

Research Article:

Linking Study of Memorising Quran with Academic Performance

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ABSTRACT

The Quran is a source of knowledge for mankind given to Prophet Muhammad as a guidance by Allah the Almighty. Memorising the Quran began by Prophet Muhammad, his companions and continued by scholars who are experts in their field. This is conducted to preserve the accuracy of the contents of the sacred source of Islamic teaching. This study aims to identify the effect of the memorisation of the Quran (hereafter referred as *hifz al-Quran*) achievement on the academic performance of secondary school students. The sample of the study consist of 83 students of a *maahad tahfiz* school in Pahang. Their performance in memorising the Quran and academic was recorded and analysed using descriptive statistics, coefficient of variation, correlation, and regression analysis. The finding shows the distribution in academic performance is equally consistent as compared to memorising the Quran based on the result of value coefficient of variation. The results also show that there is a significant positive relationship between students' *hifz* performance and academic performance which can be initially presumed that the students who excel in memorising Quran are more likely to excel in their academic field. Analysis of regression indicated that memorising the Quran has significant effect on academic performance where for every one marks of increase in memorising the Quran, the marks for academic performance also increase by 0.58. There are 22% of total variation in academic performance of student influenced by memorising the Quran. Therefore, the study serves a beautiful insight hidden on the effect of the Quran to academic performance. The Quran memorising culture should be therefore instilled for the development of the Muslim identity, values and the development of Islam in general.

Keywords: Academic, *hifz* Quran, performance, student

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INTRODUCTION

The landscape of Malaysian education system has undergone a paradigm shift to empower spiritual and religious practices for achieving a potential sustainable learning strategy. It was evident by rapid growth in the number of public schools running its standard national academic curriculums in parallel with a comprehensive memorisation of the Quran (hereafter referred as *hifz al-Quran*) module. The acceptance of the *hifz* of the Quran module to be embedded in national education design particularly in the public secondary schools have been realised after witnessing an impressive and consistent results in both academic and *hifz* performance by students in Imtiyaz's model schools (Haron et al., 2020). In fact, over the years, Muslim parents have indicated high interest to enroll their children in private *Tahfiz centres* (Abdullah & Maksom, 2016; Muhammad, 2017) for learning the Quran better and become a hafiz (a person that can memorise and recite the whole Quran). Others believe that their children need to be spiritually strong to be successful in their life and hereafter; thus, there is need for the government to enhance public schools with comprehensive spiritual learning contents. Recent update on the progress indicates that a policy on Dasar Pendidikan Tahfiz Negara (DPTN) is in the pipeline, by which the implementation will be carefully outlined and tailored to meet current needs of students and parents (www.utusan.com.my).

The *hifz* of the Quran module addresses the capability of students in memorising all 114 chapters in the Quran within a stipulated period. The process begins by learning the Quran by heart, followed by memorising efforts and to the extent that they are capable to write the whole Quran without error (Taiwo, 2014 as cited in Bani et al., 2014). The extend on learning and memorising of the Quran is expected to enhance memory function as the activities involve brain exercises such as elaboration, visual imagery of the words, self-referent encoding of the Quran text and many more as prescribed in Nawaz and Jahangir (2015). Besides, a study by Roche et al. (2009) indicates that the practice of rote learning through a sequence of words repetition enhances the performance of the memory as this process facilitates the brain function (Yusuf & Yusof, 2016). Similarly, the memorisation of the Quran or known as *hifz*, is perceived to have indirect effect on cognitive ability, which is important to help in the learning process of other subjects (Yusuf & Yusof, 2016).

The research objective of this study aims to establish an empirical connection between the memorisation of the Quran with the students' performance in academic achievement based on current observation from the trend and scientific supports from the literature. Although many studies have been conducted to identify some probable contributing factors towards the students' academic performance such as learning environment, teachers' methods and more, the study of the effect of Quran memorisation is scarce and lack conclusive direction. The perceptions of parents and education stakeholders on the strong influence of *hifz* study on the academic success must be therefore empirically researched for an informed policy and methods. Given that the scarcity in research and its value-relevant, the main objective of the study is to correlate the variables namely the students' *hifz* performance and their academic performance for a conclusive direction of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Memorisation of the Quran commenced from the day the first verse received by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from Allah SWT the Almighty through Jibrail AS. The verses were then taught to the companion which is then followed by the tradition of memorising. Initially, memorising the verses from Al-Quran is a way to preserve the accuracy of the contents of the sacred source of Islamic teaching. However, nowadays memorising Al-Quran goes far beyond its original cause.

There are several studies conducted to demonstrate the benefits that relates the effect of memorising Quran to various aspects of life. For example, Nawaz and Jahangir (2015) conducted a research to ascertain the impact of the early exposure on memorising Quran on the achievement of the students later in their academic performance and socio-cultural aspect. Purposive sampling technique and exploratory survey research methods were adopted in the investigation. The result shows a significant improvement in both aspects for the *huffaz (memoriser)*. However, as a small sample size of 36 participants was employed, there is a tendency that the result cannot be generalized for a broader spectrum. Moreover, a study by Sulaiman et al. (2012) involving two junior science college had adopted a different method for their investigation. Two schools were selected with one school as a control group and the other school as the experimental group. The control group offers the same subject except memorising Quran. Comparing the result of both schools in academic achievement, the performance of the students who had taken up the memorisation of the Quran as part of the learning curricular performed better in all subjects. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between memorising the Quran and the students' overall academic performance.

Studies reviewed above did not study on the number of chapters or specific chapters memorised by the samples of the study. The focus was on the process of memorising the Quran as part of the students' learning curricular activities. Arrasyida (2014) investigated on the effect of memorising juz' 'amma (the 30th juz' of the Quran) (Juz 30 of the Quran) on the students' achievement in Islamic Religious Knowledge subject in the primary school. This is done with the assumption that early childhood is the best time sharpen the students' memory with positive element for later development in their life. It was found that 16% variation of a student's performance is contributed by memorising one chapter of Quran which is *juz' amma*.

As stated in Bloom taxonomy (The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2014), memorisation is one of the most fundamental cognitive skill needed by students. Thus, during learning session, memory plays an important role. In relation to this, the study by in ref Slamet (2019) found a strong support that memorising the Quran had significantly improved the cognitive intelligence among children. Similar finding by Klemm (2007) had proven that good memory expands the repertoire of cognitive capabilities upon which new understandings can be developed and expedited by using a good memorising technique that encourages students to think better by making association between the newly acquired lesson and existing knowledge.

Apart from memorising the verses from the Quran which influences academic performance, there were also other learning activities associated with Quran, which if combined will

yield positive outcome. Al-Attas (2011) found significant relationship between religiosity “memorising the Qurán” and a sharp healthy memory. This study compares the performance in tests for both groups, namely religious and non-religious. There is a significant difference in the performance between two groups; and the students in religious group had more “A”s compared to non-religious group. On the other hand, Hashim (2015) conducted a study on 212 students of diploma of Tahfiz Darul Quran JAKIM, Selangor, on the specific strategy employed and their performance in memorising the Quran. This study shows a strong relationship between strategies adopted and the achievement in memorising Quran.

Due to the strong impact of memorising power, Yusuf (2010) also stated that memorising may become a learning style that can be accommodated into daily learning activities. However, memorising the Quran was not mentioned specifically as the medium by which the memorising exercises were conducted. The findings mentioned the positive relationship between academic achievement and the adopted memorisation as learning style among the students. However, based on studies conducted previously, there is a strong indication that brain memory enhancement may be developed via learning to memorise Quran. Thus, there is a probability of using Quran memorisation as an exercise to enhance brain memory retention. Moreover, listening to the recital of the Quran for 15 minutes a day also showed improvement in students’ memory (Hojjati et al., 2014) and to some extent, contributes to superior brain health (Rahman et al., 2020) which could explain the impact on academic achievement.

A study by al-Mighamsi (2004) found that memorisation of the Quran helps to improve the achievement of university students by instilling the desire to learn, enhancing the development of cognitive skills such as conceptualising, remembering, measuring, evaluating, thinking, reading skills and writing, improving vocabulary, and expanding general knowledge amongst students. As stated by Hafiz et al. (2016), majority of the students have outstanding academic record, which produces significant impact on memorising the Quran. The positive achievement is obtained as a result of students’ perseverance, determination and sincerity in gaining knowledge and memorising the Quran.

Besides the above discussion, there are also studies conducted identify the effect of memorising Quranic verses across different age groups. Slamet (2019) investigated the effect of memorising the Quran on the cognitive intelligence development among a group of kindergarten children. He concluded that memorising the Quran results an improvement in the scores up to 15.63% on the children’s cognitive intelligence. This is also supported by study by Hashim and Samsudin (2019) where the focus is on higher order cognitive intelligence branch namely critical thinking and its positive relationship with the tahfiz students. A study conducted specifically to measure the multiple intelligent (MI) among *huffaz’s* was carried out by Rahim et al. (2017) aimed on validating the *huffaz’s* intelligence via a psychometric instrument called Huffaz Intelligence Test. The finding suggested that all the *huffaz’s* exhibited the MI, though it varies from one hafiz to another.

Most of the studies have been conducted mainly on Eastern part of the world where most of the populations are Muslim. Therefore, the comparisons between the idea of Western versus Islamic teaching is minimised if not insignificant. However, Berglund and Gent (2018) conducted a study to investigate the effect of Islamic tradition learning which included Quran memorisation to the mainstream schooling learning method involving 27

British Muslim children. The findings supported that memorising the Quran and focus are two positive skills that can be employed in a mainstream school system.

On the other hand, Saquib et al. (2017) examined the association between Quran memorisation and health among older men. In his study, which consists of male participants aged 55 years old and above with or without multiple health history in diabetic, hypertension, and depression. As opposed to Slamet (2019) whose sample study only involved 10 children from the kindergarten, Saquib et al. (2017) used a larger sample size which is 400 male participants from the city. Regardless of their sample size, both studies presented positive effect on the children’s cognitive intelligence and elderly men’s health. Furthermore, the study by Saquib et al. (2017) highlighted that as the portion of the Quran memorised increases, the less likely the participant to have one of these chronic diseases. Taking all the findings into consideration on the part of the number of portions of Quran memorisation and the effect on the participant, this paper is conducted to identify the significant effect of the total number of surah in Quran memorised on the achievement in the high school level examinations among students.

METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted to associate the hifz performance and academic performance of students from maa’had tahfiz in Pahang. Therefore, the secondary data of 83 students were randomly chosen from the students’ school administration in the selected two schools as a case study. The performance of hifz of the Quran is measured by the level of memorisation of the Quran at the end of form five. Students who completed the memorisation of the Quran (*khatam*) scored 30 marks while additional 10 marks were given for those sitting for Syahadah examination. Besides, the academic performance was measured by the result of Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or the Malaysian Certificate of Education. The students were enrolled for 11 subjects for this examination. Scores for each student were calculated by multiplying grade and the value of the grade based on SPM grade system. For example, student who scored 11 A+ is equivalent to 44 marks. The data for both variables were recorded for the previous year and analysed using descriptive, coefficient of variation, correlation, and regression analysis.

RESULTS

This study consists of 50 male and 33 female students. The descriptive, coefficient of variation, independent *t*-test, correlation and regression analysis are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and coefficient of variation

	Memorising Quran	Academic performance
Mean	29.77	37.15
Standard deviation	3.37	4.19
Skewness	-1.92	-0.42
Coefficient of variation	11.32%	11.28%

Table 1 shows the descriptive analysis and coefficient of variation of the study. Mean marks for hifz Quran among 83 students are excellent (29.77) from the total marks of 40 and small standard deviation (3.37) marks. All students successfully memorised the Quran which consists of 30 *juz'* (parts), in less than five years. The mean of SPM's academic performance is also very good (37.15) from the total marks of 44 and small standard deviation (4.19) marks. All the data were approximate to be normally distributed with the value of ± 2 . Thus, these two performances can be explained more meaningfully by using coefficient of variation analysis. The distribution of performance academic performance is more consistent compared to memorising the Quran since the value coefficient of variation for performance academic performance is less than memorising the Quran.

Table 2. Independent *t* test between gender

Variable	Gender	<i>N</i>	Mean	SD	Mean diff.	<i>t</i> -test	<i>p</i> -value
Memorising Quran	M	50	29.11	4.05	1.64	1.92	0.028*
	F	33	30.76	1.51			
Academic performance	M	50	36.51	4.68	1.63	1.76	0.082
	F	33	38.14	3.12			

Notes: F = female, M = male, SD = standard deviation, diff. = difference.* significant at the 0.05 level.

Based on Table 2, the average marks of memorising the Quran for male students is 29.11 while the average marks for female students is 30.76. Standard deviation for male is 4.05 which shows the distribution of marks larger than standard deviation for female (1.51). Female students with on average of 1.64 marks higher than male students where indicates that there is a significant difference Memorising the Quran between male and female students. The test shows the difference in the marks with statistically significant *t*-value = 1.92, $p < 0.05$. Besides that, academic performance between male and female students do not indicate any significant different and is equally excellent.

Table 3. Correlation analysis between memorising Quran and academic performance

Statistics	
Pearson correlation	0.47*
<i>N</i>	83
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00*

Note: *correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4. Regression analysis between memorising Quran and academic performance

	Estimates	<i>t</i>	Sig.
(constant)	19.76	5.407	0.00*
Memorising Quran	0.58	4.789	0.00*

Notes: Model fit: $R = 0.47$, $R^2 = 0.22$, F -value = 22.94; * significant at the 0.05 level.

Correlation analysis study between hifz of the Quran and academic performance of students shows significant positive relationship (p -value < 0.05). It shows that hifz of the Quran gives significant impact on the academic performance. Students who excel in hifz Quran will also excel in academic. The relationship between performance is moderately strong (0.47) refer to Table 3, and significant relationship shows hifz of the Quran is possible to be one of the significant factors contributed to academic performance. As a step ahead, regression analysis in Table 4 shows that overall model fit with F -statistics value 22.94 valid at the significance level of 0.05. Twenty-two percent of total variation in academic performance of student is influenced by Memorising the Quran as shown by the R -squared value. The regression model indicates, for every 1-mark increase for Memorising the Quran, the marks for academic performance also will increase by 0.58.

DISCUSSION

Quran is the *Kalamullah* (the word of Allah), which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to bring prosperity to his people in this world and in the hereafter. There are many advantages for people who read the Quran. Similarly, for those who memorise the Quran, Allah will give rewards in this world and in the hereafter. Overall, the result for this study indicated that the consistency of performance by these students are equally excellent not only in Memorising the Quran but also in their academic performance. This result is in tandem with Hafiz et al. (2016) whereby the study indicates that most of students have outstanding academic achievement not only in Memorising the Quran but also in their academic performance. For example, the practice of Quran memorisation had significantly improved performance in sustaining English vocabulary retention (Mohammad, 2019), critical thinking and language proficiencies (Abdul Rashid et al., 2020) as well as mathematics performance (Rosdiana & Ikrimah, 2020; Faiziyah, 2018). Further, it is well supported in the hadith stating that Qur'an promises goodness.

The best of you are those who study the Qur'an and those who teach it
(Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

The result also found that there is a significant difference in memorising Quran between male and female. This difference is significant as a study found that the rate of compliance with the system applied among female students is higher than male students (Hashim et al., 2014). Findings of Hashim et al. (2014) show that *tahfiz* learning etiquettes, methods and strategies performed by female students are more effective than male students. Commitment is a factor where female students perform better in comparison to male students in the field of memorisation which is often dominated by men.

The significant positive relationship between hifz of the Quran and academic performance is parallel with previous studies (Novebri & Dewi, 2020; Nawaz & Jahangir, 2015; Sulaiman et al., 2012; al-Attas, 2011; Arrasyida, 2014). The findings of this study also support the study conducted by al-Mighamsi (2004) on the effect of Memorising the Quran and on

achievement of students at university level where students' achievement on memorising the Quran is excellent comparatively. The results of a study conducted by Fauzan and Mohamad (2017) on Bachelor of Quranic and Sunnah Studies' at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Negeri Sembilan, found that memorising the Quran has a positive impact on students' academic excellence. At the school level, the impact of Memorising the Quran on academic achievement is evidenced by the excellence achieved by students at Maahad Integrasi Tahfiz Sains (MITS) and the Ulul Albab education system, that has been introduced at the MARA Junior Science College (MRSM), which offers an integrated curriculum academic subjects and memorisation of the Quran (Yahaya, 2016). Thus, the memoriser of the Quran has an amazing memory potential for the needs of life, as well as creative and critical thinking. Thus, the ability to master various fields of knowledge brilliantly, as stated in the hadith that the memoriser of the Quran gets a multiplied bonus.

Whoever reads one letter from the Book of Allah (the Quran) then for him (the reader) with it (the Quran) the reward and the reward are doubled ten as it is. I did not say that alif laam mim is one letter but alif one letter, lam one letter and mim is one letter. (Narrated by Tarmizi)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is a significant positive relationship between hifz Quran and academic performance. Students who excel in hifz Quran will also excel in academic performance. It shows that hifz Quran is one of the most significant factors to academic performance. hifz of the Quran could enhance the cognitive skill of the memoriser that would lead to more effective learning process in academic courses. Even if the student attends to less contact hours during academic course, they are able to produce excellent academic performance. It is suggested that future studies to examine the factors contributing to the academic performance such as learning method, the facilities provided, the number of teachers, and teachers' experiences, family education and background. Therefore, the culture of hifz Quran should be seriously considered to be implemented in all schools throughout Malaysia to cultivate a young generation that is spiritually and intellectually strong. Thus, as suggested by al-Mighamsi (2004), teaching, reading, memorisation and a deep study of the Quran should be extended to all faculties in university to have the positive benefit effects of hifz Quran.

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