



Strengthening Four Competencies of Teachers In Improving the Professionalism of MI/SD Educators (Personal, Social, Professional, And Pedagogical Competencies)

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Abstract

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Education plays a crucial role in developing human potential and improving the quality of national human resources. The success of education is strongly influenced by teachers as the main actors in the learning process. However, various studies indicate that teacher competencies in several schools remain inadequate, which affects the quality of learning and student achievement. This study aims to analyze the importance of strengthening the four core teacher competencies pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies in improving the quality of education at the elementary level (MI/SD). This research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method. Data were collected from scientific journals, books, regulations, and relevant academic sources accessed through Google Scholar and other educational databases. The data were analyzed descriptively by identifying, categorizing, and synthesizing key findings related to teacher competencies. The results indicate that the four competencies are interrelated and play a significant role in enhancing teacher performance and learning quality. Therefore, continuous efforts to strengthen these competencies are essential to foster effective learning and to develop students who are intellectually capable and possess strong moral character.

Keywords: Teacher Competence, Pedagogical Competence, Professional Competence, Personal Competence, Social Competence, Education Quality.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious effort made by an individual to acquire and develop their potential. Education guides humans in developing this potential to become better individuals. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, the goal of education in Indonesia is to make education a guideline for children to become individuals who are capable of achieving safety and happiness. Education is a key pillar in advancing the nation, as it is an important factor in improving the quality of human resources. The mindset and reasoning abilities of human resources are expected to develop in accordance with each individual's experiences. Education can also be considered a dynamic manifestation that evolves alongside human culture. Therefore, developments in the field of education must be in line with cultural



changes. Improvements in education at all levels need to be continuously made as a proactive measure to meet future needs (Tomi et al., 2026).

The key to successful education, among many factors, is the teachers and students as the actors. From the teachers' perspective, professional competence, personality, social skills, and pedagogical skills are essential for transferring knowledge (Undang Undang Republik Indonesia, 2005). From the students' perspective, enthusiasm and persistence in learning activities are needed because the true advantage of humans is that they are given reason and the power of life in the sense of civilization, so that humans are able to create their own world and choose strategies to achieve their life goals.

In reality, some teachers still lack professionalism in carrying out their professional duties, so in the future, it is hoped that the character of teachers will improve. This issue has triggered students' antipathy towards teachers and a decline in student motivation to learn, especially in history, where the relationship between teachers and students is less than harmonious (Artono & Sari, 2020).

Teacher competence has a significant effect on the quality of the teaching and learning process because teacher competence determines their performance in facilitating students to succeed in learning. Several studies related to teacher competence show that teacher competence has an influence on student learning outcomes. However, in reality, several studies show that the four competencies of teachers in some schools are still inadequate. One of these studies was conducted by Siswantari. Siswantari (2011) conducted a study aimed at determining the competencies of non-formal teachers in all learning groups (kejar) for Package A and Package B throughout Indonesia. The results of her study show that the competencies of non-formal teachers, consisting of pedagogical competencies, professional competencies, social competencies, and personality competencies, are generally still low. The low level of teacher competence indicates that the quality of teachers does not yet meet the requirements of Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards. Siswantari mentioned that the low competence of teachers also reflects that school programs are carried out haphazardly and have not been implemented properly. The important thing is that planned programs can be implemented despite various limitations, including limitations in competence. Thus, efforts are still needed to improve the competence of teachers in order to improve the quality of education (Lestari & Purwanti, 2018).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review (Sari, 2020) method to analyze the importance of strengthening the four core teacher competencies: pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies. Data were obtained from secondary sources such as scientific journals, books, laws and regulations, and relevant academic publications accessed through Google Scholar and other educational databases. The literature selection focused on peer-reviewed articles and credible sources relevant to teacher competence and education quality.

The collected data were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical technique. Each selected source was carefully reviewed to identify key concepts,

findings, and arguments related to teacher competencies. The results were then categorized and synthesized systematically to provide a comprehensive understanding of the urgency and strategies for strengthening teacher competencies in improving the quality of education at the elementary level (MI/SD).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Teacher Competence in Education

Teachers are people who must be respected and emulated, in the sense that they have charisma or authority that makes them worthy of being emulated and looked up to. Teachers are adults who are consciously responsible for educating, teaching, and guiding students. A person referred to as a teacher is someone who has the ability to design learning programs and is able to organize and manage the classroom so that students can learn and ultimately achieve maturity as the ultimate goal of the educational process. Teaching is a profession, which means it is a position that requires special skills as a teacher and cannot be done by just anyone outside the field of education. Although in reality, there are still people outside the field of education who do this (Nurfuadi, 2021)

Teachers are one of the most important components in education. Teachers play a significant and strategic role in the context of education. This is because teachers are at the forefront of implementing education. Therefore, it is only fitting that teachers have various competencies related to their duties and responsibilities.

Islamic teachings also pay close attention to the need for these competencies, as stated by Allah SWT in Surah Al-An'am verse 135 as follows:

قُلْ يٰقَوْمِ اَعْمَلُوا عَلٰى مَكَاتِبِكُمْ اِنِّىْ عَامِلٌ فَاَسُوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۗ مَنْ تَكُوْنُ لَهٗ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِۗ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُوْنَ ۙ ۱۳۵

Say (O Muhammad), "O my people! Work according to your position, and I will work (accordingly). Soon you will know who will have the best place in the Hereafter. Indeed, the wrongdoers will not prosper" (QS. Al-An'am: 135).

The meaning of this verse is that a person who bears responsibility must carry it out as best as possible according to his abilities. In the words of Allah SWT, if he carries out that responsibility well, then we will also receive good things (Rao & Affan, 2023).

Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers Article 4 emphasizes that teachers, as agents of learning, serve to improve the quality of national education. Therefore, in order to perform their duties properly, teachers must meet certain requirements, one of which is competence (Hasnianti et al., 2023).

Competence is a fusion of knowledge (intellectual ability), attitude (emotional ability), and skills (physical ability) that is manifested in the form of actions. In other words, competence is a combination of mastery of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that are reflected in habits of thinking and acting in carrying out tasks/work. It can also be said that competence is a combination of abilities, knowledge, skills, attitudes, characteristics, understanding, appreciation, and expectations that underlie a person's characteristics to perform work in carrying out tasks or jobs in order to achieve quality standards in the field of education.

Competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that teachers must possess, internalize, and master in order to carry out their professional duties (Jamin, 2018).

Professional teachers are not only required to have one competency, namely professional competency, but professional teachers should have all competencies. As mandated by UUGD No. 14/2005 Article 10 paragraph 1 and PP No. 19/2005 Article 28 paragraph 3, teachers must have competencies that include pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies obtained through professional education. In the context of these two policies, the professional competence of teachers can be defined as the totality of knowledge, skills, and attitudes manifested in the form of intelligent and responsible actions possessed by a person to hold the position of teacher as a profession (Jamin, 2018)

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that teachers are a profession that plays a strategic role in determining the success of education. As respected and emulated figures, teachers are not only tasked with transferring knowledge, but also with shaping character, guiding, and setting an example for students. Therefore, teachers must possess and master four main competencies, namely pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies, as mandated in Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. These four competencies are interrelated and inseparable, as they form the basis for teachers to carry out their duties responsibly, effectively, and in accordance with national education quality standards. With a comprehensive mastery of these competencies, teachers are able to optimally fulfill their role in shaping knowledgeable, moral, and high-quality students.

1. Professional Competence

Professional competence is the ability to master subject matter broadly and deeply in order to set learning objectives and organize learning content centered on students. Indicators of professional competence include a) knowledge of learning content and how to teach it; b) characteristics and learning styles of learners; and c) curriculum and how to use it. Experienced teachers are defined as those who have the ability to organize education and teaching, but professional teachers are also defined as those who have the necessary abilities to organize teaching and education. In other words, expert teachers are defined as people who are able to complete tasks because they have special abilities and expertise in the field of teaching and function as good teachers. Therefore, professional instructors are defined as schools that have professionalism in education and teaching related to their work as a livelihood (Sustiana et al., 2025).

The higher the teacher's professional competence, the higher the quality of the learning process. The findings of this study are in line with a study conducted by Khodijah in 2021, which shows that a teacher's professional competence has a positive impact on learning. Professional competence is a teacher's ability to gain depth in a subject, have a specific profession, and understand the nature of their work. A professional teacher has the duty to teach. In teaching, a teacher conveys material and sincerely imparts knowledge to their students. This competency is very important for teachers to have so that learning is of high quality (Pibina et al., 2025).

Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that professional competence is a teacher's ability to master subject matter broadly and deeply and

understand how to teach it in accordance with the characteristics of students and the applicable curriculum. This competence includes mastery of learning content, understanding of how students learn, and the ability to manage and apply the curriculum appropriately. Professional teachers are teachers who have special expertise in their field, are able to carry out their teaching duties with full responsibility, and treat their profession as a form of sincere service. The higher the professional competence of teachers, the higher the quality of the learning process and outcomes. Therefore, professional competence is one of the main factors in improving the quality of education.

2. Pedagogical Competence

Etymologically, the word pedagogy comes from the Greek words *paedos* and *agagos* (*paedos* = child and *agage* = to accompany or guide), therefore pedagogy means guiding children. Guiding in the sense of imparting morals, knowledge, and skills to students (Akbar, 2021) Pedagogy literally means a male assistant in Ancient Greece whose job was to take his master's children to school. Figuratively, pedagogy refers to an expert who guides children toward certain goals in life (Nurfuadi, 2021)

Pedagogical competence is one of the four basic competencies that professional teachers must possess, as stipulated in Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. This competence refers to the ability of teachers to manage student learning effectively and efficiently in accordance with educational and humanistic principles. According to Permendiknas Number 16 of 2007, pedagogical competence is the ability of teachers to manage student learning, which includes understanding students, designing and implementing learning, evaluating learning outcomes, and developing students to actualize their competencies. This shows that pedagogical competence is not limited to teaching techniques, but also encompasses comprehensive psychological, sociological, and pedagogical dimensions (Santoso & Trisnani, 2024).

In Indonesian Minister of Education Regulation No. 16 of 2007 concerning Academic Qualification Standards and Teacher Competencies, the indicators of pedagogical competencies for high school/MA teachers are outlined as follows: (1) Mastering the characteristics of students from physical, moral, spiritual, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual aspects. (2) Mastering learning theories and educational learning principles. (3) Developing a curriculum related to the subjects taught. (4) Conducting educational learning. (5) Utilizing information and communication technology for learning. (6) Facilitating the development of students' potential to actualize their various potentials. (7) Communicating effectively, empathetically, and politely with students. (8) Conducting assessments and evaluations of the learning process and outcomes. (9) Utilizing assessment and evaluation results for learning purposes. (10) Taking reflective action to improve the quality of learning. Based on the above description and previous research, the following hypothesis (H1) can be formulated: pedagogical competence has a significant effect on teacher performance (Mu'arif, 2023).

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that pedagogical competence is a basic skill that teachers must possess in order to manage learning effectively, educationally, and humanely. This competence is not only related to teaching skills, but also includes a comprehensive understanding of student

characteristics, mastery of learning theory, curriculum development, use of technology, implementation of evaluation, and reflection to improve the quality of learning. With good mastery of pedagogical competence, teachers are able to create a meaningful learning process and support the optimal development of student potential. Therefore, pedagogical competence has a significant influence on teachers' performance in carrying out their professional duties.

3. Personality Competence

Personal competence is one of the four professional teacher competencies and is inseparable from other competencies, namely pedagogical competence, social competence, and professional competence. This competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that teachers must possess, internalize, and master, and which have become part of themselves in order to carry out their professional duties. Competency is a combination of knowledge, ability, and application in carrying out tasks in the workplace (Nazmi et al., 2025).

Teacher personality includes integrity, maturity, consistency in action, and emotional maturity. Teachers with good personalities will become role models, indirectly instilling moral and ethical values in students' lives (Undang Undang Republik Indonesia, 2005). Teachers who are able to be patient and wise when facing challenges in the classroom tend to create a supportive and enjoyable learning environment. The influence of teachers' personality competencies is also very significant in the process of shaping students' characters. Teachers' exemplary behavior will become part of the value learning experienced directly by students. Students find it easier to absorb values from the attitudes and actions demonstrated by teachers than from mere advice or moral lectures. Teachers who are honest, responsible, disciplined, and respect differences will instill these values in students' souls.

Teacher personality competencies are divided into several main aspects, namely: 1. Steady and Stable Personality: Teachers must have strong and consistent principles in their actions. They are not easily influenced by external pressures, whether from the environment or students. 2. Mature and Responsible: Teachers must demonstrate maturity in solving problems and be responsible for every decision they make. 3. Authority and Wisdom: Teachers are expected to be able to make wise decisions and be respected by students for their behavior and personality. 4. Consistency and Honesty: Honesty and consistency in daily actions will strengthen students' trust in teachers. 5. Professional Ethics: Teachers must uphold professional ethics and maintain the dignity of themselves and the institution where they teach (Setyaningrum et al., 2025).

A teacher must act in accordance with religious, legal, and social norms. Currently, there are many incidents in which teachers violate religious, legal, and moral norms, thereby contradicting the personal competencies that a teacher should possess. This is because some teachers do not understand the importance of personal competencies in helping them to carry out their teaching duties smoothly (Jamin, 2018).

The Influence of Personality Competence on Student Character Teachers' personality competence has a major influence on the formation of student character. Students tend to imitate their teachers' behavior, both consciously and unconsciously. For example, teachers who are honest, disciplined, and fair will set

a real example for students regarding the importance of these values in everyday life. Conversely, teachers who do not demonstrate integrity will weaken the value of character education in schools. Teachers' personalities also help create a positive learning climate, full of empathy, and supportive of the growth of self-confidence in students. Teachers' exemplary behavior is a crucial factor in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also has noble character (Setyaningrum et al., 2025).

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that personal competence is an important aspect that teachers must possess as part of their professionalism. This competence reflects the integrity, maturity, responsibility, authority, honesty, and consistency of teachers in acting in accordance with religious, legal, and social norms. Teachers' personalities not only influence the success of their teaching, but also have a major impact on shaping students' characters. Teachers with good personalities will become role models who instill moral and ethical values through their attitudes and behavior. Therefore, strengthening personality competencies is essential for teachers to be able to create a positive learning environment and shape a generation with noble character and integrity.

4. Social Competence

Social competence encompasses a set of basic skills, attitudes, intelligence, and feelings that are given functional meaning by cultural context, environment, and situation. Social competence cannot be separated from the influence of social situations, social group conditions, social tasks, and individual circumstances in adapting to various situations and environments.

People with high social competence are able to express more social concern, are more sympathetic, more helpful, and more loving. Individuals with social competence use their thoughts and feelings to select and control which behaviors should be displayed and which should be suppressed in certain situations in order to achieve their own goals or those of others (Yuniarti, 2017) .

The benefits of teachers with social competence are that if teachers have competence, they will be emulated by their students. This is because, in addition to intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence, students also need to be introduced to social intelligence. The aim is for students to have a conscience, a sense of caring, empathy, and sympathy for others. Meanwhile, individuals with social intelligence are characterized by a strong relationship with God, benefiting the environment, being polite, caring for others, honest, and clean in their behavior.

The benefits of teachers' social competence guide students to have social intelligence that can be applied in their daily lives in the midst of a social environment. Teachers are figures that students look up to. There is a well-known saying that teachers are respected and imitated, meaning that teachers are admired and emulated. Therefore, in the learning process, teachers are expected to be able to establish good social relationships with students through interaction and communication. After all, the personality of teachers will always be a concern for every student.

Teachers do need to pay attention to their social relationships with students. Because these relationships occur both inside and outside the classroom, they have a direct impact on learning objectives. Successful teacher-student

relationships also contribute to a pleasant learning atmosphere. In relation to social relationships between teachers and students, efforts need to be made to improve teachers' social competence by developing social intelligence, which is a must for teachers. The aim is to ensure that teacher-student relationships run smoothly. Teachers' success depends on their social skills as well as other abilities. Teachers are expected to set a good example, act and behave appropriately, and build close and harmonious relationships and interactions with others. Therefore, this requirement is reasonable.

Social competence is a collection of values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that a person demonstrates in their work, which is referred to as a perspective on behavior and appearance. A teacher must care about their students and colleagues. This demonstrates the ability to be social (Sustiana et al., 2025).

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that social competence is the ability of teachers to interact, communicate, and adapt effectively with students, colleagues, and their social environment. This competence includes values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that are reflected in polite behavior, empathy, concern, and the ability to build harmonious relationships. Teachers with high social competence can serve as role models for students in developing social intelligence, such as caring, honesty, and mutual respect. With good social relationships between teachers and students, the learning atmosphere will be more conducive and enjoyable, so that educational goals can be achieved optimally.

B. The Urgency of Strengthening Four Teacher Competencies

The teaching profession consists of individuals who have special education and expertise in the field of teaching, and are committed to making a positive contribution to society. To achieve this level of professionalism, teachers need intensive specialized training and a high level of self-awareness in order to continuously improve their knowledge and skills. Teacher performance is assessed not only based on general teaching outcomes, but also on their competencies, which include qualitative and quantitative abilities. These aspects cover cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions that must be implemented comprehensively in teaching practice. A teacher's competencies also include the ability to carry out their duties in accordance with established standards, have a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the subject matter, and be able to successfully guide students to achieve the established teaching objectives. A teacher's success is measured by how well they can help their students develop and achieve their desired academic goals (Fitrah et al., 2025).

Teacher competence is an important aspect that every teacher must possess. By improving teacher competence, teachers will directly realize that in order to provide quality learning, they need to improve their competence, which includes pedagogical competence, professional competence, and personal and social competence. It is hoped that by mastering these competencies, a positive learning atmosphere will be created, and learning objectives will be achieved effectively and efficiently (Kurnia et al., n.d.).

Teachers play a very important role in the learning process and the achievement of learning objectives. Teachers have a great responsibility to provide knowledge and experience or understanding to children so that they can improve their performance and abilities as well as positive values through guidance and

exemplary behavior towards their students. Teacher competence determines the quality of classroom management and child learning; therefore, improving the quality and competence of teachers will determine the success of achieving learning objectives.

C. Strategies for Improving Teacher Competence

Teacher competency development is a continuous effort to improve, maintain, and enhance teachers' skills in handling educational and learning issues that have an impact on better student learning outcomes (Pareza et al., 2025). Teacher competence is a key factor in realizing quality education. Teacher competence includes pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. Teacher competence will not improve on its own, but there are certainly efforts to improve it (Sustiana et al., 2025). Therefore, various systematic strategies are needed to continuously improve the pedagogical quality of MI teachers.

1. Read Educational Books Diligently

It is undeniable that books are a repository of knowledge and a window to the world. By reading, one can understand and comprehend a subject or issue. Teachers, as individuals who constantly interact with students who are always developing, should continue to expand their knowledge. This is very important because by reading, teachers can understand the problems that students encounter and learn how to solve them. By reading educational books, especially those related to learning, ranging from mastering the characteristics of students from physical, moral, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual aspects, learning theories, curriculum, and learning technology, learning can be made more effective and efficient (Akbar, 2021).

2. Reading and Writing Scientific Papers

Reading and understanding the contents of journals or other scientific papers in the field of teacher education can develop their professionalism. In addition to increasing insight and knowledge, reading and writing scientific papers can also hone teachers' skills in expressing new ideas in the field of education (Nursalim, 2017)

3. Educator Certification

The granting of educator certification to teachers is recognition that they have met the criteria to be professional teachers. Professional teachers are an absolute requirement for achieving quality educational goals. The educator certificate itself is a certificate issued by a designated university as the certification administrator as proof of recognition of the teacher's professionalism, which is given to teachers as professionals (Supriyatno et al., 2016).

The granting of certification to teachers must be understood within the framework of improving the quality of education nationally. It is not only a teacher who has received legal recognition and authority as a professional teacher in a particular subject area and at a particular level of education.

Behind the granting of teacher certification, there is also a demand to improve their performance even further. Through the teacher certification program, it is hoped that the performance of teachers as learning agents will improve in accordance with the established standards. It is hoped that improved performance and quality of learning will ultimately lead to an increase in the learning achievements of students (Supriyatno et al., 2016).

4. In-Service Education Program

Motivating teachers to pursue higher education through continuing education. Of course, this starts with the teachers themselves, in the sense that schools should strive to provide teachers with opportunities for higher education, either through scholarship programs or on their own initiative. Teachers must be encouraged to increase their knowledge about developments in educational issues to avoid the possibility of falling behind in the field of education. Therefore, teachers are required to update and improve their education to enhance their level of professionalism (Susilowati et al., 2013)

5. Program In Service Training

Activities such as training, refresher courses, workshops, courses, seminars, discussions, or forums, whether conducted internally or externally by the institution (Susilowati et al., 2013) Teacher training is an important element in improving the quality of education, especially in the context of strengthening teaching skills and mastery of effective learning methods. Training not only plays a role in improving teacher competence, but also has a significant impact on the quality of teaching, which ultimately affects student learning outcomes. Teacher training aims to update and enrich their knowledge and teaching skills so that they can adapt to developments in curriculum and educational technology. Continuous training also provides opportunities for teachers to collaborate with colleagues, share experiences, and find solutions to various educational problems in their environment. With training, teachers can develop confidence in teaching and build a positive learning environment in the classroom (Sustiana et al., 2025)

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that teacher competency development is a continuous process that is very important in improving the quality of education and student learning outcomes. Teacher competencies, which include pedagogical, professional, social, and personal aspects, will not develop automatically, but require planned and systematic efforts. Various strategies, such as regularly reading educational books, reading and writing scientific papers, pursuing teacher certification, continuing education through in-service education programs, and participating in training or in-service training, are concrete steps toward improving teacher quality and professionalism. Through continuous competency development, teachers are expected to be able to adapt to developments in science, curriculum, and technology, thereby creating more effective and innovative learning that has a positive impact on student learning achievement.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description in the introduction and discussion, it can be concluded that strengthening the four competencies of teachers, namely pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies, are key factors in realizing quality education in MI/SD. These four competencies are interrelated and inseparable, as each plays a role in shaping teachers who are professional, have integrity, and are able to manage learning effectively and humanely.

Pedagogical competence emphasizes teachers' ability to understand student characteristics, design and implement learning, and conduct appropriate evaluations. Professional competence relates to in-depth mastery of subject matter

and the ability to develop oneself in line with advances in science and technology. Personal competence requires teachers to have integrity, maturity, and exemplary attitudes and behavior. Meanwhile, social competence emphasizes teachers' ability to communicate and interact effectively with students, colleagues, parents, and the community.

Strengthening these competencies must be done continuously through various efforts such as reading and writing scientific papers, participating in training and certification, and continuing education. With consistent strengthening, MI/SD teachers are expected to be able to improve the quality of learning and contribute to shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has good character and noble morals.

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