Quranic Reading Proficiency and Factors Affecting Mastery Quran among Public University Students



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Abstract

This study pertains to the mastery levels of Quranic Tajweed knowledge among students in public higher education institutions (IPTAs). The study aims to identify the extent of proficiency in reading the Quran among IPTA students, observe differences in Quranic reading proficiency based on demographic factors, and identify the contributing factors to students' Quranic reading ability. The study respondents consist of 121 IPTA students from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). This research employs a questionnaire to collect study data, and quantitative data is analyzed using percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations based on Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The study findings indicate that students' abilities are moderate in terms of basic Quranic recitation aspects, and specific aspects still pose challenges for many students, such as mastering knowledge of melodies, melodious recitation, understanding the rules of Tajweed, and reciting with Tajweed. The study also finds that variations in Quranic reading proficiency exist based on gender, highest education level, field of study, and place of education. The research also identifies several factors contributing to students' mastery of Tajweed knowledge and Quranic reading. To ensure that students can achieve the best possible mastery of Tajweed knowledge, the researcher has suggested several steps that could be taken into consideration by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), school administrations, teachers, and parents.

Keywords: proficiency, al-Quran, reading, students, public university.

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Introduction

The study of the Quran involving scholars and scientists is very urgent as an effort to improve the quality of understanding, appreciation, and practice of the Islamic guidance (Al-Qur'an) in the society (Putra & Hidayaturrahman, 2020). The Qur'an holds a fundamental role for Muslims and even for non-Muslims pursuing its study. Hence, prior to engaging with its content, one must first acquire the skill of accurate Quranic recitation. True mastery of recitation is achieved

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through a proficient grasp of tajweed. According to the Head of the Tahfiz Department at Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa (KUIS), an alarming statistic emerges - around 40% of private tahfiz students lack theoretical mastery of tajweed (Zainora Daud et al., 2018). Ahmad Rozaini's *et.*, *al* (2010) research investigating Quranic recitation proficiency among UiTM students found that 72.67% exhibited moderate proficiency, while 36.91% struggled. The crux of the issue emerged: 43% were unfamiliar with tajweed principles, leading to difficulties in proper phonetic articulation.

Similarly, an analysis encompassing 428 secondary school students unveiled a distressing trend - 90% faced hurdles in mastering Quranic skills, and a staggering 40% within the teenage group couldn't read the Qur'an (Mohd Aderi & Zainab 2016). Collectively, these findings underscore a glaring reality: a significant portion of students, spanning private tahfiz institutions to universities, exhibit insufficient familiarity with tajweed rules. This shortfall consequently hampers accurate pronunciation and proficiency in Quranic reading skills. The predicament is further aggravated by a considerable lack of awareness regarding tajweed principles, particularly among secondary school students. Given the multifaceted challenges identified, the research endeavours to tackle its outlined objectives holistically.

These objectives encompass gauging students' Quranic reading abilities, discerning variations in proficiency based on demographic factors, and pinpointing the factors that contribute to students' Quranic reading abilities. By addressing these goals, the study aims to shed light on the overarching issues and present viable solutions to effectively address these shortcomings.

Literature Review

The Significance of Tajweed in Quranic Learning

The requirement to learn tajweed is established as *Fardh Kifayah*, a communal obligation. However, the obligation to recite the Quran with tajweed, known as Fardh Ain, is binding upon every Muslim. It is imperative for each Muslim to adhere to correct tajweed rules once they are acquainted with the genuine recitation technique. By practicing tajweed in Quranic recitation, errors that could mar the reading experience are effectively averted. In Islamic religion, mistakes in recitation of holy Quran (the sacred book of Muslims) are forbidden. Mistakes can be missing words, verse, misreading *Harakat* (pronunciations, punctuations, and accents) (Muhammad et al., 2010). Tajweed is the way of Quran recitation where the reciter follows a set of rules for correct and perfect recitation. The recitation rules guide the reciter to the accurate reading by following the words' diacritics and other rules, such as *Idhhar*, *Ikhfa*, *Idgham*, *Iqlab*, etc (Alrumiah & Al-Shargabi, 2022). Errors in recitation are classified into two categories: *Al-Lahn Al-Jali*, a conspicuous mistake, and *Al-Lahn Al-Khafi*, a subtle error committed against established enunciation norms without altering meaning.

The Role of Tajweed in Accurate Recitation

Mastery of tajweed is paramount to prevent grave errors. Proficiency in tajweed empowers individuals to read the Quran confidently and flawlessly. This aptitude further guarantees the preservation of the Quran's recitation and meaning. The numerous benefits of Quranic recitation are illuminated through hadiths and Quranic verses. Among these, the assurance of individual felicity in both the present life and the hereafter holds significance. For instance, the phrase "In the name of Allah Taala" holds immense importance.

The Avoidance of Serious Mistakes Through Tajweed

Gaining knowledge of tajweed proves to be a pivotal factor in avoiding significant errors. Those who dedicate themselves to studying tajweed not only develop a sense of confidence and expertise but also attain the ability to recite the Quran fluently. Moreover, achieving mastery in this discipline elevates the calibre and authenticity of Quranic recitation and understanding. Given that any memorization process necessitates continuous revision, the most effective approach to review and authenticate one's recitation is to involve another individual, preferably an expert in Holy Quran recitations (El Amrani et al., 2016). This individual can closely follow the recitation, identify any inaccuracies, and provide corrections. Quranic verses and hadiths consistently underscore the numerous advantages of engaging in the practice of reciting the Quran. One such benefit is the promise of lasting prosperity in both the worldly life and the hereafter, as exemplified in the words of Allah Taala:

"Surely those who recite the Book of Allah, establish prayer, and donate from what We have provided for them secretly and openly can hope for an exchange that will never fail, so that He will reward them in full and increase them out of His grace." (Surah al-Fatir, verses 29-30)

In Surah Al-Fatir, Allah assures those who recite the Quran and engage in virtuous acts that they can anticipate an enduring exchange of reward. This pledge from Allah is complete and abundant, reflecting His limitless benevolence and favour upon devoted believers. Overall, the pursuit of tajweed and precise Quranic recitation is not solely a means of deepening spiritual connection with Allah, but also a pathway to attaining happiness and eternal rewards. By upholding the Quran's integrity through tajweed, believers can experience the profound impact of this divine scripture in their lives and embrace the blessings promised by Allah.

Challenges In Quranic Recitation Skills Among Secondary School Students in Malaysia

A study conducted with Universiti Pertahanan Malaysia involving 428 secondary school students, as highlighted by the Islamic Education Division (1993), unveiled a disconcerting reality—up to 90% of students grappled with Quranic recitation skills. These findings pertained to the outcomes of Quranic teaching within schools. Similarly, a study by the Islamic Affairs

Division of the Prime Minister's Department in 1995, across various secondary schools, revealed that over 40% of surveyed adolescents were unable to read the Quran (Mohd Aderi dan Zainab (2016).

However, (Rosmawati Umar, 1993) in an exploration conducted at Sheikh Haji Othman Religious Secondary School in Kuching, Sarawak, found that students exhibited only a satisfactory grasp of Quranic recitation, with some unable to read the Quran altogether. This shortfall stemmed from an early-age neglect in teaching children the Quran.

Further insights from (Maimunah Ismail, 1995) studying Quranic reading skills among 60 first-year students at Sekolah Menengah Selayang Baru, Gombak, indicated that overall achievement ranged from moderate to weak. Interestingly, the study found no significant correlation between parents' educational background and income with Quranic reading skills. Instead, it highlighted the link between pre-secondary school Quranic education and subsequent Quranic reading ability.

Meanwhile, (Ahmad Abdul Ghani, 1997) uncovered that student who had attended *Fardhu Ain* classes demonstrated proficient Quranic reading. Yet, a small 3% struggled with recitation. Conclusively, this study demonstrated that students excelling academically also mastered Quranic recitation. An investigation by Aminah (1997) within (Mohd Aderi dan Zainab, 2016) disclosed that as high as 39.4% of respondents from Hulu Langat District High School were unable to articulate the *makhraj* letters of the Quran—an alarming reflection of their true recitation proficiency.

Through the lens of (Farehan Mohd Hani, 2000), employing a ratio of 13:20:12:8, students' mastery of the ability to read Nun Sakinah, as observed among third-year students in Petaling district, can be categorized into degrees of proficiency—good, moderate, weak, and very weak. The difficulty students face in reading Nun Sakinah was attributed to unfavourable family circumstances, inadequate learning opportunities, and personal perceptions regarding the importance of Quranic reading.

The findings of (Ghozali et al., 2022) study highlight the role of TikTok as a mediator in disseminating al-Qur'an-related content, particularly in teaching al-Qur'an and enhancing Quranic Reading Proficiency. The utilization of TikTok for teaching and reciting al-Qur'an signifies a modern approach to enhancing Quranic Reading Proficiency among users. By providing accessible and engaging content, TikTok contributes to the improvement of individuals' ability to read the Quran with accuracy and understanding.

Considering the amalgamation of past research, investigations into Quranic recitation skills among Malaysian secondary school students bring to light concerning trends of struggles and deficiencies in this domain. The outcomes underscore a substantial percentage of students grappling with proper Quranic recitation, some even incapable of reading it. Various factors contribute to these challenges, including the absence of early Quranic education, ineffective teaching methodologies, and adverse family circumstances. Moreover, the level of Quranic recitation proficiency appears linked to academic performance and exposure to *Fardhu Ain* classes, emphasizing the necessity of a comprehensive approach to religious education.

Research Methodology and Data Analysis

This study adopts a descriptive approach and employs a quantitative research design, specifically employing a survey method as its research methodology. The quantitative data collection process yielded a total of 131 responses, of which 121 students were identified as relevant to the program group under investigation, following rigorous screening. Data analysis for this study was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. In addressing the first research question, quantitative data obtained from the administered questionnaires were subjected to descriptive analysis. This analytical process involved calculating measures such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to gain insights into the respondents' perspectives. To assess potential gender-based disparities, t-test analysis was employed to examine whether significant differences exist.

Moreover, to explore the significant presence of Quranic reading proficiency in relation to students' testing grounds, the study utilized Chi-squared analysis. This analytical method helps determine whether a statistically significant association exists between the ability to read the Quran and the diverse aspects of the students' testing environments. These analytical approaches collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing Quranic reading proficiency within the scope of the study.

This study is a descriptive study that uses a (quantitative) research design which is a survey method as a research methodology. Quantitative data collection successfully obtained 131 responses and after screening, only 121 students followed the type of group of the relevant program for analysis. The analysis of this research was carried out using the SPSS version 20.0 package. To answer the first research question, the quantitative data from the set of questionnaires were analysed descriptively to obtain the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. T-test analysis was used to test whether there is a significant level by gender. While the data analysis to test whether there is a significant existence of the ability to read the Qur'an from the aspect of the student's testing ground is to use Chi-squared analysis.

Research Scope and Participant Demographics

This research is characterized as a descriptive study, involving a cohort of 120 students hailing from diverse backgrounds. The participants encompass both male and female Muslim students, and they are drawn from three prominent public universities: Universiti Teknologi Mara, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. The investigation primarily centers on examining demographic factors, specifically gender, field of study, and place of study, as attributes influencing the participants' Quranic reading proficiency.

The rationale for selecting these institutions is rooted in their collective representation of Muslim students spanning various fields of study. This deliberate diversity in academic disciplines contributes to the robustness of the study's findings. By embracing students from a multitude of fields, the research aims to gain comprehensive insights into the participants' mastery of tajweed, enriched by the encompassing spectrum of disciplines present across the selected universities.

Research Instrument and Questionnaire Design

The research instrument employed in this study, namely the questionnaire, draws its foundation from a prior research endeavour conducted by (Azarudin Awang et al., 2011). Utilizing a five-point Likert scale, this instrument facilitates the collection of responses from student participants concerning the statements presented within the research framework. The Likert scale, recognized for its efficacy in gauging perceptions and attitudes (Cohen, 1989), provides a structured and continuous approach for respondents to convey their perspectives within a defined context.

Comprising five distinct parts, the questionnaire is thoughtfully structured. It is divided into Sections A, B, and C. Section A encapsulates the Self-Information Questionnaire, while Sections B and C delve into the crux of the research. These sections collectively centre on assessing the Mastery of Tajweed Knowledge Among University Students. This meticulous design ensures that the research instrument captures a comprehensive spectrum of participant responses, yielding valuable insights into the study's focus and objectives.

Procedures

The researcher has adeptly transformed the questionnaire into a digital format, specifically a Microsoft Word document shared through Google Docs, enabling online responses. The questionnaire's clarity is ensured through comprehensive instructions, and the language employed aligns seamlessly with the respondents' daily interactions, fostering a user-friendly experience for effective participation. Upon completing the questionnaire, respondents simply need to click a button to effortlessly transmit their responses to the researcher.

Upon data collection, the researcher initiates the subsequent steps. After respondents provide their responses, data compilation takes place. Subsequently, data analysis is executed, aligning with the study's objectives. The analysis encompasses mean, frequency, and percentage calculations for descriptive insights. These findings are presented in a tabular format, facilitating a visual representation of the acquired data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 program is harnessed as the analytical tool for data examination. This meticulous approach, from questionnaire administration to data analysis, underscores the research's methodical rigor and commitment to deriving meaningful insights aligned with the research goals.

Results

This chapter delves into a comprehensive discussion of the demographic context of the study's respondents, encompassing key variables such as age, gender, field of study, place of study, and study levels among university students. Initiating this discussion is an exploration of the age distribution within the sample of this study, which comprises 121 respondents. It is evident that the predominant age group among respondents is 18 to 25 years, encompassing 120 individuals (99%). Remarkably, only one respondent falls within the age bracket of 26 to 30 years (1%). Subsequently, attention turns to gender distribution. Among the respondents, 46

are male (38%), while the female cohort comprises 75 individuals (62%), shaping a balanced representation of genders within the study population.

Moving forward, an analysis of educational backgrounds reveals a diverse composition. Pre-University levels, encompassing foundation, A-Levels, STPM, Matriculation, and Diploma, account for 11 respondents (9.1%). The Undergraduate category commands the majority with 88 respondents (72.7%). Postgraduate Diploma holders comprise 21 respondents (17.4%), while a sole respondent holds a Bachelor Diploma (1%). Regarding the field of study, the participants manifest a multidisciplinary spectrum. Notably, Business Management constitutes the largest share with 82 respondents (67.8%), followed by Technology Management with 9 respondents (7.4%). Fields such as Marketing Management 4 respondents (3.3%), Geoinformation 2 respondents (1.7%), Quantity Surveying 5 respondents (4.1%), Accounting and Qiraat Studies 6 respondents (5%), Islamic Finance 4 respondents (3.3%), and disciplines like Construction, Mechanical Engineering, and Chemical Engineering each represent smaller segments, with one respondent each (0.8%).

Finally, the discussion shifts to the institutions where the study respondents pursue their education. Within this scope, UTM accounts for 29 respondents (24%), while UiTM encompasses the largest group with 82 respondents (68%). USIM is represented by 10 respondents (8%), reflecting the composition of the study's participant pool across these respective institutions. This comprehensive overview of the demographic context provides a foundational understanding of the study's participant composition, laying the groundwork for the subsequent analyses and interpretations.

Table 1 presents an insightful depiction of students' self-efficacy perceptions in Quranic reading. Notably, respondents exhibit a commendable level of proficiency in various aspects. Their aptitude in recognizing and articulating the letters of the Qur'an, citing the Qur'anic kalimah, and accurately referencing the connected Qur'anic kalimah is notably high. Additionally, their skill in deciphering reading marks and effectively reading the Qur'an demonstrates a commendable level of competence.

Furthermore, respondents' capabilities extend to understanding the laws of Tajweed and reading with tajweed, as well as their grasp of melodious patterns and intonations. In these areas, their self-efficacy reflects a moderate yet commendable level of proficiency. Their ability to discern songs, sound variations, and correctly reciting the Qur'an also resonates at a similar moderately high level.

This comprehensive evaluation through Table 1 affirms the students' largely positive perceptions of their capabilities in Quranic reading, thereby providing an initial insight into their competency in various aspects of Quranic recitation.

Table 1. Students' Self-Efficacy Perceptions in Quranic Reading.

No	o.Item	Very Weak	Weak	Averag	eGood Very Total
1	The ability to recognize the letters of the Quran	-	-	11.6%	36.4%52.1% 100
2	The ability to pronounce the letters of the Qura according to the correct Makhraj	n -	.8%	25.6%	45.5%28.1% 100
3	Ability to Pronounce Al-Quran Words	-	.8%	14%	49.6%35.5% 100

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4	Ability to Recite Continuous Al-Quran Sentences -	-	20.7%	39.7%39.7% 100
5	The ability to recognize the signs of reading in the Quran	-	29.8%	44.6%25.6% 100
6	Knowledge About Tajwid Law .8%	5.8%	39.7%	40.5%13.2% 100
7	Ability to Read the Quran According to The Correct Law of Tajwid	3.3%	38.8%	41.3%14.9% 100
8	Knowledge of Songs and Voices In reading the Quran 2.5%	9.1%	55.4%	24.8%8.3% 100
9	The ability to read the Quran with songs 5.8%	19.8%	643.8%	24% 6.6% 100

1.7% 1.7% 31.4% 47.9% 17.4% 100

Gender-Based Quranic Reading Ability Comparison

10 Ability to Read the Quran Correctly

A comparison of the level of ability in reading the Quran based on gender was conducted using an independent samples t-test. The findings revealed that male students have a higher ability to read the Quran (min=3.85) compared to female students (min=3.78). However, the t-test results underscore that this difference is not statistically significant. In essence, the observed variance in Quranic reading proficiency between male and female students appears to be primarily attributed to chance rather than a substantial distinction. Further validation arises from the Levene's test for Quranic reading ability, yielding a value of 0.390—surpassing the threshold of 0.05. This outcome signifies the absence of a noteworthy difference in score variance between the two gender groups. Conclusively, derived from both the t-test outcomes and the Levene's test results, the Quranic reading ability between male and female students showcases no significant disparity. Both groups evidently exhibit comparable levels of proficiency in Quranic recitation. These findings collectively emphasize the equitable distribution of Quranic reading prowess across genders within the study cohort.

Table 2. Comparison of Quranic Reading Ability Levels by Gender Variable

Independent Samples Test											
	Leven	e's Test									
for Equality of											
	Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
								95%			
								Confidence			
					Sig.			Interval of the			
					(2-	Mean	Std. Error	Difference			
	F	Sig.	t	df	tailed)	Difference	e Difference	Lower Upper			
Mastery Equal	.744	.390	.552	119	.582	.06684	.12116	17307 .30675			
of variances											
Quranic assumed											

Reading Equal .53083.419 .598 .06684 .12611 -.18397 .31765 variances not assumed

Influential Factors on Quranic Reading Ability

The study findings illuminate respondents' perspectives on the impact of various factors on their Quranic reading ability. Foremost, the support rendered by guiding entities—Quran teachers, neighbors, and family members—resonates as the most potent influencer in enhancing Quranic reading proficiency. Complementing this central influence, a cluster of supplementary factors emerges. These include the emphasis on Tajwid knowledge, parental attitudes, the integration of Quranic reading practices into daily life, and the availability of Quranic study activities on campus. While these factors collectively play a role in shaping Quranic reading ability, their influence is comparatively less pronounced in comparison to the pivotal guidance factors.

Table 3 elucidates the subconstruct factors instrumental in influencing university students' Quranic reading ability. **Item 1:** The guiding factor (Quran teachers/neighbors/family members) garners a substantial mean score (min) of 4.27, with a standard deviation (SP) of 0.742. Most respondents' express agreement, as 63 students (52.1%) concur, while 48 students (39.7%) strongly endorse the impact of this factor on their Quranic reading ability. **Item 2:** The factor of lesser emphasis on Tajwid knowledge obtains a mean score (min) of 3.89, accompanied by a standard deviation (SP) of 0.911. The responses indicate agreement, with 55.4% of students in accord, and 27 students (22.3%) indicating strong agreement with its influence on their Quranic reading ability. **Item 3:** Parental attitudes constitute the third factor, attaining a mean score (min) of 3.95 and a standard deviation (SP) of 1.056. A noteworthy portion of students (45.5%) strongly concur, alongside 39 students (32.2%) in agreement regarding its impact on their Quranic reading ability. Item 4: Pertaining to attitudes and the scarcity of Quranic reading practice in daily life, the mean score (min) stands at 3.90, while the standard deviation (SP) is 0.926. Most students (57%) express agreement, and 27 students (22.3%) exhibit strong agreement regarding its role in their mastery of the Quran. **Item 5:** The absence of engaging Quranic study activities on campus culminates in a mean score (min) of 3.98, accompanied by a standard deviation (SP) of 0.806. A substantial number of students (58.7%) share agreement, with 28 students (23.1%) strongly emphasizing its influence on their Quranic reading ability.

To synthesize, the study conclusively affirms that diverse factors significantly impact university students' Quranic reading ability. The interplay of guiding support, emphasis on Tajwid knowledge, parental attitudes, daily life practices, and on-campus Quranic study activities collectively shape participants' competence in Quranic reading. The alignment between student perspectives and these influencing factors underscores their pivotal roles in shaping and honing Quranic reading skills among the study cohort.

Table 3 Factors Affecting Their Ability in Reading the Quran

N o	Item	Stron gly Disag ree	Disag ree	Neutr al	Agre e	Stron gly Agree	Me an	S.D	Interpreta tion
1	The guiding factor (Quran teachers/neighbours /family members)	1 (.8%)	3 (2.5%)	6 (5.0 %)	63 (52.1 %)	48 (39.7 %)	4.2 7	.74 2	High
2	The factor of less emphasis on Tajwid knowledge	4 (3.3%)	5 (4.1%)	18 (14.9 %)	67 (55.4 %)	27 (22.3 %)	3.8 9	.91 1	High
3	Parental attitude factor	7 (5.8%)	4 (3.3%)	16 (13.2 %)	55 (45.5 %)	39 (32.2 %)	3.9 5	1.0 56	High
4	Attitude and lack of emphasis on the practice of reading the Quran in daily life	5 (4.1%)	4 (3.3%)	16 (13.2 %)	69 (57%)	27 (22.3 %)	3.9	.92 6	High
5	Lack of stimulating activities for Quranic studies on campus	2 (1.7%)	4 (3.3%)	16 (13.2 %)	71 (58.7 %)	28 (23.1 %)	3.9	.80 6	High

Conclusion

Overall, this study examined the level of Quranic reading proficiency among students from UiTM, UTM, and USIM. The research findings shed light on their commendable competence in fundamental Quranic reading yet reveal a notable shortfall in more intricate facets demanding elevated skills. Furthermore, a notable disparity surfaces in the ability to recite the Quran with melody between female and male students. This variance likely stems from an array of influential factors impinging on their Quranic reading prowess. These factors encompass the pivotal role of guidance sources (Quran teachers/neighbours/family members), the observed decline in emphasis on Tajwid knowledge, parental attitudes, the inclinations, and practices concerning daily Quranic reading, and the scarcity of engaging Quranic study activities on campus. In essence, the intricate interplay of these elements substantiates their role in shaping and moulding students' Quranic reading abilities.

In essence, this study underscores the necessity to address the multifaceted factors underpinning Quranic reading proficiency among students—especially in areas that present heightened challenges. The path forward necessitates concerted efforts aimed at augmenting and fortifying Quranic reading skills. Furthermore, a nuanced approach is essential in tackling

the disparities in melodic Quranic recitation between male and female students. Collectively, this study advocates for strategic measures that encompass both enhancement and harmonization, paving the way to a more robust Quranic reading competence within the study community.

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