Original Research Article

Indonesia Student Can't Read the Qur'an? The Bilhikmah Method Solution

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Abstract: Although Islam emphasizes that its followers should be able to read the Qur`ān, most students, unfortunately, cannot. Results showed that only 15% of elementary school students, 25% junior high school, 35% of high school, and 40% of university students could read the Qur`ān. Also, the 2021 pre-test results from the UPI showed that only 34% of students could read the Qur`ān. The findings from the UNISBA were better, as the 2021 pre-test results revealed that up to 60% of students were able to read it and only 40% could not. Therefore, the problem of this study is regarding how Al-Qur`ān illiteracy among students can be eradicated. Several innovative reading methods are employed in Indonesia, including the bilhikmah technique. This research aims to test the effectiveness of this method in eradicating Al-Qur`ān illiteracy from UNISBA students. It used a quasi-experimental research method, and the sample comprised 998 students of the 2021-2022 class that were unable to read the Al-Qur`ān. A total of 499 students from 14 classes attended the offline learning program, while the other half from 20 classes participated online. Before and after learning, pre-tests and post-tests were provided. Consequently, the study discovered that 84% and 74% of students from the offline and online classes, respectively, managed to improve their ability to read the Qur`ān. Based on the statistical test results, the offline program was much more effective than the online equivalent. Hence, the study recommends that the eradication of Al-Qur`ān illiteracy for students should use the bilhikmah method for both offline and online classes.

Keywords: Illiterate, Al-Qur`ān, Bilhikmah Method, Offline, Online.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Holy Qur`ān is written in Arabic, which means that Arab nations will certainly have no trouble reading it. However, non-Arab nations, such as Indonesia, which are accustomed to reading and writing in Latin script, will, of course, face difficulties because the language and form of writing are foreign. Indonesian follows the Latin script and is written from left to right, while Arabic is the other way. The Qur`ān is a book that every Muslim needs to read, and the habit of reading it has become a tradition of Indonesian and foreign Muslims. Consequently, the study results showed that Muslim communities that read the Qur`ān every day in the Middle East and Main Africa are about 31% - 52%. Meanwhile, Turkey and Europe make up 3%-9%, Pakistan-Afghanistan 36%-43%, Malaysia 35%, and Indonesia 37 % (Pew-Research-Center, 2012). In a very religious area in Indonesia, finishing or reading the *Khatam* is the pride of the people. Parents support their children to "be able" to read the Qur`ān properly and

correctly, who then they read it regularly every day, are celebrated by the community when they finish. The *Khatam* Al-Qur`ān ceremony is a strong factor for children in performing their love of reading the Book, as it entails a process of social recognition for those that like to read it (Wirdanengsih *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, learning to read the Qur`ān is already a part of Indonesian Islamic education.

Long before getting to know Latin writing, the Indonesians, and people from Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, southern Thailand, and the southern Philippines were accustomed to writing in "Arabic-Malay" letters. This form of writing consists of Indonesian or other similar languages that use Arabic letters, also known as "Arab-Pegon." Historical evidence includes the Terengganu inscription at the beginning of the XIV century AD, which also used Arabic-Malay characters (Aini *et al.*, 2006; Hadi, 2009).

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In the past, from the beginning of Indonesia's independence until 1964, Muslim students were helped to learn the Qur`ān with a national curriculum that taught "Arabic-Malay." They used to recite the Qur`ān and learned to read it in the evening or after the Maghrib prayer. Even in religious base areas, the children studied at school in the morning, while during the day, they learned religion at the madrasa, after maghrib prayer and Fajr Qur`ān in the mosque. Therefore, it is not surprising that Muslim children at that time could read the Qur`ān. However, there was a change, and Arabic-Malay was no longer taught in schools but became only a curriculum of local content, including in the Riau Islands area (Ibrahim, 1998). In most areas, such as West Java where the Bandung Islamic University (UNISBA) is located, there are no Arabic-Malay lessons, and the Muslim community generally relies on learning the Qur`ān from recitation. Hence, the learning time reduced, and the children's enthusiasm for the Qur`ān concurrently decreased. According to the annual Al-Qur`ān reading test results for IKIP Bandung (now the Indonesia University of Education or UPI) students from 1987 to 1992, only about 10% could read the Book (U. Supriadi & Rahmat, 1992).

The beginning of 1990 was the era of the revival of reading the Qur`ān in Indonesia after KH As`ad Humam, an Ulama and trader from Yogyakarta, invented Iqra, a fast method of reading the Book. Then, the Tadarus Team of the Young Generation of Mosques and Mushalla (Tadarus AMM Team) established Al-Qur`ān Kindergarten (TKA) in mosques. Also, they disseminated the Iqro method so that thousands of children from Yogyakarta and its surroundings could read the Qur`ān at a very young age. Subsequently, the government, particularly the Minister of Religion, formalized Iqro as a new method of reading the Qur`ān. Also, the Indonesian Mosque Youth Communication Agency (BKPRMI), with the forerunner of the Tadarus AMM Team, was formed at the national level. This institution has disseminated foreign workers and the Iqro method to all corners of Indonesia and even Southeast Asia (Humam, 2000; Wikipedia, 2020).

The impact of the Iqra method was tremendous, and according to research conducted in 2001 in Bandung City and Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java, up to 10% of elementary school students in grades 1-3 could read the Al-Qur`an. Also, 20% of the students in grades 4-6, 25%, and 35% in junior and senior high schools, respectively, and 40% of university students possessed this ability. After examination, it was discovered that most of the university students that could read the Al-Qur`ān had been able to since high school. Similarly, most of the capable high school students had been able to read it since junior high school, and those in grades 1-3 of the elementary school that were able had studied at TPA (Rahmat *et al*., 2001). These findings mean that only 5% of pure students could read the Qur`ān after entering university and those in junior high who could read it after

attending SMP or SMA were only 5%. Also, only 10% of elementary school students could read the Qur`ān after sitting in grades 4-6 because the other half were from TPA, and only 5% of university students were able to read the Book.

The map of the ability to read the Qur`ān in college is unique, as up to 60% of the UNISBA students can read the Book (M.W. Yahya, 2020). Conversely, only 30% of the students from the UPI are capable, while about 40% of the students could read the Qur`ān when it was still a teaching institute as IKIP Bandung (T. Supriadi & Julia, 2019; U. Supriadi & Rahmat, 2020). These results mean that there are more student-teacher candidates with religious backgrounds than non-teacher students. Hence, more UNISBA students can read the Qur`ān probably because their backgrounds are more religious.

Being smart at reading the Qur`ān is one of the goals of Islamic Religious Education, as all educational institutions feel uneasy with the inability of students and student-teachers to read the Qur`ān. Therefore, all educational institutions and levels have Al-Qur`ān literacy programs, such as in kindergarten (Astuti, 2013; Srijatun, 2017; Sari & Mahfudh, 2019), SD, SMP, SMA (Rahmat *et al*., 2001), and universities (Murniyetti *et al*., 2012; Kemenag, 2019; Masruroh, 2019; T. Supriadi & Julia, 2019; Yahya, 2020; U. Supriadi & Rahmat, 2020). Even Malaysia has made memorizing Al-Qur`ān a test to enter higher education, and as a result, reading and writing lessons, as well as memorizing the Book are performed seriously in schools (Republika.co.id, 2019).

Unfortunately, the Al-Qur`ān literacy program in higher education is not complete, and this basic problem seems to be the ineffective learning method for students to read the Qur`ān. The methods that have been implemented include *TAHQIQ* (T. Supriadi & Julia, 2019), 3A (*Ajari Aku Al-Qur`ān*), or "Please Teach Me Al-Qur`ān" (Alhamuddin *et al*., 2018), and without mentioning the method (Murniyetti *et al*., 2012; Masruroh, 2019). Since UNISBA has used the bilhikmah method for years, this study tested the effectiveness of the technique in alleviating Al-Qur`ān illiteracy for students.

The Importance of Reading The Al-Qur`Ān
The results of both normative and empirical studies show that reading and listening to the Qur`ān has great benefits in increasing spiritual happiness, reducing stress, and healing illnesses for Muslim.

Normatively, Muslims refer the importance of reading the Qur`ān to the verses and hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad. By using the thematic Qur`ān digital method (Rahmat & Fahrudin, 2018), the virtues of reading the Qur`ān i.e. "recite what is sent of the Book (Qur`ān) by inspiration to thee" (Qur`ān, 2013, surah 29/Al-Ankabut: 45). The people believe that if they

perform God's orders, they will obtain various benefits. Al-Qur`ān is a guide for life and religion (Qur`ān, 2013, surah 2/Al-Baqarah: 2, 185), and an antidote for believers (Qur`ān, 2013, surah 17/Al-Isra`: 82; 41/Fushshilat: 44). When hearing the recitation of the Qur`ān, Muslims are instructed to listen calmly and attentively to obtain God's grace (Qur`ān, 2013, surah 7/Al-A`raf: 204). The Prophet SAW said that the people who read the Qur`ān will receive multiple rewards from God (Bukhari, 2013; Tirmidzi, 2013). Muslims will live peaceful, meaningful, and honest lives by reading and understanding it correctly (Rahmat *et al.,* 2016; Rahmat & Yahya, 2020; Rahmat & Yahya, 2021). They will also be moderate and tolerant (Rahmat & Yahya, 2021b; M. W. B. H. Yahya & Rahmat, 2021; Rahmat *et al.*, 2021).

The results of empirical studies show the importance of reading the Qur`ān. Also, research findings from lecturers, students, and educational staff at Arak University of Medical Sciences, Iran, indicate that this habit affects all dimensions of life, such as peace, humanistic communication, patience, and tolerance. Therefore, to obtain more divine benefits, this study recommends that all Muslims adapt to reading the Qur`ān (Hekmatpou *et al.*, 2011). According to the literature review results, reading and listening to a Qur`ān recitation have a positive impact on mental health and can delay cognitive aging or increase memory (Nadimah, 2018). The paired sample t-test results of a study on students of Payame Noor University, Iran, showed a significant increase in the mean scores of participants' spiritual well-being from the pre- test to post-test (p <0.001). However, no significant difference was detected between reciting and listening to the Qur`ān regarding their effect on happiness in the covariance analysis (f = 0.931 and p = 0.338). Hence, reading and listening to the Qur'an can increase a student's spiritual happiness score, with the former showing a more profound effect (Olyanasab & Shahandeh, 2019).

The habit of reading the Qur`ān can increase the peace of youth, as the students that were taught to read and listen to recitations had less stress than the control group (Taghilolo, 2009). In other research, the correlation analysis results obtained rxy = 0.450, meaning the variables X, which entails the reading habits of the Qur`ā,n and Y, which is peace of mind, have a moderate or sufficient correlation (Sofyan, 2016). Based on studies in Iran, reading and listening to a Qur`ān recitation can be used as a non-pharmacological treatment for reducing anxiety (Ghiasi & Keramat, 2018). Also, research by Al-Qadhi, a psychiatrist from the United States, showed that reading the Qur`ān has a huge impact of up to 97% in providing peace of mind and healing of illnesses (Al-Battar, 2012). However, studies of Muslim patients in Malaysia have found no effect of reading the Qur`ān on stress relief. The results of the study in the experimental and control groups showed no significant differences in heart rate (HR), systolic (sBP), and diastolic blood pressure (dBP), mean arterial pressure (MAP), and respiratory rate (RR) when all p-values> 0.05. Also, the intervention group did not experience a significant reduction in physiological stress responses over time, except for HR (Abu-Bakar, 2014). In another study, forty (40) mechanically-ventilated IIUM Medical Center ICU patients that met the weaning criteria were randomized into a listening group to read the Qur`ān (n = 7) and a control group (n = 23). Patients in the first group received 30 minutes of uninterrupted bed rest while listening to Surah Al-Mulk via an mp3 player, followed by an equal amount of bed rest. Conversely, the control group was assigned 60 minutes to rest without listening to any recitation. The preliminary findings of this study pointed to the potential effect of listening to Qur'anic recitations on reducing the physiological stress response in mechanically ventilated ICU patients. However, the small sample size was not statistically significant (Ramly *et al.*, 2018). In general, pleasant reading activities influence cognitive, emotional, and clinical interventions (Sriganesh & Ponniah, 2020).

A pregnant woman that listens to or reads the Qur`ān feels comfortable, as does the baby because the mother's condition affects the child. Various studies have shown that reading, reciting, or listening to the Qur`ān by pregnant women positively impacts the fetus or baby in the womb (Suciati, 2015).

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS
2.1 Research Design
This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the bilhikmah method in eradicating Al-Qur`ān illiteracy from UNISBA students. According to the research objectives, a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design without a control class was employed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 311).

This method is inseparable from the bilhikmah book, and the purpose of learning to read Al-Qur`ān via this technique is for students to master these books completely. The bilhikmah pocketbook consists of 3 volumes, where book I has thirty-eight (38) pages, II has thirty-two (32), and III comprises thirty-six (36) pages.

Book I introduced the *hijaiyah* letters with an Arabic font, the *shakal* or vowels in a complete set, and the *makharijul* letters or sounds. One set of these letters consists of 2-4 items, and one letter set comprises 1–2 or one letter form. For example, the set of letters, أ ب ت ث, which read *a ba ta tha, i bi ti thi*, or *u bu tu thu* consists of two forms, namely the letters أ (a) and ب ت ث (*ba ta tha*). Subsequently, book 1 was taught as follows:
a. The lecturer taught the sound of the *hijaiyah* letter with a *shakal* in one set, أ ب ت ث (*a ba ta tha*), ج ح خ (*ja ha kha*), etc., based on the rules of the letter sounds or *makharijul*-letter coming out of the mouth. For students to easily recognize the sound of the scaled letters, they were associated with familiar sounds, e.g., the

sound of the letter خ (*kha*) was linked with the snore sounds.

b. The *hijaiyah* letters were associated with objects that the students can easily recognize, e.g., the letter أ (*a*) was linked with a person standing or an electric pole. Also, ت (*ta*) was associated with a bowl containing two meatballs, ث (*tha*), like a bowl containing three, while the letter ب (*ba*) was like a single meatball that falls under the bowl.

c. The lecturer read the *hijaiyah* letters with a *shakal* per association, then the students followed the reading.

d. The students were guided to memorize the assorted *hijaiyah* letters until completion (M.W.B.H. Yahya, 2019a).

Book II introduced the "word" or "sentence," namely the *hijaiyah* letters at the beginning, middle, and end of the "word." Then, breadfruit, which is the dead letter in the middle and the end of the "word" and ا ل (*alif-lam*) *qamariyah*, which is the clear L sound, were introduced. These were followed by *shamsiyah*, when the L sound disappears and goes to the next letter sound, and *tashdid*, the letter-double, which is written in one letter. While reading, the first letter, which is breadfruit is dead, and the second letter is alive. Subsequently, book 2 was taught as follows:

a. The lecturer taught an overview of *hijaiyah* letters based on changes in the letter feet, such as بتث (*batatha*) and جحخ (*jahakha*).

b. Several *hijaiyah* letters that could not be connected at the beginning and middle of the "word," namely the letters أ (*a*), د ذ ر ز (*da dza ra za*), and و (*wa*) were introduced.

c. The lecturer taught breadfruit reading, which involves the dead letter in the middle of the "word" or the end of the "word or sentence." For example, while يُخَـادِعُونَ is read *yukhadi`una,* where the word fragments of *yukhadi* are all vowels, يَخْـدَعُونَ is read *yakhda`una,* because the letter خ (*kha*) in *yakhda`u* uses the breadfruit *kha*-consonant.

d. Also, the reading of ا ل (*alif-lam*) *qamariyah*, which is the clear L sound, and *shamsiyah*, where the L sound is missing and goes into the next letter sound, was taught. Then, the letters that go into ا ل *qamariyah* or *shamsiyah* were mentioned and accompanied by examples. For instance, the word ٱلْحَمْدُ is read *alhamdu*, while the word الرَّحْمَـٰن, which is *al-rahman*, is read *arrahman,* as the L reading is missing.

e. *Tashdid* letters, which are double letters but written as one and then marked with *tashdid*, were also taught. The reading for the first letter is breadfruit or dead, while the second is alive, e.g., the word إِيَّاكَ is pronounced *iyyaka*.

f. The lecturer read the sentences of the Qur`ān, including continued *hijaiyah* letters, breadfruit, *alif-lam qamariyah, shamsiyah*, and *tashdid*,

then the students followed the reading (M.W.B.H. Yahya, 2019b).

Book III refines the Qur`ān readings by introducing long-short readings, practicals, and the most basic Tajweed Science, which are procedures for reading the Qur`ān. Book 3 was taught as follows:

a. The lecturer taught a long reading of two vowels, which comprised 2x short readings in length. For instance, on the alive or dead letters that are connected with breaded letters, أ or *alif*, و or *wau,* and ي or *ya* are used for long reading of the sounds A, U sound, and I. Subsequently, in مَـٰلِكِ, the letters م (*mim*) plus أ (*alif*) are read long as *maa,* academically written *mâ*, while ل (*lam*) and ك (*kaf*) are read short so that it becomes *maaliki,* usually written *mâliki*. In the word وَيُقِيمُـونَ, the letters ق (*qaf*) plus ي (*ya*) and م (*mim*) plus و (*wau*) are read long as *qii* and *muu*, while the others are read short so that it becomes *wayuqiimuuna,* academically written *wayuqîmûna*.

b. Also, the reading of six vowels is taught to be very long if there is a "~" sign. For example, in the word قَالُوٓا۟, the letter ق (*qaf*) is read long as two *harakat,* while ل (*lam*) is read long as six *harakat* so that the reading becomes *qaaluuuuuu,* academically written *qâlû* .

c. The lecturers also taught long readings, which are read short because they meet breadfruit or *tashdid*, e.g., وَٱتَّقُـوا۟ ٱللَّـهَ is written as *wâttaqûllâha* but read *wattaqullâha*.

d. The lecturer taught the students to melt the sukun letters into the next *tashdid* letter, e.g., مَـن يُـؤْمِنُ says *man yu`minu* but reads *mayyu`minu*.

e. Additionally, they were taught lecturer teaches *waqaf*, which stops reading because the sentence is perfect. The *waqaf* signs, especially the letters ط, م, and لا, are the lowercase *tha, mim, and lam-alif* above the sentence, meaning that you cannot stop because the sentence is imperfect. For example, since وَٱلْعَصْرِ , which reads *wal `ashri* has a small *lam-alif* sign above the end of the "sentence," then it must be continued to the next sentence.

f. The lecturer taught the reading at the end of the verse and it involves turning off the final letters that are wrong. For example, in بِسْمِ ٱللَّـهِ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ , which is written *bismillâhirrahmanirrahîmi,* the end of the verse is written as 'mi' but read as *bismillâhirrahmanirrahîm*.

g. They were also taught how to read the letters at the beginning of the surah, such as الم, which is pronounced *alif-lâm-mîm*, يس spoken as *yâ-sîn*, and كهيعص as *kaf-hâ-yâ-`ain-shâd*.

h. Finally, the lecturer trained the students on the *makharijul* letters stylishly and loudly (M.W.B.H. Yahya, 2019c).

Before learning, a pre-test was performed, and after the program, which entailed nine to fourteen meetings, a post-test was conducted.

Generally, learning to read the Qur`ān is performed classically. The number of students per class is around thirty-five, and the length of the study indicated that reading the Qur`ān can occur for 9 meetings x 60 minutes. However, the studying was done offline and online because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the offline or classical learning involved about 35 students per class with a duration of 9 x 60 minutes. Online learning can be effective if the number of students per class is around twenty, and it was held for a relatively long time, at 14 x 60 minutes. There were fourteen offline classes taught by seven lecturers, where each taught two, and twenty-five online groups, also taken by seven lecturers, where each took three to four.

2.2 Population and Sample Selection

The population was 1,109 UNISBA students from all non-religious faculties: Law, Science, Technology, Psychology, Economics, Communication, and Medicine. They are all students who are unable to read the Al-Qur`ān. Then, the sample was 998 students, which is 90%, with 290 at the pre-basic level and 708 primary-level readers, where both made up 29% and 71%, respectively.

2.3 Research Instrument

The pre and post-test research instruments employed the Al-Qur`ān Reading Ability Test. Subsequently, the ability to read the Qur`ān was divided into four levels, which were, first, the advanced level, where the individual is fluent in reading the Qur`ān with correct recitation. This is followed by the skilled level, which comprises fluency in reading Al-Qur`ān with little errors in recitation, and the basic level, where one can read but is slow and gets a lot of the recitation wrong. The fourth is the pre-basic level, which starts from the inability to recognize some *hijaiyah* letters. Consequently, students that had reached the first and second levels were assessed as able to read the Qur`ān, while those in the third and fourth levels were evaluated as unable.

Based on the pre-test results, students that were at the fourth or pre-basic level were trained using the bilhikmah books 1, 2, and 3, while those at the third or basic level used books 2 and 3.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed via IBM SPSS Statistics, and percentages were to score the level of the ability to read the Qur`ān. Conversely, the comparative test was employed between the offline and online classes and between the post-test and pre-test results.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Students' Ability Level to Read the Al-Qur`ān

The level of the students' ability to read the Al-Qur`ān before learning, i.e., pre-test, and after learning, which is post-test), for both the offline and online classes are shown in Figures 1-4 below.
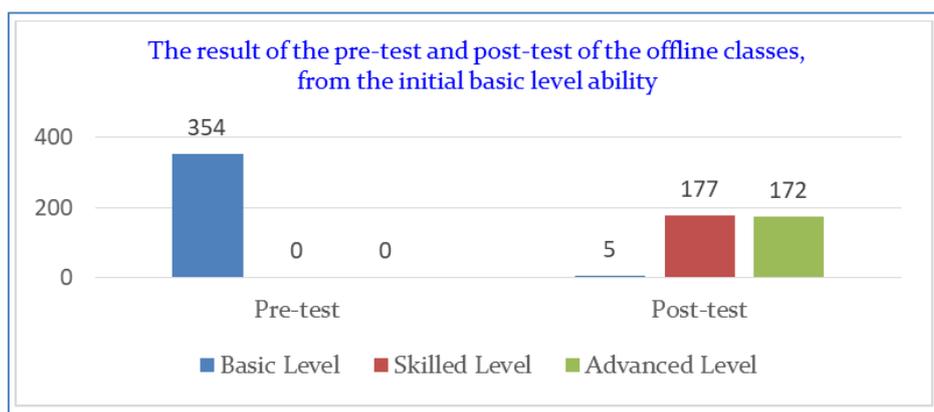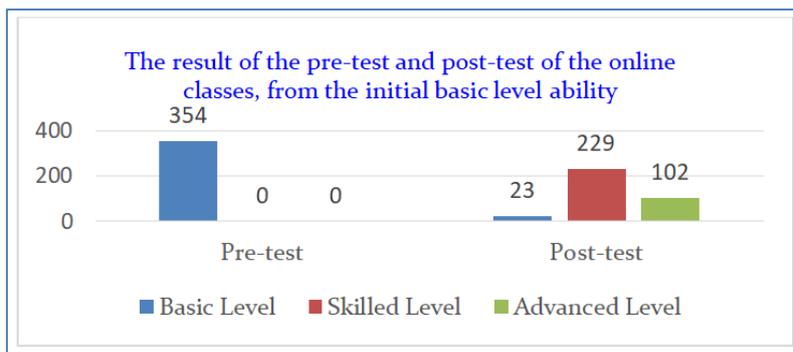

n pre-test = 354 students, n post-test = 354 students

Figure 1: The ability, from the initial level, of the students to read the Al-Qur`ān before and after learning in the offline class

Figure 1 shows an increase in the ability to read the Qur`ān after the offline classes. Before learning, i.e., pre-test results, about 354 students could not read the Al-Qur`ān at the basic level, but after the program, almost all, at a value of 98.6%, could. Half, i.e., 50%, of the students moved up to the skilled level, almost half, at 48.6%, moved up to the advanced position, and only a few students, at 1.4%, remained at the basic level.
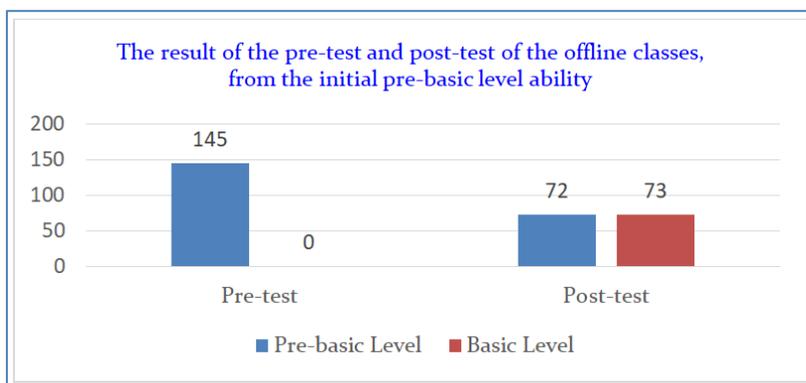
n pre-test = 354 students, n post-test = 354 students
Figure 2: The students' ability, from the initial, to read the Al-Qur`ān before and after learning in the online classes

Figure 2 shows an increase in the ability to read the Al-Qur`ān after the online classes. Although 354 students could not read the Al-Qur`ān at the basic level before learning, according to the pre-test results, almost all students at a value of 93.5% could after the program.

Most of the students, at 64.7%, moved up to the skilled level, a small proportion, at 28.8%, became advanced, while only a few students, at a value of 6.5%, remained at the elementary level.
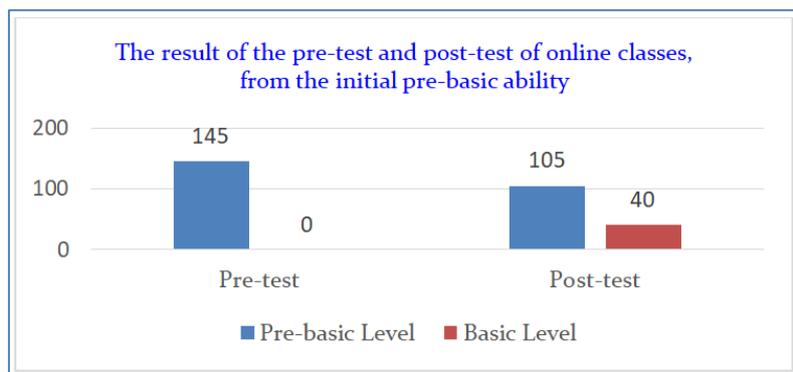

n pre-test = 145 students, n post-test = 145 students
Figure 3: The ability of the offline class students to read the Al-Qur`ān before and after learning, from the initial pre-basic level ability

Figure 3 shows an increase in the ability to read the Qur`ān after the offline classes. Before learning, i.e., pre-test results, 145 students could not read the Al-Qur`ān at the pre-basic level. Although they were still

unable to read it after learning, more than half of the students, which made up 50.3%, moved up to the elementary level, while almost half, at 49.7%, remained in the pre-basic position.

n pre-test = 145 students, n post-test = 145 students
Figure 4: The ability, from the initial pre-basic level, of the online class students to read the Al-Qur`ān before and after learning

Figure 4 shows an increase in the ability to read Al-Qur`ān after the online classes. Before learning, according to the pre-test results, 145 students could not

read the Al-Qur`ān at the pre-basic level. Although they were still unable to read the Qur`ān after learning, a small number of students, at 27.6%, moved up to the

Elementary level, while most of the others, at 72.4%, remained at the pre-basic level.

3.2. The Effectiveness of the Bilhikmah Method

After the bilhikmah method was implemented, there was an increase in the quantity and quality of students' ability to read the Qur`ān, as shown in the following table.

Table 1: Mean of the offline and online groups, and the t-test of the students' ability to read the Qur`ān

Group	Mean 1	Mean 2	t-test	Remark
1. Post-pre offline	2.90	1.71	39.05	Significant at alpha 0.01
2. Post-pre online	2.66	1.71	31.25	Significant at alpha 0.01
3. Pre offline-online	1.71	1.71	0	Not significant
4. Post offline-online	2.90	2.66	7.56	Significant at alpha 0.01
5. Offline-online gain	1.19	.94	7.56	Significant at alpha 0.01

n offline = 499 students, n online = 499 students

Table 1 shows that the bilhikmah method in the offline and online classes succeeded in improving the students' ability to read the Qur`ān, according to the values t = 39.05 and 31.25, which were significant at alpha .01 and df 498. Before learning, the two groups had the same mean score, 1.71, t = 0, and were not significant at alpha .05 and df 498. However, the offline classes were more successful, with a mean score of 2.90 after learning, while the online programs produced a value of 2.66. These values were evidenced by the significant t = 7.56 test results at alpha .01 and df 498. The difference in the final mean score was also strengthened by the results of the gain test, t = 7.56, which was significant at alpha .01 and df 498. Hence, the bilhikmah method was more successful in improving students' ability to read Al-Qur`ān in the offline classes than online.

Tables 2 and 3 below evaluate the student's ability to read the Al-Qur`ān, specifically from the initial basic and pre-basic skills in the offline and online classes.

Table 2: Mean of the offline and online groups, and t-test of the students' ability to read the Qur`ān, from the initial basic level.

Group	Mean 1	Mean 2	t-test	Remark
1. Post-pre offline	3.47	2.00	52.50	Significant at alpha 0.01
2. Post-pre online	3.22	2.00	41.73	Significant at alpha 0.01
3. Pre offline-online	2.00	2.00	0	Not significant
4. Post offline-online	3.47	3.22	6.34	Significant at alpha 0.01
5. Offline-online gain	1.47	1.22	6.34	Significant at alpha 0.01

n offline = 354 students, n online = 354 students

Table 2 shows that the bilhikmah method in the offline and online classes succeeded in improving the students' ability to read the Qur`ān from their initial position at the Basic level, according to the values t = 52.50 and 41.73, which were significant at alpha .01 and df 353. Before learning, the two groups had the same mean score, 2.00, at t = 0, which was not significant at alpha .05 and df 353. After learning, the offline classes were more successful, with an average score of 3.47, while the online programs produced a value of 3.22. These values were evidenced by the test result, t = 6.34, which was significant at alpha .01 and df 353. The difference in the mean post-learning score was also strengthened by the gain test result, t = 6.34 which was significant at alpha .01 and df 353. Therefore, the bilhikmah method in the offline classes was more successful in improving students' ability to read the Al-Qur`ān from the initial basic level than the online programs.

Table 3: Mean of the offline and online groups, and the t-test of the students' ability to read the Qur`ān, from the initial pre-basic level.

Group	Mean 1	Mean 2	t-test	Remark
1. Post-pre offline	1.50	1.00	12.08	Significant at alpha 0.01
2. Post-pre online	1.28	1.00	7.41	Significant at alpha 0.01
3. Pre-offline-online	1.00	1.00	0	Not significant
4. Post offline-online	1.50	1.28	4.13	Significant at alpha 0.01
5. Offline-online gain	.50	.28	4.13	Significant at alpha 0.01

n offline = 145 students, n online = 145 students

Table 3 shows that the bilhikmah method in offline and online classes succeeded in improving the students' ability to read the Qur`ān from the pre-basic level initial ability, according to values the t = 12.08 and 7.41, which were significant at alpha .01 and df 144. Before learning, the two groups had the same mean score, 1.00, at t = 0, which was insignificant at alpha .05 and df 144. After learning, the offline classes proved to be more successful with a mean score of 1.50, while the online program produced only 1.28. These values were evidenced by the significant t = 4.13 test results at alpha .01 and df 144. The difference in mean post-learning scores was also strengthened by the results of the gain test, t = 4.13, which was significant at alpha .01 and df 144. Hence, the bilhikmah method is more successful in improving students' ability to read the Qur`ān from the initial basic level offline, rather than via the online classes.

4. DISCUSSION

This research discovered that the bilhikmah method was very effective in alleviating Al-Qur`ān illiteracy in students. From a total of 534 students at the Elementary level for offline classes, 177, i.e., 50% rose to the skilled level, and 172, which accounted for 48.6%, even jumped to the advanced level. Some were stagnant, as five students, at 1.4%, remained at the elementary level. Likewise, out of 534 online students, 229, which constituted 64.7% rose to the skilled level, as many as 102, at 28.8%, became advanced, while only 23 students, at 6.5%, remained stagnant. The students that came from the pre-primary level also experienced an increase, as 73 persons, at 50.3%, out of the 145 offline students went up to the elementary level, while 72, at 49.7%, remained stagnant at the pre-primary level. In the online classes, forty (40) persons, at 27.6%, out of the 145 students, progressed to the elementary level, while the rest 105 students, making up 72.4%, were stagnant.

Separate interviews were conducted with two offline and online class lecturers each, along with five offline and stagnant online class students each, to inquire why they did not improve. It turned out that the four lecturers gave the same answer, which was that the students were not learning, and the offline teachers said the strongest evidence was that they rarely attended classes. One lecturer said that the stagnant students only attended three to four times out of the obligated nine times, while another revealed that they showed up three to five times. Likewise, the online class lecturer said that stagnant students were only present three to six times out of the obligated fourteen times, while another said that they only attended three to seven times.

The ten students interviewed also gave the same answer, as eight said that they rarely attended the Al-Qur`ān literacy programs because they were lazy, had negative thinking, and thought reading the Qur`ān was difficult. These students were taught to read the Qur`ān in elementary, junior, and even in senior high school, but

it was always unsuccessful. Therefore, it was the same again now because they thought the reading program would fail too! This feeling is indeed the main vehicle for non-Arabic speakers when learning to read the Arabic script (Hansen, 2010). The students that were unable to read the Al-Qur`ān, in this case, were those that recognized the *hijaiyah* letters, could read Arabic words or short sentences, but stopped learning and so could not read the Qur`ān. Apart from laziness for the other two students, they also suspected that the university could not eradicate Al-Qur`ān illiteracy. However, it turns out that all of them are required to take part in remedial teaching because UNISBA will not graduate students that cannot read the Qur`ān. They finally, either through their own will or by force, had to take the remedial teaching seriously. Those from Bandung city participated in nine offline learning meetings, while those from outside the city partook in the online learning program. As a result, all the 318 students, that is 100%, that engaged in the remedial teaching passed and were able to read the Qur`ān fluently. Also, a total of 198 students, at 62.3%, progressed to the skilled level, and 120, which accounted for 37.7%, became advanced. At the end of the program, all the 998 participants were able to read the Qur`ān fluently at skilled and advanced levels.

The success factor of Al-Qur`ān literacy eradication is that the bilhikmah method is quite simple and systematic, with only three volumes of pocketbooks. Therefore, it fulfills the principles of good teaching materials, which requires that it must be simple and systematic (Suyitno, 2007; Irawati & Saifuddin, 2018). The bilhikmah method introduces the form and reading of letters using the set approach. Also, the association of *hijaiyah* letter shapes and sounds are according to phonic principles in foreign language learning (Clark, 2017; Prayogo & Widyaningrum, 2017). Following the learning principles, the bilhikmah book starts the teaching materials from simple to complex (Magdalena *et al.*, 2020). Another simplicity of this method is the short learning time, which requires only nine offline or fourteen online meetings. This duration corresponds with the principle of foreign language learning, which necessitates that the learning time must be limited (Tarnopolsky, 2016).

Another success factor is that it follows the principles of teaching and learning in foreign language learning, which requires that it should be according to one's needs and interests (Tarnopolsky, 2016; Makhkamova & Amirkulov, 2020; Suyitno, 2007). UNISBA has an Al-Qur`ān literacy program, which demands, first, that every student must be able to read the Al-Qur`ān, and second, that the school will not graduate students that cannot.

This literacy technique was also compared with other methods of reading the Qur`ān. The effectiveness of the offline *Tahqiq* method, which was implemented before the Covid-19 pandemic period, was 54%, where

only 52 out of 96 students that initially could not read the Al-Qur`ān became able (T. Supriadi & Julia, 2019). This rate was obtained even though it took a longer period and lasted for fourteen meetings. Conversely, the success of the offline class with the bilhikmah method reached 84%. Padang State University also encourages students to read the Qur`ān fluently. However, only 73 persons, at 30.4%, among the 240 participants in the Islamic Religious Education course reached the *Hadr* and *Tartil* levels, which are equivalent to the skilled and advanced levels in the bilhikmah method. Meanwhile, the remaining 167 students, at 69.6%, remained at the *Tahqiq* and *Tadwir* levels, which are the same as the pre-elementary and basic levels in the bilhikmah method (Murniyetti *et al.*, 2012). The 3A approach, which utilized the Iqro book for the group E students and corresponded with the pre-basic level in the bilhikmah method, succeeded in introducing the *hijaiyah* letters (Alhamuddin *et al.*, 2018) but did not alleviate Qur`ān illiteracy.

5. CONCLUSION

The bilhikmah method is very effective in eliminating Al-Qur`ān illiteracy in students, both offline and online. Therefore, research recommends that the method should be performed offline in normal times, although it can be conducted online during this Covid-19 pandemic. Also, higher education institutions that have Al-Qur`ān literacy programs should implement the bilhikmah method.

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