

STRATEGY OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF STUDENTS' AL-QUR'AN READING AT SMK PACET

Khusnul Chotimah

Universitas KH. Abdul Chalim, Indonesia

wafasyrof04@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to examine the strategies of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in improving the quality of students' reading of the Qur'an at SMK Pacet. The formulation of the problem in this study is: (1) What are the effective strategies used by PAI teachers in improving the quality of students' reading of the Qur'an at SMK Pacet? (2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors for the success of PAI teachers in improving students' reading of the Qur'an at SMK Pacet? This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The main informants consisted of the Principal, Deputy Head of Curriculum, Deputy Head of Facilities and Infrastructure, BK/Public Relations Teacher, PAI Teacher, guardians of students, and a student of class X TKR 2. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study showed that effective strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers include a tiered approach, the use of digital technology (audio murottal and Whats.App), and peer teaching. Supporting factors include teacher competence, school support, and student motivation. While inhibiting factors include limited time, facilities, and lack of assistance at home. The strategies used have been proven to help improve students' ability to read the Qur'an significantly even though they still face technical and non-technical challenges.

Keywords: Learning Strategies, Islamic Religious Education Teachers, Reading the Qur'an, Vocational High School Students.

مستخلص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة استراتيجيات معلمو التربية الدينية الإسلامية في تحسين جودة قراءة الطلاب للقرآن الكريم في المدرسة الثانوية المهنية بجاجيت. صياغة المشكلة في هذه الدراسة هي: (1) ما هي الاستراتيجيات الفعالة التي يستخدمها معلمو التربية الدينية الإسلامية في تحسين جودة قراءة الطلاب للقرآن الكريم في المدرسة الثانوية المهنية بجاجيت؟ (2) ما هي العوامل الداعمة والمثبطة لنجاح معلمي التربية الدينية الإسلامية في تحسين قراءة الطلاب للقرآن الكريم؟ تعتمد هذه الدراسة على منهج نوعي ودراسة حالة. وتألفت مصادر المعلومات الرئيسية من مدير المدرسة، ونائب رئيس المناهج، ونائب رئيس المرافق والبنية التحتية، ومعلم رياض الأطفال/العلاقات العامة، ومعلم التربية الدينية الإسلامية، وأولياء أمور الطلاب، وأحد طلاب الصف العاشر من المرحلة الثانوية. وتم جمع البيانات من خلال الملاحظة والمقابلة المعمقة والتوثيق. وتم تحليل البيانات باستخدام نموذج مايلز وهوبرمان التفاعلي، الذي يتضمن اختزال البيانات وعرضها واستخلاص النتائج. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الاستراتيجيات الفعالة التي يستخدمها معلمو التربية الدينية



الإسلامية تشمل النهج المتدرج، واستخدام التقنيات الرقمية (المورثات الصوتي وواتساب)، والتدريس بين الأقران. وتشمل العوامل الداعمة كفاءة المعلم، ودعم المدرسة، وتحفيز الطلاب. بينما تشمل العوامل المعيقة ضيق الوقت، وقلة الإمكانيات، ونقص المساعدة المنزلية. وقد أثبتت الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة فعاليتها في تحسين قدرة الطلاب على قراءة القرآن الكريم بشكل ملحوظ، على الرغم من مواجهتهم تحديات تقنية وغير تقنية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات التعلم، معلمي التربية الدينية الإسلامية، قراءة القرآن الكريم، طلاب المدرسة الثانوية المهنية.

INTRODUCTION

Reading the Qur'an properly and correctly is an integral part of Islamic education. This ability is not only ritualistic, but also becomes a spiritual and intellectual foundation in understanding the contents of the holy book as a guide to life. In the context of formal education, the competence to read the Qur'an with tajwid and fluently should be an indicator of the success of teaching Islamic Religious Education (PAI), both at elementary and secondary levels.

However, reality shows that students in Vocational High Schools (SMK), especially in areas such as Pacet, still face obstacles in reading the Qur'an properly and correctly. This can be caused by several factors, such as lack of attention to PAI lessons, limited time for religious learning because the focus is on vocational lessons, and significant variations in basic Qur'an reading skills among students. This condition encourages the importance of developing effective and contextual learning strategies from PAI teachers.

Teachers as the spearhead of education have a central role in designing and implementing appropriate strategies to improve students' ability to read the Qur'an. Therefore, there needs to be a systematic effort to explore the forms of strategies that have been and are being used by Islamic Religious Education teachers in facing these challenges.

Based on this background, this study focuses on two main problem formulations: (1) what are the effective strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers in improving the quality of students' reading of the Qur'an at SMK Pacet? and (2) what are the supporting and inhibiting factors for the success of Islamic Religious Education teachers in these efforts?

The purpose of this study is to describe the strategies that have been used, evaluate their effectiveness, and identify factors that influence the success or failure of these strategies. This study is expected to provide contributions both theoretically and practically, especially in enriching the approach to learning the Qur'an in vocational high schools.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth the phenomenon of learning strategies for reading the Qur'an applied by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in a specific environment, namely SMK Pacet. Through this approach, researchers can understand complex social and educational realities contextually and holistically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study aims to reveal the strategies used by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in improving the quality of students' reading of the Qur'an at SMK Pacet, and to identify factors that support or inhibit the success of these strategies. Data were obtained through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of student learning outcomes. The main findings of this study are arranged in three subsections, namely the learning strategies used, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors.

Effective Strategies Used by Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Improving the Quality of Reading the Qur'an at SMK Pacet

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it was found that Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMK Pacet implemented several structured and innovative strategies, namely:

1. Tiered Approach (Leveled Stages)

Islamic Religious Education teachers divide the process of learning to read the Qur'an into three stages:

- a. Basic stage: Focus on introducing hijaiyah letters, harakat, and short readings. At this stage, students who cannot read the Qur'an at all are guided individually using the Iqro' or Tilawati method.
- b. Intermediate stage: Students begin to practice more complex readings with an emphasis on tajwid laws such as mad, qalqalah, ghunnah, and ikhfa'. The teacher provides direct correction and uses practice worksheets.
- c. Advanced stage: Reading long verses in tartil. Students are asked to record their reading and the teacher provides feedback via the class WhatsApp group.

This strategy allows teachers to systematically adjust learning to each student's initial abilities.

2. Use of Technology and Digital Media

PAI teachers actively use digital media to strengthen learning. For example, social media (WhatsApp) as a means of communication, feedback, and motivation.

3. Collaborative Learning (Peer Teaching)

Teachers apply a peer teaching approach, namely involving students who are more proficient in helping friends who are less fluent. Students are grouped based on ability. This activity fosters a sense of responsibility, solidarity, and increases understanding for both mentors and students being mentored.

4. Motivation and Appreciation

To increase student enthusiasm, teachers provide motivation in the form of:

- a. Stories of exemplary stories from the Prophet's companions and great scholars.
- b. Providing certificates and informal awards such as "Best Reader of the Week".
- c. Cultivating a spirit of competing in goodness through internal class recitation competitions.

This motivational approach helps create a fun learning atmosphere and strengthens student involvement in learning.

Supporting Factors for the Success of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Improving the Quality of Al-Qur'an Reading of Students at SMK Pacet

The success of the PAI teacher strategy in improving the quality of reading the Qur'an cannot be separated from a number of supporting factors, including:

a. Teacher Competence and Commitment

PAI teachers at SMK Pacet have a strong Islamic educational background and a good mastery of tajwid. In addition, teachers show high commitment by providing guidance outside of class hours and creating a weekly Qur'an reading program.

b. Support from the School

The school provides full support for the implementation of Qur'an learning, both in terms of a special schedule (during PAI hours), comfortable classroom facilities, and moral support from the school leadership. Speakers and simple audio devices are also available to play murottal.

c. Role of Parents

Some parents show concern for their children's Qur'an reading activities, especially by supervising the task of recording recitations at home. In some cases, parents also listen and provide encouragement to their children.

d. Internal Student Motivation

Students who have personal motivation to be able to read the Qur'an well tend to show significant progress. They are more active when practicing reading, diligently practice at home, and accept input from teachers openly.

Inhibiting Factors of Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Success in Improving the Quality of Students' Reading of the Qur'an at SMK Pacet

Although there are many supporting factors, this study also found several inhibiting factors, namely:

a. Time Limitations

Qur'an learning is only carried out in two lesson hours per week (2×45 minutes). With this limitation, teachers have difficulty providing intensive guidance to all students evenly, especially those who need special attention.

b. Diverse Initial Ability Levels

Students come from very diverse backgrounds, some are already proficient in reading, but many cannot read at all. This requires teachers to work extra hard in taking an individual approach.

c. Limited Facilities and Infrastructure

Although the school provides support, the number of devices such as audio players, headsets, and special practice rooms is still limited. Students often have to share devices during practice, which makes activities not run optimally.

d. Lack of Parental Role in Several Cases

Not all parents are actively involved. There are students who admit that they have difficulty recording their practice because there is no one to help at home. Lack of control from home makes independent practice ineffective.

Analysis

Analysis of Effective Strategies Used by Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Improving the Quality of Reading the Qur'an at SMK Pacet

a. Tiered Approach (Leveled Stages)

The tiered approach applied by Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMK Pacet is a manifestation of the implementation of the scaffolding theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978), namely providing learning support according to the closest development zone of students. By dividing learning into basic, intermediate, and advanced stages, teachers are able to adjust

materials and methods according to students' ability levels. This is important to accommodate the diversity of students' initial abilities, which if not handled properly can cause frustration or boredom. The use of the Iqro' method at the basic stage helps build a strong foundation, while tajwid exercises at the intermediate stage and tartil reading at the advanced stage gradually strengthen students' abilities. This process also reflects the principle of student-centered learning, where students actively play a role in the learning process according to their abilities.

b. Use of Technology and Digital Media

The integration of digital technology in learning the Qur'an shows significant progress in the teaching and learning process in the modern era. The use of WhatsApp as a medium of communication and feedback allows learning to be unlimited by space and time. This is in line with the concept of blended learning that combines face-to-face and online learning, thus providing flexibility for students. In addition, the use of voice recordings and murottal facilitates independent student practice that can be done repeatedly as needed. Digital media also provides sensory stimulation that can improve students' memory and concentration.¹

c. Collaborative Learning (Peer Teaching)

The peer teaching strategy implemented by Islamic Religious Education teachers shows great social and academic benefits. In addition to improving the mastery of material for the mentored students, this strategy also fosters social values such as empathy, responsibility, and solidarity. Psychologically, learning with peers helps reduce feelings of anxiety and shame that are often experienced when learning to read the Qur'an. This finding is in line with the theory of social constructivism which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process. This method is very effective in the context of classes with high variation in ability, because it can create a mutually supportive learning community.

d. Motivation and Appreciation

Providing motivation in the form of exemplary stories and formal and informal awards is an effective strategy to increase student engagement and enthusiasm for learning. This approach refers to the theory of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation where awards and recognition can increase students' self-confidence and internal drive to achieve. Internal recitation competitions also trigger a positive competitive spirit, making the learning process more interesting and challenging. This approach is important considering the challenge of

¹ Zainudin, A. (2021). *Pengaruh Integrasi Media Sosial terhadap Kualitas Bacaan Al-Qur'an Siswa SMK*. Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam, 9 (1), 34-45.

maintaining student focus and enthusiasm in religious lessons which often seem monotonous.²

Analysis of Supporting Factors for the Success of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Improving the Quality of Al-Qur'an Reading of Students at SMK Pacet

a. Teacher Competence and Commitment

Good teacher competence and high commitment are the main capital for the success of Al-Qur'an learning. Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMK Pacet not only master the material in theory but are also active in the practice of guidance outside of class hours. This shows strong dedication and professional responsibility of teachers that contribute to the quality of learning. Previous research also confirmed that teacher competence, both in terms of pedagogy and science, is the main predictor of learning success (Shulman, 1987). High teacher commitment also plays a role in creating a conducive and supportive learning environment.

b. Support from the School

Systemic support from the school, in the form of policies, facilities, and moral support, strengthens the implementation of learning strategies. The policy of allocating special hours for Islamic Religious Education learning and providing audio facilities are concrete examples of very meaningful support. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1979), the macrosystem environment such as school policies greatly influences the child's learning process. This support is the foundation that allows teachers to apply innovative methods without being hampered by administrative or facility constraints.

c. Parental Role

Parental involvement in the learning process at home is an important supporting factor found in this study. Supervision and encouragement from parents help students to practice routinely and with discipline. This is consistent with the results of Epstein's (2001) study which emphasized that parental involvement improves students' achievement and learning motivation. The role of parents as learning companions strengthens the synergy between school and family which is essential in character and religious education.

d. Student Internal Motivation

Student intrinsic motivation is also a major driver of learning success. Students who have a personal desire and commitment to master the reading of the Qur'an show faster and

² Slavin, R. E. *Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice* (10th ed.). Boston: Pearson. (2014), p. 32.

more consistent progress. This is in accordance with the theory of self-determination which emphasizes that internal motivation is positively correlated with learning achievement.³ Internal motivation facilitates active involvement and more effort in the learning process.

Analysis of Inhibiting Factors of Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Success in Improving the Quality of Students' Reading of the Qur'an at SMK Pacet

a. Time Limitations

The limited Qur'an learning of only two hours per week is a significant obstacle. The short time makes it difficult for teachers to provide individual attention to all students, especially those who need intensive guidance. This reflects the limitations of the vocational school curriculum structure which emphasizes vocational education. According to the principle of learning effectiveness, adequate time is needed to optimize learning outcomes (Bloom, 1984). This limitation forces teachers to find innovative solutions so that learning remains effective.

b. Diverse Initial Ability Levels

The diversity of students' initial abilities is a challenge that teachers must face in the learning process. Students with different backgrounds require different approaches, which of course require extra effort and special skills from teachers. This is in accordance with the theory of learning differentiation (Tomlinson, 2001), which emphasizes the importance of adjusting methods and materials according to the needs of individual students. This ability gap, if not managed properly, can cause gaps in learning outcomes and frustration in students.

c. Limited Facilities and Infrastructure

Limited facilities such as audio players and practice rooms limit the smoothness of the learning process. This condition shows that even though support is available, it is still necessary to improve the quality and quantity of supporting facilities. Adequate learning facilities are very important to provide an optimal learning experience, especially in learning to read the Qur'an which requires intensive practice and direct feedback. According to the theory of learning needs (Maslow, 1943), facilities are part of the basic needs that must be met to achieve maximum learning potential.

³ Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior* (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), 45.

d. Lack of Parental Role in Several Cases

The lack of parental involvement in several cases makes it difficult for students to carry out independent practice effectively. This is an obstacle that cannot be ignored because religious and character education is ideally a shared responsibility between the school and the family. Without supervision and support at home, the effectiveness of learning in schools is less than optimal. This condition indicates the need for a parent empowerment program so that they understand the importance of an active role in assisting children in learning.

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⁴ Carol Ann Tomlinson, *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*, ed. 2nd (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001), p. 60.

⁵ Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (1943), p. 370.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted at SMK Pacet, it can be concluded that the strategies implemented by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in improving the quality of students' reading of the Qur'an show positive and contextual results. The strategy is carried out systematically and creatively by combining a tiered approach, utilization of technology, collaborative learning methods (peer teaching), and strengthening motivation through awards and personal approaches.

The tiered learning strategy has proven effective in adapting learning to students' diverse initial abilities. Through basic, intermediate, and advanced stages, students can improve their reading skills gradually according to their respective learning speeds. The use of technology, especially in the form of audio murottal, mobile applications, and WhatsApp groups as feedback media, has expanded students' learning space outside the classroom, accelerated the practice process, and strengthened the relationship between teachers and students.

Collaborative learning with a peer teaching system also has a positive impact on improving the quality of students' reading and creating a participatory learning environment. Students feel mutually supportive and not burdened when practicing with their peers. Meanwhile, motivational strategies such as giving appreciation and inspiring stories also increase students' enthusiasm and involvement in learning activities.

The success of the strategy is supported by a number of supporting factors, including professional competence and dedication of teachers, policy support and facilities from the school, involvement of some parents, and strong internal motivation of students. However, on the other hand, there are also obstacles that affect the effectiveness of the strategy, such as limited learning time, uneven levels of student ability, lack of supporting facilities such as audio devices, and uneven parental involvement.

Overall, PAI teachers at SMK Pacet have successfully designed and implemented strategies that are adaptive to students' needs and the characteristics of vocational schools. The approach applied is contextual, flexible, and can be used as a model in learning the Qur'an in similar schools.

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