

Improving Qur'anic Literacy of Indonesian Diaspora Students in Medina through International Community Service of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara Students

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A B S T R A C T

Correct Qur'anic reading is a foundational religious obligation for Muslim children and a key element in character formation, particularly within diaspora contexts where access to structured religious education is limited. While studies on Qur'anic literacy are well established, empirical research examining the pedagogical contribution of university students to Qur'anic learning among Indonesian diaspora children in the Middle East remains scarce. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the role of KKNi students from the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah North Sumatra, in enhancing the Qur'an reading skills of fourth-grade Indonesian diaspora students in Madinah. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were gathered through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, reading performance assessments, and documentation. The findings indicate that structured mentoring, the application of the talaqqi method, and sustained motivational support contributed to measurable improvements in reading fluency, accuracy of makharijul huruf, and adherence to tajwid rules. These results highlight the strategic function of KKNi students not merely as instructional assistants but as facilitators of context-sensitive Qur'anic learning. The study concludes that university student engagement can play a significant role in strengthening Qur'anic literacy and religious character development among Indonesian diaspora learners.

Keywords: *Qur'anic Literacy, KKNi Students, Talaqqi Method, Indonesian Diaspora, Qur'an Reading Skills, Islamic Education*

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INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is the main source of Islamic teachings that are the guideline for the life of Muslims. Reading the Qur'an properly and correctly in accordance with the rules of tajweed is the obligation of every Muslim, as affirmed in Q.S. Al-Muzzammil verse 4 which commands that the Qur'an be read tartil. Good reading ability of the Qur'an is not only related to the accuracy of the pronunciation of letters and the laws of reading, but also affects the understanding, appreciation, and practice of the values of Islamic teachings in daily life (AsmawadI, 2021). Learning to read the Qur'an should ideally begin at an early age because childhood is a golden period in the formation of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities (Kinanti et al., 2026). At the elementary school level, especially grade IV, students are at an important phase in maturing reading skills, where they are expected to be able to read the Qur'an fluently and begin to understand and apply the basics of tajweed consistently. However, in the context of Indonesian diaspora communities abroad, including in Medina, learning the Qur'an faces more complex challenges.

Differences in the education system, the limitations of Qur'an teaching staff who understand the character of diaspora students, and diverse socio-cultural conditions also affect the optimization of Qur'an reading skills of Indonesian diaspora children (*Accessing the App*, n.d.). Based on initial observations in the field, it is still found that grade IV students of the Indonesian Diaspora in Medina are not fluent in reading the Qur'an, are not correct in the

pronunciation of makharijul letters, and are not consistent in the application of tajweed law, so systematic and continuous assistance is needed. A number of studies in the last five years have shown increased attention to Qur'an learning in primary school-aged children. (Musolli & Makrufah, 2021) found that the ability to read the Qur'an of elementary school students in Indonesia is greatly influenced by the intensity of teacher assistance and the tajweed learning method used, so that a systematic learning approach is a key factor in improving the accuracy of the literacy of letters and reading laws. Furthermore, (Putri & Harfiani, 2023) In his research on Qur'an learning in minority Muslim communities abroad, it was revealed that the limitations of professional teachers and differences in cultural backgrounds are the main obstacles in improving the Qur'an reading ability of diaspora children.

Recent empirical studies reinforce the importance of structured assistance in improving Qur'anic reading skills among elementary-aged learners. (Assegaf, 2022) that intensive mentoring and the use of appropriate pedagogical methods significantly enhance reading accuracy and fluency among primary school students. Similarly, research on minority Muslim communities highlights that the effectiveness of Qur'anic learning is strongly influenced by contextualized teaching strategies and the presence of committed facilitators who can bridge cultural and instructional gaps (Rahman, 2025). These findings suggest that pedagogical adaptation and sustained guidance are critical determinants of success in diaspora Qur'anic education. The findings are in line with research (Assegaf, 2022) which shows that community service-based assistance by religious college students has proven to be effective in improving the fluency of reading the Qur'an and the accuracy of the application of tajweed in elementary school students. In an international context, (Rahman, 2025) emphasizing that the success of Qur'an learning for immigrant children in the Middle East region is greatly influenced by curriculum adaptation and contextual pedagogical approaches. However, this study has not specifically examined the role of foreign students in community service programs. Meanwhile, (Manurung, 2024) emphasized that the success of the international community service program is highly determined by the integration of students' pedagogic competencies with the real needs of the target community, as well as the continuity of the mentoring carried out.

Based on the study of these previous studies, it can be concluded that most of the studies still focus on learning the Qur'an in the domestic context of Indonesia or on the minority Muslim community in general. Research that specifically examines the assistance of learning to read the Qur'an for Indonesian Diaspora students in Medina is still very limited. In addition, there have not been many studies that place the international KKNi program as an instrument of community service in improving the reading ability of the Qur'an of diaspora children, especially at the fourth-grade level of elementary school, even though this phase is a crucial stage in strengthening the fluency of reading and the application of tajweed. Therefore, this research is important to fill this gap by examining the role of students of the Faculty of Islamic Religion, University of Muhammadiyah North Sumatra (FAI UMSU) through the international KKNi program in accompanying and improving the ability to read the Qur'an of Indonesian Diaspora students in Medina. This research is expected to make a scientific contribution to the development of Qur'anic education based on international community service, as well as an evaluation material for universities in improving the quality and sustainability of the KKNi program in the future.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, which aims to understand social phenomena in their natural context by emphasizing meaning rather than statistical generalization. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation (Scott, 2022). This approach was chosen to systematically describe the role of KKNi students in Qur'anic learning, the instructional strategies implemented, students' responses and development in reading skills, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors encountered during the learning process. (Scott, 2022).

The research was conducted in the context of the international KKNi program implemented in Medina, Saudi Arabia, within the Indonesian diaspora community. Due to geographical constraints and the conditions of diaspora education, Qur'anic learning activities were carried out through online platforms using Zoom-based instructional sessions. The learning setting reflects a natural educational environment (*natural setting*), where instructional activities took place as part of the regular KKNi mentoring program without experimental manipulation or special treatment. This setting is particularly relevant because Indonesian diaspora students in Medina experience a unique educational context characterized by differences in language exposure, cultural background, and access to formal religious education (Zaini et al., 2023).

The participants in this study consisted of several key groups selected through purposive sampling, based on their direct involvement in the Qur'anic learning process. The primary participants were fourth-grade Indonesian diaspora students in Medina who participated in online Qur'anic learning sessions facilitated by KKNi students. These students were selected because grade IV represents a critical stage in the development of Qur'anic reading fluency and consistent application of *tajwid* rules. In addition, KKNi students from the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FAI), Universitas Muhammadiyah North Sumatra, who served as facilitators and mentors in the Qur'anic learning program, were included as research participants. Their experiences, instructional roles, and pedagogical strategies formed a central focus of the study. To enrich the data and strengthen contextual understanding, the research also involved KKNi field supervisors and relevant learning coordinators as supporting informants. Primary data sources are the main data obtained directly from the research subjects through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. This primary data was collected through direct observation during zoom learning, interviews, and the results of the evaluation of learning to read the Qur'an (Tara et al., 2025). The researcher's secondary data can obtain a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the Role of KKNi FAI UMSU Students in Improving the Ability to Read the Qur'an of Grade IV Students of the Indonesian Diaspora in Medina. The combination of data between the results of interviews, observations, and written documents is also carried out to strengthen the validity and credibility of the research findings.

The data analysis in this study uses an interactive analysis model (Miles et al., 2014) which consists of three main activities, namely data collection, data condensation, and verification. The data analysis technique in this study is carried out through three main stages, namely data collection, data condensation, and verification and conclusion drawing (Arianto, 2024). At the data collection stage, the researcher collected relevant data about the role of KKNi FAI UMSU students in improving the Qur'an reading ability of fourth grade students of the Indonesian Diaspora in Medina through direct observation of the learning process, interviews with related parties to dig up in-depth information, Qur'an reading tests to measure students' abilities, and documentation as supporting data. The data that has been collected is then condensed by selecting, focusing, simplifying, and organizing raw data so that it is ready for analysis, which includes the reduction of data from interviews and observations such as improving student reading, the application of talaqqi methods, and providing learning motivation, as well as the reduction of Qur'an reading test data by identifying patterns of improving reading ability and classifying students' test results into good categories, enough, and less.

The next stage is verification and drawing conclusions, which are carried out by comparing data from various sources, matching the results of observations with interviews and documentation, and checking back with informants (member checks) to ensure the validity of the data, so that the conclusions produced are valid, consistent, and in accordance with the facts in the field. To ensure that the research data is correct, accurate, and accountable, the researcher applies several data validity test techniques, namely source triangulation, technique triangulation, member check, and peer debriefing (Scott, 2013). Source triangulation is carried out by comparing data obtained from various sources, including KKNi FAI UMSU students, supervisors, fourth grade students of the Indonesian Diaspora in Medina, as well as

grade documents and learning notes, with the aim of ensuring that each information corroborates each other so that the data obtained is more credible.

Furthermore, technique triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of data collection through observation of learning activities, interviews, and documentation; If the data obtained from the three techniques shows consistency, then the data is declared valid, while if differences are found, the researcher clarifies and discusses further with related data sources. In addition, the validity of the data is also strengthened through member checks, namely by reconfirming the results of interviews, field notes, and data interpretation to informants to ensure the suitability of meaning and avoid misinterpretations (Fadli, 2021). Finally, the researcher conducts peer debriefing by discussing with supervisors or experts to ensure that the data analysis does not contain bias, conclusions are in accordance with empirical data, and do not contradict the facts in the field.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Implementation of Qur'anic Learning by KKNi FAI UMSU Students

The findings indicate that Qur'anic learning activities facilitated by KKNi students from the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah North Sumatra, were positioned as one of the main programs of the international KKNi in Medina. These activities were conducted regularly and focused on improving Qur'anic reading skills while simultaneously fostering students' enthusiasm for recitation. Observational data show that learning sessions were carried out in a structured and gradual manner, emphasizing patience and continuous guidance. This is consistent with the supervisor's statement:

"Since the presence of KKNi students, children have become more enthusiastic about reciting. They are more disciplined in attending sessions and are more confident reading the Qur'an in front of their peers. The guidance provided is patient and gradual." (Supervisor Interview)

Learning Strategies Applied in Qur'anic Instruction

Based on interviews with KKNi students, the Qur'anic learning strategies applied included collective reading activities, individual mentoring using the *talaqqi* method, and continuous motivational support. Individual assistance was prioritized, particularly for students who experienced difficulties in pronouncing *makharijul huruf* and applying *tajwid* rules. One KKNi student explained:

"We guide the children one by one, especially in makhraj and tajwid. If something is still incorrect, we repeat it slowly so they are not afraid of making mistakes and remain confident." (KKNi Student Interview)

In addition, KKNi students reported that Qur'anic learning was also intended to cultivate positive habits and reduce excessive exposure to digital media that was considered less beneficial for students.

Improvement in Students' Qur'anic Reading Ability

The results of observations, interviews, and Qur'anic reading assessments demonstrate a noticeable improvement in students' reading abilities after participating in the learning program. Students showed increased fluency in reading, greater accuracy in articulating Arabic letters, and improved consistency in applying *tajwid* rules such as *mad*, *ghunnah*, and *qalqalah*. Students also acknowledged this improvement, as reflected in the following statements:

"In the past, I often mispronounced letters. Now I read more fluently because I am guided directly. If it is wrong, the KKNi students immediately correct it." (Student Interview)

Another student stated:

"Now I am no longer afraid to read the Qur'an in front of my friends because I was taught step by step (Student Interview)

Development of Students' Confidence and Attitudes toward the Qur'an

In addition to technical improvements, the findings reveal positive changes in students' attitudes and confidence. Students became more willing to read aloud, showed greater discipline in attending learning sessions, and demonstrated increased awareness of the importance of reading the Qur'an according to *tajwid* rules. Observational data indicate that students began to read more *tartil* and showed an emerging interest in understanding the meaning of the verses they studied. These changes suggest that Qur'anic learning activities facilitated by KKNI students contributed not only to skill development but also to students' affective and spiritual growth.

Discussion**The Role of KKNI FAI UMSU Students in Improving the Ability to Read the Qur'an in Grade IV Students of the Indonesian Diaspora in Medina**

The results of this study show that KKNI FAI UMSU students have a significant role in improving the reading ability of the Qur'an of grade IV students of the Indonesian Diaspora in Medina. This role is reflected through intensive mentoring, the use of the *talaqqi* method, the habit of reading together, and providing motivation on an ongoing basis. These findings are in line with research (Rahmawati, 2023) which states that student assistance through the *talaqqi* and drill methods is able to improve the fluency of reading and the accuracy of the *makharijul* letters of elementary school students. In this study, the increase can be seen from the ability of students to read the Qur'an more fluently, accurately *makhraj*, and in accordance with the rules of *tajweed*.

The findings of this study are also relevant to the results of the research (Haq & Rahman, 2025) which emphasizes that Indonesian students abroad face challenges in adapting curriculum and language backgrounds, but the environment of Arab countries can be a supporting factor in increasing interest in learning the Qur'an if learning is carried out in a structured manner. In the context of the Indonesian Diaspora in Medina, KKNI FAI UMSU students act as facilitators who bridge the needs of students with appropriate pedagogic approaches, so that Qur'an learning becomes more directed and effective. In addition, this study corroborates the findings (Hana et al., 2023) which states that grade IV students are an ideal stage in the formation of the ability to read the Qur'an, especially in the mastery of *makharijul* letters and the laws of *tajweed* (Manurung, 2024).

The hands-on practice-based learning approach applied by KKNI students, such as individual mentoring and direct reading correction, has been proven to help students understand how to read the Qur'an correctly faster. This can be seen from the increase in students' confidence in reading the Qur'an in front of their friends. Furthermore, despite research (Jabbar & Rahman, 2025) and (Nimim Ali et al., 2024) focusing on learning the Qur'an online, the results of the study remain relevant to the findings of this study, especially on the important aspects of the role of students and the use of the *talaqqi* method and repetition in increasing motivation and ability to read the Qur'an.

The difference is that this research is carried out directly (face-to-face) in the context of international community service, so that emotional interaction, character building, and strengthening of Islamic *ukhuwah* can be formed more optimally than online learning. In addition to improving the technical ability to read the Qur'an, the results of this study also show an impact on the affective and spiritual aspects of students. Students showed increased awareness of the importance of *tajweed* knowledge, love for the Qur'an, and a tendency to reduce negative activities such as excessive use of gadgets. These findings expand on the results of previous research that generally focused on cognitive aspects, by showing that the mentoring of KKNI students also contributes to the formation of character and moral resilience of diaspora students. Thus, this research not only strengthens the results of previous research, but also provides novelty in the context of mentoring the learning of the Qur'an by KKNI students in the Indonesian Diaspora environment in Medina, especially in grade IV students. This study confirms that the international KKNI program can be a strategic model of

community service in strengthening Qur'anic education that is holistic, covering cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that KKNi students from the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah North Sumatra, play a significant role in improving the Qur'anic reading ability of fourth-grade Indonesian diaspora students in Medina. This role is manifested through structured mentoring, the application of the *talaqqi* method, collective Qur'an reading practices, and continuous motivational support. These approaches contribute to improvements in students' reading fluency, accuracy of letter articulation, and consistent application of *tajwid* rules. Beyond technical reading skills, Qur'anic learning facilitated by KKNi students also positively influences students' affective and spiritual dimensions. The findings indicate increased confidence, discipline, and positive attitudes toward the Qur'an among students, reflecting the holistic impact of the learning process. Overall, the international KKNi program implemented by FAI UMSU serves as an effective form of community service in supporting Qur'anic education within the Indonesian diaspora context. The study recommends the continuation and strengthening of similar programs to ensure sustained support for Qur'anic learning among diaspora students.

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