Qur’an in Everyday Life:
The Meaning and Reception of The Qur’an in The Muslim Community of Congaban-Bangkalan

Fawaidur Ramdhani¹*, Ach. Subaidi A. F.², Moh. Fanani³
¹,²,³STIT Miftahul Ulum Bangkalan, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author:
Bungso.ketujuh@gmail.com

Abstract:
This article tries to record how the reception of the Muslim community in Congaban Islamic boarding schools towards the presence of the Qur’an. Congaban is one of the Islamic boarding schools that is thick with the nuances and flavor of the Qur’an. There, the Qur’an lives and blends into the daily lives of its people. This study includes living Qur’an research, using qualitative methods and ethnographic approaches. The results of this study show that the typology of the reception of the Congaban’s people towards the Qur’an can be mapped into three; 1) lovers who prove their love by continuously reading and memorizing the Qur’an; 2) lovers who express their love aesthetically, both through the art of reading the Qur’an (rhythm) and the art of writing the Qur’an (calligraphy); 3) lovers who express their love by revealing the privileges (fadhilah) and moral messages of the Qur’an. The three typologies in turn form or create certain practices and traditions, including the tradition of tahfidz al-Qur’an, recitation of al-Qur’an interpretation (Jalalain), calligraphy al-Qur’an and Khatmil Qur’an. The meanings and expectations of the people of Congaban Islamic boarding school in perceiving the presence of the Qur’an are quite diverse, which can be observed from cultural, theological, psychological, and philosophical perspectives. The meanings and expectations that arise from the many forms of reception of the Qur’an are as an obligation to protect and glorify the Qur’an, to worship, express love, a form of obedience, bring sustenance, draw blessings and others.
Keywords: Qur’an in Every Life, Qur’an Reception, Congaban’s Society, Living Qur’an.

INTRODUCTION

It reminds me of Farid Esack’s statement, an observer of contemporary Qur’anic studies who once said, “The Qur’an fulfills many of the functions in the lives of Muslims” (Esack, 2002). This statement is relevant because the Qur’an is indeed able to fulfill various functions in life. In addition to functioning as a guide, the Qur’an also has other functions that are no less important. Among these functions is that the Qur’an is a medicine (syifa) for various difficulties and sorrows and a savior from danger (Junaedi, 2015). In the public stage, for example, the Qur’an becomes the spirit of change, the defender of the marginalized, the opponent of despotic actions, and many more. Often the Qur’an becomes a dialogue partner in an effort to solve life’s problems (Zainuddin & Hikmah, 2019). Not infrequently, the Qur’an is played as a solution to economic problems to bring sustenance. Even a small number of Muslims use the Qur’an to bring supernatural (magical) powers (Mustaqim, 2007).

Regardless of the different perspectives and ways Muslims treat their holy book, what is clear is that they have one belief that interacting with the Qur’an must bring their own happiness (Mustaqim, 2017). Through this belief, they transform the text of the Qur’an and dialogue directly, which in itself seems as if the Qur’an lives in their midst. Some are realized by simply reading, analyzing, tadabbur and not infrequently practiced according to their respective understandings (Huda et al., 2020). The variety of receptions (welcoming and accepting) of the Qur’an above then gave birth to a unique phenomenon. A phenomenon that in contemporary Qur’anic discourse is termed “Qur’an in everyday life”; is how the Qur’an is responded to and understood beyond its textual meaning through continuous interaction so that it seems as if the Qur’an lives and integrates into everyday life. The Qur’an is not seen as a dead but as a “living book” whose presence is real (Farhan, 2017).

A view of the “Qur’an in everyday life” phenomenon can also be found in one of the Islamic boarding schools located not far from the southern coast of eastern Bangkalan. The local people call it a Congaban
Islamic boarding school (hereinafter referred to as Congaban). Congaban is one of the boarding schools that consistently produce generations of Qur’an lovers. In their daily lives, they “ground” and “live” the Qur’an in various routine activities. The values of the Qur’an permeate and become a value system for the people of Congaban so as to form a certain culture and tradition, including tahfidz Al-Qur’an, recitation of al-Qur’an interpretation, calligraphy al-Qur’an, recitation of certain chapters in the Qur’an, khatmil Qur’an and many more. Borrowing Zhang’s (2013) mapping, the presence of the Qur’an in the daily life of the Congaban people is at least seen from three forms of reception; exegesis reception, aesthetic reception and communicative-functional reception.

The phenomenon of the “Qur’an in everyday life” found in Congaban, actually cannot be separated from the roots of transmission as well as the scientific transformation of its ancestors. From Kiai Dahlan (the first leader), Kiai Khotib, Kiai Ilyas to Kiai Ayyub (the current leader) and the whole family, they are all people who deeply love the Qur’an. The love and spirit of “glorifying” the Qur’an has been passed down from generation to generation. Not only in the big family environment of the Congaban leadership, is this love and enthusiasm are also supplied to the younger generation (As’ad, 2022). However, the phenomenon of the Qur’an reception in Congaban is part of the expression of the Muslim community’s love for its holy book.

Discussions around the phenomenon of the “Qur’an in everyday life” are actually not new. A number of studies have been conducted, some of which focus on the tradition of tahfidz and khotmil Qur’an (Maghfiroh, 2017; Istiqomah & Noorhidayati, 2021), the recitation of certain chapters in the Qur’an (Salafudin 2021; Shobahah, 2017; Nurfuadah, 2017), the tradition of mujahadah (Segar & Wati 2022), and others (Fatah, 2020; Supe’i & Al Ayubi, 2021). Unfortunately, these studies have not fully touched on the meaning behind the phenomenon of the “Qur’an in everyday life” that emerges from each individual Muslim. After all, the reception of the Qur’an certainly does not come out of anywhere. When someone recognizes the Qur’an, they also carry certain expectations. Their expressions and activities depend on their assessment of the Qur’an itself. In this context, the reader dimension is an important part that must be considered (Ramdhani, 2021). The contribution of this study is not
only because it looks at how the Congaban people's reception forms interact with the Qur'an. More than that, this paper will try to go further to reveal the meaning, motivation and expectations of the Congaban's people when they welcome the presence of the Qur'an in their daily lives.

**METHOD**

This study tries to record the social responsibility of the Congaban's people for the existence of the Qur'an in their midst. In contemporary Qur'anic studies, this model of study is known as living Qur'an studies (Atabik, 2014). Living Qur'an studies focus more on field phenomena found in certain Muslim communities (Junaedi, 2015). The study the of living Qur'an has presented a new paradigm in contemporary Qur'anic studies, as the study of the Qur'an does not only dwell on the area of textual studies. In this living Qur'an area, the study of interpretation will appreciate more the responses and actions of the community towards the presence of the Qur'an, so that interpretation is no longer elitist, but emancipatory that invites community participation.

This study includes *field research*, using qualitative methods and a phenomenological approach. Qualitative methods are used to produce descriptive data in the form of speech or writing that can be observed from research subjects (Moleong, 2014). Analysis in this context uses phenomenological analysis initiated by Edmund Husserl, which studies how human phenomena are experienced in the structure of human consciousness in actions involving cognitive and perceptual aspects (Annisa, 2012). In this context, the phenomena that occur in Congaban are not only seen as symptoms that appear from the outside skin, but try to understand and explore the meaning behind the reception symptoms in totality.

To uncover the meaning behind the Congaban's people welcome of the Qur'an, the author borrows Hans Robert Jauss “horizon of expectation” theory. For Jauss, a text will have no meaning without a reaction. Therefore, a text is considered valuable when there is reciprocity from the people who read it. Through his theory, Jauss wants to read the different perceptions of a text based on the horizon of a reader's expectations (Nurgiyantoro, 2018). Jauss wants to see how the position and reaction of readers in understanding a text according to the
judgment in their minds (Rahima, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Receptions of The Qur’an and The Horizon of Expectations

The Qur’an has two functions at once; informative function and performative function. The informative function means that the Qur’an stores various information as instructions and provisions for mankind so that they pursue the right path (al-Shirat al-Mustaqim). In short, the Qur’an is material that is read, understood and practiced. While the performative function is how the community treats the Qur’an, or reveals the other side outside the Qur’anic text (Dewi, 2017; Salafudin, 2021). That way, the performance of the Qur’an is understood and applied differently from its textual content (Rakhman, 2019).

The word “reception” comes from the Latin, recipere, which means welcoming or receiving the reader. While reception in terminology is the response made by the reader to a text. In the context of the Qur’an, this theory can be understood as a study that tries to see the reader’s response to the presence of the Qur’an. The variety of responses and welcome can be in the form of; a) the way Muslims interpret the verses of the Qur’an; b) the way Muslims implement the values and teachings of the Qur’an; and c) the way Muslims read and chant the Qur’an. The daily life of Muslims while interacting with the Qur’an has created diverse perceptions and behaviors, both in terms of theological, philosophical, psychological and cultural.

As long as the Qur’an dialogues with the reality of life, there will always be various receptions to it, and in turn will present a discourse in the realm of thought and practical action (Junaedi, 2013). In this process, there has been a mutual influence between the universality of the Qur’an and the locality of Muslims (Rusmana, 2015). If we look back, the practice of receiving the Qur’an has actually occurred during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW such as the recitation of certain chapters in the Qur’an. The reception of the presence of the Qur’an then undergoes transmission and transformation which is more or less influenced by the conditions and situations of the new community from time to time (Rahman & Dozan, 2021).

In general, there are three typologies of the reception of the Qur’an
Firstly, exegesis reception. This first typology relates to the interpretation of the meaning of the text. Those who consider the Qur’ān as a text containing knowledge (religious or general), will be orientated to understand and explore the meanings contained in the Qur’ān. It is said to be an exegetical reception because the community positions the Qur’ān as an Arabic text and means as a language. The form of this reception is at least two kinds; 1) the form of interpretation of the Qur’ān orally, namely the Qur’ān is interpreted through the recitation of tafsir books such as the study of Tafsir Jalalain, Tafsir Ibn Katsir, and other tafsir; 2) the interpretation of the Qur’ān by writing (bi al-qalam), namely the Qur’ān is interpreted through many works of tafsir.

Second, aesthetic reception. The Qur’ān is not just an ordinary book. Some Muslims consider it to be a masterpiece of “art”. This privilege is certainly very valuable for anyone who is involved in the world of art. Therefore, they try to build interaction with the Qur’ān in aesthetic ways. This unique phenomenon can be found among Qur’ānic calligraphy activists, the tradition of musabaqah tilawatil Qur’an (MTQ), and variations in the rhythm of qira’at al-Qur’an. This reception also wants to show that the beauties found in the Qur’ān are truly integrated and inherent. That is, the Qur’ān is full of poetic and melodic elements that surpass other literary works. In addition, the Qur’ān is also received aesthetically, that is, the Qur’ān can be read, written, chanted and displayed aesthetically as well.

Third, communicative-functional reception. This last typology is more likely to observe how a reader communicates intensively with the Qur’ān so as to produce a memorable “pleasure” when the tongue chants it. When reading the Qur’ān, readers bring certain feelings that imprint, touch and are able to influence their actions. In its realization, it can be done individually or collectively, routinely, temporarily, incidentally, and not infrequently it will even give rise to social, customary, legal and political systems (Istiqomah & Noorhidayati, 2021). This third typology model is clearly seen from the reception of Muslims who consider the function of the Qur’ān as a healer of wounds, tombo ati, as well as a bearer of good news. The real practice of this phenomenon is ruqyah, Qur’ānic therapy for patients in hospitals, recitation of certain surahs at certain religious social events and ceremonies and so on.
Before interacting with the Qur’an, every reader must bring certain expectations that they desire. These expectations are closely related to their educational background, experience and life journey (Mahtubah, 2020). So talking about the reception of the Qur’an cannot be separated from the horizon of expectations embedded in the minds of each perpetrator. Orientation and motivation in receiving the Qur’an in addition to aiming for worship, guidance, and justification tools, the reception of the Qur’an also aims to encourage its readers to get an understanding of what they are looking for in the form of a certain theological system which is then expressed in daily behavior (Abshor, 2019).

B. Congaban Islamic Boarding School and The Lovers of The Qur’an

The geographical location of Congaban is on the south coast of eastern Bangkalan, located at Jl. KH. A. Dahlan No. 376, Patereman, Modung, Bangkalan. This Islamic boarding school is also known as Miftahul Ulum Al-Islamy Islamic boarding school. Congaban was founded by Kiai Dahlan in 1875. Initially, the total area of the Islamic boarding school was only about 0.5 hectares. There was no dormitory for the students to stay in. At that time, most students still came from the neighborhood. Kiai Dahlan led Congaban from 1875 to 1920. The highly respected Kiai passed away at the age of 85. The leadership of Congaban was continued by the second son of Kiai Ach. Dahlan, namely Kiai Ach. Khotib Dahlan. Kiai Khotib began building dormitories for the students. At first, there were only 8 dormitory rooms built and about 60 male students occupied the dormitory (LPIT, 2020).

Kiai Khotib led Congaban from 1920 until 1983. He passed away at the age of 83. Furthermore, the leadership of Congaban was continued by Kiai Moh. Ilyas Khotib, the last son of Kiai Khotib. In 1985, Kiai Ilyas built a dormitory for female students. During his leadership, Kiai Ilyas improved the education system and management in Congaban. Along with the increasing progress and demands of the times, Kiai Ilyas decided to provide formal educational institutions. Starting from elementary-level educational institutions to universities. Kiai Ilyas passed away in 2018. The leadership of Congaban was then continued by his second son, Kiai Ayyub Musthafa Ilyas until now. Congaban is an integrated boarding
school that integrates three aspects of education: spiritual quotient (religion), emotional quotient (morals), and intellectual quotient (intellect) as requirements for success. With these three aspects, it is hoped that the students will not only have qualified religious abilities, but also compete to answer the challenges of the times (LPIT, 2020).

The face of a boarding school is identical to the figure of the kiai who leads it. Therefore, the characteristics of the boarding school are usually influenced by the character and personality of the kiai. Congaban is one of the boarding schools that consistently produce generations of Qur’an lovers. There is even an assumption that is quite popular among the surrounding community that, “If you want to be proficient in reading the Qur’an and become ahlul Qur’an, then enter the Congaban Islamic boarding school.” This cannot be separated from the influence of its ancestors. From Kiai Dahlan (the first leader), Kiai Khotib, Kiai Ilyas to Kiai Ayyub (the current leader) and the whole family, they are all people who love the Qur’an very much. The typology of the Qur’an lovers in Congaban can be mapped into three groups. First, lovers who prove their love by continuously reading and memorizing the Qur’an. Second, lovers express their love aesthetically, both through the art of reading al-Qur’an (rhythm) and the art of writing al-Qur’an (calligraphy). Third, lovers express their love by revealing the specialties (fadhilah) and moral messages of the Qur’an.

The “familiarity” of the Congaban’s people with the Qur’an was recorded in various activities, including 1) The Qur’an is read and learned. In fact, it becomes mandatory reading after maghrib and subuh prayers. At moment of Friday night, certain chapters such as Yasin, al-Kahfi and al-Waqi’ah must be read simultaneously at the Mosque; 2) the Qur’an is memorized, either the whole 30 juz or parts, some chapters and certain verses; 3) the Qur’an is read by Qari’ with melodious tones and rhythms, especially at certain events; 4) the Qur’an is contested in the form of tilawah al-Qur’an, tahfidz al-Qur’an, and khat al-Qur’an; 5) parts of the Qur’an verses are quoted and printed as accessories, greeting cards, invitation cards tailored to the theme and context of the event; 6) parts of the Qur’an verses function as psychic therapy and amulets to ward off calamities (mystical and magical); 7) parts of the Qur’an verses are used as wirid, recited in a certain amount in the practice of riyadhah; 8) parts
of the Qur’an verses are used as arguments (hujjah) in khutbah and da’wah.

The daily life of the Congaban’s people is indeed thick with the nuances and flavors of the Qur’an. Their interaction with the Qur’an has been ingrained so as to form certain patterns of religious behavior. This pattern of behavior is based on their assumptions about the object at hand, namely the Qur’an. These assumptions are called thinking patterns. For the perpetrators, this way of interaction feels more useful and dynamic. There are many spaces to present the Qur’an in the midst of life. Because in fact, the Qur’an is not limited by a certain time and space.

C. Qur’an in Everyday Life: The Meanings and Expectations Behind the Qur’an’s Presence

The people of Congaban are very close to the Qur’an. The Qur’an seems to “live” and blend with their daily lives. From oral reception, and written reception, to incarnate in the form of social activities and practices (action reception). The following is a form of reception of the Congaban’s people towards the Qur’an, and the meaning and expectations behind the presence of the Qur’an in their daily lives.

1. *Tahfidz Al-Qur’an*; Obligation, Worship, Glory and Love

Although the tradition of memorizing the Qur’an has become a common phenomenon, there are different forms of motivation (Hasbiallah, 2019). Among these motivations is belief in the virtues (fadhilah) of the Qur’an and the hope of getting rewards for what has been done (Farhan, 2017). This is also the case with the Qur’an memorizers in Congaban. The reception of the Qur’an of the huffadz in Congaban is in line with the horizon of expectations that exist in their minds. All these various horizons of expectation in turn give birth to various receptions that can be viewed from cultural, theological, psychological, and philosophical perspectives.

*First,* the cultural perspective. The principle of memorizing the Quran in the culture of Islamic boarding schools is actually based on the obligation (fardhu kifayah) to maintain the continuity of Quran memorizers. If this task has been carried out by some people, then the obligation falls on others (Rahimana, 2016). This principle refers to the views of al-Suyuthi in his magnum opus *al-Itqan fi 'Ulam al-Qur’an,* an
expert on Qur’anic studies who became one of the favorites of the people of Islamic boarding schools. This can be seen, for example, in the narration of Muhammad Soleh:

“The reason I memorize the Quran is that I want to protect the verses of the Quran and I want to preach through the chants of the Quran. Insha-Allah, this is my way of life to bring (introduce and preach) the religion of Islam through the recitation of the Quran.” (Soleh, 2021).

Second, is the theological perspective. For Muslims in Indonesia, the Qur’an is believed to be the glorious kalamullah and must be honored. Just reading it is a noble act, let alone memorizing it (Atabik, 2014). This typology of reception is also seen in some of Congaban’s people, one of which was conveyed by Malik Fahad. He said:

“Reading the Quran is one of the great acts of worship. Every letter is rewarded with a reward. Whoever reads one letter of the Quran is rewarded with one good deed. More so if you can learn and memorize 30 juz. I am very grateful because almost all of my time is spent reading and memorizing the Qur’an. I can’t imagine how many rewards this has given me. In my opinion, people who always read the Qur’an, especially until they can memorize it, are glorified people and chosen people. Because not everyone can consistently read the Qur’an, and not everyone can memorize the Qur’an.” (Fahad, 2021).

Third, is the psychological perspective. Some Congaban people believe that the Qur’an is a medicine (syifa’). Especially the cure for all heart diseases such as envy, hasud, arrogance and others. They also want to get pleasure, giving birth to certain feelings that can touch the heart (Rahima, 2016). Hamim said:

“By memorizing Qur’an, I can more easily and more often contemplate (tadabbur) and think deeply (tafakkur). Contemplating the contents of the Qur’an as self-correction and thinking about the signs of Allah’s greatness. The Qur’an is also a cure for various diseases, diseases of the heart, physical and spiritual diseases.” (Hamim, 2021).

Fourth, is the philosophical perspective. The culmination of all the various receptions of the Congaban’s people actually returns to the desire to reap the blessings of the Qur’an. Blessings certainly do not come suddenly from anywhere, but after a long process; reading, memorizing,
contemplating and practicing its content *istiqamah* and sincere. The fruit that will be achieved is an increase in faith, tranquillity, peace, and happiness. That is what is called the blessing of the Qu’ran. In line with this, Nasik al-Haromain said:

“The blessing of reading, let alone memorizing the Qur’an, is that it can foster our *mahhabbah* to the Qur’an, is worthy of worship, continues the determination and struggle of the salaf scholars, makes it easier to learn religious knowledge, the mind can be calm, and get unexpected sustenance.” (Al-Haromain, 2021).

Thus, the Congaban’s people interpret the tradition of *tahfidz al-Qur’an* as an obligation to maintain the originality of the Qur’an; as an act of worship; a glory and as a form of their love for their holy book. While their expectations during interaction with the Qur’an are quite diverse, some function the Qur’an as a medicine (*syifa’*) to offer physical and spiritual diseases. They also hope that through interaction with the Qur’an, their sustenance can be more abundant.

### 2. Recitation of Tafsir Jalalain; Obedience, Adding Insight and Preserving Heritage

The interpretation of the Qur’an as a book and as a reading is a common response that we almost find in every layer of Muslims. “Read” here means chanted, read and pondered its contents, or perhaps read and discussed together the strands of its message and meaning. When the Qur’an is read and its meanings discussed, there are a number of people sitting together and one person among them, who has the deepest knowledge of religion and the Qur’an, takes the lead, guides and explains the meaning of the Qur’anic message.

One part of the “Qur’an in everyday life” phenomenon in Congaban is the recitation of tafsir Jalalain. This tradition is a form of exegesis reception; a reception that positions the Qur’an as an Arabic text and has meaning. Exegesis reception manifests in the interpretation of the Qur’an, both *bi al-lisan* (orally) and *bi al-qalam* (in writing). *Bi al-lisan* means that the Qur’an is interpreted through the recitation of tafsir books such as Tafsir Jalalain, Tafsir Ibn Katsir, and other tafsir books. While *bi al-qalam* means that the Qur’an is interpreted in the form of a work of interpretation (Zaman, 2019).

The recitation of Tafsir Jalalain in Congaban is held every day,
starting from 05:30 WIB to 06:30 WIB. Except on Mondays and Fridays, or when Kiai Ayyub as the teacher of the recitation has an excuse, such as being sick, or having a need or event, then the recitation of tafsir Jalalain is closed. The recitation begins with the recitation of *tawassul bi al-fatiha* led directly by Kiai Ayyub. As with tafsir recitations in pesantren in general, the recitation of tafsir Jalalain in Congaban applies the *bandongan* model; *pegon* writing is based on *i’rab* and *nahwu* (grammar). Unlike the *sorogan* and *masyawarah* models, the *bandongan model* is known to emphasize the kiai’s activeness and creation.

The recitation of Tafsir Jalalain in Congaban is conducted in two stages. *Firstly*, Kiai Ayyub recites the Qur’anic verses that are the topic of discussion in accordance with the order of the Usmani Mushaf. After that, he interprets word by word in the order of the verse with its *i’rab* and *tarkib*. That way, the students will easily understand the literal meaning of each verse text. *Second*, Kiai Ayyub provides explanations related to the interpretation of the verses being discussed. As for the connection with the presentation of the material, the caregiver usually provides additional information outside the text of Tafsir Jalalain. For example, conveying *al-qisas wa al-tarikh* (stories and history), or *al-istararah al-wijdaniyah* (stimuli that touch the feelings of students), and sometimes interspersed with *jokes* full of wisdom. After finishing, the recitation is closed with *fatihah* and the *i’raf* prayer (*Ya Rabbana I’tarafna*).

Borrowing Karl Mannheim’s sociological theory, the reception meanings of the Congaban people who are members of the recitation of Tafsir Jalalain can be grouped into three typologies. *First*, objective meaning. The objective meaning found when perceiving the Qur’an in the recitation of Tafsir Jalalain is a symbolic form of obedience and compliance with pesantren regulations. In the pesantren environment, the attitude of obedience, *ta’dzim* (respect), obedience and submission is indeed non-negotiable. Yasin al-Farisi said:

“As students, we must obey the rules. Do not break the rules. The recitation of Tafsir Jalalain is mandatory for all students. This is an official regulation in the Congaban Islamic boarding school. We should obey our obligations and maintain our responsibilities. If we want the knowledge, we get to be useful (*nafi’ian*), then obey the rules that apply in this boarding school.” (al-Farisi, 2021).
Second, the expressive meaning. The reception of the expressive meaning of the Congaban’s people is very diverse and depends on each individual. However, of the various expressive meanings, there are at least three major expressive meanings that appear; 1) wanting to add to the scientific treasury of the interpretation of the Qur’an, 2) as a form of endeavor to be the best human being, and 3) as an effort to avoid arrogance. Muhammad Kamil said:

“The Qur’an is a source of knowledge. We can take a lot of knowledge from the Qur’an. Therefore, we must continue to learn the contents and content of the Qur’an. Studying the Qur’an, means that we are trying to be the best human beings. So that we realize who we are, we are just creatures who are not free from mistakes and sins. It is not appropriate for us to boast before Allah SWT.” (Kamil, 2021).

Third, documentary meaning. It is the implicit or implied meaning of a particular action. Every action of the actors is not fully realized as part of the overall cultural expression. In the context of the recitation of Tafsir Jalalain, it is known that the reason why the Congaban people follow and participate in the event is that they want to maintain the tradition that has been preserved for generations. Indirectly, they affirm that the recitation of Tafsir Jalalain is a symbol of the essence of knowledge among Islamic boarding schools. The Congaban people consider knowledge as something that is obtained through inheritance, transmission, and not something that is created by themselves. As said by Alfin Kurniawan for example:

“For me, the recitation of Tafsir Jalali at the Congaban pesantren is a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation. So it is our duty to preserve this tradition. This is because the knowledge we gain today is not solely the result of our own efforts, but because of the continuous inheritance and transmission from our teachers.” (Kurniawan, 2021)

3. Qur’an Calligraphy; Obligation, Sustenance and Da’wah

Ya’qut al-Musta’simi, a famous calligrapher of the Ottoman Turkish sultanate, termed calligraphy 'The art of spiritual architecture born through material means’ (Sirojuddin, 2016). In the eyes of a calligrapher, the Qur’an is very special. This was also the case with the calligraphers in Congaban. Although the reception of the Qur’an among them varies, the
point is that they are showing the visualization of the beauty of God’s revelation following the movement of imagination and—to borrow Hans Robert Jauss’ term—the “horizon of expectations” in their minds. Exploring the world of Qur’anic calligraphy is certainly not as easy as turning your palm. It requires deepening in elementary aspects such as texture, color, field, space, combination and composition by processing the verses of the Qur’an into a display that can spoil the eyes of anyone who looks at it. For this reason, the art of Qur’anic calligraphy requires not only specialized skills, but also intense practice.

Congaban calligraphers are essentially drawn from the Islamic-Arabic tradition of calligraphy and ornamentation. They learned the ins and outs and guidelines of Qur’anic khat. Starting from khat Kufi, Tsuluts, Naskh, Riq’ah, Humayuni (Diwani), to Farisi. However, they did not stop at exploring classical-traditional calligraphy by adhering to khat guidelines, but went on to explore contemporary calligraphy by enriching supporting concepts such as backgrounds, models, writing styles and others. They do not only adopt spiritual symbolic images from traditions that are deeply rooted in Islamic boarding schools. More than that, they also present new artistic values and try to enrich the symbolic-spiritual imagery of the physical-plastic dimension of Qur’anic calligraphy in particular and Arabic calligraphy in general. They then developed it into categories such as figural, expressionist, symbolist and pure abstractionist.

In addition to carving Qur’anic calligraphy in the Congaban environment, Congaban calligraphers also often receive orders from the surrounding community. They usually order special calligraphy for certain surahs or verses in the Qur’an. Beyond that, the choice of verse to be used as a calligraphy object is usually adjusted to the moment and place. Like the selection of the last piece of QS. Al Mujadalah [58]: 11 as the calligraphy object on the walls of the decoration in the Imtihan haflah event (Arifin, 2021). A Qur’anic calligrapher is an implied reader. He will immerse himself into the artistic structure of the Qur’ann. That is why calligraphers always interpret the Qur’an aesthetically. He brings with him the results of the interpretation of the Qur’an in every calligraphic pattern and model created (Jannah, 2018). As implied readers, calligraphers in Congaban have different receptions (meanings) from one another. Some of the receptions (meanings) of the presence of the Qur’an
among Congaban calligraphers—which can be mentioned here—are 1) as an obligation, 2) opening the door to sustenance and 3) as a medium for da’wah.

**Firstly,** as an obligation. Fanatical calligraphers will see that preserving the artistic beauty of the Qur’an is not just a hobby or an “escape” to fill leisure time, but rather an obligation. They devote all their attention to every stroke with sincere and holy intentions. As Ahmad Faqot said:

“Of the three kinds of art (audio, visual and audiovisual), all are already in the Qur’an. So it cannot be denied that the Qur’an is a beautiful art. Actually, there are many things that show that the Qur’an is like art. Therefore, the Qur’an in my opinion is the most beautiful object in calligraphy. Even other arts. For us calligraphers, preserving the beauty of the Qur’an is not just a hobby or a way to pass the time, but rather an obligation. If not us, who else will preserve the visual beauty of the Qur’an?” (Faqot, 2021).

**Second,** it facilitates the arrival of sustenance. From the cultural-normative side, Congaban calligraphers not only depart from the beauty of the Qur’an as an art. However, they also stand on cultural-normative foundations. This kind of reception, for example, can be seen in the narration of Nasikh al-Haromain:

“One of the writers of revelation and Amirul Mukminin of the Muslims, Sayyidina Ali ibn Abi Talib once advised; You should be able to write well (*khusn al-khat*), because writing well is one of the means to open the door to sustenance.” (al-Haromain, 2021).

In the world of calligraphers, the advice from Sayyidina Ali as quoted by al-Haromain above has often been heard. Although the source of Sayyidina Ali’s statement is still confusing, many calligraphers make it a guide. The blessing of the Quran is believed to be able to lead calligraphers to open the door to sustenance. In other words, this first reception appears to be more pragmatic.

**Third,** as a medium for da’wah. Da’wah can be done through at least five different media; oral, written, painted, audio-visual and moral (exemplary) (Ramdhani, 2021). It is a big mistake to think that da’wah is only limited to religious lectures and speeches. Now, the da’wah method that can be an option and seems quite interesting is da’wah *bi al-qalam*, one of which can be done through the art of calligraphy. This was
conveyed by Arifin:

“In every Qur’anic calligraphy that is made, there is a deep meaning and message that the maker wants to convey. Each verse chosen has an artistic function to convey the meaning symbolically. Simply put, a Qur’anic calligraphy is a form of expression of a deep reading of what the Qur’an contains. That is where the moral messages of the Qur’an are being strived for.” (Arifin, 2021).

It is not an exaggeration to say that Ubaidillah bin al-Abbas called calligraphy as oral al-yadd (the tongue of the hand); because with calligraphic writing the hand is speaking. If people in Congaban generally preach bi al-khutbah and bi al-hal, then not with the calligraphers. They prefer to take the path of da’wah bi al-qolam through the clatter of pens and brush strokes. Maybe that’s their way of serving this religion and as a way of expressing their love for the Qur’an.

4. Khotmil Qur’an; Friendship, The Rewards, Blessings and Istiqamah

The festivities of Ramadan are indeed synonymous with the Qur’an (Syahr al-Qur’an). During this special month, the people of Congaban also do not want to be left behind. They also enliven the presence of the holy month of Ramadan through a unique program, “Khatmil Qur’an One Day One Juz” (hereinafter referred to as ODOJ), they together turn on the Koran while reaping the blessings of the holy month of Ramadan. The program offers seven groups; six core groups and one substitute group to replace members who are absent (menstruation, illness, traveling, etc.). Each group accommodates as many as 30 people. The mechanism of this program requires each member to read 1 juz in order at home. After completion, they will confirm with the group coordinator. Beyond that, they are allowed and even encouraged to continue reading the Quran and complete it privately. In one month, each member can recite 30 juz/1 times. If calculated as a whole of 6 groups, then in a day can khatam 6 times, and in one month as many as 180 times khatam.

ODOJ khatmil Qur’an program starts on the first night of Ramadan, is held after tarawih prayer and lasts for about an hour or so. After all groups have completed the whole khatmil Qur’an, Nyai Huzaimah who guides the program will close it with the khatmil Qur’an prayer. According to Muzayyanah, the admin of ODOJ khatmil Qur’an program, the khataman routine originated from the desire to continue the message of
al-Maghfurlah Kiai Ilyas Khotib, “Make the Qur’an a wiridan.” The hope is to maintain discipline (istiqamah) in reading the Qur’an every time (Muzayyanah, 2021).

ODOJ members have different meanings and expectations of the Qur’an’s presence in their midst. First, as a means of friendship. Functional reception of the Qur’an in practice also has its own symbols. Philosophically, the recitation of the Qur’an in the khatmil Qur’an is interpreted of them as a means of friendship. Thus, the tradition of the khatmil Qur’an that involves the presence of the Qur’an is not only a place to multiply rewards, but also a place to create social harmonization (Fathurrosyid, 2015). In general, all members of the ODOJ khatmil Qur’an program agree to interpret the presence of the Qur’an in their midst as a means of strengthening friendship. Jumila, for example, said:

“In my opinion, reading the Qur’an through the ODOJ program has many benefits. In addition to being able to read and recite the Qur’an every day, we can also stay in touch, either with teachers or senior and junior friends. It’s as if there is no wall of separation between us.” (Jumila, 2021).

Second, harvesting the rewards and blessings of the Qur’an. Muslim communities interpret the Qur’an as the great Kalamullah. Reading it is a noble act that will be rewarded with abundant rewards and blessings (Atabik, 2014). This pragmatic reception is also evident from the members of the ODOJ khatmil Qur’an program, as told by Samrotul Farhanah for example:

“By reading the Qur’an through this khatmil Qur’an program, we can both reap the rewards and blessings of the congregation, especially in the holy month of Ramadan. We can compete in worship. We can also compete for the blessings of the Qur’an. I hope that in this month of Ramadan I can improve myself in reading the Qur’an and get the reward that is worth it.” (Farhanah, 2021).

Third, maintaining discipline (istiqamah). Psychologically, interacting with the Qur’an and reciting it regularly will be able to have a positive effect on one’s discipline. This is where the members of khatmil Qur’an ODOJ seem to interpret the presence of the Qur’an at least as al-siyifa’ (medicine) to kill laziness, thus forming a disciplined person (istiqamah). This was conveyed by Bainah Tsana’i:
“Alhamdulillah, I have a stronger motivation to read the Qur’an every day. Because on normal days I’m a bit lazy. From there, I finally became accustomed to reading the Qur’an after prayer. No matter how busy I am, I am moved to take the time to read the Qur’an, especially in the congregation has taught me the importance of discipline and persistence. Previously, I might not have been able to read the Qur’an one juz every day.” (Tsana’i, 2021).

This disciplined personality (*istiqamah*) is what is most expected by Nyai Huzaimah, the leader of the Congaban female boarding school when delivering her remarks in the ODOJ Qur’an *khatmil* program.

**CONCLUSION**

The presence of the Qur’an in the daily lives of the Congaban people is greeted with diverse responses, at least seen from three forms of reception; exegesis reception, aesthetic reception and communicative-functional reception. The typology of the Congaban pesantren people’s reception of the Qur’an can be mapped into three; 1) lovers who prove their love by continuously reading and memorizing the Qur’an; 2) lovers who express their love aesthetically, both through the art of reading the Qur’an (rhythm) and the art of writing the Qur’an (calligraphy); 3) lovers who express their love by revealing the privileges (*fadhilah*) and moral messages of the Qur’an. The three typologies manifest certain practices and traditions, including the tradition of tahfidz al-Qur’an, recitation of al-Qur’an interpretation (Jalalain), calligraphy al-Qur’an and *Khatmil Qur’an*. The meanings and expectations of the Congaban people in perceiving the presence of the Qur’an are also diverse, which can be seen from the cultural, theological, theological, and philosophical sides.

*First*, in the context of the Qur’an memorization tradition, the Congaban people interpret it as an obligation, worship, and love. *Second*, in the context of the recitation of Jalalain tafsir, the Congaban people interpret it as obedience, adding insight and preserving heritage. *Third*, in the context of calligraphy al-Qur’an, the Congaban people interpret it as an obligation, facilitating the arrival of sustenance, and as a medium for da’wah. *Fourth*, in the context of *khatmil Qur’an pasa’an*, the Congaban people interpret it as a way to strengthen friendship, seek blessings, and form an *istiqomah* personality.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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