

THE DEVELOPMENT OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICES FOR ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Continuous professional development for teachers is crucial in order to enhance their competence and professionalism. It is equally important for student teacher candidates to engage in field practice activities that promote self-reflection. The main objective of this research is to investigate how self-reflection among prospective Islamic Religious Education teachers contributes to the development of their professionalism. The study involved six participants from two universities, namely Unisba (Universitas Islam Bandung) and UPI (Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia). Qualitative methods were employed, utilizing case studies based on Stake's approach. The data collection process involved interviews, observations, and documentation techniques. The analysis was conducted through several stages, including data reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results reveal that reflective practice enhances pedagogical competence by implementing high-quality, innovative, and creative teaching methods, particularly within the classroom setting. These findings have practical implications for the field practice of Islamic Religious Education teachers in schools. They serve as a valuable resource for teachers to develop new strategies in addressing challenges within the teaching and learning process, ultimately contributing to their professional growth and establishing cultural references.

Keywords: Development, Practicum, Reflective Practice, Student Teacher Candidate

ABSTRAK

Pengembangan profesionalisme guru yang berkelanjutan sangat penting. Penting bagi calon guru mahasiswa untuk terlibat dalam kegiatan praktik lapangan yang mendorong refleksi diri guna meningkatkan kompetensi dan profesionalisme mereka sebagai guru. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimana refleksi diri di kalangan calon guru Pendidikan Agama Islam berkontribusi pada pengembangan profesionalisme guru. Penelitian ini melibatkan enam peserta dari dua universitas: Unisba (Universitas Islam Bandung) dan UPI (Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia). Metode kualitatif digunakan dengan menggunakan studi kasus berdasarkan pendekatan Stake. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan teknik dokumentasi. Analisis dilakukan melalui beberapa tahap: pengurangan data, presentasi, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan yang menonjol dari praktik refleksi ini adalah peningkatan kompetensi pedagogis melalui implementasi metode pembelajaran berkualitas, inovatif, dan kreatif, terutama di dalam kelas. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada praktik lapangan profesionalisme guru Pendidikan Agama Islam di sekolah, menjadi sumber daya berharga bagi para guru untuk mengembangkan strategi baru dalam mengatasi tantangan dalam proses belajar mengajar, sehingga membentuk referensi budaya untuk pertumbuhan profesional.

Kata Kunci: Praktikum, Praktik Reflektif, Pengembangan, Calon Guru Siswa

INTRODUCTION

It is not uncommon to come across teachers in schools who struggle with effective teaching, primarily due to a lack of pedagogical competence. Interestingly, pedagogical competence is one of the four essential competencies mandated for teachers, as specified in relevant ministerial regulations. When a teacher possesses low pedagogical competence, it adversely affects the quality of learning and subsequently impacts the overall quality of school graduates. Research conducted by Cavanagh and Prescottb emphasizes the importance of participation in university studies and practical experiences in schools. In both contexts, novice teachers are encouraged to critically examine their classroom practices through continuous and focused reflection. This reflective process is dynamic and constantly evolving as teachers encounter various classroom observations and experiences, often leading to the emergence of new challenges. Consequently, reflective practice is widely recognized as a hallmark of high-quality teaching. However, becoming a reflective practitioner can be challenging, especially when confronted with the assumption that good teaching solely originates from university training, thereby diminishing the significance of practical experience in real classrooms (Cavanagh & Prescottb, 2010; Aprilia, 2016).

Teachers can enhance their professional roles and responsibilities through the practice of reflection. According to Bowman (1989), self-reflection is a crucial component of professionalism. This viewpoint aligns with Loughran's (2005) perspective, which emphasizes the significance of reflecting on professional practices, particularly in the context of learning and teaching. Such reflection plays a pivotal role in fostering innovation and bringing about a transformative learning experience within the classroom. Presently, teacher self-reflection is widely recognized as a fundamental concept in the field of teacher education, particularly in the context of ongoing professional development. Lecturers from universities and professional teachers from schools where students engage in practicum can benefit from self-reflection. It enables them to develop a deeper understanding of pedagogical competence, including self-identity as a teacher, the teaching profession, and effective strategies for facilitating successful student learning in a manner that is efficient and impactful.

The significance of teachers engaging in reflection to enhance their pedagogical competence is evident. Moreover, pedagogical competence is one of the four mandatory competencies outlined in relevant ministerial regulations for teachers. When teachers possess inadequate pedagogic competence, it negatively impacts the quality of learning and ultimately affects the caliber of school graduates. The research conducted by Cavanagh and Prescottb highlights the importance of participation in university studies and practical experiences in schools. In both settings, novice teachers must critically assess their classroom practices through ongoing and focused reflection. This reflective process evolves dynamically in response to classroom supervision and experience, often revealing new challenges. Therefore, reflective practice is widely regarded as a hallmark of effective teaching. However, becoming a reflective practitioner can be complex, especially when confronted with the assumption that effective teaching solely stems from university education, thereby devaluing the significance of practical experience in practicum classes (Cavanagh & Prescottb, 2010; Aprilia, 2016). Consequently, there remains a challenge in reconciling these contrasting perspectives.

Universities that produce future teachers must cultivate the four essential competencies, with a particular emphasis on developing students' pedagogical competence. These competencies include personal, social, and professional aspects, all of which are integrated into the teacher education curriculum. However, the ultimate success of these efforts depends on various factors. According to Cavanagh & Prescottb (2010), one crucial factor is ensuring the seamless integration of theory and professional practice across the three domains of teacher education programs: independent acquisition of educational content, professional knowledge,

and pedagogical skills. To achieve the desired outcomes in teacher education, colleges actively involve their students in teaching practice programs. These programs serve as a practical vehicle to showcase how the learning process unfolds. They provide tangible experiences by incorporating elements such as schools, classrooms, teachers, students, facilities, infrastructure, and interactive learning involving diverse media, sources, and methods. During these teaching practice experiences, numerous theories and concepts are put into action. Many practices reinforce existing theories, while some innovative practices may not yet have a theoretical basis.

This research brings forth several novel aspects that differentiate it from previous studies. Firstly, while previous research conducted by Suintiah (2021) focused on high school students and their history lessons, the current study explores reflective thinking among prospective teacher students. Secondly, Aprilia's study (2016) solely concentrated on the Learning Strategy Courses within biology lessons, whereas this research expands its scope beyond that specific context. Moreover, Fosso-Kankeu's research (2019) primarily emphasized the evaluation of suitable strategies for reflective practice in large classes, whereas this study approaches the topic from a different perspective. Lastly, Tsang's study (2011) examined In-class Reflective Group Discussion as a strategy for professional development, whereas the present research specifically centers on prospective teacher students who are preparing to become teachers in the future. Furthermore, this study places particular emphasis on two Islamic education study programs at two universities with distinct backgrounds.

During the practicum period, teacher students fully immerse themselves in the real classroom environment, actively engaging their senses and experiences with all the elements of the learning process. This leads to significant questions: What is the impact of practicum on both teachers and students? Which specific learning experiences have the greatest influence on their development? Ultimately, does practicum effectively enhance the pedagogical competence of teacher students? The objective of this research is to establish a connection between the mandatory practicum curriculum in schools and the progressive development of teacher students' attitudes, insights, and skills, which are crucial components of their pedagogical competencies as aspiring teachers.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research approach with a case study design based on Stake's (1978) framework. The data collection process involved observation, interviews, and documentation during the internship period which is aimed to explore the students' character, self-reflection, and their interactions with their professional teacher. These factors have an impact on the students' professional growth and the development of their self-reflection skills. The collected data were then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman methods, including data reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. The participants were selected purposively from two universities in Bandung: Unisba and UPI. Specifically, the research focused on teaching students' reflections on their pedagogical knowledge within the schools where they conducted their practicum. Several interviews were conducted with teacher students to uncover the essence of their self-reflection and its connection to their practicum activities and the student-professional teacher relationship. The methodology employed in this research encompasses a three-stage hierarchy of reflective practice, which aids in interpreting the findings derived from the aforementioned interviews.

Practical Design

A case does not pertain to an individual or organization in isolation. Case studies provide opportunities for theory development, although Stake emphasizes their potential in facilitating a deeper understanding of human experiences. To achieve this understanding and foster theory building, researchers must consider specific and defined cases, which can involve a group of

individuals, such as university leaders, while maintaining clear boundaries (Stake, 1978). Collectively, these cases are referred to as instrumental cases, which are studied as distinct cases observed concurrently, in parallel, or sequentially. An instrumental case offers insights into a problem or helps refine a theory. Given this, various design approaches are viable. One approach involves treating two universities as separate cases, each comprising two student practitioners, one lecturer, and one professional teacher from the respective high schools or schools where the teaching practice takes place. One of the universities is selected as the primary focus of the research, while the other serves as the comparison group. Additionally, data is collected from the leaders of both universities and the two high schools where the teaching practice occurs.

Data Collection and Analysis

The first author conducted the final interview session in May of the second year when the students completed their studies, while the second author conducted interviews during the second year. Semi-structured discussions lasting approximately 30 minutes were held with each prospective PAI (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/Islamic religious education) teacher in January, May, and October of the 2021 academic year. The interviews focused on a specific topic: the growth of each teacher candidate's reflective practice in the context of PAI, their interaction with their tutors, the practical application of PAI Education theory, and the theoretical application of Islamic education in the field. By exploring the participants' perspectives on the theoretical aspects of Islamic education, we gained insight into their development in terms of providing effective learning experiences.

During the initial phase of the interview, participants were tasked with reflecting on their experiences during lectures, identifying their favourite lecturers, discussing their motivations for teaching PAI, and sharing any challenging experiences they encountered during their practicum. In the second and third interviews, prospective PAI teachers provided a comprehensive overview of themselves, their PAI lectures, supervisors, and engaged in impromptu discussions on specific topics related to their coursework. In the final stage of the interview, they were prompted to evaluate their practical experiences from the perspective of an early-year lecturer. Throughout all the interviews, we carefully selected questions that allowed participants to delve into their teaching practices, the school context in which they practiced, and the role of their tutors. The aim was for them to uncover and reflect upon their own development of reflective thinking skills. In the subsequent phase, the second author made copies of all the recordings, assigning pseudonyms to each participant. We created a preliminary list of codes based on the research site, which we used for the initial analysis of each interview (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Throughout the entire research process, ethical clearance was obtained, and in-depth interviews were conducted for data collection purposes. These interviews were recorded and transcribed. The participants were presented with a range of questions relevant to the larger research program's focal points. In relation to this article, specific inquiries were made regarding the reflective practices of prospective PAI teacher students. The interviews and focus groups were semi-structured, resulting in slight variations in the questions asked. Considering the belief that teachers need to make significant changes to their practices and perspectives on educational goals in the context of twenty-first century learning, participants were prompted to propose qualities of reflective teachers and to describe the relationship they perceived between reflective practice and the imperative to embrace twenty-first century learning (Setiawan, 2016).

Four prospective PAI teacher students from two universities in Bandung were selected as participants for this study. These students actively engaged in the research process and were individually interviewed at various stages, including before, during, and after their practicum

experience (Cavanagh & Prescott, 2007). Among these four students, who were employed as full-time teachers in Bandung city, agreed to participate in an additional interview session during their first two years after graduating from college. To ensure confidentiality, the students' real names were replaced with initials or abbreviations. These particular individuals were chosen because they exemplify crucial aspects of how we believe novice teachers develop their reflective practice within the practical work setting. The findings of the present study are grouped into three themes and they will be described in this section.

Reflective Experience of Prospective Student Teachers

Amir, a pseudonym, is a twenty-six-year-old non-permanent teacher of PAI at a government-owned vocational school in Bandung. During an interview conducted on February 6, 2022, Amir was described as a reserved individual who places great emphasis on the affective aspect of teaching. Amir's decision to choose this particular school was influenced by personal desire as well as guidance and advice from their thesis advisor. Coincidentally, Amir was assigned to this school for their teaching practicum while collecting research data. Amir considered this experience valuable as it provided an opportunity to learn teaching practices in a high-achieving school setting. They emphasized the importance of self-discipline and professionalism in the school's teaching practicum strategy, highlighting the need to diligently follow agreed-upon agendas and execute lesson plans effectively.

Amir also shared his experience of being part of the school community during the practicum. He expressed both joy and sadness in being involved with friendly and welcoming high school students. However, due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation, closer interactions with the students were limited. Amir consistently sought guidance and advice from the lecturer and professional teacher, particularly in areas such as lesson planning, teaching methods, and the preparation of teaching materials. According to Amir, both the supervising lecturer and the professional teacher from the school were exceptional mentors who provided positive feedback and constructive criticism when necessary.

When asked about evaluations or exams conducted during the teaching practicum, Amir confirmed the presence of assessments. These assessments encompassed various aspects, including classroom teaching, lesson plan evaluations, completion of administrative tasks, and individual reports related to the practicum. Elon, a PPL lecturer from the university where Amir studied, supported Amir's account, as did the school where the practicum took place and Dedeh (a pseudonym), a professional teacher with a doctoral degree in PAI, who provided their approval and positive comments.

Anna opted for SMA Negeri 1 Cisarua as her PPL (*praktik pengalaman lapangan*/teaching practicum) placement because she considered it one of the top schools in West Bandung, particularly renowned for its excellence in religious education. This aspect was particularly appealing to Anna, as she was a prospective PAI teacher. Currently, Anna is employed as a mental and spiritual coach at SMA Plus Cisarua, a role closely aligned with her studies in PAI at the university.

During the interview, Anna shared her strategies for implementing the PPL at the school. Initially, the learning process at SMAN 1 Cisarua was conducted online, but later transitioned to a hybrid model after a month. Anna's strategies included first gathering information about the school's conditions by consulting with teachers and students. Second, she conducted a needs analysis to identify the school's and students' expectations. Finally, Anna developed multiple plans as potential solutions to ensure a successful PPL experience. Anna also highlighted that her PPL at the school served as a platform for reflective learning, allowing her to contribute meaningfully to both her own development and the school community.

During the interview, when asked about her reflections on the highs and lows of her practicum experience at the school, Anna expressed her satisfaction and happiness. She

mentioned that she received a warm welcome from all levels of teachers and staff at the school, who patiently guided her throughout her practice. Anna also found the practicum challenging and captivating, attributing this to the students at the school, who possessed critical thinking skills. Notably, Anna felt a sense of connection with the students due to their similar age, enabling her to easily engage with them and create a lively learning environment. These positive experiences brought joy to Anna during her practicum.

However, when asked about any negative experiences during her practicum, Anna shared her disappointment with the overwhelming administrative tasks that nearly caused her to delay completing her PPL report. Anna expressed a desire for her practicum class to exhibit good behavior and motivation, reminiscent of her own attitude during her college years.

Reflective Thinking of Prospective Teacher Students

Amir's Reflective Thoughts

Amir successfully completed his practicum at a school located in a relatively affluent area in the city of Bandung. Given the socio-economic background of the students, classroom management was not a major challenge for most teachers at the school. As a result, Amir found himself primarily focused on maintaining control over the students. During the second interview, Amir praised his professional teacher as a good teacher who effectively used assertive communication, body language, and expressions to manage student behavior. While acknowledging the importance of discipline, Amir admitted that he sometimes became too fixated on strictly implementing lesson plans, resulting in a lack of confidence. He hoped to gradually shift his focus from teaching content to establishing a more disciplined classroom environment.

In a subsequent interview, Amir described one of his best lessons as being trouble-free and well-managed. However, he also expressed difficulties with classroom management and highlighted the school's failure to provide textbooks for the students. Amir pleaded for the necessary teaching materials, feeling that they were crucial for his success. In the second interview, Amir mentioned that his supervisor had suggested incorporating hands-on activities into lessons to improve student behavior and provided him with relevant references. However, in a later interview, Amir noted that his supervisor did not model this approach in their own teaching, leaving him unsure of its effective implementation. He found the preparation for hands-on lessons time-consuming and felt that using teaching materials in class often exacerbated his management problems, leading to exhaustion and loss of motivation. Unfortunately, Amir was unable to identify any alternative solutions to his class management issues and relied solely on the direct activities recommended by his professional teacher.

Following the completion of his practicum, Amir faced comparable challenges in classroom management at a new school. In the final interview, he associated the disciplinary problems with the students' limited comprehension or learning difficulties. Amir expressed frustration when teaching topics that had recently been covered, as it led to confusion and exacerbated his struggles in managing the class. He likened the situation to a complicated and entangled thread, highlighting the complexity he had to navigate. Feeling disheartened, Amir contemplated abandoning the PAI program, acknowledging its futility if students were unable to grasp the fundamental concepts of ethical behavior.

Nonetheless, Amir expressed a desire to allocate more time to lessons centered around faith in God, specifically through the recitation of Allah's names. However, he was unable to do so as he was instructed to "prioritize program coverage." Amir explained that as a first-year teacher, he felt hesitant to take bold actions or deviate too far from the established norms, fearing the consequences of making mistakes or taking unnecessary risks during his probationary period.

Anna's Reflective Thinking

Anna opted for a practicum in a suburban area, where the school had a relatively affluent socio-economic background. In a subsequent interview, Anna described the school as "good," with minor challenges in class management. During the same interview, she praised her professional teacher for their effective traditional teaching methods, referring to them as "chalk and talk" sessions where the content was delivered clearly and quickly, and key principles were well-explained.

However, as her practicum progressed, Anna became curious about alternative pedagogical approaches discussed at the university and began questioning her tutor's teaching practices to gain a better understanding of her school's situation. In the third interview, Anna expressed her excitement about constructivism, which significantly changed her perspective on teaching. However, she was disappointed that the progressive teaching methods discussed at the university were not implemented in schools.

Anna particularly struggled when attempting to incorporate the Asmaul Husna Learning approach into her lessons, realizing that students were not accustomed to the rote learning associated with it. She also observed that the school culture did not support this approach. Although Anna had the freedom to conduct her lessons in her own way, she largely followed her professional teacher's more traditional style. Nevertheless, she continued to engage in active discussions with her professional teacher, sharing her university learnings. Anna appreciated that her professional teacher listened attentively and posed challenging questions, fostering a supportive environment.

Anna reiterates her observation that students are not prepared to participate in higher-order thinking as they have an expectation for rote memorization and extensive practice. Consequently, she believes that it is more convenient to enhance teaching skills in instrumental teaching scenarios first, and once the fundamental skills are established, educators can begin exploring innovative approaches. Anna places emphasis once again on the significance of thorough explanations in teaching, highlighting that the ability to articulate concepts perfectly is crucial. She states her intention to prioritize the improvement of her explanatory skills, ensuring that she conveys information accurately, using appropriate language, methods, and progression.

The Influence of Reflective Practice on the Prospective Student Teachers' Pedagogical Competence

The research study revolves around significant inquiries regarding the impact of reflective practice on the enhancement of pedagogical competence among teacher students. Engaging in critical reflection, particularly through classroom practicum, is a highly beneficial activity for the professional development of all teachers, particularly those who are new to the teaching profession. Various studies (Jaworski, 2006; Dinkelman, 2000; Kaminski, 2003; Cavanagh & Prescott, 2007) have recognized the value of reflective practice in fostering growth and improvement.

Regrettably, there is a tendency among teachers to neglect the practice of reflection (Alger, 2006; Shoffner, 2008), which hampers the realization of their intended goals (Bean & Stevens, 2002; Collier, 1999). Instead, they often find themselves preoccupied with technical aspects of teaching (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008) and other practical concerns such as classroom planning and management (Moore, 2003; Nyaumwe, 2004). Consequently, their attention is diverted from being attentive listeners and understanding the needs of their students (Jaworski & Gelert, 2003).

The examination of teacher competence holds significant importance in cultivating teacher students with a comprehensive understanding of learning. To meet these expectations of teacher competency, the inclusion of school-based teaching practice activities that integrate

theory and practice becomes crucial for aspiring teachers (Moore, 2003). However, the actual state of the practicum classroom sometimes deviates from the vision set by the university where students pursue their teacher training (Goos, 1999). Additionally, a considerable number of prospective teachers no longer perceive the practicum as important and may refrain from experimenting with new teaching approaches, perpetuating outdated pedagogical practices (Leder, 2005).

The learning model implemented at the university plays a significant role in shaping the pedagogical competence of prospective teachers in schools (Maarif, et al., 2022). When the learning model aligns with the students' preferences in the classroom, it leads to positive recognition from the students towards the supporting teachers. Conversely, if the teacher fails to capture the students' attention in the classroom, they may be overlooked and disliked by their students (Ijudin et al., 2022). Hence, the reflective practice of teachers during their teacher training at the university greatly impacts the effectiveness of their learning model.

The learning model adopted by teachers for their students is heavily influenced by the school environment, especially for novice teachers (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999), as they strive to gain approval and acceptance from their supervising teachers (Roberts & Graham, 2008). Consequently, prospective teachers often internalize and replicate the established routines and norms of their school placements (Jaworski & Gellert, 2003) and imitate the teaching techniques they observe, resulting in a simplistic and technically-oriented perception of teaching (Putnam & Borko, 2000). This passive imitation of mentors does not foster critical reflection or enhance the capacity of prospective teachers to derive meaningful learning from their field experiences (Zeichner, 1992).

In this research, we aim to organize the research agenda into two phases. Firstly, we focus on documenting the reflective practice of prospective teacher students during their practicum in schools. Secondly, we aim to identify the factors that can either facilitate or hinder their development in attaining reflectivity. More specifically, we investigate the contributions of professional teachers and the school environment to the professional competence of each student teacher candidate involved in this study.

The key findings of this study emphasize the advantages of incorporating reflective practices into the training of PAI teachers. Participants expressed the benefits of heightened self-awareness, improved instructional strategies, and a deeper comprehension of the significance of Islamic values in education. By integrating reflective practices, participants were not only able to cultivate critical thinking skills but also adopt a reflective approach to teaching, resulting in more impactful instruction and increased student involvement. Through reflection, teachers were able to assess their teaching methods, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments to enhance their effectiveness in the classroom. Additionally, reflective practices encouraged teachers to delve further into their subject matter, pedagogical approaches, and student learning outcomes. This process allowed teachers to develop a more profound understanding of the content and explore innovative methods to effectively engage their students.

According to Boody (2008), teacher reflection can be broadly defined as a process that involves retrospection, problem-solving, critical analysis, and translating thoughts into action. In this review, we have incorporated the theoretical frameworks proposed by Boody (2008), and Schon (1987) to examine reflective thinking. We will explore reflective thinking based on the following characteristics: a) reflection as a retrospective analysis, b) reflection as problem-solving, c) critical reflection of oneself, and d) reflection on beliefs about oneself and self-efficacy. Each of these characteristics will be discussed sequentially.

The reflective learning process occurs when student teachers encounter confusion, obstacles, or doubts while attempting to solve the problems they face. Therefore, the ability to

think reflectively refers to the student teacher's capacity to select and utilize the knowledge they possess and have stored in their memory to solve problems and achieve their goals (Fuady, 2017). Reflective practice is a type of learning method that shapes the learner's mindset in comprehending learning problems (Van Gelder, 2005; Rais & Aryani, 2019). The reflective learning model trains student teachers to enhance their analytical skills by drawing upon their everyday experiences and guiding them in drawing conclusions for teaching purposes (Tsang, 2011; Zainuddin, 2018; Mahmudah, 2017). By cultivating awareness, student teachers are continually encouraged to design effective strategies for selecting, organizing, remembering, and finding solutions to the challenges they encounter. Additionally, this process fosters the development of independence and critical attitudes in student teachers, as thinking is both a result and a product of the thinking process (Suntiah, 2021).

The implications of conducting reflective studies in the context the curriculum of MBKM (Merdeka Belajar and Kampus Merdeka) are twofold. Firstly, it aims to enhance teacher self-awareness and promote personal growth. Through reflective practices, teachers can gain a deeper understanding of their teaching methods, recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and evaluate the values they incorporate into their instruction. This self-reflection allows them to assess the impact of their teaching on students and make necessary adjustments to enhance their professional competencies.

Secondly, reflective studies have the potential to improve the overall quality of PAI teachers. By engaging in critical reflection on their teaching practices, teachers are able to identify areas that require improvement. They can explore innovative teaching approaches, adapt their strategies to better cater to the unique needs and characteristics of their students, and continually enhance the quality of their instruction. Finally, the integration of reflective practices in PAI empowers teachers to develop a deeper understanding of their teaching, improve their instructional techniques, and ultimately provide a higher quality educational experience for their students.

The concept of reflective thinking was introduced by Dewey (1933), who proposed two criteria for this theory. Firstly, reflective thinking emerges from a state of doubt, confusion, or mental challenge that prompts the need for thinking. Secondly, it involves an active process of searching, investigating, and questioning in order to find answers and resolve uncertainties. In essence, reflective thinking is a deliberate attempt to address existing doubts and uncertainties (Cavanagh & Prescott, 2010; Wong et al., 2016).

Building upon Dewey's theory, Rodgers (2002) further expanded it by identifying four main elements of reflective thinking. Firstly, reflection serves as a means to comprehend one's experiences, distinct from everyday reasoning, and is fostered through educational contexts to expand the mind and explore new perspectives. Secondly, reflection requires a structured and logical framework for thinking, necessitating dedicated time and effort, particularly for individuals new to the process. Thirdly, reflection is influenced by social interactions, emphasizing that it is a socially responsible practice that goes beyond personal interests. (Rodgers, 2002; Rais, M., & Aryani, F., 2019). Finally, reflection should be grounded in a mindset that values personal and intellectual growth through an open-minded approach, shifting focus from self-absorption to self-awareness.

Muir and Beswick (2007) conducted a study in which they observed experienced teachers and identified three levels of a reflective model. The first level entails providing a technical description of classroom events, where teachers predominantly focus on the technical aspects of teaching but overlook the value and significance of the overall classroom experience. The second level involves reflection on critical incidents deliberately created and subsequently explained. Lastly, the third level encompasses critical reflection, whereby teachers extensively identify and explain critical events while considering alternative actions and contemplating the

perspectives of others. In essence, Muir and Beswick's research elucidates a model of reflective levels in relation to the practicum of learning in the classroom, progressing from initial stages to more complex stages that involve reflective actions in the learning process of prospective teacher students.

The reflective learning process was examined in the context of PAI class, aiming to enhance the teaching method skills of PAI students study program at UNISBA and UPI. The learning implementation comprises three stages: introduction, core, and closing. Reflective learning occurs when students encounter confusion, obstacles, or doubts while attempting to solve the problems they encounter. In this regard, reflective thinking refers to the student's capacity to draw upon their existing knowledge stored in memory in order to address each problem and accomplish their objectives (Fuady, 2017; Suintiah, 2021).

The findings presented in this study were derived from interviews conducted via videocall on June 6, 2022, with the lecturer from Unisba in Bandung – represented by Endang (a pseudonym). During the interviews, we gathered information regarding the duration of school practice, which was confirmed to be 60 days (equivalent to two months). The supervision structure entails one tutor for every five students, and one supervisor for every 10-15 students. The practicum students are engaged in teaching practice, conducting two to three meetings per week. Therefore, over the course of two months, a total of 12 meetings are required.

The study was conducted at two universities in Bandung, namely Unisba and UPI, with participants who provided their consent for the research. The data was collected from a group of students enlisted as trainees, who possess a proficiency level equivalent to one year of secondary school education. These participants have received education in various subjects, including curriculum and methodologies, specifically focused on PAI. With an average age of around 20 years, they are aspiring to become PAI teachers in the future. Through an interview conducted via WhatsApp on June 1, 2022, we obtained information from the head of the PAI Study Program at UPI, referred to as Farid (a pseudonym). According to Farid, the duration of school practice for these students is 120 days, supervised by a civil servant teacher. The practice involves one teaching day per week for a period of four months.

To enhance the integration of theory and practice in the PAI program for prospective teachers, the university has extended the duration of the practicum and aligned it with the methodological unit. The university collaborates with schools where the practicum takes place, starting with providing students with briefings and then accompanying them to the school, where they are handed over to the principal. The students are assigned to a tutor teacher and supervised by a mentor. Upon completion of the practicum, known as PPL, the students undergo an examination to assess their performance. They receive evaluations from their lecturer, professional teacher, and the vice principal or their representative in the curriculum field. At the final stage, there is a farewell and pick-up ceremony. In an interview conducted via WhatsApp on June 2, 2022, the dean of the PAI department at Unisba confirmed that the implementation of PPL at their university is similar to what was described by the head of the PAI study program at UPI. The differences lie primarily in technical terms in the field and the selection of schools where the prospective PAI teacher students conduct their teaching practice.

The findings from an interview with the deputy principal of state vocational school in Bandung, conducted at the school office and recorded through audio-visual means on Thursday, June 2, 2022, from 10:45 to 11:15. The interview revealed the implementation of PPL at the school. The technique yielded the following information: PPL is referred to as an internship at the school and consists of three stages: Internship 1, Internship 2, and Internship 3. Internship 1 serves as an introduction, involving PLP SP, PPL, at UPI, lasting for four months with 16 meetings and 14 RPP (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran*/lesson plans). During the internship, there are lecturers appointed, and UPI sends letters via post. Additionally, students have two

days to directly mail their documents, and briefings are conducted via Zoom due to the COVID-19 situation. Usually, the Head of UPP at UPI provides detailed explanations about the implementation, including information about honorariums. The honorarium calculation is based on the number of students, as practicum funds are allocated to students. Tutors are assigned a maximum of three students to oversee. The university provides a certificate to the school, and students are instructed to observe how teachers teach. After completing PPL, there is an exam at the school, and the exam material is determined separately. However, the specifics of the exam were not disclosed in the interview. The RPP are collected and combined, and there is a manual detailing the assessment instrument, following the UPI system with a required score of A. There is a separation and handover process, and all group reports must be submitted individually. The interview did not provide further information about the conditions for reporting and the library's role. Unisba follows a similar process, with the dean overseeing the procedure. The students bring their own snacks, and there are speeches from university representatives during the handover, creating an atmosphere akin to a wedding reception. Students are officially accepted and released from the program at this stage.

Elon (a pseudonym), a PAI lecturer, communicated via WhatsApp on Saturday, June 4, 2022, providing guidance on conducting PPL to a student named Adim (a pseudonym). The guidance entailed the following steps: The university facilitated the students' transfer to the school where the PPL would take place, and they were officially received by the school administration. Next, the students were given the opportunity to observe how the teacher conducted lessons in the PPL classroom and they were allowed to practice teaching in front of the PPL students. After that, a trial evaluation of their teaching performance was conducted by the tutor teacher. Next, the students engaged in teaching practicum activities within the classroom and consultations were held to discuss teaching strategies in front of students. After that, they prepared for the PPL exams, including the development of RPP and readiness for the PPL exams. Next, the PPL exams were administered, assessing the students' proficiency in teaching. Finally, the PPL students were handed over to their respective universities.

The research on the concept of reflection revealed that initially, the four participants were operating at the descriptive level. This was evident as they were more focused on the technical aspects of teaching, such as Amir's concern about behavior management. In this regard, Anna emphasized the importance of providing detailed information, citing previous research by Prasetio which highlighted students' preference for structured lessons. These findings align with previous research that emphasized the prevalence of procedural matters during practicum (Moore, 2003; Fosso-Kankeu, 2019) and highlight the significance of pre-service teachers' attention to practical issues as an early stage in the development of their reflective practice (Shoffner, 2008; Rais & Aryani, 2019).

As the research progressed, we observed dynamic changes in the participants' reflective attitudes at different stages. Both Amir and Anna transitioned to the practical rationalization stage. Amir acknowledged in the final interview that learning difficulties contributed to students' challenging behavior. Similarly, Jaka expressed during the third interview that the school's practicum culture and the pedagogy of his superiors made it more challenging to adopt an organized and systematic approach to work. On the other hand, Prasetio, in the third interview, demonstrated a critical yet imperfect reflection, expressing a desire to incorporate more student-centered activities into his own classroom once the practicum concluded.

These developments underscore the dynamic nature of the participants' reflective thinking and the progression they experienced throughout the research. Another notable observation was the participants' increased capacity for critical reflection on their practicum experience during the fourth interview, which aligns with Schön's (1987) assertion that significant forms of learning often manifest when students transition from the practicum to

another setting. This transition allowed for new insights and contributed to the participants' reflective growth.

The extended duration of the practicum provided an opportunity for the participants to engage in a more comprehensive reflective process and address issues that they initially did not have sufficient time to resolve (Lee & Loughran, 2000). Prasetio and Anna both reported that despite their supervisors' traditional approach, they were able to maintain their aspirations of working in an organized and systematic manner. Prasetio accomplished this by waiting for his supervisor's return, while Anna developed confidence as a teacher in the classroom, which supported her ability to maintain order and structure.

The integration of theoretical education with practical experience during university lectures and the alignment between reformation methods and traditional approaches in classroom practicum provide valuable fieldwork opportunities for Anna and Prasetio. They both recognized the disparities between these two contexts and, for pragmatic reasons, opted to adopt their supervisor's style. This presented challenges to their fieldwork experience, as they had to navigate the compatibility between their university studies and the traditional pedagogy observed during the practicum. The participant of this study chose to conform to their supervisor's style, employing tactical compliance as a strategic choice. Additionally, Prasetio utilized tactical observation, taking the initiative to monitor and conduct experiments according to the circumstances of his specific placement.

This study highlights how the conditions encountered by student teachers in their practicum schools can shape their professional development. The individuality of each student teacher, coupled with the influence of their supervising tutors, mediates this process. For instance, Amir's focus on classroom management can be attributed to the nature of his practicum school and the mentor teacher's emphasis on student behavior as a key measure of professional progress. On the other hand, Anna's emphasis on teacher explanation stems from her personal teaching philosophy and is reinforced by the observations she made during the practicum, prompting her to deeply reflect on the matter.

The research findings indicate that practicum classrooms may not always serve as ideal environments for fostering reflection among novice teachers. However, it is crucial for these classrooms to offer sufficient space for student teachers to explore alternative perspectives, interact with students, and experiment with new approaches (Ebby, 2000). The reports provided by all four participants in the study revealed a lack of opportunities to consider multiple viewpoints or propose alternative strategies during the practicum. Consequently, the limited evidence of critical reflection comes as no surprise.

Amir's lecturer and professional teacher only provides him with predetermined resources, Anna offers a sympathetic ear but does not actively encourage his classroom experiments, and Prasetio struggles with working in a structured manner despite it being a requirement of the curriculum. These observations highlight the pivotal role of the tutor teacher and the lecturer in guiding and supporting teacher students. Rather than simply addressing the problems observed, their role should involve encouraging student teachers to think about how they can improve the situation (Jaworski & Gellert, 2003; Rais & Aryani, 2019). The four case studies underscore the significance of this guidance in promoting reflective practices among teacher students.

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the scope of the discussion is limited to two universities in Bandung. The sample size is also relatively small, consisting of only one student from each campus, two lecturers, and two supervisors who participated in the study. Therefore, the findings may not be fully representative of the broader population. Furthermore, the focus of this research is primarily on examining the impact of pedagogical approaches on the participating students. While this provides valuable insights into

the specific context of the study, it may not necessarily capture the full range of factors influencing pedagogy in Islamic education. It is also important to note that this research adopts a qualitative method, specifically employing a case study approach based on the stake theory. While this approach allows for in-depth exploration of the selected cases, the findings may not be easily generalizable to other contexts or populations. Overall, these limitations highlight the need for caution in interpreting the results and generalizing them to a wider context. Future research with larger and more diverse samples from various educational institutions could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

CONCLUSION

The study on reflective practice among PAI prospective teachers at two universities: Unisba and UPI revealed that these students expressed uncertainty about applying the educational principles they learned in college during their teaching practice with students. However, after receiving clarifications from their lecturers and professional teacher, and engaging in discussions, they eventually gained confidence in effectively implementing reflective learning as aspiring PAI teachers. The outcomes of extensive interviews with participating students in practicum revealed that they acquired diverse experiences during their teaching practicums at different assigned schools. Initially, they experienced anxiety when commencing their teaching in front of high school or vocational high school students. However, they learned to overcome this anxiety by adequately preparing themselves and their teaching materials, which gradually alleviated their initial apprehension.

The concept of reflective practice in teaching, which involves mature, measurable, and innovative self-preparation, ultimately empowers PAI students engaged in practicum to develop confidence, discipline, and a positive mindset. The research findings indicate that the practicum classrooms may not inherently provide an ideal framework for fostering reflection among novice teachers. Nevertheless, they should allow sufficient room for student teachers to imagine alternatives, interact with children, and experiment with new approaches. The study involving four participating students revealed a lack of space to consider multiple perspectives or explore alternative strategies during the practicum, which explains the scarcity of evidence for critical reflection. The findings highlight the crucial role of the professional teachers at schools and their responsibility to guide practicum student teachers in critically observing their surroundings and contemplating ways to enhance the situation. The article presents recommendations for universities, professional teachers, and policymakers on how to address these challenges and establish an environment that supports the incorporation of reflective practices in teacher training programs.

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