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The Challenges of Islamic Literacy of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Students From the Perspective of the Study of Islamic Education Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to analyze the challenges of Islamic literacy among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) students from the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, emphasizing the interrelation between basic literacy skills, learning processes, and the support provided by family and school environments.

Methodology: Employing an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, the quantitative phase involved administering Islamic literacy tests and questionnaires to 127 students in grades 5 and 6, followed by qualitative data collection through interviews, observations, and documentation to deepen the analysis.

Main Findings: The findings indicate that students' Islamic literacy levels fall within the moderate category, with particularly low performance in reading hijaiyah letters and understanding the meanings of Islamic texts. Additional inhibiting factors include the predominance of lecture-based teaching, limited use of varied learning media, low student reading interest, and insufficient literacy facilities both at home and in the madrasah. Parental support was also found to be limited, resulting in inconsistent literacy habits. From the standpoint of Islamic educational philosophy, these conditions reflect a significant gap between the ideal goal of forming the insan kamil and the actual literacy competencies of students, which have not yet been integrated across cognitive, spiritual, and moral dimensions.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study underscores the need to strengthen a comprehensive Islamic literacy ecosystem by enhancing pedagogical strategies, improving literacy facilities, and fostering family–school collaboration to support the formation of Islamic character from an early age.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic literacy is the main foundation in basic education because it is the gateway for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) students to understand Islamic teachings correctly, starting from the ability to read the Qur'an, recognize morals, to understand the stories of the prophets and exemplary values [1]. Reading and writing skills are developing, so strengthening Islamic literacy is very strategic for instilling moral, spiritual, and behavioral values in accordance with religious guidance [2], [3]. The activities of reading Islamic books, studying morals, and learning Arabic vocabulary regularly can improve Islamic understanding and shape positive character in children, such as the ability to respect friends, love the environment, and be polite to parents and teachers [4],

[5]. Islamic literacy not only serves to enhance children's cognitive capacity but also plays a crucial role in shaping Islamic character from an early age, making it particularly urgent in the context of primary education [6].

The phenomenon of low religious literacy among Islamic elementary school students is evident from various field findings, which indicate that many students still lack the basic skills of reading the hijaiyah alphabet, understanding the concepts of faith and worship, and internalizing moral values in daily life [7], [8]. Students still learn with very limited facilities, often without dedicated religious teachers, so the process of Islamic literacy is not developing optimally [9], [10]. This situation is exacerbated by a shallow understanding of Islam, leading to behavior that does not reflect Islamic morals, as exemplified by cases of student violence against teachers, reflecting a moral crisis among the younger generation [11], [12]. This low level of religious literacy indicates a gap between the basic demands of Islamic education and the actual abilities of MI students. Therefore, a thorough analysis is needed to formulate appropriate and relevant strengthening strategies [13], [14].

The main challenges in strengthening Islamic literacy in MI arise from various interrelated aspects, at the student, teacher, and learning environment levels. Many MI students still face limitations in basic literacy skills, such as reading and understanding texts, which directly impacts their ability to absorb Islamic material [15]-[17]. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning practices in a number of Islamic elementary schools (MI) are still dominated by lectures and memorization, which provide little space for the development of active and reflective literacy [18]-[20]. The availability of interesting and developmentally appropriate Islamic reading resources is also often limited, preventing children from engaging in meaningful reading activities [21]. Family support for the habituation of religious literacy is not optimal, resulting in inconsistent internalization of Islamic values [22]. The complexity of these factors requires a comprehensive approach to improving Islamic literacy in MI students, encompassing pedagogical reinforcement, the provision of learning resources, and collaboration between schools and families.

An analysis of the challenges of Islamic literacy for MI students needs to be placed within the framework of Islamic educational philosophy so that the issues that arise are not only understood at the technical level, but also in the dimension of the essence of education itself. Islamic educational philosophy emphasizes that the educational process must lead to the formation of a complete person, namely a person who is balanced between spiritual, intellectual, and moral aspects [23], [17], [24]. Islamic literacy is not merely the ability to read religious texts, but the process of internalizing values sourced from revelation, reason, and life experience [25]. The problem of religious literacy through the ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives of Islamic education is caused by weak student understanding, lack of role models, and a minimal reading culture can be understood as symptoms of the lack of integration of the educational process with the goal of forming people with Islamic character [26], [27]. The study of Islamic literacy in Islamic elementary schools (MI) cannot be separated from the basic principles of Islamic educational philosophy, which places religious knowledge as the foundation for the formation of morals and civilization.

Previous research findings indicate a significant gap between the ideals of Islamic education and the reality of Islamic literacy in Islamic elementary schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) [28], [29]. Islamic education guides students to become individuals of faith, noble character, and able to understand and practice religious teachings comprehensively [30]. Many MI still face limitations in realizing these goals, both in terms of learning quality, availability of learning resources, and teacher readiness to implement effective literacy approaches [26]. Learning models that do not fully encourage active student involvement, a lack of habituation to reading relevant Islamic texts, and a learning environment that does not fully support the development of religious character hinder the process of internalizing values [27]. This reality confirms the persistent gap between the ideology of Islamic education, which emphasizes the formation of a perfect human being, and the empirical situation, which demonstrates students' low levels of basic religious literacy. Therefore, more systematic and sustainable improvement efforts are needed.

Research on the challenges of Islamic literacy among Islamic elementary school students is crucial to obtain a comprehensive picture of the real conditions on the ground and to understand the factors influencing the development of religious literacy in elementary school-aged children. Various efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education (IRE) learning and the promotion of Islamic literacy habits often lack a strong empirical basis, resulting in interventions that are not fully targeted [31]. Key obstacles include student abilities, teacher learning strategies, the availability of literacy resources, and family and environmental support. An in-depth analysis of these challenges also allows for the development of recommendations that are more relevant to students' needs. This research plays a crucial role as a bridge between the ideal conditions of Islamic education and educational practices in Islamic elementary schools, allowing the results to serve as a foundation for developing more effective policies, curricula, and learning strategies oriented toward Islamic character development.

The urgency of research into the challenges of Islamic literacy among MI students lies in the urgent need to strengthen the quality of religious education from the elementary level as a foundation for character development. The complexity of social developments and the current digitalization of information require

students to develop religious literacy skills that are not only cognitive but also capable of guiding them in developing strong Islamic attitudes, morals, and identities. This research is expected to produce empirical findings that can serve as a reference for curriculum development, learning methods, and literacy strengthening policies in madrasah environments.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Types of Research

This study employed a mixed methods design with an explanatory sequential model, an approach that combines quantitative data collection and analysis first, then reinforced with qualitative data as a subsequent stage [32]. This approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges of Islamic literacy among Islamic elementary school students, as quantitative measurement results often fail to fully explain the underlying factors behind low Islamic literacy skills. The quantitative stage was used to objectively map students' ability levels, while the qualitative stage provided a richer explanation of the context, experiences, and learning dynamics that influence Islamic literacy. The combination of these two approaches enabled the researcher to gain a comprehensive and holistic understanding that is more relevant for developing strategies to improve Islamic literacy in Islamic elementary schools.

2.2 Population and Research Sample

The subjects of this study were students of an Islamic elementary school (MI) in City X, consisting of 80 fifth-grade students and 47 sixth-grade students, for a total of 127 participants. The study employed a total sampling technique in the quantitative phase, as the population size was relatively affordable and allowed all students to be respondents to obtain a comprehensive picture of students' Islamic literacy skills. The qualitative phase employed a purposive sampling technique, which involves deliberately selecting informants based on considerations of variations in literacy skills, engagement in learning, and readiness to provide in-depth information. Qualitative informants also included Islamic Religious Education teachers and madrasah principals to broaden perspectives on learning conditions, school environmental support, and factors influencing students' Islamic literacy development. This combined approach ensured that the data obtained had both representative breadth and analytical depth.

2.3 Research Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques to obtain more comprehensive information. Data were obtained through an Islamic literacy test that covered the ability to read the hijaiyah letters, understand the basic meaning of religious texts, and understand faith, worship, and morals. Additionally, a Likert-scale questionnaire was used to measure non-cognitive aspects such as interest in reading Islamic texts, religious study habits, access to reading resources, and family and school support for literacy activities. In the qualitative phase, data was collected through in-depth interviews with students, teachers, and madrasah principals to explore their experiences, perceptions, and challenges in developing Islamic literacy. Observation techniques were also used to capture Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning practices and literacy activities in the classroom and madrasah environment. Additional qualitative data were obtained through documentation, such as textbooks, class schedules, and available literacy facilities. The use of these various instruments enabled researchers to obtain a comprehensive picture of students' Islamic literacy skills and the supporting and inhibiting factors.

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study was conducted in two stages, consistent with a mixed methods approach. In the quantitative phase, test and questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as percentages, categories, and average scores, to map students' Islamic literacy levels across various aspects, including their ability to read religious texts, understanding basic religious concepts, and literacy habits. This analysis provides an initial overview of student ability trends in grades 5 and 6 of Islamic elementary schools (MI). Next, in the qualitative phase, analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which encompasses data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This approach was used to identify key themes related to Islamic literacy challenges, such as student perceptions, teacher instructional strategies, and supportive learning environments. The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses were then integrated to generate a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing Islamic literacy skills of Islamic elementary school students. This integration process is key to providing a comprehensive interpretation in line with the research objectives.

2.5 Research Procedures

The research procedure was implemented through three main stages in accordance with the explanatory sequential model. The first stage was quantitative data collection, which included administering an Islamic literacy test and distributing a questionnaire to all grades 5 and 6 students to obtain an initial overview of their

literacy skills and habits. The results of this stage were used to determine the focus of the subsequent research. The second stage was qualitative data collection, conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation with selected informants based on quantitative findings, to uncover factors influencing the development of students' Islamic literacy. The third stage was data integration, combining the results of quantitative and qualitative analyses to produce a comprehensive explanation of the challenges of Islamic literacy. The validity of the quantitative data was strengthened through instrument validity and reliability tests, while the validity of the qualitative data was maintained through source and method triangulation techniques, as well as member checking to ensure the consistency and credibility of the findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of quantitative data collection show the level of Islamic literacy of MI students as depicted in the following table:

Table 1. Recapitulation of Quantitative Results of Islamic Literacy of MI Students (N = 127)

Component	Category/Indicator	Number of Students	Percentage
Islamic Literacy Level (Total Score)	Very high	9	7.1%
	Tall	28	22.0%
	Currently	54	42.5%
	Low	31	24.4%
	Very Low	5	3.9%
Ability to Read Hijaiyah	Good	37	29.1%
	Enough	52	40.9%
	Poor	38	29.9%
Understanding the Meaning of Islamic Texts	High	22	17.3%
	Medium	63	49.6%
	Low	42	33.1%
Mastery of Faith	Good	41	32.3%
	Enough	58	45.7%
	Poor	28	22.0%
Mastery of Worship	Good	36	28.3%
	Enough	61	48.0%
	Poor	30	23.6%
Moral Mastery	Good	43	33.9%
	Enough	57	44.9%
	Poor	27	21.3%
Frequency of Reading Islamic Books	Routine	24	18.9%
	Sometimes	56	44.1%
	Rarely	47	37.0%
Availability of Islamic Readings at Home	Available and used	39	30.7%
	Available, rarely used	33	26.0%
	None	55	43.3%
Parental Support	High	28	22.0%
	Medium	62	48.8%
	Low	37	29.1%

Table 1 shows that the Islamic literacy level of students at Islamic Elementary Schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) is mostly in the moderate category (42.5%). Of the 127 students who responded, 22% achieved the high category, and 7.1% achieved the very high category. Meanwhile, a significant proportion remained in the low (24.4%) and very low (3.9%) categories, indicating that Islamic literacy skills are not evenly distributed and require comprehensive improvement.

In terms of reading the hijaiyah letters, the majority of students fell into the adequate category (40.9%), followed by good (29.1%) and poor (29.9%). This finding indicates that nearly a third of students still experience basic difficulties in reading the hijaiyah, which impacts their ability to understand religious texts. This is consistent with findings regarding understanding the meaning of Islamic texts, where almost half of students fell into the moderate category (49.6%), while 33.1% fell into the low category. Only 17.3% of students had a good understanding of the meaning of simple religious texts.

In terms of mastery of faith, worship, and morals, student ability patterns also tend to be in the moderate category. In faith, the majority of students are in the sufficient category (45.7%), while only 32.3% are in the good category. In the aspect of worship, the majority of students are also in the sufficient category (48.0%), while the good category reaches 28.3%. A similar pattern is seen in mastery of morals, with the proportion of the sufficient category at 44.9% and the good category at 33.9%. Overall, these three basic aspects indicate that student abilities are quite adequate, but have not yet reached the optimal level.

In terms of interest and religious literacy habits, reading Islamic books remains low. 37.0% of students rarely read, while 44.1% read only occasionally. Only 18.9% of students regularly read religious books. This is reinforced by data showing that 43.3% of students do not have Islamic reading materials at home, and 26% have books but rarely use them. The limited availability of reading materials within the family environment also contributes to low literacy habits.

Parental support for literacy activities is also moderate, with nearly half of students (48.8%) reporting moderate parental support, while 29.1% report low levels of support. These findings indicate that the home environment is not yet a strong supporter of religious literacy development.

The results of qualitative data collection revealed the following findings, summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Recapitulation of Qualitative Results of Islamic Literacy of MI Students

Main Theme	Sub-Themes/Specific Findings	Data Evidence (Interviews/Observations/Documentation)	Meaning of Findings
Students' Basic Literacy Skills	Difficulty reading hijaiyah letters	Many students still mispronounce certain letters; students admit to never receiving intensive practice at home.	Hijaiyah literacy skills are not yet evenly distributed and are an initial obstacle in understanding religious texts.
	Understanding of the meaning of the text is still low	Students often read without understanding the meaning; they need repeated teacher explanations.	Religious literacy is still mechanical and has not yet reached an understanding of meaning.
Islamic Education Learning Process in Class	The learning method tends to be lecture-based.	Observations show a predominance of verbal explanations without literacy activities.	Learning strategies do not support the development of religious literacy.
	Minimal variety of learning media.	Teachers use standard textbooks without additional Islamic storybooks.	Media do not support literacy stimulation.
Students' Literacy Interests and Habits	Low interest in reading	Students stated that they rarely read Islamic books outside of class hours.	Literacy habits are not formed within the family or school environment.
	Unscheduled reading activities	There is no specific reading time during school.	Schools have not yet implemented a structured Islamic literacy culture.
Family Support	Limited learning support	Parents admitted they rarely accompany their children because they are focused on work.	The family's role as a literacy driver is not yet optimal.
	Lack of Islamic reading materials at home	Most students' homes do not have storybooks or religious reading materials.	Home conditions do not support literacy habits.

Madrasah Facilities and Environment	Reading corner not available	Classroom observations revealed a lack of reading space or shelves.	The school environment provides limited access to Islamic books. Facilities do not yet support the religious literacy movement.
	Library less active	School documents indicate a limited collection of Islamic books.	The school environment provides limited access to Islamic books. Facilities do not yet support the religious literacy movement.
Teachers' Challenges in Developing Literacy	Limited Islamic Education learning time	Teachers say there is not enough time allocated for reading habits.	The curriculum structure hinders literacy intensity.
	Heterogeneity of student abilities	Reading ability ranges widely.	Teachers need a differentiated approach that is not yet available.
Student Perceptions of Learning	Learning is considered "difficult"	Students said some religious material was difficult to understand.	Low literacy affects perceptions of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) material.
	Students prefer storytelling methods	Interviews revealed a high level of enthusiasm for the stories of the prophets/morals.	Storytelling has the potential to be an effective literacy strategy.
Strengthening Islamic Values	Moral practices are not yet consistent. Understanding of worship still needs guidance.	The teacher stated that polite behavior was not yet stable.	Character strengthening through literacy is needed.
	Moral practices are not yet consistent. Understanding of worship still needs guidance.	Students often performed ablution or prayer readings incorrectly.	Religious literacy is still at a basic level.

Table 2 provides an in-depth overview of the Islamic literacy challenges faced by MI students. Initial findings indicate that students' basic literacy skills, particularly in reading the hijaiyah letters, remain uneven. Many students still mispronounce certain letters, and most admit to rarely practicing reading at home. This situation impacts their ability to understand the meaning of religious texts, as some students read mechanically without understanding the meaning of the verses or texts they read. This indicates that students' religious literacy skills remain superficial and have not yet reached a deep level of understanding.

In terms of the learning process, observation data shows that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning is still dominated by lectures and verbal explanations. Teachers rarely use literacy-based learning methods such as directed reading, text discussions, or summary reading activities. Furthermore, the variety of learning media is still very limited. Teachers rely more heavily on standard textbooks without utilizing Islamic storybooks or visual media that can facilitate student understanding. This situation makes learning less effective in encouraging active religious literacy activities.

Further findings illustrate that students' interest in and literacy habits are also still low. Most students admitted to rarely reading Islamic books outside of class hours, and reading activities at school are not scheduled. There is no specific time set aside for independent reading, and schools have not yet implemented a structured Islamic literacy culture. This lack of reading habits has implications for students' weak ability to develop an independent understanding of Islam.

Within the family environment, parental involvement in supporting children's Islamic literacy is also minimal. Many parents rarely accompany their children in religious studies at home due to limited time or educational background. Most students' homes do not even have Islamic reading materials, so children are not accustomed to interacting with religious texts outside of school. This indicates that families are not yet the primary agents in developing religious literacy habits.

The condition of the madrasah's facilities and environment also influence students' literacy development. Observations indicate that classrooms lack reading corners, and the school library is not functioning optimally due to the limited collection of Islamic books relevant to the students' age range. The madrasah lacks a planned religious literacy program, thus severely limiting students' access to Islamic reading.

Teachers also face various challenges in developing Islamic literacy. In addition to limited Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning time, teachers face a wide range of student abilities. Some students are very weak in reading the hijaiyah (hijaiyah), while others are quite good. This situation requires teachers to implement a differentiated learning approach, but adequate guidance or facilities are not yet available for this. Teachers also stated that reading habit strategies have not been implemented due to the dense curriculum.

From the students' perspective, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning is often considered difficult because they struggle to understand the material presented. However, students show high enthusiasm when teachers use storytelling, particularly about the stories of the Prophets and morals. This indicates that storytelling has the potential to be an effective strategy for improving students' Islamic literacy. However, students' moral practices have not been consistently implemented. Teachers assessed that students' polite behavior still needed improvement, and their understanding of religious procedures still required intensive guidance, particularly regarding the sequence of ablution and prayer recitations.

Overall, the qualitative research findings illustrate that challenges to Islamic literacy among Islamic elementary school students stem not only from their basic abilities but also from pedagogical factors, the school environment, family support, and learning facilities. This situation indicates the need for comprehensive interventions that include improving teacher skills, providing engaging reading materials, strengthening a culture of literacy, and collaboration between schools and families to foster a conducive Islamic literacy ecosystem.

The results of this study indicate that the Islamic literacy level of MI students is generally in the moderate category, with some students still facing difficulties in basic skills such as reading the hijaiyah letters and understanding the meaning of religious texts. The importance of reading and understanding skills as a basis for properly internalizing Islamic values [33], [34], [6]. These skills are the foundation for developing a child's religious character and spiritual attitudes. Weak reading habits and limited access to Islamic literature are the main causes of poor Islamic literacy among MI students. The dominance of the moderate and low categories reflects a gap between the ideal concept of integrative Islamic literacy and empirical conditions that are still partial and not yet optimally developed. Most MI students still face limitations in correctly reading the hijaiyah letters and understanding the meaning of Islamic texts, as evidenced by the high proportion of students in the moderate and low categories. This fact indicates that basic religious literacy skills have not yet developed optimally. Mastery of the hijaiyah alphabet, tajweed, and understanding its meaning are essential prerequisites for developing comprehensive and meaningful Islamic literacy [35]-[37]. Literacy is not merely understood as the technical ability to read, but as a cognitive process for grasping the messages and values contained in religious texts [38], [39]. Students with low hijaiyah skills tend to have difficulty understanding Quranic verses and other religious materials, resulting in low motivation and interest in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning [40], [41]. Limited reading and comprehension skills are a critical point that needs to be strengthened through more varied, targeted, and developmentally appropriate learning interventions for MI students.

The learning strategies used by Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers are still dominated by lectures and verbal explanations, with minimal use of learning media and literacy activities that actively engage students [17]. The importance of meaningful learning through recitation (tilawah), tadabbur (contemplation), and gradual internalization of values [42] is emphasized. Islamic literacy requires an active, collaborative, and text-based approach in modern pedagogical practices so that students can develop reading comprehension skills while internalizing Islamic teachings [43]. The use of methods such as storytelling, visual media, or directed reading activities can significantly increase students' religious interest and understanding [2]. The low variety of learning strategies found in the field is one of the factors hampering the development of Islamic literacy in MI students. There is a need to improve teachers' pedagogical competence to provide more innovative, interactive, and contextual learning.

The family and madrasah environments do not fully support the development of students' Islamic literacy. Most students lack religious reading materials, and parental support in religious learning activities remains very limited. The family is the primary educational environment that should instill religious values, habits, and habits from an early age [5], [44]. Madrasah facilities, such as libraries, reading corners, and learning media, are either unavailable or not functioning optimally, indicating that a culture of Islamic literacy has not yet been institutionally established. The availability of reading materials, family involvement, and school support are important factors that significantly improve students' literacy skills [6], [25]. The weakness of literacy support

systems, both at home and at school, is an external factor that significantly contributes to the low Islamic literacy skills of MI students.

This research shows that teachers face quite complex challenges in developing students' Islamic literacy. Limited Islamic Religious Education (IRE) instructional time makes it difficult for teachers to cultivate reading habits, deepen the meaning of texts, and practice worship intensively. Furthermore, the heterogeneity of student abilities, ranging from very weak to relatively strong, necessitates differentiated learning, while facilities and learning media support remain minimal. Teachers should be murabbi (leaders) who not only deliver material but also guide students' spiritual and literacy development through a continuous and adaptive process [4], [45]. Field conditions indicate that teachers primarily act as information transmitters due to limited resources and curriculum burdens. The lack of learning media, the administrative burden on teachers, and the disparity in student abilities are significant factors hindering the improvement of Islamic literacy in elementary school students [46]. The challenges faced by teachers in madrasahs are not only pedagogical but also structural and systemic, necessitating stronger institutional support. The development of students' morals and understanding of religious practices remains inconsistent, as evidenced by the large number of students who misunderstand the order of ablution (wudu) and prayer recitations, and lack consistency in demonstrating polite behavior in daily life. This fact indicates that their Islamic literacy has not been fully internalized in their attitudes and actions. Morals are the primary goal of education (ghayah at-tarbiyah), and Islamic literacy should be a pathway to developing character that reflects Islamic values [47]. Literacy does not stop at understanding texts but must be realized in real life through role models, habituation, and behavioral reinforcement. Improving students' morals and religious practices is more effective if religious literacy is delivered through applicable methods such as storytelling, hands-on practice, teacher role models, and daily habits. The misalignment between students' cognitive understanding and Islamic behavior demonstrates the need for a more comprehensive, integrative, and character-building approach to Islamic literacy [34].

Students' literacy skills are still in the moderate to low category, learning is still informative, and internalization of moral values and worship has not been optimal. The philosophical framework of Islamic education emphasizes that education must shape a complete human being balanced between cognitive, spiritual, and moral aspects [48], [49]. Epistemologically, Islamic education emphasizes that revelation and reason must be the basis for the formation of knowledge, but in practice, students experience limitations in understanding religious texts due to weak basic literacy. Axiologically, the goal of Islamic education is the formation of noble morals, but student behavior does not fully reflect these values. These empirical findings reinforce the view that Islamic education at the MI level does not fully reflect the holistic and transformative principles of tarbiyah. Revitalization of Islamic literacy-based learning is urgently needed, focusing not only on cognitive aspects but also on strengthening character through applied methods, role models, and the instilling of values in everyday life.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Islamic literacy level of elementary school students is generally moderate, with major weaknesses in their ability to read the hijaiyah letters and understand the meaning of religious texts. The Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning process is still dominated by lecture methods and minimal media variety, thus under-promoting the development of an active and reflective literacy culture. Furthermore, the family and madrasah environments do not provide optimal support for developing a reading habit, as evidenced by the limited availability of Islamic reading materials, literacy facilities, and parental guidance. Philosophically, these findings indicate a gap between the ideal goal of Islamic education—the formation of a perfect human being—and the reality of students' literacy skills, which are not yet integrated cognitively, spiritually, and morally.

This study has several limitations. First, the quantitative data only describe the literacy status of students at one madrasah, so the results cannot be generalized to a broader context. Second, the limited data collection time limits a more in-depth exploration of the dynamics of literacy habits within the family environment. Third, the Islamic literacy test instrument does not comprehensively cover all aspects of religious literacy, such as simple interpretation or value analysis within texts. These limitations need to be considered when interpreting the results.

Future research is recommended to expand the sample size to include several madrasahs in different regions to obtain a more representative picture of students' Islamic literacy. A more comprehensive Islamic literacy instrument is also needed, encompassing Quranic reading skills, understanding values, and applying teachings in daily life. Furthermore, future research could explore storytelling-based interventions, Islamic digital media, or literacy learning models to test the effectiveness of specific strategies in improving Islamic literacy. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to continuously and in-depthly observe students' literacy development.

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