
Islamic Educators Development Strategy in Improving Professional Competence Towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to explore and describe the strategies for developing Islamic educators to enhance their professional competence in response to global educational challenges and student needs. **Theoretical framework:** The theoretical framework is grounded in the importance of integrating pedagogical, technological, and managerial competencies to build educators' capabilities, aligning with contemporary educational theories and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 on quality education. **Literature review:** A review of the literature highlights persistent challenges in the consistent implementation of educator development programs and the gap between existing strategies and the holistic competencies required today. **Methods:** Using a descriptive qualitative research design, this study was conducted at SMP Islam Bani Hasyim Singosari Malang. Informants included the principal, three vice principals, the chairman of the national exam committee, and teachers of Indonesian, English, Arabic, and religious studies. **Results:** Findings reveal three core strategies in educator development: First, the Education Strategy, which includes free lectures aimed at broadening educators' strategic and adaptive thinking; Second, the Educator Training Strategy, which is implemented in three levels to accommodate new educators, enhance existing educators' skills, and prepare educators for leadership roles; Third, the Strategy of Cultivating and Realizing a Sense of Responsibility, focusing on practical and ethical approaches to professional development. **Implications:** The implications of this research suggest that a comprehensive, tiered, and responsibility-focused approach can effectively improve educator competence, curriculum relevance, and the quality of learning, thereby supporting the achievement of SDGs. **Novelty:** The novelty of this study lies in its integrated framework that combines education, training, and ethical responsibility cultivation tailored to Islamic educational institutions, offering a sustainable model for educator development in the era of globalization.

Keywords: development strategy, islamic educator development, competency improvement, professional competence, sustainable development goals.

INTRODUCTION

An educator development strategy is a series of steps or approaches designed to improve the quality and ability of educators to carry out their duties professionally [1]. This strategy includes efforts to provide training, further education, and ongoing coaching for educators. Where MacPhail in his research explained the main purpose of this strategy is to ensure that educators can master teaching materials, use effective learning methods, and utilize technology to support the educational process [2]. With the right development strategy, educators can face new challenges in the world of education, such as curriculum changes and the growing needs of learners [3].

Langdon Warren adds that educator development also includes improving skills in leadership, communication, and classroom management [4]. These competencies are important so that educators can create a conducive and enjoyable learning environment. This strategy often involves formal training, such as seminars and workshops, as well as informal coaching, such as mentoring and group discussions [5]. In practice, Adrianto added that this strategy must be tailored to the needs of individual educators and the goals of the educational institutions where they work [6]. Thus, educators not only teach but also become facilitators who are able to empower students.

As for improving professional competence, according to Maxbuba Qobilovna, it is an effort made to develop a person's abilities, skills, and knowledge in the field of work pursued [7]. Where professional competence includes technical ability, mastery of material, and special expertise relevant to job duties and responsibilities. Suchyadi added that this improvement effort aims to ensure that individuals are able to work effectively, and productively, and meet applicable professional standards [8]. With improved competencies, a professional can face job challenges that are increasingly complex and change with the times [9].

In line with Ridei's statement, improving professional competence usually involves various activities, such as training, further education, certification, or direct experience in the field [10]. This process not only helps individuals to improve their work performance but also opens up wider career opportunities. Professional competence also involves aspects such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and appropriate decision-making [11]. Thus, the definition of educator development strategies and the improvement of professional competencies are important steps to ensure educators are able to face the evolving challenges of education. Through training, coaching, and continuous development, educators can improve their teaching quality and become effective facilitators. This approach also opens up wider career opportunities and ensures the relevance of expertise to the future demands of the profession.

As stated by Budiharso educators have an important role in producing a quality and competitive generation in society [12]. However, it is slightly different in application or in practice according to Simamora et al, where many educators face various challenges, such as limited ability to master technology, lack of renewal of learning methods, and lack of access to relevant training [13]. This often causes a gap between the competence of educators and the growing demands of education. The presentation of Beribe's research results that in the era of globalization, education requires educators who are able to adapt to curriculum changes, digital technology, and the increasingly complex and diverse needs of students [14].

According to Szabo, educator development strategies are the main solution to overcome various problems in education [15]. Through continuing education training and ongoing coaching, educators can improve their abilities professionally [16]. In contrast to Teachers' submission the implementation of this strategy is often not optimal due to

various obstacles, such as the lack of budget, the lack of appropriate training programs, and the low motivation of educators to develop themselves [17]. This statement is reinforced by Rossoni that the lack of collaboration between educational institutions, the government, and the community is also an inhibiting factor in the implementation of this development strategy [18].

The strategy of developing educators and improving professional competence has a gap that lies in the difference between ideal needs and reality in the field. Based on the explanation, various studies above emphasize the importance of continuous training, coaching, and adjusting strategies to the needs of individual educators. However, its implementation often faces obstacles such as budget constraints, lack of relevant training programs, and low motivation of educators to participate. In addition, factors such as lack of technological mastery, curriculum changes, and diverse learner needs pose major challenges. This gap shows that although strategies have been formulated, their implementation has not been able to effectively address the demands of globalization and the complexity of education.

Thus, further research is needed to explore new approaches that are not only theoretically effective but also applicable and able to answer the needs of educators in various social and cultural contexts. This research is presented to formulate effective educator development strategies in order to improve professional competence. This research focuses on identifying the needs of educators, mastering technology, updating learning methods, and increasing collaboration between schools, the government, and the community. Thus, it is expected that the results of the research can provide applicable solutions that support the quality of learning, curriculum relevance, and educators' ability to face educational challenges in the era of globalization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of Islamic educators in shaping quality education has become increasingly significant in the context of global educational reform. As the world moves toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, which emphasizes inclusive and quality education for all, there is a growing demand for educators who are professionally competent, pedagogically innovative, and ethically grounded. In this regard, the professional development of Islamic educators requires strategic planning that is aligned with both contemporary educational needs and the values embedded within Islamic teachings.

Professional competence in Islamic education goes beyond the mastery of teaching methodologies or curriculum content. It also includes spiritual integrity, moral leadership, the ability to integrate Islamic values into various learning contexts, and a commitment to continuous personal and professional growth. The development of such competencies is essential not only for achieving academic excellence but also for nurturing holistic learners who embody ethical and responsible behavior in society.

Literature on educator development often focuses on formal training, workshops, and policy-based reforms. However, in the context of Islamic education, professional development must also incorporate self-reflection, mentorship, spiritual enhancement, and community engagement. These elements serve to balance technical skill with the moral purpose of education, ensuring that Islamic educators act as both knowledge facilitators and role models.

Moreover, achieving the targets of SDG 4 requires educators to be adaptive, inclusive, and socially aware. Islamic educators must be equipped to address diverse student needs, promote equity in learning opportunities, and contribute to the development of sustainable communities. This calls for strategic initiatives that foster collaboration between educational institutions, government bodies, and religious organizations in providing access to lifelong learning, digital literacy, and value-based education.

Despite various efforts, many Islamic education systems still face challenges such as limited access to quality professional development programs, lack of standardized teacher evaluation frameworks, and minimal integration of SDG-oriented goals. Therefore, a strategic approach that aligns Islamic educator development with sustainable education principles is urgently needed.

This review underscores the importance of establishing comprehensive and contextual strategies that support Islamic educators in enhancing their professional competence. By doing so, Islamic education can become a driving force in realizing the global vision of sustainable, inclusive, and transformative education for all.

METHODOLOGY

This research is related to the Development Strategy of Educators in order to Improve Professional Competence, this research uses a descriptive qualitative approach in the form of a case study with a single case study design [19]. The location of the research is Bani Hasyim Islamic Junior High School under the Bani Hasyim Foundation's Masjidil Ilmi located at Perum Persada Bhayangkara Singosari Blok L-K Pagentan Singosari Malang. The data source in this research is all the facts and figures that can be used as material to compile information. While the main data sources in research are words and actions, the rest are additional data such as documents, photographs, and others that are closely related to this research. The method that researchers use to determine informants is to use probability techniques (sampling is not based on chance) with the type of “purposive sampling and snowball sampling”.

Furthermore, the informants in this study are the Principal, Vice Principal for Curriculum, Vice Principal for Student Affairs & Facilities and Infrastructure, Head of National Examinations & Indonesian Language Teacher, English and Arabic Teachers, and Religion Teachers. Data collection is done in three ways, namely, in-depth interviews to collect information in the form of verbal words (verbal), participant observation to understand the attitudes/actions that occur, and document analysis in the form of writings, pictures, recordings, and so on. The data analysis used is interactive model analysis as proposed by Miles and Huberman data analysis begins with the process of data collection, data condensation, and data presentation and then ends with verification or conclusion drawing. The stages in this research are in the form of research stages that researchers fully carry out by working inductively. Researchers first explored the field. For more details, the stages in question can be seen in the following figure:

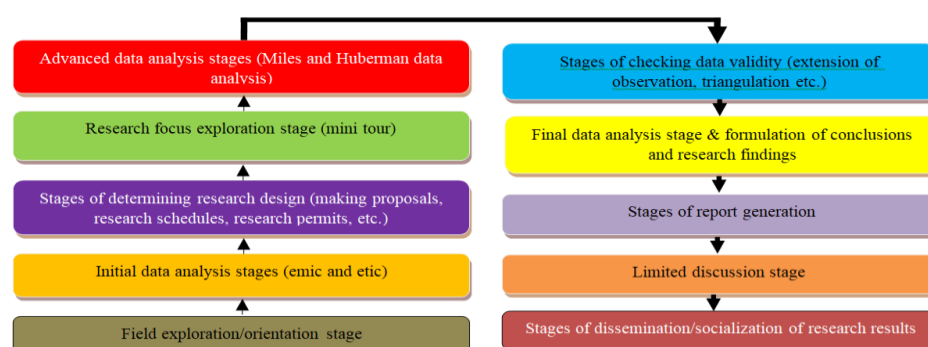


Figure 1. Research Stages

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that in order to improve the professional competence of teaching staff, SMP Islam Bani Hasyim Singoasri Malang implemented several strategies, namely

education and training. Given that educators are used as role models, protectors, and guides for students. This is in line with Abbasianchavari's statement that educators must act as protectors, be compassionate towards their students, and should treat them like their own children [20]. Educators must always control, advise, and give moral messages about knowledge and the future of their students and not let them continue their studies to a higher level before mastering the previous lessons and having noble morals [21]. Meanwhile, according to Hermino, the balance of scientific development (reason) and morals (character) is something that must always be controlled by the teacher [22].

Meanwhile, training focuses more on developing practical skills that are relevant to specific needs, both for individuals and organizations. In line with what Caeiro-Rodriguez et al. conveyed that training is designed to deepen certain abilities, for example technical, managerial, or soft skills such as communication and teamwork [23]. Meanwhile, according to Rivaldo & Nabella in the world of work, training is an effective tool to increase employee productivity and work quality [24]. Gao explained that the combination of strong education and proper training allows individuals not only to have a solid theoretical basis but also to be able to implement it effectively in real situations [25].

So further the following description of the educator development strategy applied by SMP Islam Bani Hasyim Singosari to improve professional competence, the strategy is then categorized in the following figure:

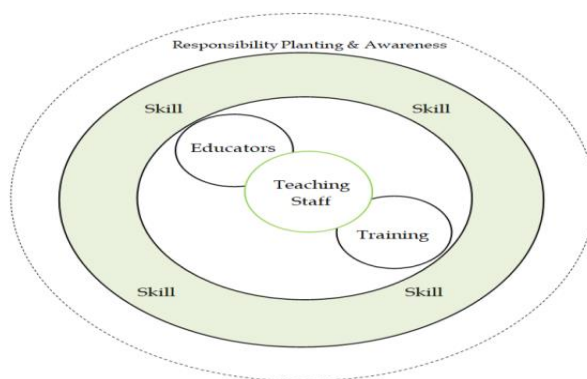


Figure 2. Classification of Educator Development Strategies (Continuous Development)

In Figure 2 above, it can be understood that: The roles of educators and training are complementary in shaping the skills of educators, especially in instilling and realizing responsibility. Educators provide a solid foundation of ethical values, morals, and professionalism that are important for educators. Meanwhile, training provides practical skills, such as creative teaching techniques, effective communication, and how to motivate learners. In line with Hui-Wen's submission that education has a theoretical basis and training as a practical guide, educators can carry out their responsibilities professionally and improve the quality of education [26].

Education

Education in organizations has an important role in the process of developing abilities that are aligned with organizational goals. Soomro also stated that through education, organizational members can increase knowledge, insights, and skills that are relevant to the vision and mission of the organization [27]. Akpa argues that structured education allows individuals to understand values, work culture, and their responsibilities within the organization [28]. According to Lomis, education helps create alignment between individual competencies and organizational needs, so that each member can contribute optimally [29].

In the increasingly complex reality of the world of work, organizations need human resources who are not only technically skilled but also have the ability to think strategically and adaptively. According to Ishak, education is the key to building this capacity by equipping organizational members with the latest knowledge and innovative approaches [30]. With the right education, organizations are able to create a productive work environment, increase job satisfaction, and strengthen employee commitment to common goals [31]. Sitopu emphasizes that education is not only a development tool but also a strategic investment to ensure the long-term success of the organization [32].

Based on the results of the study, it was found that the strategy of developing teaching staff at Bani Hasyim Islamic Junior High School through education is by educating educators for free. Educators who have been educated or obtained further study recommendations are expected to improve their quality and capacity for the future progress of the school. Where education in the organization is a strategic element that not only supports individual development but also ensures alignment between employee competencies and organizational needs. This goes hand in hand with Rojak's assertion that with structured education, organizational members can understand core values, work culture, and responsibilities so that they can contribute optimally to the achievement of the organization's vision and mission [33].

Educator Training

From the results of the researcher's analysis based on information obtained from several informants, among the reasons expressed by informants regarding this matter are: First, Bani Hasyim Islamic Junior High School is a newly established private school and is still in the development stage, so improving the quality of educators is needed to create quality education. In line with Gonzalez-Perez educators are the main pillars of the learning process, so their competence greatly affects the learning outcomes of students [34]. There are similarities with Akram's findings that the quality of educators includes a deep understanding of teaching materials, pedagogical skills, and the ability to integrate technology into the learning process [35].

The urgency of improving the quality of educators is increasingly felt in the midst of the dynamics of the growing world of education. The changing curriculum, the diverse needs of students, and the demands of globalization require educators to continue to learn and adapt. According to Smeplass, training programs, workshops, and further education are key in supporting educators to develop their competencies [36]. With better quality, educators can create an inclusive, creative, and inspiring learning atmosphere. Diez similarly emphasizes that the quality of educators not only has an impact on improving learner achievement but also on the overall competitiveness of educational institutions [37].

The second finding is that the knowledge of educators continues to be upgraded in line with the development of globalization and the development of science and technology, but not to eliminate the characteristics of Bani Hasyim Islamic Junior High School. According to Rosa and Mujiarto, educators' knowledge that continues to be upgraded is an urgent need in the era of globalization and the rapid development of science and technology [38]. Meanwhile, according to Goodwin, globalization brings significant changes in various aspects of life, including education, which requires educators to be able to compete globally. Along with that, according to Fischer, technological developments introduce various new learning tools and methods that must be mastered by educators to create relevant and interesting learning experiences [39].

The urgency of improving educators' knowledge is also closely related to the need to face future challenges and opportunities. According to Law, changes in curriculum, education policy, and labor market needs require educators who can adapt quickly and appropriately [40]. Training, workshops, and continuing education programs are effective

means to ensure educators stay abreast of the latest developments. In addition, according to Oliveira, educators' mastery of technology allows them to utilize digital platforms for distance learning, classroom management, and more efficient evaluation [41]. Thus, educators who continue to upgrade their knowledge not only support the success of students but also strengthen the competitiveness of educational institutions in the global era.

As for the training held at Bani Hasyim Islamic Junior High School based on the research findings, it can be seen in the following table of educator training categorization:

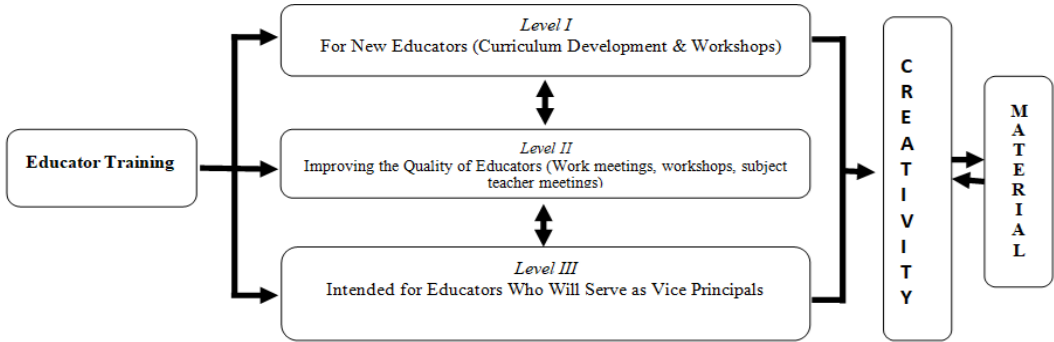


Figure 3. Forms of Training

In Figure 3 above, some explanations can be understood in that this:

Level I: New Educators (Curriculum Development & Workshops)

New Educators in the form of development, namely the context of educator training, have an urgency to ensure the quality of education is relevant and sustainable. Training provides opportunities for educators to update their knowledge and skills, especially in the face of changes in curriculum, technology, and learners' needs. According to Sorochan, through training educators can master modern teaching methods, the use of digital tools, and creative and inclusive learning strategies [42]. In addition, according to Ozen, training helps build educators' professionalism by improving communication, classroom management, and problem-solving skills [43]. In the context of globalization, Kjellgren added that training is the key for educators to compete at the international level and create a globally competent generation [44].

As for new educators in the form of curriculum workshops, namely the context of training educators through workshop activities, where this activity provides a space to discuss learning objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation collaboratively, resulting in a more applicable and adaptive curriculum. According to Makumane, curriculum workshops help educators understand more deeply the philosophy, structure, and implementation of the curriculum [45]. In this training, educators are also equipped with skills to align the curriculum with educational technology and local and global contexts. By actively participating in curriculum workshops, according to Shonfeld, educators can improve their professional competence while ensuring better quality education that is relevant to future demands [46].

Level II: Educator Quality Improvement

Improving the quality of educators has an urgency in ensuring the quality of education to the needs of the times. Qualified educators not only have in-depth knowledge of teaching materials but are also able to use innovative and relevant teaching methods. According to Lukman, by improving quality, educators can present learning that is effective, and interesting, and to the increasingly diverse needs of students [47].

Meanwhile, Fawait said that improving the quality of educators also means strengthening their ability to use technology and keep up with scientific developments [48]. This ensures that the education process not only produces smart learners but also competent ones to compete globally.

Improving the quality of educators in the form of working meetings (raker) by providing opportunities for educators to discuss collectively the challenges and opportunities in the implementation of learning. In this forum, educators can share best practices, evaluate the curriculum, and design more effective learning strategies. According to Ahmet, working meetings allow for updates on education policies, new technologies, and modern pedagogical approaches [49]. Through collaboration, educators can strengthen their communication, coordination, and innovation skills in carrying out their duties. Meanwhile, according to Waham, work meetings are a strategic forum to harmonize the vision and mission of education, improve the competence of educators, and ensure the creation of an adaptive and quality education system [50].

Meanwhile, improving the quality of educators in the form of workshops provides an interactive and applicable learning experience, which allows educators to understand the latest learning methods firsthand. According to Ledger, through discussion, simulation, and practice sessions, educators can develop pedagogical skills, and use technology, and creative approaches to teaching [51]. In addition, workshops create a collaborative environment where educators can exchange ideas, inspiration, and solutions to challenges faced. Similarly, Munna stated that with experiential learning, workshops help educators to be more confident in implementing effective teaching strategies [52].

As for improving the quality of educators in the Subject Teacher Conference, namely providing space for teachers to discuss with teachers outside the foundation or from different schools, they can share experiences, and solve problems related to teaching the subjects covered. In line with what Ismail said through the Subject Teacher Conference, it can encourage innovation and creativity in delivering material, so that learning becomes more interesting and in accordance with the needs of students [53]. In addition, according to Madrid Miranda, with such activities, teachers can also strengthen professional networks, provide mutual support, and obtain the latest information on education policy [54].

Level III. Intended for Educators Who Will Serve as Vice Principal

Educator training aimed at educators who will serve as Vice Principals has an important role in preparing individuals to face new and more complex tasks and responsibilities. The training aims to improve managerial, leadership, and decision-making competencies, which are indispensable in supporting successful school management. According to Ulin Nuha, training materials can include curriculum management, educational administration, human resource management, learning supervision strategies, and communication and negotiation skills [55]. Likewise, Hayes conveyed that by participating in this training, prospective Vice Principals hone their ability to be skilled in carrying out their roles more confidently, effectively, and professionally, so that they can support the creation of a quality and sustainable educational environment [56].

Cultivating and Realizing a Sense of Responsibility

As the researchers have explained earlier, increasing the professional competence of educators through education and training is then applied in real terms through planting and awareness of responsibility. Where the responsibility that is instilled and realized is that educators and teachers, namely teachers, are not oriented towards profit alone, be it salary, money, or other luxuries. But it is a moral responsibility, as a form of worship and

responsibility as Muslims. According to Torelli, moral responsibility is a person's awareness to carry out good and right actions by applying ethical values and norms [57]. Meanwhile, according to Yatim in the context of Islam, moral responsibility is a form of worship because every action taken with sincere intentions for good and by the Sharia will be worthy of reward by Allah [58].

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the value and meaning of responsibility from the perspective of Bani Hasyim Islamic Junior High School is presented in the following figure:

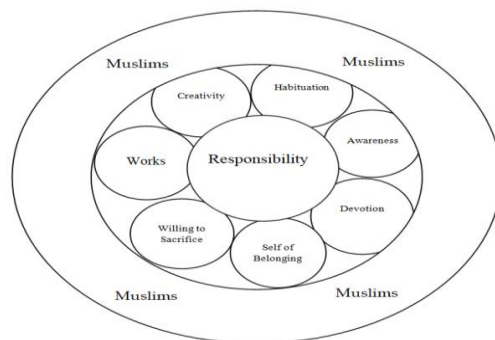


Figure 4. The Value and Meaning of Responsibility

In Figure 4 above, it can be understood that planting and awareness of responsibility in educators has been cultured in Bani Hasyim Islamic Junior High School, this is because educators realize and believe that educating and teaching is a responsibility as Muslims. The impact of the cultivation of responsibility in educators is to facilitate the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, the benchmark for knowing whether educators are responsible can be seen from the smooth learning and teaching process. So that learning activities starting from preparation to evaluation are left entirely to educators, activities managed by educators emphasize how to develop the creativity, personality, and mindset of students, not just their competence. So indirectly, the knowledge and personality of the Santri are formed. So that further the duties of an educator can be coherently described along with the dominant level, as follows: 1) Educating by teaching (most dominant) [59]; 2) Educating by encouraging (ordinary) [60]; 3) Educating by example (normal) [61]; 4) Educating by praise (moderate) [62]; 5) Educating by habituation (dominant); and educating by other means (dominant) [63].

The study explores strategic efforts by SMP Islam Bani Hasyim Singosari Malang in enhancing the professional competence of Islamic educators within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 on quality education. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the research identifies three core strategies: education, training, and cultivating responsibility. Firstly, the education strategy emphasizes the provision of free advanced studies to educators. This initiative aims to broaden educators' strategic thinking, aligning their competencies with institutional visions and emerging educational demands. By enabling teachers to pursue further education, the school fosters long-term professional growth and curriculum alignment.

Secondly, the educator training strategy is designed in a structured, tiered manner, divided into three levels: foundational training for new educators, quality improvement for current educators, and leadership training for future vice principals. This model ensures continuous professional development tailored to varying needs. Activities include workshops, curriculum development sessions, and subject teacher meetings, which build both pedagogical skills and collaborative competencies. Thirdly, the strategy of cultivating responsibility integrates moral and spiritual dimensions into professional duties. Educators are encouraged to view their roles as acts of religious devotion, instilling ethical accountability and deepening their commitment beyond monetary

incentives. This approach is rooted in Islamic values, aiming to nurture educators who act as role models and moral guides for students.

Overall, this integrated strategy—blending education, structured training, and ethical cultivation—presents a holistic model for Islamic educator development. It addresses both technical competence and moral integrity, equipping educators to navigate contemporary challenges in education. As such, the framework offers a replicable model for Islamic institutions seeking to achieve sustainable and quality education in line with global development goals.

CONCLUSION

Based on the comprehensive analysis and discussions presented in this study, it can be concluded that the Islamic Educators Development Strategy at Bani Hasyim Singosari Islamic Junior High School, Malang, plays a significant role in enhancing the professional competence of educators. This development strategy aligns with the broader goals of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in promoting quality education (SDG 4) and fostering lifelong learning opportunities for all. The research identifies three core strategies for developing educators to improve their professional competence effectively. First, the Education Strategy involves offering free lectures to educators. This initiative serves not only as an organizational objective but also fosters strategic and adaptive thinking among educators, enabling them to respond to dynamic educational challenges and contribute meaningfully to their institutions. This approach reflects SDG aspirations by promoting inclusive and equitable quality education. Second, the Educator Training Strategy is a structured, tiered program that ensures continuous professional development. It is implemented in three distinct levels: Level I targets new educators, providing foundational knowledge and skills; Level II focuses on enhancing the competencies of existing educators to maintain and improve teaching quality; Level III prepares selected educators for leadership roles such as Vice Principals. This tiered training system supports SDG targets related to capacity building and leadership development in education. Third, the Strategy of Cultivating and Realizing a Sense of Responsibility addresses the operational aspect of educator development. It is enacted through practical and relational approaches such as educating by teaching, encouraging, exemplifying, praising, familiarizing, and other methods that instill professional ethics and accountability. This strategy promotes a nurturing environment where educators not only enhance their skills but also develop a strong professional commitment, which is essential for sustainable educational development. In summary, the integrated approach of education, training, and responsibility cultivation creates a holistic development framework for Islamic educators. This framework not only improves professional competence but also supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by fostering competent, responsible, and adaptive educators who contribute to sustainable quality education. Thus, this strategy is crucial for advancing both individual educator growth and broader educational sustainability in line with global development agendas.

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Author Contributions

Hidayatussaliki, Sugeng Listyo Prabowo, and Slamet conceptualized and designed the research. Mappanyompa supervised the methodology and data analysis. Shabibah Binti Shaufit Affandi contributed to drafting and revising the manuscript. All authors read and

approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this research on Islamic Educator's Development Strategy in improving professional competence towards SDGs. This work was conducted independently without any commercial or financial relationships that could be perceived as influencing the results or interpretations presented in this study.

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