

# Ideal Teacher Competencies from Ki Hajar Dewantara's Perspective and their Relevance to Islamic Education in the Digital Era

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the concept of ideal teacher competencies from Ki Hajar Dewantara's perspective and its relevance to Islamic education in the digital era. This study employed a qualitative approach using library research. Data were obtained from Ki Hajar Dewantara's works, Islamic education literature, regulations concerning teacher competencies, and recent scientific articles on teacher competencies and digital education. The data were analyzed using content analysis through the stages of identification, classification, interpretation, and synthesis. The findings indicate that the concept of ideal teacher competencies according to Ki Hajar Dewantara is grounded in the philosophy of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani*, which positions teachers as role models, motivators, and sources of encouragement for students. Ideal teachers are required not only to possess pedagogical and professional competencies but also personal and social competencies reflected in integrity, responsibility, honesty, exemplary conduct, and the ability to guide students through a humane approach. This concept is highly relevant to Islamic education, which views teachers as murabbi, mu'allim, muaddib, and mursyid who are responsible for developing individuals who possess faith, knowledge, and noble character. In the digital era, these competencies must be integrated with digital literacy so that teachers can use technology effectively in learning while guiding students to use technology critically, ethically, and in accordance with Islamic values. Therefore, Ki Hajar Dewantara's ideas remain relevant as a foundation for developing teacher competencies in response to the challenges of Islamic education in the digital era.

**Keywords:** Teacher Competencies, Ki Hajar Dewantara, Islamic Education, Digital Era, Ideal Teacher

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**2nd International Conference on Islamic Community Studies (ICICS)**

**Theme: History of Malay Civilisation and Islamic Human Capacity and Halal Hub in the Globalization Era**

## Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to education. Learning is no longer limited to physical classrooms but has expanded into digital spaces through online learning platforms, social media, educational applications, artificial intelligence, and various open learning resources. These developments require teachers to possess broader competencies. Teachers must not only master subject matter but also be able to manage technology-based learning, establish educational communication, instill character values, and maintain students' digital ethics. In this context, teacher competency is an important factor that determines the quality of education.

In Indonesia, teacher competencies generally consist of pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies. Pedagogical competency concerns teachers' ability to manage student-centered learning. Personal competency emphasizes teachers' moral, emotional, and spiritual maturity as well as their exemplary conduct. Social competency relates to the ability to communicate and interact effectively, while professional competency concerns mastery of subject matter, professional development, and the ability to perform professional duties responsibly (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2024). These four competencies have become increasingly important in the digital era because teachers are expected to adapt to technological developments without losing their orientation toward humanity and moral values.

Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational thought is highly relevant to discussions concerning ideal teacher competencies. Ki Hajar Dewantara viewed education as an effort to guide all the natural potential possessed by children so that they could achieve the highest possible level of safety and happiness, both as individuals and as members of society. This idea positions teachers not as classroom authorities but as guides, mentors, and role models for students. The educational principle of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani* indicates that ideal teachers must be able to provide examples, cultivate motivation, and encourage students according to their developmental stages (Dewantara, 2013).

In Islamic education, teachers also occupy an important position because they are responsible not only for transferring knowledge but also for developing students' morality, personality, and spiritual awareness. In Islamic education, teachers perform the roles of *murabbi*, *mu'allim*, *muaddib*, and *mursyid*. These terms refer to educators who nurture students, transmit knowledge, instill proper conduct, and guide students toward goodness. Therefore, teacher competencies in Islamic education cannot be separated from moral, spiritual, intellectual, social, and professional dimensions. In the digital era, Islamic education teachers must also be able to use technology as a medium for Islamic preaching, learning, character strengthening, and students' moral development (Bayhaqi et al., 2024; Hajri, 2023).

However, the reality of digital education also presents various challenges. Students can access religious information from numerous digital sources that may not necessarily be valid, moderate, or consistent with the Islamic principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Furthermore, not all teachers possess sufficient digital literacy to manage technology-based learning creatively and ethically. (Yusniar et al., 2024) found that the digital literacy competencies of Islamic Religious Education teachers vary considerably, ranging from basic technology use to the creative integration of technology into learning. This indicates that ideal teacher competencies in the digital era must be formulated more contextually.

Based on the preceding discussion, this study is important because it reexamines Ki Hajar Dewantara's ideas concerning ideal teachers and connects them with the needs of Islamic education in the digital era. Ki Hajar Dewantara's humanistic and emancipatory educational thought, which emphasizes exemplary conduct, can provide a philosophical foundation for developing Islamic teachers who are adaptive to technology while remaining rooted in morality, proper conduct, and spirituality. Therefore, this study is expected to make a conceptual contribution to the formulation of an ideal teacher profile that is relevant to the challenges of contemporary Islamic education.

## **Literature Review**

### **2.1 Competencies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers**

Teacher competency refers to the abilities that teachers must possess to perform their professional duties. These competencies are not limited to the ability to present learning materials. Teacher competency includes the ability to understand students, design learning, serve as a role model, establish social communication, master teaching materials, and conduct learning assessments (Ramadhon & Baroroh, 2025). Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers stipulates that teacher competencies consist of pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies. These four competencies provide a basis for assessing teachers' readiness as professional educators.

Pedagogical competency refers to teachers' ability to manage student-centered learning (Panggabean & Nasution, 2023). In the most recent teacher competency model, pedagogical competency includes the ability to create a safe and comfortable learning environment, implement effective student-centered learning, and use assessment, feedback, and reporting to support students' development. For Islamic Religious Education teachers, pedagogical competency provides a foundation for designing religious learning that is not narrowly doctrinal but dialogical, contextual, and appropriate to students' developmental stages (Susmiyati et al., 2026).

Personal competency concerns teachers' moral, emotional, and spiritual maturity. Islamic Religious Education teachers are expected to possess strong personal qualities because students frequently regard religious teachers as examples of religious behavior. The teacher competency model emphasizes that personal competency includes the ability to behave in accordance with professional ethical codes, conduct self-reflection, and maintain a student-oriented approach (Andi Nuraeni Rustang, M. Shabir U, Andi Halimah, 2021). In the cultivation of religious moderation, personal competency is reflected in teachers' fairness, courtesy, openness, nondiscriminatory attitudes, and consistency in providing positive examples to students.

Social competency refers to teachers' ability to communicate and interact effectively with students, fellow teachers, parents, and society. This competency is relevant to religious moderation because the values of tolerance, cooperation, and respect for differences are not developed solely through lectures but also through social communication practices at school (Mauzifa & Rahman, 2025). Islamic Religious Education teachers must be able to collaborate with school principals, classroom teachers, parents, and the surrounding community so that the values of religious moderation are not confined to the classroom (Rahman & L., 2025).

Professional competency refers to teachers' ability to master subject matter comprehensively and in depth. Islamic Religious Education teachers must understand Islamic materials correctly, proportionately, and in accordance with the Indonesian national context. Professional competency also includes the ability to organize learning content, understand students' characteristics, and use the curriculum as a foundation for developing instruction (Hasrian Rudi Setiawan, 2021). In the context of religious moderation, Islamic Religious

Education teachers must be able to explain Islamic teachings concerning justice, tolerance, compassion, deliberation, brotherhood, and respect for others in a manner appropriate to students' developmental stages.

## 2.2 Ki Hajar Dewantara's Thought on Ideal Teachers

Ki Hajar Dewantara viewed education as a process of guiding students so that they could develop according to their natural conditions and the conditions of their era. Natural conditions indicate that students possess different potentials, environments, cultures, and characteristics. The conditions of the era indicate that education must be capable of responding to social developments and changing times. In the digital era, the concept of the conditions of the era is highly relevant because teachers are expected to understand technological developments and use them wisely in learning.

One of Ki Hajar Dewantara's important concepts is the *among* system. The *among* system positions teachers as *pamong*, or guides, who educate students through compassion, exemplary conduct, and respect for freedom in learning. Teachers must not impose their will in an authoritarian manner but must guide students so that they can develop their potential. This concept is consistent with modern learning approaches that position students as active subjects in the educational process.

The principle of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, Tut Wuri Handayani* describes three principal roles of teachers. First, teachers must serve as role models when they are at the forefront. Second, teachers must cultivate motivation and initiative when they are among students. Third, teachers must provide encouragement and support when students begin to develop independence. From this perspective, ideal teachers are not merely intellectually capable but also morally, socially, and spiritually mature (Mahariani et al., 2025).

Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational thought also emphasizes character education. Education does not merely aim to produce intelligent individuals but also civilized human beings. Therefore, ideal teachers must possess the ability to develop students' character. In Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought, character involves harmony among thought, feeling, intention, and action. Such harmony is essential in digital education because students require not only technological competence but also wisdom in using technology.

## Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach using library research to analyze the concept of ideal teacher competencies from Ki Hajar Dewantara's perspective and its relevance to Islamic education in the digital era. The research data consisted of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included Ki Hajar Dewantara's works concerning education, the *among* system, natural conditions, the conditions of the era, character education, and the role of teachers, as well as regulations concerning teacher competencies. The secondary sources consisted of books, national and international journal articles, educational policy documents, and relevant research findings concerning teacher competencies, Islamic education, digital literacy, educational technology, and learning in the era of artificial intelligence.

Data were collected through documentation by identifying, reading, recording, selecting, and classifying literature according to the research focus. The data were analyzed using content analysis through several stages: identifying the main concepts, classifying them into pedagogical, personal, social, professional, spiritual, and digital competencies, interpreting the concepts from the perspective of Islamic education, and synthesizing the findings to formulate the relevance of Ki Hajar Dewantara's thought to Islamic education in the digital era. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation by comparing various primary and secondary sources, careful and persistent reading, systematic note-taking, and examination of the consistency among theories, literature-based data, and the analytical findings.

## Results

Based on an analysis of Ki Hajar Dewantara's works, including writings on education, particularly *Part One: Education*, and various sources concerning national educational philosophy and Islamic education, the findings indicate that Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of the ideal teacher does not merely emphasize mastery of knowledge. It also emphasizes character development, moral exemplary conduct, the ability to guide students, and social responsibility as an educator. Teachers are viewed not only as individuals who transfer knowledge but also as figures responsible for developing students' personalities comprehensively in intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions.

The findings indicate that Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of the ideal teacher is grounded in the philosophy of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, *Tut Wuri Handayani*. This philosophy describes three principal roles of teachers in education. Through *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, teachers must serve as role models in their attitudes, behavior, discipline, honesty, responsibility, and noble character so that students receive practical examples in their daily lives.

Through *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, teachers must remain among students to cultivate learning motivation, provide encouragement, create a supportive learning environment, and encourage students to actively develop their potential. Through *Tut Wuri Handayani*, teachers provide encouragement, guidance, and trust so that students can develop independently according to their individual talents, interests, and abilities.

In addition to exemplary conduct, the findings indicate that Ki Hajar Dewantara regarded character as a fundamental teacher competency. According to his thought, educational success is not measured solely by students' high academic achievement but also by the development of individuals with noble character. Ideal teachers must possess integrity, patience, sincerity, compassion, and the ability to establish harmonious relationships with students. These values provide a foundation for creating a humane educational process that promotes students' independence.

The analysis also indicates that Ki Hajar Dewantara viewed teachers as guides who respect students' freedom in learning. According to him, education is not a process in which teachers impose their will on students. Instead, it is a process of guiding children's potential so that it can develop optimally. Teachers are responsible for providing students with opportunities to think critically and creatively and to assume responsibility for their own learning. This concept is highly relevant to the modern educational paradigm that positions students at the center of learning.

From the perspective of Islamic education, Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of ideal teacher competencies is consistent with the roles of teachers as *murabbi*, *mu'allim*, *muaddib*, and *mursyid*. Teachers are responsible not only for conveying knowledge through *ta'lim* but also for developing morality through *tarbiyah*, instilling proper conduct through *ta'dib*, and guiding students toward spiritual and moral maturity.

Islamic education views teachers as figures responsible for developing human beings who possess faith, piety, knowledge, and noble character. Therefore, the values of exemplary conduct, responsibility, compassion, honesty, and character development emphasized by Ki Hajar Dewantara are highly relevant to the objectives of Islamic education.

This study also found that the development of digital technology has transformed the competencies teachers must possess. In the digital era, teachers are no longer the only sources of information because students can access various learning resources through the internet. Therefore, teachers must possess digital competencies, information literacy, the ability to select credible learning resources, and the skills required to use technology as a learning medium. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that digital competency cannot replace teachers' roles as character guides and moral role models. Technological developments further emphasize the

importance of teachers in guiding students to use technology responsibly, critically, and in accordance with religious values.

Based on the literature analysis, ideal teacher competencies in the digital era comprise a combination of pedagogical, professional, social, personal, and digital competencies. Ideal teachers must not only be able to use educational technology but also integrate technology with character education and Islamic values. Through such integration, teachers can create innovative learning without neglecting students' moral development.

The findings indicate that Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of ideal teacher competencies is highly relevant to the needs of Islamic education in the digital era. His educational philosophy positions teachers as role models, motivators, and guides who facilitate students' comprehensive development. This concept corresponds with the Islamic educational paradigm, which regards teachers as educators responsible for students' intellectual, spiritual, moral, emotional, and social development. Therefore, teacher competency is measured not only through instructional ability but also through the quality of teachers' personalities and moral character.

The development of digital technology presents new challenges to education, particularly in developing students' character amid the rapid flow of information. Teachers must not only master subject matter but also possess digital literacy so that they can guide students in selecting accurate information, filtering potentially misleading content, and using technology as a productive learning resource. In this context, Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept remains relevant because it positions teachers as companions who provide direction and guidance rather than merely transmitting information.

The Islamic educational perspective further reinforces the importance of teachers' exemplary conduct as the foundation of educational success. Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, patience, compassion, and sincerity constitute moral competencies that teachers must possess to develop students' character. These values correspond with the philosophy of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, which emphasizes the importance of exemplary conduct in education.

In the digital era, when students encounter various influences from social media and technology, teachers' presence as role models becomes increasingly important in guiding them to develop strong character.

The concept of *Tut Wuri Handayani* is also relevant to the implementation of twenty-first-century learning, which emphasizes active, collaborative, creative, and student-centered learning. Teachers no longer dominate the learning process but serve as facilitators who provide students with opportunities to develop their potential, creativity, critical-thinking abilities, communication skills, and collaborative abilities.

Therefore, Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational thought can respond to the needs of Islamic education in the digital era by promoting a balance among technological mastery, the development of twenty-first-century competencies, and noble character.

Overall, this study demonstrates that Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of ideal teacher competencies remains relevant and applicable to educational developments in the digital era. Ideal teachers are those who can integrate pedagogical, professional, social, personal, and digital competencies with Islamic educational values. Such integration enables the learning process to produce students who are not only intellectually capable but also possess strong character, spirituality, and moral responsibility.

## Conclusion

Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of ideal teacher competencies positions teachers as role models through *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, builders of learning motivation through *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and sources of encouragement through *Tut Wuri Handayani*. Ideal teachers are expected not only to master knowledge and instructional skills but also to possess personal

competencies reflected in integrity, responsibility, honesty, compassion, patience, and the ability to guide students humanely.

This concept emphasizes that high-quality education does not merely produce academically intelligent students but also individuals who possess noble character and morality. This study also demonstrates that Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of teacher competency is highly relevant to Islamic education in the digital era. The values of exemplary conduct, character development, respect for students' potential, and emancipatory learning correspond with the objectives of Islamic education in developing individuals who possess faith, knowledge, and noble character.

Amid the development of digital technology, teachers are expected to possess not only pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies but also digital competencies so that they can use technology effectively while guiding students to use it critically, ethically, and in accordance with Islamic values. Therefore, Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational thought remains relevant as a foundation for developing teacher competencies in response to the challenges of education in the digital era.

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