

Integrating Spiritual and Pedagogical Strategies in Tahfīdz Al-Qur'an Education: A Comparative Study of Two Pesantren in Metro City, Lampung

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ABSTRACT

This study examines integrating spiritual and pedagogical strategies in Qur'anic memorization (tahfīdz) at two Pesantren in Metro City, Indonesia, addressing gaps in comparative research on spiritually oriented versus target-driven approaches. Employing a qualitative multi-case design, data from observations, interviews with participants, and document analysis were thematically analyzed using Miles and Huberman's model. Results revealed distinct strategies: the spiritually oriented pesantren emphasized sincerity, tahajjud prayers, and non-coercive enrollment, relying on intensive repetition and daily assessments, while the target-driven institution prioritized structured scheduling, multi-method techniques (e.g., talaqqī, wahdah), and measurable goals. Both shared strengths in consistent murājā'ah (repetition), moral reinforcement, and structured routines, highlighting the efficacy of combining spiritual intentionality (tarbiyah rūhiyah) with systematic pedagogy. The study concludes that harmonizing spiritual devotion with pedagogical structure enhances Qur'anic memorization, offering a replicable framework for Islamic education. Practical recommendations include adopting hybrid models balancing intrinsic motivation with methodological diversity, and integrating digital tools for retention. Future research should explore the longitudinal impacts and diverse institutional contexts to refine educational approaches.

INTRODUCTION

Tahfīdz Al-Qur'an plays a pivotal role in deepening the understanding and practice of Islamic teachings by enhancing cognitive skills such as memory and concentration, instilling Islamic values, and improving textual comprehension. These activities are intrinsically linked to the broader objectives of Islamic education, which aim to cultivate virtuous individuals who embody Islamic principles in daily life (Alwi et al., 2023; Chew et al., 2023a; Hidayat & Fauziyah, 2022; Kamil et al., 2021; M. Utsman Arif Fathah, 2022; Solihin, 2021). In Islamic societies, proficiency in Qur'anic memorization is revered as a spiritual and intellectual achievement (Heravi, 2024; Sirin et al., 2021). Despite extensive research on tahfīdz methodologies, significant gaps persist in understanding how spiritual and pedagogical strategies are integrated across different educational contexts, particularly in comparative frameworks.

Previous studies have explored diverse memorization techniques, such as *talaqqī* (direct teacher-student recitation), *murāja'ah* (repetition), and *tasmī'* (recitation audits), alongside factors influencing program efficacy, including institutional vision, teacher quality, and student aptitude (Muntiarti et al., 2020; Rahayu et al., 2023; Rizal & Alwi, 2024). Research also highlights the role of sincerity, patience, and structured curricula in sustaining memorization (Chew et al., 2023b; Choeroni, 2019). However, existing literature predominantly examines single-case studies or isolated strategies, with limited comparative analysis of how contrasting educational philosophies, such as spiritually oriented versus target-driven approaches, shape *tahfidz* outcomes. For instance, while studies acknowledge the importance of spiritual readiness (Jamilah & Baiquni, 2023) and managerial discipline (Lesmana et al., 2021), there remains a paucity of empirical work juxtaposing these paradigms to identify synergies or divergences. This gap is critical, as Metro City's Pesantren, each with distinct operational cultures, exemplify variations in memorization practices yet lack systematic comparison to inform pedagogical improvements.

This study addresses these gaps by conducting a focused comparative analysis of two leading pesantren in Metro City: Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an (spiritually oriented) and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad (target-driven). The research objectives are threefold: (1) to contrast pre-memorization preparation strategies, (2) to evaluate the implementation of memorization techniques, and (3) to analyze retention methods, thereby identifying how spiritual and pedagogical frameworks interact to optimize *tahfidz* outcomes. The hypothesis posits that the institutions employ significantly divergent strategies, with one potentially yielding higher efficacy. By synthesizing qualitative insights from observations, interviews, and document analysis, this study aims to advance practical recommendations for integrating spiritual intentionality (*tarbiyah rūhiyah*) with systematic pedagogy. Such findings are vital for refining Qur'anic education models, particularly in contexts where traditional and structured approaches coexist but remain understudied.

This research contributes to the discourse by bridging the theoretical and practical divide in *tahfidz* education. While prior works emphasize spiritual or managerial dimensions (Othman et al., 2024), this study underscores their complementary roles, offering a replicable framework for holistic memorization strategies. Future implications include advocating for longitudinal assessments of retention efficacy and the integration of digital tools, as suggested by emerging trends in educational technology (Solihin, 2021). Ultimately, this comparative lens enriches the understanding of how diverse Islamic educational philosophies can coexist to preserve and enhance Qur'anic memorization in contemporary settings.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case study approach (Robert K. Yin, 2018) to compare the integration of spiritual and pedagogical strategies in Qur'anic memorization programs at two prominent Pesantren in Metro City, Lampung, Indonesia: Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an (PPRQ) and Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad. PPRQ emphasizes intrinsic motivation and ritual-based learning, while Aisyiyah KMT focuses on structured memorization targets and measurable outcomes. This approach was chosen to facilitate cross-case comparisons and to explore contextual differences and patterns in *tahfidz* practices.

Data were collected through triangulation of three methods: interviews, observations, and document analysis. Sixteen participants were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews, including four administrators, six teachers, and six students with at least two years of experience and varying levels of memorization proficiency. Structured observations were conducted over four weeks at each Pesantren, covering activities such as *tahajjud* prayers, memorization sessions, and *murāja'ah* routines. Document analysis included reviews of institutional curricula, memorization schedules, repetition tracking books, assessment reports, and motivational materials.

Interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim. Questions focused on three main areas: pre-memorization preparation (e.g., spiritual rituals, target-setting), implementation strategies (e.g., repetition methods, teacher-student interaction), and retention techniques (e.g., murāja'ah schedules, evaluation systems). Observations were recorded using a structured rubric assessing time allocation, teacher feedback, and student engagement in spiritual activities. Documents were analyzed to contextualize the interview and observational data, for example, comparing scheduled tahfidz hours with actual practice.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, involving open coding (e.g., "sincerity of intention," "structured repetition"), axial coding (grouping into broader categories such as spiritual strategies and pedagogical techniques), and cross-case synthesis to identify similarities and differences, for instance, shared murāja'ah routines versus divergent target-setting systems (Matthew B. Miles, 2014). To ensure validity, the study used triangulation of data sources, member checking (participants reviewed interview transcripts), and peer debriefing by two Islamic education experts to reduce bias. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent, ensuring participant anonymity (e.g., "Student A," "Ustadzah Er"), and securing all data. The two Pesantren were selected due to their contrasting educational philosophies yet similar reputations as leading tahfidz institutions in the city. Participant selection aimed to achieve thematic saturation, where no new themes emerged from the data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies before Memorizing the Qur'an in Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro

The following is a table that presents the preparation strategy before memorizing the Qur'an at Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro:

Table 1: Strategies Before Memorizing Al-Qur'an at Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro

Pondok Pesantren	Strategies Before Memorizing the Qur'an	Data Source	Methods
Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro	<p>"We do not force students to enter the tahfidz programme. Only those with sincere intentions for Allah survive. Every morning, they must do tahajjud and halaqah to cleanse their hearts. Memorisation without the intention of worship memorization will become a burden."</p> <p>"At first, I was hesitant, but after joining the halaqah, my intention was strengthened. Ustadz always said, 'Don't let your memorisation only be an ornament in the world.'</p>	Mubayyin, first vice chairman of PPRQ for tahfidz. Santri A	Interview

	The tahfidz program is not forced, only for students with strong intentions.	Daily activities of Documentation students.	
	Santri must follow the programs in the Pondok, including tahajjud prayers and religious study circles (halaqah).	Daily activities in the Observation Pondok.	
Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul	<p>“We set a daily target: 1 page per day. Santri must write the target in their planner. Before they start, they are given group motivation to build their spirit.”</p> <p>“The daily target was scary at first, but now it's a challenge. We often get inspiration stories from Ustadzah about Qur'an memorisation stories from the past.”</p> <p>Encourage students to have sincere intentions in memorizing</p>	<p>Pondok administrator</p> <p>Santri B</p> <p>Tahfidz program</p>	<p>Interview</p> <p>Interview</p> <p>Documentation</p>
	Provide motivation and support to students before starting memorization	Motivational in the activities of Pondok	Observation

Table 1 explains the strategies implemented by the two Pondok Pesantren. Roudhotul Qur'an Metro emphasizes the importance of straightening the students' intention to memorize the Qur'an solely for Allah. This is considered crucial so that the memorization process is carried out sincerely and not only for worldly purposes. This information was obtained from an interview with Mubayyin, the first vice chairman of PPRQ in the field of tahfidz. In addition, the tahfidz program in this Pesantren is not forced, but is intended for students who have strong intentions. The daily activities of the students include tahajjud prayer and halaqah, which are religious activities that support the memorization process. Observations show that involvement in these activities helps prepare students mentally and spiritually before memorizing.

Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad sets clear memorization targets for santri, which helps them have focus and purpose in the memorization process. Like Pondok Roudhotul Qur'an, this Pesantren also encourages santri to have a sincere intention in memorizing, which is considered important for success in the tahfidz program. The documentation of the tahfidz program shows that sincere intentions are highly considered. In addition, the Pondok Pesantren provides motivation and support to students before they start memorizing, which can increase students' enthusiasm and confidence. Observations of motivational activities in the pesantren show that this support is an integral part of the memorization preparation process. These two Pondok Pesantren have different but complementary approaches to preparing students to memorize the Qur'an, focusing on intention, religious activities, and moral support.

Implementation Memorizing Strategy of al-Qur'an in Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro

The following is a table that presents the implementation strategy of memorizing the Qur'an at Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro:

Table 2: Strategies for Memorizing the Qur'an at Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro

Pondok Pesantren	Qur'an Memorization Strategy	Data Source	Methods
Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro	<p>"We use the multiple repetition method. Students are not allowed to add new memorisation before repeating the old one. We also have a control book to monitor their progress."</p> <p>"Before adding new verses, I have to repeat the old memorization many times. It's hard at first, but repeating helps me remember better. The control book motivates me because I can see my progress every day."</p>	Tahfidz teacher in PPRQ Santri C	Interview Interview
	<p>Santri memorize after morning prayer until 6:30 am and continue at 8:00 am until 11:00 am.</p> <p>Memorization assessment is carried out every day by the tahfidz teacher.</p>	Daily activities of students	Observation
Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad	<p>"We combine talaqqī (hearing from the teacher) and wahdah (group memorisation). Every student is required to deposit their memorisation with the teacher before lunch."</p> <p>"The wahdah method is very helpful. If something is wrong, my friends will remind me. We also compete to reach the daily target."</p>	Ustadzah Er, tahfidz teacher of KMT IMBI Santri D	Interview Interview
	<p>Santri submit their memorized verses to the teacher for evaluation.</p> <p>The tahsīn al-Qur'an program is carried out for one semester with daily assessments.</p>	Memorization submission activity	Observation
		Documentation of tahsīn activities at the cottage	Documentation

Table 2 explains the strategies applied by Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro in the process of memorizing the Qur'an. The method used at Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro is multiple repetition, where students are required to repeat the memorized verses several times to strengthen their memory. This information was obtained from an interview with the tāhfīd teacher at PPRQ. Santri have a regular memorization schedule, starting after the morning prayer until 06.30, and continuing from 08.00 to 11.00. This good timing has proven to be important in helping students focus and be consistent in memorizing. In addition, memorization assessments are conducted daily by tāhfīd teachers to ensure santri stay on track and get the necessary feedback, which is recorded in the tāhfīd program documentation.

Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad applies several methods in memorizing, namely *bi al-nazhar*, *talaqqī* (listening from the teacher), and *wahdah* (repetition together). This combination of methods aims to improve understanding and mastery of memorization. This information was obtained from an interview with Ustadzah Er, the tāhfīd teacher at the Pesantren. Students are required to submit their memorized verses to the teacher after memorizing, which allows the teacher to evaluate progress and provide necessary guidance. The *tahsīn al-Qur'an* program is also carried out for one semester with daily assessments, aiming to improve the students' Qur'an reading as well as memorization, which is recorded in the documentation of *tahsīn* activities in the Pesantren. Both Pondok Pesantren have different but complementary approaches to the process of memorizing the Qur'an, focusing on the repetition method, regular scheduling, and direct interaction with the teacher.

Strategies for Maintaining Qur'an Memorization at Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro

The following is a table that presents the strategy of maintaining the memorization of the Qur'an in Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro:

Table 3: Strategies for School Maintaining Memorization at Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro

Pondok Pesantren	Strategies for Maintaining Qur'anic Memorization	Data Source	Methods
Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro	“Murāja'ah is obligatory twice a day: after dawn and before bedtime. Students should not go to bed before repeating the old memorisation.”	Tāhfīd teacher at PPRQ	Interview
	“I have a special book to mark the verses that I often forget. Ustadzah always checks this book every week.”	Santri E	Interview
	Santri are required to repeat new memorization while adding new memorization.	Daily activities of santri	Observation
	Emphasize the importance of maintaining memorization so as not to forget or lose it.	Documentation of the tāhfīd program.	Documentation

Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad	"We have scheduled murâja'ah and monthly tests. Students whose memorisation drops must join an intensive programme."	Ustadzah KMT IMBI	Er, Interview
	"I organise my murâja'ah schedule using the book, but I am still required to report to the Ustadzah every Saturday."	Santri F	Interview
	Santri are encouraged to conduct independent murâja'ah outside scheduled classes.	Observation of santri activities outside of study hours	Observation
	Periodic memorization assessments are conducted to ensure retention.	Documentation of memorization assessment activities	Documentation

Table 3 explains the strategies applied by Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro in maintaining the memorization of the Qur'an. At Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro, santri are required to do murâja'ah or repetition of memorization at least twice a day. This method aims to strengthen memory and ensure that the memorization that has been learned is not lost. This information was obtained from interviews with tahfidz teachers at PPRQ, who emphasized the importance of repetition in the memorization process. Observation of the santri's daily activities shows that repetition of new memorization is also done, which helps the santri to continuously improve and strengthen their memorization. This Pesantren also emphasizes the importance of maintaining memorization so as not to forget or lose it, which is reflected in the documentation of the tahfidz program, which shows that maintaining memorization is a top priority.

Murâja'ah at the Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad is carried out regularly with clear scheduling, helping santri have a regular time to repeat their memorization. This information was obtained from an interview with Ustadzah Er, the tahfidz teacher at the Pesantren. Santri are encouraged to do murâja'ah independently outside of class hours, which provides an opportunity for them to take responsibility for their memorization and train their independence in learning. Memorization assessments are conducted periodically to ensure that memorization is maintained, help teachers monitor santri progress, and provide necessary feedback. These memorization assessment activities are recorded in the documentation, showing that assessment is an important part of the process of maintaining memorization. Both Pondok Pesantren apply different but complementary strategies in maintaining memorization of the Qur'an, focusing on repetition, scheduling, and periodic assessment.

DISCUSSION

Spiritual Strategies in Qur'an Memorization

The findings of this study clearly show that preparation before memorizing the Qur'an has an important role in the success of tahfidz santri in Pesantren. Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro and Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad Metro apply different approaches in this preparation stage. Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro focuses more on the spiritual aspect through alignment of intentions, additional worship such as tahajjud prayer, and a non-coercive

approach in the *tahfidz* program. In contrast, the Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad prioritizes the managerial aspect by setting memorization targets and providing motivation and support to santri before they start memorizing. These two approaches have significant implications in shaping the mental readiness and motivation of santri in memorizing the Qur'an. The spiritual-based approach at Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro ensures that santri have strong intrinsic motivation (Masita et al., 2020), while the target-based approach at Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad helps santri in organizing memorization strategies more systematically. While spiritual readiness is essential, effective memorization also requires structured management and pedagogical approaches that guide students systematically through their daily practices.

Managerial and Pedagogical Approaches

In the memorization implementation stage, Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an Metro applies the double repetition method, where santri memorize intensively in two main sessions every day, and receive regular assessments from *tahfidz* teachers (Febrani et al., 2022; Jazimi & Arif, 2021a, 2021b). This method emphasizes strengthening long-term memory through repetition, as proposed in cognitive theory by Baddeley (Baddeley, 2000). In contrast, Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad applies the *bi al-nazhar*, *talaqqī*, and *wahdah* methods, which combine independent memorization with direct learning from teachers (Kartika, 2019; Muktafi & Umam, 2022; Putri, 2021). This approach supports the concept of multi-modal learning, where santri not only memorize through repetition but also by listening and reading directly, as theorized in educational psychology studies by Schunk (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012). This finding shows that effective memorization strategies do not only depend on repetition, but also on interactive methods that involve various senses in the learning process. Both Pondok Pesantren apply different approaches, but both emphasize the importance of a systematic structure in memorization. Beyond the initial memorization process, maintaining and reinforcing memorization over time is equally crucial to ensure the long-term success of students' *tahfidz* achievements.

Memory Retention Techniques

In maintaining memorization, Roudhotul Qur'an Metro applies *murâja'ah* at least twice a day, with an emphasis on repeating old verses before adding new memorization. This approach supports long-term retention and minimizes memorization (Afidah & Anggraini, 2022). Meanwhile, Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad uses a more flexible schedule-based *murâja'ah* approach, allowing santri to repeat memorization both independently and through periodic memorization assessment sessions (Nihayah et al., 2023). This approach is in line with the theory of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002), which states that learners who have control over their learning schedule tend to have higher retention rates. This finding shows that both the strict repetition system and the flexible system have their respective advantages in maintaining memorization, depending on the needs and characteristics of the santri.

One explanation for the differences in the strategies applied in these two Pesantren is the educational philosophy adopted by each institution. Roudhotul Qur'an Metro is more oriented towards spirituality-based education and sincerity of intention (*tarbiyah rūhiyah*) (Jamilah & Baiquni, 2023; Syarifudin, 2024), as stated by Al-Ghazālī, who emphasized that knowledge will only be useful if it is obtained with a clean heart and the right intention (Sari & Marhaban, 2022). The strategy before memorizing in this Pesantren is more emphasized on mental and readiness spiritual. Pondok Pesantren Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad adopts a more education management-based approach, which emphasizes planning, discipline, and external motivation (Lesmana et al., 2021; Nizarani et al., 2020). This approach reflects the principles of goal-setting theory developed by Locke & Latham, which states that clear goals and a structured evaluation system can improve learning effectiveness (Tosi et al., 1991).

This finding implies that an effective memorization strategy should not only rely on one approach, but combine spiritual, cognitive, and managerial aspects to achieve more optimal results

(Othman et al., 2024). Several studies have found that students who receive intention-based learning and discipline tend to be more successful in memorizing compared to those who only apply one of the approaches (Anggraini & Sukma, 2024; Susanto et al., 2020; Arif, M., & Abd Aziz, M. K. N., 2023). The integrative model in tahfidz learning can be a guideline for the development of more effective Qur'anic education methods (Abdullah et al., 2024; Nuryasin et al., 2024).

This study is limited to two Pesantren, which may not fully reflect all methods used in tahfidz programs in other Pesantren in Indonesia. Geographical, cultural, and institutional affiliation factors may influence the variation of approaches used. Future research is recommended to develop a broader scope of study, including pesantren with more diverse backgrounds. This study did not evaluate the long-term impact of the strategies implemented. Longitudinal studies that monitor the success of santri in maintaining memorization after graduating from Pesantren are needed to understand the long-term effectiveness of each method. Pesantren can adopt the Spiritual-Structural Hybrid Model by combining spiritual preparation (such as tarbiyah rūhiyah sessions to strengthen intentions before memorisation) and a structured framework (realistic daily targets, tight scheduling), as well as inserting daily spiritual reflections to maintain the intrinsic motivation of santri. The results of this study confirm that a combination of spiritual, managerial, and technological approaches can create a more effective tahfidz learning system that is relevant to the times.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to compare the spiritual and pedagogical strategies of Qur'anic memorization at two Pesantren in Metro City, Lampung, to identify effective practices. Findings revealed distinct approaches: Pondok Pesantren Roudhotul Qur'an prioritized spiritual readiness and intensive repetition, while Aisyiyah KMT Imadul Bilad emphasized structured targets and multi-method techniques. Both institutions, however, reinforced structured scheduling, consistent murāja'ah, and moral-spiritual values, underscoring the complementary roles of intrinsic motivation and systematic pedagogy.

Theoretical contributions include advancing the discourse on holistic tahfidz education by demonstrating how spiritual intentionality (tarbiyah rūhiyah) and cognitive theories (e.g., self-regulated learning, multi-modal methods) can coexist to enhance memorization outcomes. Practically, this research offers a model for integrating spiritual foundations with pedagogical frameworks, enabling educators to design curricula that balance sincerity, discipline, and methodological diversity. A key limitation is the study's narrow focus on two institutions, which may limit generalizability to Pesantren with differing cultural or operational contexts. Additionally, the absence of longitudinal data restricts insights into long-term retention efficacy. Future research should explore the longitudinal impacts of these methods and the potential of digital tools to enhance memorization efficiency. Ultimately, this study affirms that harmonizing spiritual devotion with pedagogical innovation offers a transformative pathway for preserving and advancing Qur'anic education in contemporary Islamic societies.

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