



At Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam

Vol. 8, No. 2, December 2026, pp. 1704-1713
Print ISSN : 2656-7555 || Online ISSN : 2747-089X
<http://journal.stitmadani.ac.id/index.php/JPI/index>



Strategies for Enhancing Qur'anic Memorization A Case Study of *Tahfidz* Teaching Practices at *Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islam Surakarta*

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Received: 02-07-2026

Revised: 19-08-2026

Accepted: 27-09-2026

KEYWORDS

Tahfidz Teacher Strategies, Qur'anic Memorization, Learning Difficulties, Islamic Education.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the strategies employed by *Tahfidz* teachers in addressing students' difficulties in memorizing the Qur'an among students at *Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islam Surakarta* in the 2025/2026 academic year. The research aims to identify the forms of learning difficulties experienced by students, analyze the instructional strategies implemented by *Tahfidz* teachers, and evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in improving students' memorization achievement. This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. The research participants consisted of 30 students (*santri*) selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation review. The data were analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing techniques, while triangulation was applied to ensure data validity. The findings indicate that students' difficulties in memorizing the Qur'an include weak retention (40%), lack of motivation (30%), limited time management skills (20%), and insufficient mastery of tajwid and pronunciation (10%). *Tahfidz* teachers addressed these challenges through structured repetition methods (*muraja'ah*), individualized mentoring, motivational reinforcement, peer memorization groups, and continuous formative evaluation. The implementation of these strategies contributed to measurable improvements, with 70% of students showing significant progress in memorization fluency and consistency, 20% demonstrating moderate improvement, and 10% showing gradual progress. The study concludes that systematic instructional strategies combined with personalized guidance effectively enhance students' Qur'anic memorization performance.

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Introduction

Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*) education at the Madrasah Aliyah level has experienced significant development over the past two decades, in line with the increasing demand for graduates who possess both religious and academic competencies simultaneously. *Tahfidz* programs are no longer positioned merely as extracurricular activities but have become an integral

part of the curriculum in Islamic educational institutions. Amid these demands, the ability to memorize the Qur'an has become a primary achievement indicator that requires systematic and adaptive pedagogical strategies.

Memorizing the Qur'an constitutes a complex cognitive and affective process. It involves short-term and long-term memory capacity, reinforcement through repetition, consistency in *muraja'ah* (review), and students' self-regulation. Studies in educational psychology indicate that memorization success is strongly influenced by instructional strategies, intrinsic motivation, and the supportiveness of the learning environment (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020 : 10). Within the *tahfidz* context, the teacher's role becomes the primary determinant in directing this process.

Several recent studies highlight the importance of pedagogical approaches grounded in metacognitive strategies in memorization learning. Hidayat and Rahman (2021 : 53) found that the implementation of structured repetition techniques and periodic evaluation significantly improves students' memorization retention. Their findings affirm that teachers' strategies directly contribute to the quality of memorization achievement.

Another study conducted by Fauzi (2022 : 120) revealed that the main challenges in *tahfidz* programs at the madrasah level include low motivation, ineffective time management, and weak independent *muraja'ah* control. These findings demonstrate that memorization difficulties are not solely cognitive in nature but are also closely related to psychological and environmental factors.

In a broader context, Abdullah and Karim (2023 : 78–86) emphasized the importance of individualized approaches in *tahfidz* learning. Teachers who implemented personal mentoring demonstrated greater improvement in students' memorization consistency compared to those employing purely classical approaches. These results indicate the necessity of differentiated strategies based on students' characteristics.

Recent studies on Qur'anic learning at the *Madrasah Aliyah* level also underscore the urgency of integrating traditional methods with modern pedagogical approaches. Rasyid (2024 : 210) stated that combining *talaqqi*, *muraja'ah*, and reflective approaches grounded in formative evaluation positively impacts memorization stability. This integration reflects the ongoing transformation of *tahfidz* learning in the contemporary era.

Despite numerous studies discussing *tahfidz* instructional strategies, most focus on the effectiveness of specific methods without deeply elaborating the particular challenges faced by students at the Madrasah Aliyah level. There remains limited research specifically analyzing teachers' strategies in responding to memorization difficulties among eleventh-grade students within a particular institutional context through a comprehensive approach.

Another research gap lies in the limited empirical exploration of the relationship between adolescent student characteristics and *tahfidz* teachers' pedagogical strategies. Students are at a distinct cognitive and emotional developmental stage compared to early-level students. These developmental dynamics imply variations in memorization difficulties that require contextual and strategic approaches.

Several previous studies have also tended to employ quantitative approaches emphasizing memorization outcomes rather than the processes and strategies implemented by teachers. In fact, process-oriented analysis is essential to understanding effective pedagogical practices in *tahfidz* learning. This perspective opens space for more in-depth qualitative inquiry.

This study seeks to address these gaps by specifically examining the strategies employed by

tahfidz teachers in overcoming the difficulties of memorizing the Qur'an among students at *Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islam Surakarta* in the 2025/2026 academic year. The research focuses on identifying forms of memorization difficulties and analyzing the concrete strategies implemented by teachers in responding to them.

The novelty of this research lies in its contextual field-based approach that simultaneously integrates analysis of students' memorization challenges and teachers' pedagogical strategies. The study does not merely map types of difficulties but also evaluates the relevance and effectiveness of the strategies applied within a specific institutional setting.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in strengthening the framework of adaptive strategy-based *tahfidz* pedagogy. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on Qur'anic learning at the upper secondary level, particularly from the perspective of teachers' instructional strategies.

The practical contribution of this research involves providing a strategic instructional model that may be replicated by other Islamic educational institutions implementing *tahfidz* programs. The results are anticipated to serve as a reference for *tahfidz* teachers in designing more systematic and responsive interventions to students' memorization difficulties.

From an educational policy perspective, this research offers implications for the development of student-centered *tahfidz* curricula. Strengthening teachers' capacity to design differentiated strategies becomes an essential aspect of improving the quality of Qur'anic education.

Academically, this study expands the discourse on integrating modern learning theories with classical *tahfidz* traditions. The analysis of teachers' strategies within the real context of a *Madrasah Aliyah* provides an empirical perspective that is relevant for future research development.

This research positions *tahfidz* teachers as primary agents in transforming the quality of students' memorization. Adaptive and contextual strategic approaches become key factors in addressing memorization difficulties among eleventh-grade students at *Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islam Surakarta*.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical orientation. The qualitative approach was selected because the research seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of *tahfidz* teachers' strategies in addressing the difficulties of memorizing the Qur'an from the perspectives of the actors involved and within the natural context of the learning environment. This approach enables the researcher to explore meanings, experiences, and the dynamics of pedagogical interactions that cannot be reduced to numerical data alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2021 : 183).

The research design adopted was an intrinsic case study. This design focused on a specific case, namely the implementation of *tahfidz* teachers' strategies among students at *Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islam Surakarta* in the 2025/2026 academic year. The case study design provides an opportunity for in-depth contextual exploration of the *tahfidz* learning phenomenon within the real setting of an educational institution (Yin, 2022 : 45).

The objectives of this study were: (1) to identify the forms of difficulties in memorizing the Qur'an experienced by students; (2) to analyze the pedagogical strategies implemented by *tahfidz* teachers in addressing these difficulties; and (3) to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used

in improving students' memorization quality. These objectives were formulated to generate a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between memorization challenges and teachers' strategic interventions.

The evaluation model employed in this study was a process-oriented formative evaluation model. This model emphasizes the analysis of instructional strategy implementation, teacher-student interactions, and students' responses to the interventions provided. Process evaluation is considered relevant for assessing the quality of *tahfidz* instructional strategy implementation in a continuous manner (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2019 : 221).

The research was conducted at *Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islam Surakarta*. The site was selected purposively on the grounds that the institution implements a structured *tahfidz* program at the level. The research participants consisted of one *tahfidz* teacher and 30 eleventh-grade students who actively participated in the *tahfidz* program. Data collection techniques included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observation was conducted to record the *tahfidz* learning process and the strategies implemented by the teacher in the classroom setting. In-depth interviews were conducted with both the teacher and students to obtain data regarding experiences, perceptions, and memorization challenges encountered. Documentation included memorization progress records, *muraja'ah* schedules, and instructional materials.

The research instruments consisted of observation guidelines and semi-structured interview protocols. The observation guidelines focused on instructional strategies, interaction patterns, and memorization evaluation techniques. The interview protocols were designed to explore internal and external factors influencing students' memorization difficulties. Instrument development referred to qualitative research principles that are flexible and adaptive to field dynamics (Merriam & Tisdell, 2021 : 118).

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing interview data from the teacher and students. Method triangulation was carried out by integrating findings from observations, interviews, and documentation. Validity was further strengthened through member checking to ensure the accuracy of data interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2021 : 262).

Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analytical process began during data collection and continued until the completion of the study. Open coding was applied to identify major themes related to memorization difficulties and teachers' strategies.

The research procedure commenced with a pre-field stage, including a preliminary study and proposal preparation. The subsequent stage involved field data collection through observation and interviews during the *tahfidz* learning period. After data collection was completed, thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns in strategies and students' responses.

Research ethics were maintained through official approval from the *madrasah* administration and the provision of informed consent to participants. Respondents' identities were anonymized to ensure data confidentiality. Principles of academic integrity and objectivity were upheld throughout the research process. This methodology was designed to generate credible and contextual findings regarding *tahfidz* teachers' strategies in addressing difficulties in memorizing the Qur'an. The qualitative case study approach provides analytical depth concerning pedagogical practices implemented within the upper secondary Islamic education environment.

Result

This study employed the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model to analyze the strategies of the *tahfidz* teacher in addressing difficulties in memorizing the Qur'an among students at *Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islam Surakarta* in the 2025/2026 academic year. Data were obtained from 30 students and one *tahfidz* teacher through observation, interviews, and documentation of memorization progress. The assessment scale ranged from 1 to 4 (1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = very good), referring to the principles of educational program evaluation (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2020 : 22).

1. Context Evaluation

The context evaluation focused on program needs, students' backgrounds, institutional support, and the relevance of the *tahfidz* learning objectives.

Table 1. Scores of Context Evaluation Components

No	Context Component	Mean Score	Category
1	Alignment of tahfidz program objectives	3.6	Very Good
2	Students' need for the program	3.4	Good
3	Institutional policy support	3.5	Very Good
4	School religious environment	3.7	Very Good
Context Mean		3.55	Very Good

The mean score of 3.55 indicates that the contextual dimension of the *tahfidz* program falls within the very good category. The program objectives are aligned with the madrasah's vision of producing graduates who possess strong religious character and academic achievement. This alignment strengthens the legitimacy of the program within the curricular structure. The religious school environment obtained the highest score (3.7). This finding demonstrates that the school culture supports daily memorization practices and structured *muraja'ah* activities. Structural and cultural support contributes to the stability of program implementation.

Students' need for the program was categorized as good (3.4). Several students expressed the need for individualized guidance to overcome retention difficulties. This finding highlights the importance of adaptive instructional strategies in responding to students' needs (Hidayat & Rahman, 2021: 49).

2. Input Evaluation

The input evaluation encompassed teacher qualifications, student readiness, facilities, and instructional resources.

Table 2. Scores of Input Evaluation Components

No	Input Component	Mean Score	Category
1	Teacher pedagogical competence	3.7	Very Good
2	Teacher tahfidz competence	3.8	Very Good
3	Student readiness	3.2	Good
4	Facilities and instructional resources	3.3	Good

Input Mean	3.50	Very Good
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The *tahfidz* competence of the teacher achieved the highest score (3.8). The teacher demonstrated strong memorization mastery and more than five years of mentoring experience. Pedagogical competence was also categorized as very good, as indicated by the use of varied instructional methods. Student readiness was categorized as good (3.2). Some students experienced challenges related to motivation and time management. This condition suggests the need to strengthen self-regulation strategies, as emphasized by Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020: 5).

Instructional facilities were considered adequate. The availability of structured *muraja'ah* schedules and memorization control books supported learning effectiveness. The input dimension indicates strong readiness to support the teacher's strategies.

3. Process Evaluation

The process evaluation assessed strategy implementation, teacher-student interaction, *muraja'ah* methods, and formative evaluation.

Table 3. Scores of Process Evaluation Components

No	Process Component	Mean Score	Category
1	Implementation of <i>muraja'ah</i> strategies	3.6	Very Good
2	Individualized approach	3.5	Very Good
3	Monitoring and memorization evaluation	3.4	Good
4	Motivation and character development	3.6	Very Good
Process Mean		3.53	Very Good

The implementation of structured *muraja'ah* emerged as a primary strength of the program. The teacher applied tiered repetition and weekly memorization submission. This strategy enhanced students' memorization consistency. The individualized approach scored 3.5. The teacher provided specific guidance to students experiencing retention difficulties. This approach aligns with differentiated instruction principles (Abdullah & Karim, 2023: 81). Monitoring of memorization was categorized as good. Evaluation was conducted periodically through oral testing and progress documentation. The learning process reflects systematic strategy implementation.

4. Product Evaluation

The product evaluation measured improvements in memorization quantity, recitation fluency, and *muraja'ah* consistency.

Table 4. Scores of Product Evaluation Components

No	Product Component	Mean Score	Category
1	Increase in memorized verses	3.5	Very Good
2	Fluency and accuracy of tajwid	3.4	Good
3	Consistency of independent <i>muraja'ah</i>	3.3	Good
4	Long-term memorization stability	3.4	Good

Product Mean	3.40	Good
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Seventy percent of students demonstrated a significant increase in memorized verses within one semester. Recitation fluency improved through routine *talaqqi* practice and direct correction. Consistency of independent *muraja'ah* requires further strengthening. Some students lacked stability in reviewing memorization outside school hours. Long-term stability is influenced by personal discipline.

The product outcomes indicate the effectiveness of the teacher's strategies in enhancing memorization quality. These achievements reflect the relationship between instructional processes and learning outcomes (Rasyid, 2024: 205).

5. Recapitulation of CIPP Evaluation Results

Component	Mean Score	Category
Context	3.55	Very Good
Input	3.50	Very Good
Process	3.53	Very Good
Product	3.40	Good
Total	3.50	Very Good

The findings of this study demonstrate that the strategies implemented by the *tahfidz* teacher play a pivotal role in addressing students' difficulties in Qur'anic memorization. Through a structured *muraja'ah* system, individualized guidance, and continuous formative evaluation, the teacher was able to create a learning environment that supports both cognitive retention and spiritual development. The integration of pedagogical competence and strong mastery of memorization techniques significantly contributed to improving students' memorization quality and consistency.

The CIPP-based evaluation further reveals that the effectiveness of the program is not solely determined by instructional techniques, but also by contextual and institutional support. A conducive religious school culture, clear program objectives, and adequate learning resources collectively strengthened the implementation of *tahfidz* instruction. These contextual and input factors provided a solid foundation for the successful execution of learning strategies in the classroom. In terms of outcomes, the majority of students demonstrated measurable progress in the quantity and accuracy of their memorization. Improvements were evident in fluency, tajwid precision, and overall retention stability. Although some challenges remain, particularly regarding students' independent *muraja'ah* discipline outside school hours, the overall findings indicate that the teacher's strategic interventions were effective in mitigating memorization barriers.

These results highlight the importance of adaptive pedagogical approaches in *tahfidz* education. Effective memorization instruction requires not only repetition techniques but also motivational reinforcement, differentiated support, and systematic monitoring. The study contributes to the growing body of research emphasizing process-oriented evaluation in religious education settings and underscores the significance of teacher agency in fostering sustainable memorization achievement. Ultimately, the research affirms that well-planned and contextually responsive *tahfidz* strategies can substantially enhance students' ability to overcome memorization difficulties. The findings provide practical insights for Islamic secondary education institutions seeking to strengthen their Qur'anic memorization programs through structured, reflective, and evidence-based instructional practices.

Discussion

The discussion of findings underscores that the effectiveness of *tahfidz* instruction is closely linked to the integration of contextual support, teacher competence, and structured pedagogical processes. The alignment between institutional vision, religious school culture, and clearly defined program objectives provided a strong contextual foundation for implementation. Within this framework, the *tahfidz* teacher's pedagogical and content mastery functioned as a decisive factor in translating program goals into measurable learning outcomes. The evidence suggests that strategic instructional planning, supported by a conducive environment, enhances students' engagement and memorization stability.

The analysis further highlights the significance of adaptive and differentiated approaches in addressing diverse memorization difficulties among students. Individualized guidance, systematic *muraja'ah* scheduling, and formative monitoring were instrumental in strengthening retention and fluency. These strategies reflect contemporary perspectives on self-regulated learning and process-oriented evaluation, emphasizing that memorization is not merely a mechanical activity but a cognitively and affectively complex process. The teacher's responsiveness to students' internal and external challenges contributed to improved motivation and sustained participation in *tahfidz* learning.

At the product level, the findings demonstrate a positive correlation between structured instructional processes and the improvement of memorization outcomes. Increases in the quantity of memorized verses, enhanced *tajwid* accuracy, and greater consistency in review practices indicate the practical impact of the implemented strategies. The discussion therefore reinforces the argument that effective *tahfidz* education requires a holistic framework encompassing context, input, process, and product dimensions. This integrated perspective provides valuable implications for strengthening Qur'anic memorization programs in Islamic secondary education set

The *tahfidz* teacher's strategies demonstrated high effectiveness in the context, input, and process dimensions. A supportive religious environment strengthened the internalization of memorization values. Teacher competence emerged as a dominant factor in program success. Mastery of structured *muraja'ah* methods improved memorization retention.

The individualized approach positively affected students experiencing difficulties. Differentiated strategies strengthened pedagogical responsiveness to diverse student abilities. Students' intrinsic motivation played a crucial role in memorization stability. Character development formed an integral component of the teacher's strategy.

Product outcomes revealed quantitative and qualitative improvements in memorization. Recitation fluency developed through periodic oral evaluation. Consistency in independent *muraja'ah* requires reinforcement through supervision and parental support. School-family synergy influences memorization sustainability.

The CIPP evaluation model provided a comprehensive overview of program quality. Each component contributed to memorization achievement. The teacher's strategies proved adaptive to students' challenges. Process-based pedagogical approaches enhanced learning effectiveness.

The findings reinforce the literature emphasizing the importance of metacognitive strategies in memorization learning. Strengthening the monitoring system is recommended to improve long-term memorization stability.

Conclusion

This section presents the concluding synthesis of the study's findings concerning the strategies employed by the *tahfidz* teacher in addressing students' difficulties in Qur'anic memorization. The conclusions are derived from a comprehensive analysis based on the CIPP evaluation framework, which systematically examined contextual conditions, instructional inputs, implementation processes, and learning outcomes. Through this integrative approach, the study provides a coherent understanding of how pedagogical strategies function within a structured *tahfidz* program at the Islamic senior secondary level.

The formulation of these conclusions is grounded in empirical evidence gathered through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis. Each component of the evaluation contributed to identifying the strengths and areas for improvement within the memorization program. By connecting the findings across context, input, process, and product dimensions, the study ensures that the conclusions reflect both the practical realities of classroom implementation and the broader institutional framework that supports *tahfidz* instruction.

The following concluding statements therefore encapsulate the central insights of the research, highlighting the effectiveness of the teacher's strategic interventions and their implications for Qur'anic memorization practices. These conclusions aim to provide a reflective and evidence-based foundation for further academic inquiry, as well as practical guidance for strengthening *tahfidz* education programs in Islamic secondary schools.

The *tahfidz* program at *Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islam Surakarta* is categorized as very good based on the CIPP evaluation. The institutional context supports optimal implementation of the teacher's strategies. Input components, including teacher competence and student readiness, indicate strong program preparedness. The learning process operates systematically through structured *muraja'ah* and individualized approaches. Memorization outcomes demonstrate significant improvement among most students. Consistency in independent *muraja'ah* requires sustained guidance. The *tahfidz* teacher's strategies are effective in addressing memorization difficulties among eleventh-grade students.

The conclusions of this study confirm that the *tahfidz* teacher's strategic interventions were effective in addressing students' difficulties in Qur'anic memorization at *MA Al-Islam Surakarta*. The application of structured *muraja'ah*, individualized mentoring, and systematic formative assessment contributed significantly to improving students' memorization quality and retention. The evaluation findings indicate that the program operates within a supportive institutional context, reinforced by competent instructional input and well-managed learning processes.

The CIPP evaluation model provided a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the interconnected dimensions of program implementation. Strong contextual alignment and adequate instructional resources facilitated the effective execution of pedagogical strategies.

These conclusions highlight the importance of integrating pedagogical expertise, contextual awareness, and continuous evaluation in *tahfidz* education. Sustainable improvement in Qur'anic memorization requires not only technical repetition strategies but also adaptive guidance that responds to students' cognitive and motivational needs. The study offers empirical support for strengthening structured and reflective *tahfidz* programs in Islamic secondary education to ensure long-term memorization success.

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