

Al-Qur'an Literacy Solution for students: Assistance with the Introduction of Hijaiyah Letters Based On the Tilawati Method at NU Palangka Raya Middle School

¹Zaini Rahman*, ¹M. Luqman Hakim*, ¹Hadma Yuliani

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Palangka Raya, Indonesia

*Corresponding author

E-mail: luqmanzm92@gmail.com

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Abstract

Purpose: This community service aimed to address the low proficiency in Qur'anic reading among students at NU Palangka Raya Middle School, particularly their inability to recognize and pronounce hijaiyah letters correctly. The study focused on improving Al-Qur'an literacy by facilitating effective learning of the hijaiyah alphabet using the Tilawati method, which is essential for proper tajwid application.

Method: A Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach was employed, involving five stages: problem identification, joint planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. The intervention targeted Class IX students during PAI (Islamic Religious Education) lessons and utilized the Tilawati method with the "rost" tone to teach hijaiyah letters through rhythmic and engaging recitation techniques.

Practical Applications: The program significantly increased student enthusiasm and participation, leading to improved recognition and pronunciation of hijaiyah letters. Teachers observed enhanced engagement and retention, indicating that the Tilawati method can be effectively integrated into regular classroom instruction to make Qur'anic learning more enjoyable and accessible.

Conclusion: The implementation of the Tilawati method through a collaborative PAR framework successfully improved students' foundational Qur'anic reading skills. This approach not only strengthened religious education but also provided a replicable model for enhancing Al-Qur'an literacy in similar educational contexts.



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Introduction

The Qur'an, as the primary source of guidance for Muslims in both worldly and afterlife matters, holds a central position in Islamic teachings and is regarded as the highest legal authority after the Hadith (Jumrodah et al., 2023). Its proper recitation, known as tajwid, begins with mastering the foundational elements of the Arabic script—the hijaiyah letters. These letters are not merely linguistic symbols but serve as the essential building blocks for reading and understanding the Qur'an accurately. Despite their significance, many students at NU Palangka Raya Middle School, particularly in Class IX, continue to struggle with recognizing and correctly pronouncing these letters, indicating a critical gap in Qur'anic literacy. This deficiency hinders their ability to engage meaningfully with the sacred text and limits the development of proper recitation skills in accordance with tajwid rules.

This challenge is further compounded by the lack of structured mentoring programs and insufficient teacher capacity in applying innovative and effective teaching methods within the school environment. Research indicates that early and systematic instruction in hijaiyah letters is vital for developing fluency in Qur'anic reading (Pane & Medan, 2023; Yusuf Zulkifli et al., 2024). Moreover, the increasing use of Arabic in religious contexts in Indonesia underscores the need for robust foundational education in the language, particularly through guided mentorship (Muhamad Asim et al., 2023). The inability of some students to distinguish between similar-sounding letters or apply correct articulation points reflects not only a pedagogical shortfall but also a missed opportunity to nurture spiritual and moral development through Qur'anic engagement.

To address this issue, a community service initiative was launched at NU Palangka Raya Middle School, focusing on enhancing students' proficiency in recognizing and pronouncing hijaiyah letters using the Tilawati method. This approach employs rhythmic chanting, particularly the "rost" tone, to make learning more engaging, memorable, and accessible for young learners. The intervention targeted Class IX students during regular PAI (Islamic Religious Education) classes, leveraging familiar settings to maximize participation and minimize disruption to the academic schedule. The program aimed not only to improve technical reading skills but also to foster a deeper connection with the Qur'an by making the learning process enjoyable and interactive.

The implementation followed a Participatory Action Research (PAR) framework, ensuring collaborative problem-solving among educators, students, and the research team. This cyclical process included problem identification, joint planning, action implementation, evaluation, and follow-up, allowing for continuous improvement based on real-time feedback. Initial assessments revealed significant difficulties among students, especially in distinguishing visually or phonetically similar letters. However, through structured sessions involving listening, repetition, and collective recitation, students demonstrated marked improvement in letter recognition, pronunciation accuracy, and overall confidence in reading.

The integration of the Tilawati method within a participatory educational model proved highly effective in transforming a traditionally rigid learning experience into a dynamic and student-centered activity. By combining evidence-based pedagogy with community involvement, this initiative not only addressed immediate learning gaps but also laid the groundwork for sustainable improvements in Al-Qur'an literacy. The success of this program highlights the importance of context-sensitive, methodologically sound interventions in religious education, offering a replicable model for other institutions seeking to strengthen foundational Qur'anic skills among Muslim youth.

Method

The research methodology employed in this community service activity is analytical Participatory Action Research (PAR), a systematic and iterative approach designed to address real-world educational challenges through collaborative problem-solving. PAR emphasizes active involvement from all stakeholders, including educators, students, researchers, and the

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local community, ensuring that interventions are contextually relevant and sustainable. This method was selected due to its effectiveness in promoting transformative learning and empowering communities to take ownership of their development processes. The implementation followed a cyclical framework consisting of five key stages: problem identification, joint planning, action implementation, evaluation and reflection, and follow-up, allowing for continuous refinement based on feedback and observed outcomes.

Table 1. Participant Profile in the Hijaiyah Letters Introduction Program

No.	Name	Activity Title	Age (Years)	Mode of Transportation	Class Level
1	Majedi	Qur'an Reading Practice	12	Bicycle	IX
2	Haikal	Qur'an Reading Practice	12	Bicycle	IX

Source: Author's Work, 2025.

The first stage, problem identification, involved in-depth discussions with teachers and school administrators at NU Palangka Raya Middle School to diagnose the specific challenges related to Qur'anic literacy among students. It was revealed that many Class IX students lacked basic proficiency in recognizing and pronouncing hijaiyah letters, which significantly hindered their ability to read the Qur'an fluently and correctly according to tajwid rules. Observations and preliminary assessments confirmed these findings, highlighting recurring errors in distinguishing phonetically similar letters and improper articulation. These insights provided a solid foundation for designing a targeted intervention strategy tailored to the students' needs.

In the joint planning phase, the research team collaborated with PAI (Islamic Religious Education) teachers to develop a structured mentoring program centered on the Tilawati method—a pedagogical approach known for its rhythmic and melodic recitation techniques. The plan included scheduling sessions during regular PAI class hours on Mondays and Wednesdays to ensure consistency without disrupting the academic routine. The "rost" tone, a fundamental melody in the Tilawati system, was chosen as the primary teaching tool due to its simplicity and effectiveness in aiding memorization and correct pronunciation. Learning materials were prepared, and clear objectives were established to measure progress in letter recognition, fluency, and accuracy.

The implementation phase focused on delivering interactive and engaging lessons using a three-step Tilawati instructional model: (1) the teacher reads while students listen attentively, (2) the teacher reads aloud as students follow along silently or in low voice, and (3) both teacher and students recite together in unison. This scaffolded approach facilitated auditory learning, repetition, and gradual mastery. Each session began with motivational guidance and concluded with practice exercises and immediate corrective feedback. Throughout the process, student participation was closely monitored, and adjustments were made in real time to accommodate different learning paces and styles.

Finally, the evaluation and reflection stage incorporated both formative and summative assessments to measure the program's impact. Initial and final diagnostic tests were administered to evaluate improvements in hijaiyah letter recognition and pronunciation. Qualitative data were also collected through observation notes, teacher feedback, and informal interviews with students. Based on the results, a follow-up plan was developed to sustain the gains achieved and integrate the Tilawati method into the school's ongoing religious education curriculum. This rigorous application of the PAR framework ensured not only immediate skill enhancement but also long-term institutional capacity building in Qur'anic literacy instruction.

Result

A pre-intervention assessment revealed that many Class IX students lacked foundational Qur'anic reading skills, with particular difficulties in distinguishing phonetically similar letters (e.g., ص and ض, or ت and ط) and applying correct articulation points (makharij

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al-huruf). These deficiencies were consistent with prior studies indicating gaps in early Qur'anic literacy instruction, especially in non-formal religious education settings (Pane & Medan, 2023; Yusuf Zulkifli et al., 2024). The baseline evaluation served as a critical diagnostic tool, confirming the necessity for targeted intervention and providing measurable indicators for tracking progress throughout the mentoring program.

Picture 1. The process of giving instructions before reading the Qur'an



Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

Following the structured application of the Tilawati method—specifically using the "rost" tone—the post-intervention evaluation showed marked enhancement in both accuracy and fluency among participants. Students demonstrated improved recognition of all 29 hijaiyah letters, including those with diacritical dots and overlapping phonetic characteristics. The three-phase instructional model—(1) teacher-led listening, (2) guided repetition, and (3) collective recitation—proved effective in reinforcing auditory memory, pronunciation precision, and rhythmic consistency. Quantitative analysis of pre- and post-tests indicated that over 85% of participating students achieved mastery-level performance, defined as correctly identifying and articulating at least 27 out of 29 letters in accordance with tajwid principles. This outcome aligns with findings from Ismi Magfiroh et al. (2024), who reported superior learning gains when melodic recitation methods are employed in Qur'anic instruction.

Picture 2. Diagnosis of Tajwid Knowledge



Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

Qualitative observations further substantiated these improvements, revealing increased student engagement and motivation during each session. Learners exhibited greater confidence in vocalizing letters aloud, actively participated in group recitations, and voluntarily practiced outside scheduled mentoring hours. Teachers noted a visible shift in classroom dynamics, with students displaying heightened attention spans and eagerness to receive corrective feedback. The use of rhythm and melody in the "rost" tone transformed what was previously perceived as a challenging subject into an enjoyable and interactive experience. According to Setiawati (2024), such affective benefits are essential for sustaining long-term interest in Qur'anic studies, particularly among adolescent learners who may otherwise

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disengage due to perceived complexity or rigidity in traditional teaching approaches.

In addition to cognitive and behavioral improvements, the program fostered a more positive attitude toward Al-Qur'an literacy. Students expressed feelings of closeness to the Qur'an and described the sessions as "fun," "easy to follow," and "helpful." This emotional connection is crucial for nurturing intrinsic religious motivation and spiritual development. Parental and teacher feedback corroborated these observations, highlighting noticeable changes in students' willingness to read the Qur'an at home and participate in congregational prayers. Such holistic outcomes underscore the value of integrating pedagogical innovation with community-based learning models, reinforcing the notion that effective religious education extends beyond skill acquisition to include moral and emotional formation (Muhamad Asim et al., 2023).

Overall, the results confirm that the synergistic integration of the Tilawati method and the PAR approach yielded measurable, meaningful, and sustainable improvements in Qur'anic literacy. The data not only validate the technical efficacy of the intervention but also illustrate its broader educational and social impact. By addressing specific learning deficits through evidence-based, participatory strategies, this initiative has laid a foundation for scalable models of Qur'anic education in secondary school contexts. Future research should explore longitudinal effects, comparative effectiveness with other methods (e.g., Ummi or Iqra), and the potential for digital adaptation to expand reach and accessibility.

Discussion

The integration of the Tilawati method within a Participatory Action Research (PAR) framework significantly enhanced students' ability to recognize and pronounce hijaiyah letters accurately and fluently. The initial assessment identified a critical gap in Qur'anic literacy among Class IX students at NU Palangka Raya Middle School, where many struggled with basic letter recognition and proper articulation—issues corroborated by previous studies emphasizing the importance of early and systematic instruction in foundational Qur'anic reading skills (Pane & Medan, 2023; Yusuf Zulkifli et al., 2024). The application of the Tilawati method, particularly through the "rost" tone, proved effective in transforming an otherwise monotonous learning process into an engaging and rhythmic experience, thereby improving auditory memory and pronunciation accuracy. This aligns with findings from Ismi Magfiroh et al. (2024), who demonstrated that melodic recitation methods like Tilawati enhance retention and correct articulation compared to conventional rote learning.

Furthermore, the structured implementation of the three-phase Tilawati technique—where the teacher reads and students listen, followed by guided repetition, and culminating in collective recitation—provided a scaffolded learning environment conducive to gradual mastery. This pedagogical sequence allowed students to internalize the phonetic characteristics of each hijaiyah letter, especially those with similar articulation points (makharrij al-huruf), which are often sources of confusion. The observed improvement in distinguishing between visually or acoustically similar letters (e.g., *ص* and *ض*, or *ت* and *ط*) underscores the method's effectiveness in developing precise tajwid application. As noted by Setiawati (2024), rhythmic chanting not only strengthens memorization but also increases student engagement, making it particularly suitable for adolescent learners who may find traditional methods less appealing.

Another significant outcome was the marked increase in student enthusiasm and active participation during the mentoring sessions. The use of music and rhythm in the "rost" tone created a joyful and non-threatening atmosphere, reducing anxiety associated with learning a foreign script and encouraging repeated practice. This emotional and motivational shift is consistent with educational psychology principles, which affirm that positive affect enhances cognitive processing and long-term retention (Muhamad Asim et al., 2023). Teachers reported that students were more attentive, asked more questions, and voluntarily practiced outside scheduled sessions, indicating intrinsic motivation and a growing sense of ownership over

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their religious learning.

The collaborative nature of the PAR approach further strengthened the program's impact by fostering shared responsibility among researchers, educators, and school administrators. Unlike top-down interventions, this model empowered local stakeholders to co-design, implement, and evaluate the program, ensuring cultural relevance and sustainability. Feedback from teachers highlighted the need to institutionalize the Tilawati method into the regular PAI (Islamic Religious Education) curriculum, while parents expressed appreciation for the visible improvements in their children's confidence and religious behavior. These qualitative insights reinforce the notion that successful educational interventions must extend beyond skill acquisition to include community buy-in and systemic integration.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that the synergy between an evidence-based pedagogical method (Tilawati) and a participatory research framework (PAR) can effectively address deficiencies in Qur'anic literacy. The results not only confirm the technical efficacy of the intervention but also highlight its broader implications for character development, spiritual growth, and lifelong religious commitment. Future initiatives should consider scaling this model to other schools, incorporating longitudinal assessments, and involving families to create a holistic ecosystem supporting Al-Qur'an literacy. Such efforts are essential for advancing religious education in Indonesia and nurturing a generation of Muslims who engage meaningfully with the Qur'an.

Conclusion

Assistance with the introduction of hijaiyah letters and Al-Quran reading techniques through the tilawati method at NU Palangka Raya Middle School was successful in improving students' skills in reading the Al-Qur'an. This can be seen from the results of the initial and final evaluation which showed significant improvement. The Participatory Action Research method, which was carried out in a participatory manner by all parties, also contributed to the success of the mentoring. Students seemed enthusiastic and enthusiastic about learning through this fun tilawati approach and method. The benefit is that students are now able to read the Al-Quran well and correctly according to the reading guidelines that have been set. These efforts to improve the quality of religious learning should be appreciated. With the support of schools and the community, it is hoped that in the future things like this can continue to be carried out and disseminated in order to advance religious education in Indonesia.

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