

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS BASED ON SPIRITUAL MERITOCRACY THROUGH PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND INTEGRITY

Istianatul Imamah

Universitas KH. Mukhtar Syafaat Blokagung
(UIMSIA)
e-mail: imamahistianatul9@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze teacher career development based on spiritual meritocracy through professional competence and moral integrity at Universitas KH. Mukhtar Syafaat (UIMSIA) Blokagung Banyuwangi as the research site. The research focuses on three main instruments: professional training programs such as Outcome Based Education (OBE)-based course design, Internal Quality Audit (AMI), and academic publications on pesantren themes through an International Conference. This research employed a qualitative case study method. A total of 63 informants were involved, consisting of the Rector, Vice Rector I, the Dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, and faculty lecturers. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that OBE-based training improved lecturers' pedagogical competence and teaching innovation, AMI strengthened quality culture, accountability, and moral integrity in academic careers, while academic publications through international conferences expanded global scholarly networks and enhanced lecturers' research capacity. The research contribution of this discussion is to show that the OBE training program, Internal Quality Audit (AMI), and scholarly publications with a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) theme through international conferences collectively enhance lecturers' pedagogical competence and learning innovation, strengthen the quality culture, accountability, and moral integrity in academic careers, and expand the global academic network as well as increase lecturers' research capacity.

Keywords: *career development, educators based, spiritual, meritocracy through, professional competence, integrity*

A. Introduction

The career development of educators in Islamic boarding schools based on spiritual meritocracy emphasizes the balance between

professional competence and moral integrity. This is based on the basic values of Islamic boarding schools which view teachers not only as teachers of knowledge, but also as role models of morals and spiritual guides (Mujahid, 2021) (Purwowidodo & Zaini, 2024), so that the career of an educator cannot be separated from the moral qualities inherent in him. For example, in some Islamic boarding schools, teachers who actively improve their professional skills through training, learning innovation, and certification receive higher recognition, but job promotions are only given if they also demonstrate moral integrity such as discipline in worship, trustworthiness in managing tasks, and exemplary morals in front of the students (Toom et al., 2021). Conversely, teachers who possess high academic prowess but lack spiritual integrity are often not trusted to lead educational units. Thus, the spiritual meritocracy system in Islamic boarding schools establishes a social fact that an educator's career is not solely measured by professionalism but also by morality, thus fostering a balanced, authoritative, and respected teacher figure within the Islamic boarding school community.

Moral integrity is a key pillar in the career development of Islamic boarding school educators, which is based on spiritual meritocracy. Islamic boarding schools believe that the success of Islamic education is determined not only by the transfer of knowledge, but also by the moral and spiritual example demonstrated by teachers (Toom et al., 2021). Therefore, moral integrity is an indicator that determines the social position and career of educators in Islamic boarding schools (Setyosari & Kamdi, 2021). For example, an educator who shows an honest, humble, disciplined attitude in carrying out religious obligations, and consistently maintains harmonious relationships with students and colleagues is more appreciated by the Islamic boarding school community. He has a greater chance of being selected for important positions such as head of a

madrasah, musyrif dormitory, or coordinator of da'wah activities. Meanwhile, teachers with a good academic reputation but who often ignore moral norms tend to be less trusted and even receive stricter social supervision. This shows that Islamic boarding schools make morality not only a personal aspect, but also a social instrument that determines career mobility (Assa'idi, 2021), so that moral integrity becomes the essential identity of an educator in the Islamic boarding school environment.

Professional competence becomes a differentiating factor in the career of Islamic boarding school educators when integrated with the values of spiritual meritocracy. In the context of educational modernization, Islamic boarding schools not only emphasize mastery of yellow books and classical scientific traditions, but also encourage teachers to master innovative learning methods, educational technology, and effective classroom management (Halimah et al., 2024). This demonstrates a social shift in the educator career system. For example, teachers who are able to utilize digital technology for learning, develop an integrated curriculum that combines religious and general knowledge, and are active in research and publications are more quickly recognized. However, these achievements will only lead to career advancement if accompanied by a sincere attitude, trustworthiness, and a strong spiritual commitment. Without strong morality, professional competence alone is not enough to gain full trust. This fact proves that Islamic boarding schools place professional competence within the framework of spiritual meritocracy (Qorib, 2025), where modern academic abilities must go hand in hand with the values of moral integrity, so that educators are created who are relevant to the challenges of the times while remaining rooted in Islamic traditions.

Research on the career development of educators in Islamic boarding

schools reveals a comprehensive approach that integrates spiritual and professional dimensions. Teacher competency development follows a pattern based on spirituality and professionalism through integrated, holistic and sustainable development strategies (Kotten et al., 2025), while simultaneously fostering independent learning. Professional development utilizes five interaction patterns, including regular religious study, congregational prayer, and monthly meetings, supported by group, individual, seniority, and bureaucratic approaches. The moral education program strengthens educators' spiritual competence through religious instruction, habituation, role modeling, a reward and punishment system, and rule enforcement, with evaluation integrated into performance assessments. The professionalism of Islamic educators not only includes pedagogical competence and mastery of knowledge, but also moral integrity, appreciation of spiritual values, and harmonious student relationships (Jalaldeen & Al-Hidabi, 2025). This holistic development approach aims to produce educators who demonstrate professional excellence and noble character within the spiritual framework of Islamic boarding schools.

This research offers novelty by highlighting the concept of spiritual meritocracy as the primary framework for the career development of Islamic boarding school educators, a concept that has not been explicitly addressed in previous research. Previous studies have emphasized the holistic integration of spiritual and professional aspects through guidance, role models, and social interaction patterns in Islamic boarding schools (Rukmana et al., 2024). However, this research focuses on how professional competence and moral integrity serve as the basis for an objective and measurable meritocratic system in determining educator career mobility. Thus, this research not only highlights routine and collective development strategies but also examines career assessment

mechanisms based on spiritual justice, appreciation for professional achievement, and moral consistency. This approach yields a new contribution in the form of a career development model that is more systematic, transparent, and relevant to modern challenges, while remaining rooted in the distinctive values of Islamic boarding schools.

Research on Educator Career Development Based on Spiritual Meritocracy through Professional Competence and Moral Integrity in Islamic Boarding Schools is important and worthy of being conducted because the development of Islamic education currently faces the challenges of modernization while simultaneously demanding the upholding of spiritual values. Many previous studies have highlighted teacher professional development in Islamic boarding schools, but these have been limited to aspects of religious guidance or routines without emphasizing spiritual meritocracy as a systemic framework for career management. In fact, Islamic boarding schools require a fair, transparent, and Islamic-value-based mechanism to ensure that the teachers they develop are not only academically competent but also possess high moral integrity (Hasanah & Al Ghazi, 2025). The urgency of this research lies in its efforts to present a new model of career development that balances professionalism with spirituality, thereby improving the quality of educators while maintaining the moral authority of Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, this research is highly relevant, urgent, and worthy of being conducted to strengthen the position of Islamic boarding schools as superior, character-based, and competitive Islamic educational institutions..

B. Metode Penelitian

This research was conducted at KH. Mukhtar Syafaat University, Blokagung, Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia. The location was chosen based

on the campus's characteristics, which are directly affiliated with a large Islamic boarding school (pesantren), thus possessing an academic tradition closely integrated with spiritual values. This is highly relevant to the research focus on developing educator careers based on spiritual meritocracy through professional competence and moral integrity, as this university represents how Islamic boarding school values are integrated into the Islamic higher education system. Therefore, this research location is considered strategic for exploring the phenomenon of educator careers within the framework of spirituality and professionalism.

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study. A qualitative approach was chosen because it can explore social phenomena in depth, comprehensively, and contextually, in accordance with the complexity of the issue of educator career development in Islamic boarding schools. The case study type was chosen because this research seeks to specifically understand the practice of spiritual meritocracy within the scope of KH. Mukhtar Syafaat University, which has its own unique systems and values. The case study allows researchers to uncover the patterns, dynamics, and interactions underlying the practice of professionalism and morality-based career development in the Islamic boarding school environment.

The research informants consisted of the Rector, Vice Rector I, Dean of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training (FTK), and FTK lecturers. These informants were selected based on their strategic role in formulating, implementing, and evaluating educator career development. The research data was obtained from in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, as these three techniques complement each other. In-depth interviews were used to explore the informants' perspectives and experiences, participant observation helped understand real-world practices, while documentation provided reinforcement in the form of written and archival data relevant to the educator career process.

In this study, the selection of informants was carried out purposively, taking into account their strategic position and relevance to the research focus on the development of educator careers based on spiritual meritocracy through professional competence and moral integrity in Islamic boarding schools. The number of informants involved was 63 people, consisting of 1 Rector, 1 Vice Rector I, 1 Dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FTK), and 60 FTK lecturers. The involvement of these informants was deemed appropriate because they play a direct role in the process of policy formulation, program implementation, and empirical experience related to educator career development at the University of KH. Mukhtar Syafaat Blokagung Banyuwangi.

Tabel 1.1 Informans

No	Informant Criteria	Gender		Informant Code	Total
		Lk.	Pr.		
1	Chancellor	1	0	R	1
2	Vice Rector I	1	0	WR1,WR2	1
3	Dean of Tarbiyah	0	1	DT1,DT2,DT3	1
4	Lecturers of the Faculty of Engineering	39	21	D1,D2,D3,D4	60
Total		-	-	-	63

The informants selected were based on their function and involvement in the educational management system at Islamic boarding schools. The Rector, Vice Rector I, and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology (FTK) were selected because of their strategic roles in formulating policies and overseeing the implementation of career development programs. Meanwhile, FTK lecturers were chosen as representatives of those directly involved in career development, both in terms of improving professional competence and fostering moral integrity. With this composition, the research is expected to be able to gather comprehensive data from the policy level to implementation in the field.

The data analysis technique used the Miles and Huberman interactive

model, which includes three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The rationale for using this model is that interactive analysis is able to display iterative and interrelated processes, resulting in more in-depth and valid findings. To ensure data validity, triangulation of sources, methods, and observers was used. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information from various informants, method triangulation by combining interviews, observations, and documentation, and observer triangulation through the involvement of more than one researcher or external examiner. Thus, the resulting data can be academically accounted for and reflect empirical conditions in the field.

C. Results and Discussion

Professional Lecturer Training Program

Professional training programs for lecturers are an urgent need to improve the quality of education in higher education institutions, including at KH. Mukhtar Syafaat University (UIMSya) Blokagung Banyuwangi. This is due to the demands of the modern era, which emphasizes technological mastery, learning innovation, and the ability to adapt to curriculum changes and increasingly complex student needs. Without ongoing training, lecturers will struggle to deliver learning processes that are relevant, effective, and in line with current global education quality standards. Recent research shows that educators who regularly participate in professional training experience significant improvements in pedagogical skills, digital media use, and learning evaluation (ElSayary, 2023); (Fernandes et al., 2023). There are several Islamic and general educational institutions, training has been proven to help educators integrate character values with active technology-based learning methods, so that the quality of the teaching and learning process is increasingly improved (Pongsakdi et al., 2021). This social fact shows that professional training is not just an additional program, but rather a crucial instrument in human resource development in the field of education. With

targeted training, lecturers not only develop professional competency but also serve as agents of change, preparing a superior and adaptive generation to the challenges of the times. The training program held by the KH. Mukhtar Syafaat University (UIMSya) Blokagung Banyuwangi is a training on Creating a Lesson Plan (RPS) based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE). The documentation is as follows:

Figure 1.1 OBE-Based RPS Creation Training

Source: interview based on sources

Based on field data, the training program held by KH. Mukhtar Syafaat University (UIMSya) Blokagung Banyuwangi, which includes training on creating Outcome-Based Education (OBE)-based lesson plans for each study program, is expected to improve the quality of learning planning while strengthening academic accountability. Through OBE-based lesson plans, lecturers are not only required to design learning according to graduate competency achievement standards but also to ensure a more measurable link between material, methods, and evaluation (Azis et al., 2020). Thus, this training program not only has an impact on improving the technical competence of lecturers, but also becomes part of a spiritual meritocracy that integrates academic quality with moral integrity in career development in the Islamic boarding school environment.

Internal Quality Audit Control (AMI)

Internal Quality Audit (AMI) Control at KH. Mukhtar Syafaat University (UIMSya) Blokagung Banyuwangi has become a strategic instrument in ensuring academic quality and lecturer professionalism. AMI is consistently used to monitor the conformity of curriculum implementation with national higher education standards, the effectiveness of the OBE-based RPS, and the performance of the Tridharma of higher education (Pitriani et al., 2024). The

AMI process serves not only as an administrative evaluation but also as a means of academic reflection that encourages lecturers to continuously improve their teaching, research, and community service. Field data shows that the existence of AMI has made each study program more disciplined in preparing learning planning documents, reporting lecturer achievements, and integrating Islamic boarding school spiritual values into all academic activities. Research (Tarigan & Zahara, 2024) also confirms that AMI plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of accountability, transparency, and career meritocracy within higher education. Therefore, AMI is not merely a supervisory tool, but also a quality development mechanism that balances the professional competence of lecturers with the moral integrity that characterizes the spiritual meritocracy of Islamic boarding schools. The documentation is as follows:

Figure 1.2 Internal Quality Audit (AMI) Control at KH. Mukhtar Syafaat University (UIMSya) Blokagung Banyuwangi

Source: interview based on sources

The Internal Quality Audit (AMI) Control at KH. Mukhtar Syafaat University (UIMSya) Blokagung Banyuwangi was attended by all study program heads who were directly controlled by the LPMI section. This activity is expected to be able to foster a culture of quality in each study program, especially in ensuring the achievement of OBE-based curriculum

standards (Syeed et al., 2022), the suitability of the RPS to student needs, and improving the performance of lecturers in the tridharma of higher education. Through the Internal Quality Audit (AMI) mechanism, study program heads are encouraged to be more disciplined in managing academic administration, conducting continuous learning evaluations, and reporting achievement results according to established quality indicators. This will ultimately facilitate study program head accreditation. The monitoring results show that the Internal Quality Audit (AMI) serves not only as a quality assurance instrument but also as a development tool that builds collective awareness regarding the importance of accountability, transparency, and integrity in lecturer career development. (Zhang et al., 2020). Thus, AMI at UIMSYA is not just an administrative procedure, but is part of a spiritual meritocracy that combines academic professionalism with the moral values of Islamic boarding schools.

Islamic Boarding School-Themed Scientific Publication Activities

Scientific publications on Islamic boarding schools are both a manifestation of scientific actualization and a strategic means of expanding the intellectual influence of Islamic boarding schools in the global academic sphere. Until now, Islamic boarding schools have often been viewed as traditional institutions focused solely on teaching Islamic texts and moral development (Jaenullah et al., 2022). In fact, the development of Islamic boarding school scholarship, rich in classical Islamic intellectual traditions and spiritual value-based educational practices, is highly relevant for academic study. Recent research shows an increase in the number of articles and proceedings on the topic of Islamic boarding schools in the past five years, particularly regarding digital innovation in Islamic boarding schools and Islamic education management (Pitriani et al., 2024). The publication strengthens the existence of Islamic boarding schools as dynamic centers of

knowledge and opens up space for collaboration between them and universities. This social fact demonstrates that scientific publications on Islamic boarding schools are not only important as academic media but also as a social strategy to elevate the dignity of Islamic boarding schools as modern, adaptive Islamic educational institutions that contribute significantly to the development of knowledge. Thus, scientific publications are a crucial instrument for Islamic boarding schools in preserving tradition while addressing the challenges of the times. The documentation of these activities is as follows:

Figure 1.3 UIMSYA International Conference
Internasional Seminar UIMSYA Blokagung Soroti Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer Dan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan

July 22, 2025 7:56 pm



Source: interview based on sources

Based on field data, scientific publication activities on the theme of Islamic boarding schools are realized through the holding of an International Conference involving lecturers, researchers, and education practitioners from within and outside the country (Fakunle et al., 2019). This activity is a strategic forum for disseminating research results related to Islamic boarding school scientific traditions, learning innovations, and the integration of spiritual values with modern academic developments (Faizin, 2024)(Salim et al., 2024). Through this forum, ideas and findings from Islamic boarding schools are not only documented in proceedings and reputable journals, but also gain broader academic recognition globally. Field evidence shows that this international conference encourages increased academic capacity among

Islamic boarding school lecturers in writing and publishing scientific papers, while simultaneously expanding collaborative networks between educational institutions. Thus, the Islamic boarding school-themed scientific publication activities through the International Conference not only strengthen the Islamic boarding school's presence in the academic realm but also affirm its role as a center for the development of knowledge rooted in local spirituality and tradition yet globally relevant.

D. Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the development of educator careers based on spiritual meritocracy at KH. Mukhtar Syafaat University (UIMSYA) Blokagung Banyuwangi is realized through three main instruments, namely the lecturer professional training program, Internal Quality Audit (AMI) control, and scientific publication activities on Islamic boarding school themes. Professional training programs, such as the preparation of RPS based on Outcome Based Education (OBE), play a role in improving pedagogical competence, technological skills, and learning innovation that are in line with global demands. AMI control is a strategic instrument that not only ensures the achievement of academic quality standards, but also builds a culture of accountability, transparency, and discipline in each study program so that moral integrity is maintained. Meanwhile, scientific publication activities on Islamic boarding school themes, especially through International Conferences, strengthen the existence of Islamic boarding schools in the global academic arena by opening up space for knowledge dissemination, collaboration, and international recognition. Overall, these three instruments show that spiritual meritocracy in educator career development not only emphasizes professional competence, but also makes moral integrity the main foundation. In this way, this system produces educators who excel academically, have noble character, and are relevant to the needs of the times, while remaining rooted in the spiritual values of Islamic boarding schools.

E. Bibliography

- Assa'idi, S. (2021). The Growth of Pesantren in Indonesia as the Islamic Venue and Social Class Status of Santri. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 93, 425–440.
- Azis, M., Hasiara, L. O., & Abduh, A. (2020). Relationship between Lecturers' Competences and Student Academic Achievement in Indonesian Public Universities. *Talent Development & Excellence*, 12(1), 1825–1832.

- ElSayary, A. (2023). The impact of a professional upskilling training programme on developing teachers' digital competence. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 39(4), 1154–1166.
- Faizin, M. A. (2024). Islamic Boarding Education Management Reform: Transformation Strategies to Improve Competitiveness and Relevance. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 16(2), 2497–2506.
- Fakunle, O., Dollinger, M., Alla-Mensah, J., & Izard, B. (2019). Academic conferences as learning sites: A multinational comparison of doctoral students' perspectives and institutional policy. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 14, 479–497.
- Fernandes, S., Araújo, A. M., Miguel, I., & Abelha, M. (2023). Teacher professional development in higher education: The impact of pedagogical training perceived by teachers. *Education Sciences*, 13(3), 309.
- Halimah, S., Yusuf, A., & Safiudin, K. (2024). Pesantren education management: The transformation of religious learning culture in the age of disruption. *Nidhomul Haq: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 9(3), 648–666.
- Hasanah, E., & Al Ghazi, M. I. (2025). Exploring Teachers' Perspectives on Leadership Regeneration in Muhammadiyah Schools: A Phenomenological Study. *International Journal of Learning Reformation in Elementary Education*, 4(02), 113–130.
- Jaenullah, J., Utama, F., & Setiawan, D. (2022). Resilience model of the traditional islamic boarding school education system in shaping the morals of student in the midst of modernizing education. *Jurnal Kependidikan*, 8(4), 931–942.
- Jalaldeen, J., & Al-Hidabi, D. (2025). Al-Ghazali's framework of teachings professional values: Analyzing the pedagogical principles in Islamic education. *Al-Burhān: Journal of Qur'ān and Sunnah Studies*, 9(1), 27–46.
- Kotten, N. B., Bataona, Y. D., Ali, U., Koten, A. N., & Tasrim, I. W. (2025). Exploring Spiritually Oriented Supervision: Enhancing Teacher Performance and Holistic Education in Religious-Based Primary Schools. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 24(2), 227–241.
- Mujahid, I. (2021). Islamic orthodoxy-based character education: creating moderate Muslim in a modern pesantren in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 11(2), 185–212.
- Pitriani, N. R. V., Fitriani, L. P. W., & Suseni, K. A. (2024). Transforming Higher Education Curriculum Through OBE-Based Semester Learning Plans Integrated with Mpu Kuturan's Ethical Framework. *Indonesian Values and Character Education Journal*, 7(2).
- Pongsakdi, N., Kortelainen, A., & Veermans, M. (2021). The impact of digital pedagogy training on in-service teachers' attitudes towards digital technologies. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(5), 5041–5054.
- Purwowododo, A., & Zaini, M. (2024). Developing a Value-Based Moderate Islamic Education Model: A Case Study of Pesantren Sidogiri Pasuruan. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)*, 12(1), 43–62.
- Qorib, M. (2025). Socio-cultural transformation within Indonesian academics:

- cases in Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama universities. *Asian Education and Development Studies*.
- Rukmana, S., Pasaribu, M., & Sofyan, S. (2024). Holistic Integration of Islamic Religious Education Values: A Comprehensive Strategy for Character Development at MAN 1 Tapanuli Tengah. *FIKROTUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Manajemen Islam*, 13(2), 217–228.
- Salim, N. A., Zaibi, M., Brantasari, M., Ikhsan, M., & Aslindah, A. (2024). Islamic Boarding School Leadership Innovation: From Traditional to Modernization of Education. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 5(4), 447–460.
- Setyosari, P., & Kamdi, W. (2021). Exploration of Moral Integrity Education and Superior Cadre Leadership at Madrasah Boarding School Indonesia. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(4), 753–774.
- Syeed, M. M. M., Shihavuddin, A. S. M., Uddin, M. F., Hasan, M., & Khan, R. H. (2022). Outcome based education (OBE): Defining the process and practice for engineering education. *IEEE Access*, 10, 119170–119192.
- Tarigan, T. M., & Zahara, F. (2024). Internal Quality Assurance System in Achieving Accreditation Scores for Islamic Religious Higher Education. *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education*, 8(2), 677–698.
- Toom, A., Pyhältö, K., Pietarinen, J., & Soini, T. (2021). Professional agency for learning as a key for developing teachers' competencies? *Education Sciences*, 11(7), 324.
- Zhang, Y., Xiong, F., Xie, Y., Fan, X., & Gu, H. (2020). The impact of artificial intelligence and blockchain on the accounting profession. *Ieee Access*, 8, 110461–110477.