

Strategy of the Leadership of Tahfizhul Quran in Increasing Memorization Motivation of Students

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ABSTRACT

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Pesantren leadership plays a crucial role in the success of Tahfizhul Qur'an education, particularly in shaping students' motivation to consistently memorize the Qur'an. At the Tahfizhul Qur'an Syuhada Islamic Boarding School, effective leadership practices are considered decisive for the quality and sustainability of the tahfizh program. Although many pesantrens implement leadership grounded in religious values, empirical studies examining how a religious-participatory leadership strategy can enhance students' motivation in a local context remain limited. This study aims to analyze the pesantren leadership strategies in increasing students' motivation in the Tahfizhul Qur'an program. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving the pesantren leader, tahfizh supervisors, and students, and analyzed using an interactive data analysis model. The findings indicate that the pesantren leader applies a religious-participatory leadership style that emphasizes exemplary conduct, direct involvement in the tahfizh program, and the internalization of spiritual values. Students' motivation is enhanced through spiritual encouragement, personal guidance, recognition of memorization achievements, and a structured, consistent tahfizh program. The study concludes that effective pesantren leadership significantly determines students' motivation, discipline, and responsibility in maintaining Qur'anic memorization. These findings provide practical guidance for developing humanistic, religious, and sustainable tahfizh leadership models in other pesantrens.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Tahfizhul Qur'an plays a vital role in the holistic development of individuals, encompassing spiritual, moral, psychological, academic, and social dimensions. Spiritually, memorizing the Qur'an strengthens one's relationship with Allah and fosters deep religious consciousness (Rassool & Keskin, 2025). Morally, tahfizh inculcates essential values such as patience, perseverance, and honesty, which are fundamental for daily life (Shukri, 2020). From

a psychological perspective, reciting and memorizing the Qur'an has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, thereby supporting mental well-being. Moreover, tahfiz enhances academic and cognitive abilities through mastery of Arabic grammar and memorization strategies, while also motivating students to engage more actively in learning (Sokang et al., 2024; Hussin et al., 2016). Socially, Qur'anic memorization reinforces Muslim identity, nurtures a sense of belonging within the community, and prepares future generations to contribute positively to society (Nasir, 2021; Abdullah et al., 2017; Zulhannan & Musyarrofah, 2024).

Despite its benefits, students face various motivational challenges in memorizing the Qur'an, influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation, such as spiritual commitment and personal satisfaction, is crucial for sustaining long-term memorization efforts and achieving success (Latipah, 2022). However, this motivation may decline due to the demanding nature of the task, which requires high levels of consistency and perseverance (Awang, Rahman, & Yusof, 2025). Extrinsic motivation, including encouragement from parents, social recognition, and rewards, can support students' persistence, particularly in fulfilling religious obligations or attaining academic recognition (Ay & Pingov, 2022). Nevertheless, excessive reliance on external incentives may weaken intrinsic motivation over time (Hanafi et al., 2021). Traditional instructional methods, such as one-on-one face-to-face guidance, remain effective but are limited by teacher availability and the availability of individualized attention (Purbohadi et al., 2019). Institutional support from teachers, families, and peers through positive reinforcement and a conducive learning environment has been shown to significantly enhance students' motivation in Qur'anic memorization (Mousi, 2021).

As institutions dedicated to the formation of Qur'anic memorizers, pesantren hold a strategic role in nurturing students with strong character and integrity. Certain pesantren, such as Pesantren Darul Huffadh Tuju-Tuju, position Qur'anic memorization as the core of their educational identity by mandating all students to memorize the Qur'an. This emphasis extends beyond cognitive achievement to include character education by integrating Qur'anic values and local wisdom in students' daily lives (Yusuf et al., 2021). Pesantren educational programs encompass intellectual development, skills acquisition, and character formation, reinforced by a hidden curriculum internalized through routine activities and social interactions (Sadiah, 2022). Furthermore, pesantren maintain close ties with local communities and cultures, enabling them to promote moderate Islamic values and contribute to social and economic empowerment, including efforts to address poverty and social inequality (Helmy et al., 2021; Asror, 2017). Leadership within pesantren plays a decisive role in ensuring the sustainability and quality of Tahfizul Qur'an education. Pesantren leadership is typically grounded in strong spiritual and moral values, as demonstrated by Pesantren As'adiyah Sengkang, where visionary leadership based on the Barakka paradigm is translated into effective management strategies that involve human resource development, modern management systems, the utilization of digital technology, and multi-stakeholder collaboration (Hamdanah et al., 2025). In regions such as Yogyakarta and Central Java, pesantren leaders actively promote Islamic moderation to counter radicalism through principles of justice, balance, and peace (Saleh, 2025). Additionally, the adoption of educational technologies such as blended learning, flipped classrooms, and AI-assisted muraja'ah has been shown to enhance students' motivation and memorization effectiveness (Ahmad & Musa, 2025). Nevertheless, structural and pedagogical challenges persist, highlighting the need for continuous leadership capacity building and sustained policy support (Rahtikawatie et al., 2021).

Leadership strategies are therefore crucial in enhancing students' motivation within Tahfizhul Qur'an programs. Effective leadership extends beyond memorization outcomes to the creation of a supportive and innovative learning environment. The concept of Khaadimul Innovation Leadership, which integrates servant leadership and innovation, positions leaders as facilitators of students' growth and creativity, thereby increasing motivation and memorization performance (Nurchayati & Fachrunnisa, 2025). The success of tahfiz programs is also influenced by strong institutional support and structured methodologies, such as the application of Sabak, Sabki, and Manzil methods combined with disciplined muraja'ah routines and continuous evaluation (Halim et al., 2024; Subki, 2025). These approaches have been shown to improve student engagement and self-regulation, particularly within blended learning environments that encourage active participation (Zakariyah et al., 2025). Ultimately, leadership that emphasizes support, positivity, and innovation contributes significantly to both academic achievement and personal development among students (Awang et al., 2025).

Previous studies have demonstrated that pesantren leadership plays a pivotal role in the success of Tahfizhul Qur'an education through spiritual guidance, managerial effectiveness, promotion of Islamic moderation, and integration of educational technology. However, a research gap remains due to the limited number of studies that comprehensively examine the relationship between religious-participatory leadership strategies and students' motivation in regional pesantren contexts, particularly through sustained and directly engaged leadership practices. The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of a religious participatory leadership model that integrates exemplary conduct, spiritual psychological social motivation, and structured tahfiz management into a unified leadership framework. This study aims to analyze the leadership strategies of the Tahfizhul Qur'an Syuhada Pesantren in enhancing students' memorization motivation on a sustainable basis. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of an effective, humanistic, and applicable tahfiz leadership model for other pesantren and to serve as a policy reference for improving the quality of Qur'anic education.

This research offers several contributions. Theoretically, it strengthens the concept of religious transformational leadership in the context of pesantren tahfiz. Empirically, it provides evidence of effective religious participatory leadership practices that enhance students' motivation and discipline. Practically, it proposes a strategic and sustainable model for managing Tahfizhul Qur'an programs that can be adapted by pesantren across Indonesia.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the leadership strategies at Tahfizhul Qur'an Syuhada Islamic Boarding School in Batubara Regency in enhance students' memorization motivation. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the exploration of social realities, experiences, and leadership practices within the pesantren environment. The study was conducted at this boarding school due to its structured tahfizz program and the active role of its leaders in guiding students. The research subjects included the boarding school leader as the primary informant, the musyrif as supporting informants, and tahfizz students as complementary informants to obtain data regarding leadership strategies, program implementation, and students' perceptions and experiences in memorizing the Qur'an. Data were collected as outlined in the table below:

Table 1. Data Collection

| No | Research Focus | Data Collection Technique | Data Collected |
|----|--|---|---|
| 1 | Leadership Strategy of the Tahfizhul Qur'an Syuhada Islamic Boarding School | In-depth Interview | Information on leadership strategies, school policies, and the role of the leader in the tahfizh program |
| 2 | Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Leadership Management for Enhancing Students' Qur'an Memorization | In-depth Interview, Participatory Observation | Data on challenges and supporting factors in leadership implementation, and interactions among leaders, musyrif, and students |
| 3 | Forms of Motivation Given to Tahfizh Students | In-depth Interview, Documentation | Information on types of motivation provided to students and their responses to these motivations |
| 4 | Implementation of the Tahfizh Program in Increasing Students' Memorization Motivation | Participatory Observation, Documentation | Data on tahfizh activities, halaqah sessions, memorization deposits, muroja'ah, and related program documents |

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive analysis model comprising three main stages. The first stage was data reduction, involving sorting, simplifying, and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives to produce more directed information. The second stage was data presentation, arranging data into descriptive narratives to facilitate the understanding of patterns, relationships, and meanings. The third stage was conclusion-drawing and verification, in which the data were interpreted to obtain meaningful insights and conclusions regarding the boarding school's leadership strategies for enhancing students' memorization motivation. To ensure data validity, this study employed triangulation, including source triangulation by comparing data from the leader, musyrif, and students; technique triangulation by comparing interviews, observations, and documentation; and time triangulation by collecting data at different times.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Leadership Strategy of Martyr Islamic Boarding School Leaders in the Tahfizh Al-Qur'an Program

The leadership at Pesantren Tahfizhul Qur'an Syuhada in Batubara Regency employs a participatory and religious approach, with Qur'anic principles forming the core of decision-making, program development, and student growth. Leaders serve not only as structural authorities but also as moral and spiritual role models (*uswah hasanah*), whose attitudes, behaviors, and dedication to the Qur'an serve as clear examples for students. This leadership style is also transformational, especially in inspiring, motivating, and uniting efforts toward reaching memorization goals, highlighting that Qur'an memorization is both worship and a religious duty to be carried out sincerely. As Nyai at Roudlotun Nasyiin shows, transformational leadership positively affects psychological, social, and cultural progress within pesantren (Aini et al., 2021). Additionally, innovative leadership that blends visionary, democratic, paternalistic, and spiritual elements fosters an inclusive environment that promotes collaboration and creativity. Modernizing pesantren education, such as integrating technology and multilingual teaching, prepares students to meet global challenges (Salim et al., 2024).

In the context of educational management, the leadership strategy at Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Syuhada integrates program planning, the implementation of tahfizh coaching, and the evaluation of memorization achievements, with leaders serving as primary controllers to ensure that all activities align with the established vision and standards. Overall, this leadership model combines religious, transformational, and participatory dimensions, emphasizing not only the quantitative achievement of memorization targets but also the development of spiritual awareness, intrinsic motivation, and student character as Qur'an memorizers. Islamic leadership has been found to enhance the effectiveness of pesantren caretakers and improve the organization's educational and developmental climate (Kadir & Umiarso, 2023). Additionally, Kyai leadership, characterized by collaboration and a supportive school culture, plays a critical role in increasing teacher satisfaction and self-confidence (Sary et al., 2024), while spiritual leadership by Kyai helps shape student character and independence, fostering entrepreneurial spirit and self-reliance through religious practices such as prayer, consultation, and sharia-based interactions (Karim et al., 2025).

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Implementing Leadership Management when Improving the Memorization of the Qur'an for Students at the Tahfidzul Qur'an Syuhada Islamic Boarding School.

At Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Syuhada, memorizing the Qur'an is regarded as an act of worship that brings students closer to Allah SWT. To support effective memorization, several factors have been identified, including the ideal age to start, effective time management, a conducive environment, the use of a single mushaf, and engaging the senses often by reciting the Qur'an at any time, whether during or outside of prayers. Intelligence and parental motivation also play significant roles in students' success in memorization. These factors are generally divided into internal elements, such as motivation and time management, and external elements, like guidance from musyrif (mentors), a supportive setting, adequate facilities, proper mushafs, and strict boarding school rules. Systematic memorization methods include the Sisir technique, which involves memorizing from the end of a juz to the beginning and reciting every five juz to ensure accuracy and minimize errors (Kurniailah & Bakar, 2023); the Halaqoh format, which emphasizes interaction through recitation, understanding, memorization, and application of the Qur'an while fostering noble character (Zulhannan & Musyarrofah, 2024); and repetition through reading, writing, and reviewing Qur'anic verses to develop fluency and automaticity (Sabki & Hardaker, 2019).

Not all students at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Syuhada are able to implement memorization strategies effectively due to various internal and external inhibiting factors. Internally, students may experience a lack of interest and aptitude, low self-motivation, poor health, limited cognitive ability, laziness, a tendency to give up easily, and an absence of memorization targets. Externally, challenges include varying levels of busyness, misuse of mobile phones, a lack of motivation from the surrounding environment, difficulties in balancing schoolwork with muroja'ah (review), and the influence of social media. These conditions often make it difficult to balance academic responsibilities with Qur'an memorization, reducing the quality of memorization. To address these challenges, hybrid learning approaches that combine online and offline methods, such as using voice notes via WhatsApp alongside traditional face-to-face evaluation, have proven effective; for instance,

SMP Plus Babussalam uses online classical methods, while Pondok Pesantren Tahfidz Yatim Dhuafa applies the Pakistani method to simultaneously memorize new and previously memorized material (Susanto et al., 2021). Additionally, effective student management systems that monitor and evaluate activities and progress are crucial for supporting consistent memorization practices and improving overall tahfidz program outcomes (Tanzeh et al., 2020).

To overcome these challenges, several strategies have been implemented at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Syuhada. First, students are encouraged to understand the material before memorization to facilitate retention. Second, new memorization is linked with previously memorized material to ensure coherence. Third, regular muroja'ah is conducted to strengthen memorization. Fourth, students are guided to maintain their health through proper nutrition, adequate rest, and physical exercise. Fifth, consultation with mentors or parents is available when difficulties arise. Additionally, boarding school regulations, such as a minimum requirement of 30 memorization deposits per month, encourage students to review their memorization regularly while reinforcing its quality. Sustained resource allocation is also necessary to address challenges such as inconsistent student engagement and large class sizes (Basir et al., 2024).

3. Forms of Motivation Given to Tahfizh Students

The enhancement of students' memorization motivation at Tahfidzul Qur'an Syuhada Islamic Boarding School in Batubara Regency is achieved through a holistic, layered motivational strategy that encompasses spiritual, psychological, and social motivations. Spiritual motivation serves as the primary foundation for fostering students' enthusiasm in memorizing the Qur'an. The boarding school leaders and musyrif consistently instill an understanding of the virtues of Qur'anic memorization, such as multiplied rewards, the special status of hafizh and hafizhah in the sight of Allah SWT, and the Qur'an's role as intercession in the hereafter. This spiritual motivational strategy aims to develop students' intrinsic motivation, which emerges from religious awareness and sincere dedication to memorization. Students who possess a strong understanding of the worship dimensions of tahfizh tend to maintain their memorization more consistently, demonstrate greater patience when facing challenges, and are less likely to give up when bored.

Psychological Motivation, the boarding school leaders and musyrif actively engage in individual dialogues with students to understand the obstacles they face, including academic, emotional, and social challenges. This psychological support seeks to enhance students' self-efficacy in memorizing the Qur'an. Students who feel appreciated, heard, and emotionally supported show increased motivation and a stronger sense of responsibility toward the memorization targets. Social motivation is provided through recognition and appreciation of students' memorization achievements. Such recognition is not always material but is often expressed through praise, acknowledgment in front of peers, assignment of specific responsibilities and symbolic appreciation for completing a juz or reaching a particular memorization target. This strategy aims to cultivate students' pride, self-esteem, and achievement motivation. Social motivation has been shown to create a healthy competitive environment within the boarding school, encouraging students to improve the quality and quantity of their memorization without fostering negative competition. Students are not only motivated to achieve personal goals but are also inspired to serve as role models for their peers.

A comprehensive strategy to enhance the motivation of Tahfizh students involves multiple integrated approaches. First, employing diverse learning methods, such as reading, repetition, and comprehension exercises, accommodates different learning styles and improves memorization abilities (Fakhrudin et al., 2020). Second, fostering a supportive environment by ensuring a positive school climate and providing both emotional and academic support significantly strengthens students' motivation (Taat & Talip, 2021). Third, actively involving parents through regular communication and participation in school activities further enhances students' motivation and academic achievement (Sumarsono et al., 2025). Finally, addressing stress and promoting mental health through programs that develop effective coping mechanisms are crucial for maintaining students' motivation and overall well-being (Aulia et al., 2024).

4. Implementation of the Tahfizh Program in Increasing the Motivation of Student Memorization

The implementation of the *tahfizh* program at Pondok Pesantren Tahfizhul Qur'an Syuhada, Batubara Regency, is conducted through a well-planned, structured, and sustainable mentoring system. The program emphasizes not only the quantity of memorization but also the quality of recitation, accuracy of *tajwid*, and consistency of *muroja'ah* as fundamental elements in maintaining students' memorization. Core activities include daily memorization submissions (*ziyadah*) carried out in a disciplined manner under the supervision of *musyrif tahfizh*, regular individual and group *muroja'ah*, and periodic evaluations. This consistent memorization routine establishes a stable learning rhythm, fosters a sense of responsibility, and strengthens students' intrinsic motivation to memorize the Qur'an. In addition, the pesantren provides intensive guidance and personalized mentoring for students experiencing stagnation or decreased motivation, ensuring that the program is adaptive rather than uniform and responsive to individual student needs. The *tahfizh* program is therefore designed to offer a holistic educational experience by integrating religious instruction with character development. For instance, Darul Hufadz Islamic Senior High School employs a structured approach, with daily memorization of one verse along with its translation, emphasizing repetition, comprehension, and the practical application of Qur'anic values in daily life (Suryana et al., 2024). Furthermore, the integration of spiritual values within *tahfizh* programs has been shown to significantly influence students' subjective well-being. A study conducted at Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School revealed a strong relationship between spirituality and students' well-being, particularly in helping them manage stress and depression (Hasanah & Haris, 2023).

The role of leadership at Pondok Pesantren Tahfizhul Qur'an Syuhada, Batubara Regency, is particularly evident in the evaluation and supervision of the *tahfizh* program. Weekly and monthly evaluations are conducted to monitor students' memorization progress and assess the effectiveness of instructional methods. Direct involvement of the pesantren leadership functions not only as managerial oversight but also as moral support that positively affects students' psychological well-being. Leadership strategies grounded in exemplary conduct have been proven to enhance students' motivation for memorization, both internally and externally, as reflected in increased discipline, self-awareness, and positive attitudes toward Qur'anic learning. Consequently, the *tahfizh* program is not solely oriented toward academic achievement but also serves as a medium for developing students' religious

character, including patience, perseverance (*istiqāmah*), and sincerity in memorizing the Qur'an. Islamic boarding schools play a strategic role in character education by shaping students into open-minded, tolerant, and morally upright individuals through both structured educational activities and daily habituation that instills spiritual and moral values (Purwanto et al., 2021). Moreover, the Tahfidzul Qur'an Education System (T-QES) contributes to the development of future leaders with integrity by emphasizing ethical leadership and integrating Qur'anic values into personal and professional life (Rasyid et al., 2022).

D. CONCLUSION

The leadership of the Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Syuhada in Batubara Regency plays a highly significant role in shaping students' motivation, discipline, and success in memorizing the Qur'an. Pesantren leadership functions not merely as an administrative authority but as a central driving force in cultivating a tahfizh-oriented culture grounded in spiritual values and character development. The leadership model implemented is a religious-participatory approach rooted in Qur'anic values and Islamic teachings, emphasizing exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*), direct involvement in tahfizh supervision, and the internalization of spiritual values among students. Student motivation to memorize the Qur'an is enhanced by integrated strategies that encompass spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions. Spiritual motivation is fostered through continuous reinforcement of the virtues of Qur'anic memorization and the cultivation of worship-based values. Psychological motivation is realized through personalized guidance, empathetic communication, and targeted mentoring for students facing memorization challenges, while social motivation is strengthened through recognition and rewards for students' achievements. The tahfizh program is implemented in a structured, consistent, and sustainable manner through daily memorization submissions, scheduled muroja'ah sessions, periodic evaluations, and intensive coaching. Active involvement of pesantren leaders in monitoring and evaluating the program positively influences student discipline and strengthens their sense of responsibility toward their memorization. Consequently, this leadership strategy contributes to increased motivation for memorization, enhanced religious behavior, and the development of positive character traits such as discipline, patience, and sincerity. Theoretically, these findings reinforce the relevance and effectiveness of religious transformational leadership within the tahfizh pesantren context, highlighting leadership quality as a crucial factor in sustaining and improving Qur'anic memorization outcomes.

E. DECLARATION OF AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The author employed ChatGPT as a translation aid and Grammarly for linguistic polishing. These tools were used solely to improve clarity and expression. The author has thoroughly examined, revised, and confirmed the final version, and accepts complete responsibility for the intellectual content, claims, and any possible mistakes in this work.

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meaningful impact by strengthening effective, humanistic, and sustainable leadership models in tahfiz pesantren and serving as a reference for policy improvement in Qur'anic education. Additionally, this research contributes theoretically by reinforcing religious transformational leadership concepts, empirically by documenting successful practices, and practically by offering a strategic model for managing tahfiz programs in Indonesia.

G. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- Author 1 : Conceptualized the study, developed the research framework, and designed the methodology. Conducted the primary data collection and performed the main analysis. Drafted the manuscript and integrated literature review findings.
- Author 2 : Assisted in data collection, provided critical insights during data interpretation, and contributed to the discussion of findings. Reviewed and edited the manuscript for academic rigor and coherence.
- Author 3 : Provided expertise on religious leadership and Qur'anic education, contributed to the theoretical framework, and supervised the integration of spiritual and motivational aspects in the analysis. Reviewed and refined the manuscript, ensuring alignment with educational and Islamic scholarly standards.

H. LITERATURE

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