

INVESTIGATING EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGY FOR TAFSEER OF QURAN: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify Tafseer Al-Quran (Interpretation of the Qur'an) teaching strategy among Islamic Education teachers. The study was design using quantitative survey method in collecting data which involved 254 form four students and 34 Islamic Education teachers. This study involved five National Religious Secondary Schools (SMKA) in Sabah. The data were analysed descriptively using mean, standard deviation and percentage. The findings indicated medium high interpretation level for tafseer teaching practice from the aspects of teaching preparation, teaching development and teaching closing. It is hope that the finding of this study will assist the Ministry of Education, schools and other learning institution in arranging and developing programmes relevant to the needs of the al-Quran teacher in planning a more efficient Quranic teaching to enhance the appreciation of al-Quran among students.

Keywords: Teaching Strategy, Tafsir Al-Quran, Moral Values

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INTRODUCTION

Tafseer is part of Quranic knowledge and the mastery of this knowledge can help a Muslim to understand Islam deeper. Without the Quran, the ummah will not get guidance and without tafseer knowledge, Muslim will not know how to practice these guidance's. Allah (Glorified and exalted be He) says in Surah Al-Sad meaning:

"[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded." (Al-Sad: 29).

The above verse clearly prompts Muslims to tadabbur, cultivate, understand and think about Quranic verses and not merely reading it. Al-Zamakhsyari said al-Quran tadabbur means to appreciate the meaning and deeply observing the meaning of the Quran. Al-Zarkasyi (794H) mentioned, anyone who has no knowledge, understanding, taqwa, and tadabbur, will not know the delights of the Quran. Allah (Glorified and exalted be He) mention in several verses namely Al-Muzammil (73):4, Al-Jumu'ah (62):5, Al-Baqarah (2):242, Yusuf (12):2, Al-Qamar (54):17, 22, 32 and 40, reiterating the same. These explains that the need of understanding the Quran is something that is important and must be done by all Muslims who believe in the book of Allah the Almighty.

Tafseer Al-Quran study at the secondary school has been introduced for a while known as comprehension verses, a component in Al-Quran Tilawah in Islamic Education subject and a component in Al-Quran Study in PQS subject. According to the PQS Syllabus (2002), Quranic Studies will enrich knowledge, skills and appreciation of the Quran and Al-Sunnah to be practice and inculcated in everyday life. The objective is to produce students who understand and appreciate the teachings of Islam in daily life based on Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah guidance.

Following the inclusion of Tafseer Al-Quran studies in KBSM, it is understandable that tafseer is a branch of knowledge which

should not be neglected in the interests of producing a divine generation. According to Abdul Ghani Azmi (1999), as Al-Quran was revealed to be understood, therefore the aspect of understanding, knowledge and appreciation should be combined to enable the role of Quran as the guidance in life.

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Tilawah Al-Quran as a component in Islamic Studies subjects emphasizes on five important aspects namely proficiency in recitation, memorization, tafseer, teaching and appreciation of the verses taught. The aspect of the lesson learned from Tafseer Al-Quran often was not given due emphasis in the classroom teaching of the Islamic Education. Misnan Jemali (2008) research findings indicated that during the teaching of Tilawah Al-Quran, tafseer were the least emphasis. Meanwhile, many other studies indicated recitation skills among secondary school students were just at the medium level (Misnan Jemali, 2008 & Mohd Aderi Che Noh, 2011). This indicated that recitations skills in Quran reading among students were less emphasis by teachers leading to ignorant of teaching tafseer of the Quranic verses.

Other than that, teachers did not establish Tafseer Al-Quran as one of the objectives in teaching Tilawah Al-Quran. This was proven by Misnan Jemali (2008) study on the Tafseer Al-Quran as teaching objective. His findings showed 67.9 percent of respondents stated that Tilawah Al-Quran teaching in the class did not often emphasize the skills of Tafseer Al-Quran. More than half of the students' respondent stated that teachers often neglect discussion on Tafseer Al-Quran in the classroom. In addition, 52 percent of students' respondent stated that teachers often disregard emphasizing Tafseer Al-Quran skills in teaching Tilawah Al-Quran. This clearly shows that most students' respondents stated that Tafseer Al-Quran skills were given less emphasized in Tilawah Al-Quran teaching from the aspect of objective neither in daily teaching practices.

Islamic Education teachers were also seen as not giving emphasize on the aspect of translating Tilawah Al-Quran verses.

This keep student away from understanding Al-Quran content. This was proven through Misnan Jemali (2008) study where the finding indicated only 15.4 percent of students' respondent stated teachers often teach the skill of translating Al-Quran in Tilawah Al-Quran teaching. This finding also indicated that skills of translating Al-Quran in Tilawah Al-Quran were at the lowest level where this skill was not given the appropriate emphasis by teachers. The finding of this study clearly shows that teachers do not become an effective agent in teaching the verses of the Quran in achieving the objectives of Islamic studies.

Al-Ghazali's Theory of Teaching

Ibnu Khaldun's (2000) statement reinforces this view by mentioning that the teaching of knowledge to the students will be effective when done gradually. Al-Ghazali (1980) suggests that the teaching of knowledge is based on the knowledge purpose and students' ability. According to Al-Ghazali (1980) the main task of teachers is to develop students in term of morality as well as intellect to be a good and responsible people. Every subject taught must inculcate human noble values.

Al-Ghazali (1980) in his book titled "Ihya 'Ulumuddin" stated that teaching must first focus on basic knowledge before it advances to the next level of knowledge. Teaching and learning process should be done in stages according to the student's ability. Teaching should lead the student to think by encouraging students to give suggestions and insights. Based on Al-Ghazali view, it can be concluded that teaching strategies which are in line with his point of view are teacher-centred teaching, student-centred teaching and material-centred teaching.

According to Ragbir (2005), strategy refers to ways in which teacher practices in a learning activity, systematically and is the specific actions deliberately performed by the teacher to achieve specific goals in the learning process. Al-Ghazali (1980) did not present a special teaching strategy in Tafseer Al-Quran study. However, he explained some of the principles that should be held by every education and student.

According to Al-Ghazali (1980), the relationship between teachers and students must be positive. Al-Ghazali (1980) hopes to create a loving relationship between teachers and students. When the relationship built on compassionate, gentle, mutual trust and respect are created then the message of every teacher and student is easy to accomplish and in a pleasant situation.

While from the student aspect, Al-Ghazali explained the qualities that the student must have to benefit from the teaching process. These attributes are *tawadu'*, sacred from blasphemous practice, faithful and sincere. The purpose is to prevent students to be averse to unfamiliar disciplines and assuming other knowledge as frivolous (Abdul Salam, 2003). This is in line with Ibnu Khaldun views that urges students to build direct relationships with the teacher so that it is easy to acquire knowledge from teachers (Al-Ghazali, 2008).

According to Al-Ghazali (2008), the teaching process should be parallel to the student's intellectual ability. Al-Ghazali prohibits teachers from teaching non-understandable knowledge to the student which can lead to mental disorder. Al-Ghazali acknowledges the existence of individual differences from the aspect of intelligence and ability (Abdul Salam, 2003). In respect to his view, the teacher-centred teaching strategy provide teachers with the opportunity to organize the content of teaching according to the student's intellectual ability. Gradual teaching can be planned through this method of teaching. In addition, this method helps the teacher to organize the contents of the teaching systematically and convey the teaching content gradually.

Al-Ghazali (2008) added that teachers need to give ideas and views that can guide students to think. These views shall enhance their experience and information, thereby encouraging them to

give creative ideas and insights. Thus, teachers and students can share useful experiences and information (Abdul Salam, 2003). Al-Ghazali education thought coincides with teacher-centred teaching strategy. This teaching strategy trains students to think and create ideas based on lesson learned.

Al-Ghazali (2008) also pointed out that the lessons delivered should start from simple to complex. The teaching and learning process should be done in stages according to the student's ability (Abdul Salam, 2003). Al-Ghazali views are in line with the teacher-centred teaching strategy. This strategy is a gradual learning process to enhance memory and increase student understanding. In addition, this teaching strategy reinforcing the previous teaching.

Al-Ghazali (2008) has a broad view of the aspect of knowledge. He suggested that the main usage of knowledge be aligned with age, intelligence, talent and related to the value of the benefit. In addition, Al-Ghazali places educators as role models for students and familiarize students to practice knowledge for the society and self benefits (Abdul Salam, 2003).

The teaching strategy of Al-Ghazali is in line with Ibn Khaldun's view of education. According to Ibn Khaldun, the methods and strategies of teaching are not just one but vary according to student level, atmosphere and difference from each Islamic country. In addition, Ibn Khaldun advised teachers to always pay attention to students while teaching and understanding their problems and difficulties in learning. Therefore, teachers need to try to solve the difficulties of their students (Al-Ghazali, 2008). Al-Ghazali always reminds teachers to teach with love so that students can build a good relationship with teachers that will lead to effective teaching.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative study that examines the perception of form four students in SMKA on teaching strategies that consist of teacher-centred teaching, student-centred teaching and material-centred teaching. Its involved 254 students. Sampling selection method used was randomly stratified and clustered from all over Sabah namely Tawau, Sandakan, Nort-West Coast, West-East Coast and inland divisions. The study involved five National Religious Secondary School (SMKA) in Sabah. The data were analysed descriptively using mean, standard deviation and percentage while inference analysis using T test, Anova test and Pearson correlation.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Teaching Strategy

Descriptive analysis of teacher-centred teaching strategy showed that mean score was at a moderate level (mean=3.88, sd=0.547) as described in Table 1.1. The findings show that three items in this strategy are interpreted at a high level. The items are, teachers concern with students (mean=4.13, sd=1.106) with 76 percent of the respondents expressing strongly agree and agree, students involvement in learning session (mean=4.03, sd=1.072) with 69.3 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree and adding new information quoted from Al-Quran and hadith (mean=4.07, sd=0.906) with 75.6 percent of student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree.

While three items have a mean score at a moderately high level namely teacher diversified teaching method (mean=3.41, sd=1.032) with 47.7 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree, narration by teacher in teaching Tafseer Al-Quran (mean=3.83, sd=0.922) with 65.8 percent of student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree, and teachers are very interested in using narration method (mean=3.82, sd=0.976) with 62.6 percent of student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree.

Table 1.1 Teacher-Centred Teaching Strategy

No	Item	SD %	DA %	SDA %	A %	SA %	Mean	S.D	INT
B15	*Teachers concern with students.	9 3.5	17 6.7	35 13.8	63 24.8	130 51.2	4.13	1.106	H
B16	*Teachers ensure student participation in learning session	4 1.6	22 8.7	52 20.5	61 24	115 45.3	4.03	1.072	H
B17	*Teacher use multiple methods in teaching.	11 4.3	33 13	89 35	83 32.7	38 15	3.41	1.032	MH
B18	Teacher teach Tafseer al-Quran by narration.	1 0.4	20 7.9	66 26	100 39.4	67 26.4	3.83	0.922	MH
B19	Teachers add new information quoted from Al-Quran and hadith.	2 0.8	12 4.7	48 18.9	97 38.2	95 37.4	4.07	0.906	H
B20	Teachers are very keen to use narration method.	2 0.8	21 8.3	72 28.3	84 33.1	75 29.5	3.82	0.976	MH
	Total Mean						3.88	0.547	MH
	* Negative statement has been encoded								

Note: SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, SDA - Slightly Disagree, DA - Disagree, SD - Strongly Disagree, S.D - Standard Deviation, INT - Interpretation, H - High, MH - Moderately High

Student-Centred Teaching Strategy

Descriptive analysis of students-centred teaching strategy is as shown in Table 1.2. The results of the descriptive analysis presented in Table 1.2 show the overall mean score at the moderately high level (mean=3.47, sd=0.555). Two items had a mean score on moderately low level namely teachers divide students into small groups (mean=2.94, sd=1.213) with 31.9 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree, and teacher request students to list important contents of the Tafseer Al-Quran (mean=2.93, sd=1.095) with 29.2 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree.

While the other items in this strategy have a mean score at a medium high level. Teachers open discussion sessions of important contents (mean=3.97, sd=0.926) with 70.1 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree,

teachers ask students about the Tafseer Al-Quran previous lesson (mean=3.84, sd=0.981) with 67.7 percent respondent expressing strongly agree and agree, teachers allocate questions and answer sessions with students before the Al-Quran Tafseer lesson (mean=3.55, sd=1.046) with 52.8 percent respondents expressing strongly agree and agree, teachers guide students in groups (mean=3.39, sd=1.184) with 51.6 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree, teachers encourage students to analyse Quranic verses (mean=3.39, sd=1.034) with 46.1 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree, teachers guide students to analyse Quranic verses (mean=3.62, sd=1.048) with 56.7 percent respondent expressing strongly agree and agree, teacher request students to present learning outcome (mean=3.35, sd=1.075) with 45.3 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree, and teachers are keen to use presentation as teaching method (mean=3.70, sd= 1.131) with 59.4 percent respondent expressing strongly agree and agree.

Table 1.2 Student-Centred Teaching Strategy

No	Item	SD %	DA %	SDA %	A %	SA %	Mean	S.D	INT
B21	Teacher request students to present learning outcome.	14 5.5	36 14.2	89 35	76 29.9	39 15.4	3.35	1.075	MH
B22	Teacher request students to list important contents of the Tafseer Al-Quran.	29 11.4	55 21.7	96 37.8	54 21.3	20 7.9	2.93	1.095	ML
B23	Teachers are keen to use presentation as teaching method.	13 5.1	22 8.7	68 26.8	77 30.3	74 29.1	3.70	1.131	MH
B24	Teachers open discussion sessions of important contents.	0 0	18 7.1	58 22.8	91 35.8	87 34.3	3.97	0.926	MH
B25	Teachers ask students about the Tafseer Al-Quran previous lesson.	3 1.2	24 9.4	55 21.7	100 39.4	72 28.3	3.84	0.981	MH
B26	* Teachers allocate questions and answer sessions with students before the Tafseer Al-Quran lesson.	12 4.7	21 8.3	87 34.3	84 33.1	50 19.7	3.55	1.046	MH

B27	Teachers divide students into small groups.	36 14.2	55 21.7	82 32.3	50 19.7	31 12.2	2.94	1.213	ML
B28	Teachers guide students in groups.	23 9.1	32 12.6	68 26.8	85 33.5	46 18.1	3.39	1.184	MH
B29	Teachers encourage students to analyse Quranic verses.	9 3.5	39 15.4	89 35	78 30.7	39 15.4	3.39	1.034	MH
B30	Teachers guide students to analyse Quranic verses.	7 2.8	30 11.8	73 28.7	86 33.9	58 22.8	3.62	1.048	MH
	Total Mean						3.47	0.555	MH
	* Negative statement has been encoded								

Note: SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, SDA - Slightly Disagree, DA - Disagree, SD - Strongly Disagree, S.D - Standard Deviation, INT - Interpretation, H - High, MH - Moderately High, ML - Moderately Low

Material-Centred Teaching Strategy

Descriptive analysis of material-centred teaching strategy is as shown in Table 1.3. The results of the descriptive analysis showed the overall mean score at the moderately high level (mean=3.78, sd=0.685). Teachers provide training to the students (mean=4.09, sd=0.964) with 77.9 percent of student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree and this is the

highest mean score. Meanwhile, other items showed mean score at moderately high level namely teachers focus on weak students (mean=3.74, sd=1.139) with 62.2 percent respondents expressing strongly agree and agree, repetition of the main content (mean=3.65, sd=0.985) with 60.3 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree, review the subject learned at the end of every session (mean=3.81, sd=1.010) with 65.7 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree and frequently ask the students with questions as additional exercises (mean=3.59, sd=1.066) with 55.1 percent student's respondents expressing strongly agree and agree.

Table 1.3 Material-Centred Teaching Strategy

No	Item	SD %	DA %	SDA %	A %	SA %	Mean	S.D	INT
B31	Teachers provide training to the students.	1 0.4	23 9.1	32 12.6	94 37	104 40.9	4.09	0.964	H
B32	Teachers focus on weak students.	11 4.3	27 10.6	58 22.8	78 30.7	80 31.5	3.74	1.139	MH
B33	Teacher request the student to repeat the recitation of the main content of Tafseer Al-Quran.	7 2.8	23 9.1	71 28	103 40.6	50 19.7	3.65	0.985	MH
B34	Teachers request student to review the subject learned at the end of every session.	6 2.4	20 7.9	61 24	95 37.4	72 28.3	3.81	1.010	MH
B35	Teachers frequently ask students with questions as additional exercises.	10 3.9	27 10.6	77 30.3	84 33.1	56 22	3.59	1.066	MH
	Total Mean						3.78	0.685	MH

Note: SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, SDA - Slightly Disagree, DA - Disagree, SD - Strongly Disagree, S.D - Standard Deviation, INT - Interpretation, H - High, MH - Moderately High

Al-Quran deducted from the teacher and student perceptions. The overall mean of teachers' perceptions is 3.80 and the standard deviation of 0.371 is at moderately high mean interpretation. While the overall mean of student perception is 3.66 and the standard deviation is 0.455 at moderately high mean interpretation.

Summary of the Overall Teaching Strategies

Table 1.4 shows the mean, standard deviation, and mean interpretation of the three types of teaching strategies of Tafseer

Table 1.4 Summary of teaching strategies element from teachers and students perspective

Teaching Strategies Element	Teachers' Perspective			Students' Perspective		
	Mean	S.D	INT	Mean	S.D	INT
Teacher-centred	4.60	0.574	H	3.88	0.547	MH
Student-centred	3.70	0.455	MH	3.47	0.555	MH

Material-centred	3.97	0.570	MH	3.78	0.685	MH
Total Mean	3.80	0.371	MH	3.66	0.455	MH

Note: S.D - Standard Deviation, INT - Interpretation, H - High, MH - Moderately High

Table 1.4 shows the perceptions of teachers and students mean value are similar which is the moderately high level of mean interpretation of two types of teaching strategies namely student-centred and material-centred strategies. Teachers and students differ in perception of teacher-centred teaching strategies. Teacher’s perceptions scored a mean value at a high level while the perception of the students scored a mean value at a moderate-high level.

The element that scored high mean interpretation value from the teacher’s perspective is teacher-centred teaching strategy (mean=4.60, sd=0.574). While the other two teaching strategies scored moderate-high level of mean interpretation namely student-centred teaching strategy (mean=3.70, sd=0.455) and material-centred teaching strategy (mean=3.97, sd=0.570).

Meanwhile, from students’ perception, all three teaching strategies of Tafseer Al-Quran scored moderate level mean interpretation namely teacher-centred teaching strategy (mean=3.88, sd=0.547), student-centred teaching strategy (mean=3.47, sd=0.555) and material-centred teaching strategy (mean=3.78, sd=0.685).

In general, two teaching strategies of Tafseer Al-Quran indicated the same level of interpretation based on the perception of teachers and students. The student-centred teaching strategy scored the lowest mean value compared to other teaching strategies of both respondents’ perceptions. This shows that teachers and students agree that the student-centred teaching strategy is an unpopular teaching method and is less practiced by teachers in the teaching of Tafseer Al-Quran.

Material-centred teaching strategies scored the second highest mean value compared to other strategies based on the perception of teachers and students. This explains that teachers and students agree that the teaching strategies of Tafseer Al-Quran which are more often practiced by teachers is material-centred teaching strategy as compared to student-centred teaching strategies.

Teacher-centred teaching strategy scored the highest mean value compared to other teaching strategies based on the perception of teachers and students. The mean value of teacher perception was high while the mean score for student perception was at high medium value. Although there is a big difference in the mean value of teacher and student perception, however, teacher-centred teaching strategies scored the highest mean value compared to other teaching strategies base on the perception of teachers and students. This shows that teachers and students agree upon the teacher-centred teaching strategy as the main method often used by teachers in the Tafseer Al-Quran. Next, followed by the material-centred teaching strategies and the least used method is student-centred teaching strategy.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study of the teaching strategies is at a moderate level. The teaching strategies which were focused in this study were general teaching strategies outlined by Al-Ghazali and the details of the teaching strategies were taken from the book titled Education Review Guide (Panduan Ulang kaji Ilmu Pendidikan) by Ragbir (2005). The researcher concluded three

teaching strategies that are aligned with Al-Ghazali view namely teacher-centred strategy, student-centred strategy and material-centred strategy.

The finding shows that teacher-centred strategy is the preferred teaching strategy of Tafseer Al-Quran. In line with the findings, the teacher-centred strategy has the highest relationship with the appreciation of the Quran among students compared to other strategies. This clearly indicates that teachers at SMKA in Sabah practiced teacher-centred strategy using appropriate teaching method such as narration, lecturing, and presentation in teaching Tafseer Al-Quran so as to nurture an appreciation of the Quran among students. The essence of the Tafseer Al-Quran teaching through narration and lecture methods is to supplement interesting additional information. In addition, certain techniques can be used to increase students interest to deeply understand al-Quran knowledge.

Further, the teaching strategy which becomes the second choice of teachers in teaching Tafseer Al-Quran was material-centred teaching strategy, while the least used method is student-centred teaching strategy. However, the finding on the relationship of all three strategies with the appreciation of the Quran among student showed student-centred teaching strategy has the highest relationship next to teacher-centred teaching strategy. Whereas, the material-centred teaching strategy has a lower value among the three strategies. This is contrary to the common practice of selecting a teaching strategy among the religious teachers in SMKA. The religious teachers in SMKA preferred to use material-centred teaching strategy as compared to student-centred teaching strategy. Therefore, the religious teachers at SMKA in Sabah should change from current teaching strategies in teaching Tafseer Al-Quran to teaching strategies that have a greater impact on the appreciation of the Quran among students. The practiced of using material-centred teaching strategy by a religious teacher at SMKA in Sabah as a second teaching method need to be converted into the student-centred teaching strategy in the teaching of Tafseer Al-Quran. Whereas, material-centred teaching strategy should be the last choice in the selection of teaching strategy in teaching Tafseer Al-Quran study for the relationship between this strategy and student appreciation of the Quran is at the lower level.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Overall, this study contributed significantly with the emergence of a theory derived from the view of Al-Ghazali to set up effective teaching strategies that could be implemented to nurture an appreciation of the Quran among student. The theory has been detailed which comprises the teaching strategy of teacher-centred, student-centred and material-centred. Each strategy implemented will have a different effect on the student appreciation of the Quran through teacher teaching practices of comprehension verses in Tafseer Al-Quran. Hence, this study also contributed in identifying the most effective teaching strategies in producing an appreciation of the Quran through the teaching practices of Tafseer Al-Quran.

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