



Strategies to Increase Student Interest in the Superior Al-Qur'an Memorization Program in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the strategies used to enhance students' interest in the Tahfidz Al- Qur'an program at SD Aisyiyah Lubuk Linggau, one of the school's flagship programs designed to strengthen religious competence and character formation at the elementary level. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation to explore pedagogical practices, managerial arrangements, and supporting factors within the learning environment . The findings indicate that students' interest grows significantly when learning activities are designed to be enjoyable, relevant, and meaningful. Teachers employ various pedagogical strategies, including games, kinesthetic activities, rhythmic repetition, talaqqi, and inspirational storytelling, which successfully increase students' engagement and intrinsic motivation . Managerial strategies – such as flexible scheduling, ability-based grouping, and continuous evaluation – contribute to reducing learning pressure and increasing students' confidence. Social support from parents, reinforced through daily memorization control books and school appreciation events like Memorization graduation ceremonies, further Strengths students ' consistency and sense of belonging to the Memorization community. The study concludes that the effectiveness of the Tahfidz program relies not only on structured curriculum design but also on integrated strategies that respond to students' psychological needs and developmental characteristics . These findings offer theoretical and practical implications for improving Memorization programs in elementary schools and highlights the need for further research using broader and comparative approaches.

Keywords: *Tahfidz Al-Qur'an, Students' Interest, Learning Strategies, Elementary Education, Religious Character Development.*



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INTRODUCTION

The Quran memorization program at the elementary school level is increasingly viewed as a strategic instrument in strengthening students' religious character (Nurbaiti, Wahyudin, & Abidin, 2021). In this developmental phase, children are at a stage that is responsive to habits, role models, and activities that build spiritual discipline (Juwita & Yunitasari, 2024). Through structured Quran memorization activities, students are not only introduced to the ability to read and memorize the sacred text but are also guided to foster a love, emotional closeness, and appreciation

for the values of the Quran's teachings (Syahid & Wahyuni, 2019). Regular memorization of the Quran contributes to character development, such as patience, consistency, discipline, and a sense of responsibility for religious duties (Shobirin, 2018). Furthermore, a conducive learning environment, supported by the teacher's role as a spiritual model, helps strengthen the internalization of the moral values contained in the Quran (Antara, 2019). At Aisyiyah Elementary School in Lubuk Linggau, this program is a flagship program expected to develop memorization skills and internalize Islamic values from an early age. However, the effectiveness of the Tahfidz program does not solely depend on the program's structure, but also significantly depends on student interest and the learning strategies implemented by the school and teachers.

From an educational psychology perspective, interest is understood as an affective tendency that makes individuals attached to certain activities (Hurlock, 2002). (Elendiana, 2020). Interest in learning emerges and develops when students feel that the learning activities they participate in are relevant to their needs, goals, or life experiences (Kristianto, Susetyo, Utama, Fitriyono, & Jannah, 2023). When material is perceived as meaningful and useful, students tend to show higher engagement because they see a direct connection between what is learned and their lives (Awalia Anzilni, 2023). In addition to relevance, the element of enjoyment in the learning process also plays an important role (Saifulloh & Darwis, 2020). Learning activities that are designed to be interesting, interactive, and appropriate to students' learning styles can create a positive atmosphere that encourages curiosity (Jainiyah, Fahrudin, Ismiasih, & Ulfah, 2023). Meaningful learning experiences, such as through hands-on practice, discussions, projects, and collaborative activities, strengthen students' emotional connection to learning (Kharisma, Septiani, Suryaningsih, Mahdum, & Erlisnawati, 2025). This combination of relevance, enjoyment, and meaning forms the foundation for the natural and sustainable growth of learning interest (Rahmawati, 2022). According to Self-Determination theory, intrinsic motivation related to interest will increase if a person's needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met (Ryan, RM, & Deci, 2017). In the context of Tahfidz, students' interest can develop if they experience gradual success in memorizing, have a positive emotional relationship with the teacher, and are involved in strategies that provide space for exploration, not just mechanical repetition (Shobirin, 2018).

On the other hand, strategies for increasing interest are also in line with Vygotsky's constructivist theory, which emphasizes that effective learning occurs when students are exposed to contextual and collaborative learning experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). The application of methods such as talaqqi, murojaah, educational games, and the use of audio-visual media can provide a more interactive learning experience and reduce boredom (Isna Amalia Akhmar, Hana Lestari, & Zulfikar Ismail, 2021). Tahfidz programs that are too oriented towards memorization targets without considering the stages of children's cognitive development have the potential to weaken long-term interest, as Piaget emphasized that elementary school-aged children need concrete and stimulating activities (Piaget, 1954).

The phenomenon at Aisyiyah Elementary School in Lubuk Linggau shows an imbalance between program design and students' psychological readiness. Some students show high enthusiasm, but others have difficulty maintaining consistent memorization. This indicates a strategic gap that is important to analyze: whether the implemented strategy meets the principles of children's learning needs, whether teachers have adequate pedagogical skills to manage the Tahfidz program, and to

what extent the school environment and parental involvement support increasing student interest. Furthermore, the theory of educational strategy management (Bryson, 2011) emphasizes that the success of a flagship program requires comprehensive planning, consistent implementation, and measurable evaluation. If the strategy to increase student interest is not based on an analysis of student needs and characteristics, the flagship program can lose its effectiveness and become merely a symbolic identity of the school.

Previous research studies have shown that the Quran memorization program at the elementary school level plays a strategic role in shaping religious character and increasing students' love for the Quran. Nugraha (2020) found that a structured memorization habit effectively fosters students' discipline, patience, and spiritual motivation, while Lestari and Fauzan's (2021) research emphasized the importance of teachers as spiritual role models and the effectiveness of the talaqqi and murojaah methods in creating a conducive learning process. Meanwhile, Rahmawati (2022) showed that students' interest and intrinsic motivation are determining factors for the success of the tahfidz program, so the use of audio-visual media, fun activities, and a variety of strategies are necessary to increase student engagement. The similarities between these three studies lie in their emphasis that tahfidz is not only a memorization process but also a medium for character formation through habituation and role models, and that teachers have a central role in internalizing values. The differences are evident in the focus of the analysis: Nugraha emphasizes the character aspect, Lestari and Fauzan highlight the pedagogical aspect, and Rahmawati emphasizes the psychological aspect of students.

However, these studies have not specifically examined how strategies for increasing interest are formulated and evaluated within the context of flagship programs in certain schools, such as Aisyiyah Elementary School, Lubuk Linggau. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing strategies for increasing student interest in tahfidz, assessing their suitability with modern educational theory, and identifying supporting and inhibiting factors in program implementation. The lack of scientific studies related to the effectiveness of strategies used by Aisyiyah Elementary School, Lubuk Linggau, in developing student interest in tahfidz is a research gap that needs to be filled. This study aims to critically analyze strategies for increasing student interest in the tahfidz program, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and evaluate the suitability of these strategies with modern educational theory and the developmental characteristics of elementary school students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approaches and Types

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research seeks to understand the phenomenon in depth regarding strategies to increase student interest in the Tahfidz Al- Qur'an program in the natural context at Aisyiyah Elementary School Lubuk Linggau. The case study was used to intensively examine one location that has special characteristics related to the Tahfidz program that is the focus of the research. This approach allows researchers to comprehensively capture the dynamics, interactions, strategies, and direct experiences of the program implementers and participants as recommended (John W. Creswell, 2017). The research was conducted at Aisyiyah Elementary School Lubuk Linggau, an Islamic-based school with a flagship Tahfidz Al- Qur'an program. This school was selected based on the relevance of the program being implemented

with the research focus. The research was conducted over a certain period, for example, January to March 2025, which included the process of field observation, interviews with informants, document collection, data analysis, and verification of research findings.

Research Subjects and Informants

The subjects in this study were all parties directly involved in the implementation of the Tahfidz program at Aisyiyah Elementary School, Lubuk Linggau. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, namely the selection of informants based on the consideration that they can provide the most relevant and in-depth data regarding strategies to increase student interest. These informants included the principal, Tahfidz program coordinator, Tahfidz teachers, class teachers, student participants, and parents. Each informant has a different contribution in describing the strategy, implementation dynamics, and factors that influence student interest.

Data collection technique

Data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted in a moderate participatory manner, meaning the researcher was present during Tahfidz activities to directly observe the learning process, interactions between teachers and students, and the learning atmosphere. In-depth interviews were conducted semi-structured with Tahfidz teachers, principals, students, and parents to explore their views and experiences regarding strategies for increasing student interest. In addition, documentation in the form of school profiles, Tahfidz program structures, learning guidelines, activity schedules, and notes on students' memorization progress were collected to strengthen the findings from the observations and interviews (Sugiyono, 2017).

Research Instruments

The primary instrument of this research is the researcher herself, acting as a human instrument. The researcher plays a role in determining the research focus, selecting informants, collecting data, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions. The researcher also prepares supporting instruments in the form of interview guides, observation sheets, field notes, and recording devices to assist in the documentation and recording of data in the field.

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted following the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, researchers select, code, and simplify data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, the reduced data is presented in a structured narrative to facilitate understanding of patterns and relationships between findings (Miles, MB, Huberman, AM, & Saldana, 2018). The final stage is drawing conclusions, which is carried out in stages through repeated verification to produce valid and accountable findings. Researchers used several strategies, namely source triangulation, technical triangulation, extended participation, and member Check. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from teachers, students, and parents, while technical triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Extending participation was conducted by deepening the researcher's involvement in the field, while members Checking is done by reconfirming the findings with the informant to ensure the conformity between the data and the researcher's interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Al- Qur'an Memorization Program at Aisyiyah Elementary School, Lubuk Linggau

The Quran memorization program at Aisyiyah Elementary School in Lubuk Linggau is a flagship program designed to strengthen religious skills and shape the character of students from elementary school age. Through structured Quran memorization activities, the school strives to instill good reading and memorization skills, while fostering emotional closeness and a love for Islamic teachings in students. This program focuses not only on memorization but also on internalizing moral values such as discipline, patience, consistency, and a sense of responsibility. As the teacher explained:

"...In the tahfidz program, we don't just aim for memorization. What's more important is how children learn moral values like discipline, patience, and steadfastness. For example, they are accustomed to arriving on time, reviewing memorization consistently, and being responsible for maintaining good manners while studying. We consider this change in attitude to be a crucial part of the program's success, not simply the number of verses they memorize..."

With the support of a conducive learning environment and the exemplary role of teachers as spiritual models, the tahfidz program is expected to be an effective means of building the foundation of religious character from an early age, while also preparing students to become individuals with noble morals and a lifelong love for the Qur'an .

One of the class teachers explained the Tahfidz program, namely:

"...Before learning begins, the children take part in muroja'ah together so that their memorization is maintained. To add new memorization, we use the talaqqi and tikrar methods because they are easier for children to follow. Apart from that, I also carry out regular evaluations to see the progress of each student, from their memorization fluency to their attitude during the learning process..."

The class teacher's statement illustrates that the implementation of the Tahfidz program at Aisyiyah Elementary School in Lubuk Linggau is carried out through a series of systematic and planned activities. Before the lesson begins, students participate in a group muroja'ah session as a form of memorization repetition aimed at maintaining the consistency and accuracy of their recitation. When adding new memorization, the teacher applies the talaqqi method, in which students listen to the teacher's recitation directly, and the tikrar method, which emphasizes intensive repetition to make memorization more easily embedded in memory. These two methods are considered appropriate for the cognitive development characteristics of elementary school-aged children because they provide concrete examples and repetitive memorization steps. In addition to core activities, teachers also conduct regular evaluations to monitor each student's progress, not only in terms of memorization fluency and accuracy, but also in terms of their attitudes and discipline throughout the learning process. These evaluations help teachers understand students' individual needs and adjust learning strategies to be more effective in supporting the overall success of the Tahfidz program.

The school strives to create a conducive learning environment by providing a Tahfidz (memorization) room, dividing students into small groups based on their abilities, and using a variety of methods to prevent boredom. Furthermore, teachers play an active role in providing motivation, monitoring memorization progress, and building emotional bonds with students to strengthen their interest in the program.

Analysis of Strategies to Increase Student Interest in the Tahfidz Program

Strategies to increase student interest in the Tahfidz program at Aisyiyah Elementary School, Lubuk Linggau, were analyzed based on several key aspects emerging from the research findings. Observation data shows that: Observation results indicate that during the tahfidz activity, teachers implemented various learning methods that were able to attract attention and increase student enthusiasm. Teachers used educational games based on verse cards, kinesthetic movements to help memorize the hijaiyah letters, and repeated memorization exercises with a certain rhythm. Students appeared enthusiastic, some even competing to come forward to memorize in front of their friends. When the teacher shared inspiring stories of those who memorized the Qur'an, students listened seriously and actively asked questions. In addition, the activity was managed in a structured manner by dividing them into small groups based on their memorization abilities. Each group received a different learning schedule so that students felt more comfortable and not burdened. Students who previously lacked confidence began to show increased participation because they were in groups that matched their abilities. Teachers also provided short breaks to maintain a pleasant learning atmosphere. Memorization control books were always carried by students, and some showed their parents' signatures as proof of memorization support at home. This observation shows that the pedagogical and managerial strategies implemented are effective in increasing student involvement and interest in the tahfidz program.

Based on the observation data above, three findings were analyzed, including : First, pedagogical strategies are implemented through the selection of learning methods tailored to students' learning styles, such as the use of educational games, kinesthetic approaches, and rhythm-based repetitive memorization methods. Teachers also integrate inspirational stories about figures who have memorized the Qur'an to foster intrinsic motivation. Second, managerial strategies are implemented through flexible schedule management, division of study groups, and adjustment of memorization targets based on individual student abilities. This strategy has been proven to help students feel more confident and not burdened by the pressure of memorization achievements. The third aspect is social support in the form of parental involvement and the formation of a learning community. The school encourages parents to provide memorization assistance at home through memorization control books that are signed daily.

In addition, the teacher also explains:

"At our school, we regularly hold Tahfidz graduation ceremonies and awards for students who demonstrate progress in memorization. The awards don't have to be large; they can be certificates, badges, or special announcements during morning assembly. This has significantly impacted their motivation. The children feel proud and more enthusiastic about memorizing, not only because they want to receive awards, but also because they feel valued as part of a community of Quran memorizers. This program helps strengthen their religious identity. In my experience, strategies for increasing interest are not sufficient with classroom learning methods alone; they need support from the entire school environment, including a learning environment that consistently recognizes their efforts."

The class teacher's statement indicates that the implementation of the Tahfidz Program at Aisyiyah Elementary School, Lubuk Linggau, focuses not only on increasing memorization, but also on strengthening the process and controlling the quality of students' memorization. The muroja'ah practice conducted before the start

of learning reflects a consistency-oriented memorization maintenance strategy. This aligns with the principle that the success of tahfidz is not only measured by the number of verses memorized, but also by the accuracy of pronunciation and the stability of students' memory. The use of *the talaqqi* and *tikrar methods* indicates that the teacher chose an approach that is appropriate to the characteristics of elementary school children's cognitive development, where learning based on direct examples and repetition has proven more effective in facilitating the memorization process. This method also confirms the relationship between learning strategies and students' ability to internalize memorization.

Furthermore, the regular evaluations conducted by teachers indicate that the Tahfidz program at this school has a fairly robust monitoring mechanism. The evaluations cover not only memorization fluency but also student attitudes during the learning process, indicating that the school places character and discipline as indicators of program success. This analysis shows that the Tahfidz program at Aisyiyah Elementary School in Lubuk Linggau is implemented through a structured approach, starting from strengthening old memorization, learning new memorization, and evaluating progress. Therefore, the program's implementation is not only oriented towards quantitative memorization achievements, but also on the quality of the process and the development of student character.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Increasing Student Interest

The main supporting factors in increasing student interest in the Tahfidz program at Aisyiyah Elementary School in Lubuk Linggau are teacher commitment, the availability of supporting facilities, and a religious school culture. Tahfidz teachers play a central role in providing intensive guidance, creating a comfortable learning atmosphere, and providing space for students to develop according to their respective abilities. Facilities such as a prayer room, a Tahfidz room, and audio equipment for muroja'ah help optimize the learning process. The religious culture that has developed within the school environment also reinforces values, making Tahfidz activities part of students' daily lives.

On the other hand, there are inhibiting factors that affect the effectiveness of increasing student interest. One of these is the significant differences in learning abilities between students, requiring teachers to allocate more time for students who are slow to memorize. Furthermore, boredom is a challenge, especially for lower-grade students who require a variety of learning methods to stay motivated. External factors from the family environment, such as a lack of time to assist children in memorizing at home, also hinder consistent memorization. These challenges need to be considered in developing a more comprehensive follow-up strategy.

The novelty of this research finding specifically analyzes the strategy of increasing student interest in the context of the flagship Tahfidz program at Aisyiyah Elementary School, Lubuk Linggau, something that has not been widely explained in previous studies that generally only highlight learning methods or motivation in general. This study found three dimensions of integrated strategies: pedagogical, managerial, and social support strategies that work simultaneously in shaping student interest, thus providing a new analytical framework in understanding the success of the Tahfidz program in elementary schools. Another new finding is the affirmation of the importance of memorization quality control mechanisms such as *muroja'ah*, periodic evaluations, and memorization control books as a form of *quality Assurance* directly impacts the stability of students' interest and memorization achievement. Furthermore, this study revealed a gap between program standards and students'

psychological readiness, indicating that interest is determined not only by learning methods but also by the appropriateness of the memorization target load to the child's cognitive developmental stage.

This study broadens the understanding of learning interest in a religious context by integrating the theory of learning interest, Self-Determination Theory, and constructivism into the practice of tahfidz learning. Its practical contribution is evident in concrete recommendations for schools in designing effective strategies to increase interest through a variety of methods, study group management, and collaboration with parents. This research also contributes to policy by providing an empirical basis for Islamic education policymakers to develop guidelines for developing tahfidz programs that are responsive to student characteristics. The limitations of this study include its limited scope to one school, which reduces the generalizability of the findings, the absence of quantitative interest measurements, the limited depth of students' perspectives due to age, and the lack of comprehensive exploration of family factors. These limitations open up opportunities for more comprehensive follow-up research through a mixed approach, comparative studies between schools, or in-depth exploration of family dynamics and their influence on students' interest in memorizing the Qur'an.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that increasing student interest in the flagship Quran memorization program at Aisyiyah Elementary School in Lubuk Linggau relies on the implementation of an integrated strategy involving pedagogical, managerial, and social support approaches. Pedagogically, a variety of methods such as talaqqi, tikrar, educational games, and inspirational stories have been proven to create a fun, relevant, and meaningful learning environment for students, thus encouraging intrinsic motivation. From a managerial perspective, grouping students based on ability, flexible scheduling, and the implementation of regular evaluations play a crucial role in ensuring the learning process is effective and aligned with children's cognitive developmental stages. Social support through parental involvement and a religious school culture further strengthens student interest in Quran memorization activities, while also helping maintain consistency in memorization at home. The Quran memorization program at this school focuses not only on achieving the quantity of memorization, but also on the quality of the process and the formation of religious character traits such as discipline, patience, and responsibility. However, the study found several obstacles such as differences in student abilities, learning boredom, and limited family support. These findings emphasize that strategies for increasing interest must be developed adaptively and comprehensively, taking into account the psychological needs and developmental characteristics of children. This research provides theoretical and practical contributions to the development of Tahfidz programs in elementary schools, while also opening up opportunities for broader, further research through quantitative approaches and comparative studies across educational institutions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors express their sincere appreciation and gratitude to all parties who contributed to the completion of this research. Special appreciation is extended to the principal, teachers, and students of Aisyiyah Elementary School, Lubuk Linggau, for their openness, cooperation, and willingness to participate during the data collection

process. Their support enriched the research findings with invaluable insights. The authors also extend their gratitude to their academic advisors and colleagues who provided constructive feedback throughout the development of this research. Finally, our deepest gratitude goes to our families and all those who provided encouragement, enthusiasm, and moral support, which enabled us to successfully complete this research.

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