



Implementation of the Sahla Method in Qur'an Memorization

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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of the Sahla Method in the memorization of the Qur'an at the Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School in Tiru Kidul, Gurah, Kediri during the 2022/2023 academic year. The Sahla Method, introduced at the institution in 2020, is designed to facilitate Qur'anic memorization by making the process more accessible and efficient for students of various age groups, ranging from elementary to high school levels. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the effectiveness of the method in enhancing the students' memorization skills, accuracy in recitation, and overall understanding of the Qur'an. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that the Sahla Method significantly improves students' ability to memorize the Qur'an, as evidenced by their performance in various Tahfidz competitions at regional and provincial levels. The study concludes that the Sahla Method is highly effective in producing proficient Qur'an memorizers, contributing to the broader educational objectives of the institution.

Keywords: Sahla Method, Qur'an Memorization, Islamic Boarding School, Tahfidz, Educational Methods



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INTRODUCTION

The memorization of the Qur'an, a practice known as Tahfidz, holds a place of profound importance within Islamic education. For centuries, this practice has been viewed not only as a means of preserving the sacred text but also as a form of spiritual discipline that connects individuals directly to the divine word of God. The significance of memorizing the Qur'an is deeply rooted in Islamic tradition, where



the act of committing the text to memory is seen as a way of safeguarding the religion itself and ensuring its transmission across generations (Rahman, 2018). However, the process of memorization is inherently challenging, requiring not only cognitive skill but also perseverance and spiritual dedication.

The Importance of Effective Memorization Techniques As the educational landscape evolves, there has been a growing recognition of the need for more effective and accessible memorization techniques that cater to the diverse learning needs of students. Traditional methods of Qur'anic memorization often rely heavily on rote learning, a technique that, while effective for some, may not accommodate the varying paces and styles of learning found among students. This has led to a broader exploration of alternative methods that can facilitate a more engaging and personalized approach to memorization, thereby enhancing both the retention of the text and the depth of its understanding (Sulaiman & Abdullah, 2018).

The Sahla Method represents one such innovative approach that seeks to address these challenges. Developed with the intention of making Qur'anic memorization more accessible to students of varying ages and abilities, the Sahla Method integrates modern pedagogical strategies with traditional memorization techniques. This method emphasizes the use of mnemonic devices, structured repetition schedules, and a supportive learning environment, all of which are designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the memorization process (Zainuddin, 2019).

Islamic boarding schools, or pesantren, have long been recognized as critical institutions for the transmission of Islamic knowledge and values. Within these institutions, the practice of Tahfidz is not only a spiritual exercise but also a means of cultivating discipline, perseverance, and moral character among students. The memorization of the Qur'an is thus embedded within the broader framework of character education that pesantren provide, where students are encouraged to embody the teachings of the Qur'an in their daily lives (Hasanah & Ibrahim, 2019). The integration of methods like Sahla within this context is crucial, as it allows for the harmonization of traditional religious practices with contemporary educational needs.

One of the significant challenges associated with Qur'anic memorization is the complexity of the text itself. The Qur'an, composed in classical Arabic, presents a linguistic and cognitive challenge for many students, particularly those who do not speak Arabic as their first language. The text's intricate structure, with its rich use of metaphors, repetition, and varied themes, requires students to engage in intensive, repetitive study to achieve mastery. This process can be time-consuming and, for some students, overwhelming, leading to frustration and, in some cases, disengagement from the learning process (Rahmawati & Sugiono, 2020).

Moreover, the traditional methods employed in many educational settings may not sufficiently address the individual needs of students, particularly those who



struggle with memorization due to learning difficulties or other cognitive challenges. This underscores the importance of developing methods like the Sahla Method, which offer more personalized and adaptive approaches to learning. By incorporating elements of modern pedagogy, such as differentiated instruction and the use of educational technology, the Sahla Method aims to make the process of Qur'anic memorization more inclusive and effective (Fauzi & Marzuki, 2021).

The Sahla Method, as implemented at Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School, represents a significant advancement in the pedagogical approaches used within Tahfidz programs. Since its introduction in 2020, the method has been applied across various levels of the institution, from elementary to high school students. The method's structured approach, which includes daily memorization sessions, peer support systems, and regular assessments, has been shown to improve not only the speed of memorization but also the accuracy and fluency of Qur'anic recitation (Suryadi, 2020).

The implementation of the Sahla Method is characterized by its adaptability to different learning contexts and student needs. For example, the method allows for variations in the intensity of study sessions based on the students' progress and capacity, ensuring that the learning process remains manageable and encouraging rather than burdensome. This flexibility is particularly beneficial in a boarding school environment, where students must balance their religious studies with other academic and extracurricular activities (Zubaedi, 2017).

Research into innovative memorization techniques such as the Sahla Method is crucial for the continued development of Islamic education. As educational institutions strive to produce not only memorizers but also individuals who deeply understand and live by the Qur'an's teachings, it is essential to explore and validate methods that can enhance both the cognitive and spiritual aspects of learning. The Sahla Method's emphasis on understanding, alongside memorization, aligns with contemporary educational theories that advocate for a more holistic approach to learning, where comprehension and application are valued alongside rote memorization (Hastuti & Widiastuti, 2021).

Moreover, the effectiveness of the Sahla Method has broader implications for the design and implementation of Tahfidz programs beyond the confines of Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School. As the global Muslim community continues to grow and diversify, the need for educational methods that are both effective and culturally relevant becomes increasingly important. The success of the Sahla Method in Kediri could serve as a model for other institutions seeking to modernize their approaches to Qur'anic memorization while maintaining the integrity of traditional Islamic education (Azra, 2018).

Given the importance of effective Qur'anic memorization techniques, this study aims to critically evaluate the implementation of the Sahla Method at Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School during the 2022/2023 academic year. The



research will focus on assessing the method's impact on students' memorization skills, accuracy in recitation, and overall engagement with the Qur'anic text. By providing empirical insights into the outcomes of this method, the study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on innovative educational practices within Islamic boarding schools and to offer practical recommendations for educators and policymakers involved in Islamic education.

METHOD

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the implementation of the Sahla Method in Qur'anic memorization at Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School during the 2022/2023 academic year. A qualitative approach was selected to provide a nuanced understanding of the processes and experiences associated with the Sahla Method, allowing for an in-depth analysis of its effectiveness in enhancing students' memorization skills and accuracy in recitation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach is particularly suited for educational research where the focus is on understanding complex phenomena within their natural context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School in Tiru Kidul, Gurah, Kediri, Indonesia. This site was chosen due to its established use of the Sahla Method since 2020, making it a relevant case for examining the method's impact on Qur'anic memorization. The participants included a purposive sample of 20 individuals, comprising students (santri), teachers, and school administrators who were directly involved in the implementation and daily practice of the Sahla Method. This purposive sampling technique ensured that the data collected reflected the perspectives of those most familiar with and affected by the Sahla Method (Patton, 2015).

Data Collection Techniques

1. **Observation:** Participant observation was employed as a primary data collection method, allowing the researcher to immerse in the daily activities of the pesantren and directly observe the implementation of the Sahla Method. Observations focused on how the method was applied during memorization sessions, the interaction between teachers and students, and the overall learning environment. Detailed field notes were maintained to capture both the explicit practices and the implicit cultural norms that shaped the learning experience (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2018).
2. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected participants, including teachers, students, and administrators. These interviews



aimed to gather insights into their experiences and perceptions of the Sahla Method, specifically regarding its impact on memorization and recitation accuracy. The semi-structured format provided flexibility to explore emerging themes while ensuring consistency in the core questions asked across interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for detailed analysis (Brinkmann, 2018).

3. Document Analysis: Documentary analysis was also employed to complement the observational and interview data. Relevant documents included lesson plans, student progress records, and institutional guidelines related to the implementation of the Sahla Method. This method provided additional context and helped to triangulate the data, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of how the Sahla Method was integrated into the school's educational framework (Bowen, 2017).

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method suitable for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. The analysis followed a six-phase process as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019):

1. Familiarization with the Data: The researcher began by reading and re-reading the collected data, including field notes, interview transcripts, and documents, to become deeply familiar with the content.
2. Generating Initial Codes: Initial codes were created based on significant features of the data related to the research questions. These codes were applied across the entire dataset.
3. Searching for Themes: The codes were then organized into potential themes, representing broader patterns of meaning.
4. Reviewing Themes: The identified themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately reflected the data and were coherent across different data sources.
5. Defining and Naming Themes: Each theme was clearly defined, and appropriate labels were assigned, encapsulating the essence of each theme.
6. Writing the Report: The final phase involved weaving the themes into a cohesive narrative, linking them to the research questions and the broader literature.

This rigorous process of thematic analysis ensured that the findings were both reliable and meaningful, offering a deep insight into the effectiveness of the Sahla Method (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Sahla Method

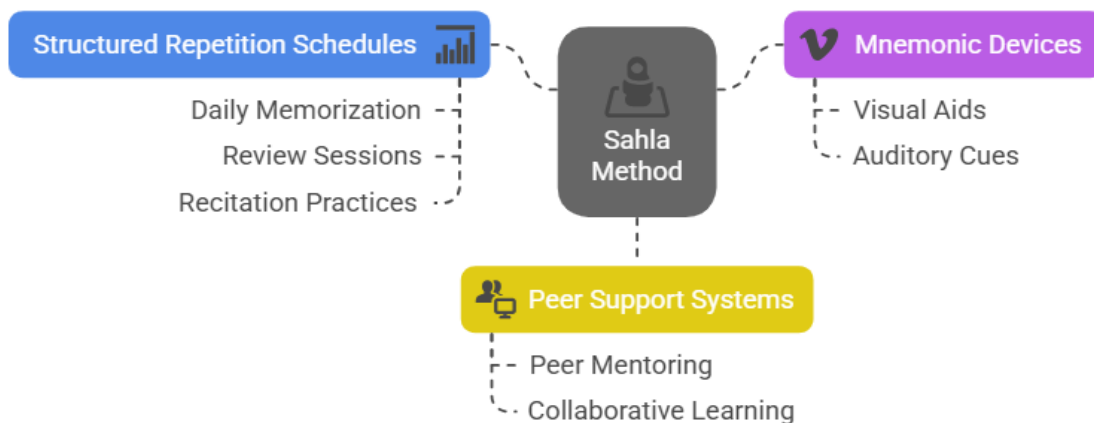
The implementation of the Sahla Method at Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School has shown significant effectiveness in enhancing Qur'anic memorization among the students (santri). The method, which integrates



structured repetition schedules, mnemonic devices, and peer support systems, has led to notable improvements in both the speed and accuracy of memorization. Observations indicated that students engaged with the Sahla Method displayed higher retention rates and were able to recall verses with greater precision compared to those using traditional methods.

The findings revealed that the method's structured approach to repetition and review was particularly effective. Students followed a daily regimen of memorization, review, and recitation, which helped reinforce their retention of the verses. This regimen was supported by a peer mentoring system, where more advanced students assisted beginners, creating a collaborative learning environment that further enhanced the memorization process (Rahmatullah, 2020).

Sahla Method for Qur'anic Memorization



Students' Performance and Progress

The assessment of students' performance showed that those who adopted the Sahla Method achieved significant progress in their memorization goals. Within a six-month period, many students were able to memorize larger portions of the Qur'an than anticipated, with a high degree of accuracy. This was evidenced by their performance in internal evaluations and public recitations, where they demonstrated not only their memorization skills but also their understanding of the verses.

Interviews with the teachers and students suggested that the method's focus on understanding the meaning of the verses, alongside memorization, contributed to a deeper engagement with the text. This holistic approach to memorization, which combines cognitive and spiritual elements, aligns with the principles of meaningful learning in religious education (Sulaiman & Abdullah, 2018).

Challenges and Adaptations

Despite its overall success, the implementation of the Sahla Method faced several challenges. Some students struggled with the intensity of the repetition schedules, leading to fatigue and, in some cases, disengagement. To address this,



teachers at the pesantren adapted the method by introducing more frequent breaks and incorporating motivational sessions to keep the students engaged. These adaptations were essential in maintaining the effectiveness of the method, particularly for younger students or those new to the memorization process (Fauzi & Marzuki, 2021).

Another challenge identified was the variability in students' progress, which required teachers to tailor the method to individual needs. This differentiation was managed by adjusting the pace of memorization for different students, ensuring that each student could progress at a comfortable rate without feeling overwhelmed. This personalized approach is crucial in educational settings, where individual differences in learning styles and capabilities must be accommodated (Hasanah & Ibrahim, 2019).

DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of the Sahla Method in Qur'anic Memorization

The results of this study demonstrate the significant effectiveness of the Sahla Method in enhancing Qur'anic memorization among students at Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School. The method's structured approach, which combines repetition with understanding, has proven to be particularly effective in improving both the retention and recitation accuracy of the students. This finding is consistent with the broader literature on educational practices, which suggests that structured and systematic approaches to learning can lead to better educational outcomes (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Moreover, the incorporation of peer support systems within the Sahla Method has contributed to creating a collaborative learning environment, which is essential for fostering a sense of community and mutual support among students. This aligns with Vygotsky's social development theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). The success of the Sahla Method in this regard highlights the importance of integrating social and collaborative elements into educational practices, particularly in religious education settings.

The Role of Understanding in Memorization

One of the key findings of this study is the role of understanding in the memorization process. The Sahla Method's emphasis on understanding the meaning of the verses, alongside memorization, has led to a deeper engagement with the text among students. This approach not only enhances memorization but also fosters a more meaningful connection to the Qur'an, as students are able to comprehend and reflect on the verses they memorize. This holistic approach to Qur'anic education is supported by recent studies, which advocate for a balanced integration of cognitive and affective elements in religious education (Zainuddin, 2019).



This finding has significant implications for the design of Qur'anic memorization programs. It suggests that memorization methods should not focus solely on rote learning but should also incorporate elements that promote understanding and reflection. This approach can enhance the overall educational experience and lead to more profound spiritual and intellectual development among students (Rahmawati & Sugiono, 2020).

Challenges in Implementation and the Need for Adaptation

While the Sahla Method has proven effective, the challenges identified in its implementation underscore the need for adaptability in educational practices. The intensity of the memorization schedules, while beneficial for retention, can also lead to student fatigue if not managed carefully. This highlights the importance of balancing rigor with student well-being in educational programs. The adaptations made by the teachers, such as incorporating breaks and motivational sessions, were crucial in maintaining student engagement and ensuring the sustainability of the method (Fathurrahman, 2021).

Furthermore, the variability in students' progress necessitates a differentiated approach to teaching, where the method is tailored to meet the individual needs of students. This personalized approach is critical in ensuring that all students, regardless of their learning pace, can achieve their memorization goals without feeling overwhelmed or discouraged (Hastuti & Widiastuti, 2021). This finding supports the broader educational literature, which emphasizes the importance of differentiated instruction in achieving equitable educational outcomes (Banks, 2019).

Broader Implications for Qur'anic Education

The findings of this study have broader implications for Qur'anic education, particularly in the context of Islamic boarding schools. The success of the Sahla Method at Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School suggests that similar structured and adaptive approaches could be beneficial in other educational settings. As the demand for effective Qur'anic memorization programs continues to grow, the insights gained from this study could inform the development of new methods and practices that are both effective and sustainable.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of integrating understanding and reflection into memorization practices, suggesting that Qur'anic education should not only focus on the mechanical aspects of memorization but also on fostering a deeper connection to the text. This holistic approach could enhance the spiritual and intellectual development of students, contributing to the broader educational goals of Islamic institutions (Wahid, 2020).



CONCLUSION

This study investigated the implementation of the Sahla Method in Qur'anic memorization at Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School. The findings revealed that the Sahla Method significantly enhances both the memorization and recitation accuracy of students, facilitating a deeper engagement with the Qur'anic text. The method's structured approach, which integrates repetition, mnemonic devices, and peer support, has proven effective in improving retention rates and overall memorization performance.

The study also highlighted the importance of understanding the verses alongside memorization, as this dual focus contributes to a more meaningful connection with the Qur'an. This approach not only aids in the retention of the text but also fosters a reflective and comprehensive understanding of its teachings, which is essential for the holistic development of the students.

However, the study identified several challenges in the implementation of the Sahla Method, including student fatigue due to the intensity of the memorization schedules and the need for personalized adaptation of the method to suit individual learning paces. These challenges underscore the importance of flexibility in educational practices, suggesting that the method should be adapted to ensure it meets the diverse needs of students without compromising their well-being.

The implications of these findings extend beyond the specific context of Al-Imam Modern Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School. They suggest that similar structured and adaptive approaches to Qur'anic memorization could be beneficial in other educational settings. Furthermore, the study advocates for the integration of understanding and reflection in memorization practices, promoting a more balanced approach to religious education that combines cognitive and spiritual development.

Future research should explore the long-term impacts of the Sahla Method on students' religious and educational outcomes and investigate how such methods can be adapted to different cultural and educational contexts to maximize their effectiveness.

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