

The foundations of hifz education in Türkiye

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Abstract: The Qur'an has been read and memorized by Muslims from the period of the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) proclamation until today. The tradition of hifz (memorization of Qur'an), which emerged with motivations such as the prevalence of oral culture in the early periods and the necessity of preserving knowledge in memories, has evolved into different paradigms as time and conditions have changed. The adoption of a Qur'an-centered understanding of education in the history of Islamic education has also influenced the approach to hifz. Many Islamic scholars have regarded becoming a hafiz (hāfiẓ, a person who has memorized the Qur'an) as a necessity for themselves. In this respect, hifz has been defined as a basic qualification for engaging with Islamic sciences. With the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye, hifz education carried out within the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA) has been affected by general educational policies. The demand for this education and the number of students has also varied in this context. Field studies that began in the 1990s regarding teaching activities in Qur'an courses became widespread over time, and since 2006, studies specifically focused on hifz education have begun to be conducted. At the present point, dozens of scientific studies are published each year on the subject of hifz education. In order to better understand the ongoing phenomenon of hifz in contemporary Türkiye, this article attempts to provide a theoretical foundation for it. Evaluations were carried out by prioritizing what hifz is, what kind of historical background it has, what effects it leaves on the target audience, and what contributions it provides to religious education. In this context, the focus has been placed on the grounding of hifz education from historical, psycho-social, sociocultural, and cognitive perspectives. In the historical grounding, evaluations were made by following the sources of Religious Education, History of Islamic Education, Sirah, and Islamic History.

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Introduction

Hifz is a concept related to the memorization of the Qur'an from beginning to end. Individuals who manage to complete their memorization are called *hafiz* in Türkiye (Bozkurt, 1997). However, in different countries, those who memorize certain chapters or sections of the Qur'an are also referred to as *hafiz* (Akdemir, 2010). *Hifz* came to the agenda with the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). In the early periods of Islam when the religion was proclaimed, the Qur'anic text was memorized primarily to comprehend its meaning and to act in accordance with its rulings, and in later periods, it preserved its meaning and importance for Muslims. However, the sources of motivation supporting the tradition of *hifz* have continued diversely throughout every era (Cebeci & Ünsal, 2006).

When the history of Islamic education is examined, it is not possible to reach direct information about *hifz* education although there are some *hadiths* that emphasize the importance of memorising the Qur'an (al-Bukhārī, 1995, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, 23). Therefore, it is necessary to look for the traces of the tradition of *hifz* in

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sources related to the history and teaching of the Qur'an. In this regard, it can be stated that the data about Qur'an teaching, carried out since the earliest period beginning with *Dar'al-Arqam* and continuing in institutions such as *suffah*, *kuttāb*, *maktab*, *dār'al-qurrā'*, and *dār'al-huffāz*, also provide information about the tradition of *hifz*.

When we look at the Republic of Türkiye, it is possible to say that *hifz* education has been conducted under the supervision and control of the state, in Qur'an courses affiliated with the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA). Besides this official practice, there are also those who complete their *hifz* through the initiatives of some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or through individual efforts. Moreover, within the scope of the cooperation made between the Ministry of National Education (MNE) (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı) and the PRA in 2014, *hifz* education has been provided along with formal education in some İmam Hatip secondary and high schools.

Developments in the education system during the Republican period have also been reflected in the practices of Qur'an teaching and *hifz* education. In the early Republican period, Qur'an teaching and *hifz* education were carried out only with special permission; after the transition to the multi-party period, they became widespread. Although there were significant decreases in the number of Qur'an courses providing *hifz* education and the number of students receiving such education during the period of eight-year compulsory and uninterrupted education, over time the inclination toward *hifz* education increased again with the reforms made in the education system (Öcal, 2015, pp. 472-484). At present, there does not appear to be a quantitative problem regarding *hifz* education. Indeed, according to the latest statistical data shared by the PRA, there are a total of 83,510 individuals receiving *hifz* education in Turkey, including 46,917 men and 36,593 women (DİB, 2025).

The main problem of the research is to make the theoretical grounding of the phenomenon of *hifz* education in the context of Turkey. In this framework, first, a historical grounding was made by summarizing the historical course of the phenomenon of *hifz* within the context of certain important periods. Then, various scientific studies written with the theme of *hifz* were examined, and attempts were made to make groundings from psycho-social, societal, and cognitive perspectives. During the grounding phase, studies conducted on *hifz* in Türkiye over the past 20 years were analyzed through document analysis, and the findings were synthesized to form a holistic framework.

1. The Historical Foundations of Hifz Education

1.1. The Period of the Prophet and the Four Caliphs

The primary aim of the first educational activities in Islamic history was to learn and teach the Qur'an (al-Bukhārī, 1995, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, 21), in accordance with the advice of the Prophet (pbuh) (Çelebi, 1998, p. 185). The main expectation from other sciences that were learned was also to prepare the ground for a better understanding of the Qur'an (Atay, 1983). In this context, the first teachers of Islam were mostly Qur'an reciters (*qurrā'*) and *huffaz* who knew how to read the Qur'an (Atay, 1983, p. 73). In this regard, Companions such as 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Zayd b. Thābit, Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū al-Dardā', and Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī can be given as examples (Suyūṭī, 1987).

The prevalence of oral culture in early Arab society was reflected in Qur'an teaching as well. In this context, Qur'an education was mostly based on oral repetition and *hifz* (Dağ & Öymen, 1974, p. 3). The statement of the Companions that they would first learn ten verses, and would not move on to the next ten until they had internalized the knowledge and practice contained in those, shows that they adopted a gradual (*tadrījī*) approach in their Qur'an learning process (Kettānī, 2003, vol. II, p. 249). It can be said that the gradual revelation of the Qur'an itself also played a role in this pedagogical approach (Keskioğlu, 2014).

The first *hafiz* of the Qur'an was the Prophet himself (Çetin, 2014, p. 57; Keskioğlu, 2014, p. 71). He memorized the revealed verses, had them written by the scribes of revelation, and recited them in prayers

and gatherings (Cerrahoğlu, İsmail, 2015, p. 63). The Prophet (pbuh) explained the need to make an effort to retain the memorized verses through the metaphor of the camel: just as a person who constantly watches over his camel can keep it in his possession, but if he releases its rope the camel wanders off, so too, knowledge learned and verses memorized will be forgotten if not preserved through effort (al-Bukhārī, 1995, *Fadā'il al-Qur'ān*, 23).

In the history of Islamic education, the starting place of educational activities is known as *Dār' al-Arqam* in Mecca. *Dār' al-Arqam* was the house of Arqam b. Abī al-Arqam al-Qurashī al-Makhzūmī, who had become Muslim at a young age. After the migration to Medina, the center of educational activities became the *Masjid al-Nabawī* (the Prophet's Mosque) (Şulul, 2011, p. 413). The special section of the *Masjid al-Nabawī* allocated for educational activities was called *suffa*. There, poor and orphaned Muslims without shelter were both housed and educated. The Muslims residing in the *suffa*, known as the *Aṣḥāb al-Suffa*, played an important role in memorizing the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh), transmitting them to those who were not present, and conveying the principles and rules of Islam to later generations (Şulul, 2011, p. 438). In this respect, the *suffa* can be said to have held a significant position in the tradition of *hifz*. Defined by some thinkers as the first university of Islam (Hamidullah, 2004, p. 158), the *Suffa* served as a model for later educational institutions (Baktır, 1990, p. 43).

As the number of Muslims increased, the *suffa* became unable to meet the growing need. Therefore, elementary-level educational institutions were established in various parts of Medina (Hamidullah, 2004, p. 637). The *kuttāb* schools, which were established to teach reading, writing, Qur'an education, and basic religious knowledge to young children—so as not to disturb the tranquility of worship in the mosques—can be cited as examples in this context. The *kuttāb* schools, which began operating during the Prophet's lifetime, were divided into two types: those that taught reading and writing, and those that taught the Qur'an (Qur'an *kuttāb*). The instruction in the *kuttāb* began with the Qur'an, and during the three-year educational process, students were expected to memorize the Qur'an. Whether the student memorized the entire Qur'an or not depended on the wishes of the student's guardian (Çelebi, 1998, pp. 23–27; Dağ & Öymen, 1974, p. 65).

Among the educational institutions that attracted attention in the early history of Islam were the *dār' al-qurrā'*. In these institutions, the Qur'an was taught, either partially or entirely memorized, and instruction in recitation (*qirā'a*) was also given (Bozkurt, 1993, pp. 543–545).

Educational activities during the period of the Four Caliphs developed compared to the Prophet's time and continued in mosques and *kuttāb* schools. Over time, the number of Qur'an manuscripts and *huffaz* increased (Hamidullah, 2004, p. 581; Kazıcı, 2014). The Qur'anic verses were compiled (*jam'*) between two covers during the caliphate of Abū Bakr (Suyūtī, 1987, vol. 1, pp. 137–143). The process of compilation, headed by Zayd b. Thābit, who himself was a *hafiz* of the Qur'an and a scribe of revelation, began six months after the death of the Prophet (pbuh) and was completed in one year. During the compilation of the Qur'an, great care was taken, considering not only the written texts but also the recitations of *huffaz* (Keskioğlu, 2014, pp. 92–96; Şulul, 2011, pp. 579–580). Written texts were accepted only when two witnesses testified that they had been directly received from the Prophet (pbuh) (Hamidullah, 2004, p. 48). The fact that memorization continued after the compilation of the Qur'an and that memorizing did not necessitate being distant from the written copies shows how accurate Abū Bakr's decision was (Sezgin, 2012). 'Umar distributed the spoils of war according to the measure of Qur'an *hifz*, which is important as an indication of the value attributed to memorizing the Qur'an in the early period (Kettānī, 2003, vol. II, p. 362).

1.2. The Umayyad, Abbasid, and Seljuk Periods

Until the 11th century AD, when *madrasas* were established, mosques had been significant educational institutions in the history of Islamic education. This was also the case during the Umayyad–Abbasid period, and the unity of mosque and education continued (Gül, 1997; Tuğ, 1969, p. 428). During the Umayyad period, when no formal school system was yet established, educational activities were maintained

through individual efforts (Dağ & Öymen, 1974, p. 69). Because an education system had not yet been developed, teachers who taught in the *kuttāb* (elementary schools) were not highly esteemed by society. Teachers who demanded payment for their lessons were criticized (Çelebi, 1998, pp. 59–77; Hitti, 2011, p. 557). On the other hand, since *maktab* teachers (school instructors) were given payments by each child and also received gifts upon the completion of certain memorization goals, such as memorizing a specific *sūra* or completing the *hifz* of the Qur'an, they were criticized by some circles. They were accused of having no knowledge other than memorizing the Qur'an, of turning *hifz* into a source of income, and of diminishing the value of teaching itself (Çelebi, 1998, pp. 172–196).

Tutors (*mu'addibs*) who taught in the palaces, upon the request of the caliphs, instructed the children primarily in the Qur'an but also in moral and daily matters. Given the limited knowledge regarding the curriculum of *kuttāb* during this period, it can be understood that some *kuttāb* taught only reading and writing, while others also offered instruction in the Qur'an and the essential principles of Islam. The curricula of the *kuttāb* where the Qur'an and the principles of Islam were taught were determined according to the Qur'an (Çelebi, 1998, pp. 37, 58, 185; Söylemez, 2002, 61–64). Under the leadership of teachers known as *qurrā'*, it is stated that in these institutions the *hifz* of the Qur'an was left to the end, and that before it, subjects such as *fiqh* and *tafsīr* were taught (Çelebi, 1998, pp. 23–24; Baltacı, 2005, vol. I, p. 76).

The Abbasids (750–1517 CE) attempted to develop a school system, increasing the number of *kuttāb* and *maktab* schools so that they could serve the broader society (Dağ & Öymen, 1974, pp. 69–70). The Anatolian Seljuks placed great importance on Qur'an *huffaz*. Assigning *huffaz* to various cities, forming a unit called "royal memorizer" (*hāssâ hafiz*) who accompanied the sultan at the palace or on journeys, and appointing *huffaz* to read the Qur'an in the tombs of notable persons and in *madrasas* can be given as examples of this (Kara, 2006). Another institution of note within Qur'an education during the Seljuk period was the *dār' al-huffāz*, where the science of recitation (*qirā'a*) was taught. The educational activities in these institutions partly continued during the Ottoman period as well (Bozkurt, 1993, p. 544; Kazıcı, 2003, p. 366).

The views of Islamic scholars who lived during the Seljuk period also provide information about the nature of Qur'an teaching activities carried out at that time. In this context, al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) defined teaching as an act of worship and stated that children should be taught the Qur'an in the *maktab* schools (al-Ghazālī, 2011, pp. 3, 166). Zarnūjī (d. 591/1194) stated that knowledge could be attained according to three principles, one of which was "*hifz* and repetition." In addition to this view, he also emphasized the priority of understanding and comprehension (Dağ & Öymen, 1974, pp. 53–53; Zarnūjī, 2015, pp. 126–127). Ibn Khaldūn stated that Qur'an teaching, which he regarded as an essential carrier of religion, was adopted by all Muslims. According to him, Qur'an instruction is important for developing the capacity for learning that will serve as a foundation for later education. Ibn Khaldūn emphasized, through examples from various regions of Africa, that the methods of Qur'an education differed according to geography (Ibn Khaldūn, 2004, p. 790).

1.3. The Ottoman Period

In the Ottoman Empire, which gave importance to science and education, Qur'an teaching was provided in educational institutions such as *sibyan mektebi*, *dāru'l-qurrā*, and *madrasah*. The *kuttāb* schools, which were among the early Islamic educational institutions, continued their function in the Ottoman period under the names *sibyan mektebi*, *taş mektep*, or *mahalle mektebi*. The primary priority of these schools was to ensure that Muslim children reached religious knowledge and that they read and understood the Qur'an (Dağ & Öymen, 1974, p. 206; Kazıcı, 2014, pp. 57–78). Although there were occasional changes in their curricula, courses related to Qur'an recitation (*tilāwah*) and *tajwīd* were always included in the *sibyan mektebi* (Ergin, 1977, vol. I, pp. 82–96; Kazıcı, 2014, pp. 88–90).

In the *madrasahs* and mosques where Qur'an teaching was conducted, special sections where the science of recitation (*qirā'a*) was taught were called *dāru'l-qurrā* in the Ottoman period. In the *dāru'l-qurrā*, the Qur'an was taught, partially or completely memorized, and education was provided on recitation (Kazıcı,

2014, p. 55). The first *dāru'l-qurrā* in the Ottoman period was built next to the Süleyman Paşa *madrasah* during the time of Orhan Gazi (Bozkurt, 1993, p. 545; Ergin, 1977, vol. I, pp. 169–172). Many *dāru'l-qurrā* operated in the Ottoman Empire, but only a few have survived to the present day. The İstanbul Süleymaniye, Hüsrev Kethüdā, Sokullu Mehmet Paşa, Atik Vālide, The Edirne Selimiye, and Kütahya *dāru'l-qurrā* are among these few (Bozkurt, 1993, p. 544). Authors such as Evliya Çelebi and Hüseyin Hüsameddin provided detailed information in their works about the *dāru'l-qurrā* where *hifz* and Qur'an education were conducted during the Ottoman period (Baltacı, 2005, pp. 863–867; Bozkurt, 1993, p. 544; Evliya Çelebi, n.d., vols. 3, 412; 1, 537; 9, 101; 10, 223; 2, 89; Hüsameddin, 1986).

In the Ottoman period, students would attend the *dāru'l-qurrā* after completing the *sibyan mektebi*. First, Qur'an *hifz* would be completed in a lower-level *dāru'l-qurrā*, and then advanced education would be received in a higher-level *dāru'l-qurrā*. In the Qur'an *hifz* and teaching of sciences conducted in the *dāru'l-qurrā*, repetition strategy and practice were frequently preferred (Baltacı, 2005, vol. I, p. 82; Kazıcı, 2000, p. 37; 2003, pp. 383–385). The memorization-based learning and teaching strategy had an important place in the Ottoman education system. In addition to the *hifz* of the Qur'an, memorization was also utilized in language learning and in the texts of other sciences that were studied (Dağ & Öymen, 1974, p. 231).

When the curriculum of the Ottoman *madrasahs*, which were renamed *Dāru'l-Hilāfeti'l-Āliye* after 1914, is examined, it is seen that the course "Qur'an Lesson" (*Kur'an-ı Kerim dersi*) was included with six hours per week in the preparatory class and with the note "to be taught at an appropriate time in each class" in the secondary section (*tālī kism*). In the *mutaḥaṣṣisīn* section, in the departments of *Tafsīr* and *Hadīth*, there was the course "Generations of Reciters and Commentators" (*Tabaqāt al-Qurrā' wa'l-Mufassirīn*), two hours in the first year and three hours in the second year. In the curricula of provincial *madrasahs*, although there was no "Qur'an Lesson," Qur'an education continued through the course "Morality of the Qur'an" (*Kur'an Ahlaki*) (Öcal, 2015, pp. 66–68; Uzunçarşılı, 2014, p. 26).

1.4. The Republican Period

With the proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye on October 29, 1923, some arrangements were made concerning education. In this context, the determining legal text was the *Law on the Unification of Education* (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*, TTK) dated March 3, 1924, and numbered 430 (Official Gazette (Republic of Türkiye Official Journal)), 1924). Article 4 of the TTK was related to religious education. Pursuant to this article, 29 *imam-hatip* schools were opened in 1924, and the *Faculty of Theology of Dārūlfunūn* was established. However, these educational institutions could not ensure continuity for various reasons, and the *imam-hatip* schools were closed in 1932, followed by the *Faculty of Theology of Dārūlfunūn* in 1933 (Ayhan, 1999, pp. 31–49; Öcal, 2015, pp. 127–135). In the 1930s, religious education was completely removed from formal education (Ayhan, 1999, p. 6; Öcal, 2015, p. 411).

The *dāru'l-qurrā*, where Qur'an teaching was conducted during the Ottoman period, was also intended to be affiliated with the *Ministry of Education* (*Maarif Vekâleti*) under Article 2 of the TTK (Official Gazette, 1924). However, under the leadership of the then PRA, Rifat Börekçi, it was accepted that these institutions were specialized schools, and they continued their instruction under the *Presidency of Religious Affairs* (*Diyanet İşleri Reisliği*) with the name "Qur'an Course" (*Kur'an Kursu*) (Bozkurt, 1993, p. 545; Kazıcı, 2014, p. 121).

The *Qur'an Courses* continue their activities under the framework of the PRA in the Republican period. The PRA was established in 1924 following the abolition of the *Ministry of Sharia and Foundations and the Ministry of General Staff* (*Ser'iye ve Evkaf ve Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umûmiye Vekâleti*). The first organizational law of the PRA was enacted in 1935, and with the law numbered 5634, which came into force in 1950, the name was changed to "Presidency of Religious Affairs" (Öcal, 2015, pp. 461–464).

The number of *Qur'an Courses* remained quite limited in the early years of the Republic. In fact, they were completely closed following the Alphabet Reform (*Harf İnkilabı*) of 1929, and upon recognizing this deficiency, they were reopened in 1930. Although their number did not increase significantly until 1950, they continued to exist. While there were 9 courses across the country in 1932, this number rose to 19 in 1934, 56 in the 1940–41 academic year, and 127 in the 1949–50 academic year. Between 1924 and 1950, a limited number of *Qur'an Course* instructors were granted special permission to teach the Qur'an. However, such restrictions paved the way for the establishment of unofficial courses outside state supervision (Baltacı, 1999, p. 183; Öcal, 2015, pp. 472–475).

In addition to official *Qur'an Courses* affiliated with the PRA in Turkey, there were also unofficial ones. Jaschke, in his work discussing institutions providing religious education in the early Republican period, stated that after 1933, only *Qur'an Courses* remained for the training of religious officials. He noted that these *Qur'an Courses* were conducted in foundation buildings that had previously served as *dārū'l-huffāz*, *dārū'l-qur'ān*, or *dārū'l-qurrā*, and in places where such buildings were not available, in mosques, old *madrasahs*, or private houses (Jaschke, 1972, p. 74).

The practices of religious education were influenced by political developments in the country's administration. Besides political factors, socio-economic elements and various social disturbances that affected public peace also influenced the public preference for *Qur'an Courses*; in response to the increasing demand, governments facilitated the opening of these courses (Akgün, 2000, p. 188). After the transition to a multi-party system in 1950, the number of *Qur'an Courses* increased. The activities of unofficial courses were also tolerated. Between 1950 and 1960, the number of *Qur'an Courses* rose from 127 to 301; in the 1964–65 academic year to 434; in 1971 to 786; and in the 1978–79 academic year to 1,538 (Öcal, 2015, pp. 476–477).

In 1971, the *Regulation on Qur'an Courses* was enacted to determine the procedures for opening, managing, supervising, and operating *Qur'an Courses*. According to this regulation, reading (*tilāwah*) and *hifz* education was provided in *Qur'an Courses*. The task of supervising *Qur'an Courses* was assigned to both the MNE and the PRA. In the 1990 revision of the *Regulation on Qur'an Courses*, "providing *hifz* education to willing citizens" was listed among the duties of *Qur'an Courses*. By fulfilling this duty, *Qur'an Courses* gained public appreciation and played an important role in preserving the tradition of *hifz* education (Akgün, 2000, p. 191; Ayhan, 1999, pp. 484–485; Koç, 2010, p. 501).

Between 1980 and 1982, several significant developments occurred concerning religious education. These include the 1982 Constitution's Article 24 making the *Religious Culture and Ethics* (*Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi*) course compulsory, the conversion of *Higher Islamic Institutes* into *Faculties of Theology* on July 20, 1982, and the preservation of the rights granted to *İmam-Hatip High Schools* by the 1973 *National Education Basic Law* (*Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu*). These developments were significant in the history of religious education in the Republican era. However, in areas concerning *Qur'an Courses* and the PRA's scope of work, no parallel progress occurred (Ayhan, 1999, p. 246).

Between 1980 and 1998, the number of those receiving *hifz* certificates (*hafızlık belgesi*) followed an increasing trend, but after 1998, due to changes in the political context, a sharp decline occurred, which continued for many years. It was observed that the numbers began to rise again after 2010. From the 2002–2003 academic year onward, the number of female students receiving *hifz* certificates surpassed that of male students. Since the 2008–2009 academic year, the number of students completing their *hifz* outside formal institutions and included in the statistics has also been notable.

After the military coup of 1980, the number of *Qur'an Courses* did not decrease; rather, it continued to increase. In the 1990–91 academic year, there were 4,998 *Qur'an Courses*, in which 6,555 female and 11,206 male students, a total of 17,761, received *hifz* education. The total number of students receiving *hifz* education continued to range between 17,000 and 20,000 until the 2000–2001 academic year, but from the 2001–2002 academic year onward, due to the *February 28 process* and the implementation of eight years of compulsory

education, this number rapidly declined. In the 2001–2002 academic year, 4,713 girls and 3,161 boys, a total of 7,874 students, received *hifz* education; in 2002–2003, 5,834 girls and 3,573 boys, a total of 9,407 students; and in 2003–2004, 5,843 girls and 3,595 boys, a total of 9,438 students. Until the 1999–2000 academic year, the number of male students memorizing the Qur'an was higher than that of female students; however, after that date, the number of female students exceeded that of males (Koç, 2010, p. 502; Öcal, 2015, pp. 477–484).

During the *February 28, 1997* process, referred to as the postmodern coup in public discourse, negative developments occurred in the field of religious education. The closure of the middle school sections of *İmam-Hatip* schools and the deferral of Qur'an course eligibility to the post-eight-year compulsory education period can be cited as examples. During this period, *Qur'an Courses* suffered a significant loss of students, and the number of *hifz* students declined accordingly (Öcal, 2015, p. 288). With the change in political power in 2003, the effects of the *February 28* process diminished, and in subsequent years, the number of students pursuing *hifz* increased.

On September 17, 2011, permission was granted for attending *Qur'an Courses* while continuing compulsory education. This development occurred with the *Decree Law No. 653* (Official Gazette, 2011), which abolished the additional Article 3 of the *Law No. 633 on the Establishment and Duties of the PRA* (Official Gazette, 1965), which had imposed an age restriction on Qur'an courses. With Law No. 6002, published in the *Official Gazette* on July 13, 2010 (No. 27640), seven general directorates were established within the PRA. Among them, the *General Directorate of Educational Services* (*Eğitim Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü*) was tasked with matters such as *Qur'an Courses* and *hifz* education (Official Gazette, 2010).

From the 2014–2015 academic year onward, the "*Formal Education-Based hifz Project in Cooperation between School and Qur'an Course*" (*Okul-Kur'an Kursu İşbirliğine Dayalı Öğrenimle Birlikte Hafızlık Projesi*) began to be implemented jointly by the MNE and PRA. This initiative provided an opportunity for parents who wanted their children to become *hafiz* but did not wish them to be disconnected from formal education. Thanks to this opportunity, many parents sent their children to these institutions to receive *hifz* education. Within this project, two types of schools can be identified: the first allows students to receive both formal and *hifz* education simultaneously (*İmam-Hatip* schools); the second comprises schools opened exclusively for students who have completed *hifz* education, where only *hafiz* students can attend. The number of schools implementing the *hifz* project has been steadily increasing. The number of schools conducting the *Formal Education with hifz Project* and the number of *İmam-Hatip* high schools educating *hafiz* students have exceeded 60 (Başkonak, 2022, pp. 68–70; Çoştu, 2017).

Since the 2008–2009 academic year, the PRA has begun granting "*hifz* certificates" to individuals who, even without attending any official *Qur'an Course*, completed *hifz* either independently or in unregistered courses not affiliated with the PRA, provided they succeeded in the *hifz* assessment exam. The number of such individuals has also been included in official statistics. Although it is impossible to determine the number of unofficial courses providing *hifz* education in Türkiye, it is known that between 2008 and 2015, a total of 13,944 individuals completed their *hifz* outside official *Qur'an Courses* and received official *hifz* certificates (Öcal, 2015, p. 488). When examining the current landscape of *hifz* education in Türkiye, 2023–2024 PRA statistics reveal that a total of 83,510 individuals are continuing their memorization training, with 46,917 males and 36,593 females (DİB, 2025).

2. The Psycho-Social Foundations of Hifz Education

The attitudes, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors of individuals who wish to become *hafiz* regarding the *hifz* education process are closely related to their psycho-social conditions. The formation of the idea of receiving *hifz* education requires possessing the perseverance and determination necessary for the successful completion of the process. At this point, associating many variables such as motivation, attitude, anxiety, stress, and awareness with *hifz* education is decisive in terms of psycho-social grounding.

The first field studies on *hifz* education drew attention through studies conducted specifically on *Qur'an Courses* (Ay, 2005; M. F. Bayraktar, 1992; Buyrukçu, 2001; Koç, 2005). Studies that examined the psycho-social aspects of individuals receiving *hifz* education began to appear from the 2000s onward. Among the earliest of these were master's theses prepared by Çaylı (2005) and Ünsal (2006). In his research, Çaylı offered suggestions and findings regarding many variables important to *hifz* education. Among the issues evaluated in his thesis were: lowering the starting age for *hifz* education to the 13–15 range; beginning the program upon the student's own volition; communication problems with instructors and course administrations; students' motivation; and post-course employment opportunities. Conducted in the same period, Ünsal's study made similar findings but additionally emphasized students' dissatisfaction with the education they received and the fact that *hifz* was pursued mostly for religious reasons.

One of the determining factors on psycho-social status is the personality traits of the individual. In a study examining the effect of *hifz* education on personality, the fact that *hifz* education is a difficult and patience-requiring form of learning, that students generally stay in boarding *Qur'an Courses*, and that they remain distant from their families and social environments, was defined as having negative effects on the individual. It was determined, however, that overcoming these challenges not only increases the individual's psycho-social well-being and level of motivation but also allows maturation and desired development of personality traits (Algur, 2021, p. 643).

As in the decision-making process for *hifz* education, the views of individuals who cannot continue and are forced to drop out are also valuable. Research conducted in this context reveals that individual factors such as stress, unwilling initiation, and underestimating the difficulty of *hifz* show the importance of psycho-social conditions during the education process. Findings that course instructors discriminate among students, act with excessive authority, apply psychological or physical violence, or that students become bored due to inadequate physical conditions of the course environment also indicate negative effects on students' psycho-social well-being (Çiftçi & Ay, 2024, pp. 509-513; Şekerci & Çakmak, 2023, pp. 387-389; Doğan & Osmanoğlu, 2023, pp. 153-162).

In a study on the project combining formal education with memorization, Güneş (2020, p. 281) stated that students who could not sustain the *hifz* process either failed to internalize *hifz* and its culture sufficiently or abandoned it due to the perception of lagging behind academically. Emphasizing also the decisive role of parents, the author stated that being either overly social or indifferent has an impact on the child, and stressed that a student undertaking *hifz* requires his or her family to concentrate on the education alongside the child and contribute to it.

Karagöz (2023, p. 63) categorized the strategies that students prefer to cope with problems encountered during *hifz* education under two themes. The first is the frequent use of social support mechanisms in coping with the difficulties of the *hifz* process, and the identification of the desire to become a *hafiz* itself as a strong coping resource. The second is that *hifz*, in later years, transforms into an independent coping strategy for dealing with problems. Another noteworthy point emphasized is that the struggle exhibited during *hifz* can later serve as a model and source of strength for the individual.

Guidance activities play a highly important role in overcoming the problems encountered during the *hifz* education process. In this context, techniques for recognizing the individual should first be employed (Korkmaz, 2019), and developmental guidance activities should be carried out for all students, not only those experiencing difficulties. Addressing students' developmental problems, providing motivational and methodological support during the *hifz* process, and offering guidance concerning post-memorization phases can all be considered within this scope. Research in the field has identified the existence of personal guidance activities for students, yet it is stated that these are often presented in a problem-centered manner and without a scientific approach. The necessity of institutionalizing the guidance activities carried out in courses and maintaining them at educational, personal, and vocational levels with reference to scientific research has been emphasized (Uğur & Osmanoğlu, 2020, pp. 947-948).

In a field study examining instructors' opinions regarding guidance activities carried out in *Qur'an Courses*, it was determined that students needed personal-social guidance on issues such as adaptation to *hifz* education, difficulties in memorization, motivation and exam anxiety, family and social problems, study awareness and time management, age-specific challenges, and deficiencies in institutional and individual guidance. According to the findings, students require guidance services to cope with the negative psychological states arising from the difficulty of memorization, to overcome identified problems, and to resolve personal-social issues related to family and friendship (Kocaman & Özkaplan, 2023, p. 221).

It is appropriate to discuss the factors influencing the psycho-social states of individuals receiving *hifz* education under distinct sub-sections.

2.1. Attitude and Awareness in Hifz

As in many educational activities, in *hifz* education, the prerequisite for efficiency is a high level of awareness regarding the process one engages in. Awareness prior to *hifz* refers to asking questions such as "Why should I become a *hafiz*?", "What is *hifz*?", "What awaits me when I begin *hifz* education?" and being able to form responses to them. During the ongoing process of *hifz* education, awareness represents having knowledge about the process—such as making and implementing daily study plans, preventing forgetfulness, and performing memorization more easily and permanently. Measures to be taken to prevent forgetting the memorized material after becoming a *hafiz* can be referred to as post- *hifz* awareness.

When the relevant literature is examined, studies that address the psycho-social condition in *hifz* education directly or indirectly (Başkonak, 2022; Şenat, 2022) draw attention. The doctoral dissertation completed in 2018, titled "*The Evaluation of the Motivation and Psycho-Social Conditions of Individuals Receiving Hifz Education in terms of Religious Education*", is among the first works to address the subject directly. In the study, the *Hifz Education Psycho-Social Status Scale* (HEPSÖ) was developed to determine the psycho-social conditions of students. By applying the developed scale in the field, findings related to the psycho-social processes of *hifz* were obtained. When the sub-dimensions of HEPSÖ are examined, it is seen that under the main theme of psycho-social status, sub-themes were named as "justification and attitude," "awareness," "communication with instructor," and "course environment." Among the scale items were elements such as happiness, determination, and feeling good about the attitudes that individuals receiving *hifz* education developed toward this training. The fact that students know what *hifz* is and what they must do for effective *hifz* education was addressed under the theme of awareness. In addition to items indicating the necessity of effective communication with the instructor for achieving success in *hifz* education, the adequacy of the physical conditions of the educational course was also included as a sub-dimension in the scale (Algur, 2018, p. 26).

In Algur's (2018, p. 279) research, it was determined that the awareness level of individuals receiving *hifz* education regarding their training was quite high (93.6%). The same study included findings that the individual's level of awareness in *hifz* increased or decreased in direct proportion to age. In this context, if a high level of awareness is desired in *hifz* education, students should receive this education at older ages. On the other hand, it was found that females had higher levels of awareness than males; that those who wanted to pursue education in the field of religious studies after *hifz* had high levels of awareness; that those who considered themselves deprived of their peers' social lives had lower levels of awareness; and that those who said they could recommend *hifz* education to others, who stated that they had a goal during the *hifz* process, and who were satisfied with the facilities of their course, had high levels of awareness—these are among the findings obtained in the aforementioned study.

For *hifz* education to be completed qualitatively, it is expected that students have a high level of cognitive readiness. Indeed, before *hifz*, the student must have a clear interest in *hifz*, the reading knowledge and skills necessary to read the Qur'anic text effectively, auditory perception sufficient to correctly understand messages and instructions from the instructor or written/oral sources, a logical and applicable

memorization strategy organized in a sequential order to memorize specific texts, sufficient memory capacity to prevent forgetting and recall when necessary, the ability to concentrate and maintain focus during memorization, and a certain problem-solving ability to compensate when unable to recite the lesson (Osmanoğlu, 2022, p. 2073).

With the increasingly common implementation of *hifz* in conjunction with formal education in recent years, the starting age for *hifz* has decreased to 10–11, following the completion of the 5th grade. This situation has enabled Qur'anic verses to be memorized more easily. However, based on scientific studies proving that the level of awareness decreases with age, it can be said that children of these ages cannot begin *hifz* education with real awareness of the process. During the developmental stages when children cannot make their own decisions, responsibility lies with parents. They must also be supported by the programs and guidance of the institutions providing *hifz* education (Algur, 2018, p. 279; Başkonak, 2022, p. 41). During the preparatory stage before *hifz*, activities should not only be carried out to improve the ability to read the Qur'an in accordance with *tajwīd* rules and to enhance memorization skills, but also to ensure mental readiness for *hifz*, awareness of the process, and the understanding that *hifz* is a lifelong achievement that must be preserved (Başkonak, 2022, p. 171).

At various times, individuals who received *hifz* education were asked about their level of satisfaction with the training they received and whether they would recommend it. In most studies, results were obtained showing that participants were satisfied with the process and would recommend it to others (Algur, 2018, p. 269; M. F. Bayraktar, 1992, p. 28; Çimen, 2007, p. 149; Koç, 2005, p. 60; Öztürk, 2007, pp. 67–77). These data can be interpreted as indicating that the *hifz* education activities carried out have left positive effects on the target group and contributed to developing positive attitudes. Moreover, findings that *hifz* education has positive effects on the individual's attitudes and behaviors, self-confidence, sense of responsibility, discipline, patience, and moral character can also be evaluated within this scope (Demir, 2019, p. 313).

In Türkiye, the *Hifz Education Attitude Scale* (HEAS) was developed to measure the attitudes of individuals receiving *hifz* education. The scale consists of 13 items and three sub-dimensions named Cognitive, Social, and Affective (Osmanoğlu & Algur, 2023). In a study using HEAS on the attitudes and social anxieties of students receiving *hifz* education, students' *hifz* attitude scores ranged between 84% and 92% of the maximum possible score. This data shows that students receiving *hifz* education have highly positive approaches toward the training they receive. Developing a positive attitude toward *hifz* in a process that can only be completed through personal effort, dedication, determination, and motivation is important. The same study found that students' social anxiety levels were around 50%, which was considered not to hinder success (Algur et al., 2024, p. 658). Similar results were also found in other studies (Çoban, 2018, p. 362).

Developing negative attitudes toward different elements of the education received by individuals in *hifz* education can lead to failure. In the *hifz* process, which begins with various motivations, decreases in motivation and the development of negative attitudes toward education may occur due to problems arising from the instructor, student, parent, or environment (Aybey, 2020, pp. 399–400; Özdemir & Çaylı, 2021, pp. 42–43). If such negative approaches are not identified and addressed, depressive conditions may develop over time (Öztürk, 2007, p. 138). Negative approaches and attitudes formed by the individual toward *hifz* education lead to problems in course attendance, lesson study, and timely completion of page repetitions. If these problems persist, failure and dropping out of education often come to the agenda. At this point, monitoring students' affective responses at certain intervals may allow timely measures to be taken to prevent loss of interest and motivation (Osmanoğlu & Algur, 2023, pp. 6–7).

2.2. Motivation in Hifz

Subjects such as an individual's preferences regarding a task they wish to perform, their activities concerning the responsibility they have undertaken, their commitment to that task, and their willingness to overcome the work they desire to accomplish fall within the scope of motivation (Pintrich et al., 1993, p. 168).

Motivation is an internal state that arouses, directs, and sustains behavior (Hoy, 2015, p. 757). Sources of motivation may be internal or external. Internal motivation refers to the individual's attachment to an activity with intrinsic interest and desire. Being motivated by an external factor such as reward or punishment is defined as external motivation. Since intrinsic motivation is formed by considering the natural interests and basic needs of the individual during the learning process, it guides learning that provides continuous benefit (Balkış Baymur, 2014, pp. 202-203). The individual who gives meaning to *hifz* education within his or her inner world for different reasons can struggle much more strongly with the difficulties that may be encountered during the education process.

In the *hifz* education process, which requires sustained effort over a long period, maintaining strong motivation is crucial for achieving the goal. For everything to proceed smoothly during *hifz*, a daily, regular, and planned process must be followed. Any disruption that may occur in this process affects the entire educational sequence. In the *hifz* process, which lasts on average two years including the preparation period, maintaining high motivation is important to overcome possible setbacks (Osmanoğlu & Göksun, 2019, p. 121). Starting *hifz* education by the student's own will may enable stronger concentration, attention, dedication, perseverance, preparedness, participation, determination, and persistence during the process (Başkonak, 2022, p. 49). Although the age at which an individual makes such a decision is also decisive, it is important that parents, teachers, course instructors, and relatives or friends who have completed *hifz* provide guidance in the decision-making process.

The motivations and reasons underlying *hifz* education are significant in terms of the quality of the education itself. When the relevant literature is examined, research findings in this regard can be found. In a study conducted by Algur (2019, p. 100), the *Hifz Education Motivation Scale* (HEMÖ) was developed and applied in the field. According to the data from this scale, motivation sources in *hifz* education are grouped under three factors: "professional and social," "education-based," and "intrinsic." Participants who indicated professional motivation sources stated that they preferred *hifz* because they would make it a profession, that it would contribute to their future career, increase their prestige in society, and provide them with a *hafiz* certificate. In education-based motivation sources, issues such as the instructor, peers, the education received, or the individual's memorization ability were emphasized. Within the scope of intrinsic motivation, attention was drawn to factors such as the pleasure derived from memorizing Qur'anic verses, the increase in self-respect, and contributing to humanity.

In another study, among the reasons students gave for engaging in *hifz* were attaining the pleasure of Allah, individual inclinations, and environmental factors. In the same study, intrinsic factors such as perseverance, determination, experiencing success, and study approaches were mentioned as motivation sources, as well as external factors such as gaining prestige, the influence of parents and instructors, and peer environment. The study also expressed that affective barriers such as difficulty, stress, and anxiety; physical barriers such as the quality of the study environment and the presence of noise; and social barriers such as communication problems with friends all hinder motivation. The same study offered suggestions such as enabling self-discipline and self-control, changing or improving the environment when necessary, and seeking support from instructors, parents, or peers to increase or maintain motivation (Osmanoğlu & Göksun, 2019, pp. 127-190).

The decision-making process for engaging in *hifz* education is an important variable in terms of success in this education. When the results of various studies in the field are examined, it is seen that participants are mostly influenced by their social environment in choosing this education. At this point, the abundance of *hafiz* individuals in one's family, neighborhood, school, or city fosters the idea of engaging in *hifz* among students (Algur, 2018, p. 270; Buyrukçu, 2001, p. 93; Çaylı, 2005, p. 81; Çimen, 2007, p. 145; Çoban, 2018, p. 363; Gürel & Kaya, 2019, p. 270; ÖzTÜRK, 2007, p. 67; Ünsal, 2006, p. 32).

Studies conducted in the field indicate that some problems experienced by students stem from deficiencies in psycho-social processes. In a study conducted specifically on *hifz* in conjunction with formal

education, it was pointed out that due to disruptions in the student selection process for *hifz* projects, students who had high academic success but insufficient readiness for *hifz* encountered difficulties. The same study determined that motivational problems occasionally occurred because certain traits highly needed in *hifz* education—such as patience, responsibility, and continuity—were not sufficiently present in some students. When these student-related problems were combined with the low awareness of parents regarding *hifz*, their lack of support for their children, and the high expectations of some parents, it was emphasized that serious qualitative issues arose (Şengül & Şimşek, 2024, pp. 1128–1134; Bakaç & Ulu, 2023; Karagöz, 2023).

2.3. The Age of Beginning Hifz

There are various opinions regarding the age at which *hifz* education should begin (F. Bayraktar, 2008, pp. 120–121; Cebeci & Ünsal, 2006, p. 44; Çimen, 2007, p. 108). The knowledge and experience that *hifz* is easier at younger ages have led to the characterization of the *hifz* process as something that should be completed in post primary school period'. The project of *hifz* education in conjunction with formal education, implemented in 2014, enabled students to begin *hifz* at an early age. In this way, an environment was created in which students were more willing and capable (Koç, 2024, p. 363).

Algur (2019, pp. 263–265) determined that there is a significant relationship between age and motivation in *hifz*. According to this finding, as the individual's age increases, the level of motivation decreases. Accordingly, it was shared that starting *hifz* education at an early age contributes to the easier completion of this education. However, the same study, which also found that there is a direct proportional relationship between the individual's psycho-social state and age, notes that as the individual's age increases, awareness also increases; while a decrease in age causes problematic conditions in terms of awareness. According to the results of the mentioned research, it can also be said that there is a direct proportional relationship between the perceived level of stress and age in *hifz* education. As the individual's age decreases, the level of stress also decreases, while the increase in age raises the level of stress. Similar findings have been identified regarding attitude scores toward *hifz* education and social anxiety levels (Algur et al., 2024, p. 659). Field research also revealed that with increasing age, there are negative emotional changes (increased anxiety, depression, and hopelessness) (Bakaç & Ulu, 2023, p. 1718).

In the planning of *hifz* education processes, the relationships between the age variable and motivation, awareness, stress, and anxiety should be considered. If the designed *hifz* education model aims for easier completion of *hifz*, increased awareness afterward, and minimal impact from affective factors during the process, it is beneficial for *hifz* education to be carried out at younger ages. In cases where a *hifz* process with a high level of awareness is targeted, *hifz* should be undertaken at later ages. However, it should be known that in such cases, the individual's stress and anxiety levels will be high, and strong awareness and motivation should be utilized to overcome them. In education processes carried out at younger ages, instead of individual awareness, it may be appropriate to establish awareness on a programmatic basis.

3. The Social Foundations of Hifz Education

Some of the possible answers to the question "*Why does a person want to become a hafiz?*" can be said to have a social nature. Indeed, in an environment where technological means have advanced, strong motivations are expected to lie behind the *hifz* of a voluminous book like the Qur'an. This motivation manifested itself in the early periods, dominated by oral culture, as an effort to preserve the wording (*lafz*). However, over time, these sources of motivation diversified—being seen as a means for learning religious sciences, as a form of dedication to attain Allah's pleasure alone, as an effort to sustain a tradition, or as a way to increase employment opportunities. On the other hand, the fact that memorizing individuals are respected and valued in society is an undeniable reality.

It is necessary to inform not only individuals who receive this education but also society about what *hifz* is. The misconception of *hifz* within society affects both the quality of education and increases the

responsibilities of those who are undergoing *hifz* education or who have become *huffâz*. Aydın (2019, pp. 20–21) made several observations in this regard, mentioning exaggerated perceptions such as considering the *hafiz* as a “walking Qur'an,” showing the same respect to the memorizer as to the Qur'an itself, and viewing *huffâz* as sources of religious knowledge or as religious scholars. He noted that this process of misunderstanding prevents *huffâz* from developing themselves, as they stay away from formal education and thus cannot improve. Similar findings can be found in other studies as well (Başkonak, 2022, p. 172).

When an individual decides to pursue *hifz* education, this situation necessitates certain changes in their social life. The individual's communication with their environment, their worship life, the duties and responsibilities they assume in society, and the change in society's perception of them can be given as examples in this context. The religious representation capacity of the *hafiz*, their involvement in mosque duties, and their recitation of the Qur'an in public settings provide them with social prestige. On the other hand, the fact that most *hifz* courses are boarding institutions creates a distinct environment in terms of students' socialization (Algur, 2018, pp. 282–283; Dartma, 2013, p. 187; Koç, 2005, p. 106; Oruç, 2009, p. 57; Ünsal, 2006, p. 41). Algur (2018, p. 283) found that individuals who considered themselves deprived of social life had higher levels of stress, whereas those who did not feel such deprivation were better motivated in the *hifz* process and had higher psycho-social status scores.

The *hifz* education process requires the individual to work in a determined, willing, long-term, and disciplined manner. The contribution from the social environment is highly important in ensuring this effort and continuity. In this sense, the quality of communication that the individual establishes with their family, friends, and course instructors is highly decisive. Various studies indicate that the quality of communication with family, peers, and instructors has a determining effect on the quality of education received (Algur, 2018, pp. 286–296; Ay, 2005, p. 98; Çaylı, 2005, p. 77; Öztürk, 2007, p. 74; Ünsal, 2006, pp. 46–47).

The *hifz* education process, which continues to develop dynamically under the influence of various factors, should be examined from multiple dimensions. The individual's decision-making process regarding *hifz* education, the period of studying, and the stage after completing the education all have a determining influence on their communication with their social environment, especially with family and friends. Therefore, *hifz* education should not be seen merely as a process of memorizing the Qur'an from beginning to end, but as a holistic element that gives meaning to the individual, matures their personality, and encompasses all dimensions—from the curriculum and the learning environment to communication and the time spent in this education (Algur, 2021, p. 644).

In a study conducted on individuals pursuing *hifz* education while receiving undergraduate education, the effects of *hifz* on their lives were examined. In this context, it was found that *hifz* education strengthened the worship life of 83.3% of participants, enhanced the religious life of 87.7%, and enabled 86% to develop a more sensitive and sincere attitude toward spiritual values. In the same study, participants stated that *huffâz* hold a respected position among the public at a rate of 89.5% (Gürel & Kaya, 2019, pp. 280–281).

It has been determined that *hifz* students whose families reside in villages are better motivated toward the education process compared to those whose families live in city centers. The same study identified a negative correlation between income level and motivation. As income levels rise, students' motivation levels decrease, while motivation increases as income levels decrease (Algur, 2019, p. 266). On the other hand, it has also been found that interest in Qur'an courses decreases as income levels increase (Naziroğlu & Vahapoğlu, 2015, p. 133).

In a study conducted by Algur (2018, p. 269), it was determined that individuals who saw themselves as deprived of the social lives of their peers had difficulty being motivated for *hifz* education and had low psycho-social readiness. Similar findings have been identified regarding attitudes toward *hifz* education and social anxiety levels (Algur et al., 2024, p. 662). In another study, it was stated that due to the inherently difficult nature of *hifz* education, it does not provide much opportunity for socialization and does not develop

the individual's self-expression skills (Demir, 2019, p. 313). Regardless of the setting or project within which *hifz* is carried out, it should not necessitate ignoring or overlooking the child's need for social communication and development. In this regard, studies have shown that individuals who engage in *hifz* alongside formal education have more opportunities for social communication and development due to their presence in school environments (Güneş, 2020, p. 273).

4. The Cognitive Foundations of Hifz Education

There are studies stating that *hifz* education contributes positively to the academic success of the individual by raising the level of understanding, comprehension, and perception of the mind and by increasing attention (Aybey, 2020, p. 391). In a field study, the interaction between the *hifz* performance of students receiving *hifz* education and cognitive abilities such as reasoning, memory, and attention—which constitute the functional and structural infrastructure of the brain—and emotional state was investigated. In the study, it was determined that in individuals who completed *hifz* education, the speed and quality of response under stress after the education, reasoning ability, attention, and memory increased (Kutlu et al., 2019, p. 361).

Referring to various studies investigating the effects of *hifz* on the individual's mental health, Şalgamci (2019, pp. 301–305) determined that memorizing the Qur'an affects mental health positively. In the study, reference was made to the positive effects of *hifz* in reducing the negative effects of disorders such as dementia and Alzheimer's. It was pointed out that memorizing the Qur'an significantly slows typical cognitive decline. On the other hand, it was noted that *hafiz* individuals are more resilient against elements that reduce the quality of life, such as anxiety, stress, depression, and sleep disorders. By pointing to the positive effects of *hifz* on the individual's cognitive and psycho-social development, the study provided a cognitive grounding for this education. There are also different studies in the relevant literature that have reached findings in this direction (Demir, 2019, p. 312).

The reason for memorizing the Qur'an can be associated with cognitive awareness concerning this education. Qur'an memorization has been practiced to be recited in prayers as a requirement of worship and as an expression of devotion to the Word of Allah, and to increase familiarity with the Qur'an (Cerrahoğlu, İsmail, 2015, p. 66). In the first period when the Qur'an began to be revealed, *hifz* for the purpose of preserving the wording (*lafz*) is also an important reason expressed in the sources (Keskioğlu, 2014, pp. 93–95). The thought of preserving the Qur'anic text in memories also has an effect on Qur'an memorization. In addition, research on the history of the Qur'an states that the Qur'an has been preserved to the present day thanks to the triple measure of writing, memorization, and studying alongside a master (*ustād*) (Hamidullah, 2000, pp. 52–87).

Being aware of with what kind of goal one sets out in the decision-making process for *hifz* education also allows this education process to be grounded at a cognitive level. In this context, when individuals receiving *hifz* education are asked what they aim for with the education they receive, their giving short-term and result-oriented answers such as "To finish *hifz*.", "To receive a *hifz* certificate." strengthens the impression that they do not make a cognitive grounding regarding the education they receive. In Algur's (2018, pp. 265–266) study, it was found that seven out of every ten participants had a goal. The stated goals are to complete *hifz* education, to become religious services personnel, to attain the pleasure of Allah, to preserve one's memorization throughout life, to increase professional qualification, to obtain a job, to be beneficial to people, and to act in accordance with *hifz*. In the same study, it was determined that individuals who adopted a goal were better motivated for the education process and had higher psycho-social readiness.

The meaning attributed to the phenomenon of *hifz* by individuals receiving this education is also highly important. In one study, *hifz* education was defined as becoming intimate with the Qur'an in order to attain Allah's pleasure; as an expression of love and devotion to Allah and religion by acting in accordance with its rulings alongside memorizing its wording; as a process that gives peace and happiness to the person; as a process that is very difficult and requires patience and determination; as a situation that changes a

person's way of life and gives a different identity in social life; and as an experience that cannot be explained but must be lived (Algur, 2018, p. 309).

Conclusion

In this article, a grounding has been attempted for a better understanding and making sense of *hifz* education. The *hifz* of the Qur'an has been on the agenda since the period when it began to be revealed. The Qur'an, which was first memorized by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), has established order and added meaning to the lives of Muslims with its rulings. The practices during the time of the Prophet, the four caliphs, the Umayyads, and the Abbasids in the process of memorizing, learning, and teaching the Qur'an set an example for Islamic societies in later years. The teaching and *hifz* of the Qur'an gained greater importance with each passing period and became systematic. Activities of Qur'an teaching and *hifz* education, which were initially conducted in homes and mosques, continued over time in independent institutions such as *madrasah*, *dāru'l-qurrā*, *dāru'l-huffāz*, and *Qur'an Course*, depending on the level of social/political development.

Today, *hifz* education, which can be received individually, within *Qur'an Courses* and non-governmental organizations, is officially provided only in *Qur'an Courses* affiliated with the PRA under the supervision and oversight of the state. In this context, many *Qur'an Courses* within non-governmental organizations also carry an official identity as being affiliated with the PRA. In 2014, the integration of *hifz* education into the formal education system was institutionalized through a collaborative initiative undertaken by the MNE and the PRA. Qur'an teaching and *hifz* education have continued to exist in line with the state's religious education policies (although their aims have differed in each period) since the early period.

It is considered beneficial that *hifz* education, whose historical foundations are known, be grounded from psycho-social, social, and cognitive perspectives in order to be better understood and made sense of today. Many elements such as with what kind of psychology and under whose influence the individual decides to pursue *hifz* education, the attitudes developed toward *hifz* education, interests, needs and expectations, anxiety and stress fall within the frame of psycho-social grounding. When examining the relationship between psychological, affective and social functions and *hifz* education, it can be better explained whether these are the cause or the result of memorization training (Avçilar, 2021; Bilgin, 2021; Faiza & Butt, 2022; Güneş & Avçilar, 2021). As understood from the research results examined in the article, psycho-social processes are being examined with an increasing number of scientific studies each passing day in order to increase the quality of *hifz* education, and data are being produced for students, parents, instructors, and policy-makers. Many variables such as the awareness, attitudes, modes of communication, motivations of *hifz* candidates, and the age of beginning *hifz* are determinative on the outcomes of the *hifz* education process.

Although *hifz* education is an experience completed through individual effort and will, it also affects society and sociality in various dimensions. While the respect and value shown to *hafiz* individuals in society crowns the rank obtained at the end of a difficult process, setting social prestige as the primary goal or society's attributing meanings to *hifz* beyond what it is can lead to the misunderstanding of the phenomenon of *hifz* and to placing an excessive burden on the shoulders of individuals receiving this education. For this reason, knowing what *hifz* education represents socially is valuable both for the more qualified continuation of the process and for the psychological well-being of *hifz* candidates.

The fact that *hifz* education is also a cognitive activity necessitates addressing this education process from a cognitive perspective as well. It is a reality identified in different studies that memorizing the Qur'anic text and the constant repetition of *hifz* to prevent forgetting have positive effects on the individual's cognitive development. In addition, findings that *hifz* is beneficial in reducing the negative effects of some brain disorders that appear with advancing age draw attention to the *hifz* process, not only because it is a religious necessity but also due to the concrete physical contributions it provides to the individual.

Although it is possible to increase the dimensions of the grounding made under four headings specifically for *hifz*, the focus has been on themes considered primary, with the consideration that it would increase the size of the article. When all the themes highlighted within the scope of grounding are considered together, it is necessary to investigate thoroughly before starting *hifz* education and to address the process in a multi-dimensional manner. The contributions and additional responsibilities that the education process to be undertaken will bring to the individual should be examined in multiple dimensions. At the end of all these processes, the individual performing *hifz*, the parent whose child is receiving *hifz* education, the institution providing *hifz* education, and the PRA organizing these educational processes should have clear and concrete answers to the question "Why should *hifz* be done?". This education should not be started without thoroughly investigating how success or failure in Quran memorization will affect the student's psychology, emotions, and relationships with his/her social environment.

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