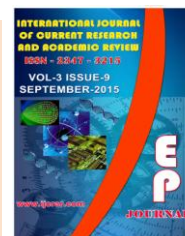




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### Interaction with the Qur'an and Self-Regulated Learning Vis-à-Vis Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Students

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#### KEYWORDS

Academic Achievement, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Interaction with the Quran, Malaysia, Undergraduate Students, Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

#### A B S T R A C T

This study examined the interaction with the Qur'an and self-regulated learning (SRL) as predictors of academic achievement of undergraduate students in Malaysia. A total of 416 Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences undergraduate students from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) participated in this study. A questionnaire on interaction with the Qur'an is developed for the purpose of the present study. Self-regulated learning is measured using Kosnin's (2007) questionnaire. Academic achievement was simply measured by the student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA). Correlation and moderated regression tests were adopted to assess the relationship between the variables. The findings of this study revealed that there was moderate relationship between interaction with the Quran and academic achievement. Significant relationship between SRL and academic achievement was found. There is also moderate interaction effect of SRL and interaction with the Qur'an on academic achievement.

#### Introduction

The growth of any country depends largely on the quality of education it can provide. Malaysia in the 1970<sup>th</sup> had all the problems of a low-income, illiterate, and under-developed country. Since then, it has witnessed phenomenal growth and development spurred primarily by educational transformations. One of the educational institutions that contributed to this development is the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). It flooded the Malaysian job market with successful

graduates and well-rounded individuals for several decades. One of the uniqueness of IIUM is its emphasis on reading and understanding the Qur'an even in its formal curriculum.

The present study focuses on the factors that can predict the academic achievement of IIUM undergraduate students, particularly their interaction with the Qur'an and self-regulated learning. Students with high academic achievement was found to be

stable in their employment, less dependent on public assistance, less likely to engage in criminal activity, more active as citizens and charitable volunteers, have higher self-esteem (Filozof, Albertin, & Jones, 1998), have lower levels of depression and anxiety (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998; Liem, Dillon, & Gore, 2001), are less likely to exhibit socially deviant behavior (Kasen, Cohen, & Brook, 1998), and are less likely to engage in substance abuse (Hallfors et al., 2002; Schulenberg et al., 1994).

One of the predictor of academic achievement is self-regulated learning. As an Islamic institution, it would be interesting to find out whether students' interaction with the Qur'an will also predict academic achievement especially considering the fact that some of the attributive names of the Qur'an indicate success such as *Huda* (guidance), *Nur* (the light), *Rahmah* (the mercy), *Mau'izah* (preaching), *al-Dhikr* (the reminder), *al-Furqan* (the criterion), and *Shifa* (the cure).

## **Background**

This section includes literature on academic achievement and interaction with the Qur'an.

## **Academic achievement**

Academic achievement is all about what students actually do, when they have finished a course of study (Academic achievement, 2009). In other words academic achievement is a process which involves the accumulation of both i.e. mastering new skills and improving already existing ones (Entwisle & Alexander, 1990; Pungello, Kupersmidt, Burchinal & Patterson, 1996).

The factors that predict and influence academic achievement have been the subject

of numerous studies over the years. Some psychological and educational theories emphasized the factors that influence academic achievement to be the biological basis (i.e., innate ability, IQ) (H. C. Kim, 1992), the structural features (e.g., high educational spending, small class size, and individualized instruction), and the individualistic values (e.g., intrinsic motivation, ability attribution, and self-esteem) (Bandura, 1997; Park & Kim, 2004). Other studies examined the role of self-efficacy at the individual level, parental and social support at the relational level, and Confucian values at the cultural level (Bandura, 1997; Park & Kim, 2004). Some Western studies revealed that parental expectation result in guilt and external pressure on students which have negative consequences on academic achievement. While some Eastern studies revealed that the reverse is the case, parental expectation and pressure had positive impact on their children's academic achievement (U. Kim, 2001). Although some factors were mentioned more than others, the overall review of the literature reveals that there is no agreement on the factors that influence academic achievement and the weight of their influence. This leads to the conclusion that the factors may vary from region to region, which leaves the door open for the possibility of discovering additional factors, such as the interaction with the Qur'an.

## **Interaction with the Qur'an**

The Quran is regarded by Muslims as the culmination of a series of divine messages that started with those revealed to Adam, regarded in Islam as the first prophet, and continued with the Scrolls of Abraham, the Torah of Moses, the Psalms of David and the Gospels of Jesus. It is a book of divine guidance and direction for mankind that revealed at intervals on different occasions during the Prophet's life. It addresses not

only issues related to faith but also other issues related to life events and incidents that serve as general rulings for Muslim life.

Muslims consider the Arabic text of the Qur'an not only as a book of religious teachings but also as a linguistic miracle. Therefore, they often encourage their children from a tender age to memorise and comprehend its large number of verses, which systematically arranged in a particular order in chapters (known as surahs), in verbatim, as was revealed to Muhammad (PBUH), with no vocal or written misrepresentations.

Past research has examined the effects of the study of the Qur'an on student achievement in various disciplines of knowledge in Saudi Arabia. Al-Ghamdi (1995), in his study of the impact of Qur'anic schools on achievement in elementary students in Jeddah, revealed that the study of the Qur'an led to improved performance in favour of the comparison group. Furthermore, Maymani (1986) concluded that learning the Qur'an develops critical and creative thinking skills. In addition, Al-Thubaity (2002), in a correlational study designed to recognise the effects of Qur'an learning on the development of creative skills in primary school students in Saudi Arabia, concluded that Qur'an learners were more creative than their non-memorising peers in all dimensions of the Torrance's Figural Creativity Test.

Learning the Qur'an implies that exposure to standard language can develop one's vocabulary and that regular reading training can help improve reading comprehension skills. The Qur'an, in its own right, invites a contemplative, critical reading:

*"Have they not pondered over the Word (of Allah, i.e., what is sent down to the Prophet (peace be upon him)) or has there come to*

*them what had not come to their fathers of old?" [Chapter 23 (Al-Mu'minum), Verse 118]*

*"(This is) a Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its verse, and that men of understanding may remember." [Chapter 38 (Saad), Verse 88]*

Past research has also indicated that exposure to the Qur'an and, hence, to standard language, helps to enhance reading comprehension skills and speaking skills among Arab speaking students (Al-Sweidy 1994; Al-Kubaisy 2009; Abdullah and Malakawy 1994; Dweidy 1996; Maymani 1986; Al-Thubaity 2002); it also helps improve receptive skills (Al-Kubaisy 2009; Mu'alem 2001; Al-Sweidy 1994). The reason for that is the Qur'an consists of a wide range of vocabulary, which is essential for improving thinking skills, expressing emotions and developing argumentative skills that in the end induces creativity. The approximately 77,000 words of the Qur'an constitutes a rich vocabulary source for vocabulary-building exercises, given that memorising (or, at least, reading) it at a regular pace is a duty for every Muslim.

Additionally, some researchers (Milgram and Milgram 1976; Milgram et al. 1978) have detected a very strong relationship between the quantity and quality of creative activities in such areas as language arts, writing, music, drama or social leadership in high school seniors ( $r = 0.92$  and  $0.89$  for boys and girls, respectively), concluding that a wide variety of activities, even at a superficial level, is necessary for unusual and excellent creative attainment. The Qur'an, being an exemplary text of standard classical Arabic, provides an ample model text (oral or written) for resetting the parameters of language in the Broca region of the human brain to foster grammatical

and stylistic correctness. In this vein, Al-Kubaisy (2009) indicated that learning the Qur'an helps develop creative language use and the creative production in Arabic. He suggested that learning the vocabulary of the Qur'an can help effectively develop synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, polysemy, metonymy and collocation, which eventually helps in developing linguistic creativity.

Furthermore, researchers have found a strong positive correlation between Qur'an learning and writing skills. In this vein, Mu'alem (2001) investigated the effects of Qur'an learning on the development of receptive skills in primary school students. Mu'alem's findings indicated that Qur'anic school students outperform their peers in regular schools in both listening comprehension and reading comprehension.

More significantly, Al-Kubaisy (2009) showed that Qur'an learning develops holistic language, especially reading, writing, listening, pronunciation and speaking skills. That study also showed that Qur'an learning is conducive to the development of divergent thinking skills.

## **Objectives**

In summary, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of the interaction with the Qur'an and self-regulated learning (SRL) on academic achievement of undergraduates in IIUM as represented by IRKHS students. The result of this study will go a long way in shedding more light on the influence of the interaction with the Qur'an on academic success.

## **Research methods**

### ***Theoretical framework***

In order to study the effect of interaction with the Quran and SRL on the academic

achievement of undergraduate students, a survey research method was adopted. The criterion variable (CV) in this study is the academic achievement of undergraduate students which is represented by their cumulative grade point average (CGPA).

The predictor variables (PV) in this study is the SRL and interaction with the Qur'an. The interaction with the Quran was also treated as a moderating variable (MV). The theoretical frame work elaborated below.

### ***Hypothesis***

H1: Interaction with the Qur'an is positively correlated to students' academic achievement.

H2: SRL is positively correlated to students' academic achievement.

H3: Interaction with the Qur'an moderates the relationship between self-regulated learning and students' academic achievement.

## **Participants**

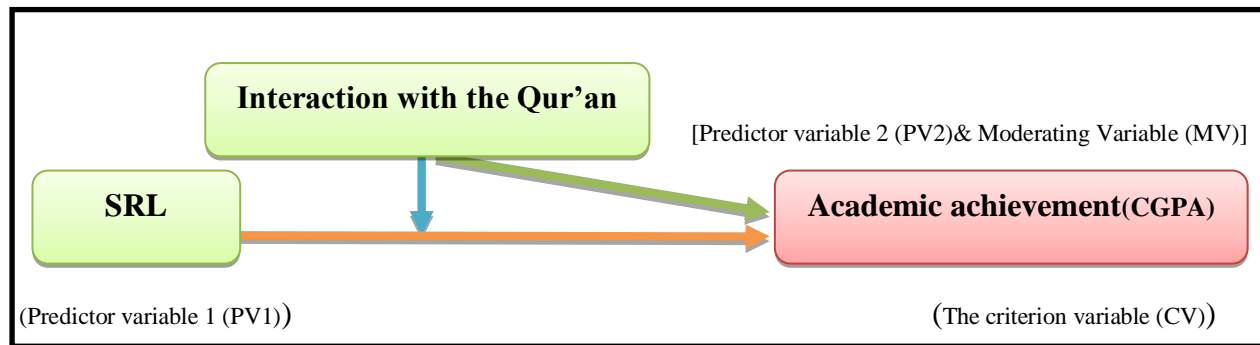
**Sample:** 416 undergraduate, students IRKHS-IIUM

**Sampling Method** Convenience Sampling of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) from Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (IRKHS) in the Gombak campus.

### ***Size of Statistical Sample***

The size of participants (416 undergraduate students) was calculated based on 'rule of thumb' concept (tools4dev, 2014). According this concept 10 % of the general population should be selected. The total number of IRKHS population is 4147.

Figure.1 Theoretical Framework



## Research Measures

### Interaction with the Qur'an

Interaction with the Quran was measured using a close-ended five Likert scale questionnaire designed specifically for this study. It initially consisted of fifteen items developed based on three domains of the interaction with the Quran:

Reading, understanding and memorization of the Quran. The questionnaire was then subjected to a validation process carried out by six subject matter experts (SME) from three different departments of IIUM:

Psychology, Quran and Sunnah Studies as well as Usul al-din and Comparative Religion. The value reported by the SME's was compared with the minimum value of content validity ratio developed by Lawshe (Cohens & Swerdik, 2009). Only five of the fifteen items were retained and used in the study to measure the interaction of the Quran.

A pilot study was carried out on five IIUM students to further evaluate the constructed items for the purpose of checking several technicalities, such as time taken to answer the questionnaires, the wordings and layout of the questionnaires.

### Academic achievement

For the purpose of this study, students' cumulative grade point average (CGPA) scores for the semesters prior to the one in which the study was conducted have been used as a proxy of academic achievement.

It is calculated by dividing the total amount of grade points earned by the total amount of credit hours attempted.

### Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

Self-regulated learning was measured by the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) (McKeachie, Pintrich, Lin, & Smith, 1991). It is a self-report instrument designed to assess college students' motivational orientations and their use of different learning strategies. Student rated themselves on a seven point Likert scale from 'not at all true of me' to 'very true of me'. The internal consistency reliability indexes form the 15 sub-scales based on data gathered from a sample of 380 Midwestern college students in the United States (Pintrich, 1996), ranged from 0.52 to 0.93. The questionnaire was used in its original language, which is English. This instrument was already been used for a research conducted by Kosnin (20007) on Malaysian students to measure the effect of



self-regulated learning on academic achievement.

### **Data collection method**

The required data was collected using paper-and-pencil method. A trained research assistant distributed the questionnaires at classrooms with the permission of the instructors and collected it after completion.

The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire which contains three sections:

1. Demographic data
2. Self-Regulated Learning questions.
3. Interaction with Quran questions.

**Data analysis method:** SPSS 16 soft-ware as follows

1. Descriptive statistics
2. Correlation
3. Regression methods

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Descriptive statistics**

There are 416 participants in this study consisting of undergraduate students of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) from the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human sciences (208 or 50 % are from IRK division and 208 or 50% are from HS division; age range = 19-24 years old; first year to fourth year students). At the initial phase of data collection, 486 questionnaires were collected and 70 of them were discarded because of incomplete answers.

The three variables described are: Self-Regulated Learning, Interaction with the Quran and Academic achievement. The mean and standard deviation of each

variables are: Self-regulated Learning (M = 171.8 , SD = 21.1), Interaction with the Quran (M= 18.76, SD = 3.14), and Academic achievement (M = 3.01, SD = 0.37).

#### **Regression**

Regression model was tested to investigate whether the interaction with the Quran moderates the relationship between self-regulated learning and academic achievement (CGPA).

#### **Regression**

1. Model 1 (main effect): it was found that self-regulated learning predict significantly the academic success [F (2, 413) = 10.61,  $p < 0.05$ ]
2. Model 2 (interaction effect): it was found that the relationship between self-regulated learning and academic achievement is moderated moderately by interaction with the Qur'an [F (3,412) = 7.23,  $p < 0.05$ ]

For model 2, which include the interaction between Self-Regulated Learning and academic achievement moderated by interaction with the Quran accounted for more variance than just Self Regulated Learning and academic achievement by themselves,  $R^2$  change = .002,  $p = 0.407$ , indicating that there is potentially significant moderation between Self-Regulated Learning and Interaction with the Quran on academic achievement

#### **Regression**

1. The high level of self-regulated learning ( $b = 0.03$ ,  $SE_b = 0.01$  Beta = 0.179,  $p < 0.05$ ) is associated with higher academic achievement.
2. However, the level of Quranic interaction ( $b = 0.12$  SE  $b = 0.06$  Beta

- 0.49,  $p > 0.05$ ) was not associated with academic achievement.
3. The interaction between self-regulated learning and Quranic interaction on academic achievement was not significant ( $b = 0.015$ ,  $SE\ b = 0.18$  Beta : 0.041  $p > 0.05$ ) suggesting that the effect of self-regulated learning on academic achievement does not depend on interaction of Quran.

**Table.1** Analysis of variance data analysis

	Model	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.737	1.369	10.609	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	53.282	.129		
	Total	56.019			
2	Regression	2.826	.942	7.297	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	53.193	.129		
	Total	56.019			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Zscore(QuranScore), Zscore(SRLScore)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Zscore(QuranScore), Zscore(SRLScore), Product

c. Dependent Variable: CGPA

**Table.2** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.221 <sup>a</sup>	.049	.044	.35918	.049	10.609	2	413	.000
2	.225 <sup>b</sup>	.050	.044	.35932	.002	.689	1	412	.407

**Table.3** Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			
	B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	
(Constant)	3.008	.018		170.797	.000	2.973	3.042				
1	Zscore(SRLScore)	.063	.018	.172	3.428	.001	.027	.099	.200	.166	.165
	Zscore(QuranScore)	.036	.018	.098	1.959	.051	.000	.072	.148	.096	.094
(Constant)	3.004	.018		163.812	.000	2.968	3.040				
2	Zscore(SRLScore)	.066	.019	.179	3.517	.000	.029	.102	.200	.171	.169
	Zscore(QuranScore)	.036	.018	.099	1.975	.049	.000	.073	.148	.097	.095
	Product	.015	.018	.041	.830	.407	-.020	.049	.001	.041	.040

a. Dependent Variable: CGPA

In addition to note that, as the association between Self-Regulated Learning and academic achievement depends on the level of interaction with the Quran again was tested on  $P < .10$ .

Results indicate that high level of self-regulated learning ( $b = 0.03$ ,  $SE_b = 0.01$  Beta = 0.179,  $p < 0.10$ ) is associated with higher academic achievement. In addition to that, the level of Quranic interaction ( $b = 0.12$  SE  $b = 0.06$  Beta 0.49,  $p > 0.10$ ) was not associated with academic achievement. The interaction between self regulated learning and Quranic interaction was also not significant ( $b = 0.015$ , SE  $b = 0.18$  Beta: .041  $p > 0.10$ ) suggesting that the effect of self-regulated learning on academic achievement does not depend on interaction of Quran.

### **Correlations**

1. Correlation between SRL and Academic achievement:  $r(416) = 0.02$ .  $P < 0.05$ . (positive correlation).
2. Correlation between Interaction with the Quran and Academic Achievement is  $r(416) = 0.148$   $p > 0.05$  (no significant relationship).
3. Correlation between SRL and Interaction with the Quran  $r(416) = 0.288$   $p > 0.05$ . (nosignificant relationship).

### **Conclusion**

It seems there is moderate relationship between interaction with the Qur'an and academic achievement based on the method known as self-regulated learning (SRL). Significant relationship between SRL and academic achievement was found. There is also no significant interaction effect of SRL and interaction with the Qur'an on academic achievement.

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