CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Quran is the fundamental source of knowledge in Islam. It contains the core of Islam, as well as a set of guidance on how life should be lived in the eyes of Allah. Verses from the Quran are closely embedded within the life of a Moslem. From prayers to daily interaction with others, the purpose of the Quran as a platform of defining the best way for one to act in any circumstances remains prevalent. This is a realization that is accepted by practicing Moslems all over the world.

If the Quran is truly important, the next question becomes - How do people memorize the Quran? The answer to this question lies rooted in tradition. It is almost customary for every Moslem to remember the holy verses by repeating them. This is done either within prayers or in a specific ritual that is frequently dedicated to remembering the Quran.

Notwithstanding the criticality of retaining the Quran in memory, some students are struggling with the task. They may remember the verses that are compulsory, such as the ones that are needed in performing the daily prayers. However, it is difficult for them to remember other verses of equal importance. This is quite an alarming issue because forgetting the Quran is considered a rather serious offense. It is therefore the function of this study to find a viable solution to the predicament at hand.

1.2 Research Background

The background of the research spans mostly on three main themes. They are Quranic memorization, memory and the use of multimedia in learning. Currently, the act of committing the Quran into memory is done traditionally. Its core strategy is repetition. The method is quite effective but it takes considerable time when there are many verses to be memorized.

Psychologically, the process of memorizing the Quran can be attributed to verbatim memory (Margulis, 2014). In its simplest sense, verbatim memory is any kind of memorization that involves a faithful retention of the subject under examination. This is vital in remembering the Quran because recitation must follow the holy book exactly. Any discrepancy could distort its original meaning.

Semantic memory (Brockmole & Vo, 2010) can support verbatim memory for a successful retention. Although it is not as accurate, semantic memory is stronger than verbatim memory. It lasts longer and suffers less decay. Both semantic and verbatim memories can be integrated better through the strategic activation of prior knowledge. This way, memory can be accurate and stable at the same time.

To ensure that verbatim and semantic memories synergize as planned, it is important to understand the concept of working memory (Baddeley, 2003). It is the memory that is active during Quranic recitation. In other words, when a person retrieves a particular verse from memory and vocalizes it, the working memory is basically in charge.

In order to exploit the various psychological findings on memory for the purpose of improving the process of memorization, the cognitive theory of multimedia learning (Khan & Masood, 2015) can be very useful. It contains a set of principles or effects that offer guidance to the design of learning. For instance, it recommends the clustering of similar items to enhance understanding.

However, using the cognitive theory of multimedia to develop an actual e-learning application can sometimes be a complicated task. This is often true when a variety of ideas are combined together. To make it more manageable, it is important to employ instructional design (Sangsawang, 2015). ADDIE is a five-phase instructional design model thatis Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. The ADDIE model helps in the integration of many different elements into a cohesive whole for lesson design.

Having the lesson design, it is now feasible to develop an e-learning application (Bhuasiri et al., 2012) to facilitate the process of Quranic memorization. A pedagogical framework (Granic et al., 2009) can be consulted at this juncture to guarantee effectiveness. Implementation-wise, it is advisable to utilize common e-learning platforms such as moodle (Barge & Londhe, 2014) to speed up development.

With the e-learning application at their disposal, the students can practice the techniques on their own, without any kind of supervision from the teacher. This can promote a higher level of motivation whereby students are no longer hampered by the constraint of time or space. In addition, they can control learning to suit their own pace without the fear of social humiliation.

1.3 Problem Statement

The traditional approach of memorizing the Quran among school students does not harness the powerof the technology of multimedia learning (Ariffin et al., 2013). Although there are many of existing online applications as described in Table 2.2 related to the Quran provide digitization, it does not really utilize technology in aiding the process of learning.

On a different note, it can be said that Quranic digitization does promote e-learning to a certain extent. Students can now refer to the Quran from anywhere at any time. They can search for a certain word exhaustively throughout the verses, which serves significantly in resolving certain qualms with regards to the Quran. This is especially true when there is an urgent need to consult the Quran on issues that are pervasive in the conflict of real life. In this sense, availability is greatly improved.

Specific to memorization, however, the online applications that offer reference to the quran such as (The NobleQur'an, Mushaf Medina 1 and Quran4u_Mohaffez) do not really optimize the retention of the students. The verses are presented as they are, without any facilitation that may encourage learning. As such, memorization remains a feat when students try to memorize the Quran via rote learning and repetition. Even though it can be effective when given sufficient time, in reality, the approach challenges the motivation and concentration of the students. Repeating something again and again can eventually cause boredom and deter the memory.

1.4 Research Questions

It is possible to transform the objectives into something more detailed by turning them into questions. As such, the research questions are:

1. Why is the existing learning method using Arabic multimedia application not suitable to be used in Libyan schools to teach the HolyQuran?

2. What is the current approach and its constraint in memorizing the Quran in Libyan schools in Malaysia?

3. How can the current approach be improved with a new model?

4. What is the improvement of the proposed model in terms of time and accuracy?

The development of the new model might include psychological, educational and technological findings. It is therefore imperative that all of them concede to the rules, regulations and principles of Islam.

1.5 Research Objectives

In order to conduct the study, the objectives must be clearly established. This allows an execution of a better research management practice in solving the problems of Quranic memorization within the stipulated timeline. Generally, the study needs to unveil the constraint of the current approach and devises a quantifiable improvement. More specifically, the research objectives are:

1. To evaluate the quality of teaching and learning of the existing multimedia Arabic Applications available in the market by pre-decided general review and specific review checklist.

2. To analyze the current approach of Quranic memorization in Libyan schools in Malaysia via an observation in class room.

3. To develop a new memorization model that integrates the psychological (Memory Model / QM3) and technological (e-learning design) components of multimedia learning and improves multimedia learning.

4. To evaluate the effectiveness of the new memorization model in terms of time and accuracy by comparing the traditional approach with the new model QM3 in classroom.

By understanding the gap within the current approach, a more precise direction of the research can be materialized. This would help in the overall design of the new model in the betterment of memorization. Not only that, it is possible for the design to be driven by the performance measure from the start.

1.6 Scope of the Research

The scope of the research is emphasized solely on Libyan school's students in Malaysia and not hafiz students, who are expert memorizers (Effeney et al., 2013; Bird, 2009) from the age range of 12 – 15. At this age, students have better ability for self-regulation. They can direct their thinking to a particular strategy in learning. This is vital in evaluating the performance of the new model. The learners must be able to memorize via the proposed model without any disruptive deviation. On the contrary, students from a younger age group such as the ones from primary school are easily distracted. They may not possess the capacity to follow through without supervision.

Realistically, this could jeopardize the data collection of the research. The data might not reflect the actual performance of memorization since the experimentation is done in a familiar class setting. Besides the age of the students, the scope is also defined based on the type of learning institution. Islamic students can often choose between a normal school and tahfiz (Ariffin et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the two differ greatly in terms of curriculum whereby the syllabus at the tahfiz is governed fundamentally on Quranic learning. In this respect, students are gathered from a normal school and not the ones that are dedicated solely on the learning of the Quran. It is crucial to acknowledge this distinction because students from the tahfiz are usually more driven and require less novel intervention.

Furthermore, the scope is confined to memorization per se without the factor of appreciation. Appreciation involves the act of learning the Quran from a higher degree of comprehension. It could include understanding the cause of a particular

ayat, as well as its implication on the practice of Islam. Given that it is quite a complex measure, appreciation is not covered in the research.

1.7 Significance of Study

Research on the Quran is an ongoing study. It is a continuous effort to unravel the manifestation of the verses in real life. Although numerous studies have been made on the Quran, none has investigated into the process of Quranic memorization from the perspective of multimedia learning as attempted by this particular research. The contributions of this research are as such:

A. Enhancement of Memorization Method.

In terms of Memorization method, most studies are focused on the techniques (Ariffin et al., 2013) that build upon the traditional one. In this sense, it is essentially a refinement of what is already employed. In other words, the method of memorizing the Holy Quran remains unchangedbecause they still using the traditional style of memorizing Al-Quran even with digitalization(e-learning). Studies conducted on memorizing the Quran are notable for their effort in casting light upon the improvement of repetition. They tend to clarify the principles for better memorization, which is undeniably crucial in elevating the efficiency and effectiveness of recall. For instance, in order to guarantee long term memory, it is recommended that recitation is repeated as many as 40 times. On the other hand, it does not examine the implementation of spaced repetition with the aid of technological innovation such as e-learning. Moreover, other studies with regard to Quranic memorization are more concerned with the macro strategy such as class management (Md. Sawari & Awang Mat, 2014). It focuses mostly on optimizing the

communication protocol between those in classes. For example, in how a teacher should interact with the students to cultivate a better learning environment. As such, it refers more on the impact of social learning without any specific regards to the mechanism of memory itself.

In effect, the current study contributes to the method of memorizing al-quran through the Quranic Multimedia Memory Model which develops the memorization methods of the quran that derived from two major components that are Cognitive Theory Of Multimedia Learning (CTML) (Mayer, 2014) as well as the models of memory (Yeh, 2014). CTML outlines the general cognitive processes that are required for the enhancement to occur whereas MM offers a more systematic elucidation of how it can be instigated. The model contains of four main phases. Each phase contributes to the entire repertoire of memorization and cannot work in isolation. In this respect, the phases are closely connected to one another. They have a synergistic relationship that guarantees the effectiveness and efficiency of memorization as a whole. It is therefore vital to employ all the phases accurately, to succeed in the application of the model. The Quranic Multimedia Memory Model (QM3) explained in four phases which are (Acquisition, Abstraction, Absorption, and Assertion). However, the abstraction phase contains of four steps that are (Extraction, Association, Ratification and schematization). Furthermore, the Absorption phase contains of four steps that are (Decomposition, Cascading, Evaluation and Attachment). Finally, the new model (QM3) and all its steps are explained in details in chapter three.

B. Theoretical and Empirical contribution.

The research developed a new model of memorization based on theory that can evolve the traditional method in terms of its most elemental mechanism. It does this

by incorporating the elements of educational technology. This offers a new perspective to the current body of knowledge.

Whereasin term ofempirical contribution;however, the application is then built using the principles and concepts recommended by the Quranic Multimedia Memory Model (QM3). As such, the structure and interface of the e-learning application adheres to the components of the model such as schematization and cue. Thus,it improves the time require for memorization of al-Quran (Memorization Time) as well as reduces the possibility to make errors from the learners (Error Propensity).

C. Data Collection contribution.

The study has done data collection during the experiment from the pre and posttests using a new technique which is memorization time and error propensity. Hence, the way data was collected; it is application and usage, and a useful guide to other researchers.

1.8 Research Hypothesis

a) Participants employing QM3 would exhibit significantly reduced memorization time as compared to those utilizing the traditional approachof memorizing the Quran.

b) Participants employing QM3 would exhibit significantly reduced error propensity as compared to those utilizing the traditional approach of memorizing the Quran.

1.9 Thesis Organization

The chapters for the thesis are organized as follow:

Chapter one presentsthe introduction, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, scope of research and the significance of the study.

Chapter two presents the previous studies or literature reviews that are related to this research. Relevant theories on memory, the multimedia learning and e-learning are covered in detail.

Chapter three discusses the research methodology.However, the development of the new model known as the Quranic Multimedia Memory Model (QM3) is explained along with the experimentation.

Chapter fourstates the description the findings of the research from the experimentation, observation and the evaluation of the Arabic multimedia applications in the markets.

Chapter five states the analysis and the discussion of the rationale behind the findings.

Chapter six presents the conclusion of the research along with the possible improvement in the future, followed by the Bibliography and Appendices.

1.10 Summary

In this chapter, the problem statement of the study is properly defined. The current method of memorizing the Quran does not fully utilize the potential of multimedia learning. As such, the research aims to analyze the current method and provides a new model that improves the process of memorization. The scope is, however,limited to Libyan school students from normal learning institutions. Realistically, the research is relevant because it contributes to a new approach of memorizing the Quran that incorporates the active use of the e-learning technology.