

COMPARING SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING IN QUR'ANIC TAHSIN AT UNIVERSITAS TERBUKA: A STUDY ON STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND PROCESSES

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari kajian penelitian ini adalah mendeskripsikan praktik tahsin al-Qur'an pada program pendidikan agama Islam Universitas Terbuka serta menganalisis capaian hasil belajar mahasiswa untuk mengetahui efektivitasnya. Mixed methods desain eksplanatori sekuensial adalah pendekatan yang diterapkan dalam penelitian ini. Data kuantitatif diperoleh melalui dokumentasi nilai dari 2.264 mahasiswa, sedangkan kualitatif diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara semi struktur dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan sinkronus melalui daring tatap maya (virtual) yang dilaksanakan secara langsung (real-time) memberikan interaksi langsung, koreksi bacaan serta pemberian umpan balik yang efektif dalam pembelajaran praktik tahsin al-Qur'an di PAI UT. Sementara itu, pendekatan asinkronus memberikan keluasaan waktu belajar mahasiswa baik mengakses materi ataupun Latihan mandiri sehingga tercipta kemandirian yang terarah. Pendekatan sinkronus dan asinkronus dalam pembelajaran Tahsin di Universitas Terbuka membentuk model blended learning daring yang dinilai cocok dalam upaya meningkatkan kompetensi membaca al-Qur'an di kalangan mahasiswa. Dilihat dari capaian nilai dimana lebih dari 75% mahasiswa mendapatkan nilai baik hingga baik sekali. Dalam pembelajaran praktik tahsin al-Qur'an di PAI UT berbasis keterampilan atau praktik, penggunaan pendekatan sinkronus dan asinkronus adalah kesatuan yang membentuk keterpaduan dalam pembelajaran sehingga tidak dapat dipisahkan satu per satu.

Kata Kunci: *Sinkronus, Asinkronus, Tahsin al-Qur'an, Universitas Terbuka*

Abstract

This study aims to describe the practice of Qur'anic *tahsin* (refinement of recitation) within the Islamic Religious Education program at Universitas

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Terbuka and analyze student learning outcomes to assess its effectiveness. A sequential explanatory mixed methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from the academic records of 2,264 students, while qualitative data were obtained through observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The findings indicate that synchronous learning through real-time virtual sessions (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) offers direct interaction, effective correction, and timely feedback in *tahsin* instruction. Meanwhile, asynchronous learning facilitates flexibility and autonomous learning, enabling students to access content and engage in self-practice at their own pace. The integration of synchronous and asynchronous modes forms a blended learning model that proves effective for enhancing Qur'anic reading proficiency. Over 75% of students achieved commendable academic performance. In skill-based learning contexts like *tahsin*, the combination of both methods constitutes an inseparable instructional unity.

Keywords: Synchronous, Asynchronous, Qur'anic Tahsin, Universitas Terbuka

INTRODUCTION

One of the essential aspects of Islamic education is the learning of the Qur'an, and a fundamental component associated with it is *tahsin*, or the refinement of Qur'anic recitation. In Qur'anic instruction, *tahsin* refers to efforts to improve and beautify one's recitation in accordance with the established rules of *tajwīd* (Rohman & Aziz, 2021). Tahsin has a vital role, correct reading will affect the correct understanding. On the other hand, errors in reading can change the meaning. This can certainly affect the quality of one's worship. In addition, Tahsin also play a role in religious life for those who practice it, including fostering a sense of pleasure in reading the Qur'an, strengthening Islamic morals and fostering self-confidence in carrying out religious activities

Traditionally, such instruction is conducted face-to-face. In the context of higher education, however, *tahsin* learning needs to be integrated with pedagogical approaches that foster strong internalization of values among students (Syahid & Rahmat, 2020). Modern education has evolved alongside rapid technological advancements, which has impacted



instructional delivery methods. At UT, the *tahsin* course is implemented through online blended learning, combining synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (flexible-time) approaches. This presents a unique challenge for practical courses such as *tahsin*, which are traditionally delivered through face-to-face teacher-student interactions. In contrast, UT's distance learning model offers no in-person meetings between lecturers and students. Nevertheless, the advancement of technology opens new avenues for delivering *tahsin* instruction virtually. The synchronous model significantly contributes to skill-based courses like *tahsin* within a distance learning environment like UT

Synchronous learning refers to real-time interaction between students and lecturers via platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams. Asynchronous learning, on the other hand, is characterized by flexibility in time and place, allowing students to study independently at their own pace without direct, real-time interaction (Hrastinski, 2008). Gao and Zhang (2021) similarly explain that synchronous approaches provide opportunities for immediate interaction, while asynchronous approaches facilitate flexible access to instructional materials. According to Suwarno et al. (2024), the flexibility afforded by asynchronous learning promotes students' autonomy and confidence in managing their learning styles, study duration, and practice routines. Hew and Lo (2021) also highlight that asynchronous learning supports learners' control over their studies

This integration of synchronous and asynchronous modes becomes a defining characteristic of UT's *tahsin* instruction—highlighting guided, independent learning.). Thus, the examination of *tahsin* instruction through synchronous and asynchronous approaches at UT and their effectiveness based on student learning outcomes remains underexplored. This study seeks to address that gap by: (1) analyzing student achievement as an indicator of the effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous methods, and (2) describing the implementation of synchronous and asynchronous *tahsin* instruction at UT. This research contributes to the development of innovative strategies for online *tahsin* instruction and can serve as a national reference for designing technology-integrated *tahsin* curricula.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Almekhlafi (2020) emphasizes that the Integrating synchronous and asynchronous methods enhances learning outcomes—where synchronous sessions offer real-time feedback, and asynchronous modes support flexible, self-paced practice. This is also stated in research by Yusop and Sumari (2021) that emphasize that blended learning, which combines synchronous and asynchronous methods, enhances student engagement and learning outcomes in Islamic education. This model offers flexibility and supports diverse learning needs by balancing autonomous study with guided interaction, making it well-suited for distance learning environments. The relationship with the importance of the blended learning model in the context of tahsin education is that tahsin is not sufficient with just one learning model, especially in a distance learning context, because tahsin is a skill so that blended learning models are relevant.

This was also realized in previous research, but the results of this research were still general. Such as Watts (2016) explains that asynchronous learning allows students to study independently and manage their own learning time, which encourages deeper understanding and supports reflective thinking—especially important in remote learning contexts. This research is supported by the research by the result of Martin et al (2017) which states that assert that synchronous learning supports learner engagement by enabling real-time communication and prompt feedback, which are essential for maintaining motivation and improving comprehension in online settings. Boelens et al. (2017) argue that effective blended learning should address key aspects such as flexibility, meaningful interaction, learner autonomy, and inclusivity. By integrating online and face-to-face elements, this approach supports personalized learning experiences and is especially valuable in diverse or remote educational settings.

Then followed research from Sumari (2021) which revealed that underscores that blended learning is an effective instructional model that combines the strengths of face-to-face and online learning, offering flexibility and promoting student autonomy. This approach is particularly relevant in distance education, where it supports both active participation and independent learning through the integration of synchronous and



asynchronous methods. Riana (2021) revealed that highlights that virtual synchronous sessions are effective in enhancing Qur'anic recitation skills, as they provide opportunities for immediate instructor feedback and live interaction—elements that closely mirror traditional face-to-face learning.

These studies reveal related synchronous and asynchronous learning models in general and not specifically for tahsin. This study discusses the description of the combination of the two approach models for tahsing learning and the analysis of the results achieved

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, beginning with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. This approach was chosen to achieve a deeper understanding of the research topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative data comprised student achievement scores in the *tahsin al-Qur'an* practicum course, the data will be used as material to analyze the effectiveness of using synchronous and asynchronous learning models. while the qualitative data provided descriptive insights into the teaching and learning processes of *tahsin* practices. So the combination of the two data will create accurate results. The limitations in this research design are the very large sample size which comes from various backgrounds and location factors which come from various regions so that is possible that this could influence the final result.

The study was conducted within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) program at Universitas Terbuka. The research subjects were students enrolled in the *tahsin al-Qur'an* practicum course during the second semester of 2024. The research objects consisted of the students' learning outcomes and the implementation processes of *tahsin* instruction during the same semester. Quantitative data were gathered through documentation of students' final grades in the *tahsin* course and via closed-ended questionnaires. The closed questionnaire contains questions whose answers have been provided by the researcher so that respondents only choose the answers. In contrast, qualitative data were obtained through non-participant observation of synchronous learning sessions conducted via Microsoft Teams. Additionally, the study included document analysis of the Learning Management System (LMS) used for the *tahsin* course,

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encompassing learning materials, videos, discussion forums. and semi-structured interviews with lecturers and students. Quantitative data analysis utilized a descriptive statistical approach. Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which involves three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To ensure the validity of the quantitative data, scores were cross-checked by the course instructors to confirm accuracy. For the qualitative data, validity was ensured through both method triangulation and source triangulation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Student Learning Outcomes in the Qur'anic Tahsin Course

The integration of synchronous and asynchronous approaches in the *tahsin* practicum course represents two complementary elements that are inseparable. The combination of these methods forms a potentially effective online blended learning model, particularly relevant for Universitas Terbuka's distance learning system. As highlighted by Boelens et al. (2017), blended learning promotes deeper engagement through the combination of flexible access and interactive sessions. The effectiveness of this approach is evident from students' academic performance, with over 75% achieving grades in the “very good” category. Data were collected from the academic records of 2,264 students enrolled in the *tahsin al-Qur'an* course during the second semester of 2024. The results indicate that approximately 76.9% of students earned an A, 4.7% received an A-, 3.7% earned a B, and 5.7% received a B-. Only 8.9% of students received grades of C or below. The grade distribution is summarized below:

Table 1.1. Student Grade Distribution

Grade Category	Number of Students	Percentage
A	1,740	76.8%
A-	107	4.7%
B	84	3.7%
B-	130	5.7%
C	48	2.1%
C-	47	2.1%
D	108	4.8%



Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that the majority of students achieved a high level of proficiency in *tahsin*. This indicates that the integration of synchronous and asynchronous learning is effective in the context of Universitas Terbuka. If the minimum passing grade is set at C, then fewer than 10% of students failed the course. This 10% is largely attributed to external factors, such as student absenteeism beyond the allowable limits.

Many students state that with this blended learning model (synchronous and asynchronous), they have more time to practice. In asynchronous they can study the materials and videos provided by the lecturer, so they can practice earlier than in asynchronous sessions they are more confident in being able to practice reading well according to the correct tajwid rules based on the videos and materials that have been given. The assessment of this course is taken from the practice carried out by students. So that the practical value achieved by students is good or very good because they are confident with their reading. This is in line with research conducted by Watts (2016) and Martin (2017) that asynchronous learning provides students with a greater possibility of learning independently and managing their own time, while synchronous learning can support student engagement and provide fast feedback.

Learning Process in the Qur'anic *Tahsin* Practicum Course

The *tahsin al-Qur'an* practicum course at Universitas Terbuka (UT) is implemented through an online blended learning model that combines synchronous and asynchronous methods. Synchronous learning is conducted in real-time, allowing instructors and students to interact simultaneously in the same virtual environment. At UT, this real-time interaction is facilitated through virtual face-to-face sessions using Microsoft Teams – unlike conventional in-person instruction typical of non-distance universities. Asynchronous learning, on the other hand, is supported by a Learning Management System (LMS), where both instructors and students can access materials at their own convenience. The LMS hosts various resources, including initiation materials, instructional videos, enrichment content, and discussion forums. Students also have access to printed modules and digital modules housed in the university's Virtual Reading Room (RBV). In addition to the main learning materials



(BMP), students may independently study using video tutorials and introductory materials available through the LMS platform or the MYUT mobile application.

According to Kebritchi et al. (2017), instructional videos should be presented interactively and engagingly, encouraging students to record their own recitations and compare them with provided samples. The asynchronous component offers students flexible time for self-directed learning, allowing them to study anytime and anywhere. This setup promotes student autonomy from understanding theory to engaging in independent practice. The asynchronous approach significantly enhances students' comprehension of *tahsin* material. This supports the argument of Anderson and Dron (2017), who stated that asynchronous learning empowers learner autonomy and sharpens understanding through reflective processes. The *tahsin* course includes the following sessions:

Session	Material Topic
1	<i>Tajwīd</i> Rules (Theory and Practice)
2	<i>Mād</i> Rules (Theory and Practice)
3	<i>Nūn Sākinah</i> and <i>Tanwīn</i> (Theory and Practice)
4	<i>Mīm Sākinah</i> (Theory and Practice)
5	<i>Al-Ta'rif</i> (Theory and Practice)
6	<i>Gharīb</i> Verses (Theory and Practice)
7	<i>Nūn Wiqāyah</i> , prostration verses, <i>ṣifr</i> , and <i>waqf</i>
8	Qur'anic reading practice covering Sessions 1–7

The success of the asynchronous sessions depends heavily on the students themselves. Barnard-Brak et al. (2010) argued that effective time management, intrinsic motivation, and self-assessment are critical to success in online learning. This study supports earlier findings that students who actively engage with videos and independent practice before synchronous sessions tend to perform better in recitation than those who are passive during asynchronous learning. LMS also plays a significant role in the success of this asynchronous session. The successful use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) in *tahsin* instruction depends heavily on lecturer creativity and student engagement (Muntafi'ah et al., 2024). This study aligns with result of Alhafdi and Alhalawafy (2020) the highlight the



vital role of digital platforms in Qur'anic education, enabling both synchronous and asynchronous interactions between teachers and students. Such an approach enhances learning flexibility, fosters participation and satisfaction, and supports the continuity of education across diverse cultural contexts. If well-integrated, the synchronous sessions can focus exclusively on the practical components of recitation.

Synchronous sessions are conducted via Microsoft Teams, where both instructor and students attend at a pre-scheduled time. During these virtual meetings, students recite selected verses, and instructors provide immediate feedback, correction, and constructive criticism. These sessions typically last for two hours, during which the instructor listens to and evaluates each student's recitation based on the lesson of the day. The synchronous component includes individual listening, direct correction of *tajwīd* and *makhārij*, peer discussions, and group practice.

Students are also required to record their recitation and upload the videos to the LMS discussion forum. If a student wishes to revise their recitation, they may re-record and re-upload the video outside of the scheduled class time. Scheduling of synchronous sessions is typically coordinated via WhatsApp groups, with weekly meetings being the norm. At Universitas Terbuka, synchronous sessions must use Microsoft Teams (or Zoom if technical issues arise). These sessions play a crucial role in Qur'anic *tahsin* instruction. They help students verify their recitation accuracy and allow instructors to evaluate students' attainment of expected competencies. Hrastinski (2019) also found that synchronous sessions increase emotional engagement and foster a stronger emotional bond between instructors and students. Moreover, synchronous learning enhances the cognitive domain through real-time feedback. Skylar (2009) emphasized that skill-based learning is more effective when delivered through real-time communication compared to asynchronous-only formats.

Many students reported that the combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning models has provided them with numerous advantages. First, asynchronous learning offers flexibility, allowing students to understand theoretical content independently and in a structured manner. Second, through asynchronous learning, students have



the autonomy to manage their own schedules in practicing Qur'anic recitation using video tutorials, enabling them to compare their recitations and thereby boosting their confidence. Third, in synchronous sessions, students who engage in frequent practice beforehand tend to progress more quickly and feel more confident when performing live recitations. Fourth, synchronous sessions provide immediate feedback and constructive suggestions from instructors, helping students identify whether their recitation—both in pronunciation and fluency—is accurate or needs improvement. Fifth, the majority of students in the Islamic Religious Education program at Universitas Terbuka are working professionals, boarding school students, or recent graduates, making this model an ideal choice as it allows them to manage their study schedules independently.

Nevertheless, the model also faces certain challenges. The primary obstacle is internet connectivity, especially since students are dispersed across Indonesia and even abroad, in both urban and rural areas. Guo et al. (2014) noted that the technical quality of internet connections significantly impacts the effectiveness of synchronous learning. Another challenge is time constraints. PAI students come from diverse professional backgrounds—teachers, bank clerks, security personnel, housewives, and boarding school students—which limits their available time. Tutors often extend session durations to ensure that all students (typically 15 per group) have an opportunity to recite and receive feedback. The more actively students engage in asynchronous preparation and independent practice, the smoother and more efficient the synchronous sessions become. The integration of both approaches ensures a holistic and cohesive learning experience, effectively substituting for traditional face-to-face *tahsin* instruction in this distance learning context. Another challenge of synchronous learning lies in the requirement for time coordination between instructors and learners, the high dependence on technological devices, and the limited opportunities for direct or physical interaction (Abdurahman, Wiliyanti, & Tarrapa, 2024).

Padaguri and Pasha (2021) also confirmed that the combined use of synchronous and asynchronous strategies can enhance the success of online learning. These approaches complement each other in terms of monitoring student progress, managing learning schedules, and promoting academic



and social interaction. Students agree that this blended model helps them improve their Qur'anic recitation skills. It gives them the freedom to control their learning pace while still receiving structured guidance. During synchronous sessions, students benefit from live corrections and detailed feedback, which, combined with consistent practice and rich LMS content, leads to improved fluency. These findings are consistent with Martin et al. (2017), who found that real-time interaction increases student motivation and engagement. This model successfully addresses the challenges of teaching *tahsin* in a distance learning environment. Yusop and Sumari (2021) also demonstrated that blended learning in Islamic education can significantly support students' spiritual, affective, and cognitive development.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings in this study demonstrates that students' learning outcomes in the *tahsin al-Qur'an* course are influenced not merely by access to learning materials, but by several key contributing factors. First, the quality of synchronous interaction between lecturers and students plays a critical role. This includes the depth and constructiveness of feedback provided by the lecturer and the students' ability to understand and implement guidance. Effective real-time interaction ensures that students can correct their recitation errors immediately and develop stronger mastery of the *tajwid* rules. Second, students' time management and commitment to independent learning significantly affect their performance. While asynchronous learning offers flexibility, it demands discipline and consistency. Students who are serious and diligent in their self-paced study benefit more from the asynchronous materials, which include digital textbooks, printed modules, instructional videos, and presentation summaries. Such discipline provides direction and structure in their learning journey. Mastery of asynchronous materials enables students to apply what they have learned more effectively during synchronous sessions. This preparedness minimizes errors and enhances the efficiency of live practice and assessment.

Third, the availability and quality of learning infrastructure is a determining factor in the success of distance education. Since the entire learning process depends on digital tools, the provision of essential



equipment—such as laptops or smartphones—and stable internet connectivity is crucial. Without these, access to LMS materials, video conferencing, and interaction forums would be limited, thereby hindering learning outcomes. In conclusion, this study confirms that a blended learning model—which integrates synchronous and asynchronous strategies—provides substantial support for the Qur’anic *tahsin* learning process. The success of this model is contingent on three key elements: The discipline and engagement of students in both independent and interactive learning, The instructional guidance and responsiveness of lecturers, And the availability and reliability of educational technology used to facilitate the course. These findings underscore the importance of instructional design that balances flexibility with structure, ensuring that students not only have access to resources but are also supported through consistent interaction and technological readiness.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Qur’anic *tahsin* practicum at Universitas Terbuka using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning has proven to be effective and complementary in equipping students with the skills needed to read the Qur’an proficiently. The asynchronous approach provides greater time flexibility and promotes student independence in accessing theoretical materials, instructional videos, and self-directed practice. Meanwhile, the synchronous approach creates real-time opportunities for students to engage in guided recitation practice and receive direct feedback and corrections from lecturers—enabling deep and personalized instruction. The result of this study show that more than 75% of students achieved excellent scores in the *tahsin* course, indicating the method’s effectiveness in achieving the learning objectives set by the study program. However, such success is not achieved automatically.

Several critical factors contribute to this outcome: The quality of interaction between lecturers and students during synchronous sessions, The consistency and time management of students in independently managing their study schedules, And the strength of internet connectivity across diverse geographical regions, including both domestic and international student locations. Overall, this online blended learning model,



which integrates synchronous and asynchronous strategies, offers a viable and innovative solution to the challenges of distance learning in practical skill-based education such as Qur'anic *tahsin*. It serves as an ideal instructional model not only for Universitas Terbuka but also for other institutions implementing similar distance learning frameworks. This model has broader implications for curriculum design and policy development in Islamic education, especially in contexts where flexibility, accessibility, and digital integration are essential. It also encourages continuous improvements in lecturer competence, student engagement, and the use of technology to support pedagogical excellence in religious instruction.

The implementation of the *tahsin al-Qur'an* practicum at Universitas Terbuka using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning has proven to be both effective and mutually reinforcing in shaping students' skills in Qur'anic recitation. The asynchronous approach provides broader time flexibility and encourages self-directed learning by allowing students to access theoretical materials, video tutorials, and practice independently. On the other hand, the synchronous approach offers real-time opportunities for students to engage in live recitation practice and receive direct corrections and feedback from instructors, thereby ensuring deep and meaningful guidance.

This study found that the majority of students—more than 75%—achieved excellent scores, which aligns with the competency standards expected by the academic program. However, such effectiveness does not occur in isolation. Several key factors contributed to this success: The quality of synchronous interaction between instructors and students, Student compliance and consistency in managing their independent study schedules, The reliability of internet connectivity across diverse regions, both nationally and internationally. In summary, this online blended learning model—integrating synchronous and asynchronous methods—offers a responsive solution to the challenges of distance education, particularly in skill-based instruction such as *tahsin*. It stands as a potentially ideal model for other institutions adopting remote learning systems.



For the future, tahsin learning can be optimized with a mixed format of synchronous and asynchronous. This will have a tremendous impact because students have matured in the material and exercises, then can practice in front of the tutor directly so that emotional bonds can be formed and provide extraordinary feedback. Some challenges for institutions in applying this method are internet connections in remote area that are very likely to be unstable, the difficulty in both sessions which is very likely to be shaken due to misused technological developments.

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