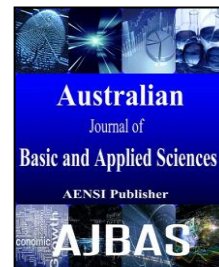




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The Relationship Between the Aspect of Fluency and Other Aspects of Quranic Reading Mastery in j-QAF Programme: A Case Study at Malacca

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ABSTRACT

Background: As an initiative to strengthen the mastery of basic principles of Islam among students at primary school level, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has introduced the j-QAF programme. This programme has been introduced since 2004 which includes aspects of learning Jawi script, reading Quran, learning Arabic and understanding basic skills of Fard 'Ayn. Based on these four aspects, the study focus on the aspects of reading Quran in j-QAF programme. This study employs a case study method by focussing at Sekolah Kebangsaan Dato' Demang Hussin, Malacca. This paper discusses the relationship between the aspect of fluency and other aspects of quranic reading mastery among Standard Six pupils who are the first generation of student to follow the teaching and learning of the j-QAF programme. In addition, it also describes the differences between the gender of pupils on every aspects in reading the Quran in the j-QAF programme. Quranic reading test was used as an instrument to gain data for the study. This instrument was adopted and adapted from the form published by Majlis Tilawah al-Quran (MTQ). A total of 136 standard six primary school students were randomly chosen from every class with different level of achievement. This research also analyzed the correlation between the aspect of fluency and another aspect of Quranic reading mastery in j-QAF programme. In the inferential analysis, the findings show that there is a significant correlation between the aspect of fluency and the rules of tajwid, punctuation and pronunciation. Meanwhile, there is no significant difference of the level of mastery in reading the Quran among girls and boys in all aspects; fluency, the rules of tajwid, punctuation and pronunciation. This study also propose some recommendations for the future researchers to ensure the successful implementation of the Quranic modules in the j-QAF programme in meeting its intended objectives.

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INTRODUCTION

The Quran represents Allah's universal message to humanity. It serves as the constitution for man's life, individual as well as society. It saves him from groping in the dark and leads him to light. It guides him to the right path. It takes care of all his needs. It counsels him whenever he faces a difficult situation. It reminds him of what he forgets. It helps him recognize what is right and what is wrong, and consoles him in times of frustration and depression. It introduces him to Allah, the Almighty and brings him close to his Creator. It maintains his dignity as an intellectual being. If he pushes it aside heeding not its advices, he will be charged with gross negligence of the Book on the Day of Judgment.

Such a significant Book deserves to be paid full attention to. Man can in no way afford to ignore it.

He stands in great and perennial need of knowledge and wisdom to help him get his problems solved. Allah alone is the source of perfect knowledge and wisdom. In order to have access to that source, one has to read and understand the Quran. When the Quran is able to be unraveled, it is a living event. The people in whose midst it came down first faced least problem in grasping the message of revealed words because its language was their own, its backdrop was their own and its issues were directly related to their day-to-day lives. Time elapses and getting to the original import of Allah's commands turns somewhat difficult. The more the gap of time between the revelation period of the Quran and later periods, the more difficult the understanding of the Book becomes. Muslim scholars have always risen to the occasion. They have endeavored to bridge the gap so

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as to enable man to know the will of his Lord. *Tafsir* works represent their efforts.

The Quran was brought forth by Allah to the Prophet SAW in revelation through Jibril AS. This revelation contains principles of law, civilization and guidance to mankind. The revelation brought forth by Allah in the Quran is the words of Allah and these words are protected from any changes. The Quran was miraculously revealed to the Prophet SAW to guide mankind from darkness into light and lead them to a straight path. The Prophet SAW conveyed the content of Quran to his Companions who were native Arabs until they were able to understand it.

Rasulullah SAW dictated "I am leaving you with two things that will ensure you not to go astray if you get hold of them after I am gone; Allah's Book (Quran) and my traditions (Hadith)" (Hadith narrated by Muslim, n.d.). The Quran is the most important and also the major source of Islamic law while Hadith is the second true source, followed by other reliable sources with the spirit of Quran and Hadith such as *Qiyas*, *Ijma'*, *Istihsan* and *Masalih al-Mursalah*. However, today, the appreciation of the Muslim community towards the Quran is disappointing. The Quran is used only as an instrument for competition without emphasizing their content for application in their daily lives. Indeed, there are some Muslims who had ignored the claims of the Quran. They are not confident that human development can be made any better when one makes close reference, and adheres to the Quran.

Yusuf Qardawi (1985) emphasizes that the reading and learning of the Quran are important in the life of a Muslim. The Quran is a book which must be trusted, read and learned. However, some Muslims nowadays are not very concerned in engaging themselves in Quran reading. In fact, there are some Muslims in this country who are Quran-illiterate. In tackling this problem, the Ministry of Education has taken serious steps to encourage Muslim students to learn to appreciate the Quran. This has resulted in the educational and curriculum reforms at primary and secondary school levels namely the 'New Curriculum for Primary School' (KBSR, 1983) and 'Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School' (KBSM, 1988). The Islamic education programme in KBSM is a continuity from the Islamic Education programme in KBSR. Both programmes are based on the Philosophy of Islamic Education as follows:

"Islamic Education is one continuous effort to present knowledge, Islamic skill and Islamic appreciation based on Quran and Hadith to shape one's attitude, skill, personality and worldview as slave to Allah who has the responsibility to develop oneself, one's society, environment and country towards achieving success in the world and hereafter" (Ministry of Education, 2006)

The curriculum change also involves the subject of Islamic Education. The results of reports from the

Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education Malaysia (1994) revealed that the curriculum of Islamic education needs to be re-evaluated to align it with the future and vision of the country.

In the history of the educational development in Malaysia, Quranic learning is considered as one of the most influential and earliest educational curriculum in the country. It began with the arrival of Islam to this country. Abdullah Munshi (1974) stated that there was no proper institution in Peninsular Malaya for education before the arrival of the Europeans, except that there were schools for learning the Quran. The influence of Quranic education was very strong among the Malay community then. It is proven that the English colonials were forced to include the Quranic education into the curriculum of the Malay schools in 1871 in order for the Malays to send their children to Malay schools constituted by colonialists (Wong & Tiong, 1971). However, as time passes, it is a depressing fact to find that many of the individuals who have converted to Islam are still not able to read the Quran fluently and correctly based on the correct methods of reading. The most worrying is the fact that many Muslims in Malaysia including school students, are still categorized as Quran illiterates at various age levels.

In addressing this issue, the Ministry of Education has introduced the j-QAF (*Jawi*, Quran, Arabic Language and *Fard 'Ayn* or Knowledge of Compulsory Basic Religious Duties) programme to be implemented in the national educational system. This programme is an effort implemented to strengthen the Islamic Education Curriculum through special emphasis on *Jawi* reading and writing, Quran reading, Arabic Language and the learning of some basic compulsory religious duties at the primary school level. It is implemented using its own curriculum and modules.

The j-QAF programme is a part of the *Islam Hadhari* concept introduced by the former Prime Minister Dato' Sri Haji Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to produce competent pupils in Islamic knowledge. It consists of five modules namely the *Jawi* Remedial Class Module, The *Tasmi'*1 Module, The Six-Month Completion of the Quranic Recitation Module, Arabic Module and *Bestari Solat* (Smart Prayer) Module (Nor Azza Ibrahim, 2005). The Department of Islamic and Moral Education (JAPIM), and the Ministry of Education Malaysia is entrusted to implement this programme and to ensure its success.

The former Prime Minister of Malaysia had launched this programme during his visit to the Ministry of Education Malaysia on the 30th December 2003. Consequently, the Ministry of Education Malaysia had organized campaigns on *Jawi*, Quran, Arabic Language and *Fard 'Ayn* (j-QAF) at the national level from 3rd until 5th of March 2004. The immediate objective of this

campaign was to gain the support of the society towards the implementation of this programme (MOE, 2006). After several years of its implementation, it is crucial to analyze the effectiveness of this programme in achieving one of its objectives that is to enhance the Quranic Recitation mastery among primary school students. However, this study will focus only on two modules related to Quranic recitation, namely the *Tasmi'* Module and the Six Month Completion of the Quranic Recitation Module which focused in four aspects included the fluency, the rules of tajwid, punctuation and pronunciation.

Research Problem:

Islamic Education is one of the core subjects taught in both the primary and secondary schools. The implementation of Islamic education in the National Education system is based on the recommendations contained in the Razak Report (1956), Rahman Talib Report (1960) and Education Act (1961). These statements have ruled out that Islamic education is to be taught in schools registered with the Ministry of Education if there are at least 15 Muslim students in the class, as found in the Education Act (1961), section 36 (1). In 1983, the Ministry of Education implemented the New Curriculum for Primary School (KBSR) and then continued with the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School (KBSM) in 1989. However, there are several problems that have emerged after the implementation of the KBSM (1989), as mentioned in a study by Halim Haji Haron (1996).

Weakness in the mastery of Quran reading is a phenomenon that must be dealt with and given a special attention. The phenomenon above is part of the issues of education that is very important and critical. This phenomenon has also been highlighted by Abdul Hamid (1995) who has found that more than 200, 000 Muslims in Malaysia aged between 35-45 years do not know how to read the Quran. According to him, this is caused by the biased Education Act (1961) which emphasizes more on Mathematics and Science than on the Islamic education. Moreover, in tandem with this, parents who emphasized on both of these subjects do not encourage their children to attend the Quran classes (Berita Harian, 1995).

The government has created a new system at the primary school level namely the j-QAF programme which encompasses *Jawi* lessons, Quranic recitation, Arabic Language and *Fard 'Ayn* to address this problem. In this research, the researcher conducted a case study at Sek. Keb. Dato' Demang Hussin, Malacca to examine the Quranic reading mastery in the j-QAF programme. It focuses on two modules namely the practical Quranic recitation module and six-month completion of the Quranic recitation module based on the four aspects of Quranic reading mastery through the j-QAF programme, which are:

fluency, mastery in *tajwid* rules, recognizing Quranic reading symbols and articulating each alphabet with the correct pronunciation. And then, it focused on relationship between the four aspects in reading the Quran.

Research Objectives:

The purpose of this research is to identify the relationship between the aspect of fluency and other aspects of Quranic reading mastery in j-QAF programme at Sek. Keb. Dato' Demang Hussin, Malacca.

Research Questions:

How long the relationship between the aspect of fluency and other aspects of Quranic reading mastery in j-QAF programme

Methodology:

Sampling of Research:

For the purpose of sampling, Gall, Gall & Borg (2005) have asserted that it does not necessarily have to be that all the members in a population are used as sample, if the selected ones can adequately reflect the issue at hand and the phenomenon that the population has to face. Meanwhile Othman (2001) has explained that the most important thing in ascertaining the sample size would be the fact that the sample can well represent the population being studied and the design chosen.

With reference to this study, the researcher had used the simple random sampling as the population studied had uniformed characteristics. The adoption of this type of sampling is based on the view of Mohd Majid Konting (2005) who stated that the simple random sampling serves as the process of taking or using the sample when every individual in the sampling has an equal chance to be chosen. According to him, the simple random sampling is the most fundamental sampling and has thrived to be the basis to other sampling designs. The simple random sampling ensures that every individual has an equal chance to be taken or used to represent the population. This indicates that other sampling forms must be done based on the simple random sampling.

As for the determination of the sample size in this research, the total number of Primary Six pupils in this school is 211 pupils in 5 classes, where each class consists between 35 to 45 pupils. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size, for a given population of 211, a sample size of 136 is needed to represent a cross-section of the population. Thus, the researcher has selected 136 Primary Six pupils with heterogenous ability who have finished the j-QAF syllabus as sample in this study. The 136 pupils represented all 5 classes and in each class, a total of 27 to 28 pupils were selected randomly. Therefore, the researcher is confident that the sampling size of the 136 selected pupils is

suitable for this study as the number tallies with the size proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

Instrument of Research:

This research begins by obtaining resources from libraries to get the primary and secondary information including previous researches related to the subject matter. This involves getting information from printed materials such as dissertations, books, research reports, journal articles, magazines and newspapers. Documents and articles from the Department of Islamic and Moral Education (JAPIM) and Division of Islamic Education (BPI), Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) either through printed materials or websites are also consulted.

The researcher has conducted Quranic reading test to selected Primary Six pupils at Sek. Keb. Dato' Demang Hussin, Malacca. This school has five classes of Primary Six with 30 to 40 pupils per class. Respondents selected for this test consist of 136 boys and girls selected from Primary Six classes involved in the j-QAF programme. The respondents were selected randomly, and they involved both genders. The test was conducted ex-post facto on 20 October 2010 (Wednesday) until 8 November 2010 (Monday) after the Primary Six pupils had finished their "Primary School Assessment Test" (UPSR) examination for 14 days for two consecutive weeks. This test was conducted at the end of 2010 to determine whether the pupils are able to complete the Quranic reading syllabus following the models of j-QAF or not. Besides, the researcher had decided to use this time so that the pupils can spend their time involving in meaningful, educational activities through the reading test.

The procedure of carrying out this test at the school started with a written request to the Headmistress to use the teaching and learning time for the said purpose. As the Headmistress had given her approval, the researcher was suggested to refer to the j-QAF teachers. The researcher conducted this test during the Quranic lesson periods, where the j-QAF teachers had given the permission to the researcher to handle the classes for the whole period. This study is aimed to evaluate the level of Quranic reading mastery among the pupils which encompasses four levels namely the Quranic reading fluency, mastery of tajwid rule, mastery in recognizing Quran reading symbols which are found in *Rasm 'Uthmani* and articulating each alphabet with the correct pronunciation.

This test required the respondents to read a few verses of the Quran which comprised the chapters of *Al-Baqarah* verse 126, *Al-Isra'* verses 80 to 81 and *Nuh* verses 27 to 28. These verses were selected because they contain the four aspects of Quranic reading that are to be tested. This test was recorded by the researcher and the recording was later handed to an expert in Quranic reading. The expert is Ustaz

Jamil bin Yusof who teaches Quran skills classes (KKQ) at Sek. Men. Keb. Tun Perak, Jasin, Malacca. Besides that, the evaluation given by the researcher was also verified by the expert. The evaluation is segregated into four aspects and the total scores of the pupils are categorized as Good (A), Average (B) and Weak (C) based on their performance.

Data Analysis Methods:

This research used the inferential analysis to identified the correlation between the aspect of fluency with the rules of *tajwid*, punctuation and pronunciation. It is also used to identify the level of reading of the Quran between male and female in aspects of fluency, rules of *tajwid*, punctuation and pronunciation. The Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) used to get the frequency and mean on the Quranic reading between male and female based on the aspects of fluency, rules of *tajwid*, punctuation and pronunciation.

Finding of Research:

The finding shows the relationship between the aspects of fluency and the rules of *tajwid* in reading the Quran. The *r* or correlation value is 0.981, indicating that there is a very strong correlation between the aspects of fluency and the rules of *tajwid* in reading the Quran. The SPSS output showed that the significant value is 0.000 since the significant value observed is less than 0.01. At this point, it is noted that there is a significant correlation between the aspects of fluency and the rules of *tajwid* in reading the Quran.

Meanwhile, the *r* or correlation value between the aspects of fluency and punctuation in reading the Quran is 0.962 which indicates that there is a very strong correlation between the aspects of fluency and punctuation in reading the Quran. The SPSS output shows that the significant value is 0.000 since the significant value observed is less than 0.01. Thus, there is a significant correlation between aspects of fluency and punctuation in reading the Quran.

Besides, the *r* or correlation value between the aspects of fluency and pronunciation in reading the Quran is 0.960 which indicates that there is a very strong correlation between the aspects of fluency and pronunciation in reading the Quran. The SPSS output shows that the significant value is 0.000 since the observed significant value is less than 0.01. Thus, there is a significant correlation between the aspects of fluency and pronunciation in reading the Quran.

Next, the inferential statistics is used to identify the level of reading of the Quran between male and female. The table below showed the distribution of frequency and mean on the Quranic reading between male and female based on the aspects of fluency, rules of *tajwid*, punctuation and pronunciation. The findings of this study also used to identify whether there is a correlation between gender with the level of Quranic reading mastery. The analysis of the

findings related to this correlation can be seen in Table 1.1 as follows:

The significant value on the aspect of fluency is 0.11, which indicates that the significant value is more than 0.05. Also, the significant value on the aspects of the rules of *tajwid* with 0.12, punctuation with 0.14 and pronunciation with 0.10 is similarly

noted. Thus, there is no significant difference between genders of pupils on the aspects of fluency, rules of *tajwid*, punctuation and pronunciation. These findings indicate there is no significant difference between the gender of the pupils with the level of the Quranic reading in all aspects.

Table 1.1: Distribution of Mean Based on Gender on Every Aspects.

Aspects	Gender	Frequency	Mean	Overall Mean	S. Deviation	Overall S. Deviation	p
Fluency	Male	66	24.29	25.63	13.27	12.88	0.11
	Female	70	26.90		12.47		
Rules of <i>Tajwid</i>	Male	66	22.09	23.44	12.41	12.08	0.12
	Female	70	24.71		11.71		
Punctuation	Male	66	5.76	6.07	3.35	3.26	0.14
	Female	70	6.37		3.17		
Pronunciation	Male	66	5.77	6.03	3.36	3.20	0.10
	Female	70	6.27		3.06		

Discussion:

Based on the reading test conducted, 64% of pupils can read the Quran fluently while 27.9% are found to be weak in reading the Quran. This result indicates that the level of pupils' achievement in reading the Quran is at the average level with the mean of 25.63. It also shows that most pupils have not mastered their Quranic reading properly while in primary school, especially in the case of fluency. This finding is different from the information obtained from the teachers who stated that most of the pupils had less problem from the aspect of fluency. This finding is consistent with the findings of Farehan (2000), Raihan (2000), Mohamad Sabri (2001) and Mohd Aderi (2004) that show that the level of Quranic reading mastery among secondary school pupils are still at the average and low levels. Similarly, Mahyuddin Ghazali (1988) also pointed out that many pupils have completed Primary Six but still could not read the Quran fluently. This situation represents a challenge to Islamic Education teachers to improve pupils' reading skills towards better mastery of the Quran.

The findings indicate that most pupils are weak in *tajwid* rules, even though they can read the Quran. Based on the findings from the reading test conducted, it is found that as many as 52.2% of pupils have good mastery in the rules of *tajwid* while 30.1% of them fall at the other end of the continuum. This finding is also supported by the teachers who mentioned that most pupils are weak in the rules of *tajwid* more than other aspects of Quranic reading. Some pupils are not familiar with the correct rules of *tajwid* such as the rules of "Nun Sakinah", "Mim Sakinah", "Nun Syiddah" and "Mim Syiddah". The study also proves that some pupils still demonstrate a low level of proficiency in reading the Quran. They cannot read well, cannot articulate correctly and do not even know the rules of *tajwid*. This is also supported by Mohamad Naim Mat Salleh (2003) who found that only 8% out of 119 people

who can read the Quran have the literacy of *tajwid* or can master the basic rules of *tajwid*.

The findings from the reading test further show that some pupils are still weak in the aspect of punctuation, as highlighted by 30.9% of the respondents, while 47.8% have successfully achieved Grade A. This finding is supported by the statement from the teacher that indicates that many pupils tend to score well in the aspect of punctuation. Findings from the pupils' interview indicate that most pupils have problems in the sign of "Sukun" and the sign of "Shiddah" especially when they are connected with other letters. However, there are a few pupils who have problems in other punctuations namely "Tanwin" and "Dammah".

The finding from the test shows that a total 45.6% respondents have performed very well in the pronunciation aspect, while 29.4% of them are still weak in this aspect. Specifically, articulation is evaluated based on 5 groups of letters. The first group is the difference in sound between the letters (ت) and (ط), while the second is the sound difference between the letters (ث), (س), (ش) and (ص). The third group is the sound difference between the sounds of (ح), (خ) and (ه), (ع) and (ه), while the fourth group is the difference between the sounds of (د) and (ذ), (ك) and (ق). The last group is the fifth group denoting the difference between the letters (ذ), (ز) and (ظ). This finding is in line with the views of the teachers who stated that pupils have less problems in pronouncing the letters properly.

This finding shows that pupils who received grade A are pupils who can read the Quran smoothly and fluently and those who followed the rules of *tajwid*. Meanwhile, pupils who received grade B are pupils who can read the Quran fluently but did not follow the rules of *tajwid*. However, pupils who have obtained grade C cannot read the Quran fluently and did not follow the rules of *tajwid*.

In the four aspects, the mean of the fluency aspects is 25.63 and the standard deviation is 12.88. Meanwhile, the mean value of the aspect of the rules

of *tajwid* is 23.44 and the standard deviation on the other hand is 12.08. The mean of the punctuation aspect is 6.07 and the standard deviation is 3.26 while the mean of the pronunciation aspect is 6.03 and the standard deviation is 3.20. The overall mean of the level of the Quranic reading mastery is 61.18 and the standard deviation is 31.13.

Meanwhile, the findings show that is a significant correlation between the aspect of fluency and the rules of *tajwid*, punctuation and pronunciation based on inferential analysis. There is no significant difference of the level of mastery in reading the Quran among girls and boys in all aspects; fluency, the rules of *tajwid*, punctuation and pronunciation.

Summary:

Based on the analysis of the findings, it can be concluded that the mean level of the Quranic reading mastery of 136 pupils in Sek. Keb. Dato' Demang Hussin, Malacca in general lies at an average level with the mean of 61.18. The results of the study also conclude that the findings following the Quranic reading mastery among pupils in all aspects such as fluency, the rules of *tajwid*, punctuation and pronunciation is at average level because the mean of all aspects is between good and weak levels only. In the inferential analysis, the findings show that is a significant correlation between the aspect of fluency and the rules of *tajwid*, fluency and punctuation, fluency and pronunciation. Meanwhile, there is no significant difference of the level of mastery in reading the Quran among girls and boys in all aspects; fluency, the rules of *tajwid*, punctuation and pronunciation.

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