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## COMPARATIVE STUDY ON TEACHER TRAINING EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICES IN QUR'ANIC SCHOOLS: CASE OF SEMI-URBAN RURAL AND REMOTE RURAL SETTINGS IN BANJARNEGARA REGENCY

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**Abstract:** This paper aims at describing the recent status of teacher training education policy and practices in 12 purposely selected Qur'anic Schools in 4 villages, which belong to Banjarnegara Regency in Central Java Province in Indonesia. The data was obtained through a field survey by using questionnaire instrument and open-ended interview to 12 school principals and 20 teachers of the Qur'anic schools. Teachers' status degree at semi-urban rural area is more educated while the teachers at remote rural area are graduates from Qur'anic school who have no teacher's certificate. In both areas, teachers mainly develop their professional teaching skills by self-learning due to very few in-service teacher trainings. Unlike teachers at formal schools, who are often offered teaching training by educational bureau in regency or province level, teachers at Qur'anic schools almost never receive teaching training. This findings suggest the local government to conduct intensive teacher training program for Quranic schools teachers in order to achieve better Islamic educational services.

**Keywords:** Islamic education, teachers training, Qur'anic school, internal comparative analysis

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country in the world with over 200 million Muslims. With more than 50,000 Islamic schools in the country, the religious teachings in these schools have a direct and long-lasting impact on the Islamic orientation and lives of Muslims in the country and elsewhere (Charlene Tan, 2014). Almost 20 million children attend the country's Islamic schools (Woischnik & Muller, 2013).

Islamic education in Indonesia is delivered through a diverse range of institutions and approaches (Wagner, 1981). Islamic schools play an important role in Indonesian society and the lives of many millions of Muslim youth. This education is provided both by the government and through private religious schools called pesantrens. The pesantrens are economically self-supporting institutions.

Students in pesantren usually work in the fields and occasionally engage in small commercial activities organized for communal needs. In this way, students support themselves through five to ten years of study and maintain close ties with the Islamic community in which they reside. Religious subjects in pesantrens, which make up about half the curriculum, are taught using the Arabic script needed for all Qur'anic study.

For Indonesian children, learning to read Arabic is a major and difficult task. In fact, it becomes obligatory for Muslims to be able to read and recite Arabic texts since all ritual activities in Islam are done in the Arabic language, including five times a day prayer, which is compulsory for all Muslims as soon as they reach to 12-13 years of age.

To facilitate Arabic learning, special small classes for young children are often organized by volunteers. Such non-formal institutions that

give Arabic language lesson or the lesson on how to read the Holy book of Qur'an are called Qur'anic schools. At present, modern teaching methods are making some inroads in Indonesia's Qur'anic schools, particularly in the cities.

## 2. QUR'ANIC SCHOOLS AS EMERGING NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE WORLD

### 2.1. What is Qur'anic School?

Actually we can find Qur'anic schools in many countries throughout of the world. A typical model of Qur'anic school in Central Asia, China, India, Arabia and South Africa to the North is a small room, usually attached to a mosque, where a teacher (male or female), teaches students to read and in some cases memorize the Qur'an in Arabic.

Qur'anic school is designed to address first and foremost the spiritual needs of Muslim learners and to offer them avenues for growth in the faith. Qur'anic school emerged in response to divine mandate expressed in the Qur'an and was designed as a means for disseminating and deepening the Islamic faith. Qur'anic school occupies a significant place in the education and upbringing of Muslim children.

Students, who vary in ages from 4 to 16 years old, usually can finish the Qur'an in about three to four years. A Qur'anic school opens in the morning or late in the afternoon. In most countries of Asia and Arabia, students go to the Qur'anic school either before or after their school day in a regular public school. In some parts of West Africa, for poor people, Qur'anic schools are the only avenue of obtaining some literacy.

Each Qur'anic school has about 40-60 students at one time and the number may decrease or increase depending on the population of the area where it is located. The Qur'anic teacher is usually a Hafiz Qur'an – the one who has memorized the text and teaches by one-on-one coaching technique. The teacher also teaches by organizing small groups depending upon the age and level of learning of the student. If the number of students is big, the teacher uses peer tutoring, where students who have mastered a certain level of the Qur'an are made to teach the junior ones.

On a typical teaching and learning processes in the Qur'anic school, a teacher would start teaching by asking students to recite what was taught the day before. After ensuring that the

student has learned to read and pronounce the Qur'an words in an acceptable manner, the teacher reads with the student the next few paragraphs three or four times, until the student begins to correctly pronounce and read the new text.

### 2.2 Qur'anic Schools in Indonesia

Qur'anic school is a non-formal educational institution that teaches reading and writing letters of the Qur'an to children from an early age, as well as instilling *akhlaqul karimah* (good manner) described in the Holy Qur'an book. *Akhlaqul Karimah* includes morals to the Almighty God, characters of the Apostles and Prophets; morals to parents, teachers and leaders, to other Muslims and other human beings who are older, peer, or younger, as well to environment or nature (Salahuddin et.al, 2013).

In this study, the Qur'anic schools are situated side by side with a mosque or a small mosque (*mushala*) in a village. Qur'anic school is established by youths, whom belong to a Mosque Youths Association under the guidance of *Imam*. Activity of the Qur'anic school is carried out after the formal school hour at mosque, in the teacher's house, or in a special building near the mosque.

Learning content in Qur'anic school is flexible, based on teachers' preference, which is adapted to needs of children (Arabic language literacy and moral education).

Existence of Qur'anic schools in Indonesia is legalized by the Government Regulation number 55/2007, 24:2 on the Religion Subject and Religion Education. It states that Qur'anic school consists of Qur'anic kindergarten (TKA/TKQ), Qur'anic school (TPA/TPQ), Ta'limul Qur'an lil Aulad (TQA), and other similar schools.

Qur'anic schools have been growing so fast during 1990's after a number of approaches on how to read and write the Qur'an were found out by Islamic scholars.

Two of Indonesian Islamic scholars in Java who have high contribution to the development of Qur'anic teaching are As'ad Humam and Dahlan Salim Zarkasi.

Mr. As'ad Humam and his team established the 'Angkatan Muda Masjid' in Yogyakarta city and initiated establishment of a Qur'anic kindergarten on 16 March 1988 and developed Iqro' teaching method, which makes drastic changes to this way of learning. The Iqro'

textbook begins with the pronunciation of Arabic letters and simple words that already contain the vowel marks so that learners can easily learn the recitation of the phrases of the Qur'an. The tools in this textbook enable children to learn how to read and recite the Qur'an more easily.

Nakata (2009) found that many Indonesian children who were around five years old took only about six months to master reading the Qur'an by using the Iqro' method textbook. The dissemination of the Iqro' method textbook has promoted peoples' interests and needs in learning to read and recite the Qur'an.

In 1996, Dahlan Salim Zarkasi, set up a Qur'anic school named 'Raudhatul Mujawwidin' in Semarang city of Central Java, which used the Qiroati teaching method. It is a method in learning reading the Qur'an which directly lets the students practice reading the combination of letters (words) in the Holy Qur'an accordance with the rules of tajwid (theory of reading Arabic words). In this lesson, children should not spell but directly read the letter sounds. The learning is pupil-centred where the thoroughness of the textbooks is not determined by the month/year and not classical but individually. Qiro'ati method consists of 6 volumes textbooks and additional ones including Tajwid textbooks (Nakata, 2009).

### 3. OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND METHOD OF THIS STUDY

#### 3.1. Objectives

This study aims to reveal similarities and differences of the teacher training education policy and practices in Qur'anic Schools located in semi-urban rural and remote rural settings in Banjarnegara Regency of Central Java Province in Indonesia.

#### 3.2 Research Questions

Are there any similarities and differences of teacher training education policy and practices in Qur'anic Schools located in semi-urban rural and remote rural settings in Banjarnegara Regency of Central Java Province in Indonesia?

#### 3.3. Research Method

##### 3.3.1 The selected Qur'anic schools

We have selected twelve Qur'anic schools in 4 villages, which are located in 3 districts of Banjarnegara Regency in Central Java. The 4 villages

were selected based on the criteria of the distance to the town and pesantren.

Sigaluh and Gembongan villages in Sigaluh district are semi-urban rural area because the areas are either situated geographically "in between" city and countryside, or differ from rural and urban landscapes in configuration, functions, and other characteristics, so that they cannot be called city, nor countryside (Tacoli, 1998). On the other hand, Tapen and Luwung villages in Wanadadi and Rakit districts are rural remote areas due to their geographic areas, which are located outside cities and towns.

#### 3.3.2 Respondents and research instruments

Data in this research were collected mainly from Qur'anic school principals and teachers. Total number of the respondents was 32 people. The research instruments used in this study were questionnaire and interview to assess the teacher training education policy and practices in the Qur'anic Schools.

#### 3.3.3 Method of collecting and analysing data

The main researcher directly went to visit the Qur'anic schools to distribute the questionnaires to the research respondents and also interviewed some of the school principals and teachers. The research was conducted from September 2014 to October 2015. The collected data were then descriptively analyzed and compared.

### 4. RESULT

#### 4.1. Profile of Qur'anic schools

The latest profile of each Qur'anic school can be seen in the data of table 1.

Table 1. Profile of the Qur'anic schools

No	Qur'anic schools	Establishment Year	Number of teachers	Number of students
1	Al-Fatah	1991	4	36
2	Baitul Insan	1992	2	25
3	Al-Islah	1998	4	35
4	Hidayaturrohman	2003	2	19
5	Baitul Islah	2003	6	47
6	Al-Wardah	2004	2	33
7	Permata	2004	10	73
8	An-Nur	-	3	36
9	Raudhatul Jannah	-	2	40

10	As-Solihah	-	4	41
11	Nurul Iman	-	3	48
12	Raudhatul Huda	-	5	48

**Source:** Field survey, 2014

Among 12 Qur'anic schools, Al-Fatah is the oldest one. This Qur'anic school was established in 1991. This Qur'anic school is managed by a senior primary school teacher, Mr. Muharto and it has 36 students and 4 teachers. The four teachers have no teaching diploma. Classes are opened from Monday to Sunday at 18:00-19:00 pm.

The youngest Qur'anic school is Permata in Tapen village. This school was established in 2004 by young general senior high school graduates, Mr. Hadiman and his little brother, Mr. Tuhyidin. For a long time, teaching and learning processes of the Permata Qur'anic school was conducted in Baituttaqwa mosque and since the beginning of 2014, this Qur'anic school has its own building located beside the mosque. Classes are opened on week days from 16.00-17.30.

Demographic condition of the school principal and teacher respondents participating in this study can be seen in the data of table 2.

**Table 2. Demographic conditions of the teachers in the Qur'anic schools**

Teachers' characteristics	Fequency	
Gender	Female	10
	Male	22
Age	14-19	8
	20-25	1
	26-31	5
	32-53	18
Education	Primary school	2
	Lower High school	6
	Upper High School	11
	Diploma	9
	Bachelor	1
	Not identified	3
Marital status	Married	21
	Single	11

**Source:** Field survey, 2014

From the data in table 2, we can see that more than half of the teachers in the Qur'anic schools are female. This condition is not different from the reality of the general school

teachers in Indonesia, that most of them are female. Majority of the teachers are 32-53 years old, and the biggest number of the teachers (11) had upper secondary school educational background. In other words, they have no diploma teaching license. And more than half of the teachers (22) had got married.

#### 4.2. Development of Qur'anic schools in semi-urban area

Table 3 and 4 shows the number of students and teachers in the Qur'anic schools in Sigaluh and Gembongan village.

**Table 3. Number of teachers in Qur'anic schools in Sigaluh and Gembongan village.**

Qur'anic schools	Number of students				
	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014
Raudhatul Jannah in Sigaluh	-	60	56	30	57
Nur-Iman in Sigaluh	48	48	48	48	48
Hidayaturrohman in Gembongan	10	15	20	25	25
As-Solihah in Gembongan	41	41	41	41	41

**Table 4. Number of teachers in Qur'anic schools in Sigaluh and Gembongan village.**

Qur'anic schools	Number of teachers				
	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014
Raudhatul Jannah in Sigaluh	2	2	2	2	2
Nur-Iman in Sigaluh	3	3	3	3	3
Hidayaturrohman in Gembongan	2	2	2	2	2
As-Solihah in Gembongan	4	4	4	4	4

From the data in table 3 and 4, we can see that each Qur'anic school in the two villages has relatively large number of students, while the number of the teacher is relatively few. It seems that no balance between the students and the teachers. Raudhatul Jannah Qur'anic School is

the hardest one because for 57 students, it only has 2 teachers.

#### 4.3. Development of Qur'anic schools in remote-rural area

Table 5 and table 6 show the number of the students and the teachers in the Qur'anic schools in Tapen village.

*Table 5. Number of students in the Qur'anic schools in Tapen village.*

Qur'anic schools	Number of students				
	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014
Al-Islah	60	50	50	40	35
An-Nur	36	36	36	36	36
Permata	78	70	65	66	87

Source: Field work, 2014

*Table 6. Number of teachers in the Qur'anic schools in Tapen village.*

Qur'anic schools	Number of teachers				
	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014
Al-Islah	7	7	5	5	4
An-Nur	3	3	3	3	3
Permata	12	9	9	10	11

Table 7 and table 8 show the number of the students and the teachers in the Qur'anic schools in Luwung village.

*Table 7. Number of students in the Qur'anic schools in Luwung village.*

Qur'anic schools	Number of students				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Al-Fatah	29	29	35	36	36
Baitul Insan	7	8	10	15	25
Al-Wardah	32	30	39	34	35
Baitul Falah	42	45	30	22	15
Raudhatul Huda	-	-	42	38	35

Source: Field work, 2014

*Table 8. Number of teachers in the Qur'anic schools in Luwung village.*

Qur'anic schools	Number of teachers				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Al-Fatah	4	4	4	4	4
Baitul Insan	2	2	2	2	2
Al-Wardah	2	2	2	2	2
Baitul Falah	3	4	4	5	3
Raudhatul Huda	-	-	5	5	5

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Al-Fatah	4	4	4	4	4
Baitul Insan	2	2	2	2	2
Al-Wardah	2	2	2	2	2
Baitul Falah	3	4	4	5	3
Raudhatul Huda	-	-	5	5	5

Source: Field work, 2014

Based on the data in table 7 and 8, among 8 Qur'anic schools in the two villages, Permata has the biggest number of students and teachers.

#### 4.4. Teacher training in Qur'anic schools in semi-urban area

Data about teacher training received by the Qur'anic school teachers in semi-urban rural can be seen in table 9.

*Table 9. Teacher training received by teachers in semi urban area.*

Teacher Training Program	Facilitating Organization
Qiro'ati Qur'anic Teaching Training Program	Al Fatah Pesantren in Banjarnegara City
Al-Qur'an Learning through Art Training	Ministry of Religion Affair (MoRA)
Muqri thoriqoh Reading and Writing Teaching Program	Ministry of Religion Affair (MoRA)
Training in Development of Teaching Method for Qur'anic School teachers	Ministry of Religion Affair (MoRA)

Source: Field work, 2015

Muslimah (30), one of the Qur'anic teachers in Gembongan village explained that Al-Fatah pesantren, which is located in Central City of Banjarnegara, facilitates as centre of in-service teacher training for the Qur'anic school teachers in the Regency. The Qiro'ati Qur'anic Teaching Training Program is usually for two years with once a week of training. In the training, teachers should finish 6 books of Qiro'ati teaching and after completing the training for two years, the teachers were awarded a certificate, which proved that a teacher is eligible to teach in a Qur'anic school.

Besides pesantren, Muslimah also stated that in Sigaluh district, there was Qur'anic school teachers Forum, which sometimes conduct in service teacher training. She further explained that a Qur'anic school teacher needed in service training in usage of Islamic children songs for motivating the students to learn more fun, Islamic stories telling skills, as well as information, computer, and technology (ICT) training for supporting the daily Qur'anic teachers' job

Furthermore, Muslimah confessed that Iqra' training is much more simple than the Qiro'ati. She said that almost everyone, who can read the Qur'an, is able to teach the children Arabic language by using Iqra' book. But for Qiroa'ti, is not just as simple as that. A teacher, who wants to completely master the Qur'an reading teaching method using Qiro'ati must learn and master each book (10 volumes) one by one in a relatively long period (interview, 2015).

#### 4.5. Teacher training in Qur'anic schools in rural-remote area

Teachers in Permata Qur'anic schools have ever received in-service training, such as Taklim Permata (monthly meeting) held by the school itself, Juz Amma and Al-Qasimi training held by Banjarnegara Regency Qur'anic School Association and Arabic language training held by Al-Munawaroh Pesantren in central city of Banjarnegara. Meanwhile, teachers in Al-Islah and An-Nur have never got any in-service training.

In-service teacher training, which have been received by the teachers of Baitul Falah and Al-Wardah Qur'anic schools are Teacher Quality Assurance Training Program held by Rakit Regency Qur'anic Schools Association and *Tamyiz* Training held by MoRA; while the teachers in the other three Qur'anic schools have never got any in-service teacher training.

Mr. Tuhyidin (33), a teacher in Permata Qur'anic school explained that to be a teacher in the Qur'anic school, someone has to be able to read the Qur'an well and have good knowledge of Islam, as well as good personality; unfortunately not all teachers in his area get sufficient teaching skills due to lacking of in-service teacher training (interview, 2015).

From the interview result with the teachers, it was revealed that pesantrens have significant roles in supporting the educational services of the Qur'anic schools. They provides both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs for Qur'anic school teachers.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

This study found out that Qur'anic schools in both of semi-urban and remote rural areas have important roles in giving sufficient and affordable Islamic education services for children to grow to be good Muslim generations, who are fluently in reading the Holy Qur'an and having good morals based on the Islamic values. In both areas, teachers still lack of service teacher trainings. Therefore, it is suggested that local government of Banjarnegara Regency to conduct intensive teacher training program for

Qur'anic schools teachers in order to achieve better Islamic educational services.

#### 6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researchers would like to express their deep gratitude to Ministry of Finance-Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) that financed this research. They also thank to all people and organizations especially the chief of village, the headmasters and teachers of the Qur'anic schools, and the local government of Banjarnegara Regency that graciously cooperated with this study.

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