

Teacher and Lecturer Certification in Indonesian Islamic Education: Policy Frameworks Implementation Mechanisms and Challenges

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ABSTRACT. The teacher and lecturer certification policy is one of the government's instruments to ensure the professionalism of educators and improve the quality of education, including in the Islamic education environment. This article discusses the objectives and objectives of the certification policy, its implementation mechanism, and the challenges of its implementation for madrasah teachers, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, and lecturers at Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI). The article is compiled through a study of regulations, policy documents, institutional reports, and literature used in source papers. The discussion shows that the certification policy has a strong juridical foundation, especially Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, as well as technical regulations of the Ministry of Religion. The policy targets include madrasah teachers, PAI teachers in public schools, and PTKI lecturers who meet certain requirements. The implementation of madrasah teacher certification is carried out through the administrative stage, Teacher Professional Education (PPG), and competency tests with the support of the SIMPATIKA system, while lecturer certification is carried out through the Lecturer Certification (Serdos) mechanism with the support of the SISTER system. Although the mechanism has been arranged in a regulatory manner, the implementation still faces problems in the form of limited digital infrastructure, inequality of access to training, uneven technical assistance, and suboptimal post-certification evaluation. Therefore, strengthening digital training based on local needs, assistance at the regional level, post-certification evaluation, and policy communication that emphasizes professional development is an important part of strengthening the implementation of certification policies in the Islamic education environment.

Keywords: *Teacher Certification Policy, Lecturer Certification, Professional Education, Islamic Education, Educator Professionalism*

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to realize quality national education, the strategic role of teachers and lecturers as the spearhead of learning is very central. This is especially important in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia which not only aims to transfer knowledge, but also instill strong religious values and morality. To ensure the quality and professionalism of educators, the teacher and lecturer certification policy is a strategic instrument that is enforced nationally, including by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia as an institution that oversees Islamic education under it.

Educator certification is a process of providing formal recognition of the academic competence and qualifications of teachers and lecturers as professionals. This policy is legally based on Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, which expressly states that "teachers and lecturers are professional educators" who are required to have an educator certificate as one of the main requirements in carrying out their duties professionally. (Republic of Indonesia, 2005) In the scope of Islamic education, the certification authority is under the Ministry of Religion

of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI), through the Directorate General of Islamic Education which is responsible for regulating and organizing the certification program for madrasah teachers and lecturers of State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN).

This certification policy is not solely an administrative form, but as an instrument to improve the quality of learning in Islamic education units. Through the certification process, a teacher or lecturer is expected not only to master pedagogic competence, but also to have professional ethics, social skills, and commitment to carry out their scientific duties. Data from the Ministry of Religion in 2025 notes that as many as 620,716 teachers assisted by the Ministry of Religion have not participated in Teacher Professional Education (PPG), consisting of 484,678 madrasah teachers and 95,367 Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in public schools, as well as 40,671 honorary PAI teachers. (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2025). This figure shows that educator certification programs are still facing a *backlog*, which is enormous, and therefore requires systematic and targeted policy measures.

On the other hand, for PTKIN lecturers, the certification mechanism is carried out through Lecturer Certification (Serdos). This process requires the fulfillment of academic qualifications, functional positions, and basic training through the Beginner Lecturer Competency Improvement Program (PKDP)). In practice, the implementation of Serdos also faces challenges in terms of funding, limited number of implementing LPTKs, and the integration of lecturer data in the Islamic higher education system. Several reports note that the PKDP process, which is a prerequisite for lecturer certification, will not receive LPDP funding allocation in 2024, so PTKIN lecturers must bear the costs independently (Director of PTKI Directorate General of Pendis of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). This has the potential to be a participatory obstacle in the development of lecturers' capacity as professional educators.

One of the main goals of the certification policy within the Ministry of Religion is to improve the professionalism, welfare, and accountability of Islamic educators. Teachers and lecturers who have obtained an educator certificate are entitled to a significant amount of professional allowance, which is IDR 2,000,000 per month for madrasah teachers, and additional allowances according to academic positions for certified lecturers (Directorate of GTK Madrasah, 2023). The implementation of certification policies in the Islamic education environment is not spared from various obstacles. Among them are the limitations of digital infrastructure, uneven socialization of the program, and a lack of technical training for teachers/lecturers, which also hinder the acceleration of this program. A study by the Ministry of Religion's Research and Development (2020) stated that many PAI teachers have difficulty accessing online PPG training due to limited internet access and technological devices (Research and Development Agency and Training of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020).

Thus, the existence of a teacher and lecturer certification policy within the Ministry of Religion is part of the national strategy to improve the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia. Although it has a strong legal basis and noble goals, its implementation still needs to be strengthened in terms of institutional, funding, and integration of educational information systems. Therefore, a study of this policy is important to explore the effectiveness of its implementation as well as provide constructive recommendations for improving the quality of educators in the future.

METHOD

This article is prepared with a literature review and document analysis approach. The discussion material comes from government regulations, Ministry of Religion documents, institutional reports, and scientific articles used as sources for articles. The document is read thematically to identify the basis and objectives of the policy, the mechanism for implementing certification, and its implementation issues. The analysis is carried out by organizing information based on themes that are in accordance with the focus of the article, then linking normative provisions with the implementation picture presented in various sources. This article is not intended as a field research, but as a policy study based on documents and literature.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Objectives and Means of Teacher and Lecturer Certification Policy in Islamic Education

Improving the quality of Islamic education cannot be separated from the strategic role of teachers and lecturers as the main agents of the transformation of Islamic knowledge and values. In the face of the dynamics of the times marked by the challenges of globalization, technological advancement, and the degradation of moral values and professionalism, efforts to foster and guarantee the quality of educators are an urgent need (Basuki, 2022). One policy designed to address this challenge is the teacher and lecturer certification program, which aims to ensure that every educator has formally recognized competence and integrity.

The policy of teacher and lecturer certification in the context of Islamic education is rooted in a strong philosophical and normative foundation, both constitutionally and theologically. Legally positive, this policy is based on Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, which emphasizes the importance of professionalism as the main requirement for the sustainability of the quality of education. Within the Ministry of Religion, the technical and operational basis of this program is outlined in the Decree of the Minister of Religion (KMA) No. 745 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Teacher Professional Education (PPG), which emphasizes the alignment between professional competence and religious values.

In an Islamic perspective, the urgency of educators' professionalism is reflected in the principles of trust and responsibility of science (Jatri et al., 2023). As implied in the words of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, "*All of you are leaders and will be held accountable for their leadership*" (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). Thus, certification is not only administrative, but also a moral instrument to maintain the scientific dignity and exemplary of teachers and lecturers in forming a generation of character.

In general, the teacher and lecturer certification policy aims to improve the quality and professionalism of educators so that they are able to carry out their duties effectively, with dignity, and responsibility. This program is designed to ensure that educators have four main competencies, namely pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies, which are the standards of feasibility in the world of education (Jannah, 2025). In the context of Islamic education, the goal also includes efforts to make teachers and lecturers not only teachers, but also as role models in instilling spiritual, moral, and national values in students (Kuswanto, 2014). More than that, certification is expected to be able to motivate educators to continue to develop their capacity through lifelong learning, in line with the spirit of *lim or of allum* in the Islamic tradition.

In addition to the general macro objectives, the certification policy also has a specific goal that directly targets improving the quality of madrasah teachers and lecturers at Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI). One of the goals is to strengthen pedagogic capacity that is in line with the characteristics of students in the context of Islam and nationality. Certified teachers and lecturers are expected to be able to integrate moderate Islamic values (*wasathiyah*) into the learning process, so as to produce graduates who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also moral and have a national commitment (Rahmawati et al., 2025). In addition, certification also aims to increase public trust in Islamic educational institutions through the quality assurance of educators (Hibatullah & Qomarudin, 2021). With certification, teachers and lecturers gain formal recognition of their competencies, as well as access to professional rights such as benefits, career development, and advanced training that support continuous capacity building.

The main target of this certification policy is madrasah teachers, both at the MI, MTs, and MA levels, as well as lecturers who teach in Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI), such as UIN, IAIN, STAIN, and private Islamic universities under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion. This program specifically targets educators who have met academic and administrative requirements but do not yet have an educator certificate as a form of professional recognition (Hani & Agustina, 2024). Priority is given to teachers and lecturers who have served for a long time, but have not yet gained access to professional training or education, including those in the 3T (frontier, outermost,

and disadvantaged) areas. With this approach, certification policies are expected to be not only administratively even, but also socially just—reaching out to different types of institutions and taking into account the geographical background and conditions of diverse educational resources.

Mechanism for the Implementation of Teacher and Lecturer Certification in Islamic Education

The implementation of certification for teachers and lecturers in Islamic education is an integral part of the policy to improve the quality of human resources in the religious education sector. A systematic and structured mechanism is the main key in ensuring that the certification process is not only administrative, but also substantive in fostering the competence and professionalism of educators. In the midst of global challenges and digital transformation, clarity of the flow and stages of certification implementation is important so that the goals of this program can be achieved effectively and equitably.

In general, the mechanism for implementing teacher and lecturer certification in Islamic education follows the flow that has been set nationally, but with certain adjustments according to the characteristics of the institution under the Ministry of Religion. The main stages passed in this process include the administrative selection of prospective participants, the implementation of the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program or Lecturer Certification Assessment (Serdos), competency tests or portfolio assessments, and ending with the issuance of educator certificates (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). Each stage is designed to measure and foster the four core competencies of educators: pedagogical, professional, social, and personality. This mechanism not only functions as an assessment system, but also as a means of continuous coaching that supports the improvement of the quality of teachers and lecturers in carrying out their roles as educators with quality, integrity, and Islamic values.

The mechanism for implementing certification for madrasah teachers under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion is carried out through an integrated and digital-based system, namely SIMPATIKA (Information System and Management of Educators and Education Personnel of the Ministry of Religion). Through this platform, teachers can register, verify data, and map the process to take part in Teacher Professional Education (PPG) (Directorate of GTK Madrasah, 2023). The administrative selection is carried out by the provincial Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion and the Directorate General of GTK Madrasah as the national responsible person. Teachers who pass the selection will follow the PPG process at the Ministry of Religion's partner Education Personnel Education Institution (LPTK), then take the PPG Student Competency Test (UKMPPG) as the final stage of assessment. If declared passed, participants will receive a valid educator certificate recognized by the state as a sign of professionalism in carrying out educational tasks in the madrasah environment.

The lecturer certification mechanism within Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI) is carried out through Lecturer Performance Assessment (Serdos), which is integrated with the SISTER (Integrated Resource Information System) information system (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020). The process begins with the submission of a tridharma portfolio – including education, research, and community service – as well as evidence of supporting activities according to the lecturer's workload (BKD) (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021a). After initial verification through the Directorate General of Islamic Education, prospective participants take part in administrative selection and portfolio qualitative assessment, followed by computer-based academic and English proficiency tests. The results of this Serdos are the basis for the issuance of lecturer educator certificates, which are also a requirement for promotion to functional positions and performance incentives at PTKI.

Challenges and Obstacles to the Implementation of Teacher and Lecturer Certification Policies in Islamic Education

The implementation of teacher and lecturer certification policies in Islamic education requires the translation of regulations into measurable and accountable field practices (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021b). This process includes the preparation of operational instruments, implementing capacity, and coordination mechanisms between levels, ranging from the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion to madrasas and religious universities so that each stage of certification can run according to the success indicators that have been set. The implementation study not only focuses on the acquisition of certificates, but also on the sustainability of improving pedagogic, religious, and professional competencies of educators as a form of commitment to the quality of Islamic education.

At the national level, the implementation of teacher and lecturer certification is regulated through a series of regulations issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, facilitated by the Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel and the Directorate General of Islamic Education (Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel, 2022). In addition, the budget allocation for the implementation of certification is regulated in the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN) through the Ministry of Religion, which is stipulated every year in the Work Plan and Budget document of the Ministry of Religion (RKA-KL) (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023).

The involvement of implementing agencies is the key to the successful implementation of certification, where the Education Personnel Education Institute (LPTK) and State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) play the role of organizers of Teacher Professional Education (PPG) and Serdos Assessment. For example, the implementation of learning modules *blended learning* and intensive mentoring strategies has been proven to increase the graduation achievement of madrasah teachers in the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG) at LPTK UIN Walisongo Semarang. In 2023, the PPG phase II graduation rate will increase significantly to reach 92%, with 95% graduation details for participants *who are first-takers* and 80% for *retakers*, demonstrating the effectiveness of the learning approach applied (UIN Walisongo Semarang, 2023). In addition, the signing of a Cooperation Agreement between FITK UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of DKI Jakarta Province on May 22, 2025, the two institutions emphasized that structural collaboration is very important to ensure the quality and smooth running of the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG), as well as strengthen the professionalism of lecturers and teachers within the framework of Islamic education (FITK Online, 2025). This inter-institutional collaboration not only ensures the availability of quality teaching resources but also facilitates continuous monitoring through the SISTER and SIMPATIKA dashboard systems.

The operational process of implementing certification in madrasahs and PTKI generally follows a systematic flow that has been set by the Ministry of Religion, starting from registration through SIMPATIKA (for teachers) and SISTER (for lecturers), file verification, implementation of the PPG or Serdos program, and the issuance of educator certificates. Although it has been regulatively organized, implementation in the field does not always run optimally. According to Zikrur Rahmat and colleagues (2022), in their research, it was found that PPG teachers in rural areas faced significant internet constraints, most of whom cited unstable electricity and internet conditions as the main obstacles in attending PPG online lectures, with around 73% of respondents feeling the impact. (Rahmat et al., 2022)

Meanwhile, within PTKI, a number of lecturers at Private Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIS) admitted that they had difficulty accessing the SISTER platform due to the lack of socialization and limited digital training, causing many unvalidated portfolio documents and administrative failures in the early stages of Serdos (UNESA, 2025). These findings show that the success of implementation is not only determined by regulatory readiness but also by technical support, digital capacity, and equitable distribution of information throughout Indonesia.

Responding to these conditions, several strategic steps are needed: (1) expanding digital training programs based on local needs; (2) strengthening technical assistance units in the regions; (3) developing a post-certification evaluation system to ensure that competency improvement actually occurs; and (4) strengthening the policy narrative that certification is part of sustainable Islamic education quality development. Adaptive, participatory, and evaluation-based implementation will be key to ensuring that certification is not only a formality but becomes an instrument for real education quality transformation.

CONCLUSION

The certification policy issued by the Ministry of Religion has a strong juridical basis—Law No. 14/2005, Government Regulation No. 74/2008, PMA No. 38/2018, and KMA No. 745/2020—which affirms that teachers and lecturers are professionals who are required to have an educator certificate. The main objective of this policy is to ensure the quality and professionalism of Islamic educators through four core competencies: pedagogic, personality, social, and professional. The policy targets include madrasah teachers (MI, MTs, MA), PAI teachers in public schools, and PTKI lecturers, with priority in the 3T area and educators who have not yet been certified.

The implementation of madrasah teacher certification is carried out through SIMPATIKA: registration, verification, PPG at LPTK, and UKMPPG; while lecturer certification (Serdos) runs through SISTER: submission of Tridharma portfolios, administrative selection, academic and English tests, and issuance of certificates. Each stage is regulated in an integrated manner and oriented towards improving the capabilities of educators, although it still faces digitalization and socialization constraints. The implementation of the certification policy shows a positive impact—improving the quality of learning and access to professional benefits—but still encounters significant obstacles, such as uneven digital infrastructure, limited technical assistance, and a lack of post-certification evaluation. These obstacles are mainly felt by educators in remote areas and PTKIS who have minimal support for digital platform training

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

During the preparation of this article, the author used ChatGPT, an AI-based language model developed by OpenAI, to assist with language refinement, grammatical correction, and the improvement of academic writing clarity. The use of this tool was intended to support the presentation and organization of the manuscript. The review and selection of relevant literature, examination of policy frameworks, analysis of certification implementation mechanisms, and interpretation of challenges related to teacher and lecturer certification in Indonesian Islamic education were reviewed and verified by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

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