

The Student's Perception on Science of Qur'an Course: A Comparative Study between Islamic Public Universities

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Abstract: This study focuses on student's perception on Science of Qur'an course in two Islamic Public Universities in Malaysia. There are Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) and International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) amongst the students of Islamic studies. The main objectives of this study are to identify the student's perception on Science of Qur'an course, student's perception on the Science of Qur'an's course outline, the reference book or syllabus that are used in the class as well as student's prospect towards Science of Qur'an course. The findings indicated positive perception amongst the students on Science of Qur'an course as it is easy to understand, the course outline that set up by faculty is appropriate as well as most of them strongly agree that this course should be continued in the future. However, students have some problems as do not have sufficient time given for them to spend on the course outline and the reference books or syllabus that are used in class do not have adequate information to refer to. As a result, some students suggested the faculty to use bilingual reference books or syllabus in class. This study highlighted the importance of Science of Qur'an to be learnt since at the young age towards better improvement.

Key words: Reference book, syllabus, prospect, outline, appropriate

INTRODUCTION

The Holy Qur'an is the greatest miracle of Prophet Muhammad. The Holy Qur'an is the highest book of virtues and values that is revealed in Arabic language and has rich and meaningful messages for humankind. Although, The Holy Qur'an is in Arabic language, it does not mean that all Arabs or people who are proficient in Arabic, can understand that book in details. In order to understand the teachings of Islam comprehensively, it takes an understanding of the Qur'an thoroughly and practice it in everyday life accordingly and consistently.

As a result, Science of Qur'an has a very important role as a gateway for humankind to understand the Holy Qur'an better. Science of Qur'an is an access for humankind to study the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an that enables them to understand, explain or interpret the comprehensive content, respectively. It is vital for Muslims to understand as then to put it into practice of the teachings in the Holy Qur'an to strengthen their

foundation of faith. However, it is ironic that there are many Muslims who are still not able to read or recite Qur'an or even study and review the Holy Qur'an appropriately. Muslims in Malaysia are no exception in experiencing this problem. Hence, it is crucial for Muslims to be encouraged to return to the Holy Qur'an in a strategic manner. In order to do so, Science of Qur'an is a medium that would assist people to study and refer to the Holy Qur'an as a source of knowledge accordingly in life.

Literature review: A study on science of Qur'an is essential to allow a person to comprehend and reflect what it is in the Holy Qur'an, accordingly. There are numbers of book discusses on this area. For instance, according to Rosmawati, Science of Qur'an is an important area to allow a person to understand and explain or interpret what occur in the Holy Qur'an by itself as of the meaning of the Holy Qur'an, the method of collecting the Holy Qur'an and composition of the verse in the Holy Qur'an (Rosmawati, 2010).

This depicts that by exploring the Holy Qur'an, an individual could perceive Islam better. It is proposed to use, *Al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Qur'an* by Suyuti (1999) as this book is used as the reference book by International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) students for their Science of Qur'an course. Furthermore, this book is also used as the main reference for majority of people who are studying this course. Therefore, this could be an appropriate approach of acquire more knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, respectively.

Meanwhile, Kalhsun (2010), found out that it is effective to learn Islamic studies by having Al-Qur'an laboratory in order for students to gain knowledge. Furthermore, Shukri suggested that by using Ulum Al-Qur'an apps, it is an interactive and innovative way of learning Al-Qur'an towards teaching and learning process by using android application (Shukri, 2015). This indicates that there are many initiatives and medium that can be used in order to retrieve the valuable knowledge in accessible way as to encourage and inculcate people to learn the Holy Qur'an.

On top of that as to instill learning the Holy Quran from the early age, Zatil did a study on Qur'an competency level among students in schools as how effective the syllabus used by the teachers within learning and teaching in class in order to help the weak students in Qur'an. Apart from that this study also aimed to know problems faced by pupils during Qur'an learning's period (Amani, 2010). This is crucial in solving and proposing recommendation or actions to be taken in encouraging students to learn the Holy Qur'an especially at early age.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology used for this research can be described fundamentally as a mixed method approach whereby quantitative and qualitative methods are used. The researcher's main means of data collection was through historical methods to compare the perception amongst the students at different universities.

Then, the data were processed and analyzed by using Inductive Method as this method is a tool to analyze data by reasoning. This process demands the acquisition of evidence from simple details to general facts and patterns. In addition, this study also processed and analyzed the data by comparative method. This method commonly used to summarize or conclude two or more theories by comparing each of both. It is imperative for the complete data and facts to be collected before any comparison are made.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total numbers of respondents were 100 people; 50 respondents (50%) were students from Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) while another 50 respondents (50%) were from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) students.

Part A (student's background): Most of the respondents are amongst female students whereby; there are only 7 male students and 43 female students from USIM. Meantime, there are only 12 male students and 38 female students from IIUM; with the total of 19 male students and 81 female students as the respondents. It is noticed that most of the respondents were educated from National Religious Secondary Schools in which 68% of USIM students and 54% of IIUM students. This is significant as the knowledge level of Islamic doctrine is an important component of the Islamic education subject since in Malaysia's secondary school (Aderi and Yunus, 2012).

There were the same numbers of students of USIM and IIUM with 25 respondents who are moderate at their knowledge level of Qur'an. Furthermore, there were the same numbers of students as well of USIM and IIUM with 26 respondents who are very interested to learn Science of Qur'an course. This is vital as teaching and learning of religious subject since schools level need to reach the expected level with appropriate guidance (Noh *et al.*, 2013) as in order to instill the interest among students from young age.

In Malaysia, the easiest place to gain and study about religious is the mosque. Most of students found that the secondary school is the best place to study Science of Qur'an as the course include in the curricular syllabus. In this study, it showed that many respondents as 26 of USIM respondents and 20 of IIUM respondents obtained their exposure on Science of Qur'an since secondary school. Besides that in the Islamic culture, mosque, is considered as one of the place to seek and acquire Islamic knowledge as well. As such, due to large Muslim population, Malaysia has built numerous mosques dispersed all over urban and rural areas (Najafi and Kamal, 2014).

Part B (student's perception on science of Qur'an course): Science of Qur'an denotes studies of revelations sent down upon the last Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that contains 'clear' and the 'unclear' verses. In order to retrieve the valuable knowledge in accessible way, an individual needs to explore Science of Qur'an to learn the Holy Qur'an comprehensively. In this study, it is found

out that there were 13 of USIM respondents were not sure but still 21 of USIM respondents agree on Science of Qur'an course is easy to understand. While 8 of IIUM respondents were not sure and 25 of IIUM respondents agree upon it. Yet, it showed that 46% of the respondents agree on Science of Qur'an course is easy to understand.

The Holy Qur'an is the ultimate source of Islamic knowledge is the divine guidance, the word of God (Waseem, 2013). This course is actually the key to get to know Islam better. The study discovered that 27 of USIM respondents strongly agree on that could gain more knowledge when they learning this course while only 19 of IIUM respondents strongly agree as well. So, 46% of respondents strongly agree gain more knowledge when they learning this course appropriately.

Nevertheless, 23 of USIM and 24 of IIUM respondents agree that this course helped them to relate between the course content with the current issues. It showed that only 3% of the respondents disagree about the contents related to the current issues. It enables the student of knowledge to better understand the Holy Qur'an as could familiar with the history of its revelation, stages of collection and the various aspects that aid its comprehension (Slamet, 2016).

Part C (student's perception on science of Qur'an course outline): A course outline should be tailored accordingly as students could keep on track of their learning session. There were 16 of USIM and 18 of IIUM respondents strongly agree that the Science of Qur'an course outline could be understood as 45% of respondents agree they can follow and understand the contents of the syllabus. However, 16 of USIM respondents were not sure while 9 of IIUM respondents were not sure as well on the time given for them to spend on the framework set of the course. On the other hand, 24 of USIM respondents agree and 23 of IIUM respondents agree on the course outline that has been set by the university faculties; as it is organized and systematic. It depicted that 47% of respondents agree the course set by the university faculties are in accordance respectively towards the needs of the course objectivity.

Part D (student's perception on the reference books or syllabus used in class): In learning session, book plays its significant role as a reference for students to refer to. Textbook is used to help students gain their knowledge and to develop their skills (Sufian *et al.*, 2004). There were 15 of USIM respondents strongly agree and 17 of IIUM respondents strongly agree that they gained a lot of knowledge by using the reference book or syllabus

provided. It showed that 50% of respondents agree they gained a lot of knowledge by using reference book or syllabus used in class.

Meanwhile, there were 23 of USIM respondents agree and 21 of USIM respondents agree that the terms used in reference book or syllabus used in class is understandable. It denoted that 44% of respondents agree the terms used in reference book/syllabus understandable. On top of that it is found out that there were the same numbers of students from USIM and IIUM with 11 of respondents, who strongly agree on the reference book or syllabus used is ideal with the important points and the description of their lesson.

Nevertheless, it is noted that 21 of USIM respondents and 13 of IIUM respondents were not sure of the reference book or syllabus as they might refer other reference books for clearer information. It illustrated that 34% of respondents were not sure whether the reference book or syllabus set a clear explanation and they need to rely on other reference books for more information in details.

The language of instruction (Arabic/Malay/English) in a book could help students to understand the course. In Science of Qur'an, most of the books are mainly in Arabic. Especially, Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, Hadith and the language used to record the results of the various branches of knowledge in the past or even the present (Awatif *et al.*, 2015). This study identified that there were 25 of USIM and 28 of IIUM respondents that the book used could help them to understand the Science of Qur'an course well. It is recognized that 53% of the respondents agree that book used is helpful in comprehending the course appropriately.

Part E (student's prospects on Science of Qur'an course): This study sought that there were 25 of USIM and 20 of IIUM respondents agree that this course provides an understanding of the basic knowledge of the Holy Qur'an. It indicated that 45% of the respondents agree and believe this course provides an understanding of the knowledge that covers all the basic knowledge of Qur'an. Also, there were the same numbers of students of USIM and IIUM with 22 respondents who strongly agree as the total of 47% that by studying this course, it can help them to contribute to society.

In addition, there were the same numbers of students of USIM and IIUM as well with 23 respondents who strongly agree as the total of 46% in which they are confident that this course can produce skillful graduates who has vast knowledge of Islam. Besides that there were 27 of USIM and 28 of IIUM students who strongly agree that that by learning this course, they could gain lots of

vocabulary and terms related to Science of Qur'an knowledge. It pointed up as 55% of the respondents believe that they are exposed to more vocabulary and terms by learning Science of Qur'an.

Study on the Holy Qur'an is essential to allow a person to understand and practice what it is in the Qur'an accordingly. It is discovered whereby 32 of USIM and 41 of IIUM respondents strongly agree that this course should be continued in the future as there are many advantages from this course that could be implied and benefitted for humankind; individually and collectively.

CONCLUSION

All in all, this study discovered that most students from these two Islamic Public Universities have positive perception about Science of Qur'an course. Thus far, there are some suggestions from the respondents about the syllabus book that the students used at the universities. USIM's students suggested that the course outline prepared by the university should be more in details and extend the period allocated for this course as well as the university needs to offer Advance Science of Qur'an course for the next semester.

While, IIUM students suggested that students who are not studying Islamic studies as their major still need learn or enroll it as their compulsory subject in university. Albeit and Razak report 1956 and Rahman Talib report 1960 have brought major changes in the national education system in which Islamic Education has become one subject in to Malaysia's school curriculum (Hafiz *et al.*, 2012). Science of Qur'an knowledge should be learnt for every student into practice. It will exemplify a positive effort in understanding and implication of Islamic teachings from the Holy Qur'an in their living towards betterment.

In addition, due to the some weakness of students in understanding English and Arabic language; USIM and IIUM students also proposed their faculty to prepare bilingual books and syllabus for more understanding of the study. Linguistic barriers to learn in regular classrooms put these students at risk of poor learning outcomes (Aimee, 2015). Hence, Science of Al-Qur'an is an important subject that needs to be learnt in understanding Islam. This does not only benefit to an individual but also others as a whole. Therefore, as universities are the platform of education, virtues and knowledge; they should offer the best education of Islamic studies for Muslims to understand, reflect and imply the teachings in the Holy Qur'an into practice for the benefits of humankind.

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