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Artikel

Reconstruction of the Tahfidz al-Qur'an Curriculum Based on Ralph Tyler's Rational Model for Strengthening Religious Character in Public Elementary Schools in Ponorogo

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ABSTRACT

The Tahfidz education program in Indonesian public elementary schools has become part of a policy to strengthen religious character. However, its implementation currently lacks a structured curriculum. This research was conducted to reconstruct the Tahfidz Al-Qur'an curriculum based on Ralph Tyler's rational model in order to build a measurable learning framework oriented toward character formation.

This study aims to reconstruct the Tahfidz Al-Qur'an curriculum using Ralph Tyler's rational model to reinforce religious character among students in public elementary schools under the supervision of the Ponorogo District Education Office. The research employs a qualitative-descriptive approach with data collection techniques including document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations.

The findings indicate that Tyler's model—emphasizing clarity of educational objectives, organized learning experiences, systematic instructional sequencing, and evaluation of learning outcomes—provides a comprehensive framework for integrating religious and moral values into the learning process. The reconstructed curriculum demonstrates alignment between regional educational policies and classroom practices, and it effectively enhances students' discipline, sincerity, and spiritual awareness.

Thus, the rational curriculum model can serve as a replicable framework for developing Islamic character education in public schools across Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Character education has become a primary focus of national and regional educational policies, particularly in the context of strengthening religious values within public educational institutions. In Ponorogo Regency, this commitment is reflected in the Regent Regulation concerning the implementation of the *Tahfidz al-Qur'an* program in public elementary schools. This program aims to cultivate faith, discipline, and noble character from an early

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age through activities of memorizing and understanding the Qur'an (Ponorogo Regency Government, 2022).

However, the implementation of the Tahfidz program in public schools often lacks a structured and measurable curriculum guide. Many schools have not yet established clarity in determining objectives, selecting learning experiences, or developing integrated evaluation mechanisms. As a result, Tahfidz activities tend to prioritize the quantity of memorization rather than the formation of students' spiritual and moral character (Saregar, 2016). This absence of guidance includes unclear learning objectives, achievement indicators, and character assessment instruments.

In this context, Ralph Tyler's Rational Model (1949) offers a relevant conceptual framework for reconstructing the Tahfidz curriculum. This model emphasizes the systematic relationship between educational objectives, learning experiences, instructional organization, and evaluation of learning outcomes. By placing objectives at the center of curriculum design, this approach enables Tahfidz activities to focus not only on cognitive aspects (memorization), but also on the integration of spiritual and character values (Sudarsana, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2016).

From the perspective of Islamic education, Tyler's principles align with the concepts of *niyyah* (goal orientation), *'amal* (learning process), and *muhasabah* (self-evaluation). This rational approach may serve as a foundation for constructing a Tahfidz curriculum that balances cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions while strengthening the internalization of *akhlaq al-karimah* within students (Azra, 2017). Several recent studies also emphasize the importance of character-based Tahfidz curriculum reconstruction in the modern era to align with the paradigm of character-based Qur'anic learning and the development of the Pancasila Student Profile (Rahmah & Kamaruddin, 2021; Nurlaili et al., 2023; Hidayat, 2022).

An effective Tahfidz curriculum should integrate memorization with spiritual reflection and meaning-making. This aligns with principles of character education that highlight the development of moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action (Lickona, 1991). Therefore, the application of Tyler's model is not only an analytical tool but also an innovative strategy for building a purpose-driven, measurable, and character-oriented Tahfidz learning system.

Therefore, this study aims to reconstruct the *Tahfidz al-Qur'an* curriculum in public elementary schools in Ponorogo both conceptually and structurally based on Ralph Tyler's rational model, in order to produce a more systematic and measurable curriculum founded upon spiritual values. This research is expected to contribute to the development of a Tahfidz curriculum that not only enhances memorization quality but also strengthens the religious character of students within public educational institutions.

1. METHOD

1. Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive approach using a multiple case study design focusing on the implementation models of the *Tahfidz* program in several Islamic educational institutions. This approach was selected for its capacity to provide an in-depth understanding of the social context, religious values, and curricular practices embedded in the *Tahfidz* programs of each school. Through this approach, the researcher aimed to interpret the meanings behind actions, policies, and experiences of the actors involved in *Tahfidz* education while considering their institutional and cultural contexts.

The multiple case study design enabled cross-case comparisons to identify both common patterns and distinctive characteristics across institutions. This approach is aligned with the

interpretive paradigm, which emphasizes understanding subjective meaning and the social construction of educational experience.

2. Participants and Demographic Information

The research participants consisted of a combination of key informants and supporting informants directly involved in implementing the *Tahfidz* program. Key informants included three school principals—each representing one institution—responsible for policy and program management. Supporting informants consisted of six *Tahfidz* teachers (one to three per school depending on organizational structure and workload) and two to three school supervisors or educational advisors from the district education authority involved in monitoring and mentoring the program.

Demographic information collected included gender, highest educational qualification, years of teaching experience, and role within the *Tahfidz* program. The total number of participants was approximately eleven to twelve individuals, which is considered adequate for achieving data depth in a qualitative-descriptive multiple case study.

3. Data Sources and Collection Techniques

The data sources in this study were divided into primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with school principals, *Tahfidz* teachers, and supervisors; classroom observations and program observations; and field notes documenting the researcher's reflections during site visits. Secondary data included policy documents (such as the Regent Regulation and school regulations), curriculum documents (lesson plans, syllabi, and evaluation instruments), program establishment decrees, and instructional materials used in *Tahfidz* activities.

Document analysis was conducted by selecting materials relevant to curriculum implementation. The criteria included direct relevance to the *Tahfidz* program, publication or use within the last three years, and the document's capacity to demonstrate objectives, content, and evaluation mechanisms.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all informants in approximately twelve interview sessions, each lasting 45–60 minutes. The interview guide contained key topics such as program background and objectives, instructional strategies, character indicators, evaluation processes, challenges, and expectations regarding curriculum reconstruction. Sample questions included: *"What is the primary objective of the Tahfidz program in this school?"*, *"How is character development evaluated through Tahfidz activities?"*, and *"What indicators are used to assess affective aspects?"*

Participant observation was conducted in each school through two to three visits, each lasting 45–60 minutes. The focus included program structure, teacher–student interaction, teaching methods, integration of character values, and formative evaluation practices. All observations were documented in field notes and, when permitted, recorded in audio or video form.

Each visit was accompanied by reflective memos capturing nonverbal cues, social dynamics, and phenomena not obtained through documents or interviews.

4. Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis followed a thematic approach based on the four core curriculum components of Ralph W. Tyler's model: objectives, learning experiences, instructional organization, and evaluation. The analysis process began with transcription and familiarization, where interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and repeatedly reviewed to understand explicit and implicit meanings.

The next step involved initial (open) coding, marking significant text segments. These codes were grouped through axial coding to form broader categories corresponding to Tyler's

components. For example, categories such as *"spiritual objectives"* or *"memorization quantity orientation"* were classified under objectives, while *"character reinforcement methods"* were placed under learning experiences.

Selective coding was then used to develop themes and identify relationships across categories, producing a conceptual structure of the *Tahfidz* program. Emerging themes such as *"dominance of cognitive memorization aspects," "limited measurable character indicators,"* or *"restricted formative evaluation"* provided a basis for curriculum reconstruction.

To ensure consistency and validity, triangulation and verification were employed by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents. Data analysis was supported by qualitative analysis software such as NVivo or Atlas.ti to facilitate coding, textual searches, and systematic theme matrix construction.

5. Data Validity and Trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness was maintained through various strategies. Source and method triangulation were conducted by comparing interview, observation, and document data to ensure accuracy and consistency. Member checking was used by providing interview summaries to selected participants for review and correction if misinterpretation occurred.

Dependability and confirmability were supported through an audit trail documenting research steps, analytical decisions, and personal reflections. Credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement and thick description to ensure deep contextual understanding. Transferability was strengthened through detailed presentation of participant characteristics and school contexts, enabling applicability to similar settings.

Peer debriefing was conducted with academic supervisors and colleagues specializing in Islamic education and curriculum studies to reassess interpretations and reinforce analytical objectivity.

6. Research Ethics

This study adhered to ethical standards in educational and social research. Before data collection, all participants were informed of the research objectives, benefits, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants to confirm voluntary participation.

Confidentiality and anonymity were protected by assigning coded identifiers to participants and institutions in transcripts and research reports. Data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes. The researcher ensured that interviews and observations did not disrupt school activities.

This research was conducted after receiving official approval from the participating schools and the Ponorogo District Education Office and followed the ethical guidelines set by the researcher's academic institution. If required, the research protocol was submitted to an institutional ethics review board for formal approval. These measures ensured scientific integrity and safeguarded the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants involved.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reconstruction of the *Tahfidz* curriculum in elementary schools based on Ralph Tyler's rational model resulted in significant shifts across the four core curriculum components—objectives, learning experiences, organization of learning experiences, and evaluation—which collectively strengthened the dimension of religious character formation among students.

At the curriculum objectives stage, the sampled schools initially set memorization targets without explicitly linking them to character development. Through reconstruction grounded in Tyler's principles, the objectives were reformulated to become more operational and

measurable, emphasizing not only cognitive outcomes related to memorization achievement but also affective values such as discipline, honesty, and responsibility. For example, one newly formulated objective states: *"Fourth-grade students are able to memorize one juz correctly and demonstrate discipline, honesty, and responsibility throughout the learning process."* This formulation reflects Tyler's concept of behavioral objectives, connecting behavioral achievement with the values to be internalized through concrete learning experiences. This principle is also aligned with Islamic pedagogy, which emphasizes the unity of *niyyah* (intention), *'amal* (action), and *muhasabah* (self-reflection) as the foundation for character formation (Azra, 2017).

Reconstruction also appeared in the design of learning experiences, which now place students as active subjects in the process of value reinforcement. Activities such as daily memorization submissions accompanied by verse reflection, peer mentoring between senior and junior students, and weekly *tadabbur al-Qur'an* sessions serve as means to integrate memorization with moral internalization. These learning experiences are not merely routine instructional activities but represent Tyler's rational model logic that every learning activity must directly contribute to achieving measurable educational goals. For instance, value reflection activities aim to foster moral awareness (*moral knowing*), while peer mentoring promotes empathy and social responsibility (*moral action*) as outlined by Lickona (1991).

Furthermore, the organization of learning experiences was arranged systematically based on the level of difficulty of the surahs and the moral values they contain. Memorization begins with shorter surahs in *juz* 30, which contain strong messages of morality and faith, and gradually progresses to subsequent *juz* with deeper reflection. Weekly and monthly structures were designed to ensure continuity of learning while providing opportunities for teachers to assess both cognitive and affective development. In this context, teachers are no longer merely examiners of memorization but function as classroom-level curriculum designers—a role emphasized by Hilda Taba (1962) as central to participatory teacher-based curriculum development. One teacher stated during an interview: *"Previously, we only followed the Tahfidz manual. Now, we design our own steps and assessments according to our students' characteristics."* This statement indicates a paradigm shift toward reflective and design-oriented pedagogy.

The evaluation dimension also underwent reconceptualization. Evaluation now includes two integral aspects: cognitive and affective. In the cognitive domain, students are assessed through memorization tests, tajwid accuracy, and fluency. In the affective domain, teachers use observation rubrics to evaluate religious attitudes such as discipline, responsibility, and sincerity. Field data showed observable improvements in students' positive behavior, particularly in punctuality and initiative in maintaining memorization. A teacher noted in an observation report: *"Students are more diligent in muraja'ah without being instructed, and they have started reminding their peers who have not submitted their memorization."* These findings reflect the direct connection between value-based evaluation systems and character formation.

Compared to earlier studies (Rahman, 2018; Saregar, 2016), this curriculum reconstruction demonstrates conceptual innovation because it successfully integrates a Western rational curriculum model with Islamic educational epistemology. While previous studies primarily focused on memorization effectiveness or motivational approaches, this study presents a more conceptual synthesis—linking Tyler's rationalization of objectives with spiritualization of intention (*niyyah*) and moral reflection (*muhasabah*) in Islamic educational practice.

Theoretically, the findings affirm that the application of Tyler's model in the *Tahfidz* context not only organizes curriculum components but also revives spiritual rationality within Islamic education. The integration of behavioral objectives and Qur'anic values bridges the gap between character education policy and its implementation at the classroom level. Thus, this

reconstruction not only improves curriculum structure but also enhances teachers' capacity to understand the logical connection between policy, practice, and learning outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

In practical terms, students demonstrated improved *moral action* through behaviors such as disciplined memorization routines and spiritual responsibility, aligning with Lickona's (1991) character education model emphasizing balance between *moral knowing*, *moral feeling*, and *moral action*. Ultimately, the integration of Tyler's rational model with Islamic educational philosophy offers a new theoretical contribution to discourse on curriculum Islamization and character-based education in public schools—showing that rationality does not contradict spirituality but instead can strengthen value internalization within Qur'anic learning practices.

CONCLUSION

The reconstruction of the Tahfidz al-Qur'an curriculum based on Ralph Tyler's rational model has produced a more systematic, measurable, and character-oriented instructional design that strengthens students' religious identity. Through the integration of four main curriculum components—objectives, learning experiences, organization, and evaluation—this curriculum not only restructures memorization instruction but also embeds spiritual values such as sincerity, discipline, and responsibility.

Analytically, the success of this model lies in its alignment with the foundational principles of Islamic education, which emphasize the unity of intention (*niyyah*), action (*'amal*), and self-reflection (*muhasabah*) as the basis for character formation (Azra, 2017). Tyler emphasizes the importance of clear educational objectives and the logical relationship among objectives, learning experiences, and evaluation (Tyler, 1949). When adapted to the context of Islamic education, these principles reveal deep relevance: rationality in curriculum design does not negate spirituality but becomes a vehicle for achieving measurable moral and religious awareness. Thus, Tyler's model serves as a bridge between systematic Western pedagogical approaches and the holistic ethos of Islamic education.

Although it demonstrates significant potential, the implementation of this model still requires contextual adjustments to be effective across different regions of Indonesia. Findings from Ponorogo indicate improvements in student discipline and spiritual responsibility, yet they are insufficient to generalize nationally. Further implementation trials in diverse social and policy contexts are needed to ensure sustainability and wider relevance.

Conceptually, this research enriches the discourse on the Islamization of the curriculum by affirming that curriculum rationality can coexist with Islamic spirituality, resulting in an educational approach that not only teaches memorization but also nurtures Qur'anic moral consciousness. The integration of Tyler's rational model and the principles of *tarbiyah Islamiyah* offers a new direction for character education in public schools, demonstrating that strengthening religious values can be achieved through curriculum design that aligns objectives, experiences, and evaluation in a coherent framework.

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