



Teacher-Guided Quranic Reading Instruction and the Challenge of Fostering Learner Autonomy

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Article Information:

Received February 10, 2026

Revised March 18, 2026

Accepted April 10, 2026

Keywords: *Quranic reading instruction, instructional practices, learning interest, learner autonomy*

Abstract

Developing students' interest in reading the Quran remains an important challenge in Quranic education, particularly in community-based learning institutions where instructional practices are predominantly teacher-centered. This study aims to explore instructional practices for Quranic reading, examine students' interest in reading the Quran, and identify the challenges and strategies for fostering reading interest. A qualitative case study approach was employed. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis involving data reduction, coding, categorization, and interpretation, while triangulation of data sources and techniques was applied to enhance credibility. The findings reveal three major themes. First, Quranic reading instruction is primarily implemented through direct teacher-guided learning, enabling immediate correction of pronunciation and *tajwid* errors and supporting reading accuracy. Second, students' interest in reading the Quran remains largely dependent on teacher supervision, as many students demonstrate limited confidence and rarely engage in independent reading outside formal learning sessions. Third, the main challenges include the absence of sustained independent reading habits and limited variation in instructional methods. Teachers address these challenges by providing motivational reinforcement, emphasizing the virtues of Quranic reading, and gradually introducing more interactive learning activities, although these efforts have not yet fully promoted learner autonomy. This study contributes to the development of Quranic education by highlighting the need to balance accurate teacher guidance with instructional strategies that cultivate students' independent reading habits and sustained interest in Quranic reading.

INTRODUCTION

Reading the Quran constitutes a fundamental aspect of Islamic education, serving as the primary gateway for understanding, internalizing, and practicing Islamic teachings (Saminu et al., 2025; Wahyuni et al., 2025). Beyond its religious significance, Quranic reading develops learners' linguistic competence, spiritual

How to cite:

Afriliyeni, A., Suprizen, S., Zulfamanna, Z. (2026). Teacher-Guided Quranic Reading Instruction and the Challenge of Fostering Learner Autonomy. *Ahlussunnah: Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(1), 593-600.

E-ISSN:

2827-9573

Published by:

The Institute for Research and Community Service

awareness, and moral character. Consequently, the ability and willingness to read the Quran accurately and consistently represent essential learning outcomes in Quranic education (Oktavia et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2025). Before engaging in Quranic memorization (*tahfiz*), learners are expected to acquire adequate recitation skills that comply with the principles of *makhraj* and *tajwid*, ensuring that memorization is built upon correct reading practices Engkizar et al., (2026).

Despite the central role of Quranic reading, contemporary Quranic education increasingly emphasizes memorization achievement, often measured by the quantity of verses memorized within a particular period. While this orientation has contributed to the growing popularity of *tahfiz* programs, it may unintentionally reduce learners' attention to regular reading practices and independent *tilawah*. As a result, some learners become highly dependent on teacher supervision during reading activities and demonstrate limited initiative to engage with the Quran outside formal instructional sessions (Engkizar et al., 2025; Numan et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2025).

Students' interest in reading the Quran is a crucial factor influencing the continuity of learning. Learning interest encourages students to participate actively, practice voluntarily, and develop sustainable reading habits beyond classroom requirements. In the context of Quranic education, strong reading interest not only supports technical reading proficiency but also nurtures lifelong engagement with the Quran (Thuwaiba & Salaeh, 2025). Conversely, limited reading interest may weaken learning motivation, reduce independent practice, and ultimately affect the quality of Quranic memorization and comprehension.

Previous studies on Quranic education have predominantly examined the effectiveness of instructional methods, memorization strategies, digital learning media, and the implementation of *tajwid* instruction (Eltoukhi et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2026; Engkizar et al., 2025; Kaema & Ulwi, 2025). Although these studies provide valuable insights into improving learning outcomes, relatively limited attention has been devoted to understanding how everyday instructional practices shape students' interest in reading the Quran and how teacher-guided learning influences the development of independent reading habits. This indicates the need for qualitative investigations that capture learners' experiences and instructional dynamics within authentic educational settings (Engkizar et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025).

Addressing this gap is important because instructional practices are not merely mechanisms for transmitting recitation skills but also social and pedagogical processes that shape students' motivation, confidence, and learning autonomy. Understanding how teachers organize learning activities, how students respond to instructional approaches, and what challenges emerge during the learning process can provide valuable insights for strengthening Quranic education (Engkizar et al., 2023, 2025; Hanafi & Pohan, 2024; Kaema & Ulwi, 2025). Such evidence may inform the design of instructional strategies that maintain recitation accuracy while simultaneously fostering students' sustained interest in reading the Quran.

Therefore, this study aims to explore instructional practices for Quranic reading, examine students' interest in reading the Quran, and identify the challenges and instructional strategies associated with fostering reading interest. By employing a qualitative case study approach, this research contributes empirical evidence to the growing body of literature on Quranic education, particularly regarding the relationship between teacher-guided instruction, learner autonomy, and students' long-term engagement in Quranic reading.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of instructional practices for Quranic reading and students' interest in reading the Quran within a community-based Quranic learning

center in Indonesia (Engkizar et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2026; Gerring, 2017). The institution is presented using a pseudonym to maintain institutional confidentiality. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and consisted of teachers and students who were directly involved in the Quranic learning process. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, including learning schedules and instructional records. Classroom observations focused on instructional interactions, students' participation, and learning behaviors during Quranic reading activities, while interviews explored participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to the instructional process and students' reading interest (Engkizar et al., 2022).

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the stages of data familiarization, open coding, theme development, theme review, and interpretation. Data from different sources were continuously compared to identify recurring patterns and strengthen the credibility of the findings. Trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking with selected participants, and peer debriefing during the interpretation process. These procedures enhanced the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings (Daniel & Harland, 2018; Kara, 2023; Kyngäs, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Quranic Reading Instruction Practices

The findings indicate that Quranic reading instruction at Quranic learning center is predominantly conducted through direct teacher-guided learning. Classroom observations showed that teachers consistently began each learning session by demonstrating the correct pronunciation of Quranic verses, after which students repeated the recitation individually or in small groups. Throughout the learning process, teachers closely monitored students' pronunciation by emphasizing the accuracy of *makhraj*, *Sifat al-huruf*, and the application of *tajwid* rules. Whenever pronunciation errors occurred, immediate corrective feedback was provided before students continued reading.

This instructional practice was consistently confirmed through interviews with teachers and students. Teachers explained that direct supervision enabled them to identify reading errors promptly and prevent students from repeatedly practicing incorrect pronunciation. One teacher stated:

"We immediately correct students whenever they mispronounce a letter or apply the tajwid incorrectly so that mistakes do not become a habit." (Teacher 1)

Similarly, students acknowledged that they felt more confident reading under the teacher's supervision because mistakes were corrected immediately.

"I feel more confident when the teacher listens to my reading because I know my mistakes will be corrected directly." (Student 4)

However, classroom observations also revealed that students rarely initiated independent reading without teacher instruction. During several learning sessions, most students waited for the teacher's cue before beginning to read, indicating that learning activities remained highly teacher-centered. These findings suggest that although direct instruction effectively supports reading accuracy, it provides limited opportunities for fostering students' autonomous Quranic reading habits (Rohman & Ainuri, 2026).

The predominance of teacher-guided instruction demonstrates that the learning process prioritizes the development of accurate Quranic recitation through continuous supervision and immediate corrective feedback. Such instructional practices are particularly important during the early stages of Quranic learning because accurate pronunciation and proper application of *tajwid* form the foundation for subsequent memorization and comprehension (Engkizar et al., 2023). Immediate

feedback enables students to recognize and correct reading errors before they become habitual, thereby strengthening procedural fluency in Quranic recitation.

These findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that direct teacher supervision remains an effective approach for developing foundational Quranic reading skills. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that excessive reliance on teacher guidance may unintentionally limit opportunities for learners to develop self-regulated learning and independent reading habits. From the perspective of learner autonomy, effective Quranic instruction should gradually transition from teacher-directed learning toward guided independence by incorporating self-practice, peer learning, and reflective recitation activities (Engkizar et al., 2024; Syafril et al., 2021). Such an approach allows students to maintain recitation accuracy while simultaneously developing responsibility for their own learning.

Students' Interest in Reading the Quran

The findings reveal that students' interest in reading the Quran remains largely dependent on structured classroom activities. Observation data showed that students actively participated during formal learning sessions but demonstrated limited initiative to read independently once teacher supervision ended. Only a few students voluntarily continued their recitation after completing the assigned learning activities.

Interview data further indicated that students' limited self-confidence contributed to their low level of independent reading. Several participants expressed concern about making mistakes in pronunciation and *tajwid*, leading them to rely heavily on teacher guidance.

One student explained:

"I'm afraid of making mistakes when reading alone, so I usually wait until the teacher asks me to read." (Student 2)

Teachers shared similar observations, noting that many students possessed adequate reading ability but lacked confidence to practice independently.

"Some students can actually read well, but they are still hesitant because they worry about reading incorrectly." (Teacher 2)

Another recurring finding concerned students' enthusiasm during learning activities. Classroom observations indicated that students' attention gradually declined when similar instructional routines were repeated over multiple sessions. Teachers recognized that limited instructional variation occasionally reduced students' engagement, particularly among younger learners who responded more positively to interactive learning activities. Collectively, these findings suggest that students' interest in Quranic reading is influenced by both psychological factors, such as self-confidence, and pedagogical factors related to instructional design (Engkizar et al., 2026).

The findings suggest that students' interest in Quranic reading is shaped by the interaction between individual psychological characteristics and classroom instructional practices. Although students demonstrated adequate reading competence during supervised learning, many lacked confidences to practice independently because they were concerned about making mistakes. This indicates that reading interest is influenced not only by technical ability but also by learners' perceptions of their own competence and readiness to engage in independent learning (Alsokari et al., 2026; Mohammed & Eltoukhi, 2025).

Furthermore, the decline in students' enthusiasm during repetitive instructional activities highlights the importance of instructional variation in sustaining learning engagement. Previous educational research has consistently shown that meaningful participation, active learning, and varied instructional experiences positively influence students' motivation and learning interest. Therefore, fostering sustained interest in Quranic reading requires learning environments that encourage active participation, strengthen students' confidence, and provide diverse instructional experiences that

move beyond repetitive teacher-centered practices.

Challenges and Efforts to Enhance Students' Interest in Reading the Quran

The study identified several interconnected challenges in promoting students' interest in reading the Quran. The primary challenge was the absence of consistent independent reading habits. Both observation and interview data demonstrated that students primarily read the Quran during scheduled instructional sessions and rarely continued practicing outside the classroom environment.

A teacher explained:

"Most students read only during class. At home, many of them practice only when their parents remind them." (Teacher 3)

The second challenge involved the relatively limited variation in instructional methods. Teachers acknowledged that maintaining the same instructional pattern over extended periods occasionally resulted in reduced student engagement.

As one teacher stated:

"If we use the same method continuously, some students lose enthusiasm because they become accustomed to the routine." (Teacher 1)

To address these challenges, teachers implemented several strategies aimed at increasing students' motivation and participation. Observations and interviews showed that teachers regularly emphasized the spiritual rewards and daily benefits of reading the Quran before beginning each lesson. In addition, teachers gradually introduced more varied instructional activities, including peer-assisted recitation, individual performance assessments, and small-group learning.

According to one teacher:

"We try to combine motivation with different learning activities so students enjoy reading the Quran and become more confident." (Teacher 2)

Although both teachers and students viewed these initiatives positively, classroom observations suggested that their implementation remained gradual and had not yet fully transformed students' dependence on teacher guidance. Overall, the findings indicate that strengthening students' interest in Quranic reading requires not only motivational reinforcement but also instructional approaches that systematically cultivate learner autonomy and sustained reading habits.

The identified challenges demonstrate that improving students' interest in Quranic reading extends beyond the selection of instructional methods. Developing sustainable reading habits requires continuous reinforcement through supportive learning environments that encourage regular practice both inside and outside formal instructional settings (Htay et al., 2025; Mutathahirin et al., 2026). The findings indicate that motivational encouragement alone is insufficient unless accompanied by instructional strategies that progressively foster learner autonomy and independent engagement with the Quran.

The efforts implemented by teachers reflect an awareness of the need to combine cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions of Quranic education. However, the gradual nature of these initiatives suggests that greater instructional innovation is required to strengthen students' long-term engagement. Interactive learning activities, collaborative recitation, self-monitoring practices, and structured home-reading programs may provide opportunities for students to become more active participants in their own learning (Kaema & Ulwi, 2025; Rosyadi & Athari, 2025). Consequently, effective Quranic education should seek to balance teacher guidance with student-centered learning approaches that cultivate independent reading habits while preserving the accuracy of Quranic recitation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that students' interest in reading the Quran is shaped by the interaction between instructional practices, learner

motivation, and opportunities for independent learning. Teacher-guided instruction effectively supports the accuracy of Quranic recitation through immediate feedback on pronunciation and *tajwid* application; however, its predominance also contributes to students' reliance on teacher supervision and limits the development of autonomous reading habits. In addition, limited variation in instructional methods and the absence of consistent Quranic reading practices beyond formal learning sessions further constrain students' sustained interest in reading the Quran. These findings suggest that strengthening students' interest requires instructional approaches that maintain recitation accuracy while simultaneously promoting learner autonomy through more interactive learning strategies, motivational reinforcement, and regular independent reading practices. This study contributes to the field of Quranic education by highlighting the importance of balancing teacher guidance with student-centered learning to foster long-term engagement in Quranic reading.

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