

Implementation of Religious Internalization Activities in Schools to Shape Tahfiz Students' Personality

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Abstract

Current *tahfiz* education no longer focuses solely on memorizing verses of the Quran. *Tahfiz* education also includes several subjects related to the Islamic religious and academic education. *Tahfiz* students would perform various physical and spiritual activities to strengthen their memorization of the Quran verses, as well as their personality in their daily life at school. This study aimed to explore the practices implemented by school administrators to strengthen the importance of personality among *tahfiz* students. This study utilized a semi-structured interview method as an instrument to obtain data. Interviews were conducted with seven teachers representing school administrators from seven private *tahfiz* schools in Selangor. This study found that the *tahfiz* school administrators have implemented several activities, such as *qiamullail* (waking up at night), non-obligatory fasting, and practising several daily *zikr* to strengthen students' personality. This study contributes by offering recommendations for curriculum and co-curriculum management to the *tahfiz* school administrators, which include the practice of religious internalization. This wholesome practice could improve the personality of the students, and help them achieve excellence in terms of faith, religious practices, and becoming virtuous characters.

Keywords: Implementation of Activities, Strengthening of Personality, *Tahfiz* Students

Introduction

Among the aspects that become the focus of religious internalization (religiosity) for an individual is his or her involvement in formal and informal religious activities. Formal activities include performing rituals of worship and reading the Holy Book, while examples of informal

activities include listening to religious broadcasts on the radio and watching television (Iddagoda & Opatha, 2017; Berglund, 2023). Apart from that, the ideological and intellectual aspects of an individual are also related to the internalization of religion and politics, which involves one's personality. Ideology involves beliefs, while intellect refers to the state of a believer's religious knowledge (Ahmad & Ismail, 2010). The internalization of religion according to the Islamic perspective means implementing the teachings of Islam comprehensively based on knowledge, understanding, and practice (Abd Razak et al., 2021). The basis of the internalization of Islam includes three principles, namely, faith, *shariah* (the law), and virtuous character. Faith is the core pillar of Islam and drives the Muslim way of life. *Syariah* is related to the practices and characteristics of Muslims, while morality is an ethical component of life that is a manifestation of faith and the implementation of the true *syariah* (Hamid, 2012; Berglund, 2023). These three principles need to be understood, appreciated, and practised in order to form a praiseworthy character, also known as personality.

The personality of a religious believer must be strengthened by practicing all the teachings of God and living life in the way that has been prescribed by the religion (Mahudin et al., 2016). A deep internalization of religion can produce quality human beings in every aspect of life, i.e., education, character, employment, way of thinking and action. These aspects can be attained through understanding, feeling, and internalizing religion as a whole in all dimensions of life (Salleh et al., 2013; Yuliawati, 2023). The aim is to gain the pleasure of Allah SWT based on confidence and obedience, i.e., by obeying all His commands and avoiding His prohibitions. Confidence and obedience to God that are embodied in a person's heart will propel him/her to form and build a noble character (Halim, 2017). Given the importance of religious internalization in shaping a good personality, efforts to develop religious internalization among *tahfiz* students should be implemented. The implementation of religious activities can shape a religious lifestyle guided by religious rules starting from childhood to adolescence, which can contribute towards a peaceful and harmonious society.

Literature Review

As previously discussed, one of the forms of religious internalization is by repeatedly reading the Holy Book. In fact, every Muslim is encouraged to memorize the Quran. In Malaysia, students who undergo the process of memorizing the Quran are known as *tahfiz* students. The goal of *tahfiz* education is to provide space and opportunities to individuals who are interested in memorizing the Holy Book, i.e., the Quran (Fakhruddin et al., 2017). In addition, *tahfiz* education aims to produce individuals who are skilled in the content of the Quran, knowledgeable, charitable, pious and virtuous, and able to realize their goals in society (Hashim & Tamuri, 2012). *Tahfiz* education in Malaysia can be categorized into two, namely, government-funded and private *tahfiz* institutions. The government-funded *tahfiz* institutions are established either by the federal or state governments. Meanwhile, private *tahfiz* institutions are established and managed privately by individuals, or non-governmental organizations (Nawi et al., 2021). The personality of *tahfiz* students must be nurtured from an early age up to the tertiary level to shape them into individuals with a high level of memorized verses in the Quran, as well as have pure values.

However, these noble goals of *tahfiz* education is not easy to achieve. Several factors could influence the efforts in achieving these goals. Among them is age, or the adolescence factor, since most *tahfiz* students are in the age range of early (9–12 years old), middle (13–

16 years old), or late adolescence (17–20 years old). As teenagers, children who are sent to tahfiz centers, or institutions could still be exposed to personality-related misconducts and adolescent problems (Norafidah & Abdul Ghafar, 2017), based on the desire to try something new, but is contrary to the shariah, such as smoking cigarettes, viewing pornographic websites, and bullying. Abdul Manaf (2013), reported that numerous tahfiz students have committed such offenses, even though they have been exposed to the importance of being virtuous. This matter needs to be given attention by all parties, especially the schools and teachers who always accompany tahfiz students so that they do not commit anything that can damage the integrity of tahfiz education.

Strong interest to memorize the Quran is also one of the factors in achieving the goals of tahfiz education. According to Abdul Manaf (2013), some of the tahfiz students he interviewed said they were sent to tahfiz schools not of their own interest, but at the urgings of their parents. Some students already have disciplinary and character problems at their previous schools, before being admitted to tahfiz institutions. In these cases, the parents expect tahfiz schools to change their children from being miscreants to admirable characters (Jalil et al., 2020). Praiseworthy characters advocated by Islam include telling the truth, being open-minded, and kindhearted. There is no doubt that a handful of students and children are not interested, naughty, and stubborn while at school, or at home. There are also a number of parents who perceive tahfiz institutions as a place for moral rehabilitation and discipline for their troubled children (Md Nawawi et al., 2014). Apart from that, tahfiz students are encouraged to be involved in co-curricular activities, such as following *usrah* (a gathering for religious activities) programs, knowledge gatherings, and outdoor camping. Other compulsory prayers in congregation and non-obligatory prayers are also included, which can affect students' character and personality. Mastor et al. (2017), found that prayer has a significant positive effect on an individual's level of piety and personality. The earnestness aspects of tahfiz students in inculcating religion in a more basic context, especially earnestness in terms of prayer perfection, the urgency to perform prayers, and steadfast in establishing non-obligatory/*rawatib* prayers can affect the shaping of a perfect personality among tahfiz students.

However, there are still disciplinary and character problems faced by tahfiz students in schools, such as laziness, passiveness, and succumbing to the temptations of urban lifestyle in the form of entertainment (Abdullah, 2007). Sometimes, tahfiz students would also commit disciplinary offenses, such as running away from their hostel, smoking, and being delinquent because they are not interested in learning. Some might find it difficult to cope with their many lessons as a result of the integration of tahfiz and academic subjects. Subsequently, students could become stressed due to insufficient time, while having too many subjects to study. Hence, these handful of stressed students could decide to leave the school compound to seek entertainment, such as watching movies and going to cyber cafes (Abdul Manaf, 2013). Students might also be involved in disciplinary problems, such as smoking, verbal fights, and bullying (Anon, 2017). There were also reports that a number of tahfiz students acted aggressively towards teachers, as a result of being punished for coming late to the *surau* (prayer room). These students fought their teachers and acted aggressively, forcing the teachers to discipline them by hitting them on the ribs and arms (Ramlan, 2017).

Factors that can influence students in implementing religious internalization include the quality of education, and internal self-factors, as well as support from parents, peers, and the community (Sharifah Nur, 2012). These factors should be given attention by all parties, especially tahfiz institutions, which have a great influence in educating students. In these schools, students are educated to be virtuous, ethical, and practise a good life culture. The aim is to instill and inculcate virtuous values as a step to shape and produce highly intellectual students with good personality (Hassan et al., 2017). Thus, tahfiz schools must create a learning atmosphere filled with activities that can curb misbehavior among students.

This study applied the concept of religious internalization presented by al-Ghazali, which includes faith, worship, and virtuous characteristics. He argued that the practice of worship is the most effective way to shape one's values, attitude, and behavior. The practice of worship is part of *sunnah* (practices and traditions by Prophet Muhammad SAW), such as prayer, fasting, reciting the Quran, and *zikr* (remembering Allah) (Hasan & Tamam, 2018). These three aspects of religious internalization have been presented by al-Ghazali in three major books, namely, *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, *Minhaj al-Abidin*, and *Ayyuha al-Walad*. In *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, al-Ghazali explained the function of science as the core of knowledge to achieve true faith. According to him, with a belief based on knowledge, a person could better understand the purpose of his creation and his creator, which is Allah SWT. *Minhaj al-Abidin*, on the other hand, explains about the *manhaj* (knowledge), whereby a Muslim has to worship perfectly as a requirement of this religion. Meanwhile, *Ayyuha al-Walad* is focused on the character aspect, especially in educating children and teenagers to behave virtuously.

Thus, this study aimed to describe the activities implemented by tahfiz school administrators, and to analyze the importance of students' involvement in such activities in order to improve their personality.

Methods

This was a qualitative study that utilized semi-structured interviews as an instrument to obtain data. Interviews were conducted with seven teachers as representatives of school administrators from private tahfiz institutions registered under the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (JAIS), through the Selangor Association of Tahfiz Quran Institutions (PITAS). Participants were selected based on convenience sampling, whereby participants were selected randomly. The selected participants represented seven districts in Selangor based on the recommendation and selection of the highest committee of PITAS. Interviews were conducted in a Focus Group Discussion, where all participants gathered at the selected schools and discussed in a focused manner the issues presented to them.

To obtain information on the implementation of activities used by the participants as representatives of school administrators, the following semi-structured interview questions were utilized: 1) What are the religious activities implemented by the school to increase the internalization of worship among students?; 2) How does the school administration implement religious internalization activities among students?; 3) What are the religious co-curricular programs that involve students other than during school sessions?; 4) What is the importance of the activities implemented by the school to the students?

Findings

This study found that the participants have implemented several activities and programs of religious internalization towards shaping the personality of tahfiz students. Examples of the religious internalization activities implemented by school administrators were sunnah worship, reciting certain verses from the Quran, reciting zikr, and additional study programs.

a. Non-Obligatory Worship

Non-obligatory worships, such as *dhuha* prayer (prayer during a later part of the morning) and *qiamullail* (midnight prayer) were some of the main activities implemented by most participants to strengthen the internalization of the religion, as shown in the following interviews:

"The emphasis on worship is very high, for example, in terms of non-obligatory prayers, congregational prayers, and so on. Other people may think it is normal, but for us it is big." (Teacher Interview 1)

"Students are awoken at 4:30 a.m. every day for qiamullail. In fact, they have to do all tahajjud prayers. Sometimes, they are even awake at 3:00 in the morning." (Teacher Interview 2)

"They have to get up at 4:30 a.m. to get ready to start activities of the day. Then, on Fridays, students have to get up slightly earlier at around 4:00 a.m. because they have to perform a full qiamullail." (Teacher Interview 4)

The implementation of worship activities, such as *qiamullail* is performed in stages. At the initial stage, *qiamullail* is not compulsory, especially for new students and can be done voluntarily. *Qiamullail* is performed en masse at least once a month, as stated in the following interviews:

"Qiyam (qiamullail) is compulsory. For new students, we provide a voluntary approach where they are not forced to get up, but we encourage them in the beginning to pray at least two rakaat." (Teacher Interview 5)

"Qiamullail will be held once a month in congregation, that is, in large numbers." (Teacher Interview 6)

Among the importance of implementing non-obligatory worship activities is that students can revise Quran verses that they have memorized by reciting them during prayers, such as *dhuha* and *tahajjud*. This is because reciting Quran verses during non-obligatory prayers can strengthen students' memory of the verses they have memorized that day. This confirmation was obtained from interviews with Teacher 2, Teacher 4, and Teacher 7, as follows:

"Besides that, we made it compulsory to pray dhuha. In the dhuha prayer, there are verses from the Quran that students must recite. Students will recite the memorized verses of the day in the dhuha prayer." (Teacher Interview 2)

"Then, the non-obligatory dhuha prayer is also compulsory for all students." (Teacher Interview 4)

"Classes end at 8:30 in the morning. After that students will take a break. During the break, they will perform dhuha prayer, since it is compulsory." (Teacher Interview 7)

b. Congregational Prayers

The five compulsory prayers, namely, *Subh* (early morning), *Zuhr* (noon), *Asar* (early evening), *Maghrib* (late evening), and *Isya'* (night) are performed in congregation, which is highly encouraged in Islam. Tahfiz students are required to perform these prayers in congregation early at the stated time by the school administrators. This confirmation was obtained through the following interview:

"In terms of the compulsory prayers, we make it compulsory to pray at the beginning of the stated time and performed in congregation." (Teacher Interview 2)

After performing the five compulsory prayers in congregation, students are also taught to shake hands with each other to strengthen their friendship and brotherhood as Muslim individuals, as per the following interview:

"Then, I told the students to practise getting up and stand to shake hands, and salawat (greetings in the name of the Prophet Muhammad SAW) after prayers to strengthen their bond. That is how students are taught to build personality from the inside." (Teacher Interview 4)

c. Non-Obligatory Fasting

The common practice of non-obligatory fasting every Monday and Thursday is also instilled in tahfiz students. However, the implementation of this activity is not compulsory, but voluntarily. Among the wisdom and advantages behind this practice is to control lust, and at the same time, be able to shape a good personality. This confirmation was obtained from the following interviews:

"Fasting on Mondays and Thursdays is not compulsory, but students are encouraged to do it." (Teacher Interview 2)

"We do not force students to fast on Mondays and Thursdays, but some do fast. There are some students who voluntarily fast." (Teacher Interview 5)

"Students are encouraged to perform qiamullail prayer, and the non-obligatory fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. Both are the main practices that we implement on students." (Teacher interview 6)

d. Taalim, Tazkirah, and Usrah

Ancillary activities to increase religious understanding, such as *taalim* (the study of the Quran), *tazkirah* (talks and discussions), and *usrah* (gathering) are also implemented in the routines of tahfiz students. The implementation of these activities are based on the *hadith*

(sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW) and the stories of past scholars, as stated in the following interviews:

"We also hold taalim activities, such as reading the hadith and presentations related to stories about the Prophet's sahabah (friends) for about an hour and a half." (Teacher Interview 2)

"Then, after the Zuhr prayer, we gather for taalim activities, so that these students can increase their religious knowledge." (Teacher Interview 4)

"There is also the tazkirah activity. Each student will have a turn to give the tazkirah. Indirectly, we train them to give public speeches." (Teacher Interview 5)

"Usually, the students will read the hadith to deliver the tazkirah." (Teacher Interview 6)

In addition, the tazkirah and usrah activities can shape and nurture the students' personality, as per the interviews with Teacher 1 and Teacher 3:

"There are several activities arranged to shape the personality of these tahfiz students when they are in the community. Among them is Ihya 'Ramadhan, where students will meet the community and deliver tazkirah. The purpose is to train them to be brave enough to go forward and deliver it after prayers." (Teacher Interview 1)

"Actually, we are also here to implement activities that can shape their personality, such as holding usrah and qiamullail." (Teacher Interview 3)

Teachers also play a role in delivering tazkirah to tahfiz students in the form of words of encouragement, advice, and reprimand. This confirmation was obtained from the interview with Teacher 4:

"Then, when the non-obligatory dhuha prayer is over, there will usually be a teacher to deliver the tazkirah, to give encouragement to the students, or maybe offer constructive remarks for the students." (Teacher Interview 4)

School administrators would occasionally invite outside speakers to deliver tazkirah, or just have experience-sharing sessions. The purpose of inviting outside speakers is to have the speakers become a role model to the students, as confirmed by the following interviews:

"These activities not only shape the students' character, but also allow them to be an icon to the students. These types of activities (taalim, tazkirah, and usrah) are mentioned in the Quran. That is the reason we invite outside speakers to explain things to the students." (Teacher Interview 4)

"We have invited some speakers from outside for tazkirah, and for them to be role models to our students." (Teacher Interview 6)

"Every month we have programs based on units. For example, we have prayer camps, mukhayyam tarbawi, and there are leadership camps. There is also a big program held once a year, which is community service and student loyalty." (Teacher Interview 7)

e. Extra Classes

Studies outside the school session, or known as extra classes, are also implemented by the school administrators to strengthen students' religious internalization. Additional classes, such as *Fiqh* (comprehensive understanding) classes, especially in matters of worship, are very important because the implementation of prayers must be based on the understanding of true knowledge. This was obtained through the following interview:

"Memorization classes for students are from Monday to Friday mornings only. After the Friday prayer, in the afternoon session, we will hold a Fiqh class." (Teacher Interview 4)

Other activities have also been implemented by school administrators on a regular basis to improve students' soft skills, such as public speaking to deliver topics related to the internalization of religion, in terms of character aspects, as stated in the following interview:

"We have implemented several programs to train students in public speaking as one of the soft skills. Students will try to relate stories on independence, taqwa (piety), and others. We also give tips to students on how to speak in front of people and cameras, and on the radio." (Teacher Interview 6)

f. Zikr (Remembrance)

Zikr or *wirid* is a collection of Quran verses, or the practice of words taken from the hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW to be recited at a certain time, or situation. Among the *zikr* implemented by school administrators as part of the practices and activities of tahfiz students is the recitation of *Ma'thurat*. This confirmation was obtained from the following interview:

"Then, after Asar prayer, we have a recitation of zikr ma'thurat. All students are involved. Then, before Maghrib prayer, we will gather the students for zikr munajat." (Teacher Interview 4)

Although tahfiz students have to read and memorize certain verses in the Quran during school sessions, or in the classroom, they also have to read selected verses at certain times to keep them disciplined in reading the Quran every day. This was confirmed through the following interview:

"Students also read Surah al-Waqiah in the morning and at night after Isya' prayer, they read Surah al-Mulk. These surahs have their own advantages according to a hadith by Prophet Muhammad SAW." (Teacher Interview 4)

By reciting the Quran consistently, or *istiqomah*, tahfiz institutions can cultivate virtuous characteristics among students. Teachers would also emphasize the aspects of praiseworthy personality and virtuous character during their teaching and learning sessions, as stated in the following interviews:

“There are students with a good personality. For example, when a teacher is carrying heavy books, they will say, ‘Can we help, Ustazah?’ We, as teachers, have to teach and instill moral values in our students. We would always remind them of the connection between memorizing the Quran and one’s personality.” (Teacher Interview 6)

“When students memorize verses of the Quran, they must always read consistently. Indirectly, the act will affect the character of the students themselves.” (Teacher Interview 7)

The findings from these interviews can help school administrators to focus on activities that can increase religious internalization among tahfiz students. Some of these activities can be implemented by the students voluntarily, even though the school administrators do not make them compulsory, especially the non-obligatory prayers. The implementation of additional class activities is to increase students’ understanding, especially on matters of worship. Recitation of selected verses from the Quran, zikr, and wirid are daily practices that can help students remain consistent and disciplined in revising memorized verses of the Quran.

Discussion and Implications

Personality is the basic construction of the mind and character of an individual. Personality can also build leadership by making a person civilized, intellectual, and has pure and viable values. If these elements of personality and religious internalization are not instilled from a young age, various social problems will arise. Religious internalization is important, as it can greatly influence the behavior, personality, and emotional contentment in the life of a Muslim (Rahman et al., 2018; Mukhlas, 2023). One of the ways to cultivate religious internalization is through tahfiz education. Memorizing and understanding verses of the Quran, which include matters of faith, worship, and pious character can increase religious internalization among readers (Bakar & Mat Rashid, 2014). The idea of internalizing spiritual activities suggests that the values and behaviors instilled become part of a student's identity. It is not just about external rules or rituals but an ingrained understanding of right and wrong, which can influence decision-making and personal growth.

Parental awareness of religious internalization activities has made schools and education institutions that provide tahfiz education the destination for children’s early education. This is because most parents have rationalized that religious internalization is important in their children’s lives. They are aware that religious internalization activities can have positive impact on the character and personality of their children, and subsequently, produce human capital that are useful to the society and country (Fauzan & Mohamad, 2017). Most tahfiz institutions today not only retain traditional elements of studying the Quran, they have also combined Quran studies, *fardu ain* (obligatory acts), and religious knowledge with conventional academic and vocational skills. Maahad Tahfiz Vokasional Aman Bistari (MTVAB) in Puchong, Selangor is one of such integrated institutions (Ismail, 2016). The integration of *fardu ain* (obligatory acts), religious knowledge, and conventional academic and vocational skills fosters holistic personality development in tahfiz students. By mastering *fardu ain*, students internalize essential religious practices such as prayer, fasting, and cleanliness, which instill discipline, responsibility, and a strong moral compass. These daily obligations help

students develop time management skills and a sense of accountability, both of which are essential for personal growth.

In addition, religious knowledge equips students with a deep understanding of their faith, enhancing their spirituality and shaping their ethical decision-making (Yuliawati, 2023). This grounding in faith builds humility, patience, and empathy or qualities essential for harmonious social interactions and personal integrity. Combining this with conventional academic and vocational skills prepares students for the practical demands of the modern world. Academic skills such as literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking expand their intellectual horizons, enabling them to engage with diverse ideas and solve complex problems. Vocational skills, on the other hand, provide practical expertise that can lead to self-reliance and career opportunities. By balancing religious obligations with academic and vocational training, tahfiz students become well-rounded individuals, equipped to succeed in both their spiritual journey and worldly endeavors, thereby enhancing their overall personality and contributions to society (Norsalim et al., 2021).

Tahfiz tight schedule, especially daily memorization of the Quran and heavy co-curricular activities can cause tahfiz students to experience emotional stress (Yahaya et al., 2017), which could lead them to commit various disciplinary problems. These problems in schools could lead to character and ethical collapse among students. In this case, school administrators should strive to form a curriculum, co-curriculum, learning environment, and activity schedule that can increase religious internalization among students without stressing them. This matter should be given due attention, because tahfiz students should be able to manage their time well, and cultivate the discipline to perform tahfiz learning activities and religious internalization at school. According to Hashim (2015), tahfiz learning process should be based on the students' spiritual and physical maturity. Spiritual maturity is related to an individual's internal factors, while physical maturity is related to external factors. According to Ahmad (2014) and Rothman et. al (2024), these spiritual and physical aspects are guidance in the shaping of the personality of successful Muslim students.

Tahfiz school administrators have implemented prayer activities to strengthen the spiritual aspect of tahfiz students. Students not only need to maintain the quality of compulsory prayers, such as praying at the beginning of each prayer time and in congregation, they are also trained to improve their non-obligatory prayers. Non-obligatory prayers performed by the students may include recitation of the memorized verses of the Quran, as one of the ways for them to maintain the memory of the verses (Ambo & Mokhsein, 2019). In this case, some school administrators make it compulsory for their students to perform non-obligatory prayers during the day and at midnight. Some of these non-obligatory activities are performed individually, or in congregation. Prayer activities that have various actions and movements can help improve the physical health of the doer (Imamoglu, 2016). Fasting on certain days, especially Mondays and Thursdays are also part of the activities implemented by some school administrators. Fasting in its true meaning is restraining from eating and drinking, as well as restraining from lust and prohibited activities. Hence, this practice is able to increase the students' spirituality as Muslim individuals. In fact, according to studies by health experts (Pakkir Maideen et al., 2017), fasting can also lead to a healthy body and reduce the risks of chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. This

practice would indirectly increase the physical strength of the tahfiz students and allow them to follow their learning sessions with more energy.

Tahfiz students not only need to memorize the Quran, they must also increase their understanding of the verses of the Quran to strengthen religious internalization. To achieve this goal, school administrators would conduct additional classes, *taalim*, and *tazkirah* sessions, as well as usrah after the compulsory prayers to increase students' knowledge on religious matters. This is because knowledge is meaningless unless practised in daily life, especially in matters of worship and being virtuous individuals. Indirectly, these activities can add value to tahfiz learning in schools that could shape students' personality (Ambo & Mokhsein, 2019). The skill of delivering *tazkirah* could indirectly add value to students, in terms of presenting and sharing knowledge with the community. Apart from that, *taalim* activities and additional classes can increase their knowledge on hadith, fiqh, Islamic history, and other religious aspects. Preparing and delivering *tazkirah* helps students develop public speaking skills, which are crucial for effective communication. By sharing their knowledge in front of an audience, students build self-confidence and learn to articulate their thoughts clearly and convincingly. This not only prepares them for religious leadership but also boosts their overall communication skills, benefiting them in various aspects of life (Yahya et al., 2020). To deliver a meaningful *tazkirah*, students must understand, reflect on, and internalize the religious concepts they are sharing. This process enhances their critical thinking skills as they learn to explain complex ideas in a relatable way. It also fosters a love for lifelong learning, as they are encouraged to continuously expand their knowledge (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Zikr and wirid recitations after daily prayers could provide spiritual support and strength to Muslims (Sarwari & Wahab, 2018). Zikr and wirid recitation must be based on the main sources of Islamic knowledge, namely the Quran and sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The wisdom in the recitation of zikr, wirid, and prayers is that they create a bond between the tahfiz students and Allah SWT so that they are always under the protection, care, and guidance of Allah SWT. Zikr recitation is able to bring peace of mind and must be practiced in the right way, such as maintaining the manners of zikr and mentioning the name of Allah SWT (Mamat & Mohd Zarif, 2019). This would indirectly leave a positive effect on the habits and behaviors of students because they would feel that every aspect of their lives is always watched by Allah SWT. These practices are also a form of continuity to the implementation of compulsory worships that develop religious internalization among the students. The selection of zikr or wirid for tahfiz students to practise should also be given attention, because they must be suitable for their Quran learning activities and can be integrated at schools. Zikr recitation, when practiced correctly, can offer significant psychological and spiritual benefits to students. By maintaining proper manners during zikr and consistently invoking the name of Allah, students cultivate mindfulness and a sense of inner peace (Applebaum, 2023). This practice fosters a heightened awareness of Allah's presence in their daily lives, which, in turn, influences their habits and behaviors in a positive manner. The sense of being constantly watched by Allah encourages students to be more conscious of their actions, leading to increased self-discipline and moral integrity. As they engage in zikr, the regular contemplation of divine names and attributes nurtures humility, patience, and gratitude. Over time, these qualities become embedded in their character, helping them navigate challenges with composure and empathy. Moreover, the peace derived from zikr has a calming effect, which can reduce stress and anxiety, further contributing to students' emotional well-being.

(Purwanti et al., 2024). The repeated practice helps them to remain centered, even in the face of difficulties, fostering a balanced approach to life.

As Muslims, education that encompasses matters of faith, worship, and character can influence the development of religious internalization, including physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual aspects (Dzulkifli & Suhid, 2018). Nonetheless, several criticisms have been directed at tahfiz institutions and schools, which are often associated with the lack of exposure to the development of competent and highly skilled human capital to fill the nation's workforce requirements. Therefore, administrators of tahfiz schools and institutions need to take proactive steps to implement activities that can develop the potentials of their students towards becoming useful human capital to the country and religion. According to Rosnani (2015), the function of education can be divided into two aspects, namely, for the good of the individual and the society. Individual potential refers to the potential of the students at these schools. Every student has inherent abilities, talents, and characteristics that define their personal potential. In educational settings, the goal is to help students realize and maximize this potential. Through the internalization of various spiritual activities at tahfiz institutions and schools, students would be able to develop their individual potential in the right direction (Tham et al., 2020). Tahfiz institutions, which focus on Quran memorization and often emphasize spiritual growth, offer a unique environment. The internalization of spiritual values and disciplined practices can shape students not just academically but also morally and ethically. When tahfiz students with a good personality and religious internalization are in the community, they can act as agents that channel virtuous values, exemplary personality, and impart knowledge that can uplift the community.

Conclusion

Tahfiz education is one form of education that is the focus in Malaysia today. This is because tahfiz education not only focuses on memorizing and revising verses of the Quran during school sessions, the students must also perform other activities, especially those related to religious internalization towards shaping a good personality. This form of education requires students to have spiritual and physical strength to undergo intense learning schedules. Tahfiz school administrators have implemented various religious internalization activities to strengthen students' faith, worship level, and virtuous character so that they can be a role model for other students and the community when they return to their home after graduation. Spiritual education emphasizes more than just academic achievement. By fostering qualities like patience, self-discipline, compassion, and self-awareness, tahfiz schools could help students develop emotionally, socially, and morally in addition to intellectually. With these efforts and initiatives, tahfiz institutions and schools not only produce students who have praiseworthy personalities, but also human capital that is useful to the religion, race, and country. Therefore, current religious internalization activities among tahfiz students must also take into account the aspects of human capital. Tahfiz students must be able to think critically and creatively, skilled at managing information, and able to deal with the ever-changing and challenging global environment, while maintaining their piety.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

Based on this study, further research could focus on the specific effects of practices such as *qiamullail* (waking up at night for prayer), non-obligatory fasting, and *zikr* (remembrance of Allah) on the long-term development of tahfiz students' personalities. Future studies could

adopt a quantitative approach to empirically measure the relationship between these practices and personality aspects such as morality, self-confidence, and leadership abilities. Further study could also explore the roles of teachers and parents as key stakeholders in supporting administrative efforts to strengthen students' personalities. Furthermore, emphasis could be placed on a holistic approach that integrates spiritual, academic, and personal development aspects into the tahfiz education curriculum.

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