

LEARNING AL-QURAN FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

(Pembelajaran al-Quran untuk Anak Kelainan Upaya)

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, children with disabilities (OKU) include hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical impairment, speech impairment, mental impairment, learning disabilities and various disabilities. Quranic learning for children with disabilities (OKU) is often neglected. This is because the community considers that children with disabilities are not required to study religion. Children with disabilities have various levels of disabilities and they have the ability to master the recitation of the Quran if given the opportunity. Therefore, the effort to provide opportunities for children with disabilities to learn religion such as reciting the Qur'an is fardh kifayah. In Malaysia, there are various methods of learning the Qur'an that have been used from ancient times until now such as the method of Iqra', the method of Baghdadi and others. In fact, in recent times, the learning of the Quran for children with disabilities has gained focus due to the awareness of parents to teach the Quran to them. Therefore, this study aims to examine the methods of learning the Qur'an used to children with disabilities in Malaysia and the challenges faced in the process of learning the Qur'an. The research method used in this study is document analysis based on previous studies and research

through journals and books related to the discussion on the learning of the Quran for children with disabilities. The results of the study found that there are three methods of learning the Quran used for disabilities in Malaysia, namely the method of Fakih, the method of Abahata al-Jabari and the method of skin sensitivity for visual impairment. However, in an effort to implement Quranic learning for children with disabilities, there are challenges faced, namely experienced teachers, children's interest in learning the Quran, controlling the emotions and behavior of children with disabilities as well as space and environmental problems. The implication of the study is to identify the existing methods of learning the Qur'an that can be used as a guide by parents, teachers and preachers in teaching the Qur'an to children with disabilities. In addition, agencies that manage children with disabilities may adopt the most appropriate method according to the type of disability.

Keywords: Quranic learning; disabilities; Fakih method; Abahata al-Jabari method; skin sensitivity

ABSTRAK

Di Malaysia, anak kelainan upaya (OKU) meliputi kurang upaya pendengaran, kurang upaya penglihatan, kurang upaya fizikal, kurang upaya pertuturan, kurang upaya mental, masalah pembelajaran dan kurang upaya pelbagai. Pembelajaran al-Quran untuk anak kelainan upaya (OKU) sering diabaikan. Ini disebabkan masyarakat menganggap anak OKU tidak diwajibkan dalam mempelajari agama. Anak OKU terdapat pelbagai tahap OKU dan mereka mempunyai kebolehan untuk menguasai pembacaan al-Quran sekiranya diberi peluang. Oleh itu, usaha memberi peluang kepada anak kelainan upaya mempelajari agama seperti bacaan al-Quran adalah fardhu kifayah. Di Malaysia, terdapat pelbagai kaedah pembelajaran al-Quran yang sudah digunapakai sejak dahulu sehingga sekarang seperti kaedah Iqra', kaedah Baghdadi dan lain-lain lagi. Malah, sejak kebelakangan ini, pembelajaran al-Quran untuk anak kelainan upaya mendapat tumpuan kerana kesedaran ibu bapa untuk mengajarkan al-Quran kepada mereka. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kaedah pembelajaran al-Quran yang digunakan kepada anak kelainan upaya di Malaysia dan cabaran yang dihadapi dalam proses pembelajaran al-Quran. Kaedah kajian yang digunakan dalam kajian ini ialah analisis dokumen berdasarkan kajian dan penyelidikan terdahulu menerusi jurnal dan buku-buku yang berkaitan dengan perbincangan mengenai pembelajaran al-Quran untuk anak kelainan upaya. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa terdapat tiga kaedah pembelajaran al-Quran yang digunakan untuk kelainan upaya di Malaysia iaitu kaedah Fakih, kaedah Abahata al-Jabari dan kaedah sensitiviti kulit untuk golongan cacat penglihatan. Namun begitu, dalam usaha menerapkan pembelajaran al-Quran untuk anak kelainan upaya, terdapat cabaran yang dihadapi iaitu tenaga pengajar yang berpengalaman, minat

anak kelainan upaya terhadap pembelajaran al-Quran, mengawal emosi dan tingkah laku anak kelainan upaya serta masalah ruang dan persekitaran. Implikasi kajian ialah dapat mengenalpasti kaedah pembelajaran al-Quran yang sedia ada yang boleh dijadikan panduan oleh ibu bapa, guru dan pendakwah dalam mengajar al-Quran untuk anak kelainan upaya. Di samping itu, agensi yang mengurus anak kelainan upaya boleh mengguna pakai kaedah yang paling sesuai mengikut jenis kelainan upaya.

Kata kunci: Pembelajaran al-Quran; kelainan upaya; kaedah Fakih; kaedah Abahata al-Jabari; kulit

INTRODUCTION

All parents hope for progeny, not to mention that children are the most beautiful gifts and invaluable trust from Allah. However, not all couples are fortunate to beget physically and mentally normal offspring. Many are tested with abnormal or children with disabilities (Quranic, al-Anfal 8:28). Parents cannot take this lightly because no matter what the physical form or mental state of their young, they are still their responsibility and trust to care for and bring up in order that they may grow up to be useful humans to religion, race and country.

Imperfection and disability is not an excuse to build a gap and dividing wall between the children with disabilities and others because the children with disabilities also play a role in fulfilling their responsibility relating to *ibadah*. *Ibadah* covers all human life transactions and activities whether physical or spiritual. In the Shariah perspective, children with disabilities children have a certain position and worthiness. It is stated that Shariah law as prescribed by Allah is obligatory as *fardu ain* (individual responsibility) and *fardhu kifayah* (collective responsibility) for every *mukalaf* Muslim. *Mukalaf* is an individual who is accountable to Allah to implement all His commands. However, not all Muslims are fully accountable to implement all of Allah's commands as some categories are exempted due to certain weaknesses and deficiencies which attenuate the conditions of being *mukalaf* when applied to them.

The children with disabilities such as persons with Down Syndrome, the deaf, dumb, autistic, dyslexic and so on are members of society who cannot be neglected. They are also the target group who cannot be taken lightly or marginalized. They need to learn and practise to the extent of their ability all the commands of Allah SWT. According to Mohamed Nazri (2011), even if the young children with disabilities are not held accountable to perform *ibadah*, the mildly children with disabilities among them need to be taught and guided in religion. It is clearly described that the mentally retarded may be categorized into mildly retarded (IQ score between 50 to

75), moderately mentally retarded (IQ score 30-50) and severely mentally retarded and very severely mentally retarded (IQ score 30 and below 30). Thus, the mental ability of the children with disabilities who are slightly mentally retarded categorizes them like children who are *mumaayyiz* (age of discernment between right and wrong, and understands the meaning of an act of worship (*ibadah*) and its obligations). They are required to perform, though imperfectly, all *ibadah* based on religious instruction and their *ibadah* are considered valid. Most children with disabilities individuals and children require a process of repetitious learning to enable them to master a skill and acts of obligatory (*fard ain*) *ibadah*.

Al-Quran and al-Sunnah are the main sources of reference to guide Muslims, from the beginning till even today. Al-Quran is also the most potent remedy to educate the heart and Quranic therapy has a direct effect on the soul. According to Aida Hidayah (2011), Quranic verses are multi-functional, thus the merit of *ibadah* is as the panacea for all problems in life. Thus, al-Quran is taught to all levels of society including the children with disabilities because it can help them to read al-Quran in the best possible manner.

Allah does not look at a person in appearance, position, descent and status alone. This difference is only in the value of the human eye. On the other hand, Allah SWT only looks at one's faith and piety. Thus, it clearly shows that Islam prioritizes equal rights for all, including children with disabilities who need the guidance and assistance of others in managing it. This coincides with the words of Allah, surah al-Hujurat 49:13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)”.

METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this study is document analysis. It is based on previous research and research through journals and books related to the study of Quranic learning for children with disabilities. In general, document analysis is a fragmentation of research data collection method that has an objective description of a communication message that has been printed, published and illustrated. In other words, the part of

the message can be heard, obtained and viewed by referring to the textual content of words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or anything else that has been communicated (Sabitha 2009; Babbie 2010). Data collection through document analysis can provide relevant information on the issues and problems being studied. Documents are the easiest source for researchers because the necessary information is already available and difficult to deceive and distort the available facts.

The purpose of this document analysis is to obtain information on the concept of people with disabilities in Malaysia and how to learn the Quran for children with disabilities. In addition, the analysis of this document also serves as a secondary source of data that can assist the researcher in analyzing Quranic learning methods and the challenges they face in teaching the Quran to children with disabilities. This will help the researcher to be more careful in pursuing future research as best he can.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Islam has a vast, holistic and multi-dimensional perspective for the children with disabilities (Ahmad Yunus & Asmilyia 2016). In the view of Abd al-Rahman Abdal-Khaliq (1995), Islam is multi-dimensional for the children with disabilities based on five aspects, which are the power of Allah and His greatness, who creates according to His will, the dignity of the children with disabilities like other normal human beings, as the best creation to worship Him and to bear responsibility and Allah's trust as vicegerent (*khalifa*) in this world (Quranic, al-Zariyat 56).

Learning al-Quran for Children with Disabilities in Malaysia

One of Allah's trusts the vicegerent (*khalifa*) is required to implement is *ibadah* according to individual ability. Reading al-Quran is the most important *ibadah* because it is related to the validity of another *ibadah* such as prayers (*salat*) Thus, learning al-Quran for children with disabilities children is important and society is obliged to instruct them according to their ability to receive it.

Learning al-Quran by children with disabilities is not the same as for normal children. The reason is that children with disabilities differ emotionally and behaviour-wise. This difference also requires a different method of teaching and learning according to their pace and different ability. Al-Quran is still necessary to be taught to children with disabilities because it is a requirement and demand that humans must implement as a duty of Allah's vicegerent.

Various terms are used to refer to the children with disabilities. In Malaysia, the term "differently abled people" has a more positive connotation than "children with

disabilities people”. This matter was first highlighted by the former Vice-Chancellor of Science University of Malaysia (USM), Prof. Dr. Zulkifli Abdul Razak who explained that the term children with disabilities or less abled people needs to be viewed correctly because the difference is not physical but their ability is different due to natural causes or undesirable occurrences (Mohamad 2012). Society generally needs to recognize them as special people with different ability, not disability. However, the term “children with disabilities people” is still used in certain circumstances.

According to the World Health Organization (1980), a differently abled, or better known as less abled or children with disabilities person, is one who is children with disabilities from determining by himself part or the whole of his life necessities or social life, as a result of a physical or mental deficiency from or after birth. However, according to the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008, the term “children with disabilities” connotes that they have long-term physical, mental or sensory disability which interact with various barriers and restrict full and effective participation in society Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 (Act 685). The Malaysian Department of Social Welfare (JKM) has grouped children with disabilities persons into seven categories of deficiency or disablement, that is children with hearing disabilities, children with visual disabilities, children with speech disabilities, children with physically disabilities, learning problems or disorders, children with mentally disabilities and multiple disabilities.

Statistics of the JKM showed that up to June 2017, registration for 431,047 children with disabilities were recorded. 61% of them are Malays which is the largest registered group while the Chinese and Indian children with disabilities respectively form 19% and 10% of the children with disabilities group. This data is recorded according to ethnicity and category of disablement, while the highest number recorded is for the learning problems or disorders category, that is, 146,809 persons followed by physical disability, visual disability, mental disability, hearing disability, multiple disabilities and speech disability. Comparatively, there are more male children with disabilities, 271,425 persons, than females which numbered 148,776 persons (JKM 2017).

The number of young children with disabilities is probably increasing every year. Thus, indirectly, the needs of the young children with disabilities have to be emphasized in terms of providing special classes, speech therapy and spiritual or religious education such as teaching them al-Quran. The reason is that they need to balance between physical and spiritual needs in their daily lives. Hence, learning of al-Quran by the young children with disabilities needs empowerment by using a suitable method to nurture their abilities and skills of reading al-Quran.

Methods of Learning al-Quran for Children with Disabilities

The available methods of learning al-Quran assist society as well as those who are weak in Arabic language to read al-Quran by using a method suitable for their ability. However, these methods are difficult to accept and implement in the case of learning for the young children with disabilities. The reason is that their diverse disablements point to the need to develop specific methods to help them learn to read al-Quran.

For example, in the case of autistic children, a specific method, the Fakih method, is introduced to facilitate teaching al-Quran to them. The Fakih method was developed by Puan Nor Aziah Mohd Daud (Deputy Chairman of Yayasan Faqeh) as an alternative method to help the deaf and dumb to properly understand and read al-Quran. It uses sign language developed in the year 2009 to enable students with hearing problem or deafness to properly read al-Quran (Nor Afzan 2017).

The Fakih method consists of joining into Quranic words, letters showed by the teacher. Learning uses numbers and colour to attract the interest and attention of autistic children. It joins the letters into Quranic words by using a button. For example, the word, (بُؤ), the letter ب is number 1, the mark above ب is number 2, the letter و is number 3 and the silent mark above و is number 4. The Fakih method is applied in teaching to help deaf, dumb and Down Syndrome children to read al-Quran as best as possible (Nor Aziah et al. 2012).

Another method of learning al-Quran for the young children with disabilities is Abahata al-Jabari. It is seen as suitable to help the children with moderate disabilities to learn al-Quran properly. This is a rhythm or melody based technique of 30 contact hours duration. This method begins with an induction set, that is, *Solmisasi (Nazham)*, *Selawat Badar*, *Nasyid Kitab al-Quran* and *Titian Ingatan*. The teaching process begins with supplication and then singing, that is, *Selawat Badar* and *Nasyid Kitab al-Quran*. After that, based on the rhythm of the song, students are introduced to *Titian Ingatan*, that is, arrangement of *Hijaiyyah* letters which are read according to the rhythm introduced. This method was first introduced to help children with Down Syndrome to learn al-Quran (Norhaslina & Nazean 2015).

A popular method of learning al-Quran, particularly for the blind or visually impaired is the use skin sensitivity. It is a writing system based on touch created for the blind to read al-Quran. This method has its own codes which require expertise and may be used to properly read al-Quran and now we have al-Qur'an Braille for help blind or visually impaired for learning al-Qur'an (Muhammad Mustaqim 2013). Referring to a study by Ahmad Yunus & Asmilyia (2016), it is stated that al-Qur'an in

Braille opened up a new chapter for the children with disabilities in reading al-Qur'an. The reason is that it has made reading al-Quran so much simpler and easier for the visually impaired. The three methods of Fakhri, Abahata al-Jabari and skin sensitivity methods are created to help the children with disabilities with sensory problems such as problems of sight, hearing and others. However, for the children with disabilities with neurology problems such as autism and mental retardation, methods have yet to be developed, specifically focused for their type of disability.

These are the well-known methods of learning al-Quran used in teaching the young children with disabilities to read al-Quran in Malaysia. The learning method is used with assistance and guidance from a trained teacher in order that its delivery may be well received. In addition, this method is also used to teach normal children who are quite weak in reading al-Quran.

Challenges in Learning al-Quran for Children with disabilities

The variety of methods to learn al-Quran found in Malaysia today is a privilege and advantage for children with disabilities to master reading al-Quran as best as possible. However, teaching them is certainly different from teaching normal children. There are various challenges for the teachers who teach as well as problems faced by the children with disabilities in learning al-Quran. Among the challenges faced by them are:

1. The lack of experienced teachers

Efforts to teach children with disabilities al-Quran requires a suitable method and teacher expertise also plays an important role. An experienced teacher with expertise in the field of al-Quran is certainly helpful for them to learn to read it properly. However, among the challenges faced is the lack of skilled and experienced teachers to teach it to children with disabilities. The reason is that not many (Salmihah et al. 2018). Teachers who manage children with disabilities children also do not have the skills in the methods of learning al-Quran for children with disabilities. When the teacher has not attended the appropriate training course, he will not have the pedagogical skills to teach al-Quran to children with disabilities (Nor Aziah et al. 2012).

2. Children with disabilities are less interested in learning al-Quran

Children with disabilities first began to get a place to explore and learn al-Quran by using a suitable method for them. This is proven by the success of Yayasan Faqeh in helping children with disabilities to not only follow learning al-Quran but other religious subjects as well (Fariza et al. 2017). However, there are also children with

disabilities who are less interested to learn al-Quran. One of the factors for this disinterest is the lack of motivation from parents, teachers and others around. In fact, children with disabilities with impaired hearing and low self-esteem are quick to admit defeat for their personal weakness. In addition, the drive to attempt reading al-Quran is less so that they lose interest and feel their deficiency hinders them from exploring and reading al-Quran like other people (Mustaffa et al. 2015).

3. Controlling emotions and behaviour of children with disabilities

The psychological and emotional development of children with disabilities is easily disturbed and they are prone to throwing tantrums, especially autistic children (Salmihah et al. 2018). Anger, tantrum, weeping and other emotions are expected behaviour of children with disabilities. This occurs when a matter disliked by them indirectly disturbs their emotions. When emotionally disturbed, their behaviour changes. This presents a challenge in teaching al-Quran to children with disabilities. Suitable methods and techniques need to be used especially in emotional management so that children with disabilities do not do the wrong thing and hurt themselves. Thus, parents particularly play an important role in giving attention to their interests and likings, controlling and wisely advising them against publicly exhibiting undesirable behaviour. In addition, making them constantly listen to Quranic recitation and *zikr* (remembrance) of Allah will help them to be calm and reduce tantrums and other negative emotions (Fariza et al. 2017). Parents who can control their own emotions will be able to manage the emotion of their children with disabilities.

4. Problem of space and environment

The problem of space and noisy environment is a challenge to learning al-Quran for children with disabilities. The reason is that they need a harmonious and calm environment in order to pursue learning al-Quran without distraction. A spacious place with adequate facilities is required to attract their interest and will assist in their growth development. This is in line with the view of (Hasnah et al. 2013) that is, physical facilities such as class room, laboratory, special room and other facilities as well as conducive school environment are the most basic needs in providing the optimum learning opportunity to all students, including special students who are visually impaired.

CONCLUSION

It is quite a good development when parents begin to be aware of the importance of learning for children with disabilities. And even more so in today's world of challenging rapid development, that most parents choose learning al-Quran as priority for their

children. Various methods have been created and founded by researchers for children with disabilities to learn al-Quran such as Fakih, Abahata al-Jabari, skin sensitivity, memorization as well as sign language methods. The successes of Ahmad Zahiruddin Zailani, an autistic child who managed to memorize 30 juzu' of al-Quran. Graduates of Darul Quran, JAKIM accomplish memorizing the entire Quran in a short period of two or three months compared to the usual three year; in addition, the achievement of Ahmad Aqeel Faiz Mohd Noor, an autistic 6 year old who was born without his right eye-ball while his left eye-ball was deficient, who managed to memorize the surah al-Baqarah, Ali Imran, al-Nisa, Yasin and Juzu' al-Amma and Mohamad Qayyim Nizar Sarimi, a visually impaired or blind child read al-Quran using Quran Braille, who won third place in the The National Quran Recital and Memorization Competition in 2017 prove that children with disabilities children also can achieve success like normal children. The successes of children with disabilities to read and memorize al-Quran are certainly inspirational for many because of their extraordinary and gifted strong memory, enabling them to read and memorize holy verses of al-Quran. Thus, the challenges faced by children with disabilities in learning al-Quran need to be overcome in order that they can master reading it. In Malaysia today, there are many places of learning religion and al-Quran in efforts to give ample space and opportunity for children with disabilities to explore learning al-Quran as best as possible.

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