

## **The Role of Teachers in Improving Students' Cognitive Competency in Islamic Education Subjects Through Recitation Method**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study discusses the role of teachers in improving students' cognitive competency in Islamic education lessons through the recitation method. This study uses qualitative methods, and the data was gathered through field observation, in-depth interviews, and written document analysis. Direct observation was conducted during the teaching and learning process, while in-depth interviews were carried out with teachers and students. Document analysis was conducted to see teaching material preparation and student learning performance scores. The results of this study show that the teacher's role in improving students' cognitive abilities in Islamic religious education subjects through the recitation method has been well implemented in every meeting. The teacher's role includes the use of the recitation method in every meeting of Islamic religious lessons. The impact of using the recitation method can improve students' cognitive abilities in mastering Islamic religious subject matter. Besides that, students' motivation and interest in studying Islam are also improving because the recitation method gives them the freedom to master Islamic religious education material. In conclusion, the recitation method is very suitable for learning Islamic religion because it is related to mastering the verses of the Koran and hadith. For this reason, teachers and Islamic education institutions need to think about applying the recitation method in Islamic religious learning when the material is mostly related to the Al-Quran and hadith.*

**KEYWORDS:** Recitation Method, Islamic Education, Teaching, CognitiveCcompetency, Students

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Efforts to achieve learning goals need to be created with a conducive learning environment system (Iqbal, Parra-Saldivar, Zavala-Yoe, & Ramirez-Mendoza, 2020; Lakkala et al., 2021). Teaching is defined as an effort to create a conducive learning environment related to teaching. Teaching is an effort to create an environmental system that allows teaching and learning (Buck, Mast, Ehlers, & Franklin, 2005). The learning environment system itself consists of or is influenced by various components, each of which will influence each other. These components

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK include the learning objectives to be achieved, the material to be taught, teachers and students who will play a role in specific social relations, the types of activities to be carried out, and the teaching and learning facilities available.

In this case, to achieve educational goals, the success of education is very dependent on the human element, especially teachers. Teachers as teaching staff consist of a group of human resources assigned to teach, guide, train, direct, and educate students who are very strategic in the life of a school so that the success of a teacher in the learning process depends on the teacher's performance.

In teaching and learning activities, it is necessary to have a relationship between the teacher and students. Therefore, the teacher has a vital role in educational institutions because the teacher gives his knowledge, and students receive this knowledge (Asrar-ul-Haq, Anwar, & Hassan, 2017). Both of them are on the noble path of studying. Teachers are professional educators with the main task of guiding, directing, teaching, assessing, educating, training, and evaluating students at the elementary school level and high school education through formal learning. Good or bad teachers in teaching and educating will influence and have a significant impact on the attitude and quality of student education.

The teacher also plays a role in developing students' cognitive abilities because their cognitive abilities can facilitate learning. Cognitive ability is a person's ability to think so that it involves knowledge, problem-solving, reasoning, assessing, connecting, and considering an event that requires reason or is rational (Bandura, 1993). Education needs to improve cognitive abilities to give birth to good quality school graduates because of government regulations: "Graduate Competency Standards are graduate ability qualifications that include attitudes, knowledge, and skills."

Cognitive development is a thought process, namely, the individual's ability to connect, value, and judge an event (Bandura, 1999). The cognitive ability of junior high school students is considered low. Most students need help reading the Qur'an and memorizing short surahs used in daily prayers. This is because teachers still tend to use less effective methods and have yet to utilize learning strategies or processes that can provide direct understanding to children.

The low cognitive ability of students in Islamic religious education subjects is inseparable from the lack of training of students in connecting material with actual conditions in everyday life. Therefore, using the recitation method, it is hoped that students will play an active role and leave their passive habits in the classroom. Every student will feel that learning Islamic religious education is fun and not repeating boring material.

One of the indicators that causes the low quality of teaching and learning in schools is the practical, theoretical inconsistency of the use of learning methods (Li et al., 2022). In the context of implementing learning where the method is an integral part, the fundamental problem is the optimal embodiment of learning methods as mandated at the theoretical level. This is where the need for practical, theoretical consistency revitalizes learning methods. The recitation or assignment method is an alternative method for conveying learning.

This is due to the density of learning material delivered while learning time is limited in class. Thus, there must be a task that must overcome the problem of lack of class study time. There are so many educational activities that it takes up a lot of students' time to carry out the learning

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process in the classroom, so to overcome this situation, the teacher needs to give assignments  
outside of class hours.

However, Islamic religious education uses the recitation method, and the role of the teacher in applying the recitation method still needs to be widely known. For this reason, in-depth research is needed on teachers' role in applying the recitation method in Islamic religious learning in secondary schools. This research was conducted to provide understanding to the academic world and practitioners regarding using the recitation method in Islamic religious education in schools.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Definition of Cognitive Ability***

The term cognitive from the word cognition means recognition, awareness, and understanding (Chaney, 2013). It is a general concept that includes activities such as thinking and reasoning, in other words, processes that involve effort in acquiring, compiling, and using knowledge. Cognitive is also understood as the ability to think and how the thinking works (Croskerry, 2000). Cognitive development is the ability to perceive the circumstances around us within a framework of logic and concepts that lead to reality (Hou, Fang, & Tang, 2021). Good cognitive development allows individuals to assess, connect, and consider between one event and another. This is called thinking and learning logic. In subsequent developments, the term cognitive became famous as a domain or realm of human psychology that includes every mental behavior and relates to understanding, consideration, information processing, problem-solving, gaps, and beliefs. Based on the meaning above, cognitive development is the development of intellectual functions or the process of developing the ability or intelligence of a child's brain.

Children are born with several sensor motor schemata, which provide a framework for their initial interactions with their environment (Clark, 2007). These sensor motor schemata will determine the child's early experiences. In other words, only events that can be assimilated into the schemata are what the child can respond to. Therefore, those events will determine the limits of the child's experience. But through experience, these initial schemata are modified. Each adventure contains unique elements that the child's cognitive structure must accommodate (Von Glasersfeld, 1982). In this way, the intellectual growth that begins with a child's reflexive response to the environment will continue to progress to the point where the child can think about potential events and mentally explore their possible consequences.

Piaget (1971) divides children's cognitive development into four stages as they get older, as follows:

**Table 1**  
**Stages of Cognitive Development**

Stage	Age / Years	Description
Sensor motor	0-2	Infants move from instinctive reflex actions at birth to the beginning of symbolic thought. Infants construct an understanding of the world by coordinating sensory experiences with physical activities.
Preoperational	2-7	Children begin to represent the world with words and pictures. This indicates increased symbolic thinking and goes beyond the connection of sensory information and physical actions.
Concrete operational	7-11	At this time, the child can think logically about concrete events and classify objects into different forms.
Formal operational	11-15	Teenagers think in more abstract and logical ways. More idealistic thinking.

Viewed from Piaget's Cognitive perspective, adolescent thinking has reached the stage of formal operational thought, a phase of cognitive development that begins at approximately 11 or 12 years of age and continues until adolescents reach adulthood (Riley, Adams, & Nielsen, 1984). At this stage, the child can think abstractly and hypothetically. At this time, children can think of something that will or might happen, something abstract. In addition, at this stage, adolescents can also think systematically and think of all possibilities systematically to solve problems. Adolescence is a period of life when the capacity to acquire and use knowledge efficiently reaches its peak.

***Definition of Recitation Method***

The recitation method is a method of giving assignments carried out by the teacher to students (Brophy, 1986). Recitation is also understood as a learning method that combines memorization, reading, repetition, testing, and self-examination in the large written dictionary of knowledge (Dahlin & Watkins, 2000). The method of presenting material in which the teacher gives specific tasks so that students carry out learning activities. Assignments given to students can be done in class, on the school grounds, in the laboratory, in the library at home, outside of school hours, or anywhere as long as the assignment can be done. The recitation method delivers learning material by giving assignments to students to work on outside of the school schedule within a certain period, and the results must be accountable to the teacher.

In the recitation method, a teacher gives certain assignments so that students carry out learning activities, and then they have to be accountable for them (Fathuddin, Nurdin, & Rustina, 2023). Students are free to do assignments at school, library, and home. Thus, when solving problems, students are more creative in finding solutions from various learning sources. With this recitation method, students can learn from the natural environment. Based on the description above, the recitation method or giving assignments is a way for the teacher in the teaching and learning process to increase students' activeness in learning both at school and at home and to be accountable to the teacher.

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Thus, recitation as a learning and teaching method is a student learning effort by giving memorization assignments, testing, and self-examination or presenting oneself in conveying learning or conducting studies (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006). The demands to stimulate students to be more active in creative learning and students' thinking to be more creative, both individually and in groups, cultivate the habit of learning to seek and discover, develop courage and self-responsibility, and desire to obtain permanent results.

### ***Steps to Implement the Recitation Method***

#### *Assignment Phase*

The assignments given to students should consider the goals to be achieved, the types of assignments that suit the abilities of students, and instructions that can help and provide sufficient time (Thorpe, 2000). The assignment technique aims to give students more stable learning outcomes because students carry out exercises while doing assignments. Students must do many tasks, which is expected to awaken them to always take advantage of things supporting their learning abilities. In addition to teachers, students also play an essential role in the learning interaction process so that it runs well and follows educational goals. In the learning process at school, students often encounter misbehavior or violations committed by students, for example, skipping class, being late, making noise when not doing assignments, and so on. These things are one reflection of the lack of discipline of students. To overcome this, the school makes rules and regulations. It is accompanied by sanctions for violators with various considerations that are not burdensome to students and for the good of students to be disciplined in teaching and learning activities.

#### *Task implementation phase*

Given guidance or supervision by the teacher, encouraged so that the child wants to carry out, tried or done by the child himself, recorded all the results obtained properly and systematically.

#### *Task accountability phase*

Student reports, both oral and written, from what has been done, there are questions and answers and discussions, assessment of the results of student work with tests and non-tests or in other ways. There are several general considerations to consider when setting up collaborative learning assignments (adapted from Davis, 1993, pp. 147-154). First, make sure the assignment is relevant and integral to achieving educational goals, so it doesn't feel like a waste of time. Second, be careful in adapting lessons to students' skills and abilities. Third, design tasks to encourage interdependence so that all members are accountable and interdependent on other members to achieve success.

### ***Islamic Religious Education***

Islamic religious education as a whole within the scope of Al-Qur'an and Al-hadith, faith, morals, fiqh/worship, and history, at the same time, illustrates that the scope of Islamic religious education includes the embodiment of harmony and balance of human relations with Allah SWT, themselves, fellow human beings, other creatures and their environment (Fuess, 2007).

From this understanding it can be found several things that need to be considered in learning Islamic religious education, namely the following:

1. Islamic Religious Education is a conscious effort, namely an activity of guidance, teaching, and/or training planned and intended for achieving the goals.

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2. Students who want to be prepared to achieve goals in the sense that they are guided, taught, and/or trained in increasing their belief, understanding, appreciation, and practice of Islamic teachings.
3. Education or Islamic Religious Education Teachers who carry out conscious guidance, teaching, and/or training activities for their students to achieve the goals of Islamic religious education.
4. Islamic Religious Education (learning) activities are directed at increasing students' beliefs, understanding, appreciation, and practice of Islamic religious teachings, who are assisted in forming personal and social righteousness.

The first teaching in Islam was when Gabriel met the Prophet Muhammad, who was in the cave of Hira. In his teaching, Gabriel asked the Prophet. The emergence of Islam was marked by teaching and education as the main foundation of faith.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses qualitative methods, and the data was gathered through field observation, in-depth interviews, and written document analysis (Askar, Adawiyah, & Nurdin, 2021; Askar, Pettalongi, & Nurdin, 2022). Direct observation was conducted during the teaching and learning process, while in-depth interviews were carried out with teachers and students. Document analysis was conducted to see teaching material preparation and the students learning performance scores. Data was analyzed using the thematic approach outlined by Corbin and Strauss (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), while the process of data analysis was conducted through three levels of coding, which began from open coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding (Kendall, 1999). The location of this study is a State Junior High School in Palu City. The school teaches Islami religious lessons to all grades of their students.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***The Teacher's Role in Improving Students' Cognitive Abilities through the Recitation Method***

Learning Islamic religious education must be carried out properly because, with good learning, the results will also be good, as is done by Islamic religious education teachers. Learning Islamic religious education is one of the most important lessons for students. Improving the cognitive abilities of students, especially in Islamic religious education subjects, both in the ability to think, memorize, and morals of students in everyday life, all of this requires efforts by the teacher properly.

From the writer's interviews, the learning of Islamic religious education must accompany the teacher's learning efforts and strategies to implement knowledge as desired. Islamic religious education can be a lesson that will interest many students if learning is engaging. Learning like this requires good cooperation between several parties in schools, such as school principals and Islamic religious education teachers, so that learning preparation is well prepared as stated by the principal as follows:

*Our task here is to cooperate reasonably with all parties at school, especially in Islamic religious education subjects. Special attention must be given because Islamic religious education is essential and must be owned by every student. Therefore, we always work*



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*closely with teachers of Islamic religious education to achieve our learning objectives. We also regulate good morals towards students; one of them is that students do not leave during school hours, such as skipping. For this reason, we always apply advice to our students in this school.*

From the results of these interviews, the authors conclude that the role of the school principal is also crucial in improving students' cognitive abilities, especially in understanding Islamic religious education. Learning can be carried out properly with the cooperation of school principals and teachers of Islamic religious education. As usual, learning Islamic religious education at junior high school in Palu went well. The problem is students' need for cognitive abilities towards Islamic religious education subjects.

Based on the results of observations that the authors found, there needed to be more cognitive abilities of students, as there were still students who could not read the Qur'an and read the readings in prayer. In this problem, based on the results of the researcher's interview, the teacher made several efforts, and one of them was using the recitation method.

In each lesson, each student certainly has different cognitive abilities. Sometimes, they have high cognitive skills, and some have low cognitive abilities. This understanding can be seen through an understanding of the learning conveyed by the teacher. Likewise, with students at junior high school in Palu. As the results of interviews with researchers with Islamic religious education teachers.

*In terms of ability, every child inevitably has different skills. Some are above standard, some are according to standard, and some are below standard for seventh-grade students. Some students have met the standard, although some still need to improve their cognitive abilities. I often need help understanding the learning material, but sometimes, I ask friends to read some of the prayers I haven't memorized because I have difficulty memorizing.*

Creating creative, intelligent students from a mental and scientific point of view is the task of all parties, including school institutions. School is a means or place believed to be able to develop all the potential that every child has. The morals that have been formed from the family environment are expected to be able to develop further when the child enters the school environment. Cognitive is the activity or process of acquiring knowledge, including awareness, feeling, or trying to explore something through one's own experience. The method of recognizing and interpreting the environment by someone is the result of acquiring knowledge. The ability of students to think more complexly and do reasoning and problem-solving. This cognitive development itself makes it easier for students to master broader knowledge so that students can understand something according to the abilities they have.

Learning Islamic religious education is mandatory in education for students who are Muslim. Still, to achieve the desired goals, cooperation between teachers and students is needed to run optimally. Based on interviews conducted by researchers, implementing Islamic religious education learning at Junior High School in Palu, especially in Islamic religious education, uses the recitation learning method.

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In the learning process, of course, the teacher must have a teaching method so that learning objectives can be achieved as from the results of interviews related to the learning process through the recitation method with one of the Islamic religious education teachers as follows:

*In Islamic religious education, recitation can be passionate and motivate students to learn more actively. It can stimulate students to learn more both in class and outside the classroom. Applying the recitation method places students learning more independently, developing creativity because students are faced with situations that require them to solve problems, which ultimately increases the interest and motivation of participants in learning Islamic religious education.*

Then, the researcher conducted further interviews regarding the learning process of Islamic religious education with one of the other teachers who said:

*First, the teacher prepares for learning, namely by making lesson plans. The next stage conveys the learning objectives of the material to be taught. Then, the core learning activities are divided into The material explanation stage; at this stage, the teacher conveys an overview of the learning material. After all the material is explained, the teacher allows students to relate to the material that has yet to be understood. At the evaluation stage, the teacher gives assignments to students to work on questions regarding the material that has been taught to determine the students' abilities.*

Based on the results of these interviews, it can be concluded that the teacher also cannot be separated from giving assignments to students because by providing assignments, the teacher will know whether the material taught by the teacher has been understood or not by students. Because most students when learning is in progress, if students are asked by the teacher whether they understand or not, the students answer that they understand even though they don't understand as long as the lesson ends quickly. Therefore, this assignment method or recitation method is very appropriate to apply.

Islamic religious education learning with the application of the recitation method at the school has been carried out following the learning steps planned for the implementation of learning activities, namely preliminary activities. The teacher gives assignments based on the goals to be achieved. In the core activities, the teacher guides students when working on questions, and in closing activities, students are responsible for the results of the work that has been done.

Teachers are required to be professional; namely, the teacher must have an attitude of action that the teacher owns in supporting work, which is based on the understanding that in carrying out a profession, it must be based on professional abilities, which include knowledge, expertise, and skills that support the profession being taught. Teachers should always pay attention to each student, whether they have the high motivation or not so that efforts to generate this motivation can be sought in ways that can arouse and encourage the willingness to learn of all students.

If students need more motivation in studying, it can be challenging to achieve the expected success. Conversely, if students have high motivation, achieving excellent or expected learning achievement will be easy. Islamic Religious Education is the main stronghold for preserving and developing Islamic teachings. As professional educators in carrying out their duties, teachers must be able to create learning methods. The use of appropriate methods in the learning



Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK process is a significant factor in achieving learning objectives. Choosing the suitable method can also help the teacher to carry out learning according to the plans that have been arranged. The results of interviews with other teachers are as follows:

*By preparing the material to be delivered to students, before giving assignments, the teacher first conveys and explains the material to be assigned to students, allowing students to ask anything they don't understand about the material to be assigned; then, we always carry out evaluations to determine the success of student learning.*

From these interviews, the researcher concluded that before the teacher conducts a lesson, the teacher prepares the material. The teacher also wants to know the goals to be achieved so that the material being taught becomes focused and gets the best results. If the teacher gives assignments to students, the teacher first conveys and explains the material that will be assigned to students so that students can handle their assignments efficiently. After that, the teacher allows students to ask questions about the tasks they will be working on, and then the teacher evaluates and assesses the students' assignments.

Based on the results of the research, it can be seen how the teacher's efforts in improving students' cognitive abilities through the recitation method at junior high school in Palu. This cognitive development can be seen when the teacher evaluates after giving assignments. This is in line with the results of interviews with other Islamic religious education teachers as follows:

*After giving the material, we always provide assignments to students, and to find out students' success, we conduct evaluations to find out how students' thinking abilities are by asking students directly. Hence, we know to what extent each student's ability.*

With this statement, the use of the recitation method has been applied by the teacher. Still, from the initial observations, the researcher found several problems in learning Islamic religious education, one of which is the low learning outcomes of Islamic religious education. This is evidenced by the results of the researcher's interview with one of the students at a junior high school in Palu, where the researcher asked the students to read the Al-Qur'an, and one of the readings in prayer; several students answered that they still could not, this was in line with the results of the researcher's interview with other students and said that:

*I used to have difficulty memorizing and reciting the sholawat; at the end, it was usually upside down, and if the teacher gave me an assignment, we usually copied it from friends if we didn't understand.*

From the statement of one of the students, the researcher can conclude that students' learning outcomes and cognitive abilities are still minimal. In contrast, students of their age should be able to master all the readings of the five daily prayers and read the Qur'an properly and correctly according to the reading tajwid.

From this description, the writer can conclude that the students' problems include a lack of interest in student learning and teacher supervision in using the assignment method so that students are less enthusiastic. Supervision when doing assignments also aims to ensure students do the task with their abilities. Then, the teacher must provide individual assessments of students so that students will feel more enthusiastic and cared for by a teacher.

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In using learning methods to match what is expected, the teacher must be required to be creative in using a method. The method is a procedure for achieving goals following the indicators determined in a learning method. The learning method must be mastered by the teacher and prepared carefully so that learning activities run effectively and can achieve teaching goals.

The recitation method is used to improve the cognitive abilities of students. The recitation method is the most commonly used, and the implementation procedure is straightforward. Every teacher can use it to help make it easier to achieve learning goals, especially in Islamic religious education subjects.

With the recitation method, it is hoped that it can improve students' cognitive abilities to achieve optimal results as expected. The recitation method can provoke students' sense of responsibility so that the learning process can occur in students and can stimulate thoughts, feelings, and attention. Students become active in accepting the material conveyed by the teacher to improve students cognitively. The stages of implementing Islamic religious education learning through the recitation method are as follows from interviews with Islamic religious education teachers:

*The teacher instructs students to write learning material that is considered essential and requires students to ask about material that still needs to be understood. The teacher concludes the material that has been studied. Then, at the end of the lesson, the teacher always gives assignments to students.*

From the results of interviews with researchers, Islamic religious education teachers at the school always apply the recitation method. This is following the results of previous researchers' observations.

### ***Teachers' Challenges in Improving Students' Cognitive Abilities Through the Recitation Method***

In the learning process, it is indeed inseparable from the obstacles encountered. To find out the obstacles when applying the recitation method in the classroom, the researcher conducted interviews with teachers of Islamic religious education subjects as follows:

Obstacles to improving students' cognitive abilities through the recitation method are the need for more willingness to learn from the students. Therefore, our efforts on this problem are by always providing advice and motivation that can increase students' enthusiasm. The other obstacle is that it is difficult for the teacher to control when giving assignments because of the possibility that other people will do the assignments.

So, in conclusion, according to researchers, the biggest obstacle is the need for more interest in learning students, and the task is difficult to control by the teacher because of the possibility of the task being done by someone else. Giving assignments is also not too frequent and too many so that students do not complain and need clarification about which assignments must be completed first. If the task is too difficult, it can reduce students' interest in learning, and in the end, many only see the work of friends or others.

The teacher's efforts to prevent these obstacles, the researchers conducted interviews again with one of the informants, including:

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1. Students must master the type of assignment given
2. The assignments given must be in accordance with the material provided
3. If the task is divided into groups, we must first give directions and then evaluate it by asking students one by one to find out the abilities of students and
4. We always try to advise students so they are always active in receiving our lessons.

Based on re-interviews conducted by the author with Islamic religious education teachers regarding the results of the efforts made through the recitation method, namely:

After the process of giving assignments, we can see and evaluate. By providing assignments, the teacher can find out how students' sense of responsibility is increasing. Many students are active, as seen when the teacher gives assignments to students and plays an active role in exchanging opinions with friends. When using the recitation method, the student's response was outstanding.

From the interviews above, the researcher concluded that in giving assignments to students, the teacher must know in advance whether the assignments to be given follow the material previously described because students must understand the assignments given to them so that they do not have difficulty doing it. Then, suppose the task is given in groups. In that case, the teacher must provide careful assessment and correction so that students are enthusiastic and do not just rely on their friends and then carry out individual evaluations by asking one by one student to find out whether they understand or not. And the last thing is to continue giving students advice and direction so that they are always active in learning. A professional teacher must be able to provide the best guidance so that students will feel reluctant and sincere in receiving knowledge because the best teacher is a teacher who is respected, not because he is feared. Thus, knowledge will flow easily by itself because education is not just material; students will also follow our best behavior and morals in everyday life.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study indicate that the teacher's efforts to improve students' cognitive abilities through recitation methods in Islamic religious education subjects have enhanced students' cognitive skills and better memory. Islamic religious education subjects, especially prayer material, contain prayer readings that students must memorize. So, applying the recitation method makes students' learning activities more active in learning Islamic religious education so that it runs well and smoothly. In recitation, students must go through three stages: given assignments, carrying out assignments, and assessing task evaluation. This research also shows that the teacher's role in improving students' cognitive abilities through recitation methods in Islamic religious education subjects has increased learning motivation to create high learning enthusiasm. The results of this research contribute to the world of academics and also to the world of practitioners. Academics can add to their insights regarding the benefits of applying the recitation method in learning Islamic religious education. Meanwhile, practitioners such as teachers and principals can imitate the recitation method in learning Islamic education in their schools.

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