

# The Challenges of Qur'an-Hadith Learning: Evidence from an Islamic Junior Secondary School in Deli Serdang

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## Abstract

Qur'an-Hadith learning in madrasahs still faces multiple constraints that hinder the optimal achievement of Islamic educational goals. While madrasahs are expected to nurture students who are religious, morally grounded, and competent in reading the Qur'an, empirical conditions often reveal persistent barriers related to teaching materials, curriculum design, instructional methods, student background, and school facilities. This study aims to portray the problematics of Qur'an-Hadith learning at MTs Amin Darussalam and to identify the factors that sustain these challenges. Using a qualitative case-study design, data were collected through open and closed interviews with teachers, students, the principal, and parents, and were strengthened by observation and a review of relevant literature. Data were analysed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the main problems include students' difficulties in understanding tajwid, a curriculum that is not yet differentiated, limited instructional time, the dominance of lecture-based teaching, weak basic Qur'anic reading skills among some students, limited family support, and inadequate learning facilities. These findings confirm that the problematics of Qur'an-Hadith learning are multidimensional and require coordinated responses from schools, teachers, parents, and policy makers.

**Keywords:** *Learning Problems, Qur'an-Hadith, Madrasah Tsanawiyah*

**Abstrak:** Pembelajaran Al-Qur'an dan Hadits di madrasah masih menghadapi berbagai kendala yang menghambat pencapaian optimal tujuan pendidikan Islam. Meskipun madrasah diharapkan dapat mendidik siswa yang religius, berlandaskan moral yang kuat, dan kompeten dalam membaca Al-Qur'an, kondisi empiris seringkali menunjukkan hambatan yang terus-menerus terkait dengan materi pengajaran, desain kurikulum, metode pengajaran, latar belakang siswa, dan fasilitas sekolah. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan permasalahan pembelajaran Al-Qur'an dan Hadits di MTs Amin Darussalam dan untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mempertahankan tantangan tersebut. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara terbuka dan tertutup dengan guru, siswa, kepala sekolah, dan orang tua, dan diperkuat oleh observasi dan tinjauan literatur yang relevan. Data dianalisis melalui kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa masalah utama meliputi kesulitan siswa dalam memahami tajwid, kurikulum yang belum terdiferensiasi, waktu pembelajaran yang terbatas, dominasi pengajaran berbasis ceramah, keterampilan membaca Al-Qur'an dasar yang lemah di kalangan sebagian siswa, dukungan keluarga yang terbatas, dan fasilitas pembelajaran yang tidak memadai. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa permasalahan pembelajaran Al-Qur'an dan Hadits bersifat multidimensional dan membutuhkan respons terkoordinasi dari sekolah, guru, orang tua, dan pembuat kebijakan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Problematika Pembelajaran; Al-Qur'an Hadis; Madrasah Tsanawiyah*

## **Introduction**

Religious learning in madrasahs is not merely intended to meet formal curriculum targets; it is also expected to cultivate students' character, morality, and spirituality in an integrated manner. Within this framework, Qur'an-Hadith is a strategic subject because it provides students with foundational access to the primary sources of Islam and is expected to foster not only memorisation but also contextual understanding and daily religious practice (Fa'atin, 2017; Satriani, 2022). In contemporary Islamic schooling, this expectation has become even more urgent because madrasahs are required to produce learners who are academically capable while also possessing strong ethical integrity and religious commitment (Hussien et al., 2021; Rafi et al., 2025).

However, the current portrait of Qur'an-Hadith learning in madrasahs still reflects a range of persistent and interrelated problems. Previous studies indicate that many students continue to struggle with reading the Qur'an accurately, understanding tajwid rules, and connecting scriptural material to everyday life situations; in parallel, classroom learning often remains dominated by lecturing and rote transmission rather than meaningful engagement (Hasanah & Habibi, 2024; Sulaiman & Alawiyah, 2023). Research in Islamic education also shows that when teachers rely heavily on one-way instruction, students' critical and reflective participation tends to weaken, even though such participation is essential for deep religious learning (Alwaddai, 2014; Hussien et al., 2021).

The problematics of Qur'an-Hadith learning are shaped by both internal and external factors. Internally, teachers frequently face a heavy administrative burden, limited pedagogical innovation, and pressure to complete dense curriculum targets, which may reduce opportunities to adapt instruction to students' actual readiness and learning needs (Triansyah et al., 2023; Pozas et al., 2020). Externally, family support, peer culture, digital distraction, and wider social change influence students' motivation and their consistency in practising Qur'anic literacy outside school (Boonk et al., 2018; Kim, 2022). For this reason, the problem cannot be reduced to a purely technical classroom issue; it is also institutional, social, and cultural in character.

A comprehensive study of Qur'an-Hadith learning problems is therefore important because this subject plays a central role in shaping students' religious identity. Much of the existing literature has focused on achievement, the use of specific methods, or media development, whereas fewer studies have examined the full constellation of obstacles faced by teachers and learners in one institutional setting (Husain et al., 2024; Hasanah & Habibi, 2024). A holistic mapping of these constraints is needed so that proposed solutions do not remain partial, short-term, or

disconnected from the lived realities of madrasah classrooms (Castro et al., 2015; Boonk et al., 2018).

Based on that background, this study aims to explain the problematics of Qur'an-Hadith learning in a madrasah context more systematically and in greater depth. Specifically, it identifies the obstacles related to teachers, students, curriculum, methods, facilities, and the learning environment, and it also explores the factors that allow these problems to persist over time (Fa'atin, 2017; Rahmawati et al., 2022). Accordingly, the study addresses two main questions: what factors cause the problematics of Qur'an-Hadith learning in madrasahs, and what efforts can be undertaken to overcome them?

## **Method**

This study employed qualitative research with a case-study approach. The design was selected because the research sought to understand in depth the multiple problematics of Qur'an-Hadith learning at a specific site, namely MTs Amin Darussalam in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra. Although the research was conducted in only one madrasah, the study attempted to construct a comprehensive portrait of the learning process by collecting data from actors directly involved in it, including the Qur'an-Hadith teacher, students, the principal, and parents.

Data were gathered through interviews using both open and closed questions, classroom observation, and literature review. The interview strategy allowed the researcher to capture both broad narratives and focused explanations regarding curriculum implementation, students' difficulties, teaching methods, parental support, and infrastructural limitations. The use of multiple data sources also strengthened the study through triangulation, which is widely recommended in qualitative educational inquiry to enhance the credibility and contextual depth of interpretation.

The data were analysed through an interactive process of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Information was first reduced by selecting materials relevant to the research focus, then organised descriptively to reveal the relationships among learning problems, causal factors, and possible responses. Through this descriptive-analytic procedure, the study sought not to isolate a single classroom problem, but to reveal the wider structure of Qur'an-Hadith learning difficulties in a way that could inform future evaluation and development.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Qur'an-Hadith Teaching Materials**

Qur'an-Hadith teaching materials in madrasahs should not be directed merely toward enabling students to read verses or memorize hadith; rather, they should build students' capacity to understand, internalize, and practice the values contained in these sources. Ideally, the material should be sequenced gradually according to students' basic abilities, beginning with recognition of the Arabic letters and basic reading

rules before moving toward deeper comprehension of verses and hadith. Such material should address not only the cognitive domain but also affective and psychomotor dimensions so that Islamic teachings can function as practical guidance in daily life (Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Ismail & Awang, 2010). Because of that, curriculum content should be aligned with students' real conditions, family background, social environment, and prior competence; when the material exceeds learners' readiness, comprehension declines and classroom fatigue increases (Tomlinson et al., 2003; Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019).

Within Qur'an-Hadith instruction, tajwid constitutes a crucial component because it provides the basis for reading the Qur'an accurately and in accordance with accepted rules. Yet the findings show that tajwid is also one of the most serious problems faced by teachers and students in the madrasah. Teachers encounter difficulty explaining rules of recitation because many students still lack basic competence in reading and writing the Qur'an. Under such conditions, tajwid instruction cannot proceed as expected, since students are asked to engage with technical and conceptual material before mastering prerequisite skills. As a result, teachers often simplify the material and focus first on basic reading ability rather than explaining the whole tajwid system, a pattern also reported in earlier studies on Qur'anic reading instruction (Mahdali, 2020; Purnomo et al., 2022).

This pattern is clearly reflected in the teacher's statement that the primary challenge lies in teaching the laws of Qur'anic recitation. Because many students cannot yet read and write the Qur'an properly, they struggle to understand and apply tajwid formulas while reading verses. The teacher therefore faces a dilemma between fulfilling curricular targets and adjusting instruction to students' actual competence. In practice, the more realistic choice is to prioritize foundational reading proficiency rather than force students to master all tajwid concepts prematurely. Although this approach may help students progress gradually, it also risks leaving their tajwid mastery shallow unless accompanied by systematic follow-up and scaffolding (Aulia et al., 2024; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

The same problem also appears in student interviews, where tajwid is described as the most difficult part of Qur'an-Hadith learning. Students reported that they did not sufficiently understand the rules of recitation and often felt confused when asked to read according to proper standards. This indicates that the challenge lies not only in memorizing tajwid concepts but also in linking theory with actual reading practice. In other words, tajwid learning has tended to remain overly theoretical and has not always provided enough repeated and guided practice, even though skill acquisition in reading requires direct modeling, corrective feedback, and rehearsal (Purnomo et al., 2022; Guskey, 2007).

Learning is more manageable when new material is introduced on the basis of students' prior experience and existing competence. Students who have not mastered basic Qur'anic reading will inevitably struggle if they are immediately confronted with technical terms such as idgham,

ikhfa', iqlab, or mad far'i, because these concepts require prerequisite mastery of letter recognition, word reading, and fluent articulation. If those basic skills are absent, tajwid becomes an excessive cognitive burden. Moreover, Qur'anic reading and tajwid mastery require repetition, habituation, and sustained reinforcement rather than one-off explanation, which is why structured practice remains central to meaningful religious literacy (Mahdali, 2020; Mayer, 2020).

The problem of tajwid materials also reveals a gap between the formal curriculum and the social realities of students. The curriculum often assumes that madrasah students have already acquired basic Qur'anic reading skills at earlier educational levels, whereas the field data show that not all students come from families that support Qur'anic learning, attend Qur'anic nonformal programs, or receive guidance at home. Consequently, teachers face wide variation in reading competence within the same classroom. This makes it difficult to determine an appropriate instructional starting point because some students read fluently while others remain at a very basic level. Such heterogeneity underscores the importance of differentiated learning in religious education (Tomlinson et al., 2003; Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019).

### **Curriculum Design**

Curriculum is the principal instrument that shapes the direction, content, and process of schooling. In contemporary educational thought, curriculum is no longer seen simply as a set of materials to be completed; rather, it should accommodate students' needs, characteristics, and diversity. Qur'an-Hadith learning should therefore be designed through a student-centered approach that maps students' prior abilities, learning needs, interests, and levels of mastery. Through such an approach, teachers can determine more suitable strategies and avoid imposing the same target on all learners regardless of readiness. Differentiated instruction is particularly important because students' Qur'anic reading ability commonly varies widely within madrasah classrooms (Tomlinson et al., 2003; Deunk et al., 2018).

The findings show that one major problem in Qur'an-Hadith instruction lies in a curriculum design that has not fully taken students' actual conditions into account. The curriculum still tends to demand formal completion of content without adequately considering students' different entry levels and learning needs. Teachers are expected to finish a set of competencies within a limited period, even though students do not share the same readiness. As a result, instruction often moves too quickly for students who still lack basic Qur'anic reading skills, while feeling too slow for students who already possess stronger foundations. This indicates that the existing curriculum has not yet optimally accommodated learner diversity (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023; Suwadi et al., 2025).

Beyond curriculum design, the interviews also show that Qur'an-Hadith instruction receives very limited time allocation. The teacher explained that the subject is allotted only around 80 minutes per week, a

duration considered insufficient both to explain the material and to train students' reading ability gradually. This is a serious issue because Qur'an-Hadith learning, especially tajwid and reading practice, requires intensive and repeated exercise. Within such a short duration, teachers are often forced to choose between chasing curricular targets and providing more intensive support for students who are still weak, so many topics are delivered only in general terms without sufficient depth (Adnan & Hafizh, 2019; Purnomo et al., 2022).

This mismatch between formal curriculum design and the actual needs of classroom learning can be interpreted through the perspective of differentiated curriculum. Students differ in readiness, interest, and learning profile, so instruction cannot be carried out effectively through a uniform pattern. In Qur'an-Hadith learning, students who are not yet fluent in reading the Qur'an clearly need different time, support, and strategy from those who already possess stronger basic competence. A curriculum that is oriented only toward material coverage and administrative targets will tend to neglect those individual needs. In such a situation, teachers may become trapped in the routine of finishing content without ensuring that students have truly understood what they have learned, even though meaningful learning—not mere coverage—is the core purpose of education (Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019; Coubergs et al., 2017).

Limited time and an overloaded curriculum can also reduce students' motivation to learn. When lessons proceed in a hurried manner and are excessively focused on content completion, students tend to feel pressured, struggle to follow the lesson, and gradually lose interest. This is especially true for students with weaker Qur'anic reading skills, who require more time than their peers to understand the material. If such a condition persists, students may come to perceive Qur'an-Hadith as a difficult, tedious, and demanding subject. At that point, the curriculum no longer functions as a tool for developing students' potential but becomes a source of pressure that weakens their learning experience (Guskey, 2007; Bond et al., 2020).

Qur'an-Hadith has still not received sufficient priority in the structure of the madrasah curriculum. Although the subject plays an important role in forming students' religious character, its time allocation remains relatively small compared with the amount of material to be covered. This situation limits teachers' space for innovation because most of the available time is consumed by explaining core material. Teachers consequently have little room for remedial teaching, small-group learning, or individual assistance for students who need further support. Students who experience difficulties therefore tend to fall behind without receiving adequate help, a pattern that reinforces inequality in learning outcomes (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023; Deunk et al., 2018).

### **Teachers' Instructional Methods**

Instructional method is one of the key components that determines the success of classroom learning. In Qur'an-Hadith instruction, method

functions not only as a medium for conveying content but also as a means of helping students understand, internalize, and practice Islamic teachings more effectively. Teachers are therefore required to possess professional competence in selecting and developing methods that suit students' conditions, material characteristics, and intended learning goals. Appropriate methods make learning more engaging, interactive, and accessible, whereas unsuitable methods easily generate boredom, passivity, and superficial understanding (Ismail & Awang, 2010; Tamuri et al., 2019).

Teachers need to combine discussion, demonstration, reading practice, peer tutoring, educational games, and digital media so that students can participate actively in the learning process. This is important because Qur'an-Hadith material—especially tajwid and verse comprehension—requires concrete learning experiences and cannot rely on verbal explanation alone. When students only listen to the teacher without direct participation, their understanding tends to remain shallow and is easily forgotten. For that reason, learning methods should be designed to provide students with opportunities to learn through experience, practice, and interaction with peers and teachers, while the teacher functions as a facilitator rather than the sole source of knowledge (Bond et al., 2020; Tamuri et al., 2019).

The findings show that the methods most frequently used by the teacher are lecture, demonstration, and peer tutoring. The lecture method is used to explain core material, while demonstration involves the use of teaching aids, reading models, or sample material so that students can grasp the lesson more easily. In addition, peer tutoring is implemented by pairing students seated together so they can help one another understand the material and achieve the lesson objectives. These choices indicate that the teacher has attempted to provide some variation in learning, even though lecturing remains the dominant approach. The use of demonstration and peer tutoring also reflects an awareness that students need more concrete and collaborative learning experiences (Purnomo et al., 2022; Aulia et al., 2024).

Even so, the continued dominance of lecturing remains a substantial issue in Qur'an-Hadith instruction. Lecturing is indeed easy to use, time efficient, and able to reach many students simultaneously. However, when used excessively, it tends to make students passive recipients of information rather than active participants in deeper thinking. In Qur'an-Hadith learning, overreliance on lecture may also hinder students' understanding of practical material such as tajwid, makharij al-huruf, and the application of recitation rules, all of which require direct exercise, simulation, and feedback more than abstract explanation. Therefore, lecture should be combined with other strategies so that students can achieve more comprehensive mastery (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Bond et al., 2020).

## **Students' Conditions and Backgrounds**

Teachers cannot regard all students as individuals with the same ability and readiness. Every learner brings different social, cultural, and educational backgrounds that demand different instructional responses. The findings indicate that some students still have low Qur'anic reading ability and therefore struggle to follow the material presented in class. At the same time, other students already possess stronger foundations because they are accustomed to learning the Qur'an at home or in nonformal religious education. This unevenness places teachers in a difficult position when trying to determine a learning pace suitable for the whole class: if instruction moves too quickly, weaker students are left behind, but if it moves too slowly, stronger students become bored (Tomlinson et al., 2003; Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019).

Interview findings also show that parental support for Qur'an-Hadith learning is uneven. One student, Relita Laura, explained that her parents rarely instructed her to read the Qur'an, although they occasionally reminded her to study. This suggests that some families have not yet developed a strong habit of accompanying children in Qur'anic learning at home. As a result, students become highly dependent on school-based instruction without receiving reinforcement from the family environment, even though repeated practice at home is crucial for developing reading fluency and confidence (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Pusztai et al., 2024).

Another interview, with Bayu Aziz, revealed that he had difficulty following Qur'an-Hadith lessons because he had not yet mastered reading and writing the Qur'an. Bayu explained that he came from a general school and therefore entered the madrasah without an adequate foundation in Qur'anic literacy. By contrast, another student, Nazura Putri, described a more supportive experience: her parents consistently encouraged her to study the Qur'an and asked her to review her memorization before sleeping. These contrasting experiences show that parental involvement has a major impact on students' motivation and Qur'anic learning achievement. Students who receive attention, guidance, and habit formation from their families usually develop stronger skills because learning continues beyond the classroom and becomes part of everyday religious life (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Pusztai et al., 2024).

When students do not receive support from home, school learning alone often struggles to produce optimal outcomes because out-of-school time is not used to strengthen the material already learned. Conversely, students who receive family support tend to develop more easily because they enjoy broader and more continuous opportunities to learn. These differing conditions require teachers to adopt more flexible and adaptive strategies so that all learners can participate according to their level of readiness. Madrasahs also need to build more intensive communication with parents so that Qur'an-Hadith learning is not confined to school but is reinforced at home through shared educational responsibility (Pusztai et al., 2024; Hill & Tyson, 2009).

## **Facilities and Infrastructure**

Educational facilities and infrastructure are often viewed as important factors in determining the success of school learning. The availability of Qur'anic copies, textbooks, instructional media, comfortable classrooms, audio devices, and technological resources can help teachers deliver material more effectively. Adequate facilities make it easier for students to learn in a comfortable and focused way and to understand both theoretical and practical material. For that reason, many schools seek to improve learning facilities as part of broader efforts to raise educational quality (Rahman et al., 2024; Bond et al., 2020).

The findings show that limited facilities and infrastructure are still regarded as one of the problems in Qur'an-Hadith learning at the madrasah. School personnel reported that insufficient learning facilities frequently hinder teachers from delivering material optimally. These limitations include inadequate learning media, the lack of visual aids, limited supporting books, and the absence of technological facilities that could help students learn more interactively. Under these conditions, teachers tend to rely more heavily on lecture-based and conventional teaching because there are few alternative media available in the classroom (Aulia et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024).

At the same time, the issue of facilities in education often becomes a recurring and rather classical explanation. Many schools cite limited infrastructure as the main cause of weak learning quality, yet educational success is not determined by facilities alone. There are schools with limited resources that nevertheless achieve strong learning outcomes because they are supported by teacher creativity, student discipline, and a robust culture of learning. Conversely, there are schools with more complete facilities that still experience instructional problems because the available resources are not used optimally. In this sense, infrastructure matters, but professional agency and learning culture remain equally decisive (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Bond et al., 2020).

Limited facilities can indeed affect the variety of methods and media available to teachers. When resources are scarce, it becomes harder for teachers to innovate because they lack sufficient tools to make learning more engaging. Nevertheless, such limitations should not lead teachers to stop striving for effective learning. In many situations, simple approaches implemented consistently are more effective than advanced technologies that are poorly utilized. Thus, teacher creativity remains a major factor in overcoming facility constraints and in maintaining students' access to meaningful learning experiences (Tamuri et al., 2019; Guskey, 2007).

The provision of facilities is therefore a shared responsibility among schools, communities, and government. Madrasahs cannot fully meet learning-facility needs on their own, especially when their economic condition is limited. Support from parents, school committees, communities, and public policy is necessary so that madrasahs can access more adequate instructional resources. At the same time, schools need to prioritize facilities that are genuinely relevant to learning needs so

that limited resources are allocated more strategically and equitably (Pusztai et al., 2024; Suwadi et al., 2025).

## **Conclusion**

The portrait of Qur'an-Hadith learning problems at MTs Amin Darussalam shows that the quality of Islamic education still falls short of the aspirations attached to madrasah education. The findings indicate that limited students' basic competence, a curriculum that is not yet adaptive, minimal time allocation, the continued dominance of conventional methods, uneven family support, and inadequate facilities together create a complex and multidimensional instructional challenge. These conditions suggest that improving Islamic education cannot be placed solely on government policy; it must also be initiated by schools through pedagogical innovation, teacher development, and the strengthening of a more religious and adaptive learning culture.

Because education is a primary medium for forming the character, morality, and future quality of younger generations, Qur'an-Hadith instruction should not be reduced to an administrative routine. The implications of this study point to the need for stronger collaboration among schools, teachers, parents, communities, and government in building a Qur'an-Hadith learning system that is more contextual, inclusive, and responsive to the real needs of madrasah students. In this regard, improving Qur'an-Hadith instruction requires both structural support and pedagogical sensitivity so that scriptural learning becomes academically meaningful and morally transformative.

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