



## **Psychological Pressure and Coping Strategies among Adolescent Qur'an Memorizers: A Phenomenological Study**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the psychological pressure experienced by adolescent Qur'an memorizers and the coping strategies they use to manage stress. Adolescence is a transitional phase marked by significant changes, making individuals more vulnerable to various pressures. These pressures are intensified by cognitive demands such as memorizing the Qur'an, along with academic expectations, parental demands, and personal concerns about failure, which may lead to anxiety and stress. This research aims to identify the sources and impacts of such pressures, as well as to analyze coping strategies, including problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews involving four participants. The findings reveal that all participants experienced pressure from academic demands, parental expectations, and personal anxiety, resulting in acute stress. Most participants predominantly used emotion-focused coping, while some also applied problem-focused coping. Factors influencing coping effectiveness include social support, problem-solving ability, and religiosity. In conclusion, adolescent Qur'an memorizers face significant psychological pressure; however, supportive environments and adaptive coping strategies contribute to better stress management and resilience.

**Keywords:** Psychological Pressure, Adolescents, Qur'an Memorizers, Coping Strategies.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by intense biological, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. This period is often marked by internal conflicts and fluctuating psychological dynamics, making adolescents particularly vulnerable to emotional and psychological pressure (Hall, 2002). Emotional instability during this phase increases the likelihood of experiencing anxiety, stress, fear, and other emotional disturbances when facing complex life demands (Nursidik, 2009). In the educational context, academic pressure is one of the primary sources of stress, especially when individuals are required to achieve high performance within limited time constraints (Taufik & Ifdil, 2013; Misra & McKean, 2000).

This phenomenon is also evident in Islamic boarding school environments, particularly in Qur'anic memorization institutions (tahfizh), where memorization activities constitute the core of the learning process. As Islamic

educational institutions, pesantren play a significant role in shaping moral character and strengthening religious values within society (Abdullah, 2008; Zubaedi, 2005). The growing public awareness of the importance of religious education has contributed to the rapid expansion of tahfizh institutions in Indonesia, reflecting high social expectations for the younger generation to excel both academically and spiritually (Kemenag, 2025; Vera, 2025).

Although memorizing the Qur'an is often perceived as a spiritually enriching activity that fosters inner peace, empirical evidence indicates that adolescent memorizers face considerable psychological challenges. Previous studies have identified difficulties such as time management issues, boredom, low motivation, and disruptions in psychological well-being (Ramadhan, 2012; Ediputri, 2018). Recent findings also reveal varying levels of stress among tahfizh students, ranging from mild to severe, primarily due to academic demands and the learning environment (Fernanti, 2024). These findings suggest that intensive memorization activities can become a source of psychological pressure if not supported by adequate emotional support and adaptive coping strategies. The pressure experienced by adolescents arises not only from academic demands but also from parental expectations, social environments, and the need to adapt to boarding school systems. As adolescents are still in the process of identity formation and emotional regulation, external pressures can easily develop into psychological stress (Silitonga, 2019). If not properly managed, such conditions may hinder cognitive, social, and emotional development (Milva, 2014).

The increasing prevalence of adolescent-related problems in society, including deviant behavior and criminality, highlights the importance of educational environments that foster both character development and mental well-being (Saad, 2003; DetikJabar, 2025; Pusiknas Polri, 2025). Pesantren are often chosen by parents as alternative educational settings that provide a more conducive environment for moral and spiritual development (Arsita et al., 2014). However, intensive educational systems and high performance targets may also generate new psychological pressures if not accompanied by adaptive pedagogical and psychological approaches. To manage stress, individuals employ coping strategies. Coping is generally categorized into two main forms: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Understanding these mechanisms is essential to examine how adolescent Qur'an memorizers adapt to the pressures they experience, as well as the factors influencing the effectiveness of these strategies.

Based on existing empirical phenomena and literature, research on psychological pressure among adolescent Qur'an memorizers has largely focused on measuring stress levels without deeply exploring subjective experiences, triggering factors, and coping dynamics. Therefore, this study aims

to explore, from a phenomenological perspective, the lived experiences of psychological pressure among adolescent Qur'an memorizers, including its causes, impacts, and the coping mechanisms employed. This research is expected to contribute both conceptually and practically to the development of more humanistic, adaptive, and psychologically oriented approaches in tahfiz education.

### **Literature Review**

Every individual has life goals beyond the fundamental purpose of worshipping Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala, and in the process of achieving these goals, individuals inevitably encounter various trials and psychological as well as spiritual pressures. This is also experienced by Qur'an memorizers who face numerous challenges in their efforts to draw closer to Allah. Therefore, it is essential to understand the emotional and spiritual pressures experienced by Qur'an memorizers from both scientific perspectives and the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam as the foundation of this study.

### **Adolescence**

Adolescence is a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood, marked by sexual maturation, intellectual development, and significant psychological and social changes (Hurlock, 1999; 2003). This phase is often characterized by emotional conflict, identity exploration, and vulnerability to anxiety, stress, and depression due to ongoing mental development (Hall, 2002; Nursidik, 2009). The ability to navigate these challenges largely depends on individual coping capacities and social support systems (Santrock, 2002). Generally, adolescence spans the ages of approximately 12 to 21 years and consists of early, middle, and late stages, each with distinct developmental characteristics (Monks, 1999; WHO; Ali & Asrori, 2004; Agustiani, 2009). During this period, individuals experience rapid physical, cognitive, and psychosocial changes, including the development of abstract thinking, identity exploration, and increased social independence (Hurlock, 2003; Monks, 1999).

### **Qur'an Memorization**

Qur'an memorization (al-hifz) is a cognitive process of internalizing verses into memory so that they can be recited without reference to the text, serving as a means of preserving the authenticity of Allah's revelation (Zuhairini & Ghofir, 2004; Masduki, 2018). The Qur'an itself is the word of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam as a miracle and guidance for humanity (Wahyudi, 2016). This activity holds significant spiritual merits, including inner tranquility, elevated status, multiplied rewards, and intercession in the hereafter (Rauf, 2004; Qardhawi, 1999; Ulumuddin, 2020; Masduki, 2018; Nurlaili et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the memorization process requires proper intention, discipline, psychological readiness, and appropriate

methods to achieve effective outcomes (Sa'adullah, 2008; Wahid, 2012; Anwar, 2018). Various methods are employed, such as *wahdah*, *kitabah*, *sima'i*, *talaqqi*, *murojaah*, and *tadabbur*, all of which have been shown to enhance memorization effectiveness in accordance with individual characteristics (Al-Hafizh, 2005; Ulum, 2007; Oktavia et al., 2014; Zamathoriq, 2019; Hawa et al., 2025).

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to generate valid and scientifically accountable findings based on narrative data derived from participants' lived experiences (Parwin, 2016; Wahyudi, 2019). The research adopts a phenomenological approach using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) model, which focuses on an in-depth understanding of individuals' subjective experiences within their natural settings without manipulation of research variables (Sugiyono, 2013). This approach is considered appropriate for exploring psychological pressure and coping strategies among adolescent Qur'an memorizers.

The research focuses on exploring participants' experiences in memorizing the Qur'an, including their motivations, supporting and inhibiting factors, forms of internal and external pressure, emotional experiences, and coping mechanisms used in managing stress. The study was conducted from October to December 2025, encompassing preparation, data collection, analysis, and report writing stages. Participants were selected purposively, consisting of four adolescents aged 13–17 years who were actively engaged in Qur'an memorization and met specific inclusion criteria to ensure depth of experiential data. Conceptually, psychological pressure among adolescent Qur'an memorizers is understood as academic and psychological strain arising from memorization demands and environmental factors, taking into account individuals' cognitive capacity limitations as explained in Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988). Coping strategies are based on the framework distinguishing problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Operational indicators of coping include problem-solving efforts, seeking social support, emotional regulation activities, self-reflection (*muhasabah*), and increased engagement in religious practices.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews as the primary source (Mulyana, 2008), complemented by direct observation to capture participants' expressions and behaviors (Zuriah, 2007), as well as secondary data from institutional documentation and informant records. Data analysis was conducted through verbatim transcription, repeated reading, coding, theme categorization, and descriptive interpretation of findings (Siyoto & Sodik, 2015). The entire research process adhered to ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and

protection from potential risks (Haryani, 2022; Putra et al., 2023). Through this methodological design, the study is expected to produce valid, in-depth findings that comprehensively explain the dynamics of psychological pressure and coping mechanisms among adolescent Qur'an memorizers.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The findings indicate that motivation in the process of memorizing the Qur'an is multidimensional, emerging from the dynamic interaction between intrinsic drives and external reinforcement, particularly from the family. From the perspective of educational psychology, this aligns with the view that the family serves as a primary agent in shaping learning orientation and internalizing religious values (Eccles, 2007). Early exposure to Qur'anic teachings contributes not only to the development of goal-oriented memorization but also to the internalization of meaning and its application in daily life. This reflects a progression from compliance-based motivation toward identified regulation, in which individuals begin to consciously accept learning goals as part of their personal identity (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

This motivational development is accompanied by psychological pressures encountered during the memorization process. Feelings of fatigue, disengagement, and reduced motivation during repetitive revision activities (*muroja'ah*) can be interpreted as manifestations of cognitive and emotional overload. According to Cognitive Load Theory, intensive memorization activities without sufficient variation in learning strategies may increase cognitive burden, thereby reducing attentional capacity and concentration (Sweller, 1988). This condition often leads to boredom, loss of focus, and passive engagement during learning sessions. These findings reinforce the argument that Qur'anic memorization requires not only strong memory capacity but also well-developed self-regulation skills to maintain long-term consistency (Zimmerman, 2002).

The pressures experienced are not limited to internal factors but are also influenced by family expectations and peer environments. Family expectations to continue the tradition of Qur'anic memorization may strengthen motivation by increasing the perceived value of the task; however, they may simultaneously create psychological strain when not accompanied by adequate emotional support. Within the expectancy-value framework, high expectations can enhance motivation while also increasing the risk of performance anxiety when individuals perceive a gap between expectations and their abilities (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Peer influence further contributes to this dynamic, as less supportive social interactions may weaken motivation and increase distractions, highlighting the significant role of social context in adolescent emotional and behavioral regulation (Santrock, 2002).

The pressure experienced gives rise to notable emotional responses, particularly fear of failure and feelings of sadness and disappointment associated with perceived inability to meet parental expectations and actualize memorized values in everyday life. From a developmental psychology perspective, this reflects a strong self-evaluative process characteristic of adolescence, where individuals begin to associate personal achievement with self-worth and social acceptance (Harter, 2012). Fear of failure can also be linked to performance anxiety, which arises when individuals feel compelled to meet specific expectations (Putwain, 2008). In this context, the pressure is not solely academic but also emotional and moral, as it relates to religious responsibility and familial expectations. The stress experienced remains situational rather than chronic, indicating the presence of adaptive capacity. Within the resilience framework, the ability to maintain relatively stable functioning despite exposure to stressors reflects the operation of effective protective factors (Masten, 2001). The limited impact on academic performance and short-term behavioral changes suggests that the stress remains within an adaptive threshold rather than developing into more severe psychological disturbances.

A key factor supporting recovery is the ability to identify sources of difficulty, including awareness of less conducive peer influences, as well as reflective understanding of personal responsibility. This process is consistent with metacognitive awareness, where individuals are able to monitor, evaluate, and regulate their cognitive and behavioral processes (Flavell, 1979). Such reflective practices also indicate the development of self-regulation, enabling individuals to realign their behavior with their learning goals (Zimmerman, 2002). Furthermore, future orientation and the establishment of personal goals in both Qur'anic memorization and religious learning function as adaptive mechanisms that strengthen psychological resilience. Goal-setting theory suggests that clear and meaningful goals enhance motivation, focus, and persistence in facing challenges (Locke & Latham, 2002), while future orientation fosters hope and supports constructive life direction (Snyder, 2002).

The coping strategies employed are integrative, combining both problem-focused and emotion-focused approaches. Reflective evaluation of past difficulties and efforts to identify solutions illustrate adaptive problem-focused coping, where individuals actively address the source of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). At the same time, seeking social support through interactions with peers and engaging in adaptive distraction, such as reading, represent constructive forms of emotion-focused coping aimed at regulating emotional responses. Such strategies help stabilize emotional states and create cognitive space for more rational processing of experiences (Gross, 2015).

Social support plays a critical role in enhancing coping effectiveness. Support from parents, teachers, and peers functions as a buffering mechanism that

reduces psychological distress and promotes well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In the ecological systems perspective, a supportive environment strengthens individual adaptive capacity through positive interactions across social contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Teachers, in particular, serve not only as instructional facilitators but also as sources of motivation and guidance that help direct learning behavior. Internal factors further contribute to coping effectiveness. Goal orientation, awareness of the learning process, and the establishment of memorization targets reflect goal-directed behavior that enhances persistence and self-control (Locke & Latham, 2002). The presence of metacognitive awareness allows individuals to continuously evaluate and adjust their learning strategies in response to challenges (Flavell, 1979).

Triangulation findings confirm the consistency between interview data and teacher observations, thereby strengthening the credibility of the results. Positive personal characteristics, such as good moral conduct and responsiveness to guidance, coexist with emotional vulnerability when facing performance failure. This reflects the ongoing developmental process of emotional regulation in adolescence (Santrock, 2002). Difficulties in balancing the demands of adding new memorization and maintaining previous memorization highlight the role of cognitive load in shaping learning effectiveness (Sweller, 1988), as evidenced by reduced focus, fatigue, and disengagement behaviors.

The presence of self-awareness, demonstrated through the initiative to seek guidance when encountering difficulties, indicates adaptive potential. The need for consistent motivational reinforcement and social attention further emphasizes the importance of supportive environments in sustaining learning engagement. Overall, these findings illustrate that the experience of pressure and coping represents a complex interaction between cognitive, emotional, social, and motivational factors. Consequently, the success of Qur'anic memorization among adolescents is not solely determined by cognitive ability but also by emotional readiness and the quality of social support. Therefore, adaptive and supportive educational approaches are essential to help adolescents manage pressure while optimizing their developmental potential.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study reveals that adolescent Qur'an memorizers experience psychological pressure arising from both internal and external factors that interact dynamically within the context of boarding school life. Internal factors include feelings of compulsion in memorization, difficulties in maintaining consistency in revision (*muroja'ah*), boredom, laziness, and excessive fear of failure. Meanwhile, external pressures stem from high parental expectations, demanding memorization targets, social comparison, and the influence of peer environments. When these pressures are not managed effectively, they may

lead to acute stress that affects academic performance, behavior, and psychological well-being, such as decreased concentration, changes in attitude, emotional instability, and feelings of fatigue and loss of motivation, with higher intensity observed in certain participants. In response to these conditions, all participants employed emotion-focused coping strategies, including self-reflection, engagement in religious practices, seeking social support, and involvement in positive distraction activities. In addition, some participants also demonstrated problem-focused coping by evaluating their difficulties and attempting to improve their strategies in dealing with stressors. The effectiveness of these coping mechanisms is influenced by several factors, including parental and teacher support, level of religiosity, problem-solving abilities, positive beliefs, and individual maturity.

These findings highlight that the sustainability of the Qur'anic memorization process is not solely determined by cognitive memorization ability but is also strongly influenced by the balance of psychological support, adaptive educational environments, and guidance approaches that are sensitive to adolescent developmental characteristics. Such conditions are essential to ensure that the pressures experienced can be managed constructively and do not develop into more severe psychological disturbances.

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