A Tahfidz Student's Narrative of Time Management and Academic Procrastination in an Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

Academic procrastination in an Islamic boarding school may develop at the intersection of formal school assignments, Qur'an memorization targets, and residential routines. This study explores how one tahfidz student understood experiences of delay, organized competing responsibilities, and interpreted conditions that hindered or supported time management. A qualitative narrative-oriented study drew on reported semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving one student and a dormitory education administrator in Banyuwangi, Indonesia. The available account was organized around experiences of postponement, accumulating obligations, reflection, and attempted adjustment. The student described delaying schoolwork and memorization submissions amid fatigue, uncertainty about priorities, fear of submitting imperfect recitation, and invitations from peers. Reported responses included recording deadlines, allocating time for study and recitation, and reconsidering discretionary activities. Dormitory schedules appeared both to structure daily life and to constrain opportunities for rest. These findings illuminate perceived self-regulation strategies rather than demonstrating measured reductions in procrastination. Islamic guidance and counseling may respond through supportive planning, realistic targets, adequate rest, and nonjudgmental mentoring; longitudinal and better documented research is needed.

Keywords: *Academic Procrastination; Islamic Guidance And Counseling; Narrative Inquiry; Self-Regulation; Tahfidz Student*

Abstrak

Prokrastinasi di pesantren dapat muncul ketika tugas sekolah, target hafalan Al-Qur'an, dan rutinitas asrama harus dijalankan secara bersamaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan memahami pengalaman seorang santri tahfidz dalam menunda tugas, mengelola waktu, serta memaknai kondisi yang menghambat atau mendukung aktivitas belajar. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berorientasi naratif dengan bahan berupa laporan wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi dari seorang santri serta pengurus bidang pendidikan asrama di Banyuwangi. Pengalaman yang dilaporkan disusun melalui alur penundaan, penumpukan tanggung jawab, refleksi, dan upaya penyesuaian. Santri menggambarkan penundaan tugas sekolah dan setoran hafalan ketika mengalami kelelahan, kebingungan menentukan prioritas, kekhawatiran hafalan belum lancar, dan pengaruh ajakan teman. Upaya yang diceritakan mencakup pencatatan tenggat, pembagian waktu belajar dan menghafal, serta peninjauan aktivitas pilihan. Jadwal asrama dipersepsi membantu keteraturan, tetapi juga dapat membatasi waktu pemulihan. Temuan menunjukkan strategi regulasi diri yang dipahami dan diupayakan informan, bukan bukti kuantitatif penurunan prokrastinasi. Bimbingan dan Konseling Islam dapat mengembangkan pendampingan empatik melalui target realistis, perencanaan, istirahat

memadai, dan dukungan pengurus; penelitian lanjutan memerlukan dokumentasi proses yang lebih rinci.

Kata kunci: *Bimbingan Dan Konseling Islam; Prokrastinasi Akademik; Regulasi Diri; Santri Tahfidz; Studi Naratif*

INTRODUCTION

Students enrolled in tahfidz programs within Indonesian Islamic boarding schools navigate overlapping expectations. Formal classroom assignments, Qur'an memorization and revision, communal worship, dormitory responsibilities, and peer relationships compete for attention during an institutionally structured day. The coexistence of these commitments does not necessarily constitute a problem; however, managing tasks becomes difficult when discretionary study periods are limited, goals compete, and fatigue accumulates. Understanding postponement in this setting therefore requires attention to individual decisions as well as the organization of residential education.

Academic procrastination is generally distinguished from a delay justified by competing duties or the need for recovery. Steel (2007) describes procrastination as voluntary postponement despite anticipating negative consequences, while Wolters (2003) connects academic postponement with motivational and self-regulatory processes. In a tahfidz context, delayed school assignments and postponed Qur'an recitation submissions should be considered analytically distinct activities: the first belongs to formal academic work, whereas the second concerns a memorization obligation that nevertheless shares demands for self-regulation. Neither category can be inferred solely from a busy timetable.

Previous studies offer several points of comparison. Research with Indonesian school students has explored associations between time management and academic procrastination (Dayantri & Netrawati, 2023) and between self-regulated learning and postponement (Mujirohmawati & Khoirunnisa, 2022). Pertiwi (2020) investigated stress and time management in relation to procrastination, while Vandriyani and Mudhar (2026) examined these variables among university students. Their research contexts and designs differ from an individual's experience of balancing memorization, religious practices, and residential obligations. Evidence from these populations can orient analysis, but it cannot substitute for a close account of the boarding-school learner.

Studies situated in Islamic boarding schools are especially relevant but address somewhat different questions. Ilham et al. (2024) documented group guidance involving

cognitive restructuring for students at another pesantren, whereas Saputro and Agung (2022) evaluated time-management guidance using a pre-experimental design and did not establish a statistically significant reduction in procrastination. These studies illuminate possible counseling responses; they do not explain, in the participant's own experiential sequence, how overlapping obligations become a reason to postpone a task and how an alternative way of organizing time is subsequently attempted.

The present article focuses on the account of one tahfidz student, referred to as LA, at a residential Islamic educational institution in Banyuwangi, Indonesia. It asks: (1) How did the student describe the experience of postponing academic work and memorization obligations while living in a structured dormitory? (2) What adjustments in prioritization and daily scheduling were reported, and what personal and contextual conditions complicated those attempts? The contribution is a context-sensitive reconstruction of reported experiences rather than a population-level model or an evaluation of a counseling intervention.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Academic Procrastination and the Boundaries of Delay

Academic procrastination has cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions: awareness of a required task, difficulty initiating or completing it, and the emotional consequences of postponement. Steel's (2007) synthesis conceptualizes it as self-regulatory failure, while Wolters (2003) shows the relevance of motivational strategies and task engagement. In this article, postponement is interpreted as procrastination only where the account indicates that an attainable task was deferred despite anticipated disadvantages. Time unavailable because of compulsory activities, physiological exhaustion, or a legitimate period of rest cannot automatically be classified in this way.

The distinction is particularly important in a pesantren. School assignments may be constrained by institutional deadlines, whereas recitation submissions depend on proficiency, readiness, and opportunities for teacher assessment. A student who hesitates because memorization is not yet fluent may be experiencing task-related evaluative concern rather than a stable perfectionism trait. Similarly, uncompleted work near bedtime may reflect inadequate recovery time. These possibilities require contextual interpretation instead of moral labels such as laziness or indiscipline.

Time Management and Self-Regulated Learning

Macan (1994) distinguishes goals and priorities, mechanics of scheduling, and perceived control over time. These dimensions provide a useful sensitizing framework for an individual's account: writing a deadline can clarify what is urgent; allocating a study period can make intentions more concrete; and periodic reflection can help a learner assess whether a plan is realistic. These concepts guide interpretation here and were not administered as a psychometric scale to LA.

The broader self-regulated learning perspective distinguishes planning, strategic performance and monitoring, and reflection. Evidence from Spanish secondary students has associated academic self-regulation with lower procrastination and different patterns of stress and resilience (Ragusa et al., 2023); research among Chinese adolescents also places self-regulation within a more complex network of individual characteristics and postponement (Sun et al., 2024). Such studies identify plausible processes without showing that the same statistical paths operate in one Indonesian tahfidz student.

Emotion regulation is integral to these processes. Under stress, deciding how to begin a difficult assignment may be harder even when the student knows its importance. Gökalp and Haktanir (2024) investigated the mediating role of self-control between stress and procrastination in adolescents. Sirois (2023) likewise emphasizes the contextual relationship between distress and delaying tasks; a longitudinal study by Sirois et al. (2023) further highlights associations involving stress and health. These findings support examining fatigue, perceived burden, and opportunities for rest alongside scheduling skills.

Islamic Guidance and Counseling in Residential Education

Within Islamic guidance and counseling, responsible use of time can be discussed as part of the learner's ethical and spiritual development. Surah Al-'Asr (Qur'an 103:1–3) underscores the value of time, faith, constructive action, truth, and patience. This scriptural orientation should not be used to attribute every delay to a religious or moral deficiency. Counseling instead connects reflection on responsibility with achievable plans, compassionate listening, attention to wellbeing, and shared consideration of institutional constraints.

A dormitory education administrator can provide information about scheduling and available support, whereas a qualified counselor is responsible for confidential exploration

of persistent emotional, motivational, or interpersonal difficulties. The two roles should complement rather than replace each other. Guidance offered to young students must remain voluntary, developmentally appropriate, and sensitive to their need for rest and social connection.

METHOD

Research Design and Context

Consistent with narrative approaches described by Creswell and Poth (2018), this was a qualitative, narrative-oriented examination of a single learner's reported experiences of academic postponement and time management. The article reconstructs an experiential sequence from existing interview-, observation-, and documentation-based descriptions. Rather than presenting a fully transcribed life-history narrative, it offers an analytically organized account of an initial pattern of postponement, perceived consequences, reflection, and attempted behavioral adjustment. This description is deliberately bounded: the underlying material does not provide verbatim transcript excerpts or dated episodes sufficient for a fine-grained temporal narrative analysis.

The original study identified a tahfidz dormitory within Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, Banyuwangi, as the site. The residential setting combined formal schooling at madrasah level, memorization and recitation targets, communal religious activities, and dormitory routines. Its precise daily timetable, institutional provisions for independent study, and the month and year of fieldwork were not documented in sufficient detail in the manuscript available for revision. Consequently, the setting is described at an institutional level without estimating the number of hours devoted to each activity.

Participants and Data Sources

One learner, previously identified by the initials LA, was the primary informant. The original report indicates purposive selection based on the learner's experiences of postponed school assignments and memorization submissions. A dormitory education administrator served as a contextual informant regarding routines and educational expectations. These roles are not interchangeable: LA's account represents a personal interpretation of experience, whereas the administrator's perspective helps describe the institutional environment. No claim is made that the student represents all tahfidz learners.

Consistent with qualitative research procedures discussed by Miles et al. (2014), the source manuscript reports in-depth semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and review of documentary materials such as activity schedules and field notes. It does not include interview duration, the number of interview encounters, observation dates, full transcripts, or reproducible extracts from the documents. For this reason, the findings below identify reported episodes as paraphrased evidence and distinguish them from theoretical interpretation. They are not presented as independently measured behavioral frequencies.

Narrative Organization, Credibility, and Ethics

The analysis retained four successive elements identifiable in the original account: habitual postponement; accumulating assignments and associated discomfort; recognition of the need to make priorities explicit; and experimentation with scheduling and everyday choices. Within each element, school-related work was distinguished from Qur'an memorization obligations, while perceived triggers were separated from consequences and strategies. Macan's (1994) dimensions and the self-regulation literature served as interpretive lenses after this organization rather than as predetermined evidence of improvement.

The source describes cross-checking interview information with observation and documentation and returning summarized interpretations to the informant for member checking. However, the precise records compared, dates of feedback, and any resulting corrections are not detailed. The strength of these credibility procedures therefore cannot be independently assessed from the available manuscript. Narrative authenticity would be strengthened in a subsequent revision based on original transcripts, anonymized quotations, document extracts, and a transparent analysis log.

The learner's initials are not reproduced in the tables below, reducing the risk of deductive identification when combined with a specific dormitory. The source reports anonymization but does not provide documentation of informed parental or guardian permission, the learner's assent, institutional approval, or arrangements for safeguarding interview data. These procedural details require verification from the original investigator before publication, especially if the participant was under 18. No ethics approval or consent not recorded in the source is claimed here.

RESULTS

The Reported Experiential Sequence

The available account begins with postponement that the learner initially treated as manageable because deadlines appeared distant. Formal school assignments and memorization requirements were both deferred on some occasions. Once these obligations accumulated, the learner described becoming unsure which task to begin and experiencing distress near approaching deadlines. This juxtaposition between anticipated available time and actual task pressure represents the first recognizable transition in the reported story; its precise chronology remains undated.

A second element involves the conflict between desirable performance and task initiation. For memorization submissions, the learner reportedly hesitated when recitation did not yet feel sufficiently fluent. This may indicate a high personal standard that discouraged submitting imperfect work. The data are insufficient to diagnose perfectionism or to establish how often this concern delayed assessment. The episode is more securely read as the learner's perceived tension between wanting to perform well and being willing to submit work for feedback.

The narrative then turns to attempts at prioritization. The learner reportedly began recording deadlines and distinguishing work requiring immediate attention from tasks that could be distributed over available time. The student also described assigning time for Qur'an revision, recitation preparation, and school assignments. These were intentional strategies, but the source does not provide the actual written plan, repeated usage records, or comparable before-and-after completion rates. A statement that tasks became easier to organize must therefore be understood as the learner's appraisal rather than verified improvement.

A final element concerns reconsideration of discretionary activities. Extended chatting or resting when there was a feasible task to begin was sometimes described as avoiding responsibilities; the learner reportedly tried allocating some such periods to smaller task units. At the same time, the student experienced fatigue after compulsory activities. The account does not establish whether any individual episode of resting was avoidant or necessary for recovery. This ambiguity is a substantive feature of the case, not a reason to criticize the learner's character.

Source-Aware Evidence Matrix

Table 1. Reported episodes and analytical boundaries in the learner's account

Reported episode (paraphrased)	Narrative meaning	Limit of available evidence
School assignments and memorization tasks were sometimes postponed.	Two distinct demands competed for limited independent study time.	No dated task log, missed-deadline counts, or exact school marks provided.
Accumulation of obligations prompted worry and uncertainty about where to begin.	Perceived consequences constituted a reflective turning point.	Emotional experience is paraphrased; no verbatim quotation or severity scale supplied.
The learner began noting priorities and planning study and recitation periods.	An attempt to translate intentions into manageable actions.	Original schedule and duration of implementation were not attached.
Incomplete fluency led to reluctance to submit memorization.	Concern over quality could coexist with avoidance of corrective feedback.	No perfectionism assessment or recitation record available.
Peer interaction sometimes competed with planned tasks.	Residential peer norms complicated independent choices.	No independent estimate of frequency or the administrator's specific confirmation.
Compulsory routines helped impose structure but contributed to fatigue.	Institutional discipline operated as both resource and potential burden.	No time-use diary, sleep assessment, or structured timetable comparison.

Reported Personal and Environmental Conditions

The account identifies low motivation to start some tasks and indecision when both school and memorization work felt pressing. These descriptions indicate a gap between knowing an obligation and initiating it; they do not establish a generalized motivational deficit. Uncertainty over where to begin could be related to task competition, perceived workload, or concern about memorization quality. Without multiple time-point observations or a standardized measure, the relative contribution of each explanation remains unknown.

The learner also characterized the structured dormitory day as simultaneously helpful and tiring. Fixed activities could serve as reminders and create predictable intervals, but the compulsory nature of these activities also restricted time for independent study and recovery. The respondent's reported fatigue should be taken seriously as a potentially reasonable response to substantial demands rather than automatically converted into an instance of procrastination. No objective workload assessment was available to resolve this tension.

Peer invitations created another perceived source of postponement. The learner reportedly found it difficult to decline opportunities to talk or relax with roommates even while intending to complete tasks. Social connection is an important element of residential adjustment, however, and the reported dilemma should not be simplified into the claim that friends cause academic failure. The empirical claim is limited to the learner's account of competing social and academic preferences.

The combined account suggests three consequences associated with postponement: accumulated tasks, apprehension near deadlines, and dissatisfaction with incomplete work. The original narrative also refers to disturbed sleep and lower task quality, but without independent sleep assessments or documented grades. These should be treated as subjective concerns or unverified contextual descriptions, not established clinical impairment or measured academic decline.

DISCUSSION

From Accumulated Demands to Deliberate Planning

The distinctive feature of this case is the tension between two valued educational commitments rather than a general refusal to study. School assignments and Qur'an memorization each carried recognized obligations; difficulty emerged when the learner had to decide how much effort, attention, and independent time to allocate to each. The reported turning point was an awareness that postponement could intensify the burden of subsequent tasks. This differs from treating productivity as a matter of individual discipline alone.

Macan's (1994) time-management framework helps explain why listing deadlines and arranging activities may be meaningful even before measurable performance changes appear. Writing down commitments externalizes competing demands, while dividing work

into small units may reduce the perceived cost of starting. Such an interpretation is consistent with self-regulated learning theory and correlational evidence involving adolescents (Ragusa et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2024). Yet the present source does not establish how consistently these strategies were enacted or whether their use changed the number of deferred tasks.

Qualitative interpretation must also distinguish prospective intention from observed achievement. The learner's report that a plan felt more manageable is a useful experiential finding. It is not equivalent to an intervention outcome, improved grade, or longitudinal maintenance of a routine. Evidence from an ACT-based student course highlights that time and effort management can be studied as possible mechanisms of change (Asikainen et al., 2024); that design differs sharply from a single-person narrative without standardized pretest and posttest data.

Avoidance, Fluency Standards, and Fatigue

The reported reluctance to submit recitation unless it felt fluent introduces a domain-specific form of avoidance. Memorization quality is a legitimate educational aim, and opportunities for correction are part of learning. If a student waits indefinitely for an ideal level of readiness, however, the desire for accuracy can compete with the need to obtain feedback. The interpretation remains provisional: the available records do not establish clinical perfectionism, fear of evaluation as a measured construct, or a stable personality pattern.

The case also illustrates why academic procrastination and exhaustion must not be collapsed into one category. Learners can postpone an attainable task to escape immediate discomfort, but they may also defer work when uninterrupted rest has become necessary. Experimental and cross-sectional evidence on procrastination and stress comes from differing populations (Gökalp & Haktanir, 2024; Sirois, 2023). In this residential context, the first counseling question should concern what time and energy were actually available, not whether the student was sufficiently motivated.

This distinction has implications for institutional accountability. An individual scheduling plan cannot create additional hours in a day if every period is already assigned. Conversely, predictable routines can support self-regulation when they preserve realistic opportunities for independent study and sleep. Evidence from international research on

smartphone distraction (Jin et al., 2024) and problematic social-media use and procrastination underscores the relevance of learning context (Touloupis & Campbell, 2024); nevertheless, the present case provides no reliable data on smartphone use and does not identify digital media as its central trigger.

Counseling Implications and Limits of Evidence

For Islamic guidance and counseling, an appropriate response is developmental and collaborative. A counselor could invite students to map compulsory duties, restorative time, and flexible periods; distinguish academic assignments from tahfidz submissions; and set short, attainable goals. A dormitory mentor could help make routines understandable, while the student retains agency over personal strategies. This approach is consistent with using Qur'an 103:1-3 as a resource for thoughtful stewardship of time without treating fatigue, distress, or delayed work as moral failure.

A possible support sequence would begin with a voluntary private conversation about workload and wellbeing, followed by a one-week task inventory, learner-selected priorities, realistic memorization and schoolwork targets, and a review of barriers. Small-group guidance may address time planning and peer support, while persistent distress, severe sleep difficulties, or substantial functional impairment would require appropriate professional assessment and referral. The sequence is proposed as an application of the findings and was not implemented or evaluated in the reported study.

Relevant intervention findings support a cautious stance. Ilham et al. (2024) describe a pesantren group-guidance context, whereas Saputro and Agung (2022) did not find clear evidence of effectiveness for time-management guidance in their pre-experimental setting. Ratri et al. (2024) studied self-instruction among university students; Åsberg et al. (2024) reported that a single-session digital intervention did not necessarily lower procrastination. These mixed designs and outcomes caution against suggesting that a generic scheduling lesson is sufficient for every learner.

For more systematic future evaluation, scholars might adapt an instrument such as that discussed by Odacı et al. (2024) only after assessing cultural and age appropriateness. Related student surveys in Indonesia (Dayantri & Netrawati, 2023; Pertiwi, 2020; Vandriyani & Mudhar, 2026) can inform variables but should not be treated as confirmation

of causality in this case. The qualitative priorities would remain participant voice, traceable episodes, reflexivity, and careful separation of subjective meaning from measurable change.

Methodological Limitations

Several limitations constrain this article. The investigation centers on one student and draws on reported interview, observation, and documentary descriptions without providing original transcriptions, dated fieldnotes, or examples of analyzed documents. The available source does not establish an exact fieldwork period, the number and duration of interviews, or a systematic chronology of behavior over time. Accordingly, the reconstructed account is narrative-oriented rather than a fully auditable narrative inquiry, and the observed sequence should not be mistaken for a longitudinal effect.

Second, the available evidence does not quantify task completion, recitation submissions, sleep quality, or changes in academic performance. The language of improvement is therefore restricted to the learner's reported attempts and perceptions. Third, the limited methodological documentation prevents independent evaluation of reported triangulation and member checking, and publication-related ethical permissions for a potentially underage participant remain to be confirmed. These gaps do not justify fabricating quotations or outcome scores; they identify what would be necessary to strengthen the empirical report.

CONCLUSION

This narrative-oriented case account shows how one tahfidz learner described the challenge of allocating time among school assignments, Qur'an memorization requirements, dormitory routines, rest, and peer relationships. In the reported experiential sequence, delaying tasks was followed by a sense of accumulating obligations, recognition of competing priorities, and attempts to use written deadlines and more deliberate study periods. The learner also described concern about imperfect recitation, fatigue, and social invitations as conditions that could complicate task initiation.

The principal contribution is contextual: postponement in residential tahfidz education cannot be explained adequately by individual motivation alone, and scheduling is not automatically a solution when rest and discretionary study periods are limited. Islamic guidance and counseling can translate this insight into empathetic assessment, realistic goal setting, non-stigmatizing support, and cooperation between learners, counselors, and

dormitory personnel. Because the study documents one person's reported experiences without standardized repeated measures, it cannot establish a causal reduction in procrastination or broad generalizability. Future work should preserve anonymized verbatim narratives, document the actual timetable and analytic steps, and examine trajectories across multiple learners and time points.

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