

## Gayo Lues as *Da'i*: An analysis of the challenges of communication strategy in the success of the Thousand Hafiz Programme

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JID | 297

### Article Information:

Received:

1 November 2023

Revised:

13 November 2023

Accepted:

21 November 2023

### Keywords:

*Da'i*, communication challenges, Islamic sharia office, one thousand hafiz programme.

### Abstract

**Purpose** - This study aims to discover the challenges or obstacles of the Gayo Lues Regency government's communication strategy in the success of the Thousand Hafiz Quran program.

**Method** - This research is field research, the source of data from documents in the form of regulations of the regent of Gayo Lues Regency, the results of interviews with the regent, deputy regent, and employees of the Islamic Sharia Office of Gayo Lues Regency as the implementing agency of the thousand hafiz Quran program. The research data was analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques.

**Result** - The results showed that the obstacles or barriers of the Gayo Lues Regency government in the success of the thousand hafiz Quran program were miscommunication between the Islamic Sharia Office and the person in charge of the budget about budget cuts due to the Covid-19 pandemic that the funding for tahfiz teachers and also the cost of food and other needs for tahfiz students was insufficient.

**Implication** - The results of this study provide information on the obstacles of the Tahfiz program so that it becomes a basis for consideration for the government to find solutions so that the Thousand Hafiz program can run again as planned.

**Originality** - This is the first study to examine the obstacles of the Quran memorization program in the Gayo Lues Regency so that it can be used as a basis for policy-making.



**For citation:** Sahirman, S., Kholil, S., & Rubino. (2023). Gayo Lues as *Da'i*: An analysis of the challenges of communication strategy in the success of the Thousand Hafiz Programme. *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*. 43(2). 297-308. <https://doi.org/10.2158/jid.43.2.18420>.

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**Kata kunci:**

Da'i, tantangan komunikasi, dinas syariat Islam, program seribu hafiz.

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**Abstrak**

**Tujuan** - Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tantangan atau hambatan strategi komunikasi pemerintah Kabupaten Gayo Lues dalam menyukseskan program Seribu Hafiz Quran.

**Metode** - Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian lapangan (field research), dengan sumber data dari dokumen berupa peraturan bupati Kabupaten Gayo Lues, hasil wawancara dengan bupati, wakil bupati, dan pegawai Dinas Syariat Islam Kabupaten Gayo Lues sebagai pelaksana program seribu hafiz Quran. Data penelitian dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik analisis data kualitatif.

**Hasil** - Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kendala atau hambatan pemerintah Kabupaten Gayo Lues dalam menyukseskan program seribu hafiz Quran adalah adanya miskomunikasi antara Dinas Syariat Islam dengan penanggung jawab anggaran tentang adanya pemotongan anggaran akibat pandemi Covid-19 sehingga dana untuk para pengajar tahfiz dan juga biaya makan dan kebutuhan lainnya untuk para santri tahfiz tidak mencukupi.

**Implikasi** - Hasil penelitian ini memberikan informasi mengenai hambatan program tahfiz sehingga menjadi dasar pertimbangan bagi pemerintah untuk mencari solusi agar program Seribu Hafiz dapat berjalan kembali sesuai dengan yang telah direncanakan.

**Orisinalitas** - Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian pertama yang meneliti tentang tantangan komunikasi program tahfiz di Kabupaten Gayo Lues sehingga dapat digunakan sebagai dasar pengambilan kebijakan.

## **Introduction**

Islamic communication is a process of conveying or passing on the essence of the truth of Islam to the audience, which is carried out continuously based on the Qur'an and hadith, either through the media or directly through the pulpits of the ummah, whose aim is to form the correct view of Islam. (Safrawali & Rozi, 2022). Communication must be done well and systematically so the effect on the communicator can be seen clearly. (Muchith, 2015). Communication in conducting a religious program, such as memorizing the Quran, is also essential because the program aims to promote faithful Islam to form a generation that loves Islamic law by adhering to the Quran's values so that the younger generation's personality is built with dignity.

The province of Aceh is known for its Islamic shari'a, which organizes all aspects of life by the teachings of Islam. (Misran, 2017) The implementation of the Quran memorization program is one of the models of Islamic development in Aceh, which is why several regions, including Gayo Lues District, have implemented it. Implementing the Quran, this program is one of the models of Islamic law development in Aceh. Therefore, several regions in Aceh Province are extreme with these programs and other Islamic law development plans. Through a Regent Regulation (Perbup), the Regent of Gayo Lues has made a policy to keep the younger generation close to the Quran to protect them from deviations from Islamic norms. The Regent Regulation in question is Gayo Lues Regent Regulation Number 16 of 2018 concerning the Development of the Hafidz Quran. This policy aims to change the life order of the Gayo Lues community, who increasingly love Islamic law.

The policy of the Regent of Gayo Lues Regency aims to change the order of life from moral development to more religious nuances. The policy step taken by the Gayo Lues Regency Government by realizing the Quran Tahfiz program is considered an appropriate step to improve the behavior of adolescents in particular. However, in the realization of local regulations, there are often problems or obstacles in the field. Issues in implementing the law can affect the function of the regulation in society, which in this case is the hafiz Alquran. Therefore, this study aims to examine the obstacles faced by the Gayo Lues Regency government in realizing the thousand hafiz program because the program was launched in 2018 through Regent Regulation (Perbup) Number 16 of 2018 concerning the Development of Hafiz Alquran, but until now in 2023 the program has not been realized as planned.

Based on this purpose, this research is vital to answer the problems faced by the Gayo Lues Regency government in realizing the Quran Tahfiz program, and this research will be the basis for system or technical improvements for the Gayo Lues Regency government in finding solutions to the problems it is facing. It is then related to the novelty of the research being conducted; an initial study has been carried out as a literature review of previous studies that have relevance to the research being undertaken, such as studies on communication strategies during the co-19 pandemic, which this study tries to focus on Buya Yahya's communication strategy. (Marwantika & Rohmatullah, 2022) Which found the result that Islamic communication is by the times and circumstances. In addition, there is also research related to Quran memorization management, which tries to examine how the management system is applied in learning Quran memorization. (Nidhom, 2021); (Atabik, 2014). The results obtained from the study state that the application of rigorous management will produce maximum goals. Furthermore, a study on the Quran memorization method (Shobirin, 2018) in Islamic boarding schools (Akbar, 2016) This study only

wants to describe what methods are used in Islamic boarding schools in memorizing the Quran, and the results found that most of them use the *al-nadzar* method, namely by multiplying repetitions. Based on these previous studies, it is found that the novelty of the investigation being conducted is because no previous studies have been found related to communication constraints in the success of the Quran memorization program. Thus, this study is very appropriate and necessary to complement previous studies.

## Research Methods

This research is included in *field research (field research)* (Sugiyono, 2012) with the research location in Gayo Lues Regency, Aceh Province. Data collection techniques were conducted using documentation review methods like Gayo Lues Regent Regulations and other documents. In addition to the documentation review technique, the interview technique was used, and in determining the resource persons to be interviewed, the purposive sampling technique was used. In this case, interviews were conducted with the government of Gayo Lues Regency, namely Mr. H. Muhammad Amru as the Regent of Gayo Lues Regency and Mr. H. Said Sani as the Deputy Regent of Gayo Lues Regency. In addition, interviews were also conducted with the department that runs the tahfiz program, namely with Mr. Samsul Bahri, the Head of the Syari'at Islam Office of Gayo Lues Regency, and his staff. After all the data has been collected, the next step will be analyzed using the qualitative data analysis method. (Jahja, 2023) through the stages of data verification and then criticism to obtain the validity of the data and its sources. To get the facts about the authenticity of the head (*authenticity*) is done through external criticism by reviewing the data or information and the authority that provides the knowledge and studying the language used in each source that has been obtained.

## Results and Discussion

### *Communication Strategy Functions and Objectives*

Communication is a prerequisite for human life, meaning that human life will not be meaningful without communication. Because without communication, humans will not interact with each other (Ramadhanty, 2014). (Ramadhanty, 2014). Two people are said to interact if each of them takes action and reaction, which is called an act of communication. Communication is an action carried out by one or more people by sending and receiving messages distorted by *noise*. Thus, communication has a comprehensive function (Qudratullah, 2016). Communication is an exchange of letters and individual and group activities regarding exchanging information, notes, and ideas.

For Lasswell, the best way to explain the function of communication or to precisely describe the act of communication is to answer the question, "Who says what in which To Whom with What Effect?" (Who Says What in What Way to Whom and With What Effect?) Lasswell's formula is included in the category of fundamental models in communication strategy. This simple formula has been used in various ways, especially to organize and form a structure for the communication process. (Kurniawan, 2018). Laswell's formula shows the initial tendency of the communication model, which assumes that the communicator must have a recipient and is therefore considered a persuasive process. It is also always thought that the messages must have an effect. (Syobah et al., 2023)..

Communication experts' focus on communication strategy is significant because the effectiveness of communication depends on the method used. Therefore, formulating communication strategies cannot be separated from understanding the elements involved in the communication process. Bottlenecks in the communication process indicate that the communication strategy is inappropriate. In this case, Effendy divides communication strategy into macro and micro. Macro (planned multimedia approach) strategy has a dual function, namely disseminating communication messages that are informative, persuasive, and instructive systematically to the target to obtain optimal results. (Mulyadi et al., 2022).. Bridging the *cultural gap* due to the ease of acquisition and ease of operation of mass media that is so powerful, which, if left unchecked, will damage cultural values.

From the above points, communication strategy is, in principle, carried out to carry out communication activities with a regular format. Regularity in delivering messages, achieving the desired goals, and situational considerations will undoubtedly be more straightforward in realizing the desired goals than done without regularity. Effendy laid the foundation of a communication strategy based on the function and purpose of communication itself. According to Effendy, communication conveys information, educates, entertains, and influences. Through communication, various information is revealed, both in the form of ideas and ideas that can add insight to those who communicate. The function of education is as a means of education that contains knowledge. The entertaining part is that the communication carried out is fun so that it can eliminate the tension in the mind. The function of influencing is communication, which aims to influence communicants' attitudes, opinions, and behavior to create changes for the better.

Effendy's opinion confirms the function of communication: First, conveying information from communicators to communicators by collecting, storing, and disseminating it to communicators. Second, educate. Through the information shared, it is hoped that the intellectual development, skills, and creativity of the person who is the communication target will develop. Third, communication functions to influence others. Communication is a means to control the audience to source motivation and encourage and follow the progress of others through what is seen, read, and heard. It was fourth, providing entertainment to others, such as music, dances, games, etc. (Mulyadi et al., 2022; Mudhofi et al., 2023).

From the above communication functions, it is clear that the desired communication objectives can be achieved so that the communicator can choose the communication strategy to be carried out. A communicator must realize who the target will talk to. A communicator who communicates has a desire that what is delivered is carried out by the target. At the same time, what the target wants with the communication must be considered.

### *Islamic Communication Strategy Planning of the Islamic Shari'a Office in Realising the Thousand Hafiz Program in Gayo Lues Regency*

Since 2018, the Gayo Lues Regional Government has begun promoting the Islamic school program that prioritizes tahfiz to educational institutions in Gayo Lues. (Rasidan, 2022) This is based on the community's proposal to transform public schools into Islamic schools by prioritizing the tahfiz program. The Gayo Lues Regional Government provides scholarships to students or boarding school students who have memorized the most to encourage Quran memorizers to be

more enthusiastic in completing the memorization. To foster high enthusiasm for learning, the local government provides scholarships for Gayo Lues generations who have become Hafiz / Hafizah to attract Hafiz; the Islamic Shari'at Office manages this scholarship program in regulating and selecting students who are entitled to receive the scholarship. In addition to providing scholarships for students or santri who memorize the Quran, the Islamic Shari'a Office also provides guidance to Tahfiz teachers with the aim that Tahfiz learning/programs can be implemented per the field's technical guidelines. (Ruhmi, 2018).

Initially, the Gayo Lues District Government only sent some prospective teachers from students out of the area to learn the Quran and become Quran memorizers, aiming to return to the site and become Tahfiz teachers. However, the local government felt that learning the Quran was very important and became one of the previously formulated visions and missions. So, the provincial government held a meeting with several religious leaders, representatives from the MPU board, the Islamic Sharia Office, Islamic boarding school leaders, and several other community leaders to formulate a plan that had been explained at the campaign mass. Therefore, a policy or regulation was born regarding the 1000 hafiz program in the Gayo Lues Regency. (Riskandafi, 2022).

Interview with the Regent of Gayo Lues Regency, Mr H. Muhammad Amru, M.SP:

"Today's generation of children and teenagers is very confused regarding religious knowledge and love for the Quran, both recitation and memorization. Hopefully, planning the Thousand Hafiz program can help the younger generation in Gayo Lues to be better in the future. The hope is that this plan will help their own families. Initially, there were families whose fathers never prayed the five daily prayers at home or in the mosque and whose parents had never recited the Quran after seeing their children learning and memorizing the Quran. Then the parents automatically realize and participate in improving their worship from prayer sessions, recitation of the Koran and other worship ". (Interview H. Muhammad Amru, M.SP Regent of Gayo Lues 2017-2022)

From the interview results above, it is understood that this planning is perfect for the young generations who will be the successors of the future change leaders in the Gayo Lues Regency. In addition, the Regent also hopes to positively affect Hafiz's children's attitudes towards their parents and families. In the beginning, parents who rarely perform the five daily prayers, after the children's guardians enter the thousand hafiz program, the parents of the tahfiz children can change for the better and be the best for the families around them.

Furthermore, the author interviewed with the Deputy Regent of Gayo Lues Regency:

"It started with the thought that to form the best future generation in the Gayo Lues area, children at an early age must be able to form Islamic characters who participate directly in the 1000 hafiz program in Gayo Lues Regency because early childhood and rejeema will be an asset in the future, unlike assets in the form of buildings that have a lifespan in the next few years. But unlike a hafiz, it will certainly have its glory in the sight of Allah and around the community. In addition, it positively affects the family of a hafiz child who will be better from all sides of life". (Interview H. Said Sani, S.Pd Vice Regent of Gayo Lues Regency 2017-2022).

From the explanation of the interview above, the author understands that the importance of the 1000 hafiz program for early childhood and adolescence is an expensive and noble asset for the future. How could early childhood and adolescence be formed as hafiz and hafizah from as early as

possible to become a golden generation for Gayo Lues Regency? In addition, there is a huge positive influence on a hafiz child's family if a child memorizes the Quran in the house. Of course, parents and siblings in the neighborhood will feel proud and honored to have a sibling bond with a child who memorizes the Quran.

Furthermore, the results of an interview with Mr H. Muslim, SE, MAP as the Head of the Islamic Shari'a Office in Gayo Lues Regency are as follows:

"The 1000 hafiz program is a superior plan from the Gayo Lues Regency government; since the campaign period, it has been promoted by the candidates for Regent and Deputy Regent of Gayo Lues Regency at that time; of course, we from the government side welcomed warmly and happily. In my proposal about the 1000 hafiz program at that time, I conveyed to the Regent and Deputy Regent of Gayo Lues Regency that the 1000 hafiz program should be a priority and featured in several designed programs". (Interview H. Muslim, SE, MAP Head of the Islamic Shari'a Office of Gayo Lues Regency).

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The interview results above are certainly an essential opinion on the 1000 hafiz program in Gayo Lues Regency. At the beginning of the program, the 1000 hafiz program was already announced during the Regent and Deputy Regent of Gayo Lues Regency campaign. This is why the 1000 Hafiz program became a flagship program during the term of office of the Regent and Deputy Regent in 2018 until now. It is evident that the 1000 Hafiz program for early childhood and teenage generations has become an attraction and has a unique dignity in the eyes of the family and the community.

The results of interviews related to initial planning with one of the Heads at the Islamic Shari'at Office, Dr H. Andi Syahputra, Lc. MA as follows:

"The planning of the 1000 Hafiz program began with the leadership of Mr. H. Muhammad Amru as the Regent of Gayo Lues, and Mr. H. Said Sani as the Vice Regent of Gayo Lues, then the planning of the 1000 Hafiz program was strengthened from the vision and mission sector of Islamic, Independent, and Prosperous. From this, the government's vision of Islam in the field is more directed toward the 1000 Hafiz program. Then in terms of the initial planning, there were several figures and related agencies who were present at that time there was the Regent of Gayo Lues, Deputy Regent of Gayo Lues, Head of the Islamic Shari'at Office, Chairman of Bapelda BP Gayo Lues, Chairman of Baitul Mal Gayo Lues, Regional Secretary of Gayo Lues, Chairman of DPRK Gayo Lues, Head of Education and Culture Office. Furthermore, planning the 1000 Hafiz program in 2018 is carried out through short-term planning, which continues to innovate from time to time so that the 1000 Hafiz program can run smoothly as it should". (Interview with the Head of the Islamic Sharia Office, Dr H. Andi Syahputra, Lc. MA)

From the interview results above, the author can provide an analysis that planning to realize the 1000 hafiz program has a long process and is full of dynamics in learning the program and departing from the vision and mission of the Gayo Lues Regency Government on Islam, Independent, and Prosperous. The planning of the 1000 hafiz program directs how the Islamic environment of Gayo Lues Regency is based on the formation of early generations and adolescents who have been formed into hafiz. Hopefully, this will be one of the efforts to preach to families and communities in the

Gayo Lues Regency with Islamic nuances by equipping children to memorize the Quran from each family in the Gayo Lues Regency.

*Communication Challenges of the Islamic Shari'a Office in Realising the Thousand Hafiz Programme in Gayo Lues Regency*

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Regarding the challenges or obstacles faced by the Gayo Lues Regency government, the researcher has interviewed the Regent of Gayo Lues Regency, Mr H. Muhammad Amru, M.SP:

"The obstacle that has the most impact on the 1000 Hafiz program is the occurrence of Covid-19; since this incident, the 1000 Hafiz program has certainly experienced disruptions and shortcomings, of course, in terms of budget in the implementation in the field". (Interview H. Muhammad Amru, M.SP Regent of Gayo Lues Priode 2017-2022)

The statement above explains that the opportunity to become a hafiz is excellent for generations of children from early childhood to teenage. However, one of the obstacles in the 1000 Hafiz program, said the Regent, is the occurrence of COVID-19, which has a very negative impact on the 1000 Hafiz program. One of the most significant impacts is undoubtedly the lack of budget in the region. So, the recipients of the 1000 Hafiz scholarship must certainly be reduced in the amount of the scholarship. Hence, the impact is that children who memorize the Koran and student guardians feel concerned because the number of scholarships and scholarship recipients must be reduced.

Furthermore, the author's interview with the Deputy Regent of Gayo Lues Regency:

"If we look at the opportunities for hafiz children in Gayo Lues Regency, I see that the first opportunity a hafiz child gets is to get honor from the community and directly get honor from Allah Swt. In addition, from the national aspect, for example, there has also been a regulation in recent years that opens a special path for Hafiz in recruiting members of the TNI, Polri, District Court, Prosecutor's Office, and Medicine. Of course, this is a great opportunity for our children to participate in the 1000 hafiz program in Gayo Lues Regency. However, the obstacles in running the 1000 hafiz program so far, in addition to COVID-19, must also be improved, for example, in terms of supervision and completion teams that must be strict regarding the 1000 hafiz program". (Interview H. Said Sani, S.Pd Vice Regent of Gayo Lues Regency 2017-2022).

From the results of the interview above, one of the obstacles is supervision in terms of budget, which, of course, must be improved so that there are no things that conflict with the Tahfiz program. But besides that, the next obstacle must be improved again in terms of the completion team so that those who get this hafiz scholarship are on target.

Furthermore, the results of direct interviews with Mr. H. Muslim, SE, MAP as the Head of the Islamic Shari'a Office in Gayo Lues Regency are as follows:

"One of the communication barriers in running the tahfiz program is the miscommunication about the prohibition of schools outside the school territory because if all children go to boarding schools, public schools will experience a shortage of students and have to close. Miscommunication in this matter makes it difficult for students to choose to study at these institutions. Another obstacle is the failure of communication on the part of the permanent institution. The boarding school cost is quite expensive for Tahfiz students, so a large enough budget is needed. At the same time, the 1000 hafiz scholarship continues to experience



shortages due to the impact of COVID-19". (Interview H. Muslim, SE, MAP Head of the Islamic Shari'a Office of Gayo Lues Regency).

The results of interviews related to initial planning with one of the Heads of the Islamic Shari'at Agency, Dr H. Andi Syahputra, Lc. MA as follows:

"The first opportunity of the 1000 Hafiz Programme is the provision of scholarships for Quran memorization, which are given monthly to 1000 Hafiz program participants. Although at the beginning, the 1000 hafiz program scholarship recipients were not so large, with the changes from 2018 to 2021, there have been improvements in terms of the number of hafiz scholarships, which continue to narrow down the number of scholarship recipients according to the amount of memorization of a participant. In addition, a huge opportunity is the growth of the 1000 hafiz program in private schools, public schools, and boarding schools. In addition, we from the Shari'at Islam Office also have a hafiz imam program, so many alums of the 1000 hafiz program have now succeeded in becoming hafiz imams whom the Shari'at Islam Office directly controls. Furthermore, one of the obstacles to the 1000 Hafiz program is the lack of human resources for teachers who are truly loyal to the role of a real teacher because the children of Hafiz students in Kbaupaen Gayo Lues certainly need the role of teachers in this program. Another obstacle is the budget, which is decreasing over time, so hopefully, there will be additional funds for the future, such as the cost of the 1000 hafiz program monitoring team, which is still far from what it should be". (Interview with the Head of the Islamic Sharia Office, Dr H. Andi Syahputra, Lc. MA)

From the interview results above, one of the obstacles has been the lack of budget from the government, one of which is the effect of COVID-19, which consumed a lot of funding at that time. However, despite this, the 1000 hafiz program is still running, even though the tahfiz scholarship recipients are reduced due to miscommunication between the organizer and the budget provider, so the program recipients do not reach 1000 hafiz in Gayo Lues Regency. The next obstacle is the lack of qualified teachers because some teachers do not teach until the completion of learning. This is due to the ineffective communication strategy between Tahfiz teachers and pesantren institutions. The table below summarises the opportunities and obstacles of the communication strategy of the Islamic Shari'a Office in realizing the 1000 hafiz program in Gayo Lues Regency as follows:

**Table 1. Communication Strategy Barriers**

No.	Obstacle Stage	Description
1.	There are still children memorizing from the 1000 hafiz program who are not yet mutein because the communication between tahfiz teachers and students is ineffective.	There needs to be increased monitoring from the Islamic Shari'a Office of the 1000 hafiz program.
2.	Public schools are experiencing a shortage of students due to miscommunication about school territorial regulations.	The 1000 hafiz program is strongly supported by the people of Gayo Lues Regency, resulting in many private schools and Islamic boarding schools with excellent tahfiz programs.
3.	There are still alums of the 1000 hafiz program who do not maintain their memorization well due to ineffective	The continuation of the 1000 hafiz program includes regeneration to become hafiz priests for men, while

No.	Obstacle Stage	Description
4.	communication between the institution and graduates. The lack of budget to run the tahfiz program is due to cuts due to Covid-19. This is due to miscommunication between the Islamic Sharia office and the person in charge of the budget, so it is necessary to improve a more effective communication strategy in the future.	for women, of course, they can become teachers at school and teachers at home for their siblings. The party responsible for the future budget needs to improve communication strategies that are more effective with the Islamic Sharia Office to maximize the budget for running this program.

## Conclusion

Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded that the challenge of the Gayo Lues Regency government's communication strategy in realizing the thousand hafiz program is the miscommunication between the Islamic Sharia Office as the implementer of the tahfiz program and the party in charge of the budget in terms of cutting tahfiz fees due to the covid-19 pandemic, resulting in a shortage of funding that has been budgeted for tahfiz teacher salaries as well as food and other costs for hafiz who have been recruited. In addition, there is also miscommunication between the Islamic Sharia Office and the boarding school for tahfiz students. Hence, the fees charged by pesantren institutions for tahfiz students are more expensive than those assigned to non-h tahfiz students. This finding is a basis for consideration for the Gayo Lues Regency government, especially the Islamic Sharia Office, to find a solution so that the thousand hafiz program can run again by the regent's regulation that has been previously programmed. This finding offers a solution to the tahfiz program that has been constrained so far so that in the future, it will provide a solution to the realization of one thousand hafizes in Gayo Lues District.

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