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ASSISTANCE IN QUR'AN LEARNING BASED ON QUR'ANIC VALUES TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS COMPETENCE

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Abstract :
This community service activity aimed to assist teachers in implementing Qur'an learning based on Qur'anic values to strengthen students' religious competence. The activity was conducted at [Partner Madrasah] with a participatory and collaborative approach through the stages of needs identification, planning, capacity building, practice, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reflection, and follow-up. Data were collected through observation, discussions and informal interviews, documentation, and focus group reflection with teachers, and were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively. The results show two main findings. First, teachers' capacity developed from a reading- and memorization-oriented design toward a lesson sequence that integrates recitation, understanding of the message, reflection, and practice commitment, with the teacher's role shifting from corrector to model and scaffolder. Second, students' religious competence developed in the dimensions of recitation confidence, comprehension of verses, appreciation, and practice of weekly value commitments. The discussion indicates that Qur'anic values function as a bridge between recitation and religious competence, and that sustained, reflective mentoring is the mechanism that makes this change possible. Program sustainability requires school policy support, continuous teacher competency improvement, and integration of the practice into the school's learning system.

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an occupies a central position in Islamic education. It is not only a sacred text to be recited correctly, but also a source of guidance that shapes the way a Muslim thinks, feels, and acts. The first revelation, iqra' (QS. Al-'Alaq 96:1–5), already connects reading with the name of the Lord who created, with knowledge, and with the dignity of the human being. A well-known prophetic tradition further states that the best among Muslims are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it (Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 5027). Consequently, Qur'an learning in schools and madrasahs is expected to produce more than fluent readers; it is expected to nurture students whose religious understanding, worship, and moral conduct are visibly shaped by the Qur'an (Halstead, 2004; Daradjat, 1996; Azra, 2012; Basofitrah, et al., 2026).

In the Indonesian education system, this expectation is reflected in several policy frameworks. The National Education System Law states that education aims to develop

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learners into persons who are faithful, pious, and noble in character (Law No. 20 of 2003). The Strengthening of Character Education policy places religiosity at the first rank of its main character values (Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017), and the curriculum of Islamic Education and Arabic in madrasahs affirms Qur'an–Hadith as a subject through which students are expected to understand, practice, and internalize religious teachings (Ministry of Religious Affairs Decree No. 183 of 2019). In other words, policy, theology, and pedagogy converge on one expectation: Qur'an learning should contribute to students' religious competence, which includes knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of practice.

Religious competence is not a single-dimension construct. Drawing on the classic dimensions of religiosity proposed by Glock and Stark (1965) and on the competence orientation of the madrasah curriculum, religious competence can be understood as the integration of (a) ritual and recitation skills, such as the ability to read the Qur'an with tajwid and tartil; (b) intellectual and ideological understanding, such as knowing the meaning and message of the verses studied; (c) experiential appreciation, such as feeling closeness to the Qur'an and a sense of accountability before God; and (d) consequential practice, such as translating the values of the Qur'an into everyday behavior at school, at home, and in the community. The Qur'an itself invites this integrated engagement when it urges recitation in a measured manner (QS. Al-Muzzammil 73:4) and, at the same time, calls on believers to reflect upon its verses (QS. Muhammad 47:24; QS. Sad 38:29).

Despite this integrated ideal, many Qur'an learning practices in schools remain dominated by the technical aspect of reading. Students are drilled to pronounce letters correctly, to repeat verses until they are memorized, and to complete a certain number of pages or chapters. These activities are valuable and should not be undervalued; however, when learning stops at pronunciation and memorization, the meaning and the values of the verses are rarely discussed, and students may regard the Qur'an as something to be read for assessment rather than as guidance for life. Shihab (1992) has long reminded Muslim educators that the Qur'an needs to be "brought down to earth", that is, related to the real problems and experiences of its readers, so that it does not remain a text that is respected but not lived. Rahman (1982) and Saeed (2006) similarly emphasize that a contemporary engagement with the Qur'an must move from the text to its ethical purposes and then to the concrete situation of the learner.

Character and moral education research offers a useful lens for this concern. Lickona (1991) argues that moral education needs to develop three interrelated components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Learning that focuses on cognitive knowing alone seldom results in stable behavior, whereas learning that connects knowledge, emotion, and habit is more likely to be internalized. A comprehensive review of character education also concludes that effective programs are intentional, involve modeling by adults, provide opportunities for students to practice values, and are integrated into the school's culture (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Nucci, 2001; Basofitrah, et al., 2026). From the standpoint of Islamic education, this framework is consistent with the classical idea that knowledge should lead to amal (practice) and akhlaq (character), as emphasized in the tradition of Al-Ghazali and in the contemporary formulation of Al-Attas (1979) on ta'dib as the instilling of adab in the

learner.

Teachers are the key agents who determine whether Qur'an learning remains technical or becomes value-oriented. Social learning theory explains that students learn not only from explicit instruction but also from observing and imitating the behavior of significant models (Bandura, 1977), which resonates with the Qur'anic concept of uswah hasanah (QS. Al-Ahzab 33:21). In addition, the sociocultural view of learning highlights that students develop more effectively when they are guided through their zone of proximal development by a more capable other, through scaffolding that gradually shifts responsibility to the learner (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976). Qur'an teachers therefore need pedagogical competence that goes beyond reading proficiency: they need to be able to formulate value-oriented objectives, pose reflective questions, give constructive feedback, and model the values they teach.

Unfortunately, professional development opportunities that help Qur'an teachers develop such competence are often limited to one-off workshops. Research on teacher professional development consistently shows that short, isolated training sessions have weak influence on classroom practice, whereas sustained, content-focused, collaborative programs with opportunities for practice, coaching, and reflection are far more likely to change what teachers actually do (Guskey, 2002; Desimone, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Basofitrah, A. 2025). This finding suggests that improving the quality of Qur'an learning requires pendampingan (mentoring or accompaniment) in which teachers are supported throughout the cycle of planning, implementing, and reflecting on their lessons.

This community service activity was carried out at MTs [Partner Name], a madrasah that is committed to strengthening the Qur'an culture among its students. The school routinely organizes Qur'an reading before lessons, weekly tahsin sessions, and tahfidz targets for selected chapters. Based on initial observations, discussions with the principal, and informal interviews with Qur'an teachers, the team identified several problems that the school wished to address.

The first problem was that Qur'an learning was still oriented mainly to reading accuracy and memorization targets. Meaning and values were mentioned occasionally, but were not planned systematically as part of the learning objectives. The second problem was the limited pedagogical repertoire of the teachers in connecting verses with students' real experiences. Teachers were devoted and had good recitation competence, but they admitted that they were uncertain about how to move from recitation to discussion of values without turning the lesson into a lecture. The third problem concerned students' religious competence. Some students were quite fluent in reading but did not understand the meaning of what they recited, and some students' daily behavior, such as punctuality, honesty in tasks, and politeness toward peers, did not yet reflect the values of the verses they studied. The fourth problem was the weak connection between Qur'an learning at school and the habits of students at home, so that the learning had limited continuity. The fifth problem was the absence of continuous mentoring; the school had previously received training, but the training was not followed by classroom accompaniment.

Based on these problems, the activity was designed not as a transfer of ready-made products, but as a process of joint learning between the service team and the

school. The activity aimed (1) to assist teachers in designing Qur'an learning based on Qur'anic values; (2) to strengthen teachers' pedagogical competence in implementing value-based Qur'an learning; (3) to improve students' religious competence, including recitation, understanding, appreciation, and practice; and (4) to formulate a sustainable mechanism so that the practice continues after the mentoring ends.

The contribution of this article lies in presenting an empirical community service experience that integrates three components simultaneously: a practical framework of Qur'anic values that is accessible to madrasah teachers, a mentoring cycle that combines workshops, micro-teaching, classroom implementation, and reflection, and an analysis of how these components relate to the development of students' religious competence. The article therefore reports not only what was done, but also how changes in teaching practice occurred and how they are connected to changes in students' learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This community service employed a participatory and collaborative approach with a mentoring (pendampingan) model. The approach was chosen because the problems were embedded in the daily practice of teaching and could not be solved by delivering a one-way training. The service team did not position teachers as passive recipients, but as professional partners who hold practical knowledge about their students and who co-construct the solutions. This stance is in line with the participatory tradition of community engagement and with the view that professional learning is most effective when it is situated in teachers' own classrooms (Wenger, 1998; Schön, 1983).

Place, Partners, and Participants

The activity was conducted at MTs [Partner Name] over a period of eight weeks. The institutional partners were the principal and the vice principal for curriculum. The main participants were four teachers who teach Qur'an–Hadith, tahsin, and tahfidz, and the target of classroom implementation was two classes of Grade VIII students totaling 64 students aged 13 to 14 years. The principal provided institutional coordination and time allocation, teachers were the main participants of the capacity building and the implementers of the learning, and students participated in the learning activities that were designed collaboratively.

Stages of Activity

The activity followed a cycle of needs identification, planning, capacity building, practice, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reflection, and follow-up. The stages, the activities carried out, and the expected outputs are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Stages of the mentoring activity

Stage	Main activities	Output
Needs identification	Classroom observation, discussion with the principal, informal interviews with teachers, review of lesson plans and *mutaba'ah* records	Map of needs and priority problems
Planning	Joint planning meeting; agreement on objectives, schedule, roles, and indicators of change	Mentoring plan and observation instrument

Stage	Main activities	Output
Capacity building	Two workshops on the Qur'anic values framework, value-oriented objectives, reflective questioning, and feedback	Shared understanding of the framework
Practice	Micro-teaching and peer feedback; design of lesson sequences, reflection prompts, and student journals	Draft lesson sequences and media
Implementation	Classroom implementation of value-based Qur'an learning in two classes over five weeks, with the team as co-observer	Implemented lessons and field notes
Monitoring and evaluation	Weekly observation, short coaching conversations after lessons, document review	Feedback notes and revisions
Reflection and follow-up	Focus group reflection with teachers; discussion with the principal on sustainability	Follow-up plan and school commitment

Mentoring was understood as a bridge between conceptual knowledge acquired in the workshop and the real conditions of the classroom. Therefore, after each implementation session, the team and the teacher held a short coaching conversation that began with the teacher's own reflection, continued with evidence from observation, and ended with a small commitment for the next session. This structure was intended to maintain teacher ownership while providing specific and actionable feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

The Qur'anic Values Framework Used

To make the integration of values operational, the team and teachers agreed on five core Qur'anic values that are relevant to madrasah students and that are explicitly grounded in verses commonly studied at the junior secondary level. The values are: religious consciousness (taqwa and gratitude), honesty (sidq and amanah), discipline and steadfastness (istiqamah), respect and good manners (adab), and compassion and cooperation (rahmah and ta'awun). Each value was linked to one or more verses, and each was translated into observable indicators of student behavior, as shown in Table 2. These indicators were later used as the basis of observation and reflection.

Table 2. Core Qur'anic values, example sources, and indicators of student behavior

Value	Example source	Example of observable indicators
Religious consciousness	QS. Al - 'Alaq 96:1–5; QS. Ibrahim 14:7	Begins recitation with intention and prayer; expresses gratitude; recites with calm and concentration
Honesty and trustworthiness	QS. At-Taubah 9:119; QS. An-Nisa 4:58	Reports own mistakes in reading honestly; does not copy tasks; returns borrowed items
Discipline and steadfastness	QS. Fussilat 41:30; QS. Al-Muzzammil 73:4	Arrives on time; completes daily recitation target; practices repeatedly until improved
Respect and good manners	QS. Al-Hujurat 49:11; QS. Luqman 31:18–19	Listens to the teacher and peers; avoids mocking mistakes; speaks politely
Compassion and cooperation	QS. Al-Ma'idah 5:2; QS. Al-Hujurat 49:10	Helps peers who struggle with recitation; shares resources; participates in group tasks

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through four main techniques. First, participant observation was conducted in the learning process to examine lesson design, teacher–student interaction, and students' responses, using an observation guide based on the indicators in Table 2. Second, discussions and informal interviews with the principal, teachers, and selected students were used to explore needs, experiences, obstacles, and perceptions of change. Third, documentation included lesson plans, teaching media, students' reflective journals, mutaba'ah (recitation monitoring) cards, photographs, and attendance records of the workshops. Fourth, focus group reflection was held with teachers at the end of the program to evaluate the process and to formulate follow-up actions.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

The data were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively through the interactive procedure of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014; Moleong, 2016). Interpretation was done by comparing the initial conditions identified during the needs assessment with the conditions observed during and after implementation. To strengthen trustworthiness, the team applied triangulation of sources (teachers, students, principal) and of techniques (observation, interview, documentation), conducted member checking by sharing preliminary findings with teachers, and kept a field journal of decisions throughout the activity.

It must be emphasized that this activity did not use an experimental design and did not provide quantitative pre-test and post-test data. The analysis was therefore not intended to calculate statistical effect sizes. The word improvement in this article refers to changes that were observed in teachers' practice, in students' learning behavior, and in the documentation produced during the program. Consequently, the findings should be read as descriptive evidence from one institutional context and not as a generalizable measure of effectiveness.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the mentoring are presented in two focuses that correspond to the main objectives of the activity: (1) the development of teachers' capacity in designing and implementing Qur'an learning based on Qur'anic values, and (2) the changes in students' religious competence during the implementation. Both focuses are described based on observation, interviews, documentation, and reflection, and are presented descriptively.

The Development of Teachers' Capacity in Value-Based Qur'an Learning

Initial condition and shift in planning orientation

At the beginning of the activity, the lesson plans collected from the four teachers showed a similar pattern. The learning objectives were formulated in terms of chapters or pages to be read or memorized, such as "students are able to read Surah Al-Hujurat verses 1–10 correctly" or "students memorize Surah Al-Mulk verses 1–5". Objectives related to meaning, values, or practice were almost absent. Observation of the initial lessons confirmed this orientation: the lesson typically began with a collective prayer, followed by teacher modeling of recitation, repetition by students, individual reading in

turn, and correction of tajwid errors. The teacher's talk was dominated by instructions and corrections, and students' talk consisted mostly of recitation.

After the first workshop, teachers began to examine their own lesson plans using the values framework in Table 2. In the reflection session, one teacher said that she had always thought that meaning belonged to a different subject, while recitation lessons were "only for reading". Another teacher admitted that he often mentioned the meaning of a verse in a few sentences but did not know how to follow it up. This recognition became the starting point for redesigning the lesson structure. By the end of the planning stage, all four teachers had revised their lesson plans so that each meeting contained at least three kinds of objectives: a recitation objective (accuracy, fluency, tajwid), a comprehension objective (understanding the message of selected verses), and a value-practice objective (one concrete behavior to be practiced that week).

New lesson structure and pedagogical repertoire

The mentoring process produced a common lesson structure that teachers adapted to their own classes. The structure consisted of five phases, as presented in Table 3. It was not intended as a rigid script, but as a flexible sequence that keeps recitation at the center while creating space for meaning and values.

Table 3. Value-based Qur'an learning sequence developed with teachers

Phase	What the teacher does	What students do
1. Preparing the heart (*tahyi'ah*)	Connects the intention of reading with a value for the week; recalls the previous week's practice	State intention, recite a short prayer, share one experience of practicing last week's value
2. Recitation and *tahsin*	Models *tartil*, gives focused correction using peer pairs and *mutaba'ah* cards	Recite in pairs, self-assess, repeat difficult parts
3. Understanding the message (*tadabbur*)	Presents word meaning and a short context; asks two or three open questions	Discuss in small groups, link verse with daily situations
4. Practice commitment (*'azm*)	Helps students formulate one specific, measurable commitment	Write a personal commitment in the journal
5. Reflection and feedback	Gives appreciative and specific feedback; notes follow-up	Reflect on what was learned and how it felt

The pedagogical repertoire of the teachers also expanded. Before the mentoring, teachers mostly used instruction and correction. During implementation, teachers were observed to use open questions ("What does this verse ask us to do when someone makes a mistake in reading?"), contextual stories, simple role plays, and group discussions. Teachers also began to use mutaba'ah cards not only to record the number of lines read, but also to record a value commitment and its realization during the week. Two teachers developed simple visual media, such as a "value tree" poster on which students attached leaves containing their commitments. In short, the development of media and activities was driven by the value-oriented objectives instead of being treated as an additional decoration.

Teacher role: from corrector to model and scaffolder

One of the most notable changes was the shift in how teachers positioned themselves. Observation notes from the second and third weeks show that teachers

spent less time correcting every error directly and more time guiding students to detect their own errors. For example, when a student mispronounced a letter, the teacher first asked the partner to listen and give a hint, and only then provided direct modeling. When discussing the verse on avoiding mockery (QS. Al-Hujurat 49:11), the teacher did not immediately conclude the lesson with a moral statement; instead, she asked students to recall an experience when they felt ridiculed and to propose how the verse would change their response. In this way, the teacher acted as a facilitator who structured the experience, while students constructed the meaning.

Teachers also became more aware of their role as models. In the reflection session, one teacher mentioned that students quickly noticed when the teacher arrived late or spoke harshly to a student who made a mistake, even if the teacher had just taught the verse on good manners. This awareness encouraged teachers to make small changes in their own conduct, such as greeting students at the door, apologizing when they were wrong, and speaking calmly during correction. The principal observed that the teachers' room also became a place for exchanging ideas about how to teach particular verses, which had not been common before.

Teachers' perceptions, obstacles, and support needed

Teachers expressed positive perceptions toward the mentoring, especially because it was conducted in their own classrooms and followed by feedback after each lesson. They said that the workshop alone would not have been enough to change their practice, and that the coaching conversation helped them to see aspects that they had not noticed. At the same time, teachers also identified obstacles. The main obstacle was time, because adding comprehension and reflection phases made the lesson longer, and teachers had to reduce the number of lines read per meeting at the beginning. Some teachers also felt uncertain when students asked questions about interpretation that they could not answer with confidence. To address this, the team and the school agreed to prepare a short reference list of trusted translations and brief commentaries and to allow teachers to consult the Islamic education coordinator.

Changes in Students' Religious Competence

Recitation competence: accuracy, fluency, and confidence

The value-based sequence did not reduce attention to recitation. On the contrary, observation and mutaba'ah records indicated that students' recitation practice became more intentional. The use of peer pairs and self-assessment on the mutaba'ah card encouraged students to identify their own difficulties, such as the length of mad, the articulation points of certain letters, and the rules of nun sukun and tanwin. Teachers reported that by the fourth week, most students in both classes were able to correct at least some of their own errors after listening to a peer's hint, and that students who had been hesitant to read aloud began to volunteer more often. This change was especially visible among several students who had previously been reluctant to read in front of the class because they feared being laughed at; after the value of respect and the commitment not to mock mistakes were discussed explicitly, these students were observed to read with more confidence.

Comprehension: from reciting to understanding the message

The second visible change was in students' comprehension of the verses studied. Before the implementation, informal questioning by the team showed that many students could recite the assigned verses but could not explain what the verses said. During implementation, students were able to restate the message of the verses in their

own words and to relate it to concrete examples. For instance, in discussing QS. Al-Hujurat 49:10–11, students identified situations of mocking on social media and in class group chats, and proposed alternative responses such as reminding gently or remaining silent. Students' reflective journals contained statements such as "this verse tells me not to laugh when my friend is wrong", which indicates that they were beginning to connect the text with their own social experience. Teachers observed that discussion in small groups helped students who were less confident to participate, and that students' questions became more varied.

Appreciation: sense of closeness and responsibility

The third change concerned students' affective engagement with the Qur'an. In the reflection sessions, several students said that they felt calmer when they began reading with intention and a short prayer, and that they understood the verses "as if the Qur'an were speaking to us". Some students shared that the explanation of meaning made them feel more serious about reading, because they realized that the verses contained commands and advice for them. Teachers noted that during the tahyi'ah phase, the classroom atmosphere became more focused and that students' behavior at the start of the lesson became more orderly. This finding should be read carefully because it is based on students' self-report and teachers' impressions; nevertheless, it is consistent across several sources.

Practice: weekly value commitments

The fourth change concerned students' practice of values. During the five weeks of implementation, each student formulated weekly commitments in the journal, such as "I will not copy my friend's homework", "I will come before the bell rings", or "I will help a friend who is still learning the rules of mad". Teachers followed up by checking the journal and asking one or two students to share their experiences. Document review showed that the commitments gradually became more specific and realistic. In the first week, many commitments were general, such as "being good to friends", whereas in the fourth and fifth weeks, commitments were more concrete and observable. Class teachers and the vice principal also reported a reduction in minor incidents such as lateness at the first lesson and a rise in peer assistance in the recitation sessions, although these observations were not recorded using a standardized instrument.

Table 4. Summary of observed changes in students' religious competence (descriptive)

Dimension	Initial condition	Condition during/after implementation
Recitation	Focus on correct pronunciation; low confidence among some students; correction mostly from teacher	Peer feedback and self-assessment used; more students volunteered to read; some self-corrected
Comprehension	Many students could recite but could not explain meaning	Students could restate the message and link it with daily situations
Appreciation	Reading perceived as a task to complete	Students reported calmness, seriousness, and a sense of being addressed by the verses
Practice of values	Values not planned or monitored	Weekly commitments in journals; more specific over time; more peer help and punctuality observed

Variation among students and remaining challenges

The changes were not uniform. Students who were already fluent in reading appeared to benefit most from the discussion of meaning, while students with weaker reading skills needed more time for basic accuracy and sometimes felt overwhelmed when asked to discuss and write at the same time. Teachers responded by providing differentiated tasks: a simpler commitment form, a shorter verse for discussion, or a fluent peer as a buddy. A few students still wrote commitments that were formulaic and copied from classmates, which shows that value learning requires continuous attention to authenticity. Furthermore, the influence of home and community environments was not examined in this activity, even though it is likely to affect whether commitments become habits. Teachers therefore proposed a short parent communication sheet as part of the follow-up plan.

Program sustainability

Joint reflection with the school resulted in a commitment to continue the value-based sequence in the following semester. The principal agreed to allocate fifteen additional minutes in the weekly schedule for Qur'an learning, to include the value-based indicators in the Qur'an teachers' supervision instrument, and to hold a monthly teacher learning forum. The team and teachers also compiled a "teaching kit" containing lesson sequence templates, examples of reflection questions, mutaba'ah card formats, and a list of verses mapped to the five values. Teachers noted that the kit should be updated every semester and that new teachers should be mentored by those who have participated in the program.

Discussion

The discussion is organized around two focuses that emerge from the results: first, the Qur'anic values as a bridge between recitation and religious competence; and second, the mentoring and scaffolding of teachers as the mechanism of change and the basis of sustainability.The results show that when Qur'an learning is designed with explicit value objectives, recitation, comprehension, appreciation, and practice can develop together rather than in competition. This finding supports the view that religious competence is multidimensional (Glock & Stark, 1965) and challenges the assumption that attention to meaning and values will reduce attention to recitation. In this activity, the time that was added for understanding and reflection was initially taken from the quantity of lines read, but the quality of recitation improved because students read with greater intention, monitored their own errors, and supported each other. This is in line with the Qur'anic instruction to recite in a measured way (tartil), which implies attentiveness and reflection and not only speed or quantity (QS. Al-Muzzammil 73:4).

The finding is also consistent with the moral education framework of Lickona (1991), in which moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action need to be developed together. In the activity, the comprehension phase (tadabbur) corresponds to moral knowing, the preparing-the-heart phase and the reflection phase correspond to moral feeling, and the practice commitment ('azm) corresponds to moral action. When teachers brought these three components into one sequence, students' commitments became more specific and observable, which suggests that the Qur'anic values began to move from abstract concepts toward habits. Berkowitz and Bier (2004) similarly found that effective character education programs combine explicit teaching, opportunities for practice, and a caring climate, and these elements were present in the sequence developed here.

Contextualization: bringing the text "down to earth"

A key mechanism that appeared in the findings was contextualization. Students became more engaged when verses were related to their real experiences, such as mocking in group chats, copying homework, or being late. This echoes Shihab's (1992) argument that the Qur'an should be related to the lived reality of its readers and Rahman's (1982) emphasis on moving from the text to its moral purposes and then to the contemporary situation. In pedagogical terms, contextualization is a form of meaningful learning in which new information is anchored to students' prior experiences. In practice, however, contextualization has to be done carefully. Teachers in this activity were reminded to avoid imposing a single interpretation that is not grounded in reliable sources, and to refer to trusted translations and commentaries when discussing meaning. The principle is that the verse remains the source and the daily situation is the field of application; students are guided to reflect and act, but the teacher does not replace the text with personal opinion.

Internalization and the question of authenticity

Self-determination theory distinguishes between behavior that is controlled by external pressure and behavior that is internalized and self-endorsed (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In religious education, the risk is that students perform the expected behavior only to please the teacher or to obtain a grade. The finding that some commitments were formulaic shows that this risk is real. However, other findings suggest conditions that support internalization: students chose their own commitments, were given reasons connected with the verses, were treated with respect when making mistakes, and received appreciative feedback. These conditions align with the support for autonomy, competence, and relatedness that is emphasized in self-determination theory. They also resemble the Islamic educational concept of ta'dib (Al-Attas, 1979), which emphasizes the gradual instilling of adab through understanding, habituation, and example rather than through compulsion alone. Future programs may deepen this aspect by involving parents and by allowing students to evaluate their own commitments, so that value practice grows from conviction and not from supervision.

Implications for Qur'an learning in madrasahs

The practical implication is that Qur'an learning objectives should be formulated at three levels: what students should be able to recite, what they should understand, and what they should practice. This does not require an additional subject, but requires a re-design of the lesson sequence and of assessment. Assessment should also reflect this integration; for example, a mutaba'ah card that records reading progress and value commitments gives teachers a richer picture of students' religious competence than a score on reading alone. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted within the limitations of the activity: the study was small, short, and descriptive, and it did not measure long-term behavior change. The positive changes are best seen as promising indications that justify further and more rigorous evaluation.

Mentoring and Teacher Scaffolding as the Mechanism of Change and Sustainability

Why mentoring worked: situated, sustained, and reflective

The change in teachers' practice in this activity did not occur immediately after the workshop; it became visible after teachers tried the new sequence in their classes and received feedback. This pattern is consistent with the literature on teacher professional development, which shows that effective programs are content-focused, provide active learning, involve collaboration, offer models of effective practice, include coaching and expert support, give time for feedback and reflection, and are sustained over time (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009). It also supports Guskey's (2002) argument that teachers' beliefs often change after they see evidence of improved student learning, not before. In this activity, teachers' confidence in the value-based approach increased when they saw students becoming more engaged, which in turn motivated them to continue the practice.

The structure of the coaching conversation also contributed to the result. By beginning with the teacher's own reflection and then providing specific evidence from observation, the team respected teachers' professionalism and avoided a purely evaluative posture. This is consistent with research on feedback, which shows that feedback is most effective when it is specific, linked to goals, and focused on how to improve the task and the learning process (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). It also reflects Schön's (1983) idea of the reflective practitioner, who learns through reflection in and on action. The reflective cycle (plan, implement, observe, reflect) enabled teachers to adapt the sequence to their own classes rather than to apply it mechanically.

Scaffolding: the double function of the teacher and the mentor

The mentoring process involved scaffolding at two levels. At the level of the classroom, teachers scaffolded students by giving hints, posing questions, and providing models before gradually releasing responsibility, as seen in the way they handled recitation errors and discussions of verses. At the level of professional learning, the team scaffolded teachers by providing frameworks, examples, and feedback, and gradually reduced direct intervention as teachers became more confident. This parallel structure reflects the sociocultural principle that learning proceeds through guided participation in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976). It also shows that teachers are more likely to implement scaffolding with their students when they have experienced scaffolding themselves, a point that is relevant for the design of future community service programs.

The shift of teachers' role from corrector to model and facilitator is significant in the context of Qur'an learning, which traditionally emphasizes the authority of the teacher in transmitting correct recitation. The findings do not suggest that this authority is abandoned; accurate recitation still requires a competent teacher. Rather, authority is complemented by facilitation: the teacher remains the guarantor of accuracy but also invites students to participate in understanding and practice. The importance of teacher modeling observed in this activity corresponds to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and to the Qur'anic emphasis on exemplary conduct (uswah hasanah, QS. Al-

Ahzab 33:21). Because students notice whether teachers practice what they teach, value-based Qur'an learning is inseparable from the teacher's own conduct, which is why the mentoring paid attention to teachers' attitude and classroom climate and not only to technique.

Sustainability: institutionalizing practice

Sustainability is a central concern of community service, because changes that depend only on the presence of the service team are unlikely to last. Several features of this activity were designed to support continuity: teachers were involved in designing the sequence and media, resources were simple and could be produced by the teachers, the principal committed time and supervision, and a teaching kit was compiled. These features reflect the view that sustainable change requires alignment between teachers' practice, school policy, and available resources (Fullan, 2007). They also correspond to the idea of communities of practice, in which professional knowledge is developed and maintained through regular participation and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). The monthly teacher learning forum that was agreed with the school can function as such a community.

Nevertheless, several risks to sustainability must be acknowledged. First, the additional time in the schedule is limited and may be reduced when the school faces other priorities. Second, teacher turnover can weaken the shared repertoire if new teachers are not mentored. Third, the quality of interpretation depends on the availability of reliable references and on the teachers' confidence to consult them. Fourth, the program has not yet involved parents systematically, although Qur'anic habits are formed in the home as well as in the school. Responding to these risks, the follow-up plan includes the integration of value indicators in supervision, the pairing of new teachers with experienced ones, regular updating of the teaching kit, and a simple parent communication sheet. Future community service programs may also include a more systematic evaluation, for example by using brief pre- and post-implementation instruments for religious competence and by following up a cohort of students over a longer period.

Limitations

This activity has several limitations. It was conducted in a single madrasah with a small number of teachers and two classes over eight weeks; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized. The data are mostly qualitative and depend on observation and self-report, which may be influenced by social desirability, especially in a religious context. The team was both a facilitator and an observer, which may influence the interpretation. Furthermore, the activity did not measure long-term behavioral change or the influence of the family. These limitations indicate that the results should be treated as practice-based evidence that can inform the design of more rigorous studies, such as quasi-experimental evaluations or longitudinal case studies.

CONCLUSION

Mentoring in Qur'an learning based on Qur'anic values made a positive contribution to strengthening teachers' capacity and to developing students' religious

competence. Through a cycle of needs identification, workshops, micro-teaching, classroom implementation, coaching, and reflection, teachers shifted from an orientation on reading and memorization targets toward a sequence that integrates recitation, understanding, reflection, and practice commitment. Teachers also changed their role from correctors to models and scaffolders.

Regarding students, the activity indicated that attention to values did not weaken recitation but accompanied improvements in confidence and peer-supported accuracy, in the ability to explain the message of verses, in the sense of closeness and responsibility toward the Qur'an, and in the specificity of weekly value commitments. These changes were observed descriptively and varied among students.

The activity also demonstrated that sustainable improvement in Qur'an learning does not depend on expensive media or sophisticated technology, but on teachers who understand the purpose of the learning, who are supported through sustained and reflective mentoring, and on school policies that give time and supervision to the practice. Future programs are recommended to involve parents, to strengthen the evaluation with measurable instruments, and to extend the mentoring to other classes and teachers.

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ETHICS STATEMENT

This activity was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles for work involving human participants. Prior to the activity, the principal, teachers, and students' parents or guardians were informed about the objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of the information obtained. Written informed consent was obtained from the school and the participating teachers, and permission was obtained for the documentation of students' learning activities. The activity did not involve any medical intervention or sensitive personal data; therefore, formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was not required under the institutional guidelines applicable to this activity.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI USE

Generative AI tools were used to assist in drafting and language editing of this manuscript. The authors reviewed, verified, and edited all content and take full responsibility for the final manuscript.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated and analyzed during this activity are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The data are not publicly available because they contain information that could compromise the privacy of the participants.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the activity, authorship, or publication of this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors have made substantial contributions to the conceptualization of ideas, implementation of the activity, data analysis, and preparation and refinement of the final manuscript of this article.

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