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Quran Memorization in Madura: A Solution for Strengthening National Resilience in an Era of Social Change

Akh. Syaiful Rijal¹, Bina Prima Panggayuh²

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Madura, Pamekasan, Indonesia

²Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines Qur'anic memorization education at PP. Bustanul Huffadz Assaidiyah Sampang, Madura, as a solution for strengthening national resilience in an era of social change through the genealogical approach of Michel Foucault. This study aims to examine Quran memorization as not only a process of memorizing the Quran, but also a medium for shaping disciplined, religious, and productive students. This research employs a qualitative method through library research and observation of Madurese *pesantren* traditions. The findings reveal three forms of power operating within *tahfidz* education. First, the pastoral power of the kiai instills religious values, nationalism, love for the homeland, and environmental awareness. Second, *pesantren* discipline through memorization deposits and communal control forms students who are orderly, responsible, and socially resilient. Third, *pesantren* biopower regulates students' daily lives and learning patterns, producing healthy and productive generations. The study also finds that Qur'anic memorization education contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in education, social development, and environmental awareness. Therefore, the *tahfidz* tradition in Madura can be understood as a soft infrastructure that strengthens ideological, social, economic, and cultural resilience in supporting Indonesia Emas 2045 amid contemporary social transformation.

Penelitian ini mengkaji pendidikan *tahfidz* al-Qur'an di PP. Bustanul Huffadz Assaidiyah Sampang, Madura, sebagai solusi untuk memperkuat ketahanan nasional di era perubahan sosial melalui pendekatan genealogi Michel Foucault. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji *tahfidz* al-Qur'an yang bukan hanya sekedar proses menghafal Al-Qur'an, tetapi juga media untuk membentuk siswa yang disiplin, religius, dan produktif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui riset pustaka dan observasi tradisi *pesantren* Madura. Temuan menunjukkan tiga bentuk kekuasaan yang beroperasi dalam pendidikan *tahfidz*. Pertama, kekuasaan pastoral kiai menanamkan nilai-nilai agama, nasionalisme, cinta tanah air, dan kesadaran lingkungan. Kedua, disiplin *pesantren* melalui hafalan dan kontrol komunitas membentuk siswa yang tertib, bertanggung jawab, dan tangguh secara sosial. Ketiga, biokekuasaan *pesantren* mengatur kehidupan sehari-hari dan pola belajar siswa, menghasilkan generasi yang sehat dan produktif. Studi ini juga menemukan bahwa pendidikan hafalan Al-Qur'an berkontribusi pada pencapaian Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (SDGs), khususnya di bidang pendidikan, pembangunan sosial, dan kesadaran lingkungan. Oleh karena itu, tradisi *tahfidz* di Madura dapat dipahami sebagai infrastruktur lunak yang memperkuat ketahanan ideologis, sosial, ekonomi, dan budaya dalam mendukung Indonesia Emas 2045 di tengah transformasi sosial kontemporer. © The Authors.

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*Corresponding Author:

Akh. Syaiful Rijal

Universitas Islam Negeri Madura

Jalan Raya Panglegur Km. 4 Pamekasan, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

Email: saifurrijal17@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Religion is an element of culture that is always intertwined with human thought and emotion, thereby serving as the foundation for actions aimed at understanding the realities one faces. [1] *Pesantren* are institutions of religious education in Indonesia whose academic traditions remain consistent with their essence. [2] This is what motivates students to continually strive to deepen their piety within the *pesantren*.

Pesantren have always been connected to various social phenomena occurring in their surroundings, whether involving Kiai or Santri. Throughout history, *Pesantren* have emerged as one of the oldest educational institutions focused on religious studies, distinguished by unique characteristics that set them apart from other educational systems namely the presence of Kiai, Santri, mosques, and boarding facilities. The role of the *pesantren* as an Islamic educational entity cannot be separated from the broader landscape of education in Indonesia, particularly in the realm of moral education, which later evolved into what is known as “character education.” Furthermore, the *pesantren* has played a significant role in the history of Indonesia’s independence and serves as a primary witness to the spread of Islam across the archipelago. Furthermore, as stated by Kiai Sahal Mahfudh, *pesantren* not only function as educational and moral institutions but also play a vital role in societal evolution. [3] Qur’anic memorization education has often been narrowly understood as the act of memorizing sacred texts without any direct relevance to social and economic development. This stigma positions Islamic boarding schools as traditional institutions detached from the dynamics of modernity and the national development agenda. [4] In reality, however, *pesantren* particularly in Madura play a strategic role in shaping the character, work ethic, and social solidarity of their students.

According to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the number of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia has continued to increase over the past decade, reaching over 42,433 with millions of active students. [5] This phenomenon demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools can no longer be viewed solely as traditional institutions, but as social institutions with a significant influence on character development, community education, and the nation's social resilience. In Madura itself, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) for the study of the Qur’an are growing rapidly and becoming centers for the formation of religious culture in the community.

On the other hand, the Sustainable Development Report shows that Indonesia still faces challenges in terms of education quality, moral degradation among the younger generation, social intolerance, and weak cultural resilience in the digital age. [6] This situation makes Islamic boarding schools and *tahfidz* education relevant as a form of soft infrastructure in supporting the achievement of the SDGs, particularly the goals of quality education, social peace, and sustainable community development. The urgency of this study is further underscored by the context of achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Indonesia Emas 2045 vision. Both of these agendas require not only physical infrastructure development but also robust social, moral, and cultural capital. As value-based educational institutions, *pesantren* possess significant potential as soft infrastructure that underpins national resilience.

To analyze these dynamics, this study employs Michel Foucault’s genealogical approach. Through the concepts of power-knowledge, biopower, and pastoral power, genealogy enables an exploration of how the practice of *tahfidz* is not neutral but rather the result of a historical construction laden with power relations and the production of truth. With this approach, *tahfidz* is no longer viewed merely as a religious practice but as a social technology that shapes subjects, populations, and social order.

Studies on Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and Qur’anic memorization (*tahfidz*) have evolved across various perspectives, ranging from classical Islamic educational approaches to contemporary social analysis. Research on *pesantren* indicates that these institutions function not only as educational institutions but also as agents of social and cultural transformation.

In the field of Islamic education, Qur’anic memorization is often viewed as a process of internalizing spiritual values that shape the character of students. Previous studies have confirmed that the practice of memorizing the Qur’an contributes to improved discipline, memory, and the development of individual morality. However, most studies still view *tahfidz* within a pedagogical framework, rather than as a system of subject production within power relations.

On the other hand, studies on *pesantren* in Madura highlight the strong authority of the kiai as the center of social legitimacy. The kiai serves not only as an educator but also as a moral and

social leader with extensive influence in the community. The tradition of students' obedience to the kiai is one of the primary factors in the sustainability of the *pesantren* education system.

In this context, genealogical theory is crucial for understanding the network of Islamic boarding schools as a social and knowledge system shaped by historical repetition, the dissemination of information, and power relations. In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault demonstrates that genealogy serves not only to trace origins but also to reveal the ways in which knowledge and legitimacy are constructed to preserve a heritage. [7], [8] Genealogy does not aim to identify a single origin of a practice, but rather to trace how that practice has been shaped through power relations, discourses, and history. From this perspective, genealogical studies of *pesantren* can elucidate the relationship between scholarly chains of transmission, religious authority, and the social structures that sustain Islamic traditions. Furthermore, Azyumardi Azra emphasizes that the network of scholars in the Nusantara was formed through the dissemination of knowledge and genealogical chains, creating intellectual ties that connect *pesantren* with classical centers of Islamic scholarship, while affirming the continuity and validity of knowledge passed down from one generation to the next. [9], [10]

In the realm of social theory, Michel Foucault's thought provides a crucial framework for understanding the relationship between knowledge and power. [10] The concept of power-knowledge explains that knowledge is not neutral but is always tied to power structures. Meanwhile, the concepts of biopower and pastoral power open up new avenues for analysis.

The concept of power-knowledge explains that knowledge and power mutually shape one another. In the context of *tahfidz*, memorizing the Qur'an is not merely religious knowledge but also serves as a source of legitimacy and authority within the *pesantren* structure. The kiai, as the holder of knowledge-based authority, occupies a strategic position in shaping norms and values. [11] Pastoral power refers to a form of authority that guides individuals morally and spiritually. [12] In the *pesantren*, the kiai fulfills this function through counsel, fatwas, and setting an example. This power operates subtly yet effectively because it is rooted in the students' trust and loyalty. This concept explains how values such as religious nationalism (*hubbul wathan minal iman*) and environmental ethics are instilled as part of the students' daily lives, thereby contributing to ideological and social resilience. Biopower is a form of power that regulates the lives of a population through the regulation of the body and the rhythms of life. In *tahfidz* practice, this is evident in the regulation of students' daily schedules, dietary patterns, rest times, and activities. [7]

Previous empirical research has also shown that students enrolled in *tahfidz* (memorization of the Koran) have relatively higher levels of learning discipline, self-control, and social engagement compared to certain other education models. [13] However, most research focuses on pedagogical and psychological aspects, neglecting to consider *tahfidz* as a mechanism for producing social subjects within power relations and national resilience.

Previous research has largely discussed *tahfidz* as a means of developing religious character, discipline, and enhancing students' cognitive abilities. [14] These studies generally employ pedagogical and psychological approaches.

Other studies position Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) as socio-cultural institutions, with the kiai (religious leader) as the center of moral and social authority in the community. This research highlights patronage relations, charismatic leadership, and the transmission of the *sanad* (transmission of knowledge). [15], [16]

Some studies have begun to use Michel Foucault's theory to examine power relations in Islamic education. [16] However, these studies focus primarily on modern educational disciplines and have not specifically examined *tahfidz* in Islamic boarding schools as practices of biopower and pastoral power.

Although extensive research on *tahfidz* and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) has been conducted, most studies still view *tahfidz* as a pedagogical practice of religious education. Previous research has not examined *tahfidz* as a mechanism for the production of social subjects through power relations, bodily discipline, and population formation, as explained in Foucault's genealogical theory. Furthermore, the relationship between *tahfidz* education, the SDGs, and national resilience is rarely discussed integratively, particularly in the context of Madurese Islamic boarding schools.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to integrate Foucault's genealogical theory with the study of *tahfidz* in Islamic boarding schools within the context of national resilience and sustainable development. This research views *tahfidz* not only as a religious practice but also as a social technology that shapes the discipline, morality, and productivity of students as part of the soft infrastructure of national development.

Unlike previous research that focuses on the pedagogical aspects of *tahfidz* or the leadership of kiai (Islamic scholars) in general, this article positions *tahfidz* Islamic boarding schools as arenas for the production of power-knowledge that contribute to the formation of ideological, social, cultural, and moral resilience in society.

This research aims to: (1) analyze the practices of biopower and pastoral power in *tahfidz* (Islamic memorization) education at Islamic Boarding School Bustanul Huffadz Assaidiyah Sampang, Madura; (2) explain how the *tahfidz* tradition shapes the discipline, morality, and productivity of students; and (3) examine the contribution of *tahfidz* education to the SDGs and strengthening national resilience.

This article argues that *tahfidz* education in Madurese Islamic boarding schools is not simply a religious practice, but rather a social mechanism that produces discipline, moral loyalty, and collective solidarity through the power relations of the kiai (Islamic cleric) and the *pesantren* system. In the context of modern social change, *tahfidz* functions as soft infrastructure that supports national resilience and sustainable development.

Thus, this research is crucial for broadening the study of Islamic boarding schools from the perspective of the genealogy of power and positioning *tahfidz* as a strategic component of Indonesian social development. This study is also expected to provide theoretical contributions to the study of Islamic education and practical contributions to strengthening national resilience based on local religious and cultural values.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with a genealogical perspective of Michel Foucault to examine Qur'anic memorization practices in Madurese *pesantren*. The research was conducted at PP. Bustanul Huffadz Assaidiyah Sampang Madura, a *pesantren* founded by Kiai Said Ismail in 1917 and recognized for its strong tradition of Qur'anic memorization education. The *pesantren* implements a boarding system, centralized leadership under the kiai, and a *tahfidz*-based curriculum with memorization targets ranging from 15 to 30 juz.

The research involved 10 informants consisting of one kiai, three *tahfidz* teachers (*ustadz tahfidz*), and six santri. Informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on their involvement, experience, and authority in *tahfidz* learning activities. The kiai was chosen due to his central role in *pesantren* leadership and value transmission, while the *ustadz* and santri were selected based on their active participation in the *tahfidz* process.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted semi-structurally to explore perspectives regarding discipline, memorization practices, *pesantren* traditions, and the role of *tahfidz* in shaping students' character and social values. Observations focused on students' daily routines, recite the memorization of Qur'an in front of the teacher (*setoran hafalan*), communal discipline, and interactions between kiai, teachers, and santri. Documentation included *pesantren* archives, curriculum documents, daily activity schedules, photographs, and related literature on *pesantren*, *tahfidz*, SDGs, and national resilience.

The main research instrument was the researcher himself as the primary instrument in qualitative inquiry. [17] Supporting instruments included interview guidelines, observation sheets, field notes, audio recordings, and documentation checklists.

To ensure data validity, this study applied source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation. [18] Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from kiai, *ustadz*, and santri. Technique triangulation was carried out by comparing interview data with observations and documentation findings. Time triangulation was implemented through repeated observations and interviews conducted at different times during the research process.

Data validity was further strengthened through prolonged engagement, member checking, and peer discussion. Member checking was conducted by reconfirming several interview findings with the informants to ensure the accuracy of interpretation. [19]

Data analysis was conducted in several stages: (1) data collection through interviews, observations, and documentation; (2) data reduction by selecting relevant findings related to *tahfidz* practices, power relations, and national resilience; (3) data categorization based on the concepts of power-knowledge, pastoral power, and biopower; (4) interpretation of findings using a genealogical approach to trace the historical formation of *pesantren* discipline and authority; and (5) drawing

Kiai Said's presence became the focal point of the Qur'an memorization program he brought from Mecca, making it the primary focus of the memorization program at PP. Bustanul Huffadz Assaidiyah in Sampang, Madura. However, the practice of *tahfidz Pesantren* Bustanul Huffadz Assaidiyah Sampang in Madura does not stand alone as a mere memorization activity, but is integrated into the overall way of life of the santri. One informant (a senior santri), memorization isn't just about reciting; it's a way of life. If you aren't disciplined from the moment you wake up until you go to sleep, memorization won't work.

Field observations show that *tahfidz* activities are integrated into the students' entire daily lives. Students begin activities before dawn with collective prayers, memorization revision (*muraja'ah*), and scheduled memorization deposits. Based on observations, students spend approximately 3–6 hours per day specifically for memorization and revision activities.

One senior santri explained:

"Memorization is not only about repeating verses. We are trained to discipline our time, behavior, and even emotions because all of them influence the memorization process."

Similarly, a *tahfidz* teacher stated:

"Students who maintain discipline in worship and daily routines usually achieve memorization targets faster and more consistently."

These findings indicate that *tahfidz* functions not merely as cognitive learning but also as a system for shaping students' habitus, discipline, and social ethics.

Table 1. Main Empirical Findings of *Tahfidz* Practices at PP. Bustanul Huffadz Assaidiyah

Aspect	Empirical Findings	Social Impact
Memorization Discipline	Daily memorization deposits and weekly evaluations	Increased self-discipline and responsibility
Kiai Authority	Strong obedience to kiai instructions and values	Ideological and moral resilience
Daily Regulation	Structured schedules for worship, study, meals, and rest	Healthy and productive lifestyle
Alumni Activities	Alumni active in teaching, da'wah, and entrepreneurship	Social and economic contribution
Social Relations	Strong communal supervision and peer support	Social solidarity and cohesion

3.2. Pastoral Power of the Kiai and Ideological Formation

The kiai occupies a central role not only as a religious teacher but also as a moral authority who shapes students' worldview. Interviews reveal that students perceive the kiai as a role model whose advice extends beyond religious matters into social ethics, nationalism, and environmental responsibility.

One administrator explained:

"When the kiai advises students to love the homeland and protect society, students consider it part of their religious responsibility."

This pastoral mechanism operates through moral persuasion rather than coercion. Teachings such as *hubbul wathan minal iman* (love for the homeland is part of faith) become internalized as collective values.

Empirical findings also show that students participate in communal activities such as village cleaning, mosque service, and social charity programs. These activities strengthen social responsibility and community engagement.

3.3. Panoptic Discipline and the Formation of Productive Students

The *tahfidz* system incorporates continuous supervision through memorization deposits, peer monitoring, and evaluation sessions. This mechanism resembles Michel Foucault's concept of panoptic discipline, where surveillance gradually becomes self-control.

Field observations indicate that: students deposit memorization daily, weekly *tasmi'* evaluations are conducted, senior students supervise junior students, communal discipline reduces absenteeism and laziness.

A santri stated:

"Even when no teacher is present, we continue memorizing because the discipline has become part of ourselves."

This finding demonstrates a causal relationship between structured supervision and the formation of internal discipline. Continuous monitoring creates self-regulation, which later contributes to productivity and consistency in learning. Academically, students become more focused and organized. Socially, they develop responsibility, punctuality, and cooperative behavior. These findings strengthen previous studies on *pesantren* discipline but expand them by showing how discipline functions as a mechanism of social subject formation rather than merely educational control.

3.4. Biopower and the Regulation of Students' Lives

The *pesantren* regulates almost every aspect of students' lives, including sleeping patterns, eating schedules, worship, memorization, and physical activities. Students sleep approximately 5–6 hours daily and follow fixed schedules for meals, study, and communal service.

One ustadz explained:

"If students lose control of their daily rhythm, their memorization quality usually declines. That is why discipline in daily life is very important."

This regulation produces relatively stable physical and mental endurance among students. Several alumni interviewed reported that the discipline developed during *tahfidz* education helped them adapt to university life, work environments, and community leadership roles.

The findings reveal a direct cause-and-effect relationship:

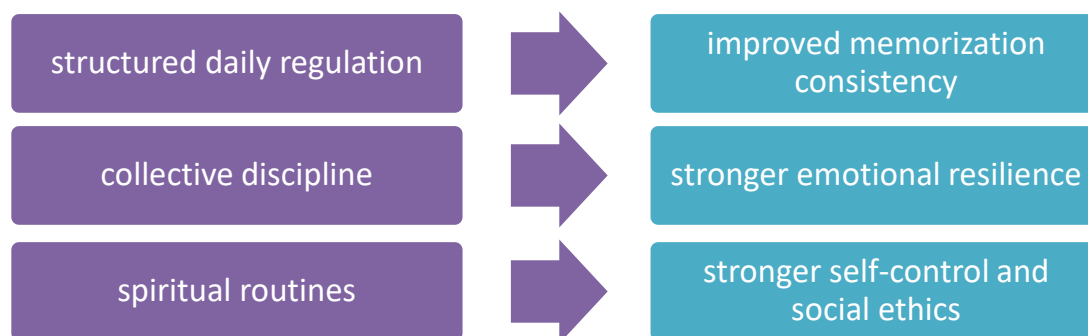


Figure 2. The relationship of direct cause-and-effect

Unlike previous studies that mainly discuss *tahfidz* from pedagogical perspectives, this research shows that *tahfidz* also functions as biopolitical management that shapes productive and socially resilient populations.

4. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that *tahfidz* education in Madurese *pesantren* operates not only as a religious learning system but also as a mechanism for producing disciplined and socially resilient subjects. This finding strengthens previous studies on *pesantren* character education but differs in its analytical focus. Earlier research generally emphasized cognitive achievement, moral education, or leadership charisma, whereas this study reveals the operation of pastoral power, discipline, and biopower within everyday *pesantren* practices.

From a genealogical perspective, the authority of the kiai is historically constructed through sanad legitimacy, religious trust, and cultural continuity. [10], [23] This finding supports studies on *pesantren* authority in Madura but extends them by showing that the kiai's authority also functions as ideological governance shaping nationalism, environmental ethics, and social solidarity.

The disciplinary system found in *tahfidz* activities also confirms Michel Foucault's argument that modern power works through surveillance and self-regulation. However, unlike disciplinary institutions described by Foucault that often rely on coercion, discipline in *pesantren* tends to operate through spiritual awareness, communal belonging, and moral obedience. [24] This becomes an important theoretical contribution because it demonstrates that religious discipline may produce voluntary self-regulation rather than purely oppressive control.

Socially, the findings indicate that *tahfidz* education contributes to community resilience through the formation of social capital, alumni networks, and moral leadership. Many alumni become

Qur'anic teachers, religious leaders, entrepreneurs, and community organizers. [25] This strengthens local social cohesion and supports sustainable development at the grassroots level.

Academically, this study contributes to Islamic education research by integrating genealogical theory with *pesantren* studies and SDGs discourse. The study positions *tahfidz* not only as religious pedagogy but also as a socio-cultural technology that shapes productive citizens and supports national resilience.

The findings also demonstrate that *pesantren* indirectly contribute to SDGs implementation. Disciplined lifestyles support health and well-being, character-based education strengthens quality education, communal solidarity strengthens peaceful societies, and work ethics encourage economic productivity. [26] Therefore, *tahfidz* education can be understood as a form of soft infrastructure that supports Indonesia Emas 2045 amid ongoing social transformation.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Qur'anic memorization education in Madurese *pesantren* is not merely a religious activity focused on memorization, but also a system of power-knowledge that shapes discipline, morality, and social solidarity. Through the genealogical perspective of Michel Foucault, the findings reveal that pastoral power, disciplinary control, and biopower operate simultaneously in the *tahfidz* tradition to produce students who are religious, disciplined, socially responsible, and productive. In this regard, *pesantren* function as a form of soft infrastructure that contributes to national resilience and supports sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The strength of this study lies in its integration of Foucault's genealogical theory with the context of Islamic boarding schools and Qur'anic memorization traditions in Madura. This research also offers a new perspective by positioning *tahfidz* education not only as a pedagogical activity, but also as a socio-cultural mechanism that contributes to ideological, social, and moral resilience in the era of social change.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the research focuses on a single *pesantren*, namely PP. Bustanul Huffadz Assaidiyah Sampang Madura, so the findings cannot be generalized to all *pesantren* traditions in Indonesia. Second, the study primarily relies on qualitative data and a limited number of informants, which may not fully represent the diversity of perspectives within *tahfidz* institutions. Third, this research emphasizes genealogical and socio-cultural analysis without measuring the quantitative impact of *tahfidz* education on broader indicators of national resilience or sustainable development.

Therefore, future studies are recommended to conduct comparative research across different *pesantren* regions, integrate quantitative approaches, and examine the relationship between *tahfidz* education, social transformation, and community resilience more comprehensively. Further research may also explore the role of digital transformation, educational innovation, and youth empowerment in strengthening the contribution of *pesantren* toward Indonesia Emas 2045.

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