



Classroom Action Research: Implementing the Four-Step Method to Improve Students' Understanding of Quran Translation

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Abstract

Understanding the translated Quran is an essential competency in Islamic Religious Education as it helps students comprehend Quranic messages and values contextually. However, many students still experience difficulties in understanding the meaning of verses, show low participation in learning activities, and rely heavily on teacher-centered instruction. This study aims to improve students' understanding of Quran translation through the implementation of a digital-based four-step method. The study employed a classroom action research design conducted in two cycles consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. Data were collected through classroom observations, learning achievement tests, documentation, and field notes. The findings revealed that the implementation of the digital-based four-step method increased student participation, strengthened collaborative learning, and improved students' understanding of Quran translation. The improvement was reflected in the achievement of learning indicators and student learning outcomes in each cycle. These findings imply that the digital-based four-step method can serve as an effective instructional strategy for improving the quality of Quran translation learning at the junior secondary school level.

INTRODUCTION

The study of the translated Quran is an important component of Islamic Religious Education at the junior high school level because it aims not only to help students read the Quran properly and accurately but also to understand the meanings and messages contained within it (Darussalam et al., 2021). An understanding of the translated Quran serves as the foundation for students to internalize Islamic values in their daily lives (Hasan, 2025). Therefore, the teaching of the Quran with translation should be directed toward strengthening students' ability to understand the content of verses contextually so that they not only master the reading and writing of the Quran but are also able to implement the values contained within it. In this study, the material focuses on Surah Al-Baqarah, verses 142–153, which contain the values of obedience to Allah SWT, gratitude, the spirit of competing in good deeds, patience, and the attitude of seeking help from Allah in facing various life challenges.

Advances in digital technology have opened up various opportunities for innovation in education. Digital transformation requires teachers to develop learning experiences that are more interactive, participatory, and learner-centered. One relevant approach is digital-based collaborative learning, which provides learners with the opportunity to work together, discuss, exchange ideas, and build understanding collectively. Through collaborative learning, students are no longer passive recipients of information but play an active role in constructing knowledge and completing various learning tasks. This approach has been proven to increase student engagement, communication skills, and cooperation, as well as lead to more optimal learning outcomes.

One strategy that can support active and collaborative learning is the four-step method, which consists of observing, asking questions, exploring, and communicating (Davinka, 2026). This method provides a systematic learning experience because students have the opportunity to observe examples, ask questions, explore through group discussions, and communicate their understanding to others. This process aligns with the constructivist approach, which positions students as active agents in constructing knowledge through direct learning experiences (Wahyudi, 2023). Through these sequential stages, students are expected to gain a deeper understanding of the material while developing critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills all of which are essential for 21st-century learning (Hermawati, 2016).

Various previous studies have shown that collaborative learning, learner-centered learning, and the use of digital technology have a positive impact on improving learning outcomes (Utami et al., 2024). Sutomo & Aini, (2024) explains that understanding learner characteristics is a key factor in determining learning success. Zaidan & Dewantoro, (2025) emphasize that students must be positioned as active participants in the educational process. Salama, (2025) demonstrate that students in Islamic education play an active role in developing their potential to become *insan kamil* (perfect human beings). Research by Peliza, (2024); Rijali & Asfiati, (2024); Yunita et al., (2025); Yusuf et al., (2024) also found that students' active engagement contributes to improved learning outcomes and character development. Furthermore, Aziz et al., (2025); Fadlillah, (2017); Intaniasari et al., (2022); Susanty, (2020) demonstrate that student-centered learning can enhance participation, motivation, and the quality of the learning process. However, research integrating the four-step method with digital-based collaborative learning in the teaching of the Translated Quran at the junior high school level remains relatively limited.

Various studies and teaching practices in several schools indicate that students' understanding of the Translated Quran still faces a number of challenges, such as low student participation in the learning process, limited ability to understand the meaning of verses in context, and the predominant use of teacher-centered teaching methods. These conditions result in suboptimal learning outcomes and students' inability to relate the content of the Quran to their daily lives. In fact, the teaching of the Translated Quran aims not only to improve students' ability to read and translate verses but also to foster a genuine understanding, appreciation, and practice of the Quran's values. Various studies have shown that learner-centered, collaborative learning that utilizes digital technology can enhance student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes (Hamilaturroyya & Hadi, 2025; Purnawanto, 2022). Therefore, more innovative and participatory learning strategies are needed to address these challenges. One alternative that can be implemented is a four-step digital-based method that integrates the activities of observing, questioning, exploring, and communicating into the collaborative learning process. This approach enables students to actively engage in building their understanding of the material, interact with their peers, and utilize technology as a learning tool, thereby making the teaching of the Translated Quran more effective,

engaging, and meaningful.

Previous research has generally addressed collaborative learning, digital-based learning, or the improvement of learning outcomes separately. Furthermore, most studies have focused on general learning strategies and student characteristics, while research integrating a four-step digital-based method with collaborative learning in the teaching of the Translated Quran remains relatively limited. Consequently, the effectiveness of integrating these two approaches in enhancing students' understanding of the Quran's content at the junior high school level has not yet been thoroughly examined.

The novelty of this study lies in the implementation of a four-step method observing, questioning, exploring, and communicating integrated with digital-based collaborative learning in the teaching of the translated Quran. Furthermore, this study employs a classroom action research design to directly test the effectiveness of instructional interventions in enhancing students' understanding of Quranic Surah Al-Baqarah, verses 142–153. The integration of the four-step method, collaborative learning, digital technology, and the Quran Terjemah textbook constitutes the primary characteristic that distinguishes this study from previous research.

This study offers theoretical implications in the form of strengthening the concept of digital-based collaborative learning in Islamic Religious Education, particularly in the teaching of the translated Quran. In practical terms, the research findings can serve as alternative teaching strategies for teachers to enhance students' engagement, collaboration, and understanding of the Quran's content. For schools, the research findings can serve as a foundation for developing more effective technology-based learning innovations that meet the needs of 21st-century students. Furthermore, this study is expected to foster more meaningful Quran instruction so that students are not only able to read and translate verses but also understand and apply the values of the Quran in their daily lives.

METHODS

This study was conducted to improve and enhance the quality of learning the Translated Quran through the implementation of a four-step digital-based method comprising the activities of observing, questioning, exploring, and communicating. The study focused on efforts to improve students' understanding and engagement through learning activities carried out in a gradual and continuous manner. The research process was carried out through action cycles that allowed teachers to systematically plan, implement, observe, and reflect on each instructional intervention. Through this mechanism, various issues that arise during instruction can be identified and continuously addressed, thereby creating a learning process that is more effective, active, collaborative, and tailored to students' needs (Abidin & Nasirudin, 2021; Agustin & Anwar, 2017; Engkizar et al., 2024; 2026; Kassymova et al., 2025; Saiyidah et al., 2025).

Method and Type

This study employed Classroom Action Research aimed at improving and enhancing the quality of the learning process and outcomes for the translated Quran through the implementation of a four-step digital-based method. This approach was chosen because it enables teachers to systematically implement instructional improvements based on problems identified in the classroom and to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions through the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Through this process, improvements in students' understanding and engagement can be directly observed, ensuring that the interventions provided align with their learning needs and characteristics (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2026; Kaema & Ulwi, 2025; Oktavia et al., 2023; Rosyadi & Athari, 2025). The study was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of the stages of

planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Each cycle was designed as a process of continuous improvement based on the evaluation results from the previous cycle, thereby enabling a gradual improvement in the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes.

Data Sources

The research data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from 23 eighth-grade students in Class VIII C at Sabilillah Islamic Junior High School in Malang the research subjects through test results, observations of learning activities, and student responses to the implementation of the digital-based four-step method. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from instructional documents, teaching materials, grade sheets, and various supporting documents related to the implementation of the intervention. The use of these two data sources aimed to provide a comprehensive picture of the changes in the learning process and outcomes that occurred during the study (Sugiyono, 2023).

Instruments

The instruments used in this study included observation sheets, learning outcome tests, questionnaires, and field notes. Observation sheets were used to observe students' levels of activity, participation, and engagement during the learning process. Learning outcome tests were used to measure students' level of understanding of the Quran Translation material in each cycle. Questionnaires were used to obtain information regarding students' perceptions and responses to the implementation of the digital-based four-step method, while field notes were used to document various events, interactions, and conditions that arose during the implementation of the intervention. The use of these instruments allows for more comprehensive and in-depth data, thereby providing a comprehensive picture of the intervention's effectiveness (Arikunto, 2021; Baroud et al., 2025).

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through observations, tests, questionnaires, and field notes. Observations were conducted to assess students' activities, participation, and engagement during the learning process. Tests were administered in each cycle to assess the development of students' understanding of the Quran: A translation material. Questionnaires were used to gather students' feedback on the implementation of the digital-based learning approach, while field notes were used to document various phenomena that arose during the learning process and could not be recorded through other instruments. The combination of these various data collection techniques allows for the acquisition of accurate and comprehensive data regarding both the process and outcomes of the instructional interventions (Creswell, 2023; Putri et al., 2025).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data derived from test results were analyzed using learning achievement percentages to determine improvements in student learning outcomes in each cycle. The achievement rate is calculated based on the number of students who met the Minimum Achievement Criteria compared to the total number of students. Meanwhile, qualitative data obtained from observations, questionnaires, and field notes were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. This analysis was conducted to identify changes in learning activities, participation levels, and student responses to the implementation of the four-step digital-based method (Miles, 2015; Sugiyono, 2018).

Data Validity

Data validity was ensured through methodological triangulation and source triangulation. Methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing results obtained from observations, tests, questionnaires, and field notes, while source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from students, teachers, and

instructional documents. In addition, the results of reflections in each cycle were used as verification to ensure the consistency and reliability of the data obtained. The application of these techniques aims to enhance the credibility, validity, and objectivity of the research findings so that the research results are scientifically accountable (Creswell, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of a 4-step digital-based collaborative method can help improve students' understanding of the Translated Quran in the material covering Surah Al-Baqarah, verses 142–153, in Class VIII C at Sabilillah Islamic Junior High School in Malang. This improvement is evident from the changes in students' learning outcomes from the initial condition through Cycle I to Cycle II. At the initial stage, there were still students who had not reached the established minimum passing score of 85. Of the 23 students, 18 (75%) had achieved proficiency, while 5 (25%) were still below the minimum passing score. This situation indicates that although most students already possessed fairly good abilities, learning strategies were still needed to help students understand the material more uniformly.

Table 1. Summary of Students' Initial Learning Outcomes

No	Score Range	Initial Condition (Number of Students)	Percentage (%)	Description
1.	< 85	8	25.00%	Not Yet Achieved Competency
2.	85–89	10	31.25%	Achieved Competency
3.	90–94	8	25.00%	Achieved Competency
4.	95–100	6	18.75%	Achieved Competency
		32	100%	

Description of Cycle I

In Cycle I, instruction began by applying the 4-step method. The learning process involved reading and repeating passages modeled by the teacher, understanding word-for-word translations, identifying words within sentences, and conducting assessments through random translations. This instructional approach provided students with the opportunity not only to listen to the teacher's explanations but also to engage directly in the process of understanding the material. The results are evident in the increased number of students who achieved mastery. In Cycle I, 18 students, or 84.37%, met the minimum competency standard, while the number of students who had not yet achieved mastery decreased to 5 students, or 15.63%.

Table 2. Summary of Student Learning Outcomes in Cycle 1

No	Score Range	Initial Condition (Number of Students)	Percentage (%)	Description
1.	< 85	5	15.63%	Not Yet Achieved Competency
2.	85–89	13	40.63%	Achieved Competency
3.	90–94	6	18.75%	Achieved Competency
4.	95–100	8	25.00%	Achieved

	Competency
32	100%

Improvement in Cycle I was also evident from a comparison of pretest and posttest scores. In general, students' posttest scores improved compared to their scores before instruction began. This indicates that learning activities that give students the opportunity to listen, imitate, translate, and respond directly can help them understand the material better. Thus, the 4-step method provides a more active learning experience than instruction that focuses solely on the teacher's explanation.

Although the results in Cycle I showed improvement, there were still some students who had not yet met the minimum passing score. Therefore, improvements were made in Cycle II. At this stage, the application of the 4-step method was more focused on group activities so that students could help and motivate one another in understanding the material. Group learning provides students with opportunities to interact with peers, share their understanding, and practice translating together. These conditions are among the factors that help students feel more confident in participating in the learning process.

Description of Cycle II Results

The results from Cycle II show improved progress. Of the 23 students, 21 students or 93.75% met the minimum passing standard, while only 2 students or 6.25% did not meet it. Compared to Cycle I, the percentage of students who met the standard increased from 84.37% to 93.75%. Meanwhile, the number of students who did not meet the minimum passing standard decreased from 15.63% to 6.25%. These data indicate that the instructional improvements implemented in Cycle II yielded more optimal results.

Table 3. Summary of Student Learning Outcomes in Cycle 2

No.	Score Range	Initial Condition (Number of Students)	Percentage (%)	Description
1.	> 85	2	6.25%	Not Yet Achieved Competency
2.	85–89	8	25.00%	Achieved Competency
3.	90–94	13	40.63%	Achieved Competency
4.	95–100	8	25.00%	Achieved Competency
		31	100%	

Description of the Final Results of the Classroom Action Research

Table 4. Final Results of the Classroom Action Research

Teacher's Actions	Impact of the Actions	Results
Cycle 1	An increase in the percentage of students who achieved scores above the Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC) and were therefore considered proficient. In the initial condition, 25% of students had not yet achieved mastery. After Cycle 1, the percentage of students who had not achieved mastery decreased to 15.63%.	Students who achieved mastery: 84.37% Students who had not achieved mastery: 15.63%
Cycle 2	A further increase in the percentage of students who achieved scores above the Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC) and were therefore considered proficient. In Cycle 1, 15.63% of students had not yet achieved mastery. After Cycle 2, the percentage of students who had not achieved mastery decreased to 6.25%.	Students who achieved mastery: 93.75% Students who had not achieved mastery: 6.25%

In addition to improving learning outcomes, the implementation of the 4-step method also makes the learning process more active and collaborative. Students have the opportunity to help one another, share their understanding, and practice translating verses with their peers. Although there are still some challenges such as differences in student ability, time constraints, and the fact that some students remain less active in asking questions or valuing their peers' opinions overall, this method has a positive impact on learning.

Thus, the digital-based 4-step collaborative method can serve as an effective learning alternative to help improve students' understanding, engagement, and cooperation in learning the translated Quran. The results of this study also indicate that using a more interactive method that directly involves students can create a more active and meaningful learning environment.

The improvement in students' learning outcomes indicates that the implementation of a digital-based four-step method is capable of creating a more structured and student-centered learning process. This method provides a systematic learning experience through the stages of observing, questioning, exploring, and communicating, thereby giving students the opportunity to build their understanding gradually. In the observation stage, students are provided with reading examples and translations of verses that serve as the foundation for building prior knowledge. The questioning stage helps students clarify concepts they do not yet understand, while the exploration stage encourages them to discover meaning through exercises and group discussions. Next, the communicating stage provides students with the opportunity to express the understanding they have gained. This process aligns with constructivist theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through learning experiences and interactions with the learning environment. When students are directly involved in the process of discovering and constructing meaning, the understanding they gain becomes deeper and more enduring compared to learning that is solely oriented toward the teacher's delivery of information.

The findings of this study indicate that the use of a four-step digital-based method can improve students' ability to understand the translated Quran. This improvement occurs because students are not only asked to memorize the meanings of words but are also engaged in the process of understanding the relationships between words and verses, as well as the messages contained within them. These results align with Vygotsky's view, which asserts that the learning process is more effective when students have the opportunity to learn through social interaction and collaboration with others. In the context of this study, the use of digital media and group activities provided students with opportunities to discuss ideas, share their understanding, and help peers who were struggling. Consequently, this approach not only enhances cognitive development but also fosters students' communication, collaboration, and social skills all of which are essential for 21st-century learning.

The improvement in learning outcomes observed in this study also reinforces the findings of previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of collaborative learning and student-centered learning. [Sandria et al., \(2022\)](#) found that a student-centered learning approach can increase student participation and engagement in the learning process. These findings align with research results showing that students become more active when given the opportunity to observe, ask questions, discuss, and communicate their understanding. [Ristianah, \(2020\)](#) also emphasized that students' active engagement is a key factor in enhancing the success of Islamic education. Furthermore, research by [Mejía-Rodríguez & Kyriakides, \(2022\)](#) indicates that instruction that takes student characteristics into account can enhance the effectiveness of the learning process. The results of this study demonstrate that a four-step, digital-based method can

accommodate differences in student characteristics through varied and collaborative activities, thereby positively impacting students' understanding of the translated Quran.

In addition to improving learning outcomes, the implementation of digital-based collaborative learning also has a positive impact on student engagement during the learning process. In group activities, students have the opportunity to help one another, exchange ideas, and build a shared understanding of the material being studied. This indicates that learning is no longer teacher-centered but rather centered on student learning activities. According to [Hidayah, \(2016\)](#), students in Islamic education are active participants who bear the responsibility for developing their own potential through the learning process. Therefore, the higher the students' engagement in learning, the greater their chances of understanding and internalizing the values contained in the learning material. In the context of the translated Quran, discussion and collaboration activities help students understand the meaning of verses more deeply because they gain various perspectives from their groupmates.

Nevertheless, the implementation of these measures still faces several challenges that require attention. Some students still show hesitation in asking questions and expressing their opinions during discussions. This situation indicates that students' self-confidence and communication skills still need to be developed through ongoing practice. In addition, differences in academic ability among students mean that their pace of understanding the material is not always the same. In some groups, there were also students who were less active and tended to rely on peers with higher abilities. These findings align with various studies on collaborative learning, which indicate that the success of group work is greatly influenced by the teacher's ability to manage group interactions, foster individual responsibility, and create a learning environment based on mutual respect. Time constraints also pose a distinct challenge, as not all students had an equal opportunity to present their translations effectively.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the implementation of a four-step digital-based method had a significant impact on improving the quality of learning in the "The Quran: A Translation" course. Student learning achievement increased from 75% at the baseline to 84.37% in Cycle I and rose further to 93.75% in Cycle II. This increase demonstrates that the interventions successfully helped the majority of students meet the established learning standards. These findings reinforce the view that active, collaborative, and digitally supported learning is capable of improving the quality of the learning process and outcomes more effectively than teacher-centered learning. Thus, the four-step digital-based method can be viewed as a relevant alternative learning strategy for teaching the Translated Quran, as it not only enhances students' understanding of the meaning of the verses but also develops critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills, as well as the ability to relate Quranic values to daily life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the implementation of a four-step digital-based method has proven effective in improving the quality of learning the translated Quran. Through the stages of observing, questioning, exploring, and communicating, students have the opportunity to actively engage in the learning process, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of the meaning and content of Quranic verses. In addition to improving understanding, this method also encourages student engagement, collaboration, and the ability to articulate and communicate their learning outcomes. Thus, the research objective of improving students' understanding of the translated Quran through the implementation of a digital-based four-step method has been achieved, as evidenced by the improved quality of the learning process and outcomes in each action cycle.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of a four-step method observing, questioning, exploring, and communicating with digital-based collaborative learning in the teaching of the translated Quran. Unlike previous studies, which generally examined collaborative learning or the use of digital technology separately, this study combines both approaches into a single structured learning activity. The implications of this study suggest that the digital-based four-step method can serve as an effective alternative learning strategy for Islamic Religious Education teachers in creating more active, collaborative, and student-centered learning experiences. These findings also contribute to the development of Quran teaching practices relevant to educational needs in the digital age, while helping students not only understand the translation of verses but also internalize the values of the Quran for application in daily life.

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Author contribution

Moh Hisbulloh: data curation, writing-original draft preparation, **Nurhaya Azzahra:** analysis, conceptualization, **Zainal Asril:** methodology, visualization, and editing.

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