

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF QUR'AN LITERACY IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the understanding of the concept of Qur'an literacy in the digital era through qualitative literature studies with content and conceptual analysis. The literature study shows the evolution of the meaning of Qur'an literacy from just a technical competence of reading and writing (qira'ah) to a multidimensional concept that integrates the treasures of the classic Qur'an with the principles of modern literacy. The results of the analysis reveal four main comprehension tendencies in contemporary discourse: literacy as a functional-critical competency that includes understanding, reflection, and criticism of texts; literacy as a multidisciplinary approach that reads the Qur'an through various lenses of knowledge; literacy as a social practice and self-transformation that internalizes values; and digital literacy which involves the ability to access, select, and use digital resources about the Qur'an wisely. These findings reflect the epistemological reformulation of the Ulumul Qur'an discipline that is integrative, participatory, and contextual. The resulting Qur'an literacy concept is a dynamic competency that enables individuals to interact actively, critically, and transformatively with sacred texts, as well as use digital technology responsibly. Thus, this research offers a new perspective and enriches academic discourse on Qur'an science that is relevant to the challenges of society in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** *Concept, Qur'an, Literacy*

### Introduction

The issue of literacy has become one of the global concerns in the last two decades. The issue is triggered by the increasing complexity of information and technological dynamics that affect the way humans read, understand, and produce knowledge. Organizations such as UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank affirm that literacy is no longer understood as just the ability to read texts, but multi-layered competencies that include deep understanding, critical analysis, argumentative skills, and skills to use digital technology in accessing and processing information. The transformation towards a knowledge-based society requires every individual to have adequate literacy capacity to be able to participate in social, academic, economic, and cultural life meaningfully. This global phenomenon shows that literacy has evolved and can enter almost all areas of the discipline. Such as numeracy literacy, technological literacy, sincere literacy, cultural literacy, digital literacy, religious literacy, to specifically related to the Qur'an, namely Qur'an literacy (Suprijono et al., 2023).

The study of Qur'an literacy in Indonesia has developed quite significantly, especially through studies published in various national and international journals, indexed and unindexed,

and even indexed by scopus Q1, Q2, Q3, and so on. Based on several studies conducted to study Qur'an literacy, various meanings, understandings, and concepts of Qur'an literacy were found. So that there are many varieties of definitions, thought patterns, and the direction of Qur'anic literacy. In fact, if reviewed based on the etymological definition of literacy, the term *literacy* initially referred to the basic technical ability of reading and writing, derived from Latin *littera*. If the definition of literacy is understood in this way, then it is associated with the Qur'an "Qur'an literacy" to be the basic ability to read and write the Qur'an which is technical. If the concept of literacy is interpreted in this way, then Qur'an literacy has strong roots in Islamic history, namely since the beginning of the Qur'an's descent. As contained in the first verse revealed by Allah SWT in Q.S *Al-'Alaq* (96:1-5), *Iqro'* means read. This verse is the initial commandment for a messenger (Prophet) Muhammad SAW. If this phrase is used, then the concept of literacy has been studied earlier in Islam. So that reading is interpreted as a means to understand the revelation of Allah (Kurniasih, 2022).

However, Qur'an literacy that is understood and expressed in various studies in this digital era contains various meanings, not only as the ability to read the Qur'an, but also multi-layered competencies that include deep understanding, critical analysis, argumentative skills, and skills in using digital technology in accessing and processing information about the Qur'an.

Based on the description above, this study will explore and analyze how Qur'an literacy is understood by a number of researchers, especially in the context of research published in various journals indexed by Sinta and Scopus. The purpose of this research is: to identify the definition and scope of Qur'an literacy in various contemporary academic literature, both books, journals, and articles that are published and can be accessed in various digital and online media. The main question of the research that wants to be answered is: How is the concept of Qur'an literacy understood in modern studies, especially in the context of the development of digital technology?

The novelty of this research lies in the effort to construct the literacy understanding of the Qur'an as a concept that not only includes the ability to read, write, memorize, and understand the Qur'an, but also the ability to access, evaluate, and produce knowledge and skills about the Qur'an in a digital environment. This research tries to present a new perspective that the science of the Qur'an must transform in line with changes in the way humans interact with the digital world. Thus, this research offers a broader conceptual framework for Qur'an literacy and enriches academic discussions related to Qur'an science in the digital era.

## Literature Review

Scopus is an abstracting and indexing database containing millions of scientific articles from international journals, proceedings, and books managed by the global publishing company Elsevier. The explanation of the literaturereview in this study directly utilizes the index from scopus. The keywords used are "*Qur'anic literacy*" and "*Quranic literacy*" which explicitly use the words Qur'an and literacy. The keyword Qur'anic literacy used in the search scopus found 52 articles without limiting the year of publication, the year found from 1989 to 2025. Likewise, the keyword (Saiful et al., 2024) *Quranic literacy*, used in the search for scopus found 53 articles. Results (in the form of titles, keywords, and abstracts) obtained from searches with the keyword "*Qur'anic literacy*" were also found in the search results using the keyword "*Quranic literacy*".

Quantitatively, this suggests that research with the keywords "Qur'anic literacy" or "Qur'anic literacy" has not dominated the international literature compared to more general terms such as "Islamic education". The majority of Scopus-indexed publications come down to the context of countries with majority Muslim populations, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia. A bibliometric study (Firmansyah et al., 2023 in (Sulianti et al., 2018) *the Journal of Religion and Education*)

revealed that more than 60% of articles on Qur'an literacy published between 2018-2023 came from both countries, followed by contributions from Pakistan, Turkey, and Arab countries. This dominance reflects that the issue of Qur'an literacy is very actively studied as part of the study of religious education and sociology of religion in the Southeast Asian region. Meanwhile, research from the Western world or Muslim minority countries is still limited and tends to use a broader framework of "religious literacy".

### Method

This research is a qualitative library research. This approach was chosen because the object of study is concepts and texts, so it requires in-depth exploration, interpretation, and critical analysis of written sources. The goal is to dismantle and reconstruct scientific discourse, so that this methodology is very suitable for reformulating the traditional concept of Ulumul Qur'an into the framework of modern "Qur'an Literacy". Operationally, this research relies on content analysis and conceptual analysis techniques on various relevant text documents. (Creswell, 2015).

Research data sources are classified hierarchically to ensure the depth and accuracy of the analysis. Primary data sources are centered on the authoritative books of the classical Qur'an, such as *Al-Suyuthi's Al-Itqan* and *Al-Zarkasyi's Al-Burhan*, as well as contemporary works that make fresh readings of the Qur'an. Secondary sources include books, journals, and dissertations that discuss Islamic literacy theory, education, and epistemology, which serve as an analytical lens. Meanwhile, tertiary sources such as indexes and catalogs are used to track the completeness of references. Data collection is carried out through systematic documentation techniques, including the creation of a literature map, critical-selective reading, and data recording using quotation cards to facilitate synthesis (Qutb, 2003).

The data analysis process is carried out in stages and integratively. The initial stage is the reduction and exposure of data, the collected material is filtered and arranged narratively to map the landscape of the concept of the Qur'an and modern literacy theory. The core stage involves comparative-critical analysis, which is an in-depth comparison of classical epistemological structures with literacy principles (such as critical literacy, multiliteracy, and digital literacy) to identify points of convergence, divergence, and reformulation gaps. The main analytical framework used is a three-stage conceptual analysis: (1) Deconstruction of the Ulumul Qur'an building into basic elements, (2) Reinterpretation of these elements through the perspective of modern literacy, and (3) Reformulation or construction of a new synthesis that becomes the conceptual model of "Qur'an Literacy" (Ratnawati Dwi Putranti, n.d.).

To maintain the validity and reliability of the findings in this qualitative research, a source triangulation strategy was applied. Any interpretation or conclusion resulting from a single source (e.g., a classical book) will be verified and enriched by comparing it to other sources (contemporary works or literacy theory). This verification process takes place on a cyclical basis throughout the study, so that the final conclusion produced is not a one-sided construction, but rather a solid, coherent, and well-documented argument building. Thus, this entire methodological set is designed to ensure that the resulting reformulation is not a conceptual imposition, but a grounded, critical, and contextual transformation.

### Result and Discussion

Based on a comprehensive literature review, this study found that the concept of Qur'an literacy in modern studies is not understood as a monolithic definition, but as a developed and multidimensional discourse (Abdurrahman, 2020). Contemporary understanding moves beyond the technical achievement of reading and writing (qira'ah) of Arabic texts of the Qur'an towards

an integrative competency framework. The concept of literacy has evolved significantly over time and varies across different contexts and disciplines. Here are some important results that are analyzed and useful to understand the diverse nature of literacy towards understanding the concept of Qur'anic literacy, including:

- **Traditional definition:** historically, literacy has been defined as the ability to read and write, especially in relation to printed texts. This classical view considers literacy to be a static individual skill that focuses on cognitive abilities. This definition can be used as a basis for defining Qur'an literacy in the context of reading and writing the Qur'an (BTQ) (Anwar et al., 2021).
- **Definition in an expanded context:** literacy encompasses a broader range of skills and competencies. It not only includes reading and writing but also speaking, computing, and problem-solving at the level necessary to function effectively in various aspects of life, such as work and family. The science of the Qur'an has a wide scope, so that the concept of Qur'an literacy has expanded to the context of speaking, memorizing, interpreting, and so on (Alahmadi et al., 2024; Mujib & Marhamah, 2020).
- **Multiliteracy:** the concept of multiliteracy recognizes the importance of diverse forms of literacy, including digital, visual, and media literacy. This approach highlights the role of technology and the need for individuals to navigate and create meaning across different modes of communication. The Qur'an has also entered the digital world, where the studies of the Qur'an can be witnessed and studied through digital media. This concept brings a more multi-literacy literacy study (Brian Street, 2003; Jamaaluddin & Sulistyowati, 2021; Shamsuddin et al., 2016).
- **Contextual and social dimensions:** literacy is not only an individual skill but also a social practice. It involves the ability to function effectively in different environments and communicative situations, using written and spoken texts as well as non-linguistic forms of communication (Kosim, 2020).
- **Literacy continuum:** instead of the literacy dichotomy versus illiteracy, literacy is often seen to exist on a continuum, with varying levels of proficiency and different types of literacy skills (Maulana et al., 2021).
- **Critical and functional literacy:** critical literacy involves the ability to critically analyze and evaluate information, while functional literacy refers to the practical application of literacy skills in daily life.
- **Impact of technology:** the advent of digital technology has significantly affected the definition of literacy. Digital literacy involves the ability to access, evaluate, and create information using digital tools, and it is increasingly important in education and the workplace.

The above description further makes it clear that literacy is a dynamic and diverse concept that goes beyond traditional reading and writing to encompass a wide range of skills necessary for effective communication and functioning in a technologically advanced modern society. The conclusion about the definition of literacy above can be formulated into the definition of Qur'anic literacy. Although in various research abstracts, no explicit definition of Qur'an literacy has been found. However, some studies touch on aspects related to the understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an, which can be concluded as a component of Qur'anic literacy. The results of the analysis reveal at least four main understandings (tendencies) in modern discourse:

1. Qur'anic literacy as a functional-critical competence: this understanding emphasizes the ability not only to read the text (recitation) correctly, but also to understand the meaning (tafsir), reflect on the message (tadabbur), and criticize existing interpretations. Classical

concepts such as asbabun nuzul and naskh-mansukh were revived not as mere historical information, but as a tool to build contextual understanding and critical thinking of the text.

2. Qur'an literacy as a multidisciplinary religious literacy: this concept unites the Qur'an with modern disciplines. Qur'an literacy is seen as the ability to read the Qur'an through a variety of historical, literary, linguistic, ethical, social, and scientific lenses. As reflected in thematic studies (mawdu'i) and contextual hermeneutic approaches.
3. Qur'an literacy as a social practice and self-transformation: here, literacy is seen as an ongoing process (muraja'ah and tahfiz) that aims to internalize values (tazkiyah al-nafs) and encourage ethical-social action (al-amal al-shalih). The focus shifts from mastery of the knowledge of the Qur'an (ma'lumat') to the formation of character and social concern inspired by the Qur'an.
4. Qur'an literacy in the digital age: this understanding responds to the contemporary context by including the ability to access, select, criticize, and use digital sources about the Qur'an (online interpretation, applications, social media) wisely and productively. This is an expansion of the classic concept of riwayat and is relegated to the realm of information technology.

The above findings show that the contemporary Qur'an literacy discourse is essentially a reformulation and epistemological expansion of the Qur'anic ulumul discipline (Abdurrahman, 2020). This discussion will analyze the paradigm shift, including:

1. First, this study found a fundamental shift in the way of viewing the sciences of the Qur'an. The Qur'an in the classical tradition is often seen as a tool or supporting science that guarantees the accuracy of interpretation. However, within the framework of modern literacy, these sciences are not abandoned but are integrated in their entirety into a core competence. For example, learning the vocabulary of the Qur'an (mukjamat) or the wonders of its language (i'jaz) is no longer a separate goal, but is part of an effort to understand the text deeply and appreciate the uniqueness of its message. In other words, his orientation shifted from simply "knowing about" the Qur'an to "meaningfully interacting" with the sacred text.
2. Second, there has been a significant change in terms of authority and access to the understanding of the Qur'an. Previous traditions tended to focus interpretation on scholars or experts who mastered special sciences. The concept of modern literacy, which is heavily influenced by critical literacy thinking, actually democratizes this access. The goal is to empower every Muslim with the basic ability to read, ask critical questions, and engage in discussions about the meaning of the Qur'an in the context of his or her own life, without having to be an expert in interpretation. Thus, the role of the Qur'an changed from an "exclusive gate" to an "empowerment tool" available to the public (Supriadi et al., 2022).
3. Third, the soul of modern literacy is contextualization. The classical Qur'an is indeed very concerned with the context of the descent of revelation (asbabun nuzul). Modern literacy extends this principle by emphasizing sensitivity to the context of the reader himself. Qur'anic literacy in this view seeks to connect the universal message of the text with the social, cultural, political, and technological realities of the 21st century. The science of abolition and substitution of the law (naskh-mansukh), for example, is no longer seen as just a list of verses, but as a model for understanding how divine messages dialect with the changing times. Basically, this forms a dynamic "living literacy".
4. Fourth, this reformulation is also marked by efforts to integrate with various perspectives and methods of contemporary science. The most striking thing is the attempt to bridge the bayani epistemology (text-based) that is the foundation of the Ulumul Qur'an, with other epistemologies such as burhani (rational-empirical) and irfani (intuitive-spiritual), as well as methodologies from modern humanities and social sciences. As a result, the concept of Qur'an

literacy has become a kind of large umbrella that protects and embraces various interdisciplinary approaches in studying the Qur'an, ranging from semiotic, sociological, psychological, to ecological studies. (Mukhtar et al., 2023)

### Conclusion

Based on all the above discussions, this research has come to a synthesis. The concept of Qur'an literacy in modern studies can be understood as a multidimensional competence and a lifelong process. This competency enables a Muslim to interact with the Qur'an actively, critically, and transformatively. The scope includes mastery of basic Arabic text reading skills, understanding meaning and context (by utilizing the treasures of the Qur'an and contemporary science), the ability to reflect and internalize values, and the ability to use various sources and media—including digital—responsibly. The ultimate goal is to form a person who is moral and able to contribute positively to society.

Thus, it can be concluded that the concept of Qur'an literacy in modern studies is essentially a dynamic reformulation of the Qur'an. This reformulation is integrative (integrated in competence), participatory (involves many people), contextual (sensitive to the times), and oriented towards the formation of complete competencies. With these characters, the concept of Qur'an literacy becomes relevant to answer challenges and take advantage of opportunities in today's times.

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