



Contents lists available at openscie.com

Indonesian Journal of Community Services Cel

Journal homepage: <https://ijcomcel.org>



Improving the Al-Qur'an Recitation Skills of Children at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA, Sungai Pisang Village through a Mentoring Program

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 1 January 2024

Revised 15 January 2024

Accepted 18 January 2024

Published 29 January 2024

Keywords:

Al-Qur'an recitation,

Community services,

Education,

Learning.

ABSTRAK

Children in Sungai Pisang Village have a low interest in Al-Qur'an recitation because many of them prefer to play rather than learn the Al-Qur'an. One of the factors causing the low interest of children in Sungai Pisang Village in reciting the Al-Qur'an is the shortage of teachers or facilitators so that the children feel bored waiting for their turn to recite the Al-Qur'an. For that reason, this community services activity aims to improve the children's ability to recite the Al-Qur'an in Sungai Pisang Village by participating in teaching the Al-Qur'an recitation. The methods used were observation and face-to-face mentoring. Observation was conducted by visiting Al-Qur'an learning center (TPA) at Nurul Bahar Mosque and collecting information from teachers regarding the children's interest in reciting the Al-Qur'an in this place. The activity implementation comprised reading and reciting *hijaiyah* letters, learning the length and shortness of recitation, reading short passage, and *didikan subuh* (activities to educate children about fundamental virtues of Islam). Partners in this activity were teachers and children who recite the Al-Qur'an in Sungai Pisang Village. The results of this activity can help teachers to improve the learning process of Al-Qur'an recitation for children at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA, which is indicated by the number of students who have improved their ability to read and recite the Al-Qur'an, namely 35 children or 70% of total participants.

1. Introduction

Sungai Pisang is a village in Bungus Kabung Bay Subdistrict, Padang City, West Sumatra. It is the southernmost village in Padang City, and is located quite remote compared to other villages in that city. Total population of Sungai Pisang Village is 2,532 people, consisting of 450 households. The majority of the population is Muslim. The main potentials in this village are fisheries and tourism sectors. The geographical location of Sungai Pisang, which borders the Indian Ocean to the west, means the majority of the villagers work as fishermen. In terms of tourism, Sungai Pisang is located in the beautiful and strategic Bungus Bay area and near many small islands. Many local communities provide boat transport services to the islands around Sungai Pisang (Ilmiawati et al., 2019).

There is one mosque In Sungai Pisang Village, namely Nurul Bahar Musala. Beside as a worship place, this mosque is also used as a place for children from the surrounding villages to learn and recite the Al-Qur'an. However, there are still many children who are not interested in participating in these activities here. Among 25 children at the Al-Qur'an learning center (*taman pendidikan Al-Qur'an/TPA*) at Nurul Bahar Mosque, 15 wanted to study the Al-Qur'an. However, their interest in Islamic education has been declined due to the lack of facilities, the shortage of teachers, and the lack of parental attention to their children. For this reason, the community in Sungai Pisang needs more facilitators of Al-Qur'an recitation for the children. This is grounded from a faith that Islamic religion acts as a means of generating to improve the quality of worship according to the rules in the Al-Qur'an and Sunnah.

The shortage of teachers has an impact on the quality of the students at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA in terms of reading and reciting the Al-Qur'an. Based on observations made, there were still many of them who did not understand how to read *hijaiyah* letters, *tajwid*, and other subjects related to Islamic religion. For this reason, a community services activity is needed in the form of religious education for children in Sungai Pisang Village, such as by teaching the Al-Qur'an recitation and implementing *didikan subuh* event (activity to educate children about fundamental virtues of Islam) every Sunday morning.

Table 1. Knowledge and understanding of students in Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA before the mentoring program

No.	Learning Subject	Number of Student	Percentage (%)
1.	<i>Hijaiyah</i> letters	27	52%
2.	<i>Tajwid</i>	15	28%
3.	<i>Makhrijul</i> letters	8	16%

The introduction of *hijaiyah* letters in early childhood can begin from the letters that make up the Arabic alphabet (Alucyana et al., 2018). Language learning in children begins from recognizing the children's ability to figure out whether they already understand and know the *hijaiyah* letters (Iqomah, 2018). *Tajwid* is a science related to the way of beautifying the pronunciation of each letter and *makhraj* (the part where it comes out), as well as providing *haq* and *mustahaq* from the letters' properties (Syiaifullah & Rahmah, 2021). In other word, *tajwid* is a science that teaches how to read the Al-Qur'an properly and correctly. The purpose of *tajwid* is to preserve the Al-Qur'an recitation from errors and changes by maintaining the verbal speech (mouth) from reading errors (Maarif et al., 2018).

Learning to read the Al-Qur'an is something that has been recognized since the time of the Prophet Muhammad Saw., that every day he educated and taught his friends to read, memorize, and understand the meaning in the Al-Qur'an. The Al-Qur'an is known as the holy book for Muslims because it provides a guide and explanation of good and bad things in the world (Muzakkir, 2015).

The general purpose of learning to recite the Al-Qur'an is to be able to properly and correctly read the Qur'an according to *tajwid*, to understand it, and to apply it. According to Yunus (1990) and Muqit

& Maskur (2021), there are several aims of learning the Al-Qur'an: (1) to read the verses of the Al-Qur'an fluently according to *tajwid*, (2) to increase the mastery of words and divine written sentences, and (3) to get used to reading and practicing the virtues of holy Al-Qur'an in daily life. Therefore, this community service activity was carried out with the aim to improve the ability of children at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA in Sungai Pisang Village to recite the Al-Qur'an through a mentoring program.

2. Methods

This community service activity was carried out in Sungai Pisang Village from June to July 2023 by collaborating with several partners, namely three teachers who are responsible for teaching the Al-Qur'an recitation at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA. The total number of *santri* (students) who participated were 50 children, consisting of 25 men and 25 women. The participating students have various learning and comprehension levels of Al-Qur'an recitation, from basic to advanced level.

The first stage was observation by collecting data based on the empirical conditions (Nasution et al., 2020). Data were collected by observing the learning activities, interviewing the village head, and analyzing related documents in the village office. Data collection includes aspects of the knowledge and ability of the students to recite the Al-Qur'an.

The second stage was implementation. There were several assistance provided by the community services team, namely actively involved in Al-Qur'an recitation activity, assisted the teachers, and recorded observation data to obtain complete and detailed information based on the needs of the team to formulate appropriate lesson plan (Syaputra & Budiman, 2021).

3. Results and discussion

The main problem affecting the quality and ability of children to recite the Al-Qur'an in Sungai Pisang Village is the shortage of teachers. The observation results reveal that the mentoring program in Al-Qur'an recitation activities here can be used as an alternative problem solving. The assistance from the community service team as the teachers at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA was able to overcome the shortage of teachers who were not balanced with the number of existing students.

The mentoring activity of assisting the Al-Qur'an recitation at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA began with an initial meeting of the community services team with one of the Al-Qur'an teachers on Monday, June 26, 2023. At the initial meeting, the service team determined the schedule of activities, frequency of meetings, and materials to be taught during the mentoring activity.

During the mentoring activity, the team introduced the *hijaiyah* letters one by one to the students. The *hijaiyah* letters were introduced as a whole, then the students begin to apply them in reading Iqra and the Al-Qur'an. The learning mechanism was that the students read Iqra and the team listened and corrected if the students' pronunciation was not correct in one page. If the students can read each letter correctly in one page, then they can continue to the next page (Anwar & Yuliana, 2021).



Figure 1. Initial meeting between the community service team and teacher

at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA

To ensure the improvement of the students' recitation skills, the service team took several effective steps. The first step was an initial evaluation, consisting of an assessment of the ability to read Arabic letters, pronunciation, mastery of *tajwid*, and reading comprehension. From the evaluation results, it was revealed that the students' ability to read *hijaiyah* letters and their mastery of *tajwid* was still low and many of them were still wrong in pronouncing certain letters. It was also revealed from initial evaluation that their ability to read *hijaiyah* letters and mastery of *tajwid* was 50%. In the next activity, the service team then designed the lesson by considering the understanding level of the students' recitation. This stage helped the team to develop a teaching plan that suits the needs of the students.

Based on the evaluation results, the lesson plan was focused on certain aspects that need to be improved, such as pronunciation of *hijaiyah* letters, understanding of *tajwid*, and reading speed. The service team provided regular feedback to the students, such as giving praise for progress made and providing constructive suggestions for improvement. The motivation provided aimed to help the students to improve their learning level and provide clear direction to them in improving their recitation quality.

The service team provided regular Al-Qur'an recitation exercises. The exercises include reading, memorizing, and understanding Al-Qur'an texts. At each meeting, students were asked to repeat the reading and memorize the reading of the previous day. This routine exercises provided can help students improve their reading of the Qur'an in accordance with *tajwid* science. Then, through the Al-Qur'an reading test conducted by the team, it was revealed that 35 students or 70% of all participants experienced an increase in their ability to recite the Al-Qur'an.



Figure 2. Team assistance in Al-Qur'an recitation activity at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA

The students were very enthusiastic about the presence of the community service team to learn the Al-Qur'an in turn and submit their memorizing. The service team also approached the students so that they could interact and socialize well (Umar et al., 2021). Then, the mentoring activity was closed with the *didikan subuh* activity, which aims to develop the interests and talents of the students at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA regarding particular subjects related to Islam religion (Sulistianti & Murniyetti, 2022).



Figure 3. Implementation of *didikan subuh* activity

The service team conducted tests and evaluations periodically in the last two weeks of mentoring to measure the progress of the students. This helped both the teachers and the students to know the extent of progress that has been achieved in the mentoring program. The results show that the quality of the students' recitation level has improved, from previously not understanding *tajwid* to understanding it better, and they have become fluent in reading *hijaiyah* letters. The number of students who have improved their ability to recite the Al-Qur'an were 32 students or 64% of total participants.

Table 2. Knowledge and understanding of students at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA after the mentoring program.

No.	Learning Subject	Amount of Student	Percentage (%)
1.	<i>Hijaiyah</i> letters	40	80%
2.	<i>Tajwid</i>	35	60%
3.	<i>Makhorijul</i> letters	20	40%

The recitation proficiency test was administered to the students to test their understanding of *hijaiyah* letter recognition and the science of *tajwid*. The knowledge of *tajwid* is essential to help prevent pronunciation errors that can alter the meaning of Al-Qur'an verses. This is particularly important as small errors in pronunciation can substantially change the meaning. A good understanding of *tajwid* and correct way in reading the *hijaiyah* letters can help students to quickly understand the pronunciation of the Al-Qur'an properly and correctly. Table 2 shows that 40 students have improved their understanding of *hijaiyah* letters, 35 students have improved their understanding of *tajwid*, and 20 students have improved their understanding of *makhorijul* letters.

Furthermore, the evaluation results show that there is an increase in the ability and understanding of students to read *hijaiyah* letters, namely from 52% to 80%; *tajwid* from 28% to 60%; and *makhorijul* letters from 16% to 40%.

4. Conclusions

The observation stage of community service activity at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA revealed the lack of interest of the students in learning to recite the Al-Qur'an, as seen from their low knowledge and understanding of *hijaiyah* letters, *makhorijul* letters, and *tajwid*. The implementation stage carried out by the team were able to improve the students' ability to learn and recite the Al-Qur'an, which was indicated by the number of students who has increased their ability to recite the Al-Qur'an, namely 35 students or 70% of all participants.

5. Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank the following parties:

1. Field supervisor, Dr. Husnil Khatimah, Ph.D, CH, Cht, CPIA, who had been willing to guide, assist, and motivate the authors.
2. Head of Bungus Teluk Kabung Subdistrict, who had given permission to the community service team to complete the socialization of education digitalization.
3. The teachers at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA, who had given permission to the community service team to help with the mentoring program of Al-Qur'an recitation.
4. Parents of the students who learn the Al-Qur'an at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA, who were very enthusiastic in seeing off and supporting their children to learn the Al-Qur'an.
5. *Santri* (the students) who study at Nurul Bahar Mosque' TPA, for their extraordinary enthusiasm in learning the Al-Qur'an held by 2023 community services team from Padang State University.

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