

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Improving the Ability to Read the Qur'an through the Al Wafa Method

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Accepted: 10 August 2025	reviewed: 5 September, 2025	Published: 20 November 2025
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Abstract: This research is motivated by the low ability of students to read the Qur'an at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan, where many students are still unable to recognize hijaiyah letters or read the Qur'an properly according to tajweed rules. Therefore, the active role of Islamic Religious Education teachers and the implementation of appropriate learning methods are urgently needed to improve students' Qur'anic reading skills. This study aims to describe the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in improving students' Qur'anic reading skills through the Al Wafa method at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan, as well as to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that teachers play a vital role as educators, instructors, mentors, facilitators, and role models in Qur'anic education. The Al Wafa method is considered effective due to its enjoyable, illustrated, and easily understood approach, which enhances students' ability to read the Qur'an. Supporting factors include teacher enthusiasm, the availability of learning materials such as the Al Wafa book, and student motivation. Meanwhile, obstacles include limited instructional time, lack of parental support, and a shortage of teaching staff. Therefore, consistent application of the Al Wafa method significantly improves students' Qur'anic reading skills.

Keyword: Role Of Islamic Religious Educatoin Teachers, Ability to Read the Al Qur'an, Al Wafa Method

Introduction

Education is a crucial aspect of preparing children for the future. Since ancient times, education has existed, albeit in very simple forms (Citriadin, 2019). However, due to its simplicity, many people do not realize that their activities are actually part of the educational process.

In general, education means a continuous effort to stimulate, accompany, and guide human beings through life's changes and developments. Education plays a vital role in shaping human life. Consequently, in Islamic teachings, education is considered highly important and holds a strategic position. Islam places great emphasis on education so that its followers can prepare a smart, qualified, and responsible future generation. Responsibility in education does not fall on a single party alone; it is a shared responsibility among the family, school, community, and the government. One form of this responsibility is to educate the younger generation to possess good Qur'anic literacy skills, which is a primary provision for Muslims in practicing their religious teachings (Citriadin, 2019).

The Qur'an is the word of Allah SWT, revealed as a miracle to the Prophet Muhammad SAW through the angel Gabriel and written in the form of a mushaf (codex). Reciting it is an act of worship, starting from Surah Al-Fatihah and ending with Surah An-Naas. The Qur'an serves as a guide for Muslims to achieve success and gain Allah's pleasure in life, both in this world and the hereafter. Given the importance of teaching the Qur'an, the Prophet Muhammad SAW advised that its instruction begin from an early age, as children have a high learning absorption capacity during this period, making it easier for them to understand the material or information provided (Susilawati, 2022).

Regarding the Qur'an, the ability to read it among the community—spanning children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly—is still lacking; some cannot read it at all, and others have never even learned it. On the other hand, within the school environment, many students are still not fluent in reading the Qur'an. Effective and enjoyable learning methods are needed so that students have high motivation and interest in learning the Qur'an. The goal is for them to be able to read the Qur'an properly and correctly according to the rules of Tajwid science and to understand its contents (Susilawati, 2022).

Reading the Qur'an requires a special understanding of recitation rules such as Tajwid. This distinguishes reading the Qur'an from reading ordinary texts, as errors in pronunciation can affect the meaning contained within the Qur'an and may lead to sin (Prihatin & Sari, 2020). Therefore, learning the Qur'an must be done correctly, using methods that can help students understand the recitation in accordance with Tajwid science (Hikmi & Halimi, 2018).

In the process of learning the Qur'an, appropriate learning methods are necessary to ensure the learning process is effective and meets students' needs. The methods used must be able to help students understand the material well and achieve learning objectives optimally. There are various methods for learning the Qur'an, such as the Iqra', Tilawati, Baghdadiyah, Qira'ati, and the Wafa method (Hikmi & Halimi, 2018).

Based on interviews and observations conducted at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan, it was found that students' abilities in understanding Qur'anic learning still vary. Each child has different capabilities; some cannot read yet, while others cannot distinguish the sounds of the Hijaiyah letters. To address this, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at the school have innovated by implementing the Al Wafa method. The reason for choosing the Al Wafa method is that it is considered effective and easy to understand according to students' needs.

This aligns with a local government policy, namely the Regent Regulation of Lamongan (Perbup) Number 5 of 2013, concerning the reading of the Qur'an for students in Lamongan Regency. Chapter II, Article 2 of this regulation states: "The activity of reading the Qur'an for students in Lamongan Regency aims to improve the ability and skills of students in reading the Qur'an properly and correctly, and to understand the meaning contained within it. As well as to practice the contents of the Qur'an in daily life" (Bupati Lamongan, 2013).

Furthermore, it is explained in the Government Regulation of the Lamongan Regent, stated in Article 9: "The learning of Qur'an reading for students in Lamongan Regency is conducted by Islamic Religious Education Teachers" (Bupati Lamongan, 2013).

Role means the contribution or participation given by an individual in a task. A teacher is a person whose profession is as an educator, instructor, and guide in a learning process within an educational environment, whether formal or non-formal (Putri et al., 2020). According to Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers, a "teacher is a professional educator whose main task is to

educate, teach, guide, direct, train, assess, and evaluate students in early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education on the formal education path" (Undang-Undang No. 14 Tahun 2005, 2005).

According to Mulyasa, as quoted by Haniyyah (2021), among the roles of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teacher are the following:

1. Teacher as an Educator The teacher acts as an educational figure who becomes a role model for students and their environment. Therefore, the teacher must have a good personality, encompassing responsibility, authority, independence, and discipline.
2. Teacher as an Instructor The teacher has the task of assisting developing students to learn something they do not yet know, develop competencies, and understand the learning standards being studied.
3. Teacher as a Facilitator The teacher plays a role in encouraging and motivating student learning so that learning objectives can be achieved, creating a supportive classroom atmosphere, and adapting learning methods to suit student needs. For example: preparing learning tools, providing learning facilities in the form of methods and media.
4. Teacher as a Guide The teacher plays a role in mentoring students during the learning process and their personal development. They help students develop their potential and overcome learning difficulties.
5. Teacher as a Model and Example As a role model, a teacher will be the focus of students and their surroundings. Therefore, the teacher must be able to maintain their attitude, thought processes, lifestyle, and human relationships. They must also be able to set a good example for the surrounding environment (Haniyyah, 2021).

Furthermore, an Islamic Religious Education teacher is someone who possesses knowledge of Islamic sciences, an educator who can guide and shape students' character into noble personalities (akhlaqul karimah). Their duty is not only to transfer knowledge but also to instill Islamic values. One important aspect of this role is helping students improve their ability to read the Qur'an.

Ability means a capability or skill. According to Stephen P. Robbins, ability is the capacity and capability possessed by every individual to perform tasks within their job responsibilities. Reading is the activity of recognizing letters, words, and sentences in a text and understanding the meaning contained within. The ability to read the Qur'an is a skill in pronouncing every Hijaiyah letter tartil (slowly and distinctly), properly and correctly, while paying attention to the science of Tajwid, Makhrijul Huruf (points of articulation), and the characteristics of the letters (Siswanto & Wahida, 2022).

A person can be said to be able to read the Qur'an well and correctly if it aligns with Tajwid, Makhrijul Huruf, Sifaatul Huruf (characteristics of letters), Fluency, and At-Tartil. Allah says in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Muzammil, commanding His servants to recite the Qur'an with tartil slowly, clearly, and with full contemplation in accordance with Tajwid rules (Maidali, 2020).

SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan is a school not based on an Islamic boarding school (pesantren) but has a strong commitment to instilling Islamic values in its students. One tangible form of this commitment is the "Jum'at Qur'ani" (Qur'anic Friday) program. The Qur'anic learning using the Al Wafa method has been implemented by the school to improve students' Qur'an reading ability because the method is attractive, relatively easy to understand, and suits the students' needs.

The Wafa method is a Qur'an learning method compiled by KH. Muhammad Shaleh

Drehem, Lc., from the Yayasan Syafaatul Qur'an (YAQIN) Surabaya since 2012. It is a comprehensive, easy-to-understand Qur'an learning method, known for its enjoyable, illustrated, and Hijaz-note-based learning (Fithriyah, 2019). The method optimizes both the right and left brain; it involves short-term repetition associated with the right brain, which encompasses creativity and imagination (Fithriyah, 2019).

The Wafa method is not very different from the Ummi method, which is also considered easy and enjoyable (Ahadiyah, 2023). Additionally, the Ummi method emphasizes the ability to read the Qur'an using melodies with high and low notes, making it easier to understand the Qur'anic text (Ahadiyah, 2023). Meanwhile, the Wafa method, besides being known as easy, enjoyable, and melodic, has its own uniqueness. Wafa learning uses a system of graded books consisting of 5 illustrated volumes. The Wafa books not only contain Hijaiyah script but are also equipped with illustrations corresponding to the material, including pictures of the Prophets, companions, and stories of the Prophets (Ainsairi et al., 2020). In its application, the Wafa method covers several levels, from Wafa 1 to Wafa 5, Tajwid, Gharib (unusual words), up to memorization (Ainsairi et al., 2020). It is a method that can stimulate students to recognize Qur'anic letters through imagination, often called conceptual learning, thereby striving to prevent children from getting bored quickly during Qur'an reading lessons. The goal of the Wafa method is to read the Qur'an properly and correctly according to Makharijul Huruf and the rules of Tajwid science (Ainsairi et al., 2020).

The objectives of this research are to describe the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in improving reading ability through the Al Wafa method at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan, and to describe the supporting and inhibiting factors for Islamic Religious Education teachers in improving the ability to read the Qur'an using the Al Wafa method at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan. Based on the data presented above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Improving the Ability to Read the Qur'an through the Al Wafa Method at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan."

Methods

In this research, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative approach with a type of field research. According to Sugiyono (2013), the qualitative research method is used to investigate objects in their natural conditions, where the researcher is the key instrument (p. 249). The purpose of this approach is to provide a deep description and explanation of a phenomenon or problem occurring in the field. Through this research, the researcher seeks to explain the Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Improving the Ability to Read the Qur'an through the Al Wafa Method at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan, with the research subjects consisting of PAI teachers and 70 students from grades VII, VIII, and IX.

The data collection process was carried out directly at the research location through observation, interviews, and documentation. The observation technique involved directly observing the Qur'an learning process, while tests or evaluations were conducted to assess students' abilities. Relevant documents such as a brief school profile, the school's vision and mission, and documentation of learning activities were also collected.

After the data was collected, verification was carried out using a triangulation technique. The methods used to manage and analyze the data in this research included data reduction, data

presentation, and drawing conclusions. The data in this research is presented in the form of tables and descriptive narratives.

Result And Discussion

Based on the results of the researcher's field study, the findings regarding the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in improving the ability to read the Qur'an through the Al Wafa method at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan are presented sequentially. The information results will be detailed according to the findings at the research location, from observational data and interviews with the School Principal, the Vice Principal for Curriculum, PAI teachers, and students of SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan.

1. The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Improving the Ability to Read the Qur'an through the Al Wafa Method at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan

The results of the research conducted at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan indicate that the teacher's role is central. This is in line with the statement of the school principal, Esty Sulistyowati, who stated that "a teacher plays an important role in the learning process, especially PAI teachers in improving students' ability to read the Qur'an. The role of PAI teachers is not only to educate but also to act as guides, direct students, supervise, and help students develop their potential, assist with difficulties experienced by students at school, especially in Qur'an learning activities to enhance their Qur'an reading ability" (E. Sulistyowati, personal interview, 26 April 2025).

Islamic Religious Education teachers have a very significant role in the process of learning to read the Qur'an at school. This role is not limited to delivering material but also includes acting as educators, instructors, guides, facilitators, and role models in improving the ability to read the Qur'an. This is evidenced by the field findings:

Table 1: Field Findings

NO	TEORI	TEMUAN
1	According to Mulyasa, as an educator, the teacher plays a role in shaping students' character, personality, and good morals while instilling religious teachings.	Accustoming students to perform ablution before beginning Qur'an lessons. It is expected that this practice develops discipline and helps maintain purity when reading the Qur'an.
2	According to Mulyasa, as an instructor, the teacher helps students who are developing to learn something they have not known before.	Learning to recognize letters and distinguish the sounds of Hijaiyah letters, including their articulation points (Makharijul Huruf) and the rules of tajwid. For example, each letter's pronunciation is emphasized when reading: <i>alif, ba, ta, tsa</i> .
3	According to Mulyasa, as a mentor, the teacher plays a role in guiding and assisting students in the process of learning the Qur'an, helping those who experience difficulties in their studies.	Before students start reading one by one, the teacher first explains the material about Qur'an reading according to the lesson for that day.

4	According to Mulyasa, as a facilitator, the teacher plays a role in fostering students' learning interest, creating a conducive learning atmosphere, and developing Qur'an learning methods that meet students' needs, thus achieving learning objectives.	Qur'an learning uses the <i>Wafa</i> method, which is easy and enjoyable. The school facilitates students with <i>Wafa</i> books (levels 1–5) available in the school library. The school also provides certificates for students who have successfully completed their Qur'an learning.
5	According to Mulyasa, as a model and role model, the teacher serves as an example for students and the surrounding environment. As a role model, the teacher must be a good example for students and the community and should practice what has been taught.	In addition to Qur'an learning using the <i>Wafa</i> method, the school also holds a <i>muroja'ah</i> (Qur'an review) activity once a month. During this activity, students gather in the prayer room (<i>musholla</i>) with other teachers, especially Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, who participate by reading and listening to the students' recitations.

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, it is known that the Qur'an reading ability of students at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan was initially very low. This was particularly evident in their ability to recognize letters, distinguish letter sounds and their points of articulation (makharijul huruf), and their lack of understanding of tajwid rules. Based on interview information obtained from the PAI teacher, Dian Eka, the initial conditions showed that "the Qur'an reading ability of most students was still relatively low. Approximately 80% of students could not read the Qur'an and did not recognize the Hijaiyah letters" (D. Eka, personal interview, April 26, 2025). This became a significant concern for the school in improving students' religious literacy.

As a solution, the school designed the "Jum'at Qur'ani" program, a Qur'an learning activity using the Al Wafa method conducted once a week. In this context, the teachers implemented learning using the Al Wafa method, which is known as a enjoyable, comprehensive method that optimizes the right brain and uses images and Hijaz melodies to stimulate students in conceptually recognizing Hijaiyah letters.

The implementation of the Al Wafa method has proven to have a positive impact on improving students' Qur'an reading ability. Based on an interview with one of the students, Salwa, she stated that before the implementation of the Al Wafa method, "her Qur'an reading ability was still halting, and she did not yet properly understand the rules of tajwid" (Salwa, personal interview, May 19, 2025). However, after the implementation of this method, her ability improved; she became able to distinguish Hijaiyah letter sounds and tajwid rules, and had progressed from level 2 to level 4.

From the research findings obtained by the researcher, the application of this Al Wafa method led to significant progress. The students' Qur'an reading ability showed increasing improvement. This is further evidenced by the documentation of student learning outcomes through the following score summary:

JURNAL BACA TULIS AL-QUR'AN HADIS

ADMIRAL MEADE

Figure 1: Students' Score Recap

Several teachers also stated that the Al-Wafa method makes it easier for students to recognize Hijaiyah letters, understand recitation rules (tajwid), and increase their interest and diligence in learning the Qur'an. This success supports the relevance of using this method in Qur'an learning.

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Islamic Education Teachers in Improving Students' Qur'an Reading Ability through the Al-Wafa Method at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan

Learning the Qur'an is an important aspect of Islamic education, especially at the elementary and secondary school levels. In improving students' ability to read the Qur'an using the Al-Wafa method, the learning process does not always run smoothly without challenges. There are several supporting and inhibiting factors faced by Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in implementing Qur'an learning.

Based on research conducted at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan with Islamic Education teacher Dian Eka, the findings indicate several supporting factors that determine students' success in learning the Qur'an using the Al-Wafa method. The following table presents the field findings regarding these supporting factors:

Table 2: Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Islamic Education Teachers in Improving Qur'an Reading Ability Using the Al-Wafa Method at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan

NO	TEORI	TEMUAN
1	The <i>Wafa</i> book is a comprehensive learning method that optimizes the right brain. It is an enjoyable method featuring illustrated stories with <i>hijaz</i> melodies.	Students participating in Qur'an learning using the <i>Wafa</i> method were seen bringing the <i>Wafa</i> books during class. As they progress through the levels, they move from one book to the next, and

		advanced students bring the Qur'an itself.
2	The teacher's enthusiasm and consistency in being responsible for guiding students in Qur'an learning regularly.	The teacher consistently teaches, ensuring no class is left unattended. Qur'an lessons are conducted every Friday from 07:00 to 08:10 a.m.
3	Students' interest or willingness to learn the Qur'an.	Students show enthusiasm in participating in Qur'an learning at school. In a class with 15 students, all attend the Qur'an lessons regularly, with none absent.

The results obtained from field research show several factors that can hinder Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in improving students' ability to read the Qur'an.

Table 3: Inhibiting Factors for Islamic Education Teachers in Improving Qur'an Reading Ability through the Al-Wafa Method

NO	TEORI	TEMUAN
1	Short allocation of time	The Al-Qur'an learning using the Wafa method is conducted only once a week every Friday from 07.00–08.15. This limited time can hinder students' learning progress.
2	Lack of parental assistance	There is a lack of parental support in accompanying their children to learn the Qur'an.
3	Insufficient number of educators for Qur'an learning at school	Due to the large number of students, teachers experience difficulties in evaluating students during Qur'an learning sessions.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMP Negeri 5 Lamongan is pivotal in enhancing students' Qur'an reading proficiency. Their responsibilities extend far beyond conventional teaching; they act as comprehensive educators, mentors, facilitators, and role models who guide students in understanding Qur'anic recitation according to the principles of Tajwid and Makharijul Huruf while simultaneously shaping their character. The implementation of the Al Wafa method has demonstrably led to significant improvements in this area, proving its effectiveness in advancing students' Qur'anic literacy.

However, this process involves both supporting and inhibiting factors. Key supports include the availability of engaging and comprehensible Al Wafa textbooks, the high motivation and consistency of the teachers, and strong enthusiasm from the students. Conversely, several challenges hinder optimal results, namely the limited time allocated for Qur'anic lessons, a lack of accompanying guidance from parents at home, and insufficient teaching staff dedicated to this subject.

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