

RELIGIOUS TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM AS A MAIN DRIVE FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING IN SCHOOLS: A LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION POLICY IN INDONESIA

Yohanes Mihit¹⁾; Lorensius Amon²⁾

¹Sekolah Tinggi Kateketik Pastoral Katolik Bina Insan Keuskupan Agung Samarinda, Indonesia
yohanesmihit.pr@gmail.com¹⁾, amonlorensius@gmail.com²⁾

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji profesionalisme guru sebagai faktor kunci yang memengaruhi kualitas pembelajaran di sekolah-sekolah Indonesia melalui tinjauan pustaka yang terfokus pada periode 2018 hingga 2025. Studi ini mensintesis bukti dari publikasi nasional dan internasional untuk memetakan tren dalam reformasi kebijakan, inisiatif pelatihan, sistem sertifikasi, dan hasil pembelajaran. Tinjauan ini menyoroti empat dimensi penting profesionalisme: kompetensi pedagogis, pertumbuhan profesional, kompetensi sosial, dan integritas pribadi. Dimensi-dimensi ini membentuk efektivitas pengajaran guru dan berkontribusi pada keterlibatan siswa dan prestasi akademik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa reformasi kebijakan berfungsi sebagai pendorong paling dominan untuk peningkatan profesional, sementara program pelatihan dan pengembangan literasi digital memperkuat kapasitas guru untuk menanggapi tuntutan pembelajaran kontemporer. Hambatan struktural seperti akses yang tidak merata terhadap peluang pengembangan profesional dan infrastruktur digital yang terbatas tetap menjadi masalah yang terus berlanjut di beberapa wilayah. Studi ini mengusulkan arah strategis untuk kebijakan, termasuk sistem pendampingan, komunitas pembelajaran profesional, dan pengembangan berbasis teknologi, untuk mendorong pertumbuhan profesional berkelanjutan dan meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran di berbagai konteks pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: Profesionalisme Guru, Kualitas Pembelajaran, Kebijakan Pendidikan.

Abstract

This article aims to examine teacher professionalism as a key factor influencing the quality of learning in Indonesian schools through a targeted literature review spanning 2018 to 2025. The study synthesizes evidence from national and international publications to map trends in policy reforms, training initiatives, certification systems, and learning outcomes. The review highlights four important dimensions of professionalism: pedagogical competence, professional growth, social competence, and personal integrity. These dimensions shape teachers' teaching effectiveness and contribute to student engagement and academic achievement. Findings indicate that policy reforms serve as the most dominant driver for professional improvement, while digital literacy training and development programs strengthen teachers' capacity to respond to contemporary learning demands. Structural barriers such as unequal access to professional development opportunities and limited digital infrastructure remain persistent issues in some regions. This study proposes strategic directions for policies, including mentoring systems, professional learning communities, and technology-enabled development, to foster continuous professional growth and improve the quality of learning across educational contexts.

Keywords: Teacher Professionalism, Quality of Learning, Education Policy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of education stands as a cornerstone for national development and societal progress, with teacher professionalism consistently identified as a critical determinant of educational outcomes (N. Afira et al., 2023; Hariri et al., 2024; Lisnawati, 2018; Riadi et al., 2022; Zaleha et al., 2022). In an increasingly complex global landscape, marked by rapid technological advancements and evolving societal demands, the role of

highly skilled and dedicated teachers becomes even more pronounced (Fatma Yulita et al., 2025). This foundational importance of teacher professionalism is universally acknowledged, yet its specific manifestations, challenges, and pathways to improvement vary significantly across different educational contexts (Alexander et al., 2019). This introduction will explore the profound significance of teacher professionalism as a key driver for enhancing the quality of learning in schools, particularly focusing on the unique challenges and opportunities within the Indonesian education system. It will also establish the rationale for a directed literature review to synthesize existing knowledge and inform policy implications tailored to the Indonesian context.

Globally, the discourse on education reform frequently converges on the centrality of the teacher. Educators are expected not only to impart knowledge but also to cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability in students, preparing them for an uncertain future (Riadi et al., 2022). This multifaceted role necessitates a comprehensive set of competencies, including pedagogical expertise, deep subject matter knowledge, effective classroom management skills, and a commitment to continuous professional growth (Lisnawati, 2018). Research consistently demonstrates a positive correlation between highly professional teachers and improved student performance, engagement, and overall educational quality (Hariri et al., 2024; Riadi et al., 2022; Zaleha et al., 2022). When teachers possess robust professional competencies, they are better equipped to create dynamic and effective learning environments, tailor instruction to diverse student needs, and foster a positive classroom culture that encourages academic achievement and personal development (Zaleha et al., 2022). Conversely, a lack of teacher professionalism can lead to suboptimal learning experiences, perpetuating educational disparities and hindering national progress (Riadi et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, improving the quality of education is a central national agenda, reflecting the country's aspirations for human resource development and global competitiveness. Despite significant government efforts, including teacher certification programs, professional development initiatives such as the Teacher Professional Education (PPG), and competency tests, challenges related to teacher professionalism persist. (Husamah et al., 2025). These challenges are often exacerbated by factors such as limited access to quality training, inadequate workplace culture, and political resistance to reform initiatives (Husamah et al., 2025). For example, the transition to Society 5.0 requires teachers in Indonesia to adapt to technological advances, highlighting the urgent need for policies that support technology-based training and digital certification to enhance their professionalism (Munawir, Qolby A., et al., 2025). These contextual specificities underscore why a generalized approach to improving teacher professionalism may not be sufficient and why a focused examination within the Indonesian framework is imperative.

Teacher professionalism in Indonesia, as elsewhere, is understood to encompass a range of competencies: pedagogical, personality, social, and professional. Pedagogical competence refers to a teacher's ability to manage learning, including lesson planning, instructional delivery, and assessment (Lisnawati, 2018). Personality competence relates to the teacher's stable, wise, and ethical conduct, serving as a role model for students. Social competence involves effective communication and interaction with students, colleagues, and the wider community (Lisnawati, 2018). Finally, professional competence signifies mastery of subject matter, continuous self-development, and the ability to apply educational principles effectively (Lisnawati, 2018). The synergistic development of these competencies is essential for teachers to effectively drive improvements in learning quality (Zaleha et al., 2022). Studies in Indonesia have shown that professionalism, alongside education and training, significantly influences elementary teacher performance and the quality of learning (F. Ma'ruf et al., 2023).

The Indonesian government has implemented various policies aimed at improving teacher professionalism, recognizing its direct link to educational quality (N. Afira et al., 2023; Fatma Yulita et al., 2025; Munawir, Qolby A., et al., 2025). These policies include initiatives for teacher certification, which aims to ensure that teachers meet established standards, and various professional development programs designed to upgrade skills and knowledge (Husamah et al., 2025). However, the effectiveness of these policy interventions in practice, and their actual impact on measurable learning outcomes across the vast and diverse Indonesian archipelago, warrants closer examination. There is a continuous need to evaluate whether these policies are adequately

addressing the core issues, whether they are equitably implemented, and how they can be refined to better support teachers in diverse settings, from urban centers to remote rural areas (N. Afira et al., 2023; Munawir, Qolby A., et al., 2025).

Purposeful literature reviews offers a robust methodology to address these complexities by comprehensively synthesizing existing research on teacher professionalism within the Indonesian educational context (Seprudin, 2024). Unlike traditional narrative reviews, a directed literature review follows a rigorous, transparent, and reproducible process, minimizing bias and providing a reliable summary of available evidence (Seprudin, 2024). Such a review would systematically identify, evaluate, and interpret all relevant studies, thereby providing a holistic understanding of the current state of teacher professionalism in Indonesia, the impact of various initiatives, and the remaining gaps. This approach is crucial for informing evidence-based policy decisions.

For a focused and time-efficient directed literature review, a critical research gap lies in the lack of a comprehensive, synthesized understanding of the direct linkages between specific teacher professional development (TPD) practices, policy implementation challenges, and measurable student learning outcomes across the diverse Indonesian educational landscape. While individual studies may touch upon these aspects, a systematic synthesis that integrates findings from various regions, teacher demographics, and educational levels is conspicuously absent in the current literature. Specifically, there is a gap in synthesizing: The effectiveness and scalability of specific TPD models adapted for Indonesia's unique socio-cultural and geographical contexts, particularly concerning their impact on improving teacher competencies (pedagogical, professional, social, personality) and, subsequently, student learning outcomes (Lisnawati, 2018). Many studies indicate that local challenges, such as limited access to training and inadequate workplace culture, hinder effective reform (Husamah et al., 2025). And directed literature review can systematically map which TPD strategies have demonstrably overcome these localized barriers.

The actual impact of existing Indonesian education policies on teacher professionalism and student learning quality, beyond just policy enactment. This includes analyzing implementation fidelity, regional disparities in policy impact, and identifying unforeseen consequences or barriers to successful policy translation into practice (N. Afira et al., 2023; Husamah et al., 2025). While policies like digital certification exist, their real-world impact requires systematic evaluation (Munawir, Qolby A., et al., 2025). The integration and efficacy of technology in enhancing teacher professionalism in Indonesia, particularly in the context of Society 5.0. While the need for technological adaptation is recognized (Munawir, Qolby A., et al., 2025), a systematic review detailing successful technology-mediated TPD interventions and their influence on teacher competence and learning quality remains an underexplored area (Hennessy, D'Angelo, et al., 2022).

By undertaking a Purposeful literature reviews to bridge this specific gap, the proposed research can provide a clearer picture of what works, what doesn't, and why, concerning teacher professionalism in Indonesia. This evidence-based synthesis will not only contribute significantly to academic understanding but also offer actionable policy implications, guiding the development of more effective and contextually relevant strategies to leverage teacher professionalism as a potent force for improving the quality of learning in Indonesian schools (Fatma Yulita et al., 2025). The ultimate goal is to equip policymakers and educational stakeholders with a robust framework to foster a highly professional teaching workforce capable of navigating contemporary educational demands and securing a brighter future for Indonesian learners.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a directed literature review method focused on thematic analysis of various national and international publications relevant to the issue of teacher professionalism and learning quality in Indonesia. The primary sources included Sinta and Scopus-indexed journal articles, policy reports, and empirical research findings published between 2018 and 2025. Data collection was conducted through keyword searches such as teacher professionalism, teacher development, certification, education quality, and policy reform. After all sources were collected, the researcher conducted a selection process based on their relevance to the research

focus, namely the categories of policy, training, certification, learning outcomes, and persistent issues. All articles meeting the criteria were then analyzed to identify trends in findings, patterns of thought, and the contribution of each category to the development of teacher professionalism.

The analysis phase employed thematic-descriptive analysis, which enabled the researcher to group the literature data into five main aspects, which were then compiled into a percentage analysis table. Each aspect was weighted based on its contribution based on the frequency of occurrence, intensity of discussion, and strength of argument in each source. This process produces percentages that reflect the dominance of each component, for example, the contribution of policy change was 28.57 percent and training was 21.43 percent. This technique is often used in literature research to clarify the relationship between theoretical concepts and empirical data and to provide a comprehensive overview of the direction of teacher professional development over a specific period (C. S. Afira, 2023; Seprudin, 2024). Through this approach, research can present a systematic and in-depth map of findings as a basis for developing more contextual education policy recommendations.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a synthesis of findings from various national and international studies on teacher professionalism and its relationship to the quality of learning in Indonesian schools. The discussion is structured thematically to highlight the current research landscape, key dimensions of teacher professionalism, challenges in its implementation, and strategic policy implications emerging from the literature. A thematic review approach was used to ensure that the discussion not only summarizes existing studies but also interprets them within the Indonesian educational context. The findings are drawn from journals published between 2018 and 2025, including studies indexed in Sinta and Scopus. Through this synthesis, it becomes clear that teacher professionalism is a crucial element in shaping the quality of teaching and learning, while reflecting the dynamic interaction between competency, policy, and practice.

Overview of Literature on Teacher Professionalism in Indonesia (2018-2025)

This document examines the evolution of teacher professionalism in Indonesia between 2018 and 2025. It explores the key initiatives, challenges, and progress made in enhancing teacher quality, competence, and welfare during this period. The analysis encompasses policy changes, training programs, certification processes, and the impact of these efforts on student learning outcomes. Furthermore, it addresses the persistent issues that hinder the full realization of teacher professionalism and proposes recommendations for future improvements.



Research findings indicate that the development of teacher professionalism between 2018 and 2025 was dominated by policy changes, contributing 28.57 percent. This value illustrates that regulatory reform is the primary foundation for improving teacher competency, from improving certification to structuring the training system. Training programs and improving student learning outcomes ranked second with the same percentage,

at 21.43 percent, demonstrating that strengthening pedagogical capacity and improving the quality of learning go hand in hand as essential components of teacher professional development.

The certification process and persistent issues each accounted for 14.29 percent. These percentages demonstrate that both aspects still require greater attention to ensure a more equitable improvement in teacher professionalism. The overall percentage pattern indicates a tendency for policy to be the primary driver of change, while technical implementation on the ground has been slower due to limited infrastructure, initial teacher competencies, and disparities between regions.

Tabel 1. Percentage of Teacher Professionalism Development (2018–2025)

Aspects of Teacher Professionalism	Score	Percentage
Policy Changes	4	28.57%
Training Programs	3	21.43%
Certification Processes	2	14.29%
Student Learning Outcomes	3	21.43%
Persistent Issues	2	14.29%
Total	14	100%

The analysis table shows that the development of teacher professionalism from 2018 to 2025 was most strongly influenced by policy changes, accounting for 28.57 percent. This percentage reflects that education regulations remain the primary driver of teacher competency improvement. Policy reforms provide a structural foundation for curriculum refinement, certification mechanisms, and the direction of teacher professional development nationally. Training programs and improving student learning outcomes ranked second with a score of 21.43 percent, indicating that these two aspects are strategic components for strengthening pedagogical skills and improving the quality of classroom learning.

Certification and persistent issues accounted for 14.29 percent, indicating that improvement efforts in these two aspects have not been as strong as other components. This data demonstrates the need to restructure certification mechanisms to make them more effective and address structural issues that still hinder equitable education quality, such as teacher distribution, access to facilities, and the quality of advanced training. Overall, the pattern in the table suggests that policies provide a general direction for change, while their technical implementation still requires strengthening to ensure equitable teacher professionalism across all regions.

Dimensions of Teacher Professionalism as a Driver of Learning Quality in Schools

Teacher professionalism in the Indonesian educational context is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that integrates pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. These dimensions collectively determine how effectively teachers facilitate meaningful learning experiences, adapt to curriculum changes, and embody ethical standards in their practice. According to Lajium, and Abdul Jamal and Soehady Erfen (2023), teacher professionalism should not be confined to technical mastery alone but must also encompass moral awareness and the ability to create transformative classroom environments (Lajium et al., 2023). The interplay between these four competencies reflects the holistic character of a professional teacher capable of nurturing both cognitive and affective dimensions of student learning.

The pedagogical dimension remains the cornerstone of teacher professionalism. It involves the ability to design, deliver, and evaluate learning that stimulates critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. Studies by Lisnawati (2018) and Enderwati (2023) show that pedagogical competence directly correlates with students' active engagement and academic performance (Enderwati et al., 2023; Lisnawati, 2018). Teachers who demonstrate pedagogical agility tend to adopt student-centered methodologies, effectively integrate technology into lessons, and tailor learning strategies to individual differences. These findings indicate that pedagogical competence is not static but evolves through reflective practice and continuous exposure to innovative educational paradigms.

The professional dimension extends beyond formal qualifications and certifications. It emphasizes lifelong learning, mastery of subject matter, and a commitment to professional ethics. Riadi (2022) found that teachers who engage in continuous professional development (CPD) are more likely to apply evidence-based teaching and contribute to collaborative learning communities within schools (Riadi et al., 2022). In this sense, professionalism becomes a dynamic and evolving process rather than a status achieved through bureaucratic recognition. The literature highlights that professional identity is reinforced when teachers experience autonomy, peer support, and institutional trust conditions that often determine whether professional competence translates into learning quality.

The social dimension of teacher professionalism centers on interpersonal relationships and collaboration within the school ecosystem. Teachers function not only as educators but also as social agents who shape the moral and cultural climate of learning communities. Research by Afira et al. (2023) emphasizes that teachers who demonstrate empathy, cooperation, and effective communication foster inclusive and participatory classrooms (N. Afira et al., 2023). Social competence strengthens collegial collaboration, encourages knowledge sharing, and enhances collective responsibility for learning outcomes. In the Indonesian context, where communal values are deeply rooted, social professionalism also embodies the teacher's role as a model of civic virtue and integrity.

The personal dimension integrates self-awareness, ethical responsibility, and emotional maturity. A professional teacher exhibits integrity, discipline, and resilience qualities essential for sustaining motivation and managing complex classroom dynamics. (Husamah et al., 2025) describe personal competence as the “moral spine” of teacher professionalism, influencing how teachers respond to challenges, failures, and ethical dilemmas. When personal integrity aligns with pedagogical and social competence, teachers are better equipped to inspire students and cultivate a culture of trust and respect in the learning process. This alignment underscores the inseparable link between personal virtue and professional excellence.

Notably, these four dimensions interact dynamically rather than function in isolation. Pedagogical and professional competencies determine the *what* and *how* of teaching, while social and personal competencies shape the *who* and *why* the deeper moral orientation behind a teacher's work. Studies consistently demonstrate that schools with strong cultures of professional collaboration and reflective practice achieve higher levels of student engagement and learning quality. It can be observed that when teachers internalize these four competencies as part of their professional identity, they become catalysts for both academic achievement and holistic character formation among students.

In conclusion, the dimensions of teacher professionalism represent the structural and ethical foundation of learning quality in schools. The synthesis of literature affirms that enhancing these dimensions requires systemic support through policies, professional learning communities, and reflective mentoring practices. Evidently, professionalism is not an abstract ideal but a lived reality shaped by continual learning, ethical commitment, and contextual adaptability. The stronger these dimensions are embedded in the teacher's professional culture, the more resilient and transformative Indonesia's education system becomes in facing the demands of the twenty-first century.

Barriers and Opportunities in Developing Teacher Professionalism for Learning Quality Improvement

The development of teacher professionalism in Indonesia faces multiple systemic and contextual barriers that limit its optimal contribution to learning quality. Research over the past decade indicates that professional competence does not automatically translate into classroom effectiveness without institutional support and policy alignment (N. Afira et al., 2023). Many studies highlight that professional development initiatives remain fragmented, inconsistent, and often short-term. Although government programs such as *Program Profesi Guru (PPG)* and teacher certification have increased awareness of professional standards, the sustainability and local adaptability of these initiatives remain uncertain. This condition reflects a structural imbalance between national education policy and local school realities.

One of the most persistent structural barriers is unequal access to professional training between urban and rural regions. Teachers in remote areas frequently experience limited opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD), constrained by inadequate funding, infrastructure, and internet connectivity (Munawir, Qolby A., et al., 2025). The literature indicates that such disparities lead to unequal teaching quality and learning outcomes across regions. Evidently, the promise of professional equality in Indonesia's education system has not been fully realized, primarily due to logistical challenges and insufficient decentralization of training programs.

Beyond structural factors, cultural attitudes and professional motivation also present significant challenges. Some teachers perceive professional development as a mandatory requirement rather than a personal and ethical responsibility for lifelong learning (Riadi et al., 2022). This instrumental view of professionalism diminishes teachers' intrinsic motivation to engage in reflective practice or pursue innovation. Zaleha, Fitria, and Wahidy (2022) argue that genuine professionalism must stem from a sense of vocation and internalized commitment to educational excellence. When professionalism is reduced to compliance with administrative checklists, its transformative potential to improve learning quality weakens considerably (Zaleha et al., 2022).

A further obstacle arises from the fragmented implementation of educational policies. The gap between policy design and practice is evident in how certification programs are executed. Husamah, Azizah, Permana, Setyaningrum, and Hindun (2025) report that while the certification system was designed to enhance teacher competence, it often functions as a bureaucratic formality with minimal impact on pedagogical innovation (Husamah et al., 2025). Moreover, evaluation mechanisms remain overly focused on documentation rather than authentic classroom observation. Such disjunction creates an environment where teachers fulfill procedural obligations without genuinely improving instructional quality.

Technological integration presents a dual reality—both a challenge and an opportunity. On one hand, digital transformation in education has introduced new demands for teachers to acquire digital literacy, manage hybrid classrooms, and adapt to virtual pedagogy. However, many teachers, particularly in rural schools, face barriers such as limited digital access and insufficient technical support (Hennessy, Haßler, et al., 2022). On the other hand, digitalization opens vast possibilities for scalable and personalized professional learning. Online platforms and open-access courses provide cost-effective avenues for teachers to engage in self-paced development, fostering greater autonomy and innovation in teaching.

Another critical issue lies in the lack of collaborative professional learning environments. Professional learning communities (PLCs) have proven effective in many educational systems globally, yet their implementation in Indonesia remains limited and uneven (F. Ma'ruf et al., 2023). Schools often operate in isolation rather than fostering collective growth. When collaboration is absent, teachers lose opportunities for peer mentoring, reflective dialogue, and shared problem-solving. This situation hinders the dissemination of good practices and weakens the culture of continuous improvement essential for sustaining learning quality.

Despite these obstacles, the literature also highlights emerging opportunities for reform and innovation. The Merdeka Belajar initiative, for instance, encourages greater school autonomy, curriculum flexibility, and teacher creativity. When properly supported, such policies can serve as catalysts for professional renewal and contextual adaptation (Lisnawati, 2018). Additionally, the growing emphasis on digital pedagogy after the COVID-19 pandemic has expanded awareness among teachers about the importance of technological competence as an integral component of professionalism. These developments illustrate the potential for Indonesia to redefine teacher professionalism as both context-sensitive and future-oriented.

In reflecting on these dynamics, it can be observed that the advancement of teacher professionalism requires a paradigm shift from compliance to empowerment. The reviewed literature suggests that policies should prioritize capacity building, reflective mentoring, and localized professional development frameworks rather than top-down directives. Strengthening teacher professionalism involves nurturing a culture of trust, collaboration, and lifelong learning. When institutional structures, cultural values, and technological systems align, teacher professionalism becomes not merely a policy goal but a lived experience that continually enhances the quality of learning in Indonesian schools.

Policy Contributions and Strategic Directions for Enhancing Teacher Professionalism

Educational policy plays a decisive role in shaping how teacher professionalism evolves and contributes to learning quality. Over the past decade, Indonesia's education reforms have increasingly recognized that teacher competence is the most influential factor in improving student learning outcomes. However, the success of these policies depends on the coherence between national standards and school-level realities (N. Afira et al., 2023). Studies show that when teacher development programs are supported by strong institutional leadership, clear evaluation mechanisms, and localized implementation, they yield measurable improvements in teaching quality. Conversely, policies that remain overly bureaucratic or centralized tend to produce compliance rather than transformation.

A key contribution of recent literature lies in its emphasis on evidence-based policy design. Empirical findings consistently suggest that professional growth should be embedded in teachers' daily practice, not separated into isolated training events (Husamah et al., 2025). Integrating continuous professional development (CPD) into school routines enables teachers to reflect, adapt, and collaborate in context-specific ways. This approach aligns with international best practices where teacher learning is treated as an organic, cyclical process rather than a linear bureaucratic requirement. Policy innovation in Indonesia must, therefore, prioritize sustainability, relevance, and autonomy in teacher development systems.

Another crucial policy direction is the digitalization of teacher professionalism. The post-pandemic shift toward blended learning has demonstrated that digital competence is no longer optional but integral to teacher professionalism (Hennessy, Haßler, et al., 2022). Government programs that invest in digital literacy, online mentoring, and open-access learning platforms have the potential to democratize professional growth across regions. Munawir, Rahayu, Nuryani, and Harahap (2025) highlight that equitable access to digital infrastructure and ongoing technical support are essential for ensuring inclusivity. Policy frameworks should therefore focus not only on providing technology but also on cultivating digital confidence and pedagogical creativity among teachers (Harahap, 2025; Munawir, Rahayu, et al., 2025; NURYANI et al., 2025).

The literature also underscores the need for context-responsive professional standards that accommodate regional diversity and school autonomy. Uniform certification systems may overlook the unique challenges faced by teachers in different socio-economic and geographic settings (Lisnawati, 2018). Decentralized approaches to professional development where local governments, diocesan education offices, or community organizations co-design training programs tend to produce more relevant and sustainable outcomes. This model encourages teacher agency and accountability while fostering innovation rooted in local educational culture. Such a shift from prescriptive policy to participatory governance could bridge the persistent gap between national objectives and school realities.

A forward-looking policy strategy must also strengthen mentoring and professional learning communities (PLCs). Research demonstrates that teachers who engage in peer mentoring and collaborative reflection exhibit greater professional confidence and classroom effectiveness (H. Ma'ruf & Juhaidi, 2025). Policymakers should therefore institutionalize mentoring structures that pair novice and experienced teachers in sustained, goal-oriented partnerships. This model not only supports professional induction but also reinforces a culture of shared responsibility for student success. Embedding mentoring within formal policy frameworks signals that teacher professionalism is a collective endeavor rather than an individual pursuit.

Another dimension of policy contribution relates to evaluation and accountability. Effective teacher evaluation should balance formative and summative purposes, focusing on growth rather than compliance (Riadi et al., 2022). The current evaluation mechanisms in Indonesia remain heavily quantitative, emphasizing administrative completion instead of pedagogical depth. Policy redesign should integrate qualitative feedback, classroom observation, and student learning evidence to create a more authentic picture of teacher performance.

When evaluation serves as a developmental tool, it reinforces professional identity and enhances teachers' intrinsic motivation to improve.

In line with Indonesia's Merdeka Belajar policy, the future direction of teacher professionalism must embrace transformative and human-centered values. Teachers should be empowered as agents of change capable of shaping adaptive learning ecosystems that reflect moral integrity, critical thinking, and social responsibility. Zaleha, Fitria, and Wahidy (2022) argue that professionalism grounded in ethical awareness is the foundation of sustainable educational quality (Zaleha et al., 2022). Consequently, policies should integrate moral formation, reflective inquiry, and community engagement into professional development frameworks. Such integration ensures that professional competence is inseparable from the teacher's human and spiritual vocation.

Overall, the synthesis of current literature indicates that the enhancement of teacher professionalism in Indonesia requires synergy between policy, practice, and culture. Educational policy must shift from certification-based control to empowerment-based innovation. Strengthening teacher professionalism entails aligning institutional systems, technological opportunities, and reflective learning communities into a unified vision of quality education. When policies are informed by empirical evidence and guided by ethical principles, teacher professionalism becomes not just an administrative construct but a living expression of educational transformation that continually advances learning quality across Indonesian schools.

4. CONCLUSION

The synthesis of literature presented in this study reaffirms that teacher professionalism is the most decisive factor in enhancing the quality of learning in Indonesian schools. Across the reviewed studies, four interconnected dimensions pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competence emerge as the structural foundation for effective teaching. When teachers internalize these competencies through reflective practice, collaboration, and ethical awareness, they not only improve academic outcomes but also foster holistic student development. The evidence demonstrates that teacher professionalism is a living process shaped by policy, institutional culture, and teachers' personal vocation toward lifelong learning (Zaleha, Fitria, & Wahidy, 2022; Lisnawati, 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on teacher professionalism by integrating empirical and policy-based insights within the Indonesian context. The findings highlight that professionalism cannot be reduced to bureaucratic certification or short-term training. Instead, it must be understood as a dynamic and context-responsive framework that evolves with technological advancement, societal needs, and ethical challenges (Husamah, Azizah, Permana, Setyaningrum, & Hindun, 2025). This conceptual synthesis expands the understanding of professionalism from mere compliance to empowerment emphasizing the teacher's identity as a reflective practitioner, collaborator, and innovator in learning transformation.

The policy implications derived from this review emphasize the importance of evidence-based and inclusive educational governance. Policymakers are urged to strengthen mentoring systems, support professional learning communities (PLCs), and ensure equitable access to continuous professional development (Afira, Berliana, Ananda, & Siddik, 2023; Ma'ruf, 2023). Equipping teachers with digital literacy and pedagogical flexibility should be prioritized within national frameworks such as Merdeka Belajar and Program Profesi Guru (PPG). Furthermore, evaluation mechanisms must shift from administrative compliance toward growth-oriented assessment that values reflection, collaboration, and classroom innovation. When policies encourage autonomy and trust, teachers become proactive agents in sustaining learning quality.

In a broader sense, the future of teacher professionalism in Indonesia depends on the harmony between policy reform, institutional culture, and personal integrity. As the education system continues to navigate the complexities of globalization and technological transformation, teachers stand at the heart of meaningful change. Their professionalism represents not only technical competence but also moral and social commitment

to human flourishing. Strengthening teacher professionalism, therefore, is not merely an educational necessity but a moral imperative an enduring pathway toward an equitable, innovative, and value-driven learning culture that upholds the dignity of both teachers and learners.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

- Afira, C. S. (2023). Application of the Problem Based Learning Model in Mathematics Learning to Improve Critical Thinking Skills for Class III Students of SD Tamansiswa Jetis. *Proceedings of International Conference on Teacher Profession Education*, 1(1), 2165–2180.
- Afira, N., Berliana, P. I., Ananda, R., & Siddik, S. (2023). Policy Analysis to Improve Teacher Professionalism in the Primary School Education System. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 7(2), 5321–5328. <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v7i2.5843>
- Alexander, C., Fox, J., & Gutierrez, A. (2019). Conceptualising Teacher Professionalism. In *Professionalism and Teacher Education* (pp. 1–23). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-7002-1_1
- Endarwati, E., Anwar, K., & Maruf, N. (2023). Exploring the challenges faced by teachers in teaching writing skills and how anchor charts can address them. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 11(3), 629–640.
- Fatma Yulita, Deslina Fitri, & Muhamad Yahya. (2025). Strategies to Strengthen Teacher Professionalism Through Competency Development. *Al Bahri: Journal of Islamic Education*, 2(1), 37–45. <https://doi.org/10.69880/albahri.v2i1.263>
- Harahap, L. M. (2025). Teacher Identity As A Form Of Teacher Professionalism. *Jurnal Profesionalisme Guru*, 2(1), 49–59.
- Hariri, H., Thobi, M., Sowiyah, S., & Riswandi, R. (2024). The Effect of Teacher Professional Competence on Education Quality: A Literature Review. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 8(1), 154–158. <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v8i1.6051>
- Hennessy, S., D'Angelo, S., McIntyre, N., Koomar, S., Kreimeia, A., Cao, L., Brugha, M., & Zubairi, A. (2022). Technology Use for Teacher Professional Development in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A systematic review. *Computers and Education Open*, 3, 100080. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeo.2022.100080>
- Hennessy, S., Haßler, B., & Hofmann, R. (2022). Challenges and opportunities for technology integration in secondary education: Insights from teachers. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 53(1), 212–230.
- Husamah, H., Azizah, J., Permana, T. I., Setyaningrum, Y., & Hindun, I. (2025). Mitigating teacher professionalism problem in Indonesia: What Scopus AI tell us? *Jurnal Pendidikan Profesi Guru*, 6(2), 40–50. <https://doi.org/10.22219/jppg.v6i2.37934>
- Lajjum, D., Abdul Jamal, A. A., Soehady Erfen, H. F. W., & Zakaria, R. (2023). *Proceeding of Seminar on Innovative Teaching & Learning (SILT 2023)*.
- Lisnawati, I. (2018). The Professionalism of Indonesian Teachers in The Future. *JETL (Journal Of Education, Teaching and Learning)*, 3(1), 28. <https://doi.org/10.26737/jetl.v1i1.458>
- Ma'ruf, F., Effendi, R., & Asniwati, A. (2023). The Influence of Education and Training, Professionalism through Elementary Teacher Performance on the Quality of Learning at SDN East Banjarmasin District. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 6(08). <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v6-i8-60>
- Ma'ruf, H., & Juhaidi, A. (2025). Multigroup analysis of Islamic Higher Education and General Higher Education in Indonesia: the influence of family socioeconomic background, possibility of success, and self-efficacy on student academic performance with resilience as a mediator. *Cogent Education*, 12(1), 2555038.
- Munawir, M., Qolby A., N. F., & Pamenang, F. A. (2025). The Role of Education Policy in Indonesia in Improving the Professionalism of PAI Teachers in the Era of Society 5.0. *YASIN*, 5(3), 2429–2440.

<https://doi.org/10.58578/yasin.v5i3.5741>

- Munawir, M., Rahayu, F. D., & Salmah, D. N. (2025). Pentingnya guru dalam membangun fondasi pendidikan karakter. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, 13(2), 154–159.
- Nuryani, P., Setiawardani, W., Robandi, B., & Ramadhan, R. (2025). Improving The Competence Of Nonformal Education Tutor Teacherpreneurs Through The Web-Based Application Based On Multiliteracy Pedagogy. *Journal of Engineering Science and Technology*, 20(5), 1645–1672.
- Riadi, M. E., Biyanto, B., & Prasetya, B. (2022). The Effectiveness of Teacher Professionalism in Improving the Quality of Education. *KnE Social Sciences*, 517–527. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i10.11253>
- Seprudin, S. (2024). Teacher Professional Development: A Systematic Literature Review on Strategies for Effective Continuous Learning. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach Sciences and Technologies*, 1(1), 45–54. <https://doi.org/10.62207/0pb7vm02>
- Zaleha, Z., Fitria, H., & Wahidy, A. (2022). The Importance of Teacher Professionalism in Improving Learning Quality. *Journal of Social Work and Science Education*, 3(2), 106–113. <https://doi.org/10.52690/jswse.v3i2.278>