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058-Turath Unpacked: Synthesizing the Knowledge of the Traditional Islamic Reference Books from the Gifted Muslim Students' Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The integrated Islamic gifted curriculum model in Kolej GENIUS Insan, USIM emphasise the application of research and innovation in the understanding of Islamic knowledge with the contemporary science and technology subjects. Turath as the established traditional Islamic reference covers in detail various disciplines of the religion and how it affects every aspect of human life. This paper examines the use of the Turath text Tayyib Al-Ihsan Fi Tibb Al-Insan, an old Malay medical reference authored by Wan Ahmad Ibn Wan Muhammad Zayn Al-Fatani in the college students' Ulumuddin project. There were nine Level 2 students identified for this assignment and they attended a series of lecture by an academic specialising in the Turath text. They were further assisted by the STEM lecturers, and Quran instructors to understand the information and knowledge of the text explained earlier. Towards the end of the project, each student produced an infographic based on the selected topic explained, and their works were checked by the respective lecturers for accuracy of the synthesized information. The early findings are discussed in this paper to evaluate the effectiveness of the project and assignment process. Using the data gathered here, the research team can improve and consider the Turath project as a form lesson enrichment process in the integration of Naqli and Aqli knowledge for

the college's students and academic staff.

Keywords: Turath, INAQ, infographic, gifted students

INTRODUCTION

The formal education in Malaysia only started during the British occupation and the curriculum and school system was a replica of the colonial system established in their own country. The British civilisation that spanned centuries and covered countries across the world continents had placed education as the human capital investment in producing elite and high-class society to helm the highest echelon of its citizenship. The noble goal yet it was not afforded to every level of their colonised nations' citizens. In Malaysia, the privileged groups would include the royal families, influential state or district leaders' and selected members of the administrative staff's children. The early form of education in the country had always been on the established English schools provided by the British administration and the missionary schools set up by various Christian organisations or movements during the early era of British colonialism in the country. As for most of the Malay Muslims, Islamic education had been the main trusted form of schooling for their children. Hence the formation of many informal religious-based Pondok institutions all over the country especially in the Peninsular areas of pre-independence Malaysia.

The history of Pondok education as one of the earliest education systems ever existed in this country has been well-documented and mentioned in much research done before (Shamsuddin, 2018; Dorloh and Hashim, 2019; Faudzinaim, 2012). Islam has been introduced to Tanah Melayu even before Malacca became the successful trading centre in the region and attracted the superpowers during the era. The influence of Islam in the ordinary people's life, especially the Malays had encouraged them to send their children to Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and many other Arabic countries to further their study and dedicate their life to educate and expand the teaching of Islam to the society all around the region. The Malay Archipelago had seen the birth of many established Islamic education institutions in the form of Islamic pondoks helmed by the *Ulama* (Islamic religious scholar) who had received their education in great Islamic universities such as Al-Azhar University in Egypt (Dorloh and Hashim, 2019).

Pondok as the Community Learning Centre

In the recent history of Malaysia, the Malay Muslim community had chosen the Pondok education system since the 19th century as it offered Islamic studies as the main components in the curriculum. It was a common belief among the Malay society that their children should grow up and become an *Ustaz* (Islamic teacher) or holding a position related to religious position (Dorloh and Hashim, 2019). At the same time, a pondok was also opened to the public and those who were interested to continue their study in various Islamic subjects taught by the Ustaz or Ulama. In Islam, one should believe in lifelong learning, and one should not stop learning and improving their knowledge regardless of their age and position. The culture of Islamic knowledge was preserved by the existence of many pondoks serving the society, across

generations.

The pondoks were traditionally built by a local Islamic Scholar (Ulama) who stayed in the same district or state. The good example of this practice can still be seen in Southern Thailand, Kelantan and Kedah (Dorloh and Hashim, 2019). The Ulama who used to study in a religious school or pondok in his area would further their study to Middle East and later came back to their hometown and set up a new pondok or choose to serve his old pondok or religious school. Society members have a high respect towards their local Ulama and trust that the best education should be formed to a local and place close to home. The old pondok had always been free and contributions for the infrastructure, facilities and other needs would come from the public.

In traditional Pondok education such as Tahfiz school, the study of Turath reference texts has always been part of the academic curriculum. Turath reference text, always referred as *Kitab Turath/Kitab Jawi/Kitab Kuning* in Malay are used in religious classes as main references other than the established main references of Al-Quran and Hadith. The Turath texts covered various subjects in Islamic studies such as Quran Tafseer, Fiqh, Hadith, Tasawwuf and Aqidah. They were written by established Islamic scholars of the era and it spanned a long period of time as it was inherited (using *sanad* method) though generations by referencing made to earlier Islamic texts to maintain its accuracy and legitimacy.

While the modern Tahfiz (Quran Education) curriculum does not make the study of Turath texts as compulsory, many educators are highlighting its importance to the young generation of Tahfiz students (Shamsuddin, 2019; Dorloh and Hashim, 2019)). There are various religious texts categorised as Turath references and while reading, understanding and synthesizing the contents could only be done by those who had studied and understood the Turath references, the information contained are too precious to be ignored by the modern academic curriculum.

Turath in Islamic Education

According to ‘Ali Jum‘ah (2007), ‘turath’ refers to works produced by Muslim intellectuals over the years in the long history of human civilisations and they were considered as work of inheritance as they were kept accurate using the “sanad method”. The works were originally based on the Quran and Sunnah, covering various topics of Islamic jurisprudence and interpretation of Islamic values in accordance with the contemporary environment, individuals and society. Islamic evidence is referred to justify issues and discussion on topics being analysed. It covers wide-ranging topics such as fiqh, usul fiqh, nahu (grammar), saraf (syntax), balaghah (literature), khat (calligraphy) and related topics supporting the Islamic subjects. The works had been produced by Muslim scholars towards the end of second Hijrah century and they have been in existence for more than 100 years.

INAQ in Islamic Gifted Education

In Kolej GENIUS Insan, the Islamic gifted curriculum is a hybrid combination of academic

and Ulumuddin subjects (Zakaria et al., 2021; Spawi et al., 2022). The core components of the curriculum are the STEM subjects which are based on the standard national curriculum for secondary school (KSSM) prepared by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. The college also has Quran education in its Ulumuddin component as students are also memorising and understanding Quran in their Quran education program.

Integration of Naqli and Aqli Knowledge (INAQ) is the teaching and learning approach taken by all the academic programs in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. This is also considered as the strategy taken to ensure knowledge, especially science and technology are not separated from the religious worldview in understanding the theories, discoveries and innovations made in the field of science and technology. The western worldview on science and technology has always strictly been on human ability and intellect to discover the new knowledge and any form of invention without any mention to the knowledge found in any religious references. In short, the common belief is both type of knowledge are incompatible and therefore should be studied separately in the western academic world.

Turath in STEM Education

Turath as the book of knowledge embodies a variety of subjects and topics while it was not specifically written to cover STEM subjects. It is not a science-related text per say yet in some turath texts, there are related topics on health or medical matters as in the case of the turath studied for this project done by the students of Kolej GENIUS Insan. The academic and Quran teachers had consulted a few Turath experts in USIM and later decided on using *Tayyib Al-Ihsan Fi Tibb Al-Insan*, an old Malay medical reference authored by a respected ulama, Wan Ahmad Ibn Wan Muhammad Zayn Al-Fatani.

THE TURATH PROJECT—RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this project, the students and the academic team were involved in the following stages as they tried to synthesize the contents on traditional Malay medical practices explained in the text. The biology lecturers involved were there to integrate the same topic presented to assist the students in understanding, planning, drafting and producing the infographics. The nine students were randomly selected, and some were volunteers in joining this project to ensure they were interested to complete the tasks given to them.

- Lecture – In this first step, the Turath expert of the chosen text, *Tayyib Al-Ihsan Fi Tibb Al-Insan,* was a lecturer from Centre of Foundation Studies, USIM. He had been consulted over this project, and had his class planned over a few sessions to enable the students and team to go over the contents carefully. The sessions were conducted in workshop style and students listened to the lecture during the scheduled sessions. All the sessions were recorded for allowing the team to review the presentation and explanation during the later stages. Students were required to jot down notes and prepare for a simple point form review and present them during the consultation sessions with the academic and Ulumuddin team who would guide them in the following steps.

- Discussion – Next, the sessions would be followed by the discussion stage. The understanding process required question-and-answer session after each lecture to check students' ideas had been formed as expected. Even the academic and Ulumuddin team were involved in deep discussion on the serious matters brought up during the lecture. The talaqqi-style (face-to-face session) was explained as the method used in the teaching and learning process practised in the traditional *pondok*. Though, the pondok students and their *Guru* (religious) were usually sitting in a semi-circle, the sessions in Kolej GENIUS Insan were setup as a replica of similar environment to give them the taste of the traditional religious classroom.

- Consultation—After each lecture session, the students would sit with the academic and Ulumuddin team to discuss their takeaways from the Turath lecture. Each participant would share their points and ideas based on what they understood. Their findings would be checked and verified for accuracy of information. This was an important phase for everyone because the students should understand the information clearly and accurately. They would later be assisted with comments and suggestions by the advisory team. The scientific terms and concepts were thoroughly examined before the preparation of the next stage by the participants.

- Infographic design – For this part, students were given the freedom to come up with their own creative design. They were encouraged to play with the ideas of producing a design that would suit the biological depiction of anatomical structure found in their main textbook or references. The loosely chosen theme was to avoid any unnecessary pressure on students because the focus of the creation of the infographics was the relevant concepts, ideas and information rather than the design. Quality infographics should be accurate information designed to attract the readers and easy for them to understand and capture the message and idea. The infographic should be appreciated for its wonderful information and knowledge-savvy in its presentation.

- Review and amendments – Once the infographic draft had been designed, it would be shared by the students and reviewed for accuracy in all the information given. The academic advisors would advise the participants for further improvements in terms of idea presentation and clear illustration of ideas. The readers should understand the information easily and helped them to remember the ideas and concepts visually.

- Evaluation – For the final stage, students work would be evaluated by the advisory team of the academic and Ulumuddin lecturers. Comments and amendments could still be made to enhance the presentation of the information and the knowledge shared with the readers. Synthesizing the Turath's information included the verification by the Turath expert as well. He would analyse the infographic and share his opinion on presentation of the topics described in the early lecture. These processes helped the validation of the information presented and written in the Turath text that they studied for this project.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this initial Turath understanding project, students were given the guidance to follow the necessary steps in understanding the lessons from the Turath reference and work on producing the infographic to extract the important information that they could identify from the explanation given by the lecturer teaching the reference texts. The expected outcome of this project is to get students to synthesise the main points from the Turath reference and translate them into the visualised form of science infographics. The quality of the infographics is judged by the way the contents and design were packaged. The overall presentation would determine whether the ideas and concepts were well-developed and matched the interpretation of the topics discussed in the original Turath text. Further research could be done on the following gathered data:

- Documenting the lecture: The Turath lecture series should recorded and documented as a form of academic teaching and learning materials. They should be organised based on subjects and topics for easy referencing. The INAQ process would benefit greatly from it as students and academics could integrate them into their lessons and assignments.
- Deeper discussion and understanding on specific topic: The Talaqqi concept is a good method in serious discussion between a teacher and the students. Two-way communication and in-depth look at the contents of the reference book being studied is what learning by reading a book from-to-cover would mean. This reading and research skill was a traditional way of learning yet it could be proven to be more effective in learning and studying the reference text such as Turath text.
- Learning in the visual form: Gifted Muslim students are known to have their varied learning styles and preferred method of reading and interpreting their study materials. Past studies have also proven this similar observation in understanding gifted students ability and skill which apply to the basic visual, audiovisual, read and kinaesthetic (VARK) learning style (Zakaria et al., 2021, Zakaria et al., 2022).
- Integrated assignment and assessment: The IGED curriculum concept proposed the use of integrated methods and approaches in teaching and learning. INAQ process could be well-developed using this assignment as a form of research and assessment where students are required to perform the task of referencing the resources from both the modern academic syllabus together with the Ulumuddin subjects.
- Critical Thinking and Bloom's Taxonomy: This Turath project adopts the important elements of learning found in Bloom's taxonomy. Each phase encouraged the participants to apply the skills mentioned in the taxonomy—remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and create. The Turath project is the accumulation of all the thinking skills combined and each phase the participants went through encouraged them to instill the required skills and ability to absorb the ideas, concepts and notions existed in the reference text as well as the academic references and textbooks found in their normal syllabus. Getting them to repeat the process would enhance their awareness of each skill and develop the critical thinking ability needed in integrating both the Naqli and Aqli knowledge in their learning process.

CONCLUSION

The integration of Naqli and Aqli has always been the educational philosophy uphold in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia and efforts have been made to bridge the gap of the STEM and Ulumuddin subjects in all the academic programs being carried out in the university. The learning experiences afforded to the students are part of the process in giving them the insights of what should be transpired from their discovery learning from various sources of knowledge which are generally known as Islamic sciences or the subjects of knowledge.

In this Turath Scientific Information project, both the teaching staff and students embarked on the challenge to unearth and reveal the scientific knowledge that had been recorded in the form of Turath reference texts. The availability of rich scientific knowledge in the traditional texts is not easy to read and understand by the normal STEM academics as the Turath reference texts need to be studied and explored by the trained mind, as in this case, the experienced and well-versed an academic of Islamic studies from the Pusat Pengajian Teras (The centre of Foundation Studies) in USIM itself. It was a learning process not only for the KGI students involved but also the academics teaching STEM and Quran education in the college.

Documenting the information contained in the Turath reference texts was a beneficial project from the scientific and Quran education perspectives as it allows the students and academics to enhance their understanding of the topics discovered through the INAQ process. The project marked the beginning of more similar assignments that could be introduced as a form learning activity and integrated assessments as part of the Islamic gifted education curriculum implemented in this college.

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APPENDIX

GENIUS Insan

UNIVERSITI SAINS ISLAM MALAYSIA

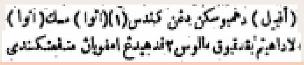
NATURAL REMEDIES FOR STROKE

Maisarah Amirah

Dan penyakit saktah iaitu penyakit yang menghilangkan perasaan dan gerak daripada sekalian anggota melainkan bernafas jua.

WHAT IS STROKE?

A stroke happens when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot (ischemic stroke) or ruptures (hemorrhagic stroke)



BLACK PEPPER

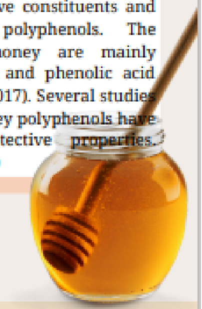
Black pepper is an anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and neuroprotective plant that could be utilised as a stroke adjuvant treatment to prevent infarct formation and edoema. In Persian medicine, black pepper is one of the medicinal plants used to prevent and treat stroke (Behzad et al, 2017)

A study shows that black pepper is able to provide neuroprotection in permanent middle artery occlusion (pMCAO) rat models. Black pepper has the potential to be a novel therapeutic agent in stroke treatment. The researchers discovered that rats given black pepper had significantly fewer neurological deficits, less ischemia-induced cellular damage, and smaller areas of cerebral infarction, as well as less severe macro and microcellular brain structural changes. (Hua et al, 2019)

HONEY

A study shows that honey has a neuroprotective effect in rats with a cerebral focal ischemia model. Honey also inhibited ischemia-induced neuroinflammation via activating microglia, and neuroinflammatory processes in the brain are thought to be important in the development of neurodegenerative disorders and neuronal injury associated with stroke (Mijanur et al, 2014)

Honey contains many active constituents and antioxidants such as polyphenols. The polyphenols found in honey are mainly flavonoids, phenolic acids and phenolic acid derivatives (Hossen et al, 2017). Several studies on honey propose that honey polyphenols have nootropic and neuroprotective properties. (Samarghandian et al, 2017)



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