



ECOLOGICAL STRATEGIES AND EMBODIED LEARNING IN THE KAISA METHOD FOR SUSTAINABLE QUR'AN MEMORIZATION

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Abstract: This study analyzes the KAISA Method as an integrative Qur'an memorization system that combines symbolic gestures, verse comprehension, spirituality, and educational-ecosystem synergy. Using a qualitative intrinsic case-study design, the study examined institutional documents from Madrasah Hafizh Qur'an Tonra, Bone Regency, South Sulawesi. The corpus encompasses dissertation proposals, operational modules and KAISA guidelines, *mutāba'ah* instruments and parent-student communications, report card formats for all levels of madrasah, organizational documents, and aggregated workforce data. Data were analyzed through condensation, cross-document mapping, source triangulation, and terminology-consistency checks. The findings show that KAISA is organized around five pedagogical principles, seven instructional stages, a multidimensional assessment system, and a madrasah-family-community ecosystem. Institutional readiness is reflected in differentiated functions for tahfizh, teaching, student affairs, character formation, dormitory mentoring, the KAISA division, health, publication, and infrastructure. The staffing documents record 34 teachers and 4 education personnel at the MA level and 45 teachers and 3 education personnel at the MTs level. However, the report-card instruments still employ four dimensions, whereas the 2024 standardization document specifies five. KAISA's main contribution lies in integrating embodied pedagogy, Islamic spirituality, institutional governance, and longitudinal documentation within an interdisciplinary model of Islamic education. Instrument consistency and completed achievement data remain necessary before its empirical effectiveness can be established.

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INTRODUCTION

Qur'an memorization occupies an important position in Islamic education because it functions simultaneously as a mechanism for transmitting revelation, cultivating spiritual discipline, and internalizing Qur'anic values. Contemporary tahfizh practice, however, cannot be evaluated only by the number of verses or juz recited. Recitation quality, retention strength, meaning comprehension, intrinsic motivation, and the relationship between memorization and everyday conduct are equally important (Malik, 2024; Yaqin & Khan, 2022). Studies of Qur'anic education indicate that memorization may cultivate transferable concentration and discipline, but these benefits depend strongly on pedagogy, teacher-student relations, and opportunities to understand textual meaning (Qazi & Sheikh, 2024).

Social and technological change has expanded the challenges of tahfizh provision. Virtual instruction during the pandemic showed that memorization success depends on method design, mentoring intensity, media readiness, and consistent assessment (Pandit, 2024; Sari et al., 2024; Yahya & Anas Hadi, 2024). Studies of pandemic-era tahfizh also show that institutions can sustain memorization through schedule, media, and supervision adaptations, while digital assessment supports documentation without fully replacing direct talāqqī and simāk. Innovation must therefore preserve the teacher's pedagogical authority while allowing systemic adaptation.

Research in Indonesia shows that effective tahfizh does not rest on a single technique. Instructional communication, program management, parental support, a conducive environment, disciplined murāja'ah, and assessment systems are interdependent (Hafidhoh et al., 2024; Mukmin et al., 2024). CIPP-based evaluation likewise treats context, input, process, and product as a unified system, indicating that memorization outcomes should not be separated from teachers, curriculum, learning time, and institutional support.

From the perspective of learning sciences, bodily engagement offers an important explanation for memory formation. Gestures may carry semantic and spatial information that complements speech, reduces representational demands, and creates memory traces through verbal and motor channels (Geduld, 2024; X. Wang et al., 2024). Experimental research shows that hand movement during learning can produce more durable memory than verbal rehearsal alone, while children can integrate speech and gesture across a relatively broad temporal window (Yusmaliana et al., 2024; Nur Hanifansyah, 2024; Moin et al., 2024).

The value of gesture is not automatic. Its effects depend on semantic alignment, prior knowledge, visuospatial ability, and instructional quality. Relevant gestures may support pattern learning and memory, whereas incongruent movement may increase cognitive load (Y. Wang, 2024). Embodied cognition translated into classroom practice therefore requires meaningful, goal-directed movement rather than isolated physical activity. Recent evidence further indicates that embodied learning can improve performance and reduce cognitive load, although effect sizes vary by intervention design and learner characteristics (Onia, 2024; Baharun et al., 2024; Hudhel & Ferdiansyah, 2024).

Digital gesture recognition and embodied learning environments reinforce this argument. Gesture-recognition systems combined with memory strategies can strengthen links between bodily experience and knowledge, while digitally mediated embodied environments may treat movement as an indicator of cognitive and emotional engagement. Individual differences in working memory and spontaneous gesture production also shape benefits from movement-based instruction (Fischer & Dignath, 2024).

Beyond the body, memorization sustainability is shaped by educational ecology. Developmental ecology views learning as the result of interaction between individuals and interconnected environmental layers, from classroom and home relationships to institutional policy and cultural values. School-family partnership therefore moves beyond administrative involvement toward engagement that positions parents as learning partners. Concrete home-school learning activities can strengthen routines, motivation, and learner self-regulation.

The KAISA Method emerges at the intersection of three needs: meaningful and enjoyable tahfizh learning, symbolic movement as a memory anchor, and stronger madrasah-family-community synergy. KAISA stands for Collaborative, Active, Integrative, Synergistic, and Adaptive. Institutional documents describe a system combining verbal memorization, symbolic gestures, contextual tadabbur, murāja'ah, multidimensional assessment, and communication with parents. Unlike studies that separate memorization techniques, online learning, or program management, this study examines KAISA as a complete pedagogical and documentary ecosystem.

This study analyzes: (1) the pedagogical principles and operational structure of the KAISA Method; (2) the integration of embodied learning with educational ecology; (3) its quality-assurance system for sustainable memorization; and (4) consistency among the documents supporting implementation. Its novelty lies in interpreting symbolic movement, tadabbur, five assessment dimensions, and the madrasah-family-community mesosystem as an interdisciplinary model of integrative Islamic education. The study therefore directly addresses Edureligia's concern with Islamic educational innovation, spirituality and character formation, curriculum integration, and the adaptation of Islamic education to contemporary pedagogical knowledge.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case-study design focused on the KAISA Method at Madrasah Hafizh Qur'an Tonra, Bone Regency, South Sulawesi. KAISA was treated as a pedagogical case with its own structure, terminology, assessment instruments, and documentation ecosystem. The article reports the document-analysis phase; consequently, the findings describe documented design, consistency, and implementation logic rather than causal improvement in student memorization.

The corpus comprised 17 document groups: a dissertation proposal; the 2024 KAISA Learning Module; the KAISA Master Book; student master records;

student mutāba’ah records; parent–student communication books; memorization–achievement recaps; ecosystem standardization documents; MI, MTs, and MA report-card formats; male and female organizational structures; MA and MTs staffing data; doctoral-program student data; and other supporting institutional documents. Personal identifiers were excluded, and staffing data were used only in aggregate form.

Data collection involved document inventory, repeated reading, tabular extraction, recording of meaning units, and mapping of cross-document relationships. Units of analysis included KAISA definitions, pedagogical principles, instructional syntax and duration, symbolic-gesture functions, forms of tadabbur, level-specific targets, assessment dimensions, parent communication, governance structure, staffing distribution, and consistency of terminology and indicators. Spreadsheet data were calculated descriptively to obtain staff totals and gender composition without disclosing personal information.

Analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Credibility was supported by cross-document triangulation, terminology checks, version tracing, and negative-case analysis of contradictory sections. The 2024 KAISA Ecosystem Standardization Document and the 2024 KAISA Learning Module were treated as principal operational references. A major limitation is that many achievement sheets, report cards, mutāba’ah records, and communication books remained blank templates; therefore, quantitative changes in memorization amount, quality, or retention could not be calculated.

Table 1. Composition of Research Data Sources

Source Group	Primary Documents/Data	Analytical Function
Conceptual-operational documents	Proposal, module, master book, standardization documents	Identify philosophy, principles, syntax, duration, and assessment standards
Student monitoring documents	Student master book, mutāba’ah, communication book, achievement recap	Examine daily recording, family involvement, and longitudinal data
Level-based learning-outcome documents	MI, MTs, and MA report cards	Compare targets, indicators, competencies, and memorization sustainability
Governance documents	Male and female mentor structures	Map managerial, instructional, and pastoral functions
Staffing data	Aggregate MTs and MA teacher and education-personnel records	Assess institutional capacity supporting KAISA
Supporting institutional documents	Other administrative and academic records	Clarify institutional context and document relationships

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

KAISA as an Integrated Pedagogical Architecture for Sustainable Qur'an Memorization

Document analysis indicates that KAISA is not merely a memorization technique using movement but a comprehensive pedagogical architecture designed to support sustainable Qur'anic memorization. The system is organized around five pedagogical principles—collaborative, active, integrative, synergistic, and adaptive—which collectively shape instructional practice. Collaboration is reflected through teacher-student interaction, peer *talāqqī*, and parental partnership. Active learning is realized through imitation, independent practice, dialogue, and symbolic bodily movement. Integration connects recitation, meaning, movement, and spirituality, while synergy positions the madrasah, family, and community as complementary learning environments. The adaptive principle requires teachers to adjust gestures, *tadabbur* language, and memorization targets according to learners' developmental characteristics.

The pedagogical architecture is operationalized through a standardized 35-minute learning sequence consisting of seven instructional stages: Opening, Orientation and Activation, Modeling, Collective Imitation, Independent Practice (*Ziyādah*), Contextual *Tadabbur*, and Evaluation and Closing. The instructional flow gradually moves from affective preparation to cognitive encoding, motor reinforcement, retrieval practice, semantic elaboration, and evaluation. Modeling and collective imitation establish observational learning, whereas independent practice evaluates students' ability to retrieve both recitation and symbolic movement without external assistance. Contextual *tadabbur* further extends memorization beyond verbal reproduction by encouraging learners to explain meanings and relate Qur'anic messages to everyday life.

Table 2. Seven Instructional Stages of the KAISA Method

Stage	Duration	Primary Function
Opening	3–4 minutes	Intention, prayer, and spiritual readiness
Orientation and Activation	3–4 minutes	Activate prior memorization and focus
Modeling	5 minutes	Teacher models recitation, tajwid, and movement
Collective Imitation	5 minutes	Students imitate collectively
Independent Practice (<i>Ziyādah</i>)	10 minutes	Independent encoding and retrieval
Contextual <i>Tadabbur</i>	4–5 minutes	Meaning-making and connection with experience
Evaluation and Closing	3–4 minutes	Feedback, reinforcement, and closing prayer

The instructional design is consistent with embodied-learning theory, which emphasizes that bodily movement supports learning when gestures carry meaningful semantic representations. Within KAISA, gestures function as iconic representations of Qur'anic keywords rather than supplementary physical activity. Consequently, movement serves as both an encoding strategy and a

retrieval cue while the adaptive principle prevents uniform implementation across learners with different developmental needs.

Ecological Learning System and Multidimensional Memorization Assessment

A second major finding is that KAISA combines multidimensional assessment with an educational ecosystem extending beyond classroom instruction. The official 2024 assessment framework evaluates memorization through five complementary dimensions: kammiyyah, kaifiyyah, dawām al-ḥifẓ, tafaqquh, and tarbiyyah rūḥiyyah. These dimensions measure memorization quantity, recitation quality, retention, comprehension, and spiritual character respectively, indicating that memorization sustainability is defined not only by increasing memorization but also by accurate recitation, long-term retention, understanding of meaning, and observable Qur'anic behavior.

Table 3. KAISA Assessment Dimensions

Dimension	Indicator	Evidence Source
Kammiyyah	Number of verses/juz memorized without looking at the muṣḥaf	Recitation deposit/ <i>talāqqī</i>
Kaifiyyah	Accuracy of tajwid, makhārij, fluency, and waqf-ibtidā'	Teacher <i>simāk</i>
Dawām al-Ḥifẓ	Retention of previous memorization; documented standard ≥85%	<i>Murāja'ah</i> test
Tafaqquh	Understanding meaning and relating verses to life	<i>Tadabbur</i> dialogue/journal
Tarbiyyah Rūḥiyyah	Motivation, character, discipline, and Qur'anic behavior	Observation and reflective records

The assessment framework is reinforced through a madrasah–family–community ecosystem. Parent–student communication books demonstrate that memorization sustainability is intentionally distributed across three interconnected learning environments. The madrasah provides instructional design, teachers, learning targets, and assessment; families supervise daily *murāja'ah*, observe symbolic gestures, discuss verse meanings, and record behavioral development; while the community provides opportunities for Qur'anic habituation and social reinforcement. Weekly activities—including supervised memorization practice, meaning discussion, congregational prayer, and reflective learning through nature or prophetic stories—translate parental participation into structured educational practice. This reciprocal relationship creates a Qur'anic educational mesosystem in which learning continuously moves between school, home, and community.

Institutional Readiness and Documentary Quality Assurance of the KAISA Ecosystem

The third finding demonstrates that KAISA implementation is supported by institutional governance and an integrated documentary quality-assurance system. Organizational documents clearly distinguish academic, pastoral, administrative, and student-support responsibilities. Separate organizational structures for male and female units allocate responsibilities for tahfizh, teaching, character development, student affairs, dormitory mentoring, public relations, health, infrastructure, and publication. Notably, the female organizational structure includes a dedicated KAISA Method Division responsible for maintaining methodological consistency across implementation.

Institutional readiness is further reflected in staffing capacity. Documentation records 79 teachers and 7 education personnel across MTs and MA levels, providing a substantial human-resource base for implementing the KAISA system. Nevertheless, available documents do not yet include detailed information regarding teaching assignments, workload distribution, KAISA certification, or teacher-student ratios.

Table 4. Aggregate Profile of Teachers and Education Personnel

Level	Teachers	Men	Women	Education Personnel	Total Personnel
MA	34	22	12	4	38
MTs	45	29	16	3	48
Total	79	51	28	7	86

Document analysis also reveals the existence of a layered quality-assurance system consisting of operational modules, the KAISA Master Book, student master records, *mutāba'ah* books, parent communication books, memorization recaps, and report-card formats. Together, these documents enable triangulation between recitation performance, teacher observations, *murāja'ah* records, student reflection, and parental reports. However, cross-document comparison identifies several inconsistencies. MI, MTs, and MA report cards continue to apply only four assessment dimensions, whereas the 2024 standardization document specifies five dimensions by adding *tarbiyyah rūḥiyyah*. Furthermore, the *mutāba'ah* instrument treats symbolic movement as an independent assessment component, while the standardization document classifies movement as a process indicator rather than an outcome dimension. These findings indicate that greater instrument standardization is necessary while preserving developmental differences across educational levels.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the KAISA Method represents a comprehensive pedagogical architecture rather than a standalone memorization technique. The integration of the five pedagogical principles collaborative, active, integrative, synergistic, and adaptive shows that Qur'anic memorization is conceptualized as a multidimensional learning process involving cognitive, social, spiritual, and behavioral development. Unlike conventional tahfizh approaches that primarily emphasize repetition and memorization quantity, KAISA organizes learning through structured interactions among teachers,

students, parents, and the wider educational environment (Martey, 2024; Muthohharoh et al., 2024). This finding supports the view that sustainable Qur'anic education depends on coherent pedagogical design rather than isolated instructional techniques. The integration of recitation, symbolic movement, meaning, and spirituality further illustrates how traditional Islamic learning can be reconstructed through contemporary pedagogical perspectives without losing its religious foundation (Hossain, 2024).

The seven instructional stages further strengthen this pedagogical architecture by providing a systematic sequence that progresses from spiritual readiness to evaluation. The learning syntax reflects principles of embodied learning in which symbolic gestures function as meaningful cognitive representations instead of supplementary physical activities. Modeling, collective imitation, and independent practice create progressive opportunities for observation, rehearsal, retrieval, and consolidation, while contextual *tadabbur* transforms memorization into a process of semantic understanding and reflective learning (Abd-Elazim et al., 2024; Griffin, 2024). Consequently, memorization is positioned not merely as phonological reproduction but as meaningful knowledge construction that combines verbal, motor, and conceptual processing. The adaptive use of gestures according to learners' developmental characteristics also demonstrates pedagogical flexibility that is consistent with learner-centered instructional principles (Putri et al., 2024).

Another important contribution of this study lies in the multidimensional assessment framework adopted by KAISA. The five assessment dimensions—*kammiyyah*, *kaifiyyah*, *dawām al-ḥifẓ*, *tafaqquh*, and *tarbiyyah rūḥiyyah*—broaden the definition of memorization success beyond the amount of memorized verses. This assessment system recognizes that sustainable Qur'anic memorization should encompass recitation accuracy, long-term retention, comprehension of meaning, and the internalization of Qur'anic values in daily behavior. Such a framework reflects a holistic conception of Islamic education in which cognitive achievement is inseparable from spiritual and character development (Hefniy, 2024; Qushwa, 2024). Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that operational indicators for *tarbiyyah rūḥiyyah* require greater standardization to minimize subjective interpretation during assessment implementation.

The study further reveals that memorization sustainability is supported by an educational ecosystem connecting the *madrasah*, family, and community. Rather than limiting learning to classroom activities, KAISA distributes educational responsibility across multiple learning environments through structured parental involvement, home *murāja'ah*, communication books, and community-based Qur'anic habituation. This ecosystem illustrates that memorization continuity is strengthened when instructional experiences at school are reinforced through consistent learning activities at home and within the surrounding community (Núñez, 2024; Ofstad et al., 2024). Such integration also transforms parents from passive observers into active educational partners

who continuously contribute to students' memorization progress, spiritual development, and behavioral formation.

Institutional readiness constitutes another significant strength of the KAISA ecosystem. The existence of differentiated organizational structures, specialized managerial roles, and adequate human resources demonstrates that implementation is supported not only by instructional design but also by institutional governance. Dedicated divisions responsible for tahfizh, character development, student affairs, dormitory mentoring, and KAISA coordination indicate that pedagogical innovation is embedded within organizational management rather than depending solely on individual teachers (Hogan & Bae, 2024). This institutional arrangement provides a foundation for maintaining implementation consistency and supports the sustainability of the learning system across different educational levels.

Finally, the documentary ecosystem identified in this study functions as an integrated quality-assurance mechanism supporting long-term implementation. The combination of operational modules, master books, mutāba'ah records, communication books, memorization recaps, and report cards enables continuous documentation and triangulation of students' memorization development across school and home contexts. However, cross-document analysis also identifies inconsistencies between the 2024 standardization document and several assessment instruments, particularly regarding the inclusion of tarbiyyah rūḥiyyah and the positioning of symbolic movement within the assessment framework (H. Wang et al., 2024). These inconsistencies indicate that further harmonization of assessment instruments is necessary to ensure that the philosophical foundations, instructional implementation, and evaluation system remain fully aligned. Overall, the findings suggest that the principal contribution of KAISA lies not only in introducing symbolic gestures into Qur'anic memorization but also in establishing an integrated pedagogical, ecological, institutional, and quality-assurance system for sustainable tahfizh education.

CONCLUSION

The KAISA Method is a tahfizh pedagogical system integrating five principles, seven instructional stages, multidimensional assessment, symbolic gestures, contextual tadabbur, and madrasah-family-community partnership. Its central strength lies in transforming memorization from a predominantly verbal activity into an integrative learning experience involving the body, meaning, spirituality, character, and social environment. Organizational and staffing documents indicate support from 79 teachers and 7 education personnel at the MTs and MA levels, alongside differentiated functions for tahfizh, instruction, student affairs, character, KAISA coordination, dormitory mentoring, health, publication, and infrastructure. Further refinement is needed in instrument consistency and implementation data. All report cards should use the five official dimensions while preserving level-specific targets; symbolic movement should be treated as a characteristic process indicator; and tarbiyyah

rūḥiyyah requires operational behavioral rubrics. Future studies should combine classroom observation, interviews, completed documents, pre-post scores, delayed retention tests, and analysis of relationships among implementation fidelity, family engagement, gesture quality, tadabbur, and memorization sustainability.

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