

Implementation of tahfidz itqon method based on differentiation of early childhood potentials

Imam Mawardi ^{a,1,*}, Aziz Muzaki ^{b,2}, Irma Sulistiyaningrum ^{c,3}, Nashih Muhammad ^{d,4}, M. Rohiq ^{e,5}, Zainal Arifin ^{f,6}

^{*abc} Universitas Muhammadiyah Magelang, Indonesia; ^d INISNU Temanggung; ^e Universitas Jambi; ^f STAI Syubbanul Magelang

¹ mawardirazal@unimma.ac.id ; ² albargazy@gmail.com ; ³ syifaalmaira@gmail.com ; ⁴ nashih1987@gmail.com ; ⁵

rohiquhammad@unja.ac.id; ⁶ zainalarifin@staia-sw.or.id

*Correspondent Author

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the implementation of variations in learning tahfidzul Qur'an with the ITQON method based on differentiation in early childhood at Tahfidzul Qur'an Al Ikhlas Islamic Kindergarten in Krogowanan, Sawangan, Magelang. This research is a descriptive qualitative research with a case study approach. The subjects in this study were caregivers from both the school principal and the ustadz. Data collection techniques were obtained from documentation in the form of guidelines for implementing tahfidz activities, standard operating procedures, and other data such as documents regarding the condition and program of children's activities. Data analysis techniques used include data reduction, presentation of data results, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that the use of the ITQON method based on differentiation can strengthen thinking skills, be able to process information well, broaden understanding, and can provide feedback in increasing memorization of the Qur'an according to different levels of early childhood abilities.

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Introduction

One of the goals of early childhood education is to prepare children for entering elementary school or madrasah ibtidaiah. At the age of 5–6 years, children are expected to be able to read, write, and count (Meiliana et al., 2015). However, a learning system that forces children to memorize quickly through drilling methods causes them to lose freedom in learning. Therefore, to meet the needs of children, educators implement differentiated learning systems and a curriculum that allows learning freedom (Merdeka Curriculum) (Nur Cahyati Ngaisah et al., 2023). Although differentiation-based education is not new, many educators do not apply this approach in learning activities. Differentiation means giving students the freedom to create according to their abilities without pressure or coercion from others (Munawar, 2022).

Thus, the primary focus in education is to strengthen character values. Character plays a vital and fundamental role in shaping individual identity. Therefore, strengthening character values must become a primary priority in the education process (Husna et al., 2021). Character also plays a key role in shaping one's personality, making it essential for character-building to be an integral part of the educational process (Devianti et al., 2020). Unfortunately, many schools, as educational institutions, still adhere to rigid systems in instilling character in children. Due to a patchwork curriculum and minimal effort in character education, schools often implement it with a sense of emptiness (Mawardi, 2017).

In Islam, teaching and shaping the character of future generations is of paramount importance, especially through teaching the Qur'an. Teaching the Qur'an to the younger generation is a way to introduce them to their life guidance (Nidhom, 2020). As a value system, Islamic education serves as the foundation for shaping the character of students, requiring the reinforcement of its conceptual paradigm at a practical level. Islamic education is not limited to specific subjects, as its values permeate subjects like Islamic Religious Education. This value system forms the foundation for educational dynamics, from planning to process and outcomes (Mawardi, 2017).

In the process of learning tahfiz Al-Qur'an, children are not only expected to memorize verses but also to ensure proper articulation (makhraj), fluency, and adherence to tajwid rules (Nurliati, 2010). To achieve learning objectives, effective management is crucial for enhancing systems, strategies, methods, and all learning activities (Hisam, 2019). The accuracy of methods is a key supporting factor in tahfiz programs. Efficient memorization methods create engaging conditions that boost enthusiasm for memorizing the Qur'an (Alfiani, 2018).

In Indonesia, various methods facilitate the process of memorizing the Qur'an (Badruzaman, 2019), each focusing on specific applications. One longstanding method is the ITQON method, a classical approach refined from the Pakistani sabaq-sabqi-manzil model. This method is efficient because memorizing new verses strengthens retention, while reviewing old memorization (manzil) ensures the entire memorization remains solid, with only a small portion being rechecked. This enhances daily recitation (tilawah) in terms of tajweed and fluency (Amri & Subhan, 2021).

Previous studies share similar perspectives on the ITQON method, focusing on planning, implementation, and evaluation of tahfizul Qur'an programs at the elementary or secondary school levels (Amri & Subhan, 2021; Anggriani, 2020) or in pesantren (Muhammad, 2022; Fatimatuzzahro, 2019; Rudiansyah et al., 2022). Additionally, studies also explore the application of differentiated religious learning in early childhood education (Asyafah, 2019; Ngaisah & Aulia, 2023). The difference lies in the object of this study, which focuses on applying the ITQON method at the early childhood level. In contrast, previous research has emphasized elementary school levels and above. Moreover, the differentiation in tahfizul Qur'an programs is still generally applied in religious education in schools.

Method

The research method applied in this study is a qualitative approach with descriptive data processing. This field research focuses on targeted subjects as the primary source of information. The distinctive characteristics of this research include its natural descriptive nature, reliance on direct data sources, prioritization of processes over outcomes, inductive data analysis, and an emphasis on meaning (Fenty Sulastini & Moh. Zamili, 2019). The type of research conducted is a case study, which involves detailed, specific, and in-depth examination of an organization, institution, or specific phenomenon (Amri & Subhan, 2021).

The research location is TK Islam Tahfidzul Qur'an Al Ikhlah in Krogowanan Village, Sawangan District, Magelang Regency. The subjects of this study are the caretakers of the institution, including the principal, teachers, and instructors. The primary data sources for this study are areas related to the application of memorization techniques implemented in the institution. These include primary data derived from operational guidelines and procedural standards for tahfiz activities. As for secondary data, the researcher utilizes records on children's abilities, documentation on children's conditions, program activity documents, as well as related journals and scholarly articles. The data analysis techniques employed in this study consist of data reduction, presentation of results, and conclusion drawing.

Result

1. Research Findings

The ITQON method, differentiated-based, is implemented through four phases: planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment. At TK Islam Tahfidzul Qur'an Al Ikhlah,

these phases are outlined as planning, implementation, and evaluation/reflection.

The planning phase involves steps to implement differentiated learning, beginning with a needs analysis to ensure that lesson plans align with children's needs and yield accurate outcomes. Following the analysis based on learning objectives, learning needs are mapped by considering children's readiness and interests. The initial step includes designing diagnostic assessments, both cognitive and non-cognitive. The steps include: 1) Conducting surveys through questionnaires. 2) Interviewing students. 3) Analyzing students' performance from the previous semester.

Table 1. Diagnostic Evaluation Results
Categorization of Achievement Based on Differentiation Aspects

Differentiation Aspects	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Readiness to learn	The child can	The child can already	children are not yet
(child's understanding)	memorize and recite Tajwid well	memorize well, but not according to Tajweed	able to memorize and are not yet able to read according to Tajweed
Interests (Learning Profile)	Children choose to memorize using the Al-Quran mushaf and murottal mp3	Children choose to memorize using only the Al-Quran Mushaf	Children choose to memorize using only murrotal mp3
Process (mentoring)	Children can memorize verses that have been taught by paying attention to Tajweed independently.	Children can memorize the verses that have been taught by being guided in their tajwid reading	Children need guidance in memorizing the verses they have been taught and in reading tajwid
Product (result achieved)	Children can display their memorization (tasmi') in front of the class well and read according to recitation	Children can display their memorization (tasmi') in front of the class well, even though their reading is not yet appropriate to recitation	Children are not yet able to display their memorization (tasmi') in front of the class well and their reading is not yet appropriate to recitation

The tahfidz learning program at TK Islam Tahfidzul Qur'an Al Ikhlash is implemented using the halaqah and tasmi' methods. The learning process involves various interactions, including individual sessions between teachers and students, group interactions among peers, and collective group activities. This approach ensures that students fully understand and interpret the material. Students are encouraged to independently enhance their memorization skills once they meet targeted milestones. Setting initial memorization goals proves beneficial, as it motivates students to focus and avoid wasting time. These goals are adjusted to individual capabilities, serving as flexible frameworks rather than strict rules. The program begins with students mastering the articulation of Arabic letters (makharijul huruf) before progressing to memorization. Students then memorize and submit their work to their class ustadz/ustadzah for guidance and are required to perform takrir (review) regularly.

Evaluation of the program is conducted systematically, including daily assessments and annual reviews. Daily evaluations focus on students' progress through sabaq (new memorization), sabqi (recent review), and manzil (long-term review). Tahfidz instructors monitor each student's progress by checking their records and providing individual feedback.

At the end of the academic year, staff conduct a comprehensive review of the ITQON method implementation, assessing achievements and identifying areas for improvement in the learning process.

The ITQON method has notable strengths and weaknesses. It is effective in helping children memorize the Qur'an up to Juz 30 while reinforcing previous memorization and introducing new material. However, the method requires a relatively long time to complete memorization, as students are trained for fluency and accountability in their recitation.

2. Discussion

The linguistic definition of Tahfidz Al-Qur'an refers to the activity of memorizing and preserving the Qur'an. Memorization involves embedding content into memory so it can be accurately recalled as it was originally (Getteng et al., 2022). A serious focus in tahfidz learning is enhancing children's memorization abilities, as implemented by TK Islam Tahfidzul Qur'an Al Ikhlas through the ITQON method. This method employs the Pakistani technique consisting of sabaq, sabqi, and manzil.

Sabaq refers to adding new memorization or submitting daily new memorized portions. It involves students starting their memorization by studying verses not previously taught by their mentor. They read the Qur'an three times under supervision before submitting their memorization for evaluation (Ayu Desrani et al., 2022).

Sabqi is the repetition of memorized material from the previous day. It must correspond with the amount of new memorization (sabaq). For instance, if the daily sabaq is one verse, the sabqi should also consist of one verse, and both must be submitted within their respective timeframes.

Manzil focuses on revisiting older memorized material, typically for students who have memorized at least half a juz. Those with less than this are encouraged to repeat previously learned surahs (Fatimatuzzahro, 2019). Additionally, tasmi' is an integral activity in preserving memorization, involving the recitation and listening of the Qur'an in a single sitting to reinforce previously learned material. This ensures that memorization, often subject to being forgotten, is well-maintained (Lubis, 2022).

Differentiated learning within the tahfidz program resembles other subject areas but emphasizes active student participation and independence in submitting memorization. Two primary strategies for differentiation are content and process.

Content focuses on tailoring material to students' levels. Teachers set memorization targets but adjust for students who have already mastered the material, allowing them to minimize the time needed to learn it further. This involves identifying students' mastery levels, streamlining their learning timelines, and focusing on smaller groups needing extra help (Ngaisah et al., 2023).

Process centers on how children comprehend and interpret the material. Desired interactions include individual mentoring sessions, group discussions, and collaborative learning between peers and groups (Sopianti, 2022). By integrating content and process strategies, differentiated learning in tahfidzul Qur'an aligns with the mechanisms illustrated in .



Figure 1. The mechanism of memorizing the Quran

The results that can be analyzed using the Itqon method based on children's differentiation in the Tahfidzul Qur'an program can strengthen thinking skills according to the child's capacity. It allows children to process information well according to the memorization material targets with the sabaq method, expands their understanding of the correct reading rules in accordance with makharijul huruf and tajwid, and provides feedback for improving their memorization using the sabia and manzil approaches. This aligns with previous research using the Pakistani method (Lubis, 2022). The varying abilities of children do not diminish their enthusiasm for memorizing, as there is an acceptance attitude based on their individual capacities. Likewise, the teacher can use teaching strategies effectively and efficiently, as there is no demand for uniform results across all children in determining learning readiness, the children's interests, and the mentoring process. The strategy can be adjusted to the children's differentiation. The results obtained from the evaluation have a positive impact on improving the quality of memorization according to the target of each child.

Conclusion

The implementation of differentiated learning in the ITQON memorization method for the Qur'an will have an impact on the school system, the classroom, and especially the children and the memorization mentors. Every child has different characteristics, and not all children can be treated the same. Inequality in providing services that meet the memorization needs of the children can hinder their progress and learning development. Ineffective services that do not align with the needs of the children can impede their learning growth. Based on observations during the learning process, the implementation of varied teaching methods can result in the following impacts: 1) All students will feel accepted; 2) Different characteristics make them feel valued, safe, and hopeful for development; 3) Teachers can work efficiently in the classroom; 4) Teachers can improve their skills as learning leaders; 5) Teachers become more creative, confident, and brave in applying different strategies; 6) There is tangible fairness and cooperation between students and teachers; 7) It facilitates and fully meets the learning needs of the students.

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