

## CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The national agenda in committing to educational space for persons with disabilities (OKU) can be seen through the implementation of *Pendidikan Inklusif* (Inclusive Education) aimed at eliminating the isolation of students with disabilities from other students. The Ministry of Education Malaysia has implemented a Zero Reject Policy to ensure that no student among the disabled is denied their right to obtain their education at the primary school level up to the higher education level either in public or private (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia., 2020). There are also stated seven OKU-Inclusive Policy Implementation Action Plans have been developed systematically and comprehensively to create OKU-friendly infrastructure, provide a conducive teaching and learning environment, create an environment based on love, respect and joy, a conducive living environment for all disability categories, create a community culture who cares for the disabled, ensures the inclusive involvement of the disabled in all activities and programs on and off campus and provides career development programs for the OKU.

In order to fulfil the obligations incumbent upon Islamic relationships, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) plays a role in supporting national inclusiveness by including the subject of the Application of Braille in Quranic and Sunnah Studies (QNR3013) as a Faculty Compulsory course (WF) to be offered to the typical students of Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies (FPQS). With the availability of this subject, students can identify *hijaiyyah* and Jawi's letters in Braille codes, sign of Quran and read the Braille Quran well.

In this education context, research on the learning style in Braille Quran code is based on the USIM's basic principle that integrating the religious with social in approaching the special group by bridging the religious gap with typical groups as

well as upholding the values of the gentleness of this special group based on Quran and Sunnah education. The FPQS' Special Interest Group (SIG) targets 2025 to be the Centre for High Impact Excellence (HiCoE) where its role as a reference centre for research and innovation in Islamic studies for OKU of international standard through the approach of *Naqlī* and *‘aqlī* knowledge integration.

This chapter will explain the problem statement related to the challenges in memorising Braille Quran codes, research objectives and research questions. Additionally, this chapter discusses the significance of research and the research framework explains the component included in-depth. Also, the limitations of research and definition of the terms facilitate readers to understand the whole of the research.

## 1.2 Research Background

USIM has played a role as a *Naqlī* and *‘aqlī* university in facing the challenges of society by establishing cooperation with various parties and NGOs. In this context, the focused society is the visually impaired OKU community. According to Ahmad Kamel et al. (2008), USIM is the only public university in developing teaching and learning Braille Quran codes by offering the QNR3013 course.

The Braille Quran learning is not only focused on the visually impaired, but uniquely USIM provides exposure toward improving the abilities and marketability as well as the value of empathy in facing the challenges of the disabled religiously. This course provides an advantage to the FPQS, USIM graduates in the field of education, from time to time from the aspect of acquiring technical and practical skills.

It involves an introduction to Braille in terms of the history of the code's creation, the development of Braille Quran in Malaysia, pioneered by the Malaysian Association for Blind Muslims (PERTIS) which has gained national recognition, methods in reading Braille Quran and the techniques used to transcribe words in the Quran.

The main objective of this course is to provide exposure to students on the historical background of Braille Quran skills required in reading Braille Quran and transcribing words from the Quran. Through the lectures and tutorials session, students' comprehension of the subject is assessed using mid-semester examinations, tests and course assignments.

The learning of the QNR3013 course offered since 2008 has shown an impact among USIM students to the community with special needs, especially for the visually impaired students who are able to produce Braille Iqra' and Smart Braille Iqra' transcripts in collaboration with UTM. Braille Iqra' was named the Champion in the Immersive Learning Experience Award category (Face to Face) at the Curriculum Design and Innovative Presentation Awards Ceremony 2019 (AKRI 2019). Meanwhile, Smart Braille Iqra' has won the INPEX Special Award. Apart from that, USIM also celebrates the special group by holding the *OKU Berdoa* event in conjunction with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities celebrated worldwide on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December every year with the support of JAKIM, JKM and the USIM Islamic Centre Complex.

### 1.3 Problem Statement

Norul Haida et al. (2016) state that identifying the learning styles that the students are most interested in can help teachers in the process of teaching and learning well. A good learning style can stimulate students to increase their motivation and attract students. Therefore, the choice of a good learning style should be emphasised by students to increase interest and focus in their learning. Past studies have explained that exposure to a variety of learning styles can help students be more interested in learning and succeed in their studies. However, according to Norul Haida et al. (2016), this element is still given less emphasis by teachers. The education system in Malaysia still lacks emphasis on appropriate learning styles and most students learn learning styles or skills by chance, indirectly or by following their friends. Students are still less exposed to models of learning styles and learning skills during the early stages of schooling. The guide from teachers helps students in understanding students' learning styles deeply. In this research context, the justification for choosing the VAK learning style model is in line with Allah's word in surah An-Nahl; 78:

.... وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

... and He made for you hearing and vision and intellect that perhaps you would be grateful.

[Surah an-Nahl: 78]

Based on research's reading, Braille writing system is a method developed by Louis Braille, which is memorising the letters from A to J. Then, the letters K to T with the addition of dot 3. Next, the letters U to Z by adding dots 3 and 6. While the letter W is a special code because in French there is no letter W, hence, this letter is added dot 6 only without dot 3. Likewise in Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) is offering a learning website for Malay Braille eKod (Lee et al., 2015). They build up the website to learn Malay language and numbering in Braille code. In the context of this research, it can be seen that there is almost no methodology to improve students' mastery of memorising the Braille Quran code.

In the context of teaching and learning Braille Quran, identifying learning style is the most important thing in the process of memorising Braille Quran codes to enhance their learning style in memorisation. The main challenge for students to read the Braille Quran is to know the letters first (Ahmad Yunus, 2016). This statement is supported by initial observations with Ustaz Awang Ngah (2018). According to his experience teaching Braille codes, no memorisation technique has been developed to help students memorise Braille codes. The process of learning in Braille Quran in its current form is already a big challenge; a transition to a new principle of *rasm Uthmani* will create new challenges. Thus, there is a need to have a proper learning tool to learn Al-Quran in Braille with *rasm Uthmani* (Dahnil et al., 2020). In the context of this research, the style of memorising the Braille Quran codes is according to the initiative of the students – whether the use of visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learning styles is more dominant among students.

According to Norakyairee (2019), the absence of teaching aids from extensive sources makes the teaching of the Braille Quran only focused on the use of the Braille Quran and Perkins Braille only. This is due to the fact that there are not many educational materials in the Braille Quran that can be used as a reference such as *Tajweed*, Islamic Education Textbooks, *Tafsir Juz Amma* and so on. The same is the case with ICT-oriented teaching aids. It can be concluded that students face challenges in memorising the Braille Quran codes apart from lacking in terms of teaching and learning aids. Therefore, in this research context, the use of learning style in the memorisation process helps students memorise codes well and increase students' interest in the QNR3013 course in memorising Braille Quran codes. Hopefully, this research will give an idea about the learning style in Braille Quran codes to help

typical students memorise the codes easily as a guideline in the process of memorising. Other than that, this research will help people contribute their effort to fulfil the need of visually impaired people.

The QNR3013 course has been offered even without appropriate memorising methods since 2008. However, exploration of the learning style of memorising Braille Quran codes needs to be carried out to address challenges related to students' mastery of Braille Quran codes. Thus, this research aims to explore students' learning styles in memorising Braille Quran codes.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

Generally, this research aims to explore the learning style including the method used by FPQS students in memorising Braille Quran codes. The objectives covered are as follows:

- 1.4.1 To examine the challenges in learning Braille Quran code among typical students;
- 1.4.2 To explore the learning style of memorising Braille Quran codes among typical students;
- 1.4.3 To analyse the learning style of memorising Braille Quran codes.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

Research questions for this research are:

- 1.5.1 What are the challenges in learning Braille Quran codes?
- 1.5.2 How do students memorise the Braille Quran codes?
- 1.5.3 How effective students' memorisation techniques are?

#### **1.6 Significant of Research**

This research is significant as the findings will not only enrich the literature in the areas of the learning style of Braille Quran codes. In fact, this research aims to explore the learning style used in memorising Braille Quran codes among students in

FPQS, USIM. On the other hand, this research also gives the challenges faced by students during the learning session. Specifically, this research helps the other researchers to investigate deeply the challenges in this Braille Quran field. The availability of Braille Quran classes offered by USIM can expose the student and help visually impaired people read Braille Quran well. At the same time, they can add their knowledge about Islam.

The findings of the research will contribute to some alternative ways to improve the field of Braille Quran codes in terms of the learning style used to memorise the codes that are suitable to students. The researcher found out that the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic (VAK) model to help students memorise Braille Quran codes.

In addition, this research will clarify the sources of enhancing academic achievement that coincides with the nature of learning style. This research also will be significant in terms of methodology because this research covered semi-structured interviews and observation by focusing on students' tendencies in their style of learning based on the Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic (VAK) model. Therefore, the findings of this research can be adopted as a useful guide for the students in choosing learning styles according to their tendencies.

### **1.7 Research Framework**

In the learning process, there are some models that might be applied. The Visual, Audio and Kinaesthetic (VAK) model is one of the models of learning that are often used in identifying the style of learning among students.

Learning style is one of the important factors that influence students' achievement in their learning process. The simplest and most common way of identifying different learning styles is based on the senses commonly called as VAK model (Miller, 2001). This VAK model is divided into three different learning styles depending on the way how students receive and process the information. Visual learners most effectively process visual information; auditory learners understand best through hearing; and kinaesthetic/tactile learners learn through touch and movement (Styles, 2007).

Researcher has given an overview about learning style which are visual, auditory and kinaesthetic (VAK). In this research, the researcher focused on the

learning style in memorising Braille Quran codes among typical students who obtained excellent scores in QNR3013.

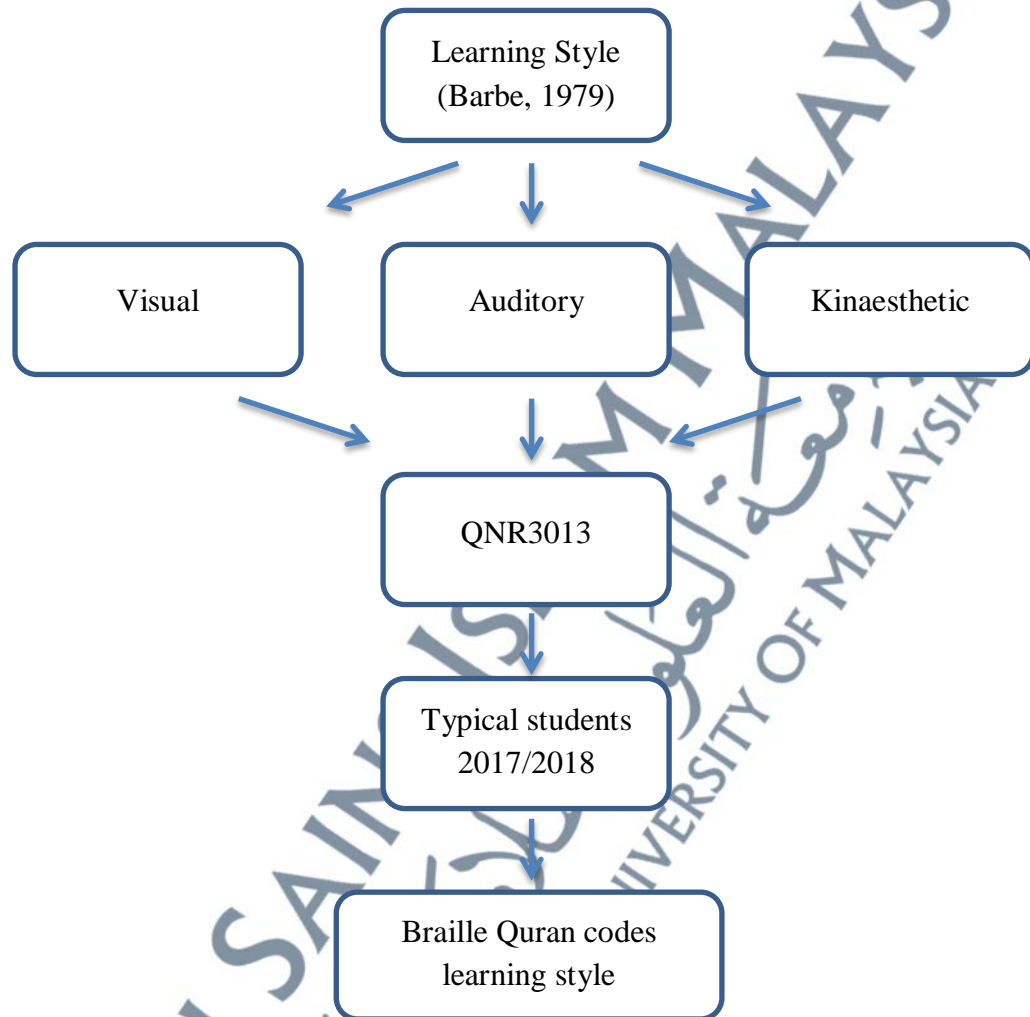


Figure I-I: Braille Quran Learning Style based on VAK Model

Hopefully, the availability of this model of learning style can help students in memorising Braille Quran codes wisely. This is because if they do not master Braille Quran codes, they do not know how to read Braille Quran well at the end of the semester during reading and writing tests. Certainly, the existence of this learning model is an important thing in learning and memorising Braille Quran codes and will create awareness toward people with special needs, especially the visually impaired.

## **1.8 Limitation of Research**

This research was conducted covering some aspects in terms of methodology and research design used by the researcher. The qualitative method was used in this research and case study as a research design in this exploration of learning styles in memorising Braille Quran codes among typical students. Braille Quran refers to the Quran *Mushaf* written in Braille code. It included the numbers because numbers are written in *Mushaf* Quran. If a student could not recognise the number's codes, they do not have to read the number of verses and the pages of *Mushaf* Braille Quran (Ahmad Kamel et al., 2008).

### **1.8.1 Limitation of Field**

USIM was chosen to be part of this research because of Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies is the only faculty that offers the course related to Braille Quran codes which is QNR3013. According to Ahmad Kamel et al. (2008), USIM is the only public universities in Malaysia offering the Application of Braille in Quranic and Sunnah studies.

### **1.8.2 Limitation of Participants**

This research focuses on five typical students of the Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies from Bachelor of Sunnah with Management Studies in the third year for session 2017/2018. These five students attended the subject QNR3013 and obtained excellent results for this subject.

### **1.8.3 Limitation of Learning Style**

This research is an exploration of learning styles which included how students memorise Braille Quran codes. Based on the analysis of the problem, this research will focus on alternative ways of learning styles which are styles that are used during memorising Braille Quran codes. There are many methods that can be developed alternatively as long as learners enjoy and understand the learning process of memorising Braille Quran codes but focusing on a particular method is better to prevent confusion and misunderstanding among learners. This research focuses on VAK models.

## 1.9 Definition of Terms

This section explains the definition of terms “Learning Style, Quran, Braille Quran, PERTIS, Typical Student, Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia”.

### 1.9.1 Learning Style

Speaks to the understanding that every student learns differently. According to Oxford Dictionary Learning refers to the process of learning something. Meanwhile, style is the particular way in which something is done. According to Meor Ibrahim Kamaruddin & Assaadah Mohamad (2011), technically, an individual’s learning style refers to the preferential way in which the student absorbs, processes, comprehends and retains information (Teach.com, 2018). Moreover, Abdul Jawad’s (2018) research found a positive and significant correlation between students’ learning styles and their Islamic education learning achievement. Generally, learning style has been defined as the way an individual learns something according to the individual’s inclinations.

Learning style plays an important role in the learning process. Models of learning are often associated with learning styles. The model is usually associated with how students use their senses in the learning process. Nowadays, there are various theories and models of learning styles that have been introduced by experts. Theories and models of learning styles may be practised and used as a guide by students throughout learning. Even so, students need to know and choose the appropriate learning style for themselves such as the VAK learning style model. Generally, it indicates the most common ways in which people learn and consists of three classifications, namely the Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic learning styles (VAK Model) (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011; Rahman & Ahmar, 2017).

In this research, the researcher used the VAK learning style that was designed in the 1979s by Walter Burke Barbe (Alduais, 2018). This learning style is mostly used by USIM students in memorising Braille Quran codes.

### 1.9.2 Quran

Quran is the word of Allah, a miracle that will last until the Day of Judgment which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Al-Suyūṭī Jalāl al-Dīn, 1416) more than 1400 years ago through the mediation of Jibril AS in stages for 23 years to

guide mankind from ignorance to the truth. Quran is written in a *mushaf*, revealed by *mutawatir*, reading it is an act of worship. It starts with *Surah al-Fatihah* and ends with *Surah an-Nas*. The Quran *mushaf* contains 323,671 letters, 77,437 words, 6,236 verses, 114 chapters, 30 chapters, 60 *hizib* and 240 *maqra*'.

### 1.9.3 Braille Quran

Braille is named after Louis Braille, a French citizen with a visual impairment. He was the founder of writing based on the use of raised dots to replace letters and numbers around the nineteenth century called as cell which has six dots and is also known as Braille code (Norakyairee et al., 2012). Braille is a form of written language for blind people, in which characters are represented by patterns of raised dots that are felt with the fingertips (Dictionaries, 2018). Braille is a writing system for the blind people created by Louis Braille. Braille is a series of raised dots that can be read with the fingers by people who are blind or whose eyesight is not sufficient for reading printed material (American Foundation for the Blind, 2019). Its consist of the 6 raised dots arranged in two parallel rows each having three dots to inscribe the character on paper and read by the finger tips by person who are visually impaired.

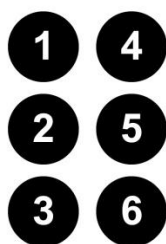


Figure I-II: The Braille Cell

The cell will be produce 64 combinations represent alphabets letter, number, punctuation mark, special sign or even the whole word.

While, Quran is the word of Allah SWT which is a miracle revealed to Prophet Muhammad SAW by Jibril AS, written in *mushaf*, narrated by *mutawatir* and is considered as a worship for those who read it (Al-Suyūfī Jalāl al-Dīn, 1416).

Braille Quran refers to the Quran *mushaf* written in Braille codes. As stated by Ahmad Kamel et al., (2008) it represents the *hijaiyyah* letters, lines such as *fathah*, *dammah*, and *kasrah*, and symbols such as *shaddah*, *sukun*, *maddan* etc. In this

research, Braille Quran refers to the *mushaf* of Braille Quran (*al- Qur'ān al-Karīm bī al-Kitābah al-'Arabiyyah al-Nāfirah*) published by the Malaysian Association for Blind Muslims (PERTIS) printed since 1999 recognised by JAKIM and approved by the Al-Quran Control and Licensing Board of the Ministry of Home Affairs Malaysia (KDN) with KDN code: PQ/Q.1001/1.2/QA/304/49/2010 (Norakyairee, 2019).

#### 1.9.4 PERTIS

PERTIS is the Malaysian Association for Blind Muslims (Persatuan Orang-orang Cacat Penglihatan Islam Malaysia), an NGO that spearheads the development of the Braille Quran in Malaysia. The development of Braille Quran in Malaysia was pioneered by PERTIS. PERTIS Braille Quran publication has received recognition at the national level – from JAKIM and the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN). In the 1990s, PERTIS took the initiative to review and reproduce the Braille Quran in the form of softcopy led by two people with visual impairments, namely Cikgu Zakaria Yahya and Ustaz Muhammad Lee Abdullah (Norhasnira et al., 2015).

#### 1.9.5 Typical Student

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2022), typical refers to having the usual qualities or features of a particular type of person, thing or group, while a student is a person who is studying at an institution, for instance, university or college (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2022). The typical student highlighting what is normally expected of students (Wong et al., 2023). A typical student is a person who has the usual qualities or features in highlighting what is normally expected of students that studies at an institution or university.

#### 1.9.6 Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies

The Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies (FPQS) is the first Faculty established by USIM in 2001. The purpose of establishing this Faculty is to elevate the study of Quran and *sunnah* in the mainstream of national education by emphasising the use of information technology in its teaching system and research.

In addition, it also aims to develop Islamic teachings by opening space for researchers and educators to study, research and disseminate knowledge and wisdom

contained in the holy Quran and *sunnah* to the community and the country. FPQS consists of four programs, namely Bachelor of Quran and Sunnah Studies with Honours; Bachelor of Quranic with Multimedia Studies with Honours; Bachelor of Sunnah with Information Management Studies with Honours, and; Bachelor of *Qira'at* Studies with Honours.

### **1.9.7 Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia**

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) is the 12<sup>th</sup> university wholly owned and funded by the Government of Malaysia. USIM's goal is to be a leader in all aspects of knowledge and as a global reference centre for the integration of *Naqlī* and *'Aqlī* knowledge. The educational model at USIM is based on several basic principles that integrate Islamic Science with Social and Physical Sciences.

USIM is determined to excel in three tracks through academic and research programs. Among them are: Islamic Studies, Quran and Sunnah, Islamic Science, Technology and Engineering and Islamic Literature, Social Sciences and Humanities

### **1.10 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher has given an overview of the learning style and the essential method to use during the learning session. This learning style is an alternative way for students of FPQS, USIM. This method is used to memorise Braille Quran and Jawi's codes among typical students. Thus, the exploration of learning styles for the learning of Braille Quran in typical circles will be explored. It aims to examine the learning styles practised by students in the process of memorising the Braille codes of the Quran.