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Beyond Incentives: How Teacher Certification Shapes Learning Quality in an Indonesian Madrasah?

Melampaui Insentif: Bagaimana Sertifikasi Guru Membentuk Mutu Pembelajaran di Madrasah Indonesia?

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Abstract

Teacher certification has become a central policy instrument for improving educational quality in Indonesia, yet its effectiveness remains widely debated. This study examines how teacher certification contributes to learning quality in an Islamic junior secondary school (madrasah) where all Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers have been certified. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving school leaders, certified teachers, and students at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang. The findings reveal that certification contributes to learning quality through three interrelated mechanisms: enhanced professional competence supported by continuous development, collaborative supervision that sustains instructional improvement, and a strong spiritual commitment that frames teaching as a form of worship. Certification also encourages teachers to adopt technology, diversify instructional strategies, and create more engaging learning environments. The study concludes that the effectiveness of certification depends not merely on financial incentives but on supportive institutional and cultural conditions that transform certification into meaningful educational improvement.

Keywords: Teacher Certification; Learning Quality; Islamic Religious Education; Collaborative Supervision; Teacher Professionalism

Abstrak

Sertifikasi guru merupakan instrumen kebijakan penting untuk meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di Indonesia, namun efektivitasnya masih menjadi perdebatan. Penelitian ini mengkaji kontribusi sertifikasi guru terhadap mutu pembelajaran pada sebuah madrasah tsanawiyah yang seluruh guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI)-nya telah tersertifikasi. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi pembelajaran, dan analisis dokumen yang melibatkan pimpinan madrasah, guru tersertifikasi, dan peserta didik di MTs Negeri 1 Magelang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sertifikasi berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan mutu pembelajaran melalui tiga mekanisme utama, yaitu penguatan kompetensi profesional, supervisi kolaboratif yang berkelanjutan, dan komitmen spiritual yang memaknai mengajar sebagai ibadah. Sertifikasi juga mendorong pemanfaatan teknologi, variasi strategi pembelajaran, dan peningkatan keterlibatan siswa. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa efektivitas sertifikasi tidak semata-mata ditentukan oleh insentif finansial, tetapi oleh dukungan institusional dan budaya sekolah yang memungkinkan terjadinya perbaikan pendidikan secara berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Sertifikasi Guru; Mutu Pembelajaran; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Supervisi Kolaboratif; Profesionalisme Guru



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INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamentally a deliberate and planned effort to create a learning environment that enables students to actively develop their potential.¹ Within the educational ecosystem, teachers occupy the most central and strategic position. Regardless of how well a curriculum is designed or how complete the available facilities and infrastructure may be, the educational process cannot function optimally without the presence of qualified teachers.²

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), the role of teachers encompasses more complex dimensions than those associated with other subjects. IRE teachers are not only required to possess professional competence in the transfer of knowledge but also bear the moral responsibility of transmitting noble values (transfer of values) and fostering students' character development (character building).³ Amid the current wave of globalization and the growing challenges of moral degradation among adolescents, the presence of professional, authoritative, and competent IRE teachers has become an indispensable necessity. This is consistent with the findings of Mulyasa, who argues that in the era of disruption, IRE teachers face a dual challenge: adapting to technological advancements while strengthening students' character, which is increasingly eroded by foreign cultural influences.⁴ Consequently, IRE teachers are expected to serve as both moral guardians and exemplary role models (*uswatun hasanah*) for students in navigating the complexities of contemporary life.

Recognizing the strategic importance of teachers, the Indonesian government has undertaken systematic efforts to enhance the status and professionalism of educators through the enactment of Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. This regulation marked a significant milestone by requiring teachers to possess academic qualifications, professional competencies, teaching certificates, physical and mental fitness, and the capacity to achieve the objectives of national education. The implementation of this regulation has been reinforced by the requirement that teachers continuously engage in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as an essential condition of professionalism.⁵ As a concrete manifestation of this legal mandate, the government introduced the teacher certification program as a primary instrument for educational quality assurance.⁶

Conceptually, the teacher certification policy was designed to achieve two interrelated objectives. The first is teacher welfare. Through the provision of a professional allowance equivalent to one basic monthly salary, the government seeks to improve teachers' economic well-being, enabling them to maintain a decent standard of living and devote their full attention to their professional responsibilities without the need for additional employment that may distract them from teaching. The second objective is educational quality. The professional allowance is a logical consequence of heightened expectations for teacher professionalism.

1 Adib Fatoni, "Wawasan Pendidikan (Pendidikan Dan Pendidik)," *MIDA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam* 3, no. 1 (January 10, 2020): 65–79, <https://doi.org/10.52166/mida.v3i1.1841>.

2 Sriyeni Surahmat, "Peran Guru Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Dan Pembelajaran," *Murabbi* 4, no. 1 (2025): 34–45, <https://doi.org/10.69630/jm.v4i1.54>.

3 Samhudi, Warul Walidin, and Zulfikar Ali Buto Siregar, "Rekonseptualisasi Peran Guru Dalam Inovasi Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Era Kurikulum Merdeka," *Tarlim: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 8, no. 2 (2025): 233–48, <https://doi.org/10.32528/tarlim.v8i2.3726>.

4 Mulyasa, *Menjadi Guru Penggerak Merdeka Belajar*, 2021.

5 Wahira Hamid, *Membangun Profesional Guru Berbasis PKB: Disain, Implementasi, Dan Model Pengembangan Pelatihan*, 2025.

6 Samsul Hadi, "Model Pengembangan Mutu Di Lembaga Pendidikan," *PENSA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 3 (2020): 321–47, <https://ejournal.stitpn.ac.id/index.php/pensa>.

Certified teachers are expected to demonstrate their competence through outstanding performance, instructional innovation, and continuous professional growth.⁷ However, after more than a decade of implementation, the effectiveness of the teacher certification policy remains a subject of ongoing academic debate. On the one hand, the government has allocated substantial public funds to finance professional allowances. On the other hand, questions continue to arise regarding the policy's actual contribution to improving the quality of national education.

Previous studies have produced mixed and often ambivalent findings. Research conducted by Munawir, Aisyah, and Rofi'ah presents an optimistic perspective, suggesting that certification has a significant positive correlation with the enhancement of teachers' competencies.⁸ The study explains that the certification process compels teachers to prepare instructional materials more thoroughly, thereby strengthening their pedagogical competence. Certified teachers are considered better prepared to design, implement, and evaluate learning activities.

In contrast, a more critical perspective is offered by Antoni, Fitria, and Ahyani.⁹ Their study highlights the ironic phenomenon whereby certification is often perceived merely as a pragmatic means of improving financial welfare. Many teachers become preoccupied with fulfilling administrative requirements and documentation procedures necessary for receiving professional allowances while making only minimal substantive innovations in classroom practice. From this perspective, certification has not yet succeeded in addressing the essence of learning quality improvement and instead functions primarily as a mechanism for enhancing economic welfare. This gap between the ideal expectations of the regulation (*Das Sollen*) and the empirical realities in the field (*Das Sein*) constitutes the academic concern that underpins the present study.

Against this backdrop, the present study focuses on a case study conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang. The selection of this site is based on the unique characteristics of the institution. Preliminary observations indicate that MTs Negeri 1 Magelang has achieved a 100% certification rate among its IRE teachers. In other words, all teachers responsible for IRE-related subjects, including *Aqidah Akhlaq*, *Fiqh*, *Al-Qur'an Hadith*, and *Islamic Cultural History*, have obtained professional teaching certification.

This condition of "full certification" offers a distinctive and compelling research opportunity compared with previous studies, which have generally focused on comparing the performance of certified and non-certified teachers. In the context of MTs Negeri 1 Magelang, the issue is no longer the disparity between teachers but rather a collective post-certification evaluation: Has the uniformly certified status genuinely fostered a high-quality learning environment? Or has it instead created a comfort zone in which teachers perceive themselves as having completed their professional development simply because they already receive professional allowances?

This study aims to comprehensively analyze the effectiveness of the IRE teacher certification policy at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang. The analysis extends beyond the issue of teacher welfare to examine more deeply the professional competence of teachers in managing learning processes, as well as its impact on students' motivation and character development. Through this investigation, the study seeks to provide a realistic portrayal of how teacher certification contributes to improving the quality of Islamic education at the madrasah level and how school

7 Riana Anjarsari, "Dampak Kebijakan Sertifikasi Guru Terhadap Kualitas Pendidikan," *Jurnal Pendidikan Surya Edukasi (JPSE)* 8, no. 2 (2022): 163–73, <https://doi.org/10.37729/jpse.v8i2.2327>.

8 Munawir Munawir, Arum Nur Aisyah, and Inayatur Rofi'ah, "Peningkatan Kemampuan Guru Melalui Sertifikasi," *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan* 7, no. 2 (2022): 324–29, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jipp.v7i2.360>.

9 Antoni Antoni, Happy Fitria, and Nur Ahyani, "The Influence of Teacher's Certification and Motivation on the Teacher's Performance," *Journal of Social Work and Science Education* 4, no. 3 (2023): 142–54, <https://doi.org/10.52690/jswse.v4i3.527>.

management ensures that teachers remain committed to the professional standards expected of them.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. This approach was selected to comprehensively, deeply, and naturally examine the phenomenon of the teacher certification policy within the context of MTs Negeri 1 Magelang. The case study method was chosen due to its capacity to explore a bounded system in depth through multiple sources of evidence.¹⁰ The study focused on teachers' professional behavior following certification and its impact on the academic atmosphere within the madrasah. Research participants were selected through purposive sampling and consisted of: (1) the Madrasah Principal as the key informant responsible for managerial policies; (2) certified Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers teaching *Aqidah Akhlaq*, *Fiqh*, *Islamic Cultural History (SKI)*, and *Al-Qur'an Hadith* as the primary subjects of the study; and (3) students as beneficiaries of the educational services provided.

Data were collected through three techniques: (1) In-Depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted to provide participants with greater flexibility in expressing their perspectives, in accordance with the principles of qualitative interviewing.¹¹ These interviews aimed to explore teachers' perceptions regarding motivation and the utilization of professional allowances, as well as the madrasah principal's views on teacher performance. (2) Participant Observation: The researcher directly observed classroom learning activities to examine variations in instructional methods, the integration of technology, and teacher–student interactions. (3) Documentation: Supporting documents were reviewed, including lesson plans and teaching modules, teaching certificates, and supervision records.¹²

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992), which consists of three simultaneous stages: data reduction (selecting relevant data), data display (organizing and presenting findings in narrative form), and conclusion drawing/verification. The trustworthiness of the data was established through source triangulation by comparing teachers' statements with confirmations from the madrasah principal and students' experiences. Furthermore, data validity was strengthened through cross-referencing among informants to ensure that the collected information was sufficiently saturated and representative.¹³

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the IRE Teacher Certification Policy at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang

A fundamental finding of this study indicates that the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teacher certification policy at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang has achieved full completion. Based on personnel documentation records, 100% of teachers responsible for IRE-related subjects (*Aqidah Akhlaq*, *Fiqh*, *Al-Qur'an Hadith*, and *Islamic Cultural History*) have obtained teaching certificates. This 100% achievement is not merely a statistical figure but also serves as an indicator that MTs Negeri 1 Magelang has institutionally fulfilled the teacher qualification standards mandated by Law Number 14 of 2005 and Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards. This administrative compliance provides a solid foundation for the madrasah to elevate the quality of learning to a higher level.

10 Ubaid Ridio, *Metodologi Penelitian Studi Kasus*, 2023.

11 Bambang Arianto, *Teknik Wawancara Dalam Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, 2024.

12 Pia Daruhadi, Sopiati, "Metode Pengumpulan Data Penelitian," *Metode Pengumpulan Data Penelitian* 3, no. 5 (2024): 5423–43.

13 Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019).

The success of teacher certification implementation in this madrasah cannot be separated from the full support of the Madrasah Principal. During the interview, the principal emphasized the view that certification is a fundamental right related to teacher welfare. “I strongly support this program because without certification, teachers would not receive professional allowances. Welfare is the key to teaching with peace of mind,” stated the principal. This statement reflects a managerial awareness that financial well-being is an essential prerequisite for professionalism. Without adequate economic security, teachers would find it difficult to devote their full attention to their pedagogical responsibilities.

This finding is consistent with the argument of Setiadi and Muhafidin, who assert that the certification policy is effective in addressing teachers’ motivational challenges by providing financial security, thereby enabling them to focus entirely on their primary duties and functions as professional educators.¹⁴

However, this study also revealed an important finding that the management of MTs Negeri 1 Magelang does not allow teachers to “work independently” after receiving professional allowances. To prevent quality stagnation, as highlighted in the study of Antoni, Fitria, and Ahyani, where certification is often interpreted merely in pragmatic terms, the Madrasah Principal has implemented a rigorous control mechanism.¹⁵ Based on field findings, the madrasah applies a Collaborative Supervision model. The principal does not monitor teacher performance alone but instead establishes a supervision team involving the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs and empowering senior teachers. The role of senior teachers within this mechanism is highly strategic, as they serve as mentors for their colleagues. Senior teachers assist in validating instructional plans and provide technical feedback regarding teaching methods to other teachers.

This multi-layered supervision model has proven effective in maintaining the accountability of certified IRE teachers’ performance. This finding is consistent with the study of Roifah et al., which concluded that a humanistic and collaborative supervision approach implemented by madrasah principals is far more effective in improving teacher performance than a rigid directive approach.¹⁶ Furthermore, this finding confirms that teacher certification can optimally contribute to the enhancement of teachers’ competencies when supported by a work environment that continuously encourages improvement and professional growth, as similarly concluded by Munawir, Aisyah, and Rofi’ah.¹⁷

Teacher Certification and Professional Transformation

The effectiveness of the certification policy is not only reflected in managerial aspects but also in its impact on the transformation of individual teachers. This study identified significant changes in the mindset and professional behavior of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang, encompassing technological adaptation, competency investment, and the strengthening of spiritual values.

14 Ade Setiadi and Didin Muhafidin, “The Effectiveness of Teacher Certification Policy in Addressing the Teacher Crisis in Indonesia,” *International Journal of Science and Society* 6, no. 2 (2024): 861–73, <https://doi.org/10.54783/ijssoc.v6i2.1245>.

15 Antoni, Fitria, and Ahyani, “The Influence of Teacher’s Certification and Motivation on the Teacher’s Performance.”

16 Zahrotur Roifah et al., “Pendekatan Supervisi Direktif Sebagai Pembinaan Dan Pengembangan Profesionalitas Guru,” *Irsyaduna: Jurnal Studi Kemahasiswaan* 5, no. 3 (2025): 570–82, <https://doi.org/10.54437/irsyaduna.v5i3.2646>.

17 Munawir, Aisyah, and Rofi’ah, “Peningkatan Kemampuan Guru Melalui Sertifikasi.”

An interesting finding of this study is the breakdown of the stigma that certification imposes a burdensome administrative workload on teachers. Based on the interviews, the majority of teachers reported that they did not feel overwhelmed by certification-related administrative requirements. “In this advanced era, technology is available to make things easier, so most of us do not feel burdened,” stated one teacher informant. This statement indicates the high level of digital literacy among IRE teachers at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang. Their ability to adapt to digital performance-reporting systems prevents their energy from being consumed by clerical tasks, enabling them to maintain the quality of instruction. The integration of technology into IRE learning is no longer merely an option but a necessity in responding to the learning preferences of Generation Z students.¹⁸ This finding demonstrates that the administrative challenges associated with certification can be effectively addressed through technological proficiency, which in turn enhances teachers’ work efficiency.

Another indicator of effectiveness can be observed in the way teachers utilize their professional allowances. This study found that IRE teachers at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang demonstrate a strong professional awareness by reinvesting the allowances they receive to improve educational quality. Field data revealed that certification funds are allocated to purchasing instructional support devices, such as high-performance laptops and tablets, as well as financing self-directed professional training.

This finding directly confirms the study conducted by Iskandar and Anriani, which concluded that the certification program has a significant positive impact on improving teacher competence, particularly by motivating teachers to adapt to technological developments and upgrade instructional facilities. The teachers embrace the concept of lifelong learning. They recognize that the educational landscape is constantly evolving, requiring them to continuously update and enhance their competencies. “The world keeps moving forward, and we must keep up with the times by continuously participating in training programs,” emphasized one teacher. This awareness challenges the assumption that certified teachers cease professional development once they have achieved a stable position.¹⁹

A distinctive finding that differentiates IRE teachers from teachers of general subjects is the spiritual dimension through which they perceive their profession. Informants acknowledged that being an IRE teacher carries a unique psychological burden, as society often expects them to assume full responsibility for students’ moral conduct. However, this study found that IRE teachers at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang possess a strong coping mechanism rooted in spirituality. They uphold the principle that “teaching is an act of worship.”

Although the responsibility of shaping students’ character is demanding and requires extraordinary patience, the teachers adhere to the value of sincerity (*ikhlas*): “Do your best to advise the students, and leave the rest to Allah.” This mindset reflects the manifestation of a well-developed personal competence among IRE teachers. It is consistent with Burhanuddin’s argument that the essence of IRE teacher competence lies in exemplary conduct (*uswatun hasanah*). Teachers function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as behavioral role models who inspire their students. This spiritual value serves as an internal source of motivation that enables teachers to remain consistent in nurturing students’ character without experiencing emotional exhaustion (*burnout*), despite the challenges posed by adolescent misconduct.²⁰

18 Titi Hendrawati, *Pengelolaan Pendidikan Islami: Optimalisasi Sumber Daya Dan Teknologi Di Era Society 5.0*, 2025.

19 Didik Iskandar and Nurul Anriani, “Kajian Dampak Sertifikasi Guru Dan Pengajaran Berbasis Teknologi Informasi Terhadap Kompetensi Guru: Literatur Review,” *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 6, no. 2 (2023): 760–67, <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v6i2.1662>.

20 Burhanudin Burhanudin, “Kompetensi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (Pai) Dan Motivasi Belajar Siswa,” *Jurnal Literasiologi* 3, no. 1 (2020): 120–38, <https://doi.org/10.47783/literasiologi.v3i1.55>.

The Impact of Certification on Learning Quality

The most authentic indicator of the success of teacher certification is not reflected in the thickness of administrative portfolios but rather in the improvement of the quality of classroom interactions. Based on participant observations and interviews with students and the Madrasah Principal, this study identified significant changes in the learning culture of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang. The findings indicate that certification has contributed not only to the enhancement of teachers' professional competence but also to the transformation of instructional practices, classroom climate, and students' learning experiences.

Field findings revealed that certified IRE teachers demonstrated greater pedagogical maturity by moving away from traditional text-based and monotonous teaching approaches. Instead, teachers employed a variety of instructional methods, including demonstrations for worship-related materials and the use of visual learning media such as videos for topics related to Islamic history and *aqidah*.²¹ These innovations enabled students to engage more actively with learning materials and facilitated a deeper understanding of abstract religious concepts through practical and visual experiences.

In addition, teachers actively implemented contextual learning strategies by linking classroom materials to real-life phenomena encountered by students in their daily lives. One student explained, "Teachers often relate the lessons to events in the news or situations in our surrounding environment, so we understand the material better." Such an approach makes religious instruction more meaningful because students are able to connect theoretical concepts with contemporary social realities. As a result, learning becomes more relevant and applicable to students' everyday experiences. The Madrasah Principal further confirmed these observations by noting that IRE teachers have introduced numerous innovations in their instructional strategies. According to the principal, certification has encouraged teachers to become more creative and reflective in designing learning activities. This finding supports the argument of Munawir, Aisyah, and Rofi'ah, who identified pedagogical innovation as one of the key indicators of improved teacher competence following certification.²² Thus, certification appears to have played an important role in strengthening teachers' capacity to manage effective and engaging learning processes. The findings of this study regarding the impact of certification on learning quality are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. The Impact of Teacher Certification on Learning Quality at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang

Aspect	Findings
Teaching Methods	Greater use of demonstrations, visual media, and varied instructional approaches
Learning Approach	Increased implementation of contextual learning connected to real-life situations
Classroom Interaction	More active student participation through discussion and questioning
Technology Integration	Frequent use of digital media and learning technologies
Student Engagement	Higher levels of enthusiasm and reduced classroom boredom
Teacher Role Modeling	Stronger perception of teachers as moral and behavioral role models

Source: Author (2026)

21 Dwi Ayu Marlinawati, Mohammad Zen Rahfiludin, and Syamsulhuda Budi Mustofa, "Effectiveness of Media-Based Health Education on Stunting Prevention in Adolescents: A Systematic Review," *AgriHealth: Journal of Agri-Food, Nutrition and Public Health* 4, no. 2 (July 26, 2023): 102, <https://doi.org/10.20961/agrihealth.v4i2.71357>.

22 Munawir, Aisyah, and Rofi'ah, "Peningkatan Kemampuan Guru Melalui Sertifikasi."

Certification also influenced patterns of teacher–student interaction. Teachers provided broad opportunities for students to express opinions, ask questions, and participate in classroom discussions. This two-way communication model fostered a more democratic and inclusive classroom environment. Students were no longer positioned as passive recipients of information but rather as active participants in the learning process. Such interaction is particularly important in religious education, where critical reflection and personal engagement with values are essential components of meaningful learning.²³

The most significant impact was reflected in students’ perceptions of the learning experience. Based on the interviews, students collectively reported that IRE lessons had become more enjoyable and engaging. The integration of technology, visual media, and practical activities reduced feelings of boredom and increased enthusiasm for learning. Furthermore, students acknowledged that IRE teachers at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang consistently demonstrated positive attitudes and behaviors in their daily interactions. The alignment between teachers’ classroom messages and their disciplined, respectful, and friendly conduct within the school environment functioned as an effective “living curriculum” that reinforced moral education beyond formal instruction.²⁴

This condition confirms that teachers have successfully fulfilled their primary role as exemplary figures for students. The findings are consistent with Dewi et al., who concluded that the personal competence of IRE teachers has a strong positive correlation with students’ learning motivation. When teachers demonstrate competence and embody the values they teach through *uswatun hasanah* (exemplary conduct), students become more motivated to emulate positive behaviors and achieve better learning outcomes.²⁵ Consequently, the effectiveness of certification in this study extends beyond pedagogical improvement and contributes to the creation of a more engaging, democratic, and character-oriented learning environment.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the certification policy for Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers at MTs Negeri 1 Magelang has been effective in improving learning quality, not merely as a welfare mechanism but as a catalyst for professional transformation. The effectiveness of the policy is evident in three interconnected dimensions. First, certification enhances teachers’ professional capacity through the reinvestment of professional allowances in technological resources and continuous competency development. Second, the policy encourages pedagogical innovation, reflected in the implementation of contextual, technology-supported, and student-centered learning strategies that create a more engaging and democratic classroom environment. Third, the effectiveness of certification is sustained by a strong spiritual orientation, in which teachers perceive teaching as an act of worship, enabling them to maintain commitment, resilience, and consistency in character education. These findings indicate that certification improves learning quality not simply because teachers receive financial incentives, but because the policy is supported by a collaborative supervisory system and a professional culture that continuously promotes improvement.

23 Haoran Bai, Wing Cheung Lui, and Paul Vinod Khatani, “Promoting Student Engagement with GPTutor: An Intelligent Tutoring System Powered by Generative AI,” *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 22, no. 1 (December 19, 2025): 77, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-025-00571-9>.

24 Wadim Strielkowski et al., “AI-Driven Adaptive Learning for Sustainable Educational Transformation,” *Sustainable Development* 33, no. 2 (April 3, 2025): 1921–47, <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.3221>.

25 S P Dewi, S B Thalib, and Magfirah, “Kompetensi Kepribadian Guru Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa,” *Jurnal Education and Society* 8, no. 1 (2024): 90–101, <https://es.upy.ac.id/index.php/es/article/view/4277>.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing discourse on teacher certification by demonstrating that the relationship between certification and learning quality is mediated by institutional support, professional commitment, and spiritual values. Practically, the findings provide insights for madrasah administrators and policymakers regarding the importance of integrating financial welfare with effective performance monitoring and professional development mechanisms. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its focus on a single madrasah and its reliance on qualitative data, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Future studies are therefore encouraged to employ comparative or mixed-method approaches involving multiple madrasahs to examine the long-term impact of certification on teacher performance, student achievement, and educational quality across diverse institutional settings.

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