



STRENGTHENING CHILDREN'S QUR'ANIC LITERACY THROUGH LEARNING AT MDTA BUSTANUL ULUM I MARINDAL

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ABSTRACT

Al-Qur'an literacy is an essential part of shaping children's character and faith from an early age. It does not only mean recognizing hijaiyah letters but also includes the ability to read the Qur'an with *tartil*, understand tajwid rules, and recite verses correctly. This literacy serves as the foundation for comprehending Islamic teachings as a whole. However, many elementary-level students are still unable to read the Qur'an properly. The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of strengthening Qur'an literacy, to identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and to understand the outcomes of Qur'an literacy reinforcement through learning at MDTA Bustanul Ulum Marindal. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings show that strengthening Qur'an literacy at MDTA Bustanul Ulum Marindal helps students overcome difficulties in tajwid and makhraj. The conclusion is that strengthening Qur'an literacy significantly improves the quality of students' Qur'an reading. The implication of this research is that reinforcing Qur'an literacy from an early age is an effective strategy to build Islamic character, enhance reading skills, and support a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Qur'anic Literacy Education is an important part of shaping children's character and faith from an early age. Qur'anic literacy does not only mean recognizing hijaiyah letters, but also includes the ability to read the Qur'an with *tartil*, understand the rules of recitation (tajwid), and properly articulate Qur'anic verses. This literacy serves as a fundamental basis for fully understanding Islamic teachings. Therefore, educational institutions such as Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Awaliyah (MDTA) hold a great responsibility in instilling and strengthening Qur'anic literacy among children. Qur'anic literacy has many benefits, such as helping individuals manage their time better, shaping personalities based on Islamic values, and providing useful spiritual, moral, and ethical guidance. In addition, Qur'anic literacy encompasses understanding the cultural and historical context in which the Qur'an was revealed, as well as how its teachings can be applied in daily life (N. A. Putri & Rohman, 2024).

However, in reality, many elementary-level students are still unable to read the Qur'an correctly and properly. This condition is also found at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal, particularly in grade IV. Preliminary observations revealed that 3 out of 12 students in that class experienced difficulties in reading the Qur'an. It is crucial that the Qur'anic literacy of these students be improved. This is evidenced by mispronunciations of letters, inability to apply tajwid rules, and a low level of fluency in recitation (Arlotas, 2021).

Reading is the key to acquiring knowledge, and Allah commands believers to reflect upon the contents of His Book. Nevertheless, in the implementation of the learning process, MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal still faces various challenges and limitations. These include limited learning facilities, lack of suitable supporting books, conventional teaching methods, and a shortage of teachers competent in tahfiz and tafsir. Furthermore, some children attend MDTA merely due to parental encouragement rather than personal awareness, resulting in relatively low interest and motivation in learning the Qur'an (Hariandi, 2019).

This condition indicates that efforts to strengthen children's Qur'anic literacy require more innovative and comprehensive strategies. Therefore, one way to increase students' interest in reading the Qur'an is through activities that reinforce Qur'anic literacy. This study is expected to bring meaningful change for the advancement of the school, particularly in the field of Qur'anic literacy. A teaching approach that attracts children's interest is necessary, such as the use of interactive learning media, strengthening practice-based learning methods, and active involvement among teachers, parents, and the surrounding community (Wahyu Muh. Syata et al., 2023).

Several previous studies on similar topics include research by Syaifun Nadhrioh (2022), which focused on reading and listening activities for 35 minutes before class begins, as well as the use of various applications such as the Madrasah YouTube channel (Nadhiroh, 2022). Another study by Jihan Safitri (2024) focused on improving literacy in reading and writing Qur'anic verses through lectures, question-and-answer sessions, habituation, and exercises (Jannah, 2024).

The difference between those studies and the present research lies in their focus. While previous studies generally employed methods such as lectures, Q&A, exercises, or

digital applications, the research at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal specifically emphasizes strengthening children's Qur'anic literacy through learning in one particular madrasah, with a possible focus on approaches, methods, and activities unique to this context. In terms of methodology, the study at MDTA Bustanul Ulum is likely to examine in more detail the aspects of strengthening or improving literacy through specific and contextual teaching approaches.

In summary, the main difference is that the study at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal focuses more on the local context and the process of strengthening literacy through learning methods specifically applied in that madrasah, compared to the general descriptions of Qur'anic literacy in children at other madrasahs that have been previously documented. Based on this case, the researcher is interested in conducting a deeper investigation into the strengthening of children's Qur'anic literacy through learning at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. According to the descriptive qualitative approach is a research method aimed at describing and understanding social phenomena in a deep and natural manner. In this approach, the researcher does not manipulate variables but instead goes directly to the field to conduct observations, interviews, and record data naturally according to actual conditions.

The research was conducted at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal, located on Jalan Kebun Kopi, Patumbak District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. The first step taken by the researcher in this study was collecting data through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out to directly observe students' activities in Qur'anic literacy, while interviews involved teachers (ustadzah) and students. Documentation in the form of activity archives and daily schedules was used as supporting data.

To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and techniques was applied, namely by comparing information from various informants and different data collection methods so that the results of the research would be more valid and accurate.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation of the Qur'an Learning Program at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal in the Framework of Strengthening Students' Qur'anic Literacy.

A. Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation of Qur'anic Literacy Strengthening at MDTA Bustanul Ulum

To examine the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Qur'anic literacy strengthening at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I, the researcher conducted observations and interviews with class teachers regarding these aspects as follows:

a. Planning of the Qur'anic Literacy Strengthening Program

To explore the planning stage at MDTA in strengthening Qur'anic literacy, the researcher carried out interviews and observations. The results indicated that the

program was conducted as part of the teaching and learning process. According to class teacher Umi Syafitriani:

At the initial stage, learning begins with introducing *hijaiyah* letters and *makharij al-huruf* (points of articulation), followed by tajwid rules such as izhar and ikhfa. Once students understand these, the next step is reading practice, starting with ta'awwudz and basmalah, carried out through tadarus (reciting while peers listen). Before reading, students are encouraged to perform ablution. During the reading activity, one student reads while peers attentively listen. The listener is tasked with providing feedback and correcting errors in recitation, making the learning process more interactive and effective. This method aims to create a conducive learning atmosphere and motivate students to be more confident and fluent in reading the Qur'an (N. C. Putri, 2023).

b. Implementation of the Qur'anic Literacy Strengthening Program

Reading the Qur'an with tartil is commanded by Allah in Surah al-Muzzammil: 4:

"...or add to it, and recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones." (Kemenag, 2019, n.d)

KH. Muhsin Salim defines *tartil* as reciting the Qur'an slowly, calmly, and reflectively: articulating emphatic letters with *tafkhim*, soft letters with *tarqiq*, elongating or shortening vowels properly, and pronouncing letters from their correct points of articulation according to their characteristics, without merging one letter into another. In this sense, *tartil* means beautifying pronunciation, observing proper pauses, and adhering to the principles of tajwid (Alawiyah, 2022).

Al-Qurthubi, in his tafsir, explains that *tartil* means reciting the Qur'an slowly, without haste, and contemplating its meaning. He cited al-Dhahhak's view that *tartil* refers to reading the Qur'an letter by letter. Ibn Kathir also interpreted *tartil* as reciting the Qur'an in a measured manner, as this aids understanding and reflection.

Through interviews and observations with class teacher Umi Fitri, the researcher examined how the program was carried out. The process of Qur'anic literacy strengthening consisted of introductory activities, core activities, and closing activities. The results are as follows:

The implementation of Qur'anic literacy learning for MDTA students used various methods, including tadarus, question-and-answer, and practice. Learning activities began at 14:30 WIB, with students seated in their places. The teacher initially applied the lecture method to orally deliver the material. Lessons began with the teacher preparing students to focus, followed by the class leader greeting the teacher. After small interactions to build closeness, the teacher proceeded with roll call. Students were required to perform ablution before reading and then take out their Qur'an.

In the first meetings, each student read only 2–3 verses. The teacher and peers listened closely and corrected any mistakes in tajwid. Qur'an reading activities were practiced daily at the beginning of each lesson, creating a routine that fostered familiarity and love for the Qur'an. This habituation method was seen as effective in

instilling consistent Qur'an reading practices, both at school and at home (Jannah et al., 2024).

Observations revealed that *tadarus* activities were conducted daily from 14:30 to 15:10 WIB, before lessons officially started. This habitual method strengthened students' Qur'an reading skills by encouraging them to repeat practices sincerely until they became part of their routine. By practicing consistently, students internalized the habit of Qur'an recitation not only in MDTA but also at home, making it easier to practice without constant reminders (Febriyanti et al., 2022).

c. Evaluation of the Qur'anic Literacy Strengthening Program

Through interviews and observations with Umi Fitri, the following results emerged regarding evaluation of Qur'anic literacy strengthening at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal:

First, Cognitive Aspect (Knowledge): According to Umi Fitri, there were no formal tests or scores. Instead, knowledge was assessed through students' ability to recite with tajwid. If students failed to apply rules correctly, she would repeat the material until they could practice it properly. Although students sometimes struggled with the theoretical definitions of tajwid (e.g., the meaning of *idhar*), they were able to apply them correctly during recitation. Occasionally, she also asked questions about rules that had been taught previously.

Second, Affective Aspect (Attitude): Similar to the cognitive aspect, no formal grades were given. During *tahsin* sessions, if students were disruptive or inattentive, she corrected their behavior, sometimes by moving them to different seats. Persistent disturbances were met with disciplinary action, such as being asked to leave class if they were unwilling to learn.

Third, psychomotor Aspect (Skills): Here evaluation was applied more directly. Qur'an recitation and memorization assessments were conducted on Fridays, while reading and writing practices took place Monday through Saturday. For recitation and memorization, students received grades such as "sufficient" or "repeat." For Qur'an writing, assessments focused on neatness, with scores such as 80 or 90 given to motivate students. Despite imperfections, teachers strived to give their best, acknowledging that children's Qur'anic writing skills were still in the learning stage (N. C. Putri, 2023).

B. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Strengthening Qur'anic Literacy through Learning at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal

Based on interviews and observations conducted by the researcher with Umi Syafitri, as well as interviews with the students at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal, several supporting and inhibiting factors of strengthening Qur'anic literacy were identified. These findings were obtained during the Qur'anic literacy program held on Fridays.

a. Supporting Factors of Qur'anic Literacy Strengthening

The interviews and observations revealed that the supporting factors in strengthening Qur'anic literacy at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal include several

aspects. All teachers agreed that using engaging learning methods is one of the keys to the success of Qur'anic literacy strengthening (Muzakki, 2024).

According to Umi Syafitri, engaging learning methods such as lectures, recitations, and listening activities help facilitate the learning process and maintain the flow of teaching, while also encouraging students to actively ask questions.

In addition, providing supplementary materials was also identified as a supporting factor. Supplementary materials on Islamic teachings and etiquettes in interacting with the Qur'an help students connect Qur'anic learning with their daily lives. Almost every session of Qur'anic literacy strengthening concludes with additional lessons such as Islamic etiquette or monotheism (Imron, 2022).

Another supporting factor is the motivation provided by teachers, particularly related to reading and writing the Qur'an. Teachers consistently encourage students by highlighting the benefits of reading the Qur'an both for the Hereafter—such as gaining intercession—and for worldly life, such as easing daily affairs for those who memorize it.

Based on observations, teachers often use spare time at the end of lessons to motivate students, particularly by emphasizing the virtues of reading the Qur'an. These efforts show that teacher competence and motivation are significant supporting factors in the effective implementation of Qur'anic literacy strengthening.

b. Inhibiting Factors of Qur'anic Literacy Strengthening

In addition to the supporting factors, several inhibiting factors were also identified in strengthening Qur'anic literacy and improving students' learning interest. Among them are parents' background and non-conducive learning environments (Zuhri, 2023). According to Umi Syafitri, one of the teachers at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal:

"The inhibiting factors, in my opinion, are the low educational background of parents, limited educational facilities and infrastructure which affect students' learning interest, and the weak socio-economic conditions of families."

Other inhibiting factors include busy family conditions, parents who are often preoccupied with work, unsupportive family environments, and students' own lack of motivation or laziness, which reduces their interest in learning (Sriwahyuni, 2024).

Furthermore, some students reported that limited learning facilities at home were also a hindrance. Many students came from island regions, bringing diverse attitudes and characters, and most of their families faced economic difficulties.

C. Results or Impacts of Strengthening Qur'anic Literacy on Students' Ability to Read and Understand the Qur'an at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal

The interviews and observations revealed several significant impacts of the Qur'anic literacy strengthening program at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal. One of the main outcomes is the improvement of students' Qur'anic reading skills. This can be observed from their increasing ability to read and understand Qur'anic verses more accurately and fluently

over time. Data show that most students experienced progress in both reading speed and accuracy.

The program also successfully enhanced students' comprehension of Qur'anic content. Students demonstrated the ability to understand Qur'anic verses and relate them to real-life contexts, as reflected in the quality of discussions and question-and-answer sessions during learning (Jumaah, 2024).

Another important result is the significant increase in students' interest and motivation toward Qur'anic learning. The use of interactive learning approaches relevant to daily life made students feel more engaged and motivated to improve their Qur'anic reading and comprehension skills (Ristianti, 2023).

In addition, the program contributed to the development of religious attitudes and values. Students not only learned about the sacred text but also about the ethics, morality, and spiritual values contained within it (Rohman, 2024). This is supported by the hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Whoever reads one letter from the Book of Allah, he will receive one good deed, and each good deed is multiplied by ten. I do not say that 'Alif Lām Mīm' is one letter, but rather Alif is one letter, Lām is one letter, and Mīm is one letter." (HR. At-Tirmidhi, No. 2910).

According to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah honor his face), the virtue mentioned in the hadith applies to those who read the Qur'an outside of prayer, even without ritual purity. Meanwhile, reading Qur'anic verses during prayer—especially while standing—yields a greater reward of 100 good deeds. Reading while sitting in prayer is rewarded with 50 good deeds, and reading outside of prayer in a state of purity earns 25 good deeds (Ali Romdhoni, 2015).

These results indicate that strengthening Qur'anic literacy not only improves reading skills, comprehension, interest, and motivation, but also fosters religious values and character formation. The success of this program can be attributed to interactive teaching methods, active student participation, support from teachers, parents, and the school, as well as the effective use of resources.

Students at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal who engage with the Qur'an daily gain substantial benefits in character building. The Qur'an serves not only as a sacred scripture but also as a primary guide in shaping responsible and resilient personalities. Regular reading, listening, and studying of the Qur'an instills moral and spiritual values, strengthens perseverance, and fosters discipline and independence. Moreover, intensive interaction with the Qur'an deepens students' understanding of values such as empathy, justice, and compassion, forming the foundation of noble character (Nurhasanah, 2024).

Through the continuous practice of reading and applying the Qur'an in everyday life, students internalize universal values such as patience, honesty, and generosity. They learn to face challenges with wisdom and calmness, recognizing every trial as an opportunity for spiritual growth. Their heightened sense of empathy and social responsibility reflects the Qur'an's teachings on compassion, justice, and tolerance.

Therefore, strengthening Qur'anic literacy at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal provides not only religious knowledge but also equips students with moral and spiritual values, preparing them to contribute positively to society. It also helps them build a closer relationship with the Qur'an as a lifelong source of guidance (Nikmah, 2015).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the learning process at MDTA Bustanul Ulum I Marindal has made a significant contribution to strengthening children's Qur'anic literacy. Through a structured approach and the use of various methods such as lectures and recitation/listening activities, students are guided step by step, starting from recognizing the Arabic alphabet (huruf *hijaiyah*) to being able to read the Qur'an and understand the rules of tajwid such as *izhar* and *ikhfa*, as well as reciting the Qur'an correctly. In addition to technical reading skills, the learning process at the madrasa also emphasizes a basic understanding of the meaning of the verses and the integration of Islamic values into daily life. This demonstrates that Qur'anic literacy developed at the institution encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Support from teachers, the madrasa environment, and parental involvement further strengthens the outcomes of learning and fosters a deeper love for the Qur'an among students.

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