



THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION TEACHERS IN IMPROVING STUDENTS ABILITIES RECITING AL-QURAN

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ABSTRACT

This article explains the role of Islamic religious education teachers to improve students' ability to read the Quran. The main objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of PAI learning on improving the ability to read the Quran in grade IX students at SMPN 1 Jombang. This research uses a qualitative approach and descriptive type with a case study method. The main data sources in this study are Islamic religious education teachers and students. Data collection techniques use interviews and observation. The results showed a significant increase in the ability to read the Quran in students, this is inseparable from the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in designing relevant learning, namely using learning strategies that are directly related to the Quran which includes choosing verses that are in accordance with the learning material, ensure the text of the Quran is studied according to the student's level of understanding, and create relevant connections between the teaching material and its application in everyday life.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education Teacher, Quran Literacy, Learning Strategy

A. INTRODUCTION

The improvement of Quranic reading skills through Islamic religious education (PAI) is an integral part of the religious practice of Muslims. The Quran is the holy book that serves as the primary guide in Islamic teachings (Syilabi & Yahya, 2007), and the ability to read the Quran proficiently is a fundamental religious obligation (Fatmawati, 2019). In an increasingly fast-paced and modern world, the role of PAI in enhancing Quranic reading skills becomes even more crucial. In the digital era, where information is easily accessible, PAI learning provides a solid foundation for understanding Islamic teachings and drawing closer to Allah through the reading and comprehension of the Quran (Sabhamis & Husna, 2018).

The improvement of Quranic reading skills also has profound effects on the spiritual and mental aspects of individuals. Through reciting (reading) the Quran, individuals feel a closeness to Allah, resulting in a sense of tranquility and peace within the soul. The ability to read proficiently allows individuals to comprehend the meanings and messages contained in the Quran, thereby strengthening faith and moral values in daily life. (Ahsin, 2000) Additionally, PAI learning aids in character development, inspiring individuals to behave honestly, do good deeds, and avoid wrongdoing, thus making a positive contribution to the social development of the community. (Permendiknas No 22 Tahun 2006)

Furthermore, the enhancement of Quranic reading skills through PAI learning has broader implications at the social level. Individuals with proficient Quranic reading abilities can serve as spiritual leaders in society, assisting in educating the next generation about Islamic teachings, and providing moral guidance and ethics to fellow believers Islam. (Daradjat, 2019) This creates a society that is more aware of religious values, which, in turn, promotes peace, tolerance, and harmony in everyday life. Thus, the improvement of Quranic reading skills through PAI learning not only strengthens individuals in religious aspects but also has a positive impact on society as a whole, promoting positive values and spiritual empowerment.

In conclusion, the enhancement of Quranic reading skills through PAI learning has broader implications at the social level. Individuals with proficient Quranic reading abilities can serve as spiritual leaders in society, assisting in educating the next generation about Islamic teachings, and providing moral guidance and ethics to fellow believers. This fosters a society that is more conscious of religious values, subsequently promoting peace, tolerance, and harmony in everyday life.

B. METHODOLOGY

In this research, the author used qualitative methods and used descriptive method approach. The qualitative method is a study aimed at photographing a variable or a situation naturally and is not intended in terms of testing a particular hypothesis. (Arikunto, 2009) From another definition, qualitative research is a research procedure

intended to examine a problem with the rules of formulating a problem and continued by researching comprehensively, namely through observation, recording, interviews and involving in research procedures aimed at finding a description of patterns, descriptions and sequencing indicators. Researchers go directly to the location to make observations, interviews and also do the documentation needed as sources of this research. Some of the procedures that researchers do are that researchers conduct preliminary studies first at the school.

Researchers make initial observations by paying attention to how the learning process and also monitoring how students' proficiency in reading the Quran. Therefore, with confirmation that from one of the Islamic religious education teachers in my interview with the teacher, that there are some students who are still stammering and cannot read the Quran, researchers are interested in researching the role of Islamic religious education teachers in overcoming students' difficulties in reading the Quran.

The data in this study was obtained through observations and interviews conducted by several students and teachers of Islamic religious education at Public Junior High School 1 Jombang. The main data sources in this study are people related to the focus of research, namely Islamic religious education teachers and students. Sedangkan sumber data sekundernya yaitu jurnal, e-book, buku cetak dan sebagainya yang berkaitan langsung dengan pembahasan penelitian ini. Data collection techniques and procedures use observation guidelines, interview guidelines and documentation. Document studies are a complementary part of the use of observation and interview methods in a study. The analysis technique with a structured data preparation process obtained from observations, interview results and other materials with the aim of being easily understood and the findings will later be published to others. The data analysis in this study was carried out from the pre-field stage, field stage and after the field stage.

The process of qualitative data analysis is carried out in three stages, there are: (Milles & Hubberman, 1992) 1). Data Reduction. 2). Data Presentation. 3). Conclusion Drawing. The validity of the data for checking validity, the technique used in this study is credibility, in this study the researcher conducts observational diligence by reading references and research results or documents related to research findings.

C. RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Quranic Reading Skills

As generally known, the Quran is the word of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through the angel Gabriel as guidance and a manual for human life. The Quran was revealed in the Arabic language, both in terms of pronunciation and style. (Said Agil Husin Al-Munawwar, 2002)

The Quran was revealed in the Arabic language due to several unique qualities it possesses. One of these is that Arabic is the oldest language on Earth, having evolved

since the time of Prophet Adam (AS) and Mother Eve. Arabic stands out as the language with the richest vocabulary, featuring numerous words rarely found in other languages. Moreover, it is the language with the highest literary level.

As a guide for life, it is imperative for humanity to study the Quran to avoid going astray. To prevent being swayed by the temptations of Satan, the Quran must be studied, understood, internalized, and subsequently put into practice. This is because the Quran serves as a helper for those who remain steadfast in their commitment to reading, understanding, and practicing its teachings.(Manna, 2009)

"Kemampuan" refers to an individual's proficiency, capability, and strength to undertake tasks independently (Suryosubroto, 2009). On the other hand, the term "membaca" translates to the process of transforming a symbolic representation, writing, or sign into a reading that can then be understood in terms of its content.(Dalman, 2013)

Based on the provided definitions, it can be concluded that reading is the activity of understanding a written text by vocalizing its written form. Meanwhile, the definition of the Quran, according to scholars, is the revelation from Allah sent to Prophet Muhammad, which was then transcribed in the form of a mushaf (physical copy of the Quran). (Ash Shiddiqy, 1992). According to other experts in Quranic exegesis, the Quran is considered the "kalamullah" or the word of Allah, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and for those who read it, it constitutes an act of worship. There are many similar interpretations of the Quran in line with the ones mentioned above.

From the above definitions, it can be concluded that the ability to read the Quran is a skill for an individual to read the Quran properly and correctly according to established rules. To understand the content of a meaning, a person is required to read first, and the same applies to the Quran. In order to comprehend the intended meanings and purposes within the Quran, which serves as a guide for human life, one must first read it.

2. Indicators of Quranic Reading Skills

There are several measurement indicators to assess how well an individual can read the Quran in accordance with established rules. These rules encompass various aspects, including:

a. Tajwid

When reading the Quran, an individual must comprehend the principles of Tajwid. Tajwid is a science that studies the articulation points of letters (Makharijul Huruf), the characteristics of letters (Shifatul Huruf), and their respective recitations. The purpose of Tajwid is to enable individuals to read the Quran correctly and fluently, following the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and avoiding errors in the recitation of the Quran.(Soenarto, 2021)

The scholars have deemed the study of Tajwid as a Fardhu Kifayah, which means it is a communal obligation, while applying the rules of Tajwid when reading the Quran

is considered *Fardhu 'Ain*, an individual obligation that is obligatory for each person reading the Quran. Therefore, it is incumbent upon every Muslim to learn Tajwid to avoid errors in Quranic recitation.

b. *Makharijul Huruf*

Makharijul Huruf, or the articulation points of letters, vary according to the type of letter. A learner cannot differentiate between letters without knowing their articulation points. It is crucial to distinguish between letters to avoid reading errors, as a mispronunciation can alter the intended meaning. (Akhmadi, 2011)

c. *Sifat huruf*

Each letter possesses distinct characteristics or qualities, making it easier to differentiate between them. These letter attributes include *jahr* (audibility), *rokhawah* (softness), *syiddah* (intensity), and others. Letters also have rules of pronunciation, such as the rules for pronouncing *mim mati*, *imalah*, *naql*, and others. (Syarbini, 2010)

d. *Kelancaran/Tartil*

Allah commands His servants to recite the Quran with *tartil*, or in a measured and deliberate manner. This directive aims to enable the reader to contemplate the Quranic verses and truly understand its content. Reciting the Quran slowly and applying Tajwid makes the recitation pleasing to the ears of the reader and the listener. *Tartil*, in this context, means embellishing/improving Quranic recitation and understanding and applying the rules of *ibtida'* (beginning) and *waqaf* (pause). (Humam, 2005)

3. Factors Influencing Quranic Reading Skills

Muhibbin Syah identifies these factors as internal and external factors.

a. Internal Factors

Internal factors are those originating from within the individual. This category comprises two sub-factors: physiological and psychological factors.

1) Physiological Factors

These factors are related to the physical condition of each individual. For instance, someone with a tongue disorder may experience difficulties in articulation, impacting clarity in speech and Quranic reading. The overall physical health of an individual also affects a child's learning process; weak physical health can hinder a child's learning.

2) Psychological Factors

These factors relate to the mental and emotional condition within an individual, motivating them to be more diligent in learning. Psychological factors include:

a) Intelligence: The ability to facilitate accurate adjustments to an individual's social environment. These internal factors collectively play a significant role in determining

an individual's ability to read the Quran effectively. Addressing physiological and psychological aspects is essential for optimizing Quranic reading skills. (Hamalik, 2000)

- b) Interest: Interest refers to a high curiosity and inclination towards something. It has a significant impact on an individual's ability to comprehend something, such as reading the Quran. High interest tends to result in high proficiency.
- c) Motivation: Motivation is something that propels an individual to take action. Motivation can determine an individual's level of proficiency in reading the Quran. Appropriate learning motivation and diligent effort yield positive results.

b. External Factors

External factors originate from outside the individual and can be categorized into social and non-social external factors.

1) Social Environment Factors

The social environment is related to the social conditions around an individual, including family, the local community, teachers, and playmates. Everything surrounding a student constitutes their social environment. The social environment significantly influences a student's learning process, such as the school environment, family, and the community.

For example, a student growing up in a religious family is likely to become a religious student. On the other hand, if a student grows up in a family that is less religious, and the social conditions of the community involve various religions, that student is likely to grow up with less religious inclination and may not be very familiar with the differences between their religion and others.

The educational background also affects a student's ability to read the Quran. For instance, a student who has received Quranic education in a Madrasah will likely have different results compared to a student who has not had Quranic education before.

2) Non-Social Environment Factors

Non-social environmental factors encompass supportive resources for an individual. For a student, their non-social environment includes the structure and location of their home, the school building and its location, weather conditions, and the time used for studying. These factors are considered determinants of a student's ability to read the Quran.

For instance, a student may not feel comfortable studying in a school building that is dilapidated, leaks during rain, and has other issues. The location of the school, if in an inappropriate place (such as in the middle of a graveyard), also determines the level of comfort for students during their studies.

4. Quranic Reading Skills of 9th Grade Students at SMPN 1 Jombang.

After the observation process, the Quranic reading skills of the 9th-grade students at SMPN 1 Jombang were found to be lacking. Many students exhibited difficulties in reading the Quran, such as stuttering during the reading, inconsistency between the pronunciation of letters and their actual reading, and inaccuracies in applying Tajwid rules.

In this observational process, the students' Quranic reading abilities can be evaluated at several levels:

- a. Basic Level: The first level is the basic level, where students have the ability to read the Quran in a simple manner without being bound by Tajwid rules and melody.
- b. Intermediate Level: The second level is the intermediate level, where students have the ability to read the Quran by following appropriate punctuation marks in accordance with Tajwid rules.
- c. Advanced Level: The third level is the advanced level, where students have the ability to read the Quran with good recitation and melody in accordance with common melodic patterns.
- d. Proficient Level: The fourth level is the proficient level, where students have the ability to read the Quran using various recitation styles.

5. The Implementation of Islamic Religious Education in Enhancing Students' Ability to Read the Qur'an in Grade IX at SMPN 1 Jombang

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in enhancing the reading ability of students in Grade IX at SMPN 1 Jombang is a crucial step in religious education at the school. This program aims to ensure that students at the junior high school level can read and understand the Qur'an proficiently, enabling them to lead a more profound and high-quality religious life. One key component of this implementation is a structured teaching method that focuses on tajwid (the rules of proper Qur'anic recitation) and understanding the content of the Qur'an.

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to improve the reading ability of Grade IX students at SMPN 1 Jombang is a highly relevant effort in the context of religious education at the school. The primary goal of this program is to ensure that junior high school students have the ability to read and understand the Qur'an well, enabling them to lead a more profound and high-quality religious life. To achieve this goal, several key components must be considered in this implementation.

Firstly, a directed teaching method that focuses on tajwid is crucial. Students need to understand the necessary tajwid techniques for reading the Qur'an correctly and precisely, avoiding pronunciation errors that may alter the meanings of sacred verses. Trained and experienced PAI teachers play a key role in teaching tajwid correctly. Additionally, understanding the content of the Qur'an is also an equally important aspect. This program must ensure that students can absorb and comprehend the mes-

sages of the Qur'an. It's not just about reading but also about reflecting and connecting religious teachings to everyday life. This helps students strengthen their faith and understand the moral and ethical values contained in the Qur'an. Therefore, the implementation of PAI learning focused on Qur'an reading skills at SMPN 1 Jombang is a highly relevant step in religious education. This program assists students in developing good Qur'an reading skills, understanding tajwid, and contemplating the meaning of religious teachings. It's not only to fulfill religious obligations but also to shape individuals who are more conscious of religious values, enabling them to lead a more profound and high-quality religious life.

To enhance the understanding and fluency of Grade IX students at SMPN 1 Jombang, the implementation includes assignments such as memorizing Qur'anic verses related to the learning material. Collaborative learning involving reading Qur'anic verses or hadiths related to the taught material is consistently applied. SMPN 1 Jombang also has a special program in its local religious curriculum, namely Diniyah and BTQ (Qur'an reading and writing). Especially in the BTQ program, it helps PAI teachers in efforts to improve students' understanding and fluency in reading the Qur'an (Syarifudin, 2021)

The importance of this program is not only in students' ability to read the Qur'an but also in their understanding of the moral and ethical values contained in the Qur'an. Under the guidance of experienced and caring PAI teachers, students are taught to connect the teachings of the Qur'an with their daily lives. This helps them understand the deeper meanings of religious teachings and apply them in practical actions in their daily lives. Furthermore, through the implementation of PAI learning, students are also encouraged to experience a spiritual connection with Allah through the recitation (tilawah) of the Qur'an, creating a sense of tranquility and peace within themselves.

In addition to enhancing the ability to read the Qur'an, this program also places significant emphasis on understanding the moral and ethical values inherent in the Qur'an. Students not only learn how to read this sacred text but are also taught to relate religious teachings to their everyday lives. Experienced and caring PAI teachers play a guiding role in helping students understand the deeper meanings of these religious teachings and apply them in real-life situations.

This program creates an environment where students are invited to experience a deeper spiritual connection with Allah through the recitation of the Qur'an. By reflecting on the meanings of the sacred verses and connecting them to their personal lives, students can feel a closeness to Allah that creates a sense of tranquility and peace in their souls. This not only helps strengthen their faith but also reinforces the spiritual aspects within them, which is crucial in facing challenges and stress in daily life.

With such a holistic approach, the PAI learning program is not just about equipping students with the ability to read the Qur'an proficiently but also shaping individuals who are more aware of the moral, ethical, and spiritual values in Islam. This helps students become better individuals, more compassionate towards others, and more

conscious of their actions in daily life. Moreover, the spiritual experiences they gain enrich their personal lives with invaluable feelings of tranquility and peace.

6. The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Improving the Ability of Grade IX Students to Read the Qur'an at SMPN 1 Jombang

Islamic Education teachers play a crucial role in enhancing students' ability to read the Quran. The presence of Islamic Education teachers serves as figures who not only transfer knowledge but also serve as role models for the students. In this context, Islamic Education teachers at SMPN 1 Jombang design relevant lessons by using teaching strategies directly related to the Quran. This includes selecting verses that align with the learning material, ensuring that the Quranic texts are studied according to the students' comprehension level, and creating relevant connections between the lesson content and its application in daily life.

Teachers often employ methods such as reading verses together during the lesson, followed by explaining the correct pronunciation and using methods to write Quranic letters. Students are then asked to review and memorize the verses, fostering a habit that trains their Quranic reading skills during Islamic Education lessons. Islamic Education teachers play a crucial role in helping students understand the contextual meanings of Quranic verses (Masdani, 2021). They guide students to relate Quranic teachings to daily life and broaden their understanding of the messages contained within. Islamic Education teachers also act as mentors and guides in Quranic learning by providing individual support, giving feedback, and identifying specific needs to ensure a good understanding (Ahyat, 2017).

Moreover, Islamic Education teachers contribute to building students' motivation to learn the Quran by creating a supportive environment, inspiring students, and motivating them to become more involved in the learning process (MUFARRIAH, 2018).. This can be achieved through the use of innovative teaching techniques, introducing inspirational stories from the Quran, or through engaging discussions. Islamic Education teachers also serve as positive examples by practicing Quranic teachings in their daily lives. The role of Islamic Education teachers at SMPN 1 Jombang in improving students' Quranic reading abilities extends beyond teaching the text. It involves shaping characters, providing inspiration, and creating a supportive environment for the spiritual development of students.

D. CONCLUSION

The Quranic reading skills of 9th-grade students at SMPN 1 Jombang exhibit various challenges, including difficulties such as stuttering, mispronunciation of letters, and inaccuracies in applying Tajwid rules. In the observation process, the students' abilities were categorized into different levels. The first level is the basic level, where students exhibit a fundamental ability to read the Quran in a straightforward manner,

without adherence to Tajwid rules or melody. The second level is the intermediate level, where students display the capability to read the Quran while following appropriate punctuation marks in line with Tajwid rules. The third level is the advanced level, involving students reading the Quran with proficient recitation and melody, aligning with common melodic patterns.

To enhance the understanding and fluency of 9th-grade students at SMPN 1 Jombang, implementation strategies include assigning tasks such as memorizing Quranic verses related to the learning material and consistently incorporating Quranic verses or hadiths related to the taught material in collaborative learning. The school has special programs in its local religious curriculum, including diniyah and BTQ (reading and writing the Quran). The BTQ program, in particular, aids the PAI teacher in efforts to improve students' understanding and fluency in reading the Quran.

PAI teachers play a crucial role in building students' motivation to learn the Quran by creating a supportive and inspiring learning environment. This can be achieved through innovative teaching techniques, introducing inspirational stories from the Quran, or engaging discussions that spark interest. PAI teachers also serve as positive examples by practicing Quranic teachings in their daily lives. At SMPN 1 Jombang, the role of PAI teachers in enhancing students' Quranic reading skills goes beyond teaching texts; it involves shaping character, providing inspiration, and creating a supportive environment for spiritual development."

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