

Quran Teacher: Future Profession or Devotion to the Ummah?

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Abstract

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Keywords: *Quran teacher, career prospects, eaching profession* Quran teachers play an important role in preserving and disseminating Islamic religious knowledge. This profession faces a dilemma between devotion to the community and the demands of modern professionalism. This study aims to analyze the roles, challenges, and prospects of Quran teachers in the contemporary social and economic context. A qualitative method with a phenomenological approach was chosen for this study. Data were collected from one hundred and five Quran teachers selected through purposive sampling and analyzed thematically using NVivo 12 software. The results of the study indicate that, although the role of Quran teachers is still considered noble and meaningful, Quran teachers experience economic difficulties and lack social recognition. Therefore, strategies are needed to improve the quality and professionalism of Quran teachers and strengthen their role in society. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of Quran teachers and its implications for the development of Islamic society.

INTRODUCTION

Al-Qur'an teachers have a special position in the Muslim community. Since the time of the Prophet SAW, they have been known as guardians and spreaders of revelation, who are responsible for guiding Muslims to understand, practice, and memorize the Holy Book (Hasanah, 2021; Muslimah et al., 2024; Nasution & Nasution, 2025). This profession has long been considered a form of worship and devotion that is not only spiritually valuable, but also contributes to the development of Islamic civilization. In many traditional Muslim societies, the teacher of the Koran is seen as a central figure in religious education who maintains the continuity of Islamic values from generation to generation (Chanifah et al., 2021; Mujahid, 2021).

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They become role models, not only in reading, but also in behavior and morals. Their presence fills non-formal educational spaces, mosques, prayer rooms, and even private homes. They do not just teach letters and tajwid, but also instill manners and sincerity in living a religious life. This position shows that teachers of the Qur'an are not just technical professions, but also guardians of the morals and spirituality of society (Mustakim et al., 2021). Religious education that was previously based on tradition and kinship began to enter the institutional and professional realm. This also influenced the community's expectations of religious teachers, including in terms of their competence, teaching methods, and welfare (Cassata & Allensworth, 2021; Goodwin, 2021). The demands of the times mean that this profession is no longer sufficient to be carried out only with a spirit of devotion, but also requires a standard of professionalism that is equal to other teaching professions. Many parents have begun to compare the quality of Quran teachers with formal teachers in schools, and this creates its own pressure for Quran teachers (Staudt Willet, 2024). The desire to provide the best education to children fosters high expectations for the quality of reading, mastery of the science of tajwid, and an adequate pedagogical approach. Al-Quran teachers are required to not only have good memorization and reading skills, but also be able to explain the meaning, provide motivation, and manage the class systematically and enjoyably (Boice et al., 2021; Engkizar et al., 2025; Nik Abdullah et al., 2021).

Changes in the landscape of Islamic education, especially in the field of memorizing and learning the Qur'an, have also placed Qur'an teachers in an increasingly complex position (Bintoro et al., 2023; Hasibuan et al., 2025). They are expected to not only be proficient in reading and teaching the Qur'an, but also be able to manage classes, understand the psychology of student learning, and master educational technology. This challenge arises amidst the fact that many Qur'an teachers work in very limited conditions, both in terms of formal recognition. economic income, and opportunities for professional development (Gazi et al., 2024). Various training and certification have not reached all groups of Quran teachers, especially those in remote areas or teaching independently. In such conditions, the professionalization of Quran teachers is an urgent issue to be discussed widely. Without systemic intervention from educational institutions and the government, this profession will continue to stagnate and be less popular with the younger generation who are starting to think about their economic future realistically (Emynorane et al., 2024; Farah et al., 2025; Munawar, 2022).

At the same time, the enthusiasm of the community in studying the Qur'an is increasing. The phenomenon of the growth of tahfidz houses, taklim assemblies, and private Qur'an reading classes is a sign of increasing religious awareness in various circles (Ismail et al., 2023). This condition creates a high demand for competent and dedicated Qur'an teachers. The demand does not only come from formal educational institutions such as schools and Islamic boarding schools, but also from urban families who want to provide the best religious education for their children. This situation creates a great opportunity for the emergence of a new generation of professional and qualified Qur'an teachers (Arina et al., 2024; Suharsongko et al., 2023). In the world of modern education, the profession of a Quran teacher is starting to be seen as a potential career path. However, without an adequate support system, including regulations, curriculum, allowances, and career levels, this opportunity can be hampered by complex social realities. The need for the development of Quran teachers is a strategic priority in the development of Islamic education in the

future (Abu-Tineh et al., 2023; Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021).

Even though it is socially recognized as a noble profession, Koran teachers often face challenges in fulfilling their basic life needs (Kardi et al., 2023; Supa'at & Ihsan, 2023). Not a few of them have to work part-time elsewhere to meet the economic needs of their families. Some teachers even teach without getting proper compensation. This has the potential to reduce motivation and consistency in providing quality teaching. On the other hand, the absence of a certification system, career ladder, or regulations governing the professional standards of Al-Qur'an teachers also strengthens the inequality that occurs in the world of religious education (Utari et al., 2024). In an increasingly competitive society, professions without economic certainty are often abandoned by the younger generation who tend to choose more promising career paths. This has hampered the regeneration of Quran teachers, even experiencing a decline in quantity and quality in some areas. If this condition continues, the mission of preaching through the path of Quranic education will face serious challenges in terms of sustainability (Khoiri & Aryati, 2021; Riaz et al., 2023). This condition raises a fundamental question: is being a Qur'an teacher a future profession that is worth fighting for economically and institutionally, or should it still be undertaken as a form of spiritual devotion without material expectations? This question is not only relevant for individual Qur'an teachers, but also for policy makers, educational institutions, and the wider community who rely on the moral and spiritual education of their children on Qur'an teachers (Aziz & Huda, 2024; Syahri Ramadona et al., 2022; Zubairi Muzakki & Nurdin, 2022).

Previous research by Nimah & Rahmawati (2023) in their article entitled "Educational Technology in Islamic Education: A Systematic Literature Review" uses a critical literature study approach to Islamic education policies in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei. This study analyzes the strategic role of Qur'an teachers in the Islamic education system and finds that the absence of a standard professional framework hinders the comprehensive strengthening of teacher capacity. They highlight the absence of regulations, lack of access to ongoing training, and the absence of adequate national standards for Qur'an teachers. The results of the study conclude that strengthening the profession of Qur'an teachers must be carried out institutionally through educational regulations, certification systems, and state-based ongoing coaching support. Their conclusions emphasize the importance of integrating the profession of Qur'an teachers into the national education system to improve the quality of Islamic education in the Southeast Asian region.

Meanwhile, Qadri (2024) in their study entitled "Countering extremism through Islamic education: Curriculum and pedagogical approaches" used an ethnographic approach with participatory observation in urban environments in Jakarta and Cairo. This study describes new dynamics in the profession of Quran teachers which are now in great demand by urban Muslim families seeking quality religious education for their children. Their findings show that despite the high demand, most Quran teachers are not yet equipped with modern pedagogical methods and tend to still rely on traditional teaching models. The results of the study showed that teachers had difficulty in meeting the expectations of urban communities regarding the quality of teaching, especially in terms of conmunication, learning psychology, and the use of digital media. Qodri concluded that without training and certification interventions based on urban needs, the profession of Quran teachers will be left behind in responding to the challenges of the times and the needs of contemporary Muslim families. In the context of remote areas, Sulaiman (2019) through his article "Teaching the Quran in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities for Rural Religious Educators" uses a qualitative case study approach to Quran teachers in several villages in the southern Philippines and the interior of Indonesia. This study highlights how Quran teachers in remote areas face major gaps in access to training, teaching materials, and economic welfare. The results of the study show that teachers in these areas mostly teach voluntarily, with religious knowledge obtained informally, and do not have adequate institutional support. This study concludes that the professionalism of Quran teachers cannot be built without the presence of the state through training, incentives, and certification, especially in areas far from education centers. The researcher emphasizes that without a strong support system, the sustainability of Quran education in rural areas will face serious threats.

To strengthen the conceptual basis and identify current research trends related to Al-Qur'an teachers, a bibliometric analysis was conducted on a number of relevant scientific publications using VOSviewer software (Apriantoro & Susanto, 2024; Asyha et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2024). Figure 1 below presents a visualization of the keyword co-occurrence network that frequently appears in academic studies on the professionalism, competence, and challenges of Al-Quran teachers. This visualization provides a thematic overview that shows the main research focus, frequently studied issue clusters, and potential research gaps that are still open to be developed in further studies.

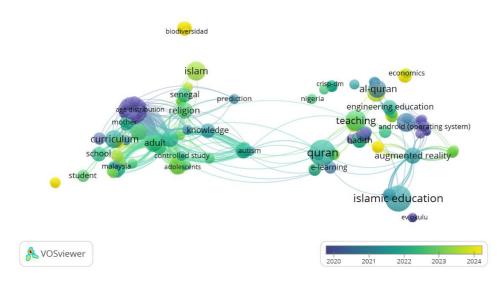


Figure 1 bibliometric analysis based on word mapping key to related scientific publications

The visualization above shows thematic connections in global academic literature throughout 2020 to 2024. The terms "quran", "al-quran", "teaching", "islamic education", and "curriculum" emerge as dominant nodes that mark the intensity of discourse in this field. The central position of the word "teaching" which is directly connected to "quran", "hadith", and "islamic education" confirms that the focus of research is still very strong on the methodological and pedagogical aspects of teaching the Qur'an. The explicit absence of the term "quran teacher" or "quran educator" as a separate entity in this visualization shows that the role and identity of the profession of Qur'an teachers have not been specifically raised in academic literature. The topic tends to be absorbed into more general clusters such as teaching, curriculum, or religion. This reflects the still limited attention to the dimensions of professionalism and welfare of Qur'an teachers as separate objects of study. In fact, their existence is at a crucial point that connects revelation and society, between Islamic values and contemporary educational practices.

In addition, the emergence of terms such as e-learning, augmented reality, and android (operating system) indicate the beginning of the adoption of technology in the process of learning the Qur'an. However, the link between this digital transformation and the role of Qur'an teachers is still weak and less explicit in the literature map. This indicates the need for further academic exploration of the readiness of Qur'an teachers in facing the challenges of technology-based pedagogy. Thus, the findings from this visualization strengthen the urgency of the main question in this article: Will Qur'an teachers continue to operate as a form of spiritual devotion, or develop into a future profession that is institutionally and professionally recognized? The absence of the term "Quran teacher" as a dominant keyword is a reflection as well as a call to build a new academic narrative that positions Qur'an teachers as strategic actors in global Islamic education.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method, namely an approach that aims to understand the meaning of experiences experienced by individuals or groups in the context of their daily lives (Neubauer et al., 2019; Putri et al., 2025). Phenomenology was chosen because this study seeks to explore in depth how Qur'an teachers interpret their roles, challenges, and professional prospects in contemporary social and economic realities. In this approach, researchers do not attempt to test hypotheses or generalize findings to a wider population, but rather focus on exploring meaning and deep understanding from the subjective experiences of informants. The targets of this study were Qur'an teachers who actively teach in various non-formal and informal educational settings such as tahfidz houses, TPA, taklim assemblies, and private tutoring at home. The number of participants in this study was 105 Qur'an teachers spread across various regions, who were selected using purposive sampling. Data collection techniques were carried out through three main methods, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies (Ainiyah et al., 2025; Urcia, 2021; Yanto et al., 2025).

To facilitate the process of processing and mapping large amounts of qualitative data, researchers used NVivo 12 software, which is one of the commonly used tools in thematic-based qualitative research. Through NVivo, interviews and field notes are systematically coded, so that the main patterns in the data can be recognized and analyzed more accurately (Nisa et al., 2021; Parida et al., 2021). The analysis was conducted through several stages, namely: (1) data transcription, (2) open coding, (3) categorization, and (4) theme extraction. Each theme that emerged was then cross-tested with observation and documentation data to maintain validity and consistency. To maintain the validity of the data, this study applied the triangulation technique, namely by comparing data from various sources and methods. Overall, the method used in this study was designed to capture the reality experienced by Al-Qur'an teachers authentically and completely. The phenomenological approach used allows researchers not only to see phenomena from the outside, but also to understand the inner dynamics and values that shape the way Al-Qur'an

Purposive Sampling, 105 Qur'an Teachers) Belection of Qualitative Methods (Phenomenological Approach)

teachers view their profession. The entire flow in this study can be seen in Figure 2 below:

Fig 2. Flow of Research Methods

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study produced three main findings that are interrelated and form a complete picture of the dynamics of the lives of Qur'an teachers in the modern era: (1) the meaning of the role of Qur'an teachers in society, (2) social and economic challenges in carrying out this profession, and (3) future prospects for the Qur'an teaching profession in the context of professionalism. These findings were obtained from processing interview data, field observations, and documentation through thematic analysis using NVivo 12. Each theme was developed through recurring codes from the teachers' narratives and refined into conclusions that can explain the real conditions faced by Qur'an teachers in various regional and institutional settings. The presentation of these results is also accompanied by direct quotes from informants to strengthen the validity of the data and present authentic voices from the field.

The Meaning of the Role of Al-Quran Teachers in Society

Quran teachers are consistently perceived by informants as guardians of divine values in society. For them, teaching the Quran is not merely a pedagogical activity, but rather a manifestation of moral and spiritual responsibility. Most informants stated that being a Quran teacher is a form of worship and invaluable charity, because they are involved in shaping the morals and religious understanding of the Muslim generation from an early age. They also see this profession as a form of exemplary behavior and an extension of the prophetic message. In many cases, Quran teachers become a place for the community to ask questions, including in social matters, family, and even personal life decisions. Ustazah N, a 51-year-old Quran teacher from the outskirts of Padang, explained:

"Sometimes people don't just come to learn tajwid. They come to confide, ask for prayers, ask for advice. Even though I'm not a master's graduate. But I understand, maybe because they see us as close to the Qur'an. They believe."

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Such trust is not formed instantly, but rather through a long process of consistent devotion. Quran teachers are considered moral role models, especially amidst the crisis of figures in modern society. This places them not only as teachers, but also as agents of value transformation, who are present among the domestic spaces of society—at home, prayer rooms, mosques, and even in children's play areas. Many teachers admit to continuing to teach even without a fixed reward, because of spiritual motivation and love for the Quran. As expressed by Ustaz M, "If I stop, who will teach the children in this village? I don't want this village to have no voice of the Quran."

Social and Economic Challenges for Quran Teachers

Behind the nobility of their roles, Qur'an teachers face life pressures that are not light, especially in the economic aspect. The majority of teachers do not receive a fixed salary and rely on voluntary donations or alms from parents of students. Based on the data, around 78% of informants stated that income from teaching activities is not enough for daily basic needs. Most teachers admitted to having to work part-time such as farming, sewing, smallscale trading, or even becoming daily workers to make ends meet. This condition affects emotional stability, concentration on teaching, and the sustainability of the profession as a life choice. There are even teachers who only teach two days a week because they have to work elsewhere for the remaining five days. An informant, Ustaz H (43 years old), who teaches at a self-help tahfidz house, said:

> "I have four children. I study the Koran every day, but if I wait for envelopes from the guardians, sometimes it doesn't even reach one hundred thousand per week. Finally, I work as a night truck driver. Sometimes I feel sleepy while teaching, but I endure it because this is a mandate."

Another impact of low income is the difficulty in accessing training or further education. Transportation and accommodation costs are often obstacles to attending Quran teacher training held in big cities. This causes stagnation in terms of pedagogical and methodological competence. Some teachers even feel less confident when asked to teach children from educated families or high academic backgrounds. They are aware of their limitations, but do not have the means to improve them. Several teachers expressed the hope that there would be training subsidies and scholarships for non-formal Quran teachers, so that they would not be left behind in teaching competence compared to Islamic Religious Education teachers in schools. On the social side, recognition of the profession of Quran teachers is still low. Several informants complained that the community only considers Quran teachers as "fillers of free time," not a main profession. This has an impact on low appreciation for the time, knowledge, and energy they spend. In one interview, a 25-year-old young teacher said in a low voice:

> "Sometimes I feel like I'm not a real teacher. School teachers get uniforms, fixed honorariums, and regular training. Us? We're only called during Ramadan or when the kids are about to graduate. But our responsibilities are no less heavy."

Prospects and Future Hopes for the Profession of Al-Quran Teachers

Amid economic pressures and social inequality, Qur'an teachers still have high hopes for the future of their profession. The enthusiasm of the community to send their children to tahfidz houses or invite private Qur'an teachers to their homes is a positive indicator that the need for Qur'an teachers continues to increase. The emergence of young Qur'an memorizer communities, the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) festival, and the trend of tahfidz-based education are catalysts that strengthen the strategic position of Qur'an teachers in the Islamic education system. Teachers hope that this momentum can be responded to with structured and sustainable coaching, as well as opening access to relevant training and certification. Some informants stated the need for intervention from the government and religious institutions to build a system that supports the sustainability of the Qur'an teacher profession. This includes the creation of regulations that guarantee formal recognition, the provision of incentives, routine training, and the development of tahfidz and tilawah teaching curricula. One proposal that emerged was the establishment of a national-level Qur'an teacher professional association that could be a forum for struggle, a forum for sharing experiences, and a space for increasing capacity. Ustaz S, a senior teacher, said:

> "I believe that if an association of Quran teachers is formed, we can be more appreciated. We can help each other, learn from each other. We must not continue to be considered second class compared to public school teachers."

In general, this study shows that the profession of Al-Qur'an teachers has great potential as a promising career path if given institutional recognition and support. There needs to be an integration between spiritual values and principles of professionalism in the development of this profession. Al-Qur'an teachers not only teach letters and the laws of tajwid, but also shape the character and Islamic identity of the future generation. If they are empowered, this profession will not only survive, but become an important driving force in the revival of quality Islamic education that is deeply rooted in society. The following author will provide an overview in the form of tables and diagrams to show the thematic structure based on the results of the interview analysis. The three main themes (Meaning of Role, Social Challenges, and Future Prospects) have several interrelated sub-codes, reflecting the structure of thinking of Al-Qur'an teachers towards their respective professions.

No	Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Narrative Quotes
1	The Meaning of the Role of the Quranic Teacher	Devotion as worship, guardian of Qur'anic values, community leader	"If I stop, who else will teach the children of this village?" – Master M
2	Social and Economic Challenges	Financial constraints, side jobs, lack of training and social recognition	"I farm because the envelopes from the guardians are not enough." – Ustaz H
3	Future Prospects and Hopes	Opportunities for growth of tahfidz houses, community support, hopes for formal guidance	"I believe that if an association of Al- Quran teachers is formed, we can be more appreciated." – Ustaz S

Table 1. Three main themes

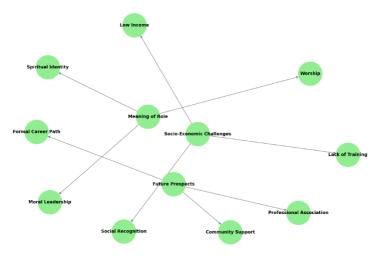


Fig 3. Thematic structure diagram

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the profession of Al-Qur'an teachers has high spiritual value and is positioned as the successor of the prophetic message in Muslim society. Their role is not only limited to teaching the reading of the Al-Qur'an, but also includes character formation, strengthening moral values, and becoming a center of socio-religious reference. Even so, Al-Qur'an teachers face significant challenges in the form of economic limitations, minimal professional training, and low social and institutional recognition of this profession. This creates an imbalance between the burden of great moral responsibility and weak structural support. Amidst various limitations, the prospects for the profession of Al-Qur'an teachers remain wide open. Increasing public awareness of the importance of Al-Qur'an education, the growth of tahfidz houses, and the desire to make the Al-Qur'an the foundation of children's education open up great opportunities to strengthen the position of Al-Qur'an teachers as a recognized formal profession. With the support of government policies, certification, professional training, and the formation of professional associations, the capacity and welfare of Al-Qur'an teachers can be improved so that they can carry out their roles more effectively and sustainably. This study has limitations in terms of coverage and methods. Because it uses a qualitative phenomenological approach, the results are contextual and cannot be generalized widely. The number of informants limited to 105 teachers in a particular region is also a limitation in reaching the diversity of conditions of Qur'an teachers nationally. In addition, the data collected is mostly narrative in nature so that it does not include quantitative dimensions such as average income levels or professional satisfaction indexes. Further research can develop a quantitative survey-based model to measure the economic impact, teaching quality, and public perception of Qur'an teachers in various regions. Cross-regional research with a comparative approach is also important to see the differences between Qur'an teachers in urban and rural areas. In addition, an in-depth exploration of the policy strategy for strengthening the profession of Qur'an teachers from an institutional and state perspective is also an important gap that has not been widely explored and can expand scientific contributions to the development of community-based Islamic education.

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