

Improving the Pedagogic Competence of Madrasa Diniyah Takmiliah Teachers as an Attempt to Improve the Quality of Quran Learning Based on Blended Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract—Madrasas as the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia have unique characteristics because they were born from the thoughts of the community where the madrasa was founded, hence resulting in diverse madrasas quality. The empowerment focus of these training and mentoring is to improve the pedagogic competence of madrasa teachers in Pangalengan and Cimaung Sub-districts, Bandung Regency. The empowerment strategies were done by carrying out various activities, namely: preparation, program planning, program implementation, and lastly program reflection and evaluation. The results of the empowerment show that the pedagogic competence of madrasa teachers has increased significantly through planning for Quran learning, implementation of Quran learning through MATA method (Reading, Playing and Storytelling), teacher pedagogical competencies in industrial era 4.0. and evaluation of Quran learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Assistance and training for madrasa teachers must always be carried out as an attempt to improve the competence of madrasa teachers towards a better direction.

Keywords—pedagogic competence, madrasa diniyah takmiliah teachers, Quran blended learning

I. INTRODUCTION

The teacher is one of the key factors to raise successful learning outcomes and a crucial factor determining the quality of education. Teacher competence and teacher welfare are essential aspects to successfully improve education quality [1]. In Law Number 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, it is stated that teachers are professional educators whose main tasks include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in formal education, basic education, and secondary education.

Teachers are required to be able to carry out national education and achieve the goal of national education that is the development of the potential of learners to be virtuous humans, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and

become democratic and responsible citizens as well as having a high quality of good characters [2]. On this account, continuous teachers' development and training are necessary, complemented by academic and pedagogic updates through teacher empowerment activities.

Pedagogic competence is not only related to the planning of learning, implementation of learning and evaluation but also concerned with several factors related to any efforts to improve the quality of learning in the classroom [3]. Likewise, teachers' pedagogic competence plays a key role in education. Personal competence has a significant influence on the performance of teachers [4].

During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers are challenged to conduct an effective and efficient learning process as an attempt to achieve learning objectives according to the policies set by the government, namely conducting a learning process from home. In establishing effective and efficient distance learning, teachers need to make thorough planning and preparation involving all related parties. Teachers, in this case, become a center of attention to building up education quality by having a high level of competence [5]. Pedagogic improvement significantly supports the success of distance learning. The pedagogic improvement in question is the ability to teach, guide, assess, use learning aids and other skills related to the efforts to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in learning.

One of the Islamic educational institutions that are compelling to be empowered during the COVID-19 pandemic is madrasas. Madrasas as the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia have a unique character because they were born from the ideas of the community where the madrasa was founded. For this reason, diverse qualities of madrasas emerged. Madrasa diniyah is a religious education institution on the non-academic path that is expected to be able to continuously provide Islamic education which formal school

does not provide through the classical system with gradual levels. The contribution of madrasas is fundamental in internalizing the characters of the youth of the nation, summarized in eighteen kinds of characters, namely religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, hardworking, creative, independent, democratic, curious, national-spirited, loving the homeland, respect, friendly or communicative, peace-loving, love to read, caring for the environment, social care, and responsible

In this case, madrasas have made a momentous contribution in instilling characters in students, both religious ethical characters and characters to become strong, independent, disciplined citizens that can overcome problems coming their way. However, from time-to-time madrasas are underestimated in terms of both funding and training.

The government of Bandung Regency through Bandung Regent Regulation No. 34 of 2010 instructs elementary school students to undergo six years of madrasa education in madrasa diniyah takmiliah. With this government regulation, madrasas diniyah are expanding rapidly in various remote areas. The purpose and objective of establishing these madrasas are so these children can read the Quran as early as possible and study the sciences related to Islam in-depth, particularly their ability to read the Quran. According to a result of a study, the purpose of establishing madrasa has not been optimal. This is evident from the results of a survey conducted in December 2020, revealing that 70% of madrasa diniyah students' ability to read the Quran was still not precise as in not according to the tajwid, added with many errors in the pronunciations of letters [6].

During the COVID-19 pandemic, madrasa diniyah are still obliged to teach the Quran to students. Therefore, madrasa diniyah teachers are required to be able to manage the applicable teaching and learning processes during this pandemic. The majority of schools are currently implementing an online system, that is using the internet network, when in fact teachers in remote areas apart from being constrained by the network, along with their students do not even have the communication devices required for online learning.

Based on a preliminary study conducted to teachers of Madrasa Ibtidaiyah in Pangalengan and Cimaung Sub-districts, Bandung Regency, the teachers claimed that 57.4% of them found online distance learning challenges due to the difficulty of using interactive methods for students, 47.1% of them acknowledged the lack of technological literacy in the learning process so that they did not optimize the use of technology, and another issue was that only 50% of students had smartphones. Due to these conditions, 82% of the learning process at Madrasa Ibtidaiyah in Pangalengan and Cimaung Sub-districts, Bandung Regency was carried out in blended learning. Thus, teachers are required to have competence in carrying out online and offline learning processes, in this case, learning is carried out in a blended learning.

The empowerment focus of these training and assistance is to improve the pedagogic competence of madrasa teachers in Pangalengan and Cimaung Sub-districts, Bandung Regency as

an attempt to improve the quality of Quran learning based on blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, it is optimized by implementing the latest method, namely the "MATA (Menyimak, Membaca, dan Bercerita/Listening, Reading and Storytelling)" method in Quran learning for madrasa teachers.

Previous studies indicate that empowerment of the community needs to use an approach that considers the potential of the assisted community. As a result, the existing potentials can be developed properly, supporting the success of the empowerment program [7]. The thorough involvement of mentors in empowerment activities also plays a determining factor for the success of community empowerment. Other empowerment results show that pedagogical competence is primarily concerned with the level of understanding of learners, instructional design, and implementation of learning the diagnosis, evaluation of learning, the development of learners has provided significant support in the form of professional-pedagogical teaching [8]. Pagarra et al. concluded that improving teachers' competence in evaluating online learning was the main focus of the evaluation. The evaluation results show that there was an improvement in teachers' competence in evaluating online learning based in line with the improvement of teachers' understanding of the use of various test-based applications and online assignments [9]. However, these results of previous studies have not provided an explanation on the development of the pedagogic competence of madrasa diniyah takmiliah teachers to improve the quality of blended learning-based Quran learning during COVID-19 pandemic.

II. METHODS

The Community Service Program (PKM/Program Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat) was conducted in Pangalengan and Cimaung Sub-districts, Bandung Regency, targeting teachers of Quran learning at Madrasa diniyah takmiliah. It was hoped that through this activity, the pedagogic competencies of teachers can be improved in terms of the ability to prepare lesson plans and teaching materials, blended learning knowledge using the MATA method, as well as the ability to prepare methods and assessment instruments for Quran learning.

On that account, as an attempt to improve the pedagogic competence of madrasa diniyah takmiliah teachers, an empowerment strategy is required through the implementation of various activities, as follows:

A. Preparation

This particular stage of the program requires thorough preparation. The first thing to do in this stage is to make observations on partners by conducting direct monitoring to find out the characteristics of partners as a whole.

B. Planning

This stage involves preparing an action plan and analyzing all the necessary needs together. The preparation of an action plan begins with mapping the problems that teachers have been dealing with in the learning process. Problem mapping is expected to trigger collective awareness of things needed to be addressed in achieving noble goals and objectives, that is improving teachers' pedagogic competencies such as 1) the ability to prepare lesson plans and teaching materials for Quran learning, 2) increasing the knowledge on blended learning using MATA method, 3) improving the ability in the preparation of techniques and assessment instruments for Quran learning.

C. Implementation

This stage involves the implementation of the empowerment focus that will be programmed as follows:

- a. Socializing teachers' pedagogic competence empowerment program
- b. Preparing action plans and forming mentoring groups
- c. Assisting the preparation of lesson plans and teaching materials
- d. Blended learning training using the MATA method
- e. Assisting the preparation of planning techniques and instruments in Quran learning.

D. Reflection and Evaluation

This reflection and evaluation stage is carried out following every completed action to see the extent of success viewed from the expectations. In addition, program evaluation is also done to find out how far the results have been achieved in the program implementation so that feedback can be obtained as materials for reflection, reports, and consideration in the context of organizing a stabilization and socialization program to related parties.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Madrasa diniyah takmiliah as an Islamic educational institution is very compelling to be empowered for its significant role in developing human resources with religious and nationalist characters. The curriculum of subjects taught at Madrasa Diniyah is quite varied as it is adjusted to the needs of the institution and the provisions of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Effective study days are four to six days a week. Learning evaluation is carried out regularly with daily, mid-semester, and end-of-semester tests based on the academic calendar from July to June. Madrasa is one of the Islamic education institutions other than boarding schools and Islamic schools [10].

However, the existence of the madrasa diniyah takmiliah is still perceived as complementary to formal education. At times, parents show lack of support in their children to get an education at madrasa diniyah takmiliah. Apart from that, governmental policies in empowering madrasa diniyah takmiliah are substandard, in terms of funds and other forms

of support. Therefore, it is necessary to have good planning policies and budget allocation procedures that are right on target at madrasa diniyah to attain effectiveness and efficiency in improving the quality of education in madrasas so that they can compete amidst the modernization [11].

This illustrates one of the conditions of the madrasas in the community, which is in line with Yusuf et.al. view that this happens because the administration of madrasas still faces several major problems, such as management issues and the poor quality of madrasa education [12].

In addition to these conditions, madrasa's teachers' pedagogical competence is still low. Based on a field survey in Bandung Regency, the number of diniyah teachers in each sub-district comprised approximately 450 people, with 60% on average being high school or MA graduates, 30% being junior high school or MTS graduates, and 10% were S-1 (bachelor degree) graduates. These teachers were assigned all over the village including remote areas where the madrasa diniyah were located and the children needed them. The number of children attending school in each madrasa diniyah was an average of 150-250 who are divided into 6 grades. This grade division, on average, was decided by the madrasas based on the students' grades in elementary school, not based on their ability.

Based on the results of initial observations conducted at several madrasa diniyah in Bandung Regency, the learning process is carried out classically by involving the students to follow the learning process and recite the Quran together. This made the students' ability to read the Quran or their knowledge of certain subjects that require individual understanding and involvement experience difficulties. On the other hand, teachers experienced difficulty because they had to teach a class consisting 40-50 students. This was caused by the difficulty in using the right method for teaching because they had very limited knowledge about learning methods and teaching techniques.

Addressing these issues, the PKM LPPM (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat/Institute of Research and Community Service) team of Unisba did a mapping of problems faced by the teachers in teaching Quran. Referring to the problems faced by teachers regarding pedagogical competencies that needed to be improved, the team empowered madrasa teachers in Pangalengan and Cimaung Sub-districts, Bandung Regency, to improve their pedagogic competence in terms of their ability to prepare lesson plans and teaching materials, blended learning knowledge using the MATA method, and also the ability to prepare techniques and assessment instruments for Quran learning. Thus, it was expected that the learning process at Madrasa diniyah takmiliah would be more interesting.

This is in line with a study conducted by Taja, et.al. that claimed learning materials in madrasas emphasize more on rote learning, therefore teachers are required to be creative and innovative in presenting the learning process, hence, it is fun for students when it is conducted through listening, playing, and telling stories [13]. Madrasa teachers must have the ability

to raise successful learning outcomes and a crucial factor determining the quality of education [14]. Therefore, the first thing to do is provide an understanding of the importance of the designed program that they have to follow. Next, community service was conducted along with madrasa diniyah takmiliah teachers in Pangalengan and Cimaung Sub-districts, Bandung Regency.

The empowerment strategy that has been carried out includes several activities. Firstly, observations of partners by doing direct contact with the partners to acknowledge their characteristics as a whole. Secondly, designing an action plan and analyzing all the necessary needs together. Third, implementing the empowerment strategy through several activities, that is blended learning training using MATA method with the following materials: a) Learning Settings during the Covid-19 Pandemic, b) Pedagogical Competence of Madrasa Teachers, c) Implementation of MATA Method in Quran Learning, and d) Evaluation of Quran Learning.

Training and empowerment of Madrasa Diniyah teachers did not stop at providing materials and discussion as it was followed by a mentoring session in terms of preparing lesson plans at Madrasa Diniyah. Madrasa teachers were guided in preparing Internet-based Lesson Plans (RPP, Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran). In addition, participants were given the opportunity for counseling and consultation on the application of MATA Method for easy and fun Quran learning.

A special Community Service activity (cost-sharing) was held in Pangalengan and Cimaung Sub-districts, Bandung Regency, targeting the teachers of Quran learning at Madrasa diniyah takmiliah was successfully implemented by improving teachers' understanding in implementing MATA method during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This achievement was well accomplished due to several supporting factors in this activity, including 1) The community service team made initial observations to map the needs of madrasa teachers in the Pangalengan and Cimaung Sub-districts, Bandung Regency. The mapping results determined the activities to be carried out to meet the needs of madrasa teachers in Pangalengan and Cimaung Sub-districts, Bandung Regency; 2) The community service team explained the aims and objectives of the program to be carried out to partners in clear and convincing manners. 3) Empowerment is not only carried out through providing understanding regarding the material provided, but also providing guidance on the preparation of learning plans for the implementation of the MATA method during the COVID-19 pandemic; 4) The program that is determined and implemented is very attentive to the needs of teachers in overcoming problems of Quran learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The evaluation stage in this training of blended learning using MATA method employed a pre-test and post-test to see the improvement of teachers' abilities about to the training activities that have been carried out. The results of the pre-test and post-test activities are presented below:

TABLE I. PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS

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N			Mean	Std Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test	15	69.85	5.94	1.88
	Post-test	15	75.35	5.75	1.82

The table above presents that the average pre-test score of the participants was 69.85, while the average post-test score of the participants was 75.35. This means that participants' understanding of the presented materials has increased with an average deviation of 5.5. Meanwhile, the results of the Paired Samples Test are as follows:

TABLE II. T-TEST: PAIRED TWO SAMPLE FOR MEANS

	Pre	Post
Mean	69,85	75,35
Variance	35,33833	33,03167
Observations	10	10
Pearson Correlation	0,030034	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	9	
t Stat	-2,13574	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,030723	
t Critical one-tail	1,833113	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,061446	
t Critical two-tail	2,262157	

Based on the data in the table above, the mean value before the training was carried out to improve the pedagogical competence of teachers in Quran learning was 69.85. Following the implementation of the training, it increased to 75.35, meaning there was a descriptive improvement. The results of the variance were not significantly different, which was about 33, and the number of sample observations used was 10 with a degree of freedom (df) which was 10-1 is 9. In addition, there was a descriptive Pearson correlation, which was 0.030034, so it can be concluded that the correlation was very strong. Based on these results, it was known that the t stat was -2.13574. The value obtained is the same as in the paired t-test materials. The hypothesis used was the two-tailed hypothesis, and the result of the t-table was 2.262157 with a p-value of 0.061446. Because the p-value was less than 5% alpha or by looking at t count > t table, then the conclusion was H₀ was rejected.

Overall, it was concluded that there was a significant difference between the results before and after the implementation of training to improve the pedagogical competence of teachers in learning the Quran. This is according to the claim of Asari, et al. stating that the training process provides benefits for teachers as it appears that teacher competence can increase, in particular the pedagogic competence. Pedagogic competencies include learning planning, learning implementation, and learning evaluation implementation [15].

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the aforementioned explanation and discussion, with good teamwork and active participation from resource persons in this community service, everything goes according to plans. Furthermore, it is hoped that these activities will provide benefits for the community service partners in improving the pedagogic competence of teachers regarding the ability to prepare lesson plans and teaching materials, blended learning knowledge using MATA method, and also the ability to prepare techniques and assessment instruments for Quran learning.

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