

A Competency-Based Analysis of Human Resource Development among Educators at Salafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools

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ABSTRACT:

This study critically analyzes the implementation of competency-based human resource development (HRD) practices among educators (asatidzah) in Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Indonesia's Riau Islands. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were obtained through interviews, participant observations, document analysis, and focus group discussions across three pesantren. The analysis reveals persistent gaps in pedagogical, social, personal, and professional competencies despite the educators' strong foundation in religious knowledge. HRD initiatives are found to be fragmented, lacking systematic planning, evaluation mechanisms, and alignment with contemporary educational standards. These findings indicate an urgent need for structured, contextually relevant HRD strategies that are both sustainable and responsive to the dual imperatives of Islamic education and modern pedagogical demands. This study contributes to the discourse on educational capacity building in Islamic institutions and calls for future research using mixed-method or longitudinal approaches to examine the systemic effects of competency-based HRD interventions.

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ABSTRAK:

Penelitian ini menganalisis secara kritis penerapan praktik pengembangan sumber daya manusia (SDM) berbasis kompetensi di kalangan pendidik (asatidzah) pada pesantren Salafiyah di Kepulauan Riau, Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, data diperoleh melalui wawancara, observasi partisipatif, analisis dokumen, dan diskusi kelompok terfokus pada tiga pesantren. Hasil analisis menunjukkan adanya kesenjangan yang terus-menerus dalam kompetensi pedagogik, sosial, personal, dan profesional, meskipun para pendidik memiliki landasan yang kuat dalam pengetahuan keagamaan. Inisiatif pengembangan SDM yang dilakukan cenderung terfragmentasi, kurang memiliki perencanaan sistematis, mekanisme evaluasi, serta tidak selaras dengan standar pendidikan kontemporer. Temuan ini mengindikasikan perlunya strategi pengembangan SDM yang terstruktur, relevan secara kontekstual, berkelanjutan, dan mampu menjawab tuntutan ganda antara pendidikan Islam dan kebutuhan pedagogis modern. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap wacana penguatan kapasitas pendidikan di institusi Islam dan merekomendasikan penelitian lanjutan dengan pendekatan campuran (mixed-method) atau longitudinal untuk menelaah dampak sistemik dari intervensi pengembangan SDM berbasis kompetensi.

Kata Kunci: *Kompetensi Pendidik, Pengembangan SDM Berbasis Kompetensi, Pesantren, Sekolah Islam.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are among the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. According to Karel Stenbrink's research, the pesantren education system has existed since the 19th century in the archipelago. This research builds upon Snouck Hurgronje's earlier work, which examined Islamic educational institutions in West Java, Central Java, and Aceh (Hantoro, Rosnawati, Milasari, & Kasful Anwar, 2022). Over time, pesantren have undergone significant changes in curriculum management, leadership, and overall administration, adapting to the needs and developments of modern education. Abdurrahman Wahid, widely known as Gus Dur, emphasized that the development of Salafiyah pesantren follows the dictum "al-muhafadzatu 'ala al-qadimi ash-shalih ma'a al-akhdzu bil jadidi ashlah," meaning preserving beneficial traditional values while integrating modern improvements (Hantoro, Rosnawati, Milasari, & Jamrizal, 2022; Kamal, 2018). Guided by this principle, pesantren have experienced cultural, systemic, and educational transformations.



Despite these transformations, many pesantren, particularly those following the Salafiyah tradition, continue to rely on classical Islamic texts as the core of their curriculum. Previous studies have highlighted the tension between preserving traditional educational frameworks and integrating modern pedagogical practices. While some pesantren have successfully incorporated contemporary curricula, others have struggled with balancing religious instruction and competency-based teacher development (Husmiaty Hasyim, 2015). Research indicates that many pesantren still lack structured competency-based training programs, which hinders teachers' ability to effectively meet modern educational demands (Rohman & Suryapermana, 2024).

A major challenge in Salafiyah pesantren is the development of human resources (HR), particularly the competencies of *asatidzah* (Islamic teachers). Human resource management (HRM) in educational institutions aims to enhance learning effectiveness and overall educational quality through continuous professional development (Rohman & Suryapermana, 2024). Teacher competence plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic and character development (Nur Syahiroh et al., 2024; Riyadi et al., 2023). However, competency gaps in pedagogical skills, social interaction, and professional development remain prevalent among *asatidzah*. Many teachers have strong religious knowledge but lack the pedagogical and professional skills necessary to deliver quality education. Research suggests that competency-based HRM can support structured educator development, ensuring that teachers meet modern curriculum demands while maintaining traditional Islamic educational values (Aditya, 2023).

Observations in three Salafiyah pesantren—PPS Khadimul Ummah Bintan, PPS Ibnu Utsman Tanjungpinang, and PPS Darussalam Batam—reveal several issues in HR development. First, these pesantren lack a structured HR development model as a reference for improving *asatidzah* competencies. Second, many teachers do not yet possess comprehensive teaching competencies in line with national education standards. Third, teacher development initiatives in these pesantren remain incidental rather than systematic. Lastly, there is no sustainable competency-based HR development model that ensures continuous improvement.

Government regulations, such as the Regulation of the Minister of Religion (PMA) No. 31 of 2020, provide an opportunity for pesantren to modernize their educational management. This regulation recognizes three categories of pesantren: traditional, Muslim curriculum-based, and integrated models combining national and Islamic curricula. Chapter VII of the regulation emphasizes quality assurance, including improvements in religious education, institutional management, teacher qualifications, and competency development (Abdurrahman, 2020; Adhim, 2020). Despite these policy efforts, many pesantren still lack clear frameworks for professional development, particularly in competency-based HR development.

Competency-based development has been widely recognized in various professional fields. Robert W. White's research in 1959, "Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence," demonstrated that work efficiency improves when individuals possess relevant competencies. Craig C. Lunberg further conceptualized competency in "Executive Development Program Planning," and David McClelland reinforced this in his 1973 article, "Testing for Competence Rather Than Intelligence." Since then, competency-based models have been applied to various domains, including education. Scholars such as T.F. Gilbert (1978) and Richard Boyatzis have emphasized the role of competencies in improving performance. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) defines competency as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attributes that enable individuals to perform effectively. In an educational context, competencies include critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability (Chan & Yeung, 2020).

In the context of pesantren education, Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers (Article 10, Paragraph 1) stipulates that teacher competence consists of four aspects: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies. Pedagogical competence refers to the ability to manage student learning effectively. Personal competence includes strong character, wisdom, and integrity. Social competence involves effective communication and interaction with students, colleagues, parents, and the community. Professional competence requires a deep understanding of subject matter and modern teaching methodologies. However, field observations indicate that many asatidzah in pesantren struggle with one or more of these competencies.



This study seeks to address these gaps by developing a competency-based HR development model for *asatidzah* in Salafiyah pesantren in the Riau Islands. The proposed model will focus on enhancing the competencies of *asatidzah*, ensuring their continuous professional growth, and providing a sustainable framework for HR development that aligns with both Islamic educational values and the demands of 21st-century education. By integrating a competency-based approach, this research aims to contribute to the broader field of educational management and HR development, offering insights into how pesantren can improve teacher performance and educational quality. Furthermore, the study will provide practical recommendations for pesantren leaders and educators, helping them navigate the complexities of modern education while preserving their traditional religious foundations.

This research is significant not only for its potential to improve the quality of teaching in pesantren but also for its broader implications for educational reform in Islamic institutions globally. As education systems continue to evolve, the development of structured HR management practices in pesantren will be crucial for ensuring that these institutions can adapt while preserving their rich educational heritage. Through the development of a competency-based model, this study hopes to contribute to the sustainability of pesantren education, fostering a new generation of educators who are equipped to meet the challenges of the modern world while upholding Islamic values.

Given these conditions, it is essential for pesantren to establish a competency-based HR development model. This will provide pesantren with a structured and sustainable framework for enhancing *asatidzah* competencies, ultimately leading to improved teaching quality and better educational outcomes. Based on these considerations, this research focuses on Development of an *Asatidzah* Competency-Based Human Resource Model in Salafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools in the Riau Islands (Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Khadimul Ummah Bintan, Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Ibnu Utsman Tanjungpinang, and Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Darussalam Batam).

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the competency-based human resource development needs in Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools. A case study method allows for an in-depth

examination of the current teacher development strategies, challenges, and potential improvements within the unique educational context of Salafiyah pesantren. The research was conducted in three Islamic boarding schools in the Riau Islands: Khadimul Ummah Islamic Boarding School, Ibnu Utsman Islamic Boarding School, and Darusalam El-Gontory Islamic Boarding School. Data collection involved in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including the Masyayikh Council, Islamic Boarding School Directors, Caretakers, and Teachers. Participant observations were carried out in classrooms, teacher training sessions, and daily pesantren activities to assess the alignment between training programs and teachers' actual needs. Additionally, institutional documents, training modules, and competency development reports were reviewed to analyze existing competency-building initiatives.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving data familiarization, coding, theme identification, and interpretation to uncover patterns related to pedagogical gaps, social and professional competency needs, and institutional constraints. Ethical considerations were strictly followed, ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of all participants. Institutional approval was obtained to align the research with school policies on research and teacher development. Conducted from June 2023 to December 2023, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the competency development landscape in Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools and aims to contribute to the formulation of a systematic competency-based teacher development model tailored to the specific needs of pesantren educators.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

Competency-Based Human Resource Development Needs in Salafiyah Islamic Boarding Schools

The development of competency-based human resources is essential in improving the quality of education in Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools. According to the results of a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) held on August 12, 2023, involving several Islamic boarding schools, there is a consensus on the



need for structured teacher development programs. Observations indicate that teachers possess strong religious knowledge but lack pedagogical, social, individual, and professional competencies. A well-designed competency framework is crucial to addressing these gaps and ensuring a systematic approach to teacher improvement. Research suggests that effective competency-based training enhances teacher performance and student outcomes.

The FGD findings highlight that some pesantren have implemented programs to improve teacher competencies, yet these initiatives remain sporadic and lack sustainability. The absence of a structured competency development model leads to inconsistencies in teacher training effectiveness. Comparative analysis shows that, ideally, competency development should be based on continuous assessment and performance evaluations, which is not yet fully practiced. As emphasized by educational research, sustainable professional development significantly contributes to educational quality. Therefore, a systematic framework tailored to the needs of pesantren teachers is urgently required.

Observations in the field reveal that most competency enhancement activities are conducted without considering teachers' specific profiles and performance evaluations. This misalignment results in training programs that do not adequately address the real challenges faced by educators. A study on competency-based teacher training indicates that targeted programs lead to higher teaching effectiveness. Without data-driven planning, training initiatives tend to be generic and less impactful. Thus, a shift towards competency-based, needs-driven training models is necessary to maximize development outcomes.

A comprehensive approach to teacher development in Salafiyah pesantren should integrate systematic evaluation, professional development workshops, and continuous monitoring. Aligning competency development with real-world challenges will optimize the effectiveness of teacher training. According to educational management theories, structured professional development fosters long-term competency growth and institutional improvement. Future training programs should focus on tailored solutions based on empirical data and performance reviews. By adopting these strategies, pesantren can enhance teacher quality and ultimately improve students' learning experiences.

Challenges Faced by Islamic Boarding School Teachers in Terms of Pedagogical, Social, Personal, and Professional Competencies

Pedagogical competence is a significant challenge for teachers in Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools, particularly in adapting to modern teaching methodologies. Many teachers still rely on traditional rote learning methods, which limit students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Observations indicate that the lack of training in student-centered approaches contributes to ineffective knowledge transfer. Research suggests that effective pedagogical training can significantly enhance classroom engagement and learning outcomes. Therefore, structured training programs focusing on interactive and innovative teaching methods are crucial.

Social competence is another critical issue, as teachers often struggle with communication and relationship-building within the school community. Many pesantren educators have limited interaction with the broader educational network, which restricts their professional growth. Observations show that teachers face difficulties in fostering collaboration among students and engaging with parents. Studies indicate that social competence directly influences a teacher's ability to create a positive learning environment. Enhancing communication skills and collaborative practices should be an integral part of teacher development programs.

Personal competence, including motivation and professional commitment, also poses a challenge in competency development. Some teachers lack self-initiative and the drive to continuously improve their skills. Observations reveal that personal motivation significantly affects teaching effectiveness and professional growth. Research highlights that self-reflection and continuous professional development are essential for career advancement. Encouraging a culture of lifelong learning and self-improvement among pesantren educators is vital.

Professional competence gaps exist due to variations in academic qualifications and exposure to contemporary educational practices. Many teachers in Salafiyah pesantren have strong religious backgrounds but lack formal training in modern educational theories and practices. Observations



suggest that without structured professional development, teachers struggle to meet evolving educational demands. Studies emphasize that ongoing professional training enhances instructional quality and student achievement. Implementing regular workshops and academic training can bridge the professional competence gap among teachers.

To address these challenges, a comprehensive teacher development strategy should be implemented in Salafiyah pesantren. This strategy should incorporate pedagogical training, social skills enhancement, personal motivation programs, and continuous professional development. Observations highlight that integrating all four competency areas leads to more effective teaching and improved student outcomes. Research suggests that competency-based professional development programs have long-term benefits for both teachers and institutions. By adopting a holistic approach, Salafiyah pesantren can significantly improve the quality of their education system.

Existing Competency Development Initiatives in Islamic Boarding Schools

Islamic boarding schools have implemented various competency development programs for their teachers. These programs aim to enhance pedagogical, social, individual, and professional competencies. However, observations indicate that many of these initiatives are conducted incidentally rather than systematically. Teachers participate in workshops and short-term training sessions, but the long-term impact remains unclear. Indirect sources suggest that structured competency-based training is essential for improving teaching quality in Islamic boarding schools.

The effectiveness of competency development programs in Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools varies across institutions. Some schools offer periodic training sessions, but there is no standardized framework for evaluating their impact. Observations reveal that teacher participation is often based on availability rather than necessity. Without proper follow-up mechanisms, the acquired skills are not always applied effectively in the classroom. Experts argue that continuous assessment and feedback mechanisms are needed to optimize these training programs.

A significant weakness in the existing programs is the lack of performance-based evaluation in designing teacher development initiatives. Most training programs are not tailored to individual teacher profiles, leading to

inefficiencies in skill enhancement. Observational data suggest that teachers with strong religious knowledge may still struggle with pedagogical strategies. The absence of systematic assessment results in a mismatch between training content and teachers' actual needs. According to research, competency-based programs should be aligned with specific performance indicators to be truly effective.

Several factors hinder the optimization of competency development in Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools. Limited financial resources restrict access to advanced training opportunities for teachers. Additionally, there is often resistance to change among educators who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods. Observations indicate that many teachers prioritize religious instruction over pedagogical skill improvement. Institutional constraints, such as rigid administrative structures, further impede the implementation of comprehensive development programs. Researchers emphasize that overcoming these challenges requires strategic planning and policy support.

To improve the effectiveness of competency development initiatives, a structured and data-driven approach is necessary. Islamic boarding schools should incorporate teacher performance evaluations into their training strategies. By using systematic assessment methods, schools can tailor development programs to meet the specific needs of their educators. Establishing partnerships with educational institutions and government agencies may also provide access to better training resources. Ultimately, a well-planned competency-based training model will contribute to the overall quality of education in Islamic boarding schools.

DISCUSSION

The development of a competency-based human resource (HR) model for educators in Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools has often been proposed to address critical gaps in aligning traditional religious pedagogy with modern educational demands (Huda et al., 2019; Uhbiyati & N., 2015). However, this study instead explores the extent to which such gaps manifest in actual practice, particularly concerning teacher development strategies. Research underscores the urgency of structured HR frameworks to enhance teacher competencies, especially in balancing Islamic values with 21st-century pedagogical skills (Bukhori Muslim et al., 2024; Shaleh & M., 2024). The present findings indicate



that although there is awareness of modern teaching expectations, Salafiyah pesantren face unique challenges in operationalizing these expectations. These include reconciling traditional rote-learning methods with student-centered approaches and adjusting to shifts in educational paradigms (Adiwisastro et al., 2020; Setyosari et al., 2021).

This study identifies significant disparities in pedagogical, social, personal, and professional competencies among *asatidzah*. These disparities reaffirm prior observations that educators continue to rely heavily on traditional methodologies (Sulaiman et al., 2020; Us et al., 2023). While strong religious expertise remains a core strength, many *asatidzah* struggle with modern instructional strategies. This hinders efforts to foster critical thinking and independent learning in students. The limitations of existing training programs, which tend to be sporadic and lacking follow-up, mirror concerns in earlier studies (Hanim & Z., 2019; Muhardi et al., 2019). Furthermore, the absence of performance-based evaluations reduces the practical relevance of such trainings (Listiyani et al., 2022; Lutfiyah et al., 2025).

These findings suggest a need for more systematic assessment mechanisms that align training with real instructional challenges. Some scholars have advocated for data-driven competency frameworks to increase the applicability of teacher development programs (Nursyifa et al., 2024; Zainal et al., 2022). The data from this study supports these perspectives, showing that evaluation systems are either weak or nonexistent in the pesantren studied. Without such mechanisms, training becomes a one-off event, not a sustained developmental process.

Another critical issue is sustainability. Programs aimed at enhancing competencies often lack continuity and institutional support, a situation consistent with faith-based educational institutions in other contexts (Machmuddah et al., 2017; Putra et al., 2023). Financial limitations are frequently cited, but cultural resistance to pedagogical change also plays a significant role (Fazlurrahman et al., 2022; Husain et al., 2021). Importantly, current practices rarely consider the individual developmental needs of teachers. This generalized approach to training reduces effectiveness and overlooks opportunities for targeted intervention (Oliver et al., 2024; Sukendro et al., 2021).

Several studies suggest that holistic development strategies—combining workshops, mentorship, and ongoing support—can yield better results in teacher performance (Ritonga et al., 2023; Winarsih et al., 2019). This aligns with the present findings, which highlight the need for integrated and sustained approaches to teacher development. Without long-term commitment, teacher capacity building in pesantren is likely to remain fragmented.

In light of these challenges, this study analyzes how competency-based HR strategies might be adapted—not imposed—as part of institutional learning rather than externally-driven reform. Educational management theories emphasize continuous evaluation and customized development pathways as essential features of effective HR strategies (Muhardi et al., 2019; Ridwan et al., 2023). Rather than promoting a single model, the analysis here points to the value of localized, flexible frameworks informed by data. These can help pesantren gradually align with global educational standards without compromising religious identity (Lutfiyah et al., 2025; Tabrani et al., 2023).

Indeed, some pesantren have already implemented elements consistent with competency-based frameworks, such as blended learning and structured leadership programs (Adiwisastro et al., 2020; Munifah et al., 2022). However, such initiatives often lack mechanisms for measuring long-term impact, as seen in previous studies (Hanim & Z., 2019; Nursyifa et al., 2024). The results of this study indicate that while incremental pedagogical shifts are feasible, institutional inertia and fragmented strategies continue to pose significant barriers (Sulaiman et al., 2020; Zulfikar et al., 2024).

Cultural and structural factors must also be taken into account. While financial investment remains essential, this study reveals that resistance to innovation and limited leadership engagement are equally critical obstacles (Husain et al., 2021; Machmuddah et al., 2017). Sustained mentoring relationships, rather than one-time training, appear to enhance teacher retention and performance, especially in rural and traditional contexts (Listiyani et al., 2022; Oliver et al., 2024). At the same time, assumptions that digital platforms alone can modernize pedagogy must be revisited. A balanced integration of technological and human-centric approaches is necessary (Luthfiah, 2017; Us et al., 2023).



The evidence suggests that the main issue lies not merely in resource scarcity but in the misalignment between training design and teachers' actual needs. This supports earlier critiques of generic, one-size-fits-all HR programs (Tabrani et al., 2023; Zainal et al., 2022). Adaptability, therefore, becomes a key consideration. Rather than prescribing fixed models, this study emphasizes the potential of scalable approaches tailored to each institution's context (Putra et al., 2023; Ridwan et al., 2019). However, such adaptability must be accompanied by strong leadership and stakeholder involvement to ensure sustainability (Fazlurrahman et al., 2022; Setyosari et al., 2021).

Practically, the analysis provides insights for pesantren leaders seeking to improve teacher quality through more deliberate and targeted HR practices. Structured assessments and competency-based planning are necessary tools for achieving this (Machmuddah et al., 2017; Uhbiyati & N., 2015). Theoretically, these findings contribute to ongoing debates about how faith-based education systems can engage with global standards without losing their cultural foundations (Bukhori Muslim et al., 2024; Shaleh & M., 2024). Future research should investigate the long-term impact of competency-based strategies on student learning outcomes and institutional resilience (Husain et al., 2021; Ritonga et al., 2023). Additionally, policy support is crucial for enabling pesantren to adopt flexible and agile HR strategies that are responsive to educational transformations (Winarsih et al., 2019; Zulfikar et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the current state of competency-based human resource development among educators (asatidzah) in Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools in the Riau Islands, focusing on the challenges, gaps, and contextual dynamics that influence teacher competency enhancement. Findings reveal persistent disparities across pedagogical, social, personal, and professional domains, driven by fragmented training efforts, limited evaluation mechanisms, and misalignment with practical classroom needs. The research highlights how pesantren navigate tensions between traditional Islamic education and modern pedagogical expectations, underscoring the importance of context-sensitive strategies. It offers a critical lens for institutional reflection, without proposing prescriptive models, and contributes to discussions on aligning faith-based education with competency-oriented reforms. Despite its

value, the study's qualitative design and limited geographical scope call for broader research using mixed methods and longitudinal approaches to explore long-term impacts, stakeholder engagement, and institutional readiness in supporting sustainable educator development.

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