

The Role of Qur'an-Hadith Teachers in Overcoming Memorization Difficulties among Grade IX Students at MTs Negeri Kota Sorong

Wa Rahma

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

e-mail: warama0303@gmail.com

Abstract: *Memorizing the Qur'an and Hadith is a fundamental element of Islamic education, serving as a spiritual discipline and an academic requirement. In formal Islamic secondary schools (madrasah tsanawiyah), students are expected to achieve specific memorization targets within the national curriculum. However, many face significant obstacles that impede this process, ranging from limited reading fluency and low intrinsic motivation to insufficient parental involvement. This study explores the multifaceted role of Qur'an-Hadith teachers in overcoming such challenges among Grade IX students at MTs Negeri Kota Sorong, identifies the difficulties they encounter, and analyzes the strategies they employ. Using a qualitative approach grounded in Islamic pedagogy and supported by modern educational theory, data were collected through eight observation sessions, in-depth interviews with three Qur'an-Hadith teachers, twelve students, and four parents, as well as the analysis of lesson plans, assessment records, and memorization logs. The data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's interactive model, with validity ensured through triangulation of sources and methods. The findings reveal that teachers function as motivators by offering praise, grades, and rewards; as facilitators by employing talaqqi and sima'i methods alongside audiovisual aids and adaptive approaches for varying abilities; as mentors by providing individual guidance outside class hours; and as evaluators through regular oral tests and recitation submissions. The challenges they face include heterogeneous reading skills, fluctuating motivation, and weak parental engagement. Strategies to address these involve collective repetition, contextualization of verses, memorization competitions, and sustained communication with parents. This study offers a conceptual framework that links classroom practices with broader educational theory, emphasizing the necessity of a synergistic approach between teachers, students, and parents for effective memorization. Its implications extend to curriculum design, teacher professional development, and community involvement in Qur'an and Hadith memorization initiatives.*

Keywords: teacher role, Qur'an-Hadith, memorization difficulties, adaptive teaching strategies.

Abstrak: *Era Menghafal Al-Qur'an dan Hadis merupakan salah satu komponen fundamental dalam pendidikan Islam yang memiliki dimensi spiritual sekaligus akademik. Di madrasah tsanawiyah, peserta didik dituntut untuk mencapai target hafalan tertentu yang telah ditetapkan dalam kurikulum nasional. Namun, dalam praktiknya, berbagai hambatan sering muncul, mulai dari keterbatasan kelancaran membaca huruf Arab, rendahnya motivasi intrinsik, hingga kurangnya keterlibatan orang tua dalam mendukung proses hafalan di rumah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran guru Al-Qur'an Hadis dalam mengatasi kesulitan menghafal pada peserta didik kelas IX MTs Negeri Kota Sorong, mengidentifikasi kendala yang dihadapi,*

serta menggambarkan strategi yang digunakan guru untuk mengatasinya. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan landasan teori pedagogi Islam yang dipadukan dengan teori pendidikan modern. Data diperoleh melalui delapan kali observasi pembelajaran, wawancara mendalam dengan tiga guru Al-Qur'an Hadis, dua belas peserta didik, dan empat orang tua, serta analisis dokumen berupa Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran, catatan penilaian, dan buku log hafalan peserta didik. Analisis data dilakukan dengan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldana, sedangkan validitas dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber dan metode. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru berperan sebagai motivator dengan memberikan pujian, nilai tambahan, dan hadiah; sebagai fasilitator dengan menerapkan metode talaqqi dan sima'i yang didukung media audiovisual serta adaptasi bagi perbedaan kemampuan membaca; sebagai pembimbing (mentor) melalui bimbingan individu di luar jam pelajaran; serta sebagai evaluator melalui tes lisan dan setoran hafalan secara rutin. Kendala utama meliputi perbedaan kemampuan membaca, motivasi yang fluktuatif, dan keterlibatan orang tua yang minim. Strategi yang digunakan meliputi pengulangan ayat secara kolektif, kontekstualisasi makna ayat, lomba hafalan, dan komunikasi berkelanjutan dengan orang tua.

Kata kunci: peran guru, Al-Qur'an-Hadis, kesulitan menghafal, strategi pembelajaran adaptif, pendidikan Islam.

Introduction

Education is recognized as a deliberate and structured process that seeks to develop the intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual capacities of individuals so they can navigate the complexities of life, adapt to societal changes, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Within the Indonesian educational system, Islamic Religious Education holds a vital position, shaping students' faith (iman), piety (taqwa), and moral integrity. Among its core components, the study of the Qur'an and Hadith stands out as an essential element, encompassing reading, understanding, and memorizing sacred texts. Memorization in this context is far from a mechanical process; it is a devotional act intended to safeguard the integrity of the text and internalize its moral guidance into everyday life.

Historically, memorization has occupied a central role in Islamic education, especially within traditional pesantren where students devote significant hours each day to recitation and review under the close supervision of teachers. The tahfidz al-Qur'an tradition is revered as both a scholarly discipline and a form of worship. However, in the modern madrasah tsanawiyah context, students must divide their attention between religious and general academic subjects, significantly reducing the time available for focused memorization. This structural shift demands innovative pedagogical responses that preserve the spiritual depth of memorization while accommodating contemporary learning environments.

The challenges are compounded by modern technology. While digital tools have the potential to enrich Qur'anic learning by providing access to audio-visual resources, they also introduce distractions that undermine concentration and reduce study time. According to research conducted by the Research and Development Agency and Training Center of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2022), approximately 63% of madrasah students report a decline in memorization quality due to distractions from social media and online gaming. Moreover, disparities in foundational reading skills are common, with some students entering secondary school lacking fluency in reading the Qur'anic script. These gaps often lead to reliance on Latin transliteration, a crutch that can hinder fluency and accuracy.

Against this backdrop, the role of the Qur'an-Hadith teacher becomes multifaceted. Teachers must inspire disengaged learners, provide differentiated resources and methods, offer

individual mentoring, and evaluate performance in a manner that fosters persistence rather than discouragement. As noted by Zaini Miftach (2018), effective Qur'an-Hadith instruction requires adaptability to the diverse learning profiles of students. Similarly, Khairul Anwar et al. (2021) have shown that strategic memorization methods can produce significant improvements in performance.

MTs Negeri Kota Sorong exemplifies these dynamics. Some Grade IX students meet or exceed memorization targets, while others struggle due to varying levels of reading fluency, inconsistent motivation, and lack of robust parental support. Teachers such as Halima Bugis and Safaatul Istiqomah have developed adaptive strategies that blend traditional recitation methods with modern educational tools and personalized mentoring. This study is distinctive in its integrated analysis of teacher roles within a formal school setting, linking observed classroom practices to theoretical frameworks in both Islamic pedagogy and modern educational psychology. Unlike research that focuses on pesantren, this study situates memorization within the constraints and opportunities of a state-regulated curriculum and mixed-subject academic environment, offering insights applicable to other institutions facing similar challenges.

Method

This qualitative research was conducted to provide an in-depth understanding of the roles played by Qur'an-Hadith teachers in addressing memorization difficulties. The study took place at MTs Negeri Kota Sorong, a state Islamic junior high school in West Papua, Indonesia. The school serves a diverse student body with varying academic abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, and previous religious education experiences. Participants included three Qur'an-Hadith teachers, twelve Grade IX students representing high, medium, and low levels of memorization proficiency, and four parents. These participants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the memorization process.

Data collection extended over two months and involved three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Eight observation sessions were conducted during both classroom lessons and extracurricular activities. These sessions focused on *setoran hafalan* (recitation submission), teacher-student interactions, and peer support behaviors. Detailed field notes captured the instructional strategies, student engagement levels, and the overall learning environment.

In-depth interviews were conducted with each teacher to explore their teaching approaches, perceptions of challenges, and strategies for improvement. Students were interviewed about their experiences, motivations, and difficulties in memorizing. Parents were interviewed to assess the nature and extent of support provided at home. Document analysis covered lesson plans, memorization records, and assessment sheets, allowing for triangulation with the data from observations and interviews.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Condensation involved coding and summarizing transcripts to identify recurring themes related to teacher roles, challenges, and strategies. Data display organized these findings into narrative matrices to facilitate cross-comparison among participants. Conclusions were drawn by integrating the patterns observed with existing literature, ensuring credibility through triangulation of sources and prolonged engagement in the field.

Results and Discussion

Teacher's Role in Overcoming Memorization Difficulties

The findings at MTs Negeri Kota Sorong confirm that Qur'an-Hadith teachers simultaneously function as motivators, facilitators, mentors, and evaluators in helping Grade IX students overcome challenges in memorization. On the motivational level, teachers—exemplified by Halima Bugis—open and close lessons with calls for sincerity of intention and encouraging words, creating a positive emotional climate in the classroom. This encouragement is reinforced through praise, extra grades, and occasional simple rewards to appreciate students' efforts. Such reinforcement resonates with constructivist principles that emphasize emotion and engagement as prerequisites for meaningful learning (Bada & Olusegun, 2015) and aligns with Panjaitan and Hafizzah's (2025) findings on the effectiveness of teachers as facilitators-motivators in improving learning quality.

As facilitators, teachers combine two traditional approaches—*talaqqi* and *sima'i*—with the support of technology. *Talaqqi* allows immediate correction of pronunciation, articulation, and tajwid rules during recitation, while *sima'i* provides opportunities for students to listen and replicate accurate recitation through examples from teachers or selected audio recordings. Students with lower fluency are given more time to listen repeatedly to short verses before reciting. The effectiveness of *sima'i* in improving tajwid accuracy and rhythm has been demonstrated empirically (Dara, 2020). The integration of Qur'an applications or audio players extends student exposure outside classroom hours, enriches auditory input, and accelerates pattern reinforcement, supporting studies on digital media in memorization learning (Zuhri & Nurfadilah, 2022; Ajeng Irani et al., 2024).

In terms of individual guidance, teachers—illustrated by Safaatul Istiqomah—provide one-on-one mentoring sessions for students who fall behind. These sessions use chunking strategies, breaking verses into smaller units with realistic daily targets, thereby reducing cognitive load and building confidence. Field evidence shows that within weeks, students who previously relied on Latin transliteration transitioned to Arabic text with gradual guidance. These results are consistent with Khairul Anwar, Yulita, Sukron Amin, and Isa (2021) on the effectiveness of chunking for accelerating Juz 'Amma memorization. Beyond technical improvement, emotional closeness developed through mentoring strengthens persistence, in line with Mulyasa's (2015) concept of professional teachers integrating academic and affective dimensions.

The evaluative role is carried out through weekly recitation submissions (*setoran*) as formative assessments and semester exams as summative assessments. Formative assessments are designed as feedback moments rather than threats, so students view mistakes as learning opportunities. This approach reflects constructivism, which sees assessment as an integral part of learning (Ültanır, 2012), and supports findings that supportive assessment formats reduce performance anxiety and increase motivation (Sakina & Sukiati, 2020). At the same time, teachers monitor progress through memorization logs, notes on recurring errors (such as elongated *mad* or *ikhfa'*), and consistency in *muroja'ah*, ensuring that development data can be tracked over time.

Despite these positive practices, the study identified three main sources of difficulty. First, heterogeneous reading ability: some students entered Grade IX with unstable Qur'an reading fluency, still relying on transliteration, which hindered tajwid accuracy and recitation speed. Second, fluctuating motivation: while some students were strongly oriented toward religious goals—such as becoming *hāfiz*—others saw memorization as a mere academic requirement. This dynamic corresponds to Deanita's (2023) findings on motivational and environmental factors. Third, limited parental involvement: many parents admitted lacking confidence in assisting Qur'anic study due to their own reading limitations or time constraints, despite evidence that parental involvement significantly affects success in Islamic education (Alfiyanto et al., 2024). In summary, memorization performance is shaped by the interplay of classroom practices, student readiness (technical and motivational), and home support.

Linking Findings with Theory and Previous Research

From a learning theory perspective, teacher practices represent a synthesis of three main paradigms. First, constructivism: emotional support, meaning-making, and feedback align with the view that knowledge is actively constructed through social interaction and reflection (Bada & Olusegun, 2015; Ültanır, 2012). Opening with intentionality and closing with appreciation is not merely ritual but an affective conditioning strategy to anchor new cognitive schemas, such as tajwid patterns, with positive emotions. Second, behaviorism: direct reinforcement—praise, acknowledgment, bonus grades—functions as behavioral modification that fosters the habit of *muroja'ah* and consistent recitation (Faidy & Arsana, 2014). Third, Vygotskian sociocultural theory: intensive interaction via *talaqqi*, verbal scaffolding, and use of mediational tools (audio *qurrā'*, digital Qur'an apps) reflects the transfer of skills from the zone of proximal development toward independent mastery.

In terms of motivation, the combination of extrinsic motivators (rewards, grades) and intrinsic motivators (spiritual orientation, the goal of becoming a *hāfiz*) can be explained through Self-Determination Theory. When teachers provide limited autonomy (e.g., choice of recitation order), competence (specific feedback on tajwid), and relatedness (warm mentoring relationships), students' basic psychological needs are met, enhancing the quality and durability of motivation compared to reliance on external rewards (Deci & Ryan, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2020). This explains why students with initially weak reading skills persisted during the difficult transition from transliteration: they experienced recognized personal progress under supportive guidance.

Cognitively, chunking aligns with empirical evidence that breaking information into smaller units reduces working memory load, accelerates pattern formation, and facilitates long-term consolidation—as reported by Khairul Anwar et al. (2021) for Juz 'Amma memorization. Structuring micro-targets (e.g., 3–5 verses per session plus general meaning) provides visible progress that sustains motivation. When combined with *sima'i*, a listen–repeat–recite cycle

emerges, integrating auditory input and oral production, heightening phonological sensitivity to tajwid rules (Dara, 2020).

The integration of learning technology—Qur'an apps, audio recitations—supports prior findings that digital media increase engagement and practice frequency, especially outside classroom sessions (Zuhri & Nurfadilah, 2022; Ajeng Irani et al., 2024). However, this study also emphasizes that technology supplements rather than substitutes talaqqi. Success remains rooted in direct teacher guidance for articulation, elongation, and waqf-ibtida'. Effective innovation preserves the authenticity of the sanad tradition while leveraging digital tools to increase practice time.

At the household level, limited parental involvement reflects common barriers in both secular and Islamic schools. Literature suggests that when parents receive practical guidance—daily recitation lists, reference audio links, simple feedback formats—their involvement increases and student outcomes improve (Alfiyanto et al., 2024). In this study, teacher initiatives to maintain communication via meetings and messaging apps helped fill this gap, though disparities in parental support remained.

Compared to pesantren, where motivation and study time are relatively homogeneous, madrasah tsanawiyah face limited class hours and multi-subject commitments. Hence, achieving memorization targets in formal schools relies on adaptive instructional design: blending group recitation with individual mentoring, employing supportive formative assessment, and orchestrating parental involvement. This aligns with the hallmarks of professional teachers (Mulyasa, 2015) and the facilitator role that positions teachers as guides of student-centered learning (Panjaitan & Hafizzah, 2025). Moreover, triangulated evidence from observations, interviews, and document analysis analyzed via Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) interactive model reinforces the conclusion that synergy between classroom, students, and parents is essential.

Practical Implications and Research Limitations

Practically, this study offers three key implications. First, effective memorization programs in madrasah should integrate talaqqi and sima'i in a consistent weekly rhythm, supplemented by micro-targets tailored to reading fluency profiles. Teachers can structure a cycle of pre-recitation (sima'i in small groups), recitation (talaqqi with tajwid correction), and post-recitation (muroja'ah supported by apps). Second, formative feedback systems should be sharpened with simple tajwid rubrics highlighting specific progress indicators (e.g., mad, ghunnah, waqf) to help students perceive competence growth. Third, partnerships with parents should be strengthened through a home-based starter kit: weekly muroja'ah schedules, standardized audio links, and simple monitoring cards. These small steps have already proven effective in raising practice frequency and reducing reliance on transliteration among some students.

As for limitations, the study was conducted in a single school with limited participants, so the findings cannot be generalized broadly. The qualitative design provides descriptive depth

but does not quantify the magnitude of effects for each strategy (e.g., the relative impact of *sima'i* versus chunking). Additionally, the study did not systematically examine the effects of specific digital applications or different blended learning patterns on memorization quality, even though features such as spaced repetition or error-tracking may yield different results. Future mixed-method studies across multiple schools that combine classroom experiments (e.g., testing spaced repetition apps) with quantitative measures (number of verses memorized, tajwid error rates, four-week retention) would complement this qualitative evidence.

Nevertheless, the inferential validity of this study is strengthened by triangulation of techniques (observation, interviews, document analysis) and sources (teachers, students, parents), as well as the use of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) interactive analysis model. Based on this foundation, the practical recommendations proposed—strengthening the *talaqqi-sima'i* cycle, developing tajwid feedback rubrics, and implementing parental starter kits—offer realistic steps for improving Qur'an memorization programs in madrasah with similar characteristics.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Qur'an-Hadith teachers at MTs Negeri Kota Sorong play essential and multifaceted roles in overcoming memorization difficulties among Grade IX students. Their efforts as motivators, facilitators, mentors, and evaluators combine traditional and modern teaching methods, individualized mentoring, and active parental engagement. The challenges they face—varying skill levels, fluctuating motivation, and inadequate home support—are addressed through adaptive strategies that blend collective and individual approaches. The study's limitations include its focus on a single school and grade level, and its exclusive use of qualitative methods. Future research should expand to multiple schools, integrate quantitative measures to assess the impact of different strategies, and explore the potential of digital platforms to enhance Qur'an and Hadith memorization. These directions will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how to optimize memorization in diverse educational contexts.

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