

## ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS LITERACY CULTURE IN PAI LEARNING (Case Study at Kertek Junior High School)

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### ABSTRACT

Strengthening religious literacy culture is a strategic effort to improve literacy skills while shaping students' religious character. This study aims to analyze the implementation, strategies, and supporting and inhibiting factors in strengthening religious literacy in Islamic Religious Education learning at SMP Negeri 3 Kertek. This study uses a qualitative approach with field research, with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using an interactive model. The results show that strengthening religious literacy is implemented through the integration of the School Literacy Movement and the Spiritual Improvement Activity Monitoring Program in the form of reading habits, joint prayers, tadarus, recitation of Asmaul Husana, and religious reflection in learning. The strategies implemented include habituation, integration in learning, the use of varied methods, as well as support from facilities and cooperation with parents. Supporting factors include school policies, infrastructure, and the active role of teachers, while inhibiting factors include low interest in reading, limited religious reading materials, and difficulties in student understanding. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of strengthening religious literacy that is designed systematically, innovatively, and sustainably to improve literacy skills and shape students' religious character.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a crucial benchmark for improving the quality of human resources in the 21st century. In contemporary education, literacy has evolved from simply reading and writing skills to complex abilities encompassing the critical understanding, analysis, and interpretation of information within real-life contexts. These skills are essential for preparing students to face the ever-changing global dynamics. However, various studies indicate that Indonesian students' literacy remains low, particularly in text comprehension and information processing (Supriadi, U., & Parhan 2025). This is supported by the findings of the National Assessment (AN) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which show that many students have not met the minimum literacy standards (Rochgiyanti, R., Arliani, A., & Sriwati 2026). This situation emphasizes the urgency of strengthening literacy culture in the educational realm.

The development of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 has brought profound transformations to the world of education, particularly in the access and distribution of information. Students are now

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equipped with the skills required for the 21st century, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Literacy extends beyond technical aspects, becoming the foundation for evaluating and using information responsibly, while also supporting mastery of science and technology and improving the quality of life (Jaenullah, J., Laili, N., Setiawan, D., & Aini 2025). Therefore, strengthening literacy must be implemented in a structured manner through integration in the teaching and learning process.

From an Islamic educational perspective, literacy is strongly linked to the formation of students' religious character. Faith values are key elements in developing pious and noble individuals. The concept of religious literacy refers to the ability to understand, internalize, and practice Islamic teachings in daily life, not just by reading religious texts but also by interpreting their meaning and internalizing their values on an ongoing basis (Muttaqin, L. S., & Nasaruddin 2026). In this way, religious literacy plays a vital role in balancing students' intellectual and spiritual intelligence.

Strengthening religious literacy in schools can be realized through a culture of literacy integrated into learning. Islamic Religious Education instruction plays a central role, not only in conveying religious material but also instilling religious values and honing students' thinking skills. Studies have shown that literacy instillation in Islamic Religious Education, such as routine Quran reading, pre-lesson reading, and Islamic reading corners, positively impacts reading interest and religious understanding (Masruroh et al. 2025). The implementation of the School Literacy Movement is also a key strategy for building a sustainable literacy culture (Saepuloh, A., & Meilinda 2025).

However, the implementation of religious literacy in schools still faces various challenges. Several studies have revealed that literacy activities are often not implemented optimally and tend to be formalities without in-depth understanding (Mawardi, A. F., & Fitriyani 2025). Limited facilities and infrastructure, such as the lack of a collection of relevant religious books, as well as the less than optimal use of literacy media, are also inhibiting factors in strengthening the culture of religious literacy (Muhyyidin 2026). In addition, students' low interest in reading, the influence of technological developments, and limited time for learning also influence the effectiveness of implementing religious literacy in schools.

This phenomenon was also found at Kertek 3 State Junior High School, where efforts to strengthen religious literacy have been carried out through various activities, such as habituating reading the Qur'an, tadarus (recitation of the Koran), and integrating literacy activities into Islamic Religious Education learning. Although various programs have been implemented, in practice there are still a number of obstacles, such as low student interest in reading, limited religious literacy resources, and suboptimal learning strategies applied. This condition indicates a gap between the ideal concept of strengthening religious literacy and the reality of its implementation in the field. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed regarding the Analysis of Strengthening Religious Literacy Culture in Islamic Religious Education Learning (Case Study at Kertek 3 State Junior High School).

## **2. METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach based on field research to explore in-depth the phenomenon of strengthening religious literacy culture in Islamic Religious Education learning, based on actual conditions on the ground. This qualitative approach was chosen because of its ability to describe social realities contextually and provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the research subjects (Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln 2018). The research location was Kertek 3 State Junior High School, which was determined using a purposive technique considering that the religious literacy programs and practices at the school were in line with the study objectives.

The research subjects included school principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and students actively involved in religious literacy activities. Subject selection was purposive to ensure data relevant to the research objectives. The research data were divided into primary and secondary:

primary data were collected directly through interactions with informants, while secondary data were sourced from literature such as books, scientific journals, school documents, and references related to religious literacy.

Data collection was conducted using three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation allows direct observation of the learning process and religious literacy practices in schools. In-depth interviews were used to uncover implementation, strategies, and supporting and inhibiting factors for strengthening religious literacy. Documentation served as supporting material, including school program documents, activity photos, and records of religious literacy implementation.

The researcher acted as a key instrument (human instrument) directly involved in data collection and analysis, assisted by observation and interview guidelines. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, coupled with increased observation accuracy and extended field participation to ensure the credibility and reliability of the data (Creswell 2016).

Data analysis in this study uses an interactive model of (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña 2014) which is carried out continuously from the data collection process to drawing conclusions. The stages of data analysis include:

a. Data Collection

Data were collected through direct field observations, interviews, and documentation. Researchers gathered information on the implementation, strategies, and supporting and inhibiting factors for strengthening religious literacy culture in Islamic Religious Education learning at Kertek 3 State Junior High School, producing field notes, interview transcripts, and supporting documents.

b. Data Reduction

This stage involves selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw field data. Researchers filter data relevant to the study's focus, group it by theme, and discard non-essential data, resulting in more focused data for further analysis.

c. Data Display

The reduced data is arranged in a structured descriptive narrative, including descriptions, simple tables, or matrices, to facilitate drawing conclusions and to display the relationships between categories such as strategies, implementation, supporting factors, and obstacles to religious literacy.

d. Conclusion Drawing/Verification

Conclusions are drawn gradually from the beginning of the research and are continuously verified through comparison of data from various sources, ensuring that the findings are valid, accurate, and reflect field conditions responsibly.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Implementation of Strengthening Religious Literacy Culture in Islamic Religious Education Learning at State Junior High School 3 Kertek**

Field findings indicate that the implementation of strengthening religious literacy culture at Kertek 3 Public Junior High School is carried out through an integrative approach, combining the School Literacy Movement program with the Spiritual Enhancement Activity Monitoring Program. The school does not establish a specific religious literacy program, but rather integrates it into existing

general literacy activities. This approach demonstrates that religious literacy is positioned as part of the overall school culture, rather than as a stand-alone activity.

The implementation of religious literacy in Islamic Religious Education is carried out systematically through the learning stages, namely preliminary, core, and closing activities. In the preliminary stage, teachers familiarize themselves with religious activities such as reciting the Asmaul Husana, praying together, and reciting Quranic verses relevant to the learning material. This stage serves as an initial stimulus to build a religious atmosphere and students' readiness to learn. In the core stage, literacy activities not only focus on reading, but also are directed at understanding the meaning, discussing the content of verses, and strengthening through memorization of short surahs. Meanwhile, in the closing stage, teachers conduct reflection and assign literacy journal assignments to determine students' level of understanding.



Figure 1. Implementation of Religious Literacy for Students at Kertek 3 State Middle School

This finding is in line with research (Mukhlis 2024) which states that integration in Islamic Religious Education learning can improve the quality of students' religious literacy through the habit of reading, understanding, and reflecting on the content of the reading on an ongoing basis. In addition, research (Jaenullah, J., Laili, N., Setiawan, D., & Aini 2025) also emphasized that strengthening religious literacy will be more effective if it is integrated into learning activities and school culture as a whole, thus forming consistent literacy habits.

However, based on student interviews, the implementation of religious literacy activities at Kertek 3 Public Middle School has not been fully consistent. Several students stated that these activities are still situational and have not yet become a strong habit. This indicates that the program's implementation is still in the strengthening stage and requires consistency.

### **3.2 School and Teacher Strategies in Strengthening Religious Literacy Culture at Kertek 3 State Middle School**

The strategy for strengthening religious literacy culture at Kertek 3 Public Junior High School is implemented through synergy between school policies and teacher learning practices. Institutionally, the school implements an integrative strategy by combining the School Literacy Movement and the Spiritual Enhancement Activity Program and establishing a regular literacy activity schedule. This scheduling aims to build consistency and make literacy part of the school

culture. Furthermore, the school involves parents in religious literacy activities through a monitoring system for home Quran recitation activities, so that literacy strengthening occurs not only at school but also within the family environment. These findings are relevant to the research (Saepuloh, A., & Meilinda 2025) which states that the success of religious literacy programs is greatly influenced by structured school policies and the involvement of various parties, including families and the external environment, (Rochgiyanti, R., Arliani, A., & Sriwati 2026) emphasized that the integration of religious literacy with general literacy in the School Literacy Movement can create a more adaptive and contextual literacy model.



Figure 2. Spiritual Enhancement Activity Program Book as a supporter of the Religious Literacy Program and Reading Corner

In the learning process, Islamic Religious Education teachers employ various strategies to support the strengthening of religious literacy. These strategies include classical learning through communal reading, individual learning tailored to students' abilities, and group learning that encourages interaction and collaboration. Furthermore, teachers employ habituation strategies through routine activities such as tadarus (recitation of the Quran), memorization, and recitation of the Asmaul Husana (the Beautiful Names of Allah), which are repeated to form student habits.

Teachers also employ reflective strategies by assigning literacy journal assignments and motivational strategies by fostering an understanding of the importance of the Quran in everyday life. These efforts are reinforced by extracurricular activities such as Quran reading and writing and Quran recitation, which aim to increase student interest and engagement.

This condition is in line with the findings (Irfran Hasanudin 2024) which states that teacher strategies in religious literacy are not only limited to reading activities, but also include habituation, motivation, and ongoing mentoring. In addition, research (Pratama 2024) shows that the role of teachers as facilitators and motivators is very important in determining the success of implementing literacy in Islamic Religious Education learning.

Thus, the strategies implemented by the school and teachers at Kertek 3 Public Junior High School demonstrate a strong collaboration between policy and learning practices. However,

innovation and strategic strengthening are still needed to optimize the implementation of religious literacy, especially in the face of the challenges of the digital era.

### **3.3 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Strengthening Religious Literacy Culture at Kertek 3 State Middle School**

The implementation of strengthening religious literacy culture at Kertek 3 State Junior High School is influenced by various factors, both supporting and inhibiting. The main supporting factors include integrated school policies, the availability of facilities and infrastructure, and the active role of teachers in mentoring students. The school provides facilities such as a library, reading corner, and internet access that can be used as learning resources. Furthermore, support from external programs such as the School Improvement Activity Enhancement Program also strengthens the implementation of religious literacy at the school.

This finding is in line with research (Nikmah 2023) which states that the availability of literacy facilities and school policy support have a significant influence on the successful implementation of religious literacy. In addition, research (Lestari and Rahmadani 2024) shows that the use of facilities such as reading corners can increase students' interest and involvement in literacy activities, especially in Islamic Religious Education learning.

However, several inhibiting factors affect the implementation of religious literacy. One major obstacle is the low ability to read the Quran among some students, which results in a less than optimal literacy process. Furthermore, a lack of support from family and community, as well as the influence of technology and social media, also impact students' interest in reading. This is in accordance with research (Cahyaningsih, I. P., & Rossidy 2024) which states that students' low interest in reading in the digital era is a major challenge in strengthening literacy, including religious literacy. In addition, research (Yacob, Zamroni, and Wartiah 2024) emphasized that the success of religious literacy is not only determined by schools, but is also influenced by the students' social environment.

Nevertheless, the research results show that the implementation of religious literacy at Kertek 3 Public Junior High School continues to have a positive impact on students, particularly in improving religious discipline, changing attitudes, and increasing awareness of religious teachings. This demonstrates that the religious literacy program has a significant contribution to shaping students' religious character.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Strengthening the culture of religious literacy in Islamic Religious Education learning at Kertek 3 Public Junior High School has been implemented through the integration of the School Literacy Movement program and the Spiritual Enhancement Activity Monitoring Program. This implementation is reflected in learning activities that involve the habit of reading the Qur'an, tadarus (recitation of the Quran), reciting the Asmaul Husana (Asmaul Husana), memorizing short surahs, and understanding the meaning of verses tailored to the learning material. Religious literacy has also been integrated into learning tools such as teaching modules and lesson plans, thus becoming part of the classroom learning process. However, its implementation has not been fully optimal due to the lack of a specifically designed religious literacy program and still found inconsistencies in practice. The strategies implemented by schools and teachers demonstrate a strong synergy in supporting the strengthening of religious literacy. Schools play a role through policies, providing infrastructure, and involving parents, while teachers implement various learning strategies such as habituation, individual and group approaches, and reflection through literacy journals. However, these strategies

still require strengthening, particularly in terms of innovative learning methods and optimizing the use of literacy facilities. Strengthening a culture of religious literacy is influenced by supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors include integrated school policies, the availability of facilities, the active role of teachers, and support from the school and family environment. Inhibiting factors include low student interest in reading, limited Qur'an reading ability, the influence of digital technology, and suboptimal utilization of literacy facilities. Despite these obstacles, the implementation of religious literacy continues to have a positive impact on the development of students' religious character, particularly in increasing their awareness of worship, attitudes, and understanding of religious values in everyday life.

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