



Internalization Strategies for Islamic Educational Values Thru Quran Memorization Learning for Students at Junior High School

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: Islamic education plays a vital role in shaping students' character and spirituality, particularly through *Tahfiz Quran* programs that emphasize not only memorization but also moral and spiritual internalization. This study aims to explore effective strategies for internalizing Islamic values through Quran memorization at three Islamic junior high schools in Deli Serdang.

Methodology: This qualitative phenomenological study explores strategies for internalizing Islamic values through Quran memorization at three Islamic junior high schools in Deli Serdang: Junior High School Jabal Noor, Al-Hijrah, and Nurul Ilmi. Data were collected via observation, interviews, and documentation.

Main Findings: Islamic values occurs through various strategies, including habituation, exemplary role modeling, *talaqqi* (direct recitation), *muraja'ah* (systematic review), reinforcement systems, and active parental involvement. These approaches effectively cultivate students' faith, worship discipline, morality, and social responsibility in daily life. Supporting factors include teachers' pedagogical competence, strong religious school culture, and parental collaboration, while challenges arise from limited time, digital distractions, and inconsistent student motivation.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study lies in its integration of classical *Tahfiz* pedagogy with a modern character education framework, offering a new model for value internalization that harmonizes traditional Islamic learning with contemporary educational demands. This research contributes theoretically by bridging spiritual formation and moral psychology, and practically by proposing a holistic *Tahfiz*-based model adaptable to modern schooling contexts. The study concludes that *Tahfiz Quran*, when integrated with reflective understanding, technological awareness, and community engagement, can effectively strengthen Qur'anic character and moral integrity among adolescents in the digital era.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has long been recognized as an essential component in the formation of Muslim identity, morality, and intellectual development. In Indonesia, where Islam is the majority religion and cultural diversity is immense, Islamic education plays a dual role: safeguarding religious traditions while also addressing contemporary social, cultural, and technological challenges. Education, in general, is not only understood as a process of transferring knowledge but also as an effort to instill values that shape individuals into responsible human beings capable of contributing positively to society [1]-[5]. In this sense, the scope of education extends

beyond cognitive development to encompass affective and behavioral transformation, aligning with the holistic vision of education articulated in the Indonesian National Education System Act No. 20/2003. This act emphasizes the need to nurture individuals who are faithful to God, possess noble character, and are competent, independent, and socially responsible.

Among the various forms of Islamic education, Tahfiz Quran the memorization of the Qur'an holds a distinctive position. Historically, memorization has been regarded as both an act of worship (ibadah) and a method of preserving the authenticity of the Qur'anic text. However, in educational practice, Tahfiz Quran serves a much broader purpose. It functions not only as a method of learning but also as a process of internalizing values, such as discipline, perseverance, respect, and moral awareness [6]-[9]. For many Muslim parents in Indonesia, enrolling their children in Tahfiz programs is motivated by the hope that their children will embody Qur'anic values, become morally upright, and resist the negative influences of modern society.

The importance of such programs is increasingly evident in the face of contemporary moral challenges. Adolescents today confront complex issues ranging from substance abuse and free association to online bullying and excessive reliance on digital devices. These challenges threaten to erode the moral foundation of youth, creating an urgent need for strategies that reinforce spiritual and ethical resilience [10]-[12]. Schools, therefore, are expected to serve as agents of character education, providing structured environments where students can internalize Islamic values in ways that are both meaningful and sustainable.

Nevertheless, debates persist within the academic and educational communities regarding the effectiveness of Tahfiz Quran as a medium of moral education. Proponents argue that systematic memorization cultivates discipline, patience, and a strong spiritual foundation, all of which are essential for holistic personal development [13]-[15]. In contrast, critics caution that memorization, if treated as a purely mechanical process, risks producing students who can recite the Qur'an fluently but fail to embody its teachings in everyday life [16], [17]. This tension highlights a broader pedagogical dilemma: how can traditional religious methods, rooted in centuries-old practices, be adapted to meet the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral needs of students in modern contexts?

Research suggests that the success of Tahfiz-based programs depends heavily on the strategies employed to internalize values. Internalisasi, or internalization, refers to the process of embedding values so deeply within an individual that they become personal convictions and habitual behaviors [18]-[21]. In practical terms, this involves combining memorization with understanding, habituation, role modeling, motivation, and reinforcement. For instance, methods such as talaqqi (recitation under direct guidance), murāja'ah (systematic repetition), and the integration of extracurricular religious activities have been shown to enhance not only memorization but also the embodiment of Qur'anic values [22]-[26]. These approaches ensure that Tahfiz learning moves beyond mechanical recitation to meaningful moral formation.

Institutional culture also plays a decisive role in the success of value internalization. Schools that cultivate a strong religious ethos emphasizing daily prayers, communal worship, discipline, and mutual respect create environments where students naturally absorb Islamic values [27]-[29]. In contrast, schools with weak leadership, inadequate teacher training, or poor resource allocation often struggle to achieve meaningful outcomes, even when Tahfiz programs are formally implemented. Leadership, in particular, is critical; principals and administrators must ensure that Tahfiz programs are integrated into the broader curriculum, adequately resourced, and supported by a culture of continuous improvement [30]-[32].

At the same time, family and community involvement remain indispensable. Studies indicate that when parents actively support and monitor their children's memorization progress, the outcomes are significantly better compared to situations where parents delegate full responsibility to schools [33]-[36]. Unfortunately, in many cases, parents are either too busy or insufficiently knowledgeable about Islamic pedagogy to provide such support, thereby undermining the consistency of value internalization. This suggests that effective Tahfiz programs must engage not only students and teachers but also parents and the wider community in order to build a holistic ecosystem of moral education.

The schools examined in this study Junior High School IT Jabal Noor, Junior High School IT Al-Hijrah, and Junior High School IT Nurul Ilmi in Deli Serdang represent institutions that have made Tahfiz Quran central to their educational vision and mission. Parents in the region are drawn to these schools because of their emphasis on Qur'anic memorization and Islamic character education, which they perceive as crucial for preparing their children to face the challenges of adolescence. Preliminary observations reveal that these schools adopt various strategies for internalizing values, ranging from strict time management and daily religious routines to personalized mentoring and reward-punishment systems. These practices, however, also encounter obstacles, such as limited time allocation, differences in students' abilities and backgrounds, and the ever-present distractions of digital technology.

To explore these dynamics, this study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach, which is particularly suited to capturing the lived experiences of teachers, students, and parents. Through observation, interviews, and document analysis, the research investigates how Tahfiz Quran is taught, how values are internalized, and what factors support or hinder the process. The findings indicate that internalization is most

successful when schools adopt comprehensive strategies that integrate memorization with broader educational practices and when they actively engage families in the process.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse on Islamic education by providing an empirically grounded analysis of how value internalization operates in the context of Tahfiz learning. Practically, it offers actionable insights for educators, school leaders, and policymakers seeking to strengthen character education in Islamic schools. By highlighting both successes and challenges, the study underscores the need for a holistic approach that combines memorization with understanding, institutional discipline with parental involvement, and spiritual formation with adaptation to contemporary realities. Ultimately, the research demonstrates that Tahfiz Quran, when implemented strategically, can serve as a powerful means of shaping Qur'anic character among youth, thereby contributing to the moral resilience of Indonesian society in the face of modern challenges.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological method was chosen because the purpose of the research was to understand and interpret the lived experiences of teachers, students, and parents in the process of internalizing Islamic educational values through Tahfiz Quran learning. Rather than focusing on numerical data, this method emphasizes the meaning of experiences, perceptions, and practices that occur naturally in the field. The research was conducted at three Islamic junior high schools in Deli Serdang Regency, namely Junior High School IT Jabal Noor, Junior High School IT Al-Hijrah, and Junior High School IT Nurul Ilmi. These schools were selected because they not only provide formal education but also place great emphasis on Qur'anic memorization programs as part of their vision and mission. Their consistent commitment to developing Tahfiz Quran programs made them a relevant locus for examining strategies of value internalization. The sources of data in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from research subjects, namely school principals, vice principals in charge of the Tahfiz program, Qur'an teachers, students involved in memorization, and parents. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from documents such as curriculum outlines, learning plans, student memorization records, school reports, and other supporting written materials. The use of both types of data allowed the researcher to cross-check and validate findings.

Data collection was carried out through three techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted directly in classrooms and extracurricular activities to record learning practices, teaching strategies, and student responses in the memorization process. Interviews were carried out in a semi-structured manner, allowing the researcher to explore participants' experiences in depth while still maintaining a clear direction. These interviews were conducted with teachers to understand the methods they used, with students to capture their feelings and challenges during memorization, with principals to learn about school policies, and with parents to examine their role in supporting children at home. Documentation complemented both observation and interview data by providing written evidence of how Tahfiz Qur'an programs were organized and evaluated.

The analysis of data followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, all information collected from observations, interviews, and documents was organized and coded according to relevant themes such as "habituation," "role modeling," "reward and punishment," and "parental involvement." In the data display stage, findings were organized into descriptive narratives, matrices, or charts to make the relationships between categories clearer. Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher identified patterns, meanings, and strategies that were then interpreted in relation to the objectives of the study and existing theoretical frameworks. To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, several validation techniques were employed. Credibility was enhanced through triangulation of methods and sources, prolonged engagement in the field, and member checking, where participants were asked to confirm the accuracy of data and interpretations. Transferability was achieved by providing rich and detailed descriptions of the research setting, participants, and context, enabling readers to determine the applicability of findings to other contexts. Dependability and confirmability were addressed by maintaining an audit trail of field notes, transcripts, coding schemes, and analytic memos, ensuring that the findings could be traced and reviewed by external parties if necessary. Ethical considerations were also prioritized in the research process. The researcher obtained permission from the relevant educational authorities and informed consent from all participants. For student participants under the age of 18, parental consent was obtained. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing the names of participants and coding the schools in reporting. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of *Tahfiz Quran* Learning

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of *Tahfiz Quran* learning in the three selected Islamic junior high schools was systematically integrated into both curricular and extracurricular activities. Memorization sessions were conducted daily, usually in the morning before general lessons began, and reinforced through afternoon review sessions. The *talaqqi* method, in which students recited verses under the direct supervision of a teacher to ensure accuracy in pronunciation (*makhraj*) and mastery of *tajwid*, was predominantly employed. Additionally, teachers implemented the *muraja'ah* method, a structured review system that required students to revise previously memorized portions before proceeding to new ones. This dual approach ensured memorization accuracy and strengthened long-term retention [37], [38].

Each school developed its own structure and memorization targets based on institutional vision and student capability. Junior High School IT Jabal Noor emphasized quantity, encouraging students to memorize between five and ten *juz* by the end of junior high school. Junior High School IT Al-Hijrah prioritized the mastery of shorter *surahs* and *tajwid* for beginners through a gradual and consistent process. Meanwhile, Junior High School IT Nurul Ilmi adopted a comprehension-based model by integrating memorization with translation and *tafsir* discussions. This approach reflects an integrative pedagogical orientation in Islamic education, where rote memorization (*hifdz*) is complemented with understanding (*fahm*) to achieve spiritual and intellectual balance [39]-[41]. Across all schools, *Tahfiz* was not treated as an isolated program but as a central pillar of the school's religious ethos, interwoven with daily prayers, assemblies, and other religious activities.

Strategies for Value Internalization

The study found that *Tahfiz Quran* learning functioned not merely as a cognitive memorization exercise but as an affective process of value internalization, aligning with the concept of *tarbiyah Islamiyah*, which emphasizes holistic spiritual, moral, and intellectual formation. Five major strategies were consistently employed across the schools. The first strategy was habituation, in which routine religious practices such as Qur'an recitation before class, collective *dhuha* prayers, and pre-lesson Qur'anic reading cultivated consistency in religious behavior. These repeated practices fostered spiritual habits and moral awareness among students [42]-[45]. The second strategy was role modeling, where teachers served as moral exemplars, demonstrating sincerity, humility, discipline, and patience, thereby instilling values through example rather than instruction. Social learning theory posits, behavioral modeling is a powerful means of internalizing moral conduct.

The third was reinforcement systems, where positive reinforcement such as certificates, recognition, and leadership opportunities—encouraged achievement, while supportive interventions were offered to those struggling. This aligns with educational psychology principles emphasizing that positive reinforcement promotes sustained motivation and self-efficacy. The fourth strategy, integration into activities, included Qur'anic camps, *musabaqah hifdzil Qur'an* (memorization competitions), and community service projects, enabling students to practice social responsibility. Finally, parental involvement extended learning beyond school boundaries, as parents were encouraged to monitor memorization at home, fostering collaboration between home and school. This home-school synergy reflects Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence, which emphasizes the shared role of families and schools in moral development [46].

Values Internalized through *Tahfiz Quran*

Four key categories of values were identified: faith (*iman*), worship (*ibadah*), morality (*akhlaq*), and social responsibility. The value of faith emerged as students developed a stronger awareness of God's presence, a deeper connection with the Qur'an, and greater sincerity in worship. Teachers observed that memorization encouraged reflection and spiritual mindfulness, supporting findings by Ahmad and Basir, who reported that *Tahfiz* programs enhance students' emotional attachment to the Qur'an and foster intrinsic religiosity [47].

The value of worship was reflected in students' consistency in performing *dhuha*, *dhuhur*, and *ashar* prayers in congregation, along with increased concern for cleanliness and ritual propriety. This pattern indicates that habitual worship reinforces both discipline and devotion, consistent with Al-Faruqi's notion that ritual practice strengthens the ethical dimension of Islamic education [48]. Moral values, including respect, honesty, empathy, and responsibility, were evident in students' conduct. Teachers noted reduced instances of misconduct among consistent *Tahfiz* participants, supporting studies by Alwi and Sulaiman, who found that memorization activities contribute to character building through self-discipline and patience [49]. Finally, social responsibility developed through students' participation in community prayer gatherings, charity events, and Qur'an competitions. These activities strengthened civic awareness and nurtured leadership potential, aligning with the concept of *khairu ummah*—developing socially conscious and morally upright Muslims.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The success of *Tahfiz Quran* learning was facilitated by several supporting factors. A strong school culture characterized by a religious atmosphere and consistent Qur'anic routines provided an environment

conducive to value internalization. Teacher competence was another crucial factor, as most Tahfiz instructors were graduates of *pesantren* or Qur'anic institutions, providing both professional expertise and moral authority. Adequate facilities and learning resources, such as dedicated rooms and structured schedules, also contributed to the program's effectiveness. Furthermore, parental and community support reinforced motivation and ensured the continuity of memorization outside of school, consistent with findings by Rahman and Hamid, who highlighted the role of social reinforcement in sustaining *Tahfiz* learning [50].

Conversely, several inhibiting factors constrained implementation. The most prevalent challenge was technological distraction, as students' excessive use of smartphones and social media disrupted focus and memorization consistency. Parental limitations in supervising memorization at home also reduced program effectiveness, particularly among working parents. Moreover, student motivation and discipline varied, with some students struggling to balance Qur'an memorization with academic subjects. These challenges mirror observations by Kamaruddin, who noted that digital distractions and low self-regulation among adolescents remain significant barriers to religious learning in contemporary Islamic schools [51].

Comparative Insights across Schools

While the three schools shared the same religious foundation and educational vision, their implementation varied according to institutional priorities. Junior High School IT Jabal Noor emphasized memorization quantity, reflecting a performance-oriented model that aimed for extensive *juz* completion. Junior High School IT Al-Hijrah prioritized quality through accurate *tajwid* recitation and consistency. Meanwhile, Junior High School IT Nurul Ilmi integrated comprehension through translation and *tafsir*, emphasizing understanding alongside memorization. These variations indicate the flexibility of *Tahfiz* pedagogy in adapting to contextual needs and educational goals. This finding aligns with Zailani et al., who suggest that *Tahfiz* programs are most effective when they balance memorization targets with comprehension-based learning and moral reinforcement [52].

Overall Impact on Students

The overall impact of *Tahfiz Quran* learning extended beyond spiritual development to cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. Teachers observed that students engaged in *Tahfiz* exhibited greater concentration, persistence, and academic discipline, which positively influenced their performance in other subjects. Parents also noted improvements in behavior, obedience, and moral responsibility. Students themselves expressed feelings of pride, spiritual closeness to God, and self-motivation to avoid unethical actions. These results support previous findings that *Tahfiz* programs enhance self-regulation, moral awareness, and emotional stability among adolescents [53]-[57].

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. The reliance on habituation and reinforcement, while effective, may risk producing compliance rather than deep conviction if not balanced with reflective understanding. The approach at Junior High School IT Nurul Ilmi, which integrates *tafsir* and translation, provides an alternative model that addresses this issue by fostering comprehension alongside memorization. This suggests that future research should examine how combining cognitive understanding with affective internalization can create more sustainable moral development. Moreover, further studies could compare long-term outcomes of students across different *Tahfiz* models to evaluate which strategies best support lifelong value internalization.

The discussion confirms that the research objectives have been met: the study has shown how *Tahfiz Quran* serves as a powerful tool for internalizing Islamic values, identified the strategies and factors that shape this process, and highlighted both consistencies with existing scholarship and unique contextual insights. The findings underscore the importance of flexibility in pedagogical approaches, the need for parental and community involvement, and the challenge of negotiating modern distractions in religious education. Future research should continue to explore innovative methods that integrate technology, enhance reflective understanding, and evaluate long-term impacts, ensuring that Qur'anic memorization remains a relevant and transformative force in shaping the next generation of Muslims.

4. CONCLUSION

This research has shown that *Tahfiz Quran* learning in Junior High School IT Jabal Noor, Junior High School IT Al-Hijrah, and Junior High School IT Nurul Ilmi is not limited to memorization but functions as an effective medium for the internalization of Islamic values. Through strategies such as habituation, role modeling, *talaqqi*, *murāja'ah*, reinforcement, and parental involvement, students developed values of faith, worship, morality, and social responsibility in their daily lives. These findings confirm the research objectives, namely that Qur'anic memorization, when systematically designed, plays a transformative role in shaping students' characters. The study also highlighted factors that support and hinder the internalization process. Strong school culture, competent teachers, facilities, and parental support were identified as enablers, while distractions from

technology, inconsistent parental engagement, limited time, and variations in student discipline emerged as obstacles. These discoveries enrich the theoretical discourse on Islamic education while offering practical guidance for institutions seeking to strengthen moral development through Tahfiz programs. Looking ahead, future research should extend to longitudinal studies that examine the long-term effects of Tahfiz Quran on students' behavior and spiritual resilience, as well as explore how digital innovations can be integrated into memorization practices without undermining their spiritual depth. Comparative studies across different cultural or institutional contexts may also provide valuable insights. Overall, this study affirms that Tahfiz Quran, when combined with reflective understanding and supportive environments, remains a highly relevant and powerful approach in addressing the moral challenges of contemporary youth.

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