

QUR'ANIC READING COMPETENCY STRENGTHENING MODEL FOR STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze students' Qur'anic reading competency, describe the strengthening practices that have been implemented, develop a strengthening model, and examine its effectiveness in improving the Qur'anic reading competency of students at SMP Negeri 7 Medan. The study employed a Research and Development approach using mixed methods that integrated qualitative and quantitative data. The model development adapted the Borg and Gall stages through a preliminary study, needs analysis, design, expert validation, trials, revision, implementation, and evaluation. Data were collected through observation, interviews, Qur'anic reading tests, and documentation, and were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative techniques. The findings indicate that students' Qur'anic reading competency was generally adequate, although weaknesses remained in *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, *tajwīd*, fluency, and *tartīl*. The effective strengthening model integrates initial competency mapping, habituation, *talaqqi*, repeated practice, individual guidance, group learning, motivation, and continuous evaluation. Model implementation demonstrated improvements in students' reading ability and confidence. The model has potential for adaptive implementation in public schools with diverse student characteristics.

Keywords: Qur'anic Reading, Strengthening Model, Islamic Education

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis kondisi kompetensi membaca Al-Qur'an siswa, mendeskripsikan praktik penguatan yang telah diterapkan, mengembangkan model penguatan, serta menganalisis efektivitasnya dalam meningkatkan kompetensi membaca Al-Qur'an siswa SMP Negeri 7 Medan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan *Research and Development* dengan metode campuran yang mengintegrasikan data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Pengembangan model mengadaptasi tahapan Borg dan Gall melalui studi pendahuluan, analisis kebutuhan, perancangan, validasi ahli, uji coba, revisi, implementasi, dan evaluasi. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, tes membaca Al-Qur'an, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kompetensi membaca Al-Qur'an siswa secara umum cukup baik, tetapi masih terdapat kelemahan pada aspek *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, *tajwīd*, kelancaran, dan *tartīl*. Model penguatan yang efektif mengintegrasikan pemetaan kemampuan awal, pembiasaan, *talaqqi*, latihan berulang, bimbingan individual, pembelajaran kelompok, motivasi, dan evaluasi berkelanjutan. Implementasi model menunjukkan peningkatan kemampuan membaca dan kepercayaan diri siswa. Model ini berpotensi diterapkan secara adaptif pada sekolah negeri dengan karakteristik peserta didik yang beragam.

Kata Kunci: Membaca Al-Qur'an, Model Penguatan, Pendidikan Islam

INTRODUCTION

The ability to read the Qur'an constitutes an important component of Islamic Religious Education because it provides students with an initial means of accessing, understanding, and engaging with Islamic teachings. Qur'anic reading competency, however, should not be reduced to the ability to recognize Arabic letters or read Qur'anic text mechanically. It involves several interrelated dimensions, including the accuracy of *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, the application of *tajwīd* rules, reading fluency, and orderly and measured recitation (*tartīl*). Recent research confirms that Qur'anic reading competency encompasses practical dimensions that cannot always be predicted by students' theoretical knowledge of *tajwīd*. Andini, Amriyah, and Octafiona (2026), for example, found a significant discrepancy between students' mastery of *tajwīd* theory and their actual Qur'anic reading performance, demonstrating that knowing recitation rules does not automatically result in accurate practical performance. Therefore, strengthening Qur'anic reading competency within Islamic Religious Education requires attention not only to conceptual understanding but also to sustained practice, corrective feedback, and the development of accurate reading habits.

The relevance of Qur'anic reading competency becomes particularly important at the secondary-school level because students are expected to develop increasingly independent religious

learning capabilities. Qur'anic literacy can support students' engagement with Islamic Religious Education and contribute to broader religious development. Recent research indicates that Qur'anic literacy is associated not only with reading proficiency but also with students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education and the development of religious character. Nurkholifah (2026), for instance, reports that Qur'anic literacy can contribute to students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education and their moral and ethical development. Similarly, research on Qur'anic literacy programs has shown that systematic literacy activities can contribute to students' reading development and religious character formation. Consequently, Qur'anic reading competency should be viewed as both a technical learning outcome and an important foundation for students' continuing religious education.

Despite its importance, Qur'anic reading competency remains uneven among students in formal educational institutions. Recent studies identify persistent difficulties in reading fluency, *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, and the application of *tajwīd*. Faizah and Haryanto (2025), for example, identify difficulties in applying *tajwīd* and *makhraj* rules as continuing barriers in Qur'anic reading instruction. Research on Islamic Religious Education teachers likewise indicates that students enter formal education with diverse levels of Qur'anic reading competence because of differences in previous

learning experiences and educational backgrounds. Lutfiana, Sa'dullah, and Hidayatullah identify differentiated instructional needs among students with diverse initial abilities and report the use of approaches such as *musyafahah*, practice, peer tutoring, and small-group learning to respond to those differences. These findings suggest that the central problem is not necessarily that all students have low competency, but that competency is distributed unevenly and requires differentiated forms of strengthening.

This issue is particularly relevant to public schools, where students may have different experiences of Qur'anic education before entering the school. Unlike students in Islamic schools or boarding schools, students in public schools may receive Qur'anic instruction through diverse combinations of family education, Qur'anic learning centres, religious study groups, or previous formal schooling. Research examining students' Qur'anic competence based on educational background confirms that students' reading abilities need to be understood in relation to their previous learning experiences and motivational conditions (Ibrahim, 2024). Studies of Qur'anic literacy programs also demonstrate the importance of support extending beyond classroom instruction. Research at an integrated Islamic elementary school, for example, found that Qur'anic literacy development was supported by school-wide participation as well as family-related factors

influencing students' practice outside school. Thus, differences in students' initial competency should be treated as an instructional consideration rather than merely as an individual deficiency.

The problem identified in the present study is also evident at SMP Negeri 7 Medan. Preliminary observations and internal school information indicate considerable variation in students' Qur'anic reading abilities. Some students are able to read Qur'anic verses fluently and apply basic *tajwīd* rules appropriately, whereas others continue to experience difficulties in articulating certain Arabic letters, applying recitation rules, maintaining appropriate fluency, and producing orderly recitation. These preliminary conditions indicate that the central problem at the school is not simply the absence of Qur'anic learning activities but the absence of a sufficiently systematic mechanism for responding to differences in students' competency. Such a condition is consistent with recent studies showing that teachers need to identify students' initial abilities and adapt instructional strategies according to their specific needs. Therefore, the problem requires a strengthening mechanism that begins with competency identification and continues through differentiated practice, guidance, monitoring, and follow-up.

In practice, SMP Negeri 7 Medan has undertaken several activities intended to support students' Qur'anic reading, including Qur'anic recitation before lessons, extracurricular Qur'anic

Reading and Writing activities, and the integration of Qur'anic materials into Islamic Religious Education. These practices provide an important foundation for strengthening Qur'anic literacy. Similar studies indicate that school-based habituation, *tadarus*, teacher guidance, demonstration, and direct practice can contribute to the development of Qur'anic reading skills. Research on Qur'anic literacy strengthening has shown that regular *tadarus* and Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an activities can be integrated into school programs, although challenges remain in maintaining consistency and student participation. Other research has demonstrated that teacher strategies involving demonstration, motivation, and regular Qur'anic reading habituation can help address students' reading difficulties. Nevertheless, the existence of several activities does not necessarily indicate the existence of an integrated strengthening model. The critical issue is therefore how these existing practices can be systematically organized into a coherent sequence of diagnosis, intervention, monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up.

Previous studies have made valuable contributions by examining particular methods, teacher strategies, or Qur'anic literacy programs. For example, research has examined the effectiveness of Qur'anic Reading and Writing programs, teacher strategies, literacy habituation, and specific instructional approaches. Afifah et al. (2025) examined

the effectiveness of a Qur'anic reading guidance program in improving students' reading ability, while Aziz and Arsyad (2024) evaluated the implementation of an Al-Qur'an literacy program and its contribution to students' academic achievement. More recent research has also examined mixed-method evaluation of Qur'anic literacy programs, demonstrating the value of combining qualitative information about implementation with quantitative evidence concerning student outcomes. These studies provide important evidence regarding strategies and programs for improving Qur'anic literacy; however, much of the existing research remains focused on individual methods, program implementation, teacher strategies, or particular educational settings rather than on the systematic development of an integrated strengthening model for heterogeneous students in public schools.

The research gap therefore lies not simply in the limited number of studies on Qur'anic reading, but in the limited development of a structured model that connects students' initial competency mapping with differentiated intervention, habituation, direct teacher mentoring, repeated practice, motivational reinforcement, continuous evaluation, and continuity between school and home learning. Recent research on teacher strategies demonstrates the importance of identifying initial student abilities and applying differentiated approaches, while research on Qur'anic literacy programs

highlights the importance of habituation, institutional support, and continuity of practice. However, these components have generally been examined separately or within specific programmatic contexts. The present study consequently positions the problem at the level of instructional-system development: how existing but partially implemented practices can be transformed into an integrated model that responds to different levels of Qur'anic reading competency within a public-school environment.

Based on this gap, the novelty of the present study lies in developing a Qur'anic reading competency strengthening model that does not depend exclusively on the selection of a particular Qur'anic reading method. Instead, the model integrates several mutually reinforcing components into a systematic cycle beginning with assessment of students' initial competency, followed by competency-based planning, habituation, *talaqqi* and demonstration, repeated practice, individual guidance, group learning, motivational reinforcement, continuous evaluation, and follow-up. This orientation is supported by recent evidence showing that structured mentoring, *talaqqi*, and sustained motivational support can improve reading fluency, *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, and *tajwīd* accuracy. The proposed model therefore seeks to move beyond a method-centred approach toward a competency-strengthening system in which instructional strategies are

selected according to students' initial conditions and continuously adjusted through evaluation.

The urgency of the study is further reinforced by the limited instructional time available for Qur'anic learning within public-school Islamic Religious Education. Qur'anic reading skills require repeated performance, immediate correction, and sustained practice, whereas classroom instruction must simultaneously address broader Islamic Religious Education competencies. Recent studies indicate that Qur'anic literacy programs can produce positive outcomes when implemented systematically, but they also face challenges related to consistency, instructional conditions, and the continuity of student practice. This situation creates a need for a model that is not only pedagogically appropriate but also feasible within the institutional conditions of public schools. The model must accommodate different starting points, maximize limited instructional opportunities, and create continuity between school-based instruction and students' independent practice.

Accordingly, the present study aims to analyze students' Qur'anic reading competency at SMP Negeri 7 Medan, identify existing strengthening practices and their limitations, develop a Qur'anic reading competency strengthening model based on students' needs and contextual conditions, and examine the effectiveness of the developed model in improving students'

Qur'anic reading abilities. The study is expected to contribute theoretically by strengthening the conceptual discussion of Qur'anic reading competency development within Islamic Religious Education, particularly in heterogeneous public-school contexts. Practically, the resulting model is expected to provide schools and Islamic Religious Education teachers with a systematic framework for organizing Qur'anic reading activities, identifying students' competency levels, providing differentiated support, monitoring progress, and establishing appropriate follow-up. Rather than claiming universal applicability, the study seeks to provide a contextual model whose potential transferability to other public schools can be considered based on similarities in student characteristics, instructional conditions, and institutional resources.

METHOD

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach using mixed methods, integrating qualitative and quantitative data sequentially. This approach was selected because the study aimed not only to describe students' Qur'anic reading competency but also to develop, validate, implement, and examine the effectiveness of a Qur'anic reading competency strengthening model integrated into Islamic Religious Education. The model development process adapted the stages proposed by Borg and Gall in a limited manner according to the needs of the study,

comprising a preliminary study, needs analysis, model design, initial product development, expert validation, limited trial, revision, field trial, and final evaluation (Borg & Gall, 2003).

The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 7 Medan, involving Islamic Religious Education teachers, students, and the principal as a supporting informant. Students were selected based on the research needs, taking into account variations in Qur'anic reading ability in terms of *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, *tajwīd*, fluency, and *tartīl*. The preliminary study was conducted through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and the principal, and an analysis of instructional documents to identify the initial conditions, existing strengthening practices, implementation challenges, and needs for model development. The findings from the preliminary study were subsequently integrated with theoretical perspectives and previous research as the basis for designing the model.

The initial model was then validated by experts with competencies in Islamic Religious Education and Qur'anic learning. The validation covered the appropriateness of the objectives, model components, implementation syntax, learning materials, evaluation instruments, feasibility, and relevance of the model to the characteristics of public schools. The validators' feedback was used as the basis for revision before the model was subjected to a limited trial. The limited trial was conducted to assess

the clarity of the implementation syntax, feasibility, practicality, and responses of teachers and students. The results of the limited trial were used to refine the model before its implementation in the field trial.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, Qur'anic reading tests, and documentation. The main instrument was a Qur'anic reading competency assessment rubric measuring the accuracy of *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, application of *tajwīd* rules, fluency and proficiency, and *tartīl*. The instrument was validated through expert judgment, while scoring consistency was maintained through a structured scoring guideline. Qualitative data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles & Huberman, 2014). Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively by comparing *pre-test* and *post-test* scores. The effectiveness of the model was determined based on the improvement in students' Qur'anic reading competency scores and, when the analytical assumptions were met, further supported by a mean-difference test. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data was conducted at the interpretation stage to explain the relationship between the implementation process and changes in students' competency. The trustworthiness of the qualitative data was ensured through source and technique triangulation and *member*

checking, while the quantitative data were strengthened through content validity and assessment reliability. The model was considered effective if it demonstrated meaningful improvement in Qur'anic reading competency, good implementation feasibility, and positive responses from both teachers and students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Qur'anic Reading Competency at SMP Negeri 7 Medan

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation conducted at SMP Negeri 7 Medan, students' Qur'anic reading competency was generally found to be at an adequate level, although mastery was not evenly distributed among all students. Variations in competency were particularly evident in the accuracy of *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, application of *tajwīd* rules, reading fluency, and orderly recitation (*tartīl*). This finding indicates that Qur'anic reading competency should not be treated as a homogeneous ability but as a multidimensional competence that develops through students' previous learning experiences, intensity of practice, instructional support, and learning environment. Students' Qur'anic reading competence also needs to be understood in relation to their educational background and previous learning experiences (Ibrahim, 2023). More importantly, theoretical mastery of *tajwīd* does not necessarily translate into accurate practical reading. Research has demonstrated a gap between students' *tajwīd* theory and their

actual Qur'anic reading performance, indicating that practical competence requires specific training beyond theoretical explanation (Andini et al., 2026).

The observations revealed that most students had acquired basic abilities in recognizing Arabic letters (*hurūf hijā'iyah*) and reading Qur'anic verses. However, several students continued to experience difficulties in distinguishing letters with similar points of articulation or phonetic characteristics, such as *thā'* (ث) and *sīn* (س), *dād* (ض) and *zā'* (ظ), as well as *hā'* (ح) and *hā'* (ه). These errors demonstrate that Qur'anic reading proficiency cannot be assessed solely according to students' ability to recognize written symbols or reproduce sequences of letters. Accurate articulation constitutes an essential dimension of practical Qur'anic reading competency because errors in articulation can affect the accuracy of recitation. Individualized recitation through the *sorogan* approach has been shown to provide opportunities for teachers to identify articulation errors and provide immediate corrective feedback (Amalia et al., 2026). Therefore, strengthening Qur'anic reading competency at SMP Negeri 7 Medan needs to provide sufficient opportunities for repeated oral practice accompanied by direct correction rather than relying predominantly on collective explanations.

Another weakness was identified in the application of *tajwīd* rules. Several students continued to experience difficulties in identifying and applying rules

related to *nūn sākinah* and *tanwīn*, including *ikhfā'*, *idghām*, *iqlāb*, and *izhār*. In addition, some students tended to recite verses too quickly and consequently paid insufficient attention to appropriate sound duration and recitation rhythm. These findings indicate a possible gap between students' declarative knowledge of *tajwīd* and their procedural ability to apply those rules during actual recitation. This interpretation is supported by research demonstrating that students' theoretical *tajwīd* mastery can differ significantly from their practical Qur'anic reading performance (Andini et al., 2026). Similar evidence indicates that systematic assistance and repeated practice can improve students' understanding and application of *tajwīd* rules (Sari et al., 2025). These findings suggest that *tajwīd* instruction should not terminate at students' ability to identify rules but should proceed toward repeated application in authentic Qur'anic reading situations.

In terms of fluency, the findings revealed at least three patterns of student competency. The first group consisted of students who were able to read relatively fluently and accurately. The second group comprised students who were reasonably fluent but still made errors in applying *tajwīd* rules or articulating certain letters accurately. The third group consisted of students who still read haltingly and required more intensive guidance. This classification is important because it demonstrates that students with different starting competencies should not necessarily receive identical instructional

treatment. Research on differentiated Qur'anic learning indicates that mapping students' abilities and providing individualized instruction can accommodate differences in reading fluency, *makhraj* accuracy, and *tajwid* mastery (Amalia et al., 2026). Individualized Qur'anic instruction has also been found useful for providing appropriate levels of assistance according to students' initial competencies (Rahman et al., 2025). Accordingly, initial competency mapping should become an essential stage in the strengthening model, enabling teachers to distinguish between students requiring reinforcement, consolidation, and remedial intervention.

These differences in competency were also closely associated, according to teacher interviews, with students' previous religious educational experiences. Students who had received Qur'anic instruction from an early age at home, through Qur'anic learning centres, religious study groups, or *madrasah diniyah* tended to demonstrate better reading abilities, whereas students who had received limited Qur'anic instruction within their families generally required more intensive support. The relevance of educational background is reflected in previous research examining students' Qur'anic reading competence, which identifies educational background as an important contextual dimension in understanding differences in competence (Ibrahim, 2023). Parental involvement can also contribute to continuity in Qur'anic learning outside school. Research has shown that parental

involvement in Qur'anic literacy activities can support children's interest and sustained engagement with Qur'anic reading at home (Inten & Agustina, 2022). Therefore, the development of Qur'anic reading competency should not be conceptualized as the exclusive responsibility of Islamic Religious Education teachers but as a process requiring continuity between school-based instruction and students' learning environments outside school.

Teachers also identified insufficient independent practice, extensive engagement with digital devices, and limited parental guidance as factors potentially affecting students' Qur'anic reading development. These observations should be interpreted carefully because they represent contextual findings from teacher interviews rather than independently established causal relationships. Nevertheless, they reinforce the importance of learning continuity beyond formal classroom instruction. A strengthening model therefore needs to create opportunities for students to practice reading regularly outside scheduled lessons while maintaining mechanisms through which teachers can monitor progress. Research on Qur'anic literacy programs demonstrates that sustained and structured activities, rather than occasional interventions, are important for maintaining students' engagement and developing Qur'anic literacy (Jumaeda et al., 2026). Consequently, the role of the family and learning environment should be

incorporated as a supporting dimension of the model rather than treated as an independently established causal determinant of students' competency.

Students' perspectives further reinforced the findings. Several students acknowledged that they still experienced difficulties distinguishing certain *tajwīd* rules and maintaining appropriate sound duration during recitation. In addition to technical difficulties, psychological factors were also identified, particularly embarrassment and lack of confidence when students were asked to recite in front of their classmates. This finding is important because Qur'anic reading involves not only cognitive knowledge and psychomotor performance but also affective readiness to perform the skill publicly and receive corrective feedback. Research has found that Qur'anic reading fluency and self-confidence are positively associated with students' Qur'anic reading mastery (Muslichuddin et al., 2025). This evidence supports the importance of creating a learning environment in which students can practice without excessive fear of making mistakes. Accordingly, confidence building should not be considered an additional activity detached from reading instruction but integrated into the process of repeated practice, individual guidance, and constructive feedback.

The importance of a supportive learning environment is further demonstrated by research involving junior secondary students, which found that differences in students' initial abilities,

motivation, and available learning time constitute practical challenges in Qur'anic reading instruction. Interactive Qur'anic reading programs can improve students' motivation and confidence while addressing differences in initial competency through grouping and instructional adjustment (Nur Aliyah et al., 2026). This evidence reinforces the interpretation that strengthening Qur'anic reading competency requires more than selecting an instructional method. Teachers must organize learning conditions that allow students with different abilities to receive appropriate levels of assistance, sufficient practice opportunities, and psychologically supportive feedback.

Overall, the findings concerning the initial condition of students' Qur'anic reading competency at SMP Negeri 7 Medan indicate that the principal issue is not simply low reading ability but unequal competency levels and discontinuity in learning and practice. The findings reveal interconnected weaknesses involving *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, *tajwīd* application, fluency, *tartīl*, and students' confidence in reading. Existing literature indicates that these dimensions require practical training, differentiated instruction, immediate corrective feedback, sustained habituation, and supportive learning environments rather than theoretical instruction alone (Andini et al., 2026; Amalia et al., 2026). Therefore, the empirical condition at SMP Negeri 7 Medan provides a substantive basis for developing a Qur'anic reading competency strengthening model that integrates initial

competency mapping, differentiated practice, direct correction of *makhraj* and *tajwīd* errors, regular Qur'anic reading habituation, confidence building, and appropriate family involvement. The model should consequently be understood not merely as a new reading method but as a structured system for responding to heterogeneous student needs and maintaining continuity in Qur'anic learning.

Planning and Implementation of Qur'anic Reading Competency Strengthening at SMP Negeri 7 Medan

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the strengthening of Qur'anic reading competency at SMP Negeri 7 Medan has become part of Islamic Religious Education activities and religious habituation programs implemented at the school. The strengthening activities are not conducted as completely separate programs from classroom instruction but are implemented through a combination of classroom learning, *tadarus*, Qur'anic reading practice, and teacher guidance. These findings indicate that the school already possesses an important foundation for developing a more systematic strengthening model. Structured and continuous Qur'anic literacy activities have been shown to support students' engagement and literacy development (Jumaeda et al., 2026). However, the implementation at SMP Negeri 7 Medan still requires improvement, particularly in terms of continuity of practice, differentiation based on students'

competency levels, progress evaluation, and family involvement.

At the planning stage, Islamic Religious Education teachers design learning activities by considering the competencies that students are expected to achieve, particularly accuracy in *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, application of *tajwīd* rules, reading fluency, and orderly recitation (*tartīl*). Such planning is important because the initial assessment revealed considerable variation in students' abilities. Teachers cannot apply a single instructional pattern to all students without taking these differences into account. Interview findings indicate that teachers first consider students' basic abilities before determining the form of guidance to be provided. This approach reflects the pedagogical principle that Qur'anic reading strengthening should be based on students' actual needs rather than solely on predetermined curriculum targets. Research on individualized Qur'anic instruction similarly demonstrates the importance of adapting guidance to differences in students' reading abilities (Amalia et al., 2026). Furthermore, the existence of a gap between theoretical *tajwīd* mastery and practical reading ability reinforces the need for planning that gives greater attention to actual performance rather than merely students' conceptual understanding (Andini et al., 2026).

The planning process is also supported by a Qur'anic reading habituation program conducted before the beginning of lessons. Regular *tadarus* activities provide students with opportunities to engage in repeated

reading practice. Habituation plays an important role in competency development because Qur'anic reading skills cannot be mastered through theoretical understanding alone. Students require sufficient practice to develop accurate pronunciation, appropriate application of *tajwīd*, and reading fluency into more consistent skills. Thus, *tadarus* serves not only as a religious activity but also as a pedagogical strategy that provides regular opportunities for practice. Research on Qur'anic literacy programs shows that structured and continuous literacy activities can support the development of students' Qur'anic engagement and literacy (Jumaeda et al., 2026). Similarly, research on Qur'anic literacy activities involving children and parents emphasizes the importance of continuity between learning activities at school and practice in the home environment (Inten & Agustina, 2022).

In its implementation, teachers employ a variety of methods, including *talaqqi*, turn-taking reading, group practice, demonstration, and direct practice. The learning process generally begins with the teacher providing a model of correct recitation, followed by students' imitation either collectively or individually. Teachers then provide corrections for identified reading errors. This pattern reflects a learning cycle consisting of modeling, practice, correction, and improvement. Such a cycle is relevant to the characteristics of Qur'anic reading skills, which require repeated practice and immediate feedback to develop accuracy.

Research on individualized *sorogan* instruction demonstrates that direct teacher–student interaction enables teachers to identify students' reading errors and provide immediate corrective feedback (Amalia et al., 2026). Consequently, errors identified during learning should not be treated merely as assessment outcomes but as integral components of the instructional process that can immediately become targets for improvement.

The use of *talaqqi* represents an important element in the implementation of competency strengthening because it enables students to receive a direct model of Qur'anic recitation from the teacher. In Qur'anic reading instruction, accurate pronunciation cannot always be achieved through verbal explanations or written materials alone. Students need to listen, observe, imitate, and receive feedback on their recitation. Therefore, direct interaction between teachers and students serves as an important pedagogical instrument, particularly for students who continue to experience difficulties in distinguishing *makhraj* or applying *tajwīd* rules. Individualized recitation approaches have demonstrated their usefulness in improving reading fluency and enabling teachers to provide specific corrections according to students' needs (Amalia et al., 2026). This approach is also consistent with the finding that theoretical knowledge of *tajwīd* does not automatically produce accurate practical performance (Andini et al., 2026). Thus, *talaqqi* in the context of SMP Negeri 7 Medan should be positioned

not merely as a traditional teaching technique but as a mechanism for transferring, observing, correcting, and monitoring practical reading competency.

In addition to individual approaches, group learning is also used as a strategy to create a more participatory learning environment. Interview findings indicate that some students feel more confident when reading within groups because they receive support from their peers. This finding demonstrates that the social learning environment plays an important role in developing students' confidence. Fear of making mistakes in front of classmates was identified as one of the barriers to learning. Group learning can reduce this psychological pressure while providing opportunities for students to learn by observing their peers' recitation. The importance of confidence in Qur'anic reading is supported by research demonstrating a positive relationship between reading fluency, self-confidence, and Qur'anic reading mastery (Muslichuddin et al., 2025). Therefore, group learning should not merely be understood as a strategy for managing large classes but also as a supportive mechanism for reducing students' psychological barriers and encouraging active participation.

Nevertheless, the implementation of the program continues to face several challenges. Limited instructional time for Islamic Religious Education is one of the main obstacles because Qur'anic reading competency requires intensive and repeated practice. When instructional time

is limited, teachers must divide their attention between achieving various competencies within Islamic Religious Education and developing students' Qur'anic reading abilities. Consequently, opportunities for each student to receive individual guidance become limited. This challenge becomes more complex when the number of students is relatively large and their competency levels vary considerably. The problem is therefore not simply the availability of teaching methods but the capacity of the program structure to provide sufficient practice and feedback within limited instructional time. Research involving junior secondary students also indicates that differences in initial ability, motivation, and available learning time can constitute practical challenges in Qur'anic reading instruction (Nur Aliyah et al., 2026).

Another challenge concerns the limited consistency of students' independent practice outside school. Interview findings indicate that students who regularly read the Qur'an at home or participate in additional religious education activities tend to demonstrate better development. Conversely, students who rarely practice outside school tend to progress more slowly. These findings indicate that school-based learning needs to be reinforced through continuous activities at home. In this context, parents have a strategic role as learning companions. Research on Qur'anic literacy activities emphasizes that parental involvement can support children's continued engagement with Qur'anic

reading beyond formal learning settings (Inten & Agustina, 2022). Therefore, synergy among teachers, schools, and families is essential to ensure that Qur'anic reading practice does not stop when students leave the school environment. Family involvement should consequently be incorporated into the strengthening model as a supporting mechanism for maintaining practice continuity rather than merely as an optional external factor.

These findings demonstrate that the planning and implementation of Qur'anic reading competency strengthening at SMP Negeri 7 Medan already incorporate several important components, including structured instruction, *tadarus* habituation, the use of *talaqqi*, direct practice, group learning, and teacher correction. However, these components have not yet been fully integrated into a strengthening mechanism with a clearly defined sequence of diagnosis, intervention, monitoring, and follow-up. This constitutes the central weakness of the existing practice. The presence of several instructional activities does not automatically demonstrate the existence of a comprehensive strengthening model. Research on differentiated Qur'anic learning indicates that instructional adaptation needs to be connected with systematic identification of students' competencies and individualized assistance (Amalia et al., 2026). Likewise, the gap between theoretical *tajwid* knowledge and practical reading performance indicates the importance of systematic monitoring of actual reading outcomes (Andini et al., 2026).

Substantively, the findings indicate that Qur'anic reading competency strengthening will be more effective when planning begins with student competency mapping, followed by practice activities appropriate to students' competency levels, intensive guidance for students experiencing difficulties, regular reading habituation, and periodic progress evaluation. Through this approach, teachers function not merely as transmitters of knowledge but also as facilitators and mentors who monitor each student's development. At the same time, schools need to establish a supportive learning ecosystem through religious habituation, while families contribute by reinforcing Qur'anic reading practice at home. Evidence concerning parental involvement supports the importance of extending Qur'anic literacy activities beyond school (Inten & Agustina, 2022), while research on individualized instruction supports differentiated guidance based on students' actual abilities (Amalia et al., 2026). The integration of these three educational environments—school, teacher, and family—therefore provides an important foundation for establishing a sustainable strengthening model that is responsive to the characteristics of public schools and the diverse needs of their students.

Development and Effectiveness of the Qur'anic Reading Competency Strengthening Model

Based on observations, interviews, documentation, and implementation, the

Qur'anic reading competency strengthening model at SMP Negeri 7 Medan integrates initial competency mapping, *tadarus* habituation, *talaqqi*, demonstration, repeated practice, individual guidance, group learning, motivational reinforcement, and continuous evaluation. The model responds to differences in students' *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, *tajwīd*, fluency, and *tartīl*. Rather than relying on a single instructional method, it establishes a structured and adaptive system based on students' learning needs. This approach is relevant because Qur'anic reading competency is influenced by students' educational backgrounds and previous learning experiences (Ibrahim, 2023), while differences between theoretical *tajwīd* knowledge and practical reading ability require intensive practice that connects knowledge with performance (Andini et al., 2026).

Initial competency mapping functions as the diagnostic foundation of the model. Students demonstrate different levels of pronunciation accuracy, *tajwīd* mastery, sound duration, and fluency. Therefore, teachers identify students' abilities before determining the intensity of intervention. Students with adequate competency receive enrichment and consolidation, whereas those with lower competency receive more intensive guidance and corrective practice. This differentiation prevents uniform instruction from overlooking individual learning difficulties. Individualized Qur'anic learning likewise emphasizes

adapting instruction and feedback to students' competency levels (Amalia et al., 2026).

The second component is regular *tadarus* habituation before lessons. This activity provides consistent opportunities for students to interact with and practice reading the Qur'an while simultaneously strengthening the school's religious culture. Because Qur'anic reading is a practical skill, repeated practice is necessary to develop accuracy and fluency. Structured Qur'anic literacy activities can support students' engagement and development (Jumaeda et al., 2026), while family involvement is important for maintaining continuity of practice beyond school (Inten & Agustina, 2022). Thus, *tadarus* is positioned as an integral pedagogical component rather than merely an additional religious activity.

The third component is *talaqqi* and demonstration. Teachers provide direct examples of accurate recitation, students imitate them, and teachers immediately identify and correct errors in pronunciation, *makhraj*, *tajwīd*, and fluency. This process creates a cycle of modeling, imitation, correction, and repetition. Such direct interaction is particularly important because accurate articulation cannot always be achieved through theoretical explanations or written materials. Research on individualized *sorogan* learning similarly demonstrates the importance of direct teacher-student interaction in identifying and correcting Qur'anic reading errors (Amalia et al., 2026).

Repeated practical training constitutes another central component. Some students understand *tajwīd* concepts but experience difficulties when applying *ikhfā'*, *idghām*, *iqḷāb*, and *izhār* during actual recitation. This indicates a gap between declarative knowledge and procedural competence. Therefore, students repeatedly practice selected verses, identify *tajwīd* patterns, receive corrections, and reread problematic passages. Such practice transforms theoretical knowledge into practical reading skills and supports the finding that Qur'anic reading competence requires continuous interaction among knowledge, practice, correction, and repetition (Andini et al., 2026).

Individual guidance complements group learning. Students with difficulties in pronunciation, *tajwīd*, or fluency receive more focused assistance, while group learning provides opportunities for peer support, observation, and collaborative practice. Individual guidance also reduces psychological pressure for students who feel embarrassed when reading before classmates. Meanwhile, supervised group learning can increase participation and confidence while helping teachers manage heterogeneous competency levels. The relationship between confidence and Qur'anic reading mastery further supports the inclusion of affective reinforcement within the model (Muslichuddin et al., 2025).

Motivational reinforcement is therefore an important component. Some students initially hesitate to recite because

they fear making mistakes or being embarrassed. Teachers respond through constructive correction, appreciation of progress, and supportive communication. The implementation indicates that students subsequently became more willing to recite, ask questions, and accept feedback. This suggests that technical competency development is closely connected to psychological readiness. A supportive learning climate allows students to regard mistakes as part of the learning process rather than as reasons to avoid participation.

Continuous evaluation and follow-up complete the model. Evaluation is used not merely to determine achievement but to monitor development in *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, *tajwīd*, fluency, and *tartīl*. The results determine whether students require remediation, additional practice, individual guidance, or enrichment. Consequently, the model operates as a cycle of competency mapping, planning, habituation, practice, correction, evaluation, and follow-up. This structure allows intervention to be adjusted according to students' continuing development (Lubis et al., 2019, 2023, 2025).

Implementation of the model demonstrated positive changes in students' Qur'anic reading performance. Improvements were particularly visible in fluency, *tajwīd* application, *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, and willingness to recite individually. Students who initially read haltingly became more fluent, while others demonstrated greater consistency in applying *tajwīd*. Direct correction through

talaqqi enabled students to recognize and correct pronunciation errors. These findings reinforce the importance of direct feedback and repeated practice in developing practical Qur'anic reading competence (Amalia et al., 2026; Andini et al., 2026).

Changes were also evident in students' affective responses. Students who initially felt embarrassed or afraid gradually became more willing to participate in individual and group recitation. They also became more receptive to teacher corrections and more active in asking questions. This development is significant because greater confidence creates more opportunities for practice and feedback. The positive relationship between self-confidence and Qur'anic reading mastery supports the importance of integrating affective development into reading interventions (Muslichuddin et al., 2025).

However, improvement was not uniform. Students with lower initial competency and limited practice at home required longer and more intensive intervention. Limited Islamic Religious Education instructional time also restricted opportunities for individual guidance. These conditions indicate that the model's success depends on implementation consistency and continuity of practice. Parental involvement therefore becomes important. Students who regularly practiced Qur'anic reading at home tended to demonstrate more consistent development, suggesting that school-based intervention needs to be reinforced

through family-based practice and communication between teachers and parents (Inten & Agustina, 2022).

Overall, the model demonstrates that strengthening Qur'anic reading competency should not be centered on a single instructional method but on the systematic integration of diagnosis, *tadarus*, *talaqqi*, repeated practice, individual and group guidance, motivational reinforcement, and continuous evaluation. Its principal contribution lies in transforming previously separate activities into a coherent cycle of intervention, monitoring, and follow-up. The observed improvements in fluency, *tajwīd*, *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, and confidence indicate positive development. Nevertheless, claims of "effectiveness" should be supported by explicit quantitative evidence if pre-test and post-test data are available. The model ultimately provides a contextual framework for public schools where students have heterogeneous Qur'anic reading backgrounds and where sustainable improvement requires collaboration among teachers, students, schools, and families.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Qur'anic reading competency of students at SMP Negeri 7 Medan is generally at an adequate level, although disparities remain in *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, *tajwīd*, reading fluency, and *tartīl*. These differences are associated with students' religious educational backgrounds,

intensity of practice, family support, and levels of self-confidence. The competency strengthening activities implemented through Islamic Religious Education, *tadarus*, the *talaqqi* method, direct practice, group learning, and teacher guidance have provided a positive foundation but have not yet been fully integrated into a systematic and sustainable model. An effective strengthening model was formulated through initial competency mapping, regular Qur'anic reading habituation, demonstration and *talaqqi*, repeated practice, individual guidance, group learning, motivational reinforcement, and continuous evaluation and follow-up. The implementation of the model demonstrated improvements in reading fluency, accuracy in applying *tajwīd*, *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, and students' confidence. However, its effectiveness remains influenced by limited instructional time and insufficient independent practice at home. Therefore, successful Qur'anic reading competency strengthening requires synergy among teachers, schools, students, and parents to ensure consistent and sustainable learning. This model has the potential to serve as an adaptive and applicable alternative for strengthening Qur'anic literacy in public schools with diverse student characteristics.

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