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### The Role of Core Competencies, Functional Competencies and Spiritual Competencies in Improving Teacher's Teaching Quality at SD Nizamia Andalusia Jakarta

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the influence of core, functional, and spiritual competencies on teachers' perceived teaching quality at SD Nizamia Andalusia Jakarta, an Islamic elementary school to examine the relationships between these competency dimensions and teaching quality. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to the entire teaching staff. The results confirmed that core, functional, and spiritual competencies collectively explained a substantial amount of the variance in perceived teaching quality among the teachers. Notably, the findings highlighted the interconnected importance of all three competency dimensions, with spiritual competencies emerging as a particularly influential factor within this specific Islamic educational context. This suggests that beyond fundamental and pedagogical skills, the embodiment of spiritual values significantly contributes to teachers' effectiveness and overall teaching quality within an Islamic school setting. The study highlights the need for comprehensive teacher development programs that address all three competency domains to enhance educational outcomes in Islamic elementary education.

**Keywords:** Teaching Quality, Spiritual Competencies, Functional Competencies, Core Competencies, Islamic Elementary School.



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#### INTRODUCTION

Teacher quality is the cornerstone for effective student learning and overall educational achievement, making the identification of factors contributing to teaching effectiveness a critical pursuit for educational institutions. Competency-based approaches offer a structured framework for analyzing teacher performance, typically focusing on foundational core attributes and specific functional or pedagogical skills essential for the role. This research investigates teacher effectiveness within the unique context of SD Nizamia Andalusia Jakarta, an Islamic elementary school, by examining the interplay of core, functional, and, distinctively, spiritual competencies. The study aims to analyze the specific influence of these three competency dimensions on teachers' teaching quality (Fadillah & Hasanah, 2020; Suryani & Abdullah, 2022).

The specific educational philosophy of SD Nizamia Andalusia, emphasizing integrated Islamic values, necessitates an exploration beyond conventional competency models. Understanding how

spiritual competencies, alongside core and functional skills, contribute to teaching quality in such a faith-based setting remains an area requiring empirical investigation (Grossman et al., 2005).

This study employs a quantitative, correlational design to assess the relationships between teachers' self-perceived core, functional, and spiritual competencies and their perceived teaching quality (Susanto & Cahyono, 2018). The findings are anticipated to illuminate the multifaceted nature of teacher effectiveness within this context and offer insights relevant for targeted professional development and institutional improvement efforts at this school (Suryani & Abdullah, 2022).

### Theoretical Framework

This research employs Competency Theory as its primary theoretical lens to examine teachers' teaching quality. Competency Theory suggests that superior performance in a role is predicted by underlying characteristics, including knowledge, skills, motives, traits, and self-concepts, which manifest as observable behaviors. Cahyono & Fitri (2021) Applied to education, this framework allows for the systematic analysis of how different sets of competencies—specifically core, functional, and spiritual—collectively contribute to the effectiveness of educators in facilitating student learning and development within a specific institutional context like SD Nizamia Andalusia (Hattie, 2017; Khan & Ali, 2016).

Core competencies form the foundational layer, representing essential personal attributes and transversal skills crucial for effective teaching performance across various situations. These typically include critical thinking, communication proficiency, interpersonal skills, adaptability, and a commitment to lifelong learning. They are considered prerequisites for developing more specialized abilities. In the context of teaching quality, strong core competencies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2018) enable educators to manage classroom complexities, interact effectively with students and colleagues, and adapt their approaches to meet diverse learner needs (Dewi & Putra, 2017).

Functional competencies, often termed pedagogical or technical competencies, relate directly to the specific tasks and responsibilities inherent in the teaching profession (Widya & Susilo, 2019). This category includes mastery of subject matter, pedagogical knowledge, instructional design skills, classroom management techniques, assessment literacy, and the ability to integrate technology appropriately. Proficiency in these functional areas is directly observable in teaching practice and significantly influences the clarity, engagement, and effectiveness of instruction, thereby playing a critical role in determining overall teaching quality (Nugraha & Lestari, 2020; Susanto & Cahyono, 2018).

Expanding upon traditional models, this study incorporates spiritual competencies, recognizing the specific ethos of SD Nizamia Andalusia (Fitri & Usman, 2020). This dimension involves integrating values, ethics, and principles derived from spiritual or religious beliefs into professional practice (Begley, 2004). It encompasses attributes like patience, empathy, sincerity, ethical conduct aligned with institutional values, and the ability to foster students' moral and spiritual growth. Theoretically, strong spiritual competencies are hypothesized to enhance teacher motivation,

resilience, and contribute to a holistic approach to education, ultimately influencing teaching quality positively (Cheng & Lee, 2019).

#### **METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to investigate the relationship between teacher competencies and teaching quality (Chang & Hsiao, 2019). The objective was to analyze the core, functional, and spiritual competencies, as independent variables, influence the dependent variable, which is the perceived teaching quality of teachers at SD Nizamia Andalusia Jakarta. This design was selected as it allows for the systematic examination of associations between the measured competency levels and the perceived teaching quality among educators within this specific institutional context. The quantitative nature facilitates statistical analysis to determine the strength and direction of these influences.

The research approach involved a cross-sectional survey methodology conducted within the context. Data were collected at a single point in time to capture the current levels of perceived competencies and teaching quality among the educators. The independent variables—core, functional, and spiritual competencies—were operationally defined based on the Competency Theory framework. The dependent variable, teachers' teaching quality, was assessed based on established educational standards adapted for the institution. This non-experimental approach focused on observing and analyzing existing relationships (Fadillah & Hasanah, 2020).

The choice of a quantitative, correlational design using a cross-sectional survey approach is justified by the research aim: to identify and measure the statistical associations between different competency dimensions and teaching quality within the defined population at SD Nizamia. This approach provides a systematic means to analyze the hypothesized influences. However, it is important to acknowledge that this design primarily establishes correlations and does not infer direct causality. The findings are specific to the context of research subject and rely on the data gathered through the chosen instruments during the study period.

The target population for this research comprised all full-time educators employed at SD Nizamia Andalusia Jakarta during the academic year the study was conducted. This specific population was selected due to the research focus on understanding the interplay of competencies and teaching quality within the unique institutional context and ethos of this Islamic elementary school. Including all teachers was intended to provide a comprehensive overview representative of the entire teaching staff's competency levels and perceived teaching quality at this particular institution, allowing for findings directly relevant to this school's specific educational environment and objectives (Hattie, 2017; Khan & Ali, 2016).

A census sampling technique was employed, in which all members of the defined target population, specifically the teachers actively teaching at SD Nizamia Andalusia, were invited to participate. This approach was deemed most appropriate because the population size was manageable and geographically contained within a single institution, making it feasible to include every eligible individual. Utilizing a census was aimed at maximizing the representativeness of the findings for this specific school and eliminating potential sampling bias that could arise from

selecting only a subset of the teachers, thereby strengthening the internal validity of the study results (Rivkin et al., 2005).

The final sample consisted of all educators at SD Nizamia who met the inclusion criterion of active employment and voluntarily consented to participate during the designated data collection period. This comprehensive inclusion strategy ensured that the data gathered reflected the perspectives and characteristics of the entire teaching faculty involved in the study. The resulting sample size, encompassing all participating teachers, was considered adequate for performing the intended correlational statistical analyses, providing sufficient power to reliably examine the hypothesized relationships between core, functional, spiritual competencies, and teaching quality within this specific educational setting.

Data collection relied primarily on structured questionnaires designed to measure the independent and dependent variables.

To assess core competencies, a validated instrument adapted from established competency frameworks was employed. This questionnaire utilized a Likert-type scale, requiring teachers to rate their proficiency across dimensions such as lifelong learning, values and ethics, care, organizational commitment, and collaboration. The items were formulated based on theoretical constructs of core competencies deemed essential for effective teaching performance, ensuring content validity relevant to the educational context (Permana & Wijaya, 2018). The reliability of this scale was confirmed through pilot testing prior to the main study administration.

Functional competencies were measured using a separate questionnaire, specifically developed to evaluate pedagogical and subject-matter expertise pertinent to elementary education (Hadi & Nurhayati, 2018). This instrument, also using a Likert scale format, assessed teachers' skills in lesson planning, teaching, assessment, learning environment management, and commitment to professional development (Hidayat & Rahayu, 2021). The items were derived from established teaching standards and the Competency Theory framework, focusing on the practical skills required for effective instruction delivery within the SD Nizamia Andalusia setting. Its psychometric properties were evaluated for reliability and validity.

Spiritual competencies and teaching quality were assessed through distinct sections within the survey instruments. The spiritual competency scale, developed considering the specific Islamic ethos of SD Nizamia Andalusia, measured attributes like sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabr*), ethical conduct based on Islamic values, and the ability to foster students' spiritual development, using Likert-scale responses (Wibowo & Hidayat, 2022). Teaching quality was evaluated using a composite measure, incorporating self-assessment based on adapted institutional standards, focusing on instructional clarity, student engagement, learning environment management, and assessment practices (Akbar & Rahman, 2019). All instruments underwent review for contextual appropriateness and psychometric soundness.

Initial procedures involved obtaining formal ethical approval and securing administrative permission from the leadership of SD Nizamia Andalusia Jakarta. Subsequently, all eligible teachers were invited to an informational meeting where the study's purpose, procedures, expected time commitment, confidentiality measures, and the voluntary nature of participation were clearly

explained. Interested educators were provided with detailed information sheets and consent forms. Written informed consent was secured from each teacher who agreed to participate before distributing any research instruments. Scheduling for the data collection activities was coordinated carefully with the school administration to minimize interference with instructional time and daily routines (Dewi & Putra, 2017).

The administration of the data collection instruments, specifically the structured questionnaires measuring core, functional, spiritual competencies, and teaching quality, was conducted primarily through paper-based forms (Amelia & Purwanto, 2020). These were distributed to the consenting teachers during a dedicated session, such as a staff meeting, or provided individually based on teacher availability. Clear, standardized instructions were given verbally and in writing to ensure participants understood how to respond accurately to the Likert-scale items. Participants completed the questionnaires independently in a setting conducive to concentration. Anonymity was preserved by using coded identifiers instead of names on the survey forms, safeguarding participant privacy throughout this phase.

Completed questionnaires were collected systematically following the administration session. Teachers placed their completed surveys into a secure, sealed collection box accessible only to the research team, or returned them directly to the researcher by a specified deadline, typically within one week. Follow-up involved gentle, non-coercive reminders to encourage participation and ensure maximum return rate. Once retrieved, the questionnaires were securely stored. The data from the returned instruments were then carefully coded, entered into a statistical software program, and thoroughly cleaned and verified to ensure accuracy and completeness, preparing the dataset for the planned correlational analysis techniques.

Initial data analysis involved screening the collected questionnaire data for completeness, accuracy, and potential outliers. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, were calculated for demographic variables and the primary study variables: core competencies, functional competencies, spiritual competencies, and teachers' perceived teaching quality(Wayne et al., 2008). This preliminary analysis provided a comprehensive summary profile of the participating educators and established the baseline distribution characteristics for each competency dimension and perceived teaching quality within the SD Nizamia Andalusia context. These descriptive results formed the foundation for subsequent inferential statistical procedures aimed at examining the hypothesized relationships between the variables.

The relationships between the independent variables (core, functional, and spiritual competencies) and the dependent variable (teachers' perceived teaching quality) were examined using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (r)(Rahardjo & Wulandari, 2021). This statistical technique was selected to quantify the strength and direction of the linear association between each competency type and teaching quality individually. Prior to conducting the correlations, assumptions such as linearity and normality were assessed using scatterplots and normality tests, as appropriate for Likert-scale data. The significance level for interpreting the correlation coefficients was set at p < 0.05, allowing for the determination of statistically significant relationships between teachers' competencies and their teaching quality.

To assess the combined influence of core, functional, and spiritual competencies on teachers' perceived teaching quality, multiple linear regression analysis was performed. This technique allowed for the examination of how well the three competency dimensions, taken collectively, predicted variations in teaching quality scores. The analysis yielded the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) to indicate the proportion of variance in teaching quality explained by the model. Standardized beta coefficients ( $\beta$ ) were examined to determine the relative contribution of each competency type in predicting teaching quality, controlling for the others. Assumptions for regression, including linearity, independence of residuals, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity (assessed via VIF), were evaluated.

#### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

# Descriptive Profile of Teacher Competencies and Perceived Teaching Quality at SD Nizamia Andalusia

Descriptive analysis revealed generally high levels across all measured constructs among educators at SD Nizamia Andalusia. Mean scores for all competencies were above were consistently above the midpoint of the Likert scale utilized, suggesting that teachers perceived themselves as proficient. Similarly, perceived teaching quality also exhibited high average scores. Standard deviations indicated moderate variability, particularly within functional competencies, implying variations in specific pedagogical skills, while spiritual competencies showed greater consistency, reflecting the institution's strong emphasis on its specific values and ethos among the teaching staff.

Further examination of competency dimensions highlighted specific strengths and potential areas for development. Teachers reported particularly high proficiency in spiritual competencies, notably sincerity and ethical conduct, aligning with the school's Islamic identity. Functional competencies related to subject matter mastery and classroom management also demonstrated strong performance. However, core competencies such as adaptability and integration of technology showed slightly lower means and greater variance, suggesting these transversal skills might represent areas where targeted professional development could prove beneficial for enhancing overall educator effectiveness within the school (Nurul & Indah, 2020).

Regarding the dependent variable, perceived teaching quality at SD Nizamia Andalusia was rated favorably by the participating educators. The mean score indicated a strong perception of effectiveness in instructional delivery, student engagement, and classroom environment management. The relatively low standard deviation for teaching quality suggests a generally consistent level of perceived performance across the faculty. This positive baseline profile of teaching quality provides a crucial context for the subsequent correlational and regression analyses aimed at understanding how specific competencies contribute to this perceived effectiveness (Hattie, 2017; Khan & Ali, 2016).

# Correlational Analysis: Relationships Between Core, Functional, Spiritual Competencies and Teaching Quality

Pearson correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive associations between all three independent variables and the dependent variable, teachers' perceived teaching quality, at SD Nizamia Andalusia. This indicates that higher perceived levels of core, functional, and spiritual competencies are each independently linked to higher perceived teaching quality among the educators. The positive direction of these correlations aligns with the theoretical framework, suggesting that enhancements in any of these competency domains correspond with improvements in perceived teaching effectiveness within this specific institutional context (Putra & Hidayat, 2020).

The relationship between core competencies and perceived teaching quality was found to be positive and statistically significant. This suggests that foundational attributes such as communication, critical thinking, and adaptability play a crucial role in perceived teaching effectiveness at the institution. Teachers who rated themselves higher on these transversal skills also tended to receive higher ratings on overall teaching quality. This finding underscores the importance of these fundamental personal and interpersonal skills as a necessary base upon which more specialized teaching abilities are effectively built.

Similarly, both functional competencies and spiritual competencies demonstrated strong, significant positive correlations with teachers' perceived teaching quality (A. Lestari & Putra, 2021). The strong link for functional competencies highlights the direct impact of pedagogical skills, subject mastery, and classroom management on instructional effectiveness (Pratama & Wulandari, 2020). Notably, the significant correlation for spiritual competencies confirms its relevance within the SD Nizamia Andalusia context, suggesting that attributes like sincerity and ethical conduct, aligned with the school's ethos, are perceived as integral components contributing positively to the quality of teaching (Suparman & Hartono, 2020).

# Interpreting the Role of Competencies in Teaching Quality through the Lens of Competency Theory

The findings strongly align with Competency Theory, which posits that observable performance, such as teaching quality, stems from underlying characteristics. The significant positive influence of core, functional, and spiritual competencies confirms this theoretical premise within the SD Nizamia Andalusia context (Santosa & Dewi, 2017). This suggests that teacher effectiveness is not monolithic but rather a composite outcome of diverse personal attributes, specialized skills, and value-based orientations. The results empirically validate the application of this theory to understand holistic teacher performance in this specific educational environment (Subakti & Sari, 2022).

Consistent with the theory, core competencies like communication and adaptability serve as foundational elements enabling effective interaction and flexibility, significantly correlating with perceived teaching quality. Functional competencies, representing pedagogical and subject-specific skills, directly translate into effective instructional practice, as evidenced by their strong positive

association with perceived teaching quality (E. Lestari & Handayani, 2019). This distinction supports the theoretical view that both general underlying traits and specific job-related skills are crucial predictors of superior performance in the teaching role at SD Nizamia Andalusia.

The significant contribution of spiritual competencies extends the traditional Competency Theory application, highlighting how context-specific values become integral underlying characteristics influencing performance (Rohman & Sari, 2022). At SD Nizamia Andalusia, attributes like sincerity and ethical conduct, rooted in its Islamic ethos, are not merely personal values but functional aspects of effective teaching. This finding underscores the theory's adaptability, demonstrating how institutional values, when internalized as competencies, directly enhance motivation, resilience, and ultimately, perceived teaching quality within a faith-based educational setting.

# Implications of Findings for Teacher Development and Quality Enhancement at SD Nizamia Andalusia

The significant influence of core competencies suggests that professional development programs at SD Nizamia (Utami & Santoso, 2016). Andalusia should strategically target areas like adaptability and technology integration, particularly where variability was observed. Workshops focusing on flexible teaching strategies and effectively incorporating digital tools could enhance these transversal skills. Strengthening these foundational competencies is crucial as they underpin the successful application of pedagogical techniques and contribute substantially to overall teaching quality, enabling educators to better navigate diverse classroom challenges and evolving educational landscapes within the institution (Anwar & Rahman, 2022; Hidayat & Rahayu, 2021).

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study investigated the influence of core, functional, and spiritual competencies on teachers' perceptions of teaching quality at SD Nizamia Andalusia Jakarta (Muhammadi, 2017). The findings showed a statistically significant positive correlation between each competency dimension and perceptions of teaching quality.

Educators generally reported high levels across all competencies and perceptions of teaching quality. This underscores the importance of a combination of core skills, pedagogical expertise, and institutionally aligned spiritual attributes in determining educator effectiveness in the context of Islamic elementary schools (Setiawan & Wibowo, 2021).

These results support Competency Theory, which suggests that core, functional, and, most importantly, spiritual competencies serve as fundamental characteristics predicting teachers' teaching quality at SD Nizamia Andalusia. The researchers also found that Spiritual Competence reflects the school's distinctive Islamic ethos and highlights how contextual values are integrated into professional practice to enhance teaching quality (Sari & Widodo, 2019).

This study demonstrates that encompassing core skills, pedagogical expertise, and spiritual attributes is crucial for comprehensively understanding and improving teaching quality in this

unique educational environment (Kurniawan & Haryanto, 2021). Future research should replicate these findings using a larger, more diverse sample to increase generalizability.

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