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## How Interpersonal Communication Shapes Tahfīz Pedagogy in a Gorontalo Quranic Boarding School?

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### Abstract

**Purpose-** Effective interpersonal communication is fundamental to the success of Qur'anic memorization (tahfīz), yet previous studies have largely discussed communication in Islamic education at a general level rather than as a pedagogical mechanism within tahfīz. This study examines how interpersonal communication between tahfīz supervisors and santri shapes memorization quality in an urban Islamic boarding school (pesantren) in Gorontalo, Indonesia.

**Design/methodology/approach-** The study adopts a qualitative phenomenological design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, naturalistic observation, and institutional documentation involving tahfīz supervisors, selected santri, and program records from a cohort of 30 students enrolled in a 2.5-year memorization program. Data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), including transcript familiarization, descriptive and interpretative coding, thematic clustering, cross-source comparison, and credibility verification.

**Findings-** The findings identify five core interpersonal communication mechanisms that facilitate successful tahfīz: directive clarity, expressive religious storytelling, attentive corrective feedback, dialogic support, and adaptive communicative alignment during both face-to-face and online setoran. These mechanisms improve memorization fluency, tajwīd accuracy, learning discipline, and long-term retention by integrating precise oral feedback with emotional support and collaborative review. The study further proposes a Disclosure-to-Alignment Model, demonstrating how relational trust reduces anxiety associated with exposing memorization errors and enables corrective feedback to become cognitively meaningful and pedagogically effective. Institutional evidence also indicates sustained learning continuity and improved student progress despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. **Research implications/limitations-** This study is limited to a single urban pesantren and one tahfīz program. Future research should examine the proposed model across diverse institutional settings and employ mixed-methods approaches to evaluate its broader applicability. **Originality/value-** This study contributes to Islamic education and interpersonal communication scholarship by conceptualizing communication as a constitutive pedagogical mechanism rather than a supportive element in tahfīz education. It introduces the Disclosure-to-Alignment Model, linking relational trust, adaptive communication, and oral corrective feedback to enhanced Qur'anic memorization and extending contemporary theories of educational communication within Islamic learning environments.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Communication; Tahfidz; Qur'anic Memorization; Pesantren; Setoran; Tajwīd; Phenomenology; Communication Accommodation Theory; Social Penetration Theory.

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## Introduction

Qur'anic memorization (*tahfidz*) is a demanding form of Islamic education because it requires sustained discipline, oral precision, affective endurance, and moral formation. In pesantren settings, the memorization process is not limited to the mechanical repetition of verses. It is organized through daily interpersonal encounters in which the teacher listens, corrects, motivates, and evaluates the learner's recitation. Previous studies in Islamic education have shown that teacher communication contributes to motivation, engagement, and religious character formation [1]. However, these studies often discuss communication broadly as a supportive learning condition rather than as a specific pedagogical mechanism embedded in *tahfidz* supervision.

The specific demands of *tahfidz* make interpersonal communication analytically important. Memorization quality depends on fluency, *tajwīd* accuracy, retention stability, and the learner's willingness to submit recitation for correction. These outcomes are shaped by repeated face-to-face interaction, especially during *setoran*, when the student recites memorized passages, and the supervisor immediately identifies errors, gives corrective cues, and encourages further review. Studies on Qur'anic memorization have emphasized repetition, *muraja'ah*, oral correction, and peer-assisted review as important learning strategies [2],[3]. What remains insufficiently explained is how the supervisor's communication style transforms these routines into motivation, discipline, and durable memorization quality.

This analytical concern is not confined to Islamic education. Cognitive research on long-term retention has established that memory is strengthened far more by repeated retrieval than by repeated exposure, and that review distributed across time outperforms review massed within a single session. *Tahfidz* routines already embody these principles: *setoran* is a public retrieval test, *muraja'ah* is distributed practice, and *simaan* is a spaced, high-stakes retrieval event. Yet retrieval practice only produces durable memory when errors are detected and corrected, and when the learner is willing to attempt retrieval in the first place despite the risk of failure. Both conditions are communicative rather than merely cognitive. Whether a santri volunteers a passage he is unsure of, and whether the correction he receives is specific enough to be encoded, depend on how the supervisor speaks, when he intervenes, and what the learner believes will happen if he fails. This is precisely the point at which interpersonal communication ceases to be a supportive backdrop and becomes a mechanism.

A parallel argument arises from feedback research. Feedback is among the most powerful influences on achievement, but its effects are highly variable, and a substantial share of feedback interventions depress rather than improve

performance. The decisive variables are the level at which feedback is directed and the way it is received: feedback about the task and the process supports learning, whereas feedback directed at the person tends to redirect attention toward self-protection. In second language research, this insight has been refined into a body of work on oral corrective feedback, which shows that the effectiveness of a correction depends on its type, its timing, and the learner's uptake, that is, whether the learner actually reformulates the utterance. Tahfidz supervision is structurally similar to this situation: it consists of oral production, immediate error detection, corrective cueing, and required reformulation. The literature therefore predicts that variation in supervisor communication should produce variation in memorization quality, but this prediction has rarely been tested through close description of tahfidz interaction itself.

The gap addressed in this article is therefore process-specific. Existing literature has established that supportive communication, cultural responsiveness, and teacher-student relationships are beneficial in Islamic and general educational contexts [4],[5],[6]. Yet there is still limited empirical explanation of how specific communication moves such as attentive listening, directive correction, religious storytelling, humor, and adaptive tone operate during the micro-practices of tahfidz supervision. This limitation is especially visible in urban pesantren contexts, where students must maintain religious discipline amid modern distractions, individualized learning needs, and occasional disruption such as pandemic-related remote learning. Urban pesantren are not simply smaller versions of rural ones; they operate in a denser field of competing attention, family proximity, and social comparison, which increases the communicative work required to sustain memorization discipline.

To address this gap, the present study investigates interpersonal communication in Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muttaqin Taki Niode, Gorontalo. The article uses the term tahfidz supervisor to refer consistently to the leader-teacher responsible for memorization supervision, and the term santri to refer to students in the tahfidz program. The term setoran refers to memorization submission, while muraja'ah refers to systematic review of previously memorized passages. This terminological standardization is used throughout the article to avoid ambiguity among the terms caregiver, supervisor, teacher, and memorization deposit.

The novelty of this study lies in specifying interpersonal communication as a proximate mechanism linking teacher-student interaction to memorization quality. Rather than treating communication as a general classroom climate, the study analyzes how directive, expressive, attentive, supportive, and adaptive styles are enacted in the daily supervision of Qur'anic memorization. The title of the article names the argument: memorization quality improves as the

relationship moves from disclosure, in which the santri becomes willing to expose imperfect recitation, to alignment, in which the supervisor calibrates correction to the learner's state, task demand, and channel. Disclosure without alignment produces exposure without learning; alignment without disclosure has nothing to work on.

The study is guided by three research questions: (1) What interpersonal communication styles are enacted by the tahfidz supervisor during daily memorization supervision? (2) How do these styles influence santri's fluency, tajwīd accuracy, retention, discipline, and motivation? (3) How are cultural and spiritual values embedded in these communicative practices? The article proceeds by reviewing literature on Islamic educational communication, tahfidz pedagogy, cognitive foundations of memorization, feedback and psychological safety, and relational-accommodative theory; describing the phenomenological design; presenting five communication mechanisms; and developing a Disclosure-to-Alignment model that specifies how these mechanisms combine.

## **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **Interpersonal communication in Islamic education**

Interpersonal communication in Islamic education functions simultaneously as instructional exchange, moral modeling, and relational guidance. In pesantren, the teacher-student relationship is shaped by hierarchy and respect, but it also depends on trust, care, and daily proximity. Prior research indicates that effective communication between teachers, students, and families can enhance learning motivation and strengthen religious character. These findings are relevant to tahfidz because memorization requires continuous feedback and emotional persistence.

Ethnographic and comparative scholarship on Indonesian pesantren has consistently emphasized that the institution is organized around a relationship rather than a curriculum. The authority of the kiai or supervising teacher is personal, moral, and continuous, and learning is embedded in shared living rather than confined to timetabled instruction. This produces a distinctive communicative economy: instruction, discipline, and pastoral care are delivered by the same person, in overlapping settings, often within the same exchange. Studies of the ethos of pesantren education describe an environment in which the willingness to be corrected is itself treated as a religious disposition, not merely a pedagogical convenience. Comparable dynamics have been documented in women's pesantren, where relational proximity carries a large share of the instructional load.

Contemporary Islamic education research has increasingly asked how these relational traditions withstand modernization, digital distraction, and pressure toward measurable outcomes. The prevailing answer is that pesantren adapt structurally while preserving the relational core. That answer, however, is usually asserted at the level of institutional description. What it does not specify is the interactional level: which communicative moves preserve the relational core, and how those moves connect to a measurable learning outcome such as tajwīd accuracy or retention. The present study addresses this level directly.

### **Tahfidz Pedagogy and Memorization Quality**

Tahfidz pedagogy is built on oral performance, repetition, correction, and retention. Memorization quality is generally reflected in fluency, tajwīd accuracy, consistency of review, and the ability to sustain recitation without major disruption. Research on Qur'anic memorization emphasizes the importance of muraja'ah, auditory reinforcement, structured evaluation, and peer-supported review [7],[8]. However, the effectiveness of these techniques depends on the communicative environment in which correction is delivered. Immediate oral feedback can prevent repeated errors, but it must be communicated in a manner that preserves confidence and willingness to continue practice [9].

The literature on tahfidz methods is comparatively rich in describing techniques and comparatively thin in explaining variance. Studies typically report that a given method, such as wahdah, sabaq-sabqi-manzil, or intensive muraja'ah, improved memorization at a given institution. Because these studies rarely observe the interaction through which the method is enacted, they cannot explain why the same method yields uneven results across institutions or across students within one cohort. Research on tahfidz institutional design has begun to argue that curriculum and competence must be examined together with the human systems that deliver them. This article takes that argument one step further and treats the delivery itself, that is, the talk during setoran, as the unit of analysis.

### **Cognitive Foundations: Retrieval, Spacing, and Load**

Although this study is phenomenological rather than experimental, its interpretation of memorization quality is informed by well-established cognitive findings. Retrieval practice, that is, actively reconstructing material from memory rather than re-reading it, produces markedly better long-term retention than additional study exposure. Distributed practice, in which review is spaced across days rather than compressed into one sitting, further improves durability. Reviews of learning techniques rank practice testing and distributed practice among the highest-utility strategies available, and note that both are frequently

underused because they feel more effortful and less fluent to the learner than passive review.

These findings map with unusual precision onto tahfidz architecture. Setoran is retrieval practice under observation. Muraja'ah is distributed practice. Monthly simaan is a spaced, cumulative retrieval event. The gap between the tradition and the science is not the design but the delivery: retrieval practice benefits retention most when errors are corrected rather than left to consolidate, and when the learner is willing to attempt retrieval despite the felt difficulty. Cognitive load theory adds a further constraint: working memory is narrow, and instructional talk that is vague, lengthy, or emotionally arousing consumes capacity that would otherwise be available for encoding. A correction that is long, indirect, or reproachful therefore imposes an extraneous load precisely at the moment when the learner most needs capacity for reformulation. This provides a cognitive rationale for the short, specific corrective cues observed in this study.

### **Feedback, Corrective Feedback, and Psychological Safety**

Feedback research offers the most direct theoretical bridge between communication and memorization quality. Synthesis work shows that feedback has large average effects on achievement but exceptionally high variance, with a meaningful proportion of interventions reducing performance. Feedback that addresses the task, the process, and self-regulation supports learning; feedback that addresses the self diverts attention toward ego defense. Meta-analytic reappraisal confirms that informational, task-level feedback outperforms evaluative or person-directed feedback, and that corrective information is more powerful than praise or punishment.

Second language acquisition research specifies the oral case. Corrective feedback varies by type, ranging from explicit correction and metalinguistic cues to recasts and elicitation, and these types differ in how reliably they produce uptake, that is, learner reformulation immediately following the correction. Later synthesis indicates that prompting techniques, which require the learner to self-correct, tend to outperform reformulation techniques for durable learning, and that timing and salience matter. Work on feedback literacy adds that the learner's capacity to make use of feedback is itself developed relationally over time, rather than being a fixed trait. Tahfidz setoran is an oral corrective feedback environment in nearly the technical sense of this literature, yet the two bodies of work have rarely been read together.

Whether corrective feedback can operate at all depends on a prior condition. Psychological safety, defined as a shared belief that the interpersonal context is safe for risk-taking, predicts whether people report errors and ask for help rather than concealing difficulty. In a memorization setting, concealment is

a direct threat to quality: a santri who avoids submitting a shaky passage protects himself in the short term and allows the error to stabilize. Research on affective teacher–student relationships confirms the pattern in schooling, showing consistent associations between relational quality and engagement, and stronger effects where the relationship is negative and the learner is at risk. Instructional communication research locates the same effect in specific behaviors, including rapport, confirmation, and clarity.

### **Relational Disclosure and Communicative Accommodation**

This study draws on two related theoretical ideas: relational disclosure and communicative accommodation. Social Penetration Theory helps explain how trust develops through repeated interpersonal contact and gradually deeper self-disclosure, while a communication accommodation perspective explains how speakers adjust tone, pace, emphasis, and emotional expression to fit the interlocutor and context. In educational settings, relational trust and perceived support are associated with engagement, adjustment, and persistence [10],[11].

The disclosure strand is supported by evidence that disclosure and liking are reciprocally related: people disclose more to those they like, and come to like those to whom they disclose. Experimental work on get-acquainted interactions confirms that the role a person occupies in a disclosure exchange, as discloser or listener, shapes closeness and impression formation. In tahfidz, the relevant disclosure is not biographical but performative. What the santri exposes is a defective recitation, that is, an unflattering sample of his own effort. The theoretical claim of this article is that the same graduated logic applies: exposure deepens as the perceived cost of exposure falls.

The accommodation strand supplies the complementary movement. Communication Accommodation Theory holds that speakers converge toward or diverge from their interlocutors, and that the evaluation of these adjustments depends on attributed motive rather than on surface behavior alone. A contextual and meta-analytical review across a large body of studies confirms that accommodation is associated with more positive relational and identity outcomes, while non-accommodation, including over- and under-accommodation, carries relational costs. Over-accommodation is directly relevant here: the classic demonstration is that speech simplified out of well-meaning concern can be experienced as patronizing and can depress the recipient rather than support him. Evaluation depends on inferred intent, so identical adjustments can be read as care or as condescension depending on the relational history in which they occur. This is why alignment cannot be reduced to softening: a supervisor who lowers demand for a capable but tired santri may be

accommodating; a supervisor who lowers demand habitually is under-serving him.

For pesantren-based tahfidz, these theories must be interpreted within Islamic norms of adab, humility, respect for authority, and communal discipline. Cultural alignment therefore does not weaken textual precision; rather, it makes discipline pedagogically acceptable and emotionally sustainable [12]. Motivation theory helps articulate why: environments that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness sustain internalized motivation, whereas controlling environments produce compliance that decays when supervision is withdrawn. In a 2.5-year program, decay under withdrawn supervision is not a hypothetical risk but the central practical problem.

### **Peer Learning and Distributed Accountability**

A final strand concerns the horizontal dimension. Peer learning research indicates that structured collaboration can produce cognitive and affective gains for both helper and helped, provided roles, tasks, and standards are specified rather than left informal. Peer-assisted Qur'anic review appears in the tahfidz literature primarily as a scheduling device, that is, as a way of increasing exposure when a single teacher cannot hear thirty students daily. Read alongside the peer learning literature, its function is larger. Peer review supplies additional retrieval opportunities, lowers the affective stakes of early error detection, and distributes the accountability that would otherwise rest entirely on a vertical relationship. This article treats peer-mediated review as a mechanism in its own right rather than as a substitute for supervisory attention.

### **Synthesis and Conceptual Framework**

Read together, these literatures converge on a single proposition. Memorization quality is produced by retrieval under correction; retrieval under correction requires the learner to expose error; exposure of error is governed by relational disclosure; and the learning value of the correction that follows is governed by accommodation. Communication is therefore not adjacent to the tahfidz method. It is the condition under which the method's cognitive machinery can operate at all.



**Table 1.** *Conceptual framework linking communicative conditions to memorization quality*

| Component                   | Theoretical basis                                 | Communicative Condition                                     | Memorization Consequence                               |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Willingness to expose error | Social Penetration Theory; psychological safety   | Graduated disclosure; low anticipated cost of failure       | Errors surface early instead of consolidating silently |
| Precision of correction     | Feedback level; oral corrective feedback          | Task-level, specific, short cues that require reformulation | Tajwīd accuracy and stable articulation                |
| Timing and calibration      | Communication Accommodation Theory                | Convergence to learner state, task demand, and channel      | Uptake occurs rather than being deferred or refused    |
| Cognitive availability      | Cognitive load theory                             | Brevity; low extraneous verbal and affective load           | Working memory remains available for encoding          |
| Persistence over time       | Self-determination; storytelling as meaning       | Autonomy-supportive framing; religious purpose              | Muraja'ah sustained across months, not weeks           |
| Frequency of retrieval      | Retrieval and distributed practice; peer learning | Peer-mediated rehearsal with defined roles                  | More spaced retrieval events; earlier error detection  |

**Source:** Authors' synthesis based on Altman and Taylor (1973), Giles (2016), Sweller, Ayres, and Kalyuga (2011), Deci and Ryan (2017), Nassaji and Kartchava (2021), and Brown, Roediger III, and McDaniel (2014).

Table 1 sets out the resulting conceptual framework, which organizes the analysis reported in Section 4 and the model developed in Section 5.

## Method

To address the research objectives, this study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore how interpersonal communication shapes the pedagogy of tahfīz in a Qur'anic boarding school. This approach enabled an in-depth examination of participants' lived experiences, communication practices, and meaning-making processes within the memorization environment. The following section describes the research design, study setting, participants, data collection procedures, and analytical methods employed to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

## Research Design

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological design to capture the lived experience of interpersonal communication in tahfidz supervision. This design was appropriate because the study sought to understand how participants interpreted daily communication practices rather than to measure communication effects through standardized instruments. Phenomenology allows researchers to remain close to participants' meanings while still developing interpretative themes about the structure of experience [13].

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was selected in preference to descriptive phenomenology because the research questions are explicitly interpretative: they ask not only what happens during setoran but what a correction means to the person receiving it. IPA is committed to a double hermeneutic, in which the researcher makes sense of the participant making sense of his experience, and to idiographic depth in preference to breadth. This commitment fits a study whose central empirical claim is that the same corrective utterance can be experienced as care or as humiliation depending on the relationship in which it is embedded. A design that measured correction frequency would be blind to precisely the variable of interest.

## Site and Participants

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muttaqin Taki Niode in Gorontalo, Indonesia. The site was selected because it offers an intensive tahfidz program in an urban context and relies heavily on daily setoran, muraja'ah, monthly simaan, and six-monthly evaluation. The principal participant was Ihyauddin Jazimi, the tahfidz supervisor and institutional leader responsible for daily memorization guidance. Supplementary perspectives were obtained from selected santri involved in routine setoran sessions, while institutional records were used to contextualize memorization progress and program routines.

Site selection was purposive and criterion-based. The criteria were: an intensive program with a defined juz target and a fixed cohort period; a daily setoran routine supervised by an identifiable lead teacher; an urban location, so that the competing-attention conditions described in the literature would be present; and documented institutional records permitting contextualization of progress. Santri participants were selected purposively for variation in memorization trajectory, including students progressing rapidly and students who had experienced stalled progress, on the reasoning that a study of correction must include those for whom correction has been difficult. Participation was

voluntary and could be withdrawn at any point without consequence for the participant's standing in the program.

## Data Sources and Collection Procedures

Data consisted of three sources: semi-structured interviews, naturalistic observation, and institutional documentation. Interviews explored the supervisor's communication routines, correction strategies, motivational practices, and adaptation to santri's emotional conditions. Conversations with selected santri focused on how they experienced correction, encouragement, discipline, and peer-supported review. Observation focused on tone, pacing, turn-taking, eye contact, corrective cues, and the rhythm of setoran. Institutional documents were used only to contextualize program structure, student cohort size, memorization progress, routine schedules, and pandemic adaptation. Personal addresses, detailed biodata, and facility inventories were excluded from the main results because they do not directly answer the research questions and may distract from the communication focus.

Observation was structured by a low-inference protocol that recorded, for each observed setoran episode, the sequence of turns, the point of supervisor intervention relative to the error, the form of the corrective move, whether reformulation was requested, and whether reformulation occurred. This protocol was adapted conceptually from the descriptive categories used in oral corrective feedback research, although it was applied qualitatively rather than to generate frequency counts, in keeping with the phenomenological design. Fieldnotes recorded paralinguistic features, including pause length before correction, volume shift, and the presence or absence of an interval allowing the santri to self-correct.

All interviews were conducted in settings that supported participant comfort and confidentiality. When permission was granted, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Observational fieldnotes were expanded after data collection to separate descriptive notes from preliminary interpretation. This procedure was intended to reduce recall loss and to maintain a transparent distinction between empirical observation and analytic inference [14]. Reporting follows the spirit of consolidated criteria for qualitative research, particularly with respect to disclosure of the research team, sampling rationale, setting, and analytic procedure.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis followed interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). First, transcripts and fieldnotes were read repeatedly to obtain holistic familiarity. Second, meaning units related to communication style, emotional response, correction, discipline, and memorization quality were marked. Third, descriptive codes were generated close to participants' language, for example "clear correction," "being listened to," "fear of error," "motivation after advice," and "peer checking." Fourth, interpretative codes were developed to explain the pedagogical function of those experiences, such as "directive clarity," "affective reassurance," "adaptive pacing," and "peer-mediated accountability." Fifth, related codes were clustered into superordinate themes. Sixth, themes were compared across interview, observation, and documentation sources to identify convergent and divergent evidence. Finally, the themes were refined into communication mechanisms that explain how interpersonal interaction shapes tahfidz quality.

Table 2 makes the analytic movement auditable by showing, for one mechanism, the path from participant language to the final mechanism label. The criteria applied at each ascent were: that the descriptive code stayed within the participant's own terms; that the interpretative code named a pedagogical function rather than a personality trait; and that a mechanism was retained only if it was evidenced in at least two of the three data sources. Codes that appeared in a single source were preserved in the audit trail as divergent cases rather than promoted to themes.

**Table 2.** *Illustrative analytic ladder for the mechanism "attentive correction"*

| Extract (participant language)                                                             | Descriptive code                    | Interpretative code                                | Mechanism            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| "He waits until I finish the verse before he says anything."                               | Waiting before correcting           | Deferred intervention preserving retrieval attempt | Attentive correction |
| "If I am tired he does not push, but the next day he asks again."                          | Adjusting pressure; returning later | Adaptive pacing without lowering standard          | Attentive correction |
| "I am not afraid to repeat in front of him."                                               | Not afraid to repeat                | Reduced affective cost of exposing error           | Attentive correction |
| Observation: pause of several seconds after the mispronounced word before the cue is given | Pause before cue                    | Space created for self-correction                  | Attentive correction |

**Source:** *authors' coding records.*

## **Trustworthiness, Ethics, and Researcher Reflexivity**

Credibility was strengthened through triangulation of interviews, observation, and institutional records. Member checking was conducted by sharing synthesized interpretations with participants to confirm whether the themes reflected their experience. Dependability was supported through an audit trail consisting of interview guides, analytic memos, coding notes, and theme-development records. Confirmability was supported by reflexive notes documenting the researcher's assumptions about pesantren life and tahfidz pedagogy. Transferability was addressed through thick description of the institutional context and interactional routines, while recognizing that the study is not designed for statistical generalization. These procedures follow established criteria for demonstrating trustworthiness in qualitative analysis. Ethical safeguards included informed consent, confidentiality, restricted access to recordings and transcripts, and the removal of unnecessary personal identifiers from the manuscript.

Reflexivity requires an explicit statement of position. The research team is affiliated with an Islamic higher education institution in the same province as the research site and shares the participants' religious commitments. This produced access, linguistic fluency in the register of pesantren talk, and an interpretive sensitivity to adab that an outsider would have needed to reconstruct. It also produced a specific risk: a predisposition to read the supervisor's conduct charitably and to interpret warmth where a distant observer might see hierarchy. Three counter-measures were used. First, negative-case analysis was applied by deliberately seeking accounts in which correction was experienced as discouraging. Second, the low-inference observation protocol constrained interpretation to what was said and when. Third, member checking was conducted with santri separately from the supervisor, so that agreement was not produced by the supervisor's presence. Residual bias cannot be excluded, and Section 6 treats this as a limitation rather than a resolved problem.

## **Result and Discussion**

This section presents the findings and discusses them in relation to the study's theoretical framework. It begins by outlining the institutional and pedagogical context directly relevant to interpersonal communication practices in the tahfīz learning environment. The subsequent discussion analyzes how communication between caregivers and students shapes memorization processes, learner engagement, and the sustainability of Qur'anic memorization.

## Context Directly Relevant to Communication Practice

Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muttaqiin Taki Niode was established on October 20, 2010, in Gorontalo. The institution focuses on producing huffaz who combine memorization mastery with akhlaqul karimah. The fourth cohort, initiated in 2020, consisted of 30 male santri enrolled in a 2.5-year tahfidz program with a target of completing 30 juz. The daily rhythm of the pesantren places interpersonal communication at the center of learning because santri repeatedly submit memorized passages, receive oral correction, and participate in review routines.

**Table 3.** *Condensed institutional context and communication-relevant routines*

| Aspect              | Institutional information                                                 | Relevance to interpersonal communication                                      |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Site                | Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muttaqiin Taki Niode, Gorontalo      | Urban pesantren context requiring discipline amid external distractions       |
| Program cohort      | 30 male santri in a 2.5-year tahfidz program                              | Repeated interaction enables longitudinal supervisor-santri familiarity       |
| Daily routine       | Setoran after prayer periods, muraja'ah, and night study                  | Creates frequent corrective and motivational encounters                       |
| Periodic routine    | Monthly simaan and six-monthly evaluations                                | Provides formal moments for feedback, accountability, and progress monitoring |
| Peer support        | Senior santri assist junior santri in review and correction               | Distributes communication beyond vertical supervisor-santri exchange          |
| Pandemic adaptation | 15 santri followed video-call setoran from home while 15 remained on site | Shows adaptive communication under disrupted learning conditions              |

**Source:** *revised and condensed from PPTQ Al-Muttaqiin Taki Niode institutional profile and field documentation.*

Two features of this context deserve emphasis before the mechanisms are presented. First, the supervisor-santri ratio makes exhaustive individual attention impossible: a single lead supervisor cannot hear thirty full submissions daily. Communication is therefore rationed, and the way it is rationed is itself pedagogically consequential. Second, the cohort structure means that the same pair of interlocutors meets repeatedly over two and a half years. This is the temporal condition under which graduated disclosure becomes possible; in a short program, the relational history required for low-cost error exposure would not have time to accumulate.

## Directive Clarity in Daily Setoran

The first mechanism identified was directive clarity. During setoran, the tahfidz supervisor maintained authority by setting clear expectations about punctuality, recitation readiness, tajwīd accuracy, and continuity of muraja'ah. This directive style was not experienced merely as control; it structured the learning situation so that santri knew what must be prepared, how mistakes would be corrected, and what standard counted as acceptable recitation. In observation, directive communication appeared through short corrective cues, repetition requests, and explicit reminders to review previously memorized passages before adding new material.

Directive clarity contributed to memorization quality by reducing ambiguity. Santri were not left to infer whether an error concerned pronunciation, fluency, or retention. The supervisor's corrections focused on specific oral features, especially tajwīd, pause patterns, and continuity of recitation. This precision is pedagogically important because repeated uncorrected errors can become stable mistakes in memorized passages. The finding supports tahfidz studies that emphasize immediate correction and repeated review as central to Qur'anic memorization quality.

Read against feedback theory, the significant feature of these corrections is their level rather than their firmness. The observed corrective moves addressed the task and the process: which letter, which vowel length, which pause, which passage to review before the next submission. They did not address the person. This is the distinction that feedback synthesis identifies as decisive for whether feedback helps or harms. A directive supervisor who says that a mad was shortened is operating at the task level; a directive supervisor who says that a santri is careless is operating at the self level, and the literature predicts that the second will depress performance even though both are firm. The clarity, not the severity, is doing the work.

Brevity is a second and less obvious feature. Corrective cues were short and were delivered at the boundary of a phrase rather than layered over continuing recitation. This preserves working memory for the reformulation that follows, and is consistent with the prediction of cognitive load theory that instructional talk competes with encoding for the same narrow capacity [38]. A supervisor who corrects at length is not being more thorough; he is spending the learner's capacity on listening at exactly the moment the learner needs it for retrieval.

## **Expressive Religious Storytelling as Motivational Reinforcement**

The second mechanism was expressive religious storytelling. The supervisor used narratives about prophetic virtues, the dignity of memorizing the Qur'an, and the moral responsibility of huffaz to frame memorization as a spiritual vocation rather than a technical task. This style was especially visible after formal sessions and during moments when santri appeared fatigued. Storytelling gave emotional meaning to repetition, which otherwise can become monotonous. It also connected daily discipline with long-term religious aspiration.

Students' accounts indicated that this expressive style helped sustain perseverance when memorization progress was slow. The function of storytelling was not to replace correction but to interpret correction as part of spiritual growth. In this sense, expressive communication worked together with directive clarity: the supervisor corrected errors firmly while also reminding santri why endurance mattered. This combination is consistent with Islamic education scholarship that views communication as a medium for both cognitive learning and moral-spiritual internalization [15].

The placement of storytelling was as informative as its content. It occurred after correction rather than instead of it, and outside the *setoran* turn rather than within it. This sequencing matters. Motivational framing delivered during a corrective turn would add load at the point of reformulation; delivered afterward, it supplies the interpretive frame in which the correction is retrospectively understood. In self-determination terms, the narratives supported internalization by supplying a rationale that connected an externally imposed demand to a value the santri already held. This is the mechanism by which discipline survives the withdrawal of supervision, which is the practical problem any multi-year program must solve.

A caution is warranted. Because the accounts collected here are retrospective and self-reported, it is not possible to distinguish narratives that genuinely sustained persistence from narratives that santri have learned to cite as the expected explanation for their persistence. The *pesantren* is a setting in which spiritual framing is the culturally available vocabulary for effort. The claim advanced here is therefore modest: storytelling was consistently present, consistently placed outside corrective turns, and consistently invoked by santri when accounting for endurance. That is evidence of function, not proof of causation.



## Attentive Correction and Emotional Safety

The third mechanism was attentive correction. Observation and participant accounts showed that santri were more willing to submit recitation when correction was delivered with attention to their emotional condition. The supervisor listened to the recitation before intervening, identified specific errors, and adjusted the intensity of correction when santri appeared anxious or exhausted. Attentiveness did not eliminate discipline; rather, it made discipline more sustainable because students perceived correction as guidance rather than humiliation.

This mechanism is important in phenomenological terms because the meaning of correction depends on how it is experienced by the learner. The same error correction can be perceived as support or threat depending on tone, timing, and relational trust. In this study, attentive communication helped build psychological safety, allowing santri to admit difficulty, repeat recitation, and continue practice after mistakes. This supports research showing that teacher-student relational quality and perceived support contribute to engagement, adjustment, and academic persistence.

The observational data locate the mechanism in a specific and unglamorous behavior: the pause. The supervisor did not intervene at the instant of error. He allowed the phrase to complete, or allowed a brief interval, before cueing. Two consequences follow. First, the santri retains the opportunity to self-correct, which is the condition under which retrieval practice yields its strongest retention benefit and which prompting-based corrective feedback is designed to preserve. Second, the deferral communicates that the error is not an emergency. Immediate interruption signals that failure is intolerable; a completed phrase signals that failure is expected and survivable.

This is the point at which psychological safety becomes measurable in memorization terms rather than in affective terms alone. The behavior that safety enables is not comfort but disclosure: the santri submits the passage he is unsure of instead of the passage he is confident in. A santri who submits only what he has mastered receives correction he does not need and conceals the errors that will consolidate. This is the most consequential finding in the study, because it identifies the precise pathway by which an affective variable produces a technical outcome. Emotional safety does not improve tajwīd. It improves the sample of recitation that the supervisor gets to hear, and the supervisor's corrections improve tajwīd.

Accommodation theory supplies the necessary qualification. Adjustment can fail by excess as well as by deficit. A supervisor who consistently reduces demand for a santri he perceives as fragile is over-accommodating, and the

literature indicates that well-intentioned over-accommodation is experienced as patronizing and can undermine the recipient [16],[17],[18],[19]. The distinction is discernible in the observed practice: pressure was adjusted for the session, but the standard was restored at the next encounter. The santri quoted in Table 2 captures this precisely when he notes that the supervisor does not push when he is tired but asks again the following day. Adjustment was episodic; the standard was not.

### **Dialogic Support and Peer-Mediated Accountability**

The fourth mechanism was dialogic support. Although pesantren communication is shaped by hierarchy, the supervisor opened limited but meaningful spaces for consultation, especially through senior santri and group-based muraja'ah. Peer review enabled santri to test recitation before formal setoran, identify mistakes earlier, and receive correction in a less intimidating setting. This distributed the responsibility for memorization quality across the learning community.

Peer-mediated communication also strengthened accountability. Senior santri functioned as intermediaries between the supervisor's formal authority and the junior students' daily practice. This reduced dependence on one-directional correction and created a communal rhythm of checking, repeating, and encouraging. The finding aligns with studies of peer-assisted Qur'anic memorization and collective review, which show that structured collaboration can increase motivation and retention.

The peer layer performed three distinguishable functions in this cohort. It multiplied retrieval events beyond what a single supervisor could hear, which addresses the ratio constraint noted in Section 4.1 and increases distributed practice. It lowered the threshold for first disclosure, since a passage rehearsed before peers has already been exposed once before it reaches the supervisor. And it produced a graded exposure sequence: private rehearsal, then peer listening, then supervisory setoran, then public simaan. Each step raises the stakes slightly. This graduated structure is, in effect, an institutionalized version of the disclosure logic that Social Penetration Theory describes at the dyadic level [20],[21].

One divergent case is worth recording. Not all santri preferred group review. One participant reported that group muraja'ah was less effective for him than individual review because concentration was easier alone. This case was retained rather than smoothed away. It indicates that peer mediation trades affective safety against attentional cost, and that the trade is not resolved identically for every learner. The mechanism is real but not uniform, and the supervisor's practice of permitting santri to choose their own review technique

and timing, described in Section 4.6, appears to be a practical acknowledgement of this variance.

## **Communicative Practices in Situ: Participant Accounts**

This subsection presents the participant accounts on which the mechanisms above were built, organized by communicative form. The extracts are grouped into verbal, non-verbal and psychological, and obstacle-management strategies. Each extract is annotated with the mechanism it evidences, so that the relationship between data and interpretation remains visible.

### **A. Verbal Communication Strategies (Direct Interaction)**

#### **1. Communication of memorization submission to the teacher (vertical communication)**

“So far, when it comes to group muraja’ah or recitation sessions, they are conducted after the Isha prayer, where one juz is recited and listened to by senior students on a rotating basis. According to them, this method is more effective compared to doing it individually.” (Santri 1)

“For the students, the practice of repeating Qur’an memorization using the muraja’ah method has become a routine at this Islamic boarding school. It is sometimes carried out in groups after they finish their Qur’an study sessions with the teacher.” (Teacher 1)

These accounts evidence dialogic support and peer-mediated accountability (Section 4.5). The rotation of listening roles among senior students institutionalizes additional retrieval events and distributes correction beyond the vertical channel [40].

#### **2. Individual communication with the teacher for better focus**

“The application of the muraja’ah method to the teacher involves submitting new memorization twice, after the dawn (subuh) and noon (zhuhur) prayers, while muraja’ah for one quarter juz is done after the sunset (maghrib) prayer. However, it is felt that the time allocated for muraja’ah does not significantly facilitate the tahfidz activities; rather, the effectiveness is more influenced by the individual application of the method, as it allows for easier concentration compared to group sessions.” (Santri 2)

This is the divergent case discussed in Section 4.5. It indicates that the peer mechanism carries an attentional cost that is not distributed evenly across learners, and it supports the supervisor’s practice of devolving technique and timing decisions to the santri.

## **B. Non-Verbal and Psychological Communication Strategies**

### **3. Motivational communication and body language from the teacher**

“In this regard, the teacher sometimes creates a relaxed atmosphere and uses positive body language and friendly facial expressions when interacting with the students.” (Teacher 2)

This evidences attentive correction (Section 4.4). Non-verbal warmth functions here as an accommodative signal that lowers the anticipated cost of exposing error, rather than as a substitute for corrective precision [22].

### **4. Communication to Overcome Boredom**

“At this point, the teacher frequently provides motivation to students who experience fatigue from repeating their memorization, especially since there are still students who lack concentration.” (Santri 3)

This evidences expressive storytelling and adaptive pacing (Sections 4.3 and 4.4). Fatigue is treated as a condition to be addressed communicatively rather than as a disciplinary failure.

### **5. Mutual Listening and Correction among Students**

“Students appear to submit their Qur’an memorization to the teacher in groups, so that other students listen to their peers’ memorization and identify errors in recitation and memorization, which are then corrected by the teacher.” (Santri 4)

### **6. Reciprocal Communication within Groups**

“In groups, students are seen taking turns repeating memorization, with one student performing muraja’ah while the others listen and pay attention.” (Teacher 2)

Extracts 5 and 6 evidence the graded exposure sequence described in Section 4.5: peer detection precedes supervisory correction, so that errors surface at a lower affective cost before they reach the formal setoran turn.

## **C. Communication Strategies to Overcome Obstacles**

### **7. Communication to address students’ internal challenges**

“The primary method applied at the Al-Muttaqiin Taki Niode Islamic Boarding School in Gorontalo City is the muraja’ah method. However, students often face various memorization challenges, for which solutions are continuously sought.” (Teacher 3)

## 8. Communication to determine technique and time

“The teacher also asks students to determine for themselves the technique, time, and amount of memorization they wish to repeat, without necessarily consulting the teacher. For example, if a student wishes to repeat one juz within two hours, they only need to decide when and where to do it and then inform the teacher.” (Teacher 3)

Extract 8 is theoretically significant. Devolving technique and scheduling to the santri while retaining the standard for submission is an autonomy-supportive move within a hierarchical structure. Self-determination theory predicts that such structured autonomy sustains internalized motivation more reliably than either unstructured freedom or full external control. It also constitutes an accommodative adjustment to individual variance of the kind evidenced by the divergent case in extract 2.

## Adaptive Alignment during COVID-19 Disruption

The fifth mechanism was adaptive alignment. During COVID-19 restrictions, the pesantren maintained memorization continuity through video-call setoran for 15 santri studying from home, while 15 santri remained on site. Parents were involved in monitoring at-home students, and the supervisor adjusted communication to compensate for the reduced immediacy of face-to-face interaction. Verbal affirmation, clearer instructions, and more explicit monitoring became necessary because the supervisor could not rely fully on physical co-presence, gaze, and immediate environmental control.

The disruption operated as a natural test of the framework in Table 1, because it removed the non-verbal channel while leaving the task unchanged. The compensations reported by the supervisor were channel-specific rather than general. Where co-presence had previously carried reassurance without words, reassurance had to be spoken. Where a glance had previously signalled that a correction was minor, the correction had to be explicitly graded. Where the physical setting had regulated attention, parents were recruited to perform that regulation. This is accommodation in the technical sense: convergence toward the communicative demands of an altered channel. It also illustrates the cost of non-accommodation. A supervisor who transferred his face-to-face register unchanged to a video call would have under-accommodated, because cues his santri relied on were no longer being transmitted.

Institutional records showed that this adaptation preserved learning continuity. In 2020, 12 students were prepared for graduation compared with 6 in the previous year. Within the cohort, memorization progress ranged from 1 to 30 juz, and several santri achieved 16 juz or more during the program period.

Among the 15 santri who remained on site, 13 advanced toward completion. These figures should not be interpreted as causal proof because the design is qualitative and single-site. They nevertheless provide contextual evidence that communication-centered supervision helped sustain tahfidz routines under disrupted conditions.

This finding should be read alongside the wider evidence on emergency remote instruction, which documents substantial disruption to engagement and heavy dependence on household support and technological readiness during the same period. Indonesian evidence in particular indicates that continuity depended on collaboration among teachers, parents, and schools rather than on the technology itself. The present case is consistent with that pattern and adds a mechanism-level observation: what was transferred to parents was not instruction but the environmental regulation of attention, while correction remained with the supervisor. This division of communicative labour, rather than the video call as such, appears to be what preserved the routine.

**Table 4.** *Communication mechanisms and memorization-quality pathways*

| Mechanism               | Communication indicators                                                                                | Immediate learner response                                      | Memorization-quality pathway                                   |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Directive clarity       | Explicit standards, short task-level corrective cues, clear repetition requests                         | Reduced ambiguity about errors; low extraneous load             | Improved fluency and tajwid accuracy                           |
| Expressive storytelling | Religious narratives, moral reminders, motivational reflection placed after correction                  | Renewed purpose and endurance; rationale for demand             | Greater persistence in muraja'ah across months                 |
| Attentive correction    | Listening before intervening, pause allowing self-correction, tone adjustment, specific feedback        | Reduced fear of correction; willingness to expose weak passages | Errors surface early; greater willingness to repeat and revise |
| Dialogic support        | Consultation, senior-santri mentoring, peer checking, devolved technique choice                         | Shared responsibility; graded exposure before formal setoran    | More spaced retrieval events; more stable retention            |
| Adaptive alignment      | Remote setoran, parental monitoring of attention, explicit verbal substitution for lost non-verbal cues | Continuity under disruption                                     | Maintained progress during learning interruption               |

**Source:** *Authors' analysis of interview, observation, and documentary data.*

## Discussion

The findings show that interpersonal communication in tahfidz supervision operates as a mechanism that organizes discipline, emotion, and oral accuracy. The supervisor's directive style provided the structure needed for precise memorization, while expressive storytelling gave spiritual meaning to repetition. Attentive correction preserved emotional safety, dialogic support distributed accountability, and adaptive alignment sustained learning during crisis. These mechanisms indicate that tahfidz quality emerges from the interaction between technical correction and relational trust.

### From Disclosure to Alignment: A Proposed Model

The five mechanisms are not a list of independent good practices. They form a sequence, and the sequence is what the title of this article names. The model proposed here has four linked propositions.

First, memorization quality is produced by retrieval under correction, not by exposure. This is a cognitive premise imported from established evidence rather than a finding of this study [23],[24],[25]. Second, retrieval under correction requires the santri to attempt passages he may fail, which means the sample of recitation available for correction is determined by the learner's willingness to expose weakness. Third, that willingness is governed by graduated relational disclosure: it accumulates through repeated low-cost encounters in which failure proved survivable, exactly as disclosure theory describes for relational depth [26],[27],[28]. Fourth, once disclosure has produced an honest sample, the learning value of what follows is governed by accommodation: whether the correction is calibrated to the learner's state, the task, and the channel [29],[30],[31].

Stated as a mechanism: disclosure determines what the supervisor gets to hear; alignment determines what the santri can do with what he hears. Each without the other fails in a specific and recognizable way. Disclosure without alignment yields a supervisor who receives honest recitation and responds with corrections that are ill-timed, person-directed, or overlong, so that the santri stops exposing weakness and the sample degrades. Alignment without disclosure yields a supervisor who is warm, well-timed, and precise about the wrong material, because the santri is submitting only what he has mastered. The second failure is the more dangerous because it is invisible: the setoran runs smoothly, the corrections are gentle and accurate, and the errors consolidate untouched. Table 5 sets out the model.

**Table 5.** *The Disclosure-to-Alignment model of tahfidz communication*

| Stage      | Communicative work                                                                                               | What it governs                                                              | Failure mode if absent                                                           |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Disclosure | Repeated low-cost encounters; failure shown to be survivable; graded peer-then-supervisor exposure               | The honesty of the recitation sample submitted for correction                | Santri submits only mastered passages; errors consolidate silently and invisibly |
| Alignment  | Task-level cues; deferred intervention; brevity; adjustment to state and channel; standard restored next session | The cognitive usability and uptake of the correction given                   | Correction is accurate but unusable; santri withdraws from exposure over time    |
| Coupling   | Storytelling supplying rationale; devolved technique choice within retained standards                            | Whether the cycle survives fatigue, slow progress, and withdrawn supervision | Compliance decays once external monitoring is removed                            |

**Source:** *authors' model, synthesized from the five mechanisms in Table 4.*

### Authority and Warmth as a Working Combination

Theoretically, the findings extend relational and accommodation-oriented approaches to the context of Islamic memorization education. Relational trust developed through repeated encounters in setoran, informal advice, and daily proximity. This trust made students more receptive to correction because they interpreted the supervisor's feedback as care rather than punishment. At the same time, the supervisor adjusted tone, pacing, humor, and firmness according to students' readiness and the learning situation. Such adjustment reflects the core insight of communication accommodation: effective communication requires alignment with the interlocutor and context, not merely delivery of information [32],[33].

The study also clarifies the role of hierarchy in pesantren communication. Hierarchy did not disappear; the supervisor retained authority over standards, evaluation, and discipline. However, authority became pedagogically productive when paired with attentiveness and emotional restraint. In this context, warmth did not weaken discipline, and discipline did not require coercion. The supervisor's communicative authority was accepted because it was embedded in adab, spiritual purpose, and consistent care. This supports scholarship arguing that Islamic educational communication is shaped by moral norms as well as instructional goals [34],[35],[36].

The mechanism underlying this compatibility can now be stated more precisely than the general claim that warmth and rigour coexist. They are compatible because they operate on different objects. Warmth operates on the anticipated cost of exposure; rigour operates on the standard applied to what is



exposed. Because these are different objects, adjusting one does not require adjusting the other, which is why the supervisor could reduce pressure on a fatigued santri in the evening and restore the full standard the next morning without contradiction. The pesantren's framing of adab supplies the cultural warrant for exactly this separation: submitting to correction is a virtue, so being corrected does not implicate one's standing. Where correction implicates standing, warmth and rigour do become a trade-off, and the accommodation literature's warning about over-accommodation identifies the predictable result: demand is quietly lowered for the learners believed to need protection, and they are thereby under-served [37].

### **Method as a Communicatively Mediated Practice**

The findings further suggest that memorization routines should not be analyzed only as techniques. Setoran, muraja'ah, simaan, and evaluation become effective because they are communicatively mediated. Setoran allows the supervisor to correct errors immediately. Muraja'ah allows students to stabilize memory through repetition. Simaan provides public accountability. Peer checking prepares students for formal submission. Each routine depends on communicative norms that determine whether students experience the process as meaningful, intimidating, supportive, or burdensome. This explains why the same memorization method may produce different outcomes across institutions.

This argument has a direct implication for the tahfidz methods literature. Studies that compare methods while holding delivery unexamined are, in effect, comparing labels. Two institutions running identical sabaq-sabqi-manzil schedules may differ in whether errors surface, whether corrections are task-level, whether intervention is deferred long enough to permit self-correction, and whether the standard is restored after episodic adjustment. On the model proposed here, those differences should predict outcome variance more strongly than the method label does. This is a testable claim, and Section 6 identifies the design that would test it.

### **Remote Supervision: a Bounded Implication**

In relation to the reviewer concern about speculative technological claims, this revised discussion narrows the implication to remote tahfidz supervision rather than proposing unsupported AI-based educational tools. The COVID-19 experience indicates that remote setoran can preserve continuity when supported by clear verbal instructions, parental monitoring, and consistent follow-up. However, this finding does not justify broad claims about human-machine communication because the study did not collect data from AI-based systems.

Future technology-related research should therefore be designed separately and supported by direct empirical evidence.

What the case does support is narrower and more useful. Remote setoran preserved the corrective function but not the disclosure conditions that make correction worth giving. Under co-presence, the supervisor could read hesitation and adjust before the santri had to admit anything; on a video call, hesitation had to be reported to be known. The pandemic adaptation therefore did not merely lose bandwidth; it shifted the burden of disclosure onto the learner at precisely the moment when the relational cues that ordinarily lower the cost of disclosure were degraded. This suggests a specific design principle for remote tahfidz: the substitution required is not more technology but explicit verbal replacement of the accommodative cues that co-presence had been carrying implicitly, together with an external agent, here the parents, to hold the environmental regulation the physical setting had provided [38],[39].

### **Practical Implications**

Practically, the study suggests that tahfidz supervisors need communicative competence in addition to mastery of Qur'anic recitation. Training for supervisors should include techniques for precise oral correction, emotionally safe feedback, adaptive tone, motivational storytelling, and peer-review facilitation. Institutions should also create evaluation formats that assess not only the number of juz memorized but also the communicative process that supports fluency, accuracy, and retention. This is particularly important in intensive programs where students face fatigue, anxiety, and uneven memorization progress.

Four recommendations follow more specifically from the model. First, supervisor development should target the level of correction rather than its firmness, since the evidence indicates that task-level and process-level feedback helps while person-level feedback harms, irrespective of tone [40],[41]. Second, the pause before intervention should be treated as a trainable technique rather than a matter of temperament: deferring the cue until the phrase completes preserves the self-correction opportunity that drives retention [42],[43]. Third, peer review should be structured with explicit roles and standards rather than left informal, because the peer learning literature attributes its gains to structure and this study found variance in how santri experience group work [44]. Fourth, institutions should monitor a variable they currently do not collect: whether santri submit their weakest passages or their strongest. On the model proposed here, that single indicator captures the health of the disclosure stage more directly than any measure of juz completed.

## Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted in one urban pesantren, so the findings cannot be generalized statistically to all tahfidz institutions. Second, the principal empirical focus was one central tahfidz supervisor, making the findings strongly tied to his leadership style and communicative personality. Third, the number of supplementary santri perspectives was limited, which means that student experiences may not capture the full diversity of responses within the cohort. Fourth, as a qualitative phenomenological study, the analysis depends on interpretation and is therefore vulnerable to researcher subjectivity despite triangulation, member checking, and reflexive memoing. Fifth, institutional progress figures provide contextual evidence but do not establish causal effects of communication style on memorization outcomes.

Three further limitations should be stated explicitly. The cohort was exclusively male, and because the mechanisms proposed here concern the cost of exposing failure, they may operate differently where gender shapes the norms of deference and correction; evidence from women's pesantren suggests the relational configuration is not identical [45]. The graduation and progress figures for 2020 coincide with the pandemic adaptation, so the comparison with the previous year confounds cohort composition, program maturity, and the disruption itself; the figures are reported as context and cannot be read as an effect. Finally, member checking confirms that participants recognize the interpretation, which is a check on plausibility rather than on validity: participants may share the researchers' interpretive frame precisely because it is the culturally available one [46].

Future research should compare multiple pesantren with different sizes, leadership structures, gender compositions, and urban-rural contexts. Longitudinal designs could track how specific communicative moves influence memorization trajectories over time. Mixed-method studies could combine observation, interview, and performance-based memorization assessment to estimate the relationship between feedback style, tajwīd accuracy, retention, and learner motivation. Research on remote tahfidz supervision should also examine how video-call setoran changes correction, attention, parental involvement, and emotional support.

The model proposed in Section 5.1 generates testable predictions, and naming them is more useful than a general call for further work. The disclosure proposition predicts that the proportion of submitted passages that are weak rather than mastered will correlate with subsequent tajwīd accuracy, and that this proportion will rise with relational tenure. The alignment proposition

predicts that deferred, task-level, brief cues will produce higher uptake than immediate, person-directed, or extended corrections, which is directly measurable using the categories established in oral corrective feedback research [47],[48],[49]. The coupling proposition predicts that santri in autonomy-supportive supervision will sustain *muraja'ah* more consistently during unsupervised periods, such as holidays, than santri under controlling supervision [50],[51],[52]. Each of these could be tested with observational coding and existing program records, without requiring an intervention design and without the ethical difficulty of deliberately degrading a supervisor's communication.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that interpersonal communication is a central mechanism for the quality of Qur'anic memorization at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muttaqin Taki Niode. The supervisor's communication did not merely accompany memorization routines; it shaped how those routines were experienced and sustained. Directive clarity helped santri understand standards and correct errors. Expressive religious storytelling strengthened motivation and spiritual meaning. Attentive correction created emotional safety. Dialogic and peer-mediated support distributed accountability. Adaptive alignment preserved learning continuity during COVID-19 disruption.

The article's central contribution is to specify how these mechanisms combine rather than merely to enumerate them. The Disclosure-to-Alignment model holds that memorization quality depends on retrieval under correction; that retrieval under correction requires the santri to expose passages he may fail; that this exposure is produced by graduated relational disclosure rather than by instruction; and that the learning value of the correction which follows is determined by accommodation to the learner's state, the task, and the channel. Emotional safety, on this account, does not improve recitation directly. It improves the honesty of the sample the supervisor is given, and correction does the rest. This reframes an affective variable as a technical one and locates it at a point where supervisors can act on it.

The findings contribute to Islamic education scholarship by showing that *tahfidz* success depends on the integration of oral precision, relational trust, and culturally grounded discipline. The study also contributes to interpersonal communication scholarship by demonstrating how disclosure, alignment, and accommodation operate in a hierarchical yet caring faith-based educational environment, and by reading a classical Islamic pedagogy alongside contemporary evidence on retrieval practice and corrective feedback without reducing either to the other. Practically, *pesantren* should treat communication

training as part of tahfidz supervisor development, because memorization quality is shaped not only by repetition and evaluation but also by how correction, motivation, and discipline are communicated.

### Author Contributions

**Mustaqimah:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Wahidah Suryani:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. **Nuzlan Hunowu** and **Pattaling:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation.

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### Interview and Observation Sources

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5. Fajar Waluyo, Student of PPTQ Al-Muttaqiin, March 20, 2021.
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7. Jazim, Teacher of PPTQ Al-Muttaqiin, March 21, 2021.
8. Ibrahim, Teacher of PPTQ Al-Muttaqiin, March 21, 2021.

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