



Sources of Work Stress of English Language Teachers in Secondary Government Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of regional education policies to improve the understanding of the Qur'an in public elementary schools in South Labuhanbatu Regency. This policy is based on Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2015 concerning Improving Understanding of the Holy Book. The study used a naturalistic qualitative approach with interview, observation, and documentation study techniques. The results show that the Qur'an-based education policy is implemented through several main strategies: teacher recruitment based on religious competency, intensive training, the preparation of a standard syllabus, annual work contracts, and the implementation of Qur'an learning outside of main school hours. The success of this program is supported by the synergy between the local government, the Education Office, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, schools, and the community. The analysis shows that this policy is aligned with the principles of strategic management, transformational leadership, and systems theory, despite limitations in funding and teacher capacity. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of regional education policies as a model for improving Qur'an literacy in public elementary schools.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental aspect of national development, particularly in shaping the character and morals of students. In the Indonesian context, religious education is an integral part of the national education system, as stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and Government Regulation Number 55 of 2007 concerning Religious Education and Religion. These regulations affirm that every student has the right to receive religious education in accordance with their beliefs, taught by educators of the same faith (Evans, 2008; Jackson, 2014). This shows the important role of religious education in shaping the character of students so that they have noble morals and deep Islamic insight. In addition, religious education is one of the three subjects that must be taught. is included in the curriculum of every formal educational institution in Indonesia. This is because religious life is a dimension of life that is expected to be realized in an integrated manner (Emmons, 2005; Ferriss, 2002; Kucukcan, 2010; Heidegger, 2021).

One of the main challenges in Islamic religious education at elementary to secondary school level is the low level of understanding and mastery of the holy book of the Qur'an (Suharsongko et al., 2023; Haikal & Anwar, 2024; Muslim et al., 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2022). Many students still have limitations in reading, understanding, and practicing the teachings of the Quran in their daily lives. This phenomenon has become a serious concern for local governments, including the Department of Education, to develop policies and strategies to improve the quality of Islamic religious education, particularly in developing a Quranic generation capable of reading, understanding, and practicing the values of the Quran.

This challenge in Islamic religious education also occurs in South Labuhan Batu Regency. South Labuhanbatu Regency is a land full of politeness, wise words, and works, where the majority of the people are Malay culture, closely related to Islamic values in the patterns of life that occur in society. However, there is a very concerning fact, as many as 50% of students in South Labuhanbatu Regency cannot read the Quran, of course this is a shared responsibility with the South Labuhanbatu Regency Government. The Regent of South Labuhanbatu believes that religious education is one part of the religious life of the people of South Labuhanbatu Regency. The Regent also wants to create a society that has knowledge and understanding of the holy books that are adhered to according to their respective religions and beliefs, forming people who believe and are pious to God Almighty, have noble morals and are physically and spiritually healthy. Then, to realize the formation of human resources as intended, the regional government provides support for the development and improvement of understanding of the holy book. by establishing a Regional Regulation, namely Regional Regulation of South Labuhanbatu Regency Number 10 of 2015 concerning Increasing Understanding of the Holy Scriptures (Syafaruddin et al., 2021; Putri et al., 2024; Budiarti & Purnomo, 2024; Siregar et al., 2024).

Furthermore, to follow up and realize the regulation, the Regent of Labuhanbatu Regency asked the Head of the South Labuhanbatu Regency Education Office to coordinate with the Ministry of Religious Affairs of South Labuhanbatu Regency to create steps and religious programs to synergize in providing religious understanding to Elementary School Students (SD). This synergy is based on the Regional Regulation that has been ratified by the Regent of South Labuhan Batu, namely Regional Regulation Number 10 of 2015 concerning increasing understanding of Islamic religious scriptures, which aims to meet the community's need for additional Religious Education, especially Islamic Religious education. The Qur'an, especially for students in Public Schools and to improve the quality of students' faith and piety through learning the Qur'an. The implementation of this policy involves various parties, including the Department of Education, schools, and educators who have the competence to teach the Qur'an (Basir et al., 2022; Hasibuan & Darlis, 2024; Ro'is & Rokhman, 2021; Hakim et al., 2022; Salim & Hasanah, 2021).

Several previous studies have examined the importance of educational institutions and teaching strategies in shaping a generation of Quran memorizers. For example, Nurdiah et al. (2023) revealed how the management strategy of Rumah Qur'an NW Lombok includes planning, implementation, and supervision to produce a generation of Quran memorizers with noble morals (Tuslam, 2020). Emphasized the effective leadership of madrasah principals who are able to provide direction, consultation, and appreciation to teachers in an effort to improve Quranic understanding. Meanwhile, Basri et al. (2024) explained the innovation of Islamic educational institutions in Aceh that combine religious and general curricula by utilizing digital technology to shape a generation of Quran memorizers relevant in the modern era. Mohamad Amin Mustofa and (Mustofa & Mahsun, 2020) also showed how the transinternalization strategy at TPA Roudlotul Muftadi'in is key to countering radicalism and shaping a moderate and noble Quran generation.

However, these studies focus more on the context of formal and non-formal educational institutions (madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and TPQ), while research that specifically analyzes local government education policies is still very limited (Aziz & Huda, 2024; Rajab & Sugi, 2024; Magfiroh et al., 2023). This research gap is the basis of this research, which specifically analyzes the local government's policy strategy in implementing Regional Regulation Number 10 of 2015 in South Labuhanbatu Regency, including aspects of

coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and cross-sector support in efforts to realize a Qur'anic generation.

This study aims to analyze the education policies issued by local governments in realizing the generation of the Qur'an, identify the implementation strategies of policies in schools, and find challenges in policy implementation and provide recommendations for improvement (Kosim et al., 2023; Engkizar et al., 2023; Sutikno et al., 2025; Utari et al., 2024). The results of this study are expected to provide benefits for various parties, including for local governments to provide input for the preparation of more effective education policies in improving the understanding of the Qur'an, for the Education Office as material for evaluating and developing strategies for implementing Islamic religious education policies, for schools as a reference in improving the quality of Qur'an learning in the school environment, and for the community to provide insight into the importance of religious education in shaping children's character from an early age. Thus, this study is expected to contribute to efforts to improve the quality of Islamic religious education and support the vision of local governments in forming a generation of the Qur'an that is faithful, pious, and has noble character.

Methods

This research was conducted in South Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra, using a naturalistic qualitative approach. Sugiyono (2022) states that qualitative research is often referred to as *naturalistic inquiry* or *naturalistic inquiry*, in which researchers are not required to develop a theory beforehand. Instead, they focus directly on natural events. Therefore, qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from trusted people.

Determining information sources in this study takes into account four parameters, namely context, behavior, events, and processes. This information source includes elements in the context of the Head of the Education Office's policy in improving the understanding of Islamic religious scriptures in Public Elementary Schools in South Labuhanbatu Regency. Field research was conducted based on five main steps in policy research according to Majchrzak, namely: (1) preparation, namely preparing the necessary information, data collection methods, and tools such as interview guidelines, writing tools, and recording devices; (2) conceptualization, including preliminary studies, problem formulation, and goal setting; (3) technical analysis, namely designing a methodology and compiling temporary conclusions; (4) recommendations, including reviewing and compiling policy suggestions; and (5) communicating recommendations to policy makers (Khoiri, 2018).

To support the validity of the data, the researcher used a phenomenological approach and evaluation method as analysis tools. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, document studies, and archival records (Iskandar, 2008). Research informants were determined purposively, namely based on certain criteria, such as having taught as an extracurricular teacher of holy book understanding for a long time, still actively teaching, having free time to be interviewed, being able to provide information directly without manipulation, and having never known the researcher before. The informants included the Head of the South Labuhanbatu Regency Education Office, the principal of a public elementary school, and an extracurricular teacher of Islamic religious education.

Data analysis is carried out in three stages according to Miles and Huberman, namely: (1) data reduction, namely simplifying and abstracting the data obtained to focus on important things; (2) data presentation, namely arranging the data systematically so that it is easy to understand

and analyze further; and (3) drawing conclusions, namely interpreting the meaning of the data that has been analyzed in depth and comprehensively (Miles et al., 2014).

To ensure the validity of the data, researchers applied several techniques such as source triangulation, technical triangulation, expanding participation, and increasing persistence. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data from various informants who had different roles, such as heads of departments, principals, and teachers. Technical triangulation is carried out by using several data collection methods at once, such as interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Expanding participation involves directly involving researchers in fieldwork for sufficient time to build trust and thoroughly understand the context. Meanwhile, increasing persistence involves continuously observing the data to identify patterns and avoid misinterpretation (Sugiyono, 2022). These techniques are expected to ensure high validity and reliability of research results.

Results and Discussion

Quran-Based Education Policy

Education Policy in improving the understanding of Islamic holy books in accordance with PP No. 55 of 2007 and Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2015 concerning Improving Understanding of Islamic Holy Books in South Labuhanbatu to create a society with noble character, noble morals, and has basic religious knowledge and skills. This policy is based on religious and religious education Article 5 paragraph 8 educational units are allowed to add religious education content either by adding teaching hours, perfecting or deepening religious learning materials. In addition, in another article it is stated that in the PP, religious education which is also an activity in the community can be carried out in prayer rooms, mosques or certain places.

The Head of the South Labuhanbatu Regency Education Office provided an explanation in an interview regarding the process of issuing a policy to increase understanding of holy books in South Labuhanbatu as follows:

“The inspiration for this policy activity is Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007, where in the field of religious and Islamic education, Article 5 paragraph 8, educational units are allowed to add religious education content, either by adding lesson hours to add or deepen religious learning materials. And also in another article it is stated that in the Government Regulation, religious education is also an activity in the community environment, if it is carried out in prayer rooms, mosques, certain places, then these two things are our inspiration, so we combine and carry out activities to increase the understanding of Islamic holy books to students by developing them in the learning process but outside the curriculum learning process, that is what inspired the emergence of regional regulations or Regional Regulation Number 10 of 2015 concerning increasing the understanding of Islamic holy books in South Labuhanbatu.”

Furthermore, the Head of the South Labuhanbatu Education Office explained:

“Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2015 serves as the basis for implementing activities to improve understanding of Islamic holy texts in elementary schools, particularly in South Labuhanbatu Regency. The aim of this activity is to support the local government's efforts to create a society that is noble, has good morals, and has basic religious knowledge and skills through religious education.”

The Quran-based education policy in South Labuhanbatu Regency was implemented as a follow-up to Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007, which allows educational institutions to add religious education content. This policy was then formulated as a regional policy through

Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 10 of 2015 concerning improving understanding of the Islamic holy book.

This regulation demonstrates the local government's commitment to creating a society with noble character, good morals, and basic religious knowledge and skills. The Head of the Education Office, Sahrul Tanjung, explained that this policy aims to strengthen religious values among the younger generation, so that they are not only proficient in reading and writing the Quran but also able to practice its teachings in their daily lives.

In practice, this policy serves as the basis for a program to improve understanding of the holy book in elementary schools. This program is not included in the main school day (intracurricular), but rather as an extracurricular activity held in the afternoon or evening. This activity is implemented in a structured and measurable manner, utilizing selectively recruited teaching staff.

To support this policy, the Department of Education has developed a standard syllabus that is mandatory for all elementary schools. The material taught includes recognizing the hijaiyah alphabet, reading Tajweed, memorizing short surahs, selected prayers, and moral values. This program emphasizes the importance of balancing Quranic reading skills with Islamic character development.

The implementation of this policy has received full support from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which is involved in the teacher selection and recommendation process. The Ministry ensures that appointed teachers possess adequate religious competency, although not all teachers hold a Bachelor's degree in Religious Education. Teachers with experience in Islamic boarding schools or religious educational institutions can be recruited after receiving a recommendation from the Ministry of Religion.

In addition, the local government has allocated a special budget to pay teacher honoraria and support program implementation in schools. Although this budget is initially limited, the local government remains committed to implementing the program in stages, starting at the elementary school level and expanding to junior high and high schools as funds become available.

Overall, the Quran-based education policy in South Labuhanbatu Regency is a clear example of synergy between the local government, the Education Office, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, schools, and the community. All parties work together to achieve the primary goal: to develop a Quran-based generation capable of reading, understanding, and applying the contents of the holy book in their daily lives.

Implementation of Regional Education Policy in Public Elementary Schools

As part of the effort to create a generation of Qur'anists who are not only able to read the Qur'an but also practice the noble values of Islamic teachings, the South Labuhanbatu Regency Education Office has taken strategic, planned and measurable steps. The policy of increasing understanding of the holy book as stated in Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2015 is the legal and moral basis for this program.

The Education Office, as the primary implementer, plays an active role in ensuring the program runs smoothly at the elementary school level. Various steps are being prepared and implemented comprehensively, from teacher recruitment and competency development through intensive training to the development of a standard syllabus to ensure uniformity of learning materials. The following are strategies implemented by the Education Office in an effort to create a Qur'anic generation in South Labuhanbatu Regency.

First, recruitment of teachers with a background in religious education or graduates of Islamic boarding schools is carried out selectively and in a structured manner, based on recommendations from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The Education Office is opening registrations for prospective teachers who will teach in programs to improve understanding of the holy book. In this recruitment, prospective teachers with a Bachelor's degree in Islamic Religious Education are automatically prioritized. However, for those without formal religious education degrees but with a background in Islamic boarding schools or strong religious experience, the Ministry of Religious Affairs is involved to provide eligibility recommendations. This ensures that the teachers involved have adequate religious competence and are able to serve as role models for students.

Interviews with the Head of the Education Office, Mr. Sahrul Tanjung, and several school principals indicated:

“The recruitment process was rigorous. Teachers who are accepted must meet the criteria that have been jointly determined by the Department of Education and the Ministry of Religion. This selection is the main foundation in maintaining the quality of the program and adapting it to the needs of teachers in elementary schools.”

Second, intensive training to improve teacher competence in teaching the Qur'an. This training is designed to ensure that teachers not only have a good understanding of religion, but also adequate pedagogical skills. The training materials include effective teaching methods, use of syllabus, and a fun approach for students in learning the Qur'an. Several principals interviewed said:

“This training was very helpful for teachers in improving their skills, especially in terms of managing classes and implementing creative learning methods. Thus, the learning process becomes more interesting and is able to increase students' enthusiasm in learning.”

Third, the development of a standard syllabus by the Department of Education. This syllabus serves as the primary reference for all teachers involved in the program, ensuring uniformity and quality of teaching in all elementary schools. This syllabus covers basic topics such as recognizing the hijaiyah letters, reciting the Quran with tajweed, memorizing short surahs, daily prayers, and developing good morals. The use of this standard syllabus helps reduce differences in the quality of learning between schools and ensures the program's objectives are achieved evenly.

From the results of observations and documentation at school, it can be seen that honorary teachers use this syllabus as the main guideline in learning activities. Principals also use this standard syllabus for monitoring and evaluation, ensuring that each teacher follows the assigned material. The syllabus established by the Head of the South Labuhan Batu Education Office can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Syllabus of Activities to Improve Understanding of Islamic Scriptures in South Labuhan Batu Regency

Grade / Semester	Standard Competence	Basic Competence	Material	Indicators
I / 1	Recognizing Hijaiyah letters	1.1 Pronounce Hijaiyah letters correctly	Hijaiyah letters	• Pronounce Hijaiyah letters correctly • Demonstrate memorization of Hijaiyah letters correctly
		1.2 Write Hijaiyah letters correctly	Hijaiyah letters	• Write Hijaiyah letters correctly

		1.3 Write Hijaiyah letters in correct sequence	Hijaiyah letters	• Write Hijaiyah letters in order correctly
	Memorizing selected Surahs	2.1 Recite Surah Al-Fatihah correctly	Surah Al-Fatihah	• Recite Surah Al-Fatihah correctly
		2.2 Memorize Surah Al-Fatihah fluently	Surah Al-Fatihah	• Demonstrate memorization of Surah Al-Fatihah fluently
	Understanding purification (Taharah)	3.1 Explain the meaning of purification	Purification (Taharah)	• Explain the meaning of purification • Mention purification procedures • Show purification tools
I / 2	Recognizing Hijaiyah letters	4.1 Write advanced Hijaiyah letters correctly	Hijaiyah letters	• Write advanced Hijaiyah letters correctly
		4.2 Pronounce Hijaiyah letters sequentially	Hijaiyah letters	• Recite Hijaiyah letters in sequence correctly
	Memorizing selected Surahs	5.1 Memorize Surah Al-Kausar fluently	Surah Al-Kausar	• Recite Surah Al-Kausar correctly • Demonstrate memorization fluently • Develop habit of reciting Surah Al-Kausar
	Memorizing daily prayers	6.1 Read prayers before & after studying	Study prayers	• Read study prayers correctly
		6.2 Memorize prayers before & after studying	Study prayers	• Demonstrate memorization of study prayers fluently
II / 1	Reading & writing Qur'anic letters	1.1 Recognize diacritical marks (Harakat)	Harakat (fathah, kasrah, dhammah, tanwin, sukun)	• Pronounce Hijaiyah letters with vowels • Write Hijaiyah letters with vowels
	Memorizing selected Surahs	2.1 Memorize Surah Al-Ikhlash fluently	Surah Al-Ikhlash	• Recite Surah Al-Ikhlash correctly • Demonstrate memorization fluently • Develop habit of reciting Surah Al-Ikhlash
	Performing ablution (Wudhu)	3.1 Practice proper ablution regularly	Ablution procedure	• Explain correct ablution rules • Demonstrate ablution properly
II / 2	Reading & writing Qur'anic letters	4.1 Read connected Hijaiyah letters	Connected Hijaiyah letters	• Recognize continuous Hijaiyah letters • Read continuous Hijaiyah letters
	Practicing noble character	5.1 Show respect & politeness to parents & teachers	Respect & politeness	• Explain ways to respect parents & teachers • Give examples of respect • Develop habit of respect & politeness
	Memorizing selected Surahs	6.1 Memorize Surah An-Naas fluently	Surah An-Naas	• Recite Surah An-Naas correctly • Demonstrate memorization fluently • Develop habit of reciting Surah An-Naas
III / 1	Reading & writing Qur'anic letters	1.1 Apply reading/writing of Nun & Mim with Shaddah, Nun Sakinah, Tanwin, and Mim Sakinah	Rules of Nun & Mim	• Pronounce Nun & Mim with Shaddah, Nun Sakinah, Tanwin, and Mim Sakinah • Read & write words with these rules correctly
	Practicing noble character	2.1 Demonstrate environmental care	Noble character	• Explain ways to love the environment • Demonstrate

				benefits of caring for the environment
	Memorizing selected Surahs	3.1 Memorize Surah An-Nashr & Surah Al-Asr fluently	Surah An-Nashr & Surah Al-Asr	• Recite Surahs correctly • Memorize fluently • Develop habit of reciting Surahs
III / 2	Reading & writing Qur'anic letters	4.1 Apply rules of Qalqalah and words with fathah, kasrah, dhammah, sukun, and shaddah	Qalqalah & diacritics	• Pronounce & write words with fathah, kasrah, dhammah • Pronounce & write words with sukun & shaddah • Read & write sentences using these rules

Judging from the table above, it can be concluded that the syllabus of activities to improve understanding of Islamic holy books has been provided by the South Labuhanbatu Regency Education Office. Starting from the first grade to the sixth grade of elementary school and the material is prepared in great detail. In the first semester of class, what must be achieved is to recognize the hijaiyah letters, memorize selected short letters in the Qur'an, and know the procedures for purification or thaharah. Meanwhile, in the second semester in the first grade, what must be achieved is to recognize the hijaiyah letters, memorize selected short letters in the Qur'an, and memorize selected prayers. In the second grade in the first and second semesters are reading and writing the letters of the Qur'an, memorizing selected short letters in the Qur'an, knowing the procedures for ablution, reading and writing the letters of the Qur'an, getting used to commendable behavior, and memorizing selected short letters in the Qur'an.

Third graders must be able to read and write letters from the Koran, get used to behaving in a commendable manner, memorize selected short letters in the Koran, read and write letters from the Koran, perform fardu prayers, and memorize selected short letters in the Koran. In the fourth grade, what must be achieved is the ability to read and write letters from the Koran, perform fardu prayers, memorize selected short letters in the Koran, understand the rules of mad reading, know the rules of prayer, and memorize selected short letters in the Koran. In the fifth grade, what must be achieved is understanding the rules of Mad reading, getting used to dhikr and prayer, memorizing selected short letters in the Koran, memorizing selected short letters in the Koran, and reciting the call to prayer and iqamah. Meanwhile, in sixth grade students must be able to read Surah Al-Baqarah verses 183-186, perform tarawih and witr prayers in the month of Ramadan, understand Surah An-Nisa verse 36, Surah Al-Ahzab verse 21, and Surah Ash-Shaf verses 2-3, and perform morning prayers.

Based on the data presentation above, it can be seen that the goal of the Head of the South Labuhanbatu Regency Education Office is not only for the purpose of being able to read the Qur'an but more than that as an effort by the regional government through religious education in order to encourage the realization of a society that has noble character, noble morals, is knowledgeable and has skills, as well as being physically and mentally healthy and able to memorize and even practice it in carrying out worship and life.

Fourth, annual work contracts. One important strategy implemented by the Education Office is the implementation of annual work contracts for honorary teachers involved in this program. This contract is formally established between the Education Office and honorary teachers who have passed the selection process. The contract outlines the teachers' responsibilities, rights, and obligations, as well as performance indicators that must be met throughout the contract period. This strategy serves a dual purpose: first, to guarantee the professionalism of honorary teachers in carrying out their duties, and second, to provide an objective basis for annual performance evaluations. From the results of interviews with school principals, it was revealed that:

“This annual contract provides legal certainty and role certainty for teachers. Teacher performance evaluation is then carried out periodically (monthly and annually) by the principal and reported to the Education Office. This ensures that the program runs with maintained quality and teachers are always motivated to give their best.”

Fifth, learning is carried out outside of main school hours (afternoon/evening) as an extracurricular activity. This program to improve understanding of the holy book is carried out outside of main school hours. Usually, Al-Quran learning activities are carried out in the afternoon or evening, after extracurricular activities are finished. This was conveyed by several principals and teachers interviewed. Thus, this program is extracurricular in nature, yet remains an important part of developing students' character and religiosity. This strategy provides space for children to focus on scripture material without disrupting other subject schedules. The teachers involved adjust the schedule to school activities, so that the children still have enough rest time, but can also participate in the study of the holy book to the maximum. Observations at the school showed that this strategy was well-received by students and parents. Activities outside of regular class hours created a relaxed atmosphere and a more intimate atmosphere between teachers and students, making the learning process more enjoyable and meaningful.

Synergy between Regional Government, Schools, and the Community in Forming a Generation of the Qur'an

The success of this program is largely determined by the synergy between local governments, the Department of Education, the Ministry of Religion, schools, and the community. The local government, the Department of Education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, schools, and the community each have their own responsibilities and roles in realizing this program. *First*, the South Labuhanbatu Regency Government plays a strategic role and is the primary driver in implementing the program to improve understanding of Islamic holy texts. This policy stems from the local government's awareness of the importance of religious values in shaping a generation with noble character. This was realized through the issuance of Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 10 of 2015, which serves as the legal basis for implementing the program at the elementary school level.

The Regent of South Labuhanbatu, Wildan Aswan Tanjung, was specifically the driving force behind this program. In interviews with several teachers and principals, it was explained that:

“The initial initiative stemmed from the Regent's program of providing rice subsidies to home-based Quranic recitation teachers. Seeing the community's enthusiasm and the potential benefits of the program, the Regent, along with the then Head of the Education Office, Mr. Sahrul Tanjung, formulated the idea of formalizing the Quranic teacher program into the school learning system. Lengthy discussions between the Regent and the Education Office then culminated in the design of a more structured program, which received approval from the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), and was ultimately ratified as Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2015.”

The local government not only drafts regulations, but also allocates a special budget to support this program. This budget support allows the program to be implemented in stages, starting at the elementary school level. The local government also ensures the program's sustainability through regular school monitoring and evaluation, ensuring that teachers are recruited through a rigorous selection process and possess the appropriate competencies.

In addition to administrative and policy support, the Regent of South Labuhanbatu is a symbol of the regional government's commitment to forming a generation of the Qur'an. His initiative in giving awards to religious teachers was the initial milestone that inspired the birth of this

program, which eventually became a structured and legally valid educational program. The success of this program cannot be separated from the visionary leadership of the Regent and close collaboration between the local government, the Education Office, the Ministry of Religion, schools, and the community.

Second, the South Labuhanbatu Regency Education Office plays a central role in implementing the Islamic holy book understanding program. As the primary implementer, the Education Office is responsible for ensuring the program runs in accordance with the regional government's vision and mission: to produce a generation of Quranic students with noble morals and religious knowledge. In its implementation, the Education Office plays several important roles. First, it is responsible for recruiting teachers for the program. The teachers recruited are not only graduates of Bachelor of Religious Education, but also have a background in Islamic boarding schools or religion, provided they obtain a recommendation from the Ministry of Religion. This recruitment is carried out selectively through strict procedures to ensure the quality of teaching. Second, the Department of Education carries out training and provision for teachers who have been recruited. This is important to improve teachers' competence in teaching the holy book, including learning methods that are fun and appropriate to students' needs. Third, the Education Office also developed and provided a standard syllabus for use by all teachers involved. This syllabus serves as the primary teaching guideline in all elementary schools in South Labuhanbatu, ensuring uniform and focused teaching, including Quran reading skills, tajweed rules, memorizing short surahs, and noble moral values.

In addition, the Department of Education plays a role in program evaluation and monitoring. This evaluation is carried out through monthly teacher performance reports which are assessed directly by the respective school principals. This aims to ensure that honorary teachers who teach deliver optimal performance and meet government and community expectations. If deficiencies or obstacles are found in implementation, the Education Office will provide guidance and necessary adjustments. The Education Office also plays an active role in ensuring the availability of supporting learning facilities and infrastructure, such as audiovisual media, whiteboards, Iqra' books, and comfortable study spaces. They collaborate with schools to ensure a conducive learning environment for students.

Overall, the Education Office's role in this program is vital. They not only serve as technical implementers but also as directors and quality monitors of program implementation, ensuring that each stage aligns with religious values and the needs of the South Labuhanbatu community.

Third, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) of South Labuhanbatu Regency plays a significant role in the program to improve understanding of Islamic scriptures implemented in elementary schools. The Ministry of Religious Affairs has been actively involved since the initial formulation of the policy. In an interview, the Head of the Education Office explained that the Ministry of Religious Affairs is a strategic partner of the local government in the process of formulating Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 10 of 2015, which serves as the legal basis for implementing this program. The Ministry of Religious Affairs has primary responsibility for selecting and verifying the eligibility of prospective teachers. This is crucial, because not all teachers who apply have a formal Islamic religious education background. Some teachers come from a general education background, but have extensive experience in Islamic boarding schools. To this end, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has the authority to issue eligibility recommendations. If the teacher is deemed to meet the requirements by the Ministry, they can be accepted and appointed as a teacher in this program to improve understanding of the holy book.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Religion also contributes to formulating teaching standards and assessing the religious aspects of the material taught. They ensure that learning materials and methods are in accordance with Islamic values and religious standards. The Ministry of Religion is also involved in preparing the curriculum and syllabus which functions as a learning guide for teachers.

In practice, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' role extends beyond teacher selection to actively providing strategic input and assisting with program implementation, including conducting regular evaluations of the suitability of recruited teachers and overall program performance. The recruitment process, which involves the Ministry of Religious Affairs, also emphasizes the importance of teachers' morals and character as role models for students.

Overall, the Ministry of Religion is the guarantor of the quality of the religiosity of this program. They ensure that every teacher possesses adequate religious competence and is worthy of guiding the next generation of Quranic scholars. Thus, this program is not merely administrative in nature but also possesses a strong religious spirit and aligns with the goals of Islamic religious education in South Labuhanbatu Regency.

Fourth, schools play a crucial and strategic role in implementing the program to improve understanding of Islamic scriptures in South Labuhanbatu Regency. Schools are not only the venue for the program, but also the implementers, supporting the smooth and effective running of learning activities.

From the results of interviews with several school principals, it was revealed that:

“Elementary schools in South Labuhanbatu actively support this program by providing adequate facilities. They ensure the availability of clean and comfortable learning spaces, suitable whiteboards, Iqra books, and audio-visual learning media needed by teachers and students. The principal of Public Elementary School 112246, for example, explained that his school provides all these needs so that holy book learning activities can run optimally. Furthermore, the school is responsible for managing and facilitating the honorary teachers who teach in this program. The principal of Public Elementary School 115492, Mrs. Rospita Sitorus, explained that the procedure for placing religious teachers begins with socialization, selection, and placement of honorary teachers in each school. The principal acts as a liaison between the local government and honorary teachers, ensuring that the teachers placed truly meet the needs and established standards.”

Schools also play a role in monitoring and evaluation. The principal and senior teachers are tasked with supervising the implementation of activities and providing regular reports on student development and the performance of honorary teachers. This report is an important part of the evaluation system run by the Department of Education. Equally important, schools play a role in developing students' character through this program. Honorary teachers, in addition to teaching Quranic reading and writing and tajweed, also serve as moral role models for students. Several school principals have expressed this belief, stating that this program has helped shape students' behavior, fostering greater politeness, respect for parents and teachers, and enthusiasm for pursuing religious knowledge.

Overall, this school is at the forefront of realizing the program's goal: to create a generation of Quranic students who are not only proficient in reading the Quran but also possess noble morals. With the support of facilities, good management, and the commitment of the principals, this program to improve understanding of the Islamic holy book can run smoothly and have a real positive impact.

In addition to the Regional Government, the Education Office, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and schools, the community also works together to improve the understanding of Islamic scriptures in Labuhanbatu. The community in South Labuhanbatu Regency plays a crucial role in supporting the success of the program to understand Islamic scriptures. Interviews with school principals and teachers revealed that the community, especially parents, fully support and express enthusiasm for the program. The Head of the Education Office, Mr. Sahrul Tanjung, explained that:

“The community views the program as a positive activity that helps combat and protect the younger generation from the negative influences of globalization. This is evident in the enthusiasm of parents who not only encourage their children to participate in the program but also bring their children directly to the learning center every day. Some parents even provide additional support at home, such as reminding their children to review memorization and read the Quran.”

Community support is also evident in their willingness to participate in various ways, such as helping to maintain a conducive learning environment and encouraging their children. This was expressed by several school principals, who stated that the presence and involvement of parents really helps motivate children to study harder and be more disciplined. Furthermore, the community generally received this program well because they saw its positive impacts directly. Children who were previously less fluent in reading the Qur'an became more proficient, and their behavior became more polite and noble. Honorary teachers who teach at the school also serve as role models in the community, so this program not only educates children at school, but also has a positive influence on the surrounding environment.

The community is also the key to the success of this program, because this program does not only depend on local government policies, but also requires support from families and the social environment. It is this moral and spiritual support from the community that makes this program not just an additional activity at school, but also a joint movement to form the Qur'anic generation that all parties hope for.

Discussion

The results of the research on the strategy of the Head of the Education Office in realizing a Qur'anic generation in South Labuhanbatu Regency can be analyzed using the theoretical framework of strategic management, transformational leadership, and systems theory. The use of this theory is not only intended as a complement, but as an analytical instrument that helps interpret the dynamics of educational policies and practices based on the Qur'an.

First, David's strategic management theory emphasizes three main stages: strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Research findings indicate that strategy formulation was carried out through the drafting of Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2015, which serves as the legal basis for the program to improve understanding of the holy book. The implementation stage is reflected in the practice of teacher recruitment based on religious competency, the provision of intensive training, and the use of standard syllabuses in all elementary schools. Meanwhile, evaluation is realized through annual work contracts for honorary teachers and regular performance reports. However, field data also revealed budgetary limitations and the dominance of a top-down approach by local governments. This raises a critical question: to what extent does this process reflect ideal strategic management practices, or is it simply a local adaptation that differs from the normative framework of strategic management?

Second, from the perspective of transformational leadership as proposed by Bass & Avolio, the Head of the Education Office acts as a visionary figure who mobilizes various parties and

encourages innovation through Qur'an learning programs outside of main school hours. However, interviews with contract teachers indicate that their motivation still relies heavily on financial incentives and annual work contracts. This situation indicates an ambiguity: on the one hand, there are inspirational elements consistent with transformational leadership, but on the other hand, the practice tends to be bureaucratic. Thus, the application of transformational leadership theory here is not fully realized, but is still mixed with characteristics of administrative leadership.

Third, Ludwig von Bertalanffy's systems theory offers a framework for understanding the synergy between actors in policy implementation. The Qur'ani Generation Program involves interaction between local governments, the Department of Education, the Ministry of Religion, schools, and the community. Each element functions as a mutually supportive subsystem. However, the dominance of local governments in the decision-making process indicates that this system is not yet fully functioning in a balanced manner. Thus, despite harmonious synergy, there remains an imbalance of roles that impacts the effectiveness of program implementation.

Solichin Abdul Wahab also emphasized that policy implementation is not merely a bureaucratic routine, but also encompasses social, political, economic, and legal influences that influence each other in the implementation process. (Karso, 2021) This is reflected in the strategy of the Head of the Education Office, who successfully involved various parties, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs and regional legislative bodies, to ensure that programs run according to community needs. Thomas R. Dye also explained that government policy is "what the government chooses to do or not to do." In this context, Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2015 represents a concrete step by the regional government to address the low level of understanding of the Quran among elementary school students.

Thus, the results of this study found that the success of implementing the program to strengthen the ability to read and understand the Qur'an in South Labuhanbatu Regency was not only determined by policy intervention through regional regulations and technical implementation instructions, but was also influenced by institutional capacity, the role of teachers, parental support, and student awareness.

These findings align with and elaborate on various previous research findings. Among them, research by (Dwi Noviani et al., 2024) revealed that the low level of Quranic literacy among adolescents in Palembang is due to limited time, low student awareness, and weak integration of character values into learning. This fact indicates that technical aspects such as tadarrus or kultum programs will not be effective without being accompanied by strengthening internal motivation and the appreciation of religious values. In the context of South Labuhanbatu, this is reflected in the need for teacher training and improving the quality of parental support as the program's primary supporters.

Furthermore, (Fathurrahman et al., 2023) emphasized that the success of the Nurul Iman TPA in developing a generation of Quranic students from an early age is highly dependent on the method of habituating worship, teacher role models, and structured teaching management. This is relevant to the conditions in South Labuhanbatu, where the preparation of a standard syllabus and strengthening the role of teachers are crucial to the success of the extracurricular Quranic program.

From a managerial perspective, (Mulyono et al., 2021) emphasize the importance of *Al-Qur'an Management*, namely an educational management model based on Al-Qur'anic values that integrates modern strategies with the principles of Islamic spirituality. In this case, the

existence of regional regulations and the role of the Education Office in South Labuhanbatu can be seen as a form of strategic policy implementation that, if supported by the vision of the Al-Qur'an, will create a healthy and sustainable educational ecosystem. Furthermore, (Irchamni et al., 2024) found that integrative programs such as *the Sisan Ngaji School* are effective in shaping the character of Al-Qur'an in early childhood, especially through the habit of praying dhuha, recitation of the Koran, and stories of the Prophet's role models. This emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach from early childhood education to secondary education, as is also being pursued in South Labuhanbatu.

On the other hand, a study (Robbaniyah & Lina, 2025) showed that tahfidz houses and non-formal educational institutions were able to address the challenge of limited resources by involving alumni and adopting an adaptive managerial approach. These findings can enrich strategies for strengthening the Qur'an program in South Labuhanbatu, for example by involving madrasah or Islamic boarding school alumni as volunteer recitation companions. (Rahmi et al., 2023) also emphasized the strong correlation between the principal's Qur'anic leadership and the formation of students' personalities. This confirms that the visionary leadership factor, which is also the focus of this article, is an important determinant in the successful implementation of Al-Quranic values in schools.

By integrating theory and empirical data more deeply, this discussion confirms that Regional Education Policy in South Labuhanbatu can be understood not only as the implementation of regulations, but also as a practice of strategic management, leadership, and a complex social system. This also demonstrates the dynamics of local adaptation, bureaucratic tensions, and opportunities for innovation, which can enrich theoretical contributions to the study of Islamic values-based education policy.

Conclusion

This study concludes that regional education policy through Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2015 has proven to play a significant role in increasing understanding of the Qur'an in public elementary schools in South Labuhanbatu Regency. The implementation of this policy includes recruitment of teachers based on religious competency, intensive training, preparation of standard syllabus, annual work contracts, and extracurricular learning of the Qur'an. The success of the program is largely determined by the synergy between local governments, the Department of Education, the Ministry of Religion, schools, and the community. This research contributes by showing that regional education policies can be a strategic model in strengthening Qur'anic literacy in elementary schools, although challenges related to limited funding and the quality of honorary teachers still need to be addressed.

The implication of this study is the importance of visionary regional leadership in shaping educational policies based on Islamic values. Other local governments can use the South Labuhanbatu model as a reference for designing more structured and responsive religious education policies to local conditions. Furthermore, the results of this study also contribute to the development of public policy theory, particularly in the context of implementing local spirituality-based educational policies.

However, this study has limitations due to its limited coverage to one district and primary education level. Therefore, generalization of the findings to other regions or higher education levels requires careful consideration. Furthermore, the data used were primarily derived from interviews and observations, making potential informant bias and limited quantitative data challenging. Further research is recommended using a mixed-methods approach, comparing

effectiveness across districts, or quantitatively evaluating the program's long-term impact on student character and achievement.

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