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Implementation of Learning the Qur'an Using the Kempekan Method

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Kempekan method in learning the Qur'an at the Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School, Subang. It also seeks to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of this method in enhancing the students' ability to read the Qur'an. This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach involving in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The analysis technique includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the Kempekan method is well implemented through a structured system comprising *cocogan*, *sorogan*, *talaqqī*, and *tamrīn al-idārah*. The method is characterized by a strong emphasis on *taḥqīq*, *waṣl*, *waqf*, *tafhīm*, and *tarqīq*, which provide a solid foundation for Qur'anic recitation techniques. Supporting factors include a conducive learning environment, involvement of qualified teachers, and structured learning with close supervision by certified *mu'allimūn* and the direct engagement of the *kyai* or *ustādh*. Challenges include reliance on skilled teachers and the lack of an official guidebook for method application. This study underscores the need for a more structured learning module to optimize the effectiveness of the Kempekan method in Qur'anic education at Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School.

Keywords: Kempekan method; Qur'an learning; Islamic boarding school; tajwīd; pedagogical effectiveness

Introduction

The Islamic scholarly tradition highly values the encouragement to study the Qur'an, an endeavor that necessitates the support of appropriate learning methods—whether through self-directed study or guided instruction (*ta'lim al-muta'allim*). An effective learning method is crucial to achieving the desired educational objectives both efficiently and accurately (Izzan & Saepudin, 2018). Effectiveness in this context refers to achieving targeted outcomes such as *taḥsīn*, *tajwīd*, *tahfīz*, *kitābah*, and *tarjamah* of the Qur'an, while efficiency relates to achieving these goals within a relatively short but focused timeframe (Hasibuan, 2023).

One method that has gained traction in Qur'anic learning is the Kempekan method, pioneered by KH. Umar Sholeh from Kempek, Cirebon, and implemented in

various Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and educational institutions (Mumtaz, 2022). The Kempekan method is an approach that emphasizes fluency, precision in *makhārij al-ḥurūf* (the articulation points of letters), and clarity in pronunciation. Qur'anic learning is a fundamental pillar of Islamic education, serving as a foundation for character development and the spiritual formation of students (Iqbal et al., 2024). However, many Islamic institutions still face challenges in this domain, such as lack of motivation, weak proficiency in *tartīl*, and instructional methods that are not well-adapted to the learners' needs.

Regional variations in Qur'anic recitation have resulted in diverse learning models (Rohma et al., 2024). The core principle of the Kempekan method lies in maintaining clarity and fluency in recitation without compromising the principles and rulings of *tajwīd*. This method incorporates a systematic, staged approach, beginning with the accurate articulation of *makhārij* to facilitate progression toward more complex reading and rule application.

As stated by KH. Musthofa Aqil Siradj (2019), the Kempekan method is a pedagogical strategy that focuses on fluency, precision in letter articulation, and clarity in pronunciation. It is distinguished by its rhythmic and tonal clarity in accordance with *tajwīd* rules and the prerequisites for valid recitation during prayer.

While several studies have examined Qur'anic learning methods such as Iqra (Nur & Aryani, 2022), Tilawati (Faojiah, 2020), Qira'ati (Mulyani & Maryono, 2019), and Yanbu'a (Fatah & Hidayatullah, 2021), limited academic work has been devoted to an in-depth empirical evaluation of the Kempekan method. Most prior research has offered descriptive overviews rather than rigorous assessments of its effectiveness on students' Qur'anic reading competencies.

Mumtaz (2022) identified two core systems within the Kempekan method: *khalqah* and *talaqqī shafahī*, with notable strengths in its distinctive recitation style and structured memorization of *ḥurūf hijā' iyyah* from early levels. Abdullah (2021) further elaborated on the method's application in Pondok Pesantren Kempek Cirebon, highlighting its use of *talaqqī/mushāfahah*, *matching*, and *taḥqīq* (meticulous articulation of *makhārij*). Syarifudin (2022) described the *Ngaji Kempekan* tradition, initiated by Kiyai Harun, as a unique pedagogical approach in the Cirebon area.

However, these studies have focused primarily on the implementation of the method without comprehensively examining the challenges or measuring its impact on student outcomes. Therefore, this research aims to address this gap by thoroughly exploring the implementation of the Kempekan method, its strengths and limitations, and its overall effectiveness in enhancing Qur'anic reading skills at various proficiency levels.

The urgency of this study lies in the need to develop more effective, context-sensitive Qur'anic teaching methodologies suited to contemporary learners. By providing a deeper understanding of the Kempekan method, this research contributes to improving the quality of Islamic education and offers a valuable reference for institutions seeking to implement evidence-based approaches in Qur'anic instruction.

Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to provide an in-depth and holistic description of the implementation of the Kempekan method in Qur'anic learning at the Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School, Subang. This approach was

selected for its ability to explain phenomena contextually through comprehensive data collection and rigorous analysis (Waruwu, 2024). The research site, Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School in Subang, West Java, is led by KH. Saefullah Hidayat. This institution was chosen due to its consistent application of the Kempekan method, with the *kyai* himself possessing a *sanad* (a certified chain of Qur'anic transmission) and a familial link to the originator of the method.

Data sources in this study include both primary and secondary data. According to Anufia and Alhamid (2019), data sources are entities that provide relevant information. Primary data were obtained through Qur'an recitation sessions and *Juz Amma* activities, as well as direct interviews with key informants such as the *kyai*, Qur'anic coaches, *asātidhah*, and students. Secondary data included documentation of *cocogan* activities (a tradition of Qur'anic memorization and repetition), *deres al-Qur'an* sessions following obligatory prayers, *tajwīd* instruction, and institutional documents such as curriculum schedules and learning evaluation records.

Data collection was conducted using three techniques:

1. Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the implementation of the Kempekan method, the challenges faced, and the learning outcomes. Respondents included the *kyai*, Qur'anic coaches, *asātidhah*, and students (Fadilla & Wulandari, 2023).

2. Observation

Participant observation was undertaken during activities such as Qur'an recitation, *cocogan*, *deres al-Qur'an*, and *tajwīd* learning to gain firsthand insights into the application of the Kempekan method (Iqra, 2022).

3. Document Study

Document analysis was employed to examine relevant materials, including curricula, activity schedules, and learning outcome reports. This complemented the data obtained through interviews and observations (Nilamsari, 2014).

Data analysis was guided by the Miles and Huberman (1994) model of qualitative analysis, which involves three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Fadli, 2021). In the reduction stage, relevant information was extracted from interviews, field notes, and document analysis. This data was then organized and displayed in descriptive form to reflect the implementation process, challenges encountered, and outcomes observed. Finally, conclusions were drawn to provide a comprehensive account of the Kempekan method's application and impact at Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School.

Results

Implementation of the Kempekan Method in Qur'anic Learning at Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School

Based on an in-depth interview with the supervisor of Qur'anic recitation activities at Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School, the implementation of the Kempekan method features distinctive characteristics. He explained, "We implement the *Kempekan* tone that emphasizes *tahqīq*, *waṣl*, *waqf*, *tafhīm*, and *tarqīq*, alongside precise articulation of *makhārij al-hurūf* as a foundation of Qur'anic learning. The

instructional system here is structured around three main methods: *cocogan*, *sorogan*, and *musyāfahah/talaqqī*. Matching is carried out by *mu'allimūn* who possess diplomas and *sanad*, followed by direct supervision from the *kyai* or appointed *ustādh*. Additionally, the *talaqqī* method is applied, wherein the *mu'allim* recites the Qur'an, and students repeat it under strict supervision. Every stage of the program—from preparation and *muḥāfaẓah* to *tamrīn al-idārah*—is designed to ensure mastery of recitation and *tajwīd* rules.”

Field observations at the school confirmed a systematic and structured implementation of the Kempekan method. Students were highly focused during each stage of instruction—from repeating Surah al-Fātiḥah and the *Du ‘ā’ at-Tahiyyāt* in the preparatory phase, to memorizing *Juz ‘Amma* during *muḥāfaẓah*, and undergoing intensive *sorogan* under the direct guidance of the *kyai* or *ustādh*. The *talaqqī* method reinforced students' understanding through supervised repetition of recitation.

Document analysis further supported these findings. Curriculum materials from Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School affirm that the *Kempekan* tone—emphasizing *taḥqīq*, *waṣl*, *waqf*, *taṣhīm*, *tarqīq*, and articulation mastery—is the core of the program. The system is structured into three main components: *cocogan* (memorization with certified *mu'allim*), *sorogan* (direct learning with the *kyai*), and *musyāfahah* (as reinforcement). The stages include:

4. **Preparation** – mastery of Surah al-Fātiḥah and *Du ‘ā’ at-Tahiyyāt*
5. **Muḥāfaẓah** – memorization of *Juz ‘Amma*
6. **Tamrīn al-idārah** – development of *qirā’ah* following the *Imām Ḥafs ‘an Shu’bah* tradition

The findings show that the implementation of the Kempekan method at Darussalam Kunir integrates both traditional and modern systematic instructional approaches. This method emphasizes a particular *lagam* and technical accuracy through a multi-tiered instructional system. The *cocogan*, *sorogan*, and *talaqqī* formats allow for deep, focused learning under qualified supervision, promoting not only technical recitation accuracy but also spiritual growth and discipline.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of the Kempekan Method

Interview data revealed several supporting factors that enhance the application of the Kempekan method. These include a conducive learning environment, technical emphasis on *tajwīd* elements, structured instructional design, and the availability of certified instructors (*mu'allimūn*) and the *kyai*. However, the supervisor also highlighted several challenges: the heavy reliance on highly qualified teaching staff, the pressure of high expectations placed on students, limited adaptability of the method to individual learning needs, and the lack of an official handbook for method standardization and replication.

Field observations confirmed that despite a highly disciplined and consistent instructional approach, some students faced challenges in meeting the rigorous standards. Additionally, the absence of structured learning guides limited the method's broader application. Nevertheless, the spiritual atmosphere and the intense guidance provided helped students navigate these obstacles.

Document reviews supported these observations. While the school has successfully institutionalized the Kempekan method, the absence of a formal teaching

manual and high reliance on traditional knowledge transmission systems remain significant barriers to broader dissemination and individualized adaptation.

Effectiveness of the Kempekan Method in Improving Qur'anic Reading Skills

The supervisor reported that the Kempekan method has been highly effective in enhancing students' Qur'anic recitation abilities. The application of the specific *lagam*, paired with structured instruction through *cocogan*, *sorogan*, and *talaqqī*, provides a holistic system that reinforces both technical and spiritual aspects of recitation. Despite its challenges, the method creates a disciplined environment conducive to focused learning and mastery of *tajwīd* principles.

Field data echoed this sentiment: students demonstrated increased fluency, accuracy in *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, and strong comprehension of *tajwīd* rules. The *sorogan* and *talaqqī* methods, in particular, offered real-time corrective feedback, which played a significant role in refining students' recitation. Although obstacles such as the absence of formal instructional material and high teaching demands persist, the method's results indicate substantial improvement in both reading proficiency and spiritual development.

Moreover, the Kempekan method's success is not only evident in technical outcomes but also in character development. The structured learning environment supports students in cultivating discipline, patience, and a deeper connection with the Qur'an. This comprehensive approach reflects the method's holistic pedagogical vision.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the Kempekan method at the Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School is carried out through a structured and integrative instructional system that includes *talaqqī*, *cocogan*, *sorogan*, and *tamrīn al-idārah*. Each component reflects a different pedagogical function: *talaqqī* allows for direct oral transmission, *cocogan* emphasizes memorization and repetition, *sorogan* enables individualized learning under teacher supervision, and *tamrīn al-idārah* strengthens reading development through guided practice. These systems are designed to foster mastery of Qur'anic recitation with a focus on *makhārij al-ḥurūf*, *tafhīm*, *tarqīq*, *waṣl*, and *waqf*—all essential aspects of *tajwīd* rules.

Despite its strengths, the method is not without challenges. As noted by Mumtaz (2022), one of the primary obstacles is the high-pressure learning environment, especially for beginner students. This is compounded by the diverse educational backgrounds of learners, which necessitate personalized guidance—an element still limited within the current model. Additionally, the absence of a standardized instructional manual makes it difficult to ensure consistency across different teaching contexts.

Nevertheless, the Kempekan method has demonstrated considerable effectiveness in improving Qur'anic literacy. This aligns with Abdullah's (2021) study, which emphasized that the *khalaqah* and *talaqqī shafahī* systems used in the Kempekan approach significantly contribute to students' ability to read the Qur'an correctly. At Darussalam Kunir, the combination of structured phases—preparation, memorization of *Juz 'Amma*, and *tamrīn al-idārah*—has enabled students to master both the form and substance of Qur'anic recitation, including articulation, intonation, and adherence to *tajwīd* rules.

In comparison to previous research, this study offers a more comprehensive examination. For instance, while Mumtaz (2022) focused primarily on the descriptive aspects of the method's implementation, the current research investigates not only the instructional process but also evaluates the method's effectiveness and explores the underlying factors that either support or hinder its success.

Furthermore, empirical data collected in this study show a marked improvement in students' reading abilities. Students were reported to have successfully memorized *Juz 'Amma*, enhanced their clarity in *makhārij*, and exhibited improved application of *tajwīd* features such as *tafhīm* and *tarqīq*. These outcomes affirm that the Kempekan method serves as a reliable pedagogical framework for achieving both technical accuracy and spiritual resonance in Qur'anic learning.

The practical implication of this research is twofold: (1) it provides a replicable instructional model for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to improve their Qur'anic pedagogy, and (2) it identifies specific areas—particularly the need for standardized materials and adaptive teaching strategies—where enhancements could further optimize learning outcomes. The holistic nature of the Kempekan method, blending tradition with structured pedagogy, positions it as a valuable tool in the development of comprehensive Qur'anic education.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Kempekan method in Qur'anic learning at the Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School adopts a multi-system approach that includes *talaqqī*, *cocogan*, *sorogan*, and *tamrīn al-idārah*. Each system contributes to a comprehensive pedagogical structure that enhances students' ability to recite the Qur'an with technical precision and spiritual depth. The Kempekan method is distinguished by its emphasis on tone clarity, rhythm, and articulation stress—particularly in elements such as *taħqīq*, *waṣl*, *waqf*, *tafhīm*, and *tarqīq*—in alignment with *tajwīd* rules and the requirements for valid recitation in prayer. This ensures accurate pronunciation that preserves the meaning of the Qur'anic text.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Kempekan method significantly improves students' Qur'anic reading proficiency. The structured and disciplined learning environment fosters not only technical competence but also the internalization of Islamic values. Despite its positive outcomes, several challenges remain, including heavy reliance on highly qualified instructors, the absence of standardized instructional materials, and the need to adapt the method to diverse learner profiles.

A key limitation of this study is its focus on a single research site—Darussalam Kunir Islamic Boarding School—which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the study did not include the Kempek Islamic Boarding School in Cirebon, the origin of the method, which could have provided deeper contextual insights and validation of its pedagogical principles.

Future research should consider conducting comparative studies between the Kempekan method and other established Qur'anic teaching methods such as Iqra, Tilawati, or Qira'ati. Additionally, research employing quantitative methodologies that measure students' recitation proficiency before and after the application of the Kempekan method could provide more robust and generalizable data. Such studies would enrich the academic discourse on Qur'anic pedagogy and support the development of evidence-based teaching strategies within Islamic education.

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