

**Teaching the Qur'an to Converts with an Islamic Education Approach:
a Case Study at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta**

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ABSTRACT: Teaching the Qur'an is an essential part of Muslims in enhancing their understanding and practice of Islamic values, especially for converts who have recently embraced Islam. It serves as a fundamental foundation in deepening the teachings of Islam and building spiritual attachment. This study examines the teaching of the Qur'an for converts using an Islamic education approach. Qur'anic teaching is of great importance and needs to be conducted to form a Muslim who is fully committed to their faith and has a basic understanding of Islamic teachings. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied and comprehensively explore individuals' perspectives and experiences. The research was conducted at the Mualaf Center in Yogyakarta. In this study, the researcher conducted observations and interviews with teachers and converts at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta. Based on the research findings, it was found that the teaching of the Qur'an at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta focuses not only on aspects of memorization and recitation of the Qur'an but also on contextual understanding and the application of Islamic educational values in everyday life. The implementation of Qur'anic teaching with an Islamic education approach at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta is carried out through teaching Islamic educational values such as *aqidah* (faith), *ibadah* (worship), *akhlak* (morality), and the Qur'an, using a unique book as a guide for the converts to understand the fundamentals of Islamic teachings, routine studies every weekend, *muroja'ah* and Qur'an reading activities, *tadabur* (reflection) or the instilling of Qur'anic values by the teachers, free tattoo removal program, and social activities as part of *da'wah* (Islamic preaching) to instill Islamic values and so on.

Pengajaran Al-Qur'an merupakan bagian penting bagi umat Islam dalam meningkatkan pemahaman dan pengamalan nilai-nilai Islam, khususnya bagi para mualaf yang baru saja masuk Islam. Pengajaran Al-Qur'an menjadi landasan fundamental dalam memperdalam ajaran Islam dan membangun ikatan spiritual. Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang pengajaran Al-Qur'an bagi para mualaf dengan

pendekatan pendidikan Islam. Pengajaran Al-Qur'an sangat penting dan perlu dilakukan untuk membentuk seorang muslim yang beriman dan memiliki pemahaman dasar tentang ajaran Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk memperoleh pemahaman yang mendalam tentang fenomena yang diteliti dan menggali secara komprehensif perspektif dan pengalaman individu. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Mualaf Center Yogyakarta. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti melakukan observasi dan wawancara dengan para guru dan mualaf di Mualaf Center Yogyakarta. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, ditemukan bahwa pengajaran Al-Qur'an di Mualaf Center Yogyakarta tidak hanya berfokus pada aspek hafalan dan tilawah Al-Qur'an tetapi juga pada pemahaman kontekstual dan penerapan nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Pelaksanaan pembelajaran Al-Qur'an dengan pendekatan pendidikan Islam di Mualaf Center Yogyakarta dilakukan melalui pengajaran nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam seperti aqidah, ibadah, akhlak, dan Al-Qur'an dengan menggunakan kitab khusus sebagai pedoman bagi para mualaf untuk memahami pokok-pokok ajaran Islam, kajian rutin setiap akhir pekan, kegiatan muroja'ah dan baca Al-Qur'an, tadabur atau penanaman nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an oleh para ustadz, program hapus tato gratis, serta kegiatan sosial sebagai bagian dari dakwah untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai Islam dan sebagainya.

Keywords: *Qur'anic Teaching, Mentors, Converts, Islamic Education*

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is a Muslim guide encompassing various aspects of life, from worship to social, economic, and political elements. The Qur'an is one of the primary sources of Islamic knowledge, from which various religious studies have emerged since the 7th century. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the original word of Allah and the final revelation given to humanity (Ahyani & Abduloh, 2021; Sai, 2018). Along with its central role in the lives of Muslims, the teaching and understanding of the Qur'an has become an issue that has gained increasing attention in recent years. With the growing Muslim population and cultural diversity in various countries, the need to understand and teach the values of the Qur'an has become more critical. Qur'anic studies in Europe show that Qur'anic learning in Europe faces several challenges. The main issue is the lack of understanding of Islam and the Qur'an among European societies. Since the 12th century, the holy book of the Qur'an has been recognized, copied, translated, read, used, and sometimes discussed polemically (Al Fiqri, 2024; Tottoli, 2023).

In addition, the religious and cultural differences between most Europeans, who are mostly Christian, and the smaller Muslim community pose a challenge to Qur'anic learning in Europe. The history of interactions between Islam and Christianity in Europe has often been marked by political and religious conflicts, contributing to the negative perception of Islam and the Qur'an (Agustono, 2018;

Tottoli, 2023). As a result, the deeply held beliefs about Islam further hinder efforts to present the teachings of the Qur'an comprehensively and inclusively within European societies. The controversy surrounding Qur'anic education in Sweden has also become a frequently debated topic. According to many students, the representation of Islam in school textbooks is often problematic, affecting their understanding of their identity and religion (Berglund & Gent, 2019; Momen, 2023; Saputro et al., 2023). The lack of balance between secular education and Islamic religious education is also an important issue in the UK. This balanced approach is essential to help students maintain their spiritual identity and beliefs while learning about Western culture (Berglund & Gent, 2019; Hammad & Shah, 2019).

Qur'anic education faces many challenges worldwide, including in Southeast Asia. As a continuation of the issue of Qur'anic education in Europe and the challenges faced in understanding Islamic teachings, in the context of Muslim communities in Southeast Asia, there are challenges arising from language factors, both spoken and written. Qur'anic teaching in Southeast Asia is generally focused more on the ability to read rather than understanding the meaning of the Qur'anic verses themselves (Febrianti & Seprina, 2024; Julhadi et al., 2022). This is like the case of illiteracy in the hijaiyah script (Qur'anic script) that occurs in Sungai Padi, Narathiwat, Thailand. Ideally, every Muslim should have the ability to read the Qur'an well. However, in reality, there are still many people in Thailand who experience illiteracy in the Qur'an (Vauziah & Hasanah, 2024).

In the translation of the Qur'an in Southeast Asia, several issues arise. One of the main problems is the linguistic and cultural diversity in the region. Southeast Asia has many languages and dialects, so choosing the appropriate target language for the Qur'anic translation is challenging. Additionally, cultural differences and local contexts can influence the understanding and interpretation of the Qur'anic translation (Zubairin, 2020). Another issue is the selection of the right words when translating key terms in the Qur'an. Some unique and complex Islamic terms are complicated to translate accurately into Southeast Asian languages (Arjuna & Munfarida, 2023).

This can reduce the nuance and meaning, which may lead to a misinterpretation of the Qur'an. Furthermore, another common issue is errors or distortions in translations made by inexperienced translators who do not fully understand the Qur'an and the intended language. Such mistakes can lead to misunderstandings or even spread incorrect information and prevent historical manipulation (Haromaini, 2015). The existence of various interpretations and exegeses of the Qur'anic translation in this region is the final issue that may be encountered. Each Southeast Asian sect or school of thought has a different approach to understanding and interpreting the Qur'an (Arjuna & Munfarida, 2023).

In Indonesia, the issue of Qur'anic education remains a significant challenge. The Vice Chairman of the Indonesian Mosque Council (DMI), General (Ret.) Syafruddin stated that with 223 million Muslims in Indonesia, around 65% of Indonesian Muslims are still illiterate in reading the Qur'an, while only 35% can read it. Furthermore, the Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance of

the Ministry of Religious Affairs reported the results of the 2023 National Survey on the "Potential Qur'anic Literacy of the Indonesian Society," which recorded a Qur'anic literacy index score of 66.038, categorized as high. Ahmad Zayadi mentioned that this national survey involved 10,347 respondents who were randomly selected and surveyed in stages, with a confidence level of 96% and a margin of error of 1%. Based on the survey, 61.51% of participants could recognize the letters and diacritics of the Qur'an, 59.92% could read the arrangement of letters into words, and 48.96% could read verses fluently. However, only 44.57% could read the Qur'an fluently, according to Tajwid (Khoeron, 2023).

There are still several obstacles hindering Qur'anic literacy in Indonesia. According to the same survey, 38.49% of respondents do not have the literacy to read the Qur'an, and 11.3% do not have a copy at home. Religious counseling has proven to be an essential factor in improving this literacy level, with participants in the counselling program scoring 78.2 points higher. Unfortunately, 22.2% of respondents admitted that their residence does not provide Qur'anic reading and writing study groups (BTQ), and 59.36% stated that they have never attended a study group despite knowing that such groups exist nearby (Khoeron, 2023). Converts often face difficulties in understanding the teachings of Islam, mainly because they have not fully adapted to their new environment. Nervousness when reading the Qur'an also becomes challenging for converts as they struggle to read Arabic (Rijal, 2024). In the early days after embracing Islam, converts often felt overwhelmed in carrying out religious duties. They also struggle to study the Qur'an more deeply. This usually happens due to an unsupportive environment and personal conditions that are not yet accustomed to the religious obligations of Islam (Rahayu, 2022).

According to information from the Indonesian Mualaf Center (MCI), around 58,000 converts in Indonesia between 2003 and 2019, or an average of 3,625 people annually. Most converts have a minimum education level of a diploma (D3). Most are from Java and are between the ages of 20 and 40. Approximately 27% of converts are of Chinese ethnic descent. According to a study by Waenoful (2016), there will be an 18% increase in converts in 2023, from 2,800 to 3,500 people. Recognizing their difficulties in learning and reading the Qur'an is essential, as evidenced by the estimated annual growth rate of 5-6% (Waenoful, 2016). This is evidenced by data showing an increase in the Muslim population in Indonesia, which grew by 4.43 million, reaching 273.32 million. Approximately 241.7 million people in Indonesia adhere to Islam, or about 87.02% of the total population (Handayani, 2024). According to data from the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta Foundation, the number of converts who declared their shahada from 2020 to 2023 totaled 550 people. In 2020, 90 people converted. In 2021, 141 people. In 2022, 149 people, and in 2023, 170 people. Cumulatively, from 2011 to 2023, the total number of converts who declared their shahada at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta Foundation reached 1,199 people. This highlights the need for a more substantial educational plan, especially for those who have embraced Islam and those who are still unable to read the Qur'an.

In the study conducted by Sai (2018) discusses how the Qur'an is taught in Muslim schools in Ireland. The author highlights various approaches, such as the

importance of writing the Qur'an in the memorization process, parents' expectation for their children to memorize the Qur'an, and understanding the recitation of Qur'anic verses as an essential part of memorization. The perspectives used in Qur'anic teaching are also explained in this study and the implications of these methods. The research shows that the approach focuses on the mechanical teaching of the Qur'anic text. It encourages students to engage in deeper discussions, understand the context, and develop critical thinking skills. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on the importance of collaboration between students and teachers in understanding the values of the Qur'an and how to apply them in daily life. Thus, the study emphasizes the importance of character development and 21st-century competencies in Qur'anic education in Muslim schools in Ireland.

Then, the study conducted by Azeli (2018) discusses the fast Quran learning methods at the Al-Furqan Arabic Education Center, which faces a significant barrier to understanding the Quran: language. The Quran was revealed in Arabic, not the native language of the Malaysian community. Therefore, this research explores ways for students to understand the Quran quickly and easily. The researcher identifies several specific methods used in the Quran comprehension learning at the foundation. One method used is the diagram method, which aims to help students understand different types of sentences. Additionally, there is the Quran translation method, which is used to convey the meaning of the Quran by translating verses. The grammar method (Nahwu) is applied to introduce the grammatical rules found in the Quran. Moreover, the question-and-answer method is frequently used in classroom activities, while the repeated practice method reinforces students' understanding. However, the author also mentions two obstacles' students face in understanding the Quran: external and internal factors. External factors include family conditions, while internal factors stem from the students' attitudes toward learning, motivation, concentration, and self-confidence (Suminto & Arinatussadiyah, 2020).

Another study was conducted by Vauziah & Hasanah (2024) another study discusses the efforts to eradicate illiteracy in Hijaiyah letters (Qur'anic script) in Sungai Padi, Narathiwat, Thailand. Through Qur'anic reading lessons using the tahsin method, there was an improvement in the Qur'anic recitation among elderly women. This study shows that a well-structured and collaborative education program successfully created a supportive learning environment where students received appropriate guidance to apply tajwid and learn the pronunciation of Hijaiyah letters. The program succeeded due to the support of experienced teachers and the participation of parents and the community. Additionally, periodic evaluations were conducted to track the students' progress and ensure that each student received the proper guidance and attention. Therefore, this study demonstrates that a systematic and participatory approach not only eradicated illiteracy in Hijaiyah but also strengthened Qur'anic teaching as part of the cultural and religious identity of the community.

In line with the previous study, the research conducted by Irfanudin et al (2022) The research discusses the capacity building of religious preachers (*muballigh*) in the Pleret Subdistrict as part of the effort to eradicate illiteracy in reading the Qur'an. The results of this study show that through training on the use of the

Tsaqifa method, the muballigh in Pleret has become more effective in teaching the Qur'an to the local community. The training includes introducing the Tsaqifa method, which makes learning easier and encourages the instructors to adopt a more positive perspective on Qur'anic teaching. Additionally, the positive feedback from the community indicates that the activity not only impacted the participants but also benefited the community. Participants were more likely to understand the material presented in the activity, showed enthusiasm for applying the methods taught, and found the technique easy to remember based on the research findings. This created a highly effective learning environment. Therefore, this activity can be considered a significant step toward eradicating illiteracy in the Qur'an in the Pleret Subdistrict.

In line with the previous research, the study conducted by Edi & Amini (2020) Discuss the Quranic learning development using the Tadabbur method at the Indonesian Islamic Student Family Association in North Sumatra. The results of the study show that using the Tadabbur method enhances participants' understanding of the content of the Quran and strengthens social bonds within the community. Additionally, this training is effective in helping participants understand the meanings of Quranic verses through an easy and enjoyable approach, motivating them to learn more. With the support of adequate tools, such as verse texts and presentation materials, the learning process becomes more interactive and engaging, helping participants apply the teachings of the Quran in their daily lives.

Converts often face many challenges in the process of Quranic learning. Converts, especially those unfamiliar with Arabic, require an appropriate approach to help them understand, read, and apply the teachings of the Quran in their everyday lives (Farida, 2019; Misbah, 2023). In such situations, the approach of Islamic education becomes essential to apply, considering the psychological, linguistic, and cultural conditions of converts.

This study is crucial as it demonstrates that the right Quranic education strategy is needed for converts in Indonesia, a country with a Muslim-majority population. The main objective of this study is to explore how effective Quranic education can be tailored specifically for converts, considering their different religious backgrounds and the challenges they face in acquiring Islamic knowledge. Due to differences in religious backgrounds and limited Islamic literacy, converts often face difficulties in understanding and internalizing the teachings of the Quran. Those who have recently embraced Islam require an educational method designed to help them understand the Quran comprehensively. By addressing these challenges, this study aims to contribute to developing a more effective Quranic education strategy for converts in Indonesia, enabling them to understand and practice Islamic teachings in their daily lives.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method to gain an in-depth understanding of the studied phenomenon and comprehensively explore individuals' perspectives and experiences. The research was conducted at the Mualaf Center in Yogyakarta. In this study, we conducted observations and interviews with

three teachers (Li, Ri, and Ni) and three converts (It, Ay, and Li) at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta. One type of qualitative research is descriptive qualitative research. The reason why we select those respondents because the teachers were qualified and mastering the teaching Qur'an to converts for more than five years. While the converts we interviewed are less than a year after convert to Islam. The descriptive research strategy was used, where the researcher studies events at the research site and phenomena in an individual's life and asks one or a group to share their life stories. The researchers then communicate this information in a descriptive chronological order (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019).

The research process began with selecting the research site at the Mualaf Center in Yogyakarta, which is relevant to the research topic on Qur'anic teaching for converts. The researcher conducted preliminary observations to understand the environment and gather initial insights. Following this, in-depth interviews were conducted with three teachers and three converts in a semi-structured format. All responses were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. After collecting the data, the researcher organized and categorized the information based on interview and observation themes. The analysis focused on identifying patterns related to the impact of Qur'anic teaching on the understanding and practice of Islam among converts. The findings were presented in a clear narrative format about the research questions. One of the main objectives of writing word-for-word comments from teachers and students is to preserve important information from the conversations. Descriptive qualitative research describes and interprets the data collected by paying attention to and recording various aspects of the situation being studied to gain a deep understanding of the actual conditions (Kriyantono & Sos, 2014).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teaching the Qur'an at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta is significant and necessary to shape a Muslim with a comprehensive faith and a basic understanding of Islamic teachings. Based on the research findings, it was discovered that the Islamic education approach at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta focuses on the memorization and recitation aspects of the Qur'an and emphasizes contextual understanding and the application of Qur'anic values in daily life. This approach enables converts not only to read the Qur'an correctly but also to comprehend the values contained within it.

The Qur'an teaching materials at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta are tailored to the participants' limited religious knowledge. This is done by providing instruction to converts gradually. The Mualaf Center Yogyakarta has developed a structured syllabus to support converts' learning process. After embracing Islam, converts are given a unique guidebook, *Practical Guidance for Hijrah: Practical Guidance on Aqidah, Worship, Akhlaq, and the Qur'an*. This book, written by Ridwan Wicaksono, S.T., M.Eng., and published by Mualaf Center Yogyakarta Publishing, is designed as a practical guide to help converts understand the fundamentals of Islamic teachings and apply them in daily life. The guidebook also serves as a reference for mentors and is the foundation of the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta curriculum. Initially, the book was a pocket guide, but over time, it evolved into a

complete book adjusted to the needs of converts. Li, one of the teachers at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta, explained in the guidebook why the Qur'an is placed at the end of the learning process. She stated that:

Qur'anic teaching should begin with a basic understanding, especially *aqidah*, as converts who have just embraced Islam generally lack sufficient knowledge. Therefore, understanding the tawhid and *aqidah*, as well as the pillars of Islam, are the first materials introduced. Each guidance session usually lasts one hour, with the first half hour dedicated to discussing the guidebook, followed by reading Iqra' and prayer practice. This approach helps converts grasp the basic concepts of Islam before delving deeper into the Qur'an.

In line with Li's opinion, teachers Ri and Ni also emphasize the importance of instilling *aqidah* and tawhid as the foundation before teaching the Qur'an. *Aqidah* is the foundational knowledge in Islam, providing an understanding of Allah, the purpose of life, and the rules to follow. *Aqidah* should be introduced early as it provides guidance for individuals in navigating life (Mujahidin, 2019). Strengthening the *aqidah* of converts is the first step to preventing them from returning to their previous beliefs. *Aqidah* is crucial as it forms the basis of all a Muslim's beliefs and must be strong and clear (Halim et al., 2021; Hasnawati, 2024). The Qur'an at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta is taught with a personalized approach, where mentors guide each convert throughout the learning process.

The method of reading the Qur'an applied at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta is the Iqra' method. As stated by teacher Ri:

The Qur'anic teaching at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta uses the Iqra' method, which helps converts learn the Qur'an from the basics, starting with hijaiyah letters and correct recitation. This method is effective due to its simplicity and is widely used in Indonesia. Its main goal is simplifying the learning process so everyone can quickly master the Qur'anic recitation. In Indonesia, various Qur'anic learning methods, such as Ummi, Iqra', and Tilawati, can be chosen according to needs. However, not using any method at all is considered inappropriate. At Mualaf Center, the Iqra' method is preferred because of its ease in teaching the correct pronunciation of hijaiyah letters. The teaching focuses on adhering to tajweed rules, avoiding critical mistakes such as mispronunciations or altered sounds, and ensuring proper elongation and shortening of recitation.

The three teachers agree that the Iqra' method is the easiest for teaching the Qur'an to converts, though other methods can also be used. Qur'anic reading at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta is taught privately, one-on-one, with mentors guiding each convert. As they progress, they are evaluated by another teacher to determine if they can move to the next level or need to repeat.

The Iqra' method, developed by H. As'ad Humam in Yogyakarta, focuses on improving reading skills. It consists of six volumes, starting from a basic level. The technique is simple, requiring no complex tools, and emphasizes fluency in reading

without spelling out the letters (Fazil, 2020; Rijal, 2024). It is widely used across Indonesia.

The guidance schedule at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta is flexible to accommodate the converts' routines, with weekly Qur'anic learning sessions. Converts are assigned one guide, and sessions can occur anytime. An online learning method is also used, where converts send video recordings of their recitations for assessment. This allows for daily practice and flexibility in scheduling. Weekly meetings provide opportunities for evaluation and additional guidance, ensuring steady progress. According to Rivaldi Pulungan (2022) similar to oral and written media, guides at the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) also use online platforms, such as WhatsApp groups, for consultations, mainly for converts preparing for marriage.

To support Qur'anic teaching for converts, the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta provides a regular program every Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday, the sessions are specifically for women (*akhwat*), while on Saturday, the sessions are dedicated to women, while Saturday sessions, held after the Isya prayer, are for both men and women. The weekly study themes, tailored to the understanding of the converts, cover topics such as *tawhid*, *aqidah*, parenting, *muamalah*, *adab*, and Islamic psychology. Additionally, the center offers a free tattoo removal program on the condition that participants memorize one surah from the Qur'an. This program is designed to help the converts grow closer to the Qur'an and develop a more profound love for it. As mentioned by teacher Li:

At the Mualaf Center, we guide converts who have recently embraced Islam or those who wish to start anew from scratch. We organize study sessions with relevant and easy-to-understand themes so that they can internalize and practice Islamic teachings daily. We also have a free tattoo removal program held on Saturdays, with the condition that participants memorize surahs from the Qur'an. Anyone who is uncomfortable can engage in Qur'anic study or reading as an alternative. For women (*akhwat*), the tattoo removal program is held on Sundays with the same conditions. All these programs are provided for free with the hope of helping them return to the Qur'an and strengthen their faith.

Then, when I asked the teachers whether there were specific surahs that the converts were required to memorize, teacher Ri responded:

For converts, the surah that must be memorized is Surah Al-Fatihah, as it is used in the obligatory prayers. Although memorizing other short surahs is not required, they are highly encouraged. This is because one of the requirements for obtaining a certificate is to have memorized Surah Al-Fatihah correctly.

The teachers at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta teach how to read the Qur'an properly and correctly and instill the teachings of Islam within the Qur'an. As explained by teacher Ri:

Teachers instill Qur'anic values during *muroja'ah* or Qur'anic recitation sessions. While reviewing or reading the Qur'an, teachers often engage in *tadabbur* (reflection) on specific verses. For example, suppose there is a verse about visiting others. In that case, the teacher explains the etiquette of visiting and emphasizes how comprehensive the teachings of the Qur'an are, even outlining the proper manners for visiting. However, the lessons follow the guidelines provided in the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta handbook for other materials.

Anwar (2019) and Handoko (2023) stated that the repetition (*muroja'ah*) of the Qur'an is not just about memorization but a journey to understand and internalize its values. Teachers also guide converts in prayers and prayer movements using the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta handbook. As conveyed by teacher Ri:

I assign converts the task of memorizing the Tashahhud Akhir prayer, which includes seeking protection from the Dajjal. If they haven't memorized it yet, I guide them step by step. For example, I assign that part first if they haven't memorized the prayer between the two prostrations. Once they have memorized it, they recite it in the next session. Given the amount to learn, I first check if they have mastered the movements, and once they have, I focus on their recitation.

The learning process at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta includes studying the guidebook, learning to read the Qur'an, and practicing prayer. All teachers cover these three aspects, although the sequence may vary. Converts receive a certificate after completing the guidance program and are assessed by a different instructor to ensure objectivity. The assessment includes the ability to perform ablution, recite prayers, and perform prayer movements. As stated by teachers Li and Ri:

The three main points assessed for the certificate are wudu (ablution), prayer recitations, and prayer movements. Guidance on reading Iqra' and the Qur'an is also essential but learning to read Iqra' and the Qur'an is considered *sunnah*, while the three main points are obligatory.

At the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta, the teachers are not only responsible for teaching the Qur'an but are also equipped with *this* training to improve the quality of their recitation. Other research reveals that mentorship for Qur'anic teachers plays a vital role in enhancing their teaching competencies (Nawawi et al., 2021; Shohib & Aziz, 2024). With such mentorship, students are expected to gain a deeper and more accurate understanding of the Qur'an. The teachers expressed that, in guiding converts, they feel motivated to deepen their knowledge of the Qur'an continually. The teachers are committed to ongoing learning if there are aspects they think need improvement. In addition to this, the teachers also receive Arabic language training. These Arabic classes are open to the public. Both teachers can attend them and convert as a form of support for converts in overcoming the

challenges of understanding Arabic. A convert often faces difficulties in understanding Islamic education, such as struggling with Arabic diction or its derivatives in Indonesian, commonly found in the Qur'an, Hadith, *fiqh*, *aqidah*, and Islamic history (Aliakbar & Rasip, 2024; Zuhri & Ghufroon, 2020). To address the challenges of learning Arabic, one of the efforts is to provide Latin script translations or use audio recordings demonstrated by the teacher beforehand. Understanding Arabic is crucial so that everyone knows the proper rules for pausing during Qur'anic recitation, ensuring that the meaning of the verses is not altered due to incorrect breaks in the reading. Thus, not only are converts encouraged to continue learning, but teachers are also expected to improve their skills consistently.

At Mualaf Center Yogyakarta, teachers face challenges while instilling Islamic education in converts. Though the converts receive essential education through regular sessions led by ustadz with strong Islamic backgrounds, the teachers guiding them are still developing their expertise. The core teachings follow the guidebook compiled by the center, but if converts have further questions, teachers refer them to a more knowledgeable ustadz or ustadzah for deeper insights.

At Mualaf Center Yogyakarta, the teachers teach how to read and understand the Qur'an correctly and consistently motivate the converts to continue learning and deepen their understanding of Islam. This is in line with research conducted by Amalina (2023), which shows that guidance at the P2MA Foundation also includes offering life motivation to converts and encouraging them to stay engaged in study sessions. Teacher Ri stated that:

This motivation arises when converts ask about everyday situations. For example, one student asked what to do if they missed part of the raka'at in congregational prayer. I explained that this is called "masbuk" and shared the rules for latecomers. I encouraged them, saying, "We can still learn many things in Islam, so take it slow. The important thing is to stay enthusiastic about learning the Qur'an, as every problem has an answer in Islam."

Teacher Li added that listening and connecting with the converts first is key to his approach. She stated that:

As a friend or family member, I listen to converts' complaints or questions. Once they feel heard, they become more open to motivation. For example, I share a Qur'anic verse when a convert expresses struggles: "No one is considered a believer until they are tested." I remind them that trials elevate our status, and the greater the faith, the greater the test.

Personal guidance at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta allows teachers to focus on specific challenges faced by converts. The challenges faced by converts include tajweed pronunciation, understanding of Arabic, and religious comprehension (Djula, 2021). A significant difficulty for converts is maintaining their initial

enthusiasm, which may fade over time due to pressure or learning struggles (Nurmuliasari, 2024). The goal is to provide foundational Islamic knowledge and maintain converts' motivation to integrate Islam into their daily lives (Faisol et al., 2022; Widodo, 2019). Converts often face psychological struggles, including conflicts with family, society, or their past beliefs. Religious understanding can be unstable, leading to a lack of motivation and difficulty in fully accepting Islam if conversion is not sincere (Nurmuliasari, 2024; putri Saragi & Qarni, 2023). To address this, teachers create a supportive environment and build strong relationships, offering motivation and encouragement to help converts grow in their faith (Imam, 2021; Nurmuliasari, 2024).

One form of *da'wah* at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta involves engaging converts in social activities to instill Islamic values. According to Daradjat (1992) Islamic education aims to shape a Muslim personality by transforming attitudes and behavior through Islamic teachings. The center has fostered villages across Yogyakarta, where they hold regular studies and social service activities every three months. Aid items are distributed based on the community's needs. During these activities, converts learn the importance of gratitude by witnessing the struggles of less fortunate communities, strengthening their faith, and helping them remain steadfast amidst challenges.

The results of this study also reveal the perspectives of converts on Qur'anic learning and their understanding of the practice of Islamic teachings in daily life. According to the interview results, some converts said they always perform wudhu before reading the Qur'an and dress modestly when studying. They are also accustomed to reciting a prayer before beginning their learning activities, as stated by one of the converts, Li:

I was taught to recite Surah Al-Fatihah and the prayer "Robbisrohli sodri wayassirli amri" before starting the learning.

The converts are not restricted by religious obligations, such as the five daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, and covering the awrah. Instead, they view prayer as a guide that provides structure to their lives and brings inner peace. Prayer is seen not only as an obligation but as a moment of reflection and a profound spiritual reminder, offering time for self-reflection and introspection (Handoko, 2023; Luthfi et al., 2024). Additionally, converts regard covering the awrah as a form of protection and a noble identity, demonstrating their commitment to Islamic teachings. The benefits of covering the awrah include avoiding sin, protecting from slander, preventing lustful thoughts, and maintaining dignity and modesty, which help enhance one's status and strengthen social control within the community (Purhasanah et al., 2023). Thus, their understanding of religious practices underscores their obligation while also emphasizing the strengthening of their relationship with Allah and the Muslim community, improving both their spiritual and social life, Li stated:

Praying, fasting, and covering the awrah are necessities, not burdens. I see the call to prayer as a reminder to act without checking the clock. Islam is simple but should not be taken lightly. Allowances are made for

those new to fasting. Half a day is fine, and a full day is even better. It's about building responsibility and sincerity. Covering the awrah, especially for women, is obligatory. Since my shahada, I have been learning to wear the hijab, gradually making it a full-time practice after 10 months. While I still wear pants, I choose loose-fitting ones and have started wearing socks when leaving the house. Covering the awrah is a duty for all Muslims, not just converts.

Similarly, converts Ay and It agree that religious rules bring peace and protection, not burden. Although they feel that studying the Qur'an does not directly affect their diligence in prayer, they believe that understanding the Qur'an strengthens their sense of responsibility in performing acts of worship, including the five daily prayers and fasting. They also experience structure and peace in life through these practices.

The research findings show that converts experience a deep sense of closeness to Allah after studying the Qur'an. They feel emotionally connected when reading verses that resonate with their personal experiences and find peace in listening to the sacred verses, sometimes even to the point of tears. Converts also strongly believe in the Pillars of Islam and the Pillars of Faith. However, they acknowledge teachers' need for guidance to fully understand each verse's meaning. All converts agree that studying the Qur'an has strengthened their belief in the oneness of Allah, the Creator, and the Giver of life. They affirmed that only Allah is worthy of worship, with Prophet Muhammad as His messenger. The Islamic teachings in Surah Luqman, verses 12–19, also contain educational values, including aspects of faith (*aqidah*), religious law (*syari'ah*), and morality (*akhlak*) (Akhyar et al., 2021; Nashiruddin et al., 2023). After studying the Qur'an, they feel more confident in their faith, reflecting a significant spiritual transformation that deepens their theological understanding and religious experience.

The research on morality (*akhlak*) shows that converts experience significant changes after studying the Qur'an. They develop better self-discipline and feel calm in various situations. Some converts mentioned that the moral values in the Qur'an have made them more patient, particularly in their roles as wives. They also noticed changes in their interactions, becoming more careful to avoid negative behaviors and more committed to doing good deeds. Although they acknowledge the great challenge of preventing sin, studying the Qur'an motivates them to improve their character and strengthen values of honesty and justice in their social interactions. One convert, Li, stated:

After studying the Qur'an, I have better understood the importance of self-discipline, covered the awrah, and become more composed. I strive to be more patient and calmer, especially now as a wife. I have also learned that men, besides my husband, father, and close relatives, should not engage in casual physical contact. I have started getting used to wearing the hijab and remaining strong despite receiving unfavorable reactions from others who disapprove.

The research findings show that the moral values in the Qur'an have influenced converts' attitudes, promoting humility, especially when observing those living in luxury or engaging in trivial sins. Their interactions have also changed, as they now focus on building relationships with communities and friends who support their transformation (*hijrah*). Recognizing the impact of their environment on spiritual growth, they are committed to surrounding themselves with individuals who positively reinforce their religious journey. This aligns with Mulyani (2023) study on the *khotmil Qur'an* tradition at Masjid Jami' Al-Ittihad in Cisuru Village, where Islamic educational values include faith (*aqidah*), ethics toward Allah, humans, the environment, and worship. As one convert, it expressed:

The change is in how I approach all matters in life. While some live luxuriously and commit significant sins, I strive to remain humble. I now interact more with communities and friends who support my transformation journey (*hijrah*), as the environment significantly influences me.

Learning the Qur'an positively impacts converts' character, fostering gratitude and a sense of improvement. They find strength in Allah's presence and aim to be humbler in social interactions, avoiding arrogance and negative influences. Patience and gratitude become key focuses as they strive to apply Qur'anic teachings daily, leading to improved character. A convert, Ay, expressed:

My life has improved since embracing Islam. Before, I felt like an abandoned beggar, but I realized I had Allah. Life is a test, but I feel better as a Muslim. Allah's plan is extraordinary. I often reflect on Surah Ibrahim, verse 7: "If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more." No matter the situation, I remain thankful because I trust Allah's plan. I've gained more faith and learned to control my speech when dealing with negative influences.

Ethical education is a key aspect of Islamic education, guiding individuals to act according to Islamic morals in personal and social life (Mukhlis et al., 2024; Yusri et al., 2024). In teaching the Qur'an to converts, the focus is on developing character and behavior aligned with Islamic values, such as honesty, humility, patience, and respect for others (Tahir et al., 2020). Modesty, including wearing Sharia-compliant clothing and covering the *awrah*, is also part of this ethical education (Andriyani, 2023).

Converts are inspired by the struggle of Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions in spreading Islam, seeing them as role models in leadership and sacrifice. Although one convert admitted to not having deeply studied Islamic history, they expressed a strong desire to learn more, especially about Islamic civilization and leadership values for modern life. This aligns with Zuhri & Ghufroon (2020), research suggests that Islamic history is a new subject for converts, motivating them to explore the Qur'an and apply these values to contemporary challenges. It stated:

The struggle of Prophet Muhammad to spread Islam, especially in establishing the five daily prayers, is truly inspiring. I also admire Prophet Lot's firm stance against the sinful behavior of the people of Sodom. After studying the Qur'an, I'm motivated to explore Islamic history further. For now, I focus on protecting myself from negative influences, knowing that Allah's trials with the Prophets were far more significant than mine, yet they remained patient.

The opinion expressed by It is supported by the statement of Ay, who also explained this aspect, saying:

The struggle of Prophet Muhammad is something I strive to emulate in daily life. One companion who inspires me is Umar bin Khattab, known for his simplicity and willingness to help others. He was also a Khulafa Rashidin, a model for spreading Islam. Ali bin Abi Talib is another source of inspiration for me. After studying the Qur'an, I realized I must deepen my understanding of Islam, which is honest and extraordinary. Learning about history has motivated me to study the Qur'an and work on self-improvement. When I discovered that Prophet Muhammad was an orphan who struggled without complaining, I felt that I, too, should be grateful and never complain about Allah's blessings.

The struggle of Prophet Muhammad and his companions, like Umar bin Khattab and Ali bin Abi Talib, deeply inspire converts. Their understanding of the Prophet's firm commitment to religious principles motivates the converts to uphold values such as prayer and avoiding sinful behavior. Learning about the Prophet's sacrifices, especially as an orphan, encourages converts to be grateful despite challenges. Studying Islamic history strengthens their belief in the Qur'an and shapes their character and spiritual resilience. This aligns with Fakhruddin & Awang (2020) Research highlights the importance of *Aqidah*, *ibadah*, *Syariah*, *Tarikh*, and *Akhlak* in building a strong Muslim community.

The Qur'an teaching at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta focuses on reading, memorizing, and instilling values of *fiqh*, *aqidah*, and *akhlak*. However, Islamic history (*tarikh*) has not been sufficiently emphasized, leaving some converts with limited knowledge of Islamic history and key figures. Despite this, converts continue to explore Islamic history independently. Additionally, adapting to new religious practices and culture poses a challenge, requiring ongoing guidance and support to strengthen their faith and understanding.

Converts often face challenges in adapting to new religious practices and environments that differ from their previous beliefs. This requires continuous guidance to strengthen their faith and understanding. Unsupportive social environments and economic struggles, such as job loss, can also lead to doubts about Islam. According to Juwairiani et al (2024), converts undergo significant changes religiously, socially, and psychologically. Proper education is essential to help them navigate these challenges. Unlike previous research focused on *aqidah* development at the Subulussalam Mualaf Center, this study emphasizes Qur'anic education with an Islamic approach at the Mualaf Center in Yogyakarta.

In addition to social and economic factors, converts face difficulties in understanding Arabic, especially in correctly pronouncing the hijaiyyah letters, due to their unfamiliarity with the language. This is similar to the research by Zuhri & Ghufroon (2020), which highlights the challenges converts face in understanding Arabic pronunciation or its Indonesian equivalents in the Qur'an, *Hadith*, *fiqh*, *aqidah*, and Islamic history. This study differs from previous research, which emphasized the motivation for converts from non-Muslim backgrounds to learn Islamic education. In contrast, this study focuses on Qur'anic education with an Islamic approach at the Mualaf Center Yogyakarta. A significant challenge for teachers is teaching the correct pronunciation of hijaiyyah letters and continuously motivating and strengthening the faith of converts who face environmental pressures and challenging economic conditions. Teachers must also consider the psychological aspects of converts, as family and ecological issues are their most significant challenges (Fitriyani, 2019; Huwaida, 2024). Therefore, an intensive and comprehensive approach is necessary to help converts adapt and gain a deeper understanding of Islam.

CONCLUSION

The teaching of the Qur'an at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta not only focuses on memorization and recitation of the Qur'an but also on contextual understanding and the application of Islamic educational values in everyday life. The implementation of Qur'anic teaching with an Islamic education approach at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta is carried out through teaching the fundamental values of Islam, such as *aqidah* (faith), *ibadah* (worship), *akhlak* (morality), and the Qur'an itself. This approach uses a guidebook tailored to the needs of the converts as a reference for understanding the fundamentals of Islamic teachings, along with routine studies every weekend, repetition (*muroja'ah*) sessions, Qur'anic recitation activities, and *tadabur* (reflection) to instil Qur'anic values by the teachers. The free tattoo removal program and social activities as part of *da'wah* (Islamic preaching) also support the instillation of Islamic values.

The method used in teaching how to read the Qur'an is the *Iqra'* method, which starts with introducing *hijaiyyah* letters and continues with learning the correct way to read the Qur'an. After completing the guidance, the converts are tested on wudu (ablution), prayer recitation, and prayer movements to perform Islamic practices correctly. Furthermore, Mualaf Center Yogyakarta also carries out *da'wah* through social service activities held every three months. These activities are part of instilling Islamic values by observing the conditions of the surrounding community, aiming to raise awareness and social concern among the converts. Overall, the Qur'anic teaching with an Islamic education approach at Mualaf Center Yogyakarta has a significant positive impact on enhancing the understanding of Qur'anic values among the converts, strengthening their faith, and improving their overall quality of Islam.

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