

Pedagogic and Professional Competence of Master's Degree Teachers: A Qualitative Study at SMP N 31 Semarang

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Abstract: This study aims to evaluate the performance of master's educated teachers at SMPN 31 Semarang, reviewed from their pedagogic and professional competence. The research method used is a qualitative approach, with data collected through observation and in-depth interviews. The data analysis process includes reading interview transcripts repeatedly and interpreting the meaning of the themes. The results of the study show that teachers with master's education at SMPN 31 Semarang have good pedagogic competence, especially in systematic learning planning, the use of varied learning strategies (scientific and differentiated), and conducive classroom management. In professional competence, these teachers show a deep mastery of the material, are active in self-development through training and workshops, and have a high professional attitude. However, there are still obstacles such as administrative burden, limited time for self-development, and digital literacy for some teachers. The principal provides feedback and guidance through a forum for evaluating the performance of teachers and the learning community to overcome these obstacles.

Keywords: *Pedagogic_Competence, Professional_Competence, Master's Degree, Teachers*

A. Introduction

Education is one of the main pillars in the development of quality human resources. According to law number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system listed in article 1 paragraph 1 contains a statement that "education is an effort that is carried out consciously and planned to realize the nuances of the teaching and learning process with the hope that the students are able to act actively and can develop the potential that exists in them so that they have many advantages such as spiritual and religious strength, strength in self-control, creating a good personality, having intelligence that is felt and channeled as well as skills that are beneficial to many parties" (Education, 2003).

In this context, teachers play a central role as facilitators and motivators in the learning process. Improving the quality of education in Indonesia is highly dependent on the competence and performance of teachers as the spearhead of the learning process. Teachers with high academic qualifications, such as master's degree graduates, are expected to be able to show superior performance, especially in aspects of pedagogic and professional competence. This pedagogic competence itself includes the ability of teachers to understand the characteristics of students, design and implement learning and evaluate learning outcomes. Meanwhile, professional competencies include mastery of learning materials, development to sustainable professionals, and the use of technology in learning.

Teacher performance evaluation is a social aspect in an effort to improve the quality of education. Teacher performance assessment not only serves as a measuring tool but also as a basis for developing into sustainable professionals which can ultimately have an impact on improving the quality of learning in schools (Alviana et al., 2023).

Pedagogic and professional competencies are two of the four main competencies that must be possessed by teachers, as stipulated in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers.

Although many teachers already have master's education qualifications, the field shows that not all show optimal performance. Several studies show that teachers' education levels do not have a significant influence on the outcomes of their performance (Bahri & Sakka, 2021). This high level of formal education is not always in line with optimal professional performance. Although most teachers have adequate academic qualifications, there are still variations in the achievement of their pedagogic and professional competencies. This shows the need for an in-depth evaluation of the performance of teachers, especially those with master's degrees, to ensure that their competencies are truly applied in learning practices (Fatima, 2024).

In addition to teachers, school principals as leaders also have a significant contribution to the development and implementation of learning programs. In another study, it was explained that the teacher's performance assessment has a great responsibility. The principal assessed the performance of teachers from various aspects ranging from competence, learning innovation to contribution to school development (Hidayat et al., 2025). Because basically if the evaluation of teacher performance is ineffective, it can have a negative impact on the quality of education (Devid Juli Yanti Telaumbanua et al, 2024).

Research revealed that teacher performance evaluation, which includes planning, implementation, learning assessment, and discipline, has a significant role in improving the quality of education. In the field, although in general the performance of this teacher is considered good, there are still obstacles such as the use of less participatory learning methods, low understanding of student

characteristics, and lack of Time Discipline. This study confirms that systematic evaluation of teacher performance contributes to teacher professionalism and sustainable quality of education in the future (Zakiyudin, 2020). This was issued by Research by Arifandi emphasizing that teacher performance evaluation must be carried out systematically and includes aspects of planning, implementation, and supervision. Evaluation itself plays an important role in improving teacher competence and the quality of education. So competency factors affect the quality of teacher performance as a whole (Arifandi, 2020).

Teacher performance assessment itself is interpreted as an effort to obtain an overview of the teacher's knowledge, values and attitudes, especially in carrying out their duties and functions, as evidenced by the way the teacher conducts learning in the classroom, the character shown to his students and the achievements of his work (Mulyasa, 2013). Meanwhile, the teacher assessment system itself is an assessment system designed to identify the ability of teachers to carry out their duties, namely through the measurement of competencies shown in their performance. So in simple terms, this teacher performance assessment aims to determine the quality of teacher competency mastery (Dermawan, 2013).

Educational institution can be seen whether it is successful or not, namely through quality or quality in education. Meanwhile, the quality of education itself is obtained from the performance of teachers in conducting learning in the classroom, one of which is in terms of pedagogic and professional competence. According to Heri Indarto, the quality of education is a quality obtained from the suitability between conditions and needs, such as the effectiveness of programs, as well as the efficiency and productivity of activities (Indarto, 2019). To increase the productivity of these activities, this evaluation must provide constructive feedback and also coaching, for example by providing training opportunities or continuing education for teachers (Kamaruddin et al., 2024). Because to pursue

teacher professionalism, various efforts are made to improve starting from supervision or assessment, by providing follow-up such as training and full support provided by schools (Risna et al., 2023). The optimal performance competence of teachers during learning is influenced by the leadership of the principal in monitoring or evaluating educators in conducting learning, starting from setting educator qualification standards, to the stage of recommending improvements (Latuconsina & Hilery, 2024).

Based on the various explanations above, it can be understood that to see the teacher's competence, an evaluation of the teacher's performance must be carried out, especially from the aspect of the teacher's competence itself, both in terms of pedagogic competence and professional competence in conducting learning. In this case, the context of educator performance evaluation is an analysis of how well the teacher performs in carrying out his duties. This is related to the high level of education achieved by the teacher himself, as stated above.

This research is motivated by the results of pre-observations that have been carried out by researchers regarding the performance of teachers with master's education qualifications in educational institutions. SMP Negeri 31 Semarang as one of the secondary education institutions in Semarang City. The school has a number of teachers who have completed their master's education. However, there has been no research specifically evaluating their professional performance from the perspective of pedagogic and professional competence. Therefore, this research aims to the purpose of this study is to analyze in depth how the pedagogical and professional competencies of master's degree teachers at SMPN 31 Semarang are manifested in their teaching practices and what challenges they face so far.

B. Methods

The research method used in this study is to use a qualitative approach, to gain an understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2014). Data was collected through observation techniques and in-depth interviews (Sugiyono, 2017). In-depth interviews were conducted with respondents by selecting those who were considered to have relevant and rich information about the research topic. The data analysis process used the technique of reading interview transcripts repeatedly and interpreting the meaning of these themes (Mules M. B., Huberman A. M., & Saldana, 2014). This research was conducted by conducting interviews with the principal and master's teachers at SMPN 31 Semarang. The validity of data through triangulation techniques to increase the validity and credibility of findings (Denzin, 2012). Data triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of classroom observations, teacher interviews, and input from the principal.

C. Results and Discussion

Pedagogic Competency Assessment for Master's Educated Teachers

Pedagogic competence is one of the four competencies that teachers must have, as stipulated in the law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers. These competencies include understanding students, designing learning, implementing the learning process, and evaluating learning outcomes. A professional teacher must be able to manage the teaching and learning process effectively and efficiently based on the characteristics of students (Sinar Grafika, 2009).

Teachers with a master's education background are assumed to have higher reflective and analytical abilities in developing learning strategies and pedagogical problem solving in the classroom. This is in line with Vygotsky's view in the social theory of constructivism which emphasizes the importance of cognitive development in the

social context, where the teacher as a facilitator must have a deep and reflective understanding of the learning process of students (Vygotsky, 1978). Master's education usually emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills, as well as mastery of theories and practices in certain scientific fields. According to Darling-Hammond's theory, quality professional development, including advanced formal education, can have a significant impact on the quality of learning, especially in terms of planning, implementation, learning and assessment, based on student needs (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

The results of the data obtained in this study regarding the assessment of pedagogic competence of teachers with master's education at SMPN 31 Semarang, in this case it is proven that in the school there are several teachers who are educated magister. The majority of teachers with master's education at SMPN 31 Semarang have good and systematic learning planning skills. The teacher is able to compile teaching modules by paying attention to the characteristics of the students, including learning styles, social backgrounds and special needs. This is in accordance with the indicators of teacher performance assessment in learning planning.

The results of the study are in line with Spencer and Spencer's theory, which states that competence is a fundamental characteristic of a person related to performance in a job. In the context of teachers, pedagogic competency evaluation can be seen through indicators such as mastery of teaching materials, the ability to prepare lesson plans or teaching modules, the use of appropriate learning methods and skills in the results of student learning evaluation (Spencer, L. M., & Spencer, 1993).

Developing their pedagogical competence, the learning strategies applied by master's educated teachers are based on scientific approaches and differentiated learning. Differentiated learning itself is an approach that adjusts learning processes, content, and products

to the individual learning needs of students. Differentiation takes into account differences in students' learning readiness, interests, and learning styles (Tomlinson, 2014). Master's teachers show a good understanding in choosing learning methods that suit the needs of students such as group discussions, project-based learning, and utilizing information and communication technology. In addition, in classroom management, the teacher is quite effective both physically and psychologically.

The classroom atmosphere tends to be orderly and supports healthy learning interactions. Teachers in this case also build positive communication with students, reflecting an increasingly positive discipline approach.(Nugroho, 2025). Because at this time class management no longer focuses on punishment but on the formation of healthy relationships, mutually agreed rules, and empowering students in decision-making. So this can create a safe, orderly and fun learning environment (Jones, V. F., & Jones, 2012).

Teachers' competence in evaluating students' learning outcomes and providing feedback, Master's teachers at SMPN 31 Semarang are able to prepare various evaluation instruments, including formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment itself is an evaluation carried out during the learning process to provide information that can be used by teachers and students to improve learning (Black, P., & Wiliam, 1998). Meanwhile, summative assessments are carried out at the end of the learning period to determine the level of achievement of learning objectives (Nitko, A. J., & Brookhart, 2014). The feedback provided is generally constructive and encourages learning reflection for students. Good feedback is specific, focuses on the process and encourages self-reflection and the setting of learning strategies by students. Effective feedback can increase motivation and learning independence (Hattie, J., & Timperley, 2007).

Professional Competency Assessment of Master's Educated Teachers

Teachers' professional competence is the ability and authority to carry out their duties as educators effectively, efficiently and responsibly in accordance with professional standards. According to the law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers, this professional competence includes extensive and in-depth mastery of subject matter, mastery of scientific structures, concepts, and mindsets, as well as mastery of relevant scientific and technological methods. Meanwhile, teachers who have my sister education are expected to have higher professional competence, one of which is characterized by understanding theory and practice in their scientific field with the context of the latest research and global reality (Shulman, 1987).

Based on data from research results at SMPN 31 Semarang, it shows that mastery of the material by master's educated teachers is very good. The teacher is able to understand the material in depth and is able to explain complex concepts in a way that is easy for students to understand. In developing themselves, most of these master's teachers actively participate in training, workshops, and MGMP activities. According to Day & Sachs theory, continuous professional development includes formal and informal activities carried out by teachers to improve professional competence, improve quality learning, as well as encouraging reflection on teaching practices (Day, C., & Sachs, 2004). In addition, teachers at SMPN 31 Semarang also carry out classroom action research and publish it, although it still needs encouragement to be more involved in scientific activities (Nugroho, 2025). Classroom action research according to Kemmis & MC Taggart encourages teachers to reflect on their learning practices, can improve the quality of evidence-based learning and become reflective and scientific practitioners (Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, 1988).

The results of the professional development of master's teachers at SMPN 31 Semarang are implemented in daily learning, some teachers have shown the direct influence of their professional development into learning, for example the use of digital media or more innovative learning approaches. However, a more systematic mechanism is needed so that the results of professional development are applied consistently. Even so, master's teachers in carrying out their duties and responsibilities apply a professional attitude, namely showing high responsibility, integrity, and commitment to their duties. In addition, the teacher also has a good ethical awareness, both towards students, peers, and school institutions (Nugroho, 2025). The results of the study are in line with the theory of professionalism, namely professional teachers show commitment to high standards of student performance and learning outcomes, responsibility for their duties and obligations as educators, and have the ability to cooperate with peers and respect the structure of the organization itself (Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, 2005).

Addition, teachers who have master's degrees in facing challenges and changes in the world of education, have a strong readiness, especially in response to changes. The teacher is active in finding out the latest information, participating in independent curriculum training and trying various digital perfumes in learning. However, there are some who still need special assistance, especially in terms of digital transformation (Nugroho, 2025).

Performance Evaluation and Development

Performance evaluation is a systematic process to assess and evaluate an employee's work achievements based on the standards and goals of the organization. Development is an organization's effort to improve the ability, competence, and potential of individuals to meet the requirements of current and future jobs. To develop their performance, teachers can improve their grades

through education and training. Investment in training results in increased productivity (Becker, 1964).

Based on the results of research data at SMPN 31 Semarang, the assessment of teacher performance is in accordance with PKG guidelines. Assessments are carried out periodically through direct observation, learning administration assessments, PKG instruments are used as the main reference accompanied by feedback from school principals and curriculum coordinators. After the performance assessment was carried out, teachers with master's education at SMPN 31 Semarang have broader academic insights, good analytical skills, and are open to educational updates. In the pedagogic aspect, teachers at SMPN 31 Semarang are better able to design learning that is oriented to the needs of students (Nugroho, 2025). This is in line with the theory of constructivism which emphasizes that the learning process should be student-centered, where the teacher plays the role of a facilitator who helps students to build knowledge based on their experiences (Piaget, 1972).

However, teachers at SMPN 31 Semarang still face several obstacles, including administrative burdens, limited time for self-development, and digital literacy for some teachers. In addition, the motivation to write scientific papers for teachers at SMPN 31 Semarang still needs to be improved. To deal with this, the principal provides feedback and coaching directly through teacher performance evaluation forums and through individual meetings. Coaching is carried out through observation of teacher performance and the formation of learning communities in schools or called *Kombel Spegasa* to share good practices with each other. In addition, the school also provides space for self-development through internal training, mentoring programs, and collaboration between teachers. In addition, the principal also facilitates teachers' participation in MGMP activities, national seminars, and the writing of scientific papers (Nugroho, 2025). According to Schon, teachers are "reflective practitioners", i.e. teachers need to continuously evaluate and adjust learning

approaches based on field experience (Schön, 1983). To evaluate and carry out development, in this case the principal has an important role, namely as a facilitator in education.

As a follow-up in the future, the principal of SMPN 31 Semarang hopes that master teachers can be the driving force for learning innovation in schools. The teacher is expected to be not only proficient in theory but also able to implement best practices that have an impact on student learning outcomes. Collaboration, learning leadership, and scientific publications are the focus of the development of master's teachers in the future at SMPN 31 Semarang.

D. Conclusions

Teachers with master's degrees at SMPN 31 Semarang show a high level of pedagogic and professional competence. In pedagogic competence, they have systematic learning planning, use varied learning strategies, and are effective in classroom management and evaluation of learning outcomes including providing constructive feedback. In professional competence, teachers at SMPN 31 Semarang show in-depth mastery of the material, are active in self-development activities such as training, workshops, MGMP and classroom action research. They also have a high professional attitude, encompassing responsibility, integrity, commitment, and ethical awareness. Although they are generally responsive to change, some still need assistance in digital transformation.

Teacher performance evaluations at SMPN 31 Semarang are carried out periodically and guided by PKG, with feedback from the principal and curriculum coordinator. Master's teachers have broad academic insights and are able to design student-centered learning. The obstacles faced include administrative burden, limited time for self-development, varied digital literacy, and motivation to write scientific papers. To overcome these obstacles, school principals

provide feedback, coaching, and facilitate self-development through learning communities, internal training, mentoring, collaboration, MGMP, national seminars, and writing scientific papers. In the future, master's teachers are expected to be the driving force for learning inflation in schools with a focus on collaboration, learning leadership, and scientific publications.

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