

Teaching Competency among Islamic Educators in Malaysia

¹Mohd Aderi Che Noh, ¹Mohd Sofian Mat Ludin and ²Asmawati Suhid

¹Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

²Faculty of Education, Universiti Putra Malaysia

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Abstract: Effective education requires a teacher who has the attitude and a high competency for teaching. This article aims to present a study relating to the attitudes and competencies of Islamic Education teachers who are important assets for the development of students' individualities. This study is a pilot study carried out to obtain quantitative data. Questionnaires were distributed to a total of 525 Islamic Education teachers in Malaysia. Descriptive and multivariate analyses were used for data analyses which include the mean, correlation and multiple regressions. The results showed the importance of teachers attitude towards the teaching profession and the high teaching competency to nurture a generation of high-quality students. Strictly speaking, attitude and teaching competency of Islamic Education teachers are very helpful in determining students' learning achievement.

Key words: Islamic Education • Attitude • Teaching Competency • Islamic Educators

INTRODUCTION

A teacher should first understand and internalize his obligations as a servant of Allah Almighty and as His caliph on the land of Earth. With this, the teacher will serve as an important agent in guiding a generation of students, not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but to bring them to the right path, forming a personality that is in line with religious values and consequently create a peaceful and harmonious society. In Islam, the responsibilities of educators are very broad and are not limited to conveying information only but include beliefs, ethics, esthetical values and behaviour in daily lives. Therefore, in educational field, the attitude and competency are seen as important elements that have direct relevance between the professional competency of teachers and the reaction and effect on students.

The noble personalities of the teachers play a very important role in developing good values in students [1] Similarly, teachers' abilities to plan manage and implement the teaching and learning process is a key factor in achieving the goal of teaching. Skills in creativity, designing and implementing teaching and learning are inextricably linked with their duties and responsibilities as educators. This is in line with the end goal of education which is an effort to produce a person that is balanced, harmonious and adheres to the religion. The overall aim of

this NEP (National Education Philosophy) is geared toward the concept of comprehensive and balanced human development in terms of physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual [2].

Objectives of the Study: The study is generally intended to identify the competencies of Quran recitation teachers. To achieve this goal, there are a number of specific objectives set out in the study such as:

- Identifying the level of Islamic Education teachers' attitudes.
- Identifying the competency levels of Islamic Education teachers.
- Identifying the relationship between attitudes and competencies of teachers of Islamic Education.
- Identifying the influence of the level of attitudes towards teaching competency in terms of lesson planning, knowledge and teaching Quran recitation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In general, this study is a quantitative study which will use the descriptive research design to identify and examine empirically and systematically the attitudes and competencies of Quran recitation teachers. Analysis is based on the five-point scale of strongly disagree (STS),

disagree (TS), less agree (KS), agree (s) and strongly agree (SS). The study population involves a total of 13,737 Islamic Education teachers throughout Malaysia [3]. A total of 525 samples were selected to be respondents. This total exceeds the proposed minimum sample set by Sekaran [4] of 384 people and Cochran [5] of 388 people for a total population of 13,373. The limitation of the study is focused on the teaching of the Quran recitation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive analysis of the results of the study showed that the overall mean scores of Islamic Education teachers' attitudes were 4.12. Analysis shows that there are two items at a moderate level which are, 'I have a problem to ensure that students have mastered the *tajwid* knowledge' and 'Sometimes I feel less enthusiastic when looking at the poor performance of most students in Quran recitation'. This finding has a close relationship with the Islamic Education teachers' heavy workload in terms of curriculum tasks and the time constraints to teach Quran recitation which interferes with the teachers' implementation of various teaching activities. This is emphasized by Ab. Halim et.al [6]. whereby a variety of constraints causes teachers to work less on *talaqi* and *musyafahah* activities while teaching Quran recitation. Nevertheless, other items showed the attitudes of Islamic Education teachers in the teaching of Islamic Education at a high level. This finding indicates that the Islamic Education teachers understand the attitude of being a *murabbi*, *muallim*, *muaddib*, *murshid* and *mudarris* which a teacher should possess. Al-Ghazali [7] (undated) asserts that a teacher's attitude must: First, to love the students as they love their own children. Second, be sincere in imparting knowledge to students, as teaching is called for by the religion. Third, always advise students to practice good manners and avoid Allah's prohibitions. Fourth, avoid bad deeds or evil manners. Fifth, do not insult other teachers, especially in front of the students. Sixth, wisely adapt to the students' age levels. Seventh, perform good deeds with knowledge. Firmly, the attitudes shown by teachers in the form of a good personality and virtuous behaviour are examples as role models for the students.

Further descriptive analysis on research findings shows the level of competency of Islamic Education teachers in Malaysian Secondary Schools at a mean score of 3.44 which is average. Therefore, efforts to improve the students' proficiency in Islamic Education should be focused on programmes to enhance teachers'

competencies in planning Quran recitation lessons, knowledge relating to Quran recitation and teaching skills in Quran recitation that will affect the students' achievement of the learning objectives for Quran recitation. This is consistent with the views of Medley and Shahnnon [8] that:

- "Competence to teach is defined in terms of possession of two kinds of knowledge, knowledge of subject matter and professional knowledge and training programmes are developed to help students become competent in this sense."

The following statistical analysis involves multivariate analysis to identify whether there is a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes in Islamic Education and their level of competency in Islamic Education. The findings showed that the correlation was $r = 0.304$. Thus, the strength of the relationship between the variables studied is strong. While significant value (p) obtained is 0.00 and this value is smaller than α value (0.01). This shows that there is a significant relationship between Islamic Education teachers' attitudes and the level of competency of Islamic Education teachers. This means that respondents who have a high score level for the teacher attitudes will also show a high score for competency level of Islamic Education teachers.

Thus, the authorities such as the Ministry of Education, Islamic Education Division, State Education Department and school administration should strive to instil positive attitudes in teachers of Islamic Education via a variety of courses, workshops and discussions as needed to counter any problems during the teaching of Islamic Education.

Based on the discussion above, it is clear that the combination between effective teaching characteristics and effective attitudes of teachers of Islamic education in the teaching and learning process is important [9]. Therefore, teachers of Islamic education are a very important component in the implementation of effective teaching [10]. Al-Nahlawi [11] stressed on the attributes and characteristics of teachers which are based on the teachings of Islam. First, all of his objectives, behaviour and thoughts are *Rabbani* in nature, which is always based on the tenets of Islam. Second, he was an honest person, where all the efforts are intended at obtaining Allah's blessings. Third, always be patient in performing the obligations and duties. Fourth, should be honest with what is conveyed. Among the signs of honesty is that the teachers practice what they preach.

The final analysis is related to multiple regression analysis which showed that 9% of the contributions to the competency of teachers of Islamic Education are from teachers' attitudes. This is clearly shown in the following regression equation:

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + \dots + b_n X_n$$
$$Y = 3.288 + 0.241X_1 + 0.332$$

where:

Y = Competency of Islamic Education Teacher

X₁ = Attitude of Islamic Education Teacher

Constant *a* = 3.288

Standard Error *r* = 0.332

Thus, it is extremely important to observe the competency of the Quran recitation teachers because the weakness of these teachers in preparing themselves as individuals with strong identities, skills and virtues can lead their students to negative environment [12].

CONCLUSION

The discussion of teacher competencies in this study includes the attitudes towards the teaching and learning of the Quran, relevant knowledge on the content and pedagogy of the Quran, lesson plans in the processes of teaching and learning of the Quran and the teaching process of the Quran. Thus, the greatness of a teacher of the Quran is not simply measured by the knowledge, skills and behaviour alone, in fact various other factors will have a significant impact in the process of educating and guiding students to become useful human beings based on the Quran.

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