MyJICT
Malaysian Journal of Information and Communication Technology
EISSN 0127-7812

Vol. 10, Issue 2, pp. 149-156 | DECEMBER 2025
DOI: https://doi.org/10.53840/myjict10-2-233

CHALLENGES AND EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTEGRITY IN ONLINE QURAN MEMORIZATION (*TASMIK*) ASSESSMENTS

[i*]Juzlinda Mohd Ghazali, [ii]Mohd Shahrul Nizam Mohd Danuri, [iii]Siti Noor Ahmad, [iv]Abu Zaki Ismail, [v]Muhammad Izzat Ngah, [vi] Iksal Yanuarsyah

[i,iii] Faculty of Creative Multimedia and Computing, Universiti Islam Selangor, Malaysia
[ii] Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, Universiti Malaya, Malaysia
[iv,v] Faculty of Islamic Civilization Studies, Universiti Islam Selangor, Malaysia
[vi] Faculty of Engineering and Science, Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor, Indonesia

[*](Corresponding author) e-mail:juzlinda@uis.edu.my

Article history:
Submission date: 28 October 2025
Received in revised form: 16 November 2025
Acceptance date: 17 December 2025
Available online: 27 December 2025

Keywords:
Online Tasmik, Academic Integrity, Teacher Perceptions, Cheating, Digital Assessment

Funding:
This research received funding from Universiti Islam Selangor.

Competing interest:
The author(s) have declared that no competing interests exist.

Cite as:
Mohd Ghazali, J., Mohd Danuri, M. S. N., Ahmad, S. N., Ismail, A. Z., Ngah, M. I., & Yanuarsyah, I. (2025). Challenges and Educators' Perceptions of Integrity In Online Quran Memorization (Tasmik) Assessments. *Malaysian Journal of Information and Communication Technology (MyJICT)*, 10(2), 149-156. https://doi.org/10.53840/myjict10-2-233

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the challenges and perceptions of *tahfiz* educators regarding the integrity of online Quran memorization assessments (*tasmik*). When institutions had to switch to online learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they had to find new ways to test students. Integrity concerns were about whether the tests were fair and if students were being honest. Through focus group discussions and nominal group techniques with nine *tahfiz* educators, this study identifies key obstacles such as weak internet connectivity, limited technological infrastructure, and student dishonesty during online *tasmik* sessions. Educators highlighted behavioural indicators of cheating, such as inconsistent eye movements, head gestures, and reliance on hidden notes or devices. The results show that educators mostly don't trust online tests and prefer to give tests in person. The study highlights the need for clear rules, ethics training, and digital skills programs to make assessments more reliable in *tahfiz* institutions. Suggestions are given for institutions to integrate the use of technology for monitoring tests, strengthen rules and policies, and provide support for both educators and students in keeping up with online Quran education.

Introduction

Using digital platforms in education has changed how we teach and learn in many subjects. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Quran memorization (*tasmik*) in Islamic institutions, especially *tahfiz* institutions, moved to the internet. Online platforms offered a flexible way to learn, but problems with cheating and honesty became a growing concern.

Quran memorization assessments are unique as they evaluate not only academic recall but also spiritual sincerity. Educators serve as both evaluators and guardians of integrity. This dual role makes their perceptions essential in understanding how integrity can be preserved in a digital environment. This study investigates *tahfiz* educators' perceptions, identifies behavioural indicators of dishonesty, and documents the main challenges encountered.

Questions this study attempts to answer:

1. What problems do *tahfiz* educators encounter when teaching online *tasmik*?
2. What signs of dishonesty are noticed?
3. How do educators see the trustworthiness of online tests compared to conventional assessments?
4. What ways can improve fairness and trust in online *tahfiz* education?

Literature Review

Academic Integrity in Online Learning

The rapid shift to online education has caused concerns regarding academic honesty. Holden et al. (2021) demonstrate that while online assessments ensure continuity of education, they also increase possibilities for student misconduct due to limited supervision and control mechanisms. This puts pressure on institutions to develop robust monitoring systems. For instance, the use of safe exam browsers and webcam proctoring integrated into platforms like Moodle has shown efficacy in curbing dishonesty, especially in low-bandwidth environments.

Research has further highlighted how inadequate monitoring in digital classrooms often forces a reliance on trust-based evaluation rather than verifiable mechanisms, possibly weakening the credibility of assessments. A systematic review by Sabrina et al. (2022) emphasizes that unsupervised online assessments are more vulnerable to several types of misconduct, including collusion and contract cheating, and recommends a comprehensive strategy including alternative assessment designs and technology-enabled safeguards.

Cheating Behaviours in Online Contexts

Many dishonest actions have been reported in online testing situations. Ambi and Smita (2022) created a system to find cheating in online tests by using a webcam to analyze where a person is looking and how they hold their head. Their research shows that computer programs can detect cheating by watching where people look and how they move their heads. This has potential uses for monitoring tests.

Also, other research shows the same results. For example, Dilini et al. (2021) created a browser add-on that uses a special type of computer model to spot unusual eye movements during quizzes. This helps to identify possible cheating. Ogata et al. (2017), researchers used sound detection and tracking people's eye movements to find out if students were using hidden tools or aids during online tests that were not supervised. These technologies highlight how behavioral biometrics can help verify someone's identity.

Islamic Perspective on Amanah (Trust)

From an Islamic educational standpoint, integrity during Quranic memorization (*tasmik*) is very important. The concept of amanah (trustworthiness) is deeply embedded in *Tahfiz* education, where dishonest behaviors such as using notes during recitation are viewed as not only academic violations but also spiritual betrayals. Razlan et al. (2022) discuss that repentance and authenticity are core to hafazan, positioning integrity as integral to both character and academic progress.
This moral dimension increases the stakes for integrity in online *tasmik* assessments. Digital monitoring must therefore be complemented by ethical nurturing; reinforcing that honesty in Quran memorization aligns with spiritual responsibility, not just academic policy.

Gap and importance of study

Previous research looks at proctoring and cheating discovery in composed or multiple-choice exam designs. They focus fundamentally on higher instruction in standard settings, highlighting extortion designs, discovery advances, and moral discourses. Be that as it may, recitation-based assessments in *Tahfiz* institutions are notably underrepresented.
Our study addresses this gap by centering on verbal memorization assessments where untrustworthiness may show through gaze, voice hesitation, or use of unseen materials, and by prioritizing educators' perceptions in the *Tahfiz* context. It contributes firsthand qualitative insights and offers culturally aligned recommendations, bridging technological tools with spiritual integrity frameworks in Islamic education.

Methodology

Research design and rationale

This study used a qualitative, exploratory design to investigate *tahfiz* educators' lived experiences and perceptions of integrity in online *tasmik* assessment as depicted in Figure 1. Qualitative methods are appropriate when the aim is to capture rich, contextualised views, obtain insiders' meanings, and generate practice-oriented recommendations (Nyumba et al., 2018). We combined Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to surface shared experiences and interactive dynamics, with the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) to elicit, clarify, and systematically rank priority issues and solutions with a mixed group-technique approach that supports both depth (FGD) and structured consensus (NGT).

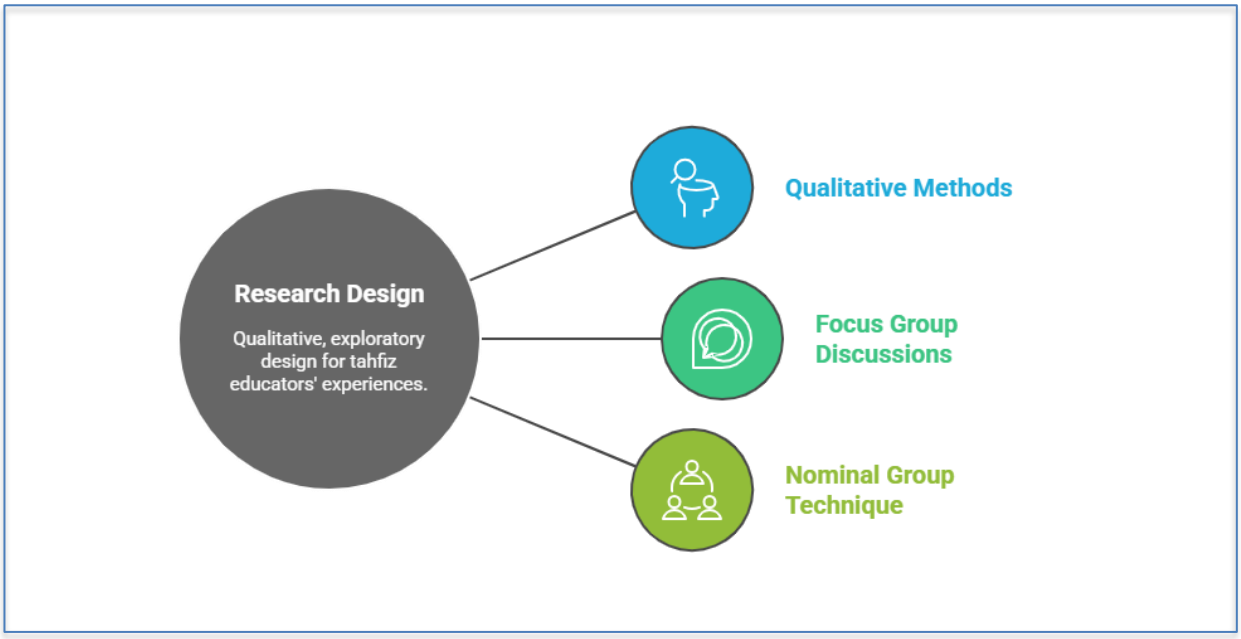

Figure 1: Research Methodology

Participants and sampling

Nine *tahfiz* educators were purposely picked from government and private *tahfiz* institutions in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur with more than eight years' experience. To participate, educators needed to have taken part in guided online *tasmik* during the COVID-19 pandemic of at least one year duration. Purposive sampling focuses on finding participants who have a lot of knowledge about the topic being studied. It's best to use small, similar groups when you want detailed information instead of trying to represent the entire population. Research shows that you can find enough important ideas with small groups of people (like 6 to 12 interviews or 4 to 8 focus group discussions) if the people in the group are similar. This means having nine participants is a reasonable choice for a focused and practical study.

Data collection procedures

Data collection took place in two types of sessions over a two-month period: FGD (90 minutes) and NGT workshops (60 minutes). FGD was moderated by the principal investigator using a semi-structured discussion guide designed to probe technical barriers, observed behaviours, perceptions of integrity, and recommended strategies. FGD promoted interaction that surfaced shared norms and divergences among educators; moderators used open prompts and follow-up probes to elicit examples and stories (Nyumba et al., 2018). NGT followed the classical four-stage sequence; silent idea generation, round-robin recording of ideas, clarification discussion, and individual ranking - to produce prioritized lists of challenges and recommended interventions. NGT is especially helpful when researchers want quick agreement and prioritized results from expert participants.

Transcription and data management

Recordings were transcribed and then checked against the audio by the research team for accuracy. Transcripts were anonymized. Metadata (e.g., session type, participant pseudonym, date) was maintained. Field notes taken during sessions captured non-verbal dynamics, tone, and moderator impressions; these notes were used during coding to enrich context and support analytic memos.

Analytic approach: Thematic analysis

We used a reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase approach: (1) familiarisation with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining/naming themes, and (6) producing the report. This flexible, transparent method is well suited to be applied to qualitative studies that aim to identify patterned meaning across a dataset while retaining researcher reflexivity about coding decisions and theme construction. Codebooks recorded code definitions, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and example quotes to ensure coding consistency.

Validation, trustworthiness and rigour

To enhance credibility and trustworthiness we applied multiple established strategies: (a) member checking - participants were given summaries of interpreted themes and invited to comment or correct; (b) peer debriefing - emergent codes and themes were reviewed by two external qualitative researchers to challenge interpretations and reduce researcher bias; (c) audit trail - a documented chain of analytic decisions (raw transcripts, coding memos, codebook versions) supported dependability and confirmability; and (d) triangulation - data from FGD, NGT rankings, and moderator field notes were cross-checked to corroborate findings. These procedures align with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability) and contemporary guidance on applying thematic analysis rigorously.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS) Research Ethics Committee prior to data collection. Participants agreed to take part and were told that joining was voluntary. They were informed that their voices would be recorded, their information would be kept private, and they could leave the study at any time.

Given the sensitive nature of discussing academic integrity, additional steps were taken to anonymize transcripts and to report findings at an aggregate level to avoid identification. Any potential risk of distress was mitigated by offering participants the option of private debriefing with the PI. Where NGT produced prioritized lists that could implicate institutions, output was presented generically to prevent reputational harm.

Limitations of the method

Although FGD and NGT are powerful for producing group norms and priorities, they can be influenced by group dynamics (dominant voices, social desirability). We mitigated these effects via skilled moderation, explicit ground rules (equal turn taking), and the private ranking step of NGT which reduces conformity bias. Using a small, specific group for the study means the findings may not apply to everyone, but they do offer valuable insights for similar *tahfiz* (Quran memorization) settings. It is suggested to conduct further research with bigger groups from different places and to check the results through observations. Advice on how many samples are enough and when to stop collecting them (Guest et al. , 2006; Hennink et al. , 2022) helps us decide on our sample size and recognizes the importance of checking our findings through different methods.

Findings and Discussions

Technical Challenges

Educators consistently reported that limited technological infrastructure posed significant hindrances to conducting effective online *tasmik* assessments. The top-ranked challenge was ‘shaky internet connections’ followed by ‘bad video quality’. The main issue was shaky internet connections, which interrupted live sessions and caused delays in sound and video. These interruptions made it hard for students to recite smoothly and also opened chances for cheating. Students might take advantage of connection problems to look at notes or online resources when they weren't visible on camera. These problems match what Wicaksono and Anam (2022) found. They reported that teachers had a hard time giving online tests because of shaky internet and less face-to-face interaction. This made them worry about whether students' performance was real.

Also, there were ongoing problems with bad video quality and not enough devices available. Educators were frustrated with blurry video feeds because it made it hard for them to see small facial expressions or unusual eye movements that could show if a student was cheating. Ambi & Smita (2022) supported these limitations and highlighted the importance of having clear visuals in their cheating detection model, which looks at eye movements and head positions. Similarly, Dilini et al. (2021) highlighted that browser-based proctoring systems depend on high-fidelity eye-tracking via webcams; a technology that becomes unreliable under poor network and hardware conditions.

These problems made it very hard to monitor things effectively. Without good internet connections and clear images, even the most watchful educators found it hard to keep track of things, making online evaluations less trustworthy.

Behavioural Indicators of Dishonesty

Educators identified several nonverbal cues strongly associated with dishonest behavior during online recitation as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Indicators associated with dishonest behavior

Indicator	Description
Frequent glances downward	Suggestive of reading from hidden notes or mushafs.
Sideways eye movement	May indicate reference to external screens or devices.
Inconsistent recitation speed	Reflects reliance on external aids when memory lapses occur.
Pretending to close eyes	Used as a tactic to conceal true eye movement.
Background noise or whispering	Signals potential off-camera assistance.

These observations align with other researches on behavioral markers of deception. For instance, frequent glances downward, sideways eye movement, inconsistent recitation speed were studied by Ambi & Smita (2022) and Dilini et al. (2021). Besides that, pretending to close eyes, concealing eye direction, background noise or whispering, off-camera assistance were focused by Ogata et al. (2017) and general gaze, eye or head movement detection and combined behavioral indicators were catered for by Yulita et al. (2023).

It is demonstrated through computational modeling that abnormal head pose and eye-gaze patterns that are detectable via webcam is able to effectively signal cheating behavior in online exams. This evidence supports the proposition that these behavioral indicators are grounded in validated research, implying potential for technology-assisted detection if visual and audio quality issues were moderated.

Educators' Perceptions of Integrity

Educators had low trust in the validity of online *tasmik*. Many expressed that the virtual format diluted the seriousness of Quran memorization, which traditionally depends on personal connections and the respect of the community. Without the presence of a physical invigilator, students seemed less focused, and educators found it challenging to uphold moral and spiritual standards.
These sentiments are similar to findings in other educational contexts. Gribbins et al. (2023) mentioned that teachers frequently doubt how effective online proctoring tools are. They worry about ethical issues, student privacy, and how these tools can make students feel more anxious during tests, which makes it harder to keep academic honesty. Jalilzadeh et al. (2024) highlighted that, from the perspective of EFL teachers, the absence of invigilators and the perceived lack of seriousness were major motivators for student cheating.

In the *tahfiz* context, where spiritual integrity (amanah) intertwines with academic evaluation, the stakes are higher. Dishonesty in Quran recitation is perceived not just as an academic lapse but as a violation of faith, making educators particularly wary of online settings where oversight is compromised.

Recommendations by Educators

Based on their observations and concerns, educators proposed a multifaceted set of strategies to reinforce integrity as depicted in Figure 1:

1. Structured Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Clear protocols should govern online *tasmik* sessions; covering camera positioning, lighting requirements, and permissible environments.
2. Integration of AI Monitoring Tools.
3. Student Ethics Workshops: Grounding digital assessments in moral education particularly emphasizing the concept of Amanah can reinforce responsible behavior among students.

4. Educator Digital Literacy Training: Educators must be equipped to navigate and manage online platforms effectively, ensuring they can detect anomalies and respond promptly.
5. Hybrid Assessment Models: Educators favored combining online assessments for convenience with periodic in-person validation, maintaining both flexibility and oversight.

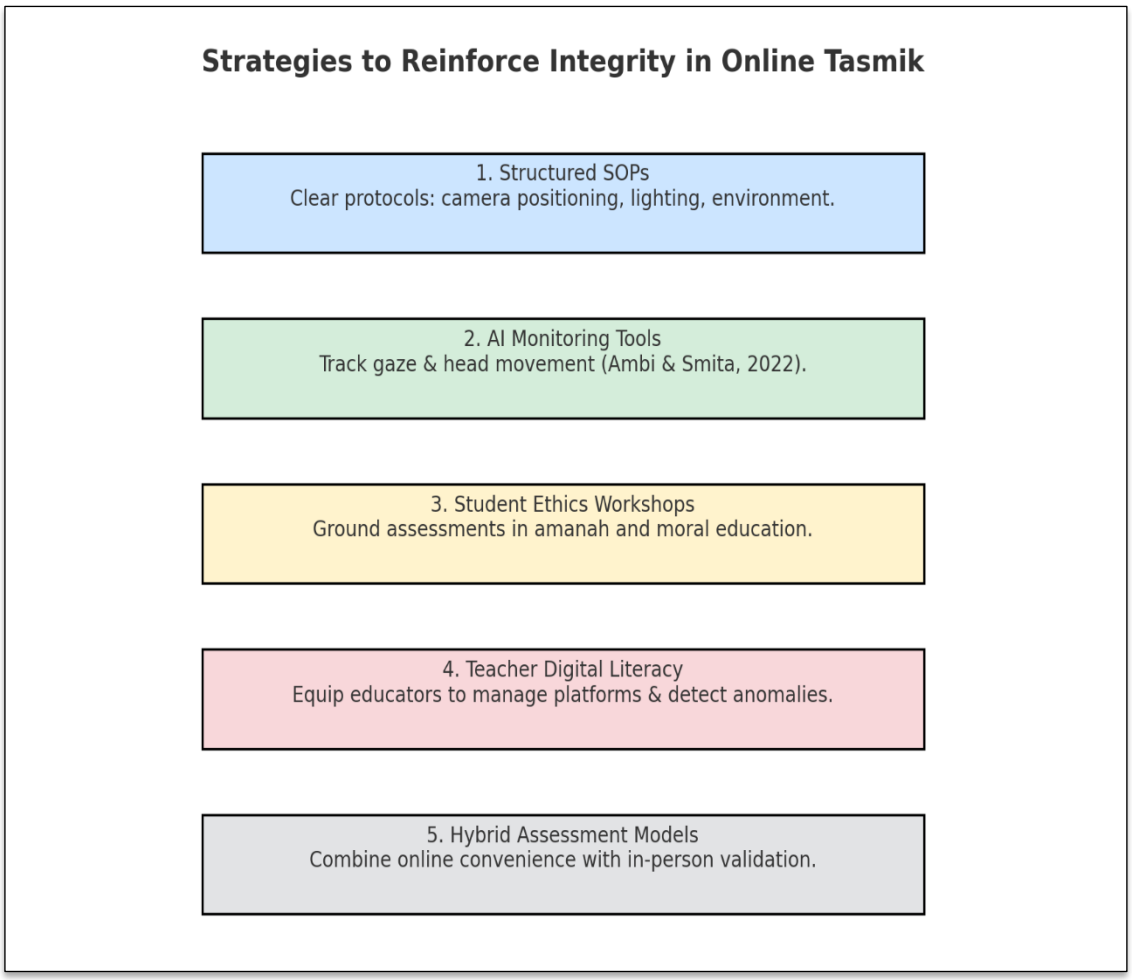

Figure 1: Educators' proposed strategies to reinforce integrity in online *tasmik*.

These proposed measures are supported by various studies. Mitigating dishonesty is most effective when combining technological safeguards with pedagogical and ethical anchoring (Gribbins et al., 2023), while open-ended or randomized question formats as recommended by Jalilzadeh et al. (2024) can also reduce reliance on unauthorized aids. As demonstrated by Ambi & Smita (2022), technology capable of tracking gaze and head movement can aid in detecting dishonesty even though current limitations (e.g., video clarity) must be addressed. Reducing dishonesty works best when using technology along with teaching methods and strong ethical guidelines (Gribbins et al., 2023).

The study confirms global concerns about academic dishonesty but highlights unique dimensions in Islamic education. In *tahfiz* institutions, being dishonest harms both learning and moral values. Educators' lack of trust shows that just using technology isn't enough as values and ethics need to be taught.

Hybrid models that use AI monitoring and educator assessment seem to show good potential. These systems could keep track of where students are looking, sounds they hear, and any background noise. At the same time, educators help students understand the right values by giving them ongoing support.

Conclusion

This study reveals that *tahfiz* educators perceive online *tasmik* as susceptible to dishonesty due to both technical and behavioural factors. The research highlights urgent needs for:

1. Clear Standard Operating Procedures across *tahfiz* institutions.
2. Educator training in digital monitoring.

3. AI-based proctoring tailored to oral recitations.
4. Ethics programs to instill amanah among students.
5. Hybrid models balancing technology with educator oversight.

Future studies should cover more areas, involve a wider range of institutions, and try out technology in real-life situations. These efforts will help make *tahfiz* education more trustworthy in the digital age.

Acknowledgement

This paper is produced from a research grant being funded by Universiti Islam Selangor.

References

Ambi Singh, & Smita Das (2022). A cheating detection system in online examinations based on the analysis of eye-gaze and head-pose. THEETAS 2022.

Dilini, N., Senaratne, A., Yasarathna, T., Warnajith, N., & Seneviratne, L. (2021). Cheating detection in browser-based online exams through eye gaze tracking. ICITR 2021.

Gribbins, M., & Bonk, C. J. (2023). An exploration of instructors' perceptions about online proctoring and its value in ensuring academic integrity. British Journal of Educational Technology, 54, 1693–1714.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. Field Methods, 18(1), 59–82.

Hennink, M. and Kaiser, B.N. (2022) Sample Sizes for Saturation in Qualitative Research: A Systematic Review of Empirical Tests. Social Science and Medicine, 292, Article ID: 114523.

Holden, O., Norris, M. & Kuhlmeier, V. (2021). Academic Integrity in Online Assessment: A Research Review. Frontiers in Education. 6. 10.3389/feduc.2021.639814.

Jalilzadeh, K., Rashtchi, M., & Mirzapour, F. (2024). Cheating in Online Assessment: A Qualitative Study on Reasons and Coping Strategies Focusing on EFL Teachers' Perceptions. Language Testing in Asia, 14, Article No. 29.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. Sage. (Foundational trustworthiness criteria).

Nyumba, T. O., Wilson, K., Derrick, C. J., & Mukherjee, N. (2018). The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. Methods in Ecology and Evolution, 9, 20–32.

Ogata, H., Akama, M., & Suzuki, S. (2017). Detecting cheating using acoustic devices in examinations with eye tracker. Bulletin of Data Analysis of Japanese Classification Society, 6(1), 127–139.

Razlan, S., Sumaiyah, A., et al. (2022). Amanah and honesty in Quran memorization: Perspectives from tahfiz educators. Journal of Islamic Education, 12(1), 55–70.

Sabrina, F., Azad, S., Sohail, S., & Thakur, S. (2022). Ensuring academic integrity in online assessments: A literature review and recommendations. International Journal of Information and Education Technology, 12(1), 60–70.

Wicaksono, A. L., & Anam, S. (2022). Teachers' Perceptions Towards the Practice Of Assessment In Online Classroom During Pandemic Of Covid-19. ELite Journal: International Journal of Education, Language and Literature, 2(4), 211–218.

Yulita, I. N., Hariz, F. A., Suryana, I., & Prabuwono, A. S. (2023). Educational Innovation Faced with COVID-19: Deep Learning for Online Exam Cheating Detection. Education Sciences, 13(2), 194.