Improving the Pedagogic Competence of Lecturers in Religious Universities: Challenges and Solutions

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Pedagogical Competence, Higher Education, Religious Institutions, Lecturer Development, Educational Innovation.	This article explores the critical issue of enhancing the pedagogical competence of lecturers at religious higher education institutions. Pedagogical competence is essential for lecturers to effectively deliver knowledge, foster critical thinking, and create an engaging learning environment. However, many lecturers face challenges in adapting to contemporary educational demands, such as integrating technology, applying innovative teaching strategies, and addressing diverse student needs. This study employs a qualitative approach through literature review and library research methods to identify the primary challenges and propose viable solutions. The findings indicate that limited professional development opportunities, insufficient institutional support, and resistance to change are the main obstacles. To overcome these barriers, the article suggests continuous training programs, collaborative learning environments, and institutional policies that encourage pedagogical enhancement. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation, religious higher education institutions can significantly improve the teaching quality of their lecturers. This, in turn, contributes to better student outcomes and aligns educational practices with global standards. The research highlights the importance of ongoing collaboration between lecturers, educational leaders, and policymakers to create sustainable pedagogical improvements. The study concludes that addressing these challenges systematically will not only benefit lecturers but also enrich the overall academic environment at religious higher education institutions.
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INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of higher education, the enhancement of pedagogical competence among lecturers has emerged as a critical factor in ensuring quality education delivery. This is particularly true for religious higher education institutions, where lecturers play a pivotal role in shaping both the academic and moral development of students (Rofiq & Sirojuddin, 2022). Pedagogical competence encompasses not only mastery of subject matter but also the ability to implement

effective teaching strategies, adapt to technological advancements, and address diverse student needs (Shaturaev, 2022). Despite its significance, the development of pedagogical skills among lecturers in religious institutions faces numerous challenges, including limited professional development programs and institutional constraints (Munjiat, 2020).

A notable research gap exists in understanding the specific barriers to pedagogical competence within religious higher education contexts. Previous studies have primarily focused on general pedagogical development in secular institutions, with limited attention given to the unique cultural, religious, and institutional frameworks of religious colleges (Nira & Fauziyah, 2021). The urgency to address this gap is heightened by the increasing demand for lecturers to integrate digital learning tools and foster critical thinking in a rapidly changing educational environment (Laili et al., 2022). This study aims to fill this void by exploring the distinctive challenges faced by lecturers in religious higher education institutions and identifying innovative solutions to enhance their pedagogical skills (Mahfudz & Sukarno, 2023).

The novelty of this research lies in its focused examination of pedagogical development within the context of religious higher education, an area that has been underexplored in contemporary academic discourse (Simamora et al., 2020). By employing a qualitative approach through literature review and library research, this study not only highlights the existing challenges but also proposes practical solutions tailored to the unique needs of religious lecturers (Baidi & Sutrisno, 2022). The ultimate goal is to provide actionable insights that can inform institutional policies and foster a culture of continuous professional development (Amirudin & Muzaki, 2019).

The primary objective of this study is to identify the key challenges hindering the development of pedagogical competence among lecturers in religious higher education institutions and propose solutions to address these issues. Additionally, the study seeks to:

1. Examine existing literature to identify best practices in pedagogical development.
2. Analyze the role of institutional support in enhancing lecturer competencies.
3. Provide policy recommendations for integrating professional development programs.

The benefits of this research extend beyond the academic community to policymakers and institutional leaders. By addressing the pedagogical gaps, religious higher education institutions can enhance their teaching quality, improve student engagement, and contribute to the development of well-rounded graduates equipped with both academic and moral competencies (Tyas et al., 2020)..

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, employing a literature review as the primary method to explore the pedagogical competence of lecturers in religious higher education institutions.

Qualitative methods are well-suited for this research as they enable an in-depth understanding of complex educational phenomena, providing insights into the nuanced challenges and solutions that lecturers face (Daniel, 2019). By synthesizing findings from existing literature, the study aims to identify patterns, trends, and gaps within the current body of knowledge regarding pedagogical development in religious contexts (Miranda et al., 2021).

Data Sources and Collection Techniques

The primary data source for this study is secondary data obtained from academic journals, books, and conference proceedings published within the last five years. The selection criteria focus on studies discussing pedagogical competence, lecturer development, and educational strategies in religious higher education institutions (Namyssova et al., 2019). Digital databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and ERIC are utilized to ensure a comprehensive collection of relevant literature. Keywords including "pedagogical competence," "lecturer development," and "higher education pedagogy" are employed to refine the search process (Cacheiro-Gonzalez et al., 2019).

Data Analysis

The collected literature is subjected to thematic analysis, a method that involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Fornauf & Erickson, 2020). Thematic analysis allows for the organization of data into categories such as challenges, solutions, and best practices, facilitating a structured understanding of pedagogical competence enhancement (Bruggeman et al., 2021). This process is iterative, involving continuous review and refinement to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the findings.

By employing a rigorous literature review and thematic analysis, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing pedagogical competence development in religious higher education institutions. The findings are expected to inform policy recommendations and contribute to the improvement of lecturer training programs (Leo et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following table presents 10 articles from the last five years, selected from Google Scholar, that address pedagogical competence among lecturers in religious higher education institutions. These articles were chosen based on their relevance, focus on pedagogical challenges, and proposed solutions for improving teaching quality in religious educational settings.

Tabel 1 Literature Review

No	Title	Author(s)	Year	Source	Key Findings
1	Financing Public Education in Indonesia	J. Shaturaev	2022	ResearchGate	Highlights the role of financial support in enhancing pedagogical skills and the impact of limited resources on lecturers.
2	Integration of ICT in Islamic Religious Education	M. Miskiah, Y. Suryono, A. Sudrajat	2019	UNY ePrints	Discusses the integration of ICT to improve pedagogical competence among lecturers.
3	Mobile-Learning in Worship Education	Y. Hanafi, N. Murtadho, M. A. Ikhsan	2020	ResearchGate	Examines how mobile-learning tools enhance lecturer competence in religious education.
4	Online Learning Challenges During COVID-19	R. M. Simamora, D. De Fretes, E. D. Purba	2020	Academia.edu	Analyzes the pedagogical challenges faced by lecturers during the shift to online learning.
5	Islamic Education During the Pandemic	S. M. Munjiat	2020	Semantic Scholar	Explores how pandemic restrictions affected pedagogical practices in religious higher education.
6	Teacher Competence in Character Education	E. Istiyono, B. Kartowagiran, H. Retnawati	2021	ERIC	Focuses on developing lecturers' competence in character education at religious institutions.

7	Academic Reform in Islamic Higher Education	B. Baidi, S. Sutrisno	2022	IAIN ePrints	Addresses the importance of academic reforms in enhancing lecturer competence.
8	Pedagogical Challenges in Digital Transformation	L. Naibaho, E. H. Tyas	2020	UKI Repository	Investigates how digital tools affect pedagogical competence in religious contexts.
9	Competence of Islamic Education Teachers	U. Manshur, H. Khotimah	2024	Serambi.org	Evaluates pedagogical development programs for Islamic religious educators.
10	Pedagogical Development in Islamic Schools	F. N. Hayati, E. Susatya	2020	ERIC	Focuses on strengthening pedagogical skills through continuous training and mentoring.

The review of these articles reveals several key themes and insights regarding pedagogical competence among lecturers in religious higher education institutions. First, many articles highlight the integration of technology as a pivotal factor in enhancing pedagogical competence. For example, Miskiah et al. (2019) emphasize the role of ICT in transforming teaching methods, allowing lecturers to engage students more effectively and improve learning outcomes. Similarly, Hanafi et al. (2020) show how mobile-learning platforms facilitate continuous pedagogical development.

Another recurring theme is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pedagogical competence. Simamora et al. (2020) and Munjiat (2020) point out that the shift to online learning posed significant challenges for lecturers, especially those with limited digital literacy. This situation underscored the urgent need for professional development programs that equip lecturers with digital teaching skills.

The literature also underscores the importance of financial and institutional support in fostering pedagogical competence. Shaturaev (2022) notes that inadequate funding for professional

development programs often hampers lecturers' ability to enhance their skills. This finding suggests that policymakers should prioritize budget allocations for lecturer training and infrastructure development.

Character education emerges as another critical aspect of pedagogical competence in religious institutions. Istiyono et al. (2021) argue that religious higher education institutions bear a dual responsibility – not only to impart knowledge but also to nurture students' moral and ethical development. As such, lecturers require continuous training in integrating character education into their teaching practices.

Moreover, academic reform is identified as a catalyst for improving pedagogical competence. Baidi and Sutrisno (2022) assert that policy changes and curriculum reform in Islamic higher education can lead to more comprehensive pedagogical development. These reforms create opportunities for lecturers to engage in lifelong learning and adapt to evolving educational demands.

Finally, the importance of collaborative learning environments is highlighted in several studies. Naibaho and Tyas (2020) emphasize that peer mentoring and knowledge sharing among lecturers can significantly enhance pedagogical skills. By fostering a culture of collaboration, religious higher education institutions can create sustainable frameworks for continuous professional growth.

. The development of pedagogical competence is crucial for lecturers in religious higher education institutions to meet the evolving demands of modern education. As the educational landscape shifts toward more interactive and technology-driven models, lecturers must adapt to maintain effective teaching and learning environments (Shaturaev, 2022). However, numerous challenges hinder this progress, necessitating comprehensive solutions that address systemic barriers and foster continuous development.

Challenges in Enhancing Pedagogical Competence

Many religious higher education institutions operate with constrained budgets, limiting their ability to provide professional development programs for lecturers. This lack of institutional support translates to fewer workshops, training sessions, and resources dedicated to enhancing teaching methodologies (Shaturaev, 2022). Without these opportunities, lecturers struggle to refine their pedagogical skills and integrate modern teaching techniques.

A significant challenge observed by Miskiah et al. (2019) is the reluctance of lecturers to embrace technological advancements in their teaching practices. Many educators in religious institutions favor traditional methods, viewing technology as a disruption to the spiritual and moral dimensions of education. This resistance limits the adoption of innovative teaching tools that could enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Rigid and standardized curricula in religious institutions often restrict pedagogical innovation. Hanafi et al. (2020) highlight that lecturers are confined to predefined syllabi, leaving little room for creative teaching approaches. This rigidity prevents the incorporation of project-based learning, collaborative activities, and other interactive teaching methods that can enrich the learning experience.

The absence of structured and continuous professional development programs is another major challenge. According to Baidi and Sutrisno (2022), many lecturers do not receive regular training to update their teaching skills. Professional development is essential for fostering pedagogical competence, yet it remains a neglected area in many religious higher education institutions.

The shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed significant gaps in digital literacy among lecturers. Simamora et al. (2020) found that many educators lacked the necessary skills to effectively conduct virtual classes, resulting in reduced student engagement and learning effectiveness. This digital divide underscores the urgent need for technological upskilling.

Religious higher education institutions must balance religious teachings with academic rigor. Istiyono et al. (2021) argue that this dual focus places additional pressure on lecturers, who must integrate religious values with contemporary pedagogical practices. Striking this balance often leads to compromises in adopting new teaching methods.

Religious institutions often attract a diverse student population with varying levels of academic preparedness and learning preferences. Munjiat (2020) notes that lecturers face difficulties in addressing this diversity, as one-size-fits-all teaching methods fail to meet the needs of all students. This challenge necessitates differentiated instructional strategies that many lecturers are not equipped to implement.

Naibaho and Tyas (2020) emphasize the importance of collaborative learning environments among lecturers. However, many religious institutions lack platforms for peer collaboration and knowledge sharing. This isolation prevents lecturers from learning from each other and adopting best practices in pedagogy.

Lecturers in religious higher education institutions rarely receive structured feedback on their teaching practices. Without proper evaluation, lecturers may remain unaware of areas needing improvement (Baidi & Sutrisno, 2022). This lack of feedback hampers efforts to enhance pedagogical competence over time.

Solutions to Overcome Pedagogical Challenges

One of the most effective solutions to enhance pedagogical competence is institutional reform that prioritizes professional development. Shaturaev (2022) suggests increasing funding for training programs, workshops, and conferences that expose lecturers to modern pedagogical strategies. Allocating budgetary resources for continuous education ensures that lecturers stay abreast of evolving teaching methodologies.

To address resistance to technology, Miskiah et al. (2019) propose integrating ICT training into professional development initiatives. By demonstrating the benefits of technology in enhancing teaching effectiveness, lecturers are more likely to embrace digital tools. Practical training sessions on the use of learning management systems (LMS) and online teaching platforms can ease the transition.

Curriculum reform is essential for fostering pedagogical creativity. Hanafi et al. (2020) advocate for greater flexibility in curricula, allowing lecturers to incorporate interactive and experiential learning activities. Introducing electives or supplementary courses focused on innovative teaching methods can gradually shift the pedagogical culture.

Baidi and Sutrisno (2022) recommend establishing dedicated professional development centers within religious institutions. These centers can offer regular workshops, mentorship programs, and peer learning sessions, creating a structured pathway for pedagogical growth.

To address digital literacy gaps, institutions should implement ongoing digital training programs. Simamora et al. (2020) suggest creating digital repositories that house instructional videos, teaching templates, and best practice guides. These resources provide lecturers with the tools needed to navigate online learning environments effectively.

Naibaho and Tyas (2020) highlight the importance of fostering interdisciplinary collaboration among lecturers. Institutions can facilitate knowledge-sharing sessions where educators from different departments collaborate on teaching projects. This cross-pollination of ideas enhances pedagogical innovation.

Munjiat (2020) advocates for the adoption of student-centered learning models to address diverse student needs. Interactive teaching strategies such as problem-based learning, group discussions, and experiential learning can engage students more effectively, resulting in improved academic outcomes.

Integrating character education into pedagogical training aligns with the core mission of religious institutions. Istiyono et al. (2021) propose embedding moral and ethical training into professional development programs, ensuring that lecturers maintain a balance between religious instruction and academic excellence.

Regular assessments and feedback loops can help lecturers refine their teaching approaches. Baidi and Sutrisno (2022) recommend instituting peer evaluations, student feedback forms, and self-assessment tools to promote reflective teaching practices.

Finally, establishing online communities where lecturers can discuss challenges and share solutions fosters a culture of continuous learning. Simamora et al. (2020) suggest creating digital forums or social media groups dedicated to pedagogical enhancement. These platforms encourage collaboration and innovation, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

By addressing these challenges through targeted solutions, religious higher education institutions can enhance the pedagogical competence of their lecturers, ultimately improving the quality of education and fostering holistic student development.

CONCLUSION

The enhancement of pedagogical competence among lecturers in religious higher education institutions is essential for improving the overall quality of education and preparing students for both academic and moral excellence. This study has highlighted significant challenges, including limited institutional support, resistance to technological adoption, and rigid curricula that restrict innovative teaching approaches. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the gaps in digital literacy and the urgent need for online learning capabilities among lecturers. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that combines policy reforms, technological integration, and continuous professional development.

Efforts to overcome these challenges must prioritize the establishment of professional development centers, digital upskilling, and curriculum flexibility. Institutions should invest in creating collaborative environments that foster peer learning and interdisciplinary engagement. Furthermore, leveraging ICT tools and student-centered teaching methods can significantly enhance engagement

and learning outcomes. By embedding moral and ethical education into pedagogical training, religious institutions can maintain their core values while embracing modern educational practices. These strategies, if implemented effectively, will create sustainable pathways for pedagogical advancement and holistic lecturer development.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of professional development programs on pedagogical competence in religious higher education. Comparative studies between institutions that have adopted technological integration and those that rely on traditional methods could provide valuable insights into best practices. Additionally, further research is needed to examine the role of student feedback and peer evaluations in shaping lecturers' teaching approaches. Investigating how character education can be seamlessly integrated into modern pedagogy will also be essential for aligning religious teachings with contemporary educational demands. These studies will contribute to the ongoing efforts to create more dynamic, inclusive, and effective educational environments in religious higher education institutions.

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