

Implementation of Qur'anic Reading and Writing Activities among Seventh-Grade Students at MTs S NU Padang Masiang Barus District Kabupaten Tapanuli Tengah

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of the Qur'anic Reading and Writing Program (QRW) at MTs S NU Padang Masiang, Barus, Central Tapanuli, Indonesia. Employing a descriptive qualitative field approach, the research aimed to (1) describe how QRW is implemented and identify supporting and inhibiting factors. Data were collected over approximately three months through classroom observations of QRW sessions, semi-structured interviews with the school principal, QRW teachers, and seventh-grade students, and documentation review. Data were analyzed using an interactive model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, supported by source and method triangulation as well as member checking to enhance credibility. The findings indicate that QRW is implemented as a compulsory extracurricular activity held three times a week and generally supports students' Qur'anic literacy and the cultivation of discipline, perseverance, and religious habits. However, program effectiveness is constrained by varied initial student competencies, limited instructional time, and inconsistent family support and religious practices in the surrounding environment. The study argues that strengthening diagnostic assessment, differentiated instruction, teacher capacity building, and school-parent collaboration along with more systematic monitoring and evaluation are essential to optimize BTQ outcomes and to inform the development of contextual Qur'anic learning models in madrasahs.

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Introduction

Education serves as a primary means of developing human resources who are knowledgeable, morally grounded, and possess strong character. In the context of Islamic education, educational institutions play a crucial role in instilling spiritual values, self-discipline, and moral conduct in learners from an early age. The objective of Islamic education is not merely to produce intellectually capable individuals but also to shape personalities that are faithful and devoted to Allah (SWT). Therefore, Islamic religious education holds a strategic function in fostering Islamic character amid increasingly complex contemporary developments (Hasibuan, 2017). At the level of implementation, the formation of religious character is also influenced by the school's religious culture and family support, both of which reinforce the habituation of religious values and practices among students (Haidir et al., 2023).

The Qur'an, as the primary source of Islamic teachings, serves as a life guide for every Muslim. It functions not only as a sacred text, but also as a moral and legal framework that directs human beings toward well-being in this world and the hereafter. In educational contexts, the Qur'an forms the foundation for shaping students' personalities so that they develop noble character and strong social and spiritual awareness (Saada, Anam, & Yusuf, 2023). Accordingly, the ability to read and write the Qur'an constitutes a fundamental skill that every Muslim is obliged to acquire as an expression of reverence for divine revelation.

The ability to read and write the Qur'an is not merely a technical competence, but also an integral part of profound spiritual formation. Through Qur'anic reading activities, Muslims are able to understand divine teachings that guide their lives. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) stated that the best among people are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it to others (al-Bukhari, 1987). This hadith highlights the importance of reading and teaching the Qur'an as acts of devotion and as means of strengthening one's relationship with Allah (SWT). In line with this, recent empirical studies suggest that practices such as listening to, reciting, and memorizing the Qur'an may be associated with certain psychological and health-related aspects, although their effectiveness remains dependent on intervention design and participant context (Mohd Rozali et al., 2022).

Despite its importance, the current reality of Islamic education indicates that many students—even within Islamic-based institutions—are still unable to read and write the Qur'an properly. This condition suggests that the implementation of Qur'anic Reading and Writing (QRW) programs has not yet reached optimal effectiveness. As observed at MTs S NU Padang Masiang, Barus District, Central Tapanuli Regency, a number of students have not yet correctly recognized *hijā'iyah* letters and have not fully mastered the rules of *tajwīd* (Marbun, 2025).

Several factors contribute to the low level of Qur'anic literacy among students, including insufficient habituation at the primary education level, limited instructional time within madrasah settings, and inadequate family support in nurturing children's Qur'anic reading practices. Consequently, madrasahs as Islamic educational institutions must give serious attention to the implementation of QRW activities. These activities should function not merely as routine programs, but also as structured efforts for character and spiritual development, aimed at forming Qur'an-oriented generations with noble character.

At MTs S NU Padang Masiang, QRW activities are implemented as a compulsory extracurricular program conducted three times a week, namely on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. The primary objective of this program is to enhance students' ability to read and write the Qur'an in accordance with *tajwīd* principles, while fostering an early love for the Qur'an (Marbun, 2025). The instructional methods employed include the *Iqra'* and *Qira'ati* methods, both of which emphasize gradual learning tailored to students' levels of ability. Recent studies indicate that strengthening Qur'anic reading proficiency in madrasahs tends to be more effective when instructional strategies are adaptively designed according to students' competency levels, accompanied by teacher guidance and systematic evaluation (Basir et al., 2024).

The role of teachers in QRW activities is highly significant, as teachers function not only as instructors but also as spiritual mentors who instill Islamic values. Teachers are expected to possess pedagogical, personal, and spiritual competencies to guide students with patience and exemplary conduct. In addition, parental involvement constitutes a key factor in the success of this program. Family support reinforces the habituation of Qur'anic reading at home, thereby creating continuity between formal and informal education.

Beyond internal factors such as student motivation and teacher competence, external factors also influence the implementation of QRW activities. The social and cultural environment surrounding the madrasah plays an important role in shaping students' religious habits. When the surrounding community maintains strong traditions of Qur'anic recitation, students tend to be more motivated to emulate these practices (Hidayah, 2021). Conversely, environments that lack support for religious activities may hinder students' spiritual development.

QRW activities in madrasahs also contribute to students' character formation. Through the habituation of reading and writing the Qur'an, students are trained to develop discipline, patience, perseverance, and noble character. These values are central to the objectives of Islamic education, which emphasize balance between intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Therefore, strengthening QRW activities in schools represents a strategic step toward improving the quality of Islamic religious education while reinforcing the Islamic identity of younger generations (Nur, 2022). From a practical instructional perspective, the implementation of the Iqra' method in school contexts has also been reported to improve Qur'anic reading ability when applied gradually and systematically (Umroni & Romelah, 2025).

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study focuses on the implementation of QRW activities at MTs S NU Padang Masiang as an effort to enhance students' religious quality. The study aims to analyze: (1) the implementation of the QRW program, and supporting and inhibiting factors. Accordingly, this research is expected to contribute to the development of more contextual and collaborative Qur'anic learning models for madrasahs and other Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a field research design to provide an in-depth portrayal of the implementation process of the Qur'anic Reading and Writing (QRW) program within the natural setting of a madrasah. This approach was selected because it enables the researcher to explore processes, meanings, and implementation dynamics based on the experiences and perspectives of the actors directly involved in the program (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research was conducted at MTs S NU Padang Masiang, Barus District, Central Tapanuli Regency, over approximately three months, beginning with preliminary observation and concluding with the formulation of research findings. The research site was selected purposively, as the madrasah implements QRW as a compulsory extracurricular activity for all seventh-grade students.

The research participants consisted of the head of the madrasah, QRW teachers, and seventh-grade students. Participants were selected using

purposive sampling, based on the consideration that these three groups represent policy-level perspectives, program implementation, and direct learning experiences within the QRW program (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data sources comprised both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct observation, interviews, and documentation conducted at the research site. Secondary data were collected from supporting documents, including the madrasah profile, QRW activity schedules, student attendance lists, learning outcome records, and other relevant administrative documents.

Data collection techniques included observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations focused on the implementation of QRW activities, covering instructional methods, student engagement, use of learning media, and overall classroom dynamics. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the head of the madrasah, QRW teachers, and selected students to explore issues related to program planning, implementation, evaluation, as well as their perceptions and experiences regarding the QRW program. Documentation was used to collect written and visual evidence that supported and strengthened the findings derived from observations and interviews.

Data analysis was conducted interactively and concurrently with the data collection process. The analytical stages included data condensation or reduction, data display in narrative and thematic forms, and drawing conclusions accompanied by continuous verification to identify patterns and meanings within the data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). Data trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation and method triangulation, by comparing information obtained from the head of the madrasah, teachers, and students, as well as cross-checking findings from observations, interviews, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming summarized findings with respondents to ensure interpretive accuracy. These procedures were undertaken to enhance the credibility of the study and to ensure that the findings accurately represent the actual conditions of QRW implementation in the madrasah (McKim, 2023; Ahmed, 2024). Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process. These included obtaining formal permission from the madrasah authorities, securing informed consent from participants, and anonymizing participant identities to maintain data confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

Implementation of the Qur'anic Reading and Writing (QRW) Program for Seventh-Grade Students at MTs S NU Padang Masiang, Barus District, Central Tapanuli Regency

The implementation of the Qur'anic Reading and Writing (QRW) program at MTs S NU Padang Masiang is conducted through a learning approach oriented toward improving students' fundamental abilities in reading and writing Arabic letters. This program is a compulsory activity for all seventh-grade students and serves as an effort to strengthen Islamic values and foster Qur'anic character formation. Based on observations and interviews, the QRW activities are organized within a structured planning framework and implemented regularly three times a week.

The planning stage of the QRW program begins with the formulation of an annual program collaboratively developed by the teachers and the head of the madrasah. Teachers design lesson plans that include learning objectives, materials, instructional methods, and evaluation procedures. The primary objective is to ensure that students are able to read and write hijaiyah letters accurately and correctly in accordance with tajwid rules. At this stage, teachers also adapt instructional methods to students' varying ability levels, as some students are still at the basic stage of recognizing Arabic letters.

During the implementation stage, teachers employ a combination of the Iqro' and Qira'ati methods. The Iqro' method is used for beginner-level students, while the Qira'ati method is applied to students who are already fluent in reading the Qur'an. Each session begins with a collective recitation of prayers and joint tahsin practice, followed by individualized guidance provided by the teacher. The learning process is conducted in a calm and motivating atmosphere to ensure that students feel comfortable while learning to read the Qur'an. This approach aligns with Islamic educational principles that emphasize compassion and exemplary conduct in teaching and learning processes (Saada, Anam, & Yusuf, 2023).

Teachers play a crucial role in ensuring the success of the QRW program. In addition to teaching, they function as motivators who encourage students to continue practicing Qur'anic reading and writing outside formal lesson hours. Interview data indicate that teachers at MTs S NU Padang Masiang consistently provide special attention to students who experience learning difficulties. They implement a gradual learning system that allows each student to develop according to their individual abilities. This differentiated approach aligns with Islamic learning principles that emphasize the accommodation of individual potential (Hasibuan, 2017).

Observation findings reveal that the QRW program has been implemented quite effectively, as evidenced by gradual yet consistent improvements in students' Qur'anic reading abilities. Students who initially were unable to recognize hijaiyah letters became capable of reading short surahs correctly after several months of participation. Teachers systematically record each student's progress in daily assessment logs, enabling continuous monitoring of learning development (Marbun, 2025).

In addition to reading instruction, the QRW program also includes Arabic writing exercises. Students are taught how to write hijaiyah letters correctly in terms of form and positioning. Writing activities are conducted using special notebooks provided by the madrasah. According to QRW teachers, writing practice significantly helps students recognize letter shapes and strengthens their visual memory. This aspect is essential, as writing constitutes an integral component of comprehensive Qur'anic literacy. In Islamic tradition, writing is regarded as a means of preserving knowledge from loss (Hidayah, 2021).

From a scheduling perspective, QRW activities are conducted three times a week—on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays—during afternoon sessions. This schedule is designed to avoid interference with core academic subjects. Each session lasts approximately 60 minutes, with time allocated for collective reading practice, individual reading, and Arabic writing exercises. A small-group system is applied to maintain a conducive learning atmosphere and facilitate direct guidance for each student.

Evaluation of the QRW program is carried out periodically through both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment is conducted at the end of each session to measure students' reading abilities, while summative assessment is administered at the end of the semester. Teachers utilize Qur'anic reading tests and Arabic writing assessments as evaluation instruments. The evaluation results indicate that most students experience significant improvement after consistently participating in the QRW program, demonstrating that the program has been implemented effectively in accordance with its intended objectives (Marbun, 2025).

From a pedagogical standpoint, the QRW program is not solely oriented toward technical skills in reading and writing but also aims to instill religious values such as patience, perseverance, and love for the Qur'an. Teachers emphasize that reading the Qur'an is not merely an obligation but also an act of worship. Through this spiritual approach, the QRW program serves as a medium for fostering Islamic character development among students, in line with the broader vision of Islamic education (Nur, 2022).

The head of the madrasah plays an active role in supporting the QRW program. This support is manifested through the provision of facilities and infrastructure, including mushaf copies, Iqro' books, Arabic writing boards, and dedicated learning spaces. Additionally, the head of the madrasah manages teacher schedules and directly monitors classroom activities. Such structural support from school management has been shown to significantly influence the effectiveness of program implementation (Marbun, 2025).

Despite these successes, the QRW program still encounters several technical challenges. One major constraint is limited instructional time due to the dense academic schedule at the madrasah. Furthermore, there is a considerable disparity in students' abilities, with some students already proficient in Qur'anic reading while others remain at a basic level. This condition requires teachers to exert additional effort in adapting instructional strategies. Such challenges are common in Qur'anic learning contexts within madrasah settings (Huda, 2019).

To address differences in student abilities, QRW teachers implement a grouping system that categorizes students into beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. This grouping enables teachers to provide more focused and needs-based guidance. The strategy has proven effective in enhancing learning outcomes, as students are able to learn at an appropriate pace. This grouping approach aligns with the concept of differentiated instruction in contemporary Islamic education, which emphasizes personalized learning (Yusri, 2020).

In terms of instructional media, teachers utilize printed materials such as Iqro' books, worksheets, and Arabic writing boards. These simple yet relevant media assist students in understanding letter forms and makharij more effectively. In several sessions, teachers also employ audio media, such as murottal recordings, to train students' listening skills and correct pronunciation. The integration of instructional media in Qur'anic learning has been shown to enhance student motivation and learning outcomes (Nasution, 2021).

Interview findings indicate that most students enjoy participating in the QRW program because the learning process is engaging and interactive. Several students reported that they were previously unable to read fluently, but after joining the program, they became more confident and willing to read aloud in

class. This suggests that the QRW program not only improves academic skills but also fosters self-confidence and religious motivation among students.

Overall, the implementation of the QRW program at MTs S NU Padang Masiang can be categorized as effective and sustainable. This success is the result of strong synergy among teachers, the head of the madrasah, and students in carrying out the program with high levels of commitment. Although challenges such as limited instructional time and disparities in student abilities persist, the program has generally achieved its primary objective: cultivating students' love for the Qur'an and improving their ability to read and write Arabic letters accurately and correctly.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of the QRW Program

The implementation of the QRW program at MTs S NU Padang Masiang is influenced by various factors that affect its success. Based on observations and interviews with teachers and the head of the madrasah, these factors can be categorized into supporting factors and inhibiting factors, both of which play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness and sustainability of the program. One of the primary supporting factors is teacher commitment. Teachers demonstrate high levels of dedication in implementing QRW activities consistently. They serve not only as instructors but also as spiritual mentors who instill Qur'anic values in students. Teachers' exemplary conduct is essential, as their attitudes and behaviors serve as tangible models for students in embodying Qur'anic character (Marbun, 2025).

Support from the head of the madrasah also constitutes a significant enabling factor. This support includes the provision of facilities such as mushaf copies, Iqro' books, and Arabic writing boards, as well as the arrangement of schedules to ensure that QRW activities do not disrupt other lessons. Such managerial support is critical in creating a school climate conducive to religious education (Hidayah, 2021). A religious school environment further supports the success of the QRW program. Daily religious activities such as morning Qur'anic recitation and congregational prayers cultivate positive habits that encourage students to engage with the Qur'an regularly. A spiritually supportive environment accelerates the internalization of Islamic values among students (Nur, 2022).

Student motivation and enthusiasm also serve as important supporting factors. Interview data reveal that most students enjoy QRW activities due to patient guidance and engaging instructional methods. The use of Iqro' and Qira'ati methods allows students to learn progressively according to their abilities, fostering comfort and active participation. In Islamic education, intrinsic motivation reflects the success of spiritually oriented teaching approaches (Hasibuan, 2017). Parental support further contributes to program effectiveness. Some parents actively assist their children in practicing Qur'anic reading at home and provide moral encouragement. Collaboration between schools and families forms a strong foundation for reinforcing Qur'anic character education, consistent with the Islamic view that education is a shared responsibility among schools, families, and communities (Saada, Anam, & Yusuf, 2023).

The availability of learning facilities and instructional media also supports QRW implementation. The madrasah provides guidebooks, student worksheets,

and murottal audio recordings to assist pronunciation practice. Appropriate media usage enhances learning effectiveness and enriches students' learning experiences (Nasution, 2021). Despite these enabling factors, several inhibiting factors remain. A major challenge is the wide disparity in students' abilities, which requires teachers to provide differentiated attention. Limited instructional time further constrains teachers' ability to provide intensive guidance, particularly for beginner-level students, even though Qur'anic learning requires continuous and repetitive practice (Yusri, 2020). Another challenge is limited parental involvement. Some students rarely practice Qur'anic reading at home due to a lack of family guidance, which slows their progress. Family support plays a vital role in motivating children and ensuring success in religious learning (Huda, 2019).

Insufficient variation in instructional methods also contributes to student boredom. Reliance on traditional methods without interactive activities can reduce student engagement. Teachers are therefore encouraged to incorporate educational games, tajwid quizzes, or simple technology-based learning to enhance motivation. Additional constraints include limited facilities and learning spaces, as well as student discipline issues, such as tardiness or fatigue after regular lessons. Teachers address these issues through motivational guidance and educative discipline, as discipline in Qur'anic learning is an essential aspect of Islamic character formation (Marbun, 2025).

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be affirmed that the implementation of the Qur'anic Reading and Writing (QRW) program at MTs S NU Padang Masiang constitutes a relevant strategy for strengthening Qur'anic literacy while simultaneously fostering students' religious character. This program does not merely target technical competencies in reading and writing the Qur'an in accordance with tajwid rules, but also cultivates discipline, perseverance, and spiritual attitudes through repetitive and structured practices. However, the program's outcomes have not yet reached optimal levels, as variations in students' initial abilities, limited instructional time, and uneven family and environmental support remain evident. These conditions indicate that the effectiveness of the QRW program is highly dependent on consistent implementation, teachers' pedagogical and spiritual competencies, and the reinforcement of continuous and systematic evaluation. Therefore, strengthening the QRW program should be directed toward adapting instructional methods to students' diverse needs, enhancing teachers' professional capacity, and fostering stronger collaboration between the madrasah and parents to ensure sustained Qur'anic learning practices both at school and at home. Through these efforts, QRW can evolve beyond a routine activity into a more systematic, contextual, and impactful model of Qur'anic instruction that contributes meaningfully to improving the quality of Islamic religious education in madrasah settings.

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