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## **The Effectiveness of WhatsApp as an Assessment Platform in Qur'an and Hadith Learning at Islamic Junior High Schools in Parepare**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study is motivated by the growing integration of digital technology in education, including in the context of Islamic religious learning. Among the most widely used digital tools is WhatsApp, which functions not only as a communication medium but also as a platform for learning assessment. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of using WhatsApp as an assessment platform in Qur'an and Hadith learning at MTs DDI Labukkang Parepare, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative field research design, data were collected through direct observation and in-depth interviews with a Qur'an and Hadith teacher and students from Grades VII, VIII, and IX. The results show that WhatsApp is moderately effective for formative assessments, as it facilitates communication, feedback, and student creativity particularly in affective and psychomotor domains through video-based assignments. However, its effectiveness is limited for summative evaluations, especially for written tasks such as multiple-choice and essay questions, due to factors such as poor internet access, differences in students' digital literacy, and the absence of structured assessment features. This study contributes to the development of technology-based Islamic education by emphasizing the need for pedagogically grounded digital integration. It underscores that while WhatsApp can enhance flexibility and accessibility in learning assessment, its optimal use requires teacher competence, technological support, and contextual adaptation.

**Kata Kunci:** *WhatsApp, Learning Assessment, Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic Education*



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### **INTRODUCTION**

Education in the 21st century is increasingly influenced by technological advancement, transforming the ways teachers deliver instruction, students learn, and learning outcomes are assessed (Arsyad et al., 2024). The integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in education has redefined pedagogical approaches and assessment practices across various learning environments (Kumar, 2024). Effective education is no longer limited to the transmission of knowledge but also involves fostering adaptability, digital literacy, and self-regulated learning (Anthony et al., 2020). Consequently, educators must adopt innovative approaches that combine pedagogical principles with technological tools to enhance learning quality and relevance in the digital era.

In Islamic education, the digital transformation of teaching and learning introduces both opportunities and challenges (Juhairiah et al., 2024). The teaching of Qur'an and Hadith core subjects within Islamic religious education traditionally relies on face-to-face interaction, memorization, and direct evaluation by teachers (Nursyamsiyah, 2023). However, with the growing use of mobile devices and digital communication platforms, Islamic education now faces the necessity to adapt to modern forms of teaching and assessment without compromising spiritual values and religious authenticity. This adaptation aligns with broader educational goals in Indonesia, where digital integration has become a national priority to improve learning effectiveness across all subjects, including religion.

Among the various digital tools available, WhatsApp has emerged as one of the most commonly used platforms in educational settings, particularly in countries with limited access to formal learning management systems (Enakrire & Kehinde, 2022; Kee, 2020). WhatsApp's accessibility, familiarity, and multifunctional features such as messaging, voice notes, document sharing, and group discussions make it an attractive option for teachers seeking efficient and flexible communication with students (Kimbi & Laurent, 2023; Nsirim et al., 2024). In Islamic junior high schools (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*), WhatsApp is not only used for instructional communication but also as a platform for conducting quizzes, submitting assignments, and providing formative feedback on students' learning performance in Qur'an and Hadith subjects.

Previous studies have demonstrated that WhatsApp supports online and blended learning environments by promoting learner engagement, enhancing motivation, and fostering social interaction between teachers and students (Alsharif et al., 2021). Research in general education contexts indicates that WhatsApp facilitates formative assessment and feedback exchange effectively, allowing for asynchronous communication and peer evaluation (Miswari & Albab, 2025). Similarly, studies in higher education environments have shown that mobile-based platforms can improve assessment transparency and student autonomy when properly integrated into classroom practices (Zhang et al., 2025).

However, most of these studies focus on general or language education and rarely address the pedagogical and evaluative dimensions of religious education. In particular, there is limited empirical evidence regarding the use of WhatsApp for assessment purposes in Qur'an and Hadith learning contexts. The assessment of Qur'an and Hadith involves unique elements such as memorization accuracy (*tahfiz*), interpretation skills (*tafsir*), and ethical understanding that differ significantly from secular academic assessments. Consequently, the adoption of digital tools like WhatsApp requires careful adaptation to ensure that both cognitive and affective learning outcomes are effectively measured.

Some local studies in Indonesia have explored the role of WhatsApp in supporting online religious learning, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Toisuta, 2021). These studies generally report positive perceptions among teachers and students regarding WhatsApp's usability and communication efficiency. Nonetheless, they often lack systematic measurement of effectiveness in terms of learning outcomes or assessment validity. In the context of Islamic junior high schools, where technology access and digital pedagogy are still developing, it becomes crucial to understand whether WhatsApp truly enhances learning evaluation or simply serves as a communication tool.

Another limitation in the existing literature lies in the theoretical grounding of WhatsApp-based assessment research. Many prior studies have yet to connect their findings with established learning theories such as the Mobile Learning Theory (m-Learning), which emphasizes learning flexibility and context, or the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which highlights user perception and behavioral intention in adopting technology. Applying these theoretical lenses to Islamic education could

provide deeper insights into how technology-mediated assessments influence student motivation, participation, and learning achievement in Qur'an and Hadith studies.

Given these limitations, a significant research gap exists regarding the effectiveness of WhatsApp as an assessment platform within Islamic educational institutions. There is insufficient empirical analysis of how WhatsApp features such as media sharing, voice recording, and group interactions can facilitate evaluation of Qur'an and Hadith learning outcomes. Furthermore, there is limited understanding of the challenges teachers face in aligning digital tools with religious pedagogical objectives. This gap underlines the importance of conducting a focused study in the Indonesian context, particularly in Parepare, where WhatsApp has been adopted as a practical solution for digital assessment in Islamic junior high schools.

The city of Parepare, located in South Sulawesi, presents a relevant case for such an investigation. Many Islamic schools in this region have adopted WhatsApp for instructional and evaluative purposes due to its accessibility and low operational cost. Preliminary observations at MTs DDI Labukkang Parepare revealed that while WhatsApp facilitates communication between teachers and students, several challenges persist, including limited feedback control, varying digital literacy levels, and difficulties aligning WhatsApp features with the cognitive and affective aspects of Qur'an and Hadith assessment. These challenges warrant systematic investigation to determine whether the platform's benefits outweigh its limitations in the context of religious education.

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of WhatsApp as an assessment platform in Qur'an and Hadith learning at Islamic junior high schools in Parepare, Indonesia. It specifically seeks to assess the extent to which WhatsApp supports the assessment process in terms of engagement, feedback delivery, and learning outcomes. The study argues that WhatsApp, as a mobile-assisted assessment tool, has the potential to make assessment practices more interactive, efficient, and accessible, while maintaining the pedagogical integrity of Islamic education.

By addressing this research gap, the study contributes to the global discourse on mobile-assisted learning and digital assessment within religious education. It offers empirical evidence on how WhatsApp can be effectively integrated into Qur'an and Hadith learning contexts, providing both theoretical and practical implications for teachers, policymakers, and educational technologists. Ultimately, this research emphasizes that integrating digital tools like WhatsApp into Islamic education not only bridges traditional and modern pedagogies but also supports the broader vision of inclusive, technology-enhanced learning in developing educational settings.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative field research design to examine the effectiveness of WhatsApp as an assessment platform in Qur'an and Hadith learning at Islamic junior high schools in Parepare, Indonesia. The qualitative approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth exploration of social and pedagogical phenomena within their natural settings. Field research allows the researcher to directly observe real classroom interactions and capture the authentic experiences of teachers and students as they use WhatsApp for assessment purposes.

The study followed an interpretive paradigm, focusing on understanding participants' perceptions, behaviors, and experiences rather than measuring variables statistically. This design aligns with the research objective to describe and analyze how WhatsApp functions as a mobile-assisted assessment tool in religious education contexts.

## **Sample and Participants**

The participants of this study consisted of one Qur'an and Hadith teacher, Hasmaini, S.Ag, and a group of students enrolled in Qur'an and Hadith classes at MTs DDI Labukkang Parepare, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The selection of participants used a purposive sampling technique, which allows researchers to intentionally select individuals who possess specific knowledge or experience relevant to the study's focus.

The teacher participant was selected because she had actively implemented WhatsApp in her teaching and assessment activities. The observed students, aged between 13 and 15 years old, represented different class levels at the junior high school stage (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*). This sample was considered sufficient to provide a representative understanding of WhatsApp-based assessment practices in Qur'an and Hadith learning.

## **Data Collection**

Data were collected through two main qualitative techniques: observation and interviews.

### **1. Observation**

The researcher conducted direct classroom observations focusing on the use of WhatsApp as an assessment medium. The observation process was guided by a structured checklist designed to record specific aspects, including:

- a. The process of implementing Qur'an and Hadith assessments through WhatsApp;
- b. The teacher's instructional strategies in designing and delivering evaluation activities;
- c. Students' engagement and ability to use WhatsApp features for completing and submitting assignments; and
- d. Teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness and challenges of WhatsApp-based assessment.

This observation process enabled the researcher to capture authentic interactions and behaviors that occurred during learning and assessment activities.

### **2. Interviews**

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Qur'an and Hadith teacher to explore her experiences, perceptions, and challenges in using WhatsApp as an assessment platform. The interview protocol consisted of ten open-ended questions, covering the following themes:

- a. Implementation scope (number of classes, student participation, and assessment formats),
- b. Effectiveness and practicality of WhatsApp for learning evaluation,
- c. Measurement of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects via WhatsApp, and
- d. Obstacles and strategies in aligning digital tools with pedagogical goals.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face and supported by follow-up questions through WhatsApp messages to ensure data completeness and accuracy. Prior to fieldwork, the researcher designed and validated observation and interview instruments. The data collection took place between October 17 and November 6, 2023, at the MTs DDI Labukkang campus.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis was performed continuously throughout the research process, following the model of (Huberman & Miles, 2002), which includes three key stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

### **1. Data Reduction**

The collected data from observations and interviews were selected, simplified, and categorized based on emerging themes related to WhatsApp-based assessment practices. Irrelevant or redundant data were excluded, and core information was coded for further analysis.

2. Data Display

Organized data were presented in descriptive and tabular formats to allow thematic comparison and facilitate interpretation. The use of visual displays helped in identifying recurring patterns and relationships within the data.

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Conclusions were drawn iteratively during the data collection process and refined as new insights emerged. To ensure the credibility of the findings, member checking was conducted by confirming interpretations with the teacher participant.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The data obtained from observation and interviews describe how WhatsApp was used as an assessment platform in Qur'an and Hadith learning at MTs DDI Labukkang Parepare. The research was conducted over two weeks, from October 17 to November 6, 2023, involving one Qur'an and Hadith teacher, Hasmaini, S.Ag, and students from Grades VII, VIII, and IX. WhatsApp was employed not only for sharing learning materials but also for evaluating students' performance through multiple forms of assessment. The observation revealed that the teacher implemented evaluation continuously from the beginning to the end of the semester. The assessments included written tests such as multiple-choice and essay questions, as well as practical assignments such as recording Qur'an recitations or group-based tasks submitted through WhatsApp.

During field observation, it was found that the Qur'an and Hadith teacher was the only instructor responsible for all three grade levels, teaching a total of 52 students 9 in Grade VII, 19 in Grade VIII, and 24 in Grade IX. The teacher used WhatsApp to facilitate communication, assign tasks, and receive submissions from students. Through chat messages, voice notes, and video calls, she provided both formative and summative feedback. Students interacted frequently in class WhatsApp groups, sharing videos and documents related to their tasks. However, engagement levels varied across grade levels, with Grade IX students demonstrating greater independence and responsiveness, while Grades VII and VIII required more parental assistance to complete assignments.

Based on the interview results, the teacher explained that the school continuously strives to adapt to technological developments. She stated:

*"Saat ini di era yang semakin modern, kami pihak sekolah juga selalu berusaha agar tidak ketinggalan terhadap perkembangan-perkembangan teknologi yang ada saat ini. Salah satu langkah awal yang kita lakukan yaitu dengan memanfaatkan aplikasi WhatsApp dalam proses pembelajaran, baik dalam pembagian materinya maupun dalam melakukan evaluasi. Hal ini dikarenakan, kami tidak hanya melakukan evaluasi pada pertengahan dan akhir semester saja, tetapi sejak awal dimulainya semester kami sudah melakukan evaluasi, baik dari aspek kognitif, afektif, maupun psikomotorik peserta didik itu sendiri. Akan tetapi, seiring berjalannya proses pembelajaran penggunaan aplikasi WhatsApp sebagai media evaluasi pembelajaran dalam hal ini pemberian tugas masih terdapat peserta didik yang belum mengerjakan tugasnya secara sempurna. Sehingga biasanya kami harus menyampaikan kepada mereka bahwa hasil dari tugas yang telah mereka kerjakan masih membutuhkan perbaikan dan kami tetap mengirimkan kembali materi yang berkaitan dengan tugas tersebut untuk dipelajari kembali dan kami juga meminta kepada peserta didik agar menanyakan materi yang mereka tidak pahami. Setelah itu, mereka akan diberikan kesempatan untuk mengerjakan ulang tugas tersebut dan mengirimkan kembali hasilnya kepada kami melalui WhatsApp. Itu*

merupakan salah satu bentuk evaluasi dari aspek kognitif peserta didik. Sedangkan untuk aspek afektifnya biasanya diperoleh dari hasil chat atau sikap peserta didik saat berbicara dengan teman atau bahkan kepada gurunya melalui pesan singkat, telepon, ataupun video. Adapun untuk aspek psikomotoriknya biasanya dilihat dari keseharian peserta didik apakah sikap sosial peserta didik terhadap lingkungan sekitarnya, dalam hal ini dalam pemberian tugas kelompok peserta didik saling bekerja sama untuk menyelesaikan tugas tersebut. Bahkan jika teman mereka ada yang mengalami kesulitan mereka saling tolong menolong. Misalnya saja, pada saat pembuatan video hafalan surah-surah pendek dimana salah satu teman mereka ada yang tidak tahu cara mengirimkan video tersebut mereka saling memberikan pengajaran sehingga temannya pun dapat mengumpulkan tugas dengan tepat. Bukan hanya itu, peserta didik juga dapat mengembangkan keterampilan mereka melalui kreativitas peserta didik dalam mengedit video agar terlihat menarik untuk dilihat dan dinilai oleh pendidik.”

From this statement, it can be inferred that WhatsApp was effectively used for continuous formative assessment across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The teacher frequently used WhatsApp to provide instant feedback, encourage peer collaboration, and promote creativity in students’ video-based tasks. Students’ interactions in chat groups also became indicators of affective learning outcomes, as politeness, cooperation, and initiative were observed through their digital communication behavior.

However, despite these benefits, the teacher admitted that WhatsApp had limitations as an evaluation tool. In another part of the interview, she noted:

“Salah satu tantangan dalam melaksanakan proses pembelajaran menggunakan media WhatsApp ini karena dari ketiga kelas yang saya ampuh tentu memiliki karakteristik peserta didik yang berbeda-beda. Sedangkan yang saya ajarkan juga lebih sering memberikan tugas dalam bentuk audio ataupun video. Jadi, peserta didik banyak yang kurang maksimal dalam mengerjakan tugas yang diberikan. Belum lagi, peserta didik yang masih duduk di kelas VII dan VIII dimana kebanyakan dari mereka masih membutuhkan bantuan orang tua dalam mengerjakan tugas-tugas mereka. Setelah saya perhatikan, dari kelas VII–IX yang saya ajar, kelas yang paling sering mengerjakan tugas dan terlihat cukup antusias mengerjakannya ialah kelas IX. Sedangkan untuk kelas VII dan kelas VIII saya merasa bahwa penggunaan WhatsApp sebagai media evaluasi pembelajaran masih kurang efektif untuk digunakan dalam jangka waktu yang lama. Selain itu, peserta didik masih kesulitan dalam memanfaatkan WhatsApp sebagai media pembelajaran karena mereka kebingungan dalam memisahkan penggunaan aplikasi WhatsApp untuk tujuan pribadi dengan tujuan pendidikan. Padahal, dengan bantuan orang tua, peserta didik dapat diarahkan untuk menggunakan fitur grup untuk diskusi kelompok dan senantiasa memastikan bahwa peserta didik menggunakan WhatsApp dalam konteks pembelajaran yang produktif. Meski demikian, penggunaan WhatsApp sebagai media evaluasi pembelajaran sebenarnya juga memberikan kebebasan kepada peserta didik untuk mengerjakan tugas di mana dan kapan saja. Karena jika kami memberikan tugas kepada mereka, tugas tersebut diberikan jangka waktu yang lama bahkan ada yang sampai satu minggu lamanya. Jadi, peserta didik juga merasa tidak perlu terlalu terburu-buru dalam mengerjakan dan mengumpulkannya. Sehingga, pada saat ingin mengumpulkan tugas peserta didik masih memiliki kesempatan untuk memperbaiki apabila terdapat kendala saat mengirimkan tugasnya. Bukan hanya itu, dengan aplikasi WhatsApp ini secara tidak langsung kami melatih peserta didik untuk terbiasa menggunakan teknologi dalam bidang pendidikan. Apalagi, dalam materi Al-Qur’an Hadis ini di mana kami lebih sering memberikan tugas hafalan yang dikirimkan dalam bentuk video. Sehingga peserta didik dapat mengedit dan membuat kreativitas sebaik mungkin agar video yang mereka buat menarik untuk dilihat dan didengarkan.”

From this explanation, the teacher highlighted that while WhatsApp supports flexible learning and digital creativity, several obstacles hindered its full effectiveness—such as differing student digital competencies, data costs, and distractions. Younger students often confused personal and academic use of the application, requiring parental involvement to maintain focus on learning objectives.

Overall, the research findings reveal that WhatsApp is partially effective as a medium of assessment in Qur’an and Hadith learning. It facilitates feedback,

motivation, and accessibility but remains limited for complex or structured evaluations such as multiple-choice and essay testing. These limitations stem primarily from technological constraints, student readiness, and the informal nature of the platform.

## Discussion

The findings of this study highlight both the potential and the limitations of using WhatsApp as an assessment platform in Islamic education. The teacher's experience at MTs DDI Labukkang reflects broader trends in digital pedagogy, where educators increasingly rely on mobile communication tools to conduct formative assessments. WhatsApp enables students to receive immediate feedback, engage in reflective learning, and demonstrate affective and psychomotor competencies through interactive tasks. These outcomes are consistent with the Mobile Learning Theory (Crompton, 2013; Moya & Camacho, 2024), which posits that mobile tools support flexible, context-rich learning environments that transcend physical classroom boundaries.

The teacher's statement that WhatsApp was used for assessing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects aligns with earlier findings (Nsirim et al., 2024), who found that WhatsApp facilitates interactive communication that enhances engagement and feedback in higher education settings. Similarly, (Deslina, 2024) concluded that WhatsApp promotes student participation and collaboration but is less effective for structured assessment formats. These parallels suggest that WhatsApp functions best as a formative assessment tool allowing ongoing evaluation and personalized support rather than as a platform for summative or standardized tests.

In the context of Islamic education, this study reinforces findings by (Asyari & Hamami, 2025), who noted that digital tools can enhance spiritual and moral learning outcomes when integrated thoughtfully with religious pedagogy. The affective dimension observed through students' online manners and collaboration reflects the Islamic values of *akhlaq* (ethics) and *ta'awun* (cooperation). This finding highlights how WhatsApp can extend beyond cognitive evaluation to support character development an essential component of Qur'an and Hadith education.

However, the challenges identified in this study such as internet constraints, uneven digital literacy, and misuse of WhatsApp for personal purposes echo those reported by (Musahlan et al., 2022; Safitri et al., 2025), who found that while WhatsApp enhances accessibility, it also introduces issues of distraction and technical difficulty. These obstacles reduce the platform's overall effectiveness as a primary assessment medium.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which explains user adoption of technology through perceived usefulness and ease of use. Teachers perceive WhatsApp as useful for continuous assessment and communication, yet the limited functionality for structured evaluation decreases its overall perceived utility. Students' varying technological readiness also influences their engagement, reflecting the need for greater digital literacy training and guided parental support.

Overall, the results confirm that WhatsApp plays a valuable role in supporting flexible, accessible, and student-centered assessment but remains inadequate for comprehensive evaluations requiring objectivity and formal grading structures. As suggested by (Rahmah et al., 2019), integrating mobile tools like WhatsApp with structured digital platforms such as Google Forms or Quizizz could yield a more balanced and effective assessment system.

Therefore, the findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on mobile-assisted assessment in Islamic education, showing that technology can enhance both learning outcomes and moral development when implemented with pedagogical sensitivity. However, to achieve sustainable and equitable results, schools

must ensure adequate infrastructure, teacher training, and digital ethics education. WhatsApp can serve as a bridge between traditional Islamic evaluation methods and modern technological assessment but it requires thoughtful integration to achieve optimal effectiveness in the digital era.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of WhatsApp as an assessment platform in Qur'an and Hadith learning at Islamic junior high schools in Parepare, Indonesia. The findings revealed that WhatsApp serves as a partially effective tool for learning evaluation, particularly in facilitating formative assessments, feedback exchanges, and affective interactions between teachers and students. It supports teachers in monitoring students' progress across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains and encourages digital creativity through activities such as video-based recitation tasks. However, the platform's limitations such as inconsistent student engagement, restricted internet access, and lack of structured testing features reduce its overall effectiveness for summative or standardized assessments.

The study contributes conceptually to the discourse on mobile-assisted assessment (m-learning) within the context of Islamic education, highlighting that technology can complement but not replace traditional evaluative practices. WhatsApp enhances accessibility, flexibility, and communication, aligning with the principles of the Mobile Learning Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), yet it requires pedagogical adaptation and technical support to function optimally. Practically, the findings emphasize the importance of teacher competence, digital literacy, and parental involvement in ensuring that mobile platforms are used responsibly and effectively in religious learning environments.

Future research should expand on this work by exploring integrated or hybrid digital assessment models, combining WhatsApp with structured learning management systems such as Google Forms, Moodle, or Quizizz. Studies could also include larger participant samples, comparative analyses across multiple Islamic schools, or quantitative measurement of learning outcomes to evaluate the long-term impact of mobile-based assessments on student achievement and engagement. By deepening this line of inquiry, scholars can contribute to the development of more inclusive, innovative, and pedagogically sound digital assessment frameworks for Islamic education in the digital era.

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