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Efforts of the Tahfidz Extracurricular Program in Enhancing the Quran Reading Skills of Students

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Abstrak

Al-Quran adalah wahyu dari Allah yang dianggap sebagai mukjizat dan diturunkan kepada Nabi Muhammad SAW melalui perantara malaikat Jibril. Kitab ini diberikan secara bertahap sebagai pedoman hidup universal bagi manusia sampai akhir zaman dan merupakan penyempurnaan dari ajaran-ajaran sebelumnya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi efektivitas program ekstrakurikuler tahfidz dalam memperbaiki kemampuan membaca Al-Quran di kalangan peserta didik serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang menghambat keberhasilan program tersebut di MTs Negeri 1 Kota Pagar Alam. Metodologi yang digunakan adalah penelitian lapangan dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan sampel dipilih melalui teknik *Nonprobability Sampling*. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa terdapat keterbatasan sumber daya pengajar dalam ekstrakurikuler tahfidz, dengan hanya satu tutor yang tersedia, membatasi jumlah peserta yang dapat terlibat.

Kata Kunci: *Ekstrakurikuler, Kemampuan Membaca Al-Quran, Tahfidz*

Abstract

The Quran is considered a divine revelation from Allah, seen as a miracle, and was progressively revealed to Prophet Muhammad through the intermediary of the angel Gabriel. This scripture serves as a comprehensive guide for humanity until the end of time and perfects the teachings previously established. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the extracurricular tahfidz program in enhancing the Quranic reading skills of students and to identify the barriers faced in implementing this program at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Pagar Alam. The methodology employed is qualitative descriptive field research with a non-probability sampling technique. Data collection was conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings indicate a limitation in teaching resources for the tahfidz extracurricular activities, with only one tutor available, thus limiting the number of participants in the program.

Keywords: *Extracurricular, Quran Reading Ability, Tahfidz*

INTRODUCTION

The Holy Quran is the word of Allah, a miraculous revelation gradually bestowed upon Prophet Muhammad through the intermediary of the angel Gabriel. It serves as a comprehensive guide for all humanity until the end of times, refining and completing prior teachings. The Quran is documented as a mushaf, beginning with Surah Al-Fatihah and concluding with Surah An-Nas, and is transmitted through uninterrupted consensus. Reading the Quran is an act of worship, and studying it is essential to ensure proper pronunciation and fluency. This proficiency is vital for understanding and implementing its teachings. As the Quran is the word of Allah, He guarantees its purity and sanctity and is also its protector. (*Q.S. Al-Hijr : 9*),(Al-Quran, 2016).

This verse emphasizes that Allah SWT revealed the Quran and that He alone will preserve its purity until the end of time, ensuring that its contents remain unchanged. Historically, Prophet Muhammad ensured its preservation by memorizing it and instructing his companions to do the same and record it on various materials such as stone, animal bones, and date palm leaves, among others. This eventually led to the compilation of the Quran into a book by the Rightly Guided Caliph, Uthman Ibn Affan. In modern times, the accessibility of the Quran in book form or as a compiled mushaf results from the hard work and efforts of those who came before. Therefore, Muslims must actively safeguard the sanctity and purity of the Quran by studying, reading, memorizing, practicing, and preaching its teachings to others. This represents a form of guardianship that can be exercised over the Quran.

The Quran represents a person's proficiency in reading, pronouncing, and understanding its verses in a measured manner according to the rules of reading that

include tajweed laws, articulation points, and more to ensure smooth and fluent recitation without hesitation. Indicators of Quran reading ability include mastery of tajweed and eloquence.

According to Director General Ahmad Zayadi from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the level of ability of the Indonesian population to read and write the Quran is high, reaching 66.03% based on the survey "Potential of Quran Literacy in Indonesian Society" conducted by the Directorate General of Islamic Community Development at the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, the capability to read the Quran fluently according to the basic Tajweed rules without errors is at a medium level, at 44.57% (Antaraneews.com, 2023). This high rating in Quran reading ability in Indonesia is evidenced by the phenomenon observed by researchers such as Erin Zelia Nawawi from Seragi, North Sumatra, who won first place at the 2023 International Quran Recitation Competition in Qatar. She is one of four representatives from Indonesia participating in the event. Erin, a student at MTs Guppi in Pematang Sijonam and the daughter of Mr. Agul Kurnawawi and Mrs. Safrida, has been known for her achievements, having won numerous provincial and national Quran recitation competitions. Last year, she won at the provincial level in North Sumatra and came second in the 2022 National Quran Recitation Competition. Such phenomena signify the improvement in Quran reading abilities in Indonesia. The establishment of Islamic boarding schools and Tahfidz Houses in Indonesia, which serve as learning centers, is also part of the efforts to nurture a generation proficient in Quran reading and memorization. Islamic educational institutions not only focus on Islamic education but also emphasize Quran memorization, such as the Alam Tahfidz Al-Quran Boarding School and Tahfidz Izzul Quran Orphanage and Poor Boarding School in Kota Pagar Alam, along with other Tahfidz Houses focused on Quran learning and memorization like the Al-Maderiyyah Tahfidz and Tilawah House, Rumah Quran Pola Pertolongan Allah, and other Tahfidz Houses in Kota Pagar Alam. The researcher has observed several phenomena within the scope of Kota Pagar Alam indicating an improvement in Quran reading ability, such as Yuski Agus Kurniawan, a student from the Islamic Education Program at the College of Islamic Studies in Kota Pagar Alam, who won first place at the City Level Quran Recitation Competition in 2020 and at the Lahat County Level in 2024. These phenomena demonstrate the significant impact of guidance from educational institutions, the environment, parenting styles, and parental support. Islamic-based educational institutions aim to produce the best graduates academically and as Quran memorizers and reciters.

In the current era of globalization, researchers have observed a disparity in Quran reading skills between urban and rural areas. This is evidenced by the survey results from

the Directorate General of Islamic Community Development at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ahmad Zayadi, which indicated that the proficiency in reading the Quran smoothly according to Tajweed rules is categorized as moderate, at 44.57%. It is expected to find individuals, particularly among teenagers, who are not fluent in reading the Quran, some of whom have never even studied the holy book. This may be due to a lack of interest in learning the Quran, insufficient knowledge about its importance, limited educational resources, the absence of institutions or study circles for Quran learning, and time constraints often due to work commitments. Although Indonesia ranks high, there is always room for improvement and enhancement, particularly in increasing Quran literacy by improving indicators such as the fluency of Quran reading. Additionally, there is a need to encourage community engagement in study circles, religious schools (TPA/TPQ), and Quran learning, especially in rural areas, as well as improve the quality of teachers to boost learning interest and enhance Quran reading skills.

To foster the potential of its students, MTs Negeri 1 Kota Pagar Alam offers a variety of extracurricular activities, including the Tahfidz extracurricular program. This program, conducted outside of regular school hours, aims to guide and enhance students' skills and abilities in studying, understanding, practicing, and memorizing the Quran. MTs Negeri 1 Kota Pagar Alam is one of the schools implementing the Tahfidz extracurricular program. Interviews with the program's instructors revealed that the student's level of understanding varies. Many students are not fluent in reading the Quran, some struggle with applying correct tajweed rules, and overall, there is minimal interest in learning the Quran.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive methodology (Field Research). Data collection methods include interviews, observation, documentation, and additional interviews.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Literature Study

Before reaching a higher level of proficiency, an individual must go through a phase of improvement, face challenges, and learn from experiences to achieve their maximum potential. Over time, an individual can experience enhancements in their skills and knowledge. Improvement is an inevitable journey toward growth and progress, where every small step taken brings us closer to the best version of ourselves. Indicators of the ability to read the Quran are found in tajweed and fluency. Fluency or fashohah in the context of

reading the Quran encompasses several aspects, including the ability to pronounce Arabic letters accurately according to tajweed rules, the ability to read the Quran smoothly and slowly as per established regulations, understanding the meanings of the verses read deeply, beautifying the recitation, and the ability to memorize part or all of the Quran, among others. It is important to remember that the ability to read the Quran is not limited to just the technical aspects of reading. In addition to mastering correct reading techniques such as tajweed and makhraj, it is also crucial to understand the verses of the Quran, contemplate them, understand the historical context, and apply or implement them in daily life. Linguistically, the term "improvement," according to Adi S in Nuriyanto, comes from the word "tingkat," which means a layer or layers that form an arrangement. "Tingkat" means rank, level, and class (Nuriyanto, 2019).

Nuriyanto explains that "improvement means progress. Improvement is increasing the degree, level, and quality or quantity. Improvement also implies the enhancement of skills and abilities to become better. Moreover, improvement signifies achievements in processes, dimensions, characteristics, relationships, etc." (Nuriyanto, 2019).

Efforts of the Tahfidz Extracurricular Program in Enhancing Quran Reading Skills Among Students at MTs Negeri 1 Pagar Alam

In this study, the first research problem was addressed by direct observation and interviews with informants. The observation was conducted in several stages: initial, intermediate, and final.

During the initial observation stage, the researcher attended the Tahfidz extracurricular activities on Saturday, March 23, 2024, from 11:30 AM until completion, held in a classroom at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Pagar Alam, bringing an observation sheet for the Tahfidz extracurricular activities as a research instrument. At this stage, the researcher observed phenomena on the field related to the management and effectiveness of the Tahfidz extracurricular program at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Pagar Alam in enhancing the students' Quran reading skills, as well as the completeness of the procedures owned by the program such as the extracurricular work program, extracurricular structure, student attendance, extracurricular rules/regulations, student grades list, learning implementation plan, etc. The goal was to determine the management and effectiveness of the extracurricular activities and the completeness of the procedures owned by the Tahfidz extracurricular program. Based on the observations of the initial stage, the researcher found the existence of the Tahfidz extracurricular program and its structured setup. It was also observed that student

attendance was not consistently taken at each session. Regarding the grades list, there was only a temporary list handwritten on paper by the supervisor.

During the intermediate observation stage, the researcher continued the observation by attending the Tahfidz extracurricular activities again on Saturday, March 30, 2024, from 11:30 AM until completion, held in the classroom at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Pagar Alam, still using the observation sheet for Tahfidz extracurricular activities. At this stage, observations were made on the extracurricular supervisors regarding teaching methods, assessment indicators, evaluation techniques, and so forth. The researcher also observed the students participating in the extracurricular activities in terms of their participation and involvement, interest, concentration/seriousness, activeness, discipline, and so forth.

Barriers to Implementing the Tahfidz Extracurricular Program to Enhance Quran Reading Skills of Students at MTs Negeri 1 Pagar Alam

This study addressed the second research problem through structured interviews with Ms. Nur Afni, S.Pd.I, the extracurricular supervisor and informant for this research. The Tahfidz extracurricular activities at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Pagar Alam inevitably face several obstacles. Below are the findings from the interview regarding factors that hinder the implementation or application of the Tahfidz extracurricular program.

Inadequate Learning Facilities: "We have some in the library for the Quran, but the students already bring their own from home. They are very enthusiastic; they bring Juz Amma when asked and Tajweed books, too. The school has Qurans, but the children already have their own. For Tajweed books, we have some in the library but not enough to meet the demand" (Supervisor, 2024).

From the interview above, it can be concluded that the learning facilities, apart from the Quran, are insufficient. Although there are some books, they are not enough for all students participating in the Tahfidz extracurricular program.

Lack of Dedicated Space for Activities: "No, we use the classroom. Our schedule is after school, so activities take place in the classroom. We used a special room last semester because some classes had afternoon sessions, but it was a makeshift solution. After the children go home in the second semester, we are back in the classroom" (Supervisor, 2024).

From the interview, it is clear that there is no dedicated room for Tahfidz's extracurricular activities, so they are still held in classrooms after school.

Limited Time for Activities: "Yes, there is a time limitation, but if we extend it beyond an hour and a half, the children feel bored and tired. We only persuade them for an hour and a half" (Supervisor, 2024).

From the interview, it can be inferred that the supervisor has limited time to conduct the extracurricular activities. Extending this time could make the students feel bored and tired, primarily as these activities are conducted after school hours.

Limited Number of Instructors: "For now, because there are few students, it is manageable, but I limit the number of children who can participate in Tahfidz" (Supervisor, 2024).

The interview reveals that only one tutor/supervisor is available, which limits the number of students who can participate in the Tahfidz extracurricular activities.

From the data collected, several inhibiting factors were identified: Insufficient Learning Resources: The availability of learning materials such as reference books, Tajweed books, Juz Amma, and Qurans is inadequate. This can hinder the implementation of Tahfidz's extracurricular activities, especially since not all students have adequate Quran learning facilities at home.

Lack of a Special Room for Activities: The absence of a dedicated space for the Tahfidz extracurricular activities means they are still conducted in classrooms after school or whenever a classroom is available. A dedicated space would provide a more comfortable and focused student environment, preventing boredom.

Limited Time for Activities: Time constraints often hinder any extracurricular activity, especially in Tahfidz. Efficient time management is crucial for successful learning and achieving set objectives.

Limited Teaching Staff: This also hinders the effective implementation of Tahfidz's extracurricular activities. With more instructional time required, especially when students are tested or practice individually in front of their tutor, the activities become less effective due to the large number of students and limited available time.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to assess the efforts of the Tahfidz extracurricular program in enhancing the Quran reading skills of students and to identify the factors that hinder its implementation. While the Tahfidz extracurricular program has been implemented at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Pagar Alam, it has not yet fully maximized its potential in improving students' Quran reading abilities due to several key elements lacking in its implementation.

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