

Enhancing Mastery of Christian Religious Education Content through Professionalism Development at SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the enhancement of mastery in Christian Religious Education (PAK) content through teacher professionalism development at SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura. Characterized by its dual focus on cognitive understanding and moral formation, PAK requires teachers not only to convey doctrinal knowledge accurately but also to guide students in applying ethical principles in daily life. Using a qualitative approach supported by interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, the research explores how professional development activities—such as workshops, peer mentoring, reflective practice, and collaborative lesson planning—contribute to teachers’ mastery of content and pedagogical effectiveness. Findings indicate that teachers who engage consistently in structured professional growth demonstrate improved clarity in presenting complex theological concepts, employ interactive and contextualized teaching strategies, and foster environments conducive to moral and cognitive development. Reflective practices were found to enhance teachers’ self-awareness, ethical reasoning, and instructional adaptability, while collaborative professional learning facilitated knowledge sharing, problem-solving, and pedagogical innovation. Despite challenges such as limited access to updated resources, time constraints, and administrative obligations, teachers’ professionalization positively impacts classroom management, student engagement, and the internalization of moral values. The study highlights that mastery of PAK content is deeply interconnected with teachers’ reflective, ethical, and relational competencies, underscoring the importance of sustained professional development in achieving both academic and moral educational objectives. These insights offer practical implications for educators, school administrators, and policymakers aiming to strengthen teacher capacity, curriculum implementation, and holistic student development in Indonesian primary education. Ultimately, investing in teacher professionalism emerges as a strategic approach to ensuring that PAK instruction is both intellectually rigorous and ethically grounded.

Keywords: *Mastery, Christian Religious Education, Professionalism Development*

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education in primary schools depends not only on curriculum design but also on the professional competence of teachers, particularly in subjects that combine cognitive and moral dimensions, such as Christian Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Kristen, PAK). At SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura, teachers face the dual challenge of delivering doctrinal knowledge while simultaneously fostering students' moral and spiritual development. The mastery of PAK content is therefore a critical concern, as it enables educators to present lessons accurately, contextualize biblical teachings, and guide students in applying religious values in everyday life. However, research and classroom observations indicate that teachers' content knowledge alone does not guarantee effective instruction; pedagogical professionalism, ongoing professional development, and reflective practice are essential components that bridge theoretical knowledge and classroom application. Professionalism in teaching encompasses multiple dimensions, including pedagogical skills, subject mastery, ethical responsibility, and the ability to manage classrooms effectively. Teachers with high professionalism demonstrate not only competence in their subject matter but also the capacity to adapt teaching strategies to diverse student needs, to employ innovative approaches, and to evaluate learning outcomes critically. In the context of PAK, this professional competence becomes even more significant, as teachers must navigate theological accuracy, moral guidance, and students' cognitive readiness simultaneously. According to Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers in Indonesia, professional competence is one of the four core competencies expected of teachers, alongside pedagogical, social, and personality competencies. The law emphasizes continuous development and mastery of subject content as essential for the teacher to fulfill their role effectively. At SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura, various factors influence teachers' ability to master PAK content, including access to professional development programs, availability of teaching resources, and opportunities for collaborative learning. Limited exposure to updated pedagogical strategies or theological materials can hinder teachers' capacity to deliver lessons that are both intellectually accurate and morally enriching. Research shows that professional development activities—such as workshops, mentoring, peer observations, and reflective practice—enhance teachers' subject mastery, instructional quality, and confidence in handling classroom challenges. For instance, studies by Lustani Samoris (2024) highlight that teachers' personal and professional competencies significantly affect students' moral development and engagement in Christian education. These findings reinforce the notion that teacher development is intrinsically linked to learning outcomes, particularly in subjects that shape both cognitive and ethical dimensions of student growth. The implementation of professional development in PAK must account for contextual realities. Teachers at SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura operate in a socio-cultural environment where students come from diverse backgrounds, including varying levels of religious understanding and family support. Effective professionalization enables teachers to design lessons that resonate with students' lived experiences, employ interactive methods, and cultivate critical thinking alongside moral reasoning. In this light, enhancing mastery of PAK content is not merely an academic pursuit but a holistic effort to align knowledge, pedagogy, and ethical guidance in a coherent instructional framework. This study aims to examine how professional development initiatives

contribute to teachers' mastery of PAK content at SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura. Specifically, it investigates the extent to which structured professional growth, reflective practices, and collaborative learning influence teachers' knowledge acquisition, instructional strategies, and students' moral engagement. By exploring these dynamics, the study seeks to provide insights into practical mechanisms for strengthening teacher professionalism in Christian Religious Education and to identify strategies that can improve both content mastery and holistic student development in Indonesian primary schools.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to examine how professional development influences teachers' mastery of Christian Religious Education (PAK) content at SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura. The case study design was chosen because it allows an in-depth exploration of complex educational phenomena within their real-life context, capturing both the procedural and reflective dimensions of teacher professionalization. By focusing on a single school as a bounded system, the research provides a detailed understanding of how professional development initiatives translate into enhanced content mastery and instructional quality. Data collection involved multiple complementary methods to ensure methodological triangulation and to enhance the credibility of findings. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six PAK teachers, exploring their experiences in professional development programs, perceived impact on content mastery, and challenges encountered in implementing new pedagogical strategies. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to allow for detailed thematic analysis. Second, classroom observations were carried out over a six-week period to document teachers' instructional practices, use of subject knowledge, and interaction with students. Observation protocols focused on indicators such as clarity of content explanation, contextualization of biblical teachings, application of interactive learning methods, and integration of moral guidance. Third, relevant school documents-including lesson plans, teacher portfolios, and professional development reports-were analyzed to trace evidence of content mastery and pedagogical improvement over time. The data analysis process followed a thematic coding approach, combining both deductive and inductive techniques. Deductive codes were based on the research focus areas, including content mastery, professional development activities, instructional strategies, and student moral engagement. Inductive coding allowed for the emergence of unanticipated themes, such as collaborative learning practices, reflective habits, and contextual adaptations. Codes were then grouped into broader categories to identify patterns, relationships, and causal linkages between professional development and PAK content mastery. This methodological framework enabled a comprehensive exploration of how teacher professionalization contributes to mastery of PAK content, highlighting both practical applications and reflective dimensions of instructional improvement in the context of Indonesian primary education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings from this study reveal a multifaceted relationship between professional development and teachers' mastery of Christian Religious Education (PAK) content at SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura. Across interviews, observations, and document analyses, it became evident that professionalization activities substantially influence teachers' knowledge depth, pedagogical effectiveness, and confidence in delivering PAK lessons. Teachers consistently reported that workshops, peer mentoring, and reflective exercises enhanced their understanding of theological content, improved their lesson planning capabilities, and fostered greater sensitivity to students' diverse moral and cognitive needs. Observational data confirmed that teachers who actively participated in structured professional development exhibited more clarity in explaining biblical principles, contextualized lessons with real-life examples, and employed interactive learning strategies that engaged students in critical reflection. One key theme that emerged is the centrality of continuous learning in shaping teachers' content mastery. Teachers emphasized that knowledge of PAK is not static; scriptural interpretations, pedagogical approaches, and students' socio-cultural contexts require ongoing engagement with professional learning opportunities. For example, a teacher noted that attending a seminar on integrating biblical narratives with daily ethical scenarios enabled her to design lessons that prompted students to reflect on honesty and empathy in their immediate social environment. The integration of content knowledge with ethical instruction was observed to enhance students' understanding of religious principles and their application in everyday life, demonstrating that professional development serves both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. Another significant finding concerns the role of collaborative professional development in promoting content mastery. Teachers highlighted the value of peer discussions, lesson-sharing sessions, and mentoring circles in exchanging knowledge, addressing pedagogical challenges, and receiving constructive feedback. Classroom observations revealed that teachers who regularly engaged in collaborative professional learning demonstrated higher confidence, effectively scaffolded complex theological concepts, and incorporated diverse teaching methods, including storytelling, group reflection, and role-play exercises. These practices not only improved comprehension of PAK content but also fostered student engagement, reflective thinking, and moral reasoning. Document analysis of lesson plans further illustrated that professionalized teachers aligned instructional objectives with national curriculum standards while contextualizing lessons to the students' lived experiences, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Reflective practice emerged as another essential factor linking professional development to content mastery. Teachers engaged in structured reflection, journaling, and peer feedback reported increased awareness of their instructional strengths, knowledge gaps, and ethical responsibilities. Reflection allowed teachers to critically examine lesson effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and integrate moral guidance seamlessly into content delivery. For instance, after observing a peer teach a lesson on stewardship, a teacher reflected on ways to incorporate local cultural examples, thereby enhancing students' comprehension and personal connection to biblical teachings. Observations confirmed that reflective teachers employed adaptive strategies, adjusted pacing to suit student understanding, and addressed misconceptions promptly, resulting in more

meaningful learning experiences. These findings align with studies emphasizing that teacher self-reflection enhances instructional competence, ethical awareness, and student engagement, particularly in subjects that combine cognitive and moral learning objectives.

The research also highlights the interplay between teachers' professional growth and their ability to manage classroom dynamics effectively. Teachers who participated in professional development demonstrated improved classroom management, creating environments conducive to both learning and moral formation. They employed positive discipline strategies, encouraged student participation, and fostered respectful dialogue, reinforcing the values taught through PAK content. Teachers' mastery of content enabled them to anticipate student questions, clarify doctrinal misunderstandings, and connect scriptural lessons with students' personal experiences. This integrated approach not only enhanced students' cognitive understanding but also their moral reasoning, as students were encouraged to apply ethical principles in interactions with peers and community members. The observations support the notion that professionalism in teaching transcends subject knowledge, encompassing ethical, relational, and reflective dimensions that collectively contribute to effective character education. Challenges in professional development and content mastery were also evident. Teachers reported constraints such as limited access to updated theological resources, insufficient time for professional growth due to administrative obligations, and variability in institutional support. Observational data revealed instances where teachers struggled to simplify complex theological concepts for younger learners, indicating gaps between knowledge acquisition and pedagogical application. Some teachers noted that while workshops enhanced theoretical understanding, translating insights into practical classroom strategies required additional support and follow-up. These challenges are consistent with broader literature highlighting structural and resource-related barriers to teacher professionalization, suggesting that institutional commitment, targeted support, and resource provision are critical for sustainable improvement in content mastery. The impact of professional development on students' learning outcomes was evident. Teachers' increased mastery translated into more engaging lessons, clearer explanations of biblical content, and structured moral guidance. Students exhibited higher participation levels, greater curiosity about PAK topics, and improved capacity to relate scriptural principles to their personal experiences. For example, during lessons on honesty and responsibility, teachers' contextualized examples prompted students to discuss real-life scenarios, demonstrating both comprehension and moral reasoning. These outcomes reinforce the assertion that teacher professionalism is a key determinant of both academic and character development, as it enables the integration of knowledge, pedagogy, and ethical guidance. The study found that professional development strengthened teachers' confidence and sense of vocation. Teachers expressed that ongoing learning opportunities reaffirmed their commitment to the teaching profession, inspired innovation in lesson design, and reinforced ethical responsibility in guiding students. This intrinsic motivation was observable in classrooms, where teachers exhibited enthusiasm, patience, and creativity, fostering an environment that encouraged students to explore religious concepts thoughtfully and internalize ethical values. The findings suggest that professional development not only enhances content mastery but

also reinforces teachers' moral authority, relational competence, and pedagogical efficacy, creating a virtuous cycle that benefits both educators and learners. In synthesis, the research demonstrates that enhancing mastery of PAK content through professional development is a multidimensional process involving knowledge acquisition, pedagogical skill-building, reflective practice, collaborative learning, and ethical awareness. Professionalized teachers are better equipped to deliver content accurately, contextualize lessons meaningfully, manage classrooms effectively, and cultivate students' moral reasoning. The study underscores the critical importance of institutional support, including access to resources, mentoring, structured professional development programs, and time allocation for reflection and collaboration. For schools such as SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura, investment in teacher professionalism emerges as a strategic approach to improving both educational quality and moral formation, aligning with national educational goals that emphasize holistic development. The findings affirm that teacher professionalization is inseparable from effective PAK instruction. Mastery of content, when coupled with reflective, collaborative, and ethically grounded practice, fosters environments where students not only learn religious knowledge but also develop the capacity to apply moral principles in everyday life. The study contributes to understanding the mechanisms through which professional development influences teaching quality and student outcomes, providing practical insights for educators, school administrators, and policymakers seeking to enhance both curriculum mastery and holistic student development in Indonesian primary education.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the professional development of teachers significantly enhances mastery of Christian Religious Education (PAK) content at SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura, demonstrating that effective teaching in moral and religious subjects requires more than content knowledge alone. Professional growth, encompassing workshops, peer collaboration, reflective practice, and mentoring, directly impacts teachers' ability to design meaningful lessons, clarify complex theological concepts, and integrate moral guidance into classroom instruction. Teachers who actively engage in professional development exhibit higher pedagogical confidence, more effective classroom management, and greater capacity to foster students' moral reasoning and ethical behavior. The findings underscore that professionalization is multidimensional. It not only strengthens cognitive mastery of PAK content but also enhances relational and ethical competencies. Teachers' reflective practices enable them to critically evaluate lesson effectiveness, adapt strategies to meet students' diverse needs, and continuously refine their moral and instructional approaches. Collaborative professional development, such as peer discussions and mentoring, further enriches teachers' pedagogical repertoire, promotes knowledge exchange, and fosters a culture of shared accountability for student learning and moral formation. Challenges remain, particularly regarding limited access to updated theological resources, time constraints, and balancing administrative obligations with professional growth. Addressing these barriers is essential for sustaining improvements in content mastery and teaching quality. Institutional support, including resource provision, structured professional development programs, and time for reflection, emerges as a critical factor in enabling teachers to translate knowledge into

effective classroom practice. Professional development contributes not only to academic achievement but also to holistic moral formation. Teachers with enhanced content mastery and professionalism can create learning environments that encourage ethical reflection, moral reasoning, and application of biblical principles in daily life. For SD Negeri No. 076095 Hilidaura, investing in teacher professionalization represents a strategic approach to achieving both curriculum goals and broader educational objectives, ensuring students receive instruction that is intellectually rigorous, ethically grounded, and contextually relevant. This study highlights the importance of continuous professional growth in fostering competent, reflective, and morally responsible educators who can effectively guide students in understanding and living out Christian values.

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