



The Role of Al-Quran Literacy in Deepening Understanding of Islamic Religious Education

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Abstract:

This research focuses on the role of Al-Qur'an literacy in deepening students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education and developing their moral and ethical character. This research explores how Al-Qur'an literacy functions as a reading skill and a tool for developing critical, reflective thinking and a holistic understanding of Islamic teachings. This research uses qualitative methods, including interviews, observation, and documentation techniques, to explore Al-Qur'an literacy experiences, perceptions, and practices at Middle School. The research results show that Al-Qur'an literacy significantly impacts understanding Islamic Religious Education material and developing students' character. However, this research also identified challenges in implementation, such as a need for more time allocation in the curriculum and variations in reading skill levels among students. The implications of this research emphasize the need for adaptive learning strategies and additional support to increase the effectiveness of Al-Qur'an literacy in religious education.

INTRODUCTION

Al-Quran literacy among students is vital in forming their character and understanding of Islamic religious values (Supriadi et al., 2022; Islamiah & Maulidiah, 2024). In Indonesia, as a country with a Muslim majority population, the skill of reading the Qur'an is expected to be an essential skill that every student has from an early age (Ningsih et al., 2023; Samudra et al., 2022). However, the reality on the ground shows that there are still many students who need help reading and understanding the contents of the Qur'an. This difficulty is caused by the lack of school learning and the need for more practice reading the Qur'an in the family and community environment (Assa'idi, 2021; Suharsongko et al., 2023; Ridlo & Yanti, 2023). As a result, students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education material could be more profound. This can be seen from students' low achievement in P.A.I. lessons, which cover aspects of knowledge and a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and their implementation in everyday life (Mubin et al., 2023; Zanjabila et al., 2023; Purwanto et al., 2023; Zuhdi et al., 2024). This indicates an urgent need to improve Qur'anic literacy among students,

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which will deepen their understanding of Islamic religious education and strengthen their moral and ethical values.

Various studies have revealed a positive relationship between Qur'an literacy and understanding Islamic Religious Education materials. Several studies (Anggreani & Ali, 2024; Hanafi et al., 2023) show that reading the Qur'an well can improve students' understanding of the content and meaning contained in religious texts. Research (Akib, 2024; Muryati & Hariyanti, 2024; Solihat et al., 2023) I found that students with better Qur'an reading skills tend to have a deeper understanding of Islamic Religious Education materials, especially regarding the basic concepts of Islam and the moral values taught. Other studies (Arifin, 2023; Sumirah et al., 2023) Also, integrating learning to read the Qur'an with Islamic Religious Education teaching can improve students' understanding of Islamic theological and ethical concepts. In addition, the study (Assa'idi, 2021; Hanafi et al., 2023; Khotimah et al., 2024) revealed that intensive and continuous Quran literacy training significantly improves students' learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education subjects. However, most of these studies focus on the technical aspects of Quran reading skills without delving deeper into how such literacy can holistically influence students' critical understanding of religious teachings.

Although various studies have shown a positive relationship between Qur'an literacy and understanding of Islamic Religious Education material, most research still needs to include more than the technical aspects of reading ability and its direct influence on student learning outcomes (Cuhanazriansyah, 2023). Several research gaps have yet to be widely explored, especially in understanding how Qur'anic literacy functions as a reading skill and a tool for developing critical thinking and reflection on Islamic teachings (Pratama et al., 2024). In addition, previous studies tend to pay less attention to the social and cultural context in which Qur'anic learning takes place and how these factors influence the effectiveness of Qur'anic literacy in deepening religious understanding. Previous studies also rarely highlight the integrative role of Qur'anic literacy in the broader educational curriculum, which involves the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of religious learning. Thus, there is still an urgent need for more comprehensive and holistic research exploring the role of Qur'anic literacy in improving cognitive abilities and shaping students' character and ethics in Islamic Religious Education.

This study offers a more holistic approach to exploring the role of Qur'an literacy in deepening the understanding of Islamic Religious Education. Unlike previous studies that focused more on the technical ability to read the Qur'an, this study seeks to understand how Qur'an literacy can be used to develop critical thinking and deep reflection on religious teachings. This study will also integrate students' social and cultural contexts while studying the Quran, which has yet to be widely discussed in previous studies. In addition, this study will evaluate the role of Qur'an literacy in developing affective and psychomotor aspects, not only cognitive, in Islamic religious education, providing a more comprehensive view of the impact of Qur'an literacy. Thus, this study provides a significant new contribution to Islamic religious education by showing how increasing Qur'an literacy can effectively deepen spiritual understanding and holistically strengthen students' character and ethics.

This study aims to examine in depth the role of Qur'anic literacy in deepening students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education at SMPN 15 Samarinda. This study seeks to identify how Qur'anic literacy functions as a reading skill and a tool for building critical, reflective thinking and a more holistic understanding of Islamic teachings. In addition, this study aims to explore the impact of Qur'anic literacy on various aspects of learning, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, in different social and cultural contexts. This study also seeks to reveal learning strategies that can improve Qur'anic literacy among students to strengthen their understanding of religious and moral values taught in Islamic religious education subjects.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted at SMPN 15 Samarinda because this school has a comprehensive and integrated Al-Qur'an literacy program in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. SMPN 15 Samarinda is one of the schools that prioritizes strengthening Islamic values through Al-Qur'an literacy-based learning. This location was selected based on the desire to understand in depth how Al-Qur'an literacy is applied in an educational context with a unique program to deepen students' understanding of Islamic teachings. In addition, students at SMPN 15 Samarinda come from various social and cultural backgrounds, which provide diversity in learning patterns and practices of Al-Qur'an literacy. This study uses qualitative research methods to explore in-depth and comprehensively the experiences, perceptions, and practices of Al-Qur'an literacy among students and teachers. Qualitative methods were chosen because they allow researchers to gain a rich and contextual understanding of how Al-Qur'an literacy can deepen students' knowledge of P.A.I. materials and reveal factors that influence the effectiveness of Al-Qur'an literacy-based learning in the school educational environment.

To deeply understand the role of Qur'an literacy in deepening the understanding of Islamic Religious Education at SMPN 15 Samarinda, this study used several data collection techniques, namely interviews, observations, and documentation. Interview techniques were used to collect data from key informants, namely Islamic education teachers, students, and principals. This interview aims to obtain in-depth information about the experiences, views, and strategies used in implementing Qur'an literacy in the school environment. Observation techniques were used to see how the Qur'an literacy learning process takes place in the classroom, including interactions between teachers and students and the use of learning methods and media. These observations provide empirical data on classroom dynamics and learning practices that cannot be obtained through interviews alone. In addition, documentation is used to collect secondary data such as curriculum, lesson implementation plans (R.P.P.), teaching materials, and reports on Qur'an literacy activities in schools. This technique helps strengthen data from interviews and observations. It provides a complete picture of the implementation of Qur'an literacy and its influence on the understanding of education of Islamic religion at SMPN 15 Samarinda.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, which aims to identify the main patterns and themes of the data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The analysis begins with transcribing interviews and recording observation results in detail,

followed by data coding to identify categories and themes relevant to the study's focus. Each coded data is then grouped into more prominent themes, such as the effectiveness of Qur'anic literacy in Islamic Religious Education learning, factors that influence student understanding, and strategies used by teachers in integrating Qur'anic literacy into Islamic Religious Education materials. Furthermore, the data is analyzed in depth to reveal the meaning and interpretation of each theme and understand the relationship between Qur'anic literacy and understanding of Islamic Religious Education at SMPN 15 Samarinda. The results of this analysis are then used to compile more comprehensive conclusions regarding the role of Qur'anic literacy in deepening students' understanding of religious teachings and providing recommendations for improving Qur'anic literacy practices in schools.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Reading and understanding the Qur'an deepens students' understanding of Islamic teachings. Quranic literacy is not just the technical ability to read sacred texts but also understanding the context and meaning of the verses (Hasan et al., 2024). By improving the literacy of the Qur'an, students can relate religious teachings to their daily life practices, thus strengthening their understanding of the basic concepts in Islamic Religious Education. In addition, the literacy of the Qur'an plays a role in the development of students' character, helping them internalize the moral and ethical values taught in the Qur'an (Muryati & Hariyanti, 2024). However, the implementation of Qur'anic literacy faces challenges, such as the lack of time allocation in the curriculum and the variation in the level of Qur'anic reading skills among students, which may affect its effectiveness. Therefore, addressing these challenges and integrating Qur'anic literacy into religious education is essential for deeper understanding and strong character development.

To address the challenges associated with Qur'anic literacy a multifaceted approach is necessary. Educators and curriculum developers should consider allocating specific time slots dedicated to Qur'anic studies within the school timetable. This adjustment would ensure that students have ample opportunity to engage with the text and its teachings without feeling rushed or overburdened. Incorporating interactive and engaging methods, such as group discussions, multimedia resources, and practical applications, can also enhance students' connection to the Qur'an and make learning more accessible and meaningful.

Understanding Religious Concepts Through Al-Quran Literacy in Improving Islamic Religious Education Learning

Quran literacy is crucial in deepening Islamic Religious Education's teachings. Reading and understanding the Quran correctly allows students to access the meaning and context of the sacred texts (Faiz et al., 2023; Sholihah & Alfiyah, 2024). With good Quranic literacy skills, students not only read the Quranic verses technically but can also understand the historical, linguistic, and

theological context of the verses. This facilitates a deeper understanding of religious teachings, including basic concepts such as monotheism, worship, morals, and Islamic law. One student said, “Understanding the context of the Quranic verses, I feel more confident in carrying out my worship and understand why each religious practice is important.” Improved Quranic literacy allows students to integrate religious teachings into their daily lives, strengthening their understanding of how Islamic teachings can be applied in a modern context (Dalimunthe, 2023; Sanjani, 2024).

In addition to understanding the material, Quran literacy plays a vital role in developing students’ character. Quran literacy activities, such as reading, understanding, and practising the teachings of the Quran, contribute to the formation of moral and ethical attitudes based on Islamic values. A teacher stated, “Quran literacy makes students more sensitive to Islamic values in everyday life. They are wiser in making decisions that are in line with religious teachings.” Students active in Quran literacy practices tend to show improvements in moral behaviour, ethics, and positive attitudes, which support the formation of their character. Quran literacy helps students internalize religious values and apply them in social interactions and daily decisions, strengthening their moral and ethical qualities.

However, the implementation of Quran literacy faces several challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of time allocated to the curriculum for Quran literacy activities. With busy schedules and a focus on various subjects, the time available to develop Quran literacy skills is often limited. In addition, there are differences in the level of Quran reading skills among students, which can affect learning effectiveness. This variation in ability challenges ensuring that all students receive the same benefits from the Quran literacy program. One parent added, “After my child was active in Quran literacy, I saw positive changes in their behaviour and ethics, especially in social interactions.” Therefore, it is essential to address these challenges by optimizing the curriculum, providing additional support for students, and implementing adaptive learning strategies to maximize the role of Quran literacy in deepening Islamic education understanding.

In addition, Quran literacy plays a vital role in understanding Islamic teachings. With good literacy skills, students can explore various interpretations and explanations of the verses of the Quran, which enriches their knowledge of religious teachings. They become more critical and reflective in dealing with spiritual issues and can better assess various views of Islamic tradition. Therefore, Quran literacy improves cognitive understanding of Islamic Religious Education material and supports the formation of more profound and more mature thinking about Islamic teachings. From the findings above, it can be concluded that several student skills show their contribution to the findings, namely regarding

increasing understanding of religious concepts so that they can be collected in the findings by Figure 1.

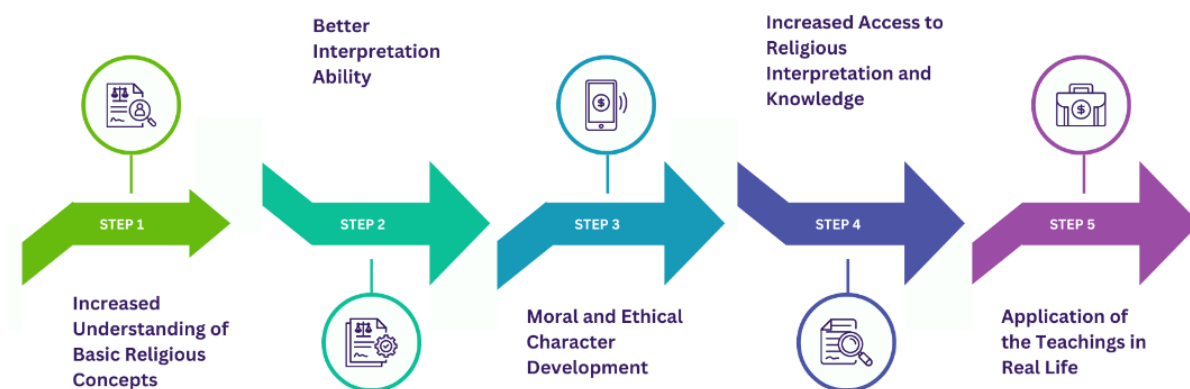


Figure.1 Student Skills

The study results show that students with good Qur'an literacy skills tend to have a deeper understanding of basic concepts in Islamic Religious Education (Daswati & Fitriani, 2023; Zuhdi et al., 2024). Quranic literacy enables students to understand the meaning and context of the verses of the Quran better, which in turn strengthens their understanding of religious teachings. Quranic literacy includes the technical ability to read sacred texts and a deep understanding of the meaning and context of the verses (Haikal et al., 2024; Sanjani, 2024). Students who master the literacy of the Qur'an can more easily identify and understand the messages contained in the verses of the Qur'an and how these messages are applied in various aspects of life (Munawwaroh et al., 2024). With this ability, students not only read the verses literally. Still, they can also interpret and relate the teachings of the Qur'an to the situations and contexts they face (Qushwa, 2024).

The development of moral and ethical character, increasing access to interpretation and religious knowledge, and the application of teachings in real life; through good Quran literacy skills, students not only understand the basic concepts of religion, such as monotheism and worship more profoundly but are also able to interpret holy verses in the context of everyday life, which strengthens their understanding of Islamic teachings (Putri et al., 2024; Maisuroh et al., 2024). In addition, Al-Qur'an literacy plays a vital role in forming students' moral and ethical character through Islamic values while opening access to various interpretations and knowledge that enrich their religious insight (Musyafak & Subhi, 2023). Finally, the ability to apply the teachings of the Quran in real life shows how this literacy impacts not only the cognitive aspect but also the practical practice of religious teachings in various situations and contexts of their lives (Hasanah et al., 2024).

The Relationship between Al-Quran Literacy and Character Development

Research reveals that Quran literacy contributes to understanding Islamic Religious Education material and has a positive impact on the development of students' character. Students active in Quran literacy activities show improvements in moral attitudes, ethics, and daily behaviour that align with Islamic teachings.

This explanation is from a teacher who stated, "Students who are actively involved in Quranic literacy are better able to demonstrate positive moral attitudes, which are seen in their daily lives." Research reveals that Quranic literacy is essential in deepening the understanding of Islamic Religious Education materials and developing students' character. Quranic literacy activities, such as reading, learning, and exploring the meaning of holy verses, significantly impact students' moral and ethical attitudes. Through regular interaction with Quranic texts, students better understand the moral values and ethical teachings taught in Islam. This process helps students to internalize these values in their daily lives.

Quran literacy activities integrated with religious education strengthen students' character by teaching them honesty, patience, and responsibility. One student said, "After reading the Quran regularly, I feel more patient and responsible in dealing with various situations." Students actively involved in Quran literacy often show improvements in their moral behaviour. They learn to face challenges more positively, act with empathy towards others, and practice religious teachings in their social interactions. This improves their personal qualities and affects their relationships with others, strengthening harmonious and productive social relationships.

In addition, Quran literacy activities contribute to character development by strengthening a sense of identity and commitment to Islamic teachings. By understanding religious teachings more deeply through Quran literacy, students become more aware of their responsibilities as Muslim individuals. One of the parents added, "I see significant changes in my child, he has become more consistent in implementing Islamic teachings at home." From the results of interviews with these informants, they are encouraged to adopt behaviours that are in line with Islamic teachings, both in personal and social contexts. Therefore, Quran literacy enriches students' religious knowledge and plays a crucial role in shaping their character through Islamic moral and ethical values.

The implementation of Al-Quran literacy in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum shows a positive impact not only on understanding the material but also on the development of students' character. Through structured and ongoing literacy activities, students gain a deeper understanding of the moral and ethical values taught in Islam. Reading and understanding the Al-Quran helps students internalize values such as honesty, patience, and a sense of responsibility. This internalization process goes hand in hand with formal learning in religious education, so Al-Quran literacy becomes an effective tool in shaping students' character through Islamic values.

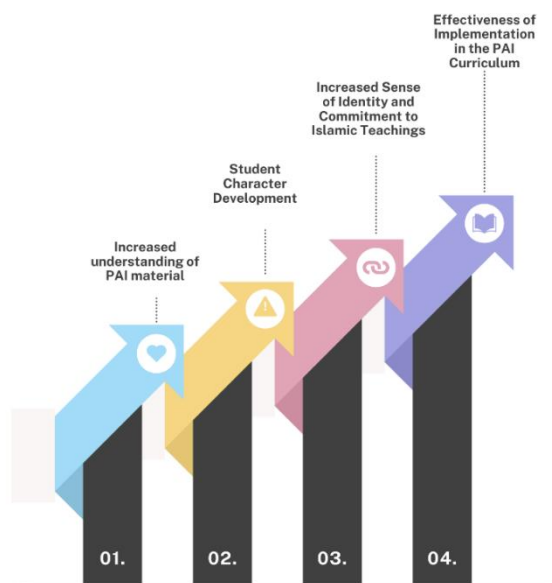


Figure 2. literacy activities

Observation results by Figure 2, show that students actively involved in Al-Qur'an literacy activities tend to improve their moral and ethical behaviour. They can better face challenges positively, act empathetically, and show concern for others (Syafitri, 2020). In addition, they also tend to be more consistent in implementing religious teachings in everyday life. This observation confirms that Al-Quran literacy enriches students' spiritual knowledge and contributes to forming a solid character that aligns with Islamic teachings (Astuti et al., 2023).

This study also shows that through Quran literacy activities, students develop a stronger identity as Muslim individuals. With a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings, students become more aware of their Muslim responsibilities (Saifudin, 2023). This awareness influences their attitudes in everyday life, encouraging them to live a better life and by religious teachings (Mulyadi et al., 2023). Implementing Al-Qur'an literacy in religious education is thus not only a learning activity but also a process of forming identity and commitment to Islamic teachings.

Al-Qur'an Literacy in Improving Students' Understanding and Character Development in Islamic Religious Education

Although Quran literacy has a positive impact, this study also identified several challenges, such as the lack of time allocated in the curriculum for Quran literacy and differences in the level of Quran reading skills among students. These challenges affect the effectiveness of Quran literacy in improving Islamic Religious Education understanding.

This statement aligns with one of the teachers who said, "Students often have difficulty deepening the Qur'an literacy because the time allocated is too limited, especially with the density of other subjects." Although Qur'an literacy significantly impacts students' understanding and character development, this

study identified several challenges that can affect effectiveness. One of the main challenges is the need for more time allocated to the curriculum for Qur'an literacy activities. In many education systems, the time available for Qur'an literacy is often limited due to the density of lesson schedules and the focus on various other subjects. This makes it challenging to integrate Qur'an literacy deeply into the learning process, thereby reducing students' opportunities to develop optimal Qur'an reading skills.

Then, a student also stated, "I find it difficult to understand the Qur'an better because the time available to study it is minimal." Another challenge is the difference in the level of Qur'an reading skills among students. In the same environment, there is variation in the ability to read the Qur'an, which different educational backgrounds and personal experiences can cause. This difference creates difficulties in providing equitable and effective teaching. Students with lower reading skills may find it difficult to follow the material, while students with higher skills may feel less challenged. This imbalance affects the effectiveness of Qur'an literacy learning and can hinder achieving desired results in understanding Islamic Religious Education materials.

In addition, one teacher added, "The differences in reading ability among students make teaching Quranic literacy more challenging, as I have to adjust my approach to each student." Differences in Quranic reading skill levels may result in the need for different approaches to teaching and mentoring. Teachers may face difficulties adjusting teaching methods to meet the needs of students with varying skill levels, which may reduce the quality and impact of Quranic literacy learning. Therefore, it is essential to address these challenges by providing adequate time in the curriculum for Quranic literacy and developing adaptive teaching strategies to support all students, regardless of their skill level.

This study has significantly contributed to understanding the role of Qur'anic literacy in deepening the understanding of Islamic Religious Education. One of the main findings is the positive impact of Qur'anic literacy in improving students' understanding of basic religious concepts, such as monotheism, worship, morals, and Islamic law. Qur'anic literacy allows students to access the meaning and context of holy verses to integrate religious teachings into their daily lives. This study shows that Qur'anic literacy plays a role in the cognitive aspect and in the formation of students' moral and ethical character, which is essential in developing personality according to Islamic values.

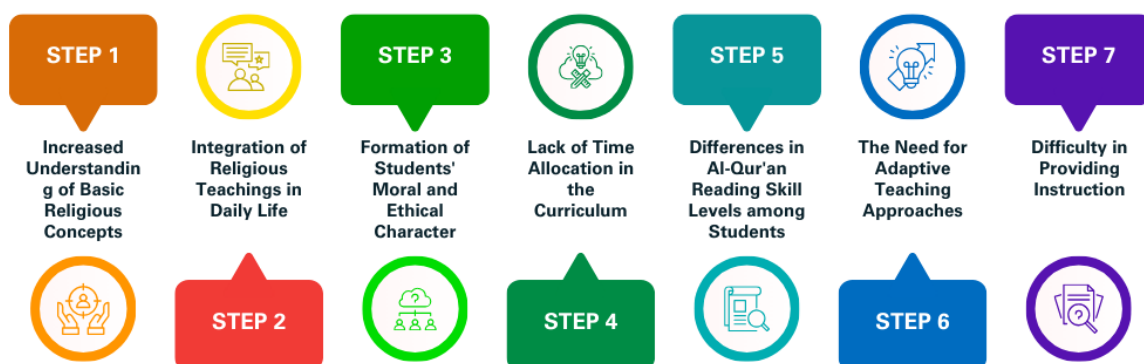


Figure 3. Implementation of Al-Qur'an Literacy

The results of this study also revealed several challenges that need to be considered in implementing Al-Qur'an literacy. One of the main challenges identified is the need for more time allocated to the curriculum for Al-Qur'an literacy activities. Limited time often makes Al-Qur'an literacy unable to be integrated deeply into the learning process (Syahputra, 2022). The tight schedule of lessons and focus on various subjects affect the effectiveness of Al-Qur'an literacy in achieving its goals. This time limitation reduces students' opportunities to develop optimal Al-Qur'an reading skills, ultimately impacting their understanding of religious teachings (Syamsidar et al., 2024).

In addition, this study found differences in students' Qur'an reading skills, which is another challenge in implementing Qur'an literacy. Different educational backgrounds and personal experiences can cause this variation in reading ability (Sinaga & Setiawan, 2024). These differences in skill levels create difficulties in providing equitable and practical instruction. Students with lower reading skills may need help with the material, while students with higher skills may feel less challenged (Syahrin & bin As, 2021). This imbalance impacts the effectiveness of learning Al-Quran literacy and hinders the achievement of desired results in understanding P.A.I (Kartika & Arifudin, 2024).

Observational results from this study also show that teachers often face difficulties adapting teaching methods to meet the needs of students with different skill levels. Differences in Qur'an reading abilities require different teaching approaches, which are only sometimes easy to implement. Teachers must adapt to various teaching strategies that can support students with varying skill levels, but these challenges can reduce the quality and impact of Qur'an literacy learning. This study emphasizes the importance of a more adaptive approach to teaching Qur'an literacy.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study highlights the crucial role of Quran literacy in deepening students' understanding of the basic concepts of Islamic Religious Education and in forming their moral and ethical character. The most important finding of this study is that Quran literacy not only contributes to the cognitive aspect but also has a significant impact on the development of students' moral attitudes and behaviour, which reflect the internalization of Islamic values in everyday life. The wisdom that can be taken from this study is the importance of Quran literacy as an educational tool that educates intellectually and forms students' character through religious values, which are relevant in Islamic education.

Scientifically, this study contributes significantly by updating the perspective on the importance of Qur'an literacy in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, especially in the context of more holistic teaching involving cognitive and affective aspects. This study also underlines the need for an adaptive teaching approach to accommodate differences in reading skill levels among students. However, this study has limitations, especially in terms of coverage that is limited to some instances, locations, and variations in the level of Qur'an reading skills. Therefore, more comprehensive follow-up research, considering variations in gender and age and broader survey methods, is needed to obtain a more in-depth picture and can be used as a basis for more appropriate educational policies.

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