

Strengthening IRE Teacher Competencies for Character Education and SDGs Realization

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to examine the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers' competencies in integrating character education to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), in Ogan Ilir Regency. **Theoretical framework:** The study draws on Lickona's character education theory (cognitive, affective, conative dimensions) and Muslich's teacher competency framework (pedagogic, professional, personality, social aspects) for integrating character education into IRE learning.

Literature review: Previous research underscores the importance of character education, its integration challenges, and the essential role of IRE teachers as moral role models, though competencies in character education vary. **Methods:** A mixed-methods approach was used, involving quantitative (competency tests) and qualitative (interviews, observations, document analysis) data from 70 IRE teachers in Ogan Ilir Regency. Data were analyzed with SPSS and thematic coding. **Results:** The study found that IRE teachers' competencies in planning and implementing character education were generally adequate, but significant gaps existed in the evaluation of character education. Most teachers demonstrated sufficient competencies in integrating character values during planning and implementation phases, but the evaluation of character education was weak, with limited use of standardized assessment tools. **Implications:** The study highlights that IRE teachers

face challenges such as limited time, resources, and training. **Novelty:** This research is among the first to analyze IRE teachers' competencies in integrating character education in Ogan Ilir Regency, offering new insights into how teacher competencies support sustainable development goals in education.

Keywords: ire, teachers' competency, character education, challenges, sdgs.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a structured process that not only functions to transfer knowledge, skills, and values but also to shape students' character, ethics, leadership, and critical thinking skills. In the context of nation-building, education has a strategic role to produce a generation with integrity and can make a positive contribution to social, economic, and cultural progress. Therefore, education in Indonesia is directed not only to the academic aspect, but also to strengthening character as the foundation of the formation of a whole human being [1]. Character education is an important part of the educational process. Lickona emphasized that character education includes cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions that aim to form noble personalities, responsible, and caring for others. In Indonesia, character education is seen as a systematic effort to instill cultural, moral, and spiritual values that become the nation's identity. Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), character education has a close relevance to the 4th goal, namely quality *education*, and the 16th goal of peace, justice, and strong institutions [2].

In this case, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) has a strategic position because it not only teaches aspects of faith, worship, morals, and muamalah, but also instills moral, ethical, and spiritual values in students. IRE functions to form a generation of Muslims who are religious, characterful, tolerant, and contribute to social life. The integration of IRE with character education is relevant as an effort to answer the challenge of moral degradation due to globalization, modernization, and instant cultural penetration that often contradicts the noble values of the nation. However, the implementation of character education in IRE faces various challenges. IRE teachers are often faced with limited learning facilities, a lack of professional training, limited time in the curriculum, and the negative influence of social media on students. In addition, weak family and community support, as well as school policies that are less in favor of strengthening character, complicate efforts to integrate character values in learning. This condition requires IRE teachers to have qualified pedagogic, professional, personality, and social competencies, as well as being able to act as role models (*Uswah Hasanah*) for students [3].

The phenomenon of moral degradation among adolescents further emphasizes the importance of character education. Cases of deviant behavior, such as brawls, abuse of digital media, and other deviant behavior, show a weak internalization of values. This is where the competence of IRE teachers is the key to integrating Islamic values in learning that is relevant to the daily lives of students. Based on this description, this study focuses on the analysis of the competencies and challenges of IRE teachers in integrating character education to support the achievement of the SDGs, especially SDG 4 (*Quality Education*) and SDG 16 (*Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*). This study is considered important because there have not been many studies that specifically examine the competence of IRE teachers in certain areas, including Ogan Ilir Regency, in the context of character education oriented towards sustainable development [4].

Novelty and Implications. This study offers significant novelty both conceptually and empirically in the discourse of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), teacher competency, character education, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). First, unlike previous studies that generally discuss character education in a broad pedagogical framework, this research specifically examines the intersection between IRE teacher competencies and SDGs-oriented character education integration. By positioning teacher competency as a strategic variable in achieving SDGs targets—particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and

SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)—this study bridges religious education scholarship with global sustainable development discourse. This integrative perspective provides a more holistic understanding of how faith-based education contributes to SDGs realization at the local level [5].

Second, the study contributes empirical evidence from Ogan Ilir Regency, a region that has not been widely explored in national or international academic publications. By employing a mixed-methods design with 70 IRE teachers, this research generates context-based data that highlight both strengths and gaps in competency dimensions—pedagogic, professional, personality, and social—particularly in the evaluation stage of character education. The identification of weaknesses in assessment practices, especially the limited use of standardized and measurable character evaluation tools, represents an important contribution to improving SDGs-aligned educational quality. This localized evidence strengthens the argument that SDGs implementation in education requires not only policy commitment but also teacher-level competency reinforcement [6].

Third, this research proposes an analytical linkage between Lickona's character education dimensions (cognitive, affective, and conative) and Muslich's teacher competency framework within the SDGs paradigm. This conceptual synthesis demonstrates that effective SDGs integration in IRE classrooms depends on teachers' capacity to translate moral values into measurable learning outcomes. Therefore, the study advances a practical model in which IRE teacher competencies function as mediating instruments for SDGs-oriented character transformation. The implications of this research are multifaceted. Practically, the findings suggest the need for structured professional development programs focusing on character education assessment literacy. Training initiatives should equip IRE teachers with innovative evaluation tools, reflective assessment strategies, and SDGs-based curriculum alignment techniques. Strengthening teacher capacity in these areas will directly contribute to enhancing SDGs 4.7 implementation, which emphasizes education for sustainable development and global citizenship [7].

Institutionally, education policymakers in Ogan Ilir Regency and similar regions should integrate SDGs indicators into teacher performance standards and curriculum planning. Schools can establish collaborative forums among IRE teachers to share best practices in SDGs-based character education integration. Moreover, partnerships between universities, teacher training institutions, and local governments are essential to develop sustainable professional learning ecosystems. Theoretically, this study reinforces the argument that religious education plays a strategic role in SDGs achievement, particularly in cultivating ethical awareness, social responsibility, and peaceful coexistence. By demonstrating how IRE teacher competencies influence character education effectiveness, the research underscores that sustainable development is not solely an economic or technological agenda but also a moral and spiritual endeavor. Consequently, strengthening IRE teacher competencies becomes a transformative pathway toward SDGs realization, ensuring that quality education fosters not only academic excellence but also justice-oriented and ethically grounded future generations [8].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Competence of Islamic Religious Education Teachers

Competence is a set of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that are reflected in the habits of thinking and acting to carry out their duties professionally. In the context of IRE, teacher competencies include pedagogic, professional, personality, and social aspects [9]. IRE teachers are required to be role models (uswah hasanah) who not only transfer knowledge, but also instill Islamic values in the lives of students. This competence plays a strategic role in shaping people of faith, piety, and noble character.

Islamic Religious Education and Character Education

IRE is a directed process in instilling the values of faith, worship, morals, and muamalah to form a kaffah Muslim personality. IRE not only transfers religious knowledge but also instills faith, piety, and noble morals. Meanwhile, character education aims to shape students to have noble character, responsibility, and to be able to live in harmony [10]. According to Lickona, character education includes cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions, thus emphasizing aspects of knowledge, commitment, and real behavior [11]. In the Indonesian context, character education is understood as an effort to build the nation's cultural values and character through learning, example, school culture, and community involvement.

Challenges of IRE Teachers in Character Education Integration

The implementation of character education in IRE faces structural and cultural obstacles. Challenges include limited learning facilities, lack of professional training, student heterogeneity, and limited time in the curriculum. External factors such as weak family support, the negative influence of social media, and low community participation are also obstacles [12]. On the other hand, internal school factors in the form of weak managerial policies, lack of teacher collaboration, and difficulty in evaluating character achievements also complicate the implementation. Therefore, the integration of character education in IRE requires synergy between teachers, schools, families, and the community.

Relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The integration of IRE teacher competencies and character education has a direct contribution to the achievement of SDG 4 (Quality Education), which emphasizes the importance of inclusive, equitable, and quality education. In addition, character education also supports SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by forming a generation with integrity, tolerance, and peace-loving [13], [14]. IRE teachers as agents of change play an important role in instilling religious values as well as national character, so that Islamic education contributes to sustainable development.

Table 1. Synthesis of Previous Research

Author & Year	Study Focus	Key Findings	Relevance to this research
Lickona (1991, 2012)	Character education in a global perspective	Character education includes cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions; Its success is highly dependent on the school, family, and community environment.	Becoming the theoretical basis for the integration of character education in IRE
Muslich (2011)	Implementation of character education in schools	Character education is difficult to succeed without the support of school policies and collaboration between teachers.	Reinforcing findings about internal challenges in schools
Noble (2013)	Teacher competence in learning	Teacher competencies include pedagogical, professional, personality, and social aspects that must be integrated in a balanced manner.	Becoming a framework to measure the competence of IRE teachers
Ramayulis (2012)	The role of IRE teachers in Islamic learning	IRE teachers not only transfer religious knowledge, but also	Relevant to the research focus on the role of IRE teachers as

		shape the Islamic character of students	agents of character education
Rohmad (2019)	IRE and the formation of morals	IRE plays an important role in shaping morals, faith, and social responsibility	Showing IRE's contribution to the nation's moral development

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed methods approach with an embedded mixed methods design. The selection of this design was motivated by the purpose of the research, which focused on two main aspects, namely exploring the pedagogic competence of IRE teachers in integrating character education and analyzing the challenges faced by teachers in the learning process [15], [16].

The research was carried out in Ogan Ilir Regency in the April-June 2024 period with the participation of IRE teachers at the high school/vocational level. The research population was 105 teachers, with 70 teachers willing to become respondents through filling in test instruments. Quantitative data were obtained through pedagogic competency tests, while qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis that included textbooks, curriculum, and syllabus.

To ensure the quality of the instrument, validity and reliability tests are carried out. Quantitative instruments were tested through the validity of the content by experts and reliability using the SPSS application, while the qualitative data were tested for validity through the member check technique [17]. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS-assisted quantitative descriptive analysis and thematic coding analysis for qualitative data, so that comprehensive, valid, and in-depth research findings were obtained.

Table 2. Research Method Design

Problem Formulation	Subject/Participant	Data Type	Instruments/ Data Sources	Data Collection Techniques	Analytical Techniques
Pedagogic competence of IRE teachers in the integration of character education	High School/Vocational School IRE Teacher (70 people)	Quantitative & Qualitative	Pedagogical competency tests, interview guidelines	Competency tests, semi-structured interviews	Descriptive analysis (SPSS) & thematic coding
The challenges of IRE teachers in learning	Selected IRE SMA/SMK teachers	Qualitative	Interview & Observation Guidelines	In-depth interviews, non-participant observations	Thematic coding

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Competence of IRE Teachers in Character Education Integration

The analysis of the pedagogic competence of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in integrating character education is carried out through the processing of competency test data, which includes three main components, namely planning, implementation, and

learning evaluation. The distribution of the results of the IRE teacher competency test is shown in the following table.

Table 3. Pedagogic Competency Category for IRE Teachers

Component	Very Good/Good	Enough	Less	Total
Planning	28 teachers (40%)	32 teachers (45%)	10 teachers (15%)	70
Implementation	25 teachers (35%)	35 teachers (50%)	10 teachers (15%)	70
Evaluation	18 teachers (25%)	39 teachers (55%)	14 teachers (20%)	70

The data in Table 4.6 shows that most IRE teachers are in the *Adequate* category, especially in the implementation (50%) and evaluation (55%) aspects. Meanwhile, the *Very Good/Good* category is more prominent in the planning (40%) aspect compared to implementation (35%) and evaluation (25%). The *Less category* is relatively small, but still significant in the evaluation aspect (20%). These findings indicate a gap in teachers' pedagogic competence, especially in the implementation and evaluation of character education integration. To strengthen the quantitative findings, data triangulation was carried out through interviews, observations, and document analysis [18]. The following is a description of the results of the analysis per component:

1. Planning Aspects

As many as 40% of teachers are in the *Very Good/Good* category. However, the results of the interviews show that planning is more administrative in nature. One teacher stated:

"We fill out the lesson plan according to the format, including writing character values, but we do not always detail the implementation in the learning step." (Interview, AC Teacher, 2025)

The observation results reinforce this, where the integration of character values is only visible in the lesson plan document, especially in the learning objectives section, without a clear internalization strategy. This explains why some teachers only reach the *Sufficient category* even though the lesson plan documents look complete.

2. Implementation Aspects

As many as 50% of teachers are in the *Sufficient category* in the implementation of character education integration. One of the teachers stated:

"We have tried to insert character values, but we are often constrained by time because the IRE material is quite dense." (Interview, FH Teacher, 2025)

Observations show that teachers emphasize the delivery of cognitive material, while character values are only inserted in a limited way, for example, in the form of moral advice at the beginning or end of learning. This indicates the need to strengthen contextual learning strategies so that character integration is more real.

3. Evaluation Aspects

Evaluation is the component with the lowest achievement, where only 25% of teachers are in the *Very Good/Good* category, while 20% are still in the *Less* category. One of the teachers stated:

"We are not used to creating detailed attitude assessment instruments, usually only assessing attendance and participation." (Interview, AF Teacher, 2025)

Observations and analysis of documents support these findings. The assessments carried out by teachers are still predominantly cognitive through written tests, while rubrics or attitude assessment instruments are very limited. This causes the integration of character education to not be systematically recorded in learning evaluations.

The results of the study show that the competence of IRE teachers in integrating character education still faces serious challenges in the aspects of implementation and evaluation. This condition has a direct impact on the achievement of SDG 4 (Quality Education), which emphasizes the importance of education that fosters the values of peace, tolerance, and sustainable development [19], [20].

In addition, the weak implementation of character education also affects IRE's contribution to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), which demands the creation of a young generation with moral integrity, social responsibility, and tolerance [21]. Thus, improving the competence of IRE teachers, especially in pedagogic, professional, and evaluation aspects, is a key factor in supporting the achievement of the SDGs in the field of education and national character development.

Table 4. Triangulation of Test Results, Interviews, Observations, and Document Analysis Data

Component	Test Results	Interview	Observation	Document	Triangulation Conclusion
Planning	40% High, 45% Medium , 15% Low	Some teachers stated that they had included character values, but were still limited to the cognitive aspect.	The lesson plan is available, but lacks detail in the value internalization strategy.	The majority of RPP documents list character values in general, without detailed assessment indicators.	Planning is carried out, but the quality is not optimal (dominant in the <i>Sufficient</i> category)
Implementation	35% High, 50% Medium , 15% Low	Teachers have difficulty relating character values, especially to online learning.	Teachers use lecture methods more	The teaching journal shows inconsistent character integration	The implementation of integration is still a formality; the majority is <i>Enough</i>
Evaluation	25% High, 55% Medium , 20% Low	Teachers do not yet have a standard instrument for character assessment	Attitude assessments are conducted in general (e.g., attendance and participation)	The assessment document contains only the cognitive aspects	Evaluation is the weakest aspect, with dominant <i>Sufficient</i> and partly <i>Insufficient</i>

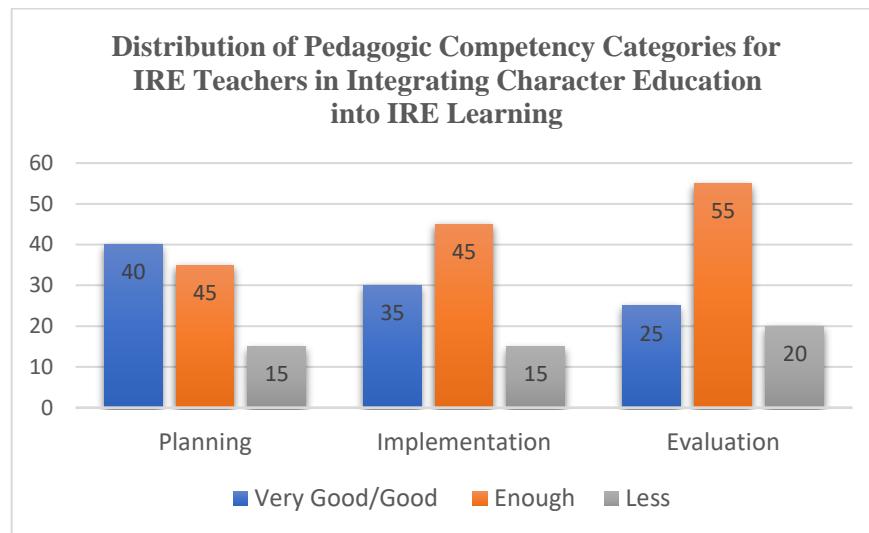


Figure 1. Bar chart showing IRE teachers' competency distribution across planning, implementation, and evaluation categories and levels.

The visualization of the triangulation results shows that the majority of IRE teachers are in the *Sufficient category*, especially in the implementation and evaluation aspects. In general, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in Ogan Ilir Regency have a fairly good understanding of the urgency of character education, but its implementation in learning practice is still not optimal [22].

In the planning aspect, character values have been listed in the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) and teaching modules, but the presentation is still normative and administrative. The strategy of internalizing character values has not been designed in detail, so planning has not been able to ensure the implementation of value integration in the learning process [23], [24].

In the implementation aspect, learning tends to be cognitively oriented with the lecture method as the dominant approach. More effective collaborative, participatory, and contextual learning strategies for character formation are still rarely used. As a result, the integration of character education is often limited to the delivery of moral advice, rather than habituation or real practice in the learning process [25], [26].

In the evaluation aspect, most teachers do not have adequate standard instruments to comprehensively assess the achievement of character values. The assessments carried out are more limited to aspects of student attendance, discipline, and participation, while the dimensions of attitude, morals, and noble morals have not been assessed systematically [27], [28].

Thus, the pedagogic competence of IRE teachers in integrating character education can be categorized *quite well*. Teachers have an adequate theoretical understanding, but limitations in the aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation prevent character education from running optimally. These findings are in line with the views of Muslich and Lickona, who affirm that the success of character education is highly dependent on the integration of planning, implementation, and evaluation [29], [30].

From the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this condition shows a gap in the achievement of SDG 4 (Quality Education), which emphasizes the importance of education to instill the values of peace, tolerance, and global responsibility. In addition, the weak evaluation of character education also has implications for the delay in achieving SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), because the integration of character values has not fully formed students with integrity, tolerance, and competitiveness [31].

Therefore, there is a need for special training programs for IRE teachers, the development of comprehensive character evaluation instruments, and consistent school policy support [32], [33]. These measures will strengthen the integration of character education in IRE learning more effectively, sustainably, and in line with the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs).

Challenges of IRE Teachers in Character Education Integration

IRE teachers face several obstacles in integrating character education into learning. The main challenges include limited learning facilities and resources, a lack of professional training related to character education strategies, and differences in students' social, cultural, and economic backgrounds that affect the acceptance of character values. In addition, limited time in the curriculum, lack of support from family and community, and negative influence of media and technology complicate implementation [34], [35].

Other factors that are obstacles are weak school policies, low student discipline, difficulties in evaluating character education achievements, and limited collaboration between teachers in the application of character values in all subjects [36], [37]. All of these challenges show that efforts to integrate character education by IRE teachers require broader support, both from educational institutions and the social environment.

Table 5. Challenges of IRE Teachers in Character Education Integration

Challenge Indicators	Description
Limited Learning Facilities and Resources	There is a lack of books, teaching materials, and facilities that support character education.
Lack of Professional Training	Teachers have not received adequate training related to character education strategies and methods.
Differences in Students' Backgrounds	Students' cultural, social, and economic diversity affects the acceptance of character values.
Limited Time and Curriculum	Busy schedules make it difficult for teachers to integrate character education as a whole.
Low Family and Community Support	Lack of parental involvement and social environment hinders the formation of students' character.
Negative Influence of Media and Technology	Digital content and social media often conflict with the values of character education.
Weak School Policy and Management	Schools do not yet fully have programs or policies that support character education.
Student Discipline and Behavior Issues	Low discipline and student learning motivation hinder the internalization of character values.
Character Education Evaluation	The difficulty of measuring the achievement of character education in an objective and standardized manner.
Lack of Collaboration Between Teachers	Coordination between teachers is still limited in integrating character values across subjects.

The results of the study show that IRE teachers face various challenges in integrating character education into the learning process. The main challenges include limited learning facilities and resources, a lack of professional training related to character education strategies, and differences in students' social, cultural, and economic backgrounds that

affect the acceptance of character values. In addition, limited time in the curriculum and low support from families and communities are also significant obstacles. Other external factors, such as the negative influence of media and technology, further complicate teachers' efforts in shaping students' character [38].

This finding is in line with the opinion of Lickona, who emphasized that character education requires the support of a conducive social environment to be effectively internalized. On the other hand, challenges also arise from internal aspects of schools, including weak policies and school management in supporting character education programs, low discipline and motivation to learn among students, and difficulties in evaluating character achievements objectively. The lack of collaboration between teachers in integrating character values across subjects also weakens implementation. This is reinforced by Muslich, who states that character education will be difficult to succeed in if it is not supported by consistent school policies and cooperation between educators [39].

From the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this challenge is closely related to SDG 4 (Quality Education), which emphasizes the importance of learning that instills the value of sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, a culture of peace, tolerance, and respect for diversity. In addition, weak institutional support and the social environment also have an impact on the achievement of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), which requires the presence of the younger generation with moral integrity, tolerance, and social concern. Thus, the results of this study confirm that the success of character education through IRE learning does not only depend on the competence of individual teachers, but also on the support of the education system, school policies, families, and the wider community. This collective effort is needed so that character education is truly able to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs) [39].

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive picture of the current state of IRE teacher competencies in integrating character education and their strategic relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although most teachers fall within the “sufficient” category, particularly in planning and implementation, the persistent weaknesses in evaluation reveal a structural gap between conceptual understanding and measurable practice. This gap has important implications for SDGs-oriented education, especially SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). From a pedagogical perspective, the dominance of administrative compliance in lesson planning indicates that character education is still positioned as a formal requirement rather than an embedded instructional philosophy. While teachers include character values in lesson plans, the absence of detailed internalization strategies suggests limited transformation of values into experiential learning. In the context of SDG 4.7—which emphasizes education for sustainable development, global citizenship, human rights, and a culture of peace—this limitation weakens the potential of IRE to cultivate critical ethical awareness and responsible citizenship [40].

The implementation phase further reflects a cognitive-centered orientation. The prevalence of lecture-based methods constrains opportunities for dialogical, reflective, and collaborative learning that are essential for character formation. Character education, particularly within Islamic Religious Education, requires habituation, modeling (uswah hasanah), and contextual problem-solving approaches. Without participatory pedagogies, values such as tolerance, justice, integrity, and social responsibility remain abstract concepts. Consequently, the transformative dimension of education envisioned in the SDGs framework is not fully realized. The most critical weakness lies in evaluation practices. The limited use of standardized instruments for assessing attitudes, moral reasoning, and behavioral change undermines the sustainability of character education initiatives. Assessment remains predominantly cognitive, focusing on written tests rather than authentic evaluation of ethical conduct. This deficiency directly affects accountability

mechanisms within SDG 4, which stress measurable learning outcomes. Moreover, inadequate evaluation of character development has broader implications for SDG 16, as the formation of peaceful and justice-oriented citizens depends on systematic moral assessment and reinforcement [41].

The identified challenges—limited facilities, insufficient professional training, weak institutional support, and socio-cultural diversity—demonstrate that teacher competency alone is insufficient to ensure SDGs realization. Character education integration requires systemic alignment among curriculum policy, school leadership, teacher collaboration, family engagement, and community participation. Sustainable development in education must therefore be understood as a multi-level ecosystem rather than an individual teacher responsibility. Overall, this study confirms that strengthening IRE teacher competencies is a strategic pathway toward SDGs realization, but it must be accompanied by structural reform. Continuous professional development focused on character assessment literacy, SDGs-based curriculum alignment, and innovative pedagogical models is essential. By bridging religious values with sustainable development principles, Islamic Religious Education can contribute not only to academic quality but also to ethical transformation, social cohesion, and long-term national resilience aligned with the global SDGs agenda [41].

CONCLUSION

The pedagogic competence of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in Ogan Ilir Regency in integrating character education is in the sufficient category. In the planning aspect, character values have been included in the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) and teaching modules, but they are still normative and administrative without a structured internalization strategy. In the implementation aspect, learning tends to be oriented towards the cognitive aspect, with the dominance of the lecture method, so that the integration of character values is not optimal. Meanwhile, in the evaluation aspect, most teachers do not have adequate standard instruments to comprehensively assess the development of students' character; The assessment carried out is more limited to the aspects of discipline and attendance. In addition to these limitations, this study also identifies several contextual challenges, including limited facilities, internet access, learning media, lack of teachers and continuous training, curriculum dynamics, and limited learning time. External factors such as differences in family backgrounds, cultures, and the upbringing of students also reinforce obstacles in integrating character education consistently. Thus, the success of the integration of character education in IRE learning is not only determined by the individual capacity of teachers, but also requires systemic support that includes the preparation of an applicable curriculum, the provision of adequate learning facilities and media, the development of comprehensive character evaluation instruments, and continuous teacher training. In addition, collaboration between schools, families, and the community is a key factor in realizing effective and sustainable character education. More broadly, strengthening the integration of character education in IRE also contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially quality education (SDG 4) and the formation of a young generation with integrity, tolerance, and social concern that supports peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16). Thus, character education through IRE not only has an impact on the development of individual students, but is also relevant to the sustainable development agenda at the community and state levels.

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Author Contribution

Endang Switri conceptualized the study, coordinated data collection, and drafted the manuscript. M. Sirozi contributed to theoretical framework development and SDGs integration analysis. Annisa Astrid, Hamidah, and Muhammad Torik supported data interpretation and language refinement. Rozi Irfan Rosyadi assisted in methodological design and statistical validation. Meguellati Achour provided international academic perspectives and critical revisions. All authors contributed to discussion development, reviewed the final manuscript thoroughly, and approved its submission for publication.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article entitled Strengthening IRE Teacher Competencies for Character Education and SDGs Realization. This research was conducted independently without financial sponsorship or commercial involvement that could influence the research process or findings.

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