

Technology Related *Tahfiz* Al-Quran Learning in Malaysia: A Systematic Literature Review

Pembelajaran Tahfiz Al-Quran Berbantuan Teknologi di Malaysia: Satu Kajian Sorotan Literatur Sistematis

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Abstract: *Tahfiz* learning in Malaysia is a form of learning that involves students memorizing the Quran and mastering the knowledge related to the Quran. The learning of *tahfiz* has grown rapidly, progressing from traditional pondok system to private and government *tahfiz* centers. The most important *tahfiz* institution is Darul Quran. The Ministry of Education (MOE) also has *Tahfiz Model Ulul Albab* (TMUA) schools, in addition to Maktab Rendah Sains Mara (MRSM) Ulul Albab schools. Developments in education has seen the use technological elements in *tahfiz* learning. This study aims to collect written studies related to the use of technology in *tahfiz* learning. The search is focused on the keywords "*tahfiz*" and "*tahfiz* model ulul albab". The main references are authoritative academic resources available in the UiTM Library Online Database as well as Google Scholar. As a result, the number of scholarly articles related to *tahfiz* and *Tahfiz Model Ulul Albab* from the online database sources of UiTM Library and Google Scholar was 92 articles, and only 10.87% of articles discussed the scope of technology in *tahfiz* learning. This study gives the impression that *tahfiz* learning still has a lot of room to be developed by utilizing technology, especially online learning through the internet.

Keywords: *tahfiz*; technology; internet; ulul albab, TMUA

Abstrak: *Pembelajaran tahfiz di Malaysia merupakan satu bentuk pembelajaran yang melibatkan pelajar menghafaz al-Quran dan menguasai ilmu-ilmu berkaitan al-Quran. Pembelajaran tahfiz berkembang pesat daripada sistem pengajian pondok kepada pusat-pusat tahfiz swasta dan kerajaan. Institusi tahfiz paling utama adalah Darul Quran. Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM) juga mempunyai sekolah-sekolah Tahfiz Model Ulul Albab (TMUA), di samping Maktab Rendah Sains MARA (MRSM) Ulul Albab. Perkembangan dalam bidang pendidikan memperlihatkan penggunaan unsur teknologi dalam pembelajaran tahfiz. Kajian ini bertujuan mengumpulkan kajian yang ditulis berkaitan penggunaan teknologi dalam pembelajaran tahfiz. Pencarian difokuskan kepada kata kunci "tahfiz" dan "tahfiz model ulul albab". Rujukan utama adalah sumber-sumber akademia berwibawa dalam pangkalan data perpustakaan UiTM dan juga Google Scholar. Hasilnya, artikel ilmiah yang berkaitan dengan tahfiz dan Tahfiz Model Ulul Albab daripada sumber-sumber pangkalan data perpustakaan UiTM dan Google Scholar ialah sebanyak 92 buah artikel, dan hanya 10.87% artikel sahaja yang membincangkan skop teknologi dalam pembelajaran tahfiz. Kajian ini memberi gambaran bahawa pembelajaran tahfiz masih mempunyai banyak ruang untuk dikembangkan dengan memanfaatkan teknologi, khususnya pembelajaran dalam talian melalui internet.*

Kata Kunci: *tahfiz*, teknologi, internet, ulul albab, TMUA

Introduction

Tahfiz Education in Malaysia

Education of *tahfiz al-Quran* in Malaysia is believed to emerge in line with the study of al-Quran held in the form of *halaqah* (groups of students) in the homes of teachers and mosques (Nordin Ahmad et al., 2018). The first formal memorization class before independence was pioneered by Dato Mufti of Kelantan, Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Nor bin Ibrahim as soon as he returned from Mecca in 1937. (Nordin Ahmad et al., 2018).

In 1966, Darul Quran Institution was established at the suggestion of the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tuanku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Hajj. The move was followed by the state of Terengganu which established a private *tahfiz* institution in 1967. The state owned *tahfiz* institutions began in 1967 pioneered by the State of Kelantan, followed by Terengganu five years later. (Nordin Ahmad et al., 2018). The first private *tahfiz* institution established in Malaysia was Maahad Tahfiz wal Qiraat in Jeram Selangor in 1981 (Solahuddin, 2018). To date, the number of *tahfiz* institutions registered under JAKIM is 704 throughout Malaysia (JAKIM, n.d.)

School-level *tahfiz* education was given a breath of fresh air when the Menteri Mesar of Terengganu, YAB Dato 'Seri Idris Jusoh introduced the Ulul Albab program in Terengganu through the establishment of the Terengganu Foundation Imtiaz Secondary School. Starting with SM Imtiaz Besut in 1999, the Ulul Albab program was established on three main foundations, namely Quranic, Encyclopedic and *Ijtihadic*. (Arniyuzie Mohd Arshad, 2015).

Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) soon followed the footsteps of Yayasan Terengganu by introducing the Ulul Albab program in four Maktab Rendah Sains MARA (MRSMs), starting with MRSM Gemenchah in 2006. (Arniyuzie Mohd Arshad, 2015).

Recognizing the needs of the community for a systematic *tahfiz* education, incorporated with the mainstream academic subjects, the Ministry of Education Malaysia has introduced the Tahfiz Model Ulul Albab (TMUA) programme in 2014 at SM Agama Persekutuan Bentong. To date, there are 15 TMUA KPM schools nationwide. Apart from that, there are 21 Government Aided Religious Schools (SABK) that implement the *Tahfiz* Integrated Curriculum (KBT) under the MOE. (KPM, 2018).

Technology Based Learning

Technology Based Learning (TBL) is learning through electronic technology, including the internet, intranets, satellite broadcasts, audio and video conferencing, bulletin boards, chat rooms, webcasts, and CD-ROMs.

TBL also includes related terms, such as online learning and web-assisted learning which only covers learning that occurs over the internet, and computer-assisted learning which is limited to learning through the use of computers. The term E-learning is synonymous with TBL and is often used as an alternative in education and industry. (Koller et al., 2006).

Technology Assisted Tahfiz Learning

Although the rapid development of technology is felt by the world of education in general, technology-assisted *tahfiz* education is still underdeveloped (Nordin Ahmad et al., 2018). This is due to its tight bonding with the traditional learning methods especially *talaqqi* and *musyafahah*, *takrar*, *tasmik* and *murajaah*. This is seen as a kind of handicap in the teaching and learning methods of *tahfiz*, especially in this point of time, where technology plays a big role in the education process. (Aznil Hashim et al., 2014). Technology-assisted learning in the field of *tahfiz* usually focuses on the use of tools such as MP3 and videos to aid students in memorizing the Holy Quran (Mohamad Marzuqi Abdul Rahim et al., 2016).

Research Objectives

This systematic literature review aims to examine technology-assisted *tahfiz* learning in Malaysia. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Identifying the number of scholarly studies conducted related to *tahfiz* education in Malaysia.
2. Making a classification of research areas related to *tahfiz* education which includes the field of technology-assisted *tahfiz* learning.
3. Analyzing the aspects of technology studied in the technology-assisted *tahfiz* learning articles.

Methodology

Literature Identification

This systematic literature review (SLR) on technology related *Tahfiz al-Quran* learning in Malaysia is based on the SLR process proposed by Xiao & Watson (2019). After setting the objectives of the study, the researchers began looking for the literature by typing the keywords "*tahfiz*" and "*tahfiz model ulul albab*" in the advanced search function provided in the respective resources.

The online databases chosen for this study are Scopus, Web of Science, Science Direct, Sage, Springer Links, Proquest Education, Proquest Dissertation & Theses, JSTOR, Emerald Insight and EBSCO which are all available through UiTM Library Online Database. In

addition, Google Scholar is also used as a source for this search, since it is one of the frequently used databases by researchers across various disciplines (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

Inclusion Criteria

In this systematic literature review, six inclusion criteria were determined as follows:

1. Articles on *tahfiz* education in Malaysia. Articles related to *tahfiz* institutions or programs in other countries are dropped.
2. Only full text accessed studies are taken into account. Articles with access to titles or abstracts *per se* are excluded.
3. Repeated articles within one database or across other databases will only be counted as one article.

Data Extraction

From their search, the researchers found 28 articles related to *tahfiz* education from only three sources, namely Scopus (14), Web of Science (9), and EBSCO (5). As for Google Scholar, preliminary search results found 270 articles with titles containing the words "*tahfiz*" and/or "*tahfiz model ulul albab*".

All the articles were then screened based on the inclusive criteria that had been set. For the first criteria, which includes only *tahfiz* studies within Malaysia, all 28 articles in Scopus, WOS and EBSCO had met this criterion, whereas 135 articles found in Google Scholar did not meet this criterion and had to be dropped.

With regards to the second criterion that excludes non full text article from this study, the researchers were able to screen out 1 article from SCOPUS, 3 from WOS and 33 from Google Scholar. This exclusion leaves 13 in SCOPUS, 6 in WOS, and 102 in Google Scholar, while the number of articles in EBSCO remains 5.

As mentioned earlier, the third criterion states that repeated articles within one database or across multiple databases will only be counted as one article. While there were no repeated articles on *tahfiz* education within SCOPUS and WOS, there was 1 repeated article in EBSCO and 10 in Google Scholar, which leaves only 4 articles in EBSCO and 92 articles in Google Scholar. And as far as repetition across databases are concerned, all the articles in SCOPUS, EBSCO and WOS were also mentioned in Google Scholar.

As a result, the researchers concluded there were only 92 scholarly articles related to *tahfiz* education and *Tahfiz Model Ulul Albab* in Malaysia from the online database sources of UiTM library and Google Scholar to be analysed. Table 1 below summarizes the result of this data extraction and inclusion process:

Table 1: Data Extraction and Inclusion Process

Database (DB)	Advanced Search	Outside Malaysia	Non-Full Text	Repeated Within DB	No. of Articles
SCOPUS	14	0	1	0	13
EBSCO	5	0	0	1	4
WOS	9	0	3	0	6
Google Scholar	270	135	33	10	92

Results And Discussion

Data Analysis

In the next process, the researchers read the entire 92 articles to determine the scope of study of each scholarly article. As a result, they were able to classify the field of study into 15 main scopes. The scopes are challenges, policies, physical, teaching and learning methods, finance, teacher competence/training, curriculum, students, achievements, administration, history, attitude, support/motivation, technology and others.

Some articles only touched on one scope of the study while some articles touch on several scopes. A summary of the number of articles based on the breakdown of scopes is as in Table 2.

Table 2: Scope of Tahfiz Education Studies

No.	Scopes of Study	No. of Articles
1	challenges	11
2	policies	13
3	physical	7
4	teaching & learning methods	41
5	finance	3
6	competencies /teachers training	19
7	curriculum	27
8	students	12
9	achievements	22
10	administration	22
11	history	4
12	attitude	10
13	support /motivation	6
14	technology	10
15	others	21

From the table, technology is only discussed in 10 articles. This figure is 10.87% of the total 92 articles related to *tahfiz* and *Tahfiz Model Ulul Albab*. Furthermore, there were 41 articles that studied the *tahfiz* teaching and learning method, which is 44.57% of the total studies. These two very different percentages can be interpreted that the method used in learning *tahfiz*, whether in Darul Quran, TMUA schools, private *tahfiz* institutions or state owned *tahfiz* institutions is more toward the traditional teaching and learning method and less toward technology-assisted learning.

Technological Aspects in Tahfiz Education

An in-depth reading of these scholarly articles concluded that the technological aspects discussed were more of a technology-assisted memorization aids used in traditional teaching and learning (T&C) sessions either for the purpose of strengthening or expediting memorization. The studies also touched on the need to integrate technology in *tahfiz* education in order to improve student achievement both in memorizing new verses as well as retaining old memorizations. At the same time these studies revealed that the use of technology in *tahfiz* learning is still minimal even though teachers realize its benefits and have the basic skills to implement technology-assisted teaching.

Ahmad Marzuqi et al. (2016) studied the level of use of Quran Memorization Aids (QMA) among lecturers of *Tahfiz Al-Quran* institutions in Malaysia. A study was conducted in four *tahfiz* institutions in the Central Zone involving 386 respondents. His study found out that the level of use of QMA among lecturers was moderately low with a mean value of 2.92.

The scope of QMA is divided into printed aids and electronic aids. The printed QMA is a special mashaf, additional references, notes, library reading materials, magazines and newspapers, *tasmik* record books and attendance books. While electronic QMA is limited to audio and video only. QMAs of an online nature such as mobile online applications, messaging systems, e-learning platforms, teleconferencing were not included in this study. This showed that the use of technological and online QMA was limitedly used in *tahfiz* teaching and learning sessions (Mohamad Marzuqi Abdul Rahim et al., 2016).

The same goes for Sekolah Permata Insan. A study by Ahmad Bazli et al. (2016) showed that the use of technology was simply a virtual Quran and student presentations in video form.

Therefore, the use of technological-based QMA needs to be intensified so that *tahfiz* al-Quran education in Malaysia is in line with the development of current education and thus ensures the quality of *tahfiz* education. QMA, on the other hand, needs to be expanded to internet-sourced materials and mobile applications.

Ahmad Zulfiqar Shah and Mohd Abdul Nasir (2016) studied the activities of enrichment, reinforcement and rehabilitation in *tahfiz* learning in several selected *tahfiz* schools in Kelantan. The researchers checked documents and conducted interviews with several *tahfiz* teachers in the schools.

As a result of the study, the researchers were able to list seven enrichment activities, eight reinforcement activities and five rehabilitation activities. Among the activities listed, there was a technology-assisted activity under the enrichment strategy, which is to listen to the

recitation of famous reciters using technological tools such as radios, MP3s and compact discs. Similarly, under the enrichment strategy, the same technological tools were also used. During the holidays, *murajaah* camps and al-Quran rehabilitation camps would be held.

In other words, technology-assisted learning is limited to existing audio-visual aids and has not yet reached online learning activities. During the holidays, students and teachers will still sit in front of each other, a traditional setting known as *talaqqi* and *musyafahah* in the camps, where the students will recite verses of the Al-Quran by memory in front of the teacher. In this case teachers do not take advantage of the internet facilities that allow such camps to be conducted online.

Technology-assisted teaching and learning was found to have significant connection with students *tahfiz* achievement. A study conducted at SMKA Kuala Lumpur, one of the earliest KPM schools to implement TMUA, found that student achievement is still not optimal to the goals set in TMUA programmes. Among the causes of this weakness was that teachers were still using traditional methods in *tahfiz* teaching and learning *tahfiz* even though they themselves strongly agreed that the use of technology helps in improving the quality of memorization of the Quran. (Nik Md Saiful Azizi et al., 2019).

The study of Muhd Zulhilmi Haron et al. (2019) discussed the use of technology-based teaching aids in the *Tahfiz Model Ulul Albab* (TMUA) environment. The respondents of the study were teachers and students. The results of the study found out that teachers' awareness of the benefits of using technology-based aids was high. The ability of teachers to use technology-based aids was also high. However, feedback from students revealed that the use of technology-based teaching aids among teachers was still at a moderate level. These findings were in line with the study of Azmil et al. (2013) who reported that the majority of lecturers used only the most basic QMA even though they realised the importance of diversifying QMA in uplifting student learning ability. (Hashim et al., 2016).

Technology has also been identified as one of the major challenges of *tahfiz* education. A study conducted by Solahuddin Ismail (2016) presented 3 challenges; modernization challenges, technology challenges and certification challenges. According to him, *tahfiz* institutions, have to quickly adapt to technological advances in order not to be left behind. School administrators and teachers need to master technology so that the management and teaching and learning process becomes easier and more effective, although they may have to bear the increased financial burden of having to prepare appropriate infrastructure and training for its teachers.

The use of technology should be seen as an effort to elevate *tahfiz* education. Darul Quran, for example, as the

country's leading *tahfiz* educational institution, strives to prepare lecturers who understand and benefit from technological developments and are proactive, courageous, want to try new and innovative ideas (Nordin Ahmad, 2015).

Even so, it is also worth noting that there are two studies that focused on teaching and learning *tahfiz* via internet. Although both of these studies were conceptual in nature, at least there are already some thoughts to direct *tahfiz* learning in that pathway.

One of the studies was conducted by Fatimah Zaharah et al. (2020) who studied the probability of using online technology "Internet of Things - IoT" to help students maintain memorization, which is a big challenge faced by *tahfiz* students. The researchers proposed three IoT approaches; a virtual *tahfiz* class (cloud classroom), an online *murajaah* application that is able to correct student reading automatically using speech detection technology and online student performance reporting.

While Muhammad Ghufuran et al. (2018) presented a study on *i-Tasmi'* program, which is a conceptual mobile application to help students memorize, while teachers can monitor the development of students' memorization through the application. Apart from that, they viewed that *i-Tasmi'* is also able to attract students to memorize because it uses the latest technology. They proposed to use speech detection technology that is capable of detecting students' reading and memorization errors automatically without the need for a teacher.

Although only conceptual in nature, these two studies should be seen as a positive development towards the progress of online *tahfiz* learning in the future.

Conclusion

From these studies, it is clear that technology-based learning has not yet expanded its implementation at any level of memorization, either in schools or in post-school *tahfiz* institutions, including Darul Quran itself, which is Malaysia's main Al-Quran memorization institution.

Awareness of the importance of technology is somewhat visible, but lecturers and *tahfiz* teachers failed to make maximum use of it. What was discussed were only technological tools such as videos and recording devices that are useful to listen to the recitation of the best *imams*, or video presentations to explain the understanding of the verses discussed. In general, there was almost no study that discussed online *tahfiz* learning and teaching.

It is to be noted that the future direction of education is more towards online learning, especially in the IoT era in the 4.0 industry revolution. This need for online learning is increasingly important and much needed with the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and the Movement Control Order being implemented.

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