

Implementation of Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an as a Medium for Da'wah at the Qur'an Recitation Development Institute (Lptq) in Medan Marelan District

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Abstract

Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) is one form of Islamic da'wah delivered through the art of Qur'anic recitation. However, in practice, MTQ is often viewed merely as a competition. This study aims to explore how MTQ, particularly in the tilawah category, is implemented as a medium of da'wah by the LPTQ (Institute for the Development of Qur'anic Recitation) in Medan Marelan District. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings show that LPTQ has made efforts to train participants not only in recitation techniques, but also in manners, intentions, and understanding of Qur'anic meanings. Regular training sessions are held and are open to the wider community. However, several challenges remain, such as limited funding and a lack of awareness among some participants regarding the da'wah values of tilawah. In conclusion, the tilawah branch of MTQ has been directed as a medium of da'wah, though it still requires stronger spiritual development.

Keywords : Dakwah, LPTQ, MTQ

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Introduction

Islam is a religion of dakwah, which means it always encourages its followers to actively spread the teachings of Islam[1]. In reality, Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an is a competition in the art of reading the Qur'an that is closely associated with values of beauty. This is relevant to the identity of Islam, which views art as a means of expressing the beauty of its potential values as a religion of da'wah. Therefore, da'wah or religious propagation in the form of art is an adaptive practice, as it is able to awaken human intuition, which is easily attracted to beauty[2].

In relation to da'wah as an important learning tool for society, Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) is a concrete example of the implementation of Islamic values through religious activities based on the Qur'an[3]. As times change, Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) is no longer limited to a competition in reading the Qur'an, but has expanded to include several categories such as recitation, memorization, tartil, calligraphy, interpretation, syarhil, fahmil, hadith, and scientific writing on the Qur'an[4]. Through these activities, the message of da'wah is conveyed both verbally and in writing.

Dakwah does not always have to be done through lectures, discussions, and tabligh akbar, but dakwah also needs to be adapted to the current developments of the times[5]. Dakwah can be conveyed through various approaches that are more varied and creative so that the messages of dakwah can be more easily accepted and leave an impression on the hearts of the listeners[6]. The words of Allah regarding the call to preach are found in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl, verse 125, as follows:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بَالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هَادٍ

And He is most knowing of those who are guided

Meaning: "Call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is guided." (QS. An-Nahl 16: Verse 125).

In the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an event, there are various types of competitions as explained in the previous paragraph, each with its own characteristics and uniqueness. For example, in the Syarhil Qur'an competition category, the delivery of the sermon includes Islamic elements such as religious songs, sholawat chants, pantuns, and poetry. Another example is in the Tilawah Qur'an or mujawwad competition category, where the message is conveyed by reciting the Qur'an using various *maqam* or melodies to create a beautiful and artistic sound. A listener or mustami' will certainly be moved and may even shed tears when someone recites the holy verses of the Qur'an[7]. It is at that moment that the message of da'wah is conveyed so that one will remember the greatness of Allah Subhanahu Wata'ala.

In Indonesia, Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an is a public and open event, so it is not only intended for certain groups but also allows the wider community to enjoy the activity. In its activities, MTQ not only features competitions but also various performances at the opening and closing ceremonies, such as parades, dances, ceremonies, and so on. This makes the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an a means of preaching by showing the diversity of ethnicities, races, religions, and cultures so that the MTQ audience is not only from Muslims, but non-Muslims are also allowed to participate in the success of the event[8].

In essence, Islam never prohibits its followers from holding competitions or similar events, as long as the objectives and practices of these activities do not conflict with Islamic law[9]. This includes the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ). However, with the passage of time, there have been worrying developments in the implementation of the MTQ. One of these

is a shift in focus from a medium for preaching to merely a competition that only emphasizes technical aspects and vocal aesthetics. Vocal quality and stage performance often become the main focus of MTQ judging, while the spiritual aspects and understanding of the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an still receive little attention.

Professor Ahmad Tholabi Kharlie of UIN Jakarta emphasized that the MTQ should not only be viewed as a competition, but also as a means of nurturing the community and spreading Islam. He stated that MTQ should be used as a forum for friendship and unity among Al-Qur'an memorizers throughout Indonesia, not just a competition in reciting, memorizing, writing, or interpreting the Al-Qur'an[10]. The Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ), which is designed as a competition, does indeed provide many benefits for participants, such as awards, facilities, and even a higher and more respected position in society[11]. However, in reality, this often creates competition among participants, so that the purpose of participating in MTQ is no longer to get closer to the Qur'an, but to gain existence and popularity. This shows that MTQ emphasizes results or achievements rather than a deep spiritual development process. Therefore, the role of educational institutions becomes crucial in nurturing the spiritual aspects of qari and qariah to foster a religious Qur'anic generation that is not easily swayed by worldly negative influences.

Based on previous research conducted by Ibnu Syahid, a student at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra, he said that in order to improve understanding and practice of the contents of the Qur'an, especially among the younger generation, the role of an institution is needed as a forum for developing the potential of participants so that they can foster a passion for reading and understanding the Qur'an and a love for it. LPTQ, which functions as an institution for preaching the Qur'an, conducts training, guidance, and cooperation with various parties such as Quran teachers, Quran education institutions, schools, and local governments with the aim of improving the quality of MTQ participants so that, insha Allah (), there will be qaris and qarias who popularize the Qur'an, one of which is by preaching through their abilities in the field of the Qur'an that they have deepened.

In order to provide a deeper understanding of the background of the above issue, the author is interested in examining the main issues related to **the Implementation of the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an as a Medium for Da'wah at the LPTQ in Medan Marelan District**. To make the discussion more focused, the author will concentrate on one branch of the MTQ, namely the *mujawwad* or Tilawah Al-Qur'an branch.

Literature Review

2.1 Basic Concepts of Da'wah

The word dakwah comes from Arabic, which means to call, invite, summon, entertain, pray, or ask[12]. In its meaning, dakwah can be understood as a device that contains various important components that are interconnected, such as the perpetrator of dakwah, the target of dakwah, the content of the message, and the methods and media used to achieve the objectives of dakwah itself. In Islam, da'wah is considered very important and strategic because it is believed to be capable of bringing about changes in a person's life that are not only temporary but also touch the core of their personality, thereby fostering strong awareness and conviction within them.

Dakwah can be defined as the dissemination of Islamic teachings to all people through the concept of "amar ma'ruf nahi munkar," which is the command to encourage good and prevent evil. In this process, dakwah plays a role in increasing religious understanding in order to change the way of thinking, inner attitude, and behavior of the people for the better[13]. In spreading Islam to the wider community, da'wah must be based on the values contained in the Qur'an and Hadith, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Da'wah can be said to be successful if it fulfills two main characteristics, namely, first, an increase in the listeners' knowledge of Islamic law after participating in da'wah. Second, the awakening of the listeners' spiritual awareness to actively practice their religion.

2.2 Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an

Musabaqah comes from the Arabic word "sabaqa-yasbiqumusabaqatan-sibaqan" which means to compete, to overtake each other, to race, and to run. Tilawatil comes from the Arabic word "tala-yatulu-tilawatan" which means to read[14]. Thus, MTQ is a type of competition in reading the Qur'an that includes Murattal and Mujawwad recitations, as well as recitations that take into account the art and etiquette of reading the Qur'an in accordance with established rules.

Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an in Indonesia originated from the establishment of Jam'iyyah Al-Qurra' Wa Al-Huffadz, an institution founded by Ahli Sunnah Wal Jama'ah Nahdhatul Ulama, which is also the largest institution in Indonesia. In the month of Ramadan in 1968, precisely in Makassar, South Sumatra province, the first Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an was held with only one category, namely the adult category, which then gave birth to the newest generation of qaris for the first time[15]. Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an continues to improve in line with the times until it has reached the point where it now has many branches and categories that are competed in.

2.3 Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an as a Medium of Da'wah

The Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an is a manifestation of the community's love for the Qur'an and Hadith and a reflection of the spirit in practicing the noble values contained therein in daily life[16]. Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an can also be used as a medium for Islamic da'wah, in accordance with Allah's words in the Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, verse 148, which reads: فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ meaning, "So race to the good." This means that Muslims are encouraged to enthusiastically perform good deeds, invite others to love the Qur'an, and inspire the younger generation to study and practice the Qur'an.

From a scientific point of view, da'wah has a primary meaning. First, specifically, da'wah emphasizes verbal or direct invitation through speech, such as lectures, sermons, or even through writing. Second, in a broader sense, da'wah is not only an invitation through speech but also refers to actions such as education, economics, social, and politics, among others.

2.4 The Institute for the Development of Qur'an Recitation

The Qur'an Recitation Development Institute (LPTQ) is an institution that serves as a training ground for qaris and qarias to improve their understanding of the Qur'an and plays a very important role in encouraging the community's enthusiasm and interest in spreading the teachings of the Qur'an. The Qur'an Recitation Development Institute (LPTQ) is actually a semi-official institution under the Directorate General of Islamic Guidance.[17] In carrying out

its duties, this institution, which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has several programs related to the art of reading, writing, and deepening the understanding of the Qur'an. One of these programs is organizing the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (Qur'an Recitation Competition), which begins at the village, sub-district, district, national, and provincial levels.[18]

The Qur'an Recitation Development Institute (LPTQ) grew and developed from the sub-district level to the national level. LPTQ was established in 1977 through Joint Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs No. 19 of 1977 and No. 151 of 1977 dated May 7, 1977. Based on the results of the 5th National LPTQ Conference with the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs in Bandar Lampung in 1988, a decision was made on the development of the Qur'an Recitation Development Institute at the national and regional levels throughout Indonesia under the name "Lembaga Pengembangan Tilawatil Qur'an" (LPTQ).⁵ LPTQ with the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs in Bandar Lampung in 1988, a decision was made regarding the development of the Qur'an Recitation Development Institute organization at the national and regional levels throughout Indonesia under the name "Qur'an Recitation Development Institute," abbreviated as LPTQ, with the aim of realizing the appreciation and practice of the Qur'an in Indonesian society based on Pancasila[19].

Research Methodology

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an as a medium of da'wah at the LPTQ in Medan Marelan Regency. In this study, data sources were obtained through two categories, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The sources of interviews involved in this study were, *first*, the administrator of LPTQ in Medan Marelan Regency, Ustadz Imam Ilham S.Pd., S.Sos.; *second*, Muhammad Zainurdin S.Pd and Humaira Azzahra Lubis as qori and qoriah; and *third*, Ustadz Hasanuddin Lubis S.Pd as a member of the community. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through literature studies by reviewing various relevant literature, including books, journals, and official documents closely related to this research.

Results

Tilawah Al-Qur'an is the art of reading the Qur'an with tajwid and using various melodies such as *bayati*, *hijaz*, *nahawand*, *rost*, *sika*, *shoba*, and *jiharka*. In the Qur'an and Hadith, there are recommendations to beautify and improve the recitation of the Qur'an. This was also expressed by Qori' Zainurdin, who said:

"When reading the Qur'an, if possible, do not read it flatly, but with rhythm. Even if it is not perfect, at least there is an effort. Because when the Qur'an is read beautifully, it will certainly bring rewards not only to the reader but also to the listeners who appreciate it. If it can bring about positive changes in life, then the rewards will be multiplied."

In implementing MTQ as a medium for preaching, there is an implementation process to achieve the planned objectives.

4.1 Planning the Implementation of MTQ as a Medium for Da'wah in the Tilawah Branch at LPTQ Medan Marelan District

Based on interviews with LPTQ officials in the Medan Marelan sub-district, the planning and preparation of MTQ, especially at the sub-district level, involves several processes that are carried out in stages and systematically, involving various related parties. As stated by Ustadz Imam Ilham, an LPTQ official in the Medan Marelan sub-district:

"The planning process is usually carried out several months before the MTQ is held. It starts with training for qori and qori'ah, preparing funds, forming a committee, selecting participants, determining the location, and so on."

Before the MTQ event, the LPTQ of Medan Marelan Subdistrict holds intensive training for prospective participants. The LPTQ of Medan Marelan Subdistrict holds regular tilawah training sessions at least once a week. During the training, participants are guided by trainers who are experienced and competent in their fields. The LPTQ of Medan Marelan District equips qori and qori'ah with knowledge about tajwid, fashohah (fluency in reading), the ethics of reading the Qur'an, mastery of songs, as well as vocal and voice techniques. During the training, prospective participants of the Quran Recitation Competition () are also instilled with Islamic values so that they do not only view the Quran Recitation Competition as a competition, but are also able to convey the message of da'wah contained in the Quran to the community. As stated by Ustadz Imam Ilham:

"Before starting with technique, we always instill ethics first. Because ethics reflect spiritual aspects. If ethics are good, then insha Allah, spirituality will also be good, and vice versa."

This training is not carried out monotonously only at the LPTQ office in Medan Marelan Regency, but sometimes it can also be done at mosques or Al-Qur'an houses. As stated by Qori' Humaira Azzahra:

"We have practiced reading the Qur'an at the Mazaya Marelan Foundation, and sometimes we also practice reading the Qur'an at the Ummar Bin Khattab Helvetia Mosque."

By not limiting the training to one location, this creates broader integration with the community. Thus, not only the community around the LPTQ office is involved, but the community outside it can also see and hear the qori and qori'ah reciting the holy verses of the Quran beautifully and melodiously. This aligns with the implementation of the Quran Recitation Competition (MTQ) as a means of da'wah, as such activities allow the community to learn to read the Quran, even at a basic level, thereby fostering a love for the Quran.

4.2 The process of implementing the MTQ branch of Quran recitation (mujawwad) by the LPTQ of Medan Marelan District.

After undergoing training and guidance, the LPTQ of Medan Marelan Subdistrict then prepared the qari and qariah for the MTQ at various levels, especially at the subdistrict level. The LPTQ of Medan Marelan Subdistrict conducted selection and screening of prospective participants. Based on the results of the interviews, the selection process was carried out at the LPTQ office in Medan Marelan District on February 9, 2025. Ustadz Imam Ilham, an administrator at the LPTQ in Medan Marelan District, said that:

"Participants who pass the village-level selection will be reselected at the sub-district level by the Medan Marelan Sub-district LPTQ. We will select the best ones and send them to the sub-district level MTQ competition on February 15, 2025. From the sub-district level, they will continue to the regency level, then to the provincial level, and so on with a similar process."

Based on the researcher's observations, the MTQ in Medan Marelan Subdistrict covers several age categories, namely children (7-14 years old), teenagers (14-24 years old), and adults

(24-40 years old). This shows that MTQ as a medium of da'wah can be carried out by all ages. Not only adults, but children are also capable of playing a role in spreading Islamic teachings through the art of reciting the Qur'an. In fact, the community tends to be more impressed when they see children who are talented in reciting the holy verses of the Qur'an fluently and melodiously (), encouraging them to provide better Islamic education for their children. As expressed by one member of the community, Ustadz Hasanuddin Lubis:

"With MTQ, my child has become more enthusiastic about learning the Qur'an. Every night after Maghrib, he usually recites the Qur'an. In addition, I chose education not in a public school but in a madrasah that emphasizes religious knowledge, so that the education is in line with his interests."

4.3 Challenges in Implementing MTQ as a Da'wah Medium at the LPTQ in Medan Marelan District.

Based on the author's field research, it is not easy to implement MTQ as a medium for da'wah at the LPTQ in Medan Marelan District. There are several obstacles, including:

- a. Funding; Lack of funding is one of the obstacles encountered in the field. Lack of funding from the central government hinders the implementation of planned programs. In an interview with Ustadz Imam Ilham, an administrator at LPTQ Medan Marelan, he said that:
 "Actually, there should be many training programs organized by LPTQ. However, due to a lack of funding from the city government, LPTQ, especially in Medan Marelan District, is only able to organize training in several fields such as tilawah, tahfidz, and tartil. This is because bringing in trainers requires funds. In addition, LPTQ covers many branches, including syarhil, calligraphy, tafsir, and many others."
- b. Mental factors: based on the author's observations, mental factors greatly influence the quality of qori' and qori'ah. Participants who view MTQ as merely a place to seek existence and popularity are actually influenced by mental factors that have not yet been formed in qori' and qori'ah. They only prioritize physical aspects such as technical training, maintaining diet and health, and seeking more experience and insight. Meanwhile, inner aspects such as understanding the meaning of verses, gratitude, sincere intentions, and humility are often forgotten. As a result, their inner mentality becomes weak because their outer mentality is too strong, causing them to focus on only one goal.
- c. Lack of interest in preaching; In applying MTQ as a medium for preaching, the roles of both the speaker (participant) and the listener (community) are necessary. From the author's observations in the field, the author sees that there is still a lack of enthusiasm to explore the messages contained in the Qur'an more deeply. Many participants and community members still consider MTQ to be merely a form of entertainment. This can be seen from their behavior after the MTQ event ends. They generally just come, receive prizes, and then go home. There is no spiritual development outside of activities such as forming special da'wah communities (), da'wah training, and so on. This is in line with the opinion of Ahmad Tholabi Kharlie, who states that MTQ should be interpreted as a means of community development and Islamic da'wah, not just a competition. In this regard, the MTQ in

Medan Marelan District has attempted to balance the technical aspects of the competition with the message of da'wah. However, field findings indicate that the spiritual development of participants needs to be strengthened to ensure the MTQ does not lose its essence as a means of spreading Islam.

Conclusion

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Tilawah MTQ by the LPTQ of Medan Marelan Subdistrict has shown real efforts in making it a medium for da'wah. This activity does not only focus on competition but is also directed at fostering the morals, manners, and Islamic values of the participants. Regular training has produced qaris and qarias who are not only proficient in reading the Qur'an but also have the awareness to convey messages of da'wah through the recitation of holy verses. The training is not only centered at the LPTQ office but also at mosques and Qur'anic schools, directly involving the surrounding community. This provides more space for the community to witness and feel the value of da'wah in MTQ, and even triggers enthusiasm among children and parents to love the Qur'an. However, there are still several obstacles in its implementation, such as limited funds, the weak spiritual mentality of some participants, and the lack of public awareness of the true meaning of da'wah in MTQ. Many still consider the MTQ to be merely a competition, without any lasting influence after the event is over. Therefore, there needs to be a strengthening of spiritual guidance and a deeper understanding of the contents of the Qur'an, so that the MTQ truly becomes a means of da'wah that is capable of shaping a Qur'anic generation, not only in terms of voice, but also in terms of heart and behavior.

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