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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TEACHING AND LEARNING THE HOLY QUR'AN IN MALAYSIA AND OMAN: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

The Qur'an is the Holy Book in Islam and reading it is an act of worship. Various efforts have been made by the Muslim scholars to ensure that the Muslim generation is able to read the Qur'an. Based on this statement, this study aims to study the teaching and learning al-Qur'an in two Islamic countries, Malaysia and Oman. This study is a qualitative study in which the data analysed in this study will be the analysis of documents related to the development of Qur'anic teaching in Oman and Malaysia. This study found that the al-Baghdadiyah method is the traditional method in teaching and learning the Holy Qur'an in Malaysia, while al-Baghdadiyah method and al-Nuraniyyah method are traditional method in Oman. Second, the teachings of the Qur'an have also changed in accordance with the changes of the times. Third, both governments have shown great determination in ensuring that the Muslim generation can read the Qur'an by integrating the study of the Qur'an in the curriculum in their respective countries.

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Introduction:-

The teaching and learning of the Qur'an are an important foundation in building a strong ummah. Since the time of the Prophet (PBUH), the Prophet Muhammad placed great emphasis on teaching and learning the Qur'an to the companions. Along with the passage of time and the development of Islam across various continents, various methods of learning the Qur'an have been introduced by Islamic scholars to continue the work of the Prophet (PBUH). In this context, Oman and Malaysia are two Islamic countries located on different continents. This study is a pioneer study, looking into the methods of teaching and learning the Qur'an in two countries as these two countries are in different localities and cultures altogether. Thus, this study is seen as important to enrich the reference sources of Qur'anic studies in the Islamic world.

Traditional Method in Teaching and Learning al-Qur'an in Malaysia and Oman

The history of teaching and learning al-Qur'an began with the first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad SAW (PBUH) through the angel Jibril AS in the Cave of Hira. The first process of teaching the Qur'an took place when Jibril AS taught Rasulullah SAW to recite the first verse of the Qur'an, known as Iqra'. While the process of

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Rasulullah SAW repeating the recitation of Jibril AS is a learning process. At this stage, Jibril AS was a teacher while the Prophet Muhammad SAW was a student who listened to the teacher's recitation. This process was known as *TalaqqiMusyafahah*, in which the Prophet SAW carefully listened to the recitation of the verse delivered by Jibril AS, then the Prophet repeated and memorized the verse (al-Buti, 1991).

In Malaysia, traditionally, there is a method that is widely used in studying the Holy Qur'an which is delivered by *talaqqi* and *musyafahah* using al-Baghdadiyah Method. According to Sharifah Norshabani et. al (2018), the al-Baghdadiyah method is the oldest and most widely used method in the world. It is believed to have originated in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq and was introduced in Malaysia in line with the arrival of Islam in this country centuries ago. This al-Baghdadiyah method uses a book as a learning module called Muqaddam which is the main teaching materials for the basic recitation of the Qur'an (Laki et al., 2015).

The following paragraph depicts the steps of al-Baghdadiyah method. This method emphasizes on the identification of *hijaiyyah* letters, vowels, and spellings. This al-Baghdadiyah method uses the method of spelling by pronouncing the letters from *alif* (ا) to *ya* (ي) in a drill approach until students memorized it. Next, the students are taught to spell a single letter mixed with *harakat*, namely *kasrah*, *dhommah* and *fathah*. The students will spell and sound out the verses that have different *harakat* and punctuations, consisting of two or more syllabi and four syllabi. There is a long sound reading, short, buzzing and not buzzing. After the students master these steps, they are asked to recite the verses of the Qur'an without spelling it again. If this student can recite the verses of the Qur'an, then they can recite the verses of the Qur'an and surahs from al-Fatihah, al-Nas to Surah al-Naba' (Curriculum Section Islamic and Moral Education KPM 2004).

On the other hand, In Oman, the community traditionally studies the al-Qur'an with *talaqqi* and *musyafahalike* that practiced in Malaysia. In fact, the method used is like the method used in Malaysia; the al-Baghdadiyah method. However, in addition of using the method of al-Baghdadiyah, the Oman community also uses another method which is named as al-Nuraniyyah Method. (Maimoona, 2019). al-Nuraniyyah Method is to facilitate Muslims to read the Qur'an correctly. It is a combination of recognizing Arabic letters and tajwid al-Qur'an. This method was first introduced in India and subsequently expanded to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa and other Islamic countries. Among the advantages of this method are improving the pronunciation of Arabic letters and the points of articulation letters as well as correcting the short and long length of a sound when sounding Arabic letters. It covers all the laws of tajwid al-Qur'an concisely.

Furthermore, syllabus in al-Nuraniyyah Method is suitable for all age groups but learning at a young age is easier and more effective. This does not mean it is unsuitable for the elderly. It requires a greater focus in understanding this study (al-Ra'i, Mohd Faruq, 2014) The syllabus in al-Nuraniyyah Method has been very well formulated and organized, and it is distributed in order and gradual way. It has used examples from the verses of the Qur'an as the best examples for students to train the ability to recite the Qur'an phrases with tajwid.

The syllabus in this method begins by introducing a single *hijaiyyah* letter, then a combined *hijaiyyah* letter, then a truncated letter (*hurfmughattaat*), then a short vowel which is diacritical marks is placed below or above the letters known as *fathah*, *kasra* and *dhommah*, then *tanwin*, then practice on short vowels and long vowels, then *alifsoghirah*, *hurfa'al-saghirah* and *hurfwawal-saghirah*. Then, *hurfmad* and *hurflin*, and the practice on *tanwin*, *hurfmad* and *hurfleem*. Then the *sukun* and the exercise further on *sukun*. After it, the *syiddah* and exercise on it, and then it came up with exercises for almost all kinds of *mad*, then in the last lesson, the exercise for all the remaining laws of tajwid such as the rulings of the nun *sakinah*, the rulings of the *mimsakinah* and so forth

Contemporary Method in Teaching al-Qur'an in Oman and Malaysia

The learning and teaching of the Qur'an has undergone a variety of changes in line with the development of education in the world. The same situation happens to the learning and teaching of the Qur'an which has also changed with the changes of this age. In Malaysia, the development of learning and learning of the Qur'an has also received a paradigm shift. Traditionally, it only happened in the homes of teachers, now it has received widespread coverage by the mass media and advancement of technology, which is triggering public awareness of the importance of learning the Qur'an. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has changed the landscape of learning and teaching of the Qur'an.

In Malaysia, specifically, several TV programs have received warm response from the public such as the appearance of the reality TV *Akademial-Qur'an*, *Program Mari Mengaji* (Let's read Qur'an), *Mari Bertarannum* (Let's tarannum) on TV9, *TilawahInteraktif* (Interactive Tilawah) on TV1 and *Kalam Suci* (Sacred versus) on Astro Oasis. These programs had received encouraging responses from younger and older generations where Qur'an-reading programs are more relaxed and fun. As the world was hit the epidemic of COVID-19, online learning or also known as e-learning platform is beginning to be the choice of society in this era of pandemics. In the time of pandemic COVID-19, the Malaysian society has changed their medium of learning and teaching al-Qur'an by using a variety of digital tools. Digital platform has opened lots of opportunities for learning such as *Facebook*, *Youtubechannel*, *Moodle*, *Zoom*, *Googleclassrooms*.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, Oman, being a country on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, has also paid a deep attention to the teaching of the Qur'an by the government and scholars. According to Osborne (2020), Oman is a relatively advanced country in the field of the Qur'an by introducing a long-distance online program to read the Qur'an by introducing a program named as "Electronic Program for Learning the Holy Qur'an". By introducing such a program, Oman seems to have taken advantage of the latest technology by setting up a platform for teaching the Qur'an. Rasydi Tahir (2019) also mentioned that the country of Oman is a country that emphasizes on the study of the Qur'an. In traditional times, parents had sent their children to mosques, Kuttabs and established Qur'anic schools to recite the Qur'an. Now with rapid technology advances, the development of technology has opened various opportunities in the teaching and learning of the Qur'an.

The Role of Government in Teaching and Learning Qur'an to The People

The Malaysian government's determination is to ensure that all Malaysian Muslims can read the al-Qur'an. According to Siti Mursyidah (2018), the Malaysian government has made efforts to consolidate the teaching and learning of Qur'an by introducing the integrated secondary school curriculum in 1988 by making the al-Qur'an as a major component in the subject of Islamic Education. In this curriculum, full emphasis is on the ability to read and understand the verses of the Qur'an, strengthen the Islamic faith, worship, and a way of life in Islam. al-Qur'an is not only taught for students to recite but also designed to create the understandings of the meanings of al-Qur'an. As meanings are being emphasized, students are learning to appreciate it. Memorized verses were also added for supplies to perform worship perfectly (KPM,1988).

In the meantime, in accordance with current developments, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MMOE) made the book *Iqra'* as a method of teaching recitation of the Qur'an compiled. Truly, it to adapt or modify the old method of Baghdadi so that students can read the Qur'an effectively and efficiently. Students can learn Qur'an in a shorter period. In addition, MMOE also introduced the al-Qur'an Skills Class Program as an effort to further elevate the al-Qur'an. Besides, students are encouraged to study Qur'an in more depth in the field of *tarannum*, *qiraat*, memorization and *ulumul-Qur'an* (Omar et al. 2016).

At the same time, the Omanis Ministry of Education (OMOE) has shown its seriousness in connecting the current generation with al-Qur'an literacy by formulating a curriculum that focuses on reading skills, understanding of the meaning of al-Qur'an verses and the practicality of those verses in daily life. According to Maimoonal-Zadjali (2018), for the current generation, the learning of the Qur'an will start from grade one (basic) and continue until grade 12. While from the point of view of the syllabus of learning tajwid, learning about the laws of tajwid begins in the grade 6 and continues until the grade 9. In this syllabus, students will begin to study the law of *nun al-sakinah* and *tanwin*, *mimal-sakinah* and *tanwin*, the law of *al-qalqalah*, the law of *lafzal-jalalah*, the law of *hurfaal-ra'*, the law of *mad*, and the law of *makhrajhurfa*. In this syllabus, students will master in two aspects, namely theory and practice.

Of course, the seriousness of this OMOE will not succeed except by providing trained and skilled al-Qur'an teachers. In implementing this idea, the OMOE has carried out several programs to improve the quality of Qur'an teachers. Therefore, efforts to organize workshops and training courses are implemented to help teachers of the Qur'an carry out their functions in producing students who are not only proficient in reading the Qur'an but also able to understand the contents of its verses. Thus, it will help students practice Qur'an in their lives.

Conclusion:-

The above study has achieved its goal by discussing the aspects of teaching and learning of the Qur'an in Oman and Malaysia. This study found that the al-Baghdadiyyah method is the traditional method in teaching and learning

Qur'an in Malaysia, while in Oman, the community also uses al-Baghdadiyyah method, the same method used in Malaysia, but it has been enhanced using other methods, al-Nuraniyyah method. Second, the teachings of the Qur'an in both countries have also changed in accordance with the changes of the times. Third, both governments have shown great efforts and determinations in ensuring that today's Muslim generation are able to read and understand the Qur'an by incorporating the study of the Qur'an in the curriculum in their respective countries.

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