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Nightly Memorization Routine: Strengthening Students' Learning Habits through the Qism al-Taḥfīẓ Program at Dalwa Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

This community engagement program examined the implementation of a nightly memorization routine organized by Qism al-Taḥfīẓ at Dalwa Islamic Boarding School as a structured strategy for strengthening students' learning habits. The program involved 200 students from Ibtidā'iyyah Levels 2 to 4 selected through random sampling. Memorization materials were differentiated according to educational level. Level 2 students memorized *Mufradāt al-Af'āl*, *Mufradāt al-Asmā'*, *Matn al-Ājurrūmiyyah*, and selected Hadith; Level 3 students focused on *al-Amtsilah al-Taṣrīfiyyah*, selected Hadith, and *ʿIbārah Qaṣīrah*; while Level 4 students memorized *Naẓm al-Maqṣūd* and *al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawiyyah*. The program employed a structured educational intervention supported by pre- and post-program evaluation, observation, and institutional memorization records. The findings indicate that the nightly routine transformed memorization from an occasional academic obligation into a more stable and institutionally supported learning practice. Regular scheduling, progressive memorization targets, repetition, supervision, memorization submission, and correction encouraged greater consistency, discipline, responsibility, and engagement among students. The differentiated materials also created a progressive learning pathway from basic vocabulary and grammar to morphology, functional expressions, versified linguistic knowledge, and extended religious texts. The program demonstrates that traditional pesantren memorization can be strengthened through contemporary principles of habit formation, retrieval practice, and structured learning. Its main contribution lies in positioning nightly memorization not merely as a means of retaining texts but as an institutional mechanism for cultivating sustainable learning habits within the pesantren environment.

Kata Kunci:
Disiplin Belajar, Hafalan, Pembentukan Kebiasaan, Pesantren, Retrieval Practice.

Abstrak

Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini mengkaji pelaksanaan rutinitas hafalan malam yang dikelola oleh Qism al-Taḥfīẓ di Pondok Pesantren Dalwa sebagai strategi terstruktur untuk memperkuat kebiasaan belajar santri. Program melibatkan 200 santri tingkat Ibtidā'iyyah kelas 2 sampai kelas 4 yang dipilih melalui *random sampling*. Materi hafalan dibedakan sesuai tingkat pendidikan. Santri kelas 2 menghafalkan *Mufradāt al-Af'āl*, *Mufradāt al-Asmā'*, *Matn al-Ājurrūmiyyah*, dan hadis pilihan; kelas 3 menghafalkan *al-Amtsilah al-Taṣrīfiyyah*, hadis pilihan, dan *ʿIbārah Qaṣīrah*; sedangkan kelas 4 menghafalkan *Naẓm al-Maqṣūd* dan *al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawiyyah*. Program dilaksanakan melalui intervensi pendidikan terstruktur yang didukung evaluasi sebelum dan sesudah kegiatan, observasi, serta catatan hafalan institusional. Hasil program menunjukkan bahwa rutinitas hafalan malam

mampu mengubah hafalan dari kewajiban akademik yang bersifat sesekali menjadi praktik belajar yang lebih stabil dan didukung secara institusional. Penjadwalan yang teratur, target hafalan yang progresif, pengulangan, pengawasan, penyetoran, dan koreksi mendorong peningkatan konsistensi, kedisiplinan, tanggung jawab, dan keterlibatan santri dalam belajar. Diferensiasi materi juga membentuk jalur pembelajaran progresif, mulai dari kosakata dan gramatika dasar menuju morfologi, ungkapan fungsional, pengetahuan kebahasaan berbentuk nazam, dan teks keagamaan yang lebih panjang. Program ini menunjukkan bahwa tradisi hafalan pesantren dapat diperkuat melalui prinsip pembentukan kebiasaan, *retrieval practice*, dan pembelajaran terstruktur. Kontribusi utamanya adalah menempatkan hafalan malam bukan sekadar sebagai sarana mengingat teks, tetapi sebagai mekanisme institusional untuk membangun kebiasaan belajar santri yang berkelanjutan.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools, commonly known as pesantren, represent a distinctive educational environment in which learning extends beyond formal classroom hours and becomes embedded in students' daily lives. Unlike conventional schools, pesantren integrate academic learning, religious practices, social interaction, discipline, and communal routines within a residential educational setting. This integrated environment allows educational values to be cultivated not only through direct instruction but also through repeated practices, institutional traditions, and structured daily activities. Recent studies have highlighted that pesantren continue to maintain their distinctive educational identity while adapting their learning systems to contemporary educational demands, making routine-based learning an important component of their pedagogical culture (Hanafi et al., 2021; Arif et al., 2024). At the same time, the intensive nature of boarding-school life also requires students to manage multiple academic, religious, and institutional responsibilities, which may affect their consistency in maintaining productive learning behaviors (Yusuf, 2022).

One of the educational characteristics frequently associated with pesantren is the cultivation of learning through repetition and habituation. Activities performed regularly at predetermined times can gradually become part of students' behavioral patterns rather than remaining temporary academic obligations. From the perspective of habit theory, habits develop when behaviors are repeatedly performed in relatively stable contexts until contextual cues begin to facilitate increasingly automatic responses (Wood & Rünger, 2016). More recent research has strengthened this proposition by demonstrating that stable contexts support behavioral automaticity and goal attainment during intentional habit formation (Stojanovic et al., 2022). Verplanken and Orbell (2022) similarly emphasize that repeated behavior, contextual consistency, and cue-response associations are central mechanisms in the development of habitual behavior. A recent systematic review further confirms that habit formation does not occur instantly but develops progressively through repeated performance over time, with consistency and contextual stability playing important roles in this process (Singh et al., 2024).

These perspectives are particularly relevant to learning habits. Effective learning does not depend exclusively on students' cognitive abilities but also on whether productive learning behaviors can be sustained consistently. Stojanovic et al. (2021) found that habit-specific self-efficacy contributes to the automatization of repeated behavior, suggesting that repeated learning practices

can gradually require less motivational negotiation when they become established habits. Similarly, David et al. (2024) demonstrate that students' study behaviors are strongly influenced by existing habits and structured routines. Their findings show that even when students understand which learning strategies are effective, they do not necessarily apply them consistently unless those strategies become integrated into their regular learning behavior. Therefore, educational institutions should not merely tell students to study consistently but should create environments, schedules, cues, supervision, and repeated opportunities through which effective study practices can become habitual.

Memorization can become particularly meaningful when understood through contemporary cognitive perspectives rather than simply as mechanical repetition. Cognitive research distinguishes passive rereading from active retrieval, in which learners deliberately attempt to recall previously learned information from memory. Retrieval practice has consistently been recognized as an effective strategy for strengthening learning and long-term retention (McDermott, 2021). Greving and Richter (2022), for example, demonstrated that recall-oriented activities such as short-answer retrieval can generate meaningful learning benefits in authentic educational contexts. A meta-analytic review by Latimier et al. (2021) also indicates that spacing retrieval episodes across time can improve retention, while Lyle et al. (2022) found that spaced retrieval creates productive cognitive difficulty that can strengthen learning. These findings suggest that repeatedly asking students to recall memorized material is educationally different from simply asking them to reread the same material every night.

The effectiveness of retrieval, however, is influenced by the way it is organized. Li et al. (2024) found that retrieval practice combined with corrective feedback produced stronger vocabulary-learning outcomes than repeated study without equivalent retrieval and feedback opportunities. Classroom evidence also indicates that the effects of retrieval-based learning may vary according to learning context, task format, feedback, and the quality of initial learning (Jakobsson et al., 2024; Bego et al., 2024). Bego et al. (2024), in particular, reported a positive overall effect of spaced retrieval across multiple authentic courses while cautioning that its effectiveness is influenced by instructional design. This evidence is important for structured memorization programs because the educational value of memorization is likely to increase when repetition is accompanied by scheduled recall, supervision, correction, evaluation, and opportunities to revisit material that has not yet been mastered.

Within Islamic educational settings, structured memorization has long occupied an important pedagogical position, particularly in programs related to Qur'anic memorization. Although the nightly memorization routine examined in the present community engagement program should not be reduced exclusively to Qur'anic memorization, contemporary tahfiz studies provide relevant insights into how structured memorization can be institutionally organized. Saragih et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of management, learning targets, and supervision in tahfiz learning. Rohmawati and Az Zafi (2021) similarly identify systematic methods and repeated practice as important components of memorization instruction, while Mulyani and Rindaningsih (2021) demonstrate that curriculum management contributes to the organization and continuity of tahfiz learning. These studies suggest that memorization becomes more sustainable when it is supported by clear institutional structures rather than being left entirely to individual student initiative.

Other studies reinforce the importance of scheduling, repetition, memorization deposits, assessment, and monitoring. Ma'rifah et al. (2023) found that tahfiz learning in an Islamic boarding-school environment involved organized learning stages, repeated memorization, individual memorization submission, evaluation, and teacher supervision. Likewise, Supriadi et al. (2022) underline the importance of learning management in improving the quality of tahfiz programs. More recent evidence by Anam et al. (2025) indicates that learning discipline is significantly associated with students' Qur'anic memorization achievement, particularly through students' seriousness, attendance, adherence to learning rules, and time management. These findings shift attention from memorization as an isolated cognitive activity toward memorization as a disciplined and institutionally supported learning practice.

Recent literature also demonstrates that memorization programs face challenges when students experience fatigue, inconsistent motivation, limited monitoring, competing academic activities, or difficulties in managing time. A systematic review by Al Arifi et al. (2026) categorizes challenges in Qur'anic memorization into student-related, teacher-related, curricular, time-management, and institutional dimensions. Such findings indicate that requiring students to memorize material without providing an organized support system may not automatically generate productive learning habits. Conversely, systematic guidance, repetition, supervision, and continuous evaluation can help students maintain their memorization practices. Mukhammad and Bon (2026) further report a meaningful relationship between organized Qur'anic memorization learning and the quality of students' memorization, highlighting the importance of the learning process rather than merely the amount of material memorized.

This perspective provides an important foundation for understanding the role of Qism al-Taḥfīẓ at Dalwa Islamic Boarding School. The nightly memorization routine is not merely an additional task assigned after formal learning hours. It can be conceptualized as an institutional mechanism for transforming repeated learning behavior into a stable study habit. By allocating a regular period every night for memorization, establishing materials or targets to be memorized, requiring students to prepare their memorization, and supervising their progress, the program creates the essential conditions of repetition, contextual stability, retrieval, accountability, and feedback. In this sense, Qism al-Taḥfīẓ serves not only as a unit responsible for memorization but also as an institutional facilitator of students' learning discipline and habitual study practices. This approach corresponds with evidence showing that stable behavioral contexts facilitate automaticity and goal attainment and that effective study habits require environments that consistently support their performance (Stojanovic et al., 2022; David et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, an important gap remains in the existing literature. Most studies of memorization in Islamic educational institutions have concentrated on Qur'anic memorization methods, tahfiz curriculum management, learning outcomes, or specific techniques for increasing memorization quality (Saragih et al., 2021; Rohmawati & Az Zafi, 2021; Ma'rifah et al., 2023; Anam et al., 2025; Al Arifi et al., 2026). Meanwhile, studies on habit formation and retrieval practice have largely been conducted in general educational or psychological contexts rather than within the distinctive residential learning ecology of pesantren. Consequently, limited attention has been given to nightly memorization as a routine-based community engagement strategy that intentionally connects institutional supervision, repeated recall, learning discipline, and habit formation within everyday pesantren life. This gap is particularly relevant because the educational contribution of a

memorization program may extend beyond students' ability to reproduce specific materials and include the development of consistency, responsibility, self-regulation, and sustained learning habits.

Accordingly, this community engagement program focuses on the implementation of the Nightly Memorization Routine through Qism al-Taḥfīẓ at Dalwa Islamic Boarding School as a structured effort to strengthen students' learning habits. Rather than treating memorization solely as an outcome, the program emphasizes the process through which students repeatedly prepare, memorize, recall, submit, and maintain learning materials within a consistent nightly schedule. The program therefore seeks to examine how the routine can foster consistency in learning, strengthen students' responsibility toward memorization targets, and encourage the development of more disciplined study behavior. More specifically, the program addresses two questions: (1) How can a structured nightly memorization routine be implemented through Qism al-Taḥfīẓ to strengthen students' learning habits? and (2) What changes in students' consistency, discipline, and engagement with memorization are observed following the implementation of the routine? The program is expected to provide a practical model of community-based educational assistance that integrates the traditional memorization culture of pesantren with contemporary perspectives on habit formation and memory-based learning.

METHOD

Program Design

This community engagement program employed a structured educational intervention with a one-group pretest–posttest evaluation design to examine changes in students' learning habits before and after their participation in the nightly memorization routine. The approach was selected because the program was primarily intended to strengthen an existing educational practice at Dalwa Islamic Boarding School rather than to create an artificial experimental setting. The pretest–posttest procedure enabled the program team to establish an initial description of students' learning habits and compare it with their condition following systematic participation in the program. Such an approach is appropriate for evaluating educational interventions when the same group of participants is assessed before and after program implementation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The quantitative evaluation was complemented by structured observation and institutional memorization records maintained during the program. This combination was intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of behavioral changes, particularly because learning habits cannot be represented exclusively by test scores. Observable indicators such as punctuality, consistency in attending memorization sessions, preparedness, completion of memorization targets, willingness to repeat previously memorized materials, and responsibility for submitting memorization were therefore incorporated into the evaluation.

Setting and Participants

The program was conducted at Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, an Islamic residential educational institution in which students participate in formal learning as well as structured religious and academic activities throughout the day. The nightly memorization routine was organized in coordination with Qism al-Taḥfīẓ, the institutional division responsible for supervising students' memorization activities.

The target population consisted of students from Ibtidā'iyyah Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4 (2 Ibt–4 Ibt). These three levels were selected because the students had already experienced the basic

learning culture of the pesantren while still requiring systematic reinforcement of independent learning discipline and memorization habits.

A total of 200 students were included as participants. Participants were selected using random sampling from eligible students enrolled in the three Ibtidā'iyyah levels. The use of random selection was intended to provide students within the target population with an opportunity to participate without selection being determined primarily by previous memorization achievement, academic performance, or perceived learning discipline. The final group therefore represented students with varying levels of memorization ability and learning consistency.

Nightly Memorization Intervention

The intervention centered on a nightly memorization routine conducted as part of the students' regular pesantren schedule. Rather than introducing memorization as an occasional activity, the program emphasized repeated engagement at a relatively stable time and within a consistent institutional environment. This structure was intended to transform memorization from a task that depended largely on individual motivation into a predictable learning routine supported by environmental cues, peer participation, and institutional supervision.

The materials and memorization targets followed the learning assignments established by Qism al-Taḥfīẓ according to the students' respective educational levels. Students were expected to prepare the assigned material, memorize it independently or through repeated recitation, retrieve it without continuously referring to the source material, and complete the required memorization submission. Students who had not yet reached the expected level were encouraged to repeat and improve their memorization rather than simply proceed to new material.

The implementation followed four interconnected stages. First, preparation and target setting were conducted by communicating the memorization materials and expected targets to the students. Second, students participated in the nightly memorization session, during which they repeatedly studied and recalled the assigned materials. Third, memorization monitoring and submission were undertaken to examine students' preparedness and consistency. Fourth, reinforcement and repetition were provided for material that had not yet been mastered.

These stages positioned Qism al-Taḥfīẓ not merely as an administrative unit but as an active facilitator of learning habits. Supervisors encouraged punctual participation, monitored students who experienced difficulty maintaining the routine, and reinforced the principle that memorization should be practiced consistently rather than only immediately before evaluation. The repetitive and contextually stable nature of the routine was consistent with habit-formation research indicating that repeated behavior in relatively stable contexts contributes to behavioral automaticity (Stojanovic et al., 2022).

Data Collection

Data were collected using three complementary sources: a learning-habit questionnaire, structured observation, and memorization-monitoring records.

The learning-habit questionnaire was administered before and after the program. It focused on four dimensions directly related to the objectives of the intervention: learning consistency, discipline, responsibility, and engagement in memorization. The indicators included students' regularity in allocating time for memorization, punctuality in attending scheduled activities, willingness to repeat learning materials, preparedness before memorization submission, persistence when encountering difficult materials, and responsibility for completing assigned targets. Responses

were recorded using a Likert-type response format to enable quantitative comparison between pre-intervention and post-intervention conditions.

Structured observation was carried out during the nightly sessions to capture behaviors that could not be adequately represented through self-reported responses. The observation focused particularly on students' attendance, punctuality, preparedness, active participation, concentration during memorization, repetition of material, and completion of the scheduled activity. Observational evidence was used to support the interpretation of changes identified through the questionnaire.

In addition, Qism al-Taḥfīẓ memorization records were examined as institutional evidence of students' participation and progress. These records provided information regarding the regularity of memorization submissions, completion of assigned targets, and students who required repetition or additional assistance. The use of multiple data sources was intended to prevent the evaluation from relying solely on students' subjective perceptions.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the learning-habit questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis included the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum scores, and percentage distributions to describe students' learning habits before and after the nightly memorization intervention.

Pretest and posttest scores were subsequently compared to determine the direction and magnitude of change following participation in the program. A paired-samples statistical test was used because measurements were obtained from the same participants at two different points in time. Where the assumptions of parametric analysis were satisfied, a paired-samples t-test was applied. Statistical significance was determined at the $p < .05$ level. In addition to statistical significance, the magnitude of improvement was considered to avoid interpreting small numerical differences as educationally meaningful.

Observation data and memorization records were analyzed descriptively by identifying recurring patterns related to students' consistency, punctuality, preparedness, participation, and responsibility. These findings were subsequently compared with the quantitative results. Agreement between questionnaire scores, observed behaviors, and institutional records was used to strengthen the interpretation of the program outcomes.

Ethical Considerations

The program was conducted within the established educational activities of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School and in coordination with the relevant institutional authorities and Qism al-Taḥfīẓ. Participation in the evaluation component was handled with attention to students' privacy and educational welfare. Students were informed that the collected information was intended to evaluate and improve the nightly memorization program rather than to impose additional academic punishment or determine their formal academic ranking.

Participant identities were not reported in the analysis. Individual responses, observation records, and memorization data were treated confidentially and presented only in aggregated form. Participation or performance in the evaluation did not alter students' institutional rights or access to educational activities. Particular attention was also given to the educational status of younger participants by ensuring that data collection remained consistent with institutional permission and established procedures for working with students in the pesantren environment.

Through these procedures, the program sought not only to evaluate whether students memorized more material, but more importantly to examine whether repeated nightly memorization supported the development of more consistent, disciplined, responsible, and sustainable learning habits among students.

RESULT AND CONCLUSION

Implementation of the Nightly Memorization Routine

The nightly memorization program involved 200 students from Ibtidā'iyyah Levels 2 to 4 who were selected through random sampling. The program was implemented as a regular component of the students' evening learning activities under the supervision of Qism al-Taḥfīẓ at Dalwa Islamic Boarding School. Unlike occasional memorization assignments that are completed primarily in preparation for examinations, the program placed memorization within a fixed and recurring period of students' daily life. Consequently, memorization became an organized institutional routine rather than an activity that depended entirely on individual initiative.

The most distinctive characteristic of the program was the differentiation of memorization materials according to students' educational levels. The materials did not consist of one uniform text for all participants. Instead, each level received content corresponding to its linguistic and religious learning objectives. At Level 2, memorization concentrated on fundamental Arabic vocabulary, basic Arabic grammar, and Hadith. At Level 3, students moved toward Arabic morphological patterns, Hadith, and functional short expressions. At Level 4, the memorization content became more structurally and textually demanding through *Naẓm al-Maqṣūd* and *al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawiyyah*. This configuration is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Memorization Materials across Ibtidā'iyyah Levels

Level	Memorization Materials	Primary Learning Orientation
Ibtidā'iyyah Level 2	*Mufradāt al-Afʿāl*	Basic Arabic verbs and productive vocabulary
Ibtidā'iyyah Level 2	*Mufradāt al-Asmā'*	Basic Arabic nouns and lexical enrichment
Ibtidā'iyyah Level 2	*Matn al-Ājurrūmiyyah*	Foundations of Arabic syntax (*naḥw*)
Ibtidā'iyyah Level 2	Selected Hadith	Religious knowledge and textual retention
Ibtidā'iyyah Level 3	*al-Amtsilah al-Taṣrīfiyyah*	Arabic morphology and word-pattern transformation
Ibtidā'iyyah Level 3	Selected Hadith	Religious knowledge and textual retention
Ibtidā'iyyah Level 3	*ʿIbārah Qaṣīrah*	Functional Arabic expressions and communicative readiness
Ibtidā'iyyah Level 4	*Naẓm al-Maqṣūd*	Advanced foundational morphology through versified text
Ibtidā'iyyah Level 4	*al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawiyyah*	Hadith memorization and Islamic knowledge

The results reveal an important pedagogical feature of the program: nightly memorization at Dalwa was progressive rather than repetitive in content. Students did not simply memorize larger quantities of similar material as they moved from one level to another. Instead, the nature of what they memorized gradually shifted from lexical items toward grammatical formulations, morphological systems, functional expressions, versified linguistic rules, and complete religious texts. This progression indicates that memorization functioned as a supporting mechanism across several domains of the pesantren curriculum.

From Occasional Memorization to a Stable Learning Routine

A central result of the program was the institutionalization of memorization within a predictable nightly schedule. The significance of this structure lies not merely in the number of materials students were required to memorize, but in the repetition of the **act of learning itself**. Every night, students encountered a similar behavioral sequence: preparing the assigned material, reading and repeating it, attempting to recall it without reference to the text, reviewing difficult parts, and preparing themselves for monitoring or submission.

From the perspective of habit formation, this regularity is educationally important. Stojanovic et al. (2022) found that repeating behavior within stable contexts was associated with greater automaticity and improved goal attainment. Their findings suggest that consistency of time and context can make intended behavior progressively easier to initiate. In a learning context, David et al. (2024) similarly showed that students often struggle to transform intentions into consistent study behavior when external structure is absent, while structured routines and accountability can facilitate more regular study practices.

The Dalwa program can therefore be understood as an example of institutionally scaffolded habit formation. Students were not expected to independently decide each evening whether they wished to memorize. The pesantren environment predetermined the activity, time, expectations, and supervisory structure. This reduces dependence on fluctuating motivation and makes memorization part of the rhythm of everyday student life.

This finding is particularly relevant to residential education. In a pesantren, the institution has access not only to classroom instruction but also to students' broader daily schedules. Such a context enables educational interventions to extend beyond formal teaching periods. Recent evidence from tahfiz boarding-school settings similarly indicates that scheduled memorization and review sessions, when supported by institutional supervision, can facilitate consistency and target achievement. Nabila et al. (2026), for example, describe a schedule-routine model in which memorization, review, and institutional supervision are systematically distributed across students' daily activities.

Level 2: Building a Lexical and Grammatical Foundation

For Level 2 students, the memorization program incorporated *Mufradāt al-Afʿāl*, *Mufradāt al-Asmā'*, *Matn al-Ājurrūmiyyah*, and selected Hadith. This combination represents the foundational stage of the program because it connects three essential forms of knowledge: vocabulary, grammatical concepts, and religious texts.

The memorization of *Mufradāt al-Afʿāl* and *Mufradāt al-Asmā'* provides students with an accessible lexical repertoire. Separating verbs and nouns is pedagogically meaningful in Arabic because students need to recognize not only lexical meaning but also the grammatical and morphological behavior of different word classes. At this level, memorization serves as an initial lexical storage mechanism. Repeated retrieval can subsequently make those words more readily accessible during reading, sentence construction, and oral communication.

Contemporary cognitive research strongly supports the distinction between repeatedly seeing information and repeatedly retrieving it. McDermott (2021) concludes that practicing retrieval after initial learning can slow forgetting and strengthen later accessibility of learned information across different types of material and learners. Carpenter et al. (2022) likewise identify retrieval practice and spacing as two of the most consistently supported strategies for durable

learning. Thus, the nightly structure of the Dalwa program potentially provides an advantage over one-time intensive memorization because previously encountered vocabulary can be retrieved repeatedly across successive learning occasions.

The inclusion of *Matn al-Ājurrūmiyyah* adds a different dimension. Students are not merely memorizing lexical units but internalizing concise formulations of foundational Arabic syntax. Recent community-service research involving *al-Ājurrūmiyyah* reports that structured instruction and intensive assistance can improve novice learners' understanding of basic Arabic grammar and their ability to engage with Arabic texts. This supports the relevance of introducing *al-Ājurrūmiyyah* during the foundational stage, although memorizing the matn should ultimately be connected with examples and practical grammatical analysis.

Hadith memorization further broadens the function of the nightly routine. It prevents the program from becoming exclusively linguistic and maintains the classical pesantren integration between Arabic learning and Islamic knowledge. In this sense, students memorize Arabic not only because it is a language to be analyzed but also because it serves as the medium through which foundational Islamic texts are transmitted.

Level 3: From Vocabulary to Morphological Patterns and Functional Expressions

The Level 3 memorization materials consisted of *al-Amtsilah al-Taṣrīfiyyah*, selected Hadith, and *ʿIbārah Qaṣīrah*. Compared with Level 2, this stage represents a transition from storing individual lexical items and basic grammatical propositions toward recognizing patterns and retrieving larger meaningful linguistic units.

The inclusion of *al-Amtsilah al-Taṣrīfiyyah* is particularly significant because Arabic morphology requires students to recognize systematic transformations of lexical roots through different patterns. The text introduces students to *taṣrīf iṣṭilāḥī* and *taṣrīf lughawī*, enabling them to repeatedly encounter relationships among root forms, patterns, tense, participles, verbal nouns, and other morphological derivatives. Research on the text confirms that its instructional orientation centers on understanding vocabulary transformation according to Arabic morphological patterns.

Nevertheless, the evidence also provides an important caution. Ababil and Yakin (2024) found only a very weak and statistically non-significant relationship between studying *al-Amtsilah al-Taṣrīfiyyah* and students' ability to transform Arabic vocabulary in their particular setting. This finding is valuable for interpreting the Dalwa program because it suggests that memorization should not be treated as sufficient by itself. Memorized morphological paradigms need to be followed by manipulation of unfamiliar words, sentence construction, recognition of forms in authentic texts, and application of the patterns in actual language tasks.

The presence of *ʿIbārah Qaṣīrah* at Level 3 partially addresses this issue because it introduces memorization at the phrase level. Instead of recalling isolated words, students retain short functional expressions that can potentially be retrieved directly during communication. A 2025 study in an Islamic boarding-school context found that short-phrase memorization was associated with improved Arabic speaking performance, including fluency, accuracy, participation, and confidence. Although the setting and participants differ from the present program, the study reinforces the pedagogical potential of moving from isolated vocabulary toward meaningful linguistic chunks.

This transition marks an important curricular progression within the Dalwa routine: word → pattern → phrase → use

At the earlier stage, students accumulate verbs and nouns. At Level 3, they begin to recognize how words change morphologically and how combinations of words function as readily retrievable expressions. The nightly memorization routine therefore has the potential to function as a bridge between declarative linguistic knowledge and increasingly automatic language access.

Level 4: Memorizing Structured Knowledge through Naẓm and Hadith

At Level 4, the memorization content becomes more demanding through *Naẓm al-Maqṣūd* and *al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawiyyah*. This stage differs from the previous levels because students are required to retain longer, denser, and conceptually interconnected texts.

Naẓm al-Maqṣūd represents the traditional pedagogical practice of organizing linguistic knowledge into versified form. In pesantren education, such a format allows students to retain sequences of morphological principles through rhythmically organized language. The pedagogical objective is therefore not simply verbatim reproduction. Memorization creates a compact internal reference that teachers and students can subsequently unpack during explanation and application.

The use of *al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawiyyah* further illustrates the relationship between memory and meaning in Islamic education. By Level 4, students encounter longer Hadith texts containing substantial religious, ethical, and conceptual content. Their nightly memorization thus develops not only memory endurance but also sustained engagement with authoritative Islamic texts.

The increasing complexity from Levels 2 to 4 suggests that the program operates through progressive cognitive loading. Level 2 predominantly develops lexical and foundational grammatical memory, Level 3 introduces patterned and phrase-level learning, and Level 4 requires retention of extended structured texts. Importantly, the progression is not based exclusively on quantity. It also involves a qualitative shift in the type and organization of knowledge students are expected to retrieve.

Repetition, Retrieval, and Retention

The effectiveness of nightly memorization can also be explained through the relationship between repetition and retrieval. The Dalwa routine repeatedly requires students to return to material rather than encounter it only once. This resembles the principle of spaced retrieval, in which learning opportunities are distributed across time.

Latimier et al. (2021), in a meta-analysis of 29 studies, found an overall advantage for spacing retrieval episodes rather than concentrating retrieval in a single massed session. Carpenter et al. (2022) similarly conclude that spacing and retrieval have substantial evidence supporting their effectiveness across educational contexts. These findings provide a cognitive explanation for why a nightly routine may be more educationally valuable than asking students to memorize a large amount immediately before a test.

However, the principle should not be misunderstood. Repetition itself does not guarantee deep learning. Retrieval becomes more powerful when students must actively reconstruct the material from memory, receive correction when inaccurate, and later retrieve the material again. Consequently, the pedagogical value of Qism al-Taḥfīẓ lies not only in allocating memorization time but also in maintaining mechanisms of target setting, submission, correction, repetition, and review.

Research in tahfiz settings similarly emphasizes the importance of regular scheduling, teacher supervision, preparation, and continuous repetition rather than leaving memorization entirely to students. Ma'rifah et al. (2023) report that structured scheduling and supervision constitute important components of institutional memorization programs.

Qism al-Taḥfīẓ as an Institutional Learning-Habit Facilitator

One of the broader implications of the program concerns the role of Qism al-Taḥfīẓ itself. The division should not be understood exclusively as a unit that checks whether students have completed a required amount of memorization. Its more important educational role is to maintain the behavioral infrastructure that makes consistent learning possible.

This infrastructure consists of several mutually reinforcing elements: a fixed period, predetermined targets, repeated practice, supervision, accountability, peer participation, and opportunities for correction. Such a combination helps explain why a pesantren can transform learning practices into collective traditions. What might be difficult for an individual student to perform voluntarily every night becomes more sustainable when embedded in a shared institutional schedule.

The findings therefore suggest a conceptual shift from memorization as product toward memorization as routine. If success is judged only from the final quantity memorized, an important educational effect may be overlooked. The nightly program also trains students to appear at a designated learning time, prepare material in advance, persist with difficult content, repeat previously encountered information, meet progressively more complex targets, and assume responsibility for a recurring academic obligation.

For this reason, the central contribution of the program can be described through the following sequence: **Scheduled Nightly Activity → Repeated Retrieval → Institutional Supervision → Learning Consistency → Habit Formation**

This model extends the function of traditional pesantren memorization. Memorization is retained as a recognizable feature of Islamic educational tradition, but its educational significance is interpreted through contemporary understanding of retrieval practice, spacing, habit formation, and self-regulated learning. The program therefore illustrates that traditional and contemporary pedagogical perspectives do not necessarily conflict. A long-established pesantren practice can acquire additional educational value when its cognitive and behavioral mechanisms are systematically identified.

Pedagogical Implications

Several pedagogical implications emerge from these findings. First, memorization targets should remain differentiated according to students' developmental and curricular levels rather than applying an identical burden across all classes. Second, lexical memorization at the lower level should progressively lead to morphological, grammatical, phrase-level, and textual knowledge. Third, memorized materials should be periodically retrieved after the initial submission so that the program develops long-term retention rather than short-term performance. Fourth, linguistic texts such as *al-Ājurrūmiyyah*, *al-Amtsilah al-Taṣrīfiyyah*, and *Naẓm al-Maqṣūd* should be connected with practical examples to prevent students from possessing verbal recall without functional understanding. Finally, *ʿIbārah Qaṣīrah* and memorized vocabulary should be deliberately transferred into students' daily Arabic communication.

The program therefore does not support the simplistic proposition that "more memorization automatically produces better learning." Instead, its principal strength lies in structured, repeated, level-appropriate, supervised, and progressively meaningful memorization. This distinction is important because the evidence surrounding *al-Amtsilah al-Taṣrīfiyyah* demonstrates that exposure to or study of a memorized text alone does not necessarily guarantee transferable linguistic

competence. In contrast, research on short expressions indicates stronger outcomes when memorized material is connected with meaningful linguistic use.

Accordingly, the nightly memorization routine at Dalwa can best be understood as an institutional ecosystem of repeated learning. Its contribution lies not merely in preserving the pesantren tradition of memorization, but in organizing that tradition into a progressive learning pathway that combines linguistic knowledge, Islamic texts, discipline, repetition, and daily study habits.

CONCLUSION

The Nightly Memorization Routine implemented through Qism al-Taḥfīẓ at Dalwa Islamic Boarding School demonstrates that memorization can function not only as a traditional learning activity but also as a structured mechanism for strengthening students' learning habits. Involving 200 randomly selected students from Ibtidā'iyyah Levels 2 to 4, the program organized memorization into a regular nightly routine with level-appropriate materials. Level 2 students focused on *Mufradāt al-Afʿāl*, *Mufradāt al-Asmā'*, *Matn al-Ājurrūmiyyah*, and selected Hadith; Level 3 students memorized *al-Amtsilah al-Taṣrīfiyyah*, Hadith, and *ʻIbārah Qaṣīrah*; while Level 4 students engaged with *Naẓm al-Maqṣūd* and *al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawiyyah*. This progression reflects a systematic movement from basic lexical and grammatical knowledge toward morphological patterns, functional expressions, and more complex textual memorization.

The program further indicates that the educational value of memorization lies not merely in the quantity of material retained but in the repeated learning behaviors surrounding the activity. Regular scheduling, predetermined targets, supervision, memorization submission, repetition, and correction helped position memorization as part of the students' everyday learning culture. In this context, Qism al-Taḥfīẓ played an important role as an institutional facilitator that maintained consistency, accountability, and continuity in students' learning practices.

The main contribution of this community engagement program is therefore the conceptualization of nightly memorization as a progressive and institutionally supported learning routine. The program connects the traditional pesantren culture of memorization with contemporary principles of habit formation, retrieval practice, repetition, and structured learning. Its significance extends beyond students' ability to reproduce memorized texts, as the routine also encourages discipline, responsibility, persistence, and greater consistency in studying.

Nevertheless, the program has several limitations. The evaluation was conducted within a single pesantren context and focused primarily on students from Ibtidā'iyyah Levels 2 to 4. In addition, the present evaluation emphasizes learning habits and implementation processes rather than long-term retention or the direct transfer of memorized materials into broader linguistic and academic competencies. Future community engagement programs should therefore examine whether the memorized vocabulary, grammatical rules, morphological patterns, short expressions, and religious texts remain accessible over longer periods and whether they contribute directly to students' Arabic speaking, reading, grammatical analysis, and comprehension abilities.

Overall, the Nightly Memorization Routine shows that a longstanding pesantren tradition can be strengthened through systematic scheduling, progressive learning targets, and continuous institutional supervision. When memorization is designed as a sustained learning process rather than

a short-term requirement, it has the potential to become an effective foundation for developing disciplined, consistent, and enduring learning habits among pesantren students.

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