

## **Comparative Analysis of the Implementation of Tahfidzul Qur'an Assessment in Assuring Students' Memorization Quality at Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora, Indonesia, and Maahad Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Darul Falah Selangor, Malaysia**

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**Abstract:** This study compares how Qur'anic memorization (tahfidzul Qur'an) assessment is implemented to assure students' memorization quality at Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora, Indonesia, and Maahad Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Darul Falah (MTADF) Selangor, Malaysia. It uses a qualitative comparative case-study design. Data were collected through interviews with the caretaker and a student in Blora and with the director (mudirah), a teacher (ustazah), and a student in Selangor, including a follow-up interview with the Blora caretaker about the khotmil Qur'an ceremony. The data were compared across ten dimensions. The findings show that both institutions emphasize fluency, verse accuracy, tartil and tajwid, and correct articulation (makharijul huruf), and both combine daily recitation and review with periodic examinations. Their quality-assurance approaches differ: Blora emphasizes retention of the complete memorization through examinations twice a year, periodic sima'an, and verification before the khotmil Qur'an ceremony, with a one-error-per-juz threshold reported by the student and recognition through syahadah and a sanad pathway. MTADF uses a tiered and documented system based on a target of one juz per month, assessment after each juz, Pra-Syahadah every five juz, graded results, and external verification. The comparison suggests that quality assurance is shaped not only by shared recitation standards but also by the way assessment is structured, documented, and verified within each institution's governance context. The findings are limited by the small number of informants and the lack of memorization achievement records.

**Keywords:** Qur'anic Memorization Assessment; Memorization Quality; Comparative Case Study; Pesantren; Maahad Tahfiz.

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini membandingkan implementasi asesmen tahfidzul Qur'an dalam menjamin mutu hafalan di Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora, Indonesia, dan Maahad Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Darul Falah (MTADF) Selangor, Malaysia. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kasus komparatif kualitatif dengan data wawancara pengasuh dan santri di Blora serta mudirah, ustazah, dan pelajar di Selangor, termasuk wawancara lanjutan dengan pengasuh tentang hafalah khotmil Qur'an di Blora. Data dianalisis lintas kasus pada sepuluh dimensi perbandingan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua lembaga memakai indikator mutu yang serupa, yaitu kelancaran, ketepatan ayat, tartil dan tajwid, serta makharijul huruf, dan sama-sama memadukan setoran, murajaah harian, dan ujian berkala. Perbedaannya terletak pada logika penjaminan mutu. Asesmen di Blora berpusat pada otoritas pengasuh, menekankan keterjagaan seluruh hafalan melalui ujian semesteran yang menurut santri berambang satu kesalahan per juz, sima'an berkala, dan penyimakan khatam menjelang hafalah, lalu dikukuhkan dengan syahadah dan jalur sanad. Asesmen di MTADF berjenjang dan terdokumentasi, terikat pada target satu juz per bulan, penilaian per juz, Pra-Syahadah per lima juz, dan verifikasi di luar lembaga. Perbedaan ini sejalan dengan kerangka tata kelola kedua negara. Temuan dibatasi oleh jumlah informan dan belum tersedianya dokumen capaian hafalan.

**Kata Kunci:** Asesmen Tahfidzul Qur'an; Mutu Hafalan; Studi Kasus Komparatif; Pesantren; Maahad Tahfiz.

## **A. Introduction**

The quality of Qur'anic memorization (tahfidzul Qur'an) depends not only on how much students memorize, but also on whether they can recite the verses fluently, accurately, with tartil and correct tajwid and makharijul huruf, and retain them over time. Assessment therefore has an important role in assuring memorization quality: it helps educators identify students' mastery, monitor progress, and determine when memorization requires further review (Nugraha et al., 2025; Dita & Nurjannah, 2023). This role becomes especially important in residential tahfidz institutions, where students may be memorizing new passages while maintaining previously memorized verses.

In practice, tahfidz assessment varies widely. Some pesantren implement tiered evaluation on a daily, weekly, monthly, and annual basis, combining muroja'ah, tasmi', and tadarus (Nugraha et al., 2025). However, many institutions are still constrained by students' weak consistency in retaining old memorization while adding new memorization, as well as by a lack of structured instruments for detecting students' weaknesses early (Dita & Nurjannah, 2023). Ernawati et al. (2023) even found that tahfidz assessment instruments developed by elementary school teachers still needed revision in terms of content, construction, and language. This means that the number of verses memorized is not enough to measure quality; what matters more is the extent to which the assessment system is able to keep the memorization sustainably preserved.

Previous studies on the evaluation of tahfidz programs have mostly been limited to a single-country context. Ayyusufi et al. (2022) evaluated two pesantren in Sukoharjo using the CIPP model and found both to be rated very good, although they differed in inputs and in the achievement of memorization targets. Musfirah et al. (2025) evaluated a peer-tutor-based tahsin program in Makassar using the same model and emphasized optimizing inputs and time allocation. Safariah and Masykur (2023) highlighted the planning, implementation, and evaluation of tahfidz in an Acehese dayah, while Rubiyad et al. (2023) examined the relationship between the One Day One Ayat method and elementary school students' memorization ability.

The success of tahfidz is also determined by its management, from planning to evaluation, in both schools and madrasahs (Firmansyah et al., 2024; Rustiana & Ma'arif, 2022). Galib et al. (2023) showed the contribution of the effectiveness of learning methods to students' memorization ability, while Sakinah and Hasan (2024) found that good time management compressed the 30-juz target from three years to one year.

Studies of tahfiz in Malaysia show similar quality challenges. Abd Ghani and Yahaya (2021) found that the implementation of private tahfiz curricula in Johor was at a moderate-to-low level and needed improvement. Abdul Rahman et al. (2021) identified six components of the tahfiz curriculum at Maahad Integrasi Tahfiz Sains (MITS) Selangor, including assessment management and memorization (*hafazan*) evaluation as the main determinants of the quality of curriculum management. Kadir et

al. (2025) found that certain factors influenced students' memorization achievement at Johor State Religious Secondary Schools at a high level, although not all students reached the target within the prescribed time.

In this study, memorization quality is the quality of mastery of memorization as observed when students recite their memorization without looking at the mushaf, with five indicators: (1) fluency, namely reciting verses continuously without stumbling and without much prompting from the listener; (2) accuracy of wording and verse order in accordance with the mushaf; (3) tartil and accuracy of tajwid; (4) accuracy of articulation (*makharijul huruf*); and (5) retention, namely the persistence of old memorization as new memorization increases (*mutqin*). Fluency differs from tartil: fluency concerns the continuity of memorization, whereas tartil concerns slow, orderly recitation that gives each letter its due, so a reciter can be fluent but not yet recite with tartil because of rushing. These five indicators serve as the comparison tool in the Results section.

To interpret the functions of assessment, this study distinguishes between summative assessment that measures achievement (*assessment of learning*) and formative assessment that supports learning (*assessment for learning*) (Heitink et al., 2016). According to the systematic review by Heitink et al. (2016), assessment for learning requires teachers to interpret assessment information directly, involve students, and give substantive, constructive, and focused feedback. Assessment is also viewed as a means of self-regulation and co-regulation, in which students, teachers, and peers jointly regulate the learning process (*assessment as learning*) (Andrade et al., 2021). In tahfidz, recitation and review followed by immediate correction can be read as coaching assessment, whereas juz examinations or promotion examinations can be read as achievement assessment. Quality assurance of memorization is understood as these two functions operating together: memorization is not merely measured, but its results are followed up until the standard is met.

The policy frameworks of the two countries are also relevant. In Indonesia, Law Number 18 of 2019 on Pesantren recognizes the distinctiveness of pesantren and gives them room to provide education in accordance with their traditions (Law Number 18 of

2019, Article 1 and General Elucidation). Within this framework, the institution studied in Indonesia, Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum, determines its own standards and ways of assessing memorization through the caretaker, as described in the Results section. In Malaysia, tahfiz education is guided by the National Tahfiz Education Policy (Dasar Pendidikan Tahfiz Negara, DPTN), coordinated by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, 2021). The DPTN serves as the national guideline for managing tahfiz education, aligned with the National Education Policy and state legislation (Arsad et al., 2026). In Selangor, private tahfiz institutions are required to register with the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (JAIS), which also audits registered maahad tahfiz, while the Selangor State Al-Quran Tahfiz Institutions Association (PITAS) cooperates with JAIS and the state government on registration matters (Haneefa et al., 2024). Thus, assessment in the Indonesian institution tends to be autonomous, whereas in the Malaysian institution it may be connected to mechanisms outside the institution.

Although studies have examined tahfidz learning and assessment in Indonesia and Malaysia, the two bodies of research largely develop separately and often focus on learning models, curriculum, or program evaluation rather than on the assessment process as a system of quality assurance. Hartanti and Agmar (2025), for example, compared tahfidz learning models and memorization methods at an Indonesian pesantren and a Malaysian institution, while Noer and Rusydiyah (2019) proposed the Coin Pro 2 model for evaluating a tahfidz program. These studies provide useful foundations, but they do not specifically compare how assessment is designed, implemented, recorded, and followed up at institutional level across the two national contexts.

The research gap addressed here is therefore the limited comparative evidence on how tahfidz assessment functions as a quality-assurance system in institutions operating under different governance frameworks. This study contributes by comparing Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora, Indonesia, and Maahad Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Darul Falah (MTADF) Selangor, Malaysia, across ten dimensions, including assessment frequency, assessors, quality criteria, recording, follow-up, and recognition of achievement. Rather

than assuming that either system is more effective, the study examines their similarities and differences in light of the available interview data and the policy contexts in which each institution operates.

This study aims to comparatively analyze the implementation of tahfidzul Qur'an assessment in assuring memorization quality at the two institutions, with three research questions: (1) how are the tahfidzul Qur'an assessment systems at Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora and at Maahad Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Darul Falah Selangor designed and implemented; (2) what are the fundamental similarities and differences between the two assessment systems; and (3) what factors support and hinder the implementation of memorization assessment at each institution according to practitioners and students?

## **B. Research Methods**

This qualitative study uses a comparative case study design, or *multiple-case study* (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017), because what is compared are two systems, namely how memorization assessment is designed, run, recorded, and followed up, rather than variables measured across many units. With only two institutions and no standardized, equivalent memorization quality instrument across the two countries, statistical tests between institutions would be meaningless. The comparison procedure follows the four stages formulated by Bereday, namely description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and comparison, as described by Phillips and Schweisfurth (2014). Following Bartlett and Vavrus (2017), the comparison is carried out horizontally between institutions and vertically, that is, by tracing the links between assessment practices and the policy frameworks above them. The two sites were chosen purposively: both run residential tahfidz programs, they operate under different policy frameworks, and they were accessible to the researcher. Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora is the researcher's alma mater, while access to Maahad Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Darul Falah (MTADF) Selangor was obtained through the researcher's community service program (Kuliah Kerja Nyata, KKN) in Selangor.

The comparison was carried out on ten dimensions determined in advance and derived from the memorization quality indicators and the assessment function framework in the Introduction, namely the program's purpose and direction;

memorization targets and rhythm; form and frequency of assessment; assessor; quality criteria; graduation standard; recording of results; follow-up; form of recognition of achievement; and supporting and hindering factors.

Informants were selected purposively from three categories, namely program leaders, tahfidz teachers (ustadz/ustadzah), and students (santri). At MTADF Selangor, the three were represented by the mudirah as head of the maahad (MDF), a tahfiz teacher (ustazah) (UDF), and a student (pelajar) (SDF). At Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora, the roles of leader and listener are held by one person, namely the ibu nyai as caretaker who also listens to students' recitations (PKU), along with one santri (SKU), so there were five informants in total. The santri and student informants had participated in the tahfidz program for more than three years and had taken memorization examinations several times.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews on assessment design, implementation, assessment indicators, recording, follow-up, and obstacles. In Blora, the interview with the caretaker was conducted in person in Javanese, recorded, transcribed, and then translated into Indonesian by the researcher; the interviews with the santri were conducted in person in Indonesian. Follow-up questions were possible only in the oral interviews in Blora. In Selangor, the three informants answered in writing and online in Malay, without written follow-up questions. Malay terms such as *hafazan* (memorization), *murojaah* (repetition of memorization), *pentaksiran* (assessment), *rekod* (records), and *Ithbat* (verification of memorization) are retained alongside their English equivalents. Information about the khotmil Qur'an ceremony and the listening session before the ceremony was obtained through a follow-up interview with the caretaker. Data were collected in September 2026.

The difference in data collection methods, oral in Blora and written in Selangor, is acknowledged as a limitation: written answers are more concise and orderly, whereas oral interviews are richer but less systematic. For this reason, the comparison is limited to dimensions for which data are available at both locations. Each statement is labeled with the code of its source informant, and statements corroborated by both a practitioner and a student are marked with both codes. Statements about the institution's formal

provisions, such as targets, examination levels, and grades, delivered by the leader are read as a description of institutional policy. Statements about experiences or practices that come from only one informant are treated as preliminary findings, marked with their source, and not used as the sole basis of comparison. Memorization achievement documents, such as recaps of juz examinations or the number of students who repeat, had not yet been obtained from either institution, so this study does not assess the effectiveness of assessment but rather its design, procedures, and supporting and hindering factors according to practitioners and students.

Data were coded deductively based on the ten dimensions, then supplemented with inductive coding for findings outside those dimensions (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Each case was analyzed separately, then across cases using a matrix per dimension (Table 1), so that similarities and differences were read on the same dimensions. Comparative claims are formulated as the emphasis of each system in its context, not as a judgment that one institution is more effective than the other.

Data validity was checked through source triangulation, that is, comparing practitioners' statements with those of the santri or student at each institution, and every analytic decision was recorded in the matrix so that it could be traced (Nowell et al., 2017). To manage closeness to the alma mater, the researcher separated informants' statements from personal knowledge, anchored every procedural statement in informants' statements, and used the santri's statements as a comparison for the caretaker's statements. This study obtained permission from the caretaker of Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum and the mudirah of MTADF. The santri and student were involved with the consent of the institution and their own consent, as well as the consent of their guardians because the student informants were under 18 years of age; their identities were anonymized with informant codes, and the data were used only for this study.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **The Assessment System at Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora**

The tahfidz program at Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum has run since around the early 1990s; according to the caretaker, the first santri completed memorization around 1995 (PKU). Its purpose, in the caretaker's words, is to accommodate santri who want to

memorize the Qur'an. Assessment operates even before santri begin memorizing: the entry requirement for the memorization track is good tajwid and fluent recitation; if this is not yet met, the santri first recites *bin nadzri* (reading while looking at the mushaf) (PKU). Every new santri must memorize juz 30 in the first year, and those who pass continue reciting *bin nadzri* to the ibu nyai in the second year. Assessment in Blora thus functions as a series of gates: juz 30, fluency in *bin nadzri*, and then the memorization of 30 juz.

The caretaker rejects a uniform time target: "nek menghafal iku gak bisa ditarget" (memorization cannot be targeted) (PKU). The only thing set is a daily minimum, namely adding at least one page of memorization. Some santri are able to add a quarter juz per recitation and complete in a year, while others need up to ten years, with an average of around five years (PKU). The santri described a consistent weekly rhythm: Monday–Thursday and Saturday consist of *deresan* or review in the morning and *ziyadah* (adding new memorization) of at least one page in the afternoon; Friday and Sunday are used for group *sima'an*, juz 1–15 on Friday and juz 16–30 on Sunday, each divided into three groups (for example juz 1–5, 6–10, and 11–15) who take turns doing *sima'an* on three juz (SKU). The caretaker calls this activity *mudarosah*, which serves to maintain fluency (PKU).

On top of the weekly rhythm there are examinations twice a year: before Ramadan for the memorization of the current year and after Eid al-Fitr for the entire memorization (SKU). According to the santri, the graduation standard is explicit and strict, namely a maximum of one error in each juz: "misal kalo saya ujian 10 juz, jika di salah satu juznya terdapat kesalahan lebih dari 1, maka harus mengulang juz yang banyak salahnya itu" (for example, if I take an examination on 10 juz and in any one of the juz there is more than 1 error, then I have to repeat the juz with many errors) (SKU). A juz that is not passed undergoes a *her*, or remedial; if more than two juz are not passed, the santri must repeat the *sima'an*, whereas if it is one juz, the santri recites directly to the ibu nyai (SKU). According to the santri, this provision is not always fixed and can be adjusted according to the ibu nyai's direction (SKU). The aspects assessed, according to the santri, include tartil, tajwid, makharijul huruf, and fluency, with tartil as the main

emphasis: "yang terpenting di sini itu tartil, pelan-pelan" (the most important thing here is tartil, going slowly) (SKU). The caretaker stated that all of these aspects are attended to when listening (PKU).

Recording in Blora is brief. Asked about the recitation book, the caretaker at first answered that there was no book and that she assessed the results of recitation herself: if it was not fluent enough, the santri was asked to repeat. Later the caretaker mentioned the ngaji card and report card (rapor) as recording tools, including for noting santri who must repeat (PKU). Thus, decisions on the quality of daily recitation rest on the caretaker's direct judgment, while the ngaji card and report card record it briefly; the details of their contents cannot yet be confirmed because the documents have not been obtained.

The highest summative assessment in Blora is integrated with the khotmil Qur'an ceremony (haflah) for male and female santri. It has three groups of participants: new santri who complete the memorization of juz 30, santri who complete reading 30 juz *bin nadzri*, and santri who complete memorizing 30 juz *bil ghoib*. The day before the ceremony, a panel of judges listens to the new santri's juz 30 and the *bil ghoib* santri's 30 juz in *glondongan* fashion, that is, all at once in one continuous sequence, as a requirement for going on stage. On stage, the *khotimin* and *khotimat* receive the syahadah from the caretaker as a sign of completion. For *bil ghoib* santri, the syahadah is not the end point: after the ceremony they return to recite to the abah yai as a requirement for obtaining sanad in a *tabarukan* manner (PKU). Quality verification in Blora ends in personal and continuous recognition, namely the syahadah from the caretaker and the sanad from the kiai, in front of the pesantren community.

### **The Assessment System at Maahad Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Darul Falah Selangor**

MTADF was founded in 2001 and accepts only female students (*banat*), with the aim of producing a Qur'anic generation in wording, meaning, and practice. Initially, learning focused on memorization (hafazan) and fardu ain. Since 2020, MTADF has followed a Selangor State Government program that enables students who complete 30 juz to continue academic study up to the national examination through the Fastrack SPM Tahfiz, which according to the mudirah is equivalent to the Aliyah-level

examination and makes the continuing pathway of graduates, to higher education or the world of work, increasingly clear (MDF).

Unlike Blora, MTADF sets a uniform target, namely "satu bulan satu juz dengan lancar dan bertajwid" (one juz per month, fluently and with tajwid) (MDF). Assessment is carried out each time a student finishes one juz and before starting the next juz, in addition to a cumulative assessment every five juz (juz 1–5, 6–10, up to 26–30) called Pra-Syahadah. Internal assessment is the responsibility of the teachers and the mudirah, while Ithbat PITAS or Ithbat JAIS is an assessment outside the institution which, according to the mudirah, is the responsibility of the head of the tahfiz maahad at the state level (MDF). Every day, students submit new hafazan, review old hafazan, and the class teacher corrects every error, so that assessment takes place continuously (UDF).

The aspects assessed, according to the ustazah, include fluency, verse accuracy, tajwid, articulation (makhraj huruf), and the extent to which students can recite without much assistance. The quality threshold is formulated qualitatively: "Sekiranya pelajar dapat membaca dengan lancar, tepat dan kesalahan yang dilakukan hanya sedikit, maka hafazan tersebut boleh dianggap telah mencapai tahap yang ditetapkan" (if a student can recite fluently and accurately and makes only a few errors, the memorization can be considered to have reached the established level) (UDF). In examinations, students pass if they achieve the grade of Jayyid, Jayyid Jiddan, or Mumtaz (MDF); the error limit for each grade was not explained in the interview. Results are recorded in the Student Record Book (Buku Rekod Pelajar) and the Teacher Record Book (Buku Rekod Guru) and set out in the certificate (MDF), including the parts that are still weak so that they receive attention in the next session (UDF). The student described a similar emphasis to the Blora santri: the ustazah asks her to recite "jangan laju-laju dan diperlahankan lagi sebut satu persatu supaya bacaan tajwid nya lebih jelas" (don't rush, slow down further and pronounce them one by one so that the tajwid is clearer) (SDF).

Follow-up at MTADF works on two layers. At the institutional level, students who have not met the target are announced and given special attention, while students with the grade of Mumtaz are motivated to maintain their achievement; according to the mudirah, this approach fosters a competitive spirit (MDF). At the class level, the

ustazah identifies problematic parts, asks students to repeat and recite again, and gives additional guidance if errors recur: "pentaksiran bukan sekadar untuk melihat pencapaian pelajar, tetapi juga membantu mereka memperbaiki dan mengekalkan hafazan" (assessment is not merely for seeing students' achievement, but also helps them improve and sustain their memorization) (UDF). The student herself reads one page five to ten times, memorizes five verses at a time, and repeats a corrected verse three to five times until fluent (SDF).

### Cross-Case Analysis

Table 1 presents the comparison matrix of the two assessment systems on the ten predetermined dimensions, grouped into program design, quality standards, and follow-up and recognition.

**Table 1. Comparison Matrix of Tahfidz Assessment Systems at the Two Institutions**

| Dimension                        | Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora                                                      | MTADF Selangor                                                                           |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Program design</b>            |                                                                                       |                                                                                          |
| <b>Purpose and direction</b>     | Accommodating santri who want to memorize                                             | Qur'anic generation (wording, meaning, practice); Fastrack SPM Tahfiz pathway since 2020 |
| <b>Target and rhythm</b>         | No time target; minimum 1 page per day; juz 30 in the first year                      | 1 juz per month, fluent and with tajwid                                                  |
| <b>Form and frequency</b>        | Daily recitation and deresan; sima'an on Friday and Sunday; examinations twice a year | Daily recitation and murojaah; per-juz assessment; Pra-Syahadah per 5 juz                |
| <b>Assessor</b>                  | Ibu nyai; panel of judges before the ceremony; abah yai for sanad                     | Class teacher and mudirah; state party for Ithbat                                        |
| <b>Quality standards</b>         |                                                                                       |                                                                                          |
| <b>Quality criteria</b>          | Tartil (primary), tajwid, makharijul huruf, fluency                                   | Fluency, verse accuracy, tajwid, makhraj, independence in reciting                       |
| <b>Graduation standard</b>       | Max. 1 error per juz (according to santri); tajwid and bin nadzri prerequisites       | Grades of Jayyid, Jayyid Jiddan, Mumtaz                                                  |
| <b>Recording</b>                 | Ngaji card and report card (brief)                                                    | Student Record Book, Teacher Record Book, certificate                                    |
| <b>Follow-up and recognition</b> |                                                                                       |                                                                                          |
| <b>Follow-up</b>                 | Her per juz; 1 juz to ibu nyai, more than 2 juz repeat sima'an                        | Repeat and recite again; additional guidance; announcement and motivation                |

| Dimension                        | Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora                                                                              | MTADF Selangor                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recognition of achievement       | Ceremony, caretaker's syahadah, tabarukan sanad                                                               | Certificate; Fastrack SPM Tahfiz pathway                                                                                                                                                  |
| Supporting and hindering factors | Supporting: regular weekly rhythm, clear passing threshold.<br>Hindering: recitation not yet fluent, laziness | Supporting: clear target, competitive motivation, continuous monitoring.<br>Hindering: student enthusiasm, teachers' emphasis, family disruption, differences in ability, monitoring time |

(Source: processed from interviews, 2026)

Table 1 shows the same core at both institutions. The quality indicators are almost identical, namely fluency, accuracy, tajwid, and makhraj, along with an emphasis on recitation that is not rushed. The emphasis on tartil was mentioned by the santri and student at both institutions themselves in answer to the open question "What does the ustadz/ustadzah usually pay attention to or assess when you recite your memorization?", which does not mention tartil (SKU, SDF), so it can be read as a standard internalized by the learners. Both also combine three layers of assessment: daily recitation and review with immediate correction, periodic examinations, and summative verification before recognition of completion (Figure 1). In Heitink et al.'s (2016) framework, the first layer is assessment for learning because the listener interprets the recitation and corrects it immediately, whereas the second and third layers are achievement assessment. This is consistent with the tiered evaluation in Nugraha et al. (2025) and the position of memorization evaluation as a determinant of tahfiz curriculum management (Abdul Rahman et al., 2021). Suwardi et al. (2023) also reported daily to annual assessment at three Islamic elementary schools with one juz heard in a single sitting; memorization passes if errors are no more than three and can be self-corrected. The threshold mentioned by the Blora santri, one error per juz in the examination of the entire memorization, appears stricter, although the unit of examination differs and, according to the santri, it can be adjusted according to the caretaker's direction (SKU).

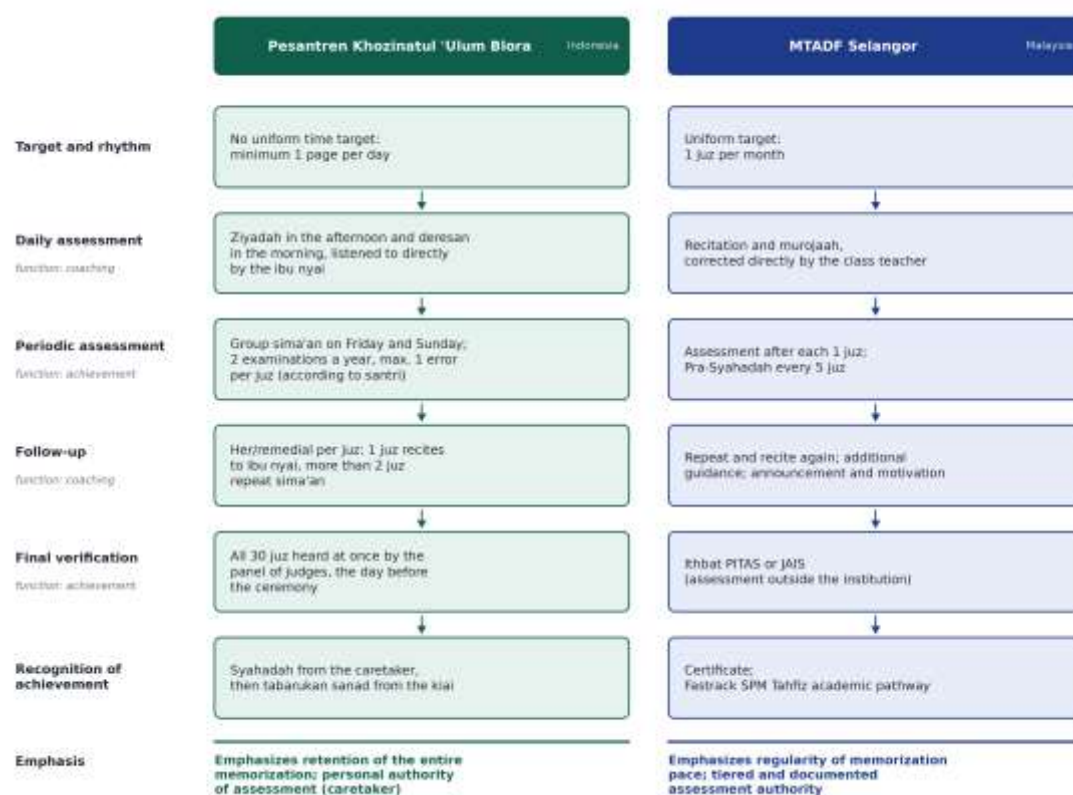


**Figure 1. Memorization Assessment Flow at Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora and MTADF Selangor**  
(Source: processed from interviews, 2026)

The first difference lies in what is guarded most. Assessment in Blora mainly guards the retention of the entire memorization: without a uniform time target, the pressure lies on the examination of the entire memorization, the threshold of one error per juz according to the santri, weekly sima'an by juz range, and the all-at-once hearing before the ceremony. Assessment at MTADF mainly guards the regularity of progress: the target of one juz per month, assessment after each juz, and Pra-Syahadah every five juz make it an orderly progress gate. Both address the problem of the difficulty of maintaining old memorization while adding new memorization (Dita & Nurjannah, 2023) from different directions: Blora emphasizes consolidation, while MTADF emphasizes a regular pace with periodic consolidation every five juz.

The second difference lies in the source of assessment authority. In Blora, authority rests on the caretaker: decisions on daily recitation are taken from the ibu nyai's direct judgment, recording is brief, and the final recognition takes the form of the

syahadah from the caretaker and the sanad from the kiai. Quality is assured by the listener's thoroughness and the continuity of the teacher–student connection. At MTADF, authority is distributed in tiers among the class teacher, the mudirah, and an outside party through Ithbat; results are recorded in two record books and expressed with graded predicates, so quality is assured by documented procedures and third-party verification. Both systems have strengths and risks. The Blora system is flexible and sensitive to the santri's condition, but its documentation trail is thin, hard for outsiders to trace, and dependent on a single listener. The MTADF system is easy to trace and compare, but a uniform target may put pressure on slower students; Kadir et al. (2025) noted that not all students reach the target within the prescribed time. A public announcement of students who are behind can both motivate and pressure; these data do not yet show the direction of the effect. The positions of the two systems on these two differences are summarized in Figure 2.

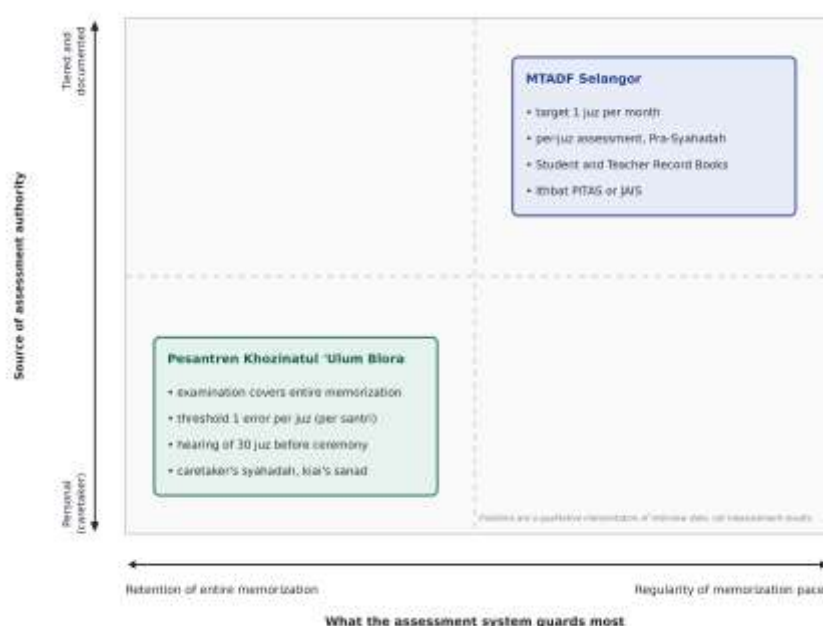


**Figure 2. Conceptual Positions of the Two Assessment Systems**  
 (Source: researcher's interpretation of interview data, 2026)

These differences can be understood from the governance frameworks. As a pesantren within the framework of Law Number 18 of 2019, Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum determines its own assessment standards and rites following pesantren tradition:

the caretaker's authority, the ceremony as recognition in front of the community, and the sanad as scholarly legitimacy. MTADF is within an ecosystem that connects private maahad with state religious authorities and tahfiz associations, so part of its assessment, namely Ithbat, is determined from outside the institution. Its participation in the Fastrack SPM Tahfiz since 2020 also shows how policy that connects hafazan with academic education helps shape institutions. Thus, the Blora system emphasizes the retention of memorization and personal-traditional legitimacy, whereas the MTADF system emphasizes a regular pace and tiered verification, in line with each governance framework, without intending to judge that one is more effective than the other.

On the follow-up dimension, both institutions make assessment results the basis for coaching, in different forms. Blora uses tiered remediation according to the number of juz not passed: one juz is handled directly by the bu nyai, more than two juz are returned to sima'an, with adjustments according to the bu nyai's direction. MTADF combines public recognition, in the form of announcements and motivation, with individual guidance by teachers and the mudirah. On the learners' side, both show assessment as a learning process, that is, a combination of co-regulation and self-regulation (Andrade et al., 2021): the listener's correction is followed by the learner's own effort to regulate her repetition. A Blora santri views deresan as a way for memorization to "ngga nganggur jadi kenangan" (not sit idle and become a memory) (SKU), while an MTADF student devises her own repetition strategy after being corrected (SDF).

### **Supporting and Hindering Factors in the Implementation of Assessment**

Hindering factors in Blora are individual, namely santri's recitation that is not fluent and laziness that the santri herself admits. The handling is personal: the santri is reprimanded and advised by the caretaker, and according to the caretaker the recitation usually improves (PKU). The caretaker stated that there are no time constraints. The supporting factors are a dense and regular weekly rhythm and a clear passing threshold. At MTADF, the hindering factors are more varied and layered: declining student enthusiasm due to individual factors, insufficient emphasis by some teachers on student achievement, families who often take students home or visit them (MDF), differences in

students' ability levels, and teachers' limited time to monitor each student when their numbers are large (UDF). The supporting factors are clear targets, announcements and motivation that according to the mudirah foster a competitive spirit (MDF), and continuous monitoring by teachers (UDF). The handling consists of the mudirah's advice to students and teachers, understanding toward parents, recitation and murojaah schedules, and extra attention for students who need it. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Mohd Azmi et al. (2024) at tahfiz madrasahs in Pahang that success in memorizing is influenced by personal motivation, family and teacher support, effective memorization strategies, a conducive learning environment, and religious observance.

The difference in the variety of hindering factors needs to be read carefully. The hindering factors at MTADF appear more numerous not merely because the problems are more complex, but also because the data come from three informants with structured written answers, whereas in Blora the roles of leader and listener are held by one person and the interview was oral. The caretaker's statement that there are no time constraints, for example, needs to be confirmed with data on the number of santri and listeners before being compared with the MTADF ustazah's complaint about limited time.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum Blora and MTADF Selangor use similar memorization quality indicators, namely fluency, verse accuracy, tartil and tajwid, and makharijul huruf, and both combine daily coaching assessment with periodic achievement assessment. The fundamental difference lies in the logic of quality assurance. Assessment in Blora centers on the caretaker's authority and emphasizes the retention of the entire memorization through examinations twice a year with a threshold of one error per juz according to the santri, periodic sima'an, and the all-at-once hearing before the khotmil Qur'an ceremony, which is then confirmed with the syahadah and the sanad pathway. Assessment at MTADF is tiered and documented, tied to a target of one juz per month, per-juz assessment, Pra-Syahadah per five juz, graded predicates, and Ithbat outside the institution. This difference is consistent with the governance of the two countries, namely the autonomy of pesantren in Indonesia and the connection of

private tahfiz maahad with state authorities in Malaysia. Hindering factors for assessment in Blora were reported to be individual, whereas at MTADF they involve students, teachers, families, and the monitoring burden.

This study is limited by the small number of informants, the different data collection methods, and the unavailability of memorization achievement documents, so its findings describe the design and procedures of assessment, not its effectiveness. Further research is suggested to gather examination recaps, the number of santri who repeat, and written grade criteria, as well as to involve more listeners and learners. Practically, Pesantren Khozinatul 'Ulum could consider more detailed recording of recitation and examination results without abandoning the caretaker's authority, while MTADF could make room for students whose pace differs from the uniform target.

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