
The Role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers in Overcoming Difficulties in Reading the Qur'an among Seventh Grade Students at SMPN 2 Kadindi

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the forms of difficulties in learning to read the Qur'an faced by seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Kadindi, understand the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in overcoming these difficulties, and identify the factors causing these learning difficulties. The research employs a qualitative approach aimed at revealing factual conditions without manipulation. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. The collected data is then analyzed descriptively and qualitatively. The results show that the forms of difficulties encountered by students in learning to read the Qur'an at SMPN 2 Kadindi include the pronunciation of hijaiyyah letters (makharijul huruf), fluency issues in reading, and lack of understanding of tajweed rules. The role of PAI teachers in overcoming these difficulties involves providing Qur'an reading guidance before lessons start, offering personal guidance, and applying various teaching methods. The factors causing these learning difficulties include low student interest in PAI lessons, family education background, and school policies directing students to read the Qur'an through existing materials or textbooks. The three roles played by PAI teachers at SMPN 2 Kadindi have proven effective in overcoming the difficulties in learning to read the Qur'an, as evidenced by the positive responses from students. However, some students still do not take the lessons seriously. Nonetheless, with the teachers' efforts, students have shown improvements such as better pronunciation of hijaiyyah letters, mastering the length of readings, and reading the Qur'an more fluently, although there is still room for improvement in reading fluency and tajweed comprehension.

Keywords: Learning difficulties, Teacher's role, Reading the Qur'an

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and morals. One of the main aspects of PAI is learning the Quran, which includes the ability to read, understand, and practice its teachings (Atsani et al., 2023). The ability to read the Quran is fundamental for students to delve into its contents and meanings. However, in practice, not all students have the same ability to read the Quran. At SMPN 2 Kadindi, this challenge is quite prominent, especially in the seventh grade. Many students still face difficulties in reading the Quran correctly and fluently. These difficulties can be attributed to various factors, such as a lack of basic Quranic education in previous levels, insufficient practice, or even a lack of motivation from the students themselves

(Nurdiah et al., 2023). This situation requires special attention from PAI teachers who are responsible for guiding and directing students to improve their Quran reading skills (Nasri & Mulyohadi, 2023).

The role of PAI teachers is crucial in overcoming these difficulties (Nasri, 2023b). PAI teachers not only act as instructors but also as mentors who can provide effective solutions and appropriate teaching methods to help students understand and read the Quran more easily (Nasri, 2019). With the right approach, it is hoped that seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Kadindi can overcome their difficulties in reading the Quran and ultimately read fluently and understand the contents of the holy book. Previous research has shown that the role of teachers is very important in improving students' Quran reading skills. A study by Rahmah stated

that varied and interactive teaching methods can increase students' interest and ability to read the Quran (Nasri, 2017). Furthermore, research by Hidayat found that the use of technology in Quranic learning, such as digital applications and audiovisual media, has a positive impact on students' reading ability (Nasri, 2016).

The existing literature shows various effective approaches and strategies in addressing difficulties in reading the Quran. According to Hasan, the approaches of tahsin (improving the quality of reading) and tajwid (rules of Quranic recitation) are very important in Quranic learning (Holme, 2003). Meanwhile, a study by Ahmad emphasized the importance of contextual learning that connects Quranic material with students' daily lives, thus motivating them to learn more (Solihat et al., 2023). Other literature, as outlined by Zain, highlights the importance of the role of parents and the environment in supporting Quranic learning at school. Collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community is considered a key factor in the success of Quranic education (Alsharbi et al., 2021).

This research is expected to contribute significantly in several aspects: theoretical, practical, and policy. Theoretically, this research adds to the body of literature on the role of PAI teachers in Quranic education, especially in the context of overcoming reading difficulties at the junior high school level. Practically, this research provides recommendations for PAI teachers at SMPN 2 Kadindi and other schools regarding effective methods and strategies to address Quran reading difficulties. From a policy perspective, this research can offer insights to education policymakers on the importance of support for programs aimed at improving Quran reading skills in schools. This introduction has outlined the crucial role of PAI teachers in addressing Quran reading difficulties in the seventh grade at SMPN 2 Kadindi, along with a review of previous research and relevant literature. This study is expected to provide new insights and practical solutions for educators to enhance students' Quran reading abilities.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the role of PAI teachers in overcoming difficulties in reading the Quran among seventh-

grade students at SMPN 2 Kadindi (Nasri, 2023a). The qualitative research method was chosen because it allows researchers to gather detailed information and obtain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, views, and strategies used by PAI teachers in the learning process (Nasri et al., 2024).

This study uses a case study design (Cissé & Rasmussen, 2022). The case study was chosen because it enables researchers to conduct an in-depth exploration of a specific context, namely SMPN 2 Kadindi, and observe how PAI teachers play a role in overcoming difficulties in reading the Quran in the seventh grade (Wallwey & Kajfez, 2023). The subjects of this study are PAI teachers who teach seventh grade at SMPN 2 Kadindi, seventh-grade students who experience difficulties in reading the Quran, as well as the school principal and parents of the students (Creswell & J. David Creswell, 2022). The selection of these subjects is based on the objective of obtaining various perspectives on the issue being studied (Luo & Chan, 2022).

Data in this study were collected through several techniques. In-depth interviews were conducted with PAI teachers, the school principal, and parents of the students to gather information on their experiences, views, and strategies used in Quranic learning (Falcetta et al., 2023). Additionally, observations were made in the classroom during the Quranic learning process to directly see the methods and approaches used by PAI teachers (Blackley et al., 2020). Document data collection includes the analysis of documents related to the curriculum, lesson plans, and students' learning outcomes (Ritter et al., 2023).

Data analysis was carried out in several stages (Schwandt, 2021). The first stage is data reduction, where the collected data are reduced by sorting, summarizing, and simplifying the data to make it easier to understand (Mihas, 2023). The second stage is data presentation, where the reduced data are presented in narrative, table, or diagram form to facilitate further analysis (Jacobs & Perez, 2023). The final stage is drawing conclusions, where conclusions are drawn based on the analyzed data, and verification is conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings (Eftenaru, 2023).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, data triangulation was performed by comparing information obtained from various

sources and different data collection methods. Additionally, member checks were conducted by requesting confirmation from the research subjects regarding the results of the interviews and observations (Jansen et al., 2022). This research was conducted through several steps, starting with preparation such as obtaining research permits, preparing research instruments, and conducting instrument trials (Pettit et al., 2022). This was followed by data collection, data analysis, and reporting of results (Fitzner et al., 2023). By using this research method, it is expected to obtain an in-depth understanding of the role of PAI teachers in overcoming difficulties in reading the Quran in the seventh grade at SMPN 2 Kadindi and to identify effective strategies in the learning process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

This study aims to understand the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in addressing difficulties in reading the Qur'an among seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Kadindi. The following are the research results obtained from various data sources, including in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation.

1. The Role of PAI Teachers in Overcoming Difficulties in Reading the Qur'an

PAI teachers at SMPN 2 Kadindi play a crucial role in helping students overcome difficulties in reading the Qur'an. Based on interviews with several PAI teachers, some strategies they use include:

- a. Individual Approach
Teachers provide special attention to students who have difficulty reading the Qur'an by providing individual guidance. This allows teachers to understand the specific problems faced by each student and provide appropriate solutions.
- b. Use of Tahsin and Tajwid Methods
Teachers apply the tahsin (improving the quality of recitation) and tajwid (rules of recitation) methods in learning. These methods help students understand how to read letters, diacritics, and the rules of recitation in the Qur'an correctly.
- c. Use of Audiovisual Media
Some teachers utilize audiovisual media such as videos and digital applications that

support Quranic learning. The use of this technology significantly helps students better understand the recitation and increases their interest.

d. Continuous Practice

Teachers ensure that students receive continuous practice in reading the Qur'an, both in and out of class. Teachers also give homework assignments focused on Quranic reading practice.

2. Challenges Faced by PAI Teachers

Although various strategies have been employed, PAI teachers at SMPN 2 Kadindi still face several challenges, including:

- a. Lack of Student Motivation
Some students lack motivation to learn to read the Qur'an. This is influenced by a lack of support from the home environment and a lack of awareness of the importance of Quranic reading skills.
- b. Limited Learning Time
The allocated time for Quranic learning at school is often considered insufficient to address all the difficulties students face.
- c. Variation in Student Abilities
The varying levels of Quranic reading abilities among students require teachers to work extra to adapt teaching methods to each student's needs.

3. Role of the School Principal and Parents

The role of the school principal and parents is also crucial in supporting the efforts of PAI teachers. Based on interviews with the school principal, some steps taken to support Quranic learning include:

- a. Facility Improvement
The school provides adequate facilities such as comfortable classrooms, teaching aids, and supportive learning media.
- b. Extracurricular Programs
The school organizes extracurricular programs focused on Quranic learning to provide additional time for students to learn.

From interviews with several parents of students, it is known that support from home significantly influences students' Quranic learning. Parents who actively accompany their children in learning to read the Qur'an at home tend to see a more significant improvement in their children's abilities.

4. Document Analysis

Document analysis of the curriculum, lesson plans, and student learning outcomes shows that:

a. Curriculum and Lesson Plans

The curriculum and Lesson Implementation Plans (RPP) used already cover tahnin and tajwid materials, but more time allocation is needed for practical reading practice.

b. Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes indicate an improvement in Quranic reading skills in most students, although some students still require additional guidance.

This study found that the role of PAI teachers is crucial in overcoming difficulties in reading the Qur'an in the seventh grade at SMPN 2 Kadindi. Strategies such as the individual approach, use of tahnin and tajwid methods, utilization of audiovisual media, and continuous practice are highly effective. However, challenges such as student motivation, time constraints, and variation in student abilities still need to be addressed with stronger support from the school and parents. This study also indicates that collaboration between teachers, school principals, and parents is a key factor in the success of Quranic learning.

Discussion

The research results shed light on the significant role of PAI teachers in addressing challenges related to Quranic reading among seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Kadindi. Several key points emerge from the findings, which can be discussed in relation to relevant theories in education and Quranic learning.

1. Individualized Approach and Constructivist Learning Theory

The use of an individualized approach by PAI teachers aligns with the constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of actively constructing knowledge through personal experiences and interactions (Tennyson & Volk, 2015). By providing individual guidance and tailored support to students with difficulties in Quranic reading, teachers facilitate the construction of meaning and understanding according to each student's unique learning needs. This approach promotes a learner-centered environment where students actively engage in the learning process, leading to deeper comprehension and mastery of

Quranic reading skills (Yahyaie & Mahini, 2012).

2. Utilization of Audiovisual Media and Multimedia Learning Theory

The incorporation of audiovisual media and digital applications in Quranic learning corresponds with the multimedia learning theory, which posits that the use of multiple modalities enhances learning effectiveness (AL-Dossary et al., 2022). According to this theory, the combination of visual and auditory stimuli can facilitate better understanding and retention of information (Xue et al., 2023). PAI teachers who leverage audiovisual resources provide students with diverse learning experiences, catering to different learning preferences and styles (Nerantzidis et al., 2023). By appealing to both visual and auditory senses, these multimedia approaches promote more comprehensive and engaging Quranic learning experiences, leading to improved reading skills.

3. Parental Involvement and Social Learning Theory

The involvement of parents in supporting their children's Quranic learning reflects the principles of social learning theory, which emphasizes the influence of social interactions and modeling on learning behaviour (Widiarto & Emrouznejad, 2015). According to this theory, individuals learn from observing and imitating the behaviors of others, particularly significant figures in their social environment (Hermawan, 2023). When parents actively participate in their children's Quranic learning, they serve as role models and provide direct guidance, reinforcing the importance and value of Quranic literacy (Husnawadi & Nasri, 2023). This collaborative approach between parents and teachers fosters a supportive learning environment that enhances students' motivation and commitment to Quranic reading.

4. Challenges and Self-Determination Theory

The challenges faced by PAI teachers, such as student motivation and time constraints, can be analyzed through the lens of self-determination theory, which examines the factors that influence intrinsic motivation and volitional behaviour (Ezeudoka & Fan, 2023). According to this theory, individuals are motivated to engage in activities when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence,

and relatedness are satisfied. In the context of Quranic learning, addressing challenges such as student motivation requires strategies that nurture students' sense of autonomy and competence, while also fostering a supportive social environment where students feel connected and valued (Rulyandi & Nasri, 2023). By promoting a sense of ownership and competence in Quranic reading, teachers can enhance students' intrinsic motivation and persistence in overcoming difficulties (Nasri, 2015).

The discussion of research results in light of relevant theories highlights the importance of employing effective pedagogical strategies and fostering supportive learning environments in Quranic education. By aligning teaching practices with theoretical frameworks such as constructivism, multimedia learning, social learning, and self-determination theory, PAI teachers can optimize the learning experiences of students and facilitate their development of Quranic reading skills. Moreover, addressing challenges in Quranic learning requires a holistic approach that considers the interplay of individual, social, and environmental factors, emphasizing the collaborative efforts of teachers, parents, and the broader community in supporting students' Quranic literacy journey.

CONCLUSION

The study has provided valuable insights into the role of PAI teachers in addressing difficulties in Quranic reading among seventh-grade students at SMPN 2 Kadindi. Through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, several key findings have emerged. PAI teachers play a crucial role in supporting students' Quranic reading skills through individualized approaches, the utilization of multimedia resources, and continuous practice. However, challenges such as student motivation, time constraints, and varying student abilities persist, necessitating collaborative efforts from teachers, school administrators, parents, and the community (Nasri, 2015). The findings of this study underscore the importance of employing effective pedagogical strategies aligned with relevant theories in education. Constructivist learning approaches, multimedia learning principles, and social learning theories offer valuable frameworks for enhancing Quranic

learning experiences and addressing students' diverse needs.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve Quranic education at SMPN 2 Kadindi and similar institutions:

1. **Professional Development for PAI Teachers**
Provide professional development opportunities for PAI teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills and knowledge of effective Quranic teaching methods. Workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning communities can support teachers in implementing innovative strategies tailored to students' needs.
2. **Integration of Multimedia Resources**
Encourage the integration of multimedia resources, such as educational videos, digital applications, and interactive learning platforms, into Quranic learning activities. This can enhance student engagement, facilitate comprehension, and cater to diverse learning styles.
3. **Promotion of Parental Involvement**
Foster greater parental involvement in Quranic education by organizing parent-teacher meetings, workshops, and family Quranic reading sessions. Educate parents about the importance of supporting their children's Quranic learning journey and provide guidance on how to facilitate learning at home.
4. **Allocation of Adequate Learning Time**
Review and adjust the allocation of learning time for Quranic education to ensure sufficient opportunities for practice and reinforcement. Consider extending class hours, implementing dedicated Quranic learning periods, or incorporating Quranic reading sessions into extracurricular activities.
5. **Establishment of Support Systems**
Develop support systems within the school community to address individual student needs and overcome challenges related to Quranic reading. This may include peer tutoring programs, mentoring initiatives, or counseling services to provide additional guidance and encouragement.
6. **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation**
Implement a system for continuous monitoring and evaluation of Quranic

education programs to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Collect feedback from students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders to inform ongoing curriculum development and instructional practices.

By implementing these recommendations, SMPN 2 Kadindi can enhance its Quranic education program and empower students to develop strong Quranic reading skills. Additionally, similar institutions can adapt these strategies to create supportive learning environments that foster students' spiritual growth and academic success in Quranic studies.

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