

## Memorizing the Quran: Exploring Academic Hardiness, Self-Efficacy, and Perceived Social Support in Islamic Schools

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### ABSTRACT

Religion-based schools with a curriculum focused on Quran memorization face challenges in integrating general education with religious education, emphasizing reasoning and memorization. Students must possess academic hardiness to actively participate in learning and develop self-efficacy in memorizing the Quran. Additionally, students require social support to reinforce the impact of academic hardiness on self-efficacy. This research explores the educational and psychological factors that can enhance students' ability to memorize the Quran. The study involved 113 participants, and data were collected using convenience sampling for ease of access. The data were analyzed using moderation analysis with SPSS version 22 and the add-on Macro Process by Hayes. The findings indicated that academic hardiness influences self-efficacy in Quran memorization, with social support playing a moderating role. Specifically, the results revealed that only parental support moderated the influence of academic hardiness on self-efficacy ( $t(113) = 2.88, p < 0.01$ ). This research is a valuable reference for family studies, highlighting parents' significant role in their children's academic development. This study's novelty is identifying psychological factors contributing to children's memorization of the Quran.

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## INTRODUCTION

Islamic schools, also known as *madrasahs*, are educational institutions that integrate religious teachings and practices with general education. Islamic schools have gained immense popularity in Indonesia and are experiencing rapid growth. Despite their long-standing presence in Indonesian society, research on educational psychology in these schools remains incomplete. Therefore, further research is needed to advance Islamic education (Syar'i et al., 2020). Indonesia has the highest number of Islamic schools, which solely focus on Islamic-based education and operate with government approval. According to available statistical data, the number of Islamic schools in Indonesia more than doubled, from approximately 63,000 schools between 2002 and 2003 to 145,000 schools between 2011 and 2012. This increase is mainly attributed to the proliferation of informal Islamic schools that the state has not recognized. In that period, Islamic schools accounted for 17% of all schools, with junior-level schools representing 31% and senior secondary-level schools comprising 36% (Asadullah, 2020).

One of the earliest studies on Islamic schools was conducted by Castles in 1966, which involved an examination of his notes while studying at Gontor (Castles, 1966). The emphasis on memorizing the Quran is a distinguishing feature of many popular Islamic schools. This practice initially gained prominence in Morocco, and its spread encountered numerous challenges due to disagreements, particularly from both Muslim and non-Muslim leaders, as well as negative portrayals in the Western media, which associated it with terrorism and radicalism (Boyle, 2006; Llorent-Bedmar et al., 2020). In Indonesia, there is a significant prevalence of Islamic schools that prioritize memorizing the Quran. These religious institutions have become important for parents who wish to provide their children with a comprehensive Islamic education. Islamic education in Indonesia strongly emphasizes the development of religious character (Hidayati & Rifa'i, 2020; Mas'ud et al., 2019; Yaacob et al., 2014).

Memorizing the Quran is crucial for cultivating a solid religious character in Islam because it demonstrates one's deep devotion to the faith. Since prayer is integral to worship and the Quran is directly linked, Muslims must memorize this holy book. Additionally, Muslims consider it their significant responsibility to preserve the purity of the text as it contains fundamental religious teachings (Gent & Muhammad, 2019). Memorizing the Quran offers numerous benefits, including an increase in intelligence quotient (IQ), enhancement in the quality of life, strengthening of faith and religiosity, improvement in physical health conditions, promotion of psychological and mental well-being, enhancement of concentration, boost in serotonin hormone function, stimulation of the brain, and instillation of discipline (Amir et al., 2021; Arifin, 2022; Black et al., 2020; Ishak et al., 2021; Mahjoob et al., 2014; Shunhaji & Lestari, 2020; Trinova & Wati, 2016).

Furthermore, from a neuroscientific perspective, the Quran also benefits cognitive function and brain health. Several studies support this claim, including research from Malaysia that found that listening to Al-Fatihah reduced the power spectrum in the left occipital lobe compared to when participants heard Arabic news. Interacting with the Fatihah Chapter activates a neural network characterized by oscillatory patterns connected to creating visual mental images (Ismail et al., 2023).

Then, from a neuroscientific perspective, the Quran has been found to benefit cognitive conditions and brain function. Several studies support this claim, including research from Malaysia. The study found that listening to Al-Fatihah reduced the power spectrum in the left occipital lobe compared to when participants listened to Arabic news. When engaging with the Fatihah Chapter, a neural network characterized by oscillatory patterns is activated, which is connected to creating visual mental images (Ismail et al., 2023).

Fundamentally, there is no age limit for memorizing the Quran, similar to memorizing other memories, general knowledge, and foreign languages (Irlina, 2019). Parents who send their children to Islamic schools usually enroll them early, starting with playgroups and kindergartens (Salasiah et al., 2018). Young children attending Quran memorization-based Islamic schools must focus on memorizing their beliefs, which will shape their self-regulated learning abilities (Kibtiyah et al., 2020; Utami et al., 2022). Confidence in memorizing the Quran falls within the domain of confidence in learning, commonly called self-efficacy (Mustaqimah, 2019). Self-efficacy plays a vital role for children attending Islamic schools that emphasize Quran memorization, as having confidence in memorization facilitates the rote learning process and contributes to the success of the overall learning process (Dzul kifli et al., 2016; Maryama et al., 2020; Sali & Ancho, 2021).

Self-efficacy in this context refers to the belief in one's ability to memorize the Quran. It is believed to influence task selection and motivation levels. Different individuals have varying levels of self-efficacy for each task. The level of self-efficacy can impact an individual's success in achieving well-being across physical, socio-emotional, psychological, cognitive, and spiritual aspects (Mutmainnah & Afyanti, 2019; Nadlifah et al., 2022; Sirin et al., 2022).

Including religious and academic curricula, which may incorporate national or international subjects, can result in academic burdens and fatigue among students. The pressure to memorize the Quran must be addressed to prevent academic burnout and stress (Ismail et al., 2016; Mahfud, 2019; Utari & Hamid, 2021). Enhancing students' self-efficacy in remembering is important to facilitate Quran memorization and overcome obstacles such as academic overload and extra lessons. By doing so, students can effectively control and discipline themselves to maintain memorization (Afsari et al., 2020).

Self-efficacy is influenced by several factors, including a person's resilience under pressure. Students with hardiness will find it easier to face pressure, carry out extracurricular activities, avoid skipping class, and provide coping strategies for dealing with academic failure than those without hardiness (Benishek & Lopez, 2001). Academic hardiness is a student's resilience in facing learning pressure that may cause distress. This concept divides hardiness into three dimensions: the 3C's (control, challenge, and commitment) (Abdollahi et al., 2020; Benishek & Lopez, 2001; Sheard & Golby, 2007).

Academic hardiness has a strong relationship with self-efficacy. One study found that academic hardiness leads to positive attitudes toward certain subjects and makes students more resilient to academic stress (Cheng et al., 2019). Other research states that academic hardiness has a positive influence on self-efficacy and a negative influence on statistical anxiety, where statistics is a complex subject for students. Therefore, academic hardiness is essential for students' self-confidence in achieving academic success (Ali & Gaber, 2022).

Researchers used the sub-dimension of perceived social support as a moderator to examine the effect of academic hardiness on self-efficacy. A student who memorizes the Quran gains confidence in memorization due to social support from family, friends, or significant others who are teachers. Social support is a significant factor that generally acts as a helper and can moderate the relationship between stressful life events and the symptoms of stress experienced (Dahlem et al., 1991). Social support is believed to reduce depression, improve the quality of life for patients with diseases, and facilitate student learning (Mana et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

The surrounding environment plays a significant role in developing self-confidence in learning. It is the foundation for individuals to feel confident in tackling questions and engaging with subjects taught in Islamic schools. The family, the first social circle children encounter, strongly influences their self-confidence, followed by peers and individuals who hold respected positions, such as teachers or mentors (Amini & Samani, 2021).

Social support is crucial in dealing with stress. A study has shown that nurses who receive social support experience reduced stress levels and greater confidence in their work. Social support can come from family, friends, and other individuals (Liu & Aunguroch, 2019). In an educational context, it is believed that social support, particularly from parents, plays a significant role in enhancing children's enthusiasm for memorizing the Quran. Parents are a vital source of support for their children's learning (Hasanah, 2021).

Furthermore, research indicates that social support influences, moderates, or mediates self-efficacy. For instance, one study found that social support from friends makes nurses feel that their work is meaningful and contributes to a positive work environment (Wang et al., 2017). Similarly, in the field of education, individuals who are studying challenging subjects like statistics

require academic hardiness to persevere. Academic hardiness is also believed to enhance an individual's ability to receive social support. Self-efficacy positively impacts academic hardiness (Ali & Gaber, 2022). Peer support, a sub-dimension of social support, is particularly important in dealing with academic difficulties, including tests. Peer support has been found to moderate self-efficacy for test anxiety (Lei et al., 2021). Similarly, teachers play a significant role in supporting students' self-efficacy in science classes, as one study has shown (Tahfidz teacher in the context of memorizing the Quran) (Hasanah, 2021).

The problem in this research revolves around whether the difficulties children face in memorizing can be explained by factors such as academic hardiness and individual support, which contribute to student learning. This research aims to uncover the educational and psychological factors that can enhance students' ability to memorize the Quran. Academic hardiness influences self-efficacy in Quran memorization, with social support playing a moderating role (see Figure 1). This research aims to bring forth innovation in the field of science, specifically in Islamic education psychology. The hypotheses for this research are as follows:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Academic hardiness influences self-efficacy when moderated by peer support.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Academic hardiness influences self-efficacy when moderated by family support.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Academic hardiness influences self-efficacy when moderated by significant other support (teacher).

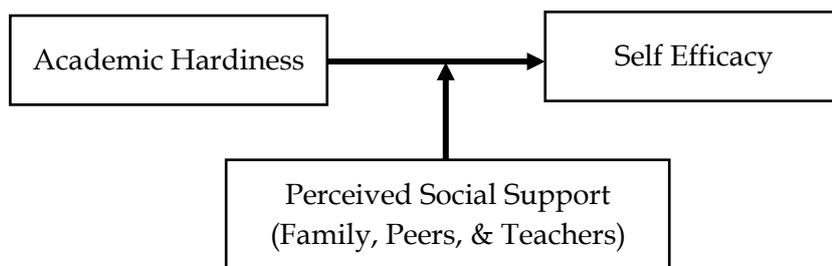


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## METHODS

### Participant

This research study involved a sample of 5th and 6th-grade students, ranging in age from 10 to 12 years, from an Islamic school in Jakarta. A total of 113 people were included in the sample, with 47 males (41.6%) and 66 females (58.4%). The students in the sample were selected based on their completion of the task of memorizing 5 Juz.

The sampling technique used in this study was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was chosen because it provided easy access for the researchers and allowed the inclusion of participants who met the required criteria. The sample size of 113 was determined based on the assumption that a convenience sample would provide sufficient participants who met the required criteria (Sedgwick, 2013).

Data for this study were collected using survey techniques, specifically online questionnaires distributed to and completed by 5th and 6th-grade students. The researchers guided the students to enter their responses into a Google Form. This research was conducted during the COVID-19 Community Activities Restrictions Enforcement (CARE) period in Indonesia, specifically at school X in DKI Jakarta, towards the end of November 2021. School X was chosen for this study because it is one of the Tahfidz schools implementing multiple curricula.

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive analysis and bivariate correlation techniques to examine the descriptive data and explore relationships between variables. Additionally, regression analysis with moderating variables was conducted to assess the influence and strength of the moderator variable on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The data were analyzed using the Winsteps application version 3.73 to evaluate the validity and reliability of the instruments used, and SPSS version 22 with the Macro Process by Hayes add-on was used to conduct the regression analysis with moderating variables.

### Measurement

**Academic Hardiness:** The Revised Academic Hardiness Scale assesses students' personality characteristics with the resilience and strength to cope with school-related stress. This instrument was developed by Benishek et al. (2005) and consists of 13 questions, including 9 favorable and 4 unfavorable items. The dimensions of this instrument include control (never giving up and believing in one's abilities), commitment (trying to stay focused while studying), and challenge (perceiving learning difficulties as opportunities). The responses for the favorable items range from strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), to strongly disagree (SD). In contrast, for the unfavorable items, the responses range from strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), agree (A), to strongly agree (SA). This research includes "I can remain calm and learn from the difficulties I face in tahfiz lessons" and "I will prioritize studying over playing with friends." This research analyzed the instrument, and a Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha$  value of 0.72 was obtained.

**Self-Efficacy:** Eighteen items are used to measure self-efficacy, which in this research is defined as students' strong belief in their ability to complete tasks successfully. Bandura developed this instrument, which consists of 14 favorable items and 4 unfavorable items. The responses for the favorable items

range from strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), to strongly disagree (SD). In contrast, for the unfavorable items, the responses range from strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), agree (A), to strongly agree (SA). This research includes "I feel overwhelmed when confronted with difficult homework" and "I seek clarification from the teacher when I don't understand something." This research analyzed the instrument, and a Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha$  value of 0.74 was obtained.

**Perceived Social Support.** The Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Scale consists of 18 questions, with 14 favorable and 4 unfavorable items. This instrument, developed by Sarafino (2012), is based on social support theory. Participants were assessed on the support they received from their closest people through three specific sources: family, peers, and significant others. The highest response options for favorable items range from strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD), while for unfavorable items, they range from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA). In this study, the instrument was analyzed and found to be multidimensional with three dimensions: peer support ( $\alpha$ : 0.78), family support ( $\alpha$ : 0.80), and significant other support ( $\alpha$ : 0.82). Examples of items in this study include "My parents pay attention to me so that I study hard," "I have friends who don't like it when I get good grades," and "Teachers give advice and suggestions when I have problems."

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation values for the variables used in this research. The results from Table 1 indicate that academic hardiness, family support, and significant other support are associated with self-efficacy.

**Table 1.** Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Descriptive Statistics between Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Academic Hardiness	-					
2. Self Efficacy	.53**	-				
3. Perceived Social Support	.13	.25**	-			
4. Peer Support	.04	.16	.80**	-		
5. Family Support	.07	.23*	.83**	.48**	-	
6. Significant Other Support	.18	.21*	.82**	.56**	.56**	-
<i>M</i>	38.22	45.40	47.26	15.26	15.54	16.47
<i>SD</i>	4.90	5.51	7.56	2.19	2.82	2.55

Note: \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Based on research hypotheses derived from theory, it has been revealed that there is a significant relationship between academic hardiness and self-efficacy.

Additionally, there is a moderating effect of three variables: peer support, family support, and significant other support on the relationship between academic hardiness and self-efficacy. A moderation regression analysis was conducted on each social support approach separately, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Regression and Moderation Analysis

Variables	$\beta$	B	SE B	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> $\Delta$	F
Peer Support								
AH**	.45	.54	.11	3.95				
PS	.01	.11	.05	.21				
AH x PS	.08	.13	.06	1.47	.56	.31	.01	16.36**
Family Support								
AH**	.44	.60	.09	4.76				
FS	.02	.20	.03	.74				
AH x FS**	.09	.20	.03	2.88	.60	.36	.05*	20.74**
Significant Other Support								
AH**	.52	.50	.13	4.06				
SOS	.03	.12	.03	1.05				
AH x SOS	.01	.02	.03	.29	.54	.29	.00	14.98**

AH = Academic Hardiness; PS = Peer Support; FS = Family Support; SOS = Significant Other Support. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

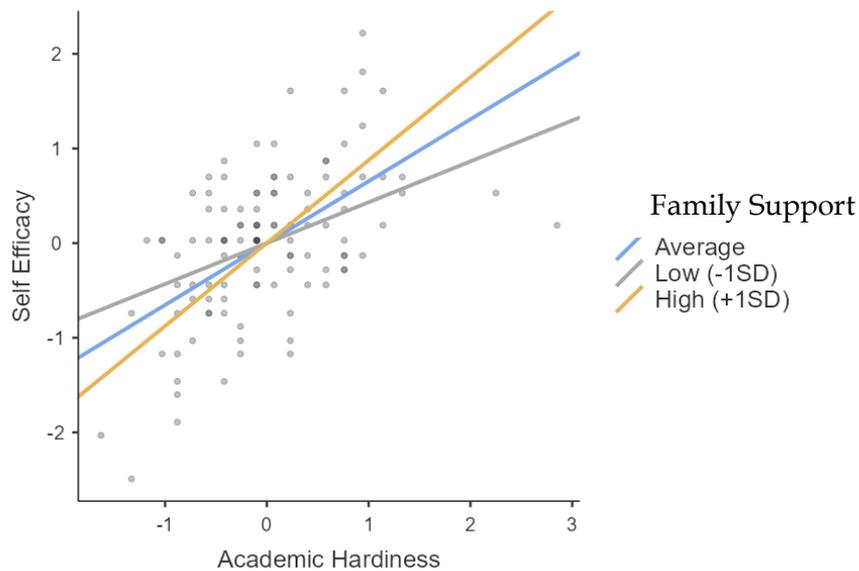
The regression analysis results in Table 2 indicate that the influence of academic hardiness on self-efficacy is moderated by peer support in moderator analysis. Academic hardiness significantly influenced self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.450$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In contrast, peer support did not significantly affect self-efficacy in students memorizing the Quran ( $\beta = 0.010$ ,  $p > a$ ). Therefore, peer support does not moderate the relationship between academic hardiness and self-efficacy ( $R^2 = .31$ ;  $F(1, 109) = 16.36$ ,  $p = .144$ ,  $\beta = 0.080$ ).

For hypothesis 2, the regression analysis results in Table 2 show that the influence of academic hardiness on self-efficacy is moderated by family support in moderator analysis. Academic hardiness significantly influenced self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.440$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In contrast, family support did not significantly affect self-efficacy in students memorizing the Quran ( $\beta = 0.020$ ,  $p > a$ ). Therefore, family support moderates the relationship between academic hardiness and self-efficacy ( $R^2 = .36$ ;  $F(1, 109) = 20.74$ ,  $t(113) = 2.88$ ,  $p = .005$ ,  $\beta = 0.090$ ).

Next, for hypothesis 3, the regression analysis results in Table 2 indicate that the influence of academic hardiness on self-efficacy is moderated by significant other support in the context of moderator analysis. Academic hardiness significantly influenced self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.520$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In contrast, significant other support did not significantly affect self-efficacy in students memorizing

the Quran ( $\beta = 0.030, p > a$ ). Therefore, significant other support moderates the relationship between academic hardiness and self-efficacy ( $R^2 = .29; F(1, 109) = 14.98, p = .773, \beta = 0.010$ ).

Based on the above data, hypothesis 2 is supported, meaning that family support can strengthen the influence of academic hardiness on self-efficacy in students who memorize the Quran. However, hypotheses 1 and 3 are not supported. The regression line for hypothesis 2 can be seen in Figure 2. When family support is a moderator, it can enhance the influence of academic hardiness on self-efficacy.



**Figure 2.** Regression line of Family Support as Moderator between Academic Hardiness and Self Efficacy

## Discussion

Several studies have shown that self-efficacy is crucial for effective learning. It empowers students to enhance their abilities in various subjects and encourages them to confront challenges rather than avoid them (Tan et al., 2020). While memorization is generally considered a basic form of learning, it can be essential for understanding complex knowledge, such as memorizing the Quran (Hasbi et al., 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2019).

An important predictor variable, academic hardiness, is needed to strengthen self-efficacy in Quran memorization. This research demonstrates that academic hardiness has a consistently positive impact on students' self-efficacy. Numerous studies have indicated that higher levels of academic hardiness lead to higher levels of self-efficacy in learning. Commitment, the ability to control one's emotions, and a willingness to face challenges enable individuals to

overcome difficulties encountered during Quran memorization (Cheng et al., 2019; Ubaidah et al., 2018).

These findings are consistent with other research demonstrating academic hardiness's influence on learning self-efficacy. Wang & Tsai (2015) found that students' academic hardiness is influenced by the teacher's hardiness, which in turn affects self-efficacy in learning science. Additionally, Jang and Liang (2016) found a high correlation between academic hardiness and both self-efficacy and academic self-efficacy. Moreover, academic hardiness can also improve self-efficacy in online learning (Kuo et al., 2021). These studies support the notion that academic hardiness significantly impacts self-efficacy in the academic domain.

The moderating role of social support can further enhance students' self-efficacy in memorizing the Quran. In this research, students' perceived social support is analyzed across three dimensions: peer support, family support, and support from significant others, which in this case refer to teachers, as they play a crucial role in the learning environment at school (Koca, 2016; Liu & Aunguroch, 2019).

Hypothesis 1 discovered that peer support did not moderate the influence of academic hardiness on self-efficacy. When memorizing the Quran, friendship is less significant in strengthening students' self-confidence (AbdulRaheem et al., 2017). While studying, individuals may receive support from their friends, but this depends on the reciprocal process between classmates. Students may perceive that their friends are less capable of supporting them in memorization (AbdulRaheem et al., 2017; LaFontana & Cillesen, 2010). This idea is further supported by the fact that students still rely on their parents during elementary school and have not transitioned from the familial peer period to a broader social peer environment (Véronneau & Dishion, 2011).

Hypothesis 2 found that parents were crucial in supporting children in memorizing the Quran. Students receive this support, which motivates them to memorize and reduces the psychological distress associated with memorization because their parents pay attention to them (Hasanah, 2021). Students who have good communication with their parents can increase their self-confidence in learning and consistently develop academic hardiness (Hashemi et al., 2015).

Several studies also concur that parental involvement and support enhance children's intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy in learning. Parents can serve as learning companions for their children. Furthermore, families are essential for students to memorize the Quran, as they provide the best education for their children. Parents who send their children to Quran memorization schools can establish closer bonds with them and share stories about school-related challenges (Anoum et al., 2022; Hasanah, 2021; Fan & Williams, 2009).

Then, regarding significant support from others, particularly teachers, previous literature has shown that teachers play a crucial role in memorizing the Quran (Amini & Samani, 2021). However, this study found that significant support from others did not moderate the relationship between academic hardiness and self-efficacy. This finding aligns with previous research, which suggests that teacher support alone cannot guarantee academic success if students lack psychological control (Liu et al., 2019). Another observation is that teachers primarily focus on knowledge transfer rather than providing emotional support to their students. Consequently, students perceive that teachers do not support their efforts to memorize the Quran (Alaydrus, 2019; Chang et al., 2018). This finding highlights the influence of academic hardiness on self-efficacy among students engaged in Quran memorization. Of the three variables tested for moderation, peer and significant other support were not significant moderators, whereas family support was found to enhance student self-efficacy, particularly when the student possesses academic hardiness.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research suggests that in building students' confidence in memorization, it is necessary to persist in facing academic challenges. This solution will help students improve and develop extrinsic motivation by helping them understand the importance of their efforts. Parents must also know that sending their children to Tahfidz school requires their support. Some activities parents can engage in include memorizing the Quran and maintaining memorization through joint activities called *murajaah*. The innovation of this research lies in the fact that parents can serve as the primary support system for their children's religious education.

There are several limitations to this research. Firstly, the sample is limited to just one school with only two grade levels, namely grades 5 and 6 of elementary school. Therefore, using convenience sampling, the findings cannot be generalized. Secondly, the sample is restricted to the Jakarta Metropolitan Area, where schools focusing on Quran memorization spread throughout Indonesia. Thirdly, the study has limitations in academic hardiness and self-efficacy variables. Future research should consider other variables such as intelligence level, the impact of excessive use of media (such as games or social media) in non-Islamic boarding schools, and the role of school support in fostering an academic culture for students.

This research can serve as a valuable reference for family research, highlighting parents' important role in students' academic development. Future research should explore the influence of other variables, such as academic buoyancy, learning motivation, and grit. Additionally, as this research was conducted in elementary schools, further studies can be conducted with secondary and high school students. Furthermore, there is potential for this research to be extended to adults who are just beginning to learn or memorize the Quran.

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