

From Memorization to Transformation: The Role of Tahfidz in Developing Spiritual and Moral Character

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ABSTRACT

The tahfidz (Quran memorization) program in Islamic boarding schools plays an essential role in fostering students' spirituality and character development. However, maintaining consistency in memorization remains a significant challenge due to various internal and external factors. This study aims to examine the implementation of the tahfidz program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School in Probolinggo, focusing on its contribution to students' spiritual strengthening and character formation, as well as the challenges encountered in the process. This research employs a qualitative field study approach, utilizing participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques. The participants include students, teachers, and administrators selected through purposive sampling. The findings reveal that the tahfidz program significantly enhances students' memorization quality, discipline, responsibility, and spiritual awareness. Structured routines such as daily memorization and repetition (muroja'ah) help build consistency and strengthen students' connection with the Quran. Nevertheless, challenges such as academic workload, fatigue, and fluctuating motivation affect students' ability to maintain consistent memorization. The study implies that a holistic approach integrating disciplined routines, intensive mentoring, and attention to students' emotional well-being is crucial to optimize the effectiveness of tahfidz programs. Overall, the program plays a strategic role in shaping disciplined, morally grounded, and spiritually resilient individuals who are prepared to contribute positively to society.

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INTRODUCTION

The Quran memorization education (*tahfidz*) in Islamic boarding schools plays a significant role in strengthening the spirituality and character development of students (*santri*) (Effendi et al., 2025; Setiawan et al., 2025; Turrohma et al., 2025). The *tahfidz* program is not merely a process of memorizing Quranic texts, but also an educational tool that integrates religious values, discipline, and character development (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Jaedun et al., 2024; K et al., 2025). The primary goal of *tahfidz* education is to shape students who not only memorize the holy verses of the Quran but also understand and apply the values contained in the Quran in their daily lives (Akmansyah et al., 2025; Sabarudin et al., 2023; Sholihah & Zaenurrosyid, 2025). However, in practice, there are various challenges faced, both internal and external, that can affect the success of the *tahfidz* program.

While the benefits of *tahfidz* for the spiritual and character development of students have been widely discussed in the literature, previous research has largely focused on the cognitive and spiritual aspects in general (Asrori et al., 2022; Kurniailah & Bakar, 2023; Mukhammad & Bon, 2026) shows that *tahfidz* has significant benefits in increasing students' discipline and spirituality. However, the main challenge faced by students in maintaining consistency in their memorization remains an issue that needs to be addressed (Mubi et al., 2024). Various factors, such as pressure to meet memorization targets, the influence of the boarding school environment, and a heavy academic load, can affect students' ability to maintain their memorization consistency (Gozali, 2023); (R. Jannah et al., 2022).

The importance of this study lies in the relevance of *tahfidz* education in the context of more holistic character development. The *tahfidz* program is expected to shape a generation that is not only proficient in memorizing the Quran but also possesses good discipline, morality, and ethics, all of which are essential in everyday life (Aslihah & Wasehudin, 2023; Pangastuti et al., 2025; Syarifah & Kubra, 2024). This program functions to strengthen the spirituality of students and helps them build emotional resilience and mature character. This is in line with the goals of Islamic education, which emphasizes the formation of strong character and spiritual closeness to God through Quranic learning (Asrori et al., 2022).

This study aims to fill the knowledge gap related to the practical challenges faced in the *tahfidz* program. Although many studies have examined the benefits of *tahfidz*, most of these studies have not sufficiently explored how challenges such as students' personal motivation and external influences from the boarding school environment affect the success of the program (Abdul Mughni et al., 2022) emphasizes the importance of effective management in the *tahfidz* program, but few have examined how boarding school managers address these challenges through a more comprehensive approach.

The rationale for this study is based on the importance of understanding how boarding school managers can optimize the *tahfidz* program to address existing challenges while also strengthening students' character and spirituality. This study proposes to view *tahfidz* management through a more holistic approach, which includes intensive nurturing (*Riāyah Ṭ-Ṭullāb*), disciplined *tahfidz* routines, and evaluation based on memorization quality. This approach aims to not only improve students' memorization but also strengthen moral and spiritual values in their lives.

The primary objective of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of the Quran memorization program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School in Probolinggo, focusing on the challenges faced by students in maintaining their memorization consistency. This study also aims to explore how boarding school managers address these obstacles through a holistic approach that combines disciplined *tahfidz* routines, intensive nurturing, and evaluation based on the quality of

memorization. The research is expected to provide practical recommendations for boarding schools to improve the effectiveness of the tahfidz program and offer a deeper understanding of the impact of tahfidz on the spiritual and character development of students.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a field research type, aimed at exploring the dynamics of the Quran memorization (*tahfidz*) program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School in Probolinggo and its impact on the spirituality and character development of the students (*santri*). The research subjects consist of santri, tahfidz teachers, and boarding school administrators, selected using purposive sampling technique. This technique allows for the selection of subjects based on the relevance of their experiences and direct involvement in the tahfidz program. Data was collected through three main methods: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation collection. Participatory observation involved the researcher directly participating in tahfidz activities to gain a deeper understanding of the program's dynamics. In-depth interviews were conducted with santri, teachers, and administrators to explore their views, experiences, and perceptions regarding the tahfidz program and its impact on their spiritual development. Documentation collection complemented the data with written materials or recordings relevant to the tahfidz program.

Data analysis was carried out using a qualitative approach through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction involved filtering and categorizing relevant information, while data presentation was organized in a narrative format to facilitate understanding of the findings. Conclusions were drawn by formulating the key findings that describe the impact of the tahfidz program on the character and spirituality of santri, as well as the challenges faced in its implementation. Data validity was ensured using two main techniques: source triangulation and member checking. Source triangulation compared data obtained from various parties (santri, teachers, administrators) to ensure consistency and accuracy of the information. Member checking was conducted by confirming the interview results with informants to ensure that the data interpretation was accurate and reflected their experiences.

This research was conducted in several stages, starting with the preparation phase, which involved planning the research and selecting the sample. Data collection was carried out through direct observation, interviews, and documentation. The next phase was data analysis, which focused on organizing, understanding, and interpreting the collected data. The final research report was prepared by presenting the findings systematically, along with recommendations that could be used to improve the implementation of the tahfidz program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School. With this approach, the study aims to contribute to the development of more effective strategies to strengthen the spirituality and character of santri through tahfidz education

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Consistency and Quality of Students' Memorization

The first indicator that reflects the strengthening of students' spirituality through the tahfidz program is the consistency and quality of Quran memorization achieved by the students. A well-structured and disciplined tahfidz program enables students to memorize the Quran within a set period. The routine, which starts in the morning with new memorization followed by review (*muroja'ah*) in the afternoon and evening, creates consistent habits for the students. This leads to more

stable and long-lasting memorization, reflecting a deeper spiritual connection with the Quran. The quality of this memorization also measures their understanding of the recitation, not merely the ability to memorize the text.

Consistency in maintaining Quran memorization is a significant challenge in the tahfidz program, particularly with the other activities students must engage in. Therefore, the tahfidz program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School is designed to provide students with opportunities to maintain their memorization through regular repetition and rigorous evaluation. Memorization evaluation, which is based on quality, not only measures the speed of memorization but also the accuracy of recitation and long-term retention. Thus, this consistency shows how deeply students are connected to the Quran as a life guide.

Moreover, the tahfidz program also includes methods that prioritize understanding the meaning of each verse being memorized. This aims to prevent mechanical memorization without comprehension. Understanding the meaning of each verse helps students internalize the teachings of the Quran into their daily lives. It also strengthens the spiritual bond between the students and the Quran, as they are not only memorizing the text but also reflecting on and understanding the meanings within it. Therefore, the quality of memorization reflects a tangible strengthening of their spirituality.

A tahfidz program focused on consistency and memorization quality ultimately results in students who are not only proficient in memorizing the Quran but also in applying its teachings. With strengthened and stable memorization, students are better prepared to lead a spiritually directed life. They have a strong foundation in navigating daily life, which serves as a moral compass in decision-making and facing life's challenges.

Enhancement of Students' Discipline and Responsibility

The second indicator in the strengthening of students' spirituality through the tahfidz program is the improvement in discipline and responsibility that is formed through the tahfidz routine. The tahfidz program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School places a strong emphasis on discipline in daily activities, starting from the morning with new memorization until the evening with group review (*muroja'ah*). Each student is required to follow a set schedule, which includes time for memorization, rest, and other religious activities. This discipline extends beyond memorization and permeates other aspects of students' lives, such as prayer times, study, and interactions with others.

Responsibility in the tahfidz program also includes managing their own memorization, where students are expected to monitor and maintain the quality of their memorization independently. They are responsible for reminding themselves of the memorization targets set and working hard to achieve them. The intensive nurturing (*Riāyah Ṭ-Ṭullāb*) applied in the boarding school helps foster a strong bond between the teachers and students, where teachers not only teach memorization but also guide and motivate students to maintain personal discipline and responsibility in carrying out the tahfidz program.

Discipline and responsibility are also reflected in students' time management. The strict tahfidz program requires students to learn how to manage their time efficiently. They must balance time between memorization, religious studies, and participating in other social and religious activities. This teaches them the importance of good time management and how to prioritize important activities, which in turn develops their ability to live a more organized and responsible life.

Success in following a strict routine and maintaining responsibility for their memorization is a clear sign of the development of discipline and spiritual responsibility in students. The tahfidz program, which emphasizes discipline, not only helps students become more organized in their daily routines but also teaches them to be more responsible toward themselves and their community. This responsibility ultimately contributes to the formation of a strong character, not only in memorizing the Quran but also in their lives within society.

Enhancement of Moral and Spiritual Character.

The third indicator is the improvement in students' moral and spiritual character, which can be seen in the changes in their attitudes and values. The Quran memorization program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School does not only focus on memorizing the Quranic text but also on strengthening character through understanding and applying the teachings of the Quran in daily life. The program gives students the opportunity to internalize the moral values contained in each verse they memorize, such as patience, sincerity, and responsibility. Thus, the tahfidz program functions as a means to shape students' character more holistically.

A structured tahfidz program, coupled with an intensive nurturing approach, allows students to experience a direct influence on their character. They are not only academically engaged with the Quran but also emotionally and spiritually. A deep understanding of the meanings of the verses they memorize encourages them to apply these values in their daily lives, reflecting their moral growth. For example, verses that teach patience, honesty, and kindness are reflected in students' behavior, which becomes more disciplined, responsible, and capable of controlling their emotions and practicing good manners.

The improvement in students' spirituality is also evident in the peace of mind and tranquility they experience after interacting regularly with the Quran. The tahfidz routine, which involves reciting, understanding, and repeating Quranic verses, brings calm to the heart and strengthens students' spiritual connection with God. The success of the tahfidz program in reinforcing this spiritual bond has a broader impact on students' lives, as they feel closer to the teachings of their religion and are more prepared to face life's challenges.

Strong moral and spiritual character is not only beneficial to students in a personal context but also to their social communities. Students who have internalized the teachings of the Quran and strengthened their discipline and responsibility will be more prepared to make positive contributions to society. They will have a strong, compassionate character and be ready to become agents of change, bringing Islamic values into their social lives. Thus, the tahfidz program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School focuses not only on academic outcomes but also on shaping students' character in ways that contribute meaningfully to the strengthening of the broader Muslim community.

DISCUSSION

Consistency and Quality of Students' Memorization

The tahfidz program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School has shown a significant impact in improving the consistency and quality of students' Quran memorization. This study found that the disciplined daily routine, starting from new memorization in the morning to review (muroja'ah) in the evening, helps students maintain their memorization in a more stable and long-lasting manner. This aligns with findings that suggest regular repetition and quality evaluation are key factors in

maintaining students' memorization consistency (Sabrina et al., 2022). Students participating in this program not only memorize the Quran more quickly but also ensure their memorization remains intact in the long term with high quality.

Understanding the meanings of the memorized verses also becomes an important aspect of this tahfidz program (Wahyuningsih et al., 2024), understanding the meaning of the Quran not only strengthens memorization but also provides spiritual depth for the students. In this regard, students who memorize with a deep understanding of the meanings of the verses report an increased closeness to the Quran and positive effects in their daily lives (Turrohma et al., 2025; Wafi et al., 2023). The tahfidz program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School, which integrates memorization with understanding the meanings, proves to be effective in creating a generation that not only memorizes the Quran but also understands and applies its teachings (Amin et al., 2025; M. Jannah & Jumari, 2024).

However, challenges in maintaining memorization consistency still exist, as observed in this study. Some students reported difficulties in retaining their memorization due to external factors such as a heavy academic load and a lack of rest time. Along with the pressure to achieve memorization targets, such as completing 30 juz within a specific time frame, some students experienced a decrease in motivation. This highlights the need for a more holistic approach in managing the tahfidz program, one that focuses not only on achieving targets but also on the emotional and mental well-being of the students.

Enhancement of Discipline and Responsibility

The second indicator, the improvement in discipline and responsibility, is also a key aspect of this tahfidz program. Students who follow the strict tahfidz routine learn to manage their time more efficiently (Gozali, 2023). The high discipline in following the tahfidz schedule not only enhances memorization abilities but also forms a more organized and responsible character. This study shows that with strict supervision from caregivers and continuous evaluation, students become accustomed to maintaining discipline in their lives. They are not only responsible for their memorization but also for all other tasks and obligations, both in religious and social activities at the boarding school (Farhanillah et al., 2025; Rohani et al., 2025).

The implementation of the Riāyah Ṭ-Ṭullāb system, which provides personalized attention to each student, has proven effective in increasing their responsibility for memorization. This system ensures that every student is not only required to memorize but also receives guidance to maintain their memorization consistency. This is consistent with the findings of (Karimah, 2023), which indicate that intensive nurturing in the tahfidz program helps students overcome their personal challenges, whether emotional, social, or academic. Personalized guidance from the teachers also provides additional motivation for students to stay disciplined in following the tahfidz program.

However, despite the increased discipline and responsibility, some students experience burnout, which affects their motivation. Several students stated that they feel exhausted due to the very tight routine, which can affect their enthusiasm in continuing the tahfidz program. This shows the importance of having variation in the learning approach and balancing the tahfidz activities with rest or other social activities to keep students' enthusiasm and motivation intact.

Enhancement of Moral and Spiritual Character

The enhancement of students' moral and spiritual character is the most significant result of the tahfidz program implemented at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School. The tahfidz program not only focuses on memorizing the Quranic text but also on shaping better character through understanding and applying the values contained in the Quran. Students following this program demonstrate significant changes in their behavior, such as improved discipline, patience, and empathy towards others (Yanti et al., 2023). Quran memorization (tahfidz) positively impacts the development of students' moral character, reflected in their increasingly good behavior and responsibility in life.

This tahfidz program also has a deep spiritual impact on the students, improving their inner peace and tranquility. The students report that the tahfidz routine, which involves understanding the meaning of the Quran, provides calmness of heart and helps them live with greater spiritual awareness. This study found that after participating in the tahfidz program, students felt closer to God and were better able to control their emotions and face life's challenges more wisely. This is consistent with the findings of (Villani et al., 2019), which suggest that a closer relationship with the Quran can enhance an individual's subjective well-being and spiritual peace.

However, despite the many positive changes in students' character and spirituality, challenges remain. Some students reported difficulty in maintaining patience and sincerity, especially when facing pressure or difficulties in following the tahfidz program. This highlights the need for more support in guiding students to internalize the teachings of the Quran in their lives, particularly in applying these values when facing more complex life situations.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the tahfidz program at Al Amri Islamic Boarding School plays a significant role in strengthening students' spirituality and character formation. The most notable finding is that the effectiveness of the program lies not only in memorization activities but also in the integration of disciplined routines, intensive mentoring (*ri'ayah ṭ-ṭullāb*), and understanding of Quranic meanings. An important and somewhat unexpected finding is that while structured routines enhance consistency and discipline, they may also lead to student fatigue and decreased motivation when not balanced with adequate rest and emotional support. Thus, the success of the tahfidz program is closely linked to both academic and psychological factors.

This study supports previous research highlighting the positive impact of tahfidz programs on spiritual and character development, while also extending the discussion by emphasizing a holistic approach. It offers a new perspective by integrating memorization, character education, and emotional well-being as interconnected elements. Additionally, this study contributes to the literature by highlighting the importance of program management and mentoring systems in sustaining students' consistency, thereby enriching existing models of tahfidz education with a more comprehensive framework.

This study is limited to a single Islamic boarding school, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. The use of a qualitative approach also limits the ability to measure the impact quantitatively. Future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples across different educational settings. Further studies may also incorporate mixed-method approaches to obtain more comprehensive data, as well as explore additional variables such as psychological resilience, learning strategies, and institutional management. Such efforts are expected to provide

deeper insights and support the development of more effective tahfidz programs and educational policies.

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