

## THE ROLE OF TAMAN PENDIDIKAN AL-QUR'AN AL MUTTAQIN IN ERADICATING AL-QUR'AN ILLITERACY IN DUSUN PLELEN, SIDOHARJO VILLAGE, PACITAN

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### ABSTRACT

Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ) Al Muttaqin, located in Dusun Plelen, Sidoharjo Village, Pacitan, has been instrumental in addressing Al-Qur'an illiteracy among children in the area. This non-formal, non-profit institution has employed the Ummi and Iqro' methods to teach children how to read and write the Al-Qur'an. This research aims to explore the role of TPQ Al Muttaqin in combating Al-Qur'an illiteracy, and to assess the effectiveness of the teaching methods applied. The study's findings indicate that the TPQ program has significantly improved the Al-Qur'an literacy of its participants, with 35 out of 50 children demonstrating proficiency in reading and writing the Al-Qur'an.

**Keywords:** Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an, Al-Qur'an illiteracy, Ummi method, Iqro' method

### INTRODUCTION

Religious education, particularly Al-Qur'an literacy, plays a vital role in shaping the spiritual and moral character of Muslim individuals and communities. The ability to read and understand the Al-Qur'an is considered a foundational skill for every Muslim, serving not only as a religious obligation but also as a source of ethical guidance and identity formation. Despite its importance, Al-Qur'an illiteracy remains a pressing issue in various regions of Indonesia, especially in rural and underserved communities where access to formal religious education is limited.

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, continues to face challenges in ensuring that all Muslim children can read and write the Al-Qur'an proficiently. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama) indicate that millions of children still struggle with basic Al-Qur'an literacy. The situation is even more concerning in rural areas such as Dusun Plelen, Sidoharjo Village, Pacitan, where economic constraints, lack of qualified teachers, and limited educational infrastructure hinder efforts to improve literacy rates. In response to these challenges, non-formal educational institutions such as Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ) have emerged as vital agents of change. TPQs provide community-based, flexible, and often volunteer-driven educational services, aiming to equip children with the skills to read and understand the Al-Qur'an. These institutions operate outside the formal school system and are often managed by local religious leaders, educators, or community volunteers who are deeply committed to promoting Islamic education.

One such institution is TPQ Al Muttaqin, located in Dusun Plelen. Established to address the high rates of Al-Qur'an illiteracy among children in the village, TPQ Al Muttaqin utilizes two widely recognized methods: the *Ummi* and *Iqro'* methods. The Ummi method emphasizes a structured and integrated approach to reading, writing, and recitation, while the Iqro' method focuses on the gradual recognition and pronunciation of Arabic letters and words. These methods have been selected for their proven effectiveness in teaching young learners to read the Al-Qur'an accurately and

confidently. This study aims to explore the role of TPQ Al Muttaqin in eradicating Al-Qur'an illiteracy among children in Dusun Plelen, as well as to assess the effectiveness of the teaching methods employed. Beyond its educational function, TPQ Al Muttaqin also serves as a spiritual center for the community, reinforcing Islamic values and nurturing a sense of religious belonging among its students.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to shed light on the successes and challenges of TPQ-based Al-Qur'an education in rural Indonesia. By examining the strategies and outcomes of TPQ Al Muttaqin, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on non-formal religious education and offer practical insights for policy makers, educators, and religious leaders who aim to combat Al-Qur'an illiteracy at the grassroots level. The issue of Al-Qur'an illiteracy has been a longstanding concern within Islamic education in Indonesia. Various studies have emphasized the importance of early religious education to instill basic literacy in reading the Al-Qur'an and understanding its teachings (Hasanah, 2020). Non-formal religious institutions, such as Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ), have been central to addressing this challenge, especially in areas where access to formal religious schools (madrasah) is limited or where economic and geographic factors hinder regular schooling.

1. **The Role of Non-Formal Education in Religious Literacy.** Non-formal education refers to organized educational activities that occur outside the formal school system and are designed to serve specific learning needs and populations (UNESCO, 2018). In the context of Islamic education, TPQs represent one of the most common forms of non-formal religious instruction in Indonesia. They are community-driven, flexible, and often managed with limited resources, yet they play a crucial role in transmitting religious knowledge and values to children (Sari, 2021). Several studies highlight that non-formal religious education contributes significantly to the religious and moral development of young learners. It allows students to learn at their own pace and often fosters a more personal and values-based learning environment (Wahyuni, 2022). Furthermore, TPQs can adapt their teaching strategies to suit the cultural and linguistic context of their communities, making them highly effective in rural settings.
2. **Teaching Methods in Al-Qur'an Literacy: Ummi and Iqro'.** Two widely used methodologies in Al-Qur'an literacy education in Indonesia are the Ummi and Iqro' methods. Each method offers a unique pedagogical approach, tailored to help beginners—particularly children—develop their skills in reading the Al-Qur'an.
  - a. **The Ummi Method.** The Ummi method is a comprehensive approach that integrates reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in a structured and systematic manner. It emphasizes talaqqi (teacher-led recitation) and muroja'ah (repetition) to develop fluency in reciting the Al-Qur'an. According to Suryadi (2019), the Ummi method follows a step-by-step model starting from sound recognition to fluent recitation, making it highly accessible for young learners. It also incorporates tajwid rules from an early stage, ensuring that students develop proper pronunciation and respect for the rules of Qur'anic recitation. The method also uses group learning and peer assessment, which promotes active participation and builds confidence among students. Many educators consider the Ummi method effective not only for children but also for adult learners who are returning to Al-Qur'an education after years of disengagement.

- b. The Iqro' Method. The Iqro' method, developed by KH As'ad Humam and widely implemented since the late 20th century, introduces Arabic letters and their pronunciation gradually through a tiered booklet system (from Iqro' 1 to Iqro' 6). Al-Jabari (2020) explains that the strength of the Iqro' method lies in its simplicity and clarity. Each level introduces new letters and reading patterns, allowing learners to progress steadily based on their mastery. The method is often teacher-guided but encourages independent reading and repetition. Its use of visual learning tools and repetitive practice suits early learners who are unfamiliar with Arabic script. The Iqro' method has been widely adopted in TPQs across Indonesia and remains a cornerstone in foundational Qur'anic education.
3. Comparative Effectiveness and Integration of Methods. Both the Ummi and Iqro' methods have been the subject of academic evaluation, and each presents distinct strengths. While the Iqro' method is often praised for its user-friendliness and adaptability for self-paced learning, the Ummi method offers a more structured and holistic approach that incorporates tajwid, memorization, and listening skills from the outset (Nugroho & Istiqomah, 2022). In practice, many TPQs—including TPQ Al Muttaqin—combine both methods to maximize effectiveness. This integrative approach allows educators to benefit from the strengths of each method, ensuring that students not only become fluent readers but also develop an appreciation for the linguistic and spiritual aspects of the Al-Qur'an.
4. Impact of TPQs on Community Religious Life. TPQs are more than just educational institutions; they are often at the heart of community religious life. They serve as spaces for communal worship, spiritual guidance, and intergenerational transmission of Islamic knowledge. As noted by Sari (2021), the presence of TPQs contributes to strengthening religious identity and cohesion within local communities, especially in rural areas where formal religious education is lacking.

## METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method, aiming to explore and analyze the role of TPQ Al Muttaqin in eradicating Al-Qur'an illiteracy in Dusun Plelen, Sidoharjo Village, Pacitan. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the educational processes, teaching methods, and learning outcomes within the TPQ environment. The case study design is particularly suitable for this research as it focuses on one specific institution and provides a comprehensive examination of its practices and impacts. The study was conducted at TPQ Al Muttaqin, a community-based non-formal Islamic educational institution located in a rural area of Dusun Plelen. The TPQ is known for its commitment to Al-Qur'an literacy and character development. The institution serves approximately 50 child participants, aged between 6 to 14 years old, who come from various socio-economic backgrounds. To obtain a holistic picture of the educational process and its effectiveness, this research used the following data collection methods; 1) Observation. Participant and non-participant observations were carried out during the teaching and learning sessions. The researcher observed the interaction between teachers and students, the implementation of the Ummi and Iqro' methods, student engagement, and classroom dynamics. Observation checklists were used to systematically document teaching practices, student responses, and lesson flow. 2) Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, the TPQ administrator, and selected parents.

### Data Analysis Techniques

The qualitative data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's model (1994), which involves the following steps; 1) Data Reduction: Organizing, simplifying, and selecting relevant information from raw data. Transcripts from interviews and field notes were coded and categorized based on emerging themes. 2) Data Display: Presenting data in the form of matrices, charts, and thematic clusters to facilitate understanding. 3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Drawing conclusions from patterns and relationships observed in the data, and verifying their validity by cross-checking with multiple data sources (triangulation).

The credibility of the data was ensured through triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement in the field.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings reveal that TPQ Al Muttaqin has made significant contributions in reducing Al-Qur'an illiteracy in Dusun Plelen. Based on data collected from observations, interviews, and documentation, the following key results were identified:

- a. Student Achievement in Al-Qur'an Literacy. Out of 50 children enrolled in the TPQ program; 1) 35 students (70%) demonstrated the ability to read and write the Al-Qur'an proficiently. 2) 15 students (30%) were still in the early stages of learning, with ongoing guidance using the Ummi and Iqro' methods. These results were based on internal assessments conducted by the teachers, which evaluated students' reading fluency, accuracy in tajwid, ability to write hijaiyah letters, and memorization of short Surahs.
- b. Effectiveness of the Ummi and Iqro' Methods. Both methods have been effectively implemented in the learning process; 1) The Ummi method helped students develop a holistic understanding of reading, writing, and correct pronunciation (tajwid). It employed a structured, interactive, and repetition-based model that facilitated engagement and retention among younger learners. 2) The Iqro' method introduced the Arabic alphabet systematically. Its step-by-step approach helped students recognize and articulate Arabic letters confidently before moving to full Qur'anic verses. Observation notes show that students who consistently attended classes and received support from home tended to achieve literacy faster. The combination of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic techniques made both methods suitable for the TPQ setting.
- c. Role of Teachers and Institutional Support. TPQ Al Muttaqin is supported by 4 dedicated teachers, all of whom have undergone basic training in the Ummi or Iqro' methods. Their commitment and pedagogical skills greatly contributed to the success of the program. Teachers adopted individualized attention for slower learners and used motivational techniques like rewards and praise to boost confidence. The administrator played a crucial role in curriculum organization, scheduling, and maintaining collaboration with parents. Weekly evaluations and monthly group reviews were conducted to monitor student progress.
- d. Parental Involvement and Community Support. Interviews with parents revealed that many noticed positive changes in their children's behavior and discipline after attending the TPQ. Several parents mentioned that their children had become more diligent in performing prayers, reciting the Qur'an at home, and showing improved manners. The community views TPQ Al Muttaqin not only as an educational institution but also as a spiritual center that fosters moral

and religious development. During events such as Khataman Al-Qur'an and Maulid Nabi celebrations, parents and community members participate actively, strengthening the bond between TPQ and society.

The findings affirm that TPQ Al Muttaqin plays a strategic role in eradicating Al-Qur'an illiteracy in its locality. The success rate of 70% among its students is an encouraging sign that non-formal educational models can be highly effective, especially in rural or underserved areas where access to formal Islamic education is limited.

- a. **Alignment with Previous Studies.** These results are consistent with Suryadi (2019), who found that structured Qur'anic instruction significantly improves literacy levels in TPQ environments. The integrated teaching style of the Ummi method supports multi-sensory learning, which is ideal for young children. Meanwhile, Al-Jabari (2020) also highlights the simplicity and efficiency of the Iqro' method in helping students master the basics of Arabic phonetics and Qur'anic reading.
- b. **The Importance of Non-Formal Education.** As stated by Sari (2021), TPQs serve not only as literacy centers but also as platforms for character building and moral reinforcement. TPQ Al Muttaqin's activities go beyond classroom learning, encompassing social, spiritual, and familial aspects. The institution's informal, nurturing environment allows children to learn without the pressure typically found in formal education systems.
- c. **Challenges and Opportunities.** Despite the positive results, some challenges remain; 1) Irregular attendance among certain students due to family obligations or economic factors. 2) Limited resources such as teaching materials, Qur'anic texts, and learning aids. 3) Need for continuous teacher training, especially in updating pedagogical approaches to match learners' needs.

However, these challenges present opportunities for improvement. Collaborations with local government, community leaders, or NGOs could help TPQ Al Muttaqin gain access to more resources and training programs. Digital learning tools may also be introduced to support blended learning, especially during unforeseen situations like the COVID-19 pandemic.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that TPQ Al Muttaqin has played a pivotal role in combating Al-Qur'an illiteracy among children in Dusun Plelen, Sidoharjo Village, Pacitan. Through the structured implementation of the Ummi and Iqro' methods, the TPQ has successfully enabled 70% of its students to achieve Qur'anic literacy, demonstrating their ability to read, write, and recite the Al-Qur'an with correct tajwid. As a non-formal and non-profit educational institution, TPQ Al Muttaqin serves as a vital supplement to formal education systems, especially in rural settings. The TPQ not only enhances students' Qur'anic skills but also contributes to their spiritual development, moral values, and sense of religious identity. The integration of community participation, parental involvement, and dedicated educators has contributed significantly to the institution's effectiveness. This research reaffirms the importance of non-formal religious education in shaping the character of young Muslims and bridging the educational gaps often found in rural communities. The success story of TPQ Al Muttaqin can serve as a model for other TPQs in similar socio-cultural contexts.

To enhance the sustainability and further impact of TPQ Al Muttaqin's educational efforts, the following recommendations are proposed; 1) Strengthen Teacher Capacity. Conduct regular training

and workshops for teachers on effective Qur'anic pedagogy, classroom management, and child psychology to support diverse learning needs. 2) Develop Learning Infrastructure. Improve the availability of learning materials, such as Al-Qur'an books, writing tools, visual aids, and audio learning media to support both visual and auditory learners. 3) Enhance Parental Engagement. Organize parental involvement programs, such as Qur'an reading sessions at home and periodic meetings to discuss student progress, creating a more supportive home environment for learning. 3) Establish Institutional Partnerships. Seek collaborations with local government, educational foundations, or religious organizations to secure funding, mentorship, or resources for expanding TPQ programs and outreach. 4) Implement a Monitoring and Evaluation System. Develop a systematic evaluation tool to track student progress in a structured manner, enabling continuous improvement in curriculum and teaching strategies.

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