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Integrating Psychological Support and Spiritual Meaning Through Humanistic Tahfidz Pedagogy in an Indonesian Madrasah

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Abstract

This study examines how humanistic pedagogy connects learner support with structured Qur'an memorization at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Probolinggo, Indonesia. Existing research addresses psychological factors, but their translation into teaching practice requires contextual investigation. The qualitative case included all five program teachers and six students, with two selected by teachers from each proficiency level: Iqro, tahsin, and tahfidz. Interviews in May 2026 lasted approximately fifteen minutes per teacher and seven minutes per student and were documented through written notes. Three non-participant observations and institutional documents provided additional context. Reading and thematic grouping of interview notes identified individualized guidance, friendly two-way communication, ability-based grouping, and differentiated recall cues within shared curricular targets. Level summaries revealed differing reading-related difficulties, while learners valued teacher assistance and quiet learning conditions. Smartphone use and uneven parental availability challenged home review. A separate July recap of 53 students showed varied attainment from nearly one to twelve juz. The contribution is a contextual account of differentiated support toward common goals; aggregate attainment does not establish the approach's causal effectiveness.

Keywords: Humanistic Pedagogy, Qur'an Memorization, Tahfidz Education, Educational Psychology, Islamic Education

1. Introduction

Educational psychology has increasingly reconceptualized learning as a multidimensional process involving not only cognitive achievement but also students' motivation, agency, psychological needs, well-being, and social relationships (Howard et al., 2021). Large-scale evidence synthesized through self-determination theory indicates that the quality of students'

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motivation is systematically associated with academic performance, persistence, well-being, and other educational outcomes, particularly when learning environments support autonomous forms of motivation (Howard et al., 2021). Contemporary educational research further demonstrates that autonomy-supportive teaching involves a student-focused interpersonal orientation in which teachers acknowledge learners' perspectives, provide meaningful rationales, encourage initiative, and minimize unnecessarily controlling instructional practices (Reeve & Cheon, 2021). A systematic review of longitudinal studies examines the relationship between teachers' autonomy support and student engagement, directing attention to how supportive practices unfold over time (Yang et al., 2022). Research on secondary-school well-being also indicates that autonomy, learning engagement, values, equity, health, and school culture should be considered interconnected dimensions of students' educational experiences rather than isolated outcomes (Jiang et al., 2025). These developments are particularly relevant to humanistic pedagogy because the approach positions learners as active persons whose individual needs, experiences, emotions, aspirations, and meanings should be recognized within educational processes (Reeve & Cheon, 2021). Consequently, the global development of educational psychology provides a strong rationale for examining religious learning environments not merely in terms of achievement, but also in terms of how pedagogical relationships create conditions for motivation, psychological safety, agency, and meaningful learning (Jiang et al., 2025).

Qur'an memorization, or tahfidz, represents a distinctive educational setting in which cognitive learning, motivation, social support, religious commitment, and personal meaning converge within a highly structured learning process (Yundianto et al., 2023). Empirical research in Indonesia has shown that academic hardiness contributes to students' self-efficacy in Qur'an memorization and that parental support can moderate this relationship, demonstrating the importance of psychological and relational factors beyond memorization techniques alone (Yundianto et al., 2023). Research on Qur'an memorization has likewise examined self-efficacy and social support as determinants of students' motivation, indicating that students' confidence and interpersonal environments are relevant to their persistence in memorizing the Qur'an (Al Waro' et al., 2023). Recent research on tahfidz students has also addressed anxiety associated with Qur'an memorization examinations, suggesting that psychological readiness and emotional conditions deserve pedagogical attention alongside achievement targets (Triyono et al., 2023). At the instructional level, accounts of learners' memorization difficulties underscore the need to examine the learning conditions surrounding repeated recitation and review (Nik Abdullah et al., 2020). Internationally oriented research on Islamic educational settings also indicates that Qur'an memorization should be understood within a broader educational ecology involving family support, peer relationships, self-efficacy, and institutional expectations (Yundianto et al., 2023). However, these studies primarily investigate psychological predictors, memorization techniques, anxiety, or learning outcomes, leaving the pedagogical relationship between

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humanistic principles and everyday Qur'an memorization practices insufficiently theorized and empirically documented (Reeve & Cheon, 2021; Yundianto et al., 2023).

The central research gap therefore concerns the absence of an empirically grounded explanation of how humanistic pedagogy is conceptualized and enacted within structured Qur'an memorization education (Reeve & Cheon, 2021). Existing educational-psychology research provides substantial evidence concerning autonomy, competence, relatedness, motivation, and well-being, but these constructs have rarely been examined as an integrated pedagogical framework within tahfidz education (Howard et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2022). Conversely, existing Qur'an memorization studies have established the importance of self-efficacy, social support, anxiety management, and instructional methods, but they have paid considerably less attention to how teachers translate these psychological principles into concrete classroom interactions and pedagogical decisions (Triyono et al., 2023; Yundianto et al., 2023). This separation produces an important blind spot because tahfidz programs commonly involve fixed memorization targets, repeated recitation, individual assessment, teacher supervision, and expectations of discipline, all of which may either support or constrain students' psychological needs depending on how they are pedagogically enacted (Yang et al., 2022). Recent research on secondary-school well-being reinforces this concern by identifying autonomy, engagement, values, equity, and school culture as interconnected dimensions whose relationships require further investigation through educational practices and pedagogies (Jiang et al., 2025). The unresolved problem is therefore not whether students can memorize the Qur'an, but how a structured memorization program can simultaneously maintain religious and academic standards while recognizing learners as active, emotionally situated, and individually differentiated human subjects (Reeve & Cheon, 2021). This gap is particularly significant in Indonesian Islamic secondary education, where the intersection between contemporary educational psychology and Qur'anic memorization pedagogy remains comparatively underexplored (Yundianto et al., 2023).

The gap is therefore one of pedagogical enactment. Psychological studies already identify relevant learner characteristics; the unresolved issue is how teachers integrate these characteristics when deciding the pace of memorization, responding to errors, communicating expectations, and supporting learners who struggle. The present case examines those decisions within a program that specifies a three-juz graduation target, making the relationship between common standards and individualized support especially pertinent.

This study addresses the gap by operationalizing humanistic pedagogy in tahfidz education through four interrelated dimensions: recognition of learner individuality, autonomy-supportive interaction, relational and emotional support, and meaningful Qur'anic learning (Jiang et al., 2025; Reeve & Cheon, 2021). Recognition of learner individuality refers to teachers' responsiveness to differences in students' memorization capacity, learning pace, psychological readiness, and personal circumstances, while

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autonomy-supportive interaction concerns the provision of meaningful rationales, participatory opportunities, constructive choices, and encouragement of learner initiative (Reeve & Cheon, 2021). Relational and emotional support refers to the creation of respectful teacher–student relationships in which learners can communicate difficulties, receive constructive feedback, and experience psychological safety during memorization activities (Jiang et al., 2025). Meaningful Qur'anic learning extends memorization beyond quantitative accumulation by connecting recitation and retention with understanding, reflection, religious meaning, and students' lived experiences (Yundianto et al., 2023). The novelty of the present study lies in examining these dimensions as an interconnected pedagogical process within an actual Islamic secondary-school tahfidz program rather than treating psychological factors, instructional methods, and memorization outcomes as separate variables (Yang et al., 2022). More specifically, the study develops a contextually grounded account of how humanistic principles are translated into planning, teacher–student interaction, differentiated memorization practices, feedback, evaluation, and responses to learner difficulties in a real Islamic educational setting (Reeve & Cheon, 2021). This contribution extends educational psychology into Islamic Qur'anic education by connecting learner autonomy and well-being with religious learning objectives, thereby offering an empirically grounded perspective on how humanistic pedagogy can be adapted without reducing the distinctive spiritual and disciplinary purposes of tahfidz education (Jiang et al., 2025).

Accordingly, this study aims to investigate humanistic pedagogy in Qur'an memorization education at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo City, Indonesia, with particular attention to its conceptual foundations, implementation practices, and contextual supporting and inhibiting factors (Yundianto et al., 2023). The study specifically seeks to answer three research questions: (1) How is the concept of a humanistic approach constructed within the tahfidz program at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo City? (2) How is the humanistic approach implemented in the tahfidz program at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo City? and (3) What supporting and inhibiting factors influence the implementation of the humanistic approach in the tahfidz program at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo City? (Jiang et al., 2025; Reeve & Cheon, 2021). Through qualitative investigation, the study seeks to contribute empirical knowledge about how autonomy, competence, relatedness, emotional support, learner individuality, and meaningful learning can be translated into pedagogical practices within Qur'an memorization education (Howard et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2022). The study consequently contributes to the body of knowledge by positioning tahfidz not merely as a cognitive memorization activity but as a psychologically, socially, and spiritually situated educational process in which humanistic pedagogy may shape students' learning experiences and the sustainability of their engagement with Qur'anic learning (Jiang et al., 2025; Yundianto et al., 2023).

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2. Literature Review

2. 1. Humanistic Pedagogy, Autonomy, and Learner Well-Being

Humanistic pedagogy is rooted in the broader humanistic tradition of education, which views learners as active persons whose cognitive, emotional, social, and personal dimensions should be developed through meaningful educational experiences. In contemporary educational psychology, this orientation has increasingly been articulated through self-determination theory (SDT), particularly through the concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. A large-scale meta-analysis involving 344 samples and more than 223,000 participants demonstrated that different forms of student motivation are systematically associated with academic performance, persistence, well-being, and goal orientation, with intrinsic motivation and identified regulation showing particularly adaptive relationships with educational outcomes (Howard et al., 2021). This finding challenge pedagogical approaches that equate successful learning primarily with compliance, external rewards, or avoidance of punishment, because externally regulated motivation may be less beneficial for students' well-being and long-term engagement (Howard et al., 2021). The implication is particularly important for educational settings characterized by repetitive learning activities and achievement targets, where students may complete learning tasks without necessarily developing ownership or personal meaning.

Self-determination theory provides an analytical vocabulary for this inquiry rather than a synonym for all humanistic education. Its distinction between psychological need satisfaction and external regulation helps explain why the same memorization target may be experienced differently depending on teacher interaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Religious commitment may also involve identified or internalized regulation, so personal spiritual meaning should not automatically be classified as intrinsic enjoyment (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Within this theoretical development, autonomy-supportive teaching has become one of the most empirically established expressions of humanistic pedagogy. (Reeve & Cheon, 2021) conceptualize autonomy-supportive teaching as a student-focused interpersonal orientation that encourages teachers to acknowledge students' perspectives, provide meaningful rationales, offer opportunities for initiative, and minimize controlling instructional language and practices. Their review of 51 intervention studies, including 38 randomized controlled trials, demonstrated that teachers can develop autonomy-supportive teaching practices and that such practices produce benefits for students, teachers, and classroom climate. More extensive evidence is provided by a meta-analysis of 153 studies comprising 213,612 participants, which found consistent relationships between perceived autonomy support from teachers and parents and autonomous motivation, behavioral engagement, mastery goals, self-regulated learning, self-beliefs, and academic performance (Guay, 2023). These findings indicate that autonomy support should not be understood as simply allowing students to choose whatever they want,

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but rather as a structured pedagogical process through which teachers maintain instructional goals while supporting students' agency and internalization.

The contemporary literature has consequently moved the discussion of humanistic pedagogy beyond the traditional opposition between teacher-centred and student-centred education. The critical issue is not whether teachers should provide structure, but how structure is communicated and enacted without unnecessarily frustrating students' psychological needs. Autonomy-supportive teaching can coexist with clear expectations, feedback, instructional guidance, and academic standards when these elements are presented in ways that acknowledge students' perspectives and encourage internalization (Reeve & Cheon, 2021). This distinction is particularly relevant to religious education because structured learning objectives and normative expectations are often integral to the educational process. A humanistic approach therefore should not be interpreted as eliminating discipline, assessment, or teacher authority; rather, it concerns how authority is exercised and whether students experience the learning process as meaningful, respectful, and psychologically supportive.

Recent scholarship on student well-being strengthens this argument by demonstrating that learners' well-being cannot be reduced to positive emotions or the absence of psychological problems. A systematic literature review focusing on secondary education identified health, autonomy, learning engagement, values, equity, and school culture as interconnected dimensions of student well-being and argued that future research should examine how pedagogies and educational practices interact with these dimensions. This perspective is especially important for Islamic secondary education because students' educational experiences are simultaneously shaped by academic expectations, religious values, interpersonal relationships, institutional culture, and personal development. Humanistic pedagogy can therefore be conceptualized as a relational and contextual approach rather than merely an instructional technique. In the context of this study, the literature suggests four analytical dimensions that can be used to examine humanistic tahfidz education: learner individuality, autonomy-supportive interaction, relational-emotional support, and meaningful learning. These dimensions provide a theoretical bridge between educational psychology and Qur'anic memorization while leaving open the empirical question of how such principles are actually enacted in Islamic schools.

2. 2. Qur'an Memorization Education and the Emerging Humanistic Perspective

Research on Qur'an memorization has developed along several partially separate trajectories, including memorization techniques, cognitive processes, psychological characteristics, social support, institutional management, and religious character formation. One important strand examines the psychological characteristics associated with students' ability to sustain Qur'anic memorization. (Yundianto et al., 2023), for example, investigated 113 students in Islamic schools and found that academic hardiness was associated with self-efficacy in Qur'an memorization, while parental support moderated the relationship between

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academic hardiness and self-efficacy. This finding is important because it demonstrates that memorization achievement is not simply a function of students' memory capacity or the amount of repetition undertaken. Instead, learners' confidence, resilience, and social environment influence how they experience and sustain the memorization process. Nevertheless, the study primarily examined psychological predictors through quantitative analysis and did not investigate how teachers translate these psychological needs into pedagogical interactions.

A second strand focuses on the difficulties experienced by students within tahfidz programs. (Nik Abdullah et al., 2020) used qualitative interviews with secondary learners to examine the challenges and difficulties they experienced in Qur'an memorization classes. The significance of this study lies in its recognition that tahfidz should be investigated from learners' perspectives rather than solely through institutional targets or teachers' evaluations. However, identifying students' difficulties does not necessarily explain how teachers can respond to those difficulties through a humanistic pedagogical framework. The distinction is important because a student's difficulty may arise from memorization load, learning pace, anxiety, lack of confidence, family circumstances, or classroom relationships, and each condition requires a different pedagogical response. Consequently, the existing qualitative literature provides an important foundation for understanding learner experience but leaves insufficiently explored the pedagogical mechanisms through which teachers respond to individual differences.

Research on memorization difficulties indicates that learning demands should be examined in relation to learners' experiences and instructional conditions (Nik Abdullah et al., 2020). The present study consequently examines recitation, repetition, correction, and review as situated pedagogical practices. It does not infer a particular cognitive memory mechanism from the available case description.

A recent IJIS study links talaqqi teaching with spiritual formation through direct teacher–student interaction (Wijaya et al., 2026). It provides a relevant comparison for the present case, while leaving room to examine how teachers support psychological needs and differentiated progression within grade-specific memorization targets.

A fourth strand has begun to connect Qur'an memorization with broader psychological and educational concerns. Research on Islamic self-efficacy and anxiety among tahfidz students, for instance, suggests that psychological preparation can influence students' experiences when facing Qur'an memorization assessments. Similarly, studies examining self-efficacy and social support indicate that students' psychological resources and interpersonal environments are relevant to their memorization motivation. These findings are consistent with the broader educational-psychology literature demonstrating that autonomy support, competence, relatedness, and intrinsic motivation are associated with positive learning outcomes (Guay, 2023; Howard et al., 2021). However, the two literatures have developed largely in parallel: educational psychology has generated a sophisticated theoretical and empirical understanding of human motivation and supportive pedagogy, whereas tahfidz

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research has primarily concentrated on memorization methods, psychological predictors, and program outcomes. This fragmentation represents the central theoretical problem addressed by the present study.

The position of the present research therefore differs from previous tahfidz studies in three important respects. First, it does not treat psychological factors such as self-efficacy, motivation, or social support as isolated variables but examines them as dimensions of a broader humanistic pedagogical process. Second, it does not evaluate tahfidz primarily according to the quantity or accuracy of memorization but investigates how pedagogical practices enable students to experience memorization as meaningful, supportive, and responsive to their individual needs. Third, it examines humanistic pedagogy through qualitative investigation of actual educational practices, thereby allowing the relationships among teachers, students, learning activities, institutional policies, and family environments to emerge from the empirical context. This positioning is consistent with recent calls to examine student well-being through the interaction of psychological and socio-cultural factors rather than through standardized psychological constructs alone.

The literature consequently reveals a specific unresolved issue: the field has substantial evidence about why students are motivated and what techniques may facilitate Qur'an memorization, but considerably less evidence about how a humanistic pedagogical environment is constructed and enacted within a structured tahfidz program. This study occupies that space by examining MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo City as a contextual case of Islamic secondary education. The study therefore moves the literature from the question of what influences memorization outcomes toward the more pedagogically consequential question of how teachers and institutions create learning conditions in which students can memorize the Qur'an while maintaining agency, competence, relatedness, emotional security, and meaningful engagement. This positioning provides the conceptual basis for the subsequent methodological investigation of the concept, implementation, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors of humanistic pedagogy in the tahfidz program.

3. Research Method

3.1. Research Approach, Setting, Participants, and Data Collection

This study employed a qualitative case-study approach to investigate the conceptualization, implementation, and contextual conditions of humanistic pedagogy within the Qur'anic Excellence Program (QEP) at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Probolinggo, East Java, Indonesia. The bounded case concerns one institutional program integrating Qur'anic reading and memorization through three proficiency levels. Case-study inquiry enables pedagogical practices to be examined in relation to their institutional context (Yin, 2018). All five teachers responsible for the three levels participated. Six students were selected through teacher nomination: two from Level 1 (Iqro), two from Level 2 (tahsin), and two from Level 3

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(tahfidz). Within each level, teachers nominated one student judged to have the highest proficiency and one judged to have the lowest. These are relative judgments within each level, rather than comparisons across the entire school. This purposive selection sought variation in learner experience; it does not represent a random or statistically representative sample. The relevance and depth of the accounts, rather than participant number alone, inform the assessment of information power (Malterud et al., 2016).

The QEP blueprint specifies common curricular expectations: memorization of Juz 30 in Grade VII, Juz 29 together with consolidation of Juz 30 in Grade VIII, and Juz 28 followed by assessment of Juz 28–30 in Grade IX. The final minimum is three juz. Proficiency levels serve as instructional arrangements for pursuing these expectations, and students in every level continue to participate in tahfidz (MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Probolinggo, n.d.-a). Daily implementation involves three lesson periods, as confirmed in the teacher accounts. The blueprint is used to establish curriculum targets, while this confirmed field information establishes the instructional duration.

Interviews were conducted over a one-month period in May 2026. Each teacher interview lasted approximately fifteen minutes, and each student interview approximately seven minutes. Responses were documented through written notes rather than audio recordings, so no verbatim audio transcription was undertaken. Teacher questions addressed understandings of individualized support, training, entry assessment, grouping, daily activities, correction techniques, progress, smartphone-related challenges, and family communication. Student questions addressed level placement, perceived difficulty, teacher assistance, feelings during correction, preferred learning conditions, and home review. The evidence supplied for the manuscript consists of a summary across the five teacher interviews and separate summaries for the two students within each level. Findings are therefore reported as paraphrases at the teacher-group or proficiency-level level, without attribution to a single informant or an assumption that every participant gave an identical answer. Transparent reporting of these procedures follows qualitative reporting principles (Tong et al., 2007; O'Brien et al., 2014).

Three non-participant observations were conducted during May 2026. The researcher observed learning activities without taking part in teaching or guiding students. The observations provide contextual exposure to program implementation; the present report does not attribute a particular incident to an observation because session-specific field descriptions have not been supplied. Documentary material comprises the institutional blueprint and the monitoring formats used for Iqro, tahsin, and tahfidz. These were examined to identify scheduled activities, progression criteria, monitoring fields, and school–family communication arrangements (Bowen, 2009). The supplied copies are unfilled formats, documenting the system used rather than completed individual entries. A separate July 2026 attainment recap covers all 53 students and provides contextual information subsequent to the May interviews.

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3.2. Analytical Framework, Data Analysis, and Credibility

The analytical framework connects learner individuality, supportive interaction, relational support, and meaningful Qur'anic learning with self-determination theory's concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Reeve & Cheon, 2021). Analysis involved reading the written interview notes and grouping responses with similar meanings. The resulting thematic organization addresses the three research questions: conceptualization of humanistic pedagogy, its implementation, and supporting or inhibiting conditions. This process is situated within thematic analysis as an interpretive approach to organizing patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021; Byrne, 2022). The report retains variation across Iqro, tahsin, and tahfidz summaries rather than merging them into a single student experience. It does not claim audio transcription, specialist software use, independent coder agreement, or a documented six-phase procedure beyond the reading and grouping process confirmed by the researcher.

Source comparison distinguishes teacher and student interview summaries from institutional prescriptions and aggregate attainment information. For example, teacher summaries describe differentiated correction, while the monitoring formats specify progression and review procedures. These connections support contextual interpretation but do not verify individual attainment or establish complete agreement across sources. School permission and consent from participating teachers, students, and parents or guardians were obtained. The researcher's non-participant role limited direct involvement in the observed teaching. No ethics-committee approval, member checking, or other unconfirmed procedure is asserted. Qualitative reporting standards guide transparency about the material used, its source, and its interpretive limits (Walsh et al., 2020; O'Brien et al., 2014).

4. Result

4.1 RQ1 Conceptualization of Humanistic Tahfidz Pedagogy

In response to RQ1, the teacher interview summary conceptualizes humanistic pedagogy as individual attention required by the concentration demands of Qur'an memorization. Teachers emphasize understanding each student's learning capacity and everyday behavior, adopting a friendly manner, and maintaining two-way communication. Learners share curricular targets but receive guidance responsive to their starting abilities and difficulties. The three levels Iqro, tahsin, and tahfidz organize this support without excluding any level from memorization. Humanistic practice is therefore expressed through how teachers know and assist learners while retaining the program's expectations.

The teacher summary relates instructional competence to training and skills appropriate to the level being taught. Teachers regard this preparation as helpful in matching guidance to learner ability. They describe a maximum group size of ten students per teacher and a regular three-period learning block as conditions enabling attention beyond merely listening to daily

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memorization submissions. These statements describe reported program arrangements; they do not establish training effectiveness or the exact distribution of the July cohort across simultaneous groups.

The blueprint places love for the Qur'an, accurate reading, progressive memorization, and Qur'anic character among the program's goals, while recognizing learners' unique potential in its educational philosophy (MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Probolinggo, n.d.-a). This documentary orientation is compatible with the reported emphasis on adapting guidance to ability. The monitoring books also preserve structure through review, correction, and progression criteria. Together, the sources support an interpretation of humanistic pedagogy as differentiated suport within a spiritually oriented curriculum; they do not directly measure psychological safety, autonomous motivation, or character development.

4.2 RQ2 Implementation within the QEP Curriculum

In response to RQ2, teachers report that an assessment at the beginning of the academic year informs grouping by reading ability and memorization progress. The level-specific monitoring books guide daily activities within the confirmed three-period provision. Grouping makes collective muraja'ah more manageable, while individual daily submissions continue to depend on learner readiness. Teachers maintain motivation and assistance toward the common program targets rather than treating every learner as able to submit an identical amount each day. The reported maximum of ten students per teacher is a group-organization principle, not an observed enrollment distribution for the full cohort.

The student summaries show different experiences of initial difficulty. The tahfidz-level summary reports little difficulty because learners could already read the Qur'an. The tahsin summary describes some difficulty related to less fluent reading, while the Iqro summary describes difficulty associated with hesitant reading. These accounts qualify any general statement that all students initially struggled. Across the three level summaries, students describe feeling happy when teachers assist them and express a preference for a quiet setting in which they can concentrate with the teacher. These are reported learning experiences, not standardized measures of well-being or motivation.

The teacher summary identifies multiple recall techniques adapted to the student: recalling the meaning of a word at the beginning of an ayah, reviewing the preceding passage, and introducing new memorization as a cue to recall an earlier passage. The level summaries supply concrete examples of support. Tahfidz learners refer to the meaning of an opening keyword and cues toward the following ayah; tahsin learners mention restarting a passage and cues from an earlier ayah; Iqro learners refer to prompting at the beginning of an ayah. These accounts illustrate variation in assistance and do not establish that a particular technique was used exclusively in one level. Teachers describe progress as rapid under daily practice and conducive guidance, but this remains their assessment rather than a measured rate of improvement.

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The monitoring books specify different instructional pathways. The Iqro book schedules writing short surahs from Juz 30, reading at least two Iqro pages, random review of short surahs, and correction of letter articulation. Its table records Iqro progress, articulation, muraja'ah, and a review score (MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Probolinggo, n.d.-b). The tahsin book requires a reading submission before a memorization submission, specifies a minimum addition of two verses across two lines, and distinguishes advancement (L) from repetition on the following day (L−). It also permits selection of a surah by group agreement and provides space for teacher corrections (MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Probolinggo, n.d.-d). The tahfidz book records new memorization, repetition, and review through fields labelled sabaq, pengulangan, manzil, and sabqi; these labels are interpreted according to the book's own definitions (MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Probolinggo, n.d.-c). The documents therefore demonstrate planned differentiation in activities and feedback, while the researcher confirms that memorization remains part of every level.

The researcher supplied an attainment recap for all 53 students in July 2026: one student had memorized twelve juz, two students six juz, eight students five juz, eleven students three–four juz, ten students two juz, and the remaining 21 students nearly one juz. This recap was obtained after the May 2026 interviews and covers the full program group rather than only the six student interviewees. The three-juz minimum remains the program target; the July distribution shows that some learners had exceeded it while others had not yet reached it. Grade, cohort, starting-point information, and individual assessment records have not been supplied, so the recap does not establish graduation-level target completion, change since May, or a causal effect of humanistic teaching.

Table 1. Reported Program Level Memorization Attainment

Memorization attained	Number of students
12 juz	1
6 juz	2
5 juz	8
3–4 juz	11
2 juz	10
Nearly 1 juz	21
Total	**53**

Source: program attainment recap supplied by the researcher, July 2026; total enrollment 53 students. The nearly-one-juz category contains the 21 students remaining after the other five categories are counted.

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4.3 RQ3 Supporting and Inhibiting Conditions

In response to RQ3, the teacher summary identifies competence, manageable groups, regular scheduling, parental monitoring, and repetition at home as support conditions. Teachers describe communicating with families through monitoring books and coordinating with class teachers so that information reaches parents. Signature fields in all three monitoring formats provide a documentary counterpart to this reported communication. The tahsin rules additionally require parental signatures, submission each Monday, and home review (MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Kota Probolinggo, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, n.d.-d). The formats demonstrate how monitoring is organized, while the interview summaries explain its intended role; the supplied copies do not show completion rates.

Smartphone use, particularly gaming at home, is the principal challenge identified in the teacher summary. Teachers relate insufficient control of use to reduced focus. The student-level summaries reveal differences in home support: the tahfidz summary mentions maternal assistance and limits on phone use; the tahsin summary mentions maternal assistance and enjoyment of games; and the Iqro summary mentions maternal assistance when time permits and forgetting review because of phone use. These are level summaries, not identical statements attributed to every student. Together with the teacher account of parents' work commitments, they show why continuity between school guidance and home review varies. The evidence concerns perceived distraction and supervision; it does not establish a causal effect of gaming on memory.

5. Discussion

5.1 Humanistic Pedagogy as Psychological Need-Supportive Qur'anic Education

The central contribution of the case is the relationship between common Qur'anic memorization targets and individualized pedagogical support. The reported three-level organization does not remove memorization from learners who are still developing reading proficiency. Instead, trained teachers combine reading development, review, and memorization while adjusting guidance to the learner's current ability. This can be interpreted as support for competence within a structured curriculum. Self-determination theory provides a useful explanation of why structure may be more sustainable when learners receive guidance that makes progress attainable and personally meaningful (Howard et al., 2021; Deci & Ryan, 2000). However, the case does not directly measure psychological need satisfaction or establish that the program increased intrinsic motivation.

The distinction between fixed targets and differentiated support is central to interpreting autonomy-supportive practice. Teachers retain responsibility for accurate recitation and progression while describing friendly, two-way communication. The tahsin format also permits surah selection by group agreement, a limited opportunity for participation within shared

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expectations. Reeve and Cheon (2021) explain autonomy support through responsiveness and the communication of structure rather than unrestricted choice. Student reports of feeling happy when assisted are compatible with a supportive relational climate, although they do not directly establish psychological safety or autonomous motivation. The variation between confident tahfidz learners and reading-related difficulty in tahsin and Iqro further indicates that learner experience must remain visible within the common curriculum.

Spiritual meaning is located primarily in the program's stated aim of cultivating love for the Qur'an and Qur'anic character, rather than in a measured psychological outcome. The combination of reading accuracy, repeated review, and memorization across all levels connects curricular progression with continued engagement with the Qur'an. Religious commitment may involve internalization of valued goals rather than enjoyment of every learning task, an important distinction in interpreting motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The present findings therefore support examination of psychological and spiritual dimensions together while avoiding the assumption that memorization achievement demonstrates spiritual transformation.

5.2 Differentiation, Relationships, and the Conditions for Humanistic Tahfidz Education

Differentiation operates through the organization of support: the Iqro level strengthens foundational reading, the tahsin level connects correction with incremental memorization, and the tahfidz level structures additions and review. All three pathways pursue the same program minimum. This extends the discussion of differentiation beyond changing final expectations to considering the preparation, feedback, and practice required by learners at different starting points. Research linking differentiated instruction with well-being, inclusion, and academic self-concept offers a relevant theoretical comparison (Pozas et al., 2021). The researcher's reported attainment distribution includes both performance above the three-juz minimum and learners below it. This heterogeneity reinforces the need to examine support and progression, while individual records and grade-level context remain necessary to assess completion of the curriculum targets.

The reported ten-student group limit provides an organizational rationale for individual attention, but the differentiated recall cues show how support is enacted in interaction. Keyword meanings, prompting, and restarting a passage are practical responses to specific difficulties. Student preferences for a quiet setting and focused attention with the teacher underline the relational and environmental conditions of memorization. This interpretation is compatible with research associating teacher support with engagement and achievement (Tao et al., 2022) and longitudinal work on autonomy support and student engagement (Yang et al., 2022). The case does not compare group sizes or techniques, so it cannot isolate their effects.

School–family cooperation combines documentary routines and reported communication: home review, parent signatures, monitoring books, and coordination through class teachers. Teacher and parental support are relevant social contexts for motivation (Bureau et al., 2022), but the student summaries show that supervision is uneven. Maternal limits on phone use in

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the tahfidz summary differ from conditional availability and missed review in the Iqro summary; the tahsin summary also identifies gaming alongside maternal assistance. These contrasts support feasible family communication and agreed home routines, rather than an assumption that every parent can provide continuous supervision or that proficiency level itself explains differences in support.

The smartphone challenge also requires a relational response. The interview summary identifies gaming as a perceived obstacle to focus, while limited parental availability complicates supervision. The case therefore directs attention to cooperation around study time, agreed device routines, and realistic monitoring arrangements. These are recommendations drawn from the reported difficulty, not interventions whose effects were tested. Teacher adaptation at school should be considered alongside the conditions under which learners practise at home.

The case suggests a framework linking common memorization targets, proficiency-based preparation, individual teacher guidance, structured review, and school–family monitoring. The contribution is supported by the fit between reported grouping practices and the three differentiated monitoring books. The confirmed three-period learning block is relevant because teachers describe using the available time for both memorization submissions and guidance adapted to learners' methods and abilities. However, instructional duration alone does not establish the quality of teacher interaction or demonstrate that the targets were attained.

The study also complements IJIS scholarship mapping Islamic pedagogy as a field that integrates spiritual and ethical concerns (Kusuma et al., 2026). Whereas that work maps the research landscape, this case focuses on the everyday relationship between curricular structure and learner support. The comparison with talaqqi research further locates spiritual meaning within teacher–student interaction without assuming that findings from a pesantren transfer directly to this madrasah (Wijaya et al., 2026).

6. Conclusion

The case identifies humanistic tahfidz pedagogy as individualized guidance toward common Qur'anic learning targets. RQ1 is answered through teachers' attention to learning capacity, everyday behavior, friendly interaction, and two-way communication. RQ2 is answered through entry assessment, proficiency-based grouping, differentiated recall cues, daily practice, and monitoring, with memorization retained in all three levels. The student summaries show different reading-related difficulties and a shared preference for attentive assistance in a quiet setting. RQ3 identifies teacher competence, regular provision, and family cooperation as supports, while smartphone use and uneven parental availability challenge home review. The contribution is a contextual account of pedagogical enactment, supported by five teacher interviews and six student interviews, rather than proof of a universally effective intervention.

Practical development should strengthen responsive guidance, constructive correction, differentiated daily tasks, and feasible family monitoring while retaining the blueprint's targets.

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The single-madrasah design, brief interviews, written-note documentation, and group-level summaries limit the detail of individual experience available for interpretation. Teacher nomination of the highest- and lowest-proficiency students within each level provides contrasting perspectives but does not cover the full range of learners. The July 2026 recap covers 53 students and postdates the May interviews; without baseline, grade-level, or individual assessment information, it cannot establish change or graduation-level completion. The monitoring formats document the system used rather than completed entries. Future comparative or longitudinal research could examine the relationship between these practices, learners' experiences, and sustained memorization.

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