

## Student Problems in Reading the Quran at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan

Khairul Akbar<sup>1\*</sup>, Citra Oktogia Fitri<sup>2</sup>, Aswan Djante<sup>3</sup>, Jenita Khoirala<sup>4</sup>, Juanita<sup>5</sup>  
Universitas Muhammadiyah Luwuk, Indonesia

**Corresponding Author:** Khairul Akbar; [khairulakbar606@gmail.com](mailto:khairulakbar606@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

The ability to read the Qur'an is a fundamental competency in Islamic Religious Education that students are expected to master as part of developing their religious character. However, in reality, some students still experience difficulties in reading the Qur'an properly and correctly. This study aims to describe the condition of students' Qur'an reading ability, identify the factors influencing the low level of this ability, and examine the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers and schools in fostering Qur'an reading skills at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The informants consisted of seven participants: one Islamic Religious Education teacher, four students at the Iqro learning stage, and two students at the Qur'an reading stage. Field data were collected for approximately 43 days. The findings indicate that several students still have low Qur'an reading ability, particularly in reading fluency, pronunciation of makharijul huruf, and application of tajwid rules. Therefore, more structured guidance through learning activities, habituation of Qur'an reading, and continuous mentoring is necessary

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In Islamic religious education, one fundamental skill that students must master is the ability to read the Quran. This skill encompasses not only fluent reading but also the ability to pronounce tartil (correct pronunciation), apply the principles of tajweed, and master the pronunciation of letters. Theoretically, knowledge of Arabic phonetics, an understanding of pronunciation principles, and consistent reading habits are essential for Quranic reading skills. Therefore, accurate Quranic reading is crucial for developing students' religious competence, as well as their language skills.

In reality, Quranic reading remains difficult at various levels of education. According to various studies, some students still struggle to read the Quran correctly. Research by Syarifah (2023) indicates that some students particularly struggle with correctly applying tajweed guidelines and understanding the pronunciation of the letters. These problems include mispronouncing letters, using incorrect reading rules, and not practicing consistently, all of which contribute to poor reading skills.

Many studies have shown that students' learning strategies and motivation, in addition to technical aspects, influence their Quranic recitation ability. According to other research, many students frequently make errors in pronouncing words correctly and applying the rules of Quranic recitation because they do not yet fully understand Tajweed. This implies that, to maximize students' reading abilities, the Quranic recitation process requires a more systematic approach and continuous practice (Tambusai et al., 2023).

However, in reality, initial findings by researchers at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan revealed that some students still felt that their Quranic recitation skills were not yet fully developed. Several tenth and eleventh grade students were still at the Iqra stage of their learning process. These findings demonstrate that some students do not yet possess the necessary skills to recite the Quran at their current level of education.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research focuses on three main areas: the state of students' Quranic recitation abilities, factors contributing to low Quranic recitation abilities, and the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and schools in improving these abilities. This research is based on the phenomena and background observed at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan. To gain a more comprehensive picture of the reality of Quranic teaching in the classroom, these three factors are deemed important to examine in depth.

To strengthen Islamic religious education at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan, this study aims to objectively describe students' Quranic reading skills, analyze the factors influencing these low levels, and identify the roles of Islamic Religious Education teachers and schools in improving students' reading skills.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, aiming to provide an in-depth description of students' Quranic reading abilities, the factors influencing these abilities, and the role of Islamic Religious Education

(PAI) teachers and school administrators in fostering Quranic reading. A descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a natural understanding of social phenomena through data collection in the form of words, explanations, and interpretations from research participants. This method emphasizes not only the results but also the processes and meanings of the phenomena studied, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of the conditions under study (Waruwu, 2024).

The study was conducted at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan for approximately 43 days through fieldwork. In qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary instrument, directly involved in the data collection process. Seven informants were recruited: one PAI teacher, four students still in the Iqro stage of learning, and two students already in the Quranic reading stage. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, considering specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. Islamic Religious Education teachers were selected as the primary informants, while students were recruited to obtain information on their learning experiences, Quranic reading ability levels, and the difficulties they encountered (Adiningrat & Albina, 2025).

The seven informants in this study consisted of one Islamic Religious Education teacher, four students in the Iqro stage of learning, and two students already in the Quranic reading stage. Purposeful sampling was used to select informants, with informants selected based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. Islamic Religious Education teachers were selected as the primary informants because of their role in Quranic reading education and development in schools. Students were selected to directly identify their learning experiences, Quranic reading ability levels, and the challenges they faced during the learning process.

Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted by directly observing Islamic Religious Education learning activities and Quranic reading development in schools, while in-depth interviews were conducted with Islamic Religious Education teachers and students to obtain information regarding Quranic reading ability and the factors influencing it. Documentation was used as supporting data in the form of learning activity records, attendance lists, and documentation of Quranic reading coaching activities. The data obtained was then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analysis model, which includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Waruwu, 2024).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Quranic Reading Skills of Students at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan*

Quranic reading skills at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan show significant diversity, as evidenced by interviews with teachers and students. According to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, students' reading skills are generally still considered minimal, particularly in pronunciation, letter length, and application of Tajweed principles. This difficulty indicates that students struggle not only with reading fluency, but also with accurate pronunciation and

understanding of reading principles. This demonstrates that students' Quranic reading skills do not meet the requirements of vocational education.

These interview results align with research by Mappanyompa (2022), which revealed a significant correlation between students' Quranic reading skills and their understanding of Tajweed, particularly regarding letter pronunciation and the application of reading standards. According to this study, reading errors are usually caused by a conceptual understanding of Tajweed, not a mechanical inability to read letters.

Educational practices clearly demonstrate that students who are proficient in Quranic reading differ from those at the Iqro stage. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers indicate that students at the Iqro stage have limited reading accuracy and are less proficient in Tajweed, while fluent students often participate in Islamic Religious Education classes with greater enthusiasm and confidence. Teachers use fluency measures based on pronunciation accuracy and overall fluency.

Syarifuddin et al. (2022) revealed that Quranic recitation proficiency varies within a class and is influenced by previous education, family support, and the intensity of reading practice, further amplifying this skill variation. This data supports the findings of research conducted at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan, which showed that skill variation is common but that an appropriate pedagogical approach is essential.

Interviews with students at the Iqro stage revealed that the main difficulties they face lie in applying Tajweed rules and the length of recitation, rather than in recognizing or connecting the hijaiyah letters. This indicates a gap between mastery of basic skills and a deeper understanding of Quranic recitation rules. Furthermore, psychological factors such as anxiety when reading in front of the class also impact students' abilities. The Quran reading ability of students at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan can be grouped into two categories: those who still experience difficulties in applying tajweed and the length of the recitation, and those who have read relatively fluently. This difference indicates that the level of Quran reading mastery in schools is not yet evenly distributed, resulting in significant variation in ability among students.

### ***Factors Contributing to Students' Low Quranic Reading Skills***

Quranic reading is a fundamental skill for every Muslim student. This skill includes reading the hijaiyah letters, understanding tajweed, and being able to recite Quranic verses fluently. However, in practice, many students still struggle to read the Quran. Interviews with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and several students revealed several factors that influence this. These factors include the environment, reading preferences, individual motivation, and family support.

The PAI teachers stated that students' low Quranic reading skills are influenced by a lack of early reading habits, as well as environmental and family background factors. Quranic reading is a skill that requires continuous practice, so without regular practice, students will struggle to recognize the hijaiyah letters and apply the rules of tajweed correctly. Students from religious families are generally introduced to Quranic learning from an early age, while students who

lack parental guidance tend to have more limited learning opportunities. This aligns with Surya & Fanreza (2024), who demonstrated that regularly practicing Quranic recitation at home and at school can improve reading skills while simultaneously creating a religious environment that supports students' interaction with the Quran.

Interviews with students at the Iqro stage revealed that some of them did not have a regular Quranic recitation practice before entering vocational high school and did not have teachers to guide them in Quranic recitation. This situation results in students lacking a foundation in recognizing the hijaiyah letters and understanding the rules of tajwid, resulting in difficulties in reading correctly. Furthermore, a lack of practice and low motivation to learn also impact the development of students' Quranic recitation skills. According to Supriadi et al. (2023), motivation significantly influences the quality of students' Quranic learning. Students with high motivation tend to practice more diligently and more easily achieve learning targets. Conversely, students with low motivation tend to struggle to achieve the desired abilities.

In contrast to students still at the Iqro stage, the two students who were able to read the Quran fluently had different learning experiences. Interview results indicate that from an early age, they have been accustomed to studying the Quran regularly, both at home and at school. Furthermore, support from parents and teachers is a crucial factor in the learning process, such as providing motivation, guidance in correcting reading errors, and structured learning guidance. In line with this, Syarifuddin et al. (2022) explain that Quranic reading skills can develop optimally through continuous practice, support from teachers, and a conducive educational environment.

Low Quranic reading ability among students is influenced by various interrelated factors, such as a lack of Quranic reading habits from an early age, low motivation to learn, minimal family support, and a lack of regular practice and guidance. Conversely, students who have better Quranic reading skills are generally accustomed to learning from an early age and receive strong support from their families and educational environment. Therefore, improving Quranic reading ability requires collaboration between schools, families, and students to ensure optimal learning.

### ***The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers and Schools in Developing Students' Quranic Recitation***

Islamic Religious Education teachers and schools play a crucial role in improving students' Quranic recitation skills, considering that schools serve not only as a place to transfer knowledge but also as a means of developing religious character. In practice, learning to read the Quran requires ongoing practice, although its implementation often faces various obstacles such as time constraints, suboptimal teaching methods, and low interest among some students.

Based on interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers, schools have implemented several efforts to support the improvement of Quranic recitation skills, including encouraging students to read the Quran before the start of lessons, practicing Quranic recitation after congregational Dhuhr prayers, and utilizing free time or class time to guide students who are still experiencing

difficulties. However, these development activities have not been implemented in a systematic and sustainable manner, thus limiting their effectiveness.

In addition to developing a reading habit, schools also implement a monitoring system through regular monthly recording of students' Quranic reading progress to monitor their reading progress. However, the implementation of this coaching program still faces several obstacles, such as errors in pronouncing the Hijaiyah letters and low learning motivation among some students. In this context, the role of teachers is crucial in guiding students to understand the Hijaiyah letters and correcting reading errors through ongoing practice. Az-Zahra & Zailani (2024) found that teachers act as guides, providing consistent direction and practice to students. The success of coaching is also influenced by the consistency of the implementation of the learning program in the school environment.

Interviews showed that three out of four students still at the Iqro stage stated that learning to read the Quran at school has not had a significant impact on improving their abilities. This is influenced by limited learning time and a lack of dedicated attention to students at the basic stage of Quran reading. Furthermore, students need motivation and guidance from teachers to ensure a more focused learning process.

Islamic Religious Education teachers play a crucial role in creating a learning environment that supports the improvement of students' Quran reading skills. Teachers function not only as instructors but also as motivators, encouraging students to continue learning and improving their reading. The effectiveness of Quran reading development programs also depends on parental involvement and school support (Hakim & Hasan, 2024).

Based on research findings, it can be concluded that schools and teachers play a role in developing Quran reading skills, but implementation is not yet optimal and consistent. The Quran reading development program at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan has not been implemented systematically, resulting in students still at the Iqro stage not experiencing significant improvement in their reading skills. Meanwhile, students who are able to read the Quran fluently are more influenced by the habits they acquire from their families and the environment outside of school.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Quranic reading skills of students at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan show varying levels. Some students have achieved a fairly good reading comprehension, while others are still in the early stages of learning. Frequently encountered difficulties include tajwid (recitation), pronunciation of the letters, and accuracy in reading long and short verses. This situation indicates that the level of Quranic reading mastery among students is uneven and is influenced by several factors, such as a lack of early reading habits, low motivation to learn, limited opportunities for regular practice, and a lack of family support.

Meanwhile, Islamic Education teachers, along with the school administration, have undertaken several development efforts through reading habituation activities and student guidance. However, these activities have not been optimally implemented and have not been structured into a systematic

program. Therefore, strengthening this program through a more structured, sustainable, and consistent Quranic reading development program, involving collaboration between teachers, schools, and families, is needed to ensure optimal and equitable improvement in students' Quranic reading skills.

#### **FURTHER STUDY**

This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to conduct further research related to the topic of Student Problems in Reading the Quran at SMKN 1 Totikum Selatan in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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