

The Role of Multidimensional Teachers in Preparing Students' Academic Competency Tests at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Junior High School

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the multidimensional roles of teachers in preparing students for the Academic Competency Test (ACT) at SMP Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading. The research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Informants included mathematics and Indonesian language teachers serving as ACT mentors, the principal, vice principals for curriculum and student affairs, and ninth-grade homeroom teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that teachers performed multidimensional roles as learning facilitators, evaluators, motivators, mentors for independent learning, guides for students' mental, emotional, and spiritual readiness, mediators between schools and parents, and instillers of ethical examination values. Teachers not only strengthened students' academic readiness through adaptive learning, continuous evaluation, and intensive mentoring, but also developed students' motivation, self-confidence, psychological resilience, and moral integrity. Furthermore, parental involvement and religious activities contributed significantly to supporting students' holistic readiness in facing the ACT. These findings emphasize that academic success requires integrated pedagogical, emotional, social, spiritual, and character-based support within Islamic education practices nationwide.

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary educational landscape positions the Academic Competency Test (TKA) not merely as a cognitive measurement instrument, but as a medium for mapping students' intellectual readiness, adaptability, and analytical capacity to face the dynamics of 21st-century learning. In this context, teachers are no longer positioned merely as transmitters of knowledge, but rather as multidimensional pedagogical figures who simultaneously orchestrate students' academic, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects. Research shows that student success in academic

assessments is strongly influenced by teacher involvement in fostering a supportive, reflective, and transformative learning environment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). In an Islamic-based school environment like Muhammadiyah Pucanggading Junior High School, this role becomes increasingly complex as teachers are faced with the challenge of balancing academic achievement with the development of students' religious character and moral integrity.

The phenomenon of increasing academic pressure leading up to the TKA often gives rise to psychopedagogical symptoms such as learning anxiety, decreased self-confidence, and disorientation in junior high school students. Such conditions demand teachers who are not only methodologically proficient but also possess adequate emotional sensitivity and interpersonal skills. Research by Collie (2021) confirms that teacher emotional support significantly correlates with students' academic resilience and self-regulation in facing learning evaluations. Therefore, the affective dimension of TKA mentoring practices is an inseparable element of the academic learning strategy itself. Teachers act as psychological catalysts, helping students manage evaluative pressures through a persuasive and dialogical humanistic approach.

On the other hand, the transformation of the national education paradigm, which increasingly emphasizes higher-order thinking competencies, requires teachers to reconfigure learning strategies in a more innovative and adaptive manner. Teachers are not merely required to deliver material; they are also required to build an academic culture that stimulates critical reasoning, numeracy literacy, and contextual problem-solving. According to research by König et al. (2020), teachers' pedagogical competency strongly influences students' ability to handle competency-based assessments because they serve as the primary link between the curriculum and classroom learning practices. In the context of TKA preparation, teachers at Muhammadiyah Pucanggading Junior High School are required to develop a learning scheme that is not solely oriented toward achieving grades but also strengthens students' thinking structures in a substantive and sustainable manner.

Beyond the academic and psychological dimensions, teachers also play a significant social role in building a collective learning ecosystem at school. Teacher interactions with students, parents, and the school community form a support network that determines students' readiness for TKA. A study by Kim and Seo (2021) showed that collaboration between teachers and families can increase students' intrinsic motivation while strengthening consistency in learning at home. This demonstrates that successful TKA preparation is inextricably linked to teachers' ability to establish educational communication with various school elements. At this point, teachers function as social mediators, integrating the school's academic interests with the individual needs of students in a more humane and inclusive manner.

In Muhammadiyah educational institutions, the spiritual dimension is also an important feature of educational practice. Teachers are not only required to produce students who excel academically but also possess moral and spiritual maturity. This perspective demonstrates that TKA preparation should not be understood as a mere activity of drilling questions, but rather as a process of developing holistic self-readiness. Research by Hidayat and Syafe'i (2021) confirms that integrating religious values into learning can improve student learning discipline, academic responsibility, and self-control. Therefore, teachers at Muhammadiyah Pucanggading Junior High School bear a multidimensional responsibility that goes beyond conventional instructional duties, as they also serve as spiritual guides, instilling the values of perseverance, honesty, and an Islamic learning ethos in the TKA preparation process.

Although various studies have examined teacher effectiveness in academic learning and evaluation, studies specifically highlighting the multidimensional role of teachers in assisting with Academic Competency Test preparation in Muhammadiyah schools are relatively limited. Most previous research has focused solely on learning strategies or learning outcomes, leaving little insight into the interconnectedness of teachers' pedagogical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions within a unified educational practice. This gap in research presents an important academic gap requiring further in-depth exploration, particularly given the complex learning challenges facing junior high school students in the era of competency-based education and nationally standardized assessments.

Based on this description, the study "The Multidimensional Role of Teachers in Preparing Students for Academic Competency Tests at Muhammadiyah Pucanggading Junior High School" is

relevant and strategic. This research is expected to provide scientific elaboration on how teachers simultaneously fulfill academic, psychological, social, and spiritual roles in assisting students in facing the TKA (Teacher-Based Competency Test). Furthermore, this research can provide conceptual contributions to the development of educational administration and leadership studies, particularly in understanding the transformation of teachers' roles amidst the changing orientation of national educational assessments. Therefore, the results of this study are not only theoretically significant but also offer practical implications for strengthening the quality of academic mentoring in Islamic value-based schools.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to in-depth examine the dynamics of teachers' multidimensional roles in preparing students for the Academic Competency Test (TKA) at Muhammadiyah Pucanggading Junior High School. A qualitative approach was chosen because of its exploratory capabilities in uncovering social realities, subjective experiences, and patterns of educational interactions that occur naturally in the school environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This research seeks to holistically understand how teachers carry out pedagogical, motivational, social, and spiritual functions in assisting students in facing competency-based academic assessments. Research informants were determined through purposive sampling, taking into account the intensity of involvement and the relevance of their roles in the implementation of the TKA program (Campbell et al., 2020). The informants included mathematics and Indonesian teachers as TKA numeracy and literacy tutors, the principal, the vice principal for curriculum, the vice principal for student affairs, and the ninth-grade homeroom teacher. The diversity of informants is intended so that the data obtained is not partial, but is able to represent the construction of policies, learning strategies, and academic mentoring practices that take place integrally in schools.

Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation to obtain rich, detailed, and reliable data. Observations were used to directly record the learning atmosphere, pedagogical communication patterns, and the forms of teacher mentoring for students during the TKA preparation process. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted flexibly and reflectively to allow informants to express their experiences, perceptions, and mentoring strategies more substantively (Adlini et al., 2022). Documentation was utilized as a supplementary data source in the form of learning tools, TKA mentoring schedules, student evaluation archives, and school administrative documents related to the research focus. Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, as outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), ensuring a circular and continuous data interpretation process. To maintain the validity of the findings, this study employed source triangulation and technique triangulation to ensure the data obtained had stronger consistency and interpretative accuracy (Fusch et al., 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Teachers as Learning Facilitators

The role of teachers as learning facilitators in preparation for the Academic Competency Test at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Junior High School is evident in their ability to create a varied, adaptive, and student-centered learning environment. Teachers no longer function solely as conveyors of information, but rather as facilitators of the learning process, enabling students to construct their understanding more independently and contextually. This is evident in the use of various media such as textbooks, practice questions, PowerPoint presentations, instructional videos, and the use of Smart TVs and artificial intelligence-based technology to develop questions based on the TKA framework. This strategy demonstrates a pedagogical transformation toward more digital, interactive, and responsive learning, meeting the demands of modern academic assessment. Furthermore, interactive lectures, discussions, problem-solving, and repeated practice drills are crucial tools in developing students' cognitive readiness. These findings align with research demonstrating that the use of digital technology and a variety of learning methods can increase student engagement and strengthen their academic readiness for competency-based evaluations (Rahmadi & Hayati, 2022; Nugroho et al., 2023).

In the context of diverse student academic abilities, teachers demonstrate a facilitative role through the implementation of differentiated learning and individual mentoring. Teachers provide differentiated treatment based on student characteristics and learning achievements, such as providing enrichment questions for students with high abilities and intensive mentoring for students who still experience learning difficulties. This approach reflects teachers' pedagogical sensitivity to class heterogeneity, ensuring that the learning process is not uniform and rigid. Furthermore, providing additional study hours is a concrete example of teachers' efforts to create more flexible learning spaces for students who need reinforcement. This practice demonstrates that learning facilitators are not only responsible for classroom management but also for creating inclusive and supportive learning access. Recent research shows that differentiated learning and individual mentoring have proven effective in increasing student motivation, self-confidence, and academic outcomes at the secondary school level (Faiz et al., 2022; Sulastri & Wahyuni, 2024).

Furthermore, the existence of tryout programs, material deepening, remedial classes, and consulting services outside of class hours demonstrates a systematic collaboration between schools and teachers in building an academic culture that supports student readiness for TKA. Teachers not only provide academic assistance but also provide psychological support through motivation and awareness, so students have confidence in facing tests. This pedagogical relationship demonstrates that teachers, as facilitators, play a role in creating a humanistic learning climate, where students feel cared for, guided, and given space to develop according to their potential. This approach is crucial because readiness for academic tests is determined not only by material mastery but also by students' emotional and motivational states. Numerous studies confirm that teacher emotional support, material deepening programs, and the intensity of academic interactions outside of class significantly contribute to improved learning performance and readiness for national assessments and academic competencies (Prasetyo & Amrina, 2021; Lestari et al., 2025).

2. Teachers as Learning Evaluators

Teachers, as learning evaluators at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Junior High School, play a strategic role in mapping students' academic progress during preparation for the Academic Competency Test (TKA). Evaluation is not limited to the end of the lesson but is ongoing, encompassing drills, daily assignments, quizzes, periodic assessments, and periodic tryouts. Through this process, teachers gain insight into students' mastery of the material and identify areas that require reinforcement. Student responses to drills and tryouts serve as important indicators for teachers in assessing the effectiveness of ongoing learning. Thus, evaluation serves as a diagnostic tool that helps teachers make more precise and targeted pedagogical decisions. This practice demonstrates that teachers as evaluators focus not only on grading but also on a continuous process of reflection and improvement. These findings align with research suggesting that formative evaluation based on periodic practice can improve the quality of learning and help teachers adapt teaching strategies to students' learning needs (Hattie & Timperley, 2021; Sari et al., 2023). In addition, the use of tryout

results as a basis for mapping student weaknesses indicates a constructive evaluative culture, where learning outcome data is utilized to strengthen students' academic readiness to face competency assessments (Pranata & Dewi, 2022).

Follow-up of the evaluation results also shows the teacher's pedagogical awareness in providing appropriate interventions for student achievement. Students with low scores are not left behind, but are provided with remedial classes, additional mentoring, enrichment sessions, and extra study hours as a form of more intensive academic support. This step demonstrates that evaluation is understood as a coaching process, not simply a measurement of final results. Furthermore, teachers also recognize that student success in facing TKA is influenced not only by cognitive aspects but also by motivational factors that play a significant role in building mental readiness to learn. Therefore, learning evaluations are also directed at fostering student awareness of their own abilities and weaknesses, thus encouraging them to make independent improvements. This condition shows that the role of the evaluator in learning is closely related to the teacher's ability to build educational and motivating feedback. Recent research shows that evaluation accompanied by constructive feedback and follow-up programs can significantly increase students' learning motivation, self-confidence, and academic performance (Widodo et al., 2024; Anggraeni & Nurhasanah, 2025). Thus, learning evaluation in TKA preparation at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Middle School is not only a measuring tool for learning achievement, but also a means of forming students' academic and psychological readiness as a whole.

3. Teachers as Guides to Independent Learning

The role of teachers as mentors for independent learning at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Junior High School is reflected in various strategies aimed at gradually and sustainably building students' learning awareness. Teachers not only provide learning materials but also foster independent learning habits through assignments, quizzes, practice exercises, summaries, and fostering the habit of independently seeking additional learning resources. In some situations, teachers deliberately avoid providing direct answers to students' problems, but instead encourage them to discuss and find their own solutions with their peers. This approach demonstrates a shift in the teacher's role from being an information center to being a facilitator and mentor, fostering self-regulated learning in students. Furthermore, the practice of creating a daily study schedule strengthens academic discipline, enabling students to manage their study time in a more structured manner, particularly in preparation for the Academic Competency Test (TKA). This practice aligns with research showing that fostering independent learning through time management, independent practice, and reflective learning can improve students' academic readiness and learning resilience (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2021; Fauziyah et al., 2023). In this context, teachers play a role as facilitators in the process of internalizing learning responsibility, so students are not entirely dependent on teacher guidance in the classroom.

Meanwhile, teachers also monitor students' learning activities outside of school through WhatsApp groups, learning social media, homework assignments, and communication with parents. This mentoring pattern demonstrates that fostering independent learning doesn't stop in the classroom but extends to students' homes and daily lives. However, the process of developing independent learning habits still faces various obstacles, such as low motivation to learn, excessive use of gadgets, lack of discipline from childhood, and the influence of family and friends. This condition shows that independent learning is a skill that does not develop instantly, but is influenced by social support and the learning culture surrounding students. Teachers also believe that students who have an awareness of independent learning tend to be better prepared for TKA because learning time at school is limited and not all material can be fully explored in class. Therefore, independent learning skills are an important asset in strengthening understanding of the material while building students' self-confidence in facing academic assessments. This finding is supported by research stating that the level of learning independence has a positive correlation with learning outcomes, intrinsic motivation, and student readiness in facing competency-based academic evaluations (Putri & Handayani, 2022; Rahman et al., 2025).

4. Teachers as Motivators

The role of teachers as learning motivators at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Junior High School is evident in their efforts to build students' awareness of the importance of education and their readiness for the Academic Competency Test (TKA). Motivation is not only provided in the form of academic encouragement, but also through emotional and reflective approaches, such as life advice, reminders of parents' struggles, visions of the future, and even the sharing of inspiring stories about individuals who have successfully transformed their lives through education. Some teachers also utilize audiovisual media in the form of motivational videos and depictions of life's struggles as affective stimuli to strengthen students' enthusiasm for learning. This approach demonstrates that teachers act as psychological drivers, helping students develop a meaningful learning orientation, rather than simply pursuing academic grades. From a pedagogical perspective, teacher motivation is a crucial part of the learning process because it fosters students' self-confidence, optimism, and resilience in the face of academic pressure. Research shows that verbal support, appreciation, and inspiration from teachers significantly influence students' intrinsic motivation and learning engagement at the secondary education level (Sutrisno & Amalia, 2022; Wahyuni et al., 2024). Thus, teachers function not only as instructors but also as figures who build students' psychological energy so they can persist and thrive in the learning process.

On the other hand, teachers recognize that successful learning motivation is not solely determined by school-based stimuli, but is also influenced by internal and external factors within the student. Internal factors such as learning interests, aspirations, talents, and self-confidence are the primary foundations that determine a student's ability to maintain consistent learning. Meanwhile, external factors in the form of family support, social environment, teacher teaching methods, and learning facilities contribute to creating a climate that supports or hinders student motivation. Therefore, the motivation given by teachers is often directed at touching the students' personal awareness so that they have the motivation to learn that comes from within themselves. Although teachers acknowledge that the impact of motivation is sometimes not always visible instantly and comprehensively, a motivational approach is still considered important in building discipline, mental readiness, and perseverance in students facing TKA. These findings align with research showing that learning motivation is closely linked to academic discipline, learning resilience, and student readiness for competency-based educational evaluations (Nasution & Harahap, 2021; Pratiwi et al., 2025). Therefore, the teacher's role as a motivator is not merely to provide momentary encouragement, but rather to develop students' psychological strengths so they can manage their learning process more consciously and responsibly.

5. Teachers as Guides to Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Readiness

Teachers, as mentors for mental, emotional, and spiritual readiness at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Junior High School, play a crucial role in helping students cope with psychological pressure during preparation for the Academic Competency Test (TKA). Teachers not only focus on academic achievement but also strive to maintain students' emotional stability through a humanistic and persuasive approach. This support includes providing life advice, emotional support, in-depth conversations, and fostering an understanding that TKA is not the sole determinant of one's future, although it must still be addressed with maximum effort. A personal approach to students experiencing anxiety and stress is provided through intensive communication, motivation, and collaboration with homeroom teachers, subject teachers, and the school's guidance and counseling service. These efforts demonstrate that teachers act as supportive figures, helping students build psychological resilience to avoid becoming trapped by excessive academic pressure. In addition, teachers also build students' self-confidence through appreciation, gradual practice, and mental strengthening so that students do not feel inferior or easily give up. This finding is in line with research explaining that emotional support from teachers contributes significantly to reducing academic anxiety and increasing students' self-confidence in facing educational evaluations (Fitriani & Hasanah, 2022; Kurniawan et al., 2024). In this context, mental readiness is seen as an important foundation because students who are able to manage their emotions tend to be more focused, calm, and optimal in doing academic tests.

In addition to psychological support, the school also provides spiritual strengthening as an integral part of fostering student readiness to face foreign workers. Activities such as Dhuha prayer, Dzuhur prayer in congregation, dhikr together, and Al-Quran halaqah every morning are a medium for developing inner peace as well as strengthening students' religious values. Students' responses to the activity were considered positive because it was able to create a more peaceful atmosphere and foster self-confidence in facing exams. This spiritual support demonstrates that the school views learning readiness holistically, addressing not only the intellectual aspects but also the emotional and spiritual dimensions of students. Teachers believe that good mental health directly impacts academic performance, as uncontrolled psychological stress can affect students' physical health, concentration, and thinking skills during tests. These findings are supported by research showing that spiritual practices and religious support in the school environment have a positive influence on students' psychological well-being, stress management, and academic readiness (Rahmawati & Nurhayati, 2021; Salsabila et al., 2025). Thus, the role of teachers as guides for mental, emotional, and spiritual readiness becomes an important part in building students' readiness to face TKA in a more complete and balanced way.

6. Teachers as a Liaison between Schools and Parents

The role of teachers as liaisons between the school and parents at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Middle School is evident through the intensity of communication and collaboration built to support students' readiness for the Academic Competency Test (TKA). Teachers serve as bridges connecting the school's academic needs with learning support within the family environment through various communication media, such as WhatsApp groups, official circulars, learning progress reports, and parent-teacher meetings and parenting activities packaged alongside school religious studies. This form of communication is not only informative but also persuasive, as the school actively invites parents to be involved in supporting students' learning at home, from monitoring study schedules to providing moral and emotional support to their children. Parents' responses to the TKA preparation program generally show a positive and enthusiastic attitude, because they have high hopes for their children's academic success. However, the collaborative process isn't always smooth sailing. Several obstacles, such as limited parental time, miscommunication, differing perspectives, and school expectations that don't always align with family circumstances, pose challenges to building optimal collaboration. Therefore, teachers strive to strengthen partnerships through regular, open, and more humane two-way communication to foster a mutually understanding relationship between the school and the family. This condition shows that teachers not only carry out academic functions, but also social functions as educational mediators who maintain the continuity of student development at school and at home. These findings align with research demonstrating that parental involvement facilitated through intensive communication with teachers significantly impacts student learning motivation, academic discipline, and readiness for educational assessments (Epstein & Sheldon, 2021; Hidayati et al., 2024). Furthermore, other research confirms that school-family collaboration built through a communicative and participatory approach can create more effective learning support for students' academic and emotional development (Prasetyo & Wulandari, 2023).

7. Teachers as Planters of Exam Values and Ethics

The role of teachers as instillers of test values and ethics at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Junior High School is reflected in ongoing efforts to build students' moral awareness, encouraging them to view the Academic Competency Test (TKA) not merely as a means of obtaining grades, but as a process of developing self-integrity. Teachers instill the value of honesty through life advice, fostering honesty in daily activities, providing role models, and reinforcing the religious value that every behavior carries a moral responsibility before God. Understanding the importance of integrity and sportsmanship is also continuously reiterated in learning activities and morning motivation to ingrain it into students' learning culture. Furthermore, teachers strive to build students' self-confidence through sufficient practice, appreciation for the learning process, and strengthening the belief that success achieved honestly is far more meaningful than instant achievement through cheating. In some situations, the application of educational sanctions for cheating behavior is also

carried out as a form of ethical learning so that students understand the consequences of irresponsible actions. This approach demonstrates that teachers function not only as instructors of academic material but also as agents of character development, building students' moral foundations for facing exams and future social life. Teachers view character traits such as discipline, responsibility, perseverance, and honesty as more fundamental than mere academic achievement, as these values shape students' long-term resilience and work ethic. These findings align with research showing that character education and the cultivation of academic integrity significantly influence honest behavior, discipline in learning, and reduce cheating practices in educational evaluations (Suyitno & Wahyudi, 2022; Lickona, 2021). Other research also confirms that teacher role models and strengthening a culture of integrity in schools contribute significantly to shaping students' morality and increasing their sense of academic responsibility (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Therefore, teachers, as instillers of values and exam ethics, play a strategic role in ensuring that student success is measured not only by test scores but also by the character qualities that accompany the achievement process.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the role of teachers in preparing for the Academic Competency Test (TKA) at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Middle School is multidimensional and not limited to teaching functions alone. Teachers are present as learning facilitators who are able to create an adaptive learning process through the use of technology, a variety of learning methods, and academic mentoring tailored to student needs. On the other hand, teachers also carry out the function of evaluators by utilizing assessment results, practice questions, and tryouts as a basis for reflection and improvement of learning strategies. This role is strengthened through teachers' efforts to guide students' learning independence so that they are able to manage the learning process in a more disciplined, independent, and responsible manner, both at school and at home. In addition to academic aspects, teachers also play a role as motivators who build optimism, self-confidence, and learning resilience in students through emotional, inspirational, and persuasive approaches. Thus, readiness to face TKA is not only formed through mastery of the material, but also through strengthening students' motivation, discipline, and continuous learning awareness.

Furthermore, this study shows that the success of TKA preparation is greatly influenced by teachers' ability to build students' mental, emotional, spiritual, and character-building readiness as a whole. Teachers not only help students cope with the psychological pressures leading up to the test, but also create a more humane learning environment through emotional support, spiritual guidance, and strengthening religious values. In a social context, teachers also serve as liaisons between schools and parents through intensive and collaborative communication to create synergy in student learning support at home and at school. Furthermore, instilling the values of honesty, integrity, discipline, and sportsmanship is crucial in shaping students' academic ethics, ensuring that success is measured not only by grades but also by the quality of their character. Therefore, it is understandable that the role of teachers in preparing TKA at Muhammadiyah Pucang Gading Middle School is a holistic form of educational support, encompassing academic, psychological, social, spiritual, and moral dimensions in an integrated manner to support students' readiness to face the challenges of educational evaluation.

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