Perceptions of Students with Visual Impairments at a Tahfiz Centre towards the Challenges of Quranic Memorisation Learning

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ABSTRACT

Quranic tahfiz education plays an important role in nurturing a generation of Muslims who are knowledgeable, morally grounded, and closely connected to the Quran. To ensure educational equity, opportunities to participate in tahfiz education should also be accessible to persons with visual impairments. Nevertheless, students with visual impairments continue to encounter various challenges that may constrain the processes of Quranic memorisation and engagement, including limited access to assistive learning materials and appropriate educational support. This study therefore examines the perceptions of students with visual impairments regarding the principal challenges of Quranic memorisation learning at the Markaz Tahfiz Orang Kurang Upaya Masalah Penglihatan (MTOKUMP), Tok Jiring, Terengganu. A quantitative approach using a descriptive survey design was employed. Six students from MTOKUMP were selected through purposive sampling. Primary data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire measuring students' perceptions of various learning challenges. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean scores and standard deviations. The findings indicate several key challenges, including limited availability of Braille Quran materials, constraints in the use of Islamic digital technologies, and substantial reliance on teachers as primary learning facilitators. Despite these challenges, the students demonstrated strong motivation to continue their memorisation, supported by intrinsic motivation, teacher guidance, and the institutional learning environment. Overall, the findings suggest that tahfiz education can support students' self-confidence, discipline, and spiritual well-being. The study contributes to the development of more inclusive teaching strategies and disability-friendly Islamic educational technologies, with the aim of strengthening the accessibility and effectiveness of tahfiz education in Malaysia.

Keywords: MTOKUMP, Quranic memorisation, tahfiz education, learning challenges, student perceptions, visual impairment

INTRODUCTION

Quranic education is a fundamental component in the formation of Muslims who possess faith, noble character, and consciousness of Allah SWT. Within tahfiz education, memorising the Quran is not merely a cognitive activity but also an act of worship that cultivates spiritual discipline and moral character (Abdullah, 2019). Malaysia has placed considerable emphasis on the development of tahfiz education through the establishment of various specialised institutions aimed at producing knowledgeable and practising huffaz (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia [JAKIM], 2021). Within this development, persons with visual impairments should likewise be provided equitable opportunities to participate fully in tahfiz education, in accordance with the Islamic principle of equality in the pursuit of knowledge (Ahmad, 2020).

Students with visual impairments encounter various challenges in Quranic memorisation learning. Limitations in visual access require them to rely on the Braille Quran, audio recordings, assistive technologies, and teacher guidance. Although efforts towards inclusive learning have been undertaken by government agencies and religious institutions, constraints remain in relation to the accessibility of materials, technological skills, teacher

training, and psychospiritual support (Yusof & Hamzah, 2022). Understanding students' perceptions of these challenges is therefore essential to ensure that instructional systems respond effectively to their needs and potential.

Tahfiz education for persons with visual impairments continues to require focused attention. Despite the availability of specialised institutions and the use of the Braille Quran, students may still experience difficulty in accessing comprehensive, structured, and user-friendly learning resources (Bahagian Pendidikan Islam, 2022). Previous studies have reported that many students with visual impairments rely substantially on teachers' oral guidance and audio recordings because of the limited availability of suitable interactive digital materials (Rahman & Salleh, 2021). Such circumstances may restrict opportunities for independent revision and effective review of Quranic verses.

In addition, limitations in teachers' specialised pedagogical competencies, together with psychological and spiritual factors, may shape the learning experiences of students with visual impairments. Many tahfiz teachers have not received specialised training in special education, potentially creating gaps in communication and the suitability of instructional approaches (Abd Rahman et al., 2020). Issues related to motivation, self-confidence, and social stigma have also been identified as important challenges (Ismail & Mahmud, 2018). The absence of a fully disability-responsive tahfiz instructional model therefore warrants empirical investigation into students' actual perceptions and experiences, with a view to informing more effective inclusive teaching strategies in contemporary Islamic education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusive Education and Visual Impairment

Inclusive education emphasises access, meaningful participation, and equitable achievement for all learners, including students with visual impairments. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) advocates flexibility in content presentation, information processing, and assessment to accommodate variation in learner abilities (CAST, 2018). At the global level, the World Report on Disability identifies access to learning materials, societal attitudes, and inadequate teacher training as major barriers to the education of persons with disabilities (World Health Organization [WHO] & World Bank, 2011). Within Islamic education, equitable access to knowledge is consistent with maqāṣid al-sharīʿah and the concept of taʿlīm, which encompasses the cultivation of faith, morality, and adab without discrimination. Tahfiz education for students with visual impairments should therefore be grounded in inclusive principles and supported by adaptive environments, curricula, and pedagogies.

Tahfiz Pedagogy: Memorisation Strategies and Adaptation

Studies of tahfiz pedagogy identify repetition (takrār), talaqqi-musyāfahah, audio-based talaqqi, spaced repetition, and overlearning as useful strategies for strengthening long-term memory (Baddeley, 2012; Ericsson et al., 1993). For students with visual impairments, these strategies are commonly supported by Braille Quran materials, qirāʾah recordings, and intensive guidance from teachers or musyrif (King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex, 2008). From a theoretical perspective, Cognitive Load Theory suggests that limitations in visual input may be accommodated through auditory and kinaesthetic channels (Sweller et al., 2011). Vygotsky (1978) further emphasises scaffolding through interaction with teachers and peers within the zone of proximal development. These perspectives suggest that tahfiz pedagogy for students with visual impairments should maximise auditory-tactile modalities and social learning support.

Accessibility: Braille Quran, Assistive Technology, and Digital Materials

Access to Braille Quran materials, screen-reading software such as NVDA and JAWS, DAISY-standard audio books, and murattal applications constitutes an important component of learning for students with visual impairments (DAISY Consortium, 2020). The King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex has developed a standardised Braille Quran to facilitate readability and consistency of notation (King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex, 2008). UNESCO (2020) emphasises that assistive technology is most effective when accompanied by appropriate user and teacher training and by accessible digital content. Within tahfiz education,

tools such as verse-based audio tagging, voice concept maps, and scheduled repetition banks may enhance students' autonomy in independent revision. Common challenges reported in the literature include limited Braille collections, device costs, and Islamic digital platforms that do not fully meet accessibility standards.

Teacher Competence and Training

Teacher competence in special education pedagogy is an important element in supporting students with visual impairments. Training that integrates UDL, multimodal strategies, inclusive classroom management, and authentic assessment has been associated with improved participation and motivation (UNESCO, 2020). From an educational psychology perspective, teacher competence can strengthen students' self-efficacy, which is associated with persistence and achievement (Bandura, 1997). In tahfiz settings, teachers require skills in integrating auditory-tactile modalities, designing phased micro-teaching interventions, and developing memorisation assessment rubrics responsive to visual needs. Gaps in training, particularly exposure to assistive technologies and accessible task design, remain recurring barriers in international policy reports (UNESCO, 2020; WHO & World Bank, 2011).

Psychospiritual Dimensions, Motivation, and Social Support

Quranic memorisation is not solely a cognitive process; it also encompasses spiritual and affective dimensions. Self-Determination Theory proposes that autonomy, competence, and social relatedness strengthen intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In tahfiz education, emotional and spiritual support, a tarbiyah-oriented environment, and structured religious practices are often associated with perseverance in memorisation. For students with visual impairments, social stigma, performance anxiety, and environmental barriers may undermine motivation, whereas peer communities, murabbi guidance, and recognition of incremental achievement can strengthen psychological resilience (Bandura, 1997). International literature on students with visual impairments likewise highlights the role of families and community networks in supporting emotional stability and long-term learning discipline (WHO & World Bank, 2011).

Policy Framework and Local Needs

At the global policy level, the Education 2030 Framework for Action calls on governments and institutions to remove barriers to quality learning for all (UNESCO, 2020). Within the Islamic education ecosystem, national tahfiz development initiatives, including institutional guidelines, curriculum standards, and quality assurance, can serve as important catalysts. Their effectiveness, however, depends on implementation through the provision of Braille Quran materials, high-quality audio equipment, continuous teacher training, and accessible digital platforms. Local needs also include collaboration among tahfiz institutions, Braille libraries, and welfare agencies to optimise resources and reduce duplication of effort.

Knowledge Gap and Contribution of the Study

Although a substantial body of literature addresses inclusion, assistive technology, and motivational theory, a specific gap remains concerning the direct experiences of students with visual impairments in tahfiz environments. In particular, limited attention has been given to how students evaluate the adequacy of Braille and audio materials, the accessibility of Islamic platforms and applications, teacher strategies that align with auditory-tactile modalities, and the nature of daily psychospiritual support within institutions. This study contributes by measuring students' perceptions through a Likert-scale questionnaire and identifying prominent areas of challenge to inform practical improvements based on UDL, teacher training, and the enrichment of accessible learning resources.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive design to examine the perceptions of students with visual impairments regarding challenges in Quranic memorisation learning. The design was selected because it enables

the collection of numerical information describing respondents' levels of perception regarding specific aspects of learning (Creswell, 2018). The descriptive approach allowed the researchers to identify patterns and tendencies in students' perceptions using basic statistical analysis.

Population and Sample

The study population comprised students with visual impairments enrolled in a Quranic memorisation programme at MTOKUMP, Tok Jiring, Terengganu. Six students were selected through purposive sampling. Selection criteria included current enrolment in tahfiz education for at least six months and experience using the Braille Quran and audio-based memorisation methods. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that participants were directly relevant to the objectives of the study (Patton, 2015).

Research Instrument

The principal research instrument was a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire developed to measure students' perceptions of challenges in tahfiz learning. The questionnaire comprised sections addressing respondents' backgrounds, challenges in the use of learning materials, assistive technology facilities, the role of teachers, and spiritual motivation. The items were developed with reference to previous literature on inclusive education and tahfiz learning for persons with visual impairments (Yusof & Hamzah, 2022; Rahman & Salleh, 2021).

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through face-to-face administration of the questionnaire to each respondent at the centre. Oral explanations were provided to ensure that participants clearly understood each item, taking into account their visual limitations. Data collection was conducted ethically, with written consent obtained from the institution and participants. All respondent information was kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, specifically mean scores and standard deviations, were used to assess students' levels of perception regarding the learning challenges examined. The analysis was used to describe patterns in students' perceptions across the different dimensions of Quranic memorisation learning.

RESULTS

This section presents findings obtained from questionnaires completed by six students with visual impairments at MTOKUMP, Tok Jiring, Terengganu. Descriptive analysis involving mean scores and standard deviations was used to assess students' perceptions of challenges in Quranic memorisation learning. Overall, most items were rated at a very high level, indicating substantial needs for comprehensive and inclusive learning support.

Challenges in Quranic Memorisation Learning among Students with Visual Impairments

No.	Statement	Mean	SD	Perception Level
1	The lack of assistive materials such as the Braille Quran affects my learning.	4.83	0.37	Very High
2	I need more time to understand and memorise the Quran.	4.67	0.52	Very High
3	My teachers provide sufficient support throughout my learning process.	4.67	0.52	Very High
4	The infrastructure at the centre facilitates my learning.	4.83	0.37	Very High

5	Motivation from my family and teachers is important to my success in memorisation.	5.00	0.00	Very High
6	I need counselling to help me cope with challenges in tahfiz learning.	4.17	0.75	High
	Overall Mean	**4.70**	**—**	**Very High**

Table 4.1 indicates that students with visual impairments encounter several important issues affecting Quranic memorisation and learning. The limited availability of specialised learning aids, particularly the Braille Quran, received a mean score of 4.83 (SD = 0.37), categorised as very high. This finding highlights the importance of accessible learning resources in supporting students' understanding and memorisation.

Students also reported requiring more time to understand and memorise the Quran (M = 4.67, SD = 0.52). This reflects the intensive repetition and sustained attention required in tahfiz learning, particularly where access to Braille text, audio support, and additional guidance is necessary. The finding supports the need for flexible pedagogical strategies that accommodate individual learning requirements.

Teacher support was rated very highly (M = 4.67, SD = 0.52), indicating positive perceptions of teachers' guidance throughout the learning process. Infrastructure also received a very high rating (M = 4.83, SD = 0.37), suggesting that an accessible and conducive institutional environment is an important component of the students' learning experience.

Motivation from family members and teachers recorded the highest mean score (M = 5.00, SD = 0.00), demonstrating complete agreement among respondents regarding the importance of social and emotional encouragement in sustaining memorisation. By contrast, counselling recorded the lowest mean score (M = 4.17, SD = 0.75), although it remained at a high level. The larger standard deviation indicates greater variation in counselling needs across individual students.

Perceived Contributions of Tahfiz Education to Students with Visual Impairments

No.	Statement	Mean	SD	Perception Level
1	Tahfiz education helps me become closer to Allah.	5.00	0.00	Very High
2	I feel that my memorisation skills have improved since studying here.	5.00	0.00	Very High
3	Tahfiz education gives me confidence to face challenges in life.	4.83	0.37	Very High
4	I have learned to become more disciplined through tahfiz education.	5.00	0.00	Very High
5	Tahfiz education helps me understand Islamic moral values better.	5.00	0.00	Very High
	Overall Mean	**4.97**	**—**	**Very High**

Table 4.2 presents the descriptive analysis of students' perceptions of the contribution of tahfiz education to their personal development. Five dimensions were assessed: spiritual closeness to Allah SWT, improvement in memorisation skills, self-confidence, discipline, and understanding of Islamic moral values. All items were rated at a very high level, with mean scores ranging from 4.83 to 5.00. The overall mean of 4.97 reflects highly positive perceptions of the educational experience at MTOKUMP.

Four of the five items recorded the maximum mean score of 5.00 with a standard deviation of 0.00. Students unanimously indicated that tahfiz education helped them become closer to Allah SWT, improved their memorisation skills, strengthened their discipline, and enhanced their understanding of Islamic moral values. The absence of variation in these four items indicates complete consistency in respondents' ratings.

Self-confidence recorded a mean score of 4.83 (SD = 0.37), which was also categorised as very high. Although

this was the lowest score in Table 4.2, the difference from the other items was small. The result suggests that students perceived tahfiz education as supportive of their confidence in facing life challenges, while the modest variation may reflect differences in individual experience and circumstances.

Overall, the mean score of 4.97 indicates highly positive perceptions of tahfiz education among the MTOKUMP students. The findings suggest that the programme has the potential to support holistic development not only in Quranic memorisation but also in spiritual growth, discipline, moral understanding, and self-confidence.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Overall, the findings reveal two key dimensions of the Quranic memorisation learning experience among students with visual impairments at MTOKUMP. First, the students reported a high level of learning challenges and support needs, as reflected by an overall mean score of 4.70 in Table 4.1. Second, the students expressed highly positive perceptions of the contribution of tahfiz education to their personal development, with an overall mean score of 4.97 in Table 4.2. Taken together, these findings suggest that visual impairment and challenges in accessing Quranic learning do not necessarily prevent students from benefiting meaningfully from tahfiz education. Appropriate learning support, teacher guidance, and family motivation appear to be important elements in enabling students to sustain their memorisation efforts and develop their potential holistically.

As shown in Table 4.1, the limited availability of assistive learning materials, particularly the Braille Quran, emerged as one of the major challenges, with a mean score of 4.83 (SD = 0.37). This finding highlights the importance of providing learning resources that are accessible and responsive to the specific needs of students with visual impairments. Unlike sighted students who can directly access printed mushaf, students with visual impairments rely on alternative learning modalities, including the Braille Quran, audio recordings, and digital assistive technologies. Limited access to such resources may constrain independent learning and increase students' reliance on teachers. Inclusive tahfiz education should therefore prioritise accessible learning materials to provide students with greater opportunities to review and reinforce their Quranic memorisation independently.

The need for additional time to understand and memorise the Quran was also rated very highly (M = 4.67, SD = 0.52). This finding indicates that flexibility in learning time should be considered an important component of tahfiz education for students with visual impairments. The need for additional time should not be interpreted as an indication of limited learning ability; rather, it reflects differences in how students access, process, and reinforce information. Notably, despite reporting the need for additional learning time, students rated improvement in their memorisation skills at the maximum mean score of 5.00 (SD = 0.00) in Table 4.2. This suggests that students perceived substantial progress in Quranic memorisation despite requiring a more flexible learning pace.

Teacher support recorded a mean score of 4.67 (SD = 0.52), while motivation from teachers and family members received the highest score in Table 4.1 (M = 5.00, SD = 0.00). These findings underscore the importance of interpersonal and social support within tahfiz education for students with visual impairments. Teachers serve not only as instructors and evaluators of memorisation but also as facilitators who assist students in adapting learning strategies to their individual needs. Families, meanwhile, provide emotional encouragement that helps students sustain motivation and perseverance throughout the memorisation process. The respondents' unanimous recognition of the importance of teacher and family motivation suggests that successful tahfiz learning is closely associated with a supportive social ecosystem rather than individual ability alone.

The learning environment was another important dimension, with infrastructure receiving a mean score of 4.83 (SD = 0.37). Appropriate infrastructure can facilitate accessibility, mobility, safety, and comfort for students with visual impairments. Within the context of inclusive education, an accessible environment represents more than the provision of physical facilities; it is an essential component of equitable educational participation. Tahfiz institutions serving students with visual impairments should therefore consider accessible learning spaces, adequate Braille materials, audio resources, and appropriate digital technologies that can promote greater independence in learning.

Although counselling recorded the lowest mean score in Table 4.1, it remained at a high level (M = 4.17, SD =

0.75). The relatively larger standard deviation indicates greater variation in students' perceived counselling needs compared with the other items. This suggests that psychological and emotional support requirements may differ across individuals. Accordingly, counselling services should be made available flexibly and tailored to individual needs. Such provision could complement academic and spiritual support, particularly because Quranic memorisation requires sustained commitment, patience, emotional resilience, and consistent engagement.

Table 4.2 further demonstrates highly positive perceived outcomes across the five dimensions assessed. Four of the five items recorded the maximum mean score of 5.00, namely strengthening closeness to Allah SWT, improvement in memorisation skills, development of discipline, and understanding of Islamic moral values. Self-confidence was also rated very highly, with a mean score of 4.83 (SD = 0.37). This pattern indicates that tahfiz education extends beyond the acquisition of Quranic memorisation skills. Continuous engagement with the Quran was also perceived by the respondents as contributing to spiritual development, character formation, and greater self-confidence.

Spiritual development was particularly prominent, as all respondents strongly agreed that tahfiz education helped them become closer to Allah SWT (M = 5.00, SD = 0.00). This finding suggests that the Quran functions not only as the subject matter of learning but also as a medium for spiritual development. Activities such as memorisation, tasmik, and muraja'ah provide opportunities for students to engage consistently with Quranic verses. For students with visual impairments, this finding is particularly meaningful because it demonstrates that visual limitations do not prevent meaningful engagement with the Quran or the development of spiritual well-being.

Tahfiz education was also positively associated with the development of discipline and the understanding of Islamic moral values, both of which recorded a mean score of 5.00 (SD = 0.00). Quranic memorisation requires consistency, time management, patience, and systematic repetition. These practices may provide a meaningful context for cultivating values such as patience, istiqamah (steadfastness), trustworthiness, and responsibility. Similarly, the high score for self-confidence (M = 4.83) indicates that respondents perceived their tahfiz learning experience as supportive of their confidence in facing challenges in life.

When the findings from both tables are considered together, a significant pattern emerges: high levels of learning challenges coexist with highly positive perceptions of spiritual development, memorisation progress, discipline, moral values, and self-confidence. This finding should not be interpreted as suggesting that the challenges themselves caused these positive developments. Rather, it demonstrates that students continued to derive substantial benefits from tahfiz education despite experiencing various learning-related constraints. Teacher support, family motivation, accessible infrastructure, and flexible learning arrangements appear to be important elements that may facilitate these positive educational experiences.

Overall, the findings highlight the need for a holistic and inclusive approach to tahfiz education for students with visual impairments. Such an approach should integrate flexible pedagogy, Braille Quran resources, assistive technologies, sustained teacher guidance, family involvement, accessible infrastructure, and appropriate psychosocial support. At the same time, the highly positive perceptions of spiritual development, memorisation progress, discipline, moral values, and self-confidence demonstrate the potential of tahfiz education to support the holistic development of students with visual impairments. Nevertheless, as this study involved only six students from MTOKUMP, the findings should be interpreted within the specific context of the participants and should not be generalised to the broader population of students with visual impairments. Future research involving larger samples and multiple tahfiz institutions is recommended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges, experiences, and educational outcomes of tahfiz education for this population.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that students with visual impairments at MTOKUMP encounter a range of challenges in Quranic memorisation learning, particularly in relation to access to assistive materials such as the Braille Quran, the need for additional learning time, and the availability of appropriate learning support. At the same time, teacher support, institutional infrastructure, and motivation from families and teachers constitute important elements that help students sustain their memorisation. Family and teacher motivation recorded the highest mean

score (M = 5.00, SD = 0.00), reflecting respondents' unanimous recognition of the importance of such support. The findings concerning tahfiz education also reveal highly positive perceptions in relation to closeness to Allah SWT, memorisation skills, self-confidence, discipline, and the understanding of Islamic moral values. Tahfiz education for students with visual impairments should therefore be developed through a more inclusive and holistic approach that integrates flexible pedagogy, assistive technology, psychosocial and spiritual support, and disability-friendly learning environments. Such an approach is important to ensure that visual impairment does not become a barrier to accessing, mastering, and meaningfully engaging with the Quran.

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