

Behavioristic Approach in Improving Students' Qur'an Memorization At MTs Darul Hikmah

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Manuscript received : 19-11-2025; revised : 29-12-2025; accepted : 14-01-2026. date of publication: 23-01-2026

Abstract

Purpose – The improvement of Qur'an memorization among madrasah students requires effective instructional strategies capable of fostering consistency, discipline, and long-term retention. The behavioristic approach is considered relevant because it emphasizes habit formation through stimulus, response, and reinforcement mechanisms. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the behavioristic approach in improving students' Qur'an memorization at MTs Darul Hikmah.

Design/Methodology/Approach – This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the Qur'an Hadith teacher and supported by relevant documentation. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to ensure systematic interpretation.

Findings – The findings indicate that structured repetition (muraja'ah), consistent positive reinforcement, and disciplined memorization routines significantly enhance students' memorization consistency and retention. The application of reinforcement strategies, such as verbal praise and structured evaluation, contributes to strengthening students' learning discipline and gradually fostering intrinsic motivation. The stimulus-response pattern implemented in daily memorization activities creates stable learning habits and improves memorization endurance.

Originality/Value – This study highlights the contextual application of behavioristic learning theory in Islamic secondary education, particularly in Qur'an memorization practices. It contributes practical insights for teachers in designing structured and reinforcement-based memorization systems to improve students' learning outcomes within religious education settings.

Keywords: Behavioristic Approach, Qur'an Memorization, Reinforcement, Learning Discipline

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I. INTRODUCTION

Qur'an memorization learning at the madrasah tsanawiyah level plays a strategic role in shaping students' religious character while simultaneously fostering learning discipline. At this stage of early adolescence, students require structured habituation and consistent behavioral reinforcement to develop stable learning patterns. In practice, however, memorization activities often face several challenges, including inconsistent muraja'ah (review practices), low learning motivation, and the absence of systematic instructional strategies capable of establishing sustainable memorization habits. These conditions indicate that Qur'an memorization learning should not rely solely on cognitive mastery but must also emphasize the formation of structured learning behaviors.

From the perspective of learning theory, the behavioristic approach conceptualizes learning as observable behavioral change resulting from interactions between stimulus and response strengthened through reinforcement. Dimiyati and Mudjiono (2018) explain that learning represents a transformation of behavior shaped through experience and interaction with the learning environment. Similarly, Slameto (2018) argues that directed and repeated practice can establish relatively permanent learning habits. Suyadi (2019) further highlights that behavioristic principles are particularly effective in

instructional contexts that require repetition and precision, as consistent stimuli can generate measurable behavioral responses. These theoretical perspectives suggest that Qur'an memorization—an activity fundamentally dependent on repetition and reinforcement—is conceptually aligned with behavioristic learning principles.

Within the broader discourse on instructional strategies, Sanjaya (2020) states that systematically designed learning processes based on structured practice can form stable patterns of learning behavior. Rusman (2019) also emphasizes that instructional models focusing on habituation and periodic evaluation can enhance students' learning consistency. In addition, Hamalik (2019) explains that continuous practice will eventually produce automatic responses that become relatively permanent over time. From a motivational perspective, Uno (2021) and Sardiman (2018) highlight the importance of reinforcement in increasing the frequency of desired behaviors while strengthening sustainable learning motivation. Taken together, these perspectives confirm that stimulus control, structured repetition, and reinforcement are central elements in developing disciplined learning behavior.

Within the context of Islamic education, habituation has long been recognized as a fundamental method for internalizing religious values. Nata (2020) emphasizes that Islamic education prioritizes repetitive training and continuous practice in order to cultivate religious character. Ramayulis (2019) similarly argues that the objectives of Islamic education include the development of disciplined and moral behavior through structured and continuous educational practices. These perspectives indicate that the behavioristic approach is not contradictory to Islamic educational philosophy. On the contrary, it is conceptually compatible with the tradition of habituation that has long characterized religious instruction, particularly in the practice of Qur'an memorization.

Several educational studies in Indonesia have shown that reinforcement systems and structured habituation can contribute to improving students' discipline and learning consistency. However, most of these discussions remain general within the broader frameworks of religious education or learning theory and do not specifically analyze the contextual implementation of behavioristic principles in improving Qur'an memorization at the madrasah tsanawiyah level through field-based qualitative research. This limitation reveals a research gap that requires contextual and empirical analysis of how stimulus, reinforcement, and structured habituation operate in real classroom settings of Qur'an memorization.

Based on this gap, this study aims to describe and analyze the implementation of the behavioristic approach in improving students' Qur'an memorization at MTs Darul Hikmah. Specifically, this research examines the forms of stimulus provided by teachers, the reinforcement patterns applied during memorization activities, the structured muraja'ah mechanisms implemented in the learning process, and their impact on students' memorization consistency and quality. By employing a qualitative case study design, this research seeks to contribute both conceptually—by strengthening the application of behavioristic theory within Islamic secondary education—and practically, by providing structured insights for teachers in designing reinforcement-based memorization systems.

The current practice of Qur'an memorization learning at the madrasah level requires a structured behavioral framework that integrates repetition, reinforcement, and disciplined learning routines. In this study, the behavioristic approach is positioned not merely as a classical learning theory but as a practical pedagogical model that aligns with Islamic educational principles of habituation and character formation. Through this integrative perspective, this research argues that effective memorization should be understood not only as a cognitive achievement but also as a systematically constructed behavioral outcome.

II. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to describe and interpret the implementation of the behavioristic approach in improving students' Qur'an memorization at MTs Darul Hikmah. Rather than testing hypotheses or measuring statistical relationships, this study seeks to explore the contextual meaning of instructional practices as they naturally occur within the classroom setting. The case study design allows for an in-depth and holistic understanding of how behavioristic principles—namely stimulus, response, and reinforcement—are implemented in actual memorization activities.

The research was conducted at MTs Darul Hikmah. In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the primary instrument (human instrument) responsible for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing the data. The researcher was directly involved in gathering information through interaction with the informant and examination of relevant documents. The research subject consisted of one Qur'an Hadith teacher who actively teaches and supervises students' memorization activities. The informant was selected using purposive sampling, based on the consideration that the teacher has direct

experience in implementing memorization strategies grounded in reinforcement and structured habituation.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the Qur'an Hadith teacher. These interviews focused on several aspects, including the forms of stimulus provided during memorization sessions, reinforcement patterns applied to students, structured muraja'ah mechanisms, and the evaluation techniques used to assess the quality of students' memorization. Secondary data were collected from supporting documents, including students' memorization records, muraja'ah schedules, and instructional planning documents used by the teacher during the learning process.

Data collection techniques consisted of semi-structured interviews and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were employed to allow flexibility in exploring the informant's experiences while maintaining alignment with the research focus. Meanwhile, documentation was used to support and validate the interview findings by examining written records related to memorization activities and evaluation systems implemented by the teacher.

Data analysis was conducted through three systematic stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, information relevant to the implementation of behavioristic principles was selected and organized. Data display was then carried out through systematic narrative descriptions to illustrate patterns of stimulus application, reinforcement strategies, and habituation mechanisms in memorization learning. Finally, the conclusion-drawing stage involved identifying recurring themes and interpreting how behavioristic principles contributed to improving students' memorization consistency and retention.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data, this study applied both source triangulation and technique triangulation by comparing interview results with documentary evidence. In addition, member checking was conducted with the informant to confirm the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations and to ensure that the findings authentically represent the instructional practices implemented at MTs Darul Hikmah.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reinforcement Patterns and the Formation of Learning Motivation

In addition to structured drills, reinforcement constitutes a central component of the behavioristic approach implemented in this study. The teacher applies positive reinforcement through verbal praise, additional academic points, and opportunities for students to lead prayers or present memorization in front of the class. These forms of reinforcement function as external motivators that encourage students to increase the frequency of desired memorization behaviors.

Uno (2021) argues that positive reinforcement strengthens the likelihood that a behavior will reoccur. Similarly, Sardiman (2018) explains that appropriate rewards, when applied consistently, can gradually transform extrinsic motivation into intrinsic motivation. This phenomenon was observed in the classroom context, where students who were initially passive became more confident and actively engaged in memorization submission after receiving consistent reinforcement from the teacher.

Hamalik (2019) further explains that repeated practice combined with reinforcement produces relatively permanent behavioral responses. Within the context of Qur'an memorization learning, reinforcement does not merely function as a reward for performance but also strengthens disciplined learning routines. Over time, students demonstrate greater consistency in reviewing previously memorized verses before progressing to new memorization tasks.

Systematic Muraja'ah and Habit Formation

Another important finding concerns the implementation of scheduled muraja'ah as a structured evaluation mechanism in memorization learning. Students are required to review previously memorized verses before being allowed to add new memorization. This system is designed to ensure the stability of memorization retention while preventing rapid forgetting.

Suyadi (2019) explains that behavioristic learning is particularly effective in learning activities that require precision and continuous repetition. In this context, the muraja'ah system reinforces memory pathways through repeated verbal practice, enabling memorization to gradually shift from short-term recall to longer-term retention. Sanjaya (2020) also emphasizes that structured and systematic evaluation plays a crucial role in strengthening behavioral consistency in learning.

The regular implementation of muraja'ah also reflects the process of habit formation, which is a central concept in behavioristic learning theory. Continuous repetition gradually produces automatic behavioral responses (Hamalik, 2019). As a result, students become increasingly capable of recalling memorized verses with less hesitation and greater confidence. The teacher also observed a noticeable improvement in memorization stability and student self-confidence following the consistent

implementation of this system.

Integration with Islamic Educational Principles

From the perspective of Islamic education, habituation is not merely a technical instructional method but a fundamental strategy for internalizing religious values. Nata (2020) emphasizes that repetition and disciplined practice are essential elements in shaping students' religious character. Similarly, Ramayulis (2019) argues that Islamic education aims to cultivate moral integrity and disciplined behavior through structured and continuous practice.

Therefore, the application of the behavioristic approach in Qur'an memorization learning does not contradict Islamic educational philosophy. On the contrary, it aligns conceptually with the long-standing tradition of habituation (ta'wid) within Islamic pedagogy. The structured drills, reinforcement mechanisms, and systematic muraja'ah practices observed at MTs Darul Hikmah illustrate how classical behavioristic principles can operate harmoniously within religious education settings.

Impact of the Behavioristic Approach on Students' Memorization Performance

The implementation of behavioristic principles in Qur'an memorization learning at MTs Darul Hikmah demonstrates a noticeable impact on students' memorization performance. Based on interview findings with the Qur'an Hadith teacher, students showed improved consistency in memorization submission after structured drills, reinforcement, and systematic muraja'ah were applied consistently in the learning process. Students who previously demonstrated hesitation when presenting memorization gradually became more confident and prepared to recite verses in front of the teacher and their peers.

This improvement can be understood through the behavioristic framework in which repeated stimulus-response interactions gradually strengthen learning behavior. The consistent use of repetition, reinforcement, and evaluation creates a controlled learning environment that encourages students to develop disciplined study routines. As a result, memorization activities become more structured and predictable, enabling students to manage their memorization tasks more effectively.

Furthermore, the teacher observed that students were increasingly motivated to review previous memorization independently before attending class. This behavioral change indicates that reinforcement and habituation strategies not only influence short-term memorization performance but also contribute to the development of long-term learning discipline. Such findings support the argument that behavioristic principles can effectively support instructional activities that rely heavily on repetition and precision, such as Qur'an memorization learning.

Synthesis: Behavioral Discipline as the Foundation of Memorization Stability

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that the behavioristic approach is both relevant and applicable for improving Qur'an memorization at the madrasah tsanawiyah level. The integration of structured stimuli, positive reinforcement, and systematic habituation contributes significantly to the development of disciplined learning behaviors, improved memorization consistency, and increased student motivation.

Rather than functioning merely as a mechanical repetition model, the behavioristic approach in this context serves as a structured behavioral framework that strengthens memorization endurance and learning discipline. The results of this study therefore demonstrate that classical behavioristic theory continues to hold pedagogical relevance within contemporary Islamic secondary education, particularly in instructional contexts that require repetition, accuracy, and sustained behavioral engagement.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the improvement of Qur'an memorization at MTs Darul Hikmah does not occur incidentally but is systematically constructed through structured behavioral conditioning. The implementation of the behavioristic approach—through repetitive drill, consistent stimulus delivery, positive reinforcement, and scheduled muraja'ah—proves effective in shaping disciplined and stable learning behavior. Memorization development is achieved not merely through cognitive processing but through controlled stimulus-response mechanisms that gradually form structured study habits. In this context, the learning environment functions as an intentional conditioning space where repetition and reinforcement generate measurable behavioral change in students' memorization consistency and accuracy.

The findings further confirm that scheduled muraja'ah serves as a stabilizing mechanism that maintains retention quality and prevents rapid forgetting. Rather than emphasizing memorization quantity alone, the system ensures accuracy, fluency, and long-term retention through continuous

repetition. The integration of reinforcement strategies—such as verbal praise, additional academic points, and leadership opportunities—strengthens student motivation and encourages active participation. Over time, externally reinforced behaviors evolve into more autonomous learning routines, reflected in increased self-confidence, improved memorization endurance, and stronger commitment to adding new verses. Thus, habit formation emerges as the central outcome of the behavioristic framework applied in this tahfidz program.

From a broader Islamic educational perspective, this study affirms that the behavioristic approach is pedagogically relevant and conceptually aligned with the principle of habituation (ta'wid) in Islamic teaching traditions. When implemented consistently, systematically, and under structured supervision, behavioristic strategies contribute significantly to the development of disciplined religious character alongside memorization competence. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions implementing Qur'an memorization programs are encouraged to integrate structured drills, reinforcement systems, and periodic evaluation mechanisms as core instructional components. Future research may expand this framework by integrating behavioristic strategies with cognitive and affective approaches to ensure that memorization outcomes are not only strong in retention but also enriched with comprehension and deeper spiritual internalization.

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