

Improving the Quality of Education by Developing the Social Competency of Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how the quality of education can be enhanced by developing teachers' social competence, allowing them to address the challenges posed by the rapidly changing times. The data for this study were collected through a literature review, analyzing various concepts and theories. Numerous published sources, including research papers, journals, and records, were used as references. The study's findings emphasize teachers' crucial role in improving education quality. As they directly engage with students during the teaching and learning process, teachers are primarily responsible for imparting knowledge and skills and fostering independence, intelligence, and knowledge based on individual talents and abilities. When teachers possess social competence, they become positive role models for students. In conclusion, teachers should strive to set an excellent example for their students. Having highly competent teachers can significantly enhance the overall quality of education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Competence refers to the ability to perform a task or work based on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for the job. In various professions, including education, competence is crucial for achieving organizational goals effectively and efficiently. In education, particularly in schools, teachers are the primary education personnel who must possess the relevant competencies in their respective fields and responsibilities (Rusilowati & Wahyudi, 2020). Competent teachers can fulfill their duties effectively, efficiently, and in line with the set objectives (Diwanggoro & Soenarto, 2020). Besides subject knowledge, a teacher's competence also lies in imparting and applying knowledge to students meaningfully and effectively.

Social competence is one of the essential competencies that teachers should possess, as they are directly involved in the learning process and interact with students (Bürgener & Barth, 2018). The teacher's role is analogous to a double-edged spear, with one edge representing their sharp grasp of the subject matter and the other signifying their ability to effectively communicate and present the material to students, enabling meaningful learning experiences (Madani, 2019).

The principal's role in the education system is challenging, especially considering the current dynamics and increasing demand for accountability. The principal needs to work on fulfilling their daily duties and functions, given their higher authority and power than supervisory groups or auditors. Education plays a crucial role in the nation's development, as it enhances and cultivates the quality of human resources (Irby & O'Sullivan, 2018). A quality teacher can adapt to the rapidly changing times and address complex educational challenges by continuously improving the competence of all school components (Puneet, 2020).

For a school to achieve its educational goals, the principal plays a pivotal role. The principal's ability to manage school resources, determine the school's vision, mission, and objectives, and develop strategies and targets that align with the school's conditions and needs all enhance the quality of education (Hari et al., 2019). The research highlights the importance of principal leadership competence in motivating and managing educational personnel, which leads to increased teacher professionalism and development (Chuenjitwongsa et al., 2018).

Globalization has brought about shifts in teacher-student relationships in the current educational landscape, with commercialization sometimes taking precedence over morality. Unfortunately, politeness and respect for teachers are diminishing, and students are influenced by media portrayals of teacher-student interactions, which may not always emphasize respectful attitudes (Zhao et al., 2021). To foster positive student behavior and character, teachers' social competence becomes crucial, enabling them to create a positive learning environment and instill positive attitudes in students (König et al., 2020).

Teacher professional competence is also vital for learning, as it motivates students to excel. Professional teachers can employ effective teaching strategies and engage students in their learning process, fostering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor growth. Furthermore, teachers' social competence helps develop positive attitudes and character in students, making it an essential aspect of their teaching role. Teachers with social competence can create a positive school environment, nurture better student behavior, and contribute to their overall character development.

2. METHODS

The data collection method utilized in this study is a literature review. This section evaluates the concepts and theories employed by analyzing the existing literature, with a particular focus on articles published in various scholarly journals.

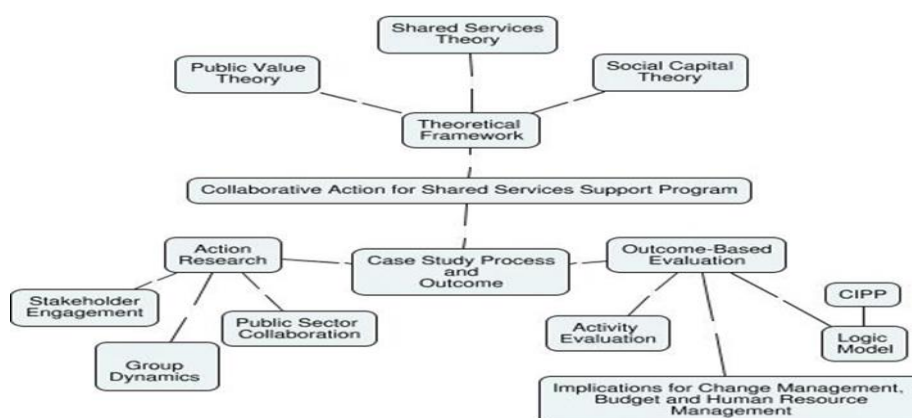


Figure 1. Design of literature study

The research employs a data-gathering method through literature reviews of various published sources, including research-related papers, journals, and records. Nazir (2014) mentioned that literature research involves reading books, articles, records, and reports relevant to the issue being investigated. For data analysis, an inductive approach is utilized in this study. The data is analyzed by systematically discussing the information gathered in phases to identify patterns, themes, and classifications.

The main objective of this study is to determine the significance of teacher competence development, as highlighted in the literature study conducted by Gudmundsdottir & Hatlevik (2018). The literature review is a foundation for building concepts or theories in research studies. It is a necessary activity, especially in academic research, aiming to develop both theoretical and practical aspects.

For this research, the chosen method is a literature study. The data from various sources were compiled, analyzed, and summarized to conclude the topic under investigation (Retnawati et al., 2018).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Understanding Teacher Social Competence

According to the National Education Standards, as outlined in Article 28 paragraph (3) point d of Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005, social competence is defined as the capability of teachers, as integral members of the community, to effectively communicate and interact with students, fellow educators, education staff, parents, and the surrounding community.

An essential aspect for teachers is the ability to communicate effectively with their students, particularly within the classroom setting. During the teaching and learning process, communication and interaction occur between teachers and students and among students. This exchange of communication triggers responses and reactions from both students and teachers and these responses, in turn, can significantly influence the development of students' morals. As teachers serve as role models or exemplars for their students, their communication and interaction styles play a vital role in shaping the students' character.

Sagala (in Giroux, 2018) elaborates on the concept of "social competence" concerning the teachers' capacity to interact with others as social beings. Similarly, Denidya (in Caena & Redecker, 2019) defines social competence as the teachers' ability to establish positive, empathetic, and courteous relationships with their superiors, fellow teachers, school staff, parents, and the broader community.

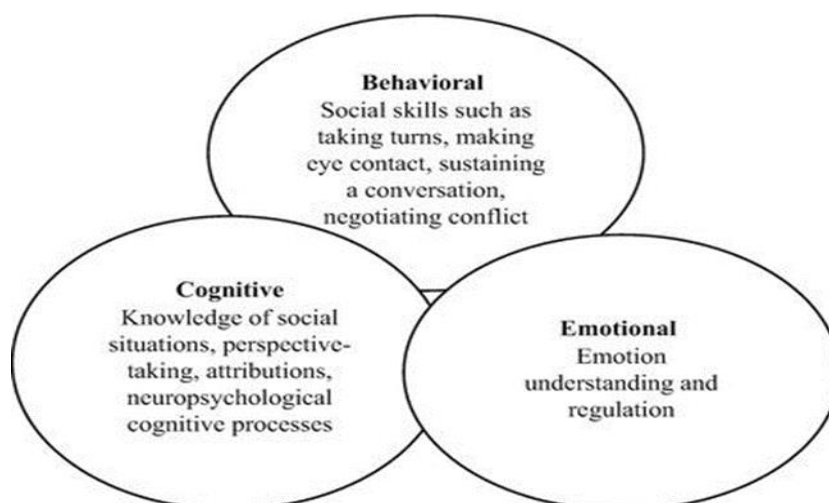


Figure 2. Social Competence patterns of teachers in improving education

In summary, teacher social competence encompasses the teacher's proficiency in effectively communicating with various stakeholders within the school, such as school principals, students, fellow educators, educational staff, and parents/guardians. Additionally, it involves maintaining polite communication with the broader community and being capable of utilizing information and communication technology effectively. The specific indicators of teacher social competence are outlined as follows:

- a. Proficient in engaging with students.
- b. Capable of effectively communicating with colleagues and educational staff.

- c. Skilled in interacting with parents/guardians of students.
- d. Demonstrates polite communication with members of the community.
- e. Proficient in the functional use of information and communication technology.

Social competence is among the four essential competencies teachers must possess and apply within school and community settings. Mulyasa (as cited in Wolf et al., 2019) outlines several indicators of social competence, including:

- a. Demonstrate effective oral, written, and sign language communication skills.
- b. Utilize communication and information technology effectively and functionally.
- c. Establish positive and effective relationships with students, fellow educators, education staff, and parents/guardians of students.
- d. Interact politely and respectfully with members of the surrounding community.

3.2 Characteristics of Teacher-Social Competence

As social beings, teachers are intricately connected to the community and their environment. Consequently, teachers must possess sufficient social competence, particularly regarding education, which extends beyond the confines of school and encompasses learning experiences within the broader community.

For a teacher, social competence serves as a fundamental asset in fulfilling their teaching responsibilities with professionalism. Effective communication between teachers and students is at the heart of educational activities (Müller et al., 2021). Therefore, teachers must exhibit the following characteristics of social competence:

- a. Proficient in student communication
Effective communication between teachers and students is vital for achieving learning objectives. Teachers should creatively optimize their communication skills, choosing the right words to explain concepts during teaching and learning. Communicating in a friendly and polite manner makes learning memorable and meaningful. Communicating effectively may lead to clarity and help students comprehend the material (Rieckmann, 2018).
- b. Effective communication with colleagues and school staff
Teachers must communicate effectively with all educational stakeholders, including fellow teachers, administrators, and staff. They form part of a cohesive team working towards the advancement of education. Maintaining smooth communication fosters an optimal educational environment, while a lack of effective communication may disrupt the educational process and create interpersonal conflicts (Wanner & Palmer, 2018).
- c. Skillful communication with parents/guardians
Teachers should be proficient in communicating with parents or guardians, as they play a crucial role in achieving educational goals. Establishing good communication allows both parties to stay informed about students' progress. A practical and cooperative relationship between teachers and parents facilitates learning (Sulastri et al., 2020).
- d. Polite communication with the community
Teachers are integral to the community and should exemplify active participation and commitment to societal progress. They should avoid a sense of superiority and engage with the community positively. Ignoring the community's concerns or isolating oneself may lead to marginalization and undermine the teacher's impact on society (Ratnasari, 2019).
- e. Functional use of information and communication technology
In today's rapidly evolving technological landscape, teachers must adeptly utilize information and communication technology such as mobile phones, email, and social media for educational purposes. Being proficient in these tools enables teachers to connect with students, facilitate learning, and efficiently interact with others in this era of globalization (Fajriana & Aliyah, 2019).

It is essential to avoid labelling teachers as technologically inept or "technology stuttering," as this negative perception undermines their professional competence. Teachers should be proficient in using technology and adapt to the ongoing changes in the world (Dudung, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to continuously learn and keep up with the advancements in communication and information technology. This practice broadens their knowledge and boosts their confidence in effectively integrating technology into their daily activities based on their respective fields and needs.

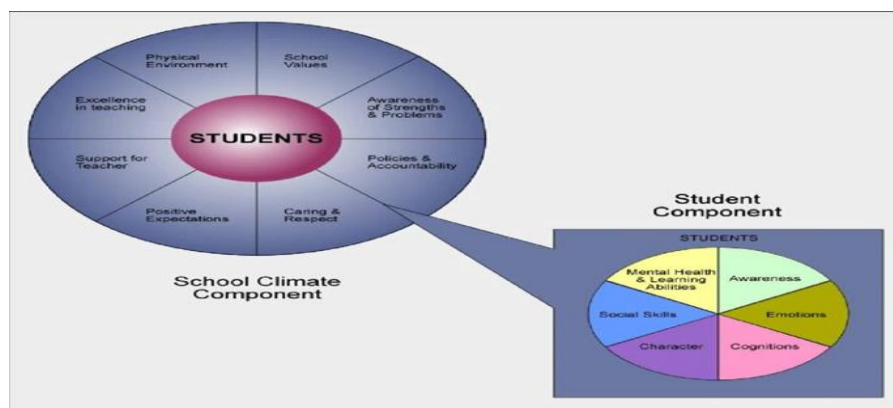


Figure 3. Social Competence Development Model

During its implementation, the government introduced Perpu No. 19 of 2005, which encompasses the National Education Standards. In the regulation's explanation, it is explicitly stated that the vision of national education is to establish a robust and influential social institution that empowers all Indonesian citizens to become high-quality individuals, enabling them to confront the ever-evolving challenges of the current era. Meanwhile, the national education mission is as follows:

1. Endeavour to expand and ensure equitable access to high-quality education for all Indonesian citizens.
2. Enhance the quality of education to achieve competitiveness at both national and international levels.
3. Increase the relevance of education in addressing societal needs and global challenges.
4. Support and facilitate the holistic development of the nation's children from early childhood to adulthood, fostering a culture of lifelong learning.
5. Enhance the preparedness of educational inputs and the quality of the learning process to effectively nurture moral character.
6. Enhance the professionalism and accountability of educational institutions as centers for assimilating knowledge, skills, experiences, attitudes, and values, adhering to national and global standards.
7. Promote community involvement in education while upholding the principle of autonomy within the context of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

After the reformation, the regional autonomy paradigm became the fundamental approach in shaping state regulations. Aligned with regional autonomy, the government was committed to decentralizing education by empowering schools at all levels. As a result, various aspects of central policies underwent revision, allowing regional governments to tailor education patterns according to their specific potentials and needs (Syam & Santaria, 2020).

As the 21st century commenced, Indonesia faced many complex issues, including problems related to national and state reforms, prolonged economic crises, poverty, unemployment, and the necessities of food, clothing, and housing that continued to challenge the Indonesian people. Amidst these challenges, education remained disorganized, characterized by irregularities at its inception and conclusion and diminishing prospects in inputs, processes, and outputs (Jufni et al., 2020). To address these issues, the development of human resources became crucial, with the education sector emerging as the government's primary concern. Education in Indonesia must have a strong foundation and support; it must become an empowered institution capable of elevating the nation's dignity.

Sadly, according to UNDP research, Indonesia is ranked 109th out of 174 countries in terms of competitiveness, ranking 46th among Southeast Asian countries. Singapore ranks 2nd, Malaysia 27th, the Philippines 32nd, and Thailand 34th, while Indonesia is considered among the most corrupt countries in the world. Indonesia ranks 10th out of 14 developing countries in the Asia Pacific region. Thailand occupies the first rank, followed by Malaysia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, and Kep. Solomon, and Pakistan. Indonesia scored 42 out of 100 with an average grade of E. Regarding providing complete primary education, Indonesia receives a C grade, ranking seventh. Indonesia receives a failing grade (F) for state action and ranks 11th. Regarding teacher input quality, Indonesia receives a grade of E, ranking 14th. Indonesia only performs well in gender equality, with a B score, and overall equality, with a B score, ranking 6th and 4th, respectively (Solikhulhadi, 2021).

This alarming state of affairs is underscored by the observation that despite a crisis, Thailand still manages to rank first. Therefore, Indonesian education is now considered an emergency that demands serious attention and immediate solutions to resolve educational problems and address all shortcomings. It indicates a crisis in terms of human resources. In light of this situation, implementing School-Based Education Quality Management (Annisa Alfath et al., 2022) is essential to address Indonesia's decline in human resource aspects.

To effectively maintain and control the quality improvement process, a nationally regulated and agreed-upon standard must be established as a benchmark for evaluating quality enhancement. This notion has given rise to a new approach, wherein the management of education quality improvement must be school-based, making schools the focal point of educational activities (Jamin, 2018).

This concept promotes close collaboration among schools, communities, and the government, with each entity fulfilling its responsibilities. The aim is to provide schools with autonomy to actively and dynamically engage in the process of enhancing education quality by utilizing existing school resources. Schools are expected to grasp the essence of macro education policies and understand their environmental conditions (strengths and weaknesses). Subsequently, they must undergo a planning process to formulate micro policies, prioritizing programs to be implemented and evaluated by their respective visions and missions. Furthermore, schools must set quality targets for the upcoming year (Nawaki & Santyo Rusandy, 2022). By adhering to national policy references and receiving sufficient inputs, schools are empowered to take responsibility for developing their resources in line with the learning needs of students and the community.

Discussion

Teacher social competence encompasses the essential ability of educators to effectively communicate with various stakeholders, including students, colleagues, educational staff, parents, or guardians, as well as maintaining respectful interactions with the surrounding community. Moreover, teachers should possess functional skills in utilizing information and communication technology. As social beings, teachers are intrinsically connected to the community and their environment, necessitating the development of adequate social competence, particularly concerning education, which extends beyond the confines of the classroom and into the broader community.

Given the role of teachers as influencers of the present era, it becomes imperative for them to embody social competencies. According to Djam'an Satori, these social competencies consist of the following:

- a. Possess adept communication skills when interacting with students and parents/guardians.
- b. Demonstrate empathy and understanding towards others.
- c. Able to collaborate effectively with the Board of Education or School Committee.
- d. Foster positive relationships with colleagues and educational collaborators.
- e. Display a comprehensive understanding of the surrounding environment.

Social competence pertains to the capacity of teachers as individuals to engage with others effectively and harmoniously. As social beings, teachers exhibit courteous behavior, possess the ability to communicate and interact with their surroundings engagingly and demonstrate empathy towards others.

The teachers' skill in communicating and interacting effectively and captivately extends to students, fellow educators, educational staff, parents, guardians, the school community, and other interested parties associated with the school.

By possessing social competencies, teachers are expected to address challenges students face, particularly the development of positive character traits. These competencies can be observed through the following indicators of the teacher's social competence:

- a. As educators, teachers should consistently act as role models for their students.
- b. While fulfilling their responsibilities, teachers should embody compassion and fairness and demonstrate a strong sense of accountability.
- c. Teachers must prioritize the dignity of each student.
- d. Teachers must refrain from providing extra lessons to their students in exchange for fees.

The concept of teacher competency is closely related to the ability of teachers as social beings to interact effectively with others. As social beings, teachers should exhibit polite and effective communication and interaction with students, fellow educators, education staff, parents, and the broader school community. Additionally, they should be proficient in using information and communication technology. Teachers are considered educators of the modern era, and their competency encompasses various aspects. It includes possessing the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their duties effectively. Teacher competency is crucial for providing quality education and ensuring students' success.

Regarding research on improving education quality, principals play a significant role in making efforts to enhance inputs, processes, and outputs in schools. They focus on preparing professional educators, creating safe and stimulating learning environments, and encouraging academic and non-academic student excellence. Furthermore, teacher competency is a vital aspect mentioned in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. The law defines teacher competencies, including pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies acquired through professional education. Teachers who possess these competencies can fulfill their roles and responsibilities independently and effectively, significantly impacting the overall education system's success.

4. CONCLUSION

Teachers play a crucial role in teaching and learning, creating a conducive classroom environment for students. Therefore, teacher competence is of utmost importance, encompassing academic knowledge, pedagogical skills, and personality, social and professional competencies. The social competence of teachers involves their ability to adapt to the demands of their work within the surrounding environment while fulfilling their duties as educators. In this role, teachers should take the initiative and lead development efforts, especially those related to education in the community.

Effective interactions with students, fellow educators, and parents or guardians of students greatly contribute to the success of the educational process and the achievement of better educational objectives. Throughout the learning process, teachers must continuously develop their professional competencies to enhance the quality of education.

Developing specific competencies is essential, including reflecting on their personality values, mastering their educator role, and developing skill competencies. Moreover, teachers should be proficient in understanding and creating learning tools, formulating and implementing learning programs, assessing the learning process and outcomes, managing administrative tasks, utilizing various teaching methods tailored to students' characteristics, connecting learning with society, industry, and universities, adapting to technological advancements, conducting classroom action research, and publishing research findings. In summary, social competence refers to teachers' ability to effectively communicate with students, fellow educators, and the community, ensuring the realization of desired educational goals.

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