

PROFESSIONAL AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES IN SUSTAINING MUTQIN QUR'ANIC MEMORIZATION

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ABSTRACT

In Islamic educational institutions worldwide, sustaining *Mutqin* (robust and precise) Qur'anic memorization remains a persistent challenge, particularly for *Huffāz* (Qur'an memorizers) who assume professional roles with competing institutional responsibilities. This study aims to explore the lived experiences of Tahfiz Qur'an (TQ) teachers in achieving and sustaining *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization within the context of pesantren-based professional practice. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed, involving six TQ teachers from five Qur'an-based pesantren in West Java, Indonesia, with data collected through in-depth interviews and reflective narratives. The findings reveal that achieving *Mutqin* memorization begins with the formation of a strong spiritual and disciplinary foundation, culminating in formal memorization certification, and is sustained through structured daily *muraja'ah* practices integrated into pre-, during-, and post-work routines. Participants encountered personal, cognitive, and institutional constraints; however, they addressed these challenges through self-regulation strategies, including adaptive time management, use of audio recitation technologies, workload adjustment, and reinforcement of spiritual discipline. The study concludes that sustaining *Mutqin* memorization is not solely an individual achievement but a professionally mediated pedagogical practice shaped by institutional support and spiritual commitment. These findings imply that pesantren and Islamic educational institutions should strengthen professional development, workload policies, and structured memorization support systems to sustain Qur'anic mastery among TQ teachers.

Keywords: Islamic Boarding School, *Mutqin* Qur'anic Memorization, Qur'anic Pedagogy, Tahfiz Teachers, Teacher Professionalism

INTRODUCTION

Across world educational traditions, memorization has long functioned as a durable means of preserving authoritative knowledge and safeguarding accuracy across generations (Delaine, 2022; Shemesh, 2021). In Muslim societies, this legacy is especially visible in the living tradition of Qur'anic memorization, sustained from the earliest Islamic period to contemporary contexts (Alias & Yusof, 2024; Ayyad, 2022). Today, Qur'anic memorization remains institutionalized in diverse national settings, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Türkiye, Malaysia, and Indonesia, through formal and non-formal Islamic educational institutions that cultivate *Huffāz* as custodians of the Qur'anic text and its transmission (Abd Ghani et al., 2025; Alnajashi et al., 2025; Jahroni, 2024; Kaltsum et al., 2021; Yurtseven et al., 2025). This global continuity highlights Qur'anic memorization not only as a devotional practice but also as a foundational educational responsibility that supports instructional authority in Islamic education.

In Indonesia, Qur'anic memorization is strongly associated with pesantren life, where *santri* develop disciplined routines under close pedagogical supervision (Inayatussahara & Hasan, 2023). However, after graduation, many memorizers transition into employment and new academic trajectories, bringing intensified time pressure and shifting priorities that can weaken

sustained rehearsal and retention (Husnaini et al., 2022; Robinson, 2022; Yang, 2025). These pressures are compounded by limited higher-education pathways and institutional arrangements that explicitly support continuing memorization commitments among working *Huffāẓh* (Zulkifli & Hj. Rofie, 2024). As a result, TQ teachers, who are simultaneously memorizers and institutional workers, often face growing difficulty maintaining the quality of their memorization, with potential downstream consequences for instructional credibility and Qur'anic pedagogy (Basir et al., 2024; Muafiah et al., 2022; Surahman et al., 2025).

Within Qur'anic education, memorization quality varies considerably (Awang et al., 2025), reflecting differences in cognitive control and memory processes that influence retention and accurate recall (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968). Scholars of Qur'anic pedagogy distinguish a high level of mastery commonly referred to as *Mutqin*: memorization characterized by robust retention, precise recall, and minimal error (Ariyadi, 2017; Asy-Syinqithi, 2022). This standard resonates with classical emphases on *hifẓ ma'a itqān*, memorization accompanied by excellence and precision, as a normative benchmark for Qur'an memorizers (Al-Suyuthi, 2008). In practice, *Mutqin* attainment is often tied to formal assessment, certification, and recognized transmission lineages (*sanad*), making it both pedagogically demanding and institutionally regulated (Kaltsum et al., 2021; Zamzila & Rambe, 2025). Yet, what remains less visible in the literature is how this "high-mastery" status is sustained when teachers face routine workload pressures and competing obligations.

Existing scholarship on TQ teachers has generated valuable insights into teacher competence, curriculum implementation, and pedagogical practices across diverse Islamic educational contexts. Quantitative studies demonstrate that teachers' pedagogical knowledge, professional skills, and access to learning facilities significantly influence instructional quality and support effective implementation of Qur'anic curricula, including the integration of Higher Order Thinking Skills within TQ education (Haron et al., 2021; Saad et al., 2025). Similarly, research on curriculum implementation highlights the strategic role of TQ teachers in navigating institutional expectations and adapting instructional approaches to contemporary educational demands (Othman et al., 2025). Beyond technical competence, religio-spiritual routines, such as intention-setting, ritual preparation, and consistent revision practices, have been identified as important pedagogical elements that help cultivate memorization discipline and spiritual engagement among students (Bahrin, 2022; Yusuf et al., 2019). These findings collectively underscore that TQ teaching competence encompasses not only pedagogical expertise but also the integration of spiritual, cognitive, and instructional dimensions.

Complementing quantitative findings, qualitative research has provided deeper contextual insights into the diversity of Qur'anic pedagogy across institutional and cultural settings. For instance, studies of Qur'anic instructors in Norway's Islamic supplementary education reveal adaptive teaching practices shaped by local educational environments, demonstrating how instructors balance traditional memorization methods with contemporary pedagogical expectations (Markeng & Berglund, 2024). Similarly, research on Ja'farī Qur'anic instructors in Türkiye highlights the importance of structured pedagogical progression, institutional support, and early memorization training in shaping memorization outcomes (Yurtseven et al., 2025). These studies illustrate that Qur'anic pedagogy is shaped not only by individual teacher competence but also by institutional structures, sociocultural contexts, and educational traditions. Together, they contribute to a broader understanding of how TQ teachers operate as educators, curriculum implementers, and transmitters of Qur'anic knowledge within evolving educational systems.

Despite these important contributions, existing scholarship has primarily focused on instructional effectiveness, teacher competence, and student learning outcomes, while giving comparatively limited attention to TQ teachers' own memorization maintenance as a

professional and lifelong practice. This gap is significant because TQ teachers' memorization stability directly affects pedagogical credibility, instructional authority, and the continuity of accurate Qur'anic transmission within pesantren-based education (Basir et al., 2024; Muafiah et al., 2022). Sustaining *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization is particularly challenging for teachers who must balance institutional responsibilities alongside their memorization commitments. Accordingly, the present study addresses this gap by exploring the lived experiences of TQ teachers in achieving *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization, sustaining it through daily *murāja'ab* within institutional contexts, and navigating the personal and institutional challenges associated with maintaining memorization stability. By foregrounding TQ teachers' lived experiences, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of memorization as a dynamic professional practice central to teacher professionalism and the long-term sustainability of Islamic education.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive, qualitative, phenomenological design grounded in the Husserlian tradition to explore the lived experiences of TQ teachers in achieving and sustaining *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization. Phenomenology was selected because it enables an in-depth examination of how individuals consciously experience and interpret a phenomenon within their lifeworld (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The analysis was guided by an integrated conceptual framework combining Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) and Spaced Repetition (SR), which together explain how memorization is intentionally regulated and cognitively sustained over time. SRL conceptualizes memorization as a cyclical process involving forethought, performance, and self-reflection (Zimmerman, 2002), while SR explains long-term retention through structured, interval-based review that counters memory decay (Cepeda et al., 2006; Ebbinghaus, 1913; Karpicke & Bauernschmidt, 2011). As illustrated in Figure 1, this framework provides an analytical lens to interpret how TQ teachers initially achieved *Mutqin* memorization, sustained it through daily *murāja'ab* practices amid professional responsibilities, and navigated institutional and personal challenges that influence memorization stability.

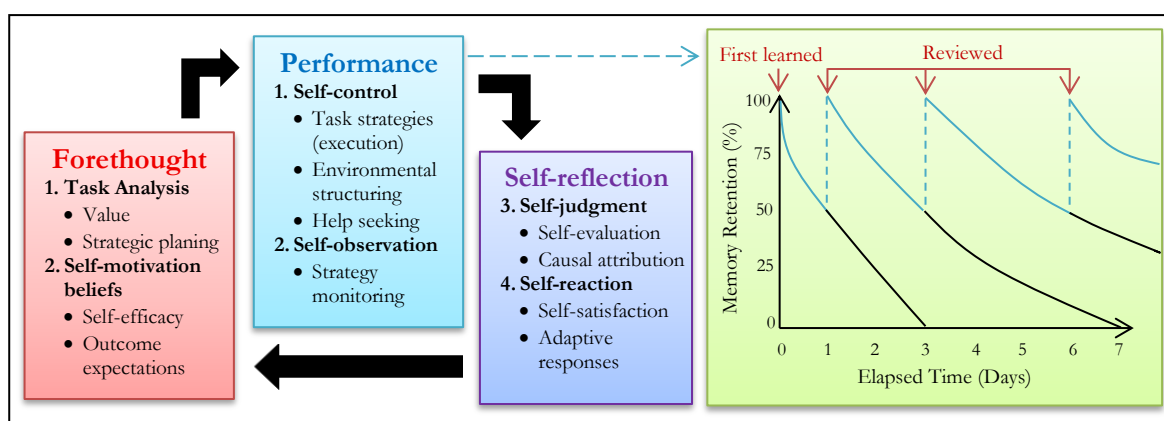


Figure 1. Integrative Framework of Self-Regulated Learning and Spaced Repetition Theory

Figure 1 presents a comprehensive integration of the SRL and SR frameworks, illustrating how memorization is deliberately managed and sustained over time. SRL conceptualizes memorization as a recurring cycle involving planning, execution, and self-assessment, whereas SR emphasizes long-term retention via systematic review intervals that help prevent memory decline. This integrated approach offers insights into how TQ teachers initially attained *Mutqin* memorization, maintained it through daily *murāja'ab*, and addressed challenges impacting the stability of their memorization. In terms of the participant selection, as can be seen in Table 1, the participants were recruited using purposive snowball sampling (Creswell &

Poth, 2018) to ensure the inclusion of experienced TQ teachers with verified *Mutqin* memorization.

Table 1. Details of Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Teaching Experience (Year)	Pesantren Location	<i>Sanad</i>
P1	Male	5	Bekasi	<i>Qirā'ah 'Aṣim al-Kūfī Rimāyah Ḥafs wa Syu'bah</i>
P2	Male	5	Depok	<i>Qirā'ah wa Hijz Ḥafs 'an 'Aṣim</i>
P3	Male	4	Bekasi	<i>Qirā'ah 'Aṣim al-Kūfī Rimāyah Ḥafs wa Syu'bah</i>
P4	Male	6	Bogor	<i>Qirā'ah 'Aṣim al-Kūfī Rimāyah Ḥafs wa Syu'bah</i>
P5	Female	7	Ciamis	<i>Qirā'ah 'Aṣim al-Kūfī Rimāyah Ḥafs, Matnu 'l-Jazāri</i>
P6	Female	7	Ciamis	<i>Tuḥbatu 'l-Atfāl</i>

Table 1 indicates that six participants (four males and two females) from five Qur'an-focused pesantren in West Java, Indonesia, were selected. The Inclusion criteria required participants to (1) hold a degree in Qur'anic studies, (2) have at least three years of teaching experience in Qur'anic memorization, and (3) possess verified mastery of all thirty *juḏ*. Verification was based on formal *sanad* certification issued by recognized Qur'anic scholars and institutional validation through professional roles such as senior teachers or memorization evaluators. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted between October 2024 and January 2025, lasting 30–60 minutes, either face-to-face or via digital platforms (Zoom or WhatsApp video calls). Interviews were conducted in Indonesian to facilitate depth and clarity, guided by open-ended prompts that invited participants to describe their experiences of achieving, sustaining, and managing *Mutqin* memorization alongside institutional responsibilities. All transcripts were translated using a forward–backward translation procedure to ensure semantic accuracy.

Moreover, the data analysis followed Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological procedures, beginning with epoché, in which researchers bracketed prior assumptions to remain grounded in participants' descriptions. Interview transcripts were repeatedly reviewed to identify significant statements through horizontalization, which were then reduced to invariant constituents and organized into thematic clusters using NVivo 15. Individual textural descriptions (what participants experienced) and structural descriptions (how they experienced it within institutional and personal contexts) were constructed and synthesized into a composite essence of the phenomenon. Trustworthiness was ensured through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria, including member checking to confirm interpretive accuracy, thick description to enhance transferability, and an audit trail and reflexive memoing to ensure dependability and confirmability. This rigorous analytic process enabled a comprehensive understanding of how TQ teachers achieve, sustain, and negotiate *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization as part of their professional and spiritual practice within pesantren education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results presented below outline the key empirical themes that emerged from in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with six TQ teachers. These teachers are affiliated with five different Qur'an-focused pesantren located in West Java, Indonesia. The findings are organized in line with the study purpose, describing (1) how TQ teachers achieved *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization, (2) how they sustained *Mutqin* through daily *murāja'ah* amid work demands, and (3) the challenges they faced and adaptive strategies they employed while balancing memorization commitments with institutional responsibilities.

Achieving *Mutqin* Qur'anic Memorization

Participants described achieving *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization as a gradual process involving spiritual, cognitive, and procedural stages. Their experience centered on six themes: establishing a religious foundation, ensuring accuracy, developing repetition, regulating timing, organizing review intervals, and formal assessment. These themes, detailed in Table 2, collectively represent the fundamental structure of how participants experienced and progressed in attaining *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization.

Table 2. The initial process of achieving *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization

Themes	Subthemes	Participants with Experience		
		<i>n</i>	%	Name code
1. Establishing a Religious Foundation	Cultivating reverence toward the Qur'an	1	16.7	P3
	Starting with the <i>Sunnah</i> prayers before memorizing	3	50.0	P1, P3, P5
2. Laying the Ground of Accuracy	Establishing correctness through <i>tashih</i> and <i>tahsin</i>	5	83.3	P1, P2, P3, P4, P6
	Using word-by-word <i>mushaf</i>	2	33.3	P3, P6
	Inscribing verses to strengthen recall	1	16.7	P4
3. Rhythm of Repetition	Perceiving twenty to thirty repetitions as sufficient	6	100	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
4. Preferred Memorization Times	After the <i>Tajabbud</i> prayer is tranquil	6	100	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
	After the afternoon exercise is fresh	1	16.7	P3
	Between <i>Maghrib</i> and <i>'Ishā</i> prayer	1	16.7	P4
5. Preferred <i>Muraja'ah</i> Intervals	<i>Qarib</i> (short-term revision)	2	33.3	P1, P4
	<i>Ba'id</i> (mid-term revision)	2	33.3	P1, P4
	<i>Ab'ad</i> (long-term revision)	1	16.7	P1
6. Taking a <i>Mutqin</i> Assessment	Having thirty- <i>juḥ</i> memorization	4	66.7	P1, P2, P3, P4
	Choosing a <i>sanad</i> -certified examiner	6	100	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
	Memorizing <i>Matn al-Jazariyyah</i>	5	83.3	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
	Studying <i>Rasm al-Qur'an</i>	4	66.7	P1, P3, P4, P6
	Undergoing extended <i>Talaqqī</i> and <i>Musyafahah</i> for months	6	100	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6

Table 2 illustrates the initial process participants followed to achieve *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization. They described it as a gradual and disciplined journey that developed through interconnected spiritual, cognitive, and procedural stages. Participants viewed mastery of *Mutqin* not as an immediate result but as the outcome of consistent and ongoing engagement with memorization practices over a period of time. Their narratives revealed six key experiential themes: establishing a strong religious foundation, ensuring accuracy in recitation, cultivating a rhythmic pattern of repetition, managing the timing of memorization sessions, organizing *muraja'ah*, and undergoing formal assessments and validation processes.

Establishing a Religious Foundation

Participants consistently experienced the initial stage of memorization as rooted in a strong religious foundation. Before focusing on technical memorization strategies, they emphasized the importance of preparing themselves spiritually and cultivating reverence toward the Qur'an. Memorization was experienced as a sacred engagement that required inner readiness and spiritual alignment.

Participants described cultivating reverence (*adab*) toward the Qur'an as essential to facilitating memorization. They experienced this reverence as strengthening their connection with the Qur'an and enhancing memorization fluency. One participant stated that “with good

spiritual connection to Allah and adab to the Qur'an, memorization is smooth" (P3, Personal Communication, November 2024).

Participants also described beginning memorization with preparatory spiritual practices, particularly performing ablution (*wuḍu*) and *Sunnah* prayers. These practices were experienced as creating emotional calmness and mental clarity before memorization. "I take *wuḍu* first, then perform the *Sunnah* prayer before starting memorization" (P5, Personal Communication, December 2024). Then the statement was added by P1, "We want to become part of Allah's family, the memorizers of the Qur'an. So, we usually begin memorizing with the *Sunnah* prayer, asking Him to make it easier" (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024).

Through these practices, participants came to perceive memorization as a deeply rooted spiritual activity, which was initiated through deliberate and mindful preparation, thereby emphasizing the intentional and holistic nature of the process.

Laying the Ground of Accuracy

Participants described achieving *Mutqin* memorization as requiring the establishment of recitational accuracy before committing verses to memory. They experienced accuracy as a foundational prerequisite, emphasizing that errors in pronunciation or articulation could compromise memorization stability.

Participants described learning *tashīḥ* and *tahsīn* to ensure precise articulation and correct recitation. A participant uttered that "for novice Qur'an memorizers, nothing is more important than learning *tashīḥ* and *tahsīn*" (P4, Personal Communication, November 2024). Additionally, P1 said, "I learn *tashīḥ* and *tahsīn* to make sure my Arabic pronunciation is accurate" (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024). Not only that, a participant argued that "this process makes memorizing the Qur'an more fluent for me" (P6, Personal Communication, January 2025).

Some participants described using a word-by-word mushaf to support memorization. They experienced this approach as helping them understand verse structure and strengthening retention by stating, "I feel more comfortable memorizing when I understand the meaning of every single word" (P3, Personal Communication, November 2024), and "the translation helps me understand the structure and flow of the verses" (P6, Personal Communication, January 2025).

On the one hand, a participant described inscribing verses as part of memorization, experiencing the act of writing as reinforcing recall. "I used to inscribe at least one page of Qur'an every day from memory until I completed all parts" (P4, Personal Communication, November 2024).

Participants perceived the process of accuracy-building as a crucial foundational step that is essential before progressing toward achieving stable and enduring memorization. This phase serves to establish a solid base for memory retention, highlighting its importance in the overall learning sequence.

Rhythm of Repetition

Participants described systematic repetition as central to achieving memorization stability. They experienced repetition as a structured process that gradually strengthened recall and reduced hesitation.

According to the participants, they described repeating verses approximately twenty to thirty times before submitting memorization. For instance, one participant stated, "I usually read the verse twenty times while looking and then memorize it without looking" (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024). Additionally, another participant added, "I read one page of Qur'an about twenty times, sometimes up to thirty times" (P2, Personal Communication, October 2024). Moreover, they mentioned that "after twenty repetitions, memorizing the verses becomes easier" (P3, Personal Communication, November 2024).

Hence, participants perceived repetition not merely as a mechanical activity, but as an intricate, gradual process through which the act of memorization incrementally became more stable and fluent, highlighting the progressive nature of skill acquisition.

Preferred Memorization Times

Participants described memorization quality as influenced by the timing of memorization. They experienced certain periods as more conducive to focus and memorization stability.

Moreover, the participants described memorizing after *Tabajjud* prayer, experiencing this time as calm and conducive to concentration. One participant captured it in his utterance, “*I usually wake up around two or three in the morning to memorize, because my mind feels calm and focused after the Tabajjud*” (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024). The statement is galvanized by P6 who stated, “*during the last third of the night, the memorization process feels considerably quicker*” (P6, Personal Communication, January 2025).

Conversely, some participants reported memorizing in the afternoon after engaging in physical activity, which they found enhanced mental clarity. One participant mentioned, “*In the late afternoon, after moving my body a bit, my focus improves when memorizing*” (P3, Personal Communication, November 2024). Others described using the time between Maghrib and ‘Ishā prayer for memorization, stating, “*Between Maghrib and ‘Ishā, I hold the Qur’an and utilize that time*” (P4, Personal Communication, November 2024). Overall, participants perceived the timing of memorization as impacting their concentration and fluency.

Preferred *Murāja’ah* Intervals

Participants described organizing memorization through structured *murāja’ah* intervals during the process of completing thirty *juḏ*. They experienced *murāja’ah* as a tiered system involving short-term, mid-term, and long-term revision.

Murāja’ah Qarib involved revising the portions memorized on that day, as described: “*Murāja’ah Qarib is the revision done for what has been memorized that day*” (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024). Furthermore, *Murāja’ah Ba’id* entailed reviewing material from previous days, with one participant noting: “*It involves revising two to three juḏ in one day before memorizing new material*” (P4, Personal Communication, November 2024). Meanwhile, *Murāja’ah Ab’ad* referred to revising earlier memorization, exemplified by a participant stating: “*While memorizing the sixteenth juḏ, I must initially repeat the first to fifteenth juḏ*” (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024). Participants experienced these revision intervals as helpful in maintaining memorization continuity during the process.

Taking a *Mutqin* Assessment

Participants considered the successful memorization of *Mutqin* as the point of formal assessment and validation. They found this stage to be challenging and believed it demanded consistent preparation.

Participants indicated that completing thirty *juḏ* was a necessary requirement. One participant uttered, “*taking this assessment is very demanding, because the primary requirement is to have completed memorization of all thirty juḏ*” (P2, Personal Communication, October 2024). In particular, the participants emphasized being assessed by *sanad*-certified teachers; one stated: “*We only submit our memorization to teachers who are sanad-certified*” (P6, Personal Communication, January 2025).

Similarly important, the participants also described memorizing supporting texts and studying Qur’anic orthography. P5 captured that “*before the assessment, we were required to memorize Matn al-Jazariyyab*” (P5, Personal Communication, December 2024). Not only that, one stated

that “I was also expected to understand *Rasm al-Qur’an* before the *Mutqin* examination” (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024).

Furthermore, participants characterized the most challenging phase as the extensive stages of *talaqqī* and *musyāfabah*. P3 explained that “if there was even a small mistake, I had to repeat the process from the beginning” (P3, Personal Communication, November 2024). Then, P4 reinforced the statement by saying, “not everyone can pass at this stage” (P4, Personal Communication, November 2024). Therefore, the participants experienced this stage as the final validation of memorization stability and mastery.

Sustaining *Mutqin* Qur’anic Memorization Amid Institutional Responsibilities

Participants described maintaining *Mutqin* Qur’anic memorization as a continuous, disciplined process integrated into their daily routines as teachers. After *sanad* certification, the focus shifted from initial memorization to ongoing stability, which was seen as a responsibility rather than a separate activity. Their experiences highlight managing structured *khatam* targets, scheduling *murāja’ah* around work, and maintaining it before, during, and after duties. Table 3 captures the themes that reflect how participants sustained *Mutqin* Qur’anic memorization while fulfilling institutional responsibilities.

Table 3. The strategies for sustaining *Mutqin* Qur’anic memorization amid institutional responsibilities

Themes	Subthemes	Participants with Experience		
		n	%	Name code
1. Managing the Monthly <i>Khatam</i> Target	Three <i>juḏ</i> daily	4	66.7	P1, P2, P3, P6
	Five <i>juḏ</i> daily	2	33.3	P4, P5
2. Pre-Work <i>Murāja’ah</i> Allocation	Allocating early hours for one to two <i>juḏ</i>	6	100	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6
3. In-Work Micro- <i>Murāja’ah</i> Practices	Short breaks to reread a single page repeatedly	1	16.7	P4
	Short breaks for <i>murāja’ah</i> one <i>juḏ</i>	2	33.3	P4, P5
	Requesting random verse testing from colleagues	2	33.3	P2, P6
	Applying color-coded verse labeling	1	16.7	P1
4. Post-Work <i>Murāja’ah</i> Completion	Completing the remaining <i>juḏ</i> in the afternoon	6	100	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6

Table 3 outlines various strategies employed by participants to sustain *Mutqin* Qur’anic memorization despite the demands of institutional responsibilities. Participants described maintaining *Mutqin* Qur’anic memorization as a continuous and disciplined process that requires persistent and deliberate efforts, emphasizing the importance of regular *murāja’ah*. They explained that this practice is seamlessly integrated into their daily routines as teachers, often involving specific times allocated for review and reinforcement of memorized verses, ensuring consistency and perseverance in their memorization journey. After earning *sanad* certification, they experienced a shift from merely completing memorization to ensuring its long-term stability. This act of maintenance was not seen as a separate task but as an inherent part of their professional and personal lives, reflecting a deep sense of responsibility. Their lived experiences highlighted four core themes: managing structured *khatam* targets, dedicating time to *murāja’ah* before starting work, incorporating *murāja’ah* into their daily work routines, and completing additional *murāja’ah* sessions after fulfilling institutional duties. These strategies collectively illustrate how teachers actively embed Qur’anic review into their busy schedules to preserve their memorization over time.

Managing the Monthly *Khatam* Target

Participants described sustaining *Mutqin* memorization through structured daily *murāja'ah* targets designed to ensure continuous revision of all thirty *juz*. They experienced these targets as an organizing framework that guided their daily memorization routines and prevented memorization decline.

Most participants described reviewing approximately three *juz* per day as a consistent maintenance practice. They experienced this target as manageable and effective for maintaining memorization stability. Furthermore, *"I must repeat at least three juz each day, usually divided before and after work"* (P3, Personal Communication, November 2024). Additionally, *"I complete one-tenth of the Qur'an each day. When time allows during work hours, I revise additional portions"* (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024). Some participants described organizing revision using rotational patterns to ensure balanced coverage across all *juz*. For example, *"I rotate the juz, such as 1, 11, 21. Then 2, 12, 22, until all thirty juz are covered"* (P2, Personal Communication, October 2024). Meanwhile, the other participants described maintaining more intensive *murāja'ah* targets of approximately five *juz* per day, which they experienced as requiring greater endurance and time allocation. For instance, *"I target five juz per day, divided before work and continued after work"* (P4, Personal Communication, November 2024). Finally, *"I finish thirty juz in six days, adjusting the timing around my work schedule"* (P5, Personal Communication, December 2024). From the excerpts, it can be seen that participants experienced these structured targets as helping to maintain continuity in memorization.

Pre-Work *Murāja'ah* Allocation

Participants described allocating *murāja'ah* during early hours before beginning their institutional responsibilities. They experienced this early allocation as protecting memorization continuity from potential interruptions during the workday.

All participants described revising one to two *juz* before starting work. Furthermore, this early revision was commonly performed after *Tabajjud* or *Subuh* prayer. One participant stated, *"I intentionally wake up earlier than my work schedule to focus on murāja'ah"* (P6, Personal Communication, January 2025).

Participants experienced early *murāja'ah* as allowing them to engage in memorization with greater focus and fewer interruptions. They described this period as providing a sense of calmness and readiness before beginning institutional duties.

In-Work Micro-*Murāja'ah* Practices

Participants described sustaining memorization by integrating *murāja'ah* into their work routines whenever opportunities arose. They experienced *murāja'ah* during work hours as occurring in brief, flexible intervals rather than in structured sessions. It can be galvanized by a participant who utilizes his short breaks to repeatedly review a single page. *"Since revising by juz is difficult during work, I use brief free moments to reread a single page repeatedly"* (P4, Personal Communication, November 2024).

Meanwhile, other participants described revising portions of memorization during lighter workload periods. *"When the workload is lighter, I revise one juz during breaks"* (P5, Personal Communication, December 2024). Whilst the other requests colleagues to test the memorization informally. *"Sometimes, I ask colleagues to test my memorization randomly when they are available"* (P2, Personal Communication, October 2024). On the one hand, one of the participants uses markers to identify memorization instability. *"When some verses feel unclear, I mark them with color codes and revisit them later"* (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024).

Overall, the participants experienced these practices as helping maintain memorization continuity despite institutional demands.

Post-Work *Murāja'ah* Completion

Participants described completing their remaining *murāja'ah* after finishing institutional duties. They experienced post-work hours as providing greater flexibility and fewer interruptions, allowing them to complete their daily revision targets.

The period after work is used by participants to complete unfinished portions of *murāja'ah*. “After work, I complete whatever remains from my daily target” (P3, Personal Communication, November 2024). This endeavor is undertaken to assist participants in maintaining stable, continuous memorization.

Essential Structure of Sustaining *Mutqin* Qur'anic Memorization

Taken together, participants experienced sustaining *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization as a continuous and disciplined process requiring intentional planning and consistent integration within their institutional routines. *Murāja'ah* was not perceived as a separate or optional task but as an integral component of their professional and spiritual responsibility as TQ teachers. This understanding shaped how they structured their daily lives, ensuring that memorization maintenance remained prioritized despite teaching duties, administrative work, and institutional commitments. Sustaining *Mutqin* was therefore experienced as an ongoing regulatory practice requiring conscious management of time, attention, and effort to preserve memorization stability.

Participants used structured daily *murāja'ah* targets at different times of the day. Early revision offered clarity and spiritual readiness, while flexible breaks helped reinforcement despite institutional constraints. Post-work revision served as a consolidation phase to complete daily targets and stabilize recall. Through this structured yet adaptive cycle of preparation, integration, and completion, participants maintained memorization continuity while fulfilling their professional roles, demonstrating that sustaining *Mutqin* memorization is a dynamic practice embedded within their spiritual commitment and institutional life.

Experiencing Challenges and Adaptive Responses in Sustaining *Mutqin* Qur'anic Memorization Amid Institutional Responsibilities

Participants described maintaining *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization as an ongoing challenge influenced by personal and institutional factors. They viewed *murāja'ah* not as a stable process but as one requiring constant adaptation to internal and external constraints. Their experiences highlighted three key themes, detailed in Table 4.

Table 4. Challenges and adaptive responses

Themes	Subthemes	Participants with Experience		
		<i>n</i>	%	Name code
1. Personal Challenges	Laziness	2	33.3	P4, P6
	Emotional spillover	2	33.3	P4, P5
	Physical fatigue	4	66.7	P1, P2, P3, P6
2. Institutional Challenges	Sudden institutional activities and unpredictable schedules	3	50.0	P1, P3, P6
	High teaching load	3	50.0	P2, P4, P6
	Administrative duties	4	66.7	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6
	Lack of institutional support	3	50.0	P2, P3, P5
3. Adaptive Responses	Time management	5	83.3	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6
	Reducing <i>murāja'ah</i> load	2	33.3	P2, P3
	Listening to MP3 <i>murattal</i>	1	16.7	P6
	Utilizing a kaleidoscope	1	16.7	P1
	Physical well-being	2	33.3	P1, P3
	Spiritual regulation	5	83.3	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5

As shown in Table 4, participants explained that maintaining *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization involves ongoing challenges stemming from both personal circumstances and institutional responsibilities. They described *murāja'ah* maintenance as a dynamic process rather than a stable, continuous activity, requiring constant adjustments to navigate various internal and external constraints. Their lived experiences highlighted three key themes: personal obstacles impacting the consistency of *murāja'ah*, institutional challenges linked to professional obligations, and the adaptive strategies they employed to preserve their memorization efforts.

Personal Challenges Affecting *Murāja'ah* Continuity

Participants reported experiencing personal challenges that occasionally disrupted their *murāja'ah* routines. These challenges were experienced as fluctuations in motivation, emotional stability, and physical condition that affected their ability to maintain consistent *murāja'ah*.

Some participants highlighted experiencing periods of reduced motivation or boredom during repetitive *murāja'ah*. P6 stated that “*as a Qur'an lover, I sometimes feel bored with what I did*” (P6, Personal Communication, January 2025). In addition, the participants described emotional experiences that affected their memorization focus. Emotional tension from daily interactions sometimes carried into their *murāja'ah* sessions, affecting their ability to concentrate. “*Honestly, my emotions are sometimes difficult to control, and experiences from the day tend to linger and affect my murāja'ah at home*” (P4, Personal Communication, November 2024).

Moreover, physical fatigue was described as another condition affecting memorization continuity. Participants experienced fatigue due to illness, travel, or prolonged activity, which reduced their physical energy and concentration. For example, “*Being sick or traveling can disrupt my consistency because they often make me physically tired*” (P2, Personal Communication, October 2024). Additionally, “*These unavoidable conditions require short breaks, and murāja'ah resumes once my condition stabilizes*” (P3, Personal Communication, November 2024).

Participants encountered these personal challenges as temporary disruptions that necessitated adjustments to their *murāja'ah* routines, highlighting the flexibility and resilience required to maintain their academic responsibilities amidst unforeseen difficulties.

Institutional Challenges Affecting *Murāja'ah* Continuity

Participants also described experiencing institutional demands that significantly impacted their ability to maintain consistent *murāja'ah* practices. These challenges were perceived as stemming from their professional responsibilities and the broader institutional environments, which often placed competing priorities and time constraints on their religious study routines.

Participants described sudden institutional activities and unpredictable schedules as disrupting their planned *murāja'ah* routines. For example, one participant noted, “*Sudden activities appear without prior notice, and the murāja'ah schedule I had prepared becomes impossible to follow*” (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024). Similarly, another mentioned, “*Another barrier arises when unforeseen events disrupt my schedule*” (P3, Personal Communication, November 2024). Additionally, participants also reported that heavy teaching loads negatively affected their physical and mental energy for *murāja'ah*. One participant explained, “*After teaching for long hours, my energy is already depleted, so it becomes difficult to open the Qur'an*” (P6, Personal Communication, January 2025). Overall, these factors contribute to significant challenges in maintaining consistent *murāja'ah* routines.

Administrative duties were also experienced as reducing available time and mental capacity for memorization. For instance, “*Administrative duties sometimes take away my free time, whether for engaging with the Qur'an or even for my family*” (P5, Personal Communication, December 2024). Moreover, some participants described experiencing limited institutional support for

sustaining memorization. Specifically, “*Our pesantren pays attention to teachers’ welfare, but in terms of professional development, there is very little support*” (P2, Personal Communication, October 2024). Thus, the participants experienced these institutional conditions as affecting the continuity and consistency of *murāja’ah*.

Adaptive Responses for Sustaining Memorization Stability

Participants described developing adaptive responses to sustain *Mutqin* Qur’anic memorization despite personal and institutional challenges. They experienced these responses as essential for maintaining memorization continuity.

Participants described managing their time carefully to balance institutional duties and *murāja’ah*. They emphasized the importance of starting the year with proper time management, stating, “*I always manage my time at the beginning of the year*” (P5, Personal Communication, December 2024). Additionally, they highlighted the need to allocate time effectively, noting, “*Both responsibilities must be balanced, with clearly divided hours and places*” (P2, Personal Communication, October 2024). Participants also described how they adapt their *murāja’ah* targets during periods of heavy workload. For instance, one participant mentioned, “*Even on days when I have no time for murāja’ah, I still try to revise at least one juz’*” (P3, Personal Communication, November 2024).

At the same time, some participants mentioned that listening to *murattal* recitations serves as an alternative way to review during illness or physical exhaustion. For instance, “*When I am sick, I listen to one juz’ of murattal through MP3*” (P6, Personal Communication, January 2025). Participants also described using visual aids to reinforce memorization. Specifically, “*The use of a kaleidoscope is beneficial, particularly when certain verses of the memorization feel unclear*” (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024).

Similarly important, maintaining physical well-being was described as supporting memorization continuity. Consequently, individuals emphasized the significance of engaging in activities such as playing football or jogging to achieve this balance. “*I need occasional refreshment through physical activities such as playing football or jogging*” (P1, Personal Communication, October 2024). Participants also described maintaining spiritual intention as supporting memorization persistence. Moreover, they highlighted the importance of perceiving *murāja’ah* not as a burden but as a beneficial practice. “*I try not to perceive murāja’ah as a burden. It is a barakah task*” (P4, Personal Communication, November 2024).

Participants perceived these adaptive responses as critical mechanisms that enabled them to maintain, reinforce, and extend their memorization capabilities even in the face of persistent and evolving challenges.

Essential Structure of Experiencing Challenges and Sustaining Memorization

Taken together, participants experienced sustaining *Mutqin* Qur’anic memorization as involving continuous negotiation between personal conditions, institutional responsibilities, and adaptive responses. Challenges were experienced as inherent aspects of sustaining memorization, while adaptive practices enabled participants to maintain memorization stability over time. Sustaining *Mutqin* memorization was experienced not as a static achievement but as an ongoing process requiring persistence, adjustment, and continuous engagement with the Qur’an.

This study explored the lived experiences of TQ teachers in achieving, sustaining, and navigating challenges associated with *Mutqin* Qur’anic memorization within institutional contexts. The findings demonstrate that *Mutqin* memorization is not a static accomplishment but a dynamic, intentional, and continuously regulated process involving spiritual preparation, cognitive encoding, structured revision, and adaptive regulation across professional

environments. Viewed through the combined frameworks of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) and Spaced Repetition (SR), *Mutqin* memorization emerges as a holistic learning practice that integrates motivational, cognitive, behavioral, and spiritual dimensions. This confirms that memorization quality is not solely determined by repetition intensity but by learners' capacity to regulate motivation, strategies, and environmental conditions over time (Inzlicht et al., 2021; Moilanen, 2024; Zimmerman, 2002).

The first major finding reveals that achieving *Mutqin* memorization begins with spiritual intentionality, expressed through reverence (*adab*), ablution, and *Sunnah* prayer prior to memorization. Within the SRL framework, this reflects the forethought phase, where learners establish motivational beliefs and task value before engaging in learning activities (Zimmerman, 2002). Religious intentionality functions as a motivational anchor that transforms memorization from a mechanical task into a meaningful spiritual responsibility. Previous research confirms that religious commitment enhances self-control, emotional regulation, and goal persistence by aligning learning behavior with transcendent meaning (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). Similarly, spiritual practices such as prayer and reflection enhance concentration and psychological readiness, strengthening cognitive engagement and learning stability (Alsuhaيمي & Atallah, 2025; Izzah, 2024). These findings align with attribution theory, which suggests that internal motivational orientation strengthens persistence and adaptive learning behavior (Malle, 2022; Weiner, 1985).

The findings further indicate that participants prioritized recitational accuracy through *tashhīh* and *tahsīn* as foundational preparation before memorization. This reflects strategic planning within the SRL forethought phase, where learners select appropriate strategies to achieve desired learning outcomes (Zimmerman, 2002). Mastery of *tajwid* and articulation ensures accurate encoding, preventing the consolidation of incorrect phonological patterns. Prior research confirms that improper articulation leads to persistent memorization errors that become difficult to correct later (Ayyusufi et al., 2022; Mosankore & Ahmad, 2024). Participants' use of word-by-word *mushaf* and semantic engagement reflects deeper cognitive processing. Cognitive neuroscience research demonstrates that semantic encoding strengthens memory consolidation by integrating linguistic meaning with contextual memory representations (Mikhailova et al., 2021). Similarly, handwriting practices strengthen memory by activating sensorimotor pathways, reinforcing neural connections between visual and verbal processing (Ito et al., 2020; James, 2017). These findings support classical and contemporary memory theories emphasizing that accurate encoding is essential for durable long-term retention (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968; Zhang & Hupbach, 2023).

Systematic repetition emerged as a central mechanism for achieving memorization stability. Participants described repeating verses twenty to thirty times before achieving stable recall, reflecting deliberate regulatory control over memorization behavior. This aligns strongly with Spaced Repetition theory, which demonstrates that repeated retrieval strengthens neural consolidation and reduces forgetting (Cepeda et al., 2006; Ebbinghaus, 1913). Spaced retrieval has consistently been shown to enhance retention stability across domains (Karpicke & Bauernschmidt, 2011; Latimier et al., 2021). Importantly, repetition in this study was not mechanical but intentionally regulated. Research on metacognitive control suggests that structured repetition helps learners calibrate perceived and actual learning, preventing premature overconfidence in memorization (Toppino & Pagano, 2021). This confirms that *Mutqin* memorization reflects regulated repetition rather than passive rehearsal.

Temporal regulation also emerged as a significant dimension of memorization practice. Participants consistently preferred memorization during spiritually and cognitively optimal periods, particularly after *Tabajjud* prayer and during quiet evening hours. Within the SRL framework, this reflects environmental structuring, where learners regulate external conditions

to optimize performance (Zimmerman, 2002). Physiological research shows that night prayer and early waking are associated with increased melatonin levels, which enhance cognitive clarity and emotional calmness (Heidari et al., 2024). Similarly, cognitive performance fluctuates across daily cycles, with improved attention and executive function during optimal physiological states (Allen et al., 2008; Staneva et al., 2025). Engaging in cognitively demanding tasks during optimal periods enhances sustained performance and learning efficiency (Peetz et al., 2025). These findings demonstrate that participants actively regulated both internal and environmental conditions to support memorization stability.

Structured *murāja'ah* patterns further illustrate advanced self-regulatory competence. Participants organized revision into tiered cycles involving short-term, mid-term, and long-term revision intervals. This reflects the spacing effect, where distributed review strengthens long-term retention and prevents memory decay (Cepeda et al., 2006; Latimier et al., 2021). Spaced repetition strengthens synaptic reinforcement and improves retrieval accuracy (Abbas et al., 2023). This structured revision system reflects strategic behavioral regulation, ensuring that memorization remains stable across extended timeframes. Historical and educational research confirms that structured revision has long been essential for preserving complex knowledge systems (Delaine, 2022; Shemesh, 2021), including religious texts.

Following *sanad* certification, sustaining memorization required continuous *murāja'ah* integrated within professional routines. Participants described structured daily *kebatam* targets and distributed revision sessions. This reflects the performance phase of SRL, where learners regulate behavior to sustain performance over time (Zimmerman, 2002). Distributed practice reduces cognitive overload and enhances retention stability (Van Hoof et al., 2021). Without systematic review, retention declines rapidly due to natural forgetting processes (Bell et al., 2008). These findings confirm that sustaining *Mutqin* memorization requires continuous behavioral regulation rather than relying solely on initial mastery.

Participants also demonstrated adaptive regulatory strategies within institutional environments, including early-morning revision, micro-revision during work breaks, and post-work memorization completion. These behaviors reflect behavioral flexibility and strategic self-control (Zimmerman, 2002), which are essential for maintaining learning under real-world constraints (Kim et al., 2023). Help-seeking practices, such as peer testing, functioned as external feedback mechanisms supporting metacognitive monitoring (Chen & Son, 2024). Kämmer et al. (2020) argue that self-monitoring strategies, such as repetition and visual marking, enable learners to identify unstable memorization areas and adjust their strategies accordingly. These findings demonstrate that sustaining memorization requires continuous monitoring and adaptive regulation.

The findings also reveal that sustaining memorization involved navigating personal challenges, including fatigue, emotional fluctuations, and motivational variability. These experiences reflect the self-reflection phase of SRL, where learners evaluate performance and identify factors affecting learning outcomes (Zimmerman, 2002). Attribution theory suggests that identifying internal causes of learning difficulty enables adaptive strategy adjustment (Malle, 2022; Weiner, 1985). Emotional instability and fatigue reduce cognitive resources and impair sustained attention (Rossi & Di Stefano, 2024). However, recognizing these challenges enables learners to develop compensatory regulatory strategies.

Institutional constraints also emerged as significant barriers, including heavy workloads, administrative duties, and unpredictable schedules. These external constraints function as environmental barriers limiting learning continuity (Alvarez et al., 2020). Institutional environments play a critical role in shaping teacher competence and learning sustainability (Emery et al., 2021). The absence of institutional support places responsibility for memorization maintenance entirely on individual teachers. Similar findings have been reported in Qur'anic

education contexts, where sustaining memorization often relies on personal discipline rather than structured institutional support (Husnaini et al., 2022; Zulkifli & Hj. Rofie, 2024).

Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated adaptive self-regulatory responses, including time management, strategy adjustment, auditory reinforcement, and spiritual reframing. These responses reflect self-reaction processes, where learners adjust strategies based on self-evaluation (Zimmerman, 2002). Effective self-regulated learners demonstrate flexibility in adjusting goals and strategies to maintain performance (Kim et al., 2023). Listening to *murattal* recordings, combined with visual cues, supported retention through multimodal reinforcement. This approach aligns with findings by Matusz et al. (2015), who demonstrated that multimodal learning enhances memory consolidation.

Participants also managed their memorization processes by prioritizing well-being, which encompassed physical exercise and emotional regulation strategies. Engaging in physical activity not only bolsters cognitive abilities but also increases motivation and persistence in learning (Ma et al., 2025; Tilp et al., 2020). According to Nichols (2025), maintaining emotional well-being is crucial for sustaining motivation and encouraging active participation in learning tasks. These insights highlight that effective memorization relies on regulating both cognitive functions and physiological states to optimize learning outcomes.

From an Islamic educational perspective, *Mutqin* memorization exemplifies individual achievement and a key part of professional competence crucial for preserving the Qur'anic text's authenticity. Teachers are vital transmitters of Qur'anic knowledge, and research shows that teacher competence broadly impacts educational quality. Specifically, studies such as Yao et al. (2024) highlight the significant role that teacher skills and knowledge play in shaping effective learning environments. Furthermore, teacher competence has been consistently recognized as a critical determinant of instructional quality and the long-term sustainability of educational programs (Looney, 2011). Thus, maintaining *Mutqin* memorization is essential to teacher professionalism, emphasizing the need for well-trained educators dedicated to Qur'anic and pedagogical integrity.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that *Mutqin* memorization is best understood as a dynamic self-regulated learning process integrating spiritual motivation, cognitive strategy, structured revision, and adaptive regulation. The integration of SRL and SR frameworks provides a comprehensive explanation of how *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization is achieved and sustained across complex institutional contexts. These findings extend existing research by demonstrating that *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization is not merely a cognitive process but a holistic regulatory practice integrating spiritual, cognitive, and professional dimensions.

Finally, these findings highlight important implications for Islamic educational institutions. Supporting memorization maintenance requires institutional recognition of *muraja'ah* as a professional responsibility. Providing structured time, institutional support, and ongoing professional development opportunities is essential for enhancing teacher competence. These elements collectively contribute to the long-term sustainability of Qur'anic transmission by equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge. Institutional support, in particular, plays a vital role in maintaining professional standards and ensuring high-quality education (Wang et al., 2025). Strengthening this support system for memorization practices

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that achieving and sustaining *Mutqin* Qur'anic memorization among TQ teachers is a dynamic, lifelong process shaped by spiritual intentionality, strategic memorization practices, structured *muraja'ab*, and adaptive self-regulation within institutional contexts. Using a phenomenological approach grounded in Self-Regulated Learning and Spaced Repetition frameworks, the study shows that *Mutqin* memorization depends on deliberate preparation, systematic repetition, distributed revision, and flexible regulatory strategies, allowing educators to balance memorization with professional responsibilities. Despite encountering personal and institutional challenges, TQ teachers demonstrated regulatory resilience by adjusting revision intensity, managing time effectively, and maintaining spiritual motivation, ensuring memorization stability over time. These findings establish *Mutqin* memorization as a fundamental aspect of teacher professionalism and quality assurance in Islamic education, beyond individual religious achievement. Accordingly, Islamic educational institutions should recognize *muraja'ab* as an essential component of professional practice and provide structural support, protected time, and professional development opportunities to sustain teachers' memorization competence and ensure the continuity, accuracy, and integrity of Qur'anic transmission across generations.

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