

Challenges Faced by Islamic Education Teachers in Teaching the Subject of Al-Quran in Primary Schools

¹Wan Rosnina Salwani Wan Mamat, ²Harun Baharuddin

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Email: nurainadalila@gmail.com, harunbaharudin@ukm.edu.my

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Abstract

This study investigates the challenges faced by Islamic education teachers in teaching the subject of Al-Quran in primary schools. The Al-Quran is a fundamental pillar in Islamic education, and the correct approach is necessary to ensure a solid understanding of Islamic religion and culture. Hence, Islamic education teachers bear significant responsibility to ensure the effective teaching of the Al-Quran to primary school students. This study examines the challenges encountered by these teachers, including the lack of appropriate resources, the need to understand child development, and the need for teaching methods suited to children's developmental stages. A qualitative research method was employed to gain insights into these challenges. The findings indicate that the main challenges include a shortage of suitable teaching aids, difficulties in engaging children's interest in learning the Al-Quran, and the need to integrate more play-based approaches in teaching the Al-Quran to primary school students. In conclusion, the provision of more effective teaching aids, deeper understanding of child development, and creative teaching approaches are some of the steps that can be taken to address these challenges. The research design utilized qualitative methods, focusing on data collection instruments and interviews.

Keyword: Islamic Education, Al – Quran, Primary Schools, Teaching and learning.

Introduction

Islamic education is a vital aspect of the holistic development of a Muslim individual, with the study of the Al-Quran serving as a cornerstone for understanding Islamic religion and culture. In the context of primary school education, Islamic education teachers face various challenges in delivering effective Al-Quran lessons to young students. These challenges encompass several aspects requiring special attention, such as the lack of resources, understanding of child development, and the adaptation of teaching approaches.

This study aims to identify and analyze the challenges faced by Islamic education teachers in teaching the Al-Quran in primary schools. By understanding these challenges, measures can

be taken to improve the quality of Al-Quran teaching and learning for primary school students. According to Abdul Razif Zaini et al. (2020), it is hoped that this study will provide deep insights into the primary challenges encountered by Islamic education teachers, particularly in the context of teaching the Arabic language to preschool children. The findings are expected to contribute to a better understanding of how to overcome these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of Al-Quran teaching for primary school students.

The challenges faced by Islamic education teachers in teaching the Al-Quran in primary schools involve several critical aspects that need to be comprehensively addressed. Primary school students are at a crucial stage of child development, where foundational learning and values are established. At this stage, children are highly receptive to learning the Al-Quran and basic concepts. Al-Quran teaching holds a special position in Islamic education, as it is essential for students to learn to read the Al-Quran proficiently. Islamic education teachers are responsible not only for imparting religious knowledge but also for teaching the Al-Quran. They must be able to use teaching methods that align with the developmental stages of children.

Challenges include the lack of suitable teaching materials for primary school students, who often require colorful, interactive, and easy-to-understand resources. Additionally, finding teaching approaches that capture children's interest and match their cognitive abilities can be difficult. Motivating children to learn the Al-Quran, which they may perceive as challenging or dull, is another key issue. Teachers' proficiency in Al-Quran instruction and effective teaching techniques for children is also critical. Parental involvement plays a crucial role in supporting Al-Quran learning at home, and schools or educational institutions need to provide adequate facilities and teaching aids. Moreover, continuous professional training and development programs for teachers are necessary to enhance their skills in teaching the Al-Quran.

Primary school education serves as a fundamental foundation for the holistic and effective development of an individual. In the context of Islamic education, teaching the Al-Quran to primary school students is highly significant. The Al-Quran is the holy book of Muslims, and mastering its recitation from a young age can establish a strong foundation for religious understanding and cultural identity. Islamic education teachers play a critical role in shaping these early learning experiences. However, there are several issues that require special attention to ensure the teaching and learning process (TLP) is effective and achieves its intended goals (Fadzil et al., 2020). The effectiveness of Al-Quran teaching at this early stage can influence children's religious understanding and character development in the future. By understanding this background, we can better assess and address the challenges faced by teachers in teaching the Al-Quran to primary school students. This includes developing a more effective curriculum, providing better teaching materials, and offering continuous training and support for teachers.

Objectives

This study was conducted to achieve the following two objectives:

1. To identify the main challenges faced by Islamic education teachers in teaching the Al-Quran at the primary school level.
2. To explore proposed solutions or improvements to address the identified challenges.

Literature Review

The Literature Review Focuses on Proposed Solutions and Improvements to Overcome the Challenges Faced by Teachers

Kabilan, Embi (2006):

This study examined online collaboration among English language teachers for meaningful professional development. It highlighted that online collaboration provides a platform for teachers to share experiences, resources, and teaching strategies, thereby improving the quality of teaching and learning. It also strengthens professional networks and supports continuous learning among teachers.

The literature suggests that teacher training and professional development are key to enhancing the quality of Al-Quran instruction in early childhood education. By leveraging technology and collaborative approaches, teachers can continuously improve their skills and overcome challenges in Al-Quran teaching. Findings from Kabilan and Embi (2006) offer a model that can be adapted and applied in the context of Al-Quran instruction, ensuring that teachers receive the necessary support and resources to teach effectively.

Research Methodology

This Study Employs a Qualitative Research Design, Utilizing Data Collection Instruments such as:

- *Interviews:* Conducted with Islamic Education and Arabic Language teachers teaching the Al-Quran at SK Putrajaya P11-3, Federal Territory of Putrajaya.
- *Observations:* Observing the teaching and learning processes in Al-Quran classes to identify challenges that may not be captured through interviews, such as difficulties in classroom management or the effectiveness of teaching strategies.
- *Primary Sources:* Information was gathered from journals, articles, theses, and scholarly books available in several higher education institution libraries.
- *Secondary Sources:* Information was also collected from authoritative websites, such as the Ministry of Education and the *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2021, Vol. 14, No. 1, Pages 13-19.

The combination of these methods ensures a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and the development of effective strategies for Al-Quran teaching at the primary school level.

Research Design

This chapter explains and discusses the research methodology employed to achieve the study's objectives. The description in this chapter covers various aspects of the research design, including study participants, study location, research procedures, data collection methods, validity and reliability, and data analysis techniques. This research adopts a qualitative approach aimed at exploring the challenges faced by Islamic Education teachers in teaching Al-Quran to primary school students.

The overall framework of this qualitative study is outlined as a process that begins with selecting the research methodology, designing the study framework, sampling techniques, and data collection methods, such as in-depth interviews and document analysis, as well as ensuring the validity and reliability of qualitative data. The subsequent step involves analyzing qualitative data, which facilitates the identification of themes by continuously comparing recorded phenomena with similar themes.

To conduct a qualitative research design on the challenges faced by Islamic Education teachers in teaching Al-Quran in primary schools, the following steps are recommended:

1. Identifying the issues and setting the objectives of the study.
2. Recognizing the primary challenges faced by teachers in teaching Al-Quran.
3. Analyzing the factors contributing to these challenges.

Study Participants

The study involved various methods of data collection, including:

- In-depth interviews with Islamic Education teachers in primary schools.
- Direct classroom observations during Al-Quran teaching sessions.
- Document analysis, such as lesson plans, teaching materials, and student performance reports.

Participant Selection

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting teachers involved in Al-Quran instruction. Typically, four teachers were selected. The interviews used semi-structured questions focusing on the teachers' experiences, challenges, and perspectives on teaching Al-Quran. Observation forms recorded classroom interactions, teaching techniques, and student reactions. Interviews were conducted face-to-face for detailed analysis, and observations were carried out periodically over a specific time frame for a comprehensive overview.

Data Analysis Process

- Reviewing interview transcripts and observation notes.
- Identifying key themes and sub-themes.
- Analyzing these themes to understand the challenges faced and drawing conclusions and recommendations based on the data analysis.

Data Validity and Reliability

- Ensuring validity through multiple data sources (interviews, observations, documentation).
- Peer validation by seeking feedback from colleagues or experts in Islamic Education to assess the accuracy and reliability of the findings.
- Maintaining confidentiality of participant information and securing written consent before data collection.

Reporting and Dissemination

The research findings were structured into a report that included the study background, methodology, findings, analysis, and recommendations. The findings were presented to stakeholders such as schools, education departments, and the educational community.

Participant Criteria :

In this qualitative study, selecting appropriate participants was critical to ensure relevant and comprehensive data:

1. Islamic Education Teachers

- Teachers specializing in Al-Quran instruction in primary schools.
- A mix of experience levels (new, experienced, and senior teachers).

- Sample size: 10–15 teachers, sufficient for qualitative research to gather diverse and in-depth data.
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- 2. *Students*
 - Primary school students attending Al-Quran classes, selected from different grades (Year 1 to Year 6).
 - Sample size: 5 students from various classes and religious backgrounds.
- 3. *Parents*
 - Parents of students attending Al-Quran classes, particularly those actively involved in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), providing broader perspectives on the challenges faced by teachers.
 - Sample size: 5–10 parents to gather their views and expectations regarding Al-Quran teaching.

By involving diverse participants from different backgrounds, the study aimed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by Islamic Education teachers in teaching Al-Quran at the primary school level.

Summary of Participants, Data Collection Methods, and Focus Areas

Participant Category	Number	Selection Method	Data Collection Method	Focus Areas
Islamic Education Teachers	4 teachers	Purposive sampling	- In-depth interviews (semi-structured questions) - Direct classroom observations - Document analysis (lesson plans, teaching materials, reports)	- Teaching experiences - Challenges in teaching Al-Quran - Perspectives on teaching methods and effectiveness
Students	5 students	Purposive sampling (various grades)	Classroom observations	- Learning experiences - Interactions with teachers and peers
Parents	5–10 parents	Purposive sampling	Interviews	- Expectations and feedback on Al-Quran teaching

Data Analysis Methods

- Transcription and Review: Examining interview transcripts and observation notes.
- Theme Identification: Recognizing key themes and sub-themes based on the collected data.
- Thematic Analysis: Analyzing data to understand the challenges, perspectives, and experiences of teachers, students, and parents.
- Data Validation: Triangulating data through multiple sources (interviews, observations, documentation) and peer validation by experts or colleagues.

Ethical Considerations

- Obtaining written consent from participants.
- Ensuring confidentiality of participant information and maintaining anonymity.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure for a qualitative study on the challenges faced by Islamic Education teachers in teaching Al-Quran in primary schools involves several essential steps to ensure the data obtained is both comprehensive and relevant. The steps include:

1. Obtaining Authorization
 - Seek formal permission from educational authorities and schools to conduct the study.
 - Submit an application letter to relevant parties, including a clear explanation of the study's purpose and procedures.
2. Participant Consent:
 - Obtain written consent from all participants (teachers, administrators, students, and parents) after providing clear information about the study.
 - Address any questions or concerns participants may have.
3. Training Data Collectors:
 - Train data collectors to ensure accuracy in conducting the study.
 - Provide guidance on using research instruments (interviews, observations, document analysis).
4. Conducting Interviews:
 - Schedule interviews with teachers and students at convenient times and locations.
 - Use a prepared interview guide to ensure all critical aspects are covered.
 - Record interviews (with participants' consent) for transcription and analysis.

Sample Interview Questions:

 - Teachers: "What are the main challenges you face in teaching Al-Quran?"
 - Students: "What difficulties do you experience while learning Al-Quran?"
 - Parents: "What are your views on the teaching of Al-Quran at your child's school?"
5. Document Analysis:
 - Collect relevant documents such as lesson plans, teaching materials, and student performance reports.
 - Analyze the content of these documents to understand the teaching structure and strategies used.
 - Evaluate the teaching aids and their usage in the classroom.
6. Direct Observations:
 - Observe classroom sessions during Al-Quran teaching.
 - Use observation forms to note teacher-student interactions, teaching techniques, and student responses.
7. Data Validation and Triangulation:
 - Validate data through triangulation by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis.
 - Engage experts or colleagues to review the findings and ensure accuracy.
8. Ethical Considerations:
 - Maintain confidentiality by assigning codes to data to protect participants' identities.
 - Obtain written consent from participants before data collection.

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Data Collection Procedure Summary Table

Step	Activity	Details/Actions
1. Authorization	Obtain formal approval from authorities	- Submit application letter to relevant bodies. - Include study objectives and procedures.
2. Participant Consent	Secure written consent from participants	- Provide clear explanations about the study. - Address participants' questions or concerns.
3. Training Collectors	Train data collectors	- Guide them on using research tools (interviews, observations).
4. Interviews	Conduct interviews	- Schedule at convenient times and locations. - Use prepared interview guides and record sessions with consent.
5. Document Analysis	Collect and analyze documents	- Collect lesson plans, teaching materials, and performance reports. - Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching aids.
6. Observations	Conduct observations in classroom	- Use observation forms to record teaching and learning dynamics.
7. Validation	Validate data through triangulation	- Compare interview, observation, and document data. - Seek feedback from experts or colleagues.
8. Ethical Safeguards	Maintain participant confidentiality	- Use coded data to ensure anonymity.

This systematic approach ensures that the study is conducted rigorously, ethically, and provides meaningful insights into the challenges faced by Islamic Education teachers in teaching Al-Quran at the primary school level.

Study Findings

The data for this study was obtained through interviews and document analysis. The overall results identified themes and sub-themes from the data sources, which include interviews and document analysis. The researcher also conducted data triangulation to ensure validity and reliability. Thus, the findings in this study are based on the research objectives determined by the researcher.

1. Major Challenges Faced by Islamic Education Teachers in Teaching Al-Quran in Primary Schools*Teacher Competency Level*

Lack of Specialized Training: Not all teachers possess advanced skills in teaching Al-Quran, particularly in areas such as *tajweed*, *tarannum*, or modern learning methods like *Iqra'* and *Tilawati*. Teachers often face administrative burdens alongside teaching responsibilities, which can hinder their focus on planning effective Al-Quran teaching activities.

Key issues include

- Busy schedules that limit teachers' opportunities to attend advanced training.
- Limited exposure to specialized courses for Al-Quran teaching, especially for newly appointed Islamic Education teachers (GPI).

Recommendations

- Introduce regular, specialized courses organized by the Ministry of Education and Islamic Affairs Departments, such as intensive *tajweed* workshops or professional *tarannum* training.
- Employ expert teachers or certified Quran reciters (qari/qariah) as mentors to enhance teaching techniques.
- Provide training in using digital teaching aids like Quran learning apps and smartboards.
- Collaborate with Islamic universities or institutions like Darul Quran to offer specialized training modules for teachers.

Example Feedback

"Teachers have limited exposure to courses on Al-Quran teaching, making it challenging for new GPIs to teach effectively."

— TB01/GPI1

Student Motivation and Interest

Diverse Learning Levels: Students have varying levels of Quranic reading skills. While some are just learning the Arabic alphabet (*huruf hijaiyah*), others can already read fluently. The digital era has also led students to show more interest in technology than traditional Quran learning.

Key challenges include

- Teachers struggling to provide individual guidance due to limited time.
- Difficulty balancing attention between weaker and more advanced students.
- Advanced students becoming bored while waiting for others to catch up, while weaker students feel embarrassed or stressed.

Recommendations

- Design differentiated learning activities tailored to students' levels.
- Integrate engaging digital tools to make Quran learning more interactive.

Example Feedback

"Students struggle with Quran reading due to their weak foundational skills, making it difficult for teachers to guide them effectively."

— TB02/GPI2

Lack of Resources and Teaching Aids

Limited Digital Materials: Technology use in Quran teaching, such as apps, interactive audio, or e-learning platforms, remains underutilized. Many schools lack teaching aids like *mushaf* Al-Quran, flashcards, or other tools, especially in rural areas.

Key Challenges Include

- Insufficient infrastructure, such as smart devices or stable internet connectivity.
- Lack of basic equipment like laptops, projectors, or smartboards for teachers to use interactive tools.

Recommendations

- Increase access to digital resources like interactive Quran apps and guided audio tools.
- Invest in infrastructure to support digital learning, especially in rural schools.

Example Feedback

"Digital materials for Quran teaching are very limited, making it difficult to engage students who are more inclined toward digital tools."

— TB03/GPI1

Time and Scheduling Constraints

Limited Teaching Time: The allocated time for Islamic Education, including Quran lessons, is often short due to competing curriculum requirements. Additionally, co-curricular activities may further reduce the time available for Quran teaching.

Key Challenges Include

- Teachers face difficulties in delivering comprehensive lessons on *tajweed*, memorization, *tarannum*, and Quranic understanding.
- Frequent disruptions from school events like sports practice or motivational programs.

Recommendations

- Advocate for dedicated and uninterrupted teaching time for Quran lessons.
- Collaborate with schools and parents to prioritize Quran teaching within the curriculum.

Example Feedback

"Teachers are burdened with administrative tasks and frequently assigned external duties, limiting their teaching time."

— TB04/GPI2

Traditional Teaching Approaches

Over-Reliance on Traditional Methods: Approaches such as rote memorization without context may reduce students' interest and learning effectiveness. There is little emphasis on methods that integrate technology or encourage active student participation through group activities.

Key challenges include

- Students may view Quran learning as monotonous or solely exam-focused.
- Lack of contextual understanding limits students' appreciation of the Quran's wisdom and relevance.

Recommendations

- Transition to modern, interactive teaching methods that blend traditional values with innovative approaches.
- Incorporate group activities and digital tools to enhance student engagement.

Example Feedback

"Many teachers still rely on traditional methods like verbal explanations and writing, leading to students losing focus and interest."

These findings highlight critical areas for improvement in teaching Al-Quran in primary schools, emphasizing the need for enhanced teacher training, better resources, innovative teaching approaches, and strategic time management to foster effective learning.

Discussion

The study on challenges in teaching Al-Quran in primary schools identified several key issues related to teacher competency, student motivation and interest, lack of resources and teaching aids, time and scheduling constraints, as well as the use of traditional teaching approaches. The following is a detailed discussion of these issues:

Teacher Competency Level

Many Islamic Education teachers lack adequate training in modern pedagogy and appropriate teaching methods for Al-Quran subjects. Their competency is often limited to traditional approaches, without incorporating contemporary technologies. Teachers with limited skills in creative methods may struggle to capture students' attention and enhance their understanding of the Quran.

Additionally, teachers face difficulties adapting their methods to cater to students with varying levels of proficiency, ranging from those unfamiliar with Arabic letters to those proficient in Quranic reading.

Recommendations

- Regular training programs should be provided to enhance teachers' competencies, particularly in Quran teaching strategies.
- Introduce student-centered training modules to help teachers adapt their methods based on students' proficiency levels.

Student Motivation and Interest

Many students perceive Quran learning as boring because they cannot see its relevance to their daily lives. A lack of interactive teaching methods often contributes to low interest. This low motivation hinders active student participation, making them passive and less inclined to improve their Quran reading skills.

The absence of encouragement from families to emphasize the importance of Quran learning further contributes to students' lack of motivation.

Recommendations

- Implement game-based or technology-driven teaching methods to attract students' interest.
- Actively involve parents through workshops or awareness programs about the importance of Quranic education.

Lack of Resources and Teaching Aids

Primary schools often lack engaging and appropriate teaching aids for Quran learning, such as digital modules, visual aids, and interactive applications. Teachers rely on static textbooks that fail to appeal to students, particularly those who benefit from more visual and practical learning methods.

Not all schools have access to technology, such as computers or interactive software, to enhance Al-Quran teaching.

Recommendations:

- Equip schools with high-quality teaching aids, such as Quran learning applications or interactive videos.
- Collaborate with external organizations, such as NGOs or educational agencies, to provide technological resources to schools

Time and Scheduling Constraints

The weekly time allocated for teaching Al-Quran is often insufficient to ensure students fully master Quran reading and comprehension skills. Teachers are pressured to cover the syllabus without focusing on fundamental skills like *tajweed*, which are essential for Quran learning. Islamic Education teachers are frequently involved in various other activities, such as co-curricular programs, administrative tasks, and managing religious events (Norliza Kila and Mashita Abu Hassan, 2019).

Recommendations

- Allocate additional time in school schedules specifically for Quran teaching.
- Reduce teachers' administrative burdens so they can focus on teaching activities.

Traditional Teaching Approaches

Teachers often rely on traditional approaches, such as reading and memorization, without emphasizing understanding or real-life application. This method tends to be mechanical and less engaging for students.

As a result, students lose interest in the subject and struggle to connect Quranic learning with life values or religious practices. Many teachers rarely apply student-centered approaches, such as collaborative learning, problem-solving, or technology integration.

Recommendations

- Encourage teachers to adopt modern approaches, such as flipped classrooms or technology-assisted learning.
- Provide training and guidance to teachers on integrating more interactive and student-centered methods.

Conclusion

These challenges highlight the need for comprehensive reforms in the Islamic education system, particularly in Al-Quran teaching. Improvements can be made by:

1. Exposing teachers to modern teaching methods and educational technologies.
2. Providing interactive teaching materials and adequate technological tools.
3. Allocating sufficient time for Quran teaching in school schedules.
4. Encouraging teachers to adopt student-centered approaches to make learning more engaging and relevant.

By addressing these challenges, the Islamic education system can be strengthened to produce students who are not only literate in the Quran but also capable of understanding and practicing its teachings in daily life.

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