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## The Effectiveness of Principal Leadership in Managing a *Tahfidz*-based Curriculum

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HAIRUL FAUZI<sup>1\*</sup>, MUH IBNU SHOLEH<sup>2</sup>, HAWWIN MUZAKKI<sup>3</sup>, MUHAMMAD HARIS<sup>4</sup>, AND MUHAMMAD RAMADAN ABD ALLAH MOHAMED<sup>5</sup>

### Abstract

This study examines the role of principal leadership in managing the *Tahfidz*-based curriculum at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah Tanjung Jabung Barat, aiming to enhance students' character through intellectual and spiritual development via Quran memorization. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, collecting data through interviews with the principal, teachers, students, and parents and direct observations of the implementation of the *Tahfidz* program. The data analysis technique is an interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and iterative conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in the effective implementation of the curriculum. The principal's clear vision, motivational strategies, and stakeholder engagement significantly contribute to the program's success. Key strategies, such as structured *Tahfidz* schedules, the *Talaqqi* method, and intensive mentoring, have improved students' Quranic memorization skills and comprehension. Despite its success, the program faces limited facilities, varying student motivation levels, and the need for enhanced teacher training.

### Keywords

Curriculum management, Islamic education, *Tahfidz* curriculum, transformational leadership

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<sup>1\*</sup>Institut Agama Islam (IAI) An-Nadwah Kuala Tungkal, Jambi, Indonesia Corresponding author: [hairullahtahzan@gmail.com](mailto:hairullahtahzan@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) KH Muhammad Ali Shodiq Tulungagung, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Institut Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan, Indonesia.

<sup>5</sup>South Valley University Qena, Egypt

## Introduction

The curriculum plays a crucial role in the educational system, acting as a roadmap for the learning journey. It focuses on academic knowledge and integrates character development, spirituality, and essential competencies that students need to acquire (Fitriyani & Saifullah, 2020). Within Islamic education, creating a curriculum incorporating Islamic principles, such as the *Tabfidz* Quran (Quran memorization), holds is particularly important in reinforcing students' religious growth. In Indonesia, there is a growing demand for *Tabfidz*-based curricula, as they help shape students who are intellectually skilled and spiritually grounded (Abdullahi, 2022). One example of an institution that applies this approach is MT's Hidayatul Hikmah in Tanjung Jabung Barat, Jambi.

MT's Hidayatul Hikmah has become a prominent Islamic educational institution known for integrating the *Tabfidz* Quran program into its curriculum. This initiative aims to nurture students' affection for the Quran while improving their memorization and comprehension abilities (Nazemi, 2016). The success of this *Tabfidz*-based curriculum, however, relies not only on the design of the curriculum itself but also on the leadership of the school principal, who plays a vital role in guiding the institution (Yusra et al., 2024). The principal's leadership is central to managing the curriculum, implementation it, and ensuring that the program fulfills its intended objectives.

Effective leadership by the principal is crucial for the success of curriculum management. A capable principal can motivate teachers and students toward a shared vision, manage resources effectively, and foster a positive learning environment (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Specifically, in *Tabfidz*-based curriculum, the principal's role includes embedding Islamic values in all aspects of the learning process, motivating teachers to engage in the *Tabfidz* program actively, and involving parents and the community to support the initiative (Mulford et al., 2004). Without strong leadership, issues such as low teacher participation, inadequate resources, and low student motivation can undermine the successful execution of the *Tabfidz* program.

At MT's Hidayatul Hikmah, the principal's leadership is especially significant due to the challenges posed by the school's location in Tanjung Jabung Barat, Jambi, which faces geographical and resource limitations. Therefore, the principal must possess excellent managerial skills, adaptability in decision-making, and a high level of dedication to enhancing the quality of education (Garza et al., 2014). The principal must develop effective strategies to optimize the *Tabfidz* program, such as creating a balanced schedule between general subjects and Quran memorization, providing teacher training on *Tabfidz* instruction, and ensuring that the necessary facilities are in place for Quran memorization.

The principal also plays a critical role in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the *Tabfidz* program. Effective monitoring ensures that the program follows the planned framework and achieves its goals (Syafli & Ikwandi, 2023). Regular evaluations are essential for tracking students' progress in memorizing the Quran, providing educators feedback, and identifying improvement areas. This process serves as a control mechanism and drives continuous improvements in the program's quality (Johnson et al., 2024).

Another significant challenge in implementing the *Tabfidz*-based curriculum at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah is the diversity of students' socioeconomic backgrounds. Many students come from lower- to middle-income families, requiring additional support to remain motivated in the *Tabfidz* program (Lokman et al., 2022). In this context, the principal must foster strong partnerships with students' families and the local community to build a supportive network for students. A collaborative effort between the school, parents, and the community can strengthen the *Tabfidz* program and provide a conducive environment for students' academic and spiritual success.

Their leadership style also influences the effectiveness of the principal's leadership., for example, is particularly effective in managing a *Tabfidz*-based curriculum (Cruickshank, 2017). Principals who adopt this style can inspire and motivate teachers and students to work towards common goals. Furthermore, transformational leaders are typically visionary, skilled communicators, and deeply committed to fostering the potential of every individual within the school (Cruickshank, 2017). By employing this leadership style, principals can cultivate a positive, innovative, and values-driven school culture aligned with Islamic teachings.

Research into the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in managing a *Tabfidz*-based curriculum at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah is essential as it can offer valuable insights into strategies for improving the quality of Islamic education. The findings of this study are expected to provide a thorough analysis of successful leadership practices, the challenges faced, and practical solutions that can be implemented to optimize the *Tabfidz* program. This research will also serve as a reference for other Islamic educational institutions looking to develop *Tabfidz*-based curricula.

This study will focus on analyzing the role of the principal in managing the *Tabfidz*-based curriculum at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah, exploring strategies for overcoming challenges, managing resources, and evaluating the impact of the principal's leadership on the success of the *Tabfidz* program. The results of this research are anticipated to contribute significantly to the development of Islamic educational leadership theories and practices, particularly in managing curricula that incorporate Islamic values like Quran memorization (*Tabfidz*).

## **Literature Review**

One of the most widely recognized leadership theories in education is transformational leadership, which emphasizes the ability of a leader to inspire, motivate, and drive change within an institution (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leaders go beyond administrative functions by instilling vision, fostering collaboration, and encouraging professional growth among teachers and staff. In Islamic education, this leadership approach is particularly relevant, as it aligns with the values of moral guidance, continuous self-improvement, and the holistic development of students (Cruickshank, 2017). Studies have shown that transformational leadership positively influences teacher performance, student engagement, and curriculum implementation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

At MTs Hidayatul Hikmah, the principal's role extends beyond administrative duties to providing spiritual motivation and guidance in Quran memorization programs. The principal's ability to cultivate a shared vision for the *Tabfidz* program and actively engage teachers, parents, and students in its implementation is a key factor in its success. Transformational leadership

allows for a dynamic and adaptable approach to overcoming challenges such as limited resources, diverse student backgrounds, and varying motivation levels.

Effective curriculum management is crucial for the success of any educational program, including *Tahfidz*-based learning. Curriculum management involves planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating educational programs to meet learning objectives (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017). The *Tahfidz* curriculum at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah integrates Quran memorization with general subjects, requiring a balanced approach to scheduling, instructional strategies, and assessment methods.

Research on curriculum implementation in Islamic education highlights the importance of structured programs, well-trained teachers, and continuous monitoring (Rosyad & Syafee'i, 2019). In *Tahfidz* education, methodologies such as *Talaqqi* (direct recitation to a teacher) and *Muroja'ah* (revision of memorized verses) are essential in reinforcing Quranic retention (Sholeh et al., 2024). The principal's role in ensuring the smooth integration of these methods into the curriculum is critical to student success. Moreover, teacher training and development programs play a significant role in improving the quality of instruction, as educators must not only have mastery of Quranic recitation but also possess effective pedagogical skills (Henny et al., 2024).

Islamic educational leadership differs from conventional leadership models as it is deeply rooted in religious principles. Leadership in Islamic schools is guided by *akhlaq* (ethics), *amanah* (trust), and *syura* (consultation) (Sergiovanni, 1992). Islamic leaders are expected to be role models in moral and ethical conduct while ensuring educational institutions uphold religious values.

In managing a *Tahfidz*-based curriculum, principals must integrate these Islamic leadership principles to foster a learning environment that encourages intellectual and spiritual development. Research by Suddahazai (2023) suggested that Islamic leadership models, such as Prophetic Leadership, emphasize wisdom, patience, and responsibility in guiding students and teachers (Suddahazai, 2023). These qualities are particularly relevant in *Tahfidz* education, where discipline, perseverance, and continuous improvement are essential for success.

While the benefits of a *Tahfidz* curriculum are widely acknowledged, schools implementing such programs often face challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, variations in student learning abilities, and limited parental support (Wijaya, 2024). Previous studies indicate that strong leadership and community involvement are crucial in addressing these issues. The principal must develop strategies such as securing financial resources for infrastructure improvement, fostering partnerships with religious organizations, and implementing motivational programs to sustain student enthusiasm for Quran memorization.

Research highlights the importance of involving parents in their children's *Tahfidz* journey (Hasanah, 2021). Schools that actively engage parents through regular meetings, workshops, and home-based reinforcement programs tend to experience better student outcomes. At MTs Hidayatul Hikmah, parental involvement is a key aspect of ensuring continuous support for students, reinforcing the principal's role as a bridge between the school and the community.

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in transformational leadership, curriculum management, and Islamic educational leadership. These frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of how effective leadership influences the success of a *Tahfidz*-

based curriculum. By applying transformational leadership principles, ensuring structured curriculum implementation, and incorporating Islamic leadership values, principals can create an environment conducive to Quran memorization and holistic student development. The findings of this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on Islamic educational leadership and offer practical insights for schools implementing similar programs. This literature review is the foundation for exploring how the principal of MTs Hidayatul Hikmah manages a *Tahfidz*-based curriculum, addresses challenges, and implements best practices to enhance educational quality.. Further research is needed to assess how these leadership strategies can be adapted to different educational contexts, ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of *Tahfidz* programs across various Islamic institutions.

### **Methodology**

This research utilizes a qualitative approach with a descriptive method (Creswell, 2007). This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of the school principal's leadership in managing the *Tahfidz*-based curriculum at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah, Tanjung Jabung Barat. The study aims to provide a comprehensive depiction of how the principal carries out their responsibilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating the *Tahfidz* program as part of the school curriculum.

The research was conducted at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah in Tanjung Jabung Barat, Jambi. This school was selected due to its distinctive approach to integrating the *Tahfidz* program within its curriculum. Additionally, the principal's strategic role in coordinating various supporting elements of the *Tahfidz* program was a key factor in choosing this institution as the research site.

### ***Research design, site, and participants***

The study involved key stakeholders, including the principal as the primary figure in curriculum management, teachers directly engaged in the *Tahfidz* learning process, students enrolled in the program, and parents and community members contributing to its support. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, focusing on individuals whose roles and involvement were essential to the study.

### ***Data collection methods***

Data were gathered using three primary methods: in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis (Bowen, 2009). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, students, and parents to collect detailed insights regarding the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in the *Tahfidz* program. Direct observations were conducted to examine the principal's role in designing and executing the *Tahfidz* curriculum, including their interactions with teachers and students. Additionally, document analysis involved reviewing materials such as lesson plans, *Tahfidz* schedules, program evaluation reports, and official policies issued by the principal.

### *Data analysis*

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). During the data reduction phase, relevant information was selected and summarized according to the study's focus. The refined data were presented in narrative or tabular format to facilitate analysis. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring patterns or themes, which were verified to ensure accuracy and validity.

### *Data validation*

To enhance data credibility, this study employed source and method triangulation (Shull et al., 2008). Source triangulation involves cross-verifying information obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis, while method triangulation compares findings from different data collection techniques. Furthermore, discussions with fellow researchers and member checks with informants were conducted to minimize potential biases and ensure that the data accurately represented the participants' perspectives.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### *The role of principal leadership in managing the Tahfidz curriculum*

The results of the observation and documentation at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah support the principal's role in managing the *Tahfidz* curriculum. During the class observation, it was evident that the students were enthusiastic about following the *Tahfidz* lessons. Every morning, before lessons began, students memorized several verses of the Quran in small groups under the supervision of well-trained *Tahfidz* teachers. The documentation obtained showed that each student had a special notebook used to record their memorization progress, and there was a regular schedule to test their memorization in front of the teacher. This indicates that there is an organized and structured system in place to support the *Tahfidz* program, which is effectively managed by the principal.

Documentation of meetings between the principal and the students' parents also shows ongoing communication regarding their children's progress in the *Tahfidz* program. In one meeting, the principal told the parents,

"We believe that the success of the *Tahfidz* program depends not only on the school but also on full support from the family. Therefore, we want to ensure that every parent knows and understands the importance of their role in supporting their children at home" (Principal, 2024).

This reflects the principal's efforts to build synergy between the school and parents, which is part of a transformational leadership approach to achieving common goals in the *Tahfidz*

program. In an interview with the principal, he emphasized the importance of maintaining a clear vision in integrating Islamic values into the education system. He said,

"I believe that our role as educators is not only to teach academic subjects; we must also nurture the spiritual development of students. The *Tabfidz* program is not just about memorizing the Quran, but also about instilling values of discipline, patience, and sincerity in students" (Principal, 2024).

This demonstrates the principal's commitment to a holistic approach to education, which aligns with transformational leadership styles that emphasize academic and spiritual development. He also added,

"I ensure that the teachers are equipped with the right tools and methodologies to teach *Tabfidz* effectively, which has improved the quality of our program" (Principal, 2024).

The interviewed teachers also expressed their appreciation for the principal's leadership. One teacher said,

"The guidance and motivation from the principal are key factors in our ability to teach *Tabfidz* effectively. He regularly monitors our progress and encourages us to innovate in our teaching methods" (Teacher, 2024).

This statement underscores the principal's role as a facilitator who actively supports teachers and encourages collaboration to enhance the quality of education, especially in teaching *Tabfidz*. Another teacher also said,

"The regular advice and feedback from the principal help us maintain high teaching standards, and we are encouraged to ensure that every student gets a fair chance to memorize the Quran" (Teacher, 2024).

Students also acknowledge the principal's efforts in creating an environment that supports the success of the *Tabfidz* program. One student said,

"The principal often visits our class and asks about our progress in memorizing the Quran. His encouragement motivates me to work harder" (Student, 2024).

This reinforces the principal's commitment to monitoring student progress and providing the necessary support. Regarding parental involvement, an interview with a parent revealed their understanding and support for the *Tabfidz* program. The parent said,

"The principal regularly holds meetings with us to explain the importance of the *Tabfidz* curriculum. This helps us understand the program better and encourages us to support our children in their memorization efforts" (Parent, 2024).

This statement strengthens the idea of collaboration between the school and parents in ensuring the success of the *Tabfidz* program. The management of resources by the principal is also highlighted by the teachers and the principal himself. The principal stated,

"I ensure that we have enough time and resources for the *Tabfidz* program. We collaborate with local organizations to provide additional resources when necessary" (Principal, 2024).

The teachers confirmed this, stating that the availability of sufficient time and materials for memorization plays a significant role in the smooth implementation of the curriculum. The leadership of the principal at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah, Tanjung Jabung Barat, holds a crucial role in overseeing the *Tabfidz*-based curriculum. As the key figure in the institution, the principal is not only responsible for administrative leadership but also serves as a driving force in steering the school toward enhanced educational objectives, particularly in the implementation of the *Tabfidz* curriculum. At MTs Hidayatul Hikmah, the principal adopts a transformational leadership approach, which significantly contributes to the effective management of the *Tabfidz* program. This leadership model underscores the importance of inspiring and motivating all school members—teachers, students, and parents—to work collectively toward a shared vision. By fostering positive relationships among all stakeholders, the principal ensures strong collaboration in supporting the *Tabfidz* program.

An effective school leader overseeing the *Tabfidz* curriculum possesses a clear vision regarding Islamic values into students' education (Chaanpraserta et al., 2024). Through an inspirational leadership style, the principal encourages teachers not only to focus on general subjects but also to enhance their skills in teaching *Tabfidz* using more effective methods (Noh et al., 2019). The principal's motivation has been instrumental in increasing teachers' dedication to implementing the *Tabfidz* program in classrooms. Regular guidance is provided to teachers to maintain the quality of *Tabfidz* instruction, ensuring that every student receives an equal opportunity to maximize their Quran memorization. Acting as a facilitator, the principal promotes effective communication between teachers and the school administration while offering essential support to enhance the overall quality of the *Tabfidz* program.

Creating a supportive learning environment is another fundamental responsibility of the principal in ensuring the success of the *Tabfidz* program. A key strategy employed by the principal is fostering strong connections with students (Yuniarti, 2024). By closely monitoring students' memorization progress and providing constructive feedback, the principal helps students overcome challenges and stay motivated. This collaborative approach ensures that students not only develop academically but also strengthen their spiritual character. Given that *Tabfidz* education extends beyond memorization to character-building, the principal's role in creating an environment that nurtures intellectual and moral growth is essential.

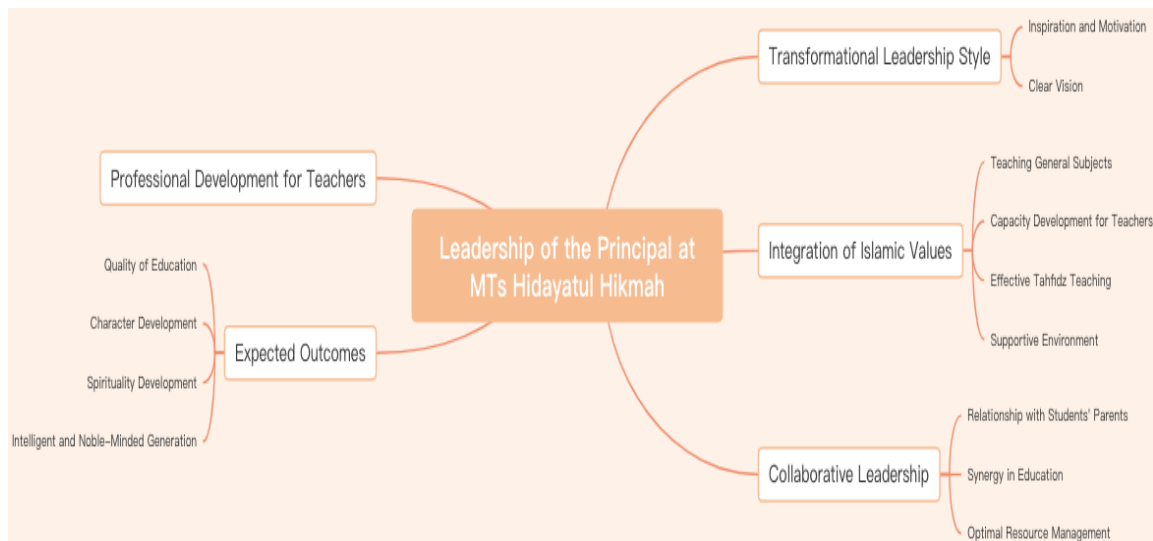
Beyond school-based initiatives, the principal also prioritizes parental engagement as a vital component in the successful implementation of the *Tabfidz* curriculum. Parental involvement plays a critical role in reinforcing students' learning experiences outside the classroom. To strengthen this support system, the principal conducts regular meetings with parents to discuss the significance of the *Tabfidz* program and its impact on students' personal and academic development. By maintaining transparent communication, parents gain a deeper



understanding of the program's objectives and are more inclined to provide encouragement and assistance to their children in the memorization process (Satyawati & Dwikurnaningsih, 2024). This aligns with the principles of transformational leadership, which emphasize the role of leaders in not only inspiring institutional members but also engaging all stakeholders in achieving common educational goals.

In addition to instructional leadership, the principal plays a key role in managing resources essential for the implementation of the *Tabfidz* curriculum. Ensuring the availability of teaching materials, allocating sufficient time for memorization, and providing necessary facilities are among the principal's priorities (Sholeh, 2023). In some instances, the principal seeks external support to further strengthen the *Tabfidz* program's execution. Through effective resource management, the principal helps the school overcome potential challenges, ensuring that the *Tabfidz* curriculum is implemented optimally.

Figure 1. Principal leadership in managing the *Tabfidz* curriculum



The transformational leadership demonstrated by the principal at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah is instrumental in the effective management of the *Tabfidz*-based curriculum. This leadership style not only emphasizes academic excellence but also fosters the development of students' character and spirituality. By inspiring and motivating all stakeholders, the principal successfully mobilizes collaboration among teachers, students, and parents to support the *Tabfidz* program. Consequently, the principal's leadership in managing the *Tabfidz* curriculum plays a crucial role in shaping a generation that is intellectually capable and spiritually enriched.

### ***Strategies for implementing a *Tabfidz*-based curriculum***

The implementation of the *Tabfidz*-based curriculum at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah Tanjung Jabung Barat follows a structured and innovative approach, supported by the school principal and the teaching team. One of the key components of this strategy is the morning *Tabfidz*

schedule, where students have dedicated time each day to focus entirely on their Quranic memorization. The school principal emphasizes the importance of this schedule, stating, "*We ensure that students have a dedicated time every morning for Quranic memorization. This routine not only fosters discipline but also helps students develop a strong foundation in memorizing the Quran consistently*" (Principal, 2024). This insight highlights the principal's commitment to providing a structured environment that supports the students' memorization efforts. A teacher from the school further affirms the effectiveness of the morning *Tahfidz* session, saying,

"The morning *Tahfidz* schedule provides an ideal environment for our students to focus entirely on memorizing the Quran. They are free from other academic distractions, which significantly helps them stay on track with their memorization goals" (Teacher, 2024).

This reveals the positive impact of the morning schedule in creating a conducive environment for memorization. The *Tahfidz* program at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah also includes regular *tahsin* sessions to ensure that students' recitation of the Quran is with proper *tajweed* rules. The principal confirms the significance of these sessions, saying,

"We believe that proper *Tajweed* is as essential as memorization itself. Our *Tahsin* sessions are designed to ensure that students not only memorize the Quran but do so in the correct manner" (Principal, 2024).

A *Tahfidz* teacher elaborates, stating,

"During our *Tahsin* sessions, we focus on correcting students' recitation according to *Tajweed* rules. This ensures that their memorization is not only accurate but also follows the correct rules of Quranic recitation" (Teacher, 2024).

These sessions are crucial for maintaining the quality and accuracy of students' memorization, ensuring they do not make errors in recitation. Another essential element of the *Tahfidz* curriculum is the group-based *Muroja'ah* (review) sessions. In these sessions, students are grouped into small teams where they take turns correcting each other's memorization and recitation. The principal highlights this method, stating,

"We organize students into small groups where they can review each other's memorization. This peer support system is vital for reinforcing their memorization and helping them stay motivated" (Principal, 2024).

A student reflects the benefit of this approach:

"In the group review sessions, we correct each other and help each other out, which really motivates me to keep improving. It feels good to help my friends and be helped by them" (Student, 2024).

These peer review sessions foster responsibility and solidarity, which not only enhances memorization but also strengthens the learning community among students.

The *Talaqqi* method is another key strategy in MTs Hidayatul Hikmah's *Tabfidz* program. This method involves direct interaction between students and their teachers, allowing for personalized guidance. The principal affirms the significance of *Talaqqi*, stating,

"With *Talaqqi*, students receive individualized attention. They can directly interact with the teacher, which helps them memorize faster and with fewer mistakes" (Principal, 2024).

A *Tabfidz* teacher adds,

"Through *Talaqqi*, we provide one-on-one attention to students, helping them correct any memorization mistakes. This has been an effective method for ensuring their memorization is precise" (Teacher, 2024).

*Talaqqi*'s interactive nature allows for quicker mastery of the Quran and ensures that students receive the support they need to overcome challenges in their memorization journey. In addition to the group-based review and *Talaqqi* methods, the *Tabfidz* program at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah also includes an intensive mentoring system for students who may be struggling with memorization. The principal explains,

"We offer one-on-one mentoring for students who need additional help. This ensures no student falls behind, and they continue progressing at their own pace" (Principal, 2024).

A parent also expresses appreciation for this individualized attention, saying,

"I appreciate how the school provides extra time and attention for students who are having trouble memorizing. My child has benefitted from the personalized mentoring sessions" (Parent, 2024).

This individualized mentoring approach ensures that every student receives the support necessary to succeed, regardless of their initial memorization abilities. These strategies—morning *Tabfidz* sessions, *Tahsin*, group-based *Muroja'ah*, *Talaqqi*, and mentoring—create a comprehensive framework that supports not only the memorization of the Quran but also the quality and accuracy of students' recitation. This holistic approach reflects MTs Hidayatul Hikmah's commitment to the academic and spiritual development of its students, providing a nurturing environment that encourages personal growth and collaborative learning. Through these strategies, the school fosters a community of learners who are motivated, supported, and committed to their Quranic memorization journey.

The implementation of the *Tabfidz*-based curriculum at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah Tanjung Jabung Barat follows a structured and innovative approach. The school principal, together with the teaching team, has developed a program that emphasizes not only the memorization

of the Quran but also ensures its quality and consistency. One of the key strategies employed is the morning *Tahfidz* session, a dedicated time each day that allows students to concentrate fully on their memorization in a calm and focused environment. This routine has been highly effective in cultivating a habit of consistent and disciplined Quranic memorization among students.

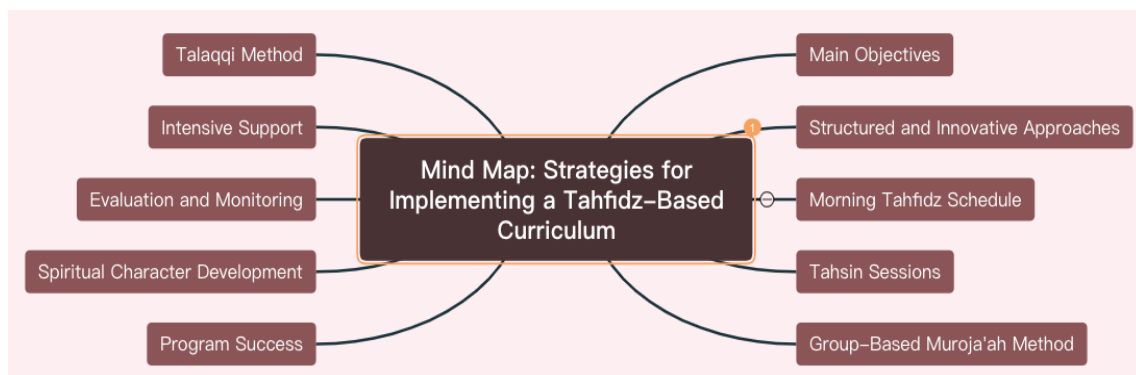
To further support students' learning, the curriculum integrates *Tahsin* sessions, which focus on improving Quranic recitation according to proper *Tajweed* principles. These sessions ensure that students do not merely memorize the Quran but also recite it correctly. This aspect is essential in maintaining accuracy and fluency, preventing potential errors that could affect their recitation (Mufidah & Aisyah, 2024). As a result, *Tahsin* sessions play a vital role in reinforcing memorization and reading proficiency at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah.

Another important component of the *Tahfidz* curriculum is the group-based *Muroja'ah* (review) system. Students are divided into small groups where they take turns reciting and correcting each other's memorization. This collaborative approach offers numerous advantages, including strengthening recall through repeated practice and fostering a sense of responsibility and teamwork. Additionally, peer interaction during these review sessions provides motivation and support, further enhancing students' enthusiasm for learning (Sleeter, 2018). By participating in these activities, students develop a stronger connection to their memorization journey, encouraging them to continuously improve.

The school also implements the *Talaqqi* method, in which students receive direct instruction from *Tahfidz* teachers. Through this technique, students engage in interactive learning, listening to and repeating verses under the guidance of their instructors. This method helps refine their memorization and ensures accurate pronunciation. Due to the personalized attention given, *Talaqqi* has been particularly effective in overcoming challenges that students may face during the memorization process (Naufal et al., 2024).

Additionally, the *Tahfidz* curriculum includes an intensive mentoring program designed to support students struggling with memorization. Those who encounter difficulties receive personalized guidance through one-on-one mentoring with *Tahfidz* instructors, supplementary learning materials, or extended study sessions. The flexible structure of this mentoring initiative accommodates students' diverse learning needs, ensuring that each individual progresses at their own pace without feeling left behind (Aisyah & Mustofa, 2024).

Figure 2. Strategies for implementing



By combining these structured and innovative strategies, MTs Hidayatul Hikmah has established a comprehensive *Tahfidz* program that not only allocates time for memorization but also enhances students' recitation quality through proper tajweed application. The integration of morning *Tahfidz* sessions, tahsin lessons, group-based muroja'ah, *Talaqqi*, and personalized mentoring creates a supportive learning environment. This holistic approach ensures that students not only achieve their memorization goals but also develop a strong spiritual and academic foundation.

### *Challenges in managing the Tahfidz curriculum*

The main challenge by MTs Hidayatul Hikmah is the limited facilities that support the implementation of the *Tahfidz* program. Although the school has sufficient classrooms, a dedicated space specifically designed for intensive *Tahfidz* activities is still unavailable. The principal stated,

"We face limitations in having adequate space for intensive *Tahfidz* activities. We have enough classrooms, but there is no specific room that can optimally support this activity" (Principal, 2024).

This issue is also felt by the teachers involved in the *Tahfidz* program. One of the *Tahfidz* teachers explained,

"We often use regular classrooms, which are not designed for *Tahfidz* activities. Sometimes, noise from other classrooms disrupts the students' concentration" (Teacher, 2024).

Students also expressed that they felt uncomfortable with this situation. One student said,

"I find it hard to concentrate while memorizing because of the noise from other classrooms" (Student, 2024).

To address this issue, the principal has collaborated with various educational and social institutions to improve the school's facilities. One step taken is technology, such as the use of Quran memorization applications that students can use to support their muroja'ah activities. Additionally, efforts are being made to create a more conducive classroom environment for *Tahfidz* activities to provide a more comfortable space for students. Another challenge faced by MTs Hidayatul Hikmah is the varying motivation levels among students in participating in the *Tahfidz* program. The principal revealed,

"We realize that not all students have the same motivation in following the *Tahfidz* program. Some students are very enthusiastic, but others are less motivated" (Principal, 2024).

The same sentiment was shared by the *Tabfidz* teachers. One of the teachers said,

"Student motivation greatly influences their success in memorizing. Some students are very enthusiastic, but others seem reluctant to participate in *Tabfidz* activities" (Teacher, 2024).

A student also expressed,

"I feel more motivated when there are rewards for students who reach their memorization targets" (Student, 2024).

External factors, such as family support, also have a significant impact. For example, a student's parent stated, "*We fully support the Tabfidz program, but we realize that our child needs more encouragement at home to stay motivated*" (Parent, 2024). To address this challenge, the principal has implemented various measures, such as providing rewards for students who reach their memorization targets and enhancing parental involvement through regular *meetings*. In these meetings, parents can discuss their children's memorization progress and offer greater support for their learning process.

The next challenge faced by MTs Hidayatul Hikmah is related to the teachers' capacity to teach *Tabfidz*. Although many teachers have strong religious education backgrounds, some still require additional training to teach *Tabfidz* in a more creative and effective way. The principal stated,

"We realize the importance of training to enhance teachers' skills in teaching *Tabfidz* using more engaging methods" (Principal, 2024).

One *Tabfidz* teacher also acknowledged,

"The training we received has been very helpful, but we need more methods that can capture students' attention and make them more excited to learn" (Teacher, 2024).

Students also expressed that the current methods sometimes feel monotonous. One student said,

"Sometimes the methods used feel boring. I hope there will be more variety in the way *Tabfidz* is taught" (Student, 2024).

To overcome this challenge, the principal organizes regular training for *Tabfidz* teachers, focusing not only on the technical aspects of memorization but also on creative ways to make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. The principal also encourages collaboration among *Tabfidz* teachers to share experiences and teaching strategies. A parent added,

"We see that the school is making an effort to improve the teachers' ability to teach *Tabfidz*, and we fully support it" (Parent, 2024).

Despite facing various challenges, the principal of MTs Hidayatul Hikmah continues to strive to find the right solutions. The principal stated,

"We continue to try to find the best ways to overcome these issues. By collaborating with various parties, including social and educational institutions, we hope to improve the facilities and quality of the *Tabfidz* program" (Principal, 2024).

Several steps have been taken, including the introduction of technology in the learning process, offering rewards to motivate students, and organizing regular training for *Tabfidz* teachers. It is hoped that, with improvements in facilities and teacher training, the *Tabfidz* program at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah will run more effectively. The principal hopes that these efforts will create a generation that is not only knowledgeable in science but also strong in memorizing and practicing the Quran, in line with the objectives of the *Tabfidz* program.

Although the *Tabfidz* program at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah has demonstrated positive outcomes, several obstacles continue to impede its smooth execution. The primary challenges identified in this study revolve around three key areas: the availability of adequate facilities, variations in student motivation, and the capability of teachers in delivering *Tabfidz* instruction. Addressing these concerns necessitates strategic solutions to enhance the quality of Quranic memorization education and fulfill its intended goals.

One of the most pressing challenges is the inadequacy of infrastructure to support the *Tabfidz* program effectively. While the school provides sufficient classrooms, it lacks designated spaces specifically designed for intensive memorization sessions. The absence of such dedicated areas often results in an environment that is not conducive to focused learning (Alamanda et al., 2021). Furthermore, essential learning tools, such as interactive whiteboards, audiovisual equipment, and other technological resources, remain limited. These deficiencies hinder students' ability to optimize their memorization efforts, affecting the overall efficiency of the learning process.

To mitigate this issue, the school administration has taken proactive steps by establishing collaborations with educational and social organizations that support religious learning. Through these partnerships, the school aims to secure improved infrastructure, such as specialized classrooms and additional learning aids for the *Tabfidz* program (Susanti et al., 2024). Additionally, efforts are being made to incorporate digital tools, including Quranic memorization applications, to support students in their revision and pronunciation practices.

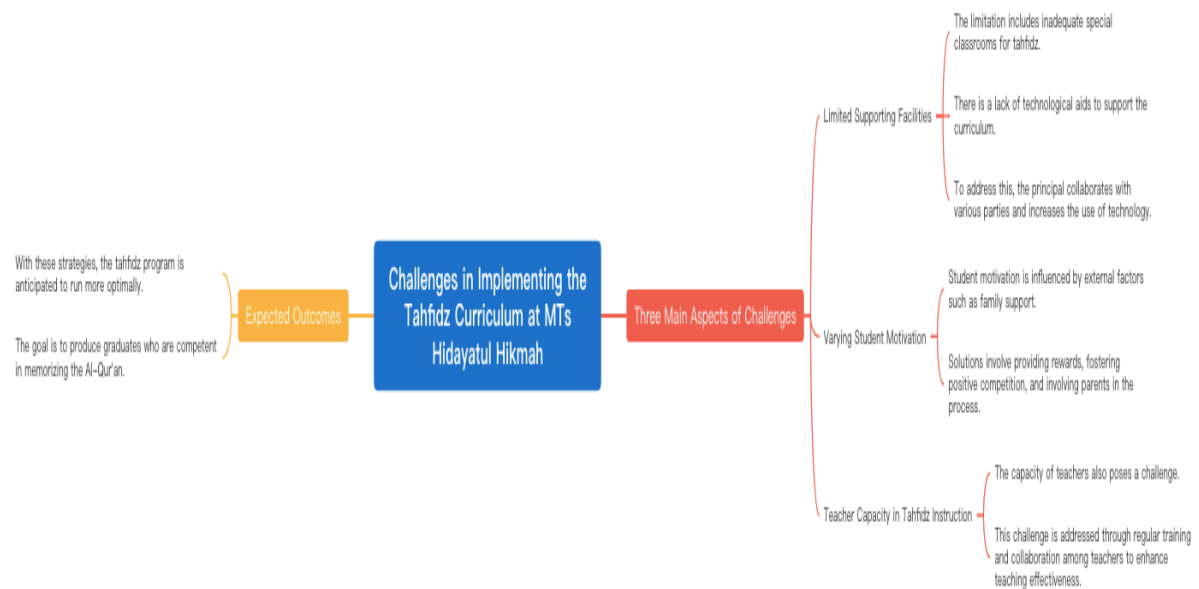
Another major challenge lies in the varying levels of student motivation to engage in the *Tabfidz* program. Not all students demonstrate the same enthusiasm and dedication toward memorizing the Quran. While some students excel in retention and recall, others struggle significantly. External factors, such as the lack of encouragement from family or community, often shape students' motivation (Saragih et al., 2021). Many students come from backgrounds where religious education is not emphasized, which can negatively impact their commitment to the program.

Recognizing the importance of motivation in the success of Quranic memorization, the school has introduced several strategies to foster a supportive and encouraging learning environment (Rasyidi & Setiawan, 2021). These include implementing reward systems for

students who reach specific memorization milestones and promoting healthy peer competition to inspire mutual encouragement. Furthermore, parental involvement is actively encouraged through regular meetings that provide updates on students' progress. This initiative seeks to raise awareness among parents about the significance of their role in supporting their children's memorization journey.

A third challenge pertains to the teaching capacity of *Tahfidz* instructors. Although many educators at the school possess strong religious knowledge, some require additional training to refine their pedagogical approaches and make memorization sessions more engaging. Without adequate professional development, teachers may struggle to adopt innovative and interactive methods that keep students motivated (Pratama & Firdaus, 2019).

**Figure 3.** *Challenges in managing*



To address this, the school organizes regular training sessions and workshops to enhance the teaching methodologies of *Tahfidz* instructors. These programs focus not only on memorization techniques but also on effective motivational strategies to sustain students' interest in learning (Chaniago, 2024). Teachers are encouraged to collaborate and exchange best practices, fostering a supportive community among educators. By strengthening teacher competencies, the school aspires to elevate the quality of Quranic memorization instruction and achieve better student outcomes.

Despite these ongoing challenges, the principal of MTs Hidayatul Hikmah remains steadfast in seeking appropriate solutions. By implementing innovative strategies and fostering collaboration with various stakeholders, the *Tahfidz* program is expected to run more efficiently and accomplish its mission of nurturing a generation that is intellectually proficient and deeply connected to the Quran.



*The contribution of the Tahfidz program to Islamic education*

The *Tahfidz* program at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah significantly contributes to the development of Islamic education, particularly in shaping students' character and integrity. Observations conducted during the program revealed that students not only memorized the Quran but also gained a profound understanding of its spiritual values, which they applied daily. The memorization process taught students essential life skills such as discipline, time management, and perseverance, and these qualities extended beyond the classroom into other aspects of their personal development. One student shared,

"When I memorize the Quran, I don't just learn the words; I learn the meaning behind them. This helps me make better decisions and behave in a more respectful way" (Student, 2024).

The Quranic teachings were not only learned but also practically applied, influencing students' moral decisions and behavior. In addition to character building, integrating the *Tahfidz* curriculum with general academic learning was observed to create a balance between spiritual and worldly education. Students at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah engaged in Quranic memorization and subjects such as mathematics, science, and social studies. This dual development allowed students to excel not only in religious knowledge but also in their intellectual pursuits, reinforcing the notion that Islamic education should nurture academic intelligence and spiritual strength. The principal emphasized,

"The *Tahfidz* program plays a crucial role in shaping the moral and spiritual character of our students. It provides them with not only knowledge of the Quran but also a deeper understanding of the spiritual and ethical values within it" (Principal, 2024).

This integration ensures that the religious and general educational components work together to foster well-rounded students. Character development through the *Tahfidz* program was further highlighted by the disciplined and responsible behavior of the students. Teachers observed that the memorization process encouraged students to manage their time effectively, balancing their Quranic studies with their academic obligations. One teacher noted,

"The program instills in students' important life skills such as perseverance, time management, and discipline. Memorizing the Quran requires commitment and patience, which are qualities that our students carry over into their academic work and personal lives" (Teacher, 2024).

This focus on discipline and perseverance not only benefited students in their academic endeavors but also contributed to their personal growth, as they learned to apply the values of the Quran in their interactions and actions. Parents also expressed positive feedback regarding the impact of the *Tahfidz* program on their children's character. One parent shared,

"I have seen a significant change in my child's character since they started the *Tabfidz* program. They have become more disciplined and thoughtful, and they apply the teachings of the Quran daily. It's not just about memorizing verses—it's about living them" (Parent, 2024).

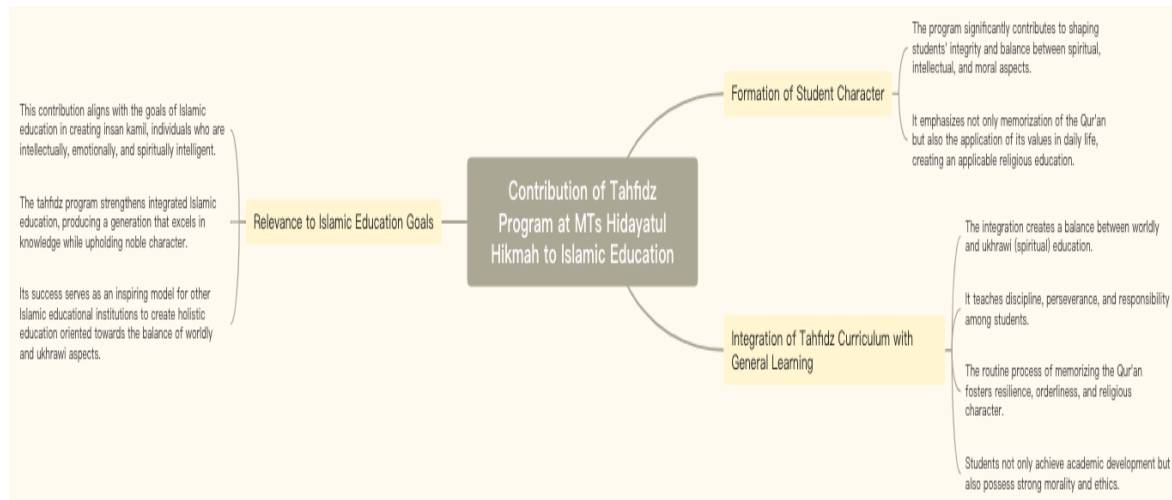
This feedback indicates that the program has a lasting effect on students, encouraging them to adopt ethical behaviors and practices that align with Islamic teachings, not only in the classroom but also in their daily routines. The *Tabfidz* program at MT's Hidayatul Hikmah plays a crucial role in the advancement of Islamic education, particularly in shaping students' character and moral integrity. This program not only focuses on memorizing the Quran but also instills a deep understanding of the spiritual values contained within it. Through this approach, students develop intellectual and moral awareness, allowing them to implement Quranic teachings in their everyday lives. As a result, religious education at this institution is not limited to theoretical knowledge but is integrated into students' personal development and daily conduct.

At MT's Hidayatul Hikmah, the *Tabfidz* curriculum with general academic subjects creates a harmonious balance between religious and secular education. The structured implementation of the program teaches students essential values such as discipline, perseverance, and resilience in memorization while engaging them in general academic subjects to support their intellectual growth (Kosim et al., 2019). This dual learning approach ensures that students develop a well-rounded educational foundation, where religious and general knowledge complement each other rather than existing separately. Such an educational model aligns with the broader objectives of Islamic education, aiming to cultivate individuals who are intellectually capable, spiritually aware, and morally upright.

One of the most significant contributions of the *Tabfidz* program is its impact on character development. The memorization process instills self-discipline and time management skills, as students learn to allocate time efficiently between their memorization sessions and academic studies. Additionally, it fosters perseverance and resilience, as students navigate the challenges of retaining large portions of the Quran while focusing on other responsibilities (Setiawan & Rasyidi, 2020). Beyond academic benefits, the program nurtures ethical and moral growth, as students internalize and apply Quranic teachings in their interactions and decision-making. This results in individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also guided by strong moral principles.

Within the broader scope of Islamic education, the *Tabfidz* program significantly contributes to developing well-rounded individuals who embody the concept of *insan kamil*—a person who attains a balance between intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth (Ilham et al., 2024). This concept emphasizes that true success is not solely measured by academic excellence but also by an individual's ability to interact harmoniously with others and uphold noble character through religious teachings (Sada et al., 2024). By fostering knowledge and strong moral values, the program helps produce a generation of students who excel academically while remaining deeply committed to Islamic principles.

**Figure 4.** *Contribution of the Tahfidz program*



The impact of the *Tahfidz* program extends beyond individual students, serving as a model for other Islamic educational institutions. The success of MTs Hidayatul Hikmah in integrating Quranic memorization with general education offers valuable insights for other schools seeking to implement similar initiatives. By adopting this approach, Islamic schools can further enhance their educational frameworks, ensuring that students receive a well-rounded education that strengthens intellectual and religious aspects. Given its effectiveness in nurturing knowledgeable and morally upright individuals, the *Tahfidz* program at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah is a testament to the significance of a holistic and integrated Islamic education system.

### Conclusion

The findings at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah indicate that the *Tahfidz* program plays a crucial role in enhancing Islamic education holistically. A significant factor in its success is the principal's transformational leadership, which has contributed to the effective management of the curriculum. By establishing a clear vision, inspiring teachers and students, and fostering a supportive environment, the principal has ensured the smooth implementation of the program. This underscores the vital role of strong leadership in advancing religious education initiatives.

The structured and innovative approach to the *Tahfidz* curriculum at this institution incorporates various strategies, such as integrating memorization activities into students' daily routines, utilizing the *Talaqqi* method, and providing intensive mentoring for those facing challenges. These methods have not only strengthened students' ability to memorize the Quran but have also deepened their comprehension of its teachings. While the program has yielded positive outcomes, several obstacles persist, including limited facilities, varying levels of student motivation, and the need for continuous professional development among teachers. To address these challenges, the principal has initiated several measures, such as partnering

with external organizations to enhance infrastructure, organizing teacher training programs, and involving parents in supporting students' progress. These efforts are crucial in ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the *Tabfidz* program.

Beyond academic benefits, the *Tabfidz* program at MTs Hidayatul Hikmah significantly influences students' character development, instilling discipline, religious commitment, and ethical values. This aligns with the goals of Islamic education, which emphasize the formation of *insan kamil*—individuals who achieve a balance between intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence. Furthermore, the success of this program serves as an exemplary model for other Islamic schools, demonstrating how structured religious education can contribute to shaping a generation that excels academically and morally.

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### Biographical Notes

**HAIRUL FAUZI** is working at Institut Agama Islam (IAI) An-Nadwah Kuala Tungkal, Jambi, Indonesia.

**MUH IBNU SOLEH** is working at Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) KH Muhammad Ali Shodiq Tulungagung, Indonesia

**HAWWIN MUZAKKI** is working at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia

**MUHAMMAD HARIS** is working at Institut Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan, Indonesia.

**MUHAMMAD RAMADAN ABD ALLAH MOHAMED** is working at Institut Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan, Indonesia.