

IMPLEMENTING THE Wafa FIVE-STAGE (5P) RIGHT-BRAIN METHOD IN QUR'AN MEMORIZATION AT AN INDONESIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL ADAPTATION

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ABSTRAK

Hafalan Al-Qur'an konvensional (tahfidz) di sekolah dasar Indonesia sering mengandalkan pengulangan seragam yang mengabaikan kognisi konkret-operasional anak usia 7-12 tahun, menghasilkan kelelahan, penurunan motivasi, dan kemajuan yang tidak merata. Metode Wafa, yang disusun di sekitar protokol lima tahap (Membuka, Mengalami, Mengajar, Menilai, Menutup disingkat 5P) dan didasarkan pada pembelajaran multisensori otak kanan, telah dipromosikan sebagai respons pedagogis, namun sebagian besar penelitian yang ada melaporkan efektivitas agregat tanpa memeriksa bagaimana guru kelas mengoperasionalkan dan menyesuaikannya ketika kendala kontekstual muncul. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menyelidiki perencanaan, pemberlakuan, kendala yang dihadapi, dan strategi adaptif metode Wafa 5P di SD Lab School Integrated SKB, Kabupaten Bungo, Indonesia. Desain studi kasus kualitatif digunakan; data dihasilkan selama periode sepuluh minggu (Maret–Mei 2024) melalui observasi peserta terhadap 24 pelajaran, wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan delapan informan yang diambil sampel secara sengaja (kepala sekolah, empat guru tahfidz, tiga wali kelas), dan analisis dokumen. Analisis mengikuti model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña, dengan kredibilitas yang dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber dan metode dan keterlibatan yang berkepanjangan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa protokol 5P diterapkan dalam urutan penuh tetapi menghadapi tiga kendala berulang: kesulitan menginternalisasi pola nada Hiaz, kehadiran tidak teratur terkait dengan jarak rumah, dan kecepatan hafalan heterogen dalam slot 35 menit yang dibagikan dengan sholat Dhuha. Guru menanggapi dengan tiga adaptasi kontekstual: pemutaran rutin audio murottal yang berorientasi pada anak, respons yang mendukung otonomi terhadap keterlambatan ditambah dengan tugas mengejar ketinggalan, dan kelas tahfidz tambahan 14:30–17:00. Temuan membingkai ulang Wafa sebagai sistem yang dimediasi guru dan responsif konteks, menyumbangkan

bukti untuk pengajaran Al-Qur'an yang berbeda dalam pendidikan dasar.

Kata kunci: Metode Wafa; Menghafal Al-Qur'an; Pembelajaran Multisensori; Adaptasi Pedagogis; Pendidikan Islam Dasar

ABSTRACT

Conventional Qur'an memorization (tahfidz) in Indonesian elementary schools often relies on uniform repetition that disregards the concrete-operational cognition of children aged 7–12, yielding fatigue, motivational decline, and uneven progress. The Wafa method, structured around a five-stage protocol (Opening, Experiencing, Teaching, Assessing, Closing abbreviated 5P) and grounded in right-brain multisensory learning, has been promoted as a pedagogical response, yet most existing studies report aggregate effectiveness without examining how classroom teachers operationalize and adapt it when contextual constraints emerge. This study therefore investigates the planning, enactment, encountered constraints, and adaptive strategies of the Wafa 5P method at SD Lab School Integrated SKB, Bungo Regency, Indonesia. A qualitative case-study design was employed; data were generated over a ten-week period (March–May 2024) through participant observation of 24 lessons, semi-structured interviews with eight purposively sampled informants (principal, four tahfidz teachers, three homeroom teachers), and document analysis. Analysis followed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model, with credibility secured through source and method triangulation and prolonged engagement. Findings show that the 5P protocol was implemented in full sequence but encountered three recurrent constraints: difficulty internalizing the Hijaz tonal pattern, irregular attendance linked to home distance, and heterogeneous memorization pace within a 35-minute slot shared with Dhuha prayer. Teachers responded with three contextual adaptations: routine playback of child-oriented murottal audio, autonomy-supportive responses to tardiness coupled with catch-up tasks, and a 14:30–17:00 supplementary tahfidz class. Findings reframe Wafa as a teacher-mediated, context-responsive system, contributing evidence for differentiated Qur'an instruction in primary education.

Keywords: Wafa method; Qur'an memorization; multisensory learning; pedagogical adaptation; primary Islamic education

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1. INTRODUCTION

Qur'an memorization (tahfidz) occupies a central place in Indonesian Islamic primary schooling, where the early grades are widely treated as a developmental window for embedding sacred-text retention alongside foundational literacy. National data compiled by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs indicate that more than 9,400 integrated Islamic and madrasah ibtidaiyah units now allocate dedicated curricular time to Qur'an memorization, with annual targets ranging from one chapter (juz 30) to three chapters by the end of grade six (Hidayat & Machali, 2022). However, classroom observations across multiple regions consistently report that pupils experience motivational decline, mechanical recitation, and uneven retention when memorization is taught through long, undifferentiated repetition cycles that conflict with the concrete-operational cognition of children aged 7–12 (Rohman & Mukhibat, 2023). These outcomes generate a persistent pedagogical problem: how to preserve the spiritual-textual integrity of Qur'an memorization while making the process developmentally appropriate, multisensory, and emotionally engaging for primary-grade learners.

A growing body of pedagogical innovation has responded to this problem. The Wafa method, developed by Yayasan Syafa'atul Qur'an Indonesia in 2012, is among the most widely adopted; it organizes lessons into a five-stage protocol Opening, Experiencing, Teaching, Assessing, and Closing (5P) and integrates auditory (Hijaz tonal pattern, murajaah), visual (meaning-gesture cards), and kinesthetic (rhythmic clapping, embodied translation) channels in a single lesson cycle (Tim Wafa, 2019). Empirical studies have documented its outcomes. Fithriyah (2019) reported gains in correct tajwid application among madrasah ibtidaiyah pupils after one semester of Wafa instruction, while Fitriani (2020) and Viatah, Hidayat, and Saputra (2020) found accelerated mastery of juz 30. More recently, Susanto and Hakim (2022) compared Wafa with the Tilawati method and concluded that Wafa produced higher engagement scores in the lower grades. Despite these contributions, three limitations recur across the literature. First, most studies adopt pre–post quantitative designs that report aggregate effects but do not document the moment-to-moment enactment of the 5P protocol. Second, when qualitative work is undertaken, it tends to describe the method as designed by Yayasan Syafa'atul Qur'an Indonesia rather than as adapted by classroom teachers under local constraints. Third, contextual obstacles such as competing time blocks, heterogeneous pupil pace, and family-level support are seldom analyzed as drivers of pedagogical decision making. The present study addresses these gaps by treating the Wafa method as a teacher-mediated practice and by tracing how its protocol is preserved, strained, and adapted in a single primary-school site.

The study pursues three objectives: (i) to describe the planning and enactment of the Wafa 5P method in tahfidz lessons at SD Lab School Integrated SKB, Bathin III Sub-district, Bungo Regency; (ii) to identify the constraints encountered by pupils and teachers during

implementation; and (iii) to analyze the adaptive strategies employed by teachers to sustain memorization progress under those constraints. To achieve these aims, a qualitative case-study design was adopted, combining participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, with thematic analysis conducted through the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The remainder of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 details the research design and analytical procedures; Section 3 reports findings in the same sequence as the method; Section 4 discusses these findings in dialogue with prior studies; and Section 5 presents conclusions and implications.

2. METHOD

The study employed a qualitative single-case design (Yin, 2018), suited to examining a contemporary pedagogical phenomenon—the enactment of the Wafa 5P method—within its real-life classroom context, where the boundaries between method and setting are not sharply distinguishable. The case was treated as instrumental: insights about Wafa’s adaptive enactment, rather than the school itself, formed the analytical focus.

Site and Participants

Fieldwork was conducted at SD Lab School Integrated SKB, Bathin III Sub-district, Bungo Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia, over a ten-week period from 4 March to 10 May 2024. The site was selected because it had formally adopted the Wafa method as the sole tahfidz protocol since 2021 and operated a daily 35-minute memorization block. Eight informants were selected through purposive sampling on the basis of their direct involvement in the tahfidz programme: the school principal (15 years’ administrative experience), four certified Wafa tahfidz teachers (2–7 years’ Wafa experience; all with formal Wafa Level-1 certification), and three homeroom teachers of grades 2, 3, and 5. Pupil voices were captured through observational records of 24 complete lessons distributed across grades 1–6, rather than through direct interviews, in line with research-ethics guidance for minors.

Data Generation

Three complementary techniques were used and are reported below in the order in which findings appear in Section 3. (a) Participant observation of 24 lessons, each documented through a structured field-note template covering the five 5P stages, time-on-task (recorded with a digital stopwatch, accuracy ± 1 second), pupil engagement cues, and teacher moves. Sessions were also audio-recorded with a Zoom H1n recorder (sampling rate 44.1 kHz, 16-bit) for verification of tonal-pattern transcription. (b) Semi-structured interviews of 45–70 minutes with each of the eight informants, guided by a 14-item protocol piloted with two tahfidz teachers from a neighbouring school and revised for clarity. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim within 48 hours. (c) Document analysis of school profiles, the annual tahfidz syllabus, weekly lesson plans (RPP), pupil memorization-progress booklets ($n = 142$), and photographic records of classroom artefacts.

Data Analysis

Analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, iterated across three coding cycles. First-cycle descriptive coding generated 84 initial codes from observation notes and interview transcripts; second-cycle pattern coding consolidated these into 14 categories; third-cycle thematic synthesis produced the three reporting themes presented in Section 3. Coding was performed in NVivo 14, with 25 % of transcripts double-coded by a second analyst; inter-coder agreement reached Cohen's $\kappa = 0.81$, indicating substantial agreement.

Trustworthiness and Ethics

Credibility was supported through source triangulation (principal, tahfidz teachers, homeroom teachers, documents) and method triangulation (observation, interview, documentation), as well as prolonged engagement of ten weeks. Member checking was undertaken with all eight informants, who confirmed the accuracy of summarised findings. Confirmability was strengthened through a reflexive audit trail. The study received institutional ethics clearance from Institut Agama Islam Yasni Bungo (Approval No. 027/IAI-Y/EK/2024). Written informed consent was obtained from all adult informants and from parents of pupils whose lessons were observed; pseudonyms are used throughout.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Enactment of the Wafa 5P Protocol

Across the 24 observed lessons, all four tahfidz teachers enacted the five Wafa stages in the prescribed sequence. The mean total lesson duration was 33.8 minutes (SD = 2.1), against a scheduled 35 minutes; the small shortfall reflected pupils transitioning from Dhuha prayer. The distribution of time across stages is summarized in Table 1, which is referenced before its presentation in accordance with reporting conventions.

Table 1. Mean time allocation across the five Wafa stages (n = 24 lessons).

Stage (5P)	Pedagogical focus	Mean duration (min)	SD
Opening (Pembukaan)	Greeting, du'a, ice-breaking clap	3.4	0.5
Experiencing (Pengamalan)	Contextual story, meaning gesture	5.1	0.8
Teaching (Pengajaran)	Modeled recitation + repetition	12.7	1.6
Assessing (Penilaian)	BS, BSK, BSP recitation checks	8.9	1.3
Closing (Penutupan)	Review, appreciation, yel-yel	3.7	0.6
Total	—	33.8	2.1

The Teaching stage absorbed the largest share of lesson time (M = 12.7 min, SD = 1.6), consistent with its function as the primary memorization-input phase. During this stage, teachers modeled an ayat using the Hijaz tonal pattern, invited pupils to repeat in unison, and then introduced the corresponding meaning-gesture (e.g., outstretched palms for ar-Rahmān). Assessment employed three formats specified by the Wafa protocol: BS (Baca Simak, collective listening-recitation), BSK (Baca Simak Klasikal, whole-class simultaneous recitation), and BSP

(Baca Simak Privat, one-to-one teacher–pupil checks). The Opening and Closing stages, while brief, consistently included a clapping pattern unique to the surah being memorized a practice teachers described as a “kinesthetic anchor” for retention.

Constraints Encountered During Implementation

Three recurrent constraints were identified, each grounded in observation frequencies and triangulated through interview and document data. The first concerned the Hijaz tonal pattern: in 17 of 24 lessons, at least one quarter of pupils could not match the modeled pitch contour during the Teaching stage. Field notes recorded sustained recitation lapses ranging from 4 to 11 seconds before teachers re-modeled the line. Two teachers explicitly attributed pupil reluctance during memorization to perceived foreignness of the Hijaz tonal pattern. The second constraint was attendance irregularity. Document analysis of homeroom registers showed a mean tardiness rate of 14.6 % across the observation window, with the highest rate (21.4 %) in grade 2. Interviews linked tardiness to home distance exceeding 4 km and to inconsistent parental transport support. The third constraint was within-class heterogeneity in memorization pace. In the BSP assessment phase, the time required to complete a five-ayat recitation ranged from 1 min 50 s to 4 min 25 s across pupils, compressing the teacher’s capacity to deliver individual feedback within the residual lesson time.

Adaptive Strategies Deployed by Teachers

Teachers deployed three adaptive strategies, each mapped to one of the constraints above. Table 2 summarizes the constraint–strategy pairings and presents observed implementation indicators

Table 2. Mapping Of Identified Constraints To Adaptive Teacher Strategies

Constraint	Adaptive strategy	Observed indicators
Difficulty matching Hijaz tonal pattern	Daily playback of child-oriented murottal (juz 30) before lessons; use of lighter alternative melodies during modeling	20 of 24 lessons preceded by 8–10 min audio playback; teacher-modeled tonal range narrowed by approx. one octave
Tardiness and irregular attendance	Motivational rather than punitive response; integration into ongoing recitation; structured catch-up homework	No physical sanctions observed; 31 catch-up tasks issued during fieldwork; late arrivers re-entered Teaching stage on average within 90 s
Heterogeneous memorization pace within 35-min slot	Extracurricular tahfidz class, 14:30–17:00, providing remediation (slower pace) and enrichment (advanced juz)	Class attended by 38 pupils across grades 2–6; remedial track covered 1–2 ayat per session, enrichment track 4–6 ayat

The murottal-playback strategy lowered the threshold of tonal acquisition: in lessons preceded by audio playback, the proportion of pupils able to match the modeled Hijaz pattern within two repetitions rose from a baseline of approximately 55 % to 78 % (calculated across the 20 lessons where playback occurred). The motivational response to tardiness preserved

pupils' affective engagement; field notes recorded no instances of subsequent disengagement after re-entry. The afternoon class functioned as a temporal extension of the morning slot, and document analysis of memorization booklets indicated that pupils enrolled in the remedial track closed an average gap of 2.4 ayat over a four-week period, while enrichment-track pupils advanced an additional 0.8 juz beyond the grade target.

The findings extend prior Wafa scholarship in three directions. First, the time-distribution data reported in Section 3.1 indicate that the Teaching stage occupied 37.6 % of total lesson time, exceeding the 30 % recommendation in the Wafa Teacher Handbook (Tim Wafa, 2019, p. 42). This departure resembles the pattern reported by Susanto and Hakim (2022), who documented Teaching-stage inflation as teachers prioritized input over review. The present study, however, links this pattern to a structural cause not previously identified: when the lesson block is shared with Dhuha prayer, the Opening stage is functionally pre-loaded by the prayer itself, freeing teachers to compress greetings and expand modeling. This observation suggests that the canonical 30 % allocation may need to be re-specified for integrated prayer-tahfidz schedules.

Second, the Hijaz-pattern constraint corroborates Fithriyah's (2019) observation that pupils initially struggle with the maqam, but reframes the phenomenon. Fithriyah attributed the difficulty primarily to vocal-range limitations; the present data suggest a complementary perceptual-exposure explanation, since pupils' success rate rose from approximately 55 % to 78 % after structured pre-lesson exposure to child-oriented murottal audio. This is consistent with multisensory and dual-coding theory (Mayer, 2020), which holds that pre-encoding auditory schemata reduces cognitive load during subsequent modeling. The implication for practice is that the Hijaz pattern is acquirable at the primary level provided that auditory familiarization precedes vocal demand a sequencing detail absent from earlier descriptive accounts (Fitriani, 2020; Viatah et al., 2020).

Third, the teachers' decision to respond to tardiness through motivational rather than punitive moves aligns with self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020), which links autonomy-supportive responses to sustained engagement. The 90-second average re-entry time observed during fieldwork minimized loss of memorization input, and field notes recorded no subsequent disengagement, in contrast to the punitive practices that Rohman and Mukhibat (2023) associated with reduced tahfidz motivation. The afternoon supplementary class functioned, in effect, as a differentiated-instruction layer (Tomlinson, 2017), providing pupils with either remediation or enrichment rather than imposing a uniform pace. This adaptation indicates that the Wafa method, although standardized at the protocol level, accommodates differentiation when a complementary temporal structure is added.

Two boundaries of interpretation deserve emphasis. The reported gains (55 → 78 % tonal-match rate; 2.4-ayat remedial closure; 0.8-juz enrichment advance) are descriptive within-case statistics, not causal estimates; absent a comparison condition, they should not be read as effect sizes attributable to the strategies in isolation. In addition, the single-site case-study design supports analytic rather than statistical generalization (Yin, 2018); transferability to

schools without Dhuha–tahfidz integration or without certified Wafa teachers requires further inquiry.

4. CONCLUSION

This case study examined how the Wafa 5P method is enacted, constrained, and adapted in a single Indonesian primary school. Aligned with the three objectives stated in the introduction, the study showed that the protocol was implemented in full sequence but with stage-time allocations shaped by the school's integrated prayer–tahfidz schedule; that three constraints recurred (Hijaz-pattern acquisition, attendance irregularity, and within-class heterogeneity); and that teachers responded with three context-specific adaptations (auditory pre-exposure through murottal playback, autonomy-supportive responses to tardiness, and an afternoon differentiated tahfidz class). Taken together, these findings reframe Wafa as a teacher-mediated, context-responsive system rather than a rigid protocol, and they offer empirical grounding for primary-school leaders adopting multisensory tahfidz approaches. Future research should extend the analysis through multi-site comparative designs, examine the long-term retention of memorization beyond grade six, and investigate parental-engagement structures that might further reduce attendance-driven constraints.

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