21st Century Teacher Competency: Towards Conceptualization of Islamic Culture in Islamic Schools

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ABSTRACT

The present work explores 21st-century teachers' competency in conceptualizing Islamic culture in the MAN 1 Islamic senior high school in Gorontalo City. This descriptive qualitative research employed a descriptive phenomenology approach. All data were generated from observation, interviews, and documentation. The data were further analyzed in four steps: condensation, coding, categorization, and theory. According to the results, 21st-century religious education teachers should be capable of designing, organizing, directing, and supervising the cultivation of the practice of religious teachings in aspects of Islamic law. This aims to embody Islamic cultures, such as dress, religious traditions, and Islamic interaction. Meanwhile, the application of 21st-century skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity has not been practiced by teachers and students. Conducting further research to reveal strategies for comprehensively realizing Islamic culture from various aspects is necessary. This is especially significant in identifying aspects of 21st-century manners aligned with the profile project of Rahmatan lil alamin (a mercy to all creation) and making religious teachings a key leadership competency in madrasas.

Keywords: Leadership, Competence, 21st-century Teacher, Islamic Culture

INTRODUCTION

Central to cultivating the practice of religious teachings in the madrasah community through the application of 21st-century skills is the role of religious education teachers. This aims to create an Islamic culture. The issue of cultivating the practice of religious teachings through teacher leadership has become a trend in the last ten years in Indonesia, especially after the introduction of character education based on national education (Sukardi, 2016) Teacher leadership competence is a fairly prominent and fascinating topic, especially in the west. Meanwhile, the dynamics of teacher studies in Indonesia still focus on academic concerns related to the four standard competencies, namely pedagogic, personality, social, and professional. In fact, teacher leadership competence plays an important role in improving educational practices (Mukaffa, 2018).

Teachers' competencies comprise personality, pedagogic, professional, and social competencies. (Febriana, 2021). Leadership competence is an additional competency of religious education teachers (Fatmawati, 2020). This competency aims to realize Islamic culture by cultivating the practice of religious teachings in a way that aligns with 21st-century learning, which requires the development of thinking,

communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation (Irawati et al., 2022).

The implementation of the 21st-century religious education teacher leadership competencies requires the cultivation of religious teachings among students, enabling the attainment of the goal of realizing Islamic culture in madrasas. Such a concept is deemed crucial considering the notion of education as a process of people empowerment (Alwi et al., 2021) that represents a meaningful (Wahono, 2018) representation of the core of culture (Ilham, 2019).

Teachers' leadership competency is central to conceptualizing Islamic culture in every educational unit (Sa'diah, 2019). This competency includes several aspects, namely: (a) capable of planning the cultivation of the practice of religious teachings; (b) organizing the potential of Islamic schools; (c) capable of innovating, motivating, facilitating, guiding, and counseling; (d) capable of maintaining, controlling, and directing the cultivation of the practice of religious teachings and harmonious relations with other religious adherents (Ulfah & Susandra, 2021).

However, some religious studies teachers of the 21st century cannot design and manage the cultivation of religious teachings to actualize Islamic culture at schools. Students tend to highlight Islamic culture in the way they dress (Wahyu Ziaulhaq & M. Idris, 2020) and perform religious activities, (Siswanto, 2019) as well as Islamic interaction as seen in the practices of greeting other people within the schools (Siswanto, 2019) (Irmawati, 2021). On the other hand, Islamic values in communication, collaboration, and responding to students' creativity and innovation have not been widely practiced (Fikri et al., 2020).

Islamic culture has not been reflected through good manners in the context of harmonizing the religious atmosphere. Such a problem is seen in students' impolite behavior in interacting with others (Febriyanti & Sundari, 2020) which hinder

them from responding to critics positively when they become a leader at the school (Astuti & Hastanti, 2021). 21st-century teachers should be able to produce creative and innovative students who can demonstrate positive behavior in receiving criticism and responding to breakthroughs (Surjanti et al., 2022).

Politeness and manners for communication and collaboration have not been maintained, signifying a gap in the relationship between the teacher as a leader and students as the person being led. This condition also shows a lack of Islamic cultural values in communication both when asking questions, giving opinions, and discussing. (Gafur, 2020). In addition, Islamic culture has not been fully practiced due to the lack of appreciation towards creativity (e.g., saying thank you and rewards). (Effendi et al., 2021).

Previous research related to leadership competence has been carried out a lot. However, this study focuses more on school principals in improving welfare and effectiveness in the workplace (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021), academic leaders in fostering communicative competence (Kamal Saeed et al., 2022), fostering and developing the leadership of women in Madrasah Mu'allimat (Makruf et al., 2022), prospective leaders in schools in educational changes (Al-Zyoud, 2015), and school principals' roles in sustaining the development of the professional learning community (Hu et al., 2022).

Previous research on 21st-century teachers tends to emphasize research sites, creative skills in training (Gyurova, 2020), and the correlation between 21st-century student skills and 21st-century teacher skills (Tican & Deniz, 2019). The dimension of teacher competency is a potential aid in developing teachers' skills that align with 21st-century learning (Sulaiman & Ismail, 2020). Furthermore, the competency of 21st-century teachers in formulating instructional design (Babair, 2023) of digital pedagogy is the key to (Rintayati et al., 2022) maximum teaching performance. (Kim et al., 2019).

Islamic culture has also been studied in previous studies. Still, their focus is not related to the competence of the 21st-century teacher leadership: it examines aspects of the antagonism between Islamic culture and western culture (Tafazoli & Egan, 2022) building Islamic culture through strengthening the morals of students, (Mawardi et al., 2020) instilling morals through the implementation of Islamic culture, (Raudhatinur, 2019), forming an Islamic culture through the concept of a child-friendly school, (Alawi et al., 2022) and implementing religious culture in at schools. (Maarif et al., 2020).

The empirical fact at MAN 1 Gorontalo reveals that religious education teachers emphasize four standard competencies: pedagogic, personality, social, and professional. However, they do not focus on leadership competencies in comprehensively cultivating religious practice. The leadership competence of 21st-century teachers tends to pay more attention to dressing in Islamic ways. Meanwhile, the aspect of manners or adab, which leads to applying 21st-century skills in interaction, communication, collaboration, criticizing, and appreciating students' creativity, is still not widely exemplified. This reflects the weak awareness of religious education teachers that they are more than just educators, teachers, supervisors, and assessors but also leaders who embody Islamic culture in the madrasah community.

From the above discussion, the significance of this research is to explore new knowledge about the leadership competencies of 21st-century religious education teachers focusing on cultivating religious practice on aspects of adab or manners concerning 21st-century skills. The tendency of Islamic culture embedded in 21st-century religious education teachers emphasizes aspects of shari'a or rituals and religious interactions. On that ground, this research is expected to contribute to the development of educational scholarship in formulating a theory of creating an Islamic culture aligning with the student profile project: bring mercy to all, independent learning curriculum, and 21st-century skills. In the present work, madrasas or Islamic schools are Islamic educational institutions serving as the main target of this research that determines the direction and basis for implementing Islamic culture in each educational program. The main objective is the comprehensive practice of religious (Islamic) teachings to foster the leadership competence of religious teachers.

MATERIALS & METHODS

This qualitative research explores an interpretative paradigm representing 21st-century teacher leadership competencies consisting of teachers of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Al-Qur'an Hadith, Islamic Cultural History, and aqidah (morals). The value of this self-reflection encompasses experience, cognition, and self-understanding, which involves emotion. "No law, structure, or mechanism exercises higher explanatory principles or greater predictive power than self-interpretation" (Crotty 2003). (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021).

Data condensation techniques find written summaries with analysis patterns that are sharpened, classified, focused, discarded, and organized data. Such techniques enable better data accommodation of data holistically without reducing field findings (Mathhew B, 2014). Meanwhile, coding was performed on the collected data. (Fadli, 2021). Categorization was carried out to identify themes and theories of 21st-century teacher leadership competencies in cultivating the practice of religious teachings. Furthermore, a set of theories is applied to examine the embodiment of Islamic culture in accepting and responding to 21st-century skills.

Coding enables the identification of ideas or conceptual frameworks from students and other informants to find helpful information. This information is sorted into units of meaning that categorize and classify material according to the features it

represents. To construct research findings from student information and other informants about 21st-century teacher leadership competencies, researchers also took themes that were linked between students, teachers, and school or madrasas principals as a necessity for realizing Islamic culture. The themes were then classified according to the meanings and explained by Goleman et al. (2004) (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021) for the practice of religious teachings as a key leadership competency.

Participants

Informants in the interview activities were instructed to answer several key questions and sub-questions to describe their ideas (Merrian, 2009). (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021) The aim is to find situations that describe the competence of 21st-century teacher leadership and Islamic culture with their respective perspectives. Informants are aware that their responses will be used for research purposes. (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021) To ensure confidentiality, the names of all students and teachers were changed to pseudonyms.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data analysis begins with collecting data from direct interviews. Observations relied on field notes and documentation of related documents. The data were further analyzed in four steps: condensation, coding, categorization, and theory. (Sidiq, Umar, 2019).

RESULT

The 21st-century teacher, as a leader should promote a friendly atmosphere of collegiality to cultivate respect, helpfulness, and cooperation in conceptualizing Islamic culture (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021). Cultivating religious practice as an embodiment of Islamic culture at MAN 1 Gorontalo City relies on leadership competencies, resulting in the focus of the 21st-century teacher services on cultivating religious practice in 21st-century skills, e.g., displaying communication, collaboration, critical thinking, as well as creative and innovative thinking.

Regarding collaboration, students who are competent in one class or as group leaders in a study team still prioritize competition, so they are reluctant to share knowledge with their friends because of academic habits and competitive personalities (Iskandar, 2019). This is where teachers and principals act as good listeners and care about the spiritual needs of their students. Collaboration and communication are difficult to do without being based on empathy, which is central to realizing Islamic culture (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021).

The 21st century has brought changes to various aspects of human life with all the challenges, e.g., globalization, liberalization, and development of ICT, that require immediate solutions. (Sulaiman & Ismail, 2020). As a result, students sometimes find it difficult to adjust to the challenges and dynamics of the 21st century, including cultivating religious teachings on collaboration skills. Such a problem underpins the necessity for religious education teachers at MAN 1 Islamic Senior High School in Gorontalo City to perform their duties as leaders in cultivating the practice of religious teachings through 21st-century skills to create Islamic culture.

Table 1. Leadership Competence of 21st Century Teachers in MAN 1 Islamic senior High School in Gorontalo City.

No.	Teacher's Leadership Competence	Observation Results
1	Plan the cultivation of the practice of religious teachings	Develop programs and proposals for cultivating the practice of religious teachings in the madrasahs environment through active involvement of teachers and student organizations
2	Organizing school potential systematically	Schedule of activities for the practice of religious teachings, e.g., religious guidance and celebration of religious holidays involving stakeholders

3	Encouraging innovation and motivation and facilitating guidance and counseling programs	Promoting a religious atmosphere through learning technology as a warning to those violating religious teachings
4	Maintaining and directing the cultivation of the practice of religious teachings	Giving advice, verbal warnings, assignments, punishments to students who do not practice religious teachings

Source: Observation Sheets, 2022.

Some of the activities of 21st-century teachers as a leader in cultivating the practice of religious teachings include: compiling proposals for activities for cultivating the practice of religious teachings in the school environment by involving all components, such as subject teachers and student organizations, scheduling religious activities such as religious guidance and celebration of religious holidays, creating a religious atmosphere through the use of learning technology, advising and directing through psychological approaches, verbal reprimands, assignments, punishments for students violating the teachings of Islam. All of these components are important because the traditional approach to realizing Islamic culture does not fit with madrasas' current needs, signifying the necessity for social and personal transformation to address 21st-century challenges (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012).

Furthermore, the teacher as a leader does not only provide motivation and service at every moment of the religious activities he leads. They facilitate students with learning information and communication technology, such as encouraging and facilitating the use of available media, such as books in the library room, e-learning in learning, and other information technology. This will improve 21st-century skills in line with Islamic culture for students, who are, without doubt, under the supervision and guidance of religious education teachers. In other words, the teacher acts not only as an educator but also as a leader because this will reflect a relatively high level of affection satisfaction (Yu et al., 2022).

Although performance appraisal related to religious education leadership competence was not carried out. Religious teachers in the research site have demonstrated mastery of leadership competencies. They have included spiritual and social character and affective values in 21st-century learning designs, such as organizing activities to cultivate religious teachings through study groups and encouraging students who face difficulties realizing Islamic culture. This was done considering the strategic potential of religious education teachers in responding to the main issues of religion (Arifin, 2016).

The above discussion aligns with regulatory demands for religious education teachers to implement leadership competencies represented by their ability to organize the school's potential in realizing Islamic culture. Despite the assessment absence of leadership competence, the teachers in the research site have applied the concepts of 21st-century learning in their classes. Of the total teachers in the research site, seven teachers have been certified, where 18 and five of them are bachelor's and master's graduates, respectively.

All teachers are also shown to apply their knowledge consistently, sincerely, and conscientiously without being forced. Teachers' discipline, for example, is reflected in their awareness to ensure that the learning activities are well-organized, thus helping students to practice religious teachings voluntarily. The 21st-century teachers play a significant role in communicating the teaching of Islam. Islamic values are continuously incorporated during the learning activities, expecting the mercy of Allah.

Since the beginning, Islam in Indonesia has been well-known for its politeness, tolerance, cooperation, peace, and moderation. Islam upholds the value of brotherhood, compassion, mutual forgiveness, self-control, and abstinence from enmity and hatred among human

beings (Meftah 2018) (KhanafiIn, Imam., n.d.) In other words, this religion teaches the principles of universal affection between people. Religious education teachers who act simultaneously as leaders must pay attention to their students, both humans and Allah (hablum minallah) and relationships between humans and humans (hablum minannas).

In addition to the tasks discussed above, religious education teachers must consider students' abilities, not burdening the students by giving assignments. Monitoring and supervising the acculturation of the practice of religious teachings must prioritize problem-solving skills. Monitoring and supervising the acculturation of the practice of religious teachings is not just a formality. These two processes build togetherness regardless the ethnicity and racial differences, thus

acknowledging and loving Allah, prophets, and scholars. Such an attitude fosters peace between people (Bidabad 2017) (KhanafiIn, Imam., n.d.)

The 21st-century teacher who serves as a learning leader does not just design, develop, and present material according to his expertise to achieve goals. Such a concept is supported by the ability to understand the characteristics of students through guidance and observation of student development using methods related to problem-based learning and project-based learning. In addition, digital technology-based learning media is needed to create an Islamic learning environment, apply educative discipline, conduct assessments based on higher-order thinking skills, and develop learning tools that strengthen the culture of religious practice.

Table 2. Activities of Teachers and Students of the 21st-century

No.	21st-century Skills	Observation Results
1	Critical Thinking	The teacher allows students to ask questions after watching the video he prepared. The teacher as a leader also provides motivation, facilitates, asks to bait, and guides questions
2	Collaboration	The teacher leads the distribution of study groups to explore further the tasks in the student worksheet
3	Communication	The teacher leads the course of the discussion by giving freedom to students to communicate ideas with their friends, and present their work. The teacher listens to each student's presentation attentively
4	Creativity and Innovation	The teacher as a leader encourages students to learn something new from the material or real examples that they experience or from various internet-based learning sources

Source: Observation Sheets, 2022.

Based on the observations, religious education teachers as leaders apply the religious practice in critical thinking activities as one of the 21st-century skills. This was done by encouraging students to ask questions about their observed videos. All students were facilitated and motivated in literacy activities before conveying interesting ideas, resulting in multi-directional interactions. A sense of kinship and togetherness is also seen throughout learning activities, thus representing the teachers' leadership.

The teacher, as a leader, tries to influence students through persuasive abilities to help overcome learning difficulties or optimize

students' potential, primarily related to the practice of religious teachings. Such a concept supports 21st-century thinking skills, i.e., critical, collaborative, communicative, and innovative thinking. The main leadership competency is cultivating religious teachings in dealing with 21st-century skills. (Febriyanti, Afif Alfianto, Zulkili, 2022).

Students mentioned their experiences guided by a religious education teacher who was always persuasive in finding solutions to their problems. For example, the teacher facilitated students in stimulating problem-solving skills when analyzing videos and real problems related to learning material.

The teacher does not impose his will but provides alternatives according to the abilities and potential of students.

It is also revealed that the teacher sincerely helps students cultivate their problem-solving skills, motivating them to aim higher in every classroom activity. This concept underpins the basis for practicing religious teaching in madrasahs or Islamic schools (Marza, 2017).

There are ten certified religious education teachers with different terms of service. According to the research data, ten certified religious education teachers have different working periods. Religious education teachers are generally good at teaching competencies, namely pedagogic, personality, social, and professional (including two other competencies, i.e., spiritual and leadership for religious education teachers).

Based on the document observation, the assessment does not incorporate the component of religious and leadership competence. Other assessments, such as civil servant performance assessments, have included the leadership component (there are five components: service orientation, integrity, commitment, cooperation, and leadership). The leadership component in this assessment, however, was left blank.

Table 3. Civil Servant Performance Assessment Document for July-December Period

No.	Assessment Component	Score	Description
1.	Service Orientation	92.00	(Very Good)
2.	Integrity	92.00	(Very Good)
3.	Commitment	92.00	(Very Good)
4.	Discipline	92.00	(Very Good)
5.	Cooperation	92.00	(Very Good)
6.	Leadership		

Source: SKP Document July - December 2022

Assessment of the performance of 21st-century teachers has been assessed from the aspects of service orientation, integrity, commitment, discipline, and cooperation. However, the leadership competence of religious education teachers has not been assessed regardless of the importance of leadership competence for religious education teachers that is equal to pedagogic, personality, social, and professional competencies.

The observations show that 21st-century teacher leadership competencies have been applied in 21st-century learning. However, it is not assessed in either the Teacher's Performance Assessment (PKG) or the Employee Target Achievement (SKP). The absence of the leadership competence assessment of religious education teachers blames the unavailability of an assessment format, except for the SKP. However, this assessment can only be completed by the teachers. The government or authorities should establish regulations for assessing the leadership competence of religious education teachers.

Based on the above discussion, the religious education teachers have yet to actualize the Islamic culture at MAN 1 Islamic Senior High School in Gorontalo City. The teachers tend to focus on sharia aspects, such as proper dress, prayer in congregation, and Islamic celebration and interaction. Aspects of manners have not been given much attention by teachers, especially in overcoming the challenges of the 21st century regarding students' critical thinking skills, communication, collaboration, and creativity.

Table 4. Islamic Culture in 21st-century Teacher Competency

No.	Islamic Culture	Observation Results
1	Dress Culture	Teachers and students wear uniforms according to the provisions of Islamic law for both women and men
2	Religious Tradition	Teachers and students pray in congregation at the school mosque and get used to celebrating religious holidays ceremoniously
3	Islamic Interaction	Teachers and students relate to each other by greeting each other, greeting, shaking hands, smiling, and maintaining personal and environmental hygiene.
4	21st-Century Skills	Critical Thinking Lack of manners to respond to questions and constructive criticism. Communication Speaking and conveying ideas impolitely Collaboration Self-centered and lack of collaborative skills Creativity and Innovation Does not recognize and appreciate students' advantages and achievement

Source: Observation Sheets, 2022.

DISCUSSION

The practice of religious teachings shown through example and habituation by teachers and students is well-implemented yet well-implemented and is yet aligned with 21st-century skills. Such conditions blame the teachers' tendency to focus on sharia aspects, e.g., dress, religious traditions, and manners in interactions. Religious education teachers have not fully become leaders in practicing religious teachings in aspects of 21st-century skills, ignoring exemplary and habituation. As a result, Islamic culture has not been practiced comprehensively.

Religious education teachers have not fully become leaders in practicing religious teachings in aspects of 21st-century skills, ignoring exemplary and habituation. Thereby, Islamic culture has not been practiced comprehensively. Academic qualifications do not determine the teachers' leadership competency. Nevertheless, the teachers are able to instill a positive manner in students, reflecting the leader's quality in the habituation of Islamic teaching.

The head of the Islamic school admits that religious education teachers are certified but have not been fully able to embody Islamic culture comprehensively as expected, especially in practicing religious teachings in the 21st-century skills. Cultivating the practice of religious teachings in the 21st-century skill dimension fits with the central leadership competency for 21st-century teachers.

The leadership competence of religious education teachers has not been assessed in MAN 1 Islamic Senior High School in Gorontalo City, regardless of the importance of leadership competence for religious education teachers that is equal to pedagogic, personality, social, and professional competencies. Emphasis on cultivating the practice of religious teachings is still lacking in realizing Islamic culture in classroom learning. The ability of 21st-century teachers to plan, organize school potential, and encourage and supervise the cultivation of religious practice tends to emphasize the aspects of sharia and religious traditions, e.g., the celebration of religious holidays. Meanwhile, the manners or manners of applying 21st-century skills in their duties as learning leaders have not been widely practiced by religious education teachers.

CONCLUSION

The number of informants is the limitation of the present research. This can affect the generalizability of the findings (Crotty, 2003). Challenges are inherent in researching broad topics, e.g., teacher leadership competence to create Islamic culture. Another limitation is that a geographical factor influences the research as the present work was conducted only in Gorontalo; thus, the culture impacts the managerial aspects. As a result, this research is less relevant to other Islamic schools in other provinces of Indonesia. In other words, further research on 21st-century teacher leadership competencies from the point of view of madrasah principals and education stakeholders needs to be carried

out. Similar cross-cultural and religious studies from other countries should address this theme to provide a broader perspective on culture and religion.

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