

## Educational Leadership In *Pesantren* : Managing To Improve The Quality Of Qur'an Memorization

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### Abstract :

*The quality of Al-Qur'an memorization reflects the extent of a person's ability to master and maintain their memorization. To improve this quality, it is necessary to apply management that includes the functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising, by optimally utilizing available human resources and facilities. This study aims to describe the management of Pesantren, examine the quality of students' memorization, and analyze the contribution of management in improving the quality of students' memorization of the Al-Qur'an. The method used is a qualitative approach of a descriptive case study type, with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that management in Pesantren includes the preparation of a structured tahfidz program, the arrangement of supervisor tasks and deposit schedules, the implementation of routine tahfidz activities, and supervision through daily evaluations and exams every time one juz is completed. Efforts to improve the quality of memorization are carried out through daily deposits after dawn, murajaah after asar and maghrib, and the provision of special guidance for students who experience difficulties. Overall, the management of the Islamic Boarding School has proven to have a significant role in supporting the success of students' memorization, through an organized system, discipline in implementation, and continuous evaluation, thus creating a conducive environment to maintain and strengthen memorization of the Qur'an to the maximum.*

**Keywords :** Islamic Boarding School Management, Quality Improvement, Qur'an Memorization

### INTRODUCTION

*Pesantren* are conventional educational institutions that emphasize religious values as guidelines in daily life with the aim of studying, understanding, deepening, experiencing, practicing Islamic teachings, and maintaining the purity of religious teachings, especially in teaching and strengthening memorization of the Qur'an. The existence of *Pesantren* is important in the development of the era because it is able to create a conducive environment for students to memorize and understand the contents of the Qur'an. *Pesantren* as Islamic educational institutions have a strategic position in character formation, strengthening spirituality, and intellectual development of

the young generation of Muslims. One form of education that is a characteristic and advantage in *Pesantren* is the program of memorizing Qur'an, which is a learning process that is carried out systematically and continuously to guide students in memorizing the Qur'an. The memorization activity not only requires aspects of intellectual intelligence, but also involves spiritual awareness, emotional commitment, and support from a supportive and directed Islamic boarding school environment (Amaliah & Holilah, 2025)

Every institution or organization requires management, which includes the leadership process, which consists of actions taken to achieve goals (Agustian et al., 2023; Susanto et al., 2023). The quality of memorizing the Qur'an reflects fluency, accuracy of *tajwid*, fluency, and the ability to maintain memorization over a long period of time. However, achieving optimal memorization quality cannot be separated from the implementation of good management functions in the Islamic Boarding School. Management is a series of processes that include establishing plans, organizing, coordinating, and supervising existing resources in order to achieve targets optimally and efficiently (Cai, 2023; Tavo & Rasmus, 2024). The large number of memorizers of the Qur'an is a real form of maintaining the authenticity and purity of the contents of the Qur'an from attempts to deviate or forge. These memorizers are believed to be chosen people chosen by Allah SWT to help guard His words, although in essence Allah is the one who guarantees the authenticity of the Qur'an. In the modern era today, Muslims are faced with different challenges compared to the past, especially in maintaining the memorization they have achieved (Ayyad, 2022). Therefore, the presence of educational institutions such as *Pesantren* is very important, because it is able to provide a conducive environment for students to strengthen and maintain their memorization of the Qur'an to the maximum.

The process of memorizing the Qur'an does not only focus on achieving memorization, but also on efforts to maintain memorization so that it remains strong and not forgotten (Gulamhusein et al., 2023; Per-Henrik et al., 2023). Many memorizers are enthusiastic at the beginning, but are less consistent in maintaining their memorization. If the memorization process can be done in one year, then maintaining memorization will be a lifelong job. Maintaining memorization is very important and must be done by everyone who memorizes the Qur'an.

However, in practice in the field, a number of quite serious problems are still found related to the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school management, especially in the implementation of the Qur'an memorization program. Some students experience obstacles in the process of memorizing and facilitating their memorization, one of which is caused by learning methods that are not in accordance with the characteristics of individual students. Each student has a different learning style and ability, so a uniform approach is not always effective. In addition, the limited guidance from the caretakers and *pesantren* administrators who have in-depth experience also contributes to the obstacles. Motivational support from the surrounding environment such as peers, family, mentors, and administrators are still minimal, often making students feel that they do not get adequate support in their struggle to memorize the Qur'an. This

condition can have an impact on decreasing enthusiasm and consistency, so that the memorization results are not optimal and less sustainable in the long term. Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation and improvement of the management system are needed as well as efforts to increase motivation, in order to create a learning environment that is more conducive to the success of students' memorization. Several previous studies have discussed the management of *Pesantren* and memorization programs, such as research by Bahrin (2022) which highlighted the role of memorization teachers in guiding and motivating students. Other studies by Karim et al. (2025) revealed that the success of *pesantren* management is influenced by aspects of planning, supervision, and the leaders of the Islamic boarding school. However, there is still very limited research that comprehensively links the implementation of managerial functions with the improvement of the quality of memorization of the Qur'an directly in the *pesantren* environment.

Based on the background explanation that has been explained previously, this study aims to describe the management of *Pesantren*, explain the quality of students' memorization of the Qur'an, and analyze the management of *Pesantren* in improving the quality of students' memorization of the Qur'an.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design, which aims to understand the phenomenon as a whole in natural conditions and consider the background and context of the incident as a whole. The research was conducted directly in the field with a natural setting, and focused on an event or object intensively and in detail. Data collection was carried out through direct observation in the Islamic boarding school environment and in-depth interviews with subjects involved in the implementation of management at the Islamic Boarding School. The data collected through this process was then used as a basis for formulating research findings.

The purpose of the qualitative approach is to understand and analyze the phenomena that occur in a social context as a whole (Lim, 2025; Muzari et al., 2022). This approach seeks to explore the meaning, views, experiences, and perceptions of informants related to the research topic. The data collected is descriptive and analyzed narratively to gain a deep understanding, not in the form of numbers or statistics (Steen, 2025).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### 1. Management of *Pesantren*

Management of *Pesantren* is the process of organizing and managing all components of *Pesantren* to achieve Islamic education goals effectively and efficiently, while still being based on Islamic values and independence. As a religious educational institution, *Pesantren* play a strategic role in forming a generation that is intelligent, religious, and has noble character. All educational institutions, both formal and non-formal, have an orientation to

direct students towards better development. In this case, management of *Pesantren* includes the management of human resources, facilities, and learning programs systematically by implementing managerial functions, namely planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising.

a. Planning

Planning is the stage of determining goals and strategic steps that must be taken in order to achieve the targets that have been set (Brugmann, 2021; Thomas & Thomas, 2021). In the context of improving the quality of students' memorization of the Qur'an, namely the preparation of a structured curriculum and a memorization program that is in line with the vision and mission of the boarding school, for memorization including the schedule of deposits and *murajaah*, and other activities in improving the quality of students' memorization, choosing teaching strategies or methods, employing qualified teachers or Ustadzah, and providing facilities that help students memorize.

b. Organization

All planning that has been prepared must be supported by an organizational structure so that it can be implemented effectively and function properly, so that each activity can be carried out properly (Nadler, 2024; Rivaldo & Nabella, 2023). The organizational structure of the *tahfidz* program is adjusted to the needs and size of the boarding school. This structure includes caregivers, *tahfidz* instructors, Teachers / Ustadzah, and student mentors, with the aim of ensuring effective management and ensuring the smooth running of the *tahfidz* program.

c. Implementation

The success of management is highly dependent on the effectiveness of implementation, because without real action, good planning will not produce anything (Jewell et al., 2022; Nadler, 2024). Implementation includes all real activities that support the achievement of quality memorization targets, namely the learning methods used such as *talaqi*, *takrir*, *qira`ati*, *murajaah*, and *tasmi`*. In addition, extra activities such as weekly *khataman*, and *semaan* are carried out by partners of the obtained *juz*.

d. Supervision

Supervision is an important process in management to ensure that the implementation of the program runs according to plan and achieves the set targets (Palah et al., 2022; Sutarno, 2023). The implementation of the evaluation is carried out through new memorization as well as *murajaah*, added as a daily evaluation. *Khataman* activities with the *Bil ghaib* method every Friday as a weekly evaluation, students are required to take an exam after completing memorizing one *juz* (a part in Quran), by submitting the memorization directly in one sitting. and through the assessment book used to record the results of daily evaluations and exams and to monitor the development of memorization and attendance of students.

## 2. Quality of Memorizing the Qur'an

The quality of Qur'anic memorization is a crucial indicator of the effectiveness of Islamic education, particularly in institutions such as *pesantren* (Anam et al., 2025; Wijaya, 2024). It encompasses students' ability to memorize the sacred text with precision, fluency, and sustainability over time (Kabir, 2021). This quality is commonly measured through several key indicators: the accurate application of *tajwid* rules, fluency in articulation, the ability to connect verses sequentially and meaningfully (*mutqin*), and the strength of long-term recall. Evaluation of memorization quality is conducted through structured mechanisms, including *bin-nazhar* activities following the deposit (*setoran*) of memorized portions, systematic learning of *tajwid* in *Madrasah Diniyah*, and oral assessments conducted by experienced mentors. Generally, students who have completed the memorization of 30 *juz* demonstrate strong competence in both recitation and accuracy. Nevertheless, for those who still struggle with the application of *tajwid*, the *pesantren* provides targeted, intensive coaching as part of its commitment to continuous improvement.

In this context, *pesantren* management plays a strategic and instrumental role in ensuring the success of the memorization program. Effective management practices—from comprehensive planning to consistent supervision—contribute significantly to optimizing students' memorization outcomes and sustaining educational excellence.

## Discussion

The successful implementation of the *tahfidz* al-Qur'an program in *Pesantren* requires a foundation of effective and strategic management. Optimal program outcomes can only be achieved when educational activities are conducted in an orderly, systematic, and quality-oriented manner. In this context, management encompasses the core functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising or evaluating. These functions are not merely administrative procedures but serve as vital instruments to direct, mobilize, and optimize the utilization of institutional resources—both human (such as educators and mentors) and material (such as infrastructure and learning facilities). When executed properly, these management functions form an integrated system that ensures the program's sustainability and alignment with institutional goals (Beusch et al., 2022; Vieira Nunes et al., 2022). Furthermore, well-planned management serves not only as a facilitator for program implementation but also as a critical determinant of educational quality, particularly in the *tahfidz* domain, where precision, consistency, and long-term retention are paramount (Santika & Rahimah, 2024).

The planning function represents a foundational pillar in the management of educational programs, particularly within Islamic boarding schools that implement Qur'anic memorization initiatives. Through the formulation of structured learning schedules, the development of a well-organized curriculum, the selection of effective teaching methods, and the appointment of qualified educators or *ustadzah*, planning provides not only operational clarity but also strategic orientation. This foundational process ensures that students are guided



systematically toward achieving specific learning outcomes, especially in areas demanding consistency and discipline such as *tahfidz* al-Qur'an.

Planning also serves as the basis for coordination among various educational components within the institution (Figueiró et al., 2022). By laying out measurable targets, timelines, and resource allocations in advance, the planning stage facilitates alignment among stakeholders—teachers, administrators, students, and even parents. A well-conceived plan minimizes ambiguity, mitigates potential conflicts, and ensures that pedagogical practices are conducted in accordance with institutional values and goals. Moreover, it enables the institution to anticipate challenges and proactively design interventions that uphold the continuity and effectiveness of the learning process.

Planning constitutes the initial stage in the management cycle, wherein organizational goals are determined and comprehensive strategies are crafted to achieve them efficiently (Ogochukwu et al., 2022; Tavo & Rasmus, 2024). In the context of *pesantren* education, this means that memorization programs must not only be guided by spiritual and religious objectives but also supported by professional and methodical planning processes. Therefore, planning does not function in isolation, but rather integrates with subsequent managerial tasks such as organizing, implementing, and evaluating—creating a coherent system that advances both educational excellence and the holistic development of students.

The organizing function within the *pesantren* plays a pivotal role in structuring the institutional framework to ensure effective and goal-oriented operations (H. Gunawan & Zakir, 2025; M. A. Gunawan et al., 2023). A well-established organizational structure is developed, encompassing key elements such as the caretaker (*mudir*), administrators, and various field divisions. At the core of this structure lies a leadership system that emphasizes both hierarchy and democratic participation. The chairman and vice chairman of the boarding school are elected through a democratic process, wherein candidates must first gain approval from the caretaker before proceeding to the selection stage. This mechanism is not merely procedural, but rooted in the values of integrity, trustworthiness, and adherence to institutional traditions.

The election process also takes into account the individual talents, commitment, and track records of the candidates, which are benchmarked against the standards set by previous leadership (Azman et al., 2024). Such a system reflects a blend of formal governance and cultural continuity that reinforces organizational legitimacy. The active role of the caretaker in both approving and supervising leadership transitions ensures that the elected figures are not only administratively competent but also spiritually aligned with the vision and mission of the *pesantren*. This aligns with Kovaçi et al. (2021) who defines organizing as the process of identifying and compiling various tasks, distributing responsibilities and authorities, and structuring relationships among those tasks to enable individuals to work efficiently and in accordance with the organization's objectives.

Moreover, the organizing function serves not only to divide labour but also to cultivate a collaborative and accountable institutional culture. By clearly

delineating roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority, the *pesantren* can maintain discipline, enhance communication, and streamline coordination across all levels of the organization. Importantly, the involvement of caregivers in this structure ensures that religious, moral, and educational values are consistently integrated into administrative practices. Thus, the organizing function does not operate in isolation, but is inherently interwoven with the broader framework of Islamic educational leadership, contributing to the *pesantren's* long-term sustainability and its capacity to foster future leaders grounded in both knowledge and character.

The implementation function constitutes a critical phase in the management cycle, serving as the realization of previously formulated plans and organized structures. It is at this stage that strategic intentions are transformed into tangible actions. Implementation encompasses the entire process of motivating and directing subordinates so that they work sincerely and purposefully toward achieving organizational objectives in accordance with predetermined plans (Asir & Rachman, 2021). In essence, no matter how well-crafted a plan may be, and regardless of how robust an organizational structure is, they remain ineffectual without concrete execution. Implementation becomes the vehicle that drives the vision of an institution into measurable outcomes.

In the context of the *Pesantren*, the implementation of educational strategies, particularly in the Qur'anic memorization program, is carried out through cohesive collaboration among all institutional components. Teachers, administrative staff, and student leaders work synergistically to ensure that each component of the strategy is operationalized effectively in daily activities. This collective commitment fosters a dynamic learning environment where planned targets are not only pursued but continuously refined through practice. The integration of spiritual values and institutional discipline further enhances the quality of implementation, ensuring that activities remain aligned with both educational goals and the moral ethos of the *pesantren*.

Moreover, successful implementation is closely tied to leadership capacity and the ability to cultivate motivation among stakeholders (Hashimy et al., 2023; Jayashree et al., 2022). Effective leaders at the *pesantren* level are not only administrators but also motivators who inspire their teams to work diligently and with sincerity. Through regular meetings, transparent communication, and direct involvement in program execution, *pesantren* leaders ensure that implementation is not a top-down imposition, but a shared responsibility. This participatory approach not only strengthens institutional cohesion but also increases the likelihood of achieving long-term success in educational outcomes.

The supervisory function serves as a crucial stage in the management cycle, following the processes of planning, organizing, and implementing (Kauppila et al., 2022). Supervision in educational institutions, particularly in *pesantren*, functions as a mechanism to ensure that all activities are carried out in alignment with the predetermined objectives and strategic frameworks. In essence, supervision is not merely an act of oversight but a systematic effort to measure performance, identify deviations, and implement corrective actions to maintain the quality and integrity of institutional programs (Ashagre & Furi,

2023; Sudir & Munawir Yusuf, 2025).

In the context of strengthening students' Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*), supervision is operationalized through a structured evaluation system that includes the use of a deposit assessment book. This book is an essential instrument for monitoring individual progress. It documents students' scores, attendance, and the development of memorization over time. Students are required to bring this book consistently when submitting new memorization or engaging in *muraja'ah* (review sessions). In addition to daily assessments, a comprehensive *tasmi'* test—where students recite an entire *juz* in one sitting—is employed to evaluate long-term retention and mastery. Failure to meet established standards in *tasmi'* or daily deposits results in a temporary restriction from submitting new memorization until the previous material is adequately corrected and internalized. This supervisory mechanism reinforces discipline, accuracy, and sustainability in the memorization process.

Such a rigorous approach aligns with Rabbani et al. (2025) assertion that effective management enables Islamic boarding schools to cultivate a generation of Qur'an memorizers who possess not only strong retention (*mutqin*) but also adhere to high quality standards. The effectiveness of *pesantren* management in the field of *tahfidz* is largely determined by the consistency and depth of the supervision and coaching system implemented. A structured, ongoing evaluation model ensures that students are not only progressing numerically but also qualitatively—strengthening the authenticity, fluency, and spiritual connection with the sacred text. In this regard, supervision transcends its traditional function and becomes an integral part of educational transformation within Islamic institutions.

The quality of Qur'anic memorization serves as a vital indicator of students' mastery in accurately and comprehensively retaining the verses of the Qur'an. This quality is assessed through several key dimensions, including precision in the application of tajwid rules, fluency in recitation, and consistency in memorization. These indicators align with the classical perspective of Khaeruniah et al. (2024) who emphasized that high-quality Qur'anic memorization is characterized not only by fluent reading but also by a deep understanding and correct application of tajwid, as well as the capacity to preserve memorized content over the long term. The evaluation of memorization quality is operationalized through various structured mechanisms such as *bin-nazhar* activities, systematic *tajwid* instruction, and direct oral assessments conducted by mentors. Moreover, students are guided to strengthen their memorization through integrative worship practices—particularly night prayers (*qiyam al-lail*)—during which they are encouraged to recite their memorized verses within each *rakaat*, thereby reinforcing both retention and spiritual internalization of the Qur'anic text.

The dimension of *adab* (manners) in the Qur'anic memorization process constitutes a fundamental component that warrants serious attention within the framework of Islamic education. Students are required to uphold personal purity, dress modestly and neatly, and demonstrate a reverent and focused attitude when presenting their memorization. These practices are not merely



symbolic, but serve to reinforce a deep respect for the sanctity of the Qur'an while simultaneously cultivating discipline and moral integrity in students. Consequently, this analysis affirms that the quality of Qur'anic memorization is not solely determined by the volume of memorized material, but is intrinsically linked to the use of effective pedagogical methods, the presence of a conducive learning environment, the provision of structured and continuous mentoring, and the internalization of character values through disciplined behavioural norms. This study, therefore, provides clear answers to the research questions posed. First, the management of the Islamic boarding school is conducted systematically through the core functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. Second, the enhancement of students' memorization quality is pursued through disciplined program implementation and a consistent system of evaluation. Third, the findings underscore the pivotal role of institutional management in ensuring the attainment of high-quality Qur'anic memorization outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

This study affirms that the management of the Qur'anic memorization program in Islamic boarding schools has been implemented optimally through a structured and comprehensive application of the four primary management functions: planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. Planning is reflected in the design of a well-structured curriculum and *tahfidz* schedule; organizing is operationalized through the establishment of a clear and systematic organizational structure; implementation is executed through diverse and adaptive memorization methods, such as *talaqqi*, *taqrir*, and *tasmi'*; while supervision is conducted through a multi-layered evaluation system encompassing daily assessments, weekly monitoring, and *tasmi'* examinations for each *juz*.

The quality of students' memorization is assessed based on their fluency (*mutqin*), accuracy in applying tajwid rules, smoothness in recitation, and the strength of long-term retention. Importantly, the cultivation of proper manners (*adab*) during the memorization process—such as personal hygiene, respectful dress, and reverent behaviour—has also been shown to contribute significantly to the development of students' discipline and moral character. The integration of structured management practices with a personalized coaching approach has proven effective in fostering a supportive and spiritually enriching learning environment that promotes high-quality Qur'anic memorization.

This study recommends that Islamic boarding schools continue to innovate in the management of *tahfidz* programs by enhancing the competence of mentors, refining pedagogical methods in alignment with students' learning characteristics, and integrating adaptive strategies responsive to learners' individual needs. Future research is encouraged to explore the role of psychological and socio-environmental factors in shaping the durability and consistency of students' memorization, thereby contributing to a more holistic understanding of success in Qur'anic education.

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