

# Student Interest-Based Learning in *Tahfidz* Classes and Challenges Faced during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the learning conducted in increasing the interest of learners in memorizing the *Qur'an (tahfidz)*. amid during the rise of *tahfidz* special programs offered by Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. The existence of *tahfidz* classes can provide space to build students' self-efficacy towards their interests and talents. In addition, the existence of the program becomes an opportunity for students to develop their interest in learning the science of the *Qur'an* by memorizing. This research is descriptive qualitative research. The research site was conducted in a junior high school that contained a special program of memorizing the *Qur'an*. The subjects of the study involved the principal and the teacher of the *tahfidz* school. Data collection techniques are based on confirmability. Data analysis conducted using miles, huberman, and saldana interactive models. The results of this study showed that with the interest class can provide space to build self-efficacy of learners to the interests of *tahfidz* owned. The construction process summarized the *mutaba'ah* program of *tahfidz* learning, application of memorization criteria assessment, implement *tahfidz camp* activities, and create a climate of memorization in the school environment. Through coaching and learning methods that adjusted to the needs of students, learning in this program makes students' interests more targeted..

**Keywords:** Learning, Interest Classes, *Tahfidz*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Interest Based Learning

Channeling the interests and talents possessed by a person can be done by carrying out activities which include understanding and application of the interests and talents possessed. These activities must be accompanied by a conducive and constructive environment, so that their interests and talents can develop along with their participation in these activities. Specialization programs can be a place for channeling these interests and talents, because in it there is a decision made by a person to be able to choose a certain learning material on the basis of his will and based on his interests and talents.

### 1.2. History of the Development of Islamic-Based Education in Indonesia

Currently, many Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia offer the *tahfidz* program as a featured program, even as a special program grouped in specialization programs. The specialization starts from junior high school to high school level, these institutions include Islamic schools, Madrasas and Islamic boarding schools. According to Hasbullah in (Akhiruddin, 2015) the history of Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia from the 19th century has grown with the number of students no less than 16,500 students. This proves that people's enthusiasm for religious

education has long been growing and sticking to this day, especially to get the best education, one of which is learning the *Qur'an* through *tahfidz* activities. Besides the enthusiasm was formed because many educational establishments, especially at colleges provide special scholarships for students memorizing the *Qur'an*.

Based on the scholarship program implemented by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia through the Directorate of Early Education and Pondok Pesantren (PD Pontren) has conducted a selection of memorization of the *Qur'an* for students who joined the scholarship program to Turkey. Scholarships are awarded those who meet the criteria. Then those who completed the program are given educational services for 2 years to prepare for the selection of advanced programs in Turkey. (The Wisdom of 2017).

Based on the reality that there are many opportunities for memorizing the *Qur'an* by participating in the *tahfidz* scholarship program, the public's enthusiasm for *tahfidz* education is *increasing*. Therefore, the existence of specialization classes at the junior high school level is expected to be the first step for students to prepare to become the next generation of memorizing the *Qur'an*. Even though apart from this, loving the *Qur'an* by memorizing is a Muslim's way of guarding it.

### **1.3. Understanding the Contents of the Qur'an as a Guide to the Life of a Muslim.**

The Qur'an is a guide for Muslims in carrying out their lives, making humans educated from every verse that contains the meaning of life in it. The meanings listed in it are properly judged by the beautiful arrangement of language and sentences, and therefore has an obligation to understand its life guidelines. Muslims are obliged to maintain and protect *the Qur'an* including reading (*Tilawah*), writing (*Kitabah*), and memorizing (*Tahfidz*) (Badruzaman, 2019). All three have benefits and virtues that are intended for every people who practice them, it is a form of application in maintaining the *Qur'an* from purity in every means delivered.

Studying and understanding the Qur'an is a very noble act as a manifestation of love for the owner of the universe. (Zakaria et al., 2014) explains that understanding the Qur'an is a gift from Allah SWT. It can be understood that if a servant tries to understand the Qur'an, then it is a gift that Allah has bestowed upon him. To complete the stages in each process of maintaining the purity of the Qur'an as described previously, namely by reading, writing and memorizing, there is a further process, namely the process of practicing the contents of the Qur'an.

The stages mentioned above should be carried out through assistance from someone who is an expert in their field, so as not to cause errors in the delivery of the contents contained in the *Qur'an*. Starting with the reading stage as the first step in understanding the content of the Qur'an, in accordance with the first revelation obtained by the Prophet Muhammad with the revelation of the letter *Al-Alaq* verses 1-5 which calls for the command to read in verse 1 which reads *Iqro'* or read it. This reading stage is carried out with an initial understanding in the form of letter recognition which is carried out with several methods in it.

### **1.4. Application of Interest-Based Learning Methods Towards Tahfidz Coaching**

One of the books that is often encountered is using the *Iqro'* method, in which there is a grouping of readings in each volume that can help teachers to monitor students in their progress in studying the Qur'an. The method used practical, effective, and efficient Al-Qur'an learning techniques and could lead to mastering the reading of the Qur'an (Palufi & Syahid, 2020). Then proceed with the writing stage until the last stage, namely the memorization stage, all three have learning methods that are tailored to their needs.

*Tahfidz* learning at an educational institution has variations in the selection of teaching methods, it is adjusted to the needs of students. This need can be seen in terms of age, strength in understanding the learning material, and the ability to memorizing the *Qur'an* of each student. However, before entering the stage of memorization or *tahfidz*, it is advisable to understand the readings contained in the *Qur'an* accompanied by the application of *tajwid*. The emphasis in

learning recitation is used as a benchmark for students to continue to the next memorization target, this system is the initial stage in learning before going to *tahfidz* (Fatmawati, 2019). Then you must be fluent in reading it, *tajwid*, *makhorijul letters* and so on. In QS. Al-Muzammil verse 4 explains that:

أَوْزِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ  
الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلاً

Meaning: Or more than (half) it. Qur'an and read it slowly -land.

Based on the understanding of the verse, it is recommended to read the Qur'an slowly. This means that in the reading there is a law of recitation of recitation that must be considered carefully. But before starting memorization, students are encouraged to understand the law of reading *tajwid* and apply it in reading the Qur'an.

*Tajwid* learning is applied to minimize errors in reading the Qur'an which can bring about changes in the meaning of a reading in it, as well as to help understand the Qur'an. properly and correctly. (Khamid et al., 2020)

Based on the discussion above, the steps that must be taken to be able to read the Qur'an well are by studying the law of reading recitation. So that to arrive at the stage of memorizing, students must be sure to be able to read the Qur'an properly in accordance with the rules of recitation. However, it is still found that there are students who are able to read the Qur'an fluently, but not in accordance with the rules of recitation. So what happens is that the recitation of the Qur'an is not in accordance with the placement of letters or the length and shortness of it. Therefore, in the process of implementing learning or in fostering students, a *tajwid* learning method is needed that is easy to understand and learn.

### **1.5. Challenges Faced in the Learning Process During the Pandemic.**

Since the outbreak of a pandemic caused by the Corona virus in Indonesia, many ways have been taken by the government to prevent its spread. Through this circular the Ministry of Education and Culture gave instructions to universities to conduct distance learning and advised students to learn from their respective homes. There are at least 65 universities in Indonesia that provide learning from home to prevent the spread of Covid-19 (Pragholapati, 2020)

This distance learning also applies to secondary education in Indonesia. So it is required for online learning conducted in their respective homes during the enactment of mass quarantine.

## 2. TAHFIDZ SPECIALITY CLASS

Basically, the basis of the application of *tahfidz* specialization classes at Muhammadiyah 1 Adiwerna Junior High School is as a form of response and a form of devotion to community requests addressed to schools. The request is focused on coaching activities for students in memorizing the *Qur'an*. Then the request is heard and then realized by the school with the *tahfidz* specialization class or called the *excellent* class. Such requests are not necessarily without reason, in accordance with the results of interviews with school principal, He said that with the support and trust of the student guardians, students can prepare themselves to the next level or even to college with the provision of *tahfidz* knowledge given in junior high school. Basically, the provision of *tahfidz* science is not just the provision of knowledge but as a life grip for a Muslim. (Turrahman, 2020)

Based on this statement, it can be understood that parents have the awareness to be able to provide their children with *Al-Qur'an* education, which is by memorizing. This is an opportunity for schools to improve the quality of teaching and fostering the interests of *tahfidz* that students have, with full support given by parents and the community in realizing and giving birth to a generation of memorization.

Program specialization *Tahfidz* is a program provided by SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Adiwerna for learners who have to want 's to explore their interests and talents in the field of *Tahfidz*. They are members of a special class, the school calls it an *excellent* class. The class has been running for approximately one year, after previously the school had carried out activities that supported the competence of students in memorizing and producing *hafidz* graduates with various memorization criteria and the number of juz. After seeing the enthusiasm of the community shown by the full support for the school to produce graduates who are able to memorize the *Qur'an*, the school seeks to improve these competencies by holding a specialization program for *tahfidz*.

## 3. SELECTION PROCESS FOR *TAHFIDZ* INTEREST CLASS STUDENTS

Based on the results of interviews conducted that prospective students who choose the *tahfidz* specialization class, must go through several stages of selection. The first is the BTQ (Read and Write *Al-Qur'an*) test, at this stage of the test students are tested for their reading skills and seen by their memorization history. The second is a psychological test, at this stage the Counseling Guidance teacher asks about his desire and motivation to join the *tahfidz* specialization class. Then from the results of the two tests the teachers can decide on the class placement for prospective students.

From the explanation above, it is known that the interests of students must be identified from the start, this is so that learning can take place well and students can run it without any coercion. So it is hoped that the results obtained will run according to the objectives. This statement is reinforced by Krapp's opinion in (Bikner, 2014) which states that:

*"Situational interest is triggered by situational conditions, and may vanish if these conditions dry down. Personal interest is a long lasting kind of interest that, independent of situational conditions, students bring with them into the class".*

The above statement provides an understanding that the interest that exists in a person can be triggered by environmental conditions, if conditions and the environment do not support that interest will disappear in a person. Interest is something that a person has and tends to stay in him for a long time. Then the conditions and the environment that will bring this interest last for a long time in him. Therefore, the specialization class provided for students must build a condition and environment that supports the growth of interest in students.

Students who are members of this specialization program have the advantage and opportunity to improve their competency in memorizing. This is because in this program, students are presented with a variety of coaching activities that can support the learning process. Starting the coaching process, we need some support methods adapted to the needs of learners. This method is applied to activities that take place during the coaching process, including:

### 3.1. Coaching Activities in the *Tahfidz* Specialization Program

The coaching carried out at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Adiwerna is learning that is formed in a special class in the form of a *tahfidz* specialization class. It aims to not only focus students' interest in their talents, the school also has a goal to produce graduates who are equipped with knowledge from studying the *Qur'an* and memorizing it. To realize this goal, this *tahfidz* specialization class has a target that is expected on students before completing their studies. The target is the achievement of at least 3 juz memorization that must be obtained by each student at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Adiwerna.

Of course, by setting these targets the school facilitates various kinds of coaching programs in helping the memorization process of students. These programs include:

#### 3.1.1. *Mutaba'ah* Program of *Tahfidz* Learning

In the implementation of the program, students receive guidance in the form of learning to read and write the *Qur'an* by a *tahfidz* teacher. It is intended that students are able to understand every reading of the *Qur'an* with *makhroj* and the law of recitation of *tajwid*. So that after students are declared capable in terms of reading, students continue in the memorizing stage. Inspired by *yanbu'a* method, the school provides *tahfidz* coaching to students with the procedure of reading, writing the *Quran* in accordance with *tajwid* science.

At the memorizing stage, students are facilitated with *mutaba'ah* activities or can be understood with the meaning of monitoring. This *mutaba'ah* activity contains about how

teachers can monitor the development of students' memorization through the number of deposits at each meeting. In each learning, teachers implement a group deposit system, where each group will have a turn to advance to the level of memorization. However, the deposit system remains individual, so the teacher can assess in detail the developments experienced by each student.

However, in a pandemic situation, schools limit student activities by implementing an odd-even system. The system is carried out by enforcing student attendance based on odd-even absent numbers. So that activities in schools are limited by students with half the quota that should be. This is done to avoid crowds and in line with the government policies in implementing health protocols during the pandemic.

Group activities will help individuals through a group atmosphere that can create a participatory learning atmosphere and there are efforts to develop individual insights (Sumantri, 2017). Therefore, the group was created in order to encourage and stimulate the enthusiasm of students in memorizing. Furthermore, the function of making the group aims to group students based on their memorization abilities, this is done to make it easier for teachers to deal with students who have difficulties in learning, especially in memorizing.

### 3.1.2. Application of Memorization Criteria Assessment

In generating the level of memorization of students to be better, the teacher applies activities to streng then the memorization of students by means of *muroja'ah*. *Murojaah* is a method used in memorizing the Qur'an by repeating previously memorized readings. Murojaah aims as a reminder as well as a rote reinforcement that students have had. In the *muroja'ah*, not only the memorization is strengthened, but in terms of the suitability of the reading with the rules of recitation, it is also a material consideration to be able to continue the memorization stage in the next letter or verse.

These criteria are applied and monitored through *mutaba'ah* activities *carried* out at each meeting. So that through this monitoring the teacher can assess the extent to which students can adjust to the criteria that have been applied, or there is still a need for improvement in abilities both in terms of memorization and reading techniques.

### 3.2. Implementation of Camp Tahfidz. Activities

One of the special services provided for students in the *Tahfidz* specialization class is *Camp Tahfidz* activities. This activity is an opportunity for students to be able to explore their ability to memorize and be able to build their motivation to memorize. In these activities the school gets full support from the guardians or parents of students, both moral and material support. So that these activities can be accepted and approved by the guardians so that their children can further hone their memorization skills with activities outside of school.

The implementation of this activity involves *pesantren*-based educational institutions that have teaching staff who are memorizers of the *Quran*. In order for learning to be in accordance with the target, the activity is carried out through the guidance of teachers who are experts in their fields and quarantined for 2 months in *Pesantren*. However, with the current pandemic situation, these activities have been cancelled. This is the impact of a pandemic. Students have not been able to maximally get guidance, especially in *tahfidz* guidance. So that some targets have to be delayed because some activities are forced to be postponed for a while

### 3.3. Creating a Memorization Climate in the School Environment

Supporting the continuity and smoothness of *tahfidz* learning, the school strives for the school environment to create a *tahfidz* climate by raising the spirit of memorization for students and teachers. Activities carried out in creating this climate include the principal of bringing in *tahfidz* teachers who are specially brought in to assist and train teachers in learning the Qur'an both in terms of reading and memorizing. So in this case, not only students are required to memorize, but the teacher must also take part in the process. In addition, teachers are also trained to learn the art of reading the Qur'an through *workshops* provided by the school. Through these activities, it is used as a form of effort made to be able to create a climate and atmosphere that supports students in memorizing. One of the values that can be taken is competing in goodness, the goodness in question is in the form of memorizing the Qur'an.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

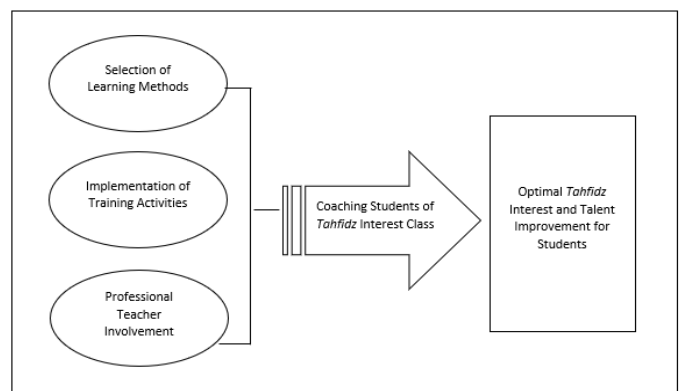


Figure 1. Flow of Coaching for *Tahfidz* Specialization Class Students

Based on the four coaching processes carried out at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Adiwerna for students of the specialization program, that the coaching carried out aims to prepare students to face challenges in the future. This preparation is realized by the existence of a *tahfidz* specialization program designed for students who want to explore and study the knowledge of the Qur'an in more depth. In addition, with this specialization, it can build motivation and self-confidence of

students in increasing their interest in memorizing. This becomes very important because self-confidence should be built as early as possible to convince students of their potential. (Sumantri et al., 2017) explains that self-efficacy obtained from cognitive processes in the form of decisions, beliefs or expectations about the extent to which individuals estimate their abilities in carrying out certain tasks or actions to achieve the desired results. (Constantine, Fernald, Robinson, & Courtney, 2019) explains that:

*“Six practices for supporting student self-efficacy: task engagement, self-regulated learning, supportive feedback, social-communicative engagement, multi-sensory learning activities, and student centered learning.”*

The explanation above can be understood that to build self-efficacy in students it is necessary to do 6 ways, including involvement in making assignments, learning that is based on the needs of students, supportive feedback, involvement of social connections, multi-sensory learning activities, and student-centered learning. From the results obtained that the four coaching activities carried out at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Adiwerna for students in the specialization class can be concluded to be able to contain these six aspects. So that coaching in this specialization class can help students increase their confidence in their *tahfidz* interest.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of analysis and discussion of data concluded that the specialization of the *tahfidz* program, can provide space to be able to build the efficacy of independent learners to the interests and talents of *tahfidz* and become one of the opportunities for learners to be able to develop their interest in learning the science of the *Quran*. Supported by the coaching activities carried out including: the mutaba'ah program of *tahfidz* learning, application of memorization criteria assesment, implement *tahfidz camp* activities, and create a climate of memorization in the school environment.

Through coaching and learning methods that are tailored to the needs of students, learning in this specialization program becomes more focused on their interests and talents. So that with the interest-based learning, students' interests become more directed than they originally had difficulty in knowing their interests, becoming aware of the interest in learning in school. Regarding the methods used in the construction of *tahfidz* for students, one of the methods applied is the *yanbu'a* method. Inspired by this method, the school provides *tahfidz* coaching to students with the procedure of reading, writing the *Quran* in accordance with *tajwid* science.

However, the implementation of these activities cannot run optimally, due to pandemic conditions which require restrictions on activities to prevent the spread of the virus. In addition, activities in the form of coaching students are carried out by limiting the number of students at each meeting. So that in responding to these conditions, schools are

trying to adapt and make adjustments in the implementation of activities so that they can continue to guide students well.

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