

3 ICLICE 2015 45 Ahmad Abdullahi Ibrahim

Bagdadi Method and Tahfiz Students' Intrinsic Motivation toward Reading Qur'an: A Case Study of Sekola Dar-Al Muhibbeen Kuala Lumpur

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the impact of the adoption of Bagdadi method on tahfiz students' intrinsic motivation and their ability to master Qur'an recitation. To achieve the aim, the researcher purposively selected and interviewed a number of tahfiz teachers and students from Sekola Dar-Al Muhibbeen, Kuala Lumpur to examine how learning by Bagdadi method influence students' intrinsic motivation. Besides that, non participant observations were conducted to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. The data were collected, transcribed, coded and separated, and then analyzed using inductive analysis model. The findings show that the use of Bagdadi intrinsically motivates tahfiz students to learn reading Qur'an; enable them to read Qur'an within one month especially those with good psychomotor skills and students perceive learning with Bagdadi is easy and funny as it gives them happiness and enjoyment in the classroom. Finally, this research helps tahfiz teachers in boosting up their interest to use Bagdadi in their teaching.

Keywords: Bagdadi Method, intrinsic motivation, tahfiz students.

INTRODUCTION

Learning and reading Qur'an is not only rewarded through reciting in front of a teacher. The word Qur'an reflects "recitation" of which Grahar (1987) in Tirri (2010) refers as per formative and instructive sense. Thus the recitation of Qur'an encompasses not only an act of reading but also is a worship that results aesthetic enjoyment. In the modern technology era, instructional technology (IT) can be used to assert in reading Qur'an for the impaired learners using Braille, Digital Qur'an and other devices for the flexibility of

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learning Qur'an. Bagdadi is one of the recent methods used by teachers to teach tahfiz students how to read Qur'an. Tahfiz students are referred to a group of students who have the goal to memorize the whole Qur'an by the use of Bagdadi method as the initial stage of learning to read and recognize the phrase and verses of Qur'an faster. The method involves the use of a dry wooden stick for knocking on tables while pronouncing each of the Qur'an or Arabic alphabets (like ا ب ت ث) or words (like ذهب, كتاب). The knocking should correspond students' pronunciations of the Qur'anic letters and words.

Before the advent of Bagdadi method, Iqra'a and Muqaddam method are used for teaching tahfiz students. The methods are traditional in nature which is more in behaviorist instructional strategies in which teacher control almost all learning activities in other words, teacher catered method. However, among the disadvantages of the method is lack of students' interest and motivation in learning (Smaldino & Lowther, 2007). Thus, Bagdadi Methods is seen as an alternative to those methods.

Many studies were conducted on the impact of the use of technology in teaching Qur'an on students learning satisfaction and motivation. For instance, a research was conducted on learning of Qur'an (Ta'allum Al-Qur'an) in multimedia by Alias (2005). The researcher investigated on students' satisfaction in their learning through the multimedia. Moreover, other previous studies in learning Qur'an were formed on using graphical user interface for virtually improved users (Razaly, 2010); and interactive multimedia learning of Al-Qur'an (Nor Feaza, 2006). Another researcher focuses on objectivism teaching theory in teaching tajweed (Abdu Hameed, 2010). However, there is still lacking on the research on the use of low cost instructional materials like the use stick as in Bagdadi Method on tahfiz students' motivation and on their ability to read Qur'an at ease.

Motivation and interest play important roles in students' learning. The assumption that: Instructional Technology (IT) increases students' motivation is seen in many arguments for why IT should be used in schools. It is common to say that students are more motivated when they learn by using IT. They found the lesson more pleasant, more attractive and more motivating to study with technological tools than with traditional means (Paul, 2002). Therefore, it is important for teachers to consider instructional materials in order to sustain motivation in learning.

On the other hand, there are researchers that indicate the influence of motivation on students' achievement and learning especially intrinsic motivation. For instance, Seafullah, (2012) pointed out that students with intrinsic motivation keep in reading materials more deeply, achieve a higher grade, and show more persistence in learning. Moreover, Passey, and Rogers (2004) claimed that intrinsic motivation predicts positive effects on students' achievements.

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Thus, when tahfiz students become intrinsically motivated in their learning on how to read and memorize Qur'an, without doubt they will achieve their optimum goal of memorizing the Holy Qur'an within a short period.

Research questions

- 1- How does learning with Bagdadi intrinsically motivate tahfiz students to read Qur'an?
- 2- For how long do tahfiz students use Bagdadi to enable them to read Qur'an?
- 3- What are the attitudes of tahfiz teachers and students toward the use of Bagdadi Method

Research Method And Data Collection

This qualitative research explored the tahfiz students' motivation in their learning with Bagdadi and instructional strategies followed by tahfiz teachers in teaching their students. The methodology affords the opportunity to experience people involved in the study and gain more understanding of the school (Hatch, 2002). A qualitative approach is appropriate in a study that requires a detailed understanding, or the situation needs exposition (Yin, 2009). According to Cresswell (2007), qualitative researchers, study activities in their natural settings and describe the experience using participants, perspectives. Case study was an appropriate choice by the researcher; it provides a detail perspective of the participants, and their experiences in the involvement of the schools. Case study paradigm allows for the in-depth exploration and provides opportunity to gather information about school activities in natural settings. The case study gains clear perspective through interviews and observations of both tahfiz teachers' and students' activities in Dar al-Muhibbeen school.

Participants of The Study

The participants of this study consisted of 15 tahfiz students, and 5 teachers. The participants were purposive selected based on their ability to provide adequate information required by the researcher. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) qualitative researchers mostly engage themselves into purposive sampling as they feel it yield the best understanding of what they are studying. Creswell (2012) reported that: purposive sampling is the best to assist the researcher to discover, gain insight, and have an in depth understanding of the school through the perspective of the participant.

The criteria of participant selection included the purpose of the study, and the precision of the study. The strategy of students' selection was based on the consensus with the teachers, because they are more aware of the students' strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, students' selection was diverse in demographic information, which was consisted of age, gender, and class. On the other hand, the selection of the teachers was particularly based on those teach the subject.

Research Instruments

The research is a qualitative research; there are several instruments of data collection in qualitative research method; such as interview, observation, text analysis and documentary analysis. Janesick (2004) stated that the collection of data must be thorough, relevant, and triangulated to produce sufficient evidence on the issue explored. Hatch (2002) also reported that researcher should endeavor to obtain data that will answer their research question. Therefore, observation and interview were the techniques used to triangulate data collection for the present study.

Observation

Observation is defined as the process by which facts became data (Johnson, & Christensen, 2012). They are also in the opinion that observational research is the systematic process of recording the behavioral patterns of people, objects, and occurrences without questioning or communicating with them. Observation can lead to deeper understanding than interviews alone, because it provides knowledge of the context in which events occur, and may enable the researcher to see things that participant themselves are not aware of, or that they are unwilling to discuss (Cohen, Manion,, & Morrison, 2011).

Therefore, the researcher conducted two nonparticipant observations in different classes with different teachers. According to Freankel and Wallen (2005) there are two types of research observation: participant and nonparticipant observation. The first one is an observation of some social event, that proceed and follow it and explanation of its meaning comes by the participant and spectators before, during and after its occurrence. While the latter, deals with the nonparticipation of the researcher in the event to be observed (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

The nonparticipant observations conducted by the researcher were based on Skinner and Belmont (1993) theory of intrinsic motivation and Gagne's nine events of instructions. Namely, the researcher observed students' intrinsic motivation based on their interest, enjoyment and effort to learn when they learn by Bagdadi method, and the teachers' teaching strategies based on the nine events, to see how they applied such events in the classroom.

The researcher quietly sat at the back of the classroom to observe students' activities in the class without involving himself in the activities. The main objective of this observation was to observe students' intrinsic motivation based on Skinner and Belmont (1993) and to observe teachers' strategies of teaching either the teachers follow Gagne's nine events of instructions or not.

The researcher negotiated with teachers about the schedules of the observation. Moreover, he informed the students what he would do before the observation took place. The researcher observed each classroom for a whole class period (30 minutes) to capture the

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whole learning activities at the class. The researcher was assisted by another friend. Both of us quietly left the classroom after each observation. The medium of instruction of teaching students was Malay, and the researcher does not understand Malay. Thus, the researcher was helped by his colleague who explained him what was going in the classroom.

Observation is one of the qualitative research instruments when it “(1) serves a formulated research purpose, (2) is planned deliberately, (3) is recorded systematically, and (4) is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

Interview

Another technique used by the researcher to collect data in this study was interview, which is probably the most common form of data collection in qualitative studies in education and it relies on human experience (Lichman, 2008). The most common form of interview is the person to person encounter in which one person elicits information from another. Group or collective formats can also be used to obtain data, but group interview need to account for group processes, a topic beyond the scope of this discussion (Cresswell, 2012). However, both person to person and group interview can be defined as a conversation but a “*conversation with a purpose*” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011) The main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information. The researcher wants to find out what is “in and on someone else’s mind” (Patton, 1990).

Therefore, the researcher interviewed two teachers and five students independently for this study with the interview protocol as mentioned by Litchman (2009). The purpose of the interview was to ascertain participants’ thoughts, attitudes and experiences on the Bagdadi method of teaching. The researcher developed semi structured interview questions based on the theoretical framework of intrinsic motivation and instructional strategies.

The interview questions for research question one were developed based on intrinsic motivation theory by Skinner and Belmont (1993). This was to examine tahfiz students’ interest, enjoyment, and persistence in learning. The interview questions for research question four were based on Gagne’s nine events of instructions. Whereas the interview question for research question two and five were not based on theory. Instead the responses merely used to explore the usage of Bagdadi among tahfiz students as well as the problems the teachers face while using Bagdadi, followed by offering possible solutions to the problems. Semi structured interview were used to get response from the participants of the study.

The semi structured interview questions were different for teachers and students due to the appropriate use of language. The researcher interviewed teachers at the head master’s office during school break depending on the convenience of the teachers. One of the teachers was interviewed in Arabic language while the other one was interviewed in English language.

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The interview for the teachers lasted approximately 25 minutes. However, the researcher interviewed students at the headmaster's office on the following day. The students were interviewed in Malay. The researcher asked the students in English and the researcher's Malay colleague was translating the questions to Malay, thus, the students can understand the questions. Then the students responded in Malay at the same time the researcher's colleague again was translating students' responses to English to the researcher. The interview lasted approximately 8 minutes for each student. However, the interview was recorded in Audio Recorder namely MP4.

The first part of the interview was about demographic information of tahfiz teachers which includes age, gender, teaching experience, marital status and teacher's position in the school. On the other hand, demographic information for students was based on age, gender and class level.

According to Cresswell (2007), interview is the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals. The decision to use interviewing as a primary mode of data collection should be based on the best way to get it. Dexter (1970) summarized when to use interviewing. Interviewing is the preferred tactic of data collection when it will get better data.

Findings And Discussion

Learning with Bagdadi Intrinsically Motivate Tahfiz Students to Learn Reading Qur'an

The finding of this research revealed that using Bagdadi in teaching tahfiz students to read Qur'an intrinsically motivate them to learn. This is because Bagdadi method has some features such as the use of sticks, play time and group activities that make students enjoyed, interested and to make more effort in learning compared to other traditional methods such Iqra'a and Muqaddam methods. One of the respondents said:

“Yes I used to be very interested anxious to learn by Bagdadi especially when we were divided into groups, each group was asked to do something, each group became very committed to accomplish such task before the other group. This raised our interest to learn more”

“What makes me happy and fun when learning with Bagdadi is play times and it gives me chance to interact with my friend during the lesson”

Another student says

...play times, such as knocking with stick on a small plat of wood, sometime the harmless beat on my mates' back instead of using stick makes me enjoy my learning

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Furthermore, responses from tahfiz teachers also support the students' responses that the use of Bagdadi method in teaching intrinsically motivates students. One of the teachers says:

I think Bagdadi method motivate the students, because, firstly, the system itself is an easy system. I mean just students need to read Qur'an, and a set of stick to make a sound according to letters they pronounce. Secondly, the method is innovative, in the sense that no one has done this before. So, it is new to students and it is easy. Thus the students get it fast. The third reason is that the method is systematic, and it has a structure. For example, you learn the Arabic letter first then move to HARAKAT up to certain technicalities of Tajweed like Madd and so on

This might indicate the benefit of Bagdadi in teaching tahfiz students. From this finding it revealed that Bagdadi integrated three different pedagogical method of teaching (drill and practice, cooperative learning and games). Each of the pedagogies is related one theory of the three learning theories; behaviorism and cognitivist respectively. **Drill and Practice:** is the act of rehearsing a behavior over and over, or engaging students in an activity again and again for the purpose of improving or mastering it, as people use to say "practice makes perfect" (Newby et al, 1996). According to Smaldino (1996) drill and practice method can be defined as behaviorist ranged technique in which students are given the same materials repeatedly until they master it. By referring this definition to the application of Bagdadi, the researcher found that tahfiz students practice the knock of sticks several times in order to master its cooperation to their sound of Qur'an words. For instance tahfiz students use one knock of stick for pronouncing letter like "ب,س,ل" two knocks for words like "رب," "جاء, بسم, نصر" and so forth. Students at the first stage of practice used to make mistake but gradually they perfect it.

In drill and practice as well as Bagdadi, learners are led through a series of practice exercises designed to increase fluency in a new skill or to refresh an existing one. To be effective drill and practice exercise include corrective feedback to correct errors that learners might make along the way.

Cooperative Learning: is a grouping strategy in which students work to gather to benefit from each other's learning potentials (Killen, 2009). In reference to Bagdadi, tahfiz teachers used to divide the students into groups of three to four students for each group. Students in each group were re-practicing what they have learned and helping each other in form of group. This finding supports the claim that students learn from each other when they as a project in a team (Arends, 2001). This consume a lot of time, also teacher needs to be very careful, if not, the students will do something else rather than the work assigned to them by the teacher.

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Based on the discussion it can be concluded that learning with Bagdadi as an IT intrinsically motivates tahfiz student to learn. This finding supports the finding of Cox (1997) on his own effective classroom pedagogy using IT in primary school. The responses from students in the research include: the use of IT increases students' commitment to the learning task and enhances their interest, sense of achievements in learning, and their self-esteem. Moreover, Bagdadi promote students-students interaction (cooperative learning) and teachers-students interaction. This also supports a report made by Barron and Orwing (1997) that introducing instructional Technology (IT) into the learning environment make learning more students-centered, it encourage cooperative learning, and increases teachers-students interactions.

Length of Time Taking by Tahfiz Students to Read Qur'an Through Bagdadi Method

The finding of this study clearly revealed the advantage of the use of Bagdadi is that it enables tahfiz students to learn how to read Qur'an within one month, especially for students who have good motor skills ability. This is because the school offers the subject every school day. One of the students stated

“I have learnt how to read Qur'an with Bagdadi method within a month.”

However, some students whose motor skills ability is weak it takes them two months before they learn how to read Qur'an through Bagdadi. One of those students says:

“I learned how to read Qur'an by Bagdadi in two months” then the researcher asked the students “why it took more time unlike your mates?” the student replied that “ I cannot easily use sticks and pronounce words at the same timey, so it takes me longer time before I mastered”.

This indicates Bagdadi is more appropriate to kinesthetic learners though auditory and visual learners can also learn effectively by Bagdadi. Holzberge, (1994) believed that using IT in teaching allows learners with different learning style to assimilate and apply knowledge. Kinesthetic learners do best when they learn by movement and touching. Thus, Bagdadi partially is about students' movement when learning to read Qur'an. This shows the accuracy of Bagdadi with tahfiz students whose age between 7 to 10 years, as mentioned by teaching by movement is more preferable for grade 4 to 8 students.

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Tahfiz Teachers' and Students' Perception toward Bagdadi

The data also revealed that both tahfiz teachers and students have positive perception on Bagdadi. Tahfiz students perceive that learning by Bagdadi makes learning easy and funny, and it gives them happiness and enjoyment in the classroom. For this reason the students do not feel tired to learn. Regarding this one of the students said: "*Bagdadi is easy to me*" Another one stated that: "*Bagdadi makes me happy in the class*"

On the other hand, few students have negative attitudes toward using Bagdadi in the classroom. Their perception is that Bagdadi is very difficult to operate, as one of the students reported that: "*It is very difficult to use*". This is due to the poor motor skills of the students.

Tahfiz teachers' perception on Bagdadi is that: Bagdadi is an interesting and it helps them to achieve their instructional objectives easily. Moreover, they also perceived that Bagdadi helps them to gain students' and maintain students' attention throughout the lesson.

Bagdadi method is an easier way of teaching young tahfiz students how to read Qur'an in an effective way. Because it is suitable for their level of learning which needs plays and innovative activities, for example we are in the era of technology development young students are exposed with many technological tools for their enjoyment. Therefore, if we do not use tactical method (like Bagdadi) in teaching.

This result can be attributed to benefit of Bagdadi in both tahfiz teachers' and students perception.

Conclusion and Recommendation for Further Research

Using Bagdadi method in teaching tahfiz students to read Qur'an intrinsically motivate them to learn. This is because Bagdadi method has some features such as use of sticks, play time and group activities that make students to be enjoyed, interested and to make more effort in learning. Unlike other traditional methods such Iqra'a and Muqaddam method, which negatively affect students' motivation to learn due to their stagnation and lack of innovativeness. One of the advantages of Bagdadi is that it enables tahfiz students to read Qur'an within one month, especially for students who have good motor skills.

The data also revealed that both tahfiz teachers and students have positive perception on Bagdadi. Tahfiz students perceive that learning by Bagdadi is easy and funny, and it gives them happiness and enjoyment in the classroom. Tahfiz teachers' perception on Bagdadi is that: Bagdadi is an interesting and easier way of enabling students to read Qur'an. They also perceived that Bagdadi helps them to gain students' attention and to achieve their teaching objectives attractively.

Despite the advantages of Bagdadi revealed by the data, yet there are some obstacles militating against the use of Bagdadi. Therefore, there is need for further research to find out

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the challenges faced by both tahfiz teachers and students when using bagdadi in teaching and learning respectively.

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