

The problematics of Qur'an teaching in Singapore's half-time Madrasah

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Abstract

The half-time madrasah is an outgrowth of the earliest institutions of Islamic learning in Singapore. Half-term madrasah offers religious education for students attending mainstream schools. The half-term madrasa curriculum uses an Islamic religious education model called "Program aLIVE," or Learning Islamic Values Every Day. However, it is observed that students who have the potential to read the Qur'an well and correctly are low. This article tries to explain some of the problems that become obstacles to learning the Qur'an in Madrasah Separuh Masa. The research method used is a type of qualitative research with a literature study approach. The data used is sourced from observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that there are several challenges that become problematic in the process of teaching the Qur'an at Madrasah Separuh Masa Singapore. First, the lack of learning time, limited human resources, the difficulty of building student motivation, and Qur'an teaching methods.

Keywords: Al-Qur'an; Half-Time Madrasah; Singapore

Abstrak

Madrasah separuh masa merupakan hasil perkembangan dari institusi pembelajaran agama Islam paling awal di Singapura. Madrasah separuh masa menawarkan pendidikan agama bagi siswa yang mengikuti sekolah umum. Kurikulum madrasah separuh masa menggunakan model Pendidikan Agama Islam yang disebut dengan "Programme aLIVE" atau Learning Islamic Values Every Day. Namun demikian, dari hasil pengamatan didapat hasil bahwa siswa yang berpotensi bisa membaca Al-Qur'an dengan baik dan benar rendah. Artikel ini mencoba memaparkan beberapa problem yang menjadi kendala dalam pembelajaran Al-Qur'an di Madrasah Separuh Masa. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka. Data yang digunakan bersumber dari observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian memperlihatkan bahwa ada beberapa tantangan yang menjadi problematika dalam proses pengajaran Al-Qur'an di Madrasah Separuh Masa Singapura. Pertama, kurangnya waktu pembelajaran, keterbatasan sumber daya manusia, sulitnya membangun motivasi siswa, dan metode pengajaran Al-Qur'an.

Kata kunci: Al-Qur'an; Madrasah Separuh Masa; Singapura.

Introduction

Singapore, as one of the regions in Southeast Asia with a strong Malay culture but a Muslim minority, has an Islamic education institution called madrasah. Since their inception, madrasahs in Singapore have been known as places of learning for Muslim children, especially those related to the sciences of the Qur'an and sharia. For this reason, the term madrasah, which was first used in the early 20th century, is better known as a religious school (Buang and Chew, 2014). Madrasah al-Sibyan was the

first madrasah established in Singapore. It was established in 1905, with its main focus being the memorization of the Qur'an (Fui, 2006). Unfortunately, after the 1920s, Madrasah As-Sibyan is no longer known.

Subsequently, Singapore's Muslim community established the first modern madrasah, Madrasah al-Iqbal, which was founded in 1908 by the country's *mujaddid* (reformer) and leading figure in Islamic Malay journalism, Syed Sheikh Ahmad Al-Hadi. The modernization of Madrasah Al-Iqbal Al-Islamiyah can be seen in the Islamic Studies curriculum, which offers general subjects such as geography, history, mathematics, and English. Due to the lack of response from the Singaporean Muslim community at that time, the madrasah was closed a year later.

The modernization of madrasah carried out as a Muslim response to the thinking of Muslim *mujaddid* in Singapore was almost the same time as what happened in Indonesia. There, the group modernized madrasah in the early 20th century, precisely in 1909, with the establishment of Madrasah Adabiyah in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra (Syafri, 2022).

Some writers on the history of Islamic education mention two events that caused the emergence of the madrasah modernization movement in the Islamic world as an Islamic renewal movement that spread from the Middle East (Maksum, 2004). The two causes of this renewal are internal factors of Muslims: the notion of monotheism that has been tainted with the practices of kufr, ignorance that causes Muslims to stop thinking, divisions among Muslims, and external factors as a result of contact between the Islamic world and the West (Mokhtar, 2010).

In the next era, the establishment of madrasah in Singapore was supported by religious mentors (*ulama*) in order to develop Islamic propagation through education. The peak of this development occurred in 1966 with the establishment of 26 madrasahs across Singapore (Hj Siren, Majid, & Aljunied, 2014; Mohd Nor, 2017). Nowadays, there are only six full-time madrasahs and half-time madrasahs in the whole country of Singapore. Most of the six full-time madrasahs are located in the Eastern Region and are close to each other (Mokhtar, 2010; Muhidin, Helmiati, & Karim, 2023; Budin, 2023).

The existence of full-time and half-time madrasahs aims to help Muslim children realize ethical formation, revive the holy spirit in the souls of students, guide them to commendable customs, and lead them to become successful human beings who will benefit their religion, country, and themselves. This approach is in keeping with the original purpose of establishing madrasahs, which is to bring back scholars, leaders, and educators for Singapore's Islamic society (MUIS, 2021).

The Full-Time Madrasah offers daily lessons in general sciences, such as math, English, Malay, science, geography, history, and other general subjects. Its system is similar to the public education system implemented by the Singapore government, except with the addition of religious subjects and school uniform protocols, in

accordance with the demands of an Islamic educational institution. The full-time madrasahs in Singapore run the same way as public schools, which is about 5 hours every Monday to Friday. These madrasahs are controlled by the cooperation of Majelis Ugama Islam Singapore (MUIS) and Lembaga Pentadbir Madrasah under the Joint Madrasah Scheme (JMS) (Muhidin, Helmiati, and Karim, 2023).

The Half-Time Madrasah in Singapore is identical to *Madrasah Diniyah* in Indonesia, where students study religion after returning from public school every afternoon and Sunday. The Half-Time Madrasah is an education system that is managed on weekends and controlled by the Mosque Board under the auspices of MUIS. The Half-Time Madrasah is an alternative platform for young people who do not have the opportunity or do not enter the full-time madrasah to produce a generation of Muslims who are religiously observant, noble, religiously literate, and skilled in reading the Qur'an (Batri, 2012; Syafri, Maya, & Sarkiman, 2022). In the Half-Time Madrasah, the learning time lasts for 3 hours every Saturday and Sunday and only teaches religious subjects, namely *Aqidah*, *Fiqh*, *Akhlaq*, *Sirah*, and Quranic Literacy (aQL). A small number also conduct classes on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at the Yusuf Ishak Mosque in northern Singapore.

The Half-Time Madrasahs offer religious education for students attending public schools. They are the result of developments in Singapore's earliest institutions of Islamic learning, which at the time were not necessarily run in mosques but in *kuttabs*, writing schools, or *surau* (Buang and Chew, 2014). The curriculum uses a model of Islamic religious education called "Program aL.I.V.E.", which means "*Learning Islamic Values Every Day*". The aL.I.V.E education program aims to nurture children who are *soleh/solehah*, have piety and good morals, are knowledgeable about Islam, become devout Muslims, and show care and concern for others (<https://learnislam.sg/about-alive/>).

The A.L.I.V.E. education program at Half-Time Madrasah is an interesting program conducted by the mosque. Some previous studies see this program as a way to help Muslim children face the challenges of the times in the midst of Singapore's pluralistic society through strengthening the Qur'an and religious sciences (Syafri, Maya, & Sarkiman, 2022). This program is also considered capable of strengthening the function of the mosque, not only as a place of worship but also as an educational center (Rahman, Warsah, & Murfi, 2019). From this program, we can see the typical Singaporean Muslim community that prefers traditional learning to learning the sciences of Islamic religious education (Ishomuddin & Mokhtar, 2016).

However, from the results of preliminary observations in the two aL.I.V.E implementation locations conducted by the author, it appears that there are several obstacles that students who are able to read the Qur'an properly and correctly face. This can be seen from the lack of student interest in learning the Qur'an, so the ability to read the Qur'an properly and correctly is low. So far, no standard method has been established for the knowledge of the Qur'an class at Half-Time Madrasah. The ability

and competence of teachers to teach this subject are not specifically known. Therefore, some of the *asatizahs* interviewed did not follow the curriculum set by the management, when teaching Qur'anic knowledge (AQL – *Quranic Literacy*).

In this initial observation, the author felt that the teaching techniques provided were impractical and irrelevant because almost all students were not able to recognize and mention the *hijaiyyah* letters properly and were not able to spell and read the verses of the selected *surah*. Referring to the results of these observations, the author becomes interested in conducting research specifically related to the problems of learning Quranic literacy at the Half-Time Madrasah. This is based on the fact that the knowledge of the Qur'an must be learned by every Muslim, especially students in madrasah, so it is the responsibility of institutions and educators to realize this need. The meaning of '*ta'alama*' found in the Qur'an, which means "receiving knowledge as a result of a teaching," is that learning is an activity that a person does where the activity makes him gain knowledge (Yusuf, 2013). What's more, learning knowledge leads to the skills of reading, capturing, and understanding the Qur'an so as to be able to practice the teachings and moral messages contained therein.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the problematic nature of Qur'anic teaching in Singapore's half-time madrasah and recommend effective improvement strategies. In order to achieve this objective, the study will examine the curriculum used in Qur'an teaching, the qualifications of the teachers who teach the Qur'an, the teaching methods applied, and the time constraints in the learning process. By analyzing these factors, it is hoped that a better understanding of the problems encountered in Qur'anic teaching can be found and that remedial strategies can be developed that can improve the understanding, implementation of values, and Qur'anic reading skills of the students at Half-Time Madrasah in Singapore. The author hopes that this study will serve as an input to the teaching and learning of Qur'anic knowledge in half-time madrasah, which have not shown any progress to be proud of since the past ten years in terms of student interest, achievement, and attainment.

Research Method

This study is qualitative research that will be used to examine and describe the problematics of learning the Qur'an in the Half-Time Madrasah in Singapore as an effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning the Qur'an in the Half-Time Madrasah in Singapore. A qualitative type of writing is carried out to answer problems that require in-depth understanding in the context of the time and situation concerned. Through this type of research, research objectives can be developed and tested for validity of knowledge so as to achieve the objective of writing (Sugiyono, 2018).

Moleong (2000) argues that qualitative observation involves measuring the level of certain characteristics. The descriptive characteristics of the qualitative data collected involve words, pictures, and not numbers. Research is carried out naturally and according to the objective situation in the field without manipulating the data collected. The intended research process can also include observing the daily lives of a number of people, interacting with them, and trying to understand their language and interpretations of the surrounding world.

This type of research involves writing in the field (field research), namely the study of facts and phenomena that occur in life using a qualitative approach that is descriptive, naturalistic, and related to data that is purely qualitative in nature (Irawan, 1994). The data contained in this study are the results of observations from the author's experience while teaching in Qur'anic knowledge classes in two Half-Time Madrasah and private recitations, starting in 2022, as well as interviews with *asatidzah*, Quranic teachers, students and parents of students, and the general public. Not only that, data was also obtained from documentation, questionnaires, and reading journals, articles, or other documents related to the research title.

This study was conducted in two half-time or weekend madrasahs in Singapore, either managed by MUIS or by private mosques. The madrasahs are located in the Northern Zone and one in the Western Zone. The choice of these locations was made on the basis that both locations were where the author taught Qur'anic knowledge for about ten years. The problems studied were aimed at improving the quality of Qur'anic teaching and learning in the two madrasahs. In addition, the relatively short time, low cost and efficient labor as well as the institution being easily accessible by the author were taken into consideration. Another consideration is that since all the Half-Time Madrasahs in Singapore are under the management of the same government agency, it can be said that the two locations are considered representative of all Half-Time Madrasahs in Singapore.

The subjects of this research are the students and teachers (*asatidzah*) in Singapore Half-Time Madrasah. While the object of this research is the problematic issue of teaching and learning the Qur'an in Singapore Half-Time Madrasah. Based on this concept, the population in this study is 38 madrasahs locations that provide aL.I.V.E. This study is limited to madrasahs that provide aL.I.V.E program at the level of Tweens (Children aged 9-12 years), Teens (Teenagers aged 13-16 years) and Youth (Teenagers over 17 years).

The sampling selection technique is a way to take part of the existing population. There are several models of sample selection techniques, namely; probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Sugiyono, 2018). Probability sampling is sampling that is done randomly so that the entire population has the same opportunity to be selected. Meanwhile, non-probability sampling is a sampling method that does not provide opportunities for the population to be selected as samples (Morse, 1991). The sample selection technique used in this study is

probability sampling where all madrasahs that organize the aL.I.V.E program have the same opportunity to be sampled. Sampling was conducted randomly without regard to the levels in the study population. This technique was chosen because the population in the study, namely madrasah, is homogeneous, that is, it has the same character traits.

The cluster sampling technique was used to ensure that each area was represented (Morse, 1991). The madrasahs sampled in this study represent two regions in Singapore, namely the Yusof Ishak Mosque in the Northern Region and the Al-Mukminin Mosque in the Western Region of Singapore. These two mosques are among the 73 mosques established by the government throughout Singapore, most of which are located in residential areas. There are several unique things that caused the author to choose these two mosques as samples. The Yusof Ishak Mosque is the youngest mosque of all and the only mosque named after the first President of the Republic of Singapore. Al-Mukminin Mosque is where the author studied as a teenager and was able to witness the development and changes in the mosque.

Teachers who are respondents in this writing are religion teachers who teach in madrasahs half-time. The selection technique also uses random sampling techniques (Sugiyono, 2018). This method of determining the sample is allowed based on the opinion of J. M. Morse (1991), that the sample procedure in qualitative studies is not so strict. Furthermore, it should be flexible to make room for dynamic changes whatever the phenomenon of writing (Coyne, 1997). Michael Q. Patton (1990) argues that all types of samples in qualitative studies cover a wide scope called "purposeful sampling" or samples that aim to focus on relativity in depth, even with small sample sizes.

Based on the population of half-time madrasah teachers, the selection as a sample consisted of those who teach in the previously mentioned ranks. Each mosque has 4 classes of Tweens, Teens i.e. year 1, year 2, year 3 and year 4 and 2 ranks of Youth i.e. year 1 and 2. and the number of teachers in these ranks is 20. The sample selection technique used made only five teachers taken as respondents. The selection of respondents is based on qualitative methods that do not require a limit on respondents, so that the number of five respondents represents the existing population (Sugiyono, 2018). The sample population that has been determined is representative of the implementation system of Qur'anic learning in half-time Madrasah from the angle of curriculum and basic regulations as well as the profile of the students of the class that is uniform throughout the Singapore region.

There are two types of data in this study, namely primary data and secondary data (Arikunto, 2006). Primary data is data obtained directly from respondents through direct observation and official documents. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained through third parties in the form of writing reports, theses, books, magazines, official websites and other relevant data sources (Prawiro, 2016). Primary data in the research will focus on the teaching and learning of the Qur'an in Singapore, especially

in the Half-Time Madrasah through observation in the AQL (Alive Quranic Literacy) segment as well as several Quranic classes outside the Half-Time Madrasah. Primary data will also be obtained from interviews with *asatidzah*, Quranic literacy teachers, students, parents of students and even the general public, as well as relevant documents from Half-Time Madrasah. Secondary data is support data obtained from journal excerpts, books, internet sites and other related data sources.

Data collection techniques were carried out through direct observation, guided interviews, observation and literature review (Nazir, 2014). The interview method is a method of collecting data by asking questions that are done systematically and based on the purpose of the investigation (Ibrahim, 1989). Interview, according to Esterberg in Sugiyono (2018) is a meeting of two people to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers, so that meaning can be constructed in a certain topic. The consideration of using the interview method is to find something that is not obtained through observation or observation such as feelings, thoughts, as well as something that has happened in previous situations and times (Sigit, 1999).

Interviews in this study involved interviewing several *asatidzah* students, parents of students, as well as from private and regular Quran classes. The collected data will be analyzed descriptively so as to reach a conclusion. The structured questions for the interviews were only used as a problem-focused interview direction. Therefore, they were not used strictly. This means that questions can develop according to the answers of writing informants. This is in accordance with the opinion of Bogdan and Biden, who say that qualitative interviews have unstructured, unstandardized and open-ended characteristics (Sugiyono, 2018). Interviews are needed specifically for selected informants such as paras *asatidzah*, students or other informants who can contribute information that can help in the study of the Qur'an learning model at Half-Time Madrasah in Singapore.

While the observation method is a complex process, a process composed of various biological and psychological processes, two of the most important are the processes of observation and memory by making direct observations in the field, especially related to the necessary research data (Sugiyono, 2018). In the context of this research, the author makes observations in the field to collect the necessary data related to the Qur'an learning model at Half-Time Madrasah in Singapore. Through observation, the author records situations related to proportional knowledge and direct knowledge obtained from data (Riyanto, 1996). In the context of this writing, the author can see for himself the classroom situation as well as the method of teaching and learning the Qur'an.

In addition, this documentation method is used to find sources of information in written, pictorial and electronic documents. The documents collected are of course only documents that are relevant to the purpose and focus of this writing problem (Harjono, 1998). Document study is a complement to the use of observation and interview methods in qualitative writing (Sugiyono, 2018). Documents that are

considered important in this study are: the composition of the Al-Qur'an teaching and learning program at Half-Time Madrasah.

The data analysis techniques used in this study were carried out simultaneously with the data collection process, both through observation, interviews and through documentation. The process begins with data collection, classifying data into the same units, reducing data that is not used, presenting data and drawing conclusions or verifying data.

Result and Discussion

A. The Half-Time Madrasah Profile

The word "madrasah" in Arabic comes from the root word "*darasa*" which means to tell or teach something. The word "madrasah" also means a place where something is taught (Qasmi, 2005). Madrasahs are schools or digestive institutions where Islamic education is obtained. In the archipelago, there are various names for madrasah. In Indonesia, it is called a *pesantren* or *pondok* that provides non-formal religious education which also exists in Malaysia to this day.

In Singapore where Muslims are a minority, the Islamic education centers or institutions are called madrasah. The Half-Time Madrasah education is conducted on weekends, on Saturdays and Sundays to cater for students attending public schools, and from Monday to Friday. There are now some half-time madrasah centers that hold classes on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. All the half-time madrasahs operate out of mosques.

The main purpose of the half-time madrasah is to provide opportunities for students from public schools to study religion, as well as for moral development that is expected to overcome social problems. This is in line with the views of Dennis P. Doyle (1997), who emphasizes that moral education is part of social life and schools as a place to form morals.

The Half-Time Madrasah in Singapore are divided into four regions based on location, namely the Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western regions. There are 11 locations in the eastern region, 12 in the northern region, 3 in the southern region, and 10 in the western region (MUIS, 2020).

Table 1. Location of aL.I.V.E Teaching Center

Northern Region	Southern Region	Eastern Region	Western Region
Masjid Al-Istiqomah	Masjid Jamiah Ar-Rabithah	Masjid Al-Anshar	Masjid Al-Mukminin
Masjid Alkaff Upper Serangoon	Masjid Al-Amin	Masjid Al-Ishlah	Masjid Ar-Raudhah
Masjid Al-Muttaqin	Masjid Mujahidin	Masjid Al-Istighfar	Al-Khair English Madrasah Masjid Maarof
Masjid An-Nahdhah		Masjid Al-Mawaddah	
Masjid Darul Makmur		Masjid Darul Aman	Masjid Al-Firdaus

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Masjid Yusof Ishaq	Masjid Darul Ghufran	Masjid Darus Salam
Masjid Ahmad Ibrahim	Masjid Kampung Siglap	Masjid Asy-Syakirin
Masjid Asy-Syafaah	Masjid Alkaff Kampung Melayu	Masjid Al-Imam
Masjid Rahimabi	Masjid Haji Mohd Saleh Geylang	Masjid Hassanah
Masjid Limau	Masjid Salim Mattar	
Masjid Haji Yusoff	Masjid At-Taqwa	
Masjid An-Nur		
Masjid En-Naem		

Source: Majelis Ugama Islam Singapura

In 2021, the Islamic Learning Hub and Management (ILHAM) took over the management of several half-time madrasahs in phases. ILHAM provides progressive Islamic education, content development, institutional advisory services, and professional educators who are qualified in Singapore Islamic education. ILHAM began operations in 2021 with five mosques in the Eastern region under its control. In 2022, 10 mosques from other regions across the country were transferred to ILHAM for management.

Table 2 shows the mosques that have been transferred to ILHAM in 2021 and 2022. In the first phase in 2021, five mosques in the eastern region were managed by ILHAM. In 2022, ten more mosques from evenly distributed countries were added.

Table 2. ILHAM's aL.I.V.E Teaching Center Location

Year of 2021	Western Region
Masjid Al-Anshar	Masjid Al-Mukminin
Masjid Alkaff Kampung Melayu	Masjid An-Nahdhah
Masjid Al-Istighfar	Masjid Jamiah Ar-Robithoh
Masjid Darul Ghufran	Madrasah Masjid Maarof
	Masjid An-Nur
	Masjid Al-Mawaddah
	Masjid Al-Ishlah
	Masjid En-Naeem
	Masjid Salim Mattar

Source: Majelis Ugama Islam Singapura

In accordance with the times and circumstances, the half-time madrasahs are moving towards a more challenging situation where they are now run in state-of-the-art mosques or modern educational centers owned or rented by Islamic community organizations. This situation provides teachers and students with a wider range of opportunities with more perfect supplies and regulations to attract them. The principle of educational science by modern educators is to allow children to gather with peers, mingle and discuss with each other in classes of 20 students and one teacher as exemplified by the al-Majdiyah al-Khaliliyah school in Egypt (Shalaby, 1976).

The half-time madrasah education system was established to allow public school students to keep pace with the need for religious skills and knowledge in this century (Buang & Chew, 2014; Chee Min Fui, 2006). Apart from that, it aims at imparting pure and noble moral values to such students. This can be seen from the educational curriculum of aL.I.V.E. which emphasizes the moral development of students.

The number of students who attend the weekend religion class is still relatively small, at 40%. They are grouped and matched with age-based learning levels. The population in each rank is set as high as 25 students in each class. This may be due to the fact that each mosque has limited space. The number of classes offered depends on the amount of space available. It may also be due to parents being busy earning a living and therefore giving less attention to their children's religious and moral education. Based on these predictions, many give up the opportunity to get an education in a madrasah halfway through the school year (Kosim, 2011; Hj. Siren, Majid, Aljunied et.al., 2014).

There are two types of madrasah in Singapore. *First*, The Full-Time madrasah, where learning is done every day with religious subjects. This is because this model prepares Muslim children who will become religious leaders. However, today's full-time madrasah in Singapore also teach general sciences, such as math, English, Malay, science, geography, history and other general subjects. The full-time madrasah system is not much different from the general education system except for the addition of religious studies and school uniform protocols, in accordance with the demands of an Islamic educational institution. The Full-Time Madrasah in Singapore runs the same way as public schools which is about 5 hours every Monday to Friday. These madrasahs are run in collaboration with Majelis Ugama Islam Singapore (MUIS) and Lembaga Pentadbir Madrasah under the Joint Madrasah Scheme (JMS).

Second, The Half-Time Madrasah, it is synonymous with madrasah *diniyah*, where students study religion after returning from public school every afternoon and Sunday. The half-time maadrasah is an education system that is run on weekends under the control of the Lembaga Pentadbir Masjid under the auspices of MUIS. The learning time lasts for 3 hours every Saturday and Sunday, and only teaches religious subjects namely: *Aqidah, Fiqh, Akhlaq, and Sirah*. There is a small number that also conduct lessons on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, namely at the Yusuf Ishak Mosque in the northern region of Singapore. The short learning process of approximately 14 years causes the understanding of Islamic religious knowledge obtained by students to be less intensive when compared to full-time madrasah students (Fui, 2006).

The Half-Time Madrasah offers religious education for students attending public schools. It is an outgrowth of Singapore's earliest institutions of Islamic learning which at the time were not necessarily conducted in mosques but in kuttabs or writing schools or surau (Buang & Chew, 2014). The curriculum of hal-time

madrasah uses an Islamic Education model called "aL.I.V.E" which stands for Learning Islamic Values Every Day. The aL.I.V.E program aims to create a generation of pious and righteous children who are nurtured with a sense of piety along with good morals. This system was introduced in 2004 and continues to run until now (Syafri, Maya & Sarkiman, 2022).

The students of half-time madrasah are taught in an interactive, engaging environment in English. They are expected to convey and express the teachings of Islam logically and wisely after understanding and practicing it well every day of course within the framework of Islamic Education, especially in Singapore. The students of the half-time Madrasah with aL.I.V.E. model are divided into four ranks namely the children's rank, basic lower school (Kids) from the age of five to eight years, superior lower school rank (Tweens) from the age of nine to 12 years, teen rank (Teens) from the age of 13 to 16 years and youth (Youth) from the age of 17 to 20 years. Each stage runs for four years except Youth aL.I.V.E. which runs for two years only (MUIS, 2015).

The Half-Time Madrasah is an alternative platform for young people who do not have the opportunity or do not enter the full-time madrasah, to produce a generation of Muslims who are religiously observant, noble, religiously literate and skilled in reading the Qur'an (Batri, 2012).

Most of the teachers in the madrasah are from the younger generation of graduates from madrasah and overseas Islamic universities. There are very few teachers over the age of forty. They must be assigned by the Singapore Islamic Religious Council (MUIS). Only those from the "Tier 1" category are eligible to teach religion of all ranks, while those holding "Tier 2" certificates are only allowed to teach the Qur'an.

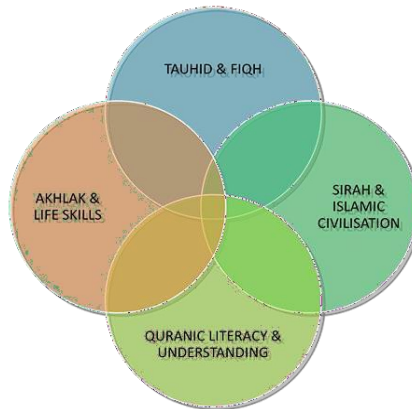
B. The Qur'anic Curriculum in aL.I.V.E Program

There are four subjects in the Learning Islamic Values Everyday (aL.I.V.E) curriculum, namely Faith & Practices (*Aqidah* and *Fiqh*), Character & Life Skills (*Akhlaq* and Life Skills), Social & Civilisational Islam (Social and Islamic Culture) and Quranic Literacy (Knowledge of the Qur'an). The subject of Faith & Practices (*Aqidah* and *Fiqh*) discusses Tawheed and all matters related to the six pillars of Faith, namely faith in Allah SWT, angels, messengers, His books, the Day of Judgment and to good and bad destiny. While matters relating to the five pillars of Islam are taught in the subject of *Fiqh*.

When in 2019 the Singapore Islamic Religious Council transferred the administration and management of the aL.I.V.E program from the Lembaga Pentadbiran Masjid to ILHAM (Islamic Learning Hub and Management), the aL.I.V.E curriculum continued to be used, but was updated according to changing times and community needs from time to time. So that the content of Islamic Education continues to be progressive, along with the provision of professional

educators to increase the excellence of these Islamic education institutions (ILHAM, 2022).

The Half Term Madrasah managed by MUIS provides an integrated curriculum model as shown in the following diagram:



Picture 1. Integrated Curriculum Model aL.I.V.E

This model of the aL.I.V.E program differs from the conventional model in which the focus of Islamic Religion Education (PAI) is on the scope of the Qur'an and Hadits, Belief, *Akhlaq*, *Fiqh*, and History or *Sirah*. Subjects of knowledge of the Quran are one of the components of the curriculum that exists in the aL.I.V.E. The material is loaded in the textbooks provided. In addition, the Singapore Islamic Religious Council (MUIS) also published an additional textbook entitled Al-Qur'an Learning. (AQL). But the author sees this subject not so clearly its purpose. The following is the maintenance activity of one half-time madrasah session in which the learning material is very dense and the knowledge of the Qur'an is seen once as the eye of the elective or supplementary teaching.

ACTIVITY 4: THE HADITH OF ARKANUL ISLAM

Activity:
Do you know what is Arkanul Islam? What are the obligatory rituals a Muslim have to practice in his life?

- Get introduced to the 5 Pillars of Islam and refer to PowerPoint Slides 10 - 11 to learn how practicing these 5 actions can strengthen our faith.
- Alternatively, you may view the Slide video for further explanation.

Learning points:

- The 5 Pillars of Islam consist of 5 actions that strengthen our faith in Islam.
- Muslims have to strive to be consistent in practicing all 5 pillars in their lives.

Extension (Activities you may do at your own time)

- Demonstrate the importance of pillars on building a house.
- Line 5 markers (vertically) and place a piece of paper on top of the markers.
- Next, try and remove 1 marker without dropping the piece of paper.
- Share your reflection on the activity with your ustaz/ustazah when you meet online.

ACTIVITY 5: Qur'anic Literacy
Surah Ad-Dhuha Verse 1 - 2

Activity:

- Refer to Powerpoint slides 12 - 15.
- Learn about the story behind the revelation of Surah Ad-Dhuha.
- Recite Verse 1 - 2 of Surah Ad-Dhuha and understand the meaning.
- Memorise the verses. An ustaz/ustazah will check on your memorisation.

If you have the handbook, you may do:

- Class Activity page 12

Picture 2. Example of Lesson Plan 1

Based on the example shown, a short learning time is contained in such a dense learning activity. The number of activities can reach five, but in reality there are only three. This situation causes students to feel overwhelmed and tend to become unfocused on learning, so they start looking for alternatives to fill their boredom by chatting with friends next door, playing HP, or breaking connections with teachers. All this because of too much information that needs to be understood by them in a short period of time without a break.

Another example of a lesson plan is displayed along with a timescale to be adhered to by the scholars. The second example shows a similar situation where the session time is allocated as follows:

Table 3. Example of Lesson Plan 2

Activity	Duration
	45 minutes
Introduction Times	20 minutes
Activity 1: Who I am? Activity 2: Surah Al-Fatihah	
Activity 3: Message from Surah Al-fatihah	15 minutes
Activity 4: Knowledge of Al-Qur'an (aQL)	30 minutes
	minutes

Based on the example, the author argues that this short time allocation is focused only on one core thing, *Surah Al-Fatihah*, which should be summarized in 30 minutes. The priority of time allocation is also an advantage in the muqaddimah session which appears to be duplicated with activity 1. Based on the situation in the field, many of the students still lack understanding of the meaning of *surah Al-Fatiha*, let alone read it well and correctly, and know the meaning.

A simpler and more even learning allocation for each subject, helps the student to focus more on the subject taught and can complete the session more calmly and systematically. The teaching session format contains three subjects at each meeting so that the learning session is not so dense with a lot of scratches in such a limited time. In addition, students have the opportunity to give a better focus to all subjects that help improve cognitive understanding and a better perception of what is learned each week. Although the material is based on the selected themes, the aspects of *Aqidah*, *Fiqh* and *Akhlaq* are also embedded in the themes so that students understand correctly the discussion of those aspects.

The writer sees an unequal focus between the subjects of knowledge of the Qur'an and others, while it is equally important to be studied from an early age, even

throughout life. The curriculum's drafting is also like denying the ability of students to learn at a fast rate at an early age (undermining). Its implementation position as an elective course in the KIDS and TWEENS rankings and the entry subjects (supplementary) in the TEENS ranking and this subject is not offered in the YOUTH rankings is causing some problems.

1. The Material of Learning of the Qur'an in the Half-Time Madrasah

The Qur'an is a teaching of the knowledge of the Quran. In addition, the students are invited to understand the meaning of the verses read briefly and to carry out the activities of memorizing choices and short *surah* (Sutarto, Kadiyo dan Ramlan Rosyadi, 2019). With the rapid development of science in various forms, many of the books related to the dissemination of knowledge of the Qur'an are on the market as well as digitally and electronically.

In Singapore's Half-Time Madrasah, the actual learning material required for the basic level is very simple. The most important things to know about the learning of the Qur'an are found in several books, such as the literal tafsir of the Quran Rasm Uthmani by *Ustaz* Mahadi bin Dahlan and *Ustaz* Azharuddin bin Sahil (2004), the Tajwid Al-Qur'an Rasm Othman by Haji Abdul Qader Leong (1998), the Tadrib at-Tajwid by Nadi Furqan (2000), the Science of the Practical and Effective Tajwid by Datuk Abu Hassan Bin al-Hafiz and Harun Ar-Rasyid Tuskan, and the book aL.I.V.E Quranic Literay issued by the Strategic Education Unit of Belia and Society, the Council of Islamic Education of Singapore (MUIS) – Youth and Community Education Strategic Unit. See the following table:

Table 4. Al-Qur'an Learning Material

The Name of Kitab	Adab of Reading	Reading Guide	Letter of Hijaiyyah	Tajwid	Number of Pages
Al-Qur'an Rasm Uthmani Vol 10 susunan Ustaz Mahadi bin Dahlan dan Ustaz Azharuddin bin Sahil	•	•	•	•	217
Tajwid Al-Qur'an Rasm Uthmani oleh Haji Abdul Qader Leong	•	•	•	•	110
Tadrib at-Tajwid oleh Nadi Furqan	•	•	•	•	240
Ilmu Tajwid Praktikal dan Berkesan Susuann Datuk Abu hassan Bin Al-Hafiz dan Harun Ar-Rasyid Tuskan	•	•	•	•	296
aQL aLIVE Quranic Literay terbitan Unit Strategis Pendidikan Belia dan Masyarakat, Majlis Ugama Islam Singapur (MUIS) –	•	•	•	•	71

Although the aQL book of the Singapore Islamic Religious Council (MUIS), which is used much thinner than the others but the substance remains the same. It makes this book simple, practical and suitable for use in a half-time madrasah. But unfortunately, what's happening on the ground is very worrying. There is a need for a new model of learning that will refresh the teaching and learning process of the Quran in the half-time madrasah of Singapore. It is hoped that the existence of a new learning model can be the cause of this aLIVE AQL book to see its usefulness in the spread of the Qur'an in the mid-time Madrasah.

As a language-oriented subject, the intelligence aspect can be used as an incentive for students to embrace and fall in love with the subject. Citing Gardner's (1983) view, one of the branches of multiple intelligence is linguistic intelligence that is closely related to the ability to master written and oral language. This increase in intelligence is expected to impress students who are potentially interested and able to read the Quran properly and correctly, to convince students' parents and the community that the Half-Time Madrasah institution is capable of educating and forming children who are able to learn the Quran correctly and properly, while also giving appreciation for the learning of the Quran as a subject loved by the students.

2. Method of Learning Al-Qur'an

Learning approach refers to the nature of the learning process that is still common as a strengthening of the orientation of learning methods. Approach means the method or way in which a task is performed. Teachers should not use the same approach to students who have different profiles because they are concerned that the teaching and learning process carried out is ineffective and does not its purpose. It is preferable that teachers identify the profile or needs of students and choose and use appropriate, appropriate and correct approaches so that the teaching and learning process is carried out effectively (Berenyi, 2018).

Unlike the concept of approach, the principle refers to a set of systematic teaching actions aimed at achieving specific short-term objectives, in language learning. In the context of this writing, the lesson is reading the Qur'an. Among the popular methods that can be applied are the research method, the socratic method, inductive method, discovery method and project method. The effectiveness of the curriculum depends on the suitability of the approach used (Mustari, Jasmi, Muhammad, dan Yahya, 2012).

In the teaching of the Qur'an in the Half-Time Madrasah, the primary method of teaching and learning is reading and memorizing. As for the writer and drawing applied only in the KIDS rankings. Given such a short time allocation, this is the best and maximum and easier to implement.

C. The Challenge of the Study of the Qur'an in the Half-Time Madrasah

From the results of observations and interviews conducted by the writer at the site of the research, the result was a low understanding of the Quran, a low application of the values of the Qur'an, and a low reading skill in the Half-Time Madrasah of Singapore. Some other obstacles such as an unoptimal curriculum, inadequate teacher qualifications, ineffective teaching methods, and time constraints in the learning process are also the results of the author's analysis.

This discrepancy occurs when there is a gap between the ability to digest and the suitability of the curriculum conducted so that it becomes less effective when seen from the ability, achievement and skill of the student to the knowledge and understanding of the Quran. The results seen in the field are that the students have not been able to know the hijaiyah letters properly and fully even though they have been attending half-time madrasahs for many years. It scans on his inability to spell and read the text of the Qur'an, Hadiths, and readings in prayers. This condition should be a concern because the Quran is a sacred book of the Muslims that contains teachings and values that must be understood and implemented in everyday life.

From the results of the research the author managed to summarize some of the challenges of teaching the Qur'an in the Singapore Half-Time Madrasah, among others:

1. Lack of Learning Time

Lack of learning time is one of the challenges faced in the teaching of the Qur'an in the Singapore Half-Time Madrasah. Because of the need to divide time between formal education and Islamic education, the time allocated to the teaching of the Qur'an becomes limited. In addition to the high load of subjects on students, making the learning of the Qur'an is considered an additional segment. So it's only implemented when it comes to time and if it takes just 10, 20 or 30 minutes. This of course affects the quality of learning and the ability of students to understand and apply the content of the Qur'an. Therefore, effective strategies and methods are needed to make optimal use of limited learning time.

2. The Limitation of Human Resource

The limitation of human resources is also a problem faced in the teaching of the Qur'an in the Singapore Half-Time Madrasah. The number of teachers who have competence in teaching the Qur'an may not be enough to meet the needs of Islamic education in this institution. Besides, the quality of the education of the Quran teacher can also be a determining factor in the success of the teaching. Therefore, there must be an effort to increase the number and quality of Quran teachers in Singapore Half-Time Madrasah use to overcome the limitation of human resources.

3. Difficulty Building Student Interests and Motivation

Another challenge in the teaching of the Qur'an in the Singapore Half-Time Madrasah is to build students' interest and motivation in the Quran. Students may find it difficult to understand and feel interested in the Qur'an, so their interest and motivation for learning may be low. This can affect the learning outcomes and achievements of students in understanding the Quran. Therefore, efforts should be made to create an attractive learning atmosphere, introduce innovative teaching methods, and socialize the importance of the Qur'an in order to build students' interest and motivation in learning it.

4. Method of Learning Al-Qur'an

The absence of a standard teaching method established for the teaching of the Qur'an (AQL) in the Half-Time Madrasah makes the teacher's ability and competence in teaching the Scriptures unknown specifically. So that some of the teachers who were interviewed did not follow the curriculum prescribed by the administrator, when teaching the knowledge of the Qur'an. (AQL – Quranic Literacy). Standard teaching methods are required for all the teaching processes in the Half-Time madrasah to be able to measure the results of the curriculum and the process of teaching carried out.

Conclusion

Being able to read and understand the Qur'an is the primary standard that every Muslim child should have, without exception in Singapore. Although these Muslim children live in a secular state, the need to be able to read the Holy Scriptures of the Qur'an remains the primary. The Half-Time Madrasah as one of the Islamic educational institutions in Singapore has an obligation to continue to improve the teaching and learning of the Qur'an for Muslim children there. In this regard, the obstacles, challenges, and obstacles in the teaching process of the Qur'an must always be reviewed and evaluated in order to the goal of learning well.

The process of teaching and learning the Qur'an in an Islamic educational institution involves various aspects, including curriculum, methods, teachers, and students themselves. Therefore, improvements in these four aspects could be the main focus of any annual evaluation at the Half-Time Madrasah, so that the barriers encountered in the classroom can be continuously monitored and promptly overcome as expected.

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