

Empowering Qur'anic Learning Motivation through the Asset-Based Community Development Approach in the Tahfidz Program at TPA Al-Hikmah Centre Buluh Kasok

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Abstract. This study investigates how the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach can be employed to enhance learning motivation in a tahfidz program at TPA Al-Hikmah Centre Buluh Kasok, a rural-based Qur'anic education center in Indonesia. The study adopts a qualitative case study design involving participatory observation, semi-structured interviews with tahfidz instructors, students, and parents, as well as document analysis. The research focuses on identifying community assets and examining their influence on students' motivation to memorize the Qur'an. Data were analyzed using thematic coding within the framework of ABCD and motivational learning theories. Findings reveal that the ABCD approach significantly supports Qur'anic learning motivation through three pathways: (1) mobilization of local social and spiritual assets, including parental involvement and religious role models; (2) creation of a collaborative peer-based learning atmosphere; and (3) cultural and emotional reinforcement through communal rituals and recognition. Students who were embedded in these asset-driven learning environments demonstrated higher persistence, stronger memorization consistency, and more positive emotional engagement. These findings confirm that learning motivation in tahfidz education is influenced not merely by curriculum design or teacher-centered instruction but by the activation of communal and cultural capital. The study supports existing theories of intrinsic motivation and the social nature of learning, while also contributing to the limited literature on ABCD in Islamic educational contexts. Future research should expand this inquiry through longitudinal and comparative studies across diverse educational settings to better understand how community-driven strategies can be institutionalized in Qur'anic pedagogy.

Keywords: Qur'anic Learning Motivation; Asset-Based Community Development; Tahfidz Education; Islamic Pedagogy; Non-formal Religious Education

1. Introduction

The emphasis on Qur'anic memorization (tahfidz) has grown considerably within Muslim communities across the globe, with many educational institutions, especially informal religious centers such as Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA), adopting it as a

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core element of their spiritual and moral education (Fairuzillah & Listiana, 2021; Nurchayani et al., 2023; Zuhurudeen & Huang, 2016). The phenomenon reflects a rising awareness among Muslim families about the need to instill strong Islamic values in children from an early age. Tahfidz programs, therefore, are not merely religious routines but are perceived as sacred commitments to produce generations of *huffaz* (Qur'an memorizers) who not only retain the Holy Book but live by its teachings (Ashani et al., 2023; Ayyusufi et al., 2022; Suryana et al., 2019). However, despite this noble aspiration, various studies indicate that sustaining student motivation in tahfidz programs remains one of the most pressing challenges (Rustiana & Ma'arif, 2022). Many children struggle with consistency, emotional fatigue, and lack of intrinsic motivation, which leads to frequent dropouts or suboptimal performance in memorization goals.

The decline in learning motivation among tahfidz students can be traced to multiple factors ranging from pedagogical rigidity, lack of emotional support, monotonous routines, to inadequate community involvement in the learning process. These problems are exacerbated in rural or economically underdeveloped areas, where institutional support is minimal, and educational interventions are often dependent on external aid or one-dimensional top-down approaches. Scholars like Demina et al. (2022) argue that effective Qur'anic learning should integrate spiritual, social, and emotional dimensions, wherein the surrounding community plays a vital role not only as supporters but as active co-creators of educational experiences. This insight aligns with the recent trend in community-based education, which advocates that sustainable educational development must be rooted in the assets of the community itself.

In the context of Islamic education, the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach provides a promising lens for reimagining how motivation in Qur'anic learning can be enhanced. Originally developed by Harrison et al. (2019), ABCD is a development strategy that identifies and mobilizes existing community strengths, such as local talents, religious leaders, community volunteers, social networks, and local institutions as opposed to focusing on deficiencies or needs. While ABCD has been widely applied in areas such as urban planning, public health, and poverty alleviation, its potential in educational frameworks, particularly in faith-based learning environments like tahfidz programs, remains under-explored. By harnessing community assets, children are not only surrounded by a supportive ecosystem but are also encouraged to see their Qur'anic learning journey as a shared responsibility and a communal act of worship, rather than a solitary burden.

Despite the theoretical potential of ABCD in enhancing learning motivation, especially in Islamic learning settings, very few empirical studies have applied this framework specifically in tahfidz programs. Existing research tends to focus on motivational strategies from the perspectives of teachers or institutional policies (Rahayu et al., 2023; Yuri et al., 2023), but little has been written about the role of community assets in directly shaping and sustaining learner engagement in Qur'anic memorization. This gap is particularly significant in semi-rural contexts like Buluh Kasok, where the community is rich in social cohesion, religious tradition, and local leadership but these resources are rarely systematized into a strategic approach for educational development. Moreover, while some studies address community participation in TPA programs, they often do so from a needs-based paradigm that emphasizes what the community lacks, rather than what it already has to offer. This reinforces a passive form of engagement and ignores the



transformative potential of mobilizing indigenous strengths to uplift the educational ecosystem.

This study seeks to fill the aforementioned gap by exploring how the ABCD approach can be employed to empower motivation in Qur'anic learning, specifically within the Tahfidz Program at TPA Al-Hikmah Centre Buluh Kasok. TPA Al-Hikmah has long served as a hub for informal Islamic education in the village, catering to children from various socio-economic backgrounds. While the program has seen steady enrollment, issues of student motivation, retention, and memorization consistency remain persistent concerns among teachers and parents. Preliminary observations reveal that although the community around TPA Al-Hikmah is endowed with various assets such as retired religious scholars, community leaders, supportive parents, and active youth groups these assets have not been strategically mapped or mobilized to support the tahfidz program in a sustainable way. Hence, this research posits that the ABCD framework could offer a structured yet flexible model for empowering Qur'anic learning motivation by activating community strengths through collaborative planning and execution.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to offer an innovative pedagogical and developmental model that bridges faith-based education with participatory community development. By reorienting the focus from individual-centered motivation to community-embedded learning dynamics, the study introduces a paradigm shift that challenges conventional top-down methods in religious education. Furthermore, the findings may offer practical implications for policymakers, religious educators, and community organizers who are committed to building robust, self-sustaining Islamic learning environments. The application of ABCD in this context is not just an academic exercise but a practical strategy to make Qur'anic memorization a more engaging, communal, and spiritually rewarding endeavor. This, in turn, can contribute to the broader goal of cultivating generations of youth who are not only proficient in the Qur'an but are also deeply rooted in the values of their community.

Accordingly, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the application of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in strengthening student motivation in the Tahfidz Program at TPA Al-Hikmah Centre Buluh Kasok. Specifically, the research aims to (1) identify the existing community assets that can support Qur'anic memorization activities, (2) analyze how these assets are currently utilized or underutilized in the program, and (3) design a strategic model for integrating ABCD principles into the daily operations and pedagogical practices of the tahfidz program. By achieving these objectives, the study hopes to provide a replicable model that can be adapted by similar institutions across Indonesia and other parts of the Muslim world.

2. Methods

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach, grounded in the interpretive paradigm to explore the dynamic application of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in enhancing motivation for Qur'anic learning within the tahfidz program at TPA Al-Hikmah Centre Buluh Kasok. The case study method is particularly appropriate for this research because it allows for an in-depth and holistic examination of complex social phenomena in their natural context (Muslimin, 2020; Najeed et al., 2022; Rosi, 2021). Rather than testing hypotheses, the study seeks to understand the processes, perceptions, and community interactions that shape the motivational experiences of students in the tahfidz setting. The research is guided by constructivist assumptions,



where reality is seen as socially constructed, and meaning is co-created between the researcher and participants through dialogical interaction.

The research was conducted at TPA Al-Hikmah Centre, located in the semi-rural village of Buluh Kasok, Indonesia. This site was purposively selected due to its active tahfidz program and its strong community engagement profile. The participants in this study include three categories of stakeholders: (1) internal actors such as students, tahfidz instructors, and TPA administrators; (2) external community members including parents, local religious leaders, and youth volunteers; and (3) key informants such as retired *ustadz* and village elders who possess deep cultural-religious capital but have not been formally integrated into the educational program. A total of 18 participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques to ensure that diverse perspectives were represented, especially from those directly or indirectly influencing the tahfidz ecosystem. Ethical clearance was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants prior to data collection.

Data collection involved multiple techniques to triangulate findings and enhance the credibility of the study. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participant groups to capture personal experiences, motivational narratives, and insights into existing community assets. These interviews were complemented by participant observation during tahfidz sessions and community events, where the researcher recorded non-verbal behaviors, teaching methods, and communal interactions that reflect motivational dynamics. Additionally, focus group discussions (FGDs) were organized with parents and youth volunteers to stimulate collective reflection on how the ABCD approach could be practically implemented. Documents such as attendance records, teaching modules, and community meeting notes were also analyzed to provide contextual background. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the data, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase model, familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and reporting (Byrne, 2022). Thematic categories were aligned with the principles of ABCD such as asset mapping, relationship-building, and mobilization to uncover how each principle intersects with motivational aspects in Qur'anic learning.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Uncovering and Mapping Community Assets: Reframing Motivation through Belonging

One of the most significant findings of this study is the powerful motivational effect generated by identifying and recognizing the community's existing assets. Through the process of asset mapping, the TPA Al-Hikmah Centre discovered an untapped wealth of resources such as retired *ustadz*, respected village elders, skilled youth volunteers, and supportive parent groups, that had previously been overlooked in the traditional tahfidz structure. This discovery led to a transformation in how students perceived their learning journey. They began to realize that they were not memorizing the Qur'an alone or only under the direction of teachers, but rather as part of a larger, spiritually invested community. The presence of village elders who recounted their own journeys of memorizing the Qur'an during community storytelling sessions, for example, created emotional resonance among students, reinforcing a sense of pride and belonging.

This asset-based orientation contrasted sharply with previous needs-based models that often viewed the community through the lens of what it lacked, be it facilities, funding, or professional educators. By shifting the focus to what the community *already had*, the tahfidz program reframed motivation as a collective endeavor. Students became



more eager to attend sessions not only for religious duty but also for the relational affirmation they received from various community figures. The psychological impact of being seen, supported, and spiritually endorsed by the wider village community proved to be a key driver in sustaining motivation, especially during difficult memorization phases.

3.2. Building Intergenerational Relationships: Motivation through Emotional Anchoring

Another important finding emerged from the deliberate activation of intergenerational relationships as part of the ABCD process. In traditional Islamic learning settings, relationships between the elderly and the youth are often present but informal. However, through this study, such relationships were intentionally structured and ritualized into the learning environment. Weekly intergenerational mentoring circles were established, where elderly community members, some of whom were former Islamic school teachers or lifelong *qari*, met with small groups of students to discuss not only memorization techniques but also life stories and Qur'anic reflections. These interactions became crucial in emotionally anchoring the students to the sacred tradition of memorization (*tahfidz*), providing them with living role models and spiritual continuity.

This practice had a profound motivational effect. Students reported feeling more inspired to persevere in their memorization when they could associate their efforts with the spiritual legacy of those who came before them. For instance, a female student shared how hearing her grandmother's account of memorizing *Juz Amma* under kerosene lamplight decades ago gave her a deeper sense of purpose and admiration. These emotionally charged stories instilled humility, gratitude, and determination, three psychological traits associated with long-term learning motivation. In contrast to pedagogical techniques focused solely on rote memorization, the ABCD-inspired relationship model offered a more holistic approach to learning, one that engaged the heart and soul as much as the intellect.

3.3. Mobilizing Volunteerism and Local Leadership

The third key finding involves the shift in community engagement from passive support to active ownership, which proved essential for sustaining long-term motivation among students. Initially, parents and youth in the community saw the tahfidz program as the exclusive responsibility of the TPA staff. However, through the ABCD process especially during participatory workshops and focus group discussions, community members were encouraged to recognize their own roles in the educational process. This resulted in the formation of voluntary support teams that provided everything from logistical assistance (preparing meals for Qur'anic camps) to co-teaching roles during revision sessions.

The presence of local leaders who endorsed the program publicly such as the village head (*kepala desa*) and the head of the mosque committee also contributed to elevating the perceived status of the tahfidz program. It was no longer seen as just an after-school activity, but a community-wide mission. This symbolic and practical support had a domino effect on student motivation. The children felt honored, celebrated, and increasingly motivated when they saw that their efforts were publicly acknowledged during community gatherings or Friday sermons. One teacher shared how a student who had been chronically unmotivated began showing dramatic improvements after his memorization achievement was mentioned by the village leader during a local religious event.





Figure 1 The TPA staff took a group photo after the educational session



Figure 2 The Learning Atmosphere of the Tahfiz Program at TPA Al-Hikmah Centre

Figure 1 shows the staff of TPA Al-Hikmah Centre Buluh Kasok posing together after an educational session, reflecting a strong sense of togetherness and dedication among the teachers involved in the tahfidz and Qur'an reading programs. Meanwhile, Figure 2 captures the learning atmosphere during a tahfidz session, where students are seen engaging in memorization activities in a simple yet spiritually rich environment. Both images highlight the role of community participation, emotional warmth, and spiritual timing, particularly the evening sessions after Maghrib prayer in creating a motivating and supportive space for Qur'anic learning. These visuals reinforce the study's emphasis on how local assets and communal involvement enhance the effectiveness of non-formal Islamic education.



Moreover, youth volunteers who previously had no direct role in the TPA began offering digital support, creating audio recordings, managing attendance digitally, and even organizing Qur'an memorization competitions. This infusion of creativity and technology brought a fresh energy to the program, making it more dynamic and appealing to young learners. The sense of collective ownership, born out of recognizing and mobilizing community assets, transformed the tahfidz program from a small religious initiative into a vibrant, shared cultural and spiritual project.

3.4. *Reconceptualizing Learning Motivation through Community Asset Engagement*

The findings of this study underscore the critical importance of reframing Qur'anic learning motivation through the lens of community assets rather than deficits. Traditional educational paradigms, especially in rural and faith-based settings, often operate on a top-down model that centers institutional authority and views communities as passive recipients of external intervention (Pintar, 2019). In contrast, the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, as implemented in TPA Al-Hikmah Centre, illustrates that motivation can be organically cultivated when learners are embedded in a web of communal care, cultural legacy, and shared spiritual values. Kretzmann and McKnight's (2017) foundational theory of ABCD asserts that the most effective development emerges from within the community, utilizing existing human, social, and institutional capital. This study empirically affirms that claim within an Islamic educational context.

The emotional upliftment that students experienced from interacting with local elders, volunteers, and parent networks aligns closely with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, particularly the needs for relatedness and autonomy. When students feel emotionally connected to their community and are given the agency to contribute meaningfully, their motivation transitions from extrinsic to intrinsic. Rather than memorizing the Qur'an due to pressure or obligation, they begin to see their learning as a personal and communal act of worship. In this way, the community serves not merely as a backdrop but as an active, motivational force. These findings complement the work of Daniels and Arapostathis (2005), who noted that student engagement and motivation significantly increase when the learning environment is emotionally and relationally rich.

Moreover, this reconceptualization of motivation is particularly vital in faith-based educational settings, where learning is not only cognitive but deeply spiritual. The spiritual testimonies of elders and public recognition by community leaders functioned as *symbolic reinforcements*, a concept echoed by Bandura's (2001) Social Cognitive Theory. Observational learning and verbal encouragement from respected figures reinforce learners' belief in their own capacity (*self-efficacy*) to memorize and embody the Qur'an. Thus, the ABCD framework does more than mobilize resources, it redefines what counts as motivation by anchoring it in spiritual-social ecosystems.

3.5. *The Role of Intergenerational and Volunteer Networks in Enhancing Educational Sustainability*

Another major theoretical implication drawn from this study is the powerful, yet often overlooked, role of intergenerational relationships and volunteer networks in sustaining educational initiatives, particularly in informal religious learning settings. Scholars such as Epstein (2018) have long advocated for *school, family, and community partnerships* in mainstream education, but this study expands that model by integrating *faith-based and intergenerational bonds* into the framework. The practice of structured storytelling circles



with elders, for instance, echoes Vygotsky's (2020) concept of the "zone of proximal development," where learners grow best when guided by more knowledgeable others. In this case, the "more knowledgeable others" were not professional educators, but respected elders who transmitted religious knowledge and values through narratives rather than instruction.

Furthermore, the emergence of youth volunteers as digital facilitators, mentors, and event organizers reflects a grassroots form of educational leadership that aligns with Gonzales, Moll, and Amanti's (2005) concept of *Funds of Knowledge*. These are the culturally accumulated bodies of knowledge and skills that exist within households and communities, often unrecognized by formal institutions. By leveraging these funds, technical skills among youth, storytelling traditions among elders, hospitality networks among parents, the tahfidz program created a multi-layered support system that extended far beyond the walls of the TPA. This model not only reinforced motivation but ensured program sustainability, especially in a context with limited external funding.

This form of "community-embedded motivation" also resonates with the work of Bloch (1994) on *situated learning*, which posits that learning is most effective when situated within real-life social practices and relationships. When students witness their family members and neighbors actively involved in their learning journey not just administratively but spiritually and emotionally, they are more likely to persist and thrive. This challenges the individualistic, institutionalized model of learning and suggests that educational sustainability in Islamic programs may be better achieved through culturally and spiritually rooted ecosystems. Indeed, the case of TPA Al-Hikmah Centre offers a replicable model where intergenerational wisdom and voluntary spirit are not supplementary, but central to both motivation and continuity.

4. Conclusions

The present study has explored the role of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in enhancing the motivation of students participating in the tahfidz program at TPA Al-Hikmah Centre Buluh Kasok. The findings indicate that motivation to learn the Qur'an is not solely the result of individual discipline or institutional curriculum, but also a product of dynamic community engagement. Specifically, three significant patterns emerged: first, the mobilization of local assets such as the involvement of community elders and parents created a culturally relevant and emotionally supportive learning environment; second, the existence of peer support and student collaboration helped reinforce discipline and consistency in memorization; and third, the spiritual and symbolic rewards offered by the community played a key role in sustaining intrinsic motivation among the students. These insights confirm that a well-orchestrated community-based approach can significantly elevate the quality and sustainability of Qur'anic memorization efforts, even in a non-formal educational setting.

From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforces the relevance of Self-Determination Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Situated Learning in explaining the learning behavior observed in tahfidz students. The emotional bonds between learners and community members satisfy their psychological needs for relatedness, autonomy, and competence, which are essential components of intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, the presence of intergenerational interaction aligns with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, where elders act as scaffolds for religious knowledge transmission. The findings also validate the central premise of ABCD theory, which posits that leveraging



existing social and cultural assets results in more sustainable and empowering development outcomes. In this context, the ABCD approach not only enhanced cognitive engagement but also nurtured a spiritually grounded motivational climate, one that goes beyond educational outcomes to touch the core of communal religiosity.

Despite these promising results, the study has several limitations that future research should address. The research was limited in geographic scope, focusing only on one TPA in a specific rural setting, which may restrict generalizability. Moreover, while the study qualitatively captured motivational patterns, it did not employ longitudinal methods to assess long-term retention or behavioral outcomes beyond the program's active phase. Future research could adopt mixed-method or longitudinal approaches to explore how community-based motivational strategies influence not only memorization outcomes but also broader aspects of character development and religious identity. Additionally, comparative studies across different TPAs, urban and rural, formal and informal could illuminate contextual variations in the success of ABCD implementation in Qur'anic education. By expanding the evidence base, future studies can help refine community-participatory models that align with Islamic pedagogical values and contemporary educational needs.

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