

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of this study. It details the context in which the study was conducted and provides information about the participants, as well as the research instruments, research design, and research procedure. This chapter is organised as follows. Section 3.2 presents the research design and explains how the qualitative methodology was implemented in this study. Section 3.3 presents the research context, which explains the background of the schools and the participants. Section 3.4 explains how the participants were selected. Section 3.5 explains the data collection methods and instruments used in this study, which were interview and interview protocols. Section 3.6 discusses the research procedures, including administrative procedures related to the research, e.g., obtaining the approval of *Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor* (JAIS) and two *Tahfiz* schools to conduct the research, contacting the teachers, and scheduling the interview sessions. This is followed by Section 3.7 that explains the data analysis procedure. The last section, Section 3.8, elaborates on trustworthiness and reliability aspects related to the study.

This study aims to identify the attitude and motivation of the *Tahfiz* students towards learning the English language. Table 3.1. presents the overview of the method for each objective along with the research instruments and analytical procedures. The following sections provide comprehensive explanation of the components in the table.

**Table 3.1:** Alignment of the Research Objectives and Questions with the Methodology

Research Objectives	Research Questions	Participants	Method	Instrument	Analysis
1. To explore the students' attitude and motivation of <i>Tahfiz</i> students towards learning English.	1(a) What are the attitude and motivation of <i>Tahfiz</i> students towards learning English?	12 students [2 sessions of focus group interview]	Focus group interviews	Students' interview protocol (Appendix 1)	Thematic analysis
	1(b) What are the attitude and motivation of <i>Tahfiz</i> students towards learning English from the perspective of English teachers?	4 English teachers	Focus group interviews	Teachers' interview protocol (Appendix 2)	Thematic analysis
2. To identify the challenges faced by English teachers in improving the attitude and motivation of <i>Tahfiz</i> students towards learning English.	3. What are the challenges faced by English teachers in improving the attitude and motivation of <i>Tahfiz</i> students towards learning English?	4 English teachers	Focus group interviews	Teachers' Interview protocol (Appendix 2)	Thematic analysis
3. To present the English teachers' suggestions to improve the attitude and motivation of <i>Tahfiz</i> students towards learning English.	2. How do the English teachers improve the attitudes and motivation of <i>Tahfiz</i> students towards learning English?	4 English teachers	Focus group interviews	Teachers' Interview protocol (Appendix 2)	Thematic analysis

### 3.2 Research Design

This section describes the overall research design. Qualitative research is described as an unfolding model occurring in a natural setting that enables the researcher to obtain and develop in-depth detail of the phenomenon under study due to his high involvement in the actual experiences of the participants (Creswell, 1994). The study adopted the qualitative methodology because it is the most suitable way to obtain rich data. Additionally, because the study was based on the genuine experience of individuals, this methodology was able to assist the researcher to obtain the participants' perspective regarding their attitude and motivation towards learning English. Focus group interviews were employed to two different groups, the *Tahfiz* students and the teachers, in order to explore the attitude and motivation of the *Tahfiz* students towards

learning English. In summary, the employed design is appropriate to accomplish the objective of this research.

### 3.3 Research Context

Jorgensen (2020) pointed out that determining the research location is the most important matter for the success of the research. Marshall and Rossman (2019) outlined several criteria to increase the chance of collecting in-depth data, including appropriate research location, presence of interest in the research, and cooperation. Fulfilling these criteria can remove obstacles when carrying out the research. The following sections detail the research context further.

#### 3.3.1 Background of School - The *Tahfiz* Schools

*Mahaad Integrasi Tahfiz Selangor* (MITS) integrates the curriculum of the Ministry of Education and religious subjects, such as *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *Hadith* (religious law and moral guidance from the narrated sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad), and *nahwu* and *sharf* (Arabic syntax and morphology). In 2018, there are only four MITS in Selangor: MITS Klang, MITS Sepang, MITS Kuala Langat, and MITS Sabak Bernam. *Tahfiz* schools have become increasingly popular within the Malaysian society, and the number of *Tahfiz* students has steadily grown over the years. In response to this positive trend, a new MITS, MITS Pandan Indah, was recently built. In total, therefore, there are five MITS in Selangor.

In this study, two MITS in the state of Selangor were chosen: *Maahad Integrasi Tahfiz Sains Klang* and *Maahad Integrasi Tahfiz Sains Sepang*. *Maahad Integrasi Tahfiz Klang*, also known as MITS Klang, is located in Alam Impian, Shah Alam, Selangor. It is also located next to the JAIS Education Resource Centre (PSPJ). MITS

Klang was established in 2011 and is the first MITS in Selangor. *Mahaad Integrasi Tahfiz Sepang* (MITS) is located in Kampung Bagan Lalang, Sungai Pelek, Sepang, Selangor. MITS Sepang was established in 2017 and is the fourth MITS after *Maahad Integrasi Tahfiz Teknologi Istana Bandar* in Jugra, Kuala Langat.

It is important to note here that most Malaysians typically understand *Tahfiz* schools as formal or informal schools that solely offer Islamic subjects and the memorisation of the Quran. In this study, *Tahfiz* schools refer specifically to MITS schools. These schools were selected because, firstly, they are excellent schools with strict admission requirements and rigorous admission interviews. As mentioned earlier, the schools follow the curriculum of the Ministry of Education while also incorporating Islamic and *Tahfiz* components. Secondly, the structured organisation of MITS schools makes them more accessible and approachable. Thirdly, the *Tahfiz* schools consider Arabic, not English, as the second language. In MITS, English is taught based on a textbook, which contents are based on the curriculum of the Ministry of Education.

### **3.4 Participants**

The participants of this study were divided into two groups. The first group was *Tahfiz* students from the two MITS schools, while the second group was English teachers. The purpose behind this grouping was to gain the perspectives of students and teachers on the attitude and motivation towards learning English. Thus, the study had gained a deep understanding of the phenomena from a specific perspective or within a specific context as it allows the researcher to delve into the depth and complexity of the subject matter, providing rich detailed insight.

### 3.4.1 Group 1 - Students

The researcher received the assistance of English teachers at the two schools to choose the participants. The students were selected based on the recommendations of their English teachers. Students of heterogeneous ability were chosen to collect a broader perspective of the subject of study. The criteria for student participants from each school were:

- Two Form 4, boy, high proficiency
- Two Form 4, girl, high proficiency
- Two Form 4, boy, intermediate proficiency
- Two Form 4, girl, intermediate proficiency
- Two Form 4, boy, low proficiency
- Two Form 4, girl, low proficiency

Form 4 is the upper secondary level of schooling in Malaysia, and its students are 16 years old. There were six students from each school, and so a total of 12 students from two schools participated in this research. The heterogeneous proficiency of the students helped the researcher to gather different perspectives regarding their motivation and attitude towards learning English.

### 3.4.2 Group 2 - Teachers

Based on the researcher's initial inquiry to the schools' administration, there were two English teachers in each MITS, for a total of four teachers. The teachers were 40 years old and above, and their educational background was generally similar. They were educated in English instruction, either for primary education, secondary education, or

bridging program (known as the matriculation programme prior to enrolment to a bachelor's degree program in Malaysia).

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

This study aims to investigate the attitude motivation and challenges of *Tahfiz* students towards learning English. To accomplish this objective, the main data collection method was focus group interview, facilitated with two interview protocols, one for the students and another for the teachers.

#### **3.5.1 Interview**

Interview is a method of collecting detailed information from the participants of the study (Glense & Peshkin, 2010). According to Bryman and Bell (2019), interview is the most common form of data collection method in qualitative research. Yin (1989) stated that interview is necessary in qualitative research because it allows the collection of in-depth information from the participants of the study (Glense & Peshkin, 1993).

#### **3.5.2 Focus Group Interview**

The researcher employed semi-structured interview, where important questions have been planned in advance while asking additional questions according to the situation (see the interview protocols in Appendices 1 and 2). The researcher employed the focus group interview for both teachers and students. The strength of this method is that it allows the researcher to gather a variety of ideas from the discussion among the participants to build on one another responses and generate ideas as they might not have thought of in an individual interview. The participants can also bounce ideas off each other and suggest new ideas that any one participant may not have thought of (Rubin &

Rubin, 2018). This way, the researcher could obtain richer information from the discussion. Moreover, focused group interviews helped the researcher to gain more data, as they were able to freely share their experience and thoughts regarding the issue in question.

The interviews with both students and teachers were supposed to be conducted face to face. However, due to the student's busy schedule, the interviews were conducted online via the Google Meet platform. The interviews were also recorded, and the responses were transcribed verbatim for further analysis. Prior to recording, consent from all participants was obtained.

### 3.5.3 Interview Protocol

This study was designed to explore the attitude and motivation of *Tahfiz* students towards learning English. The research instrument was interview protocols to guide the interview. The protocols contain specific questions related to the research objectives that were asked to both groups of participants, i.e., students and teachers.

The interview protocols were designed based on the research questions. The interview protocol form was adapted from Creswell (2008) and was used to record information during the interviews, as it is "important to have some means for structuring the interview and taking careful notes" (Creswell, 2008, p. 233). The researcher developed and used two interview protocols. The first was for the *Tahfiz* students to learn about their attitude and motivation (refer to Appendix 1). The second was for English teachers who taught at the selected *Tahfiz* schools to learn about their perspective about the students' attitude and motivation, as well as the obstacles and suggestions that could improve those two factors (refer to Appendix 2).

### 3.5.3.1 Interview Protocol for Students

The students' interview protocol comprised four segments. The first segment addressed their attitude towards learning English. The questions were designed to uncover the students' attitudes based on how they respond to the questions. The students were asked about their enthusiasm, perception, and dedication towards learning English as a second language. The second segment focused on their motivation to learn English, while the third segment focused on the management of English learning. The students were asked how they managed in English classes and what actions that they would take to improve their learning of English. Lastly, the fourth segment concerned the challenges of learning English. The students were asked about the challenges that they face in learning English, and whether they have a specific way to motivate themselves.

### 3.5.3.2 Interview Protocol for Teachers

The interview protocol for teachers consisted of five segments. In the first segment, the questions aimed to reveal the teachers' perspective on the students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language. The second segment inquired the students' sentiment towards English and what motivates them to learn English. The third segment concerned the challenges faced by the teachers in teaching English to *Tahfiz* school students. The fourth segment concerned how they managed and handled students with a negative or positive attitude and low or high motivation towards learning English. The teachers were also asked to discuss how they keep the students motivated and have a positive attitude towards learning English. They were also asked to give their view about the attitudes and motivation of the students, and whether there were any differences between students from *Tahfiz* schools and non-*Tahfiz* schools in terms of attitude and motivation. Lastly, the fifth section asked the teacher's suggestions to

maintain the students' positive attitude and high motivation towards learning English. If the interviewees did not understand the question, the researcher explained it to them verbally.

### **3.5.3.3 Pilot Interview**

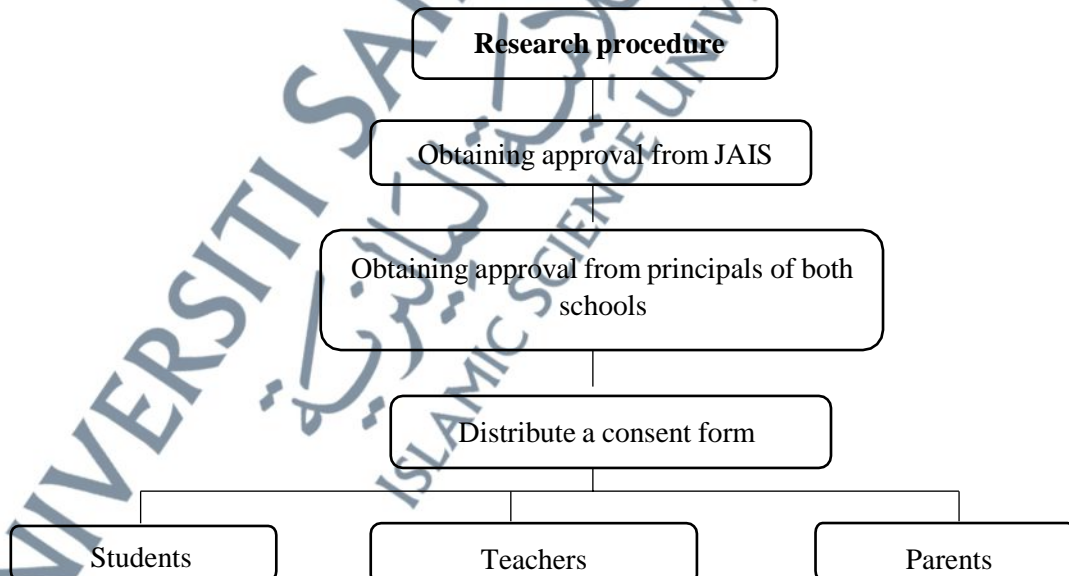
Prior to the actual field work, a pilot interview was conducted on a few students and an English teacher with similar background as the sample. The questions were asked verbally by the researcher. There was "direct verbal interaction" between the interviewer and the participant (McMillan, 2008; Patton, 2002). Direct verbal interaction means the researcher was conveyed clear messages or instructions to the participants. To avoid misleading questions, the researcher avoided using written interaction. The interviewee's understanding of the questions was very important to avoid confusion in the discussion. The interviewer provided further explanation to the interviewees when necessary. More precise responses could be gathered if the researcher asked good questions related to the issue under discussion to the respondents (Creswell, 2008; McMillan, 2008; Minichiello, Aroni, & Hays, 2008; Patton, 2002; Patton, 2003). During the pilot interview, before asking the question, the researcher started the session with some small talk with the interviewees. The purpose was to develop a good rapport with the respondents. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) suggested that building a good rapport with the participants could facilitate better responses. To not place any pressure on the interviewees, they were allowed to speak either Malay, English, or a mix of both.

Following the pilot interview sessions with the students and teacher, the researcher made necessary amendments to the questions, e.g., rephrasing 'problematic'

questions, changing ambiguous or difficult words, and adding or omitting certain questions. This process enhanced the validity of the interview protocols.

### 3.6 Research Procedure

The researcher sought the approval of JAIS and the two MITS before conducting this study. The researcher first wrote a formal letter to JAIS to seek its approval to conduct this study. After obtaining its approval, the researcher sent a letter of permission to the principals of MITS Klang and MITS Sepang. Before collecting the data, consent forms were given to students, teachers, and parents (see Appendix 3). The participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. Data were collected through focus group interviews. The selected participants were interviewed at their convenience through the Google Meet platform. Each interview lasted for about an hour. Figure 3.2 illustrates the research procedure.

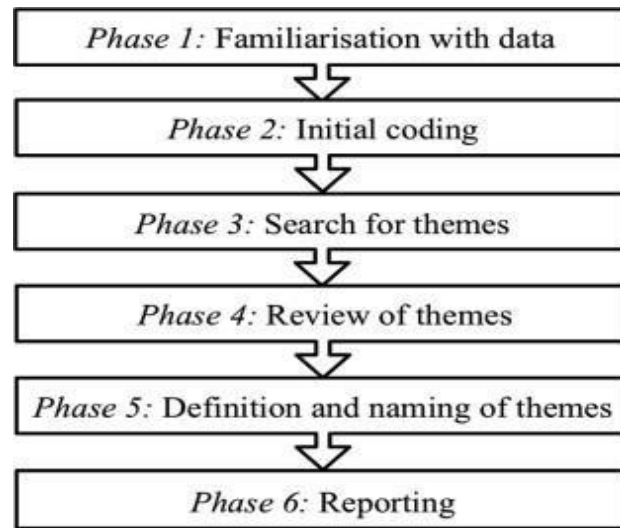


**Figure 3.1:** Research Procedure

### 3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

This section describes how the researcher analysed the collected data. The interview data were transcribed. They were then analysed using Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis technique to reveal themes pertaining to the students' attitudes and motivation. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), there are six steps of conducting a thematic analysis. The first step is familiarisation with the data, where the researcher immerses in and familiarises himself with the data by reading, re-reading, and listening to the audio at least once. The second step is coding the data based on the data collected by the participant's transcriptions. The third step is searching for themes. A theme is a coherent pattern in the data that is relevant to the research question. The first theme was "positive tendency" derived from the codes 'enjoy' and 'relax'. The second theme was "practical reason" derived from the codes "exam marks" and "future job". The fourth step is reviewing the themes between "positive tendency" and "positive attitude" then choosing the best themes, and seeing the relationship between the themes.

The fifth step is defining and naming the themes. The researcher constructed and named each theme based on the analysis, and later emerged the themes. The themes that were emerged was "positive attitudes towards learning the L2", "career prospect", "exam grades", "culture integration", "providing conducive environment", "rewarding the students", "incorporating edutainment elements", "inspiring the students", "reducing the segregation of boys and girls in classroom settings", "introducing Islamic-specific terms in general English", "students' confidence level", "segregation between boys and girls", "limited financial allocation from the school administration", "packed schedule". Lastly, the sixth step is writing up the analysis, supported with relevant data, to answer the research questions.



Source: Braun and Clarke (2006)

**Figure 3.2:** Thematic Analysis

### **3.8 Trustworthiness And Reliability**

To ensure the trustworthiness reliability of the data, some parts of the generated themes were forwarded to two raters who were experts in the area of language and education. This was to verify that the researcher has given deep thought when developing the themes

### **3.9 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter has presented the methodology of this study, including its research design, research context, selection of participants, instrumentation, research procedure, and data analysis procedure. The data were gathered using the semi-structured interview method. Findings from the data collection is discussed int Chapter 4.