

Qur'an Memorization as a Pillar of Character Building for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Students in Progressive Islam

Choirun Nisa^{*1}, Eka Danik Prahastiwi², Minsih³, Nadia Kumalasari⁴, Siti Norlina Muhammad⁵

^{1,3} Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

^{2,4} Institut Studi Islam Muhammadiyah Pacitan, Indonesia

⁵ Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia

*Correspondence Address: CS609@ums.ac.id

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18326/mudarrisa.v17i2.4279>

ABSTRACT

Article history:

Received:

June 11, 2025

Revised:

December 18, 2025

Accepted:

December 27, 2025

Objectives: This study aims to optimize the Tahfizhul Qur'an program to strengthen students' religious character based on Progressive Islam at MIM Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia.

Method: A qualitative descriptive approach was used to examine character education through Quran memorization at MIM Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan. Purposively selected informants included students, tahfizh teachers, parents, and principals. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed using data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation ensuring credibility and validity.

Results: The study shows that the Tahfidzul Qur'an program strengthens students' character particularly discipline, honesty, responsibility, empathy, and love for the Qur'an while reflecting Progressive Islam values such as renewal (*tajdid*), rationality, social justice, moderation, inclusivity, and educational technology

Keywords:

Quran memorization; character education; progressive Islam; elementary school

Theoretical Contribution: Theoretically, this research enhances Islamic character education by strengthening a holistic approach that integrates Qur'an memorization with Progressive Islamic values, in line with Thomas Lickona's framework and Al-Ghazali's moral education concept.

Implication: The Qur'an memorization program can be an alternative to build character and instill progressive Islamic values. This study is limited to a single site and a qualitative design, reducing its generalizability. Future research should use mixed methods and examine the various influences of memorizing the Qur'an

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology and globalization has had a significant impact on the behavior and morals of younger generations, including within the primary education environment (Rosa et al., 2021). The phenomenon of moral degradation—such as low social concern, consumerist behavior, individualism, and the increasing trend of verbal, physical, and sexual violence among students—has become a major concern for various parties, including the government, education practitioners, and the wider community (Maulida et al., 2023). Cases of bullying in elementary schools that frequently appear in the media, the decline of polite ethics in social interactions (Kirana Silkia Maulida et al., 2023), and the increasing dependence of children on gadgets are clear indicators of the erosion of moral values among Indonesia's younger generation (O'Connor & Michaels, 2019).

In this context, Islamic education is viewed as having a strategic role as a comprehensive alternative solution (Mubark Allafi & Ali S'aadh, 2022). One approach considered relevant and effective in shaping children's religious character from an early age is Qur'an memorization (tauhidz) programs (Rosmalina et al., 2023). However, in practice, in some basic education institutions, tauhidz programs tend to focus solely on achieving memorization targets (Subandi et al., 2019), without being balanced by the development of Islamic moral values that can be applied in daily life (Ahmadi & Saad, 2024).

Previous research by Suryono at MI Nurul Iman Karanganyar showed that although students' memorization achievements were relatively good, obstacles remained in internalizing values such as discipline and responsibility for their actions (Suryono et al., 2017). Another study conducted by Muhammad Musfi at MTsN 1 Probolinggo revealed a gap between students' Qur'an memorization and their daily behavior at home and in social environments (El Iq Bali & Fatah, 2023). Meanwhile, a study by (Sakinah & Hasan, 2024) highlighted time-management problems between tauhidz programs and formal lessons in Islamic boarding schools, which affected the consistency of students' murojaah practices.

Based on this gap, this research is important because it offers a new perspective by integrating the concept of Progressive Islam into the Qur'an memorization

program at the elementary madrasah level (Yani et al., 2023). This approach emphasizes memorization not only as a cognitive achievement (Qomariah et al., 2023), but also as a measurable instrument for moral development through real behavioral changes among students in school, home, and social environments (Setyawan et al., 2023). The concept of Progressive Islam promoted by Muhammadiyah (Prahastiwi, 2024) encourages the development of a generation of Qur'an followers who are ritually obedient, socially responsible, and globally competitive (Aprillianti, 2022), uphold high values of justice, and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. (Kirana Silkia Maulida et al., 2023)

This study also fills gaps in previous research, which has seldom linked *tahfizh* programs with dimensions of progressive Islamic practice in elementary madrasahs. Most previous studies have focused solely on cognitive achievement, particularly the number of Qur'anic verses memorized, without examining how such programs can be integrated into the development of students' Islamic morals and character in real-life contexts (Latif, 2021). According to Akkari's character education theory, character development must encompass three main components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Akkari & Radhouane, 2022)Akkari & Radhouane, 2022). In this context, the *tahfizh* program serves not only as a means of increasing Islamic knowledge, but also as an approach that can engage the affective and psychomotor domains of students to foster a holistic and well-developed character (Bachtiar et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the progressive Islamic approach as formulated by Muhammadiyah emphasizes the importance of balance among spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions in education, enabling madrasah graduates to become ritually pious, productive, adaptive, creative, and solution-oriented. Within this framework, synergistic involvement among schools, families, and communities is a key factor, as explained in Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which asserts that children's character development is shaped through continuous and reciprocal interactions across various environments (Prahastiwi, E. D., & Sugiyono, 2022). A child's developmental environment includes the micro environment (family and school), the

meso environment (interrelationships among environments), and the macro environment (culture and societal values) (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2020).

Research results at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, show that the Qur'an memorization program has become an integral part of student character development and is implemented routinely alongside general lessons. This program has successfully instilled values of honesty, discipline, responsibility, as well as habits of worship and good manners. However, there is not yet systematic integration between memorization activities and progressive Islamic values within the curriculum, and character evaluation remains largely qualitative. Given its strong program foundation and the need for innovation based on progressive Islam, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, was appropriately chosen as the research site.

Thus, this study addresses practical needs in strengthening the Qur'an memorization program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia. It also contributes theoretically to the development of a contextual, adaptive, and relevant model of Islamic character education based on the Qur'an to respond to educational challenges in the global era. This model is expected to offer an alternative solution for developing a generation of Qur'anic learners who excel in memorization while also becoming competitive and socially integrated individuals.

Method

Types and Procedures

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to describe in depth the process of forming students' religious character through the Qur'an memorization program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand phenomena naturally and contextually, based on the perspectives of participants in the field (Hidayat & Nizar, 2021). The research procedure was carried out through several interconnected stages. The process began with an initial exploration to identify the research focus related to the tahfizh

program and its role in shaping students' character, conducted through preliminary interviews and document analysis. This was followed by field data collection using in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis to obtain comprehensive insights from relevant stakeholders. Subsequently, the data were organized and reduced by selecting and categorizing information aligned with the research objectives. The refined data were then presented in narrative form and/or descriptive tables to highlight emerging patterns. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and verifying findings through thematic analysis and source triangulation to ensure the validity and reliability of the results.

Informant

The study was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia. Informants were selected purposively based on criteria of direct involvement in the implementation of the tahfizh program and the formation of students' religious character (Rosidin & Andriani, 2022). The informants included students participating in the tahfizh program, memorization tutors, parents of students, and school administrators.

Data collection

The research employed three main qualitative methods. First, participatory observation was conducted to observe students' memorization activities and behavior within the school environment using a structured observation sheet. Second, in-depth interviews were carried out with students, teachers, parents, and principals using a semi-structured interview guide to explore their experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of the tahfizh program in shaping students' character. Third, document analysis was conducted on tahfizh teaching materials, students' developmental records, and documentation of religious activities to strengthen and verify field data.

These three techniques were applied using methodological triangulation to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the research phenomena (Haki et al., 2024).

Data Analysis

The data analysis process consisted of several stages. First, data reduction was carried out by filtering and grouping information relevant to the focus of the study. Second, data presentation was arranged in the form of narratives, informant quotations, and thematic tables to provide a clear description of the findings. Third, conclusion drawing was conducted based on the main patterns or themes that emerged from the field data. Finally, triangulation, in terms of both sources and methods, was applied to enhance the validity, reliability, and credibility of the research results (McCusker, K., & Gunaydin, 2015).

DISCUSSION

Character education at MIM Adab Baleharjo

Based on data from the madrasah profile document and the vision and mission displayed in the administrative office of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia (documentation, researcher, 2025), the madrasah has a vision of realizing a generation that is faithful, possesses noble character, and is intelligent and skilled. This vision is elaborated in its mission, which includes strengthening faith, habituating students to noble character, implementing a character-based learning approach, fostering the habit of performing good deeds, and increasing concern for the cleanliness and beauty of the madrasah environment.

The vision and mission of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, reflect the institution's commitment to educating students who are intelligent, devout, virtuous, and environmentally conscious. This demonstrates a holistic educational orientation grounded in Islamic values and aligned with contemporary studies on character education and progressive Islam.

Based on the results of an interview conducted on March 5, 2025, Mrs. Ch, as the Head of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, confirmed that the madrasah's vision and mission are designed not only to pursue academic achievement, but more importantly to shape students' character grounded in faith and noble morals. She stated that the primary goal of the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program is to create a generation that is faithful, possesses noble character,

and is intelligent and skilled. This goal serves as the foundation for all learning activities and character development at the madrasah. Mrs. Mrs. Ch also added that the learning approach emphasizes politeness as an established school culture, applied not only in religious lessons but also in social interactions between students and teachers. Based on the interview, it can be concluded that the madrasah instills core character values, including faith, noble morals, politeness, honesty, discipline, and love for the Qur'an. These values are applied in religious instruction and have become an integral part of social interaction within the school environment, with the aim of shaping students into well-rounded individuals with strong character.

Thus, character education at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, is a holistic, planned, directed, and continuous process. The values promoted include discipline (*ta'dīb*), honesty (*sidq*), responsibility (*amānah*), patience (*sabr*), social care (*ta'āwun*), religiosity (*dīnīyah*), politeness (*adab*), and love (*mahabbah*) for the Qur'an. These values are not merely slogans, but have become part of the students' identity. This effort aims to shape pious and noble individuals and to create a religious, harmonious, and humanistic madrasah environment. These values are reflected in the madrasah's vision and mission and embodied in learning practices and school culture, thereby forming student identities that are faithful, morally grounded, and prepared to face future challenges in a holistic and sustainable manner.

Implementation of the Tahfidz Program

Memorizing the Qur'an at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, is designed as an integral part of daily school activities, rather than as a merely additional or complementary program. This demonstrates the madrasah's commitment to educating students who are intellectually capable and spiritually strong. Based on direct observations and interviews with the tahfidz teacher and the head of the madrasah, it is evident that memorization activities are conducted in a structured, flexible, and consistent manner, aligned with the rhythm of classroom learning.

Technically, memorization activities are carried out between class hours, during which students alternately meet with the tahfidz teacher outside the classroom. This

model allows students to memorize and reinforce their recitation in a more focused and individualized manner. In an interview conducted on March 8, 2025, one of the teachers explained that she usually waits in the hallway before beginning the tahfidz session. She then enters the classroom, and students come out one by one in an orderly manner. This approach helps maintain a calm classroom atmosphere and allows the teacher to give full attention to each student during recitation. This approach is considered effective because it avoids noise, creates a calm atmosphere, and encourages students to concentrate while memorizing.

Based on an interview with the head of the madrasah, Mrs. Ch, on March 5, 2025, the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program is designed to be integrated into the school curriculum without disrupting other learning activities. The program aims to help students live harmoniously with the Qur'an in their daily lives, so that memorization becomes an enjoyable and natural process rather than a burden. The tahfidz schedule is arranged flexibly, allowing each student the opportunity to memorize at least twice a week, adjusted to individual readiness and development.

Observations conducted during the week of March 1, 2025, showed that students appeared enthusiastic while waiting for their turn to submit their memorization. Several students even used their rest time for murojaah, either independently or in small groups. This memorization activity has become part of the school culture, strengthening memorization skills while also instilling values such as responsibility, patience, honesty, and discipline.

Memorizing the Qur'an at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, is a routine activity involving students as participants, tahfidz teachers as mentors, the madrasah principal, and support from parents, as evidenced through observations and interviews. The activity is conducted flexibly each week, with a schedule that allows students to memorize at least twice weekly. Memorization takes place within the madrasah environment, primarily outside the classroom between lesson hours. The main goal of this program is to develop students who are intellectually capable, spiritually strong, and possess sound character, by making the Qur'an a natural part of their daily lives without creating a sense of burden. The method applied is a rotating system, in which students meet

individually with the tahfidz teacher outside the classroom. This allows the memorization and retention process to occur in a calm and focused atmosphere while remaining harmoniously integrated with other learning activities. This method represents one of the unique features that supports the effectiveness of the tahfidz program in the madrasah.

Character Education Values Contained in the Tahfidz Program

The results of an interview with Teacher A, a tahfidz teacher, conducted on March 8, 2025, showed that the approach used in the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program is personal, patient, and motivating. He emphasized that students are not pressured to memorize quickly, but are encouraged to be diligent and honest throughout the process. When students experience difficulties, the teacher provides support and guidance until they gain confidence. This finding confirms that the success of Qur'an memorization is not measured solely by the quantity of verses memorized, but also by the quality of students' character development. Values such as patience (*ṣabr*), honesty (*ṣidq*), and responsibility (*amānah*) are central to this process. Students are encouraged to be open about their abilities, diligent in practice, and responsible for their own learning journey. In each Qur'an memorization session, students are asked to memorize mechanically and are also given simple explanations of the meanings of the verses being recited. This strategy aims to foster religiosity and a love for the Qur'an from an early age. One student, AR (Grade 5), stated that the routine of reciting the Qur'an every morning at school encouraged him to continue the habit at home, and that he felt something was missing if he did not read the Qur'an. This indicates that the spiritual values cultivated at school have been internalized and have influenced students' personal lives.

Alongside cognitive and spiritual aspects, values such as discipline and politeness also develop through consistent habits. Observations showed that many students arrive at school early, perform murojaah independently, demonstrate orderly behavior, and are more easily guided during learning activities. The principal, Mrs. Ch, stated in an interview on March 5, 2025, that students who actively participate in memorization generally show positive behavioral changes, such as

becoming tidier, more polite, and beginning to remind one another to perform acts of worship.

The value of social concern has become an important part of the Qur'an memorization learning process. In student interactions, there is a clear spirit of mutual assistance and an absence of ridicule when peers experience difficulty with memorization. Teachers noted that students who are more fluent in memorization tend to be more patient and helpful, fostering a strong culture of cooperation and empathy within the classroom. This demonstrates that memorization activities function as a medium for social learning, shaping students' personalities to be more sensitive and caring toward others.

The implementation of memorization activities is complemented by monitoring books and monthly reports to parents. The synergy between teachers and families further strengthens the internalization of character values at home. One parent, Mrs. U, stated that after her son participated in the memorization program, he became more disciplined, more diligent in worship, and even encouraged family members to pray in congregation. School documentation shows that more than 80% of students are able to retain their memorization well and actively participate in religious activities.

Thus, the implementation of the tahfidz program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, genuinely integrates character education values through direct experience, consistent practice, teacher role modeling, and family support. The character values developed through the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program include discipline (*ta'dīb*), honesty (*ṣidq*), responsibility (*amānah*), patience (*ṣabr*), religiosity (*dīnīyah*), politeness (*adab*), social care (*ta'āwun*), and love for the Qur'an (*maḥabbah al-Qur'an*).

This approach is consistent with Thomas Lickona's theory, which states that character is formed through three components—moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action—and aligns with the holistic view of Islamic education articulated by Al-Ghazali, who emphasized that morals are not sufficient to be taught cognitively but must be cultivated through habitual practice and concrete role models (Suryadarma & Haq, 2010). Therefore, the tahfidz program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, serves as an important pillar in shaping a generation that is intellectually capable, morally grounded, and characterized by noble conduct.

The relevance of character education to Progressive Islam

Progressive Islam in the educational context, as explained by Fathurrosyid and Khudri, encompasses values such as openness, inclusiveness, rationality, and moderate social politeness (Fathurrosyid, 2016)(Khudri et al., 2024). In practice, Progressive Islam emphasizes a dynamic understanding of religion, respect for diversity, and the encouragement of critical and creative attitudes without abandoning spiritual and moral values. Its indicators include the strengthening of open spirituality, the advancement of knowledge, respect for basic human rights, interfaith dialog, and the application of social justice in community life.

Spirituality in the Tahfidz Program

Furthermore, the principal, Mrs. Ch, explained in an interview on March 5, 2025, that strengthening students' love for the Qur'an is the primary focus of the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program. She emphasized that the goal is not merely memorization, but also cultivating love for and understanding of the Qur'an so that students' spirituality becomes stronger.

Thus, the tahfidz program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, not only enhances students' memorization ability but also fosters strong spirituality through habitual worship and a comprehensive appreciation of the Qur'an. This conclusion can be discussed in relation to Islamic spiritual theory, which emphasizes the purification of the soul (tazkiyatun nafs) through continuous practice of faith, worship, and moral refinement. According to Islamic educational thought, true spirituality is achieved when knowledge and practice of the Qur'an shape one's inner character (akhlaq karimah) and consciousness of Allah (taqwa). As supported by Al-Attas (1980), Islamic education aims not only at intellectual growth but also at the cultivation of spiritual and moral integrity. Therefore, the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, aligns with this perspective by integrating Qur'anic memorization with spiritual formation and

guiding students to become faithful, disciplined, and ethically responsible individuals.

Moral Integrity

Based on interviews with the tahfidz teacher, Teacher A, conducted on March 8, 2025, it was found that the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, focuses not only on the quantity of memorization but also on understanding the meanings of the memorized verses. During the learning process, teachers provide simple explanations of the verses' meanings so that students do not merely memorize without comprehension. This approach ensures that students develop both affection for the Qur'an and the ability to apply its teachings in daily life. The findings indicate that the program reflects both knowledge of and emotional attachment to the Qur'an, aligning with the principles of Progressive Islam, which emphasize that acquiring and applying knowledge is an essential form of worship ('ibadah).

Interviews and observations further indicate that social concern is strongly reflected in the implementation of the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program. Teachers reported that students who memorized more fluently often volunteered to help peers who struggled, without being prompted. They also reminded one another to perform prayers on time, demonstrating collective awareness of religious obligations. Teachers noted that this habit of mutual assistance develops naturally through experience and interaction within the tahfidz group rather than through compulsion. This finding was supported by the head of the madrasah, Mrs. Ch, who stated that students' moral integrity is evident in behaviors such as honesty in submitting memorization tasks and responsibility in fulfilling duties related to worship and classroom cleanliness. Therefore, the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, has successfully fostered moral integrity, including honesty (*ṣidq*), responsibility (*amānah*), social care (*ta‘āwun*), and love for the Qur'an (*maḥabbah al-Qur'an*), through contextual and meaningful learning practices.

Generation Loving the Qur'an

In the tahlidz (memorization) program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, Progressive Islamic values are applied concretely in students' daily activities. These values do not focus solely on memorization but also encompass character building, spiritual strengthening, intellectual development, and responsiveness to contemporary challenges through an open and flexible approach. This implementation aligns with the madrasah's vision of developing a generation that is faithful, noble in character, intelligent, and skilled.

Based on interview results with the tahlidz teacher conducted on March 8, 2025, it was found that the memorization approach in the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program emphasizes not only memorizing verses but also understanding their meanings. Teachers strive to ensure that students comprehend the messages of the Qur'an so that they develop deeper love for and appreciation of it. This approach helps students form both emotional and intellectual connections with the Qur'an. The findings also indicate that when the meanings of verses are explained, students become more motivated to memorize because they understand the significance behind the words. Thus, the tahlidz program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, is not mechanistic, but fosters meaningful engagement with Qur'anic content.

Social Concern

The results of interviews and observations indicate that social awareness is clearly reflected in the implementation of the Tahfidzal-Qur'an program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, particularly through students' interactions during the memorization process. The tahlidz teacher, Teacher A, explained that students in the memorization group often help one another; those who have memorized more fluently usually assist peers who are still struggling, and they do so voluntarily. This spirit of mutual cooperation develops through habitual practice and the positive atmosphere cultivated within the madrasah environment. In addition, class teachers observed that some students frequently remind their peers to perform muroja'ah or the Dhuha prayer,

encouraging collective participation. One fifth-grade student, ZR, mentioned that when friends have not yet memorized, he accompanies and motivates them. These findings indicate that cooperation and empathy are integral aspects of the character developed through tahfidz activities. Such practices are consistent with the values of Progressive Islam, which emphasize nurturing a caring, inclusive, and mutually supportive community.

Adaptive and Open to Innovation

The results of the interview with the principal, Ms. Ch, conducted on March 5, 2025, indicate that the values of adaptability and openness to innovation are reflected in the flexible implementation of the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program, which involves various stakeholders, including parents. The principal explained that memorization control books are used as a communication tool between teachers and parents, allowing parents to monitor their children's progress daily and to participate in providing motivation at home. This strategy strengthens family involvement and demonstrates that the madrasah is open to adapting contextual learning methods that are relevant to students' needs.

The interview with the tahfidz teacher, Teacher A, on March 8, 2025, revealed that the memorization schedule is adapted by rotating sessions outside the classroom to ensure a more focused process and to avoid disrupting regular lessons. The teacher explained that flexible hours are provided, allowing students to attend memorization sessions during their free time, which makes them feel more comfortable and less stressed. This approach demonstrates that innovation in the Tahfidz al-Qur'an program does not necessarily require sophisticated technology, but can take the form of a humanistic system that adapts to the realities of schools and students. Transparency in implementing this method reflects the program's alignment with the values of Progressive Islam.

The relationship between character education and Progressive Islam in the implementation of the tahfidz program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia, can be analyzed using a deep theoretical approach. Thomas Lickona states that character education must include three main aspects: moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action (Yandi Hafizallah, 2020)

. In the context of the tahfidz program, these three aspects appear to occur simultaneously. Students learn the importance of honesty and responsibility, experience and practice these values directly through daily interactions in memorization activities, such as submitting memorization records, helping one another, maintaining classroom cleanliness, and regularly performing religious practices.

This perspective aligns with the concept of Islamic education promoted by Al-Ghazali, who emphasized that morality cannot be taught merely through theory, but must be cultivated through repeated practice, real-life experiences, and role models (Zarkasih et al., 2019). Tahfidz teachers who adopt a patient and personal approach demonstrate effective moral examples, while spiritual habits such as the Dhuha prayer and muroja‘ah instill sincerity and love for worship (Ulfiana et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the tahfidz program at this madrasah reflects the values of Progressive Islam, as articulated by contemporary thinkers such as Fazlur Rahman and Syafi'i Ma'arif, who argue that Islam should not be confined to ritualism but should be applied contextually in addressing societal challenges (Suryadarma & Haq, 2010). The principles of Progressive Islam—strong spirituality, moral integrity, knowledge and love of the Qur'an, social concern, and openness to change—are evidently integrated into memorization practices that are implemented flexibly, collaboratively, and in ways relevant to contemporary contexts. From the perspective of holistic Islamic education, as proposed by figures such as Nurcholish Madjid, education should develop comprehensive human potential—intellectual, moral, and spiritual (Akbar & Atmojo, 2024). In the tahfidz program, this is reflected in the improvement of students' cognitive abilities in memorizing verses, as well as the growth of empathy, discipline, and independence.

Thus, theories of character education and the principles of Progressive Islam provide a strong foundation for understanding how the tahfidz program at MIM Adab Baleharjo functions as a medium for forming a relevant, visionary generation aligned with inclusive and dynamic Islamic values. This program not only emphasizes spiritual and moral development but also fosters adaptive and innovative attitudes in the learning process. The following table illustrates the indicators of Progressive Islam

and their concrete implementation in the tahfidz program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo, Pacitan, Indonesia.

Table 1. Descriptive Table of Progressive Islam Indicators and their Implementation

Progressive Islam Indicators	Tahfidz Program at MIM Adab Baleharjo	Character building
Strong Spirituality	Habituation prayer, prayer dhuha, prayer daily, and love of the Koran	Religiosity, spiritual awareness, love of worship
Moral Integrity	Honesty in memorizing reports, responsibility answer answer tasks and repairs polite polite	Honesty, responsibility answer answer politely polite
Knowledge and Love of the Qur'an	Understand the meaning of the verses of the Koran and instill its signs in the lives of students	Love of knowledge, understanding of religion, respect for the Koran
Social Concern	Cooperation in group memorizing, mutually help Friend murojaah	Cooperation, empathy, social concern
Adaptive and Open to Innovation	Approach flexible memorization, involving parents, and using simple memorization control media.	Openness to change, creativity, effective communication

With its implementation, the tahfidz program at MIM Adab Baleharjo has become a practical model of progressive Islamic education. This program strengthens students' spiritual and moral values and fosters adaptability, social awareness, and broad insight in line with the spirit of contextual and progressive Islam.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the Tahfidzul Qur'an program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah (MIM) Adab Baleharjo serves as an essential foundation for shaping students' religious character, spiritual awareness, and moral behavior. The routine and integrated memorization activities embedded in daily learning successfully foster values such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, patience, social concern, politeness, religiosity, and love for the Qur'an. Through habituation, teacher modeling, and a

supportive learning environment, character formation occurs naturally and continuously. This study contributes theoretically to Islamic education by demonstrating that character formation through the tahfidz program aligns with the principles of Progressive Islam, which emphasize deep spirituality, moral integrity, social responsibility, and a love of knowledge. The findings also reinforce Thomas Lickona's character education framework—moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action—as well as Al-Ghazali's perspective on the importance of habituation and exemplary conduct in moral development. Additionally, the program reflects Muhammadiyah's progressive educational paradigm, which integrates intellectual, spiritual, and humanistic dimensions in a balanced manner. This study is limited by its single-site qualitative design, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future research is recommended to employ mixed methods and involve multiple institutions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term impact of tahfidz programs on students' emotional intelligence, academic performance, and holistic character development.

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