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Factors Of Time Constraints For Memorizing The Quran And Learning Arabic In Higher Education

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Abstract
The tahfiz program in universities is one of the initiatives that help students sustain their Quranic memorization. Alternatively, the program's establishment aims to preserve the consistency of Quranic memorization amongst students currently pursuing professional studies at the tertiary level. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the contributing factors to time constraints that prevent effective outcomes of this particular program. This study is qualitative and depends much on in-depth interviews and document analysis techniques. The results of the study show that there are a relative number of challenges encountered by students that require consideration by all relevant parties, including academic workload, time restrictions, and the extracurricular activities organized by the faculties and colleges. This suggests that remarkable attention is necessary from appropriate parties to ensure the program's effectiveness and produce professional huffaz in the future. Insufficient focus on time management by the proper parties may adversely affect students' ability to implement the technique proposed by Muslim scholars for comprehending the verses of the Qur'an, which involves attaining proficiency in the Arabic language and its associated fields of knowledge.
Keyword: Tahfiz; Higher Education; Time Constraint; Arabic Learning; Challenges

INTRODUCTION

The methodology of memorizing the Quran is a revelational approach practised by the Prophet Muhammad in learning the Quran from Jibril AS recorded in al-Qiyamah chapter verse 17 and al-A'la chapter verses 6 to 7 (Arifin, 2019). The verses were later taught to the other Companions (Al-Qaysi, 1977). The Prophet (s.a.w.) was an enthusiastic person who was keen to learn the Quran from Jibril AS, as recorded in the hadith narrated by al-Bukhari (Al-Nawawi, 1998). During the Prophet's time, the companions devoted their time in reciting and memorizing the Quran at all possible times and situations (Ibn Kathir, 1996). This suggests that the companions have prioritized their time in an attempt to learn the Qur'an.

Significantly, some companions devoted their whole day to reading and memorizing the Quran, while others preferred to read and memorize the Quran at specific times, such as before going to bed or before prayer (A. Ismail et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the Companions generally dedicated their time to reading and memorizing the Quran conscientiously. They acknowledged that Quranic memorization is an essential form of worship and therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the Quran is properly received and comprehended by Muslims.

(S. Ismail, 2018) argues that Quranic memorization is part of Islamic culture among Malays. Religious education at that time was delivered by encouraging the

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children to learn the Quran and memorize it from a young age at religious institutions known as *pondok* or *madrasah*. In addition, children were also frequently involved in the Quran recitation activities in mosques or at home. However, *Tahfiz's* education has transformed into various forms of education over the years. It is professionally governed by the Federal Government, the State Islamic Religious Council (MAIN), the State Islamic Department (JAIN), a non-governmental organization (NGO), or a private *Tahfiz* centre (Khalil et al., 2021).

The *Tahfiz* education system is also expanding across all levels of education in Malaysia, from primary (Abdullah et al., 2021) to secondary (Alias, 2020) to tertiary levels. Consequently, the development of *Tahfiz* education in Malaysia is widely acknowledged by the community as they realize the significance and value of educating children in the Quran (Ramli et al., 2017). Thus, the Quranic educational system is well received on various levels by those who consider that children's education is necessary to have justly balanced approaches in both worldly and spiritual contexts.

Concerning this matter, higher educational institutions have specifically designed Tahfiz programmes in both public and private institutions to support graduates in optimizing their capabilities as religious scholars or professionals in their respective fields. Thus, Darul Quran JAKIM, in collaboration with Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Management & Science University (MSU), Universiti Cyberjaya (UoC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), and Universiti Teknikal Malaysia in Melaka (UTeM) represent a few of the universities that provide opportunities to *Tahfiz* students in higher educational institutions at different levels of their studies and areas (JAKIM, 2021). There were other tertiary institutions that also had developed Tahfiz programmes, such as Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) (Mohd Darif, 2019), Universiti Teknologi MARA (Najahudin Lateh et al., 2022), and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) (Shaarani Ismail, 2019). Thus, the commitment of different institutions to ensuring that students have access to these educational privileges has demonstrated that they are potentially an invaluable asset to the nation and a beneficial resource to society as a whole.

The achievement of students in completing the memorization of the Qur'an at school is not a guarantee of their capability of keeping Quran memorization in a long term (Training et al., 2020). Unfortunately, as *Tahfiz* students further their studies at the tertiary educational level, they encounter issues and challenges related to the time required to complete their studies. It is supported by a study conducted by (Kualitatif, 2023), in which the majority of the students enrolled in the *Tahfiz* program agreed that the pressure of academic schedules was one of the most significant challenges that prevented them from maintaining their Quranic memorization. The study suggested that of 65 students, 44 (65.7%) agreed that this was the case, and 41 (61.2%) claimed that the busy schedules of academic assignments and their lack of motivation were imposed due to time constraints. Alternatively, this is reflected in the achievement level of student's memorization of the Quran by Mohd Ashmir Wong et al. (2022) at the diploma level, which shows that there were only 19 students (10.4%) at the diploma level who were able to accomplish estimate around 26 to 30 *Juz* of the Quran, while 72 (39.7%) students only achieved from *Juz* 1 to 5. In contrast, at the diploma level, the maximum achievement level of students was 21 (46.6%) at the second of 1/6 (*Juz* 6–10). The study conducted by Muhammad Ikhwanuddin and Che Noraini Hashim (2014) has revealed a statistically significant association between the scores of respondents in Tafsir and their scores in Qur'an

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memorization. Thus, this research was conducted to discover the factors that constitute a time constraint on the ability of students to complete the syllabus of al-Quran memorization as specified in the teaching co-curriculum offered by the higher education provider. This study is to analyze the contributing factors to the time constraint among university students in achieving excellence in memorizing the Quran in order to understand its countless values through Tadabbur process that will not be reached except through Arabic learning as suggested by Muslim scholars.

METHOD

This study is qualitative in nature by adopting a field research approach, which is consistent with the opinions of (Darusalam & Hussin, 2016) adopt (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). The researcher conducted an in-person meeting with the selected informants to collect verbatim data Bryman, A. (2008). The data were also obtained through content analysis methods of relevant studies in relation to the *Tahfiz* educational strategies and their constraints, as well as to achieve the objective of the study.

The research was conducted at one of the public universities in Perlis. Concerning this matter, seven informants were selected from Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Perlis (UiTMPs) for the purpose of the study after permission from related parties was approved. The informants were later interviewed by the researcher at the Islamic Centre, also known as Masjid al-Nur, located at the Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perlis Branch.

This study using the purposive sampling technique as recommended by Merriam, S. B. (1988) adopt (Ryan et al., 2012). The researcher employed the guidelines for selecting the sample that were suggested by (Van Dalen et al., 1993). As a result, the informants are compulsory to be among those who have accomplished their memorization of the Quran and have participated in the university's *Tahfiz* program. In this regard, the predetermined criteria were established, including the *Tahfiz's* educational background, involvement in the university's *Tahfiz* program, and successfully finishing the memorization of the Quran.

Research Instrument

According to (Kahn et al., (2003) and (Long, 2009), an interview is a procedure for getting verbal data by directly conversing with the informants. The study employed an intensive interview, which includes semi-structured questions and is also complemented by supplementary questions aimed at obtaining comprehensive data from informants (Darusalam & Hussin, 2016). The interview questions were adapted from Intan Zakiah's (2018) research on *Tahfiz* students at Darul Quran and its branches in each state of Malaysia.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of the data was verified through informants review to ensure the accuracy of the information, as suggested by (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). Meanwhile, the reliability of the study is measured by adopting the repetition of the interview technique as proposed by (Baker, 1982) whereby the same informant serves as the subject, but the location and time of the meeting is held are different depending on the convenience and flexibility of the informants.

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Data Analysis Procedure

The interview sessions were recorded using a Digital Voice Sound Recorder 32GB T60 device. The recordings were later transcribed verbatim for further analysis by using the Jefferson Transcription System using specific symbols as shown in the table below;

Table 1. The Jefferson Transcription System

Symbol	Description
(.)	A micropause
(0.1), (0.2), (0.4), (0.5)	A timed pause
. emm	Inbreath
~	Shaky voice
>>	Quickened pace of speech (regardless of content)

Source: Ghazali Darusalam & Sufean Hussin, 2021)

Data Decoding

The interview recording uses the Loose Networks method suggested by(Gough & Scott, 2000). Subsequently, the samples interviewed were identifiable through the established sampling criteria. They were classified according to the order of the interview session, with *Tahfiz* Student number 1 being classified as TS1, *Tahfiz* Student number 2 as TS2, and so on.

Table 2. Students' Schedule Interview

Informant	Interview Date		Interview Location		Confirmation Date	
	Session 1	Session 2	Session 1	Session 2	Session 1	Session 2
TS1	15th December 2022	31st January 2023	Conference Room, Department of Students Affairs, UiTMPs	Masjid an-Nur, UiTMPs	31st October 2022	1st February 2023
TS2						
TS3						
TS4						
TS5						
TS6						
TS7						

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The informants are between the ages of 19 and 21 years old and have a background in Tahfiz education from secondary school. They represent almost every state in Malaysia. Each has successfully finished their Quranic memorization at the school level, possesses 5 to 8 years of relevant experience, and is currently studying different courses at the selected university.

Table 3. Demographic Profile Of The Informants

Informant	Age	State	Previous school	Faculty	Year of memorizing	Total *Juz*	Education level
TS1	19	Pulau Pinang	Maahad Tahfiz Sains Yayasan Khairiah	Applied Science	7	30	Diploma
TS2	19	Kedah	MRSM Kepala Batas, Pulau Pinang	Applied Science	5		
TS3	20	Selangor	Maahad Tahfiz al-Quran al-Islah	Computer Science and	7		

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				Mathematics			
TS4	19	Sabah	Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama Kota Kinabalu	Applied Science	6		
TS5	19	Kelantan	Maahad Tahfiz Sains	Applied Science	7		
TS6	19	Terengganu	Sekolah Menengah Imtiaz Yayasan Terengganu, Dungun	Accounting	7		
TS7	21	Kuala Lumpur	Sekolah Menengah Integrasi Sains Tahfiz, MAWIP	Accounting	8		

Contributing Factors to Time Constraints

Based on the findings of the study, there are three main contributing factors to the time constraints for those particular students in maintaining their memorization of the Quran is summarized in the following table:

Table 4. Thematic Analysis On Contributing Factors To Time Constraints

Themes	Subthemes	Frequency	Examples
Academic Workload	Assignments	5	*"Aaa.. for my course, lab reports (0.6), $laughs$.. are roughly already 10 assignments in the first semester"* (TS2/IS1/31.01.23(MU). *"Aaa.. for my course, lab reports (0.6), $laughs$.. are roughly already 10 assignments in the first semester"* (TS2/IS1/31.01.23(MU). *"For me, to memorize the Quran is (0.2), emm (0.1) time, because it's not enough to revise.. Other than that many assignments that need to be done like quizzes, homework, project, pair works.. presentation, my assignments for only this semester are already more than twenty (assignments)"* (TS3/IS2/31.01.23(MU). *"… Usually I'm busy with assignments.. there seems to be too many assignments that I slept at 5 in the morning..and then at night then at night I also have to study.. there's also tests and exams.."* (TS5/31/01.23(MU). *"…. When I'm trying to revise, there are friends who want to chat, play games."* (TS4/IS2/31.01.23(MU). *"Time. My obstacle in strengthening Quranic memorization is time constraint. As a student, most time is spent on classes, studies, assignments, tutorials, tests and quizzes. So the time for the Quran becomes limited."* (TS7/IS2/31.01.23(MU).
	Tests	2	
	Exams	1	
	Lab reports	1	
	Tutorials	1	
	Quizzes	2	
	Pair works	1	
	Homework	1	
	Project	1	
	Presentation	1	
	Classes	3	

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Time Restrictions	Time	3	*"There's not enough time ~ Sometimes there are a lot of things that need to be done in one day. There are also times when class finishes late every day. (0.1) So there's no time to revise…"* (TS2/IS1/15.12.22(MU). *"Time. The time.. >> Because university is… (0.1) not the same as when studying at school.(0.2) Other than that.. emm (0.2). At university >> the time to revise is quite limited."* (TS2/IS1/31.01.23(MU). *"…. Being a student is.. quite hard, I have to be wise in making time to revise because class is unpredictable… (0.2). There are classes that need to be changed to night time, that's the problem"* (TS6/IS1/15.12.22(MU).
Extracurricular Activities	Students' associations	2	*"Sometimes here… a lot of things to do.. recreation, playing sports with friends.. hehe.. Plus I also hold a position in my faculty association, so there's association's meeting, holding a program.. When at night I'll be too tired to memorize"* (TS3/IS1/15.12.22/BSHEP). *"Emm… I…. because I joined a lot of programs… so it's hard to give a commitment. Besides that… there's also recreation like sports.. college programs.. by holding a position in college a lot of things need to be done, so sometimes I didn't manage to memorize the Quran due to tiredness"* (TS5/IS1/15.12.22./BSHEP).
	College programs	2	
	Meeting	2	
	Playing sports/recreation	2	

Academic Workload

(Wan Razab & Othman, 2011) advocated systematic student task management to reduce excessive workload and academic burnout. It was implemented to prevent students from becoming discouraged and pessimistic about the load imposed by their daily duties. According to (Hassan et al., 2022) the lack of motivation in completing memorization in the context of *Tahfiz* program is caused by the primary responsibility imposed and the effect caused by classmates who are not included in the program.

The findings demonstrate that time has become a constraint for students due to excessive academic workloads and thus, pressuring them to focus on the *Tahfiz* programme consistently. Concerning this matter, Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping has suggested individual stress is caused by two factors, namely challenge stressors and hindrance stressors. Challenging pressure is capable of encouraging individuals to adjust to the environment and perceive the pressure positively. Conversely, hindrance stressors have negative consequences for the individual. In other words, challenging stressors are potentially harmful to the student's mental stability and social well-being as well as their academic performance due to the different circumstances of learning and the environment (Thawabieh & Qaisy, 2012; Md. Daud Ismail et al., 2016). Consequently, it will severely affect their performances and commitment to the Tahfiz program and influence the achievement of their Quran memorization.

Time Restrictions

Referring to the interview results with informants, three of the seven students admitted that their commitment to learning had affected their concentration in maintaining their Quranic

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memorization. This was due to their hectic class schedules. The following represent a few of the data given by the informants in this regard:

Nevertheless, students are advised to continuously locate time to repeat memorization in the morning and before the start of learning time to maintain their memorization, as suggested by (Nazir Kadir et al., 2021). Similarly, it is also recommended by (Fathiyah Mohd et al., 2020) that the disciplinary element is necessary to emphasize so that time management can be properly organized to achieve the specified objectives. This suggests that commitment, strategic repetition process (*Muraja'ah*), and goal setting are required through the selection of difficult chapters, specifying a proper time, maintaining a conducive learning environment, looking for motivating transmit friends, and healthy competition in doing *Muraja'ah*, as well as establishing appropriate techniques in memorization (Fatimah Zaharah et al., 2020).

Extracurricular Activities

Despite the hectic class schedule and academic workload, the involvement in extracurricular activities at the university also contributes to the time constraint, which hinders students from optimizing their focus in the *Tahfiz* program. Those extracurricular activities include student associations, college activities, and sports.

The collected data above align with the study conducted by (Fatimah Zaharah et al., 2020), where by she emphasized that student involvement is identified as the contributing factor to this matter. However, their engagement in extracurricular in the university is essential to expose them to various skills related to the work field in the future. Additionally, it also works as a means to improve their spiritual and ethical values, enhance their leadership skills, boost their national identity, and increase their capability in reasoning (Pengurusan Kegiatan Aktiviti Pelajar Universiti Teknologi MARA, 2014). Thus, the skills acquired from the activities are beneficial primarily for *Tahfiz* students and, in fact, should not be considered as drawbacks but rather beneficial to establish their marketability in the future (S. Ismail, 2018). Nevertheless, it required both parties, students and university management, to justly balance the priority by considering the ability of the student itself. Alternatively, the students are responsible for organizing their time carefully and utilizing their flexible time properly, as it will affect their continuity in Quran memorization. Therefore, time is extremely precious and needs to be managed wisely by everyone, as emphasized by the Prophet P.B.U.H in one hadith: "*There are two blessings that many people are deceived into losing: health and free time."* (Al-Bukhari, 2002).

As to conclude, the finding shows that all informants agreed that the three most prevalent factors that constitute a time constraint are time restrictions, the academic workload at the university, and extracurricular activities organized by the faculties, colleges, and student associations. From their perspective, these three elements are considered as limiting factors in establishing their memorization of the Quran at the university level. This is supported by (Hashim, 2016), in which time allocation is a critical issue that requires considerable concern and improvement in *Tahfiz* education of all levels. In addition, the factors of time constraints as mentioned above not only affect the students in strengthening their memorization but the understanding of the Qur'an through the mastery of the Arabic language is also affected. This matter is supported by the findings of (Zaini et al., 2021) that learning Arabic supported by learning high-frequency words explicitly has a positive impact on understanding the verses of the Quran. These crucial matters need to be taken seriously due to strengthening Quran memorization

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strategy through learning components of Arabic schematas such as *Nahw* and *Sorf* as suggested by (Zahriah Binti Hussin, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Time management is a vital component to actualize student achievement at all levels of education and therefore, it requires all parties to enhance their awareness regarding the significance of time by establishing time balance in daily life, ultimately the *huffaz* to preserve their Quranic memorization. In spite of academic workload may potentially assist students in memorizing al-Quran by improving them to be innovative in managing their lives systematically, the intense pressure placed could cause them struggle to accomplish the goals and objectives of the *Tahfiz* program. Students, on the contrary, are required to enhance their self-control in order fulfil academic demands, while also ensuring they have sufficient time for practicing their memorization of the Qur'an. Meanwhile, universities and parents can be involved by providing sufficient guidance to better comprehend the circumstances of students entering the professional field as *huffaz* that will eventually reach the objective of al-Quran which to appreciate its content throughout their lives.

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