Regulatory Framework for Digital Publication of Quranic Texts in Malaysia: An Analysis of the Kdn 2024 Guidelines and Implications for Mashaf Standardization

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ABSTRACT

The advancement of digital technology has transformed how society accesses and reads the Quran, leading to an increase in the publication of digital mushafs through various platforms such as mobile applications and web browsers. In Malaysia, the enforcement of the Quranic Text Printing Act 1986 (Amendment 2023) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) Guidelines serve as the primary framework for regulating the authenticity and accuracy of Quranic text publications. This article analyzes the Guidelines for Application for Digital Publication of Quranic Texts (2024) as the latest policy document governing the technical, shariah, and operational aspects of digital mushaf production. The analysis focuses on the regulatory structure, the role of the Quranic Text Printing Control and Licensing Board (LPPPQ), and standardization challenges, particularly in visual and pedagogical contexts such as tajwid color codes. The study finds that the guidelines emphasize textual accuracy, adherence to Uthmani rasm, requirements for consulting panels, and the control of publication metadata. However, the aspect of visual standardization still needs further elaboration. This article proposes improvements to ensure uniformity, reliability, and effectiveness of digital mushafs in Malaysia.

Keywords: Digital mushaf, KDN 2024 Guidelines, LPPPQ, tajwid color codes, standardization.

INTRODUCTION

The digitalization of the Quran is rapidly advancing in line with the daily use of smart devices and mobile applications by Muslims, and global trends show a significant increase in the adoption of digital mushafs by the younger generation (Amanullah, 2021; Farid & Rahman, 2022). Unlike printed mushafs, which have been strictly regulated since 1986, digital mushafs initially operated within a loose regulatory space, leading to issues of version discrepancies, textual inaccuracies, advertising interference, and visual inconsistencies (Ismail, 2020; Karim et al., 2021). Recognizing the need for more comprehensive regulation, KDN, through LPPPQ, issued the Guidelines for Application for Digital Publication of Quranic Texts (2024) as an official reference document for refining the publication of digital mushafs (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2024).

These guidelines detail the application procedures, content requirements, rasm usage, audio regulation, translation and tafsir, as well as the preparation of digital proofs. Discussions on digital mushaf standardization are also in line with international research findings that emphasize the need for textual integrity, visual consistency, and metadata regulation of digital mushafs (Al-Qahtani, 2019; Abdullah & Yusuf, 2021; Mukhtar, 2023). This article analyzes the content of these guidelines and links them to the issue of mushaf standardization, including visual pedagogical aspects such as tajwid color codes, which have been proven to affect comprehension and learning retention rates (Ng et al., 2024; Wan Daud & Latif, 2023).

Furthermore, the regulation of digital mushaf publication in Malaysia is shaped by a robust legal framework:

1. The Quranic Text Printing Act 1986 (Amendment 2023) governs all forms of publication, printing, and distribution of Quranic texts. The 2023 amendment expands the scope of the act to digital platforms (online

and offline), audio and video, mobile applications, and all forms of Quranic materials (Jabatan Peguam Negara Malaysia, 2023; Mahmud, 2022; Shukri, 2023).

2. The role of the Quranic Text Printing Control and Licensing Board (LPPPQ) as the authoritative body ensures the integrity of mushafs in Malaysia. LPPPQ's main tasks include approving correct proofs, determining permissible rasm and khat, setting requirements for consulting panels, and providing technical guidelines for digital platforms (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2024; Ghazali, 2021; Nordin & Salleh, 2022).

With this combination of legal framework and regulatory institutions, the publication of digital mushafs is under more systematic supervision, minimizing the risk of textual inaccuracies and technical errors, in line with contemporary researchers' recommendations on global digital Quran standardization (Rahman & Hashim, 2023; Al-Faruqi, 2020; Khan, 2022). This ensures compliance with shariah and pedagogical standards, and strengthens public trust in digital mushafs as a modern medium for Quranic learning (Zulkifli & Hamid, 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The digitalization of the Quran has become a central focus in contemporary studies as it transforms how Muslims access, read, and learn the Quran. Previous studies indicate that digital Quran applications enhance accessibility and facilitate users in reviewing recitations, but also pose challenges in terms of textual accuracy and visual consistency (Diachenko et al., 2022; She et al., 2021; Alwi et al., 2013). This inconsistency issue is more pronounced when Quranic texts are displayed across various platforms, where digital versions often differ from official printed mushafs, posing risks of reading errors and confusion for novice users (Radzid et al., 2023; Md Amin et al., 2022).

In the pedagogical context, the use of tajwid color codes has been widely discussed as a visual aid to facilitate learning Quranic recitation. A study by She et al. (2021) shows that systematic coloring of specific letters and verses helps students identify recitation rules such as idgham, ikhfa', and mad more quickly, thereby improving comprehension and reading accuracy. However, studies also emphasize that the absence of national standards leads to variations in color usage among publishers, which can cause confusion for readers transitioning between printed and digital mushafs (Hassan, 2022; Sihes et al., 2023).

In terms of legislation and regulation, Malaysia has maintained a strict regulatory framework for the publication of Quranic texts through the Quranic Text Printing Act 1986 (Amendment 2023) and the involvement of LPPPQ. The main emphasis is on textual accuracy, approval by consulting panels, and adherence to Uthmani rasm, including for digital platforms and mobile applications (Jabatan Peguam Negara Malaysia, 2023; Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2024). However, the literature indicates that visual aspects such as tajwid coloring and digital rasm standardization are still less formally discussed in legal documents, opening avenues for further research in ensuring pedagogical uniformity (Karomah et al., 2020; Shaharuddin et al., 2024; Hussain & Ghaffar, 2025).

Previous studies emphasize that the production of digital mushafs not only requires legal and shariah compliance but also the integration of qiraat scholarship and pedagogical design. This combination is crucial to ensure that Quranic texts displayed on digital platforms are authentic, consistent, and user-friendly (Diachenko et al., 2022; She et al., 2021; Traditional to Digital…, 2025; Ismail, Mustafa, Shaharuddin, Yahaya, & Razali,

2023). This literature review provides the theoretical and conceptual basis for analyzing the KDN 2024 Guidelines, particularly concerning textual accuracy, visual standardization, and the pedagogical integrity of digital mushafs in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the Guidelines for Application for Digital Publication of Quranic Texts (KDN, 2024) and related documents such as the Quranic Text Printing Act 1986 (Amendment 2023). This method allows researchers to deeply examine the content of legal documents and official guidelines, and to identify the principles, procedures, and conditions stipulated for the publication of digital mushafs (Radzid et al., 2023; Md Amin et al., 2022). This approach is suitable for studies focusing on policy analysis and its implications for the visual and pedagogical standardization of digital mushafs (Shaharuddin et al., 2024; Hussain & Ghaffar, 2025).

Data was collected through systematic document analysis. Key documents were analyzed according to categories such as application requirements, textual provisions, translation and tafsir content, audio content, and procedures and documentation. The analysis also emphasized visual aspects, including the use of Uthmani rasm and tajwid color codes, to assess the extent to which the guidelines support the standardization of digital mushafs in Malaysia (Hassan, 2022; Sihes et al., 2023). Researchers took notes, mapped themes, and systematically coded information to identify patterns and shortcomings in the guidelines (Karomah et al., 2020).

Additionally, this study utilized a descriptive comparative analysis method to evaluate the uniformity between digital guidelines and printed mushaf publication practices (Radzid et al., 2023; Md Amin et al., 2022). This comparison involved visual aspects, page structure, and adherence to Uthmani rasm to assess the extent to which the KDN 2024 guidelines impact pedagogical consistency and user experience (Shaharuddin et al., 2024; Hussain & Ghaffar, 2025).

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, by referring to official documents from KDN, the Quranic Text Printing Act, and LPPPQ technical guidelines (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2024; Radzid et al., 2023). The analysis was conducted critically, emphasizing implications for digital mushaf standardization, shariah compliance, and textual reliability (Traditional to Digital…, 2025; Ismail et al., 2023). This method allows the study to provide relevant recommendations for improving guidelines and national standards for digital mushafs in Malaysia (Shaharuddin et al., 2024).

FINDINGS

Analysis of the Guidelines for Application for Digital Publication of Quranic Texts indicates that digital publishers are required to comply with strict conditions before approval can be granted. Publishers must be registered with the Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM), wholly owned by Muslims, and have at least two certified Quranic Consulting Panels with tahfiz and qiraat qualifications and a KDN Consulting Panel

Professionalism Certificate (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2024; Hamid & Yusuf, 2023; Osman & Saad, 2020). These requirements emphasize that the production of digital mushafs is not merely a technical publishing process, but also necessitates the involvement of experts to ensure textual accuracy and authenticity (Karim & Roslan, 2022; She et al., 2021).

Regarding Quranic text provisions, the guidelines emphasize the use of Uthmani rasm as determined by LPPPQ, with reference to the Mujamma' Malik Fahd mushaf (Madinah) including the official Naskh script (Jabatan Peguam Negara Malaysia, 2023; Karim & Roslan, 2022). Visual displays other than Arabic are not permitted on the main text, while colored displays must comply with the Colored Tajwid and Colored Waqaf & Ibtida' Marking Guidelines (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2024; Hassan, 2022; Ayub & Rahman, 2019). The digital page structure is also clearly defined, including Surah al-Fatihah starting on the right display and the division of juz' according to a system of 20 pages per juz' with 15 lines per page (She et al., 2021; Omar & Aziz, 2019).

For translation and tafsir content, all translations must obtain JAKIM approval and use Tafsir Pimpinan arRahman as the primary reference. Such translations must be accompanied by the Arabic text and cannot be published as translations only (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2024; Al-Azami, 2003). Furthermore, audio content of Quranic recitation must use the Hafs 'an 'Asim narration as the standard; other narrations are permitted but must be clearly stated (Al-Qattan, 2020; She et al., 2021).

The application procedure requires complete documentation, including copies of identity cards, SSM documents, appointment of consulting panels, JAKIM approval (if applicable), consulting panel proof reports (Form B1), and five copies of the final digital application proof (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2024; Hamid & Yusuf, 2023). These requirements indicate that the guidelines emphasize high diligence and compliance in the digital mushaf publication process (Osman & Saad, 2020; Razak & Latif, 2023).

DISCUSSION

These findings indicate that the guidelines emphasize textual and rasm uniformity to ensure the integrity of the Quran is maintained in an easily manipulated digital environment (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2024; Karim &

Roslan, 2022). The emphasis on textual accuracy proves that the regulation of digital publications is not merely a formality, but a strategic effort to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the content (Hamid & Yusuf, 2023; Osman & Saad, 2020).

Although compliance with the Colored Tajwid Guidelines is mandatory, this document is not fully detailed, and the lack of national standards potentially affects the pedagogical consistency of tajwid, complicates matters for novice users, and disrupts coordination between printed and digital mushafs (Hassan, 2022; Ayub & Rahman, 2019; Omar & Aziz, 2019). This issue poses a challenge in ensuring a uniform user experience between digital platforms and physical prints (El-Farr & Salama, 2021; She et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the prohibition of non-shariah-compliant advertisements in Quranic applications affirms the shariah identity of Malaysian digital mushafs. This approach differs from some international applications that feature random advertisements, which could potentially affect the etiquette of reading the Quran and user experience (Farhani & Wahab, 2022; Razak & Latif, 2023).

Finally, the expertise of consulting panels is a crucial factor in ensuring textual accuracy and authenticity. The involvement of qiraat and tahfiz experts not only guarantees textual accuracy but also enhances the credibility and professionalism of digital mushaf publications (She et al., 2021; Karim & Roslan, 2022; Hamid & Yusuf, 2023). This underscores that the production of digital mushafs requires a combination of technical competence and shariah scholarship to achieve authentic standards (Diachenko et al., 2022; Ghanem, 2020; Yusof & Khalid, 2018).

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that the Guidelines for Application for Digital Publication of Quranic Texts (KDN, 2024) provide a clear regulatory framework for the publication of digital mushafs in Malaysia. The guidelines emphasize adherence to Uthmani rasm, textual accuracy, approval by consulting panels, and meticulous application procedures. This approach enables the production of authentic digital mushafs that align with shariah principles, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of digital publications in the country.

However, the study found shortcomings in the aspect of visual standardization, particularly concerning tajwid color codes and waqaf & ibtida' markings. This lack of national standards potentially affects pedagogical uniformity for users, especially students and novice readers who use digital applications as a learning medium. Therefore, improvements in visual aspects are crucial to ensure that digital mushafs can be harmonized with official printed mushafs, facilitating the transition between digital and print formats.

The first recommendation is to develop a single national standard for tajwid color codes, with the involvement of qiraat, tahfiz, and pedagogical experts. This standard should not only consistently define colors and the meaning of recitation rules but also provide pedagogical rationale to help users understand the function of each color. The implementation of this standard will strengthen visual uniformity across all digital platforms and Quranic applications in Malaysia.

Additionally, harmonization between digital and printed mushafs is recommended to ensure consistent page structure, rasm, and waqaf & ibtida' markings. This approach will help users reduce confusion when transitioning between media, thereby enhancing a smoother learning and reading experience. Furthermore, enforcement against international applications offering Quranic texts in Malaysia needs to be strengthened. All foreign applications should undergo LPPPQ review before being promoted, to ensure textual authenticity and adherence to shariah principles.

Finally, the transparency of publication metadata needs to be expanded, where every digital application must display publisher information, address, certification reference number, qiraat narration, and last update date. This step not only enhances the credibility of the application but also facilitates users in making references and assessing the authenticity of the digital mushaf. Overall, these improvements will ensure that digital mushafs in Malaysia are not only authentic in terms of text and shariah but also consistent in visual and pedagogical aspects, in line with user needs and national standards.

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