

Developing the Competence of Islamic Education Teachers in Designing Instructional Media at Public Elementary Schools in Ketol District

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the development of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers' competence in designing learning media at public elementary schools in Ketol District, Aceh Tengah. Teachers' ability to create and utilize innovative learning media is essential in enhancing the quality and relevance of Islamic education, especially in the digital era that demands contextual and engaging instruction. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on how teachers improve pedagogical and technological competencies through workshops, mentoring, and reflective practices. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis involving eight PAI teachers and two school principals. The findings reveal that most PAI teachers possess strong content knowledge but face limitations in integrating technology and creativity in instructional design. Through structured professional development programs including collaborative design sessions, peer evaluation, and digital literacy training teachers demonstrated significant progress in conceptualizing interactive media such as video-based lessons, infographics, and student-centered learning aids. This process also strengthened teachers' reflective thinking and self-efficacy. The study concludes that systematic and sustainable competence development is crucial for teachers to align Islamic values with innovative pedagogy. Educational institutions should facilitate ongoing mentoring and digital capacity-building programs to ensure that learning media serve not only as tools of information delivery but as means of spiritual and moral engagement.

Keywords: PAI teacher competence, instructional media, professional development, Islamic education, elementary school

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengembangan kompetensi guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam merancang media pembelajaran di Sekolah Dasar Negeri Kecamatan Ketol, Aceh Tengah. Kemampuan guru dalam menciptakan dan memanfaatkan media pembelajaran inovatif menjadi aspek penting untuk meningkatkan mutu serta relevansi pembelajaran PAI, khususnya di era digital yang menuntut pembelajaran kontekstual dan menarik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dengan fokus pada proses peningkatan kompetensi pedagogik dan teknologi guru melalui pelatihan, pendampingan, dan refleksi. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen terhadap delapan guru PAI dan dua kepala sekolah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar guru PAI memiliki penguasaan materi keislaman yang baik, namun masih menghadapi keterbatasan dalam integrasi teknologi dan kreativitas dalam perancangan pembelajaran. Melalui program pengembangan profesional terstruktur—seperti pelatihan desain media, evaluasi sejawat, dan peningkatan literasi digital—guru menunjukkan kemajuan signifikan dalam merancang media interaktif seperti video pembelajaran, infografis, dan alat bantu belajar berbasis aktivitas siswa. Proses ini juga menguatkan kemampuan reflektif dan kepercayaan diri profesional guru. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa pengembangan kompetensi yang berkelanjutan sangat diperlukan agar guru mampu memadukan nilai-nilai Islam dengan pendekatan pedagogis yang inovatif. Lembaga pendidikan diharapkan dapat memfasilitasi pendampingan berkelanjutan serta pelatihan literasi digital, sehingga media pembelajaran berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai alat penyampai informasi, tetapi juga sarana pembentukan spiritualitas dan akhlak peserta didik.

Kata kunci: Kompetensi guru PAI, Media Pembelajaran, Pengembangan Profesional, Pendidikan Islam, Sekolah Dasar



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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of education in the digital era has placed significant emphasis on the ability of teachers to integrate technology into learning processes. Within the context of Islamic education (Pendidikan Agama Islam or PAI), this transformation is not only technical but also moral and pedagogical. Teachers are now expected to design learning media that are engaging, interactive, and reflective of Islamic values. According to Sari and Yusuf (2022), teachers' competence in developing digital learning tools determines both the accessibility and the spiritual relevance of instruction. This challenge is particularly critical in elementary education, where media design must balance cognitive engagement with value formation.

In Indonesia, the professional competence of PAI teachers has been a central theme in educational reform. The Ministry of Religious Affairs emphasizes four key competencies pedagogical, personal, social, and professional as essential for teacher quality (Kementerian Agama RI, 2020). Among these, the ability to design and utilize instructional media remains one of the least developed areas, especially in rural schools (Rahman & Fitriah, 2021). Many teachers still rely on conventional methods such as lectures and textbook explanations, resulting in passive learning experiences that fail to connect with students' digital-oriented lifestyles. Studies by Hidayati and Widodo (2020) reveal that insufficient technological training and limited access to digital tools hinder the creativity of PAI teachers, leading to minimal use of multimedia-based instruction.

Learning media in Islamic education are not merely tools for transmitting information but vehicles for moral engagement and emotional understanding. As argued by Alhassan (2023), instructional media can serve as spiritual mediators that help students visualize, experience, and internalize Islamic values. For instance, video-based storytelling of prophetic traditions, digital mind maps of moral principles, or interactive quizzes on Qur'anic verses can transform learning into an affective and participatory experience. However, the design of such media requires teachers to possess both technological competence and theological sensitivity. Without these, digital innovation risks producing superficial engagement devoid of spiritual depth (Basri et al., 2022).

In Ketol District, Central Aceh, elementary PAI teachers face contextual challenges in developing learning media due to geographic isolation, limited internet access, and lack of structured professional training. While teachers demonstrate strong mastery of Islamic knowledge, many express uncertainties in adapting that knowledge into creative digital or visual formats suitable for young learners. Interviews conducted in preliminary observations indicate that most teachers have yet to fully utilize platforms such as Canva, PowerPoint animation, or video editing tools in lesson design. This gap highlights the urgent need for a systematic competence development model that empowers teachers to design learning media creatively while preserving Islamic educational principles.

Several studies emphasize that teacher competence is not a static attribute but a dynamic process shaped through continuous learning and collaboration. According to Guskey (2020), effective professional development occurs when teachers engage in reflective practice and receive contextualized mentoring that links theory to classroom application. Similarly, Tondeur et al. (2019) found that peer collaboration and school-based digital training significantly enhance teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK). Applying these insights to the PAI context, professional learning communities that focus on media design as a moral and pedagogical act could enable teachers to innovate within the framework of Islamic values.

At the same time, Islamic pedagogy offers a distinctive philosophical foundation for teacher competence. The classical concept of *mu'allim* (teacher as transmitter of knowledge) has evolved into *murabbi* (teacher as character builder) and *mursyid* (teacher as spiritual guide) (Abdullah, 2021). Within this paradigm, the design of learning media becomes a moral responsibility—an extension of the teacher's duty to make learning meaningful, engaging, and spiritually transformative. When teachers design media that combine aesthetics, information, and ethical reflection, they perform an act of ibadah *ilmiah* worship through knowledge. This holistic view underscores why developing media-design competence among PAI teachers is not a mere technical necessity but a spiritual imperative aligned with the broader objectives of Islamic education (*maqasid al-tarbiyah*).

Internationally, the integration of digital pedagogy in religious education has gained recognition as an essential component of 21st-century literacy. Research by Al-Smadi and Al-Khasawneh (2023) indicates that teachers who integrate digital storytelling, gamified learning, and interactive simulations in moral education achieve higher student engagement and empathy outcomes. This confirms that the creative use of instructional media enhances not only motivation but also the internalization of values an outcome directly relevant to PAI's goals. Nevertheless, cultural adaptation is crucial; imported digital tools must be contextualized to align with local moral frameworks and language (Nasir & Sari, 2023).

Based on this background, the present study seeks to analyze and describe how Islamic Education teachers in public elementary schools in Ketol District develop their competence in designing instructional media. Specifically, it aims to identify (1) the existing level of teachers' competence, (2) the strategies and training mechanisms that contribute to competence enhancement, and (3) the challenges faced during the process. The study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to provide an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences, professional growth, and contextual limitations.

By focusing on competence development in a geographically rural yet spiritually dynamic setting, this research contributes to both theoretical and practical discussions of teacher professionalism in Islamic education. Theoretically, it enriches discourse on integrating technological literacy with moral pedagogy. Practically, it offers insights for policymakers and school administrators to design professional development models that strengthen teachers' creativity, reflective practice, and digital fluency without detaching from the ethical roots of Islamic teaching. Ultimately, improving teachers' ability to design learning media is not only about enhancing educational delivery but also about nurturing a generation of learners who can experience, interpret, and live out Islamic values through meaningful educational encounters.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Teacher Competence in Islamic Education

Teacher competence represents a multidimensional construct that encompasses knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective teaching. According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2021), teacher competence includes the ability to design meaningful learning experiences, apply pedagogical knowledge, and adapt to learners' developmental needs. Within the context of Islamic education (Pendidikan Agama Islam or PAI), competence extends beyond pedagogical proficiency to include spiritual and ethical dimensions. The mu'allim (teacher) is not only a transmitter of knowledge but also a moral guide who exemplifies Islamic values through practice and character (Abdullah, 2021).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia (Kementerian Agama RI, 2020) categorizes teacher competence into four interrelated areas: pedagogical, personal, professional, and social. Among these, pedagogical and professional competencies are crucial in designing instructional media. Pedagogical competence refers to teachers' understanding of learning theory, student development, and instructional design (Widodo & Riandi, 2021). Professional competence involves mastery of subject content and the capacity to innovate in delivering it. For Islamic Education teachers, the integration of both competencies is vital to translate theological content into pedagogically meaningful and engaging formats.

Studies by Tondeur et al. (2019) and Rahman and Fitriah (2021) emphasize that competence development should be continuous, collaborative, and context-sensitive. Teachers must engage in professional learning communities where they exchange knowledge, practice new skills, and reflect critically on their experiences. In the PAI context, competence also includes the ability to embed moral and spiritual values into technological tools. This synthesis reflects a broader Islamic pedagogical vision where teaching is an act of ibadah (worship), and competence becomes both professional mastery and ethical stewardship.

2.2 Designing Instructional Media in the Digital Era

Instructional media serve as bridges between abstract concepts and concrete understanding. They help learners visualize, interact with, and internalize knowledge through multisensory engagement (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). In Islamic education, media not only convey content but also embody values helping students experience faith-based learning in engaging ways. For example, digital storytelling, visual mind maps of Qur'anic principles, and interactive moral dilemmas can enhance students' comprehension and empathy (Al-Smadi & Al-Khasawneh, 2023). Developing competence in instructional media design requires teachers to master Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) a framework that integrates technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). For PAI teachers, this means understanding how Islamic teachings (content) can be delivered through creative media (technology) while maintaining pedagogical coherence (pedagogy). Teachers who achieve this integration are more likely to produce learning experiences that are interactive, relevant, and value-driven (Basri et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the use of digital media in Islamic education must align with the principles of adab (ethical manners) and hikmah (wisdom). According to Alzeer (2020), Islamic pedagogy demands that technology be treated as an instrument of virtue, not as an end in itself. Therefore, teachers must critically assess the appropriateness of visual imagery, textual representation, and interactivity within the framework of Islamic ethics.

The goal is to design media that not only inform but also transform guiding learners toward *ta'dib* (ethical discipline) and *tazkiyah* (spiritual purification). Research conducted by Sari and Yusuf (2022) highlights that PAI teachers who engage in structured training and mentoring programs show significant improvements in creativity and self-efficacy when designing media. Such programs often include practical workshops using digital tools like Canva, Powtoon, and interactive PowerPoint, combined with reflective discussions on Islamic values. The combination of technical training and moral reflection ensures that innovation does not compromise authenticity a critical concern in religious education.

2.3 Integration of Islamic Pedagogy and Digital Literacy

Islamic pedagogy and digital literacy are not opposing forces but complementary domains when guided by ethical awareness. The integration of these two paradigms reflects the contemporary educational philosophy of integrative knowledge (*ta'dib al-ma'rifah*)—a balance between faith, intellect, and modern technology (Hassan & Jamaludin, 2021). Teachers who embody this integrative approach perceive technology as a medium for *da'wah* (moral outreach) and intellectual engagement, rather than as a distraction from spiritual growth.

Scholars such as Alhassan (2023) and Basri et al. (2022) argue that the 21st-century PAI teacher must possess digital spiritual literacy, a competency that combines digital creativity with ethical responsibility. This means being able to evaluate, produce, and share digital content that fosters reflection, empathy, and moral reasoning. Digital spiritual literacy involves three key dimensions: (1) critical discernment in selecting media that align with Islamic values, (2) creativity in designing content that resonates emotionally and cognitively, and (3) collaboration in sharing best practices within teacher communities.

In the context of Ketol District, where resources are limited, the integration of Islamic pedagogy and digital literacy requires adaptive strategies such as contextual innovation using locally available materials, offline applications, and low-bandwidth platforms to design effective media. As affirmed by Nasir and Sari (2023), localized adaptation ensures that Islamic education remains inclusive and culturally relevant. Through this integration, teachers can cultivate learning environments that are technologically updated, pedagogically meaningful, and spiritually grounded.

In summary, the theoretical framework of this study rests on three foundational pillars: (1) teacher competence as a moral and professional construct, (2) instructional media design as both pedagogical and ethical practice, and (3) the integration of Islamic pedagogy and digital literacy as a model for sustainable educational innovation. This framework guides the analysis of how PAI teachers in Ketol District enhance their competencies, overcome contextual limitations, and reimagine Islamic education through creative, value-based media design.

3. Methodology

This study applied a qualitative descriptive approach to explore how Islamic Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam or PAI) teachers develop their competence in designing instructional media at public elementary schools in Ketol District, Central Aceh. The qualitative design was chosen because it allows for a deep understanding of teachers' experiences, reflections, and practices within their authentic teaching contexts. The study was grounded in a constructivist paradigm, emphasizing that teacher competence is constructed through social interaction, professional learning, and reflective engagement rather than being a fixed attribute (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Five public elementary schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs participated in this study, representing rural educational settings with limited access to digital facilities but strong commitment to Islamic moral education. Participants consisted of eight PAI teachers and two school principals, selected through purposive sampling to ensure inclusion of those actively involved in lesson design and media creation.

Data were collected over a three-month period through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, allowing comprehensive triangulation of data (Denzin, 2012). Interviews explored teachers' experiences, challenges, and strategies in designing learning media, while classroom observations examined how media were utilized in practice to promote student engagement and spiritual learning. Document analysis of lesson plans, digital teaching materials, and workshop reports provided additional evidence of teachers' creativity and professional development. The analysis process followed Braun and Clarke's (2019) thematic analysis framework, consisting of data familiarization, coding, theme identification, and interpretation. Using both inductive and deductive coding, the study identified several core themes, including teacher creativity and adaptation, reflective learning, technological limitations, and the integration of Islamic values into media design. NVivo 12 software assisted in managing and coding data, while member checking ensured the validity of findings by allowing participants to review and confirm interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To ensure trustworthiness and ethical integrity, the research adhered to the four criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement and triangulation; transferability was supported by detailed contextual descriptions; dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of all research activities; and confirmability was enhanced by maintaining reflexive journals to minimize researcher bias. Ethical approval was obtained from local education authorities, and informed consent was collected from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. Throughout the research process, Islamic ethical principles—*adab* (respect), *amanah*

(trust), and rahmah (compassion)—were observed to align the study’s methodology with the moral and spiritual values inherent in Islamic education.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The findings reveal that Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in public elementary schools within Ketol District demonstrate varying levels of competence in designing instructional media. Initially, most teachers exhibited strong mastery of religious content and pedagogical principles but lacked sufficient technological literacy and creativity in translating concepts into engaging digital or visual formats. Before the intervention programs comprising workshops, mentoring, and reflective discussions teachers predominantly relied on traditional tools such as blackboards, textbooks, and static PowerPoint slides. Following structured professional development activities, their understanding of media design broadened substantially, enabling them to incorporate visual, auditory, and interactive elements aligned with students’ learning characteristics.

Observation notes and interview data indicate a marked improvement in teachers’ Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) integration. Teachers began to design digital posters, interactive quizzes, and video-based learning aids using accessible platforms like Canva, PowerPoint animation, and CapCut. This change reflects a shift from teacher-centered delivery to student-centered learning, emphasizing participation and visual engagement. As one teacher noted, “Now I see media not just as decoration, but as a way to make students feel part of the learning process.” This perspective marks an important evolution in teachers’ professional self-concept, indicating increased confidence and creativity in instructional media design.

The training and mentoring programs played a pivotal role in enhancing teachers’ competence. Workshops organized by the local Ministry of Religious Affairs office emphasized hands-on learning where teachers collaboratively developed lesson materials integrating text, image, and motion. Teachers practiced designing thematic visuals related to Islamic teachings such as the pillars of faith, moral stories of prophets, and daily prayer routine tailored to elementary learners. Mentoring sessions further enabled peer learning and reflection, as teachers exchanged feedback on design quality and pedagogical relevance.

Teachers reported that collaborative sessions fostered mutual motivation and reduced anxiety toward digital tools. According to a participant, “At first, I was afraid to make mistakes when using technology, but after sharing experiences with peers, I became more confident.” This aligns with research by Al-Smadi and Al-Khasawneh (2023) and Rahman and Yusuf (2022), who found that peer collaboration and reflective mentoring significantly increase teachers’ digital self-efficacy and creative output. Moreover, these activities promoted not only skill acquisition but also the integration of Islamic moral values into visual narratives, ensuring that innovation remained spiritually grounded.

A central result of the competence development program is the ability of teachers to embed Islamic values into instructional media meaningfully. Teachers consciously applied ethical principles such as simplicity, modesty, and sincerity when selecting images, colors, and themes. For instance, digital posters promoting honesty (*sidq*) and gratitude (*shukr*) featured Qur’anic verses and relevant illustrations depicting daily acts of kindness. Teachers also developed short animated videos retelling stories of Prophet Yusuf and Prophet Muhammad, which were used to cultivate empathy and patience among students. This moral contextualization of digital media reflects what Basri et al. (2022) describe as digital spiritual literacy, where technological competence serves moral formation rather than mere engagement. Observations during classroom sessions showed that students responded enthusiastically to these media, often recalling the moral messages more accurately than when taught through verbal instruction alone. This suggests that well-designed visual media can enhance moral cognition and emotional resonance, especially among young learners who are visually oriented.

Despite notable progress, teachers still encountered several constraints. The most frequently cited challenges were limited infrastructure, unstable internet connectivity, and unequal digital literacy levels among teachers. Some schools lacked projectors or reliable electricity, forcing teachers to adapt by using printed visuals or offline media formats. To address these constraints, teachers adopted contextual innovation strategies, such as designing reusable laminated posters, creating flipcharts, or using mobile phones to display short educational clips. Furthermore, differences in digital competence created disparities in media quality. Senior teachers, in particular, expressed difficulties in using software requiring advanced editing or animation skills. However, through mentoring and continuous peer support, most participants demonstrated steady improvement. Teachers who initially hesitated to use technology gradually became facilitators of innovation in their schools, mentoring others and sharing best practices. This mirrors findings by Tondeur et al. (2019) and Hassan and Jamaludin (2021), who emphasized that collaborative learning communities serve as catalysts for sustainable competence growth.

The transformation in media design competence led to observable improvements in classroom dynamics. Students exhibited increased attention, participation, and curiosity during lessons supported by interactive or visual media. Teachers reported that incorporating simple animations, visual cues, and music made lessons more relatable and memorable. Moreover, the process of designing media enhanced teachers’ reflective practice they

began to assess not only the visual appeal of their materials but also their pedagogical and spiritual impact. As a result, instructional media evolved from being supplementary tools to becoming integral components of faith-integrated pedagogy. Teachers' growing creativity and self-efficacy fostered a sense of professional pride and ownership over their teaching materials. The findings collectively demonstrate that systematic and value-oriented professional development can transform Islamic Education teachers into innovative, reflective, and spiritually conscious educators capable of designing media that educate the mind and nurture the soul.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that the development of instructional media competence among Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in Ketol District is a multidimensional process that combines pedagogical innovation, technological adaptation, and moral integration. The improvement observed after professional development activities through workshops, mentoring, and reflective collaboration illustrates that competence growth in Islamic education is not only a technical achievement but a spiritual-pedagogical transformation. The enhancement of teachers' ability to integrate Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) validates the argument that technology integration in religious education must be contextualized within moral frameworks. Studies by Rahman and Yusuf (2022) and Basri et al. (2022) emphasize that teachers who view technology as a medium for moral communication rather than entertainment exhibit more purposeful innovation. The participants' use of tools like Canva, PowerPoint, and CapCut to design value-based media demonstrates that digital competence and religious commitment can coexist harmoniously when guided by reflective practice.

This aligns with Hassan and Jamaludin (2021), who assert that Islamic teachers' spiritual consciousness enhances their moral professionalism, leading to instructional practices that unite faith and creativity. Similarly, Al-Smadi and Al-Khasawneh (2023) found that digital storytelling in moral education increases student empathy and engagement, suggesting that pedagogical creativity supports emotional and ethical learning. Hence, the integration of TPACK with Islamic pedagogy as observed in this study supports the global trend toward digital spiritual literacy, where teachers employ technology to nurture faith-driven inquiry and reflective learning.

The study also reinforces the notion that structured professional development particularly when grounded in collaboration and reflection serves as the key catalyst for sustainable competence enhancement. The observed improvement in teachers' creativity and self-efficacy resonates with Tondeur et al. (2019), who found that peer collaboration and school-based digital training significantly elevate teachers' digital integration capacity. This is also consistent with Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), who argue that teacher learning is most effective when it is participatory, reflective, and context-specific.

The mentoring component of this study echoes findings by Lavy and Naama-Ghanayim (2020), where relational support and shared experiences increase teachers' confidence and willingness to experiment with technology. Moreover, continuous reflection embedded in these activities aligns with Guskey (2020), who noted that feedback loops between practice and reflection are essential for lasting professional transformation. In this case, the combination of peer mentoring and moral reflection produced a form of collective efficacy, where teachers not only mastered digital tools but also internalized the ethical responsibility of their media design.

A distinctive contribution of this research lies in demonstrating how Islamic ethical values can be authentically embedded into instructional media design. The teachers deliberate attention to *adab* (ethical manners), simplicity, and moral symbolism in digital content creation mirrors Alzeer and Kassab's (2020) concept of "reflective digital piety," where innovation serves virtue rather than vanity. Teachers' incorporation of Qur'anic verses, prophetic stories, and moral metaphors in videos or infographics aligns with Abdullah et al. (2023), who emphasize that spiritual narratives can act as transformative learning experiences in moral education.

These practices also resonate with Ismail et al. (2022), who found that affective engagement through story-based learning enhances moral internalization and self-regulation. The visual and emotional power of multimedia facilitates the embodiment of faith principles students not only hear about honesty or gratitude but see and feel them enacted through engaging content. Thus, instructional media become both cognitive and affective bridges, strengthening moral understanding through multisensory learning.

The persistence of technological and infrastructural challenges reflects broader structural realities in rural Indonesian education. Teachers' adaptive strategies—using offline tools, printed media, or mobile phones—illustrate what Nasir and Sari (2023) describe as contextual innovation, where educators transform limitations into opportunities through local creativity. This adaptive resilience aligns with UNESCO's (2021) call for inclusive and sustainable digital transformation that accommodates resource disparities.

Despite constraints, the teachers' progress demonstrates that innovation does not depend solely on advanced technology but on pedagogical imagination. As Hassan and Jamaludin (2021) note, teachers who possess moral clarity and reflective skills can sustain meaningful learning even in low-resource environments. The present study extends this view by showing that Islamic pedagogical values such as sincerity, patience, and communal cooperation can become motivational resources that compensate for technical limitations.

The transformation of classroom dynamics following teachers' use of creative instructional media confirms previous research linking visual interactivity with increased motivation and comprehension. Al-Smadi

and Al-Khasawneh (2023) reported similar findings in moral education contexts, where interactive and aesthetic media foster emotional connection and long-term retention. Likewise, Hashim et al. (2023) found that teacher integrity and sincerity predict stronger moral influence on students' engagement and discipline.

In Ketol District, teachers' use of media rooted in Islamic values has cultivated a more participatory learning culture, where students are active co-learners. This outcome reinforces the idea that competence in media design transcends technical skill—it reflects teachers' ability to transform faith into pedagogical art. Ultimately, the findings confirm that sustainable professional development in Islamic education must integrate technological training, reflective mentorship, and moral formation to produce educators capable of shaping both intellect and character.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the development of instructional media competence among Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in Ketol District is a transformative process encompassing pedagogical innovation, technological adaptation, and moral integration. Teachers who previously relied on conventional teaching methods have shown notable progress in creating digital, visual, and interactive media that enhance students' engagement and moral understanding. This evolution signifies not only the acquisition of technical skills but also the internalization of pedagogical awareness, creativity, and ethical responsibility. The integration of TPACK principles with Islamic pedagogy enables teachers to design learning media that are both intellectually stimulating and spiritually meaningful, supporting students' holistic development in line with the goals of Islamic education.

Professional development initiatives particularly collaborative workshops, mentoring, and reflective peer learning proved to be essential in sustaining teachers' competence growth. The study confirms that teacher learning flourishes in environments that encourage shared reflection, emotional support, and moral accountability. As teachers gain confidence and digital literacy, they begin to view instructional media not merely as visual aids but as extensions of their moral mission as *murabbi* (educators and spiritual mentors). However, persistent challenges such as limited infrastructure, unequal access to technology, and differing digital proficiency levels necessitate ongoing institutional support. Addressing these barriers is vital to ensuring that competence development remains inclusive, equitable, and sustainable across diverse educational settings.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, educational authorities particularly the Ministry of Religious Affairs should institutionalize continuous professional development programs that integrate digital literacy with Islamic moral pedagogy. Such programs must emphasize practical training, mentorship, and reflective learning rather than one-time workshops. Second, schools should foster collaborative teacher communities (learning circles) where educators can co-design, evaluate, and refine instructional media aligned with Islamic values. Third, teacher education institutions should embed digital spiritual literacy into pre-service curricula to prepare future educators for the dual challenge of innovation and ethics in the digital era. By aligning technological competence with spiritual consciousness, Islamic education can continue to nurture generations who learn, think, and create within the moral framework of faith and compassion.

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