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How Do Religious Teachers Strengthen Adolescent Qur'anic Literacy? Evidence from Community-Based Tahsin Al- Qira'ah Learning in Indonesia

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Research Article

How Do Religious Teachers Strengthen Adolescent Qur'anic Literacy? Evidence from Community-Based Tahsin Al-Qira'ah Learning in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines how religious teachers strengthen adolescent Qur'anic literacy through tahsin al-qira'ah learning at a community-based Islamic education center in Indonesia. A qualitative descriptive case study was conducted at TPA Al-Falah, Muara Bulian, involving tahsin teachers, adolescent learners, and program management. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and supporting documents, then analyzed through coding, thematic categorization, and triangulation. The findings show that teachers combined three main strategies: talaqqi, in which students listened to and imitated the teacher's recitation; sorogan, in which students read individually and received direct correction; and drill, which strengthened fluency through repeated practice. These strategies were reinforced by patient teacher guidance, motivational communication, parental encouragement, a supportive learning environment, and available Qur'anic learning resources. However, differences in students' reading ability, limited home practice, reduced concentration, and restricted instructional time remained challenges. Overall, the learning process improved students' recitation fluency, pronunciation accuracy, confidence, and motivation. The study highlights the value of integrating modelling, individual feedback, and repeated practice to support adolescent Qur'anic literacy in community-based Islamic education.

Keywords: Adolescent Learning; Community-Based Islamic Education; Differentiated Instruction.

INTRODUCTION

Qur'anic literacy is a foundational capability within Islamic Religious Education (IRE) because it connects scriptural access, devotional participation, ethical reflection, and community belonging. In Indonesia, this capability is developed not only in schools but also in community-based Qur'anic Learning Centres (QLCs), locally known as Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA). These non-formal settings can extend educational access and relational support beyond school hours, particularly when learners require patient, repeated guidance. Recent work on non-formal Islamic education and on digitally mediated religious learning demonstrates the continuing importance of local religious institutions and guided learning relationships in shaping participation, identity, and access to religious knowledge [1], [2]. In the present article, the QLC is therefore approached as a human-centered educational support system rather than merely as a site for supplementary recitation practice.

Within a QLC, tahsin al-qira'ah - Qur'anic recitation refinement - focuses on improving the accuracy, fluency, and appropriateness of recitation through the articulation points of Arabic letters (makharij al-huruf), tajwid rules, rhythm, and immediate correction of errors. Indonesian studies have documented the relevance of tahsin programmes, talaqqi, musyafahah, talqin, and structured curriculum management for strengthening Qur'anic reading and memorisation [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8]. Related studies likewise report the pedagogical value of direct listening-and-imitation routines, individual reading checks, and sustained practice in Qur'anic learning [9], [10], [11], [12]. Yet, most of this literature examines particular methods or programmes in isolation. It provides less explanation of how instructors combine these methods to respond to adolescents' varied prior literacy, attention, confidence, and home-practice conditions.

The distinction matters because adolescent learners do not enter a QLC with identical experiences of Arabic-script recognition, phonological discrimination, or reading fluency. A learner may participate actively in a collective recitation while still retaining a persistent articulation error that becomes visible only in individual performance. Recent Indonesian studies have highlighted the roles of motivational strategy, adolescent-responsive tahsin instruction, instructor competence, and community programme revitalisation in sustaining Qur'anic learning [13], [14], [15], [16]. These findings point to an instructional challenge that is both pedagogical and social: a QLC must organise accurate modelling and corrective practice while protecting adolescents' willingness to read aloud, ask for help, and persist when correction is required.

This challenge is consistent with broader learning research. Developmentally responsive instruction connects cognitive growth with relationships, emotion, and meaningful participation [17]. Social cognitive theory explains why modelling, self-efficacy, and feedback are important for learners' sustained effort [18], while self-determination theory underscores the value of competence, relatedness, and autonomy-supportive interaction [19]. Systematic reviews show that teacher-student relationships are associated with engagement and achievement [20], [21], and that interpersonal support can influence motivation and participation [22], [23]. In a QLC context, these insights suggest that technically correct recitation instruction must also be psychologically safe, interactionally supportive, and sufficiently responsive to each learner's developmental needs.

The instructional design literature further clarifies why a combined strategy is needed. Feedback is most useful when it is specific, timely, and directed toward the task and the learner's next action [24], [25], whereas unstructured feedback can sometimes be counterproductive [26]. Short, sequenced modelling and guided practice can reduce avoidable cognitive load during difficult pronunciation tasks [27]. Repetition becomes more productive when learners retrieve, re-perform, and receive correction rather than merely re-hear an example [28], [29], [30], [31]. In addition, sustained learning beyond class is shaped by the quality of parental involvement and the way home support is organised [32]. These perspectives support a system in which collective modelling, individual diagnosis, targeted repetition, and simple home extension are coordinated rather than treated as unrelated activities.

Preliminary field observations at TPA Al-Falah, a QLC in Muara Bulian, Batanghari Regency, Jambi Province, identified unequal Qur'anic reading readiness among adolescents. Some learners were attentive, prepared their own printed Qur'an copies (mushaf), responded confidently, and participated enthusiastically. Others became sleepy, lost focus, practised inconsistently at home, or continued to struggle with Arabic-letter recognition and articulation. Conventional one-way routines did not fully accommodate this variation. The study consequently addressed three questions: (1) How do Qur'anic recitation instructors organise tahsin al-qira'ah learning? (2) Which factors support and constrain the strategy system? and (3) What changes are perceived in learners' technical recitation and affective engagement? The study contributes a contextually grounded model of community-based Qur'anic literacy that aligns with inclusive learning opportunities, student support services, workforce professionalism, and human-centered educational systems. The remainder of the article presents the method, findings, discussion, conclusion, and limitations.

METHODS

Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive case-study design to examine a bounded instructional setting: the tahsin al-qira'ah programme at TPA Al-Falah. A case-study approach was appropriate because the inquiry focused on naturally occurring teacher strategies, learner responses, and institutional conditions rather than on experimental manipulation [33]. The descriptive orientation enabled the researchers to report how the strategy system operated in practice while preserving the social and instructional context in which it was embedded.

Research Context and Participants

The research was conducted at TPA Al-Falah, Muara Bulian, Batanghari Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia. The centre provides non-formal Qur'anic learning for children and adolescents from the surrounding community. Participants were selected purposively from stakeholder groups directly involved in the programme: Qur'anic recitation instructors, adolescent learners, and programme management. Purposive selection was used because participants were expected to provide information-rich accounts of planning, enactment, learning experience, and programme support [34]. The original field record did not preserve a numerical participant roster or demographic distribution; accordingly, the study makes no

claims based on participant frequencies and reports evidence by stakeholder role. This transparent role-based reporting is suitable for a small, context-specific qualitative case.

Data Sources and Collection

Three complementary sources were used: classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation captured the sequence of instructional activity, including opening routines, teacher modelling, collective repetition, individual reading, direct correction, motivational communication, peer interaction, and the condition of the learning environment. Interviews explored instructors' rationale for choosing particular strategies, learners' experiences of support and difficulty, and management perspectives on resources, scheduling, and programme constraints. Documentation included the programme schedule, available learning materials, and contextual records. Combining these sources enabled convergence checks across what was enacted, reported, and institutionally supported [35], [36].

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data analysis followed an iterative process of reduction, initial coding, thematic grouping, data display, and interpretive conclusion drawing [35], [37]. First, observation and interview material was selected in relation to the three research questions. Second, the data were coded using categories such as oral modelling, individual diagnosis, repeated practice, corrective feedback, motivational reinforcement, home-practice continuity, learner readiness, and institutional support. Third, coded material was compared across data sources to identify convergent and divergent evidence. The reporting also followed thematic-analysis guidance by presenting themes as patterns of meaning supported by multiple sources rather than as isolated anecdotes [38], [39]. Trustworthiness was strengthened through method and source triangulation, an audit trail of coding and thematic decisions, and attention to credibility, dependability, and confirmability [40], [41], [42].

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary. Participants were informed that the study concerned learning practices, that identities would not be disclosed, and that they could decline to answer any question. Observation and interview material was reported using role-based descriptions to protect confidentiality in a small community setting. The study did not collect or report personally identifying data.

Table 1. Research Focus, Data Sources, and Analytic Orientation

Research focus	Primary data source	Analytic orientation
Instructional strategy system	Observation; instructor interview	Identification of modelling, individual diagnosis, corrective feedback, repetition, and evaluation routines.
Enabling and constraining conditions	Instructor, learner, and management interviews; environment observation	Thematic categorisation of learner, family, instructional, resource, and institutional conditions.
Perceived learning outcomes	Learner and instructor interviews; observation of responses	Interpretation of reported and observed changes in fluency, articulation,

Research focus	Primary data source	Analytic orientation
		confidence, motivation, and participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Integrated Learning Architecture: Modelling, Diagnosis, and Consolidation

The first theme is that tahsin al-qira'ah at TPA Al-Falah operated through an integrated learning architecture. Instructors did not rely on one technique. Instead, they moved learners through three complementary phases: talaqqi, sorogan, and drill. Talaqqi began with accurate oral modelling. The instructor recited selected words, phrases, or verses; learners listened; and the group repeated the model. This phase established a shared auditory reference and made the expected pronunciation observable before learners were asked to perform independently.

Sorogan followed as an individual-performance phase. Learners read one by one in front of the instructor, who listened for specific errors, particularly in letter articulation and fluency, and then offered direct correction. The individual format exposed errors that could remain hidden in choral repetition. It also created a basis for differentiated support: learners who could already recite fluently proceeded with confirmation and minor refinements, whereas learners with persistent difficulty received slower modelling and repeated opportunities to try again.

Drill provided the consolidation phase. Difficult sounds, words, or short passages were repeated until the learner's output became more stable. The observed logic was not simple repetition for its own sake. Rather, repetition followed diagnosis: an error was identified, a correct model was heard, the learner tried again, and the instructor checked whether the correction had been retained. This sequence connected group instruction with individual accountability and transformed correction into a routine part of learning rather than a public failure.

Table 2. Core Elements of the Integrated Tahsin Al-Qira'ah Strategy System

Instructional element	Observed and reported enactment	Primary pedagogical function
Talaqqi (guided oral modelling)	The instructor recited first; learners listened, imitated, and repeated; articulation errors were addressed directly.	Establishes an accurate auditory model and shared standard for performance.
Sorogan (individual reading check)	Learners recited individually; the instructor identified specific errors and provided immediate correction.	Enables individual diagnosis, differentiated pacing, and personal accountability.
Drill (targeted repetition)	Difficult sounds, words, or passages were repeated after correction until output became more stable.	Consolidates articulation, fluency, confidence, and habitual accuracy.

Instructional element	Observed and reported enactment	Primary pedagogical function
Motivational reinforcement	Praise, encouragement, understandable explanations, and advice were embedded in correction.	Protects engagement and psychological safety during public performance.

Individual Corrective Feedback and Differentiated Support

The second theme concerns the diagnostic role of sorogan and the specificity of instructors' feedback. Observations showed that instructors listened closely when learners read individually, interrupted only when needed, and returned learners to a sound or word that required revision. Learner accounts indicated that this direct assistance made difficult articulations easier to understand because the correction was accompanied by a fresh example and a chance to repeat the target immediately.

This practice was differentiated in a practical, low-resource sense. The centre did not use formal ability tracks, but the teacher adjusted pace, repetition, and attention to the learner's demonstrated need. Learners with difficulty recognising hijaiyah letters or distinguishing similar articulations received more guided practice. Learners who were more fluent were encouraged to continue and respond to questions, enabling the instructor to maintain the collective rhythm of the class while still addressing individual gaps. The data therefore show differentiation as responsive micro-adjustment during instruction, not as a separate curriculum for each learner.

A limitation was the absence of visible formal progress sheets for fluency, makhraj, tajwid, confidence, and home practice. Instructors could identify learners who needed additional support, but the evidence suggests that such knowledge was retained primarily through immediate interaction rather than documented longitudinally. This condition did not prevent corrective teaching, but it restricted systematic monitoring of change across sessions.

Motivational Interaction and Psychosocial Safety

The third theme is the relational quality of instruction. Lessons opened with greetings and prayer, followed by a brief explanation of the activity. Instructors used accessible language, gave attention to learners who experienced difficulty, praised effort and progress, and reminded learners of the value of reading the Qur'an accurately. Learners described patience, clear examples, gradual explanation, and a supportive atmosphere as conditions that helped them continue practising.

These practices were especially important where learners risked embarrassment when reading aloud. The observations did not show correction being separated from encouragement. Instead, the instructor combined guidance with respectful communication, allowing learners to retry without being labelled as incapable. Enthusiastic responses, willingness to read when invited, questions about difficulty, and peer assistance indicated that the learning environment supported not only technical practice but also confidence and participation.

The results consequently identify motivation as an instructional mechanism rather than an additional activity. Praise and advice were useful because they were attached to a specific learning process: listening, trying, correcting, repeating, and practising at home. When learners

perceived correction as help rather than judgment, the likelihood of sustained engagement appeared to increase.

System Enablers and Constraints

The fourth theme concerns the conditions surrounding instruction. Supporting factors included learner enthusiasm, instructor patience, parental encouragement, available mushaf and Iqra' primer books, a clean and comfortable learning room, regular scheduling, and management support. These factors formed an enabling environment in which recitation practice could occur consistently. The availability of materials reduced access barriers, while the regular schedule gave the programme a predictable rhythm.

However, the strategy system operated under several constraints. Learners entered the programme with heterogeneous starting points; some had difficulty recognising letters, producing particular makhraj, maintaining attention, or practising at home. Instructors also faced limited time to listen individually to all learners. In this context, the strength of collective talaqqi was efficiency, but the strength of sorogan was precision. The tension between the two made time allocation a central instructional issue.

Home practice was the clearest continuity challenge. Parental support was described as beneficial, but not all learners practised regularly outside the QLC. The problem was not interpreted as a lack of motivation alone. It reflected the need for simple, realistic, and clearly communicated routines that families could support without requiring specialised expertise.

Table 3. Enabling Conditions, Constraints, and Actionable Responses

Dimension	Enabling condition	Constraint	Actionable response
Learner readiness	Some learners were attentive, disciplined, and responsive.	Unequal letter recognition, articulation, fluency, and concentration.	Set individual targets and use short remedial sorogan checks.
Family and home practice	Parental encouragement supported continuity.	Practice at home was inconsistent for some learners.	Use a simple home-practice prompt linked to one clearly defined target.
Learning environment	Clean room, available materials, and regular schedules supported participation.	Instructional time was limited for learners with wider gaps.	Protect time for individual checks and prioritise high-impact pronunciation needs.
Instructor practice	Patience, modelling, correction, and praise sustained engagement.	Progress knowledge was not yet consistently documented.	Use a concise progress sheet for fluency, makhraj, tajwid, confidence, and home practice.

Perceived Learning Outcomes

The fifth theme concerns reported and observed changes. Instructors and learners consistently described improvement in recitation fluency, articulation accuracy, confidence, motivation, and willingness to participate. Learners identified teacher demonstration followed by collective repetition as especially helpful because it offered a clear model before individual performance.

Observations similarly recorded active responses, attention to explanation, voluntary questions, respectful interaction, cooperation with peers, and assistance to friends who faced difficulty.

These changes should be interpreted as qualitative and perceived outcomes, not as standardised pre-post test effects. The field record did not include a validated recitation rubric, baseline scores, or numerical progression data. Nevertheless, convergence among instructor accounts, learner accounts, and classroom observations supports the conclusion that the strategy system contributed to visible improvements in both technical and affective dimensions of learning. The key outcome was therefore not only more accurate recitation, but also an increased readiness to practise, ask for assistance, and read aloud.

Table 4. Qualitative Outcome Evidence and Interpretive Boundaries

Outcome domain	Convergent evidence	Interpretive boundary
Technical recitation	Instructors and learners described greater fluency and more accurate makhraj; observations recorded corrected and repeated performance.	Evidence indicates perceived and observed improvement; no standardised pre-post scoring was available.
Affective engagement	Learners showed willingness to read, ask questions, attend to explanations, assist peers, and report greater confidence.	Engagement was interpreted from classroom behaviour and participant accounts, not a psychometric scale.
Learning continuity	Parental encouragement, regular schedules, and accessible materials facilitated continuity.	Home-practice frequency was not quantified; the finding identifies a support need rather than a causal estimate.

Discussion

Interpreting the Integrated Strategy System

The findings show that the pedagogical value of tahsin al-qira'ah at TPA Al-Falah does not rest on the presence of talaqqi, sorogan, or drill separately. Its value lies in their sequence and complementarity. Talaqqi establishes a reliable oral model; sorogan reveals learner-specific performance; and drill consolidates correction through repeated, supervised re-performance. This interpretation extends Indonesian studies of talaqqi, musyafahah, curriculum management, and tahsin programmes [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8] by showing how several established methods can function as an integrated learner-support system. The present evidence also accords with studies that connect direct oral transmission and repeated practice with more accurate Qur'anic learning [9], [10], [11], [12].

The model is consistent with social cognitive theory because learners observe a competent model, attempt the action, receive feedback, and build confidence through successful repetition [18]. It is also compatible with self-determination theory: talaqqi supports competence through a clear standard; sorogan supports relatedness through personal attention; and respectful feedback preserves agency by allowing learners to retry rather than merely being corrected [19]. In this sense, the QLC's instructional routine combines technical accuracy with social conditions that support persistence.

Feedback, Attention, and Differentiation

The study's emphasis on individual correction is aligned with research showing that feedback works best when it is timely, specific, and connected to a next action [24], [25]. The finding should not be simplified into a claim that more feedback is always better. Feedback research also warns that poorly focused feedback may distract learners or shift attention away from the task [26]. At TPA Al-Falah, the instructor's practice was effective because correction was narrow, immediate, and followed by a second performance attempt. This allows the learner to connect the identified error with an alternative articulation while the auditory model remains available.

The evidence also speaks to cognitive ergonomics in a modest but important way. Learners who are asked to process unfamiliar Arabic letters, tajwid rules, social exposure, and correction at the same time can experience unnecessary cognitive strain. Short talaqqi segments and targeted drills reduce this burden by limiting the task to a manageable recitation unit [27]. The approach therefore supports attention and performance without requiring advanced technology or additional facilities. It is a human-centered adaptation of instruction to learner readiness.

The differentiated element of the model is similarly significant. The centre did not separate learners formally by ability, but sorogan permitted micro-level adaptation. This matters because teacher-student relationships and interpersonal support are consistently associated with engagement, resilience, and learning participation [20], [21], [22], [23]. Instructors' patience, accessible explanation, and non-stigmatising correction created conditions in which learners could disclose difficulty, receive adjustment, and continue participating.

Repetition as Structured Retrieval Rather Than Routine Drill

The field evidence repositions drill from a mechanical routine to a form of structured retrieval and performance consolidation. The learner first hears a model, then produces the target, receives correction, and produces it again. This differs from passive re-listening. Research on deliberate practice, distributed repetition, and retrieval-based learning suggests that performance improves when practice requires effortful re-production, feedback, and repeated access to the target over time [28], [29], [30], [31]. The present case does not measure retention experimentally, but it shows a locally feasible way to embed these principles in Qur'anic recitation instruction.

This interpretation also clarifies the role of home practice. Because classroom time is limited, carefully designed micro-routines - for example, a short, specified verse or a small set of difficult articulations - could extend retrieval beyond the QLC. However, the findings caution against transferring responsibility to families without support. Reviews of parental involvement indicate that its value depends on how involvement is organised and understood, rather than on the mere quantity of assistance [32]. A realistic approach would therefore provide parents with simple, non-technical prompts about what to listen for and when to encourage practice.

Novelty and Implications for Community-Based Islamic Education

The novelty of this study is its formulation of tahsin instruction as a four-part human-centered pedagogical system: model, diagnose, consolidate, and extend. The model component is talaqqi; diagnosis occurs through sorogan; consolidation is achieved through targeted drill; and extension depends on motivational communication, peer support, and simple home practice. Previous studies have commonly evaluated individual Qur'anic learning methods or programme-management arrangements [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8]. This case explains the functional interdependence among methods and identifies the affective and organisational conditions that allow them to work for adolescents with unequal readiness.

The practical implication is that QLCs should formalise a short instructional cycle: (1) a welcoming and motivational opening; (2) concise talaqqi modelling; (3) collective repetition; (4) individual sorogan checks; (5) targeted drill of priority articulation or tajwid needs; (6) peer-supported practice where appropriate; (7) a brief oral evaluation; and (8) a simple progress entry. The progress sheet need not be complex. It can record four indicators - fluency, makhraj accuracy, tajwid application, and confidence - alongside a home-practice prompt. Such documentation would retain the responsiveness already visible in instructor practice while making development traceable across sessions.

At the institutional level, the findings support capacity-building that includes adolescent pedagogy, corrective-feedback skills, low-stakes assessment, and family communication in addition to subject-matter competence. QLC management can improve service quality by protecting sufficient time for individual reading, ensuring access to mushaf and beginner materials, and establishing referral-like support for learners with persistent foundational difficulties. These are modest but scalable strategies for strengthening inclusive learning opportunities and community-based social welfare through education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that adolescent tahsin al-qira'ah at TPA Al-Falah is most meaningfully understood as an integrated, human-centered pedagogical system. Talaqqi supplied the model, sorogan made individual needs visible, and targeted drill consolidated corrected performance; motivational interaction, accessible materials, family encouragement, and a regular learning environment sustained the system. The contribution of the study is to show that Qur'anic recitation refinement becomes more inclusive and socially supportive when technical instruction is coordinated with differentiated feedback, learner confidence, and simple continuity mechanisms beyond the classroom. For community-based Islamic education, the practical priority is not to replace established methods but to formalise their sequence, protect time for individual diagnosis, and document progress through low-burden monitoring. This approach can strengthen Qur'anic literacy while also supporting adolescents' participation, self-confidence, and access to responsive non-formal education.

LIMITATIONS

The findings are contextually grounded in one QLC and should not be interpreted as statistically generalisable. The original field record did not retain a numerical participant roster, demographic profile, standardised recitation rubric, or repeated pre-post assessment; therefore,

the study reports thematic convergence and perceived change rather than effect sizes or causal estimates. The observations also captured a limited instructional period and may not represent change over a longer cycle of practice. Future research should use multi-site comparative designs, document participant characteristics, apply validated fluency-makhraj-tajwid rubrics, and combine qualitative process evidence with longitudinal recitation and confidence measures.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

S.R. conceptualized the study, conducted the field inquiry, organised the observation, interview, and documentation evidence, and drafted the manuscript. K. contributed to the theoretical framing, interpretation of the instructional strategies, and critical revision of the manuscript. I.F. contributed to methodological refinement, validation of the analysis, and manuscript review. All authors approved the final manuscript and accept responsibility for the integrity of the work.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

"The authors declare no conflict of interest."

DECLARATION OF USE OF AI IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

The authors used AI-assisted tools for English-language refinement and initial structural organisation of the manuscript. The authors subsequently reviewed, verified, and edited the text and assume full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the published content.

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