

Strategies of Memorization Teachers in Overcoming the Students' Difficulties of Memorizing the Quran in an Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the factors causing difficulties for students in memorizing the Quran and the strategies used by tahfidz teachers to overcome these difficulties at the Madinatul Ulum Islamic Boarding School. The study uses a qualitative approach with interviews, observations, and documentation. The research subjects included tahfiz teachers and students who participated in the Al-Qur'an tahfiz program. The results showed that the students' difficulties in memorizing were caused by three main factors, namely low Al-Qur'an reading skills, a busy boarding school schedule, and limited time for memorization and review. To overcome these problems, tahfidz teachers applied various learning strategies, including the tirkar method (repeated recitation of verses), the kitabah method (writing down verses from the Qur'an), and structured murojaah (scheduled repetition of old memorizations). The application of these methods has proven effective in improving the quality of students' memorization, improving pronunciation, and fostering motivation and spiritual discipline. This study confirms that the success of the tahfidz program is highly dependent on a combination of appropriate pedagogical strategies, efficient time management, and personal guidance from tahfidz teachers in creating a religious and conducive learning environment.

Keywords:

kitabah method, memorization difficulties, murojaah, tahfidz teacher strategies, tirkar method

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important aspect of our lives. It is a process of transforming individual attitudes and behaviors to mature humans through teaching and training. In this context, education plays a very crucial role in life. Through education, a person can transition from ignorance to deeper knowledge. One form of education is the ability of humans to recognize, understand, and develop their hidden potential. Islamic education, as we know, is an education system based on Islamic teachings. It is derived from the Quran and Hadith. The Quran is the word of Allah, whose truth is certain. It is a means of communication with Allah through faith, realized in worship and then applied in muamalah. Meanwhile, hadith is the second source of reference for Muslims after the Quran, containing the words, actions, and decisions of the Prophet and often used as arguments in everyday life (Ismail, 2022).

To overcome various obstacles and minimize the risk of failure in memorizing the Quran, it is necessary to apply effective learning strategies. These learning strategies are systematically and structurally arranged so that all learning objectives can be achieved in an efficient, optimal manner. By designing learning strategies aligned with clear, measurable learning objectives, educational

institutions that focus on developing Quran memorization programs can support prospective memorizers in completing the memorization process on time and in line with predetermined targets. In addition, a well-developed strategy enables more effective time management, methods, and evaluation, making it easier for students to internalize and maintain their memorization of the Qur'an on an ongoing basis. Thus, a carefully planned learning strategy is a key factor in the success of Qur'an memorization education in various institutions (Abdurrahman & Suparti, 2023).

This research was motivated by problems the author identified in the tahfidz learning process, particularly related to students' ability to memorize the Qur'an. Based on interviews with several students at the Madinatul Ulum Islamic Boarding School on October 24, 2025, three main factors were identified as causing difficulties in memorization: low ability to read the Qur'an, a busy boarding school schedule, and limited time available for memorization (Efendi et al., 2024).

During memorization, many students experience difficulties due to several main factors: a limited ability to read the Qur'an, a busy boarding school schedule, and limited time available for memorization and review. These three factors act as stimuli that greatly determine the students' responses and memorization habits. Irregularity and suboptimal stimulus intensity result in ineffective memorization responses, thereby slowing the formation of strong, consistent memorization habits. Therefore, the application of learning strategies aligned with behavioristic principles, such as the *tikrar* (repetition) and *murojaah* (repetition of old memorization) methods, is very important for strengthening memorization habits and improving students' memory in a sustainable manner. This study aims to analyze the factors that cause memorization difficulties and the reinforcement strategies that can be applied in the tahfidz learning process in Islamic boarding schools to achieve optimal results (Muttaqin, 2024).

METHOD

This research is categorized as qualitative research, an approach that produces findings without statistical analysis or other numerical calculations. Qualitative research focuses on understanding and interpreting the meaning of an event, interaction, or human behavior in a particular context, from the researcher's point of view. The subjects of this study were students at the Madinatul Ulum Islamic boarding school (Ismail, 2022).

Qualitative research is an approach that focuses on examining social, cultural, or human behavior phenomena in detail. This approach aims to explore the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of individuals or groups in a particular context, without relying on numerical data or statistics. The data obtained is usually in the form of text, video, or audio recordings. Data collection methods used include in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. The data analysis process is interpretive and descriptive in order to provide a deeper understanding of the issues being studied (Sei et al., n.d.).

RESULT

Tahfidz Teachers' Strategies in Overcoming Memorization Difficulties

The role of tahfidz teachers in improving students' memorization of the Qur'an is an important aspect that greatly determines the success of the tahfidz program in Islamic boarding schools. Teachers are not only educators, but also spiritual guides, motivators, and role models in perseverance and patience. Therefore, the strategies used by tahfidz teachers are not only oriented towards students' cognitive abilities but also address psychological, emotional, and spiritual aspects

(Fernando & Ismail, 2023). Based on the study's results, Tahfidz teachers at the Madinatul Ulum Islamic Boarding School use several main strategies, namely the Tikrar method, the Kitabah method, the Sima'i method (listening to recitations), and the structured Murojaah method. This was conveyed by the principal, Mr. M. Sofyan Nasir, S.Pd, who stated that this strategy is key to improving students' memorization skills and making them more disciplined, enthusiastic, and better at memorization.

First, the Tikrar method. In the interview results, the Tikrar method is a memorization technique by continuously repeating the recitation of Quranic verses. According to Iskandar, the tikrar method is a way to memorize Quranic verses by repeating the parts of a verse you want to memorize (Mashuri, Muftiyah, and Nafisah 2022). In addition, the tikrar method is mentioned in the Quran or mushaf hafalan tikrar (2014) as one of the most widely used techniques for memorizing the Quran by huffaz since ancient times, due to its organized memorization system. The tikrar technique involves reading a quarter of a page, then repeating it 20 times until it is memorized fluently without looking. At the Madinatul Ulum Islamic boarding school, the memorization process for students begins with reading certain pages repeatedly (bin-nadzar), then memorizing verse by verse or through the tikrar method. Once the memorization is fluent, the students submit it to the teacher and Kyai. Then they routinely repeat or review the memorization submitted to the Kyai or guardian. The more memorization they have, the more juz they must repeat every day (Mu'minatun & Misbah, 2022).

Research by Safa'at and Inayati (2019) shows that consistent repetition over a short period of time increases retention by up to 60%. In addition to strengthening memory, repetition also forms deep spiritual habits, as students constantly engage with the words of Allah each day. In behaviorist theory, continuous repetition fosters automatic habits (habit formation), so that memorization becomes spontaneous without being realized. The discussion results showed that the tahfidz teachers at the Madinatul Ulum Islamic boarding school agreed that the tikrar method was the most effective for strengthening memorization, especially for beginner students who still needed intensive repetition.

Second, the kitabah method (the writing of the Qur'an). The kitabah method, or writing verses from the Qur'an, is a memorization technique that involves copying the verses to be memorized. In practice, students first write the verses they want to memorize in a book or other writing medium. After writing, students reread the verses correctly before submitting them to the tahfiz teacher. The kitabah method is a technique for memorizing the Qur'an by writing the verses to be memorized in a special notebook. This method aims to improve memorizers' recall of the verses they are learning. After the verses are written, the memorizers reread them repeatedly until they are firmly embedded in memory and their memorization becomes strong (Nurfitrani et al., 2022). The kitabah method is considered quite practical because, in addition to using verbal aspects when reading and repeating verses, it also uses visual aspects through writing, which can accelerate memorization for students. Meanwhile, the Wahdah method is a way of memorizing the Qur'an by gradually paying attention to each verse. In this method, each verse must be thoroughly memorized first with attention to proper tajwid. The process of memorizing each verse is carried out meticulously by repeating the verse five to ten times until it is completely memorized. After one verse is well mastered, the memorizer continues to the next, so that memorization takes place in a systematic and structured manner (Nurfitrani et al., 2022). The application of this method is strongly supported by several tahfidz teachers at the Madinatul Ulum Islamic boarding school. Ustadz Ahmad Nurul Arifin said that the kitabah method is very helpful in overcoming students' memorization problems. With this method, students not only memorize verses from the Quran but also practice their writing.

Third, Structured Murojaah (Repetition of Old Memorization). Murojaah, or the repetition of old memorization, is an important strategy for maintaining the consistency of students' memorization, ensuring it remains strong, fluent, and not easily forgotten. In the context of tahfidz education at the Madinatul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, tahfidz teachers set a mandatory murojaah schedule every morning after Fajr prayer and in the afternoon after Maghrib prayer, as well as group murojaah every weekend as a form of collective reinforcement. This strategy not only fosters discipline but also instills in students a sense of spiritual responsibility towards the mandate to preserve the Quran. Every memorizer of the Qur'an realizes that without continuous review, their memorization will be easily forgotten. The Qur'an and we are constantly walking together on a long journey that begins when we are still in the cradle until we die. This journey lasts a lifetime, with the Al-Qur'an Al-Karim as a loyal companion throughout. Meanwhile, murojaah serves as a protector and guardian, ensuring that memorization is maintained throughout this journey of life. With Allah's permission, the process of muroja'ah, when done properly and consistently, is very helpful in maintaining memorization efficiently (Lauchia et al., 2023).

According to Maulana, Sarpendi, and Latifah (2025), the success of santri memorization greatly depends on the consistency of murojaah. Without regular repetition, memorization can decline by up to 30% in two weeks. This principle aligns with the theory of spaced repetition in cognitive psychology, which asserts that long-term memory is formed through periodic repetition at specific intervals (Paivio, 1991). Thus, murojaah is not only a religious activity but also a scientific process that strengthens memory and stabilizes memorization. Using this method, we, the tahfidz teachers, are able to improve the quality of reading and significantly reduce the level of memorization loss. This was stated by Ustadz Abdul Wasik during an interview.

Factors Causing Students to Have Difficulty Memorizing

Before the teaching and learning process begins, an educator needs to prepare a thorough lesson plan. In the planning stage, students' abilities, skills, and understanding of their characters are very important. At the Madinatul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, the students have diverse backgrounds and characteristics (Ismail, 2022). Some students come from religious families and have been accustomed to religious education and reading the Qur'an since childhood, making it easier for them to memorize. However, some students come from less religious families, so they face difficulties memorizing the Qur'an. According to the results of an interview with a student named Fahmi Hidayaturrohmah, "In my opinion, the most noticeable thing is the lack of time for memorization, because the boarding school activities are quite busy. After religious lessons, I am sometimes too tired to memorize much. In addition, I am not very interested in reading, so when I read long verses, I quickly get bored and lose focus. Boarding school activities such as class assignments, cleaning, and worship schedules also reduce the time available for memorization.

The process of memorizing the Qur'an depends not only on cognitive abilities but also on affective factors and a supportive environment. Based on the study's results, the tahfidz teacher's strategy of combining the *tikrar* (repetition) and *kitabah* (writing Qur'anic verses) methods is considered effective because it engages the auditory, visual, and motor aspects simultaneously. This multisensory approach has been proven to strengthen memory and help students understand the patterns of the verses being memorized (Safa'at & Inayati, 2019).

In every learning problem, there are certainly various factors that cause the problem to arise. Therefore, a teacher needs to understand each student's character and abilities before beginning the learning process. Based on the interview results, several factors were identified as causing students difficulty with memorization (Ismail, 2022).

First, poor reading skills are among the main obstacles to memorizing the Qur'an. Many students are not yet fluent in reading letters and applying tajwid correctly due to a lack of regular reading practice. This condition slows the memorization process and makes it easy to forget, because imperfect reading skills hinder accurate recall of verses. Students who are not yet fluent readers tend to lose confidence when reciting memorized material, leading to decreased enthusiasm (Maulana et al., 2025). There are various reasons for students' lack of fluency in reading. Some do not have a strong foundation in reading the Qur'an since entering the pesantren, while others lack intensive training in recitation. The lack of reading practice outside of class hours and uninteresting learning methods also affect the students' reading skills. In addition, an unfavorable learning environment and limited personal attention from teachers are also hindering factors.

The ability to read the Qur'an well is the main foundation in tahfiz activities, because the memorization process cannot run optimally without a proper understanding of reading (tahsin al-qirā'ah). According to Mubarak (2013), difficulties in reading the Qur'an often arise from a lack of basic knowledge of tajwid and from a lack of continuous reading practice. Tahfiz teachers need to provide intensive training in tahsin as a preliminary stage before starting the memorization program, so that students can pronounce correctly and fluently. The ability to read the Qur'an is the ability to recite and understand its meaning, which is the word of Allah in the form of revelations gradually revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. These revelations were passed on to his followers in sequence, and those who read them will receive multiple rewards (Collins et al., 2021).

Second, the busy schedule at the boarding school is one of the reasons students have difficulty memorizing. The daily schedule of students is usually filled with formal learning activities at the madrasah, reciting the Quran, and cleaning or guard duty. This busy routine limits their time and energy to focus on memorizing or reviewing what they have already learned. One of the main obstacles that students face is their inability to manage their time. When students lack a good time management plan for memorization, review, formal schooling, and other activities, their memorization often becomes unstable. This is supported by Utami's (2020) explanation that poor time management hinders the internalization of memorized material. According to time management theory, successful people are those who can determine priorities, plan activities, and routinely evaluate their own performance (Islam & Hasan, 2025).

The intense activities of Islamic boarding schools indeed pose a unique challenge within the boarding school-based education system. According to Damanik (2019), a high workload without proportional time management can reduce students' motivation to learn and hinder the achievement of optimal learning outcomes. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this is evident when students must divide their time between general education, diniyah (Islamic studies), and tahfidz (Quran memorization), all of which require sustained focus and energy. Therefore, time management skills are an important factor that must be trained by teachers and boarding school administrators in order to maintain a balance between memorization and other activities (Islam & Hasan, 2025).

Third, limited time for memorization. The interview results also show that time constraints are a major obstacle to students' memorization of the Qur'an. At the Madinatul Ulum Islamic boarding school, special time for memorization is usually only given after the Fajr and Maghrib prayers. With such a schedule, students are required to use their time as efficiently as possible, sometimes even setting aside time from other activities. Often, memorization is done during less-than-ideal spare moments, resulting in suboptimal results. Many students also feel pressured by daily memorization targets that must be met, even though the available time is insufficient. Some verses of the Qur'an are also considered difficult to memorize due to pronunciation or memory factors, requiring repeated recitation. The lack of time for review also makes memorization easily forgotten and difficult to retain.

This condition is exacerbated by feelings of laziness, boredom, and a tendency to give up easily during the memorization process. From interviews conducted by researchers with students, the most noticeable factor was the lack of time. Because if there was enough time, even if I had little interest in reading, I could still force myself to review. But because time was limited, my memorization became unstable, and I quickly forgot. This was stated by a student named Abdul Hamid Fatir.

In the context of Islamic boarding school education, time management plays a very important role in determining the success of the tahfidz program. According to Nata (2019), memorizing the Qur'an requires focus and excellent physical condition, so choosing the right time and setting an efficient schedule are key to optimal memorization. The best times for memorization, such as after dawn and before sunset, are known as barakah times because of the calm mood and clear mind (Rahmawati & Yuliani, 2020). However, if these times are limited, tahfidz teachers need to help students develop adaptive learning strategies, such as using distributed practice techniques or repeating memorization at regular intervals throughout the day.

In addition, time constraints often cause students to neglect murojaah or repetition of old memorizations, making it easy to forget previous memorizations when learning new ones. This aligns with the research by Maulana, Sarpendi, and Latifah (2025), which found that students without a structured murojaah schedule experience a 30% decline in memorization within 2 weeks. Therefore, the tahfidz teachers at Madinatul Ulum have established a mandatory murojaah schedule every morning and evening to ensure that memorization is maintained.

Thus, although time constraints pose a major challenge in the tahfidz program, these can be overcome through effective time management strategies, regular murojaah habits, and setting realistic, adaptive memorization targets for students. The support of teachers who understand students' psychological dynamics is also an important factor in maintaining their enthusiasm and consistency in memorizing the Qur'an (Abdurrahman & Suparti, 2023).

DISCUSSION

The research shows that the learning strategies used by tahfidz teachers at the Madinatul Ulum Islamic boarding school have proven highly effective in helping students improve their ability to memorize the Qur'an. Students who followed the kitabah and tkrar methods showed very significant progress, particularly in memorization speed and accuracy in reciting Qur'anic verses (Anwar Dwi Maulana et al., 2025). This research aligns with behaviorist theory, which holds that learning is a process of behavioral change that occurs as a result of the interaction between stimulus and response. In the context of learning to memorize the Qur'an in Islamic boarding schools, the strategies used by teachers serve as one of the stimuli that can be applied to facilitate this process, including at the Madinatul Ulum Islamic boarding school. This approach is generally accepted, but it is recommended that other variables, such as the learning environment, also be given attention, as environmental factors can affect the effectiveness of learning and students' overall memorization outcomes (Makassar, 2023).

The findings of this study provide a very important new perspective on the central and strategic role of tahfidz teachers in overcoming the various obstacles and difficulties students encounter in memorizing the Qur'an. In terms of practical implications, this study emphasizes the need to strengthen and further develop the tahfidz teaching strategies that have been used so far, both in selecting and applying effective memorization methods and in actively involving parents as a major supporting factor in the success of the memorization process. Based on the results obtained, it is recommended that future studies explore in greater depth the role of digital technology or multimedia

in assisting students in the process of memorizing the Qur'an, as well as developing intervention models based on a community approach to increase both social and educational support for tahfiz programs in Islamic boarding schools, thereby creating a more conducive and effective learning environment for the students (Muttaqin, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study identifies three main factors that hinder students' memorization of the Qur'an at the Madinatul Ulum Islamic Boarding School: limited reading ability, a busy boarding school schedule, and limited time for memorization and review. These factors affect the effectiveness and consistency of the memorization process, so effective and structured learning strategies are needed. To overcome these obstacles, tahfiz teachers apply several main methods: the tikkar method, which emphasizes continuous repetition of verses to form an automatic memorization habit; the kitabah method, which integrates writing verses as a visual stimulus to strengthen memory; and structured murojaah, which schedules consistent repetition of old memorizations as a way to keep memorization strong and prevent forgetting. This approach considers not only cognitive aspects, but also psychological and spiritual aspects to motivate and discipline students. In addition, time management is a key factor in the success of tahfidz, given the busy schedule of pesantren activities. Tahfidz teachers play an important role in helping students manage their time and in providing personal guidance to create a conducive, religious learning environment. The study emphasizes the importance of combining appropriate learning techniques, efficient time management, and motivational support from teachers to ensure that the memorization process runs optimally and achieve the desired targets in a sustainable manner. Future recommendations include exploring the use of digital technology and community approaches to strengthen social and educational support for students. With this strategy, it is hoped that students' memorization quality, pronunciation, and memorization enthusiasm will increase significantly.

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