

THEOLOGICAL MOTIVATION AND THE MUTQIN METHOD IN QUR'ANIC MEMORIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF MANHALUN NABIGHIN

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Abstract

This study investigates the integration of theological motivation and structured pedagogical practice in Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*) at Manhalun Nabighin, with a particular focus on the implementation of the Mutqin method. Employing a qualitative, phenomenological approach, data were collected from one program coordinator and thirteen students through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and analysis of institutional documents. The findings reveal that effective *tahfidz* at Manhalun Nabighin is grounded in a holistic educational paradigm, where memorization is not merely a technical pursuit but is embedded in spiritual values—such as *ikhlas* (sincerity), *istiqamah* (steadfastness), and an *akhirah*-oriented mindset—reinforced through daily routines, role modeling, and a supportive dormitory environment. The Mutqin method, characterized by systematic repetition (*muraja'ah*), rigorous evaluation, and peer support, fosters not only memorization quality and discipline but also emotional resilience and a lifelong commitment to the Qur'an. However, the research also highlights the dynamic nature of motivation, which is shaped by personal, familial, and technological challenges. The absence of formal psychosocial support points to the need for more comprehensive mentoring frameworks. These results underscore the importance of integrating theological motivation with adaptive pedagogical strategies to ensure sustainable and meaningful Qur'anic memorization. The study concludes with recommendations for educators and policymakers to develop holistic, context-sensitive *tahfidz* programs, and suggests future research to further examine comparative models and long-term outcomes.

Keywords: Qur'anic Memorization; Theological Motivation; Mutqin Method; Islamic Education; Manhalun Nabighin

A. Introduction

The tradition of Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*) constitutes one of the most enduring intellectual and spiritual legacies within the Muslim *ummah*, practiced continuously from the prophetic era to the present. Far beyond the ritual preservation of scripture, *tahfidz* serves as a vehicle for moral and spiritual formation, shaping personal piety, ethical behavior, and religious identity (Rosadi, 2023). In contemporary Islamic education—particularly in *pesantren* and institutions specializing in memorization—the Qur'an remains the principal standard of educational achievement. Yet, the continuity

and quality of memorization increasingly face threats from modern distractions, fragmented motivation, and a lack of structured pedagogical models (Ridha, 2024).

To address these challenges, Islamic educators have developed structured methods that harmonize cognitive rigor with spiritual consciousness. Among the most prominent is the Mutqin method, a memorization system grounded in repetitive mastery (*muraja'ah*), meaningful understanding, and regular evaluation (Humaira & Taufiq, 2024). Rather than focusing on speed or quantity alone, the Mutqin method targets memorization that is internalized, retained, and spiritually anchored. Its systematic approach is praised for cultivating discipline, endurance, and reflective practice among *santri* (Rosmiarni, Mawaddah, & Nurdin, 2023).

A growing body of literature has highlighted the technical effectiveness of the Mutqin method. Salahuddin and colleagues (2025) demonstrated that students engaged in Mutqin-based coaching exhibited greater memorization, retention, and comprehension than those utilizing conventional approaches. Rosyidi further emphasized the importance of institutional context, noting that the spiritual atmosphere and quality of mentoring in *pesantren* significantly amplify the method's impact (Rosadi, 2023). Nevertheless, the majority of research on Qur'anic memorization tends to treat motivation, theology, and pedagogy as separate spheres. There is a notable lack of inquiry into how these elements intersect to produce durable and meaningful *tahfidz* outcomes.

This fragmentation is particularly evident in discussions of motivation. While motivation is widely acknowledged as a critical factor in Islamic education, scholarship often approaches it from either a theological or psychological perspective. For instance, Cader (2016) describes *al-himmah al-'aliyyah* as the highest form of spiritual motivation, rooted in sincerity, faith, and self-discipline. Abdurrahim and Mudlofir (2024) argue that memorization should be understood as an act of worship, grounded in *niyyah* (intention) and *istiqamah* (steadfastness). Yet, few studies investigate how such motivations are operationalized within concrete pedagogical systems, such as the Mutqin method.

Similarly, research on theology in Islamic education underscores its moral and spiritual foundations. Fitriani, Eq, and Suhartini (2021) maintain that education in Islam is a holistic journey uniting faith (*iman*), knowledge (*'ilm*), and action (*'amal*). Jayana (2021) argues that Qur'anic pedagogy involves not only intellectual engagement but also ethical reflection and spiritual cultivation. Yet, few studies have documented how

theological values—such as sincerity, eschatological awareness, or reliance on divine guidance—are embedded in daily *tahfidz* practices or linked to measurable learning outcomes.

On the pedagogical front, researchers such as Alwi, Badaruddin, and Febriyanti (2023), as well as Effendi, Hairunnisa, and Jamaliah (2025), have described how structured routines—such as “One Day One Verse” and guided repetition—support retention. Nevertheless, this literature often prioritizes scheduling and technique, without adequately linking these practices to deeper spiritual commitments or institutional theology. What is needed is an integrative framework that brings together theology, motivation, and method.

This study responds to that need by investigating the implementation of the Mutqin method at Manhalun Nabighin, a dormitory-based *tahfidz* institution in Indonesia. It examines how pedagogical structure and spiritual values converge in the memorization process. Manhalun Nabighin is especially relevant for this inquiry due to its explicit integration of theology into its curriculum, its application of Mutqin strategies, and its immersive dormitory environment that fosters spiritual engagement.

The novelty of this research lies not only in assessing the effectiveness of the Mutqin method, but also in elucidating how theological motivation (*ikhlas*, *tawakkul*, *akhirah*-oriented mindset) and pedagogical discipline (structured repetition, regular assessment, and peer support) operate synergistically to sustain memorization. In contrast to previous studies that treat these aspects separately, this research offers a synthesized perspective on *tahfidz* as both a technical and spiritual enterprise.

Drawing upon diverse literatures—including Islamic motivation theory (Khaliq, 2017; Rois, 2019), pedagogical best practices (Akbar & Hidayatullah, 2016; Slamet, 2019), and the theology of education (Qutni, Kristiawan, & Fitriani, 2021; Supriatna, 2025)—this study argues that the effectiveness of a *tahfidz* program lies in the integration of its constituent elements. It also recognizes challenges specific to dormitory settings, such as student readiness, digital distractions, and teacher constraints. The study seeks not only to identify what works, but to explain why and for whom it works.

B. Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a phenomenological orientation to explore how theological motivation and structured pedagogical methods shape Qur'anic memorization practices at Manhalun Nabighin (Moleong, 2017). The phenomenological perspective enables the researcher to capture the lived experiences, spiritual reflections, and internalized meanings of both students and educators involved in the *tahfidz* program. This approach is particularly appropriate for investigating *tahfidz*, a process that involves not only cognitive repetition but also profound emotional and theological engagement (Haryono, 2023).

The research was conducted at Manhalun Nabighin, a dormitory-based Islamic institution recognized for its implementation of the Mutqin method within a spiritually immersive environment (Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021). Fourteen participants were involved in the study: one senior program coordinator and thirteen students actively engaged in the *tahfidz* program. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, based on their central role in shaping or experiencing the *tahfidz* process. The *ustadzah* was chosen for her responsibility in curriculum design and implementation, while students were selected to represent a range of memorization stages, consistency of attendance, and willingness to articulate their experiences.

Data collection utilized three primary techniques: semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis of institutional records. The interviews were guided by thematic prompts addressing personal motivation, theological values, experiences with the Mutqin method, and perceived challenges. Example questions included: "What motivates you to continue memorizing the Qur'an?", "How do sincerity and awareness of the hereafter affect your commitment?", and "How does the Mutqin system help or hinder your memorization?" Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with the consent of participants. Observations were conducted over a two-week period, focusing on classroom activities, *muraja'ah* sessions, evaluations, and informal religious interactions. Institutional documents—such as the *tahfidz* curriculum, weekly memorization charts, and spiritual mentoring handbooks—were also examined to triangulate the data.

Data analysis followed a thematic approach adapted from Miles and Huberman. After transcription, the interview and observation data were reduced into meaningful units

and coded inductively. Codes such as “spiritual discipline,” “memorization fatigue,” “teacher empathy,” and “ritual reinforcement” were grouped into broader themes: theological motivation, pedagogical routine, environmental support, and emotional resilience. These themes were continuously refined through comparison with existing literature on Islamic motivation and education. Validity was enhanced through method triangulation, member checking (by presenting themes to key participants for feedback), and peer debriefing with an external scholar to mitigate researcher bias.

C. Result and Discussion

This section presents and interprets the principal findings of the study, structured around four central themes: (1) Qur’anic vision and theological values, (2) the role of theology in memorization, (3) learning strategies and pedagogical implementation, and (4) motivational dynamics and institutional challenges. Each theme is analyzed in light of existing scholarship, the unique context of Manhalun Nabighin, and the stated aims of this research—namely, to understand how theological motivation and structured pedagogical methods interact to sustain meaningful *tahfidz*.

1. Qur’anic Vision and Theological Values

The findings confirm that the *tahfidz* program at Manhalun Nabighin is deeply anchored in a theological vision that frames memorization as an act of worship. The program coordinator emphasized that the institution’s objective extends beyond producing memorizers of the Qur’an to cultivating individuals who internalize and embody its teachings in daily life. This approach is consistent with Fitriani’s conception of Islamic education as the integrated development of faith, knowledge, and action (Fitriani et al., 2021).

Interviews with students revealed that spiritual motivation—rooted in the desire to seek closeness to Allah and contribute meaningfully to society—is a primary driver of their perseverance. One student explained, “I memorize not for prestige, but because I want to serve the Qur’an and be closer to Allah.” Another echoed, “This is my form of worship.” These perspectives align with Natalia’s assertion that Islamic education is a pathway to human perfection, grounded in theological ethics (Natalia et al., 2024).

However, students also described fluctuations in motivation resulting from emotional and academic pressures. This underscores that theological vision, while vital,

must be continuously reinforced rather than regarded as static. The absence of structured spiritual counseling or individualized reflection sessions within the institution may limit the depth of students' internalization of these values (Nakib, 2015). This observation challenges the common assumption that motivation anchored in theology is inherently stable (Cader, 2016) and suggests that institutional reinforcement is necessary for sustained commitment.

2. The Role of Theology in Memorization

Participants consistently referenced core theological values such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), consistency (*istiqamah*), and eschatological awareness (*akhirah*-oriented thinking) (Maulidia et al., 2022). These values were not only taught explicitly but also modeled by teachers in their everyday conduct. One student noted, "When I see my teacher rise for *tahajjud*, it motivates me more than words."

This form of role modeling resonates with Khaliq's framework, in which *ta'lim*, *tarbiyah*, and *ta'dib* are integrated throughout the educational process (Khaliq, 2017). However, this study also uncovered a lack of opportunities for students to critically engage with or personalize these theological concepts. While students frequently echoed key theological ideals, few had the chance to explore them in a dialogic or reflective setting. This extends the argument of Sarnoto and Abnisa (2022), indicating that theological education should not only transmit values but also encourage individualized reflection and critical personalization.

Notably, students interpreted theological motivation in diverse and personal ways. While some viewed memorization as a means of self-purification, others saw it as spiritual insurance for their families in the hereafter. Such diversity highlights the importance of creating space for individual interpretation within a shared theological framework and cautions against a purely doctrinal approach.

3. Learning Strategies and Pedagogical Implementation

The interviews and observations revealed that *tahfidz* instruction at Manhalun Nabighin is systematically designed and rigorously implemented. The central feature of the Mutqin method at this institution is the requirement that students memorize five *juz* in each session, supported by periodic evaluations—both weekly and monthly. As the program coordinator described, "I implement an exam system every week and every

month. With this, I can track how the students are progressing toward their targets.” This evaluative structure serves as a critical mechanism to ensure that memorization is both accurate and sustainable.

This method fosters discipline, courage, and a sense of responsibility among students. One student explained, “Because of the five-*juz* deposit method and the exams, I am able to maintain my memorization.” Others noted that the combination of new memorization and daily *muraja’ah* required them to continuously review and strengthen their previous memorization. “We have to do *muraja’ah* for at least one *juz* per day, whether we like it or not,” a student remarked. These practices confirm the findings of Alwi, Badaruddin, and Febriyanti (2023), who highlight the necessity of a written curriculum incorporating *muraja’ah* and *sima’i* to maintain memorization quality.

Students reported increased confidence and motivation, with many expressing a desire to maintain their memorization and practice it throughout their lives. As one student shared, “I feel confident in my own memorization now, and I hope I can keep practicing it for the rest of my life.” This evidence indicates that the institution’s strategy successfully balances technical memorization with the development of spiritual responsibility and lifelong learning habits.

Importantly, the learning strategies at Manhalun Nabighin address common criticisms in the literature regarding weak evaluation and monitoring systems in *tahfidz* programs (Fatmawati, in Mufidah et al., 2021). By prioritizing discipline, monitoring, and an environment conducive to spiritual and cognitive development, the institution exemplifies Akbar’s (2016) argument that structured methods and a supportive setting are critical to memorization success.

4. Motivational Dynamics and Institutional Challenges

Despite the program’s strengths, the study found that student motivation remains vulnerable to personal, familial, and academic pressures. Students identified family conflict, financial stress, and mental fatigue as significant barriers to consistency. Rather than institutional breakdown, the response from teachers and mentors was characterized by emotional empathy, spiritual reminders, and flexible adjustments to deposit requirements (Suryana et al., 2024).

The personalized mentoring approach of the *ustadzah* was repeatedly cited as a vital source of support, combining affection and firmness. This leadership style exemplifies the *murabbi* model in Islamic education, in which the educator functions as both instructor and caregiver. Nevertheless, the absence of formal psychological support or counseling means that some students internalize failure as a moral weakness rather than a situational challenge. Without psychosocial scaffolding, such guilt may undermine long-term motivation, as suggested in the broader literature (Rois, 2019).

Another unresolved issue is the impact of digital distractions. Students admitted to struggling with social media and smartphones, yet the institution lacks a clear media regulation policy. This reflects a broader challenge in contemporary Islamic education—how to harmonize traditional learning environments with the realities of digital life. Peer support among students was generally strong, but occasional competition and comparison were also reported as sources of stress. This underscores the complexity of motivational ecosystems within *tahfidz* institutions and suggests the need for targeted mentor training in socio-emotional support.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the effectiveness of the *tahfidz* program at Manhalun Nabighin is grounded in the deliberate integration of theological motivation and structured pedagogical strategies, especially through the application of the Mutqin method. The research shows that successful Qur’anic memorization is not simply the result of technical routines or rote learning, but instead emerges from a learning environment where faith, discipline, and institutional support are woven together. The Mutqin method, as implemented at Manhalun Nabighin, is marked by clear routines, systematic evaluation, and an ongoing commitment to core values such as *ikhlas*, *istiqamah*, and an *akhirah*-oriented outlook. These principles are reinforced both in formal instruction and through the daily example set by teachers and mentors. As a result, students are encouraged not only to achieve cognitive mastery of the Qur’an but also to cultivate resilience, ethical awareness, and a lasting dedication to *tahfidz* that extends beyond their years at the institution.

At the same time, this study finds that student motivation remains subject to change, influenced by a complex interplay of personal, social, and technological factors.

The challenges posed by family pressures, emotional fatigue, and digital distractions reveal the limitations of a purely theological or disciplinary approach. Addressing these realities requires a more holistic support system, including access to psychosocial guidance and flexible mentoring, to help students sustain their commitment over time.

By closely examining the dynamics at Manhalun Nabighin, this research contributes to the broader understanding of how Qur'anic memorization programs can be made both effective and meaningful. The evidence underscores the importance of aligning spiritual motivation with structured pedagogy and responsive institutional care. These insights are particularly relevant for educators and policymakers seeking to develop *tahfidz* models that are attuned to the needs and realities of contemporary learners. However, it should be noted that the scope of this research is limited to a single institution and a modest sample, which may affect the wider applicability of its conclusions. Future studies would benefit from exploring diverse institutional contexts, larger samples, and longer-term outcomes in order to enrich the discourse on theology-based *tahfidz* education.

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