students. Thus, strengthening the professionalism of PAI teachers becomes a key factor in creating religious education that is meaningful, humanistic, and relevant to the needs of modern society. Although various supporting factors exist, the development of PAI teacher professionalism at SMA Islam Al Fattah also faces several obstacles that require attention. The

inhibiting factors include the following:

1. Limited time and teachers' workload

PAI teachers are not only responsible for classroom instruction but are also involved in various administrative tasks, religious guidance programs, and extracurricular activities that demand a significant amount of time. This condition often makes it difficult for some teachers to participate intensively in training sessions or to engage in deep reflection on their teaching practices. As a result, the process of professional development sometimes progresses slowly and unevenly among the teachers.

2. Challenges in mastering technology and implementing innovative learning methods

Not all PAI teachers possess the same level of competence in utilizing digital technology to support the learning process. Some still rely on conventional teaching methods due to limited understanding of digital applications and the lack of intensive training focused on integrating technology into religious education. This becomes a major obstacle in meeting the demands of the digital era, which emphasizes technology based learning and digital literacy among students.

3. Limited external support

The lack of external support and sustainable policies from outside institutions such as the education department or religious training organizations also poses a challenge. Professional development activities like MGMP sessions or seminars are often incidental and fail to provide long-term mentoring for teachers. On the other hand, internal factors such as low financial incentives also affect teachers' motivation to develop themselves optimally. Some teachers still perceive professional development as requiring considerable time, energy, and financial resources. Nevertheless, the religious spirit and dedication of PAI teachers at SMA Islam Al Fattah serve as a moral strength that helps balance these limitations. Therefore, to enhance the effectiveness of professional development, a collaborative strategy between schools, the government, and professional communities is essential ensuring that every teacher has equal opportunities to grow continuously and sustainably.

DISCUSSION

Evans (2008) conceptualizes teacher professionalism as a multidimensional construct encompassing three interrelated domains: "attitudinal professionalism",

“behavioral professionalism”, and “intellectual professionalism”. These dimensions together describe the moral, social, and cognitive development of teachers as professional individuals. In the context of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, Evans’ theory is highly relevant because their professionalism involves not only pedagogical and technical competence but also spiritual and moral integrity rooted in Islamic values. Teaching religion requires educators to embody ethical and spiritual commitment, making professionalism inseparable from faith-based conduct. Thus, in Islamic education, professionalism is not merely a matter of skill or compliance but a reflection of sincerity (*ikhlas*), devotion (*ta’abbud*), and moral responsibility in nurturing students’ character.

The first dimension, attitudinal professionalism, refers to teachers’ internalized values, attitudes, and moral commitments toward their profession. At SMA Islam Al Fattah, this dimension is evident in the spiritual dedication of PAI teachers who actively participate in religious activities such as Qur’an study sessions, “dzikir” assemblies, and spiritual mentoring. Their professional attitude is grounded in a deep sense of faith and moral responsibility. They perceive teaching not merely as a job but as a form of worship and service to the community. According to Evans, genuine professionalism is driven by intrinsic motivation rather than external compliance. Therefore, the spiritual and moral commitment of PAI teachers represents the attitudinal foundation of professionalism, which sustains their integrity and resilience amid digital transformation.

The second dimension, behavioral professionalism, concerns the visible behaviors that demonstrate teachers’ professional engagement in their work. At SMA Islam Al Fattah, PAI teachers exhibit this through active participation in workshops, professional development programs, and “Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran” (MGMP) forums. They practice reflective teaching, collaborate with peers, and continuously evaluate their classroom strategies. This behavioral pattern aligns with Evans’ notion that true professionalism is evident when teachers voluntarily engage in self-improvement and collegial learning rather than merely performing routine tasks. The PAI teachers’ consistent involvement in professional learning communities exemplifies a behavioral transformation toward a culture of collaboration, accountability, and continuous quality enhancement in Islamic education.

Evans’ third dimension, intellectual professionalism, highlights teachers’ cognitive capacity to think critically, adaptively, and creatively in response to educational challenges. The PAI teachers at SMA Islam Al Fattah demonstrate this

intellectual dimension through their efforts to integrate digital technologies into Islamic instruction, such as using multimedia tools, online learning platforms, and digital Islamic applications. They contextualize religious teachings to align with students' modern realities without compromising Islamic principles. This reflects the teachers' intellectual maturity and capacity for adaptive pedagogy. Evans emphasizes that intellectual professionalism involves self-directed learning, reflective judgment, and openness to change. In this regard, the PAI teachers' mastery of both religious and technological literacy exemplifies a synthesis of traditional scholarship and modern innovation, marking a progressive form of Islamic teacher professionalism in the digital era.

Taken together, the attitudinal, behavioral, and intellectual dimensions of Evans' model appear to be well integrated within the professional practices of PAI teachers at SMA Islam Al Fattah. Their attitudinal professionalism is rooted in religious devotion; their behavioral professionalism manifests in collaborative and reflective engagement; and their intellectual professionalism is reflected in digital adaptability and innovative pedagogy. This triadic integration forms a holistic model of Islamic teacher professionalism that aligns with the *ta'dib* concept proposed by Al-Attas (1980), which emphasizes the harmony between knowledge, practice, and ethics. Thus, Evans' theoretical framework, when contextualized within Islamic education, reveals that teacher professionalism extends beyond technical skill it encompasses moral, spiritual, and intellectual refinement as a unified whole.

Evans (2008) acknowledges that teacher professionalism develops not in isolation but within an enabling institutional context. This is consistent with findings from SMA Islam Al Fattah, where institutional support such as the principal's leadership, adequate facilities, and a religiously oriented school climate plays a significant role in sustaining teacher professionalism. These institutional structures act as what Evans describes as "organizational scaffolding," enabling teachers to enhance their professional behavior and motivation. Supportive policies and collegial environments strengthen teachers' commitment and foster a sense of belonging to a professional community. Therefore, professionalism must be viewed not merely as an individual attribute but as a collective endeavor nurtured through systemic and organizational reinforcement.

Nonetheless, professionalism is a dynamic process subject to various constraints. The PAI teachers at SMA Islam Al Fattah face several obstacles, including heavy workloads, limited time for professional development, and varying levels of technological proficiency. Moreover, the lack of sustained

external support from educational authorities or Islamic institutions hampers long-term mentoring and innovation. In Evans' framework, such constraints impede the development of behavioral and *intellectual professionalism*, as teachers are deprived of reflective space and ongoing learning opportunities. Addressing these barriers requires systemic interventions that balance administrative duties with opportunities for continuous growth, ensuring that professionalism remains a living, evolving construct rather than a static status.

Drawing upon Evans' (2008) framework, the professionalism of Islamic Education teachers in the digital era should be understood as a continuous, holistic, and context-sensitive process. Attitudinal professionalism must be nurtured through spiritual cultivation; behavioral professionalism through reflective collaboration and collegial engagement; and intellectual professionalism through research, digital innovation, and adaptive pedagogy. For SMA Islam Al Fattah, these findings imply the need to establish a continuous learning ecosystem that supports teachers' moral, intellectual, and technological growth. By adopting Evans' model, PAI teachers can embody the role of moral and intellectual agents of change educators who are not only competent and digitally literate but also spiritually grounded, ethically conscious, and capable of integrating Islamic values within the rapidly evolving landscape of modern education.

CONCLUSION

The professionalism of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SMA Islam Al Fattah reflects the integrated dimensions of Evans' (2008) theory attitudinal, behavioral, and intellectual professionalism within an Islamic educational framework. The teachers' strong spiritual foundation, active participation in professional learning communities, and adaptability to digital innovation demonstrate a holistic form of professionalism that unites moral integrity with pedagogical competence. Despite challenges such as time constraints, limited external support, and technological gaps, the commitment of teachers, supported by the school's leadership and religious environment, sustains their professional growth. Therefore, strengthening teacher professionalism in Islamic education requires continuous institutional support, collaborative networks, and a balance between spiritual values and modern pedagogical innovation to produce educators who are competent, ethical, and transformative.

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