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Student's Perceptions Towards The Teaching And Learning Of *Jawi* (Arabic Letter) Under J-QAF Programme: A Case Study At Selected Government Primary Schools In The District Of Hulu Selangor

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Abstract

In Malaysian Educational System, Islamic Education is one of the core subject offered in the primary schools for Muslim students. Anyhow, studies have shown that they are weak in *Jawi* skills. Therefore, the Ministry of Education, Malaysia has designed special programme called j-QAF to enhance student's ability in *Jawi*, Qur'an, Arabic and Fard 'Ain. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the teaching strategies applied by Islamic Education teachers in teaching *Jawi*. The researcher has conducted a case study using self-constructed questionnaires. The respondents comprised of 112 male and 143 female year six students from the selected Government Primary Schools in the district of Hulu Selangor. A descriptive analysis was employed to provide meanings to the data. This simple descriptive statistical analysis includes percentages, frequencies and means. It was revealed that there are four frequent activities had been used; flash cards, drill technique, playing games and learning through songs. The findings also revealed that there are several methods applied by teachers in teaching *Jawi*. It was also found that students have positive perceptions towards *Jawi* subject. Generally, this study provides useful insights that can be benefited by those who involve in the field of Islamic education.

Keywords: Islamic Education, J-QAF Programme, Methods of Teaching *Jawi*, Teaching and learning *Jawi*.

INTRODUCTION

Acknowledging the important of the Islamic Education, *Jawi* subject (writing and reading Arabic letter) had been introduced in schools. In 1962, Islamic Education (IE) was introduced in Malaysian educational system. It was known as Islamic Religious Knowledge, and learning *Jawi* skills (writing and reading Arabic letter) was one of the disciplines in the subject. For its first attempt, it was subjected to one hundred and twenty (120) minutes or four periods per week (Abdullah Ishak, 1995). At the moment, the Islamic Education syllabus for primary school is prepared by a curriculum named Integrated Curriculum for Primary School (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah* [KBSR]) since 1983. Later, in the beginning of 1988 onwards, Islamic Education received good concentration when the time allocated to the subject was increased, from one hundred and twenty (120) to one hundred and eighty (180) minutes or from four (4) to six (6) periods per week in primary school, and to two hundred and forty (240) minutes or six (6) periods per week in secondary school (Ahmad Mohd, 2008).

In order to enhance students' interest as well as to build the character of Malaysian students in accordance with the Islamic teachings, the *Jawi, Quran, Arab and Fardhu Ain* (j-QAF) programme was introduced to Muslim students at the primary level, starting with Year One (1). Seminar organized by the Ministry of Education (MOE) has been decided that the implementation of *Jawi* model is to be carried out together with other j-QAF models. The MOE often ensure that teachers who teach *Jawi* have a wide knowledge and are required to secure at least a Diploma in Education qualification with specialise in Islamic knowledge. Based on the initial plans, j-QAF programme was implemented formally in national schools starting from year 2005 and would complete a circle of its implementation in year 2010.

Islamic Religious Knowledge is one of the component subjects offered in the primary schools for Muslim students. Unfortunately, most of the students feel that they learn the Islamic education purposely for passing in the examination rather than practicing it to be a good Muslim (Rosnani, 2004). Noticeably, students are weak in Islamic Education when they are weak in *Jawi*. Apart from that, *Jawi* is used to write the content of Islamic Education and mastering *Jawi* is also needed for students to read al-Qur'an fluently (Nik Rosila, 1997). Hence, the teaching of *Jawi* in Islamic education should be more effective to produce students who are proficient in the *Jawi* script after they followed subjects for six years in primary school and five years at secondary school level. According to Rosnani (2004), the Islamic education teachers prefer to use memorization in their lesson which did not encourage students to be more creative in thinking and actions.

Most schools facing problems with regard to the teachers' teaching skills. In another research, Abdul Aziz (1995) asserted that most of the respondents were unable to

read *Jawi* very well and it led to their low interest in learning Islamic education subject. This is because of the Islamic Education text book written in *Jawi* (Arabic letter). In order to practice an effective teaching of *Jawi*, the Islamic education teachers to be clear in terms of strategies, approaches, methods and techniques used during the teaching of *Jawi*. According to Abdul Raof (1993), a combination of various activities involving teaching strategies, approaches, methods and techniques will lead to effective teaching. According to Ibn Khaldun (2000), teachers should ensure that the contents of teaching and the problem of teaching and learning process well planned before progressing to other topics. Hence, teaching strategies proposed by Ibn Khaldun can help students in effective learning.

On the other hand, effective teaching *Jawi* is also related with teachers' behavior which is not only should always creative in planning, but also creative in teaching process. This practice is important because it will attract students to concentrate in class. In addition, the effective use of teaching aids will help the process of teaching and learning in an enjoyable manner and allow the materials to be easily understood by the students (Rashidi and Abdul Razak, 1998). In the teaching and learning process of j-QAF program, the use of teaching aids is emphasized to the j-QAF teachers.

As conclusion, diverse strategies and methods of teaching and learning will provide opportunity for students to increase their interest towards their teachers' teaching. Although the methodology of teaching and learning Islamic Education places much emphasis on teacher-centred approaches, teachers should be more versatile to use appropriate strategies to enhance cognitive and psychomotor skills of students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In general, this study aims to find out the strategies of teaching *Jawi* among j-QAF teachers. The main purposes of this study are:

- 1-To examine the intensity of *Jawi* subject and to what extent teaching *Jawi* for j-QAF programme plays its role in empowering Islamic Education.
- 2-To examine the intensity of the most preferable methodology used by j-QAF teachers in teaching *Jawi* at selected government primary schools in Hulu Selangor.
- 3-To investigate students' performance from learning *Jawi* under j-QAF programme.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a survey method. It intended to gain quantitative data on primary school year six students' perceptions towards the strategies in teaching *Jawi* applied

by j-QAF teachers in selected government primary schools in Hulu Selangor.

In order to obtain sample of students for this study, the researcher used convenience sampling method. A list of all students, identified by class was obtained from respective teachers of each school. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to all of the students to minimize the number of missing data in the study.

The researcher used questionnaires to analyses the students' perceptions on the strategies of teaching *Jawi* among j-QAF teachers. The validity of the research instrument was carried out by appointing a panel which consisted of two experts from a local university and government primary school for evaluation purpose in terms of the vocabulary, format as well as a clear comprehensive meaning on the content of each constructed item. In order to look at the reliability, a pilot study was conducted. The instrument reliability co efficiency value was found to be 0.75.

Upon two hundred and fifty five (255) year six students who were selected as research sample, all of them had gave their responses to the circulated questionnaires and they were found to return completed questionnaires to be used in the analysis. The obtained data were analyzed by applying statistical method to gain the required information using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Students' Demographic Background

This section presents some background information about the respondents of the present study in terms of gender and schools.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics According to Gender

Demographic Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Male	112	43.9
Female	143	56.1
	Total	
	255	100.0

Table 2
Distribution of the sample by schools

Table 1 shows the sample of the study which consisted of 255 year six students. The highest numbers of respondents 143 were female (56.1%) while the rest 112 were male students (43.9%). In terms of schools, Table2 reveals the list of the selected schools and the number of students in each school.

Name of the schools	Number of the students	
	Male	Female
1. Sek.Keb.KualaKubuBharu (1)	26	40
2. Sek.Keb.KualaKubuBharu (2)	37	33
3. Sek.Keb.AmpangPecah	19	31
4. Sek.Keb.Rasa	30	39

Students' Views on the *Jawi* Subject

With relation to the students' perception of the *Jawi* subject, there were requested to give their opinions on a few aspects related to the implementation of the subject. Further details on the students' agreement level could be seen in Table 3.

Table 3
Students' views on the *Jawi* Subject
N = 255

Students' Views	SA & A % (n)	U % (n)	D & SD % (n)
<i>Jawi</i> is an important subject to be learnt at school.	85.5 (218)	13.3 (34)	1.2 (3)
<i>Jawi</i> subject is important to facilitate me in reading Al-Quran.	85.0 (217)	12.2 (31)	2.8 (7)
<i>Jawi</i> subject is important to facilitate me to learn Arabic Language	72.9 (186)	21.2 (54)	5.9 (15)
<i>Jawi</i> subject is important to facilitate me to learn Islamic Education.	96.5 (246)	2.7 (7)	0.8 (2)
<i>Jawi</i> subject is difficult to learn.	8.6 (22)	12.5 (32)	78.8 (201)

The respondents gave their opinions regarding their views towards the *Jawi* subject. Overall it was found that the students understood (more than 85%) the basic concept of the importance of *Jawi* subject itself. However there were two items found whereby less than 85% students agreed that *Jawi* subject is difficult to learn (201 students, 78.8%) and only 186 students (72.9%) agreed that *Jawi* subject is important to learn Arabic language.

Students' Perceptions on the Methods Use in Teaching *Jawi*

The students also expressed their opinions on the methodology of teaching *Jawi* at selected government

primary schools in Hulu Selangor. The researcher divided the items into 3 groups. Refer Table 4, 5 and 6.

Group 1: Students Views on Activities in Teaching *Jawi*

Table 4
Students' Views on Activities in Teaching *Jawi*
N = 255

Teaching Activities	SA & A % (<u>n</u>)	U % (<u>n</u>)	D & SD % (<u>n</u>)
The use of flash cards facilitates me to remember <i>Jawi</i> alphabets	69.8 (178)	24.7 (63)	5.1 (13)
Drill technique to spell <i>Jawisyllable</i> is boring..	9.4 (24)	15.7 (40)	74.9 (63)
I enjoy learning while playing games in <i>Jawi</i> .	84.3 (215)	9.4 (24)	6.3 (16)
I enjoy learning <i>Jawi</i> through songs.	46.6 (119)	37.3 (95)	16.1 (41)

There are a few teaching activities suggested in *Jawi* Remedial Class model. With regard to the activities applied by j-QAF teachers, the research findings showed that teaching *Jawi* is best taught through learning with games activities (215 students, 84.3%) and drill technique (63 students, 74.9%). This was followed by the usage of flash cards would able to remember *Jawi* alphabets (178 students, 69.8%) and only (119 students, 46.6%) were enjoy learning through songs.

Group 2: Methods Applied by Teachers in Teaching *Jawi*

Table 5
Methods Applied by Teachers in Teaching *Jawi*
N = 255

Teaching Methods	SA & A % (<u>n</u>)	U % (<u>n</u>)	D & SD % (<u>n</u>)
<i>Jawi</i> subjects teachers used question exercises after a lesson is completed.	85.1 (217)	13.3 (34)	1.6 (4)
<i>Jawi</i> subjects teachers provide exercise after a lesson is completed.	89.4 (228)	9.4 (24)	1.2 (3)
<i>Jawi</i> subjects teachers encourage group activities	65.4 (167)	22.7 (58)	11.8 (30)
<i>Jawi</i> subjects teachers	58.9	24.7	16.1

gives reward to students who show improvement
Jawi subjects teachers used examples which are closest to the students.

(150)	(63)	(41)
78.8	19.2	2.6
(201)	(49)	(5)

In relation to the students' perception on methods applied by teachers in teaching *Jawi*, the findings showed that most of the students were satisfied with the methods implementation in the j-QAF programme. It was found that teachers provide them with an exercise (217 students, 89.4%), used question and answer (217 students, 85.1%), used examples closest to the students (201 students, 78.8%), encourage group activities (167 students, 65.4%) and the least method relate with giving reward (150 students, 58.9%).

Group 3: General perceptions on j-QAF teachers

Table 6
General Perceptions on j-QAF Teachers
N = 255

Teaching Methods	SA & A % (<u>n</u>)	U % (<u>n</u>)	D & SD % (<u>n</u>)
<i>Jawi</i> subjects teachers used ICT facilities when teaching <i>Jawi</i> subject.	46.3 (118)	34.9 (89)	18.8 (48)
<i>Jawi</i> subjects teachers used images during lesson	60.4 (154)	27.1 (69)	12.5 (32)
<i>Jawi</i> subjects teachers' teaching style attract my interest in learning <i>Jawi</i>	82.3 (210)	16.5 (42)	1.2 (3)
<i>Jawi</i> subjects teachers used a variety of teaching aids in teaching the subject in class.	66.6 (170)	25.5 (65)	7.9 (20)
<i>Jawi</i> subjects teachers consider my ability when teaching in class	59.6 (152)	34.5 (88)	5.8 (15)
<i>Jawi</i> subjects teachers prepared enough materials to be used by all students	75.3 (192)	22.4 (57)	2.4 (6)
Teachers' style of teaching <i>Jawi</i> makes it easier for me to learn <i>Jawi</i>	91.0 (232)	6.3 (16)	2.8 (7)

In terms of students' perceptions towards j-QAF teachers, there were mixed responses. The findings show that teachers' teaching styles makes students felt easy in learning *Jawi* (232 students, 91%) and interested (210 students, 82.3%). On the other hand, teachers prepared

enough materials (192 students, 75.3%), used a variety of teaching aids (170 students, 66.6%) and consider students' ability (152 students, 59.6%). However, only (118 students, 46.3%) admitted the teachers used ICT in teaching *Jawi*.

Students' Views on the Effect of Learning *Jawi*

Table 7

Students' Views on the Effect of Learning *Jawi*

N = 255

Statements	SA & A % (n)	U % (n)	D & SD % (n)
Identify <i>Jawi</i> alphabet well	96.0 (245)	3.5 (9)	0.4 (1)
Read <i>Jawi</i> syllables well.	87.8 (224)	9.8 (25)	2.4 (6)
Write <i>Jawi</i> alphabet well	85.5 (218)	12.2 (31)	2.4 (6)
Read Islamic Education textbook without the help of teachers.	73.8 (188)	20.8 (53)	5.5 (14)
Able to read materials in <i>Jawi</i> well	75.7 (193)	21.2 (54)	3.2 (8)
Differentiate English and Arabic loan word	74.5 (190)	21.6 (55)	3.9 (10)
Erase low self-esteem on my ability in <i>Jawi</i>	60.8 (155)	31.8 (81)	7.4 (19)
Confidence to enter <i>Jawi</i> Writing Competition	59.6 (152)	33.7 (86)	6.7 (17)
Knowing the correct technique in writing calligraphic	72.9 (186)	22.0 (56)	5.1 (13)
Increase interest in Islamic Education subject	88.2 (225)	10.2 (26)	1.6 (4)
Help me learn Arabic	77.6 (198)	18.8 (48)	3.6 (9)
Upgrade my ability in Reading Al-Quran	90.2 (230)	6.7 (17)	3.2 (8)

There are 12 questions were derived to describe students' view on the effectiveness of learning *Jawi*. The research findings showed that students were able to master well the skill to identify *Jawi* alphabet (45 students, 96%), reading Al Quran (230 students, 90.2%), increase interest in Islamic

Education subject (225 students, 88.2%), read *Jawi* alphabets (224 students, 87.8%) and write *Jawi* alphabets correctly (218 students, 85.5%). On the other hand, more than half of respondents had given them extra benefits such as help in learn Arabic (198 students, 77.6%), read materials in *Jawi* correctly (193 students, 75.7%), differentiate English and Arabic loan word (190 students, 74.5%), read Islamic Education textbook (188 students, 73.8%) and know calligraphic technique (186 students, 72.9%). However, the students achieved average or less good level to erase low self-esteem (155 students, 60.8%) and confidence to enter *Jawi* competition (152 students, 59.6%).

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings, it can generally be noted that the implementation of *Jawi* Remedial Class model is effective. This can be seen through the students' perceptions towards *Jawi* subject. It had increased their interest in learning Islamic Education. In fact most of them also aware of the importance of *Jawi* teaching which are related to other components of Islamic Education such as to recite Al-Quran and learn Arabic Language. In terms of teaching activities and methods suggested in *Jawi* Remedial class, most of the students feel that teaching strategies applied by j-QAF teachers are effective. The most preferable methods among the students were learning with games activities, drill technique, flash cards and learning through songs. According to Musa Musa Daia (1992), students will gain the most effective learning if they learn something suitable with their interest, purpose and benefits.

Even though the teaching strategies with well planned activities recommended in the j-QAF syllabus is seen as effective, however attention needs to be given towards teaching aids. Not many Islamic education teachers seemed interested to use new instructional technology to enrich and improve students' understanding (46.3%). Besides that, the research findings showed teachers' behavior also have given good impact to support students in learning *Jawi* such as consider students' different ability (59.6%), gives reward to students (58.9%) and increase students' confidence in *Jawi* competition (59.6%).

A few suggestions are given based on this discussion. **First**, *Jawi* Remedial class programme needs to be continued beside continuous monitoring and improvement need to be taken to ensure that students really have interest towards the Islamic Education which would then lead to provide a positive impact. **Second**, serious attention need to be taken among j-QAF teachers should be provided with intensive *Jawi* courses to help students gain proficiency in learning *Jawi*. This will help to improve teaching skills as well as to achieve expected objectives. **Finally**, it is necessary and fun if the Ministry of Education could provide instructional aids, tools and games for learning especially for students *Jawi* Remedial class. Perhaps j-QAF teachers need to gain support from all parties in order to ensure its

successful achievements as well as to ensure that teaching *Jawi* is conducted more smoothly and effectively.

CONCLUSION

Jawi Remedial Model class is among the initiatives taken by Ministry of Education Malaysia to instill students' interest in Islamic Education. It begins to be instilled since primary level to ensure that the expected objectives are achieved. Therefore a continuous attention and monitoring as well as solid support from all parties need to be given to the implementation class so that students and teachers will gain the expected benefits.

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