

# Implementation of Qur'an Reading and Writing Policy in Bekasi Schools: Supporting Factors, Challenges, and Strategies for Improvement

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**ABSTRACT.** This study aims to analyze the implementation of policies to improve Quranic literacy (*Baca Tulis Qur'an*, BTQ) in schools/madrasahs, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and provide strategic recommendations to improve the effectiveness of implementation. The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observation, and policy document analysis. The research subjects included school/madrasah principals, BTQ teachers, and representatives of elementary and junior high school education department official in Bekasi Regency. The results showed that the successful implementation of the BTQ policy was influenced by teacher competence, regional policy support, the availability of learning media, and parental participation. However, the main challenges included limited teacher training, a lack of innovation in learning methods, and infrastructure constraints. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the need for policy integration with adaptive learning strategies, teacher capacity building, and optimization of collaboration among stakeholders. These findings imply the need for local governments and educational units to develop sustainable BTQ teacher competency development programs and provide adequate resource support to strengthen the quality of BTQ learning.

**Keywords:** *Educational collaboration, Policy implementation, Quranic literacy, Teacher competencies*

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## INTRODUCTION

The ability to read and write the Qur'an (BTQ) is a fundamental skill for Muslim students that not only supports their understanding of Islamic teachings but also shapes their religious character, which forms the basis of their daily behavior (Arifudin & Rukajat, 2023; Istiyani et al., 2024; Setiawan et al., 2025). Amidst the challenges of moral degradation and weakening religious literacy, improving BTQ skills has become a strategic issue in national education policy, especially in madrasahs and schools that integrate religious education (Niyozov & Memon, 2011; Mukhibat et al., 2024; Muntazor, 2024). This research is important because it can contribute to developing a theory of religious-based education policy implementation, while offering practical recommendations for improving the quality of BTQ learning at the educational unit level.

In general, BTQ learning in various regions shows significant variations, both in methods (Fanani et al., 2019; Nasution et al., 2021; Sapuroh, 2022; Zahraturreihana et al., 2024; Zakaria et al.,

2024), resource availability (Sali & Marasigan, 2020; Zulkifli et al., 2022; Amalia et al., 2024), and policy support. Although the government has established BTQ as local content in several regions (Cahyaningsih, 2017; Maspupah, 2022), its implementation still faces obstacles such as a shortage of competent teachers (Fitri et al., 2021), a lack of innovative learning media (Wahyuni, 2008; Mujib & Marhamah, 2020; Karimah, 2024), and inadequate time allocation (Pradibta et al., 2019). These conditions raise questions about the effectiveness of BTQ policy implementation and the extent to which local government policies can achieve their intended objectives. The main issue that is the focus of this study is the lack of synchronization between the policy's objectives to improve BTQ skills and the reality of its implementation in the field regarding learning strategies, resource support, and stakeholder involvement. This challenge requires serious study to find a more effective implementation model, based on an analysis of the supporting and inhibiting factors faced by educational units.

So far, research related to the implementation of BTQ policies is still limited, especially those that combine policy implementation theory approaches, such as the Van Meter and Van Horn models, with the context of Al-Qur'an learning in schools/madrasas. Zeelen et al.'s (2011) study highlights the importance of combining bottom-up and top-down approaches to improve the quality of adult education policy implementation in South Africa. Meanwhile, a recent study by Pamoengkas and Utami (2025) utilized Machine Learning algorithms to improve the evaluation process in Al-Qur'an memorization education at the Al-Qur'an Science University (UNSIQ), which is an innovative approach to improving the quality and objectivity of education. Additionally, Abd Rahman's (2022) study highlights the importance of teacher training and methodological innovation, but few have comprehensively discussed integrating education policy with the principles of Quranic learning.

Findings from previous studies indicate that effective BTQ learning requires synergy between policy (Herlambang et al., 2024), teacher competence (Abd Mubi et al., 2024; Kurttekin, 2024), technological support (Hanafi et al., 2019; Akyüz, 2021; Karimah et al., 2022), and parental involvement (Li, 2023). The findings of Hanafi et al. (2019) state that the use of e-BBQ has been proven to improve Al-Qur'an reading skills compared to traditional methods significantly. Aditia et al. (2024) found that *the Hafiz* application can help hafiz memorize the Al-Qur'an and conduct independent memorization tests to make the learning process more effective and efficient. Herlina et al. (2021) also found that the *Tilawati* teaching method, accompanied by reward and punishment strategies, evaluation, and collaboration among students, can increase students' independence and confidence in learning the Qur'an. It emphasizes the urgency of research to identify the key factors determining the success of BTQ policy implementation.

In Indonesia, local governments have issued special regulations to strengthen students' religious literacy. One example is Bekasi Regency Regulation No. 9 of 2012, which mandates improving students' ability to read and write the Qur'an (BTQ). Several studies show that BTQ programs can improve students' Quran literacy and contribute to character development (Sapuroh, 2022; Fadillah et al., 2023; Azmi et al., 2024). However, there are still challenges related to management, the availability of qualified teachers, and sustainable curriculum development (Maya & Lesmana, 2018; Nurhayati & Rosyadi, 2022). These issues indicate the need for a more comprehensive investigation of how the BTQ policy is implemented and managed at the school level. Therefore, this study focuses on implementing BTQ policies in four elementary schools and two junior high schools in Bekasi Regency, West Java, Indonesia. Thus, the main objective of this study is to analyze the implementation of policies to improve BTQ skills in schools/madrasahs, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and provide strategic recommendations to improve their effectiveness. This article aims to produce a comprehensive overview of the implementation practices of the BTQ policy that can be used as a reference for policymakers, education practitioners, and researchers in developing more adaptive and contextual learning models.

## **METHOD**

### *Research Design*

This study applies a qualitative approach using phenomenological methods, as it is considered the most appropriate for exploring and understanding the life experiences of individuals involved in implementing policies to improve Quranic literacy skills (BTQ) among elementary and junior high school students in Bekasi Regency. The researcher seeks to capture the meaning and essence of the participants' experiences by placing their subjective perspectives at the center of attention. Thus, the participants' experiences are understood in the context of their real lives, as emphasized in the views of Moustakas (1994) and Creswell and Poth (2016).

### *Research Location and Participants*

This research was conducted in Bekasi Regency, involving four elementary schools (SD) and two junior high schools (SMP) as research locations. Data collection took place over nine months, from October 2024 to June 2025, covering the preparation, data collection, and analysis stages. Participants (n = 18) were selected using purposive sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015) based on their direct or indirect involvement in implementing the BTQ policy. Participants consisted of Islamic Education or BTQ teachers (n = 8), school principals (n = 6), and Bekasi Regency Education Office officials (n = 4). The inclusion criteria were: (1) active involvement in the implementation of the BTQ policy, (2) at least two years of experience in their current role, and (3) willingness to participate in this study.

### *Data Collection Techniques*

To collect data, this study utilized several complementary techniques. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to explore the participants' personal and professional experiences related to implementing the BTQ policy. Each interview session lasted between 25 and 40 minutes, was audio recorded with the participants' consent, and then transcribed word for word. The open-ended questions allowed participants to describe their thoughts and experiences freely. In addition, this study also involved participant observation to observe behavior, actions, and interactions in a natural setting during BTQ-related activities. All observations were recorded in field notes, focusing on the implementation process and the level of participant engagement. Document analysis was also done by reviewing official regulations, school documents, meeting minutes, reports, and other relevant materials to complement these two techniques.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis in this study followed the phenomenological analysis steps outlined by Moustakas (1994). These steps included phenomenological reduction, horizontalization, thematic coding, identification of essence, and narrative synthesis. Phenomenological reduction is carried out by suspending various personal assumptions so that the researcher remains open to the views and experiences of the participants. Next, horizontalization is done by identifying meaningful statements from the interview transcripts. The statements obtained are then processed through thematic coding, which involves grouping the statements into themes relevant to the study's focus. The researcher synthesizes the essence from the emerging themes to find the fundamental meaning or universal essence of the participants' experiences. In the final stage, the researcher compiles a narrative synthesis that integrates all the themes into a comprehensive, coherent, and easily understandable description of the phenomenon.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

Data from interviews with 18 participants—consisting of Islamic Education or BTQ teachers (n = 8), school principals (n = 6), and Bekasi District Education Office officials (n = 4)—as well

as field observations and document analysis, yielded six main findings: (1) policy content, (2) school response to the policy, (3) policy implementation, (4) barriers to implementation, (5) effectiveness of implementation, and (6) impact of implementation. A summary of these findings is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of Findings on the Implementation of the Policy to Improve Qur'anic Literacy (BTQ) in Schools in Bekasi District

Theme	Description	Example Evidence (Participant Code)
Policy Content	Policy formulation includes clear objectives, benefits, desired changes, designation of BTQ as a local content subject, availability of resources, and stable socio-political conditions.	<i>"The policy is clear. It states BTQ as part of local content, and we have sufficient teachers, though training is still needed."</i> (T3)
School Response	Schools integrate BTQ into learning activities as local content; some offer it as an extracurricular option, and encourage home-based BTQ learning.	<i>"We make BTQ a local content class, and also encourage children to continue learning at home."</i> (P2)
Policy Implementation	Increased awareness among students and parents; dominant use of the <i>Iqra'</i> method, some Qiraati; no integration with digital learning tools; limited final assessment, and no staged certification.	<i>"We mostly use Iqra'. Digital tools are not yet applied, and there is no certification to mark levels."</i> (T5)
Hindering Factors	Limited facilities and infrastructure; insufficient BTQ teacher competence; weak cooperation with parents and BTQ community; fragmented monitoring and evaluation; absence of certification.	<i>"Parents help sometimes, but there is no binding program, so cooperation is inconsistent."</i> (P4)
Effectiveness	Implementation not yet effective; imbalance between allocated BTQ learning time and class size; lack of qualified BTQ teachers; internal-only evaluation without external involvement.	<i>"With 40 students and only 1 hours a week, it is hard to achieve strong BTQ skills."</i> (T7)
Impact	Improved BTQ skills; increased student interest in the Qur'an; positive behavioral changes (discipline, responsibility, confidence); stronger parental and teacher awareness of BTQ importance.	<i>"We see students more disciplined and confident, especially after dbuha prayer activities."</i> (O2)

The policy to improve BTQ skills is comprehensive, covering objectives, benefits, expected behavioral changes, the establishment of BTQ as a local content subject, and resource allocation. Participants acknowledged the stable socio-economic and political conditions that support its implementation. However, some participants noted the need for continuous teacher development to maintain the quality of implementation. Most schools responded positively by integrating BTQ into the curriculum as a local content subject. Some schools also positioned BTQ as an extracurricular activity. In addition, teachers and principals encouraged students to continue learning BTQ at home or in their communities to supplement limited class time.

This implementation raises awareness of the importance of BTQ skills among students and parents. The *Iqra'* method is predominantly used, with some adoption of Qiraati. Digital technology has not been integrated into BTQ learning. The absence of a tiered certification system limits the structured monitoring of skill development. Key constraints include inadequate learning facilities, gaps in teacher competency, non-binding cooperation with parents and the BTQ community, fragmented monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and a lack of formal certification.

The implementation of this policy is not yet fully effective. Factors that hinder its effectiveness include limited learning time compared to large class sizes, a shortage of qualified BTQ teachers, and an internal evaluation process that does not involve external stakeholders,

thereby reducing the overall accuracy of performance measurements. Despite these challenges, the policy has produced several positive results: improved BTQ skills among students, increased interest in the Qur'an, more disciplined and responsible behavior, higher self-confidence, and increased awareness among parents and teachers of the importance of BTQ. Several schools have reported increased participation in religious activities, such as the dhuha prayer.

## **Discussion**

The content of the policy to improve BTQ capabilities in Bekasi Regency shows a relatively comprehensive formulation framework. This policy covers objectives, benefits, behavioral change indicators, and establishing BTQ as local content with resource support. Stable socio-economic and political conditions also support the implementation of the policy. Conceptually, this formulation aligns with research findings that state that effective education policies must include objectives, tangible benefits, and the availability of resources (Cobb & Jackson, 2012; Deas, 2018; Mugendawala & Muijs, 2020). However, although the policy appears comprehensive, some participants emphasized the need for continuous teacher competency development. It is in line with Brain et al. (2006), who state that teachers are the leading actors in policy implementation, so the quality and sustainability of teacher training are key factors in successful education policy implementation. Teachers mediate between policy and its practical application (Smit, 2005), ensuring that the desired results are achieved, which directly influences the effectiveness of policy implementation. In line with this, Good et al. (2017) reinforce that teachers are not passive recipients of policy directives; they actively interpret and adapt policies to suit students' local context and specific needs. This adaptation process is important for the successful implementation of policies.

Schools responded to this policy by integrating Quranic Reading and Writing (BTQ) into the curriculum as a local content subject, while some schools also offered it as an extracurricular activity. Teachers and principals encouraged students to continue learning BTQ at home, demonstrating efforts to strengthen the role of the family. These findings align with the school-based curriculum adaptation theory, emphasizing that schools can adapt policies to local needs (Hashim et al., 2022). According to the street-level bureaucracy theory (1980), frontline workers, such as school leaders and teachers, have significant discretion in implementing policies, often adapting them to suit the local context and resource constraints (Jallow & Sanner, 2023). Meanwhile, Siciliano (2017) states that the social networks and professional trajectories of school staff also shape the effectiveness of policy implementation. Meanwhile, Davidovitz and Schechter (2024) outline that teachers and school leaders rely on their networks to access resources and information, which in turn influences the performance and outcomes of policy implementation. It means that school leaders and teachers, as field bureaucrats, navigate resource constraints and leverage social networks to suit their unique contexts, ultimately shaping the outcomes of these policies.

In its implementation, the Iqra' method has become the dominant approach, with a small portion using the Qiraati method (Aulia et al., 2021). However, digital technology has not been integrated, and the absence of gradual certification limits the evaluation of student progress. It indicates a problem between the demands of 21st-century learning and traditional practices that are still strong. Recent research by Romadhona and Mardiana (2025) shows that the systematic use of the Iqra' method combined with formative evaluation significantly affects students' ability to read the Qur'an. Usiono et al. (2021) also found that using the Iqra' method combined with letter cards can improve the ability of elementary school children to read the Qur'an. Meanwhile, recent literature emphasizes that digital technology can strengthen the effectiveness of Quran learning through adaptive interactive media (Adhityarini, 2021; Maisarah et al., 2024; Yahya et al., 2024). Thus, the low utilization of digital technology in implementing BTQ indicates a delay in innovation that can hinder achieving maximum results.

The main obstacles to implementation include limited facilities, low teacher competence, weak cooperation with parents and the BTQ community, and fragmented evaluation without formal certification. These factors indicate that the policy implementation support system is not yet robust. Khan and Khandaker (2016) emphasize that the main factors affecting implementation performance are the quality of resources, bureaucratic capacity, and effective cross-actor coordination. Sandfort and Moulton (2014) emphasize that effective policy implementation not only requires clear objectives and regulations but must also consider the capacity of actors, the availability of resources, institutional support, and a sustainable environment. It confirms that weaknesses in teacher training, limited facilities, and weak evaluation mechanisms in implementing BTQ are structural obstacles that commonly occur in implementing public policies. Therefore, implementing the BTQ policy will be challenging in achieving the expected effectiveness without strengthening teacher capacity, adequate facilities, and institutional support.

Despite various obstacles, this policy has improved BTQ skills, students' interest in the Qur'an, and character building, such as discipline, responsibility, and self-confidence. It supports the character education theory proposed by Lickona (2013), which emphasizes that religious values education can holistically develop students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. A study by Shaleh et al. (2024) at the Ar-Rohmah Putri Islamic Boarding School revealed that a holistic-integrative approach in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum could foster comprehensive cognitive, character, and spiritual aspects. In addition, the increased awareness of parents and teachers regarding the importance of BTQ indicates the formation of shared values between schools and families. It means that collective awareness among parents and teachers regarding the importance of the Read and Write the Qur'an (BTQ) program can unite the educational vision between schools and families. The results of Safitri's (2023) study state that school-family-community partnerships in children's education strengthen school programs, particularly through partnership frameworks, teachers' communication skills, and program sustainability. It means that collaboration between schools, families, and communities is an important foundation in strengthening the quality of education. However, these positive achievements are still more dominant in the affective and motivational aspects than in the technical mastery of reading and writing the Qur'an in a structured manner.

The policy to improve BTQ skills in Bekasi Regency can strengthen students' Al-Qur'an literacy while fostering Islamic character values. However, its effectiveness is still limited by structural constraints, teacher competence, and a lack of learning innovation. Therefore, the strategy to strengthen implementation needs to focus on three aspects: (1) continuous capacity building and training for teachers, (2) the use of digital technology to support learning and evaluation, and (3) external involvement in the monitoring and certification process. With these strategic interventions, the BTQ policy will improve technical skills in reading and writing the Qur'an and strengthen the Islamic character of the younger generation at the elementary and secondary school levels.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the implementation of policies to improve Quranic literacy (BTQ) in Bekasi Regency has a comprehensive policy framework and has received positive responses from schools. However, its effectiveness is still limited due to constraints in facilities, teacher competence, a lack of digital innovation, and weak external evaluation. The main findings cover six important aspects, namely policy content, school response, implementation, obstacles, effectiveness, and impact, which generally show positive achievements in improving BTQ skills, motivation, and character building of students, although not yet optimal technically. Theoretically, this study reinforces the theory of policy implementation that emphasizes the role of actors, resources, and local context, while practically providing strategic input for schools and local governments to strengthen teacher capacity, the use of digital technology, and collaboration with parents and the

community. The limitations of this study lie in the limited number of participants and narrow regional focus, so further research is recommended to use a mixed methods approach with broader coverage to obtain a more comprehensive and applicable picture.

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