

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TEACHERS' TEACHING SKILLS AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES AT MTS DARUL AMAN TEGAL SELAGALAS

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Abstract

Teaching skills constitute a critical determinant of instructional effectiveness, encompassing a teacher's ability to guide learners through organized and interactive learning processes. These skills include the capacity to open and close lessons effectively, explain concepts clearly, pose stimulating questions, provide reinforcement, manage classroom dynamics, and apply varied teaching methods suited to learners' needs. This study aimed to examine the relationship between teachers' teaching skills and students' academic achievement in Social Studies among Grade VIII students at MTs Darul Aman Tegal Selagalas, as well as to identify instructional strategies that effectively enhance students' learning outcomes.

A mixed-methods approach employing the concurrent embedded model was used, involving 173 students as respondents. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed quantitatively using simple linear regression and qualitatively through thematic analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.60$) between teachers' teaching skills and students' academic achievement, indicating that 60% of the variance in learning outcomes could be explained by teaching skills. The study further identified that classroom management and variation in instructional strategies were among the least mastered competencies, affecting students' engagement and comprehension.

The study concludes that teachers' pedagogical skills play a decisive role in shaping students' learning performance in Social Studies. It recommends continuous professional development through workshops and subject-based teacher associations (MGMP) to strengthen instructional competence. Enhancing these teaching skills is expected to foster an engaging and effective learning environment, ultimately improving academic achievement and the overall quality of education.

Keywords: Teaching Skills, Social Studies Teachers, Learning Achievement, Instructional Strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a fundamental necessity (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2003; Neolaka & Neolaka, 2017) and the cornerstone of national development, as it equips individuals with knowledge, skills, and values essential for intellectual and moral growth. According to the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, education aims to develop students into

individuals who are faithful to God Almighty, morally upright, healthy, knowledgeable, competent, and responsible citizens. In this context, teachers act as the central agents (Djamarah, 2010; Sanjaya, 2016) in realizing educational objectives, serving not only as facilitators of knowledge but also as motivators and mentors who foster critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning. A teacher's effectiveness in managing learning activities significantly determines the success

of the educational process, emphasizing the necessity of mastering essential teaching skills to enhance learning quality and student engagement.

In the Indonesian educational landscape (Abdul Karim, 2015; Abduloh et al., 2019), the effectiveness of learning, particularly in Social Studies (Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial—IPS), remains a crucial concern. Social Studies education plays an integral role in cultivating social awareness, analytical thinking, and civic responsibility by integrating disciplines such as history, geography, economics, and sociology. However, learning outcomes in this field often remain suboptimal, attributed to teachers' limited ability to apply varied pedagogical methods and manage classroom dynamics effectively. Empirical studies have shown (Iswidia, 2020; Armansiah & Hasfinda, 2021; Parni, 2020) that teachers who possess strong pedagogical and instructional management competencies tend to achieve better student learning outcomes. Conversely, traditional lecture-dominated teaching methods reduce student participation and hinder their ability to connect classroom concepts with real-life contexts. Hence, the mastery of teaching skills—including lesson initiation and closure, effective explanation, questioning, reinforcement, class management, and variation techniques—becomes vital for ensuring an engaging and productive learning process.

Recent educational research highlights that the quality of a teacher's teaching skills correlates positively with students' academic performance. Studies such as those by Iswidia (2020), Armansiah and Hasfinda (2021), and Parni (2020) have consistently demonstrated that effective teaching competencies contribute significantly to learning achievement across various educational levels. Despite this, challenges persist in implementing these competencies within Indonesian classrooms, especially in Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs, where learning strategies are often constrained by conventional practices. Given these realities, investigating the relationship between teachers' teaching skills and students' achievement in Social

Studies at MTs Darul Aman Tegal Selagalas is imperative. Such inquiry not only provides empirical evidence of this pedagogical linkage but also contributes to the broader discourse on improving the quality of education through teacher professional development.

The central problem addressed in this study (Wicaksono et al., 2021; Rahmat, 2019) concerns the insufficient mastery and application of essential teaching skills among Social Studies teachers, which consequently affects students' academic achievement and engagement in the learning process. Preliminary observations at MTs Darul Aman Tegal Selagalas revealed that teaching practices were predominantly lecture-based, with limited use of interactive and student-centered approaches such as discussions, simulations, and contextual learning. This condition resulted in students exhibiting low levels of attention, motivation, and comprehension, particularly in Social Studies subjects that require critical analysis and social interpretation. Furthermore, teachers were found to encounter difficulties in managing classroom dynamics and fostering productive group discussions, indicating gaps in pedagogical competence and classroom control.

To address this issue, a systematic effort to enhance teachers (Sukma & Pandjaitan, 2019; Sara, 2017) teaching skills is required through the implementation of effective pedagogical training and professional development programs. Such programs should emphasize the eight core teaching competencies—opening and closing lessons, explaining, questioning, reinforcing, varying instruction, guiding discussions, individual and group teaching, and classroom management. The integration of these skills is expected to create an engaging, interactive, and student-centered learning environment that supports academic achievement. Strengthening teachers' pedagogical competence through workshops, peer collaboration, and professional forums such as the Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP) can provide sustainable improvements in instructional practices, ultimately enhancing the quality of Social

Studies education and students' learning performance.

The primary objective of this research (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017) is to analyze the relationship between teachers' teaching skills and students' academic achievement in Social Studies among Grade VIII students at MTs Darul Aman Tegal Selagalas during the 2024/2025 academic year. Specifically, the study aims to: (1) determine the extent to which teachers' teaching competencies influence students' learning outcomes; and (2) identify effective teaching strategies that contribute to improved academic performance in Social Studies. By examining this relationship, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence on the pedagogical factors that shape student achievement within Islamic junior secondary education.

The novelty of this research (Abduloh et al., 2019; Parni, 2020) lies in its integrated use of a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative and qualitative analyses to comprehensively assess the pedagogical dimensions influencing learning achievement. While previous studies have investigated the impact of teaching skills on student performance, most were limited to single-variable quantitative models and conducted at primary or general secondary education levels. This study, however, focuses on the context of madrasah education, where teaching practices are shaped by religious, cultural, and institutional dynamics. The findings offer new insights into how pedagogical competencies, particularly classroom management and instructional variation, affect students' engagement and achievement in Social Studies.

The scope of this study encompasses Social Studies instruction in Grade VIII at MTs Darul Aman Tegal Selagalas, focusing on cognitive aspects of learning achievement measured through students' semester examination scores. The research emphasizes the eight fundamental components of teaching skills as defined by pedagogical theory and educational standards in Indonesia. This scope ensures that the analysis remains relevant to the development of professional teaching competencies and

contributes to policy and practice aimed at improving instructional quality in Islamic secondary education.

2. METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods approach with a concurrent embedded model, in which the quantitative method serves as the primary approach and the qualitative method functions as a complementary component. This design was selected to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between teachers' teaching skills and students' academic achievement.

The research is quantitative correlational in nature, supplemented by qualitative data. Its purpose is to analyze the relationship between Social Studies (IPS) teachers' teaching skills and the academic achievement of eighth-grade students.

The study population consisted of 173 eighth-grade students at MTs Darul Aman Tegal Selagalas. The sample was determined using a saturated sampling technique, resulting in the inclusion of the entire population as the sample.

The variables used in this study include:

- Variable X (Teachers' Teaching Skills): measured through student questionnaires and interviews.
- Variable Y (Students' Academic Achievement): measured using students' Final Semester Examination (UAS) scores in Social Studies.

The research instruments consisted of a Likert-scale questionnaire designed to measure teachers' teaching skills (including lesson initiation, material explanation, questioning, reinforcement, variation, discussions, small-group activities, and classroom management). Additional instruments included interviews with teachers, the principal, the vice principal for curriculum, and students, as well as documentation of students' UAS scores and other supporting documents.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to 63 eighth-grade students at MTs Darul Aman. The

questionnaire consisted of 23 statements describing eight indicators of teachers' basic teaching skills: (1) opening and closing lessons, (2) explaining material, (3) asking questions, (4) providing reinforcement, (5) implementing learning variations, (6) guiding group discussions, (7) teaching small groups and individuals, and (8) classroom management. Meanwhile, students' academic achievement was measured using the final semester examination scores for Social Studies (IPS). The tabulated data show that the highest student score was 94 and the lowest was 60, with 74.6% categorized as having "good" achievement (scores > 75) and 25.4% categorized as "poor" (scores < 75).

Quantitative analysis revealed that teachers' teaching skills had a positive and significant relationship with students' academic achievement. This finding is evidenced by the results of a simple linear regression test, which produced a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, leading to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a) and rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0). The coefficient of determination (R^2) showed an Adjusted R Square value of 0.600, indicating that 60% of the variance in academic achievement could be explained by teachers' teaching skills, while the remaining 40% was influenced by other factors such as learning motivation, learning environment, parental support, and learning facilities. An R^2 value of 0.600 falls into the strong relationship category, demonstrating that teachers' roles in Social Studies learning greatly contribute to students' academic success.

Cross-tabulation analysis between indicators of teaching skills and academic achievement showed that most indicators correlated positively with improved learning outcomes. However, two aspects—guiding group discussions and classroom management—remained at lower levels compared to other indicators. This indicates that teachers have not yet fully succeeded in creating active discussion interactions or optimally managing classroom dynamics.

Qualitative findings were obtained from interviews with the eighth-grade Social Studies teacher, the principal, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, and ten

students from five different classes. The teacher acknowledged that some basic teaching skills were not applied consistently in every session. Lecturing still dominated the teaching method, while varied methods such as group discussions, simulations, and case studies were rarely used. Consequently, students often felt bored and less motivated, affecting their concentration and understanding of Social Studies material.

The interviewed teacher mentioned that limited instructional media and insufficient pedagogical training were major reasons why teaching methods remained conventional. The principal added that although teachers attended workshops and MGMP (Subject Teacher Forum) activities twice a year, these programs were not always effective because they did not consistently focus on improving practical teaching skills.

From the students' perspectives, interview results indicated a stronger interest in interactive learning involving discussions or simulations compared to single-method lectures. Students also reported that when teachers used varied media such as images, videos, or educational games, they found it easier to understand social concepts. Some students stated that teachers did not frequently provide reinforcement such as praise or constructive feedback, even though such reinforcement significantly influences learning motivation.

These findings reinforce pedagogical theories emphasizing the importance of teaching skills as determining factors in learning success. Djamarah (2010) asserts that teachers' teaching skills include the ability to manage learning activities effectively, efficiently, and meaningfully. In the context of MTs Darul Aman, the strong correlation between teacher skills and student achievement indicates that the better teachers master the eight basic teaching skills, the higher the students' academic outcomes will be.

The finding that guiding group discussions and classroom management are weak points aligns with Parni (2020), who reported that madrasah teachers often face difficulties in maintaining student engagement during discussions and managing dynamic class interactions. This

weakness may stem from the dominance of lecture-based methods and the lack of experience in implementing student-centered learning approaches.

Additionally, the skills of explaining material, posing questions, and incorporating learning variations also require particular attention. Structured explanations, thought-provoking questions, and varied methods such as simulations and case studies have been shown to improve students' comprehension of Social Studies content. Conversely, monotonous explanations and minimal interaction lead to passivity and lower academic achievement. These findings align with studies by Galuh Titian Sukma and Lena Nessyana Pandjaitan, which highlight that varied teaching methods and two-way communication between teachers and students are crucial to successful Social Studies learning.

The results also illustrate the important role of teacher training. Workshops and MGMP activities have substantial potential to improve pedagogical competence, but require evaluation and adjustment to ensure they are more applicable and relevant to teachers' actual needs. Principals and madrasah supervisors are encouraged to ensure that training programs are not merely administrative but truly enhance teachers' abilities in explaining, questioning, managing classrooms, and guiding discussions.

It is also important to note that 40% of the variance in students' academic achievement is explained by non-pedagogical factors such as intrinsic motivation, family environment, and learning facilities. This means that improving learning quality requires not only teacher competence but also systemic support from schools and the broader social environment. Schools can support learning by providing adequate facilities such as digital media, teaching aids, and comfortable learning spaces to enhance interactive learning.

a. Teacher Strategies for Improving Academic Achievement

Based on the findings, several concrete strategies are proposed to improve teachers' teaching skills and students'

academic achievement. First, teachers should increase the use of active learning methods such as group discussions, simulations, problem-based learning, and cooperative learning. These strategies help students develop critical thinking skills and understand social concepts contextually.

Second, teachers are encouraged to use varied instructional media, both digital and conventional, to prevent student boredom. For example, in history or economics lessons, teachers can use documentary videos, interactive maps, or real-life case studies relevant to students' daily experiences.

Third, teachers need to improve reflective and exploratory questioning skills to encourage active student participation in discussions. Open-ended questions that stimulate analysis and argumentation enhance students' engagement and understanding.

Fourth, consistent positive reinforcement in the form of praise, rewards, or constructive feedback is necessary to build students' learning motivation. This is crucial because intrinsic motivation is one of the most significant factors influencing academic outcomes.

Fifth, schools and educational supervisors are expected to conduct regular evaluations of teacher training effectiveness. Activities such as lesson study, classroom supervision, and peer teaching reflections can serve as forums for continuous professional development.

b. Implications and Significance

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the results reinforce the constructivist paradigm in education, which positions teachers not merely as transmitters of knowledge but as facilitators who create active and meaningful learning conditions. Practically, this study provides a foundation for schools to design teacher competency improvement policies based on real needs in the field.

The strong relationship between teachers' teaching skills and student achievement (60%) indicates that

investment in teacher professionalism significantly impacts educational quality. Improvement in teaching skills not only influences cognitive outcomes but also affects affective aspects such as motivation, discipline, and learning responsibility.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the development of teacher training curricula in madrasah settings by emphasizing the need for mastery of the eight basic teaching skills. Prioritizing group discussion facilitation and classroom management is essential to achieving more participatory and contextual Social Studies learning.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that teachers (Iswidia, 2020; Wicaksono et al., 2021)' teaching skills exert a significant and positive influence on students' academic achievement in Social Studies at MTs Darul Aman Tegal Selagalas during the 2024/2025 academic year. The findings indicate that 60% of the variation in student learning outcomes can be attributed to the effectiveness of teachers' pedagogical practices, particularly in the areas of classroom management, variation in teaching methods, and the ability to stimulate student participation. These results affirm that the mastery of essential teaching skills—such as opening and closing lessons, explaining clearly, questioning effectively, providing reinforcement, and guiding discussions—constitutes a critical foundation for fostering meaningful and engaging learning experiences.

The study's implications emphasize (Sanjaya, 2016; Rahmat, 2019) the necessity of continuous professional development for teachers through structured programs such as workshops, pedagogical training, and subject-based teacher forums (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran or MGMP). Strengthening teachers' competencies in instructional design and classroom dynamics not only enhances student performance but also contributes to the overall improvement of instructional quality in madrasah education. Furthermore, the integration of varied, student-centered, and contextual

learning approaches should be prioritized to promote deeper understanding and critical thinking among students.

Future research should extend (Neolaka & Neolaka, 2017) this investigation by incorporating broader variables such as learning motivation, school environment, and parental involvement to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing student achievement. Despite its limitations to one institution and a single subject, this study provides valuable empirical evidence supporting the pivotal role of teaching skills in improving learning outcomes. The findings contribute to the growing discourse on teacher professionalism and serve as a practical reference for policymakers and educators seeking to elevate the quality of Social Studies instruction in Islamic secondary schools.

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