
TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membangun sintesis konseptual yang memperluas diskursus teoretis profesionalisme guru dalam konteks pendidikan Islam melalui analisis tren dan pola tematik penelitian pada periode 2020–2025. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan *systematic literature review* dengan mengacu pada prinsip PRISMA untuk memastikan transparansi dan ketelitian dalam proses seleksi literatur. Studi terpilih dianalisis menggunakan pemetaan bibliometrik dan analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi hubungan konseptual serta arah perkembangan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya pergeseran paradigma dari perspektif profesionalisme berbasis kompetensi menuju pemahaman yang lebih holistik yang menekankan identitas profesional Islami, *teacher agency*, dan dimensi spiritualitas. Profesionalisme guru dipahami sebagai konstruksi multidimensional yang dibentuk melalui interaksi antara kapasitas reflektif personal, dukungan institusional, dan internalisasi nilai-nilai budaya Islam, sehingga pengembangan profesional tidak hanya bersifat teknis tetapi juga merupakan proses transformasi moral dan spiritual. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi tentang *Islamic Teacher Professionalism Framework* yang mengintegrasikan dimensi personal, institusional, dan spiritual-kultural sebagai pilar yang saling terkait. Secara teoretis, kerangka ini memperluas model profesionalisme dominan menuju perspektif berbasis nilai dan spiritualitas, serta secara praktis memberikan implikasi bagi perancangan kebijakan pengembangan guru berkelanjutan di lembaga pendidikan Islam.

Kata kunci: Profesionalisme Guru; Pendidikan Islam; Budaya Islam; Identitas Profesional; Pengembangan Berkelanjutan.

Abstract

This study aims to develop a conceptual synthesis that advances the theoretical discourse on teacher professionalism within Islamic education by analysing research trends and thematic patterns published between 2020 and 2025. A systematic literature review approach was employed, guided by PRISMA principles to ensure transparency and rigour in the literature selection process. The selected studies were analysed through bibliometric mapping and thematic content analysis to identify conceptual relationships and emerging research directions. The findings reveal a paradigm shift from a competency-oriented perspective toward a more holistic understanding centred on Islamic professional identity, *teacher agency*, and spirituality. Teacher professionalism is conceptualised as a multidimensional construct shaped by the interaction among personal reflective capacity, institutional support, and the internalisation of Islamic cultural values, indicating that professional development is a transformative moral and spiritual process rather than merely a technical improvement. This study proposes an *Islamic Teacher Professionalism Framework* integrating personal, institutional, and spiritual-cultural dimensions as

interconnected pillars. The framework contributes theoretically by extending dominant models of professionalism toward a value-based and spiritually grounded perspective, while offering practical implications for designing sustainable teacher development policies in Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: Teacher Professionalism; Islamic Education; Islamic Culture; Professional Identity; Sustainable Professional Development.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher professionalism is widely recognized as a critical factor in improving educational quality and fostering effective learning environments (Muslih et al., 2024). Professional teachers are expected not only to demonstrate pedagogical competence but also to uphold ethical responsibility, integrity, and social commitment in their professional practice (Arif et al., 2025). Within the context of Islamic education, however, teacher professionalism carries distinctive characteristics, as it integrates pedagogical expertise with moral and spiritual dimensions rooted in Islamic teachings (Succarie, 2024). Teachers are perceived not merely as instructors (*mu'allim*) but also as moral exemplars (*uswah hasanah*) who transmit values through behaviour and character. Consequently, professionalism in Islamic education is understood as a continuous process of developing religious, ethical, and professional identity rather than solely mastering instructional skills (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021; Tuna, 2022). This distinctive orientation positions Islamic teacher professionalism within a broader global discourse on value-based education.

Despite its importance, the conceptualisation of teacher professionalism remains contested (Ma'mun et al., 2025). Contemporary professionalism models are often grounded in technocratic and competency-based paradigms that emphasise standards, performance indicators, and measurable outcomes (Posangi, 2024). Such perspectives tend to position teachers primarily as implementers of institutional policies (Park et al., 2022). In contrast, Islamic educational perspectives emphasise teachers as moral agents responsible for character formation, spiritual guidance, and ethical leadership (Mulyana et al., 2023). This tension between technocratic professionalism and value-based professionalism reflects an unresolved theoretical debate regarding the nature and purpose of teacher professionalism, particularly in faith-based educational contexts.

Although previous studies have explored aspects such as teacher competence, professional identity, Islamic leadership, and school culture, theoretical explanations of how Islamic culture systematically shapes teacher professionalism remain fragmented (Astuti et al, 2024; Musthofa et al, 2023; Zawaliyah et al, 2025). Existing research tends to examine these dimensions separately, without integrating personal, institutional, and spiritual components into a coherent conceptual framework (Rahman et al, 2025). As a result, there is limited theoretical synthesis explaining professionalism as a holistic construct grounded in Islamic cultural values. This fragmentation indicates a significant theoretical gap that necessitates systematic integration of knowledge.

Therefore, this study aims to develop a conceptual synthesis of teacher professionalism grounded in Islamic culture through a systematic literature review approach. By analysing research trends and thematic patterns, this study seeks to

construct a comprehensive framework that integrates personal, institutional, and spiritual-cultural dimensions of professionalism. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically by expanding the discourse on teacher professionalism beyond technocratic paradigms toward a value-based and spiritually grounded perspective, while also providing practical insights for developing sustainable teacher professional development in Islamic educational institutions.

METHOD

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to synthesize knowledge, aiming to integrate and reinterpret dispersed scholarly discussions into a coherent conceptual understanding of teacher professionalism in Islamic education. Rather than functioning merely as a technical procedure for selecting articles, the systematic review is positioned as a methodological strategy for theory development, enabling the identification of conceptual patterns, research trajectories, and epistemic gaps across prior studies. Through this approach, the review seeks to construct an interpretive synthesis that connects empirical findings with broader theoretical discourse. To ensure transparency, rigour, and accountability in the reporting of the review process, this study follows the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. In this context, PRISMA 2020 is employed not as the methodological basis of the review, but as a structured reporting standard that guides the documentation of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages, thereby enhancing the reproducibility and credibility of the literature selection process (Page et al., 2021).

The literature search was designed as a concept-driven identification process to capture scholarly works that explicitly discuss the intersection of teacher professionalism and the cultural-spiritual foundations of Islamic education. The selection of keywords was therefore not merely operational, but theoretically informed to reflect three core constructs underlying this study: (1) the discourse on teacher professionalism and professional development, (2) the contextual domain of Islamic education as a value-based educational system, and (3) the cultural and ethical dimensions that shape professional identity within that context. By combining these conceptual categories through Boolean operators, the search strategy was intended to retrieve studies that contribute to understanding professionalism not only as a competency-based model but also as a moral-spiritual construct embedded in Islamic culture.

The initial search identified 143 publications, which were subsequently examined through a staged interpretive screening process. Rather than functioning as an administrative filtering step, this selection phase aimed to ensure conceptual relevance and analytical coherence with the objective of building a theoretical synthesis of Islamic teacher professionalism. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to retain studies that substantively addressed value integration, professional identity formation, institutional influence, or cultural dimensions within Islamic educational settings, while excluding works that discussed professionalism in unrelated religious or purely technical contexts. This process resulted in 26 articles that provided the most conceptually rich foundation for synthesis.



The analysis combined relational mapping of research themes with in-depth interpretive reading to identify recurring concepts, intellectual clusters, and emerging directions in the literature. Through this dual analytical lens, the review moved beyond description toward constructing an integrative understanding of how professionalism in Islamic education is theorised in contemporary scholarship. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria based on Table 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusions	Exclusion
Year of Publication	Published in 2020-2025	Published <year 2020
Publication Type	Article	Books, proceedings, reviews
Journal Access	Open access articles	Closed-access articles
Scope of Discussion	Development of teacher professionalism based on Islamic culture	Focus on students. Other religions: Catholic, Christian, Orthodox, etc.

Based on the search results using the PRISMA 2020 approach, a total of 143 articles were obtained from the database (Scopus). After the screening and feasibility review, only 26 articles met the inclusion criteria and were further analysed.

This selection process is carried out through four main stages: (1) Identification: 143 articles were found through initial searches. (2) Screening: 74 articles are retained after duplication and non-journal publications are removed. (3) Eligibility: 48 articles were judged relevant after reading the abstract and the full content. (4) Inclusion: 26 final articles were selected for thematic and bibliometric analysis. This selection process is illustrated in the PRISMA diagram (Figure 1), which presents the stages of literature screening systematically and transparently.

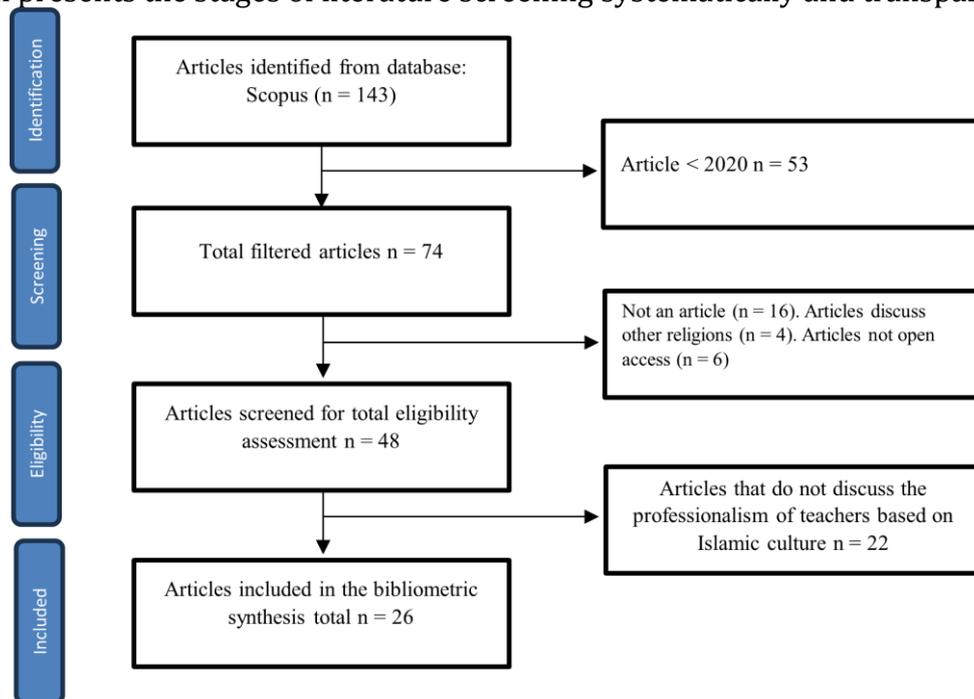


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart

From the data extraction, it was found that most articles were published in 2023–2025, indicating increasing attention to the professionalism of Islamic

teachers amid educational transformation and digitalisation. Most of the research was conducted in countries with strong Islamic education systems, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The bibliometric synthesis of the 26 articles was carried out using VOSviewer, which maps relationships between keywords (co-occurrence map) and identifies conceptual connections between research topics. This approach is used because it can provide a more objective visual representation of the knowledge structure and the direction of research development than mere narrative analysis. Thus, this analysis not only shows the frequency of keyword occurrences but also reveals how certain concepts form an interconnected thematic network in the discourse of teacher professionalism grounded in Islamic culture.

A bibliometric synthesis using VOSviewer software of 26 selected articles (Figure 2) yielded three main clusters that are closely interrelated. The first cluster focuses on Islamic education, professional development, supervision, and the school principal. This cluster emphasises the role of institutions and school leadership in fostering a culture of teacher professionalism grounded in Islamic values. The relationship between competence and professional development shows that the professionalism of teachers in the context of Islamic education cannot be separated from strengthening pedagogical competence and supporting a system of spiritual supervision.

The results section demonstrates a well-structured synthesis by combining bibliometric mapping and thematic analysis, enabling the study to move beyond merely aggregating prior findings toward identifying patterns in how Islamic teacher professionalism has been conceptualised. The cluster structure shown in Figure 2 indicates that the review successfully maps the field's intellectual landscape rather than simply summarising individual studies.

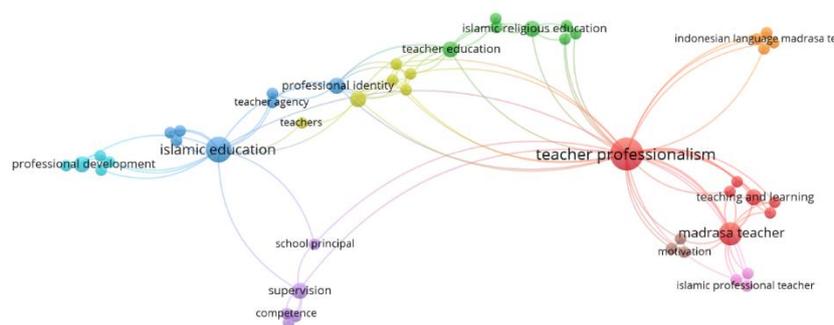


Figure 2. Network Visualisation Map

The visual network in Figure 2 should be understood not only as a representation of keyword relationships but also as evidence of distinct epistemological orientations. The cluster connecting institutional context, professional development, and educational structures reflects a structural

perspective in which professionalism is cultivated through organisational culture, leadership, and value-based supervision. This suggests that professionalism in Islamic education is socially constructed and institutionally mediated, not solely an individual competency.

The second cluster in Figure 2, centred on professional identity and teacher agency, signals a shift toward an interpretive paradigm that positions teachers as reflective moral agents. Here, professionalism is understood as an identity formation process grounded in self-awareness, ethical responsibility, and spiritual consciousness. This finding reframes Islamic teacher professionalism as an internalised value system rather than a checklist of pedagogical skills. The third cluster highlighted in Figure 2, which relates to madrasa context and learning practices, illustrates the praxis dimension of professionalism. It shows that Islamic values are enacted through daily pedagogical actions, integrating moral modelling, spiritual motivation, and instructional practice. Professionalism, therefore, operates simultaneously as both an educational practice and a devotional expression.

The density relationships displayed in Figure 3 reinforce this interpretation by showing that “teacher professionalism,” “Islamic education,” and “professional development” occupy the most interconnected positions in the research network. Their centrality suggests that the discourse consistently links competence development with ethical and religious meaning, indicating that professional growth in Islamic contexts is inseparable from moral and cultural formation.

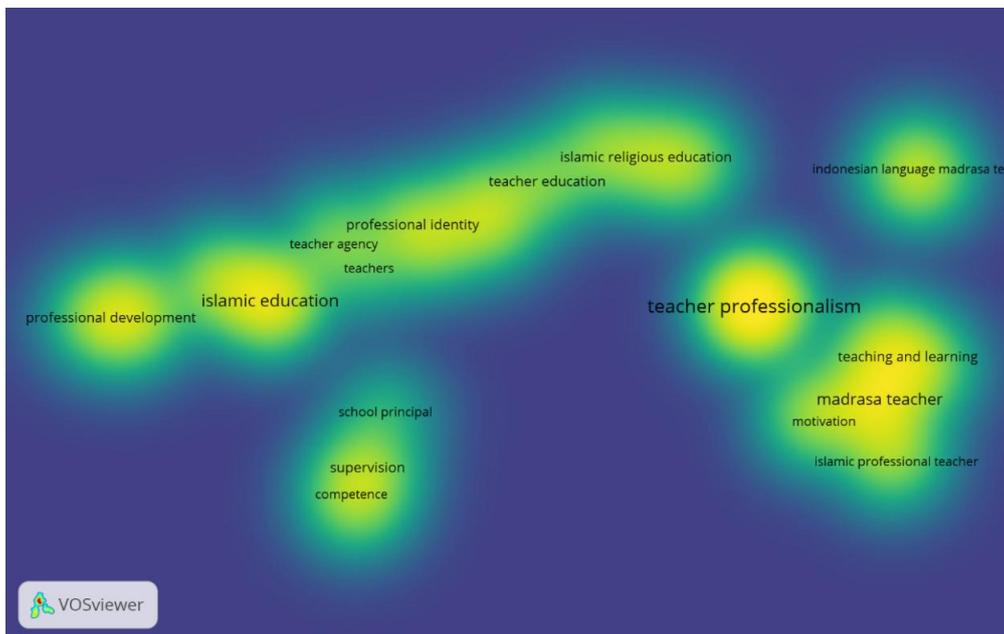


Figure 3. Map Density Visualisation

Meanwhile, the temporal shift illustrated in Figure 4 reveals an evolution in scholarly emphasis. Earlier studies (2020–2023) concentrated on general constructs such as competence and training, reflecting a predominantly technocratic understanding of professionalism. In contrast, the more recent research trend (2023–2025) foregrounds motivation, reflection, and teacher agency, signalling a shift toward a humanistic, spiritually grounded model.

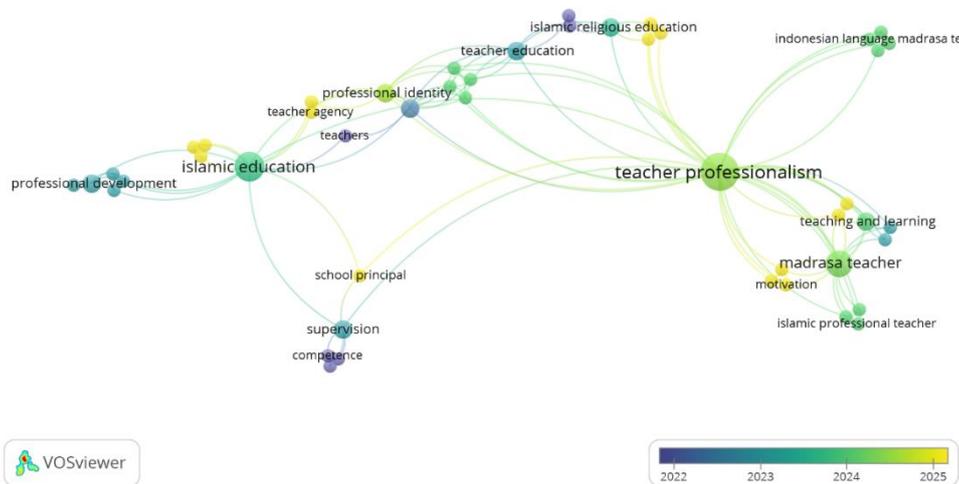


Figure 4. Map Overlay Visualisation

Taken together, the patterns across Figures 2, 3, and 4 reveal a transition in the literature from a skills-based paradigm to a multidimensional framework in which professionalism is shaped by the interaction of institutional culture, reflective identity, and Islamic moral values. The visualisations thus function not merely as descriptive outputs but as analytical evidence supporting a reconceptualisation of Islamic teacher professionalism as an ongoing process of ethical, cultural, and spiritual formation. The thematic synthesis of the 26 selected studies reveals six interrelated dimensions that characterise the development of teacher professionalism grounded in Islamic culture. These themes do not represent isolated findings from individual studies; rather, they form a convergent body of evidence that describes how professionalism is conceptualised within Islamic educational contexts.

First, a value-based foundation of professionalism. Across the reviewed literature, teacher professionalism is consistently framed as rooted in the internalisation of Islamic ethical values such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), trust (*amanah*), and excellence (*ihsan*). These values function as epistemic anchors that shape teachers' moral responsibility, positioning professionalism as an ethical-spiritual commitment rather than merely a technical qualification (Siregar, 2025; Sukenti et al., 2024; Sulaiman et al., 2020). Second, Islamic professional identity formation. The studies collectively emphasise professionalism as an identity-forming process in which teachers integrate pedagogical competence with religious consciousness. This synthesis reflects a shift from role-based professionalism toward self-understanding as a moral educator responsible for value transmission (Ma'mun et al., 2025; Succarie, 2024). Third, spiritually oriented continuing professional development (CPD). Professional development initiatives are most effective when designed as reflective and value-integrated processes rather than certification-driven activities. The literature highlights CPD models that integrate pedagogical improvement, ethical reflection, and contextual adaptation to madrasa culture (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021; Masuwai et al., 2024; Tambak et al., 2024). Fourth, institutional mediation through Islamic leadership and supervision. Teacher

professionalism is reinforced by leadership practices grounded in *ukhuwah* (collegial solidarity) and *ta'awun* (mutual support). Academic supervision is conceptualised not only as evaluative but as moral mentoring that nurtures reflective growth (Arif et al., 2025; F. E. Siagian, 2023). Fifth, negotiating digital transformation within ethical boundaries. Recent scholarship situates Islamic teacher professionalism amid the challenges of digitalisation, highlighting the need to integrate technological competence with ethical guidance to ensure innovation remains aligned with Islamic moral frameworks (Arif et al., 2025; Imran & Mardhiah, 2023). Sixth, cultural contextualisation of professional practice. Professionalism is enacted through interaction between Islamic teachings and local cultural traditions. Studies from Southeast Asia demonstrate that local wisdom traditions serve as mediating spaces in which Islamic values are translated into lived pedagogical practice (Akmal et al., 2022; Tambak et al., 2024).

Taken together, these six themes demonstrate that Islamic teacher professionalism is conceptualised as a multidimensional construct emerging from the interaction of ethical values, identity formation, institutional structures, and socio-cultural context, based on Figure 5.

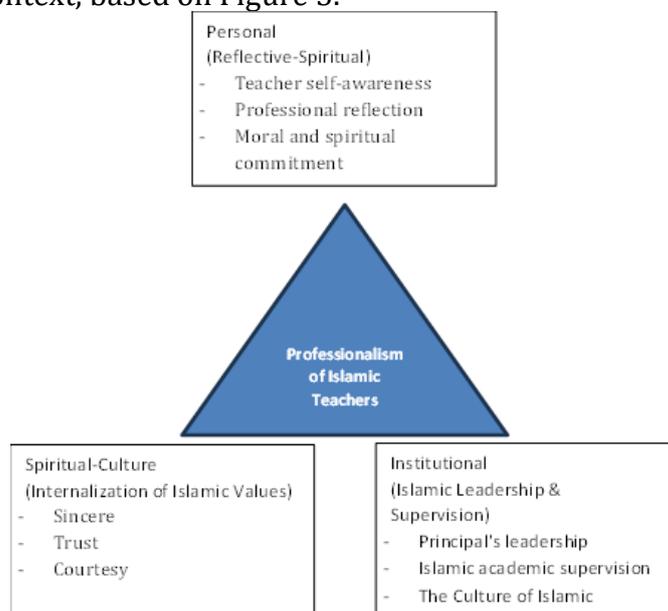


Figure 5. Islamic Teacher Professionalism Framework

The synthesis of the reviewed literature indicates a clear epistemological shift in the discourse on teacher professionalism in Islamic education during the period 2020–2025. Earlier studies predominantly approached professionalism through competency enhancement, certification, and training effectiveness, reflecting a technocratic paradigm centred on measurable performance. More recent scholarship, however, reconceptualises professionalism as a process of identity formation grounded in faith, ethical commitment, and reflective agency (Succarie, 2024; Tuna, 2022). This transition signals a movement away from viewing teachers as implementers of prescribed standards toward understanding them as moral actors who interpret and embody values within educational practice.

This shift aligns with broader perspectives on professional identity that emphasise the interaction between personal beliefs, lived experience, and

institutional context in shaping teachers' professional roles (Park et al., 2022). Within Islamic education, such interaction is intensified by the integration of religious accountability and pedagogical responsibility, producing a form of professionalism that is simultaneously ethical, spiritual, and instructional.

The findings further demonstrate that professionalism is sustained through institutional mediation. Leadership, supervision, and organisational culture function not merely as administrative mechanisms but as formative environments that nurture reflective and value-oriented practice. Studies consistently highlight that Islamic leadership promotes collegial solidarity (*ukhuwah*), mutual support (*ta'awun*), and mentorship-based supervision, all of which reinforce teachers' moral engagement with their work (Muslih et al., 2024; Posangi, 2024; N. Siagian et al., 2025). Professional development, therefore, is socially constructed within a supportive ethical climate rather than achieved through individual skill acquisition alone.

Another important dimension emerging from the synthesis is the centrality of intrinsic and spiritual motivation. In madrasa contexts, teaching is frequently interpreted as a form of worship (*'ibadah*), imbuing professional responsibilities with transcendental meaning. This orientation distinguishes Islamic teacher professionalism from secular paradigms by embedding motivation within a framework of spiritual accountability and service (Tambak et al., 2023). Consequently, professional growth is closely tied to self-reflection, moral intentionality, and the pursuit of educational work as a value-laden vocation.

The literature also redefines Continuous Professional Development (CPD) within Islamic education. Rather than functioning as a procedural requirement for certification, CPD is framed as a reflective and transformative process aimed at strengthening ethical awareness and integrating Islamic values into pedagogical practice. Programs aligned with institutional culture and religious principles show greater relevance and sustainability, as they connect professional learning with teachers' moral identity (Masuwai et al., 2025; Mulyana et al., 2023). This suggests that effective professional development in Islamic settings must integrate technical competence with value internalisation.

Cultural contextualisation further reinforces the multidimensional nature of professionalism. Islamic educational values are not enacted in abstraction but interact dynamically with local traditions and knowledge systems. Such interaction enables teachers to translate universal ethical principles into contextually meaningful practices, demonstrating that professionalism is adaptive and culturally mediated rather than uniform across settings (Akmal et al., 2022). The integration of religious and cultural elements thus becomes a defining characteristic of professional life in Islamic educational institutions.

The circular configuration of the framework signifies a continuous process of professional formation: internalised values shape teachers' identity, institutional environments reinforce and operationalise those values, and culturally embedded practices translate them into lived pedagogy. This recursive relationship demonstrates that professionalism in Islamic education is not achieved through discrete training outcomes but through an ongoing transformation that integrates belief, practice, and context. This discussion confirms that teacher professionalism grounded in Islamic culture is best understood as a holistic construct encompassing



reflective spirituality, institutional support systems, and the enactment of culturally embedded values. The proposed framework therefore extends dominant models of professionalism by offering a value-based and spiritually informed perspective that situates professional development within the moral purpose of education itself.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The findings of this study confirm that the research direction of Islamic teacher professionalism in the 2020–2025 period increasingly emphasises the importance of teacher agency and professional identity as key dimensions in the development of professionalism grounded in Islamic culture. Islamic teachers are positioned not only as teachers but also as reflectors of values and agents of spiritual change in society. The resulting Islamic Teacher Professionalism Framework conceptual model positions the personal (reflective-spiritual), institutional (Islamic leadership and supervision), and spiritual-cultural (internalisation of Islamic values) dimensions as the primary foundation for future teacher development.

The implications of this study confirm that teacher development in Islamic educational institutions should be a strategic priority, supported by the culture of Islamic organisations, not just through formal certification or training. However, this study has limitations: it analyses only Scopus-indexed articles from 2020–2025 and uses a descriptive bibliometric approach. Therefore, further research is recommended to develop empirical studies and mixed-methods designs to practically test the application of Islamic teacher professionalism across various Islamic educational contexts.

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