

Strategy to Improve al-Quran Reading and Writing Skills in Public Schools

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Abstract: This research aims to explore strategies for improving Al-Quran Reading and Writing (Baca Tulis al-Quran / BTQ) skills in public schools, with a case study at SMAN 2 Bandung. Studying the Koran is essential for every Muslim that studying the Koran is the most important thing for every Muslim, especially in terms of reading each verse in it which contains certain tajwid laws that must be obeyed when reading it. However, in reality there are quite a few people who still make mistakes in reading and pronouncing the Koran. Reading and Writing the Qur'an is a key skill in Islamic education, focusing on both Arabic mastery and character development, but also contributes to the development of students' character and morals. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document studies, which were then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The results of this research indicate that limited time and minimal support for learning at home are the main challenges in implementing BTQ in public schools. The school applies the "bandungan" method for BTQ learning, where students take turns reading with correction from teachers and classmates, as well as daily Koran assignments at home.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi peningkatan keterampilan Baca Tulis al-Quran (BTQ) di sekolah umum, studi kasus di SMAN 2 Bandung. Perlu ditekankan kembali bahwa mempelajari al-Qur'an merupakan hal terpenting bagi setiap muslim, terutama dalam hal membaca setiap ayat yang ada didalamnya yang terdapat hukum tajwid tertentu yang harus dipatuhi dalam membacanya. Namun, pada kenyataannya tidak sedikit seorang yang masih keliru dalam membaca juga melafalkan Al-Qur'an. BTQ merupakan keterampilan fundamental dalam pendidikan agama Islam yang tidak hanya berfokus pada penguasaan bahasa Arab, akan tetapi juga berkontribusi dalam pengembangan karakter serta moral siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi, dan studi dokumen, yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa keterbatasan waktu dan minimnya dukungan belajar di rumah menjadi tantangan utama dalam pelaksanaan BTQ di sekolah umum. Sekolah menerapkan metode "bandungan" untuk pembelajaran BTQ, di mana siswa membaca bergiliran dengan koreksi dari guru dan teman sekelas, serta tugas mengaji harian di rumah.

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INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an, described in Surah Al-Baqarah verses 1-2 as a guide for the pious, underscores its role as an essential source of truth and guidance for Muslims worldwide. However, in Indonesia, a nation with the largest Muslim population, a significant gap exists in Qur'anic literacy. According to the Indonesian Mosque Council (DMI), as many as 65% of Indonesian Muslims are unable to read the Qur'an proficiently (Antara, 2022). This statistic highlights a concerning disparity between the religious teachings emphasized in Islamic education and the practical ability of the younger generation to engage with the Qur'an, reflecting broader challenges in the national education system.

Public schools often face challenges integrating Reading and Writing Al-Qur'an (*Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an* or BTQ) into their curricula. Unlike madrasas and other faith-based institutions, public schools must balance religious education with the demands of a secular curriculum. This has led to BTQ being given less priority, which contributes to gaps in religious literacy among students (Zulkifli et al., 2022). At SMAN 2 Bandung, for example, BTQ is included as a subject for 10th-grade students, yet limited instructional time and unstructured approaches impede students' progress in pronunciation and comprehension.

BTQ plays a foundational role in developing students' spiritual and moral character. Beyond fostering Arabic literacy, it provides students with the tools to understand Qur'anic teachings and apply them daily. Integrating BTQ into the national education system helps nurture individuals with high moral integrity, aligning character development with Islamic values (Hamzah et al., 2022). However, despite its importance, BTQ education in public schools remains under-researched, especially regarding innovative strategies that address modern educational challenges.

Existing studies emphasize the potential of innovative teaching methods in improving BTQ learning outcomes. For instance, gamification strategies such as score tracking and leaderboards have been shown to increase student motivation (Fanani et al., 2021). Similarly, digital tools like mobile applications and e-learning platforms enhance accessibility and engagement in Qur'anic education (Akrami et al., 2024). However, most of this research focuses on faith-based schools, leaving a critical gap in understanding how these methods can be adapted to secular public schools.

This research addresses the need for a structured approach to BTQ education in public schools, with a specific focus on SMAN 2 Bandung. The school's initiative to include BTQ in its curriculum highlights an effort to improve Qur'anic literacy, yet challenges such as limited instructional time and lack of teacher training persist. By leveraging modern teaching methodologies, such as blended learning and digital tools, this study seeks to optimize the BTQ learning experience for students in public schools.

The primary goal of this study is to develop effective strategies for teaching BTQ in public schools, particularly at SMAN 2 Bandung. These strategies aim to enhance students' reading and writing proficiency in the Qur'an, utilizing innovative approaches like gamification and digital learning platforms. Additionally, the study

seeks to foster collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community to create a supportive learning environment.

As technology continues to influence education, it is essential to adapt BTQ teaching methods to meet the demands of the digital era. Incorporating mobile applications, interactive videos, and e-learning platforms not only makes Qur'anic learning more accessible but also accommodates diverse learning styles (Kholifah, 2020). This integration ensures that students can balance their spiritual education with academic requirements, promoting a holistic approach to education that aligns with both religious and modern values (Sanusi & Albantani, 2020).

By addressing the challenges of BTQ education in public schools, this research contributes to the broader discourse on Islamic education and its integration into secular curricula. The findings are expected to provide actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in designing effective BTQ programs that align with contemporary educational frameworks. Ultimately, this study aims to bridge the gap in Qur'anic literacy among Indonesia's youth, fostering a generation that is not only proficient in the Qur'an but also equipped with the moral and intellectual tools needed to navigate the complexities of modern life.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design using a case study approach to explore strategies for improving Al-Qur'an Reading and Writing (*Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an or BTQ*) skills at SMAN 2 Bandung. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the unique phenomena associated with BTQ learning strategies through detailed and descriptive data collection and analysis.

The case study approach facilitates an in-depth exploration of BTQ learning strategies within a specific real-world context. SMAN 2 Bandung, as a public school, offers a unique setting where the dynamics of BTQ education can be thoroughly examined. Field research is conducted to gain firsthand insights into how the BTQ program is implemented, with a focus on the cultural, pedagogical, and logistical factors inherent in the school environment.

Participants in the study are purposively selected to represent key stakeholders involved in the BTQ program. These include the Deputy Principal for Curriculum, responsible for overseeing academic policies, a BTQ teacher directly involved in delivering instruction, and two Class X students who provide insights into the program's impact from the learner's perspective. This purposive sampling ensures that the data collected is both relevant and rich, capturing the experiences and viewpoints of individuals directly connected to the BTQ program.

To gather comprehensive data, the study employs three primary techniques: interviews, observations, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with the selected participants to explore curriculum design, instructional strategies, challenges, and student experiences. Observations focus on BTQ classroom activities, documenting teaching methods, materials used, and interactions between teachers and students. Relevant documents, such as lesson plans, attendance records, and student assessments, are analyzed to provide

additional context. Secondary sources, including academic literature and policy documents, are also reviewed to support the study.

The study integrates both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data includes insights gained from interviews, observational records from BTQ classes, and institutional documents related to the program. Secondary data consists of academic articles, journal publications, and policy documents that contextualize the findings within broader discussions on Qur'anic education in Indonesia.

The collected data is analyzed using the Miles and Huberman qualitative analysis model, which involves three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and concluding. During data reduction, relevant data is organized and simplified to identify key themes and patterns, with irrelevant information excluded. The reduced data is then systematically presented using narratives, matrices, and diagrams to highlight relationships and strategies. Conclusions are drawn by identifying recurring themes and verifying them through triangulation, which involves cross-referencing data from interviews, observations, and documents.

Ethical considerations are carefully adhered to throughout the research process. Participants are fully briefed on the study's objectives, methods, and implications, with informed consent obtained before data collection begins. Confidentiality is maintained by anonymizing participant identities and ensuring data is used solely for research purposes. Participation is entirely voluntary, and participants are given the freedom to withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, several strategies are employed. Triangulation is used to cross-check data from different sources, ensuring consistency and accuracy. Member checking allows participants to review interview transcripts and findings to confirm the validity of interpretations. Additionally, the researcher spends sufficient time in the field to build trust and gain deeper insights, enhancing the credibility and depth of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The study of the BTQ program at SMAN 2 Bandung highlights a structured and strategic effort to enhance students' Quran reading and writing skills. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the findings demonstrate the program's implementation process, methodologies, and challenges.

BTQ Subject Implementation

BTQ learning at SMAN 2 Bandung is scheduled for 45 minutes weekly, separate from Islamic Religious Education (PAI) hours, signifying a focused effort to develop Quranic literacy among students. Observations revealed that the learning process generally ran well, but there were instances of students not adhering to the dress code, such as not wearing headscarves. Teachers, such as Mrs. Lilis, emphasized the importance of adhering to Islamic values during BTQ lessons, reflecting efforts to instill discipline and spirituality alongside Quranic learning.

The Principal stated that SMAN 2 Bandung is committed to developing students' Quranic literacy skills. BTQ lessons are held separately from Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons, with a duration of 45 minutes each week. Despite challenges such as some students not adhering to the dress code, the focus remains on instilling Islamic values and discipline. *"We hope that through this approach, students not only master reading the Quran but also develop strong Islamic character."* (Interview, 2024).

The Vice Principal of Curriculum explained that the application of the Bandungan method in BTQ aims to develop Quran reading skills collectively. With one student reading while others correct, students can learn together under the teacher's guidance. *"This is an effective way to improve tajwid and students' reading skills. Additionally, family involvement in homework is a key element in accelerating student progress."* (Interview, 2024).

BTQ teacher, explained that in class, she always reminds students of the importance of following Islamic rules, including the obligation for female students to wear the hijab. *"The Bandungan method allows students to learn together, correct each other, and improve their Quran reading skills. Homework assignments involving parents are very helpful, although we face the challenge of limited class time."* (Interview, 2024).

Students shared that the Bandungan method helps them learn in a fun and supportive way. *"We find it easier to remember tajwid and correct mistakes because our friends provide feedback. Homework involving our families also gives us extra motivation, although it can be difficult if parents can't help."* (Interview, 2024).



Figure 1. Application of the Bandungan Method when Learning BTQ

During lessons, the "Bandungan" method is employed, where one student reads aloud while others listen and provide corrections under the teacher's guidance. This method ensures collective learning and reinforces tajwid (pronunciation rules) and reading fluency. Homework assignments require students to recite the Quran at home, with family members acting as supervisors.

This dual approach of classroom learning and home practice aims to improve Quran reading skills and strengthen moral character. In summary, both teachers and students appreciate the method's benefits, although time constraints and varying levels of family support remain key challenges.

Evaluation of BTQ Skills

The Principal highlighted that the school conducts periodic evaluations of BTQ skills through structured tests and ongoing teacher observations. *"We track students' Quranic recitations using documented sheets, which detail the verses read and any mistakes. This system allows us to assess individual progress and identify areas that need attention,"* (Interview, 2024). They also acknowledged that while some students show significant improvement, others struggle due to limited support at home or lack of familiarity with Quranic texts, which can hinder their progress.

The BTQ teacher, explained that evaluations are crucial for monitoring student progress. *"We document each student's recitation and note any errors. This helps us provide targeted feedback. However, some students face challenges, such as mispronunciation of Arabic letters and difficulty writing cursive Arabic script,"* (Interview, 2024). She emphasized that these difficulties require specific interventions and additional support to help these students improve their skills.

The program includes periodic evaluations through structured BTQ tests and teacher observations to monitor students' progress. Documented sheets track daily Quranic recitations, specifying the verses read and noting errors. This system allows teachers to measure individual progress and identify areas needing improvement. However, students' progress varies. While some students exhibit significant improvement, others face difficulties due to limited support at home or insufficient familiarity with Quranic texts. Challenges such as mispronunciation of Arabic letters and errors in writing cursive Arabic script were noted, requiring targeted interventions.

Collaboration with Families

BTQ Teacher explained that family involvement plays a critical role in the success of BTQ learning. *"We assign Quran recitation tasks that require students to practice at home with the support of their parents or guardians. This involvement significantly boosts students' motivation and helps them improve their skills,"* (Interview, 2024). She also noted that while some families are very supportive, others struggle to provide the same level of assistance, which creates disparities in student progress.

A parent shared that their involvement in their child's learning process has been positive. *"I make sure to listen to my child recite the Quran at home and help them with their tasks. It's been rewarding to see the progress, but I also know some families may not have the same ability to assist, which can make a difference in how well the students are doing,"* (Interview, 2024). They emphasized the importance of continued collaboration between the school and families to ensure all students receive the support they need.

The school actively involves families in the learning process, assigning Quran recitation tasks that parents or guardians monitor. Teachers noted that family involvement significantly influenced students' motivation and skill development. However, disparities in home support emerged as a key factor in uneven progress among students.

DISCUSSION

The Koran is considered the most authentic and final revelation of Allah SWT, providing a divine guide for all Muslims. Among the books of Allah, the Koran stands out as an absolute truth, and its recitation is not only a spiritual practice but an act of worship, with each letter bringing rewards (Heriman & Mahmudi, 2024). The first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad, as recorded in Surah Al-'Alaq, emphasizes the importance of reading and learning: "Read in the name of your Lord who created, created man from a clot. Read, and your Lord is the most generous, Who taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not" (QS Al-Alaq [96]: 1-5). This command to "read" underscores the centrality of knowledge in Islam, with reading acting as a gateway to understanding and enlightenment (Masykur & Solekhah, 2021). Therefore, education, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI), plays a pivotal role in shaping the moral and ethical values of individuals and societies (Achmad Faqihuddin, 2024). In this context, enhancing students' ability to interpret and understand the Koran becomes a crucial step in nurturing strong spirituality, moral integrity, and valuable knowledge (Kurniaku & Mavianti, 2024).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds a significant role in building character and morality, which forms the spiritual and ethical foundation needed in today's society. In the case of SMAN 2 Bandung, improving students' Qur'anic Reading and Writing (BTQ) skills is a primary educational goal. This goal aligns with the broader aim of enhancing their ability to read and understand the Koran, ultimately shaping their spiritual and moral lives. To ensure students' success in achieving these goals, it is essential to carry out effective learning planning, as pointed out by Humaedi & Hartono (2021) and Putu & Tri (2020), which helps teachers target and improve specific competencies, such as BTQ.

Based on interviews with BTQ teachers at SMAN 2 Bandung, BTQ subjects are scheduled for 45-minute lessons outside of regular Islamic Religious Education (PAI) hours. Four teachers, who also serve as PAI instructors, handle the BTQ curriculum. The school allocates focused attention to improving students' Al-Quran reading and writing abilities, as this is seen as essential to their overall Islamic education. The lessons are delivered with a combination of learning methods, including the Bandungan method, which involves students taking turns reading and listening to peers' recitations for correction.

Despite the positive aspects of the BTQ program, challenges remain. During class observations, it was noted that while the majority of students actively engaged in BTQ lessons, some female students did not adhere to the dress code, such as not wearing the headscarf. The teacher, Mrs. Lilis, is committed to addressing this issue and finding appropriate solutions that respect individual needs while maintaining the values of the program.

In order to improve student performance in BTQ, SMAN 2 Bandung employs several strategies, including periodic assessments of students' progress, as well as collaboration with parents. The school sends home Koran assignment sheets that students must complete and return, ensuring that learning continues beyond the classroom. Parents' involvement in supervising and encouraging regular Koran recitation at home reinforces the connection between school and family, which is crucial for fostering a consistent learning environment.

The Bandungan method, a unique technique often associated with Islamic boarding schools, is used to facilitate the learning of BTQ at SMAN 2 Bandung. This method involves students taking turns reading from the Koran, while others listen and correct their peers' recitations. Mrs. Lilis, who teaches the BTQ course, also uses Imla' methods to train students in writing Arabic script, focusing on the proper formation and connection of Arabic letters. While the Bandungan method encourages peer learning, it also faces some limitations in the context of public school settings, where access to external support may be insufficient for some students.

Teachers assign daily Koran recitation tasks, recorded on progress sheets, which students must submit for evaluation. This provides a structured way to practice regularly at home, and while it helps improve recitation skills, the effectiveness of this method is dependent on parental involvement. It is crucial for parents to actively engage in guiding their children in this practice, as research by Hayati (2020) suggests that parental motivation can significantly impact student learning outcomes.

Despite the benefits of the BTQ program at SMAN 2 Bandung, there are several challenges that hinder its full effectiveness. One major issue is the limited amount of time allocated for BTQ lessons. With only one 45-minute class per week dedicated to BTQ, it becomes difficult for teachers to provide in-depth instruction, particularly for students who are new to Koranic studies. In the context of students who are illiterate in the Koran, difficulties with reading comprehension, pronunciation (makharijul letters), and understanding tajwid rules are common. These challenges further highlight the need for extended learning time and additional resources for students to practice outside of school (Muhammad Alam Ramadhan & Wahyu Hidayat, 2024).

Another significant challenge is the lack of support at home. Many students do not have family members who can help them with Koran recitation, which further exacerbates their difficulties. In such cases, it is difficult for students to improve their skills, as classroom learning alone is not sufficient. Mrs. Lilis acknowledged that this issue often results in students struggling to keep up with the lessons, especially when teachers cannot meet the minimum teaching requirements due to time constraints (Humaedi & Hartono, 2021).

The peer-to-peer learning method initially proposed by the teachers, where more proficient students assist those struggling with recitation, was not as effective as hoped in the public school context. This led to a shift towards more individualized learning methods, such as the Bandungan method, where students take turns reading and receive direct feedback from their teachers and peers.

However, this method is also limited by the available time and the need for more focused teacher-student interactions.

The development of BTQ skills at SMAN 2 Bandung is a crucial aspect of students' Islamic education, as it not only aims to improve their ability to read and write the Koran but also to nurture their moral and spiritual character. Despite the challenges posed by limited time, varying levels of parental support, and the initial ineffectiveness of peer tutoring, the school's approach has led to noticeable improvements in students' BTQ skills. However, to optimize this learning process, it is necessary to increase the time allocated to BTQ lessons, strengthen family involvement, and address the difficulties faced by students who lack guidance at home. Furthermore, as motivation plays a critical role in student engagement, efforts should be made to boost students' motivation and interest in learning BTQ. Given these challenges and the vital role of both the school and family in supporting students' BTQ development, future improvements to the program should focus on expanding support structures and refining the methods employed in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the significant role that Al-Quran Reading and Writing (BTQ) skills play in shaping the character and morals of students in public schools, particularly at SMAN 2 Bandung. The implementation of BTQ subjects at the school reflects a concerted effort to improve Quranic literacy among students. However, the limited time allocation for BTQ lessons has emerged as the primary challenge in achieving optimal Quran reading skills. Despite this constraint, the school uses the "Bandungan" method and assigns Quran recitation tasks at home to maximize the available instructional time. These strategies are designed to reinforce students' Quranic knowledge and reading fluency.

Active family involvement in the learning process is essential for supporting the development of BTQ skills. Teachers at SMAN 2 Bandung recognize that family engagement significantly influences students' motivation and skill advancement. By incorporating family participation, such as supervising Quran recitation at home, students are provided with the guidance and encouragement needed to improve their skills. However, the research reveals that disparities in home support contribute to uneven progress among students, as some families may not have the capacity to assist their children in their Quranic studies.

This research also underscores the importance of innovative teaching methods in overcoming the challenges faced in BTQ education. The "Bandungan" method, which encourages collective learning through peer corrections, is one such innovation that proves effective in improving students' Quranic reading skills. This approach, alongside home assignments, helps overcome the limitations posed by time constraints. By integrating these methods into the curriculum and fostering stronger collaboration with families, public schools can more effectively contribute to developing students' Quranic literacy and character, thus creating a generation that is both proficient in Al-Quran reading and writing and grounded in Islamic values.

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