

THE STUDENTS' INTEREST TOWARDS READING AL-QUR'AN

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Abstract: *This research aims to explore, understand, and describe Universitas Islam Balitar students' interest towards reading Al-Qur'an. Deploying qualitative method, observation, and interview, it appears that there were 65 out of 100 students who have finished reading Al-Qur'an, and it was revealed that most of the students read Al-Qur'an inside the college; nevertheless, most of them still read Al-Qur'an haltingly. However, all the students said that they had great interest in reading Al-Qur'an fluently either those who found themselves difficult to read Al-Qur'an or even those who were unable to read Al-Qur'an at all. The students were also aware that Al-Qur'an must be read on a daily basis, and due to the importance of reading Al-Qur'an nowadays, they thought that Reading Al-Qur'an should be a particular subject in the university. The results revealed that a great number of students who have either finished reading Al-Qur'an or read Al-Qur'an on a daily basis were found in Class A. The data were obtained from the students Attendance List under the supervision of Islamic Education lecturers in Primary Teacher Education study program at UNISBA Blitar.*

Keywords: *Al-Qur'an, Reading, Interest*

Introduction

In globalization era which is developing very fast, it is visible that the existence of moslem teenagers in society is being reduced. Day by day, the teenagers prefer to idolize artists rather than Rasulullah SAW, and they prefer reading status on social media rather than reading the Holy Al-Qur'an. Even in religious places like mosque, only the old men and children who often pray there. Meanwhile, the teenagers almost do not exist in such religious place. The moslem teenagers' interest in reading Al-Qur'an is also getting low day by day due to the development of age.

Al-Qur'an as the Holy Book of moslem is not only to be believed but also to be comprehended. For that purpose, reading and implementing Al-Qur'an is inseparable from the moslems' lives. As said by Usman ibn Affan: "The best person amongst you all is those who learn Al-Qur'an and teach it" (As-Sayuti: 1992:21). Moreover, if Al-Qur'an is studied, mused, and comprehended, the miracle of Al-Qur'an is real. Since Al-Qur'an is revealed as a mercy for the universe, the miracle of Al-Qur'an is always felt by human beings in all ages.

The students are expected to be a role model for the society either in moral or intellectual capacity. They must be a person who can articulate, be active, and facilitate conflict solution, in addition to being the agent of islahul ummah with

other elements in society using the spirit of “revitalization” of the value of Al-Qur’an and Hadits.

This study was carried out in UNISBA notably to Primary Teacher Education study program in which its students who will take part in educational institutions must possess the knowledge of Al-Qur’an.

There are some Al-Qur’an definitions based on the experts. According to Syekh Muhammad Khudri Beik, Al-Qur’an is the word of ALLAH in Arabic, revealed to Prophet Muhammad SAW to be understood, delivered to human beings by the trusted people, written in mushaf starting from Surah Al-Fatihah until Surah An-Nas. According to Syekh Muhammad Abduh, Al-Kitab or Al-Qur’an is a text written is mushaf that is kept inside the moslems’ memory. According to Muhammad Abdul Azim az-Zarqani, Al-Qur’an is a book that becomes a miracle for Prophet Muhammad SAW, is written in mushaf, and delivered by the trusted men. According to some moslem scholars, the definition of Al-Qur’an viewed from language side are the followings.

Al-Asy’ari, Al-Qur’an is combining something with another thing, since Al-Qur’an is derived from the word “Qarana.” Surah, verses, and even letters of Al-Qur’an are connected to each other.

Al-Farra, Al-Qur’an is justifying since Al-Qur’an is derived from the word “Qarain,” the plural form of “Qaraniah.” Allah SWT said that Al-Qur’an means justifying since the verses in Al-Qur’an justify each other.

Az-Zajjaj, Al-Quran means collecting, since the word Al-Quran is derived from the word “Qar’I,” and Allah said that Al-Quran is a unity, that is, the collection of the surah, and the gist of the previous Holy books.

Reading is a complex and complicated process. Complex means the involvement of any internal and external factors in the process of reading. The internal factors of reading include intelligence, interest, attitude, motivation, and reading objective. Meanwhile, the external factors include reading facility, background, social, and economy.

a. Reading tradition

Reading activity involves three basic ability:

1) Recording

Recording refers to words and sentences, then associating the sounds with the writing system.

2) Decoding

Decoding refers to the process of translating graphics into words.

3) Meaning

Meaning is the process of understanding the sense that occurs in the level of understanding, interpretative understanding, creative, and evaluative. Samsu Somadayo (2011:4) said that reading is an interactive activity to find the gist of the text. Somadayo’s statement is supported by Herry Guntur Tarigan (1985:9) stating that reading is understanding the pattern of language from

the image of the writing. From some statements above, it can be concluded that reading is a process of associating words, translating, and understanding the meaning of texts.

According to Crow and Crow, interest is a stimulus that makes a person give attention to other people, something, and particular activities (Johny Killis, 1988:26). In line with Crow and Crow, it can be said that individuals who have interest towards learning will be encouraged to give attention to learning itself.

The characteristics of interest stated by Bimo Walgito: Creating a positive attitude towards a particular object. There is something interesting from the object. Containing a hope that create desirability or enthusiasm to get something that he/she wants (1977;4)

b. Al-Qur'an education in Higher Education

According to Yusuf in Yunahar, an expert of Al-Qur'an, "Al-Qur'an education means all the activities done consciously by someone of institution to cultivate the value of Al-Qur'an itself." (Yunahar, 1999:138). Meanwhile, higher education is the highest formal education for human.

Higher education creates scholars, educators, religion scholars, thinkers, and scientists who are mature and stable in psychology, emotion, and intelligence, and they have scientific and moral responsibilities as the reflection of their self-integrity. When talking about Al-Qur'an in higher education, we unconsciously discuss other topics that relate technical aspects such as syllabus, methodology, materials, finance, etc. There is another fact that must be considered, that is, students, society, and existing formal institutions.

Method

This research deployed survey design by using interview since it could obtain accurate answers from the people. The followings are some considerations for respondents to give answers to the survey.

Religion Lecturers: The extensive experience of the lecturers can give some answers that relate to the students' interest towards reading Al-Qur'an in which it directly links to the students. This can happen since the lecturers must know the students' activeness in religious activity. Another aspect include Student Activity Unit (UKM) of Al-Qur'an. UKM certainly has some agendas of religious activities that directly relate to the students' interest towards reading Al-Qur'an. Students: In the realm of religion-based university, the students must be able to give some answers relating to the interest towards reading Al-Qur'an.

Interview was done to collect the data. Interview guide was utilized to help the researcher answer the second question about the students' view on the interest towards learning Al-Qur'an. For Primary Teacher Education class A, B, C, D, there were three main questions included in the interview guide.

The first thing to do was having a talk with the religion tutors who are responsible for monitoring reading Al-Qur'an activity, followed by interviewing

some of the students. The researcher concluded the data from the interview and analyze the problem raised during the interview. The conclusion was then drawn based on the data.

Discussion

Interest is a condition that occurs if someone saw the temporary meaning of the situation, which is connected to his or her desirability or needs. Based on the definition, interest is a condition where someone shows his or her desire or needs, which are seen based on his or her characteristics that create meaning.

Interest appears due to the concern of something being done; therefore, interest is encouragement towards particular activities making someone interested. Interest does not appear by itself; there is a need that goes alongside interest. In addition, interest appear due to the encouragement from other people.

In this discussion, interest that will be discussed is about reading Al-Qur'an. Al-Qur'an is the revelation from Allah SWT as the miracle revealed to Prophet Muhamad SAW as the fundamental source of law and living guide for moslem, and reading Al-Qur'an is a worship. Reading Al-Qur'an is prized for its accuracy and consistency towards tajwid.

Meanwhile, in the present, someone prefers to read the passages other than Al-Qur'an such as novel, magazine, book, and others. Another factor of the decreasing interest of reading Al-Qur'an is the advancement of technology. The advancement of technology is the more advance a tool, the more people will use it. Nowadays, a lot of teenagers misuse technology. They prefer using gadget for unimportant things, for example, spending spare time by accessing social media. Besides, lack of Al-Qur'an teacher is the main factor that influence the decrease of interest towards reading Al-Qur'an. Therefore, it is much better for us to analyze the cause of the decrease of interest towards reading Al-Qur'an. The students even has been influenced to do negative things. Meanwhile, the gist of Al-Qur'an gives positive values mainly about behavior and good living guide.

The Students' Interest and Ability in Reading Al-Qur'an

The results revealed that the students' interest towards reading Al-Qur'an was low. They preferred to join other religious activities such as istighosah and sholawat rather than read Al-Qur'an.

To know the result of this research, the researcher distributed a questionnaire, together with the result of observation and interview. To make it clearer, the result of this research is presented in the form of table. The early step in this research was to know how many students who have finished reading Al-Qur'an in Primary Teacher Education study program. The comparison of the respondents' answers to the questionnaire can be seen in the following table:

Table I: The list of students who have finished reading Al-Qur'an at the first semester of Primary Teacher Education, class A, B, C, D (100)

No	Study Program	Class	Having Finished Reading Al-Qur'an	Information
1	Primary Teacher Education	A	20	
2	Primary Teacher Education	B	10	
3	Primary Teacher Education	C	15	
4	Primary Teacher Education	D	15	
Total			65 students; therefore, there were 35 students who have never finished reading Al-Qur'an.	

Source: Analyzed By the Researcher 2018

Table 1 shows that 20 students from class A have finished reading Al-Qur'an. Class C and D were below class A, and the least frequency was found in class B, that is, only 10 students who have finished reading Al-Qur'an. From the data, it can be concluded that the number of students who have never finished reading Al-Qur'an were 35 students. Meanwhile, the quantity of reading Al-Qur'an in their daily lives can be seen in Table II. The comparison of the respondents' answers to the questionnaire can be seen in the following table:

Table II: The quantity of reading Al-Qur'an of the first semester students of Primary Teacher Education, class A, B, C, D (100)

No	Class	Number of Students	Reading Al-Qur'an Schedule	Recess	Having No Time
1	A	25	20	5	-
2	B	23	20	3	-
3	C	27	7	-	20
4	D	25	5	-	20
Total		100	55	8	40
100					

Source: Analyzed By the Researcher 2018

Table II reveals that the majority of the students read Al-Qur'an inside the college in the specific period for reading Al-Qur'an; 55 students. The number of students who had no chance to read was counted 40, and the lowest frequency was reading Al-Qur'an at recess, that is, only 8 students.

The level of students' interest towards reading Al-Qur'an outside the college can be seen in Table III. The comparison of the respondents' answers to the questionnaire can be seen in the following table:

Table III: Interest towards reading Al-Qur'an outside the college of the first semester students of PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION, class A, B, C, D (100)

No	Class	Number of Students	Before Activity	Recess	Having No Time
1	A	25	5	15	5
2	B	23	2	9	12
3	C	27	-	6	21
4	D	25	-	8	17
Total		100	7	38	55
		100			

Source: Analyzed By the Researcher 2018

Table III shows that the majority of the students had no chance to read Al-Qur'an outside the college, that is, 55 students. In addition, 38 students were identified reading Al-Qur'an at recess. The lowest frequency was found at the respondents who read Al-Qur'an before activity; 7 respondents only. Table IV displays the level of respondents' ability in reading Al-Qur'an.

Table IV: The level of respondents' ability in reading Al-Qur'an (100 students of the first semester of Primary Teacher Education, class A, B, C, D)

No	Class	Number of Students	Newly Recognizing Letters	Reading Haltingly	Reading Fluently
1	A	25	-	5	20
2	B	23	3	10	10
3	C	27	7	15	5
4	D	25	5	15	5
			15	45	40
Total		100			

Source: Analyzed By the Researcher 2018

Table IV shows that most of the students still read Al-Qur'an haltingly; 45 students. Meanwhile, the lowest frequency was found at the students who did not recognize letters of Al-Qur'an, that is, 15 students. The level of respondents' desire to improve their ability in reading Al-Qur'an can be seen in Table V. The

comparison of the respondents' answers to the questionnaire can be seen in the following table:

Table V: Daily Al-Qur'an reading of the first semester students of Primary Teacher Education, class A, B, C, D (100 students)

No	Class	Number of Students	No Need to be Improved	High Desire	If Someone Helped
1	A	25		25	
	B	23		23	
	C	27		27	
	D	25		25	
Total		100		100	

Source: Analyzed By the Researcher 2018

Table V shows that all the students had high desire to read Al-Qur'an, and they generally said that they wanted to improve their ability in reading Al-Qur'an even though they had to learn from zero level.

Table VI: The urgency of reading Al-Qur'an subject for the first semester students of Primary Teacher Education, class A, B, C, D (100 students)

No	Class	Number of Students	No Idea	Enough to be Local Content	Must be an Independent Subject
1	A	25	-	5	25
2	B	23	3	10	10
3	C	27	-	7	15
4	D	25	-	6	15
			3	28	65

Source: Analyzed By the Researcher 2018

Table VI demonstrates that most of the students (65) stressed the importance of reading Al-Qur'an to become a particular subject. Meanwhile, the students who said that reading Al-Qur'an should be local content were 28 students. The lowest frequency was the students who did not give answers; 3 students only.

Table VII: The urgency of reading Al-Qur'an subject for the first semester students of Primary Teacher Education, class A, B, C, D (100 students)

No	Class	Number of Students	Unessential	Reading when having chances only	Reading daily
	A	25	25	-	25
	B	23	20	3	20
	C	27	15	12	15
	D	25	10	15	10
			70	30	70
Total				100	

Source: Analyzed By the Researcher 2018

As depicted in Table VII, 70 students were aware that reading Al-Qur'an must be done on the daily basis. The rest of the students (30), however, said that they read Al-Qur'an occasionally.

Analysis of the Students' Interest and Ability in Reading Al-Qur'an

Table 1 shows that 20 students from class A have finished reading Al-Qur'an; Class C and D were below class A; and the lowest frequency was found in class B, that is, only 10 students who have finished reading Al-Qur'an. From the data, it can be concluded that the number of students who have never finished reading Al-Qur'an were 35 students.

Table II reveals that the majority of the students (55) read Al-Qur'an inside the college in the specific period for reading Al-Qur'an. The number of students who had no chance to read was counted 40, and the lowest frequency was reading Al-Qur'an at recess, that is, only 8 students. This fact is obviously miserable since moslems generally had no chance to read Al-Qur'an in daily life. The students of Primary Teacher Education as the respondents were too busy working on college activities; they tend to decrease their spiritual awareness to get close to Allah through reading Al-Qur'an. However, during the period of reading Al-Qur'an at the college, the students were more motivated since they were together with other friends who were also their tutors; therefore, when they were false in reading Al-Qur'an, they were not ashamed.

Based on Table III, it can be seen that the majority of the students (55) had no chance to read Al-Qur'an outside the college, while the rest (38) read Al-Qur'an at recess. This number is surprising since 50% of the university students had no chance to read Al-Qur'an outside the college. Lack of reading Al-Qur'an was mainly caused by college activities and extra jobs.

As showed in Table IV, 45 students were still unable to read Al-Qur'an fluently, and other 45 students were able to read Al-Qur'an haltingly. The rest (15) were unfamiliar with Al-Qur'an letters. In fact, many students of Primary Teacher Education were unable to read Al-Qur'an or halting in reading Al-Qur'an. This fact is contrast to the past years when Al-Qur'an was taught since child. When children had been taught to read Al-Qur'an, adult moslems were weak in reading Al-Qur'an instead. In this case, Religion Lecturers prepared tutors who have passed the selection test of reading Al-Qur'an. The tutors who were also the students were prepared to avoid other students feeling ashamed when they made mistakes.

As depicted in Table V, all the students (100%) really wanted to read Al-Qur'an, and they wanted to spend more time to read Al-Qur'an even though they had to learn from zero. The students were in harmony in which there was no any religion gaps so that activities done by the lecturers could run well although the result were not maximal. The most important thing is that the students at least had a will to join the activities.

Table VI demonstrates that most of the students (65) stressed the importance of reading Al-Qur'an to become a particular subject. Meanwhile, the students who said that reading Al-Qur'an should be local content were 28 students. The lowest frequency was the students who did not give answers; 3 students only.

Recently the program of reading Al-Qur'an that has been managed by UNISBA is still in the form of extracurricular activity. Therefore, there is a little chance for students to practice reading Al-Qur'an. During lecture period they had to go to college regularly, while during holidays they preferred to go home. Thus, this program cannot be effective if it is only a "local content." The students hoped that the program of reading Al-Qur'an is mandatory for each student, or simply this program can become a particular subject like other subjects.

Dealing with the urgency of reading Al-Qur'an, most of the students (70%) realized that reading Al-Qur'an should be done on a daily basis. Meanwhile, 30% of the students only read Al-Qur'an occasionally. From the percentage above, it is clear that their internal awareness (inside heart) remains virtuous, although in reality there is no any external awareness. This condition must push Primary Teacher Education Study Program alongside its lecturers to work hard to increase the students' interest and ability in reading Al-Qur'an in the realm of higher education. This awareness is permanent inside each of the students, but it should be maintained and directed to the whole awareness of learning Al-Qur'an, or at least the students are able to read Al-Qur'an correctly. Indeed, to implement Al-Qur'an, someone must be able to feel close to Al-Qur'an and interact with Al-Qur'an. It can be started anytime since actually there is no age limit to learning.

Conclusion

Deploying qualitative method, observation, and interview, it can be concluded that there were 65 out of 100 students who have finished reading Al-Qur'an, and it was revealed that most of the students read Al-Qur'an inside the college; nevertheless, most of them still read Al-Qur'an haltingly. However, all the students said that they had great interest in reading Al-Qur'an fluently either those who found themselves difficult to read Al-Qur'an or even those who were unable to read Al-Qur'an at all. The students were also aware that Al-Qur'an must be read on a daily basis, and due to the importance of reading Al-Qur'an nowadays, they thought that Reading Al-Qur'an should be a particular subject in the university. The results revealed that a great number of students who have either finished reading Al-Qur'an or reading Al-Qur'an on a daily basis were found in Class A. The data were obtained from the students Attendance List under the supervision of Islamic Education lecturers in Primary Teacher Education study program at UNISBA Blitar.

Even so, reading Al-Qur'an is still lack of devotee since people preferred reading interesting books or passages through electronic media. In addition, the

students also generally favour other activities such as sholawat since they just sit and listen to the religion lecture.

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