

Integrating *Tahfidz* into the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum to Strengthen Qur'anic Competence

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the strengthening of Qur'anic competence through its integration into the *tahfidz*-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in Indonesia. Using a literature review approach and descriptive-analytical content analysis, the study examines various scholarly sources, including books, national and international journal articles, and relevant educational policy documents. The findings indicate that Qur'anic competence is multidimensional, encompassing four interrelated domains: *tilawah* (the ability to recite the Qur'an accurately with proper *tartil* and *tajwid*), *tahfidz* (progressive memorization), contextual understanding and *tadabbur* (reflective contemplation), and the application of Qur'anic values in everyday life. The integration of these competencies into the PAI curriculum can be implemented through four models: the thematic-integrative model, the vertically sequenced model, the project-based model, and a school culture model that positions the Qur'an as the central foundation of the educational ecosystem. The success of integrating Qur'anic competence is influenced by four key factors: the competence and professionalism of PAI teachers, the quality of instructional materials, the leadership of school principals, and the synergy among schools, families, and communities. To ensure the sustainable strengthening of Qur'anic competence, several strategies are recommended, including the standardization of measurable competencies, technology-based pedagogical innovation, the professional development of teachers, the transformation of assessment systems into authentic and holistic forms, and the development of a comprehensive Qur'anic ecosystem within the school environment. Based on these findings, the study emphasizes that the Qur'an should not merely be treated as a formal subject but should serve as the spiritual foundation and value compass guiding the entire process of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Keywords: Curriculum Integration, Islamic Religious Education, Qur'anic Competence, *Tahfidz* and *Tilawah*

A. Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of global education, Islamic education faces a fundamental challenge: how to balance the preservation of traditional religious

practices—such as memorization (*tahfidz*) and textual study—with the demands of modern pedagogy, including critical thinking, contextual understanding, and learner-centered approaches (Rahman & Azzahra, 2024). This tension reflects a broader issue in religious education worldwide, where instructional practices often remain fragmented, separating technical skills from deeper cognitive and reflective competencies (Prasetyowati et al., 2025).

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, bears a significant responsibility to ensure that its Muslim generations possess adequate competence in relation to the Qur'an. As the primary source of Islamic teachings, the Qur'an serves as the normative foundation guiding various aspects of individual and social life. Consequently, the development of Qur'anic competence constitutes an essential objective within Islamic education. Within the Indonesian educational system, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum formally recognizes Qur'anic competence as a fundamental component of learning outcomes. Educational regulations emphasize that students are expected to develop basic competencies in reading, understanding, and internalizing the teachings of the Qur'an as part of the national graduate competency standards (Muhaimin, 2012). However, the current condition of Qur'anic literacy in Indonesian society indicates that this objective has not yet been achieved evenly across different social groups.

Empirical findings from the National Survey on the Potential of Qur'anic Literacy conducted by the Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, in collaboration with the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) and the Institute for Curriculum and Education Policy Studies at the University of Indonesia in July 2023, reveal important insights into the level of Qur'anic literacy among Indonesian Muslims. The survey involved 10,347 respondents across 34 provinces using a multistage sampling technique. The results indicate that 61.51% of respondents are able to recognize Qur'anic letters and diacritical marks (*harakat*), 59.92% can read sequences of letters forming words, 48.96% are able to read Qur'anic verses fluently, and only 44.57% can read the Qur'an properly in accordance with the rules of *tajwid*. At the same time, 38.49% of respondents still lack adequate ability to read the Qur'an (Ali, 2023).

These findings do not merely indicate a gap in Qur'anic literacy, but rather point to a deeper pedagogical problem namely, the fragmentation of Qur'anic learning within the curriculum. In many educational contexts, *tilawah* (recitation), *tahfidz* (memorization), and *tadabbur* (reflection) are taught as separate components, resulting in a disjointed learning experience that limits the development of holistic Qur'anic competence.

These findings demonstrate that Qur'anic literacy remains unevenly distributed across society and requires systematic educational efforts to strengthen it. In the perspective of Islamic education, Qur'anic competence cannot be narrowly defined

merely as the ability to read the Qur'an. Rather, it encompasses several interconnected dimensions, including the ability to recite the Qur'an accurately, memorize its verses, understand its meanings, and internalize its ethical and spiritual values in daily life. The mastery of *tajwid*, the tradition of *tahfidz* (Qur'anic memorization), and the reflective understanding of Qur'anic teachings are therefore essential components of a comprehensive Qur'anic learning process (Syarifuddin, 2004).

Several previous studies have explored aspects of curriculum integration and Qur'anic learning within Islamic education. Research conducted by Nufus et al. (2025) shows that the integration of *tahfidz* programs with the school curriculum can improve students' memorization quality, discipline, and religious motivation. Similarly, Sugiarto's (2025) study highlights that integrating Qur'anic and Hadith values into Islamic Religious Education learning contributes to strengthening students' religious understanding and character formation. Fernadi (2024) emphasize that curriculum integration within Islamic education is important in overcoming the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge. Furthermore, Nuryani & Rodhiyana (2025) demonstrate that teachers' pedagogical competence significantly influences students' ability to read the Qur'an.

Although these studies highlight the importance of curriculum integration and instructional quality in Islamic education, research that specifically examines the comprehensive integration of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum to strengthen Qur'anic competence remains relatively limited. In particular, studies that conceptualize and analyze the integration of *tahfidz* within the structure of the PAI curriculum as a strategy for strengthening Qur'anic competence are still scarce.

This study was conducted to address the limited number of studies that specifically examine efforts to strengthen Qur'anic competence through its integration into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum. Using a library research approach, this study reviews various scholarly sources to identify conceptual frameworks, models, and strategies that can be employed to integrate Qur'anic learning within the PAI curriculum. Based on this objective, the study seeks to address several key research questions: (1) how is the concept of Qur'anic competence understood within the perspective of Islamic education? (2) how can Qur'anic competence be integrated into the PAI curriculum, particularly within *tahfidz* programs? (3) what factors influence the successful implementation of this integration? and (4) what strategies can be developed to ensure the sustainable strengthening of Qur'anic competence within the educational process?

B. Methods

This study employs a library research approach, a research method that utilizes various written sources as the primary materials for analysis. These sources include books, scholarly articles, academic journals, research reports, government regulations,

and other documents relevant to the topic under investigation. This approach was selected because the research problem is conceptual in nature and requires an in-depth examination of ideas, theoretical perspectives, and previous research findings that have developed in the field (Zed, 2008). Library research was considered appropriate since the data sources were obtained from written documents, including academic journals, books, and other relevant literature. The study also adopts a qualitative approach, as both the data sources and the results of the literature review consist of descriptive forms of words and sentences rather than numerical data. Accordingly, the primary data sources in this study consist of books on Islamic education, national and international scholarly journal articles, and previous research findings related to the integration of Qur'anic learning within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum.

In this study, the data were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical content analysis approach. Data collection was carried out through documentation study by reviewing, classifying, and examining various relevant, credible, and up-to-date literature sources (Moleong, 2019). The analysis process began with the selection and identification of literature sources related to the research context. Each document was then carefully examined to identify key ideas and relevant information. The findings from these documents were subsequently organized into thematic categories, which facilitated the interpretation and synthesis of information. The analysis was conducted to uncover patterns, relationships, and underlying meanings associated with the phenomenon under investigation. The results of this process were then synthesized into a comprehensive understanding that served as the basis for drawing conclusions and formulating research recommendations. This approach ensures that the data derived from the literature are systematically connected with theoretical concepts, thereby producing an objective and academically accountable analysis.

C. Results and Discussion

1. The Concept of Qur'anic Competence in Islamic Education

From the perspective of Islamic education, the primary objective of Islamic education is to develop individuals who maintain a strong relationship with and live in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an. Qur'anic competence therefore extends beyond the mechanical ability to read its verses; it also encompasses the ability to understand, internalize, and apply Qur'anic values in various aspects of life (Daradjat, 2011). Accordingly, Qur'anic competence can be understood as a comprehensive and integrative construct, combining cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions within the religious and social experiences of a Muslim. In the discourse of Islamic education, scholars and educational experts generally classify Qur'anic competence into four interrelated domains that are hierarchical yet mutually complementary. Al-Badry, as cited by Nor et al. (2022) in their study on Qur'anic teaching practices, emphasizes that comprehensive Qur'anic instruction should include several essential

competencies: the ability to recite the Qur'an accurately and fluently, the ability to understand the meanings of the verses, the capacity to implement Qur'anic teachings in everyday life, and the ability to memorize Qur'anic verses. These domains can be further described as follows:

***Tilawah* Competence**

Mastery of *tilawah* requires the acquisition of four fundamental aspects. First, *makharij al-huruf*, which refers to the proper points of articulation of the Arabic letters (*huruf hijaiyah*). Second, *shifāt al-huruf*, namely the phonetic characteristics of the letters that influence their pronunciation. Third, the mastery of tajwid rules, including *mad* (elongation), *ghunnah* (nasalization), the rules of *nun sākinah* and *tanwīn* such as *izhār*, *idghām*, *iqlāb*, and *ikhfā'*, the rules of *mīm sākinah*, as well as *qalqalah*. Fourth, an understanding of *waqf* and *ibtidā'*, which concern the proper methods of pausing and beginning recitation. The mastery of these four aspects ensures that Qur'anic recitation is not only technically accurate but also aesthetically harmonious and faithful to the intended meaning of the verses (Annuri, 2020).

***Tahfidz* Competence**

In Islamic education, Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*) competence is not merely the ability to memorize sacred verses but also involves a structured and well-planned learning process. This process includes the design of systematic memorization programs, the establishment of clear assessment standards, and the development of an integrated *tahfidz* curriculum. Such an approach enables students to achieve memorization targets effectively while maintaining their memorization over the long term (Giyanti & Setiadi, 2022). Based on previous research findings, the focus of memorization in formal educational settings is generally divided into several stages. At the initial stage of *tahfidz* learning in formal education, memorization is typically directed toward Juz 30, which serves as the standard memorization target for elementary-level students. The systematic implementation of Juz 30 memorization helps learners build a strong foundational mastery before progressing to more advanced stages (Nuroini & Ilahiyah, 2025). At subsequent educational levels, memorization is expanded to include Juz 29 and selected surahs, accompanied by the implementation of *murāja'ah* (systematic review) methods to reinforce memorization regularly and structurally (Suryani & Mahmud, 2026). Consistent *murāja'ah* practice not only helps preserve memorized verses but also improves recitation fluency and the overall quality of Qur'anic reading. In this regard, *tahfidz* should not be understood merely as the memorization of textual content but rather as a continuous learning process that requires consistency, repetition, and ongoing evaluation (Suryani & Mahmud, 2026).

Qur'anic Understanding Competence

Another important domain of Qur'anic competence is the ability to understand the Qur'an. This competence does not stop at literal comprehension or merely reading translations of the Qur'anic text. Rather, it involves the capacity to engage in *tadabbur* a process of deep reflection on the meanings and messages of the Qur'anic verses as well as *tafaqquh*, which refers to the ability to derive lessons and apply Qur'anic teachings within the context of everyday life. Through this competence, learners are expected not only to recognize the meanings of individual words or verses but also to connect Qur'anic values with real-life situations and contemporary issues. In this sense, understanding the Qur'an becomes an intellectual and reflective process that links textual interpretation with social and ethical awareness. Within the framework of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, the competence of *fahm* (understanding) encompasses several essential skills. These include the ability to comprehend the translation and meaning of Qur'anic verses, recognize the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (the historical circumstances of revelation), identify the major themes of the Qur'an, and relate Qur'anic teachings to contemporary social realities and modern life issues (Nata, 2012).

Application of Qur'anic Values in Daily Life

The final domain of Qur'anic competence is the application of Qur'anic values in everyday life, which represents the culmination of all other Qur'anic competencies. At this stage, the abilities of *tilawah*, *tahfidz*, and Qur'anic understanding converge and are translated into observable behavior and practical actions. This dimension encompasses the formation of character, work ethic, social conduct, and moral commitment that are aligned with the values of the Qur'an. In this regard, the true measure of success in Islamic education is not merely the number of verses memorized or the ability to recite the Qur'an fluently, but rather the extent to which Qur'anic values are reflected in the attitudes and daily lives of learners (Daradjat, 2011). This perspective is consistent with the findings of Nurhidin (2017), who argues that the Qur'an should not be viewed merely as a text to be read or memorized, but as a moral compass and guiding framework that directs the actions and decisions of learners in their personal and social lives.

In the context of developing the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, Abrori et al. emphasize that a competency framework requires a cohesive integration of multiple learning domains. This implies that Qur'anic learning should not be disproportionately focused on a single domain, but rather must maintain a balanced development across the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains in order to produce learners who are intellectually, technically, and morally competent (Abrori et al., 2023). Such an integrated approach ensures that Qur'anic education does not merely cultivate intellectual understanding, but also develops practical skills in recitation and memorization as well as the internalization of ethical and spiritual

values. Consequently, the learning process should be designed in a way that harmonizes knowledge acquisition, skill development, and value formation within the educational experience. From the perspective of Bloom's Taxonomy, Qur'anic competence can also be analyzed across several hierarchical learning levels. Based on the author's analysis, the competencies associated with Qur'anic learning may be categorized as follows:

The Cognitive Domain in Qur'anic Recitation and Understanding Competence

The cognitive domain refers to the intellectual abilities of learners in understanding, analyzing, evaluating, and applying information. Within the context of Qur'anic learning, the competence of *tilawah*—which requires mastery of makharij al-huruf, shifāt al-huruf, the rules of tajwid, as well as waqf and ibtidā'—is closely associated with this domain. Learners are expected to memorize the fundamental rules of Qur'anic recitation, understand their functions within the structure of recitation, and apply them accurately during the reading of the Qur'an. At more advanced levels of learning, students are required to analyze recitations in order to identify and correct errors, as well as to evaluate the quality of their recitation so that it aligns with the principles of *tajwid* and the aesthetic standards of Qur'anic recitation (Abrori et al., 2023).

The competence of Qur'anic understanding also belongs to the cognitive domain, as it requires learners not merely to read the literal translation of the Qur'an but to reflect upon its messages and comprehend the wisdom that can be implemented in everyday life. This competence encourages learners to engage intellectually with the Qur'anic text, moving beyond surface-level interpretation toward deeper reflection and comprehension. Within the framework of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, this understanding competence includes several essential abilities. These involve understanding the translation and meanings of Qur'anic verses, recognizing the *asbāb al-nuzūl* (the historical circumstances of revelation), identifying the major themes of the Qur'an, and relating Qur'anic teachings to contemporary social issues. Such learning activities require critical and analytical thinking, enabling students to move beyond mere memorization or recitation toward a deeper understanding of the ethical, spiritual, and social guidance embedded within the Qur'anic text (Abrori et al., 2023).

The Psychomotor Domain and *Tahfidz* Competence

The psychomotor domain refers to physical and technical skills that require coordination, repeated practice, and precision. In the context of Qur'anic education, the competence of *tahfidz* (Qur'anic memorization) clearly falls within this domain, as the processes of reciting and memorizing the Qur'an involve the coordination of memory, vocal articulation, and consistent practice. In educational practice, *tahfidz* learning is implemented through a structured and progressive approach. At the

foundational level, memorization is typically focused on Juz 30, which serves as the standard memorization target for elementary-level learners. At the intermediate level, memorization is expanded to include Juz 29 and selected surahs, accompanied by regular *murāja'ah* (systematic review) sessions to reinforce memorization and maintain retention. Through continuous and disciplined practice, learners not only memorize the Qur'anic text but also improve their fluency and quality of recitation. As a result, their psychomotor skills develop progressively—from the stages of imitation and guided practice to higher levels of precision, articulation, and mastery in Qur'anic recitation (Abrori et al., 2023).

The Affective Domain and the Application of Qur'anic Values

The affective domain relates to learners' attitudes, values, and moral internalization. Within the framework of Qur'anic education, the competence of applying Qur'anic teachings in daily life represents the culmination of all Qur'anic learning domains. At this stage, the competencies of *tilawah* (recitation), *tahfidz* (memorization), and *fahm* (understanding) converge and are translated into observable behavior. This dimension encompasses the development of character, work ethic, social conduct, and moral commitment that align with Qur'anic values. From an affective perspective, learners gradually progress through stages of value formation—beginning with the acceptance of values, responding to them, organizing them into coherent principles, and ultimately internalizing and embodying them in everyday life. Consequently, the Qur'an functions not merely as a text to be read or memorized, but as a moral compass that guides learners' decisions, actions, and ethical orientations in both personal and social contexts (Abrori et al., 2023).

2. Conceptual Models for Integrating Qur'anic Competence in the PAI Curriculum

In the context of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, integration refers to a systematic effort to unify various components, values, and competencies within a coherent learning framework that is mutually reinforcing. Such integration aims to ensure that religious knowledge, skills, and values are not taught in isolation but are interconnected within the broader educational process. According to Muhaimin (2012), there are three paradigms of curriculum integration in Islamic Religious Education. The first is the monolithic paradigm, in which PAI is treated as an independent subject with little or no interaction with other areas of learning. In this model, Islamic education is confined to a separate curricular space and does not significantly influence the broader learning experience. The second is the additive paradigm, where Islamic Religious Education is incorporated into the general curriculum without substantial structural transformation. In this approach, religious content is added to the existing curriculum framework, but it does not fundamentally reshape the organization or orientation of the educational system. The third is the transformative paradigm, in which Islamic values—particularly those derived from the Qur'an serve as the guiding principles that shape the entire learning experience.

In this paradigm, the Qur'an functions as the primary normative foundation that informs the structure, objectives, and processes of education. Muhaimin emphasizes that the transformative paradigm represents the most appropriate approach for achieving the holistic goals of Islamic education, as it integrates intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions within the overall educational framework.

In the context of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, Wahid and Hamami highlight a major challenge in the current development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum: how to effectively integrate Islamic values particularly those derived from the Qur'an as the highest normative source into 21st-century pedagogical approaches that emphasize critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, commonly referred to as the 4C competencies. Effective integration requires a balanced approach that maintains both spiritual depth and contemporary relevance. Through such integration, learners are expected not only to master religious values but also to develop the competencies necessary to navigate the demands of modern society (Aripin, 2024). A review of the relevant literature indicates that there are four models of Qur'anic competence integration that can be applied within Islamic education in Indonesia. These models are not mutually exclusive; rather, they complement one another and can be adapted according to the needs, contexts, and educational orientations of different institutions.

The Thematic-Integrative Model

The thematic-integrative model positions Qur'anic verses as the primary reference for each thematic unit in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. In this model, all major components of PAI—including aqidah (Islamic creed), akhlaq (moral education), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and Islamic history—are taught by directly linking them to relevant Qur'anic verses. An integrated PAI curriculum that places the Qur'an at the center of curricular integration enables learners to understand that all aspects of Islamic teachings originate from divine revelation. Through this approach, the Qur'an functions not only as a textual reference but also as the conceptual foundation that connects various branches of Islamic knowledge within a unified learning framework (Hasan, 2017). Nisak (2018) further notes that the implementation of thematic integration at the elementary school level has been shown to improve students' understanding of the relevance of the Qur'an in everyday life. By contextualizing Qur'anic teachings within different learning themes, students are better able to relate religious knowledge to practical experiences and contemporary realities.

The Vertical-Sequential Integration Model

The vertical-sequential integration model is grounded in Tyler's (2013) principles of curriculum development, namely continuity, sequence, and integration. In this model, Qur'anic competencies are organized in a spiral progression across educational levels,

from elementary school to senior secondary education. According to Aulia et al., their research on the learning outcomes of Qur'anic education within the Merdeka Curriculum maps Qur'anic competencies in a gradual and structured manner. At the elementary level (SD/MI), the focus is placed on the ability to read the Qur'an with *tartil* and to memorize Juz 30. At the junior secondary level (MTs/SMP), learning emphasizes the strengthening of *tajwid* mastery and the memorization of Juz 29, accompanied by efforts to understand the meanings of the verses. Meanwhile, at the senior secondary level (MA/SMA), the curriculum highlights advanced competencies, including fluent Qur'anic recitation, the memorization of at least two selected *juz*, and the development of basic thematic interpretation skills (*tafsir tematik sederhana*). Such a structured progression ensures that Qur'anic competencies develop cumulatively in an orderly manner, avoiding redundancy while enabling each stage of learning to support and reinforce subsequent stages (Aulia et al., 2024).

The Qur'an-Based Project Integration Model

The Qur'an-based project integration model emphasizes the use of project-based learning to integrate Qur'anic competencies within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum. According to Mubin et al. (2025), the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum provides significant opportunities for the development of project-based PAI learning. Examples of such initiatives include Qur'anic literacy campaigns within local communities, projects on Qur'anic interpretations of scientific phenomena (*Tafsir Ayat Sains*) that connect Qur'anic verses with natural phenomena, and the creation of Qur'anic Values Albums, in which students document the application of Qur'anic values in their daily lives. These projects enable learners to engage with the Qur'an through experiential and contextual learning processes. As a result, they simultaneously foster multiple dimensions of Qur'anic competence, including *tilawah* (recitation), *fahm* (understanding), and the practical application of Qur'anic values.

The School Culture Integration Model

The school culture integration model emphasizes the incorporation of the Qur'an into the entire ecosystem of the school, transforming the school into a community that embodies Qur'anic values in everyday life. In this model, Qur'anic teachings are not confined to classroom instruction but become an integral part of the broader educational environment and institutional culture. Abdul Majid argues that a Qur'an-centered religious atmosphere plays a crucial role in the success of competency-based Islamic Religious Education curricula. Such an environment helps reinforce students' spiritual awareness and encourages the consistent practice of Qur'anic values within the school community. In practice, this model can be implemented through various programs and institutional initiatives. These include daily Qur'anic recitation (*tilawah*), the display of Qur'anic verses in school spaces, extracurricular *tahfidz* programs, participation in Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) competitions, the

development of digital Qur'anic libraries, and the establishment of peer learning communities among students. Through these initiatives, the Qur'an becomes not only a subject of study but also a living source of inspiration that shapes the school's spiritual climate, social interactions, and educational practices (Majid & Andayani, 2004).

3. Key Factors Affecting the Successful Integration of Qur'anic Competence

The successful integration of Qur'anic competence within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is influenced by several interrelated factors. These factors interact dynamically within the educational process and play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. A review of the relevant literature identifies four key determinant factors that significantly contribute to the success of integrating Qur'anic competencies in educational settings. These factors include:

Teacher Quality and Competence

The first factor influencing the successful integration of Qur'anic competence in the PAI curriculum is the quality and competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. Teachers play a central role in curriculum implementation, and their competence both in mastering Qur'anic knowledge and in pedagogical practice significantly determines the quality of learning. According to Abuddin Nata, many PAI teachers still lack adequate competence in Qur'anic recitation (*tilawah*) and the application of *tajwid* rules. As a result, they may struggle to provide effective role models for students in learning and practicing Qur'anic recitation. Furthermore, teachers' ability to design innovative, varied, and contextually relevant Qur'anic learning activities also requires further development. This highlights the importance of structured and sustainable professional development programs aimed at strengthening both the Qur'anic competence and pedagogical capacity of PAI teachers (Nata, 2012).

Instructional Design and the Availability of Learning Materials

The second factor influencing the successful integration of Qur'anic competence in the PAI curriculum is the design and availability of appropriate instructional materials. Abdul Majid and Dian Andayani emphasize that high-quality, competency-based PAI learning materials should clearly integrate Qur'anic references into each learning topic, employ instructional approaches aligned with students' cognitive development, and connect Qur'anic teachings with relevant real-life issues. Such instructional materials do not merely present the Qur'an as an object of study. Instead, they position the Qur'an as a living source of guidance that speaks directly to students' experiences and everyday realities. Through this approach, Qur'anic learning becomes more meaningful, contextual, and transformative. Alongside these pedagogical

considerations, the advancement of digital technology has opened new opportunities for enriching Qur'anic learning experiences (Majid & Andayani, 2017). Maslani et al. (2024) highlight that the integration of digital technologies in Qur'anic education can significantly enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes. Examples include interactive *tahfidz* applications, audio-visual *tilawah* platforms, video-based Qur'anic exegesis lectures from respected scholars, and digital memorization management systems that help monitor and support students' progress in memorization. Zahrah et al. (2025) further argue that the use of technology in Islamic Religious Education does not only increase the effectiveness of learning but also broadens students' access to diverse, interactive, and high-quality Qur'anic learning resources. In this regard, technological innovation can serve as a key supporting factor in developing holistic Qur'anic competence, while maintaining the spiritual values and Qur'anic substance that form the core of Islamic education.

School Environment and Leadership Support

The third factor influencing the successful integration of Qur'anic competence in the PAI curriculum is the school environment and leadership support. Oemar Hamalik argues that the school principal, as the curriculum leader, plays a crucial role in determining the direction, priorities, and quality of curriculum implementation. In the context of Qur'anic integration, the principal's commitment and vision largely determine several key aspects of implementation. First, the extent to which time, financial resources, and human resources are allocated to Qur'anic programs within the school. Second, the degree to which school policies consistently support the development of a Qur'an-centered school culture. Third, the level of institutional support provided to PAI teachers in designing and implementing innovative Qur'anic learning practices (Hamalik, 2012). Najib & Afifi (2022) further found that the success of Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*) programs in secondary schools depends significantly on the quality of school leadership. Effective leadership is reflected in the ability to design structured programs, organize human resources, supervise program implementation, and conduct regular evaluations. Principals who successfully develop strong Qur'anic programs generally demonstrate three key characteristics. First, they possess deep personal knowledge and appreciation of the Qur'an. Second, they are able to build supportive coalitions among teachers and parents. Third, they are capable of aligning Qur'anic programs with the broader vision and mission of the school.

Collaboration between Schools, Families, and Communities

The fourth factor influencing the successful integration of Qur'anic competence in the PAI curriculum is the synergy between schools, families, and the broader community. Strengthening Qur'anic competence cannot rely solely on the limited instructional time available in formal schooling. Instead, it requires sustained collaboration among educational institutions, families, and the surrounding social environment to ensure

that Qur'anic learning continues beyond the classroom. Such collaboration can be realized through several initiatives, including Qur'an-based parenting programs, partnerships with Qur'anic learning institutions such as *TPQ* or *TPA* (community-based Qur'anic education centers), and the involvement of local Muslim communities in supporting students' Qur'anic learning activities. These collaborative efforts contribute to the development of a holistic Qur'anic learning ecosystem, where religious learning is reinforced across multiple social contexts. Through this integrated support system, students are more likely to sustain their engagement with the Qur'an and gradually internalize its teachings in their daily lives (Daradjat, 2011).

4. Strategic Approaches to Strengthening Qur'anic Competence

Based on the analysis of various scholarly sources, this study identifies several strategies that can be effectively implemented to strengthen Qur'anic competence through the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum. These strategies are derived from a synthesis of relevant literature and aim to support the development of comprehensive Qur'anic learning within educational institutions. The key strategies identified include the following:

Establishing Clear and Measurable Qur'anic Competency Standards

One important strategy for strengthening Qur'anic competence is the establishment of clear, measurable, and progressive competency standards that can be objectively evaluated at each level of education. Muhaimin emphasizes that without concrete competency standards, the evaluation of Qur'anic learning tends to become subjective and cannot serve as a reliable basis for making valid curricular decisions. Therefore, ideal competency standards should be able to measure students' abilities accurately, be assessed consistently by teachers, and remain realistically achievable at each educational stage (Muhaimin, 2012). (Hakim & Yulia, 2024) Aulia et al. (2024) further suggest that within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, Qur'anic competency standards should be mapped through four indicators of Qur'anic literacy. These include: (1) the ability to read the Qur'an correctly in accordance with the rules of *tajwid*; (2) the ability to write Arabic (hijaiyah) letters and Qur'anic verses; (3) the ability to memorize selected verses or chapters of the Qur'an; and (4) the ability to understand or translate the meanings of the verses. Such mapping enables teachers to design more structured learning activities and allows educational institutions to conduct periodic evaluations of their Qur'anic learning programs. Furthermore, Sari et al. (2024) emphasize that an authentic character-based PAI curriculum should integrate cognitive (understanding), psychomotor (recitation and memorization), and affective (application of values) learning outcomes within a unified and coherent framework. Through such integration, Qur'anic learning can contribute not only to students' intellectual development but also to the formation of their spiritual and moral character.

Developing Innovative Approaches to Qur'anic Learning

Another important strategy for strengthening Qur'anic competence is the development of innovative approaches to Qur'anic learning. Various Qur'anic teaching methods have been developed and proven effective in enhancing students' learning outcomes, including the Ummi method, the Iqra method, the Tilawati method, the Al-Barqy method, and the Yanbu'a method. The selection of an appropriate method should be adapted to the characteristics of learners, the institutional context, and the specific learning objectives to be achieved (Munawaroh et al., 2017). In addition, the integration of digital technologies—such as Qur'anic memorization applications, Qur'an-based e-learning platforms, and multimedia learning resources—can enrich students' learning experiences and increase their motivation in the digital era. These technological innovations provide interactive and flexible learning environments that support students' engagement with Qur'anic learning. Research conducted by Nurlatifah et al. (2024) found that the Iqra method, when implemented through card-based learning and participatory demonstrations, significantly improves the quality of Qur'anic instruction, particularly for beginners or elementary-level learners. The use of visually appealing and colorful learning media has also been shown to stimulate students' learning motivation and enhance their active participation in the learning process.

Continuous Professional Development for PAI Teachers

Another important strategy for strengthening Qur'anic competence is the continuous professional development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. Muhaemin & Mubarak (2020) emphasize the importance of continuously enhancing teachers' competencies through training programs, workshops, and professional learning communities. Teacher professional development should be carried out progressively through three interrelated levels that must be implemented simultaneously. The first level concerns the development of teachers' substantive Qur'anic competence. This includes regular *tahsin tilawah* programs aimed at improving teachers' ability to recite the Qur'an fluently and correctly with *tartil*, *tahfidz* programs encouraging teachers to memorize at least five *juz* of the Qur'an, and training in contemporary Qur'anic interpretation to strengthen teachers' understanding of Qur'anic meanings and contexts. The second level focuses on the development of pedagogical competence. This includes training in the implementation of Qur'anic teaching methods such as the Ummi, Tilawati, Iqra, and Al-Barqy methods, workshops on designing integrative and technology-based learning activities, and training in authentic assessment of Qur'anic competencies.

The third level involves the development of a professional learning ecosystem, particularly through the establishment of communities of practice among PAI teachers. Within these communities, teachers regularly share experiences, innovations, and best practices in Qur'anic teaching. Such collaborative platforms

contribute to the continuous improvement of instructional quality and support the sustainable development of Qur'anic learning in schools.

Developing Authentic and Holistic Assessment of Qur'anic Competence

Another important strategy for strengthening Qur'anic competence is the development of authentic and holistic assessment systems. This approach represents a shift from purely mechanical forms of evaluation toward assessment methods that capture students' real learning experiences and competencies. Mulyasa (2019) emphasizes that authentic assessment should measure students' competencies through contextual and meaningful performance tasks, rather than relying solely on written or oral tests that are detached from real-life applications. In practice, authentic assessment in Qur'anic learning can take various forms. These include tiered memorization portfolios, *tilawah* assessments based on *tajwid* accuracy, thematic Qur'anic interpretation assignments, and reflective journals on the application of Qur'anic values. Such assessment strategies allow teachers to evaluate students' learning processes more comprehensively and meaningfully. Recent studies on deep learning-based *tahfidz* methods also emphasize the importance of actively engaging students in reflective, analytical, and applicative thinking processes. Through this approach, assessment is able to evaluate not only the quantity of memorization, but also the quality of understanding and the depth of internalization of Qur'anic values (Yasyakur et al., 2025).

Strengthening the Qur'anic Learning Ecosystem in Schools

Another important strategy for strengthening Qur'anic competence is the development of a holistic Qur'anic learning ecosystem within schools, encompassing multiple dimensions of students' educational and social experiences. Previous studies indicate that the integration between formal schooling and pesantren-based learning environments, with the Qur'an positioned as the core and spirit of the educational process, can produce significantly higher levels of Qur'anic competence compared to learning that is limited to formal classroom instruction. This ecosystem operates through four mutually reinforcing dimensions. The first is the temporal dimension, which refers to the establishment of daily and periodic routines centered on the Qur'an. These activities may include daily *tilawah* before classroom instruction, *murāja'ah* (memorization review) sessions during break times, weekly *tadabbur* sessions, and monthly Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) studies. The second is the physical dimension, which involves creating a school environment that reflects Qur'anic values. This may include the display of Qur'anic verses throughout the school environment, Qur'an corners, digital Qur'anic libraries, and facilities such as *tilawah* recording studios that support students' engagement with Qur'anic recitation. The third is the social dimension, which focuses on the development of Qur'an-centered communities within the school. Examples include student *tahfidz* groups, memorization mentoring programs, *tajwid* learning communities, and outreach

initiatives that encourage students to engage in Qur'anic-based community service and da'wah activities. The fourth is the digital dimension, which incorporates technology into Qur'anic learning. This may involve integrated Qur'anic learning platforms, digital memorization management systems, online discussion groups, and student-managed Qur'anic content channels that promote active engagement with the Qur'an in digital spaces (Nufus et al., 2025). In addition to these dimensions, family-school synergy programs constitute a crucial component of the Qur'anic learning ecosystem. Strengthening Qur'anic competence through the Merdeka PAI Curriculum should be accompanied by structured family engagement strategies. These may include Qur'an-based parenting programs, parental involvement in supporting students' memorization practices at home, and regular communication between teachers and families. Such collaboration ensures that the development of Qur'anic competence does not remain confined to the school environment but continues to grow within the family setting and broader social life of students (Sufia & Harahap, 2025).

D. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that Qur'anic competence within Islamic education is a multidimensional construct that encompasses four interconnected domains: accurate recitation (*tilawah*), structured memorization (*tahfidz*), reflective understanding (*tadabbur*), and the application of Qur'anic values in daily life. These domains should not be treated as separate components but integrated holistically within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum to ensure meaningful and transformative learning outcomes. The study identifies four complementary models for integrating Qur'anic competence: thematic-integrative, vertical-sequential, project-based, and school culture-based approaches. Each model offers distinct strengths and, when combined strategically, can support the development of comprehensive Qur'anic learning experiences. The findings also highlight that successful integration depends on several key enabling factors, including teacher competence, the quality of instructional design and learning materials, leadership support, and collaboration between schools, families, and communities. These factors operate synergistically and require coordinated implementation to achieve optimal results. In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of adopting innovative pedagogical approaches, authentic and holistic assessment systems, and the development of a Qur'an-centered educational ecosystem that extends beyond classroom instruction. This study contributes by proposing a conceptual framework that bridges traditional Qur'anic pedagogy with contemporary educational theory, offering a more coherent and systematic approach to curriculum integration. Practically, the findings provide guidance for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing integrated Qur'anic learning environments that foster not only technical proficiency but also spiritual awareness and character development. Future research is recommended to empirically examine the implementation of this framework in

diverse educational settings and to evaluate its impact on students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes.

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