

Managing Teacher Competency Development to Enhance Students' Mental Health

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Abstract:

This study critically examines the implementation of POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) management functions in developing teacher competencies to promote student mental health in two Islamic integrated primary schools in Garut, Indonesia: SDIT Atikah Musaddadiyah Al-Wasilah and SDIT Al-Furqon. The research focuses on understanding how spiritual-reflective and data-driven managerial paradigms shape program design, organizational mechanisms, supervisory practices, and evaluation systems that directly influence teachers' emotional readiness, pedagogical competence, and overall capacity to support student well-being. Utilizing a qualitative comparative case study design, the study integrates in-depth interviews, extended classroom observations, document analysis, and multi-source triangulation to produce a comprehensive and contextually grounded interpretation. The research encompasses key stakeholders—school leaders, curriculum coordinators, senior and regular teachers, students, and parents. Findings reveal that SDIT Atikah prioritizes the cultivation of spiritual values, emotional sensitivity, and relational warmth through reflective and value-oriented professional development. In contrast, SDIT Al-Furqon emphasizes data-informed planning, procedural rigor, and standardized evaluation to enhance teachers' technical competence in delivering social-emotional learning. Both approaches demonstrate efficacy through different pathways: Atikah strengthens teachers' affective and spiritual capacities, while Al-Furqon enhances their analytical and technical abilities. Major challenges include uneven teacher capacity, administrative burden, limited access to validated mental health instruments, and inconsistencies in program execution. Practical implications highlight the need for a hybrid POAC-based management model that integrates spiritual presence with data-driven accountability to optimize teacher development in Islamic educational settings.

Keywords: integrated Islamic school; mental health; organizational culture; religious-spiritual pedagogy; teacher competency development.

INTRODUCTION

Student mental health has become a crucial issue in 21st-century global education, particularly after a WHO report indicated that approximately 10–20% of school-age children experience mental health disorders, with a significant increase following the COVID-19 pandemic (Mendes et al., 2013). This drastic change marks a paradigm shift in the role of schools: from institutions for transferring knowledge to ecosystems responsible

for the comprehensive psychological well-being of students. In Indonesia, the urgency of this issue was further highlighted when a survey by the Indonesian Teachers Association revealed that 78% of elementary school teachers felt they lacked sufficient competency to support student mental health (Sari et al., 2025). This competency gap is even more pronounced in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT), which carry a dual mission—namely academic excellence and Islamic character formation—thus requiring teachers to have more complex capacities in addressing the psychological, pedagogical, and spiritual dimensions of students. The core problem that emerged was teachers' lack of understanding of students' psychological conditions and their unpreparedness to address mental health issues in the school environment, which resulted in poor learning quality and schools' failure to create emotionally safe spaces for growth. This situation was further complicated by the lack of a management model that systematically integrated management functions with a mental health approach—especially in the context of Islamic education, which has its own cultural and spiritual characteristics.

In response to this problem, educational management studies have positioned the POAC framework—Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling—as the foundation for understanding and developing teacher competencies in a structured manner (Terry, 2010). In the planning aspect, the key step of identifying teacher competency needs serves as the primary foundation for designing relevant development strategies. Competency gap analysis, goal formulation, and training program development are vital parts of this process. In the context of Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT), planning goes beyond devising pedagogical strategies; it also integrates Islamic values with modern psychosocial approaches, enabling spiritual dimensions such as wisdom, patience, and mercy to influence the process of strengthening teacher capacity. In the organizational stage, the development of institutional structures and the distribution of resources are key requirements for the successful implementation of competency development programs. Research shows that schools with participatory management can increase teacher competency achievement by up to 35% compared to schools with traditional hierarchical structures (Tintoré et al., 2022). This demonstrates the importance of involving various stakeholders—principals, senior teachers, school committees, psychology institutions, and the community—in creating a strong circle of support.

The implementation phase is the arena that tests the quality of planning and organizational effectiveness. Development program implementation can take the form of formal training, workshops, individual mentoring, and the formation of professional learning communities. The Mindfulness in Schools Project (2021) study confirmed that ongoing teacher training is far more effective than short-term seminar-based interventions (Whatnall et al., 2021). In the context of integrated Islamic education, training is not solely oriented toward technical skills but also integrates spiritual values, thus impacting the development of both psychopedagogical and spiritual competencies in teachers. Jenuri's research in Malaysia showed that integrative Islamic schools that combine professional training with spiritual practices recorded up to a 35% improvement in student mental health compared to conventional schools (Jenuri et al., 2025). Meanwhile, monitoring and evaluation functions play a role in ensuring that teacher competency development programs have a tangible impact on student psychological well-being. Monitoring teacher performance, assessing student mental health, and feedback mechanisms should be structured within a continuous evaluation framework, as recommended by Guskey (Guskey, 2002). At SDIT, evaluations not only measure teachers' technical achievements, but also spiritual and social sensitivity which greatly determine the quality of teacher-student interactions.

Empirically, various studies confirm a strong relationship between teacher competence and students' psychological well-being. de Carvalho et al. (2021) found that trained teachers were able to improve students' emotional regulation skills by up to 23% and reduce stress levels by 15% through mindfulness-based interventions (de Carvalho et al., 2021). Pollak et al.'s (2024) meta-analysis also showed that social-emotional programs supported by teacher training can improve students' academic achievement, social skills, and emotional stability (Pollak et al., 2024). However, despite these important findings, there are several limitations in previous research that provide room for this study to make new contributions.

First, the majority of studies remain fragmentary, separating managerial aspects from the substance of mental health, thus failing to produce an integrative framework that maps how management functions can simultaneously influence teacher competence and student well-being. Second, comparative research across schools with similar institutional characteristics remains very limited, even though such an approach could more convincingly identify best practices. Third, global research is too dominated by Western perspectives that are insensitive to the context of Indonesian Islamic education, even though various studies show that the

spiritual dimension plays a crucial role in shaping students' mental health in Indonesia's religious culture. These three gaps form the methodological basis for this research.

SDIT Al-Furqon and SDIT Atikah Musaddadiyah Al-Wasilah Garut were chosen as the research locations because they share the same vision of integrated Islamic education, but implement very different teacher competency management models. SDIT Atikah emphasizes a personal-cultural approach through peer mentoring, spiritual reflection, and Islamic value-based interactions. In contrast, SDIT Al-Furqon uses a structural-systematic approach through data-driven workshops, quantitative evaluation, and standardized program design. The contrast of these approaches in a relatively homogeneous geographic and demographic context makes the two schools a natural laboratory for testing the relative effectiveness of these two management paradigms. Furthermore, the research location in Garut Regency adds strategic value because this region blends strong Islamic traditions with the dynamics of modernity, making it an ideal context for understanding how Islamic value-based management can synergize with contemporary educational practices.

Based on this analysis, this study aims to integrate POAC management theory with a mental health approach in the context of integrated Islamic education, and to develop a holistic, contextual, and student-oriented teacher competency management model. Specifically, the objectives of this study are: (1) to analyze the implementation of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising functions in teacher competency development programs at SDIT Al-Furqon and SDIT Atikah Musaddadiyah Al-Wasilah; (2) to identify differences and similarities in the management approaches of both schools in supporting student mental health; and (3) to formulate the most effective management model based on comparative findings to improve teacher competency and student mental health. The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to connect management functions with student psychological outcomes, accompanied by an Islamic cultural and spiritual perspective that has so far received less attention in global literature.

The research findings are expected to contribute on three levels. First, theoretically, this study enriches the study of Islamic education management by providing an integrative model that combines POAC, mental health, and spiritual values. Second, practically, the findings can serve as operational guidelines for Islamic elementary schools (SDIT) in designing teacher development strategies that are responsive to students' psychological needs. Third, policy-wise, this research can serve as the basis for recommendations for the government and Islamic educational institutions to formulate more comprehensive regulations and professional development programs for teachers that are oriented toward psychological well-being. Thus, this research not only addresses academic demands but also has a direct impact on sustainably improving the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a comparative case study design, focusing on two integrated Islamic elementary schools: SDIT Al-Furqon and SDIT Atikah Musaddadiyah Al-Wasilah in Garut Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of phenomena within a natural context (Creswell, 2014). Meanwhile, the comparative case study design allows researchers to compare management strategies at the two research sites to systematically understand their similarities and differences (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). This method also provides space to examine contemporary phenomena occurring within the school environment. The study was conducted in the even semester of the 2024–2025 academic year, involving comprehensive data collection using various techniques. Participants included key stakeholders in the teacher competency development program, including the principal, vice principal for curriculum, senior teachers, and regular teachers directly involved in student mental health improvement initiatives. Students and parents also served as additional informants to provide perspectives on the program's impact on their psychological well-being (Patton et al., 2015).

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques. In-depth interviews were used to explore the perceptions and experiences of school leaders and teachers regarding competency development management and its implementation in improving student mental health (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Direct observation was used to assess the actual practices of planning, implementing, and evaluating teacher competency development programs. Furthermore, document analysis was conducted to examine planning documents such as school strategic plans, training programs, evaluation reports, and teacher competency assessment records (Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis used Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis technique, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). The analysis process began with data reduction, which involved identifying relevant themes and patterns from interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents. Data presentation was carried out by organizing the findings thematically according to management functions—planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling—and their relationship to student mental health. Conclusions were drawn through a process of synthesizing the findings from both schools to identify similarities, differences, and best practices.

Data validity was maintained through triangulation techniques. Source triangulation involved collecting data from various stakeholders (principals, teachers, students, parents) to ensure a comprehensive perspective (Denzin, 2012). Technical triangulation combined interviews, observations, and document analysis to validate findings. Temporal triangulation involved collecting data at different time periods to ensure consistency and capture potential changes in the phenomenon over time (Patton et al., 2015). This study also utilized member checking with key informants to ensure accurate interpretation of data and findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additionally, regular peer debriefing sessions, or discussions within the research team, were conducted to evaluate emerging findings and maintain analytical rigor throughout the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Planning in Developing Teacher Competencies for Student Mental Health

Implementing planning in developing teacher competencies related to student mental health requires a systematic, data-driven, and targeted planning design that aligns with the school's actual needs. In classical management theory, the planning stage is understood as a fundamental function that underpins the entire managerial process (Shi et al., 2022). In the school context, planning not only serves to establish development direction but also creates a pedagogical foundation for enhancing teacher capacity in responding to the increasingly complexities of student mental health. Therefore, the application of planning in teacher competency development must integrate needs assessment, the development of achievement indicators, the selection of training models, and ongoing evaluation. A frequently used model in human resource management practice is the competency approach, as described by Spencer, which emphasizes that capacity planning must be based on key behaviors (underlying characteristics) that can be observed and proven to impact performance (Spencer, 1993). In the educational realm, this competency framework can be applied to map teacher needs related to mental health understanding, basic counseling skills, early detection capabilities, and pedagogical responses to diverse student emotional situations.

Effective teacher development planning is ideally built on accurate and relevant data. Spencer emphasized that competencies should not be assumed but identified through empirical analysis of behavior and performance gaps (Spencer, 1993). In the school context, this requires needs analysis through instruments such as competency assessments, classroom observations, supervision results, and student mental health case reports. This principle aligns with the SMART planning framework, which emphasizes that plans must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (Oluyisola et al., 2022). Using the SMART framework in designing teacher competency development programs allows schools to avoid planning that is too general, normative, or merely administrative formalities, instead focusing on improving teachers' abilities to create a supportive learning environment for students' mental health. In this dimension, Fayol's contributions and modern competency theory complement each other: Fayol provides general principles for planning, while Spencer provides a technical framework for identifying realistic competency needs in school settings.

Identifying teachers' needs related to student mental health is a crucial foundation in the planning stage. Numerous educational studies have shown that teachers are the first actors to detect changes in students' emotions and behavior (Wei et al., 2025). However, this ability is greatly influenced by teachers' understanding of mental health, including early signs of psychological distress, the ability to build empathetic communication, and the ability to manage classroom dynamics in an emotionally safe manner. Research conducted by Reinke shows that teacher development programs based on identifying students' mental health needs have been shown to increase teachers' sensitivity to symptoms of stress, anxiety, and social conflict in the classroom (Reinke et al., 2011). In the context of Indonesian schools, this need is

increasingly relevant given the high incidence of bullying, academic pressure, and social changes experienced by students due to the development of digital technology. By accurately identifying needs, schools can ensure that the training programs they design are not merely formalities but truly target critical aspects that influence students' emotional well-being.

In this study, a comparison of the planning approaches at MI Atikah and MI Al-Furqon reveals two distinct planning models that reflect variations in educational paradigms. At MI Atikah, teacher competency development planning is based on a spiritual-reflective approach. The school views student mental health not only as a psychological issue but also as a moral and spiritual dimension that requires a holistic approach. Therefore, the planning process at Atikah places a strong emphasis on strengthening spiritual values, self-reflection, and character building as the foundation for building the mental readiness of teachers and students. This approach is rooted in the view that mental health is inseparable from inner balance and the strengthening of religious values, as emphasized in Lickona's (1991) theory of moral education, which states that character education and spirituality contribute to children's psychological resilience (Lickona, 1991). In Atikah's model, reflective activities, moral building, and values-based training are the main pillars integrated into teacher competency development planning.

In contrast, MI Al-Furqon implements a more data-driven teacher competency planning model. The planning process begins with the collection of empirical data on student mental health cases, behavioral observations, attendance data, violation records, and reports from guidance and counseling teachers. This model more closely aligns with the evidence-based planning framework widely used in modern educational management practices (Mintzberg, 1994). Data-driven planning enables schools to make more objective and targeted decisions, as teacher training needs are based on real-world issues that arise during the learning process (Schildkamp, 2019). For example, if a trend of increasing academic anxiety is detected, teacher training programs can focus on stress management strategies in the classroom. If data indicates high levels of bullying, schools can design training related to emotional regulation, conflict resolution, or restorative practice approaches. This model provides a more measurable and evidence-based planning direction, preventing subjectivity or inaccurate assumptions in determining teacher development needs.

The differences in approaches between Atikah and Al-Furqon reflect two equally valid orientations in educational management theory, each with its own distinct emphasis. Atikah's spiritual-reflective approach aligns with the value-based education model, which considers strengthening values key to student mental health and teacher emotional competence (Moorthy et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Al-Furqon's data-driven approach aligns with the strategic management paradigm, which emphasizes objectivity, empirical evidence, and efficiency in planning (Rêgo et al., 2022). Both approaches have their respective advantages. Atikah's model fosters moral awareness and empathy in teachers, which are crucial for creating a positive emotional climate in the classroom. Al-Furqon's model, on the other hand, enhances the accuracy of interventions, ensuring that teacher competency needs truly reflect students' real-world conditions. In the global context of modern education, integrating the two can create a more comprehensive planning model, blending spiritual dimensions and empirical data to produce emotionally, morally, and technically competent teachers.

The effectiveness of teacher competency development planning, based on previous research findings, shows that good planning is strongly correlated with improved teacher ability to manage student mental health. Research by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) confirms that teacher professional development designed with systematic and needs-based planning has been shown to improve learning quality, teacher retention, and classroom psychological climate (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In another study, Jennings & Greenberg (2009) showed that teachers who participated in competency-based planning training—especially related to social-emotional skills—experienced improved emotional regulation abilities, which then had a positive impact on student mental health (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). The results of research by Reinke et al. (2011) also confirmed that careful planning in teacher intervention programs can significantly reduce student stress levels and increase social connectedness in schools (Reinke et al., 2011).

The effectiveness of planning in the context of Islamic elementary schools like Atikah and Al-Furqon can also be seen from the alignment between school goals, teacher needs, and student characteristics. Schools with a religious vision like Atikah's will be more effective when their competency development planning aligns with the institution's spiritual mission. Meanwhile, schools that prioritize a professional and data-driven approach like Al-Furqon will be more effective when their planning is supported by robust assessment

instruments and training tailored to empirical findings. Research findings indicate that planning that is not aligned with the school's vision will result in ineffective programs, lack teacher engagement, and fail to build long-term capacity (Fitriati et al., 2024). Conversely, planning that is integrated with the school's vision and based on empirical needs produces significant and sustainable pedagogical impact.

In the context of information globalization and the increasing prevalence of mental health issues among elementary school students, implementing planning for teacher competency development is a strategic necessity that cannot be ignored (Cleary et al., 2022). Teachers are not only educators but also psychosocial actors who play a crucial role in maintaining students' mental health ecosystems. Therefore, teacher competency development planning must continue to move towards a more adaptive, multidimensional, and evidence-based model. The combination of a spiritual-reflective and data-driven approach offers integrative potential that can be tailored to the characteristics of each school. Values-based planning can strengthen teacher character, while data-driven planning can ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of interventions. The integration of these two approaches presents a significant opportunity to improve the quality of student mental health while building more holistic, responsive, and professional teacher capacity to face the challenges of 21st-century learning (Wiedermann et al., 2023).

Program Organization and Its Suitability to Teacher Development Needs

Organizing a teacher competency development program is a crucial step after planning, as it determines the extent to which the plan can be effectively implemented through supportive structures, systems, and work mechanisms. In management theory, organizing is a function aimed at ensuring that all resources—human resources, tasks, and communication channels—are appropriately allocated to achieve organizational goals (Fayol, 1949). In the educational context, organizing involves not only the division of labor and formal structures but also the creation of a collaborative ecosystem that enables teachers to learn, exchange knowledge, and develop competencies related to student mental health. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) theory provides an important foundation that requires the organization of human resources, including teachers, to be carried out strategically and integrated with institutional goals, so that every organizational decision supports increased learning capacity and quality (Belte et al., 2023). Furthermore, the organizational learning perspective emphasizes that organizing should enable schools to become learning organizations capable of creating, storing, and transferring knowledge continuously (Senge, 1990). The combination of SHRM and organizational learning serves as a primary theoretical framework explaining how school structures and systems directly influence the effectiveness of teacher competency development.

Within the SHRM framework, organizing teacher competency development requires alignment between institutional strategy, organizational structure, and human resource policies. SHRM emphasizes that organizations seeking to improve performance—in the school context, the quality of pedagogy and student mental health support—must integrate teacher learning strategies into the organizational system, including supervision, evaluation, and work culture (Georgescu et al., 2024). This means that organizing teacher training programs should not stand alone but must be connected to school decision-making structures such as regular meetings, character development programs, counseling mechanisms, and mental health policies. This aligns with the view that adaptive and participatory organizational structures significantly enhance the effectiveness of teacher development programs (Malik & Shankar, 2025). Therefore, a school's success in organizing programs depends not only on the availability of training but also on how the school system provides structural support that ensures the program can be implemented consistently.

At MI Atikah, the organization of teacher competency development programs is built through a collaborative and participatory structure. This structure is not overly bureaucratic, but rather prioritizes interpersonal communication and collaboration within small teams. This approach aligns with Senge's (1990) concept of a learning organization, where organizations are effective when their members learn together, develop a shared vision, and mutually strengthen individual capacities through healthy interactions (Senge, 1990). MI Atikah emphasizes the formation of teacher discussion groups, joint reflection activities, and spiritual habits as organizational mechanisms that support competency development. This model can be categorized as a soft structure, namely a loose yet strong structure that fosters psychological closeness and a collaborative culture. In the context of student mental health, this collaborative structure is highly relevant because it allows

teachers to share emotional experiences, discuss student cases collectively, and develop teaching strategies that are sensitive to students' mental dynamics (Kelman & Hong, 2016).

Atikah's collaborative structure offers several benefits. First, teachers experience strong social support, which research has shown is a crucial factor in enhancing teacher preparedness to address students' emotional challenges (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Second, relaxed communication allows for early detection of student mental health issues because teachers feel comfortable reporting and discussing them. Third, this structure facilitates reflective learning, a method known to increase teachers' emotional awareness and empathy (Mezirow, 1997). Thus, Atikah's collaborative organization has proven to be well-suited to teachers' development needs in mental health, particularly because this approach fosters emotional connectedness among teachers, which is crucial in responding to complex student situations.

Unlike Atikah, MI Al-Furqon implements a more formal and strategic organizational structure. This formal-strategic structure reflects a management style based on SHRM principles, which prioritize role clarity, task allocation, chain of command, and performance indicators (Wright & Snell, 1998). Organization at Al-Furqon is heavily influenced by a well-organized administrative mechanism, systematic documentation, and training programs aligned with teacher and student needs data. The school has a clear training schedule, standard operating procedures (SOPs) for handling student mental health, and a dedicated team or field coordinator responsible for managing competency development programs. This approach aligns with educational management theory, which emphasizes the need for a strong and standardized organizational structure to ensure consistent program implementation (Sinden et al., 2004). In terms of student mental health, this formal organizational model allows the school to monitor cases more measurably, conduct periodic evaluations, and ensure teacher training is progressing according to plan and meets established quality standards.

Al-Furqon's formal-strategic structure offers advantages, particularly in terms of accountability and consistency in program implementation. With a clear chain of command and documentation, coordination between teachers and leaders becomes more focused, allowing each competency development activity to be evaluated objectively. This is supported by research findings that indicate that a clear formal structure increases the effectiveness of program implementation and strengthens individual accountability for improving performance (Sun & Leithwood, 2012). Furthermore, a formal approach allows schools to integrate empirical data into the organizational process, for example through the analysis of counseling reports or student behavior records. Therefore, Al-Furqon's formal-strategic structure is more suitable for schools that want to ensure that each competency development program is standardized, has clear achievement indicators, and is consistent in its implementation.

The structural differences between Atikah and Al-Furqon theoretically illustrate two approaches to organizing learning organizations: the collaborative-organic approach versus the formal-mechanical approach. In organizational theory, the collaborative approach is more suitable for contexts requiring emotional flexibility, social cohesion, and creativity, while the formal approach is more appropriate for contexts requiring precision, documentation, and measurable evaluation (Mintzberg, 1994). In the context of student mental health, both approaches have their respective relevance. Atikah's collaborative structure provides a space for teachers to share emotional and learning burdens through social support, which research has shown is a protective factor against teacher stress and burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). In contrast, Al-Furqon's formal structure provides procedural clarity that is important for handling cases requiring a clear follow-up process, especially mental health cases requiring systematic intervention.

Organizing professional learning communities is a crucial component in supporting the success of both models. The concept of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) has become a key strategy in teacher competency development because it has been proven to improve teaching quality and the ability to solve complex problems through systematic collaboration (Hairon et al., 2017). In PLCs, teachers work in groups to analyze instructional practices, share strategies, and learn from student data. At MI Atikah, PLCs are realized through deliberation activities, reflection groups, and values forums that are culturally ingrained in the school's customs. These activities serve as informal PLCs, where learning occurs naturally through social and reflective interaction. At Al-Furqon, PLCs are implemented more formally, for example through monthly meetings, collaborative supervision, and data-driven workshops. This formal PLC approach allows the school to ensure that each teacher follows a structured learning cycle: planning, action, reflection, and evaluation.

The establishment of PLCs in both schools directly impacted teacher preparedness in addressing student mental health. Research shows that teachers involved in PLCs exhibit higher levels of sensitivity to students' emotional needs and greater confidence in addressing mental health issues (Donovan et al., 2022). PLCs increase collective teacher efficacy, the collective belief that teachers can make positive changes in student development (Bandura, 1997). Thus, both Atikah's collaborative structure and Al-Furqon's formal structure demonstrate how organizing professional communities is a crucial mechanism for enhancing teacher preparedness.

The organization of the program in both schools demonstrated that the alignment of the structure with the development needs of teachers was a key factor in the successful implementation of the student mental health program. MI Atikah, with its collaborative structure, demonstrated excellence in the aspects of empathy formation, social support, and reflective learning. This approach was effective in building teacher emotional readiness, which is crucial for understanding students' mental health. Conversely, MI Al-Furqon, with its formal-strategic structure, excelled in program fidelity, documentation, and accountability. This approach was more effective in ensuring evidence-based interventions and standardized case management processes (Ganser et al., 2017).

Considering all these findings, it can be concluded that organizing an ideal teacher development program in the context of student mental health cannot rely solely on a single model. Integrating collaborative flexibility with a formal-strategic structure is the most effective option. A collaborative structure maintains the emotional, human, and moral dimensions of the teaching profession, while a formal structure ensures that interventions are planned, documented, and evaluable. In an era of increasing mental health challenges in elementary school students, a balance between these two models is the basis for organizing a relevant, adaptive, and sustainable teacher competency development program (Rahmi, 2024).

Actuating as a Driver of Change in Teacher Competence in Supporting Student Mental Health

The actuating phase in educational management is a crucial phase that connects planning and organizing with tangible outcomes in learning practices and student psychosocial support. In the context of developing teacher competencies to support student mental health, actuating is not only about implementing programs, but also about how school leaders mobilize, motivate, and inspire teachers to internalize the necessary values, skills, and strategies. Theoretically, actuating involves leadership activities, interpersonal communication, motivational development, and teacher empowerment to develop the capacity and commitment to improve the quality of pedagogy and psychological support provided to students (Fayol, 1949). Therefore, this phase is highly dependent on the leadership style and work culture that develops within the school.

In leadership theory, the most relevant model for explaining how school leaders can drive changes in teacher competency is transformational leadership. The three main dimensions of transformational leadership—motivational inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—can be directly linked to teachers' needs in addressing student mental health issues (Khan et al., 2022). First, motivational inspiration provides emotional and moral encouragement to teachers to understand the importance of student mental health as an integral part of the educational process. Second, intellectual stimulation encourages teachers to think critically and creatively in using social-emotional learning techniques and gentle counseling strategies in the classroom (Thuan, 2019). Third, individualized consideration helps teachers feel personally cared for and supported, a crucial factor given that addressing mental health issues is often emotionally taxing for teachers (Zacher et al., 2014). Previous research has shown that transformational leadership contributes significantly to improving teacher well-being, work effectiveness, and establishing a supportive school culture.

The application of transformational leadership becomes highly relevant when linked to contemporary psychological well-being approaches such as the PERMA-W model developed by Seligman (2011). PERMA-W encompasses Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement, and Wellbeing (Seligman, 2011). This model is not only used to improve student well-being, but also the well-being of teachers as the primary agents of learning. In the context of actuating, school leaders need to ensure that all PERMA-W elements are integrated into teacher development activities: providing meaningful learning experiences, building warm interpersonal relationships between teachers, creating a

work environment that encourages full engagement, and helping teachers achieve professional learning achievements. Research shows that teachers with high levels of PERMA well-being are better able to provide social-emotional support to students and have a better level of sensitivity to changes in student behavior (Karakasidou et al., 2025).

In addition to PERMA-W, social-emotional learning (SEL) plays a crucial role in the actuating phase because it provides a practical framework for teachers to teach students emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills. Casel's SEL model emphasizes five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Lawlor, 2016). In the context of actuating, school leaders need to ensure that teachers not only learn SEL concepts but also practice them through daily activities such as class meetings, spiritual reflection, play-based activities, or collaborative learning. The integration of SEL into actuating also aligns with the multi-component intervention approach in education, where mental health support is provided through a combination of curriculum strategies, school activities, and daily habits (Dijkhuis et al., 2018). Therefore, actuating becomes the primary medium for translating psychological well-being and SEL theory into concrete practice.

Another important factor in motivating teachers is intrinsic motivation. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a comprehensive explanation that states that individuals perform best when three basic psychological needs are met: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Jeno et al., 2022). In the school context, leaders need to drive changes in teacher competency by ensuring that teachers have a sense of autonomy in developing social-emotional learning strategies, feel competent through adequate training, and feel socially connected to the school community. Research shows that teachers' intrinsic motivation significantly influences the quality of student mental health support and the effectiveness of classroom learning (Qureshi et al., 2024). SDT emphasizes that teachers should be empowered, not controlled; led, not commanded. Therefore, in the actuating stage, school leaders need to create a work environment that provides space for teachers to experiment, reflect, and develop social-emotional teaching styles that suit the characteristics of their classes.

In integrated Islamic schools like Atikah and Al-Furqon, teachers' intrinsic motivation is inextricably linked to spiritual values and religious practices. Islamic values such as self-reflection (*muhasabah*), *dhikr* (remembrance of God), patience, gratitude, and *ihsan* (forgiveness) serve as psychological strengthening strategies that help teachers maintain emotional calm and clarity of heart when dealing with student challenges. Studies show that religious practices can reduce teacher stress, increase meaning, and strengthen psychological resilience (Sisto et al., 2019). In the context of actuating, school leaders need to integrate religious approaches into teacher development, whether through joint *dhikr* sessions, moral studies, or religious counseling provided by senior teachers or the principal. This integration not only strengthens teachers' spirituality but also provides a moral and emotional foundation for providing mental health support to students. This is especially relevant because many students' mental health symptoms manifest as spiritual anxiety, difficulty regulating emotions, and a need for moral guidance.

A comparison of actuating styles at SDIT Atikah Musaddadiyah Al-Wasilah and SDIT Al-Furqon shows two philosophically different yet equally effective approaches. At Atikah, actuating is carried out through a spiritual-inspirational approach. The principal acts as a *murabbi* and spiritual guide who not only provides professional guidance but also instills the values of sincerity, *tawakkul* (trust), and empathy through various activities such as *halaqah* (religious gatherings), *tausiyah* (religious sermons), and collective reflection. This leadership style maximizes the motivational inspiration aspect of transformational leadership (Bass & Bass Bernard, 1985), where teachers are driven not by structural formalities, but by the power of moral and spiritual example. In this context, teachers feel an inner drive to improve their competence in supporting students' mental health not because of administrative demands, but because of the moral-religious awareness that every child is a trust that must be treated with love and care.

Atikah's spiritual-inspirational approach aligns with the concept of meaning in PERMA-W, where teachers find deep meaning in their profession, leading to psychological resilience and high commitment (Smith et al., 2021). Furthermore, the use of *dhikr* and spiritual reflection in teacher development helps reduce stress and increase emotional clarity, enabling teachers to better provide emotional support to students. This approach also strengthens the relatedness dimension in SDT, as teachers feel part of a mutually supportive spiritual community (Haw et al., 2024). Thus, Atikah's actuating style has proven to be an effective mechanism

for encouraging changes in teacher behavior, increasing empathy, and building teacher sensitivity to students' mental health issues.

Meanwhile, SDIT Al-Furqon demonstrates a more intellectual-analytical approach in carrying out the actuating stage. Leadership at Al-Furqon strongly emphasizes intellectual stimulation and strengthening academic competencies as the main drivers of teacher behavioral change. Professional training is conducted systematically based on student mental health case data, SEL modules, and contemporary academic references. The principal acts as an instructional leader who encourages teachers to solve problems using a scientific approach, data-driven reflection, and academic discussion. This actuating style aligns with findings that intellectualization and systematic reflection increase teacher agency and confidence in handling complex problems (Kennedy, 2016).

Al-Furqon's intellectual-analytical approach strengthens the competence dimension in SDT, where teachers are motivated by their possession of relevant skills and knowledge. This approach also enriches the achievement dimension in PERMA-W, as teachers are given the opportunity to achieve specific competency targets, such as the use of simple psychosocial assessment tools or classroom-based mindfulness techniques (Wilson et al., 1969). Thus, Al-Furqon's actuating style enhances teachers' academic and technical preparedness in addressing student mental health.

These two approaches demonstrate that effective actuation must consider school culture, teacher characteristics, and institutional values. Atikah, with its spiritual-inspirational approach, excels in creating a harmonious emotional and spiritual climate, which is a key factor in enhancing teachers' readiness to provide psychological support. Conversely, Al-Furqon, with its intellectual-analytical approach, excels in ensuring that teachers possess adequate technical skills and are able to use standardized intervention strategies. Theoretically, the integration of these two approaches constitutes a form of balanced actuation, in which emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and technical aspects are simultaneously activated (Gawronski & Lim, 1996).

Ultimately, the success of actuating teacher competency development to support student mental health hinges on the ability of school leaders to be change agents capable of inspiring, supporting, and empowering teachers (Harrison et al., 2021). Transformational leadership, when combined with psychological well-being theory, SEL, SDT, and Islamic values, produces a comprehensive, humane, and effective actuating model for developing competent, empathetic teachers who are prepared to address student mental health challenges. Therefore, the actuating stage is the most vital foundation in ensuring that teacher development programs are not merely planning documents but become real changes in the culture of learning and student well-being.

Controlling: Program Evaluation and Its Impact on Students' Mental Health

The controlling stage in teacher competency development management plays a strategic role in ensuring that all program planning, organization, and implementation efforts actually result in significant changes to the quality of students' mental well-being. In the context of two schools—SDIT Atikah Musaddadiyah Al-Wasilah and SDIT Al-Furqon—the controlling process is not merely interpreted as a routine administrative activity, but as a change management mechanism oriented towards the continuous transformation of teachers' behavior, mindsets, and pedagogical practices. The principles of change management emphasize that change can only be sustainable if it is monitored through systematic evaluation that includes strengthening goals, monitoring behavior, and aligning organizational values with field practices (Rieg et al., 2021). Thus, controlling in both schools is a crucial instrument in maintaining the sustainability of the teacher competency development program while ensuring a direct impact on students' mental health.

Within the framework of change management, change control requires an evaluation system capable of capturing the dynamics of program implementation in real time and assessing its alignment with the organization's vision (Kaur Bagga et al., 2023). SDIT Al-Furqon implements a data-driven control model through structured monitoring instruments, such as teaching evaluation sheets, student behavior tracking records, and periodic student mental health assessments. This approach aligns with the tradition of modern educational management, which emphasizes the importance of evidence-based evaluation as a basis for decision-making (Subbiah, 2023). Data-driven evaluation allows school leaders to objectively measure whether

teacher competency development strategies—particularly training related to mental health literacy, classroom management, and social-emotional learning (SEL)—have been internalized by teachers and translated into learning practices that support student psychological well-being (LaBelle, 2019).

In contrast, SDIT Atikah Musaddadiyah developed a values-based evaluation model that emphasizes the transformation of teachers' morals, spirituality, and emotional sensitivity in guiding students. This approach aligns with the concept of holistic evaluation in Islamic education, which measures not only observable behavioral changes but also changes in the inner dimension of teachers as educators (Al-Attas, 1991). From this school's perspective, the success of teacher competency development programs is measured by improving the quality of teacher-student relationships, sensitivity to children's emotional states, and teachers' ability to integrate Islamic values such as mercy, *ihsan*, *tasamuh*, and *tazkiyah al-nafs* into learning practices (Semchuk et al., 2022). Thus, values-based control reflects the paradigm that students' mental well-being is built not only from technical interventions, but primarily from the quality of teachers' emotional and spiritual presence in the educational process.

This difference in approach is also evident in the evaluation instruments used. SDIT Atikah predominantly uses qualitative methods such as weekly reflections, spiritual coaching, teacher deliberations, and narrative assessments of student emotional dynamics (Allen & Fry, 2023). This practice emphasizes that controlling at the school is a transformative, dialogical process. Meanwhile, Al-Furqon relies on quantitative instruments such as scale-based mental health surveys, behavior checklists, and charts of students' emotional regulation development (Foster et al., 2025). This approach is efficient in mapping problem patterns and assessing the effectiveness of interventions with a high degree of accuracy. Both models have their respective strengths: Atikah excels in contextual sensitivity and depth of assessment, while Al-Furqon excels in analytical precision and consistency of assessment.

From a change management perspective, controlling must ensure that the resulting changes are sustainable and prevent relapse into old patterns—a common risk when teacher training programs lack a robust monitoring system (Kotter, 1996). SDIT Al-Furqon anticipates this risk by establishing SOPs for post-training monitoring and classroom supervision, conducted at least twice per semester. Each supervision not only notes weaknesses but also provides specific technical recommendations that teachers must follow up on within a specified timeframe. This creates a pattern of continuous improvement as recommended in quality management theory (Deming, 1986). At SDIT Atikah, relapse prevention mechanisms are implemented through regular counseling for teachers, joint self-reflection sessions, and peer mentoring. This strengthens moral and spiritual aspects, making teachers more stable in managing stress and more consistent in mentoring students with high empathy.

Program evaluations at both schools also integrated Islamic values as a crucial component of control. Within the framework of Islamic education, evaluations aim not only to assess technical success but also to ensure that the educational process is conducted within the framework of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (good character) and the formation of *akhlak al-karimah* (good character) (Nimasari et al., 2025). SDIT Atikah included Islamic indicators such as the quality of *adab* (good manners), patience, teachers' ability to accompany children spiritually, and sensitivity to students' psychological conditions as part of its evaluation instruments. SDIT Al-Furqon integrated Islamic values more structurally, for example, through assessing the implementation of prayer-based mindfulness, the implementation of classroom spiritual routines, and teachers' consistency in using religious approaches when dealing with students experiencing anxiety or stress (Galenka et al., 2024). The integration of Islamic values enriches modern evaluation models, which are generally secular, with the spiritual dimension that is the distinctive identity of Islamic schools.

Substantially, the control in both schools had a real impact on improving students' mental health. Field data showed an increase in students' emotional regulation skills after teachers participated in training and regular supervision. This is in line with the findings of Durlak et al. (2011) that improved social-emotional competencies in teachers correlated with improvements in students' emotional regulation, empathy, and prosocial behavior (Durlak et al., 2011). At SDIT Al-Furqon, this improvement was evident in a decrease in the number of minor disciplinary violations, an increase in students' ability to express their emotions appropriately, and an increase in mental resilience when facing academic pressure. Data-driven evaluation allows schools to map these developments measurably and develop additional interventions if needed.

On the other hand, SDIT Atikah reported significant improvements in aspects of students' emotional well-being, such as a sense of security, learning comfort, and attachment to teachers. This finding is consistent

with research by Jennings & Greenberg (2009), which emphasized that teachers with stable emotional and spiritual competencies are able to create prosocial classrooms conducive to children's psychological development (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). The school's value-based evaluation model revealed that improvements in students' mental well-being are not always reflected in numerical data, but are evident in everyday behaviors such as increased openness to teachers, decreased levels of social anxiety, and improved friendships.

Controlling also contributes to increased student academic engagement. At SDIT Al-Furqon, students demonstrated increased concentration, learning motivation, and persistence in completing assignments. This aligns with Seligman's (2011) research within the PERMA-W framework, which demonstrated a strong relationship between positive mental states and academic engagement and learning performance (Seligman, 2011). At SDIT Atikah, academic engagement increased through a spiritual-reflective learning approach that fosters a sense of meaning and purpose in students, an approach Noddings (2013) found highly effective in increasing intrinsic engagement (Noddings, 2013).

Furthermore, effective control has been shown to reduce student anxiety levels, particularly anxiety related to academic performance and social pressure. At Al-Furqon, this decrease was identified through semester-long anxiety scale assessments. Meanwhile, at Atikah, anxiety reduction was evident in behavioral changes such as reduced psychosomatic complaints and increased student participation in class activities. These results align with research by Weare (2015), which confirmed that school-based multi-component interventions involving trained teachers have a significant impact on student mental health (Carpenter et al., 2015).

Ultimately, controlling in teacher competency development is not merely an administrative activity, but a strategic process that ensures that all changes attempted by the school truly produce substantive and sustainable impacts (Bürgeener & Barth, 2018). Both schools demonstrate that different controlling models—data-driven and value-driven—can be equally effective when tailored to organizational culture and student needs. The Al-Furqon approach resulted in highly accurate problem identification and rapid intervention, while the Atikah approach resulted in a profound depth of emotional connection and a profound psychological calm for students. Thus, controlling becomes a key pillar in ensuring that teacher competency development truly contributes to the creation of a mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and academically healthy educational environment (Collie & Perry, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the POAC management functions in the context of developing teacher competencies to support student mental health cannot be understood simply as a series of technical procedures, but rather as a multidimensional process that touches on the structural, cultural, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the integrated Islamic education ecosystem. The research question—how different management models impact teacher competency and student mental health—is answered through an in-depth comparison of two practical paradigms: the spiritual-reflective approach at SDIT Atikah Musaddadiyah Al-Wasilah and the data-driven approach at SDIT Al-Furqon. The main findings indicate that student mental health is not only the product of structured psychosocial interventions, but also arises from the moral character, emotional stability, and spiritual presence of teachers, which are formed through a comprehensive managerial process. Atikah's planning, which is based on Islamic values, produces teachers with heart sensitivity; while Al-Furqon, with its data-driven planning, produces teachers with pedagogical precision. These two pathways, when analyzed integratively, show that the effectiveness of teacher competency development programs depends on the institution's ability to synergize moral orientation and evidential orientation within a holistic management framework.

The theoretical implications of this research are significant. It expands the discourse on Islamic educational management through the formulation of a hybrid POAC model, which operates not only in the organizational and administrative realms but also touches on the epistemic and spiritual realms of education. This model corrects the reductionism of the Western paradigm that separates mental health from religious values, while also addressing the shortcomings of local literature that often places spirituality without strong scientific methodological support. This research demonstrates that student mental health in integrated Islamic schools requires a management approach that integrates evidence-based decision-making and value-based

formation, thereby enriching educational management theory through the integration of soft power (spiritual, emotional, moral) and hard power (data, structure, evaluation).

On a practical level, this research provides a new blueprint for integrated Islamic schools in designing teacher competency development. It emphasizes that teachers are not simply trained through repetitive technical workshops; they require a professional learning environment that combines spiritual reflection, rigorous academic supervision, psychosocial coaching, and ongoing evaluation of daily practices. The Atikah approach, which fosters internalization of values and emotional connection, contributes significantly to creating a psychologically safe classroom climate. Meanwhile, the Al-Furqon approach provides an accountability mechanism that enables measurable changes in students' emotional and behavioral regulation. Both approaches demonstrate that student mental health can only be achieved through teachers who are emotionally stable, pedagogically competent, and spiritually mature—conditions impossible to achieve without systematic management support.

This study also acknowledges its limitations. First, the study involved only two schools with relatively homogeneous cultural and religiosity bases, so generalization of the findings requires caution, especially when applied to non-Islamic schools or Islamic schools with different curriculum orientations. Second, this study utilized qualitative data that were rich in narratives, but still requires supporting longitudinal and quantitative data to test and validate the causal impact of the intervention on students' mental health. Third, mental health measurement still relies on non-clinical assessments, so improvements to the psychometric instruments are highly recommended in further research.

Based on this, further studies need to be directed at three main agendas. First, longitudinal mixed-method research assessing changes in students' mental well-being over a long period of time to validate the effectiveness of the hybrid management model. Second, comparative research across regions and across Islamic institutional models to test whether the integration of spirituality and evidence-based management is universal or contextual. Third, the development of a standardized Islamic values-based mental health assessment instrument capable of measuring psychological aspects not accommodated in Western instruments. Thus, this research paves a new foundation for developing a theory of Islamic educational management that is more grounded, relevant, and responsive to the psychosocial challenges of the 21st century.

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