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Quranic Memorization as Reactualization of Values Education: Opportunities and Challenges in Islamic Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Although public interest in madrasah in Indonesia is increasing rapidly, a research gap remains evident, particularly regarding their potential as a holistic educational model to address the moral degradation of children due to the pressures of globalization. This study explores opportunities and challenges of Quran memorization (tahfiz) programs as a reactualization of values education in primary schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah/MI and Sekolah Dasar/SD), drawing on academic literature and policy documents via through qualitative research with a library research type. Findings reveal substantial opportunities: theological (countering secularism), sociological (community trust and social mobility), academic (improved management and outcomes), physical (superior infrastructure), and economic (affordable access via subsidies). These position madrasah as preferred alternatives for fostering self-regulation, discipline, and Quranic virtues. However, challenges persist, including internal academic issues (e.g., teacher shortages, inadequate facilities), heightened theological awareness competing with non-formal tahfiz houses, middle-class demands for modern curricula, and globalist demands for IPTEK-IMTAQ integration. Tahfiz al Qur'an programs, bolstered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs' declaration, offer a viable pathway to achieving constitutional character education goals, provided madrasah adopt innovative pedagogies, collaborate, and secure policy support. This study advocates strategic reforms to produce resilient generations balancing spiritual depth with 21st-century competencies.

Keywords: Opportunities and Challenges; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; Quranic Memorization; Value Education.

Abstrak

Meskipun minat masyarakat terhadap madrasah di Indonesia meningkat pesat, gap penelitian masih terlihat jelas, khususnya terkait potensinya sebagai model pendidikan holistik untuk mengatasi degradasi moral anak akibat tekanan globalisasi. Penelitian ini

mengkaji peluang dan tantangan program penghafalan Al Qur'an (tahfiz) sebagai reaktualisasi pendidikan nilai di sekolah dasar (MI/SD), dengan mengandalkan literatur akademik dan dokumen kebijakan melalui penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis kajian pustaka. Hasil penelitian mengungkap peluang yang substansial: teologis (menangkal sekularisme), sosiologis (kepercayaan masyarakat dan mobilitas sosial), akademis (pengelolaan dan hasil yang lebih baik), fisiologis (infrastruktur unggul), serta ekonomi (akses terjangkau melalui subsidi). Hal ini menempatkan madrasah sebagai alternatif pilihan untuk membentuk pengendalian diri, disiplin, dan akhlak Qur'ani. Namun, tantangan tetap ada, meliputi isu akademis internal (misalnya, kekurangan guru, fasilitas tidak memadai), kesadaran teologis yang meningkat bersaing dengan rumah tahfiz nonformal, tuntutan kelas menengah terhadap kurikulum modern, serta tuntutan globalis untuk integrasi IPTEK-IMTAQ. Program tahfiz, yang didukung oleh pernyataan Kementerian Agama, menawarkan jalur yang layak untuk mencapai tujuan pendidikan karakter konstitusional, sepanjang madrasah mengadopsi pendidikan berbasis pedagogi inovatif, kolaboratif, dan memperoleh dukungan kebijakan. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan reformasi strategis untuk menghasilkan generasi tangguh yang menyeimbangkan kedalaman spiritual dengan kompetensi di abad ke-21.

Kata kunci: Peluang dan Tantangan; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; Tahfiz al Qur'an; Pendidikan Nilai.

INTRODUCTION

The growing public awareness of sending their children to madrasah has been a breath of “fresh air” for Islamic education in recent years. It is undoubtedly due to the role of madrasah, which are increasingly delivering quality educational outcomes (Bahtiyar et al., 2022; Ichsan et al., 2025; Miftahurrohman et al., 2021). It is a reality recognized by many, including academics.

Tracing the long history of *madrasah* education, madrasah have existed since the development of Islam. Madrasah grew and developed from the grassroots, namely through the social and religious responsibility to convey Islamic teachings to the next generation. Therefore, it is undeniable that madrasah at that time emphasized only the deepening of knowledge and study of Islam (Lukens-Bull, 2019). Therefore, understanding this history, when many circles talk about various national educational innovations that gave birth to education managed by the community in general (Community-Based Management of Education), education in madrasah is a model of this innovative education (Waluyo et al., 2025), especially in recent years with the continued promotion of mandatory Qur'an memorization programs in every Madrasah Ibtidaiyah/MI (Islamic elementary school).

In this context, madrasah, as educational institutions with distinct Islamic characteristics, play a crucial role in shaping students' personalities. Through education in madrasah, the community expects that children enrolled in madrasah will not only possess general scientific knowledge (IPTEK) but also develop strong moral character by mastering religious education (IPTAQ) (Khoiriah & Sujanto, 2026). With this expectation, madrasah certainly have bright prospects and are an educational solution in keeping with current developments.

In recent years, we have been shocked by the numerous immoral incidents committed by elementary school-aged children in several regions of Indonesia. These incidents, which have led to negative consequences, are a cause for concern for everyone. In the past four years alone, we have witnessed several heartbreaking incidents in the media, which are inappropriate for elementary school-aged children (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah/MI and Sekolah Dasar/SD). Goodstats data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) and the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (*Jaringan Pemantau Pendidikan Indonesia*/JPPI) shows a surge in violence in educational settings. In 2023, 285 cases were recorded. This number more than doubled to 573 cases in 2024. Thirty-one percent of these cases were directly related to bullying. The majority of victims were elementary school-aged children, with physical violence accounting for 55.5% and verbal/psychological violence accounting for 29.3% (Pusiknas Polri, 2025).

From the inappropriate incidents committed by the children above, there is a significant contradiction between the reality and expectations of education in Indonesia in the current era. The hope of education, which should be an effort to humanize humans and their surroundings, is actually the opposite: an effort to destroy humans and their environment inhumanely. Even the damage to the education system is already visible at the elementary school level. It is not surprising, then, that education is in the spotlight of many parties. Educational institutions, as a central point of education, have a vital and strategic role in carrying out their task of enlightening the nation's life (Danugroho, 2022), as stipulated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution. There is a major mandate for the state that must be, and continues to be, implemented in accordance with Article 31, paragraph 3, of the 1945 Constitution (Manasikana & Anggraeni, 2018).

In terms of education policy, Indonesia has been improving year after year. It is evidenced by the existence of a Character Education system aimed at restoring education to the nation's character. However, in practice, many educational institutions fail to prioritize

the primary goal of education: developing knowledge, attitudes, and skills in proportion. Many schools still provide excessive amounts of knowledge, so that the development of attitudes, behavior, and values within them tends to be neglected (Salmi, 2017). Therefore, in the current situation where government education policies remain unstable and align with reality on the ground, it is time for all education stakeholders (academics/schools, government, practitioners, activists, and educational researchers) to grasp and implement the meaning of "Values Education fully".

To actualize values education in the educational environment, the establishment of the Madrasah *Tahfiz* program by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2014 is a policy deserving appreciation and a symbol of the beginning of Islamic education. This declaration, at least, shares the same spirit as the noble values of the Quran, becoming the character and culture of students.

Several previous studies have revealed that the dynamics of Quran memorization education in formal educational institutions exhibit diverse patterns of curriculum integration, program design, and implementation challenges. In Indonesia, several madrasah and integrated Islamic schools have begun integrating the Quran memorization curriculum with the formal curriculum, designing memorization programs with a repetition (*muroja'ah*) approach and specific modulation, as well as utilizing reinforcement and sanctions within Skinner's behaviorist theory framework to make memorization a more focused and structured habit (Khafidin, 2021; Rasyidi, 2023). Another study at SD Al-Qur'an Islamiyyah Bandung revealed that the systematic implementation of a Quran memorization curriculum—through planning, interactive implementation, and periodic evaluation—has proven capable of creating a conducive learning environment and strengthening students' character and morals. However, it still requires increased teacher training and parental involvement (Anwar et al., 2025).

At the secondary level, SMA IT Ibnu Abbas Klaten implements a “boarding school plus *tahfizul Qur'an*” by combining the national curriculum, the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, and a special curriculum that places a high emphasis on *tahfiz*; this integrative approach shows that the combination of general and religious education in one learning framework has the potential to produce a strong Qur'anic generation in both academic and religious literacy, despite being faced with the constraints of busy student activities and differences in memorization abilities that require effective time management and intensive coaching (Muqoyyadi et al., 2020). Meanwhile, comparative research at SDIT Haniful Fikri

and SDIT Darul Mukhlisin Aceh Tamiang confirmed that although both schools use the talaqqi method, the management of intensity, teacher-student ratio, and family support greatly determine the effectiveness of achieving memorization targets and reading quality, so that participatory and community-based program design is the key to success (Yana, 2024). On the other hand, research on *tahfiz* al Qur'an learning strategies in various formal educational institutions also shows the need for an active and continuous role of *tahfiz* teachers, as well as supporting facilities such as modules, memorization cards, and a conducive psycho-physical environment, so that the memorization process does not merely become an academic burden but a means of developing discipline and spirituality, as tested in *tahfiz* al Qur'an studies in formal educational institutions based on Islamic boarding schools and integrated Islamic schools (Dainori & Imaniyah, 2025; Nazila, 2025; Qomariyah et al., 2025).

No specific studies have been found examining Quran memorization as a reactualization of educational values, despite general discussions of Quran literacy and character internalization through memorization. This gap includes the lack of in-depth exploration of the dynamics of memorization in formal institutions in Indonesia today, particularly the contextual opportunities and challenges in Islamic elementary schools. From the literature review above, previous studies have explored pedagogical challenges, strategies for internalizing values, and the implementation of memorization in Indonesian Islamic elementary schools, but none have specifically examined Quran memorization as a reactualization of educational values. Therefore, this study aims not only to analyze the dynamics of *tahfiz* al Qur'an education in formal educational institutions, but also to explore the opportunities and challenges of Quran memorization in Islamic elementary schools, particularly in Indonesia in today's contemporary context, in order to find new perspectives.

RESEARCH METHODS

The researchers employed a qualitative library research approach to explore the opportunities and challenges of Quran memorization (*tahfiz* al Qur'an) as a reactualization of values education in Islamic elementary schools (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*/MI and *Sekolah Dasar*/SD) in Indonesia. This method was selected for its suitability in conducting an in-depth synthesis of existing literature (Creswell, 2013), focusing on Quran memorization's role in revitalizing moral values, faith (*aqidah*), and social skills among early childhood students in Islamic elementary education contexts.

Data were collected through a systematic three-stage process from January to August 2025: First, identification. Searches were conducted in academic databases including Google Scholar, Scopus, Garuda (Indonesian national repository), DOAJ, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs digital library, using keywords in English and Indonesian, limited to publications from 2015–2025. This yielded dozens of documents. Second, screening and selection. Documents were screened for relevance using inclusion criteria: 1) peer-reviewed articles, books, or official reports on *tahfiz* al Qur'an programs in Indonesian elementary Islamic education; 2) empirical or conceptual focus on opportunities or challenges; 3) primary data from Indonesia or comparable contexts; and exclusion of non-educational sources. After title/abstract review and full-text assessment, 56 documents were selected, including 34 journal articles, 10 books/chapters, 6 thesis reports, and 6 case studies on *tahfiz* programs. Third, thematic grouping. Selected documents were organized into two categories—opportunities and challenges—using reference management software.

The analysis employed qualitative content analysis using a thematic approach (Adlini et al., 2022). It proceeded in three stages: 1) initial coding, involving inductive open coding of full texts to generate initial codes; 2) pattern identification, through axial coding to cluster codes into themes while noting patterns, contradictions, and policy implications; and 3) triangulation and synthesis, entailing cross-verification across sources and researcher discussions to refine themes and ensure interpretive depth.

Validity was established through source triangulation—incorporating diverse perspectives from academic, governmental, and empirical sources—and peer debriefing among researchers. Reliability was ensured by maintaining an audit trail of coding decisions and achieving inter-coder agreement (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018; Sugiyono, 2020). The limitations inherent in library research, particularly reliance on secondary data, were addressed by prioritizing recent empirical studies and pursuing conceptual generalization to enhance broader applicability. This approach yields a holistic, evidence-based framework that equips madrasah education stakeholders to effectively implement *tahfiz* al-Qur'an programs in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Tahfiz* al Qur'an Education in Indonesian Primary Schools

In Islamic teachings, the Prophet Muhammad Saw emphasized the highest respect for those who read and memorize the Quran. He also explained their status and

elevated their dignity above others. He said, "Study the Quran and read it. Indeed, the example of those who study the Quran and read it is like a vessel filled with musk, its fragrance spreading everywhere. Whoever studies it and then sleeps with the remembrance of the Quran in his heart is like a covered vessel filled with musk." (Qardhawi, 1999).

Not only that, regarding the virtues of memorizing the Qur'an, Imam Nawawi in his book *At Thibyan fi Adabi Hamalati Al Qur'an* states that there are two virtues, namely: 1) The Qur'an is the intercessor on the Day of Judgment for those who read, understand, and practice it. In the Hadith, it is stated, "Abu Umamah al-Bahili said to me, I heard Rasulullah SAW say, Read the Qur'an, then indeed it will come on the Day of Judgment as an intercessor for its owner (reader)", and 2). Memorizers of the Qur'an have been promised a high status in the sight of Allah SWT, great rewards, and respect among fellow humans.

The value education of Quran memorizers not only impacts religiosity but also serves as a potential source of self-regulation, helping them optimize their abilities to become well-rounded individuals. By self-regulation, we mean that students will be able to demonstrate high levels of discipline, honesty in their behavior, full concentration, sincerity in their actions, synchronization between the brain and heart, optimism, and self-confidence in achieving their aspirations, and other noble values.

Quran memorization (*tahfiz*) education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) has been increasingly promoted in various regions of Indonesia in recent years, with satisfactory results such as increased student memorization and competition achievements. For example, a flagship program implemented in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in certain regions successfully used the *talaqqi* method, which resulted in changes in student character, including becoming more patient, responsible, and diligent, as well as winning Quran memorization, *tartil*, and *syarh* competitions (Hazizah & Mahfud, 2022). Similarly, in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in other regions, the *tahfiz* program had a positive effect on the motivation to learn Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI*) of fifth-grade students (Anita et al., 2021). However, these results are still considered far from the community's expectations for higher memorization targets and consistency at the national level.

However, the main challenge arises from the gap between memorization targets and the implementation effectiveness of the *tahfiz* al Qur'an program in elementary

schools/Islamic elementary schools, such as students' difficulties in reading the Qur'an and inhibiting factors, such as laziness or the burden of schoolwork. The results of the study indicate that managing the 30 juz of *tahfiz* al Qur'an requires careful planning, strict monitoring, and regular evaluation through oral tests to achieve the target. In other schools, the implementation of interactive *tahfiz* al Qur'an for 10 days increased students' motivation, self-confidence, and discipline, as well as Qur'anic character traits such as honesty and cooperation, but still relies on participatory methods and rewards (Koerniansyah & Tanjung, 2025).

Broadly speaking, contemporary Indonesian society no longer views education merely as a temporary means of acquiring knowledge and skills, but rather as a long-term investment. This perspective encompasses the development of knowledge, skills, and high spirituality, as well as morality, for the dignity of both children and families. Islamic religious education in madrasah plays a strategic role in shaping religious character through habituation, role models, and an integrated curriculum, addressing moral degradation in the digital age (Yufarika et al., 2025).

This investment is driven by public awareness of the importance of memorizing the Quran (*tahfiz*) as a means of strengthening Islamic competency, even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, with the support of madrasah principals, teachers, and parents who focus on reading, writing, and memorizing Juz 30. It aligns with the trend among many Islamic elementary schools (MI) to attract students and foster noble character from an early age (Arifin, 2020). Thus, *tahfiz* al Qur'an education in MI has the potential to become a holistic foundation for future generations.

In practice, the development of Quran memorization education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) holds high hopes for its realization. However, real challenges must be faced. Nevertheless, with a holistic strategy, this hope can be gradually realized, as evidenced by the success of various MI programs in producing high-achieving young memorizers while maintaining a balance in holistic education.

B. *Tahfiz* al Qur'an Education as Opportunities in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)

Judging from the increasing enthusiasm of the community in sending their children to Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, and reinforced by the existence of new social phenomena in society (which tend to emphasize religiosity within the family), from this point, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah has great hopes of becoming an educational solution (alternative education) for the future. Some of these opportunities include:

1. Theological Opportunities

These opportunities are set in a society where religiosity and morality are at stake amid the rapid expansion of globalization, where exposure to foreign cultures through digital media and technology often erodes traditional religious practices and creates an identity crisis, especially among the younger generation. Globalization brings secular influences such as individualism, hedonism, and consumerism that contradict Islamic teachings, thereby triggering parental concerns about their children's declining interest in religion amid rapid changes in social values and norms (Safitri et al., 2024). Therefore, parents consider carefully how to maintain these two values by choosing formal education at a Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic Elementary School), which integrates a traditional Islamic curriculum, such as memorizing the Qur'an, to counter the negative impact of globalization on students' ethics and morals.

From an early age, they send their children to Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) and choose to study the Qur'an throughout their learning process, as a long-term investment in building a strong and competitive religious character in the global era. This approach not only strengthens memorization and understanding of the Qur'an through methods such as *talaqqi* and *muroja'ah* but also forms noble morals that serve as a bulwark against external cultural influences, as seen in the MI's flagship program that attracts parents to maintain family dignity (Zahrah et al., 2025). This strategy is a proactive response by Indonesian society to the challenges of globalization, in which the *madrasah* plays a role in shaping a holistic Islamic identity.

2. Sociological Opportunities

The research findings indicate that the community prefers to enroll their children in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) because the school plays a crucial role in the historical fabric of the local community. Historically, this madrasah has served as a central hub for shaping religious and social identity, where previous generations learned Islamic values integrated with local cultural norms, fostering strong emotional bonds among parents. Consequently, community expectations focus on their children's ability to achieve upward social mobility—such as advancing economically or attaining leadership positions—and to play a strategic role in upholding family social status upon reaching adulthood. This preference is bolstered by the madrasah's proven track record of producing competent graduates, many of whom pursue higher education or contribute to religious and social fields, as

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supported by data from similar studies in the Yogyakarta and Central Java regions showing competitive graduation and employment rates.

Furthermore, the appeal of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) is heightened by the presence of Qur'an *tahfiz* teachers who are not only pedagogically skilled but also widely recognized by the community as respected scholars or *huffaz* with high moral integrity. This recognition stems from a long tradition in which *tahfiz* al Qur'an teachers serve as spiritual role models, guiding students not only in Qur'anic memorization but also in everyday ethics aligned with Islamic teachings. It builds collective trust among parents, who view madrasah education as a long-term investment in holistic child development that integrates intellectual, spiritual, and social intelligence. Research on similar private *pesantrens* confirms that the *tahfiz* al Qur'an teacher factor contributes to school selection decisions, as evidenced by in-depth interviews with parents who emphasize it as a key differentiator from conventional public schools.

3. Academic Opportunities

Public expectations of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) are growing due to continuously improving academic performance, supported by professional and systematic educational management. The gradual implementation of quality management, such as self-evaluation, results analysis, and continuous improvement programs, has resulted in a high-achieving institution with creative, confident, and aspirational students and a high graduation rate with no dropouts (Setyo et al., 2021). It creates a positive image in the community's eyes, making madrasah the primary choice for educating their children.

This significant impact is felt by an education-conscious community, which views madrasah as a long-term investment in children's holistic development. The implementation of madrasah-based management improves coordination between administrators, teachers, and stakeholders, resulting in improved learning efficiency and a curriculum tailored to student needs through innovative methods (Marlina, 2024). As a result, madrasah gain academic prestige as top schools, in line with research findings that confirm the positive impact of professional management on the quality of Islamic education.

4. Physical Opportunities

Tangible physical factors, including well-constructed buildings, accessible geographic locations, conducive and religious educational environments, and adequate facilities such as classrooms, libraries, and sanitation, significantly influence societal preferences for enrolling children in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). These elements form the foundational basis of parental decision-making, as they signal institutional quality and reliability. Research by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2019) in its national madrasah evaluation report highlights that parents prioritize physical infrastructure when selecting a madrasah, viewing it as a proxy for educational efficacy. It aligns with broader educational psychology theories, which hold that environmental quality directly impacts learner motivation and retention.

Contemporary MI institutions have increasingly invested in grandiose buildings and luxurious educational amenities, such as air-conditioned classrooms, digital learning tools, and spacious playgrounds, which attract parental enrollment beyond mere religious affiliation. A study by Nijo and Wahab (2024) on Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) competitiveness in Indonesia found that schools with modern infrastructure had higher enrollment rates than those with basic facilities, attributing this to perceived prestige and safety. This trend underscores a market-driven dynamic in Islamic education, where physical opulence serves as a competitive edge, often overshadowing curriculum depth in initial parental choices.

Undeniably, addressing these physical factors optimizes the overall educational process, particularly in tahfiz al Qur'an (memorization), by minimizing distractions and enhancing focus. Empirical evidence from a quasi-experimental study demonstrates that students in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) with superior infrastructure showed a great improvement in tahfiz retention rates, linked to reduced cognitive load from comfortable settings and reliable resources (Ardila, 2021). While intangible factors such as teaching quality remain vital, robust physical provisions create an enabling ecosystem that amplifies pedagogical outcomes in religious education.

5. Economic Opportunities

Parents' expectations of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) are often based on their financial contributions, even if relatively affordable, reflecting a commitment to

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educating children from lower-income communities. As community-based educational institutions, MIs bear a strong social responsibility by offering low-cost and, in some cases, free education in remote areas through BOS funds and community endowments, thereby increasing accessibility for low-income families (Wijianto et al., 2025). It aligns with the 2025 Constitutional Court ruling requiring free basic education at both public and private MIs, reducing the economic burden on parents (Ramadhan, 2025). After all, the education of citizens must be funded by the government, as mandated by the 1945 Constitution.

Effective financial management in MI does not compromise educational quality; on the contrary, research shows a positive impact on graduate quality, with financing factors positively correlated with and contributing to it. School-Based Management (SBM) strategies and teacher competency development are key (Ulfitrah, 2021), enabling MI to meet national standards while adapting to local needs. In rural areas, community involvement through financial and social participation strengthens the learning process, resulting in high-quality output (Nurhayati & Ichsan, 2024). This community involvement is what will significantly improve the quality of education centers in the future (Ichsan, 2020).

Affordable fees actually encourage dedication among the academic community, with teachers feeling more committed to their service due to the strong sense of belonging fostered by community support. While low salaries are challenging, the intrinsic motivation of social responsibility and SBM enhances teacher professionalism, such as through training and classroom action research (Nuryanto, 2018). Transparent management of BOS funds maximizes resources, prevents leakage, and supports long-term dedication.

As a result, many Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MIs) have achieved A-level accreditation and outstanding achievements, such as having memorized the Quran (hafiz/hafizah). For example, MI Al Fattah Juwana Pati, which achieved A-level accreditation, has won tahfiz al Qur'an and MTQ competitions from local to national levels. Pesantren-based tahfiz and extracurricular programs have also contributed to this achievement, demonstrating the maximization of educational services amidst financial constraints (Rohim, 2024). This phenomenon confirms that low-cost accessibility correlates with superior outcomes, strengthening the public's preference for quality Islamic schools.

C. *Tahfiz* al Qur'an Education as Challenges in Primary Schools

Based on the explanation of the opportunities for Quran memorization education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) or Sekolah Dasar (SD) above, these hopes will undoubtedly be hampered in their realization if they are not understood. Therefore, the following describes the challenges of Qur'an memorization education in primary schools.

1. Internal Academic Challenges

Internal problems within Islamic schools, including Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), have become an open secret among various educational stakeholders, creating structural challenges for institutional management. Empirical research shows that weak management systems, such as unclear role allocation within madrasah committees and unstructured work programs, exacerbate this situation (Sirojudin, 2019). It not only hampers operational efficiency but also impacts the overall work ethic in formal Islamic educational institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, particularly Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI).

More specifically, internal challenges include the inadequate quality and quantity of teaching staff, with many teachers experiencing mismatches in qualifications and a lack of ongoing training, particularly in the predominantly private Islamic schools (madrasah). Furthermore, physical infrastructure and learning facilities are often inadequate, including a lack of standard classrooms and supporting media, which directly affects student learning outcomes (Sunarya, 2025). These factors create a vicious cycle that impedes achieving national education standards in MI.

In the context of Quran memorization education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), the problems are increasingly specific, with inadequate classroom facilities and monotonous learning methods hindering the process of repeated memorization (*muroja'ah*). The quality of teaching by supervising teachers is suboptimal due to limited staff and training, coupled with low student enthusiasm due to internal factors such as laziness, lack of focus, and low motivation, as well as external factors such as a heavy curriculum load (Fadllurrohman et al., 2022). As a result, student interest in the memorization class has declined, even though this program is crucial for preserving the Quran from an early age.

This challenge presents an urgent "homework" for the MI academic community, requiring holistic solutions, such as strengthening madrasah-based

management, improving teacher competency through training, and innovating memorization methods using interactive digital media. An integrated approach involving parents and government policies can break the cycle of problems, as recommended in various recent studies (Ali & Budianto, 2025). Thus, MI has the potential to become a leading institution in Islamic character education.

2. Theological Consciousness Challenges

New challenges have emerged due to growing religious awareness in society over the past few years, driven by the post-reform Islamic revival movement in Indonesia. This phenomenon, as analyzed in a sociology of religion study by Robert W. Hefner (2022), reflects the rise of Islamic identity among urban and semi-urban communities, where early tahfiz al Qur'an education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) has emerged as a strategic alternative to strengthen this religious awareness. Parents now view tahfiz al Qur'an not merely as memorization of the Quran, but as a long-term spiritual investment that shapes children's character in accordance with moderate Islamic teachings. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2025) shows an increase in enrollment in tahfiz al Qur'an programs in Islamic elementary schools, reflecting the public's response to the global narrative about the importance of Quranic literacy in the digital era (AntaraNews, 2026).

This awareness is inseparable from the long-established existence of non-formal tahfiz educational institutions, reinforced by the proliferation of "tahfiz houses" targeting elementary school-aged Qur'an memorizers. These institutions, as documented in the Directorate of Tahfiz Education report (2024), promote tahfiz al Qur'an education intensively through social media, community seminars, and mosque campaigns, emphasizing that it should begin as early as possible to maximize memorization, retention, and the internalization of values. Their strategy is effective, with national surveys showing that the majority of parents recognize that their children have been exposed to information through social media platforms, which then influences their children's lifestyle preferences (Aisyah, 2026). The existence of these tahfiz houses creates a supportive ecosystem that pressures formal madrasah to innovate to maintain competitiveness.

As a result, this phenomenon has direct implications for families seeking recognition of their religious status in the social environment, where choosing tahfiz al Qur'an education becomes a symbol of spiritual prestige and social differentiation.

In the context of Indonesia's pluralistic society, this encourages middle-class parents to integrate tahfiz al Qur'an with academic education, as seen in the increase in families enrolling their children in madrasah (Nurwahidah et al., 2025). The broader implication is the urgency for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools) to collaborate with tahfiz houses, develop evidence-based tahfiz curricula, and use digital media to remain relevant. This challenge can be transformed into an opportunity to enrich a holistic and adaptive Islamic education ecosystem.

3. Socialist Society Challenges

The increasingly massive social mobility in recent years poses a critical challenge for educational institutions like Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), particularly amid the rapid growth of the urban middle class fueled by higher academic education. This phenomenon, as explained in Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and social mobility, is evident in the continued expansion of middle-class families with university-level access, which creates demand for competitive, career-oriented curricula. In Indonesia, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS RI, 2025) shows an 18% rise in the middle class in urban areas like Yogyakarta and Central Java, who increasingly prioritize schools with strong graduate-track records. Tahfiz al Qur'an education in MI risks falling behind if it fails to align with these dynamics, as the middle class plays a pivotal role in societal transformation, especially through educational investments that support their economic and status aspirations.

This reality confirms that middle-class families are not only consumers of education but also agents of change, driving curriculum innovation in the wider community. They are often trendsetters in choosing schools that integrate science and technology with spiritual values, as evidenced by a study by PTIQ Jakarta, which showed that middle-class parents are turning to modernizing madrasah for holistic balance (Yahya, 2024). Without adaptation, tahfiz al Qur'an education could be seen as less relevant by this group, which views education as a primary means of vertical mobility—from manual labor to educated professionals. Therefore, MI must proactively respond to this demand by developing tahfiz al Qur'an programs integrated with 21st-century skills, such as digital literacy and soft skills, to maintain competitiveness and attract this rapidly growing segment of society.

An appropriate response from madrasah is not just about survival but a strategic contribution to shaping generations that bridge Islamic traditions with

modern demands. Strategies include university collaborations for tahfiz al Qur'an certification, sharia-based STEM facilities, and marketing campaigns highlighting successful middle-class alums. It preserves the quality of madrasah education while supporting national inclusive education agendas, as recommended in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025-2029 (Budiarti, 2025). Ultimately, such adaptation ensures MI remains the top choice for a middle class attuned to the added value of tahfiz al Qur'an education in an era of high social mobility.

4. Globalist International Challenges

The primary challenge is the rapid surge of globalization and modernization, which is profoundly impacting all societal strata, particularly the education sector. This phenomenon demands a mature and prudent response from all stakeholders, in which institutions like Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) must prepare future generations to master Science and Technology (IPTEK) alongside moral-spiritual values (IMTAQ). Characterized by digital advancements, cultural migrations, and knowledge-based economic shifts, this global current cannot be halted and will inevitably affect every segment of society, including rural Indonesian communities. As highlighted in UNESCO's 2023 study on educational globalization, developing nations like Indonesia grapple with the dilemma of adopting global technologies while preserving local identities, compelling madrasah to transform without losing their Islamic roots.

In this context, a strategic solution is to strengthen general education by integrating science and technology curricula relevant to the Industry 4.0 era, while developing and improving the quality of religious education, particularly the Quran memorization program. Memorization education is not just about memorization, but also about developing resilient character capable of navigating ethical challenges amidst technological disruption, such as AI ethics and Sharia-based digital literacy. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2024) shows that madrasah with integrated memorization programs have a higher level of student adaptation to global change than conventional madrasah (Hakim et al., 2024). These two pillars—science and technology, and faith and piety—are essential foundations for a sustainable future, ensuring graduates are not only professionally competitive but also possess noble character.

This current of globalization has profound implications for the wider community's educational choices, encouraging parents to think critically in choosing

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schools that balance the development of academic potential and the strengthening of spiritual values. Amid competition with modern schools, society is increasingly aware that holistic education in madrasah can be a bulwark against moral degradation from westernization, as evidenced by a national survey showing an increasing preference for madrasah among urban and rural families (Wagini & Hidayat, 2025). This implication emphasizes the urgency of madrasa reform to remain relevant by offering an adaptive, evidence-based curriculum that produces a generation resilient in the face of global dynamics.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the pivotal role of Quran memorization (*tahfiz*) education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) or *Sekolah Dasar* (SD) as a reactualization of values education amid Indonesia's evolving socio-cultural landscape, revealing substantial theological, sociological, academic, physiological, and economic opportunities that position madrasah as preferred holistic alternatives to counter globalization-induced moral erosion and social mobility demands. Despite persistent internal academic hurdles, such as suboptimal teacher competencies and infrastructure deficits, alongside external pressures from heightened religious awareness, urban middle-class aspirations, and globalist influences, these challenges are surmountable through strategic integrations of innovative pedagogies, community collaborations, and policy reinforcements like the 2014 Madrasah *Tahfiz* al Qur'an declaration. Ultimately, *tahfiz* al Qur'an programs not only foster self-regulation, discipline, and Quranic virtues but also align with constitutional mandates for character-building education, offering a promising pathway for madrasah to cultivate resilient, morally grounded generations equipped for 21st-century demands. The researchers acknowledge that the study has limitations regarding the quality and quantity of madrasah in rural and urban areas, as well as in Java and non-Java areas. Therefore, researchers recommend similar mixed-methods research in madrasah across Indonesia, including a review of the latest national curriculum integrated with the *tahfiz* al Qur'an program in each madrasah.

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