

Value-Compatible Vocationalisation in Faith-Based Schooling: Stakeholder Readiness for Tahfiz (Qur'anic Memorisation) Tvet in Kedah, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This article examines how technical and vocational education and training (TVET), ICT, soft skills, entrepreneurship and career literacy can be integrated into tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation)-based Islamic schooling without displacing the core religious mission of Qur'anic memorisation. Rather than treating TVET integration as a simple employability intervention, the article theorises Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET as a problem of value-compatible vocationalisation in faith-based schooling.

Design/methodology/approach: The article uses an exploratory conceptual-policy design informed by secondary analysis of an unpublished Kedah Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET survey report dated 30 April 2026. The report presents aggregate descriptive indicators for three stakeholder groups: asatizah (teachers), huffaz (Qur'an memorisers/students) and parents/guardians. Because raw response-level data, demographic variables and fieldwork verification were not available, the evidence is interpreted as aggregate descriptive case evidence rather than as a psychometrically validated population survey.

Findings: The descriptive indicators show favourable but conditional acceptance of Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET. Reported agreement was 80.3% among asatizah (teachers), 79.7% among huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) and 78.1% among parents. However, acceptance weakens around implementation risks: timetable burden, possible disruption to memorisation, cost to families, equipment needs, teacher preparation and safety in external workshops. The evidence therefore supports a distinction between attitudinal acceptance and implementation readiness.

Originality/value: The article proposes a Value-Compatible Vocationalisation Framework comprising five mechanisms: value compatibility, core-mission protection, capability expansion, implementation trust and stakeholder legitimacy. The framework explains why vocational reform in religious schooling cannot be justified through labour-market utility alone; it must be perceived as religiously legitimate, pedagogically non-disruptive, financially bearable and institutionally safe.

Keywords: Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) education; TVET; Islamic education; vocationalisation; capability approach; institutional logics; stakeholder readiness; Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has become central to contemporary education policy because skills systems are expected to respond to digital transformation, labour-market uncertainty, youth unemployment, technological change and the demand for more inclusive routes into decent work. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a specialized United Nations agency established to promote international peace and security through cooperation in education, science,

culture, and information, defines TVET broadly as education, training and skills development related to occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods, and its current strategy frames TVET as a vehicle for productive employment, decent work and digital, green and inclusive transitions (UNESCO, 2015, 2022). Similarly, the World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNESCO (2023) argue that formal TVET systems must adapt to globalisation, technological progress, demographic change and climate pressures while improving quality, relevance and inclusion.

In Malaysia, TVET has been elevated as a national priority through the National TVET Policy 2030, which seeks to strengthen a more responsive, flexible and inclusive TVET ecosystem. This national policy environment has begun to intersect with Islamic educational institutions, including tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) and pondok (traditional Islamic boarding school) settings. Budget 2026 reporting indicated that the National TVET Council would receive funding to equip tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) and pondok (traditional Islamic boarding school) students with digital technology and artificial intelligence skills through the IPT@Komuniti (community higher education) initiative. This policy development makes the Kedah case timely: it speaks not only to local curriculum reform but also to a broader national question about how faith-based institutions can participate in skills transformation without losing their religious identity.

Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) education occupies a distinctive social and religious position. It is not merely a schooling pathway; it is associated with Qur'anic memorisation, adab (ethical conduct), discipline, religious authority, family trust and the moral formation of learners. Studies of tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) education in Malaysia have shown continued parental interest and institutional growth, while also highlighting concerns over facilities, safety, curriculum, reputation and sustainability (Hamzah et al., 2024; JAKIM, 2021). Research on vocational elements in tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) settings also suggests that integration is possible but institutionally difficult, especially when curriculum alignment, resources, teacher capacity and graduate employability are at stake (Muhammad et al., 2022; Norsalim et al., 2021).

The research problem is therefore not whether TVET is useful in general. The more precise problem is how vocational and employability-oriented learning can be made acceptable in a faith-based schooling environment where the sacred educational mission of memorising and preserving the Qur'an remains central. A narrow human-capital argument that huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) need employability skills is insufficient. Parents, teachers and students may support skills development while still resisting implementation if it is perceived to threaten memorisation time, increase family costs, weaken Islamic values, burden teachers or expose students to unsafe external environments.

This study addresses that problem by re-analysing the Kedah Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET descriptive report as a case of value-compatible vocationalisation. It asks four research questions:

RQ1: What pattern of stakeholder acceptance is visible in the aggregate descriptive indicators?

RQ2: Which implementation risks condition that acceptance?

RQ3: How do different stakeholder groups frame the benefits and risks of Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET?

RQ4: How can Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET be conceptualized as a value-compatible capability expansion rather than a narrow vocational add-on?

The study makes three contributions. First, empirically, it synthesises aggregate descriptive evidence from three stakeholder groups in Kedah. Second, theoretically, it develops a Value-Compatible Vocationalisation Framework that combines capability theory, institutional logics and diffusion of innovations. Third, practically, it translates stakeholder concerns into a phased implementation model that protects hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation), reduces cost and safety risks, and builds teacher and institutional capacity before scaling.

LITERATURE REVIEW

TVET beyond narrow employability

TVET is often justified through employability, productivity and labour-market alignment. This justification is important but incomplete. UNESCO's TVET agenda includes knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for work and life, not only occupational training (UNESCO, 2015, 2022). Contemporary TVET scholarship similarly emphasises that skills systems must respond to social inclusion, sustainability and justice, rather than only to immediate labour-market demand (McGrath & Yamada, 2023). This wider framing is especially relevant for Islamic educational institutions because the purpose of tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) schooling extends beyond labour-market preparation.

The risk of an overly narrow TVET discourse is that educational value becomes reduced to income, productivity or job placement. Human-capital theory remains influential in explaining why skills investments may enhance economic productivity (Becker, 1964), but it does not fully capture moral formation, religious identity, dignity, agency or family trust. A capability perspective offers a broader vocabulary. Sen (1999) frames development as the expansion of substantive freedoms, while Nussbaum (2011) asks what people are actually able to do and to be. Applied to Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET, this means asking not simply whether huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) become more employable, but whether the programme expands their real opportunities while preserving the educational goods that make tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) meaningful.

Employability, soft skills and graduate capital

Employability is not a single technical attribute. Fugate et al. (2004) conceptualise employability as a psychosocial construct involving career identity, personal adaptability, and social and human capital. Clarke (2018) similarly argues that graduate employability involves capital, individual attributes, behaviours, perceived employability and labour-market context. These approaches are useful for the Kedah case because the report indicates stakeholder support not only for technical skills but also for ICT, communication, leadership, teamwork, entrepreneurship and career confidence.

Soft skills are especially important. Succi and Canovi (2020) show that soft skills are increasingly relevant to graduate employability, while Abelha et al. (2020) link employability to competence development through educational institutions. In tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) settings, soft skills can be framed not as secular add-ons but as extensions of adab (ethical conduct), amanah (trustworthiness), communication, leadership and service. This reframing is critical because value-compatible language can reduce the perceived conflict between religious formation and skills development.

Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) Education, Parental Trust and Curriculum Modernisation

Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) education in Malaysia has expanded through public demand and institutional diversification. Hamzah et al. (2024) report that parental preferences are shaped by facilities, safety, reputation, curriculum, location, environment and family financial capacity. Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM)'s Dasar Pendidikan Tahfiz Negara (National Tahfiz Education Policy) further indicates that tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) education has become a national policy concern requiring coordination and quality direction (JAKIM, 2021). These features make tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) reform a matter of trust: families do not evaluate curriculum change only by potential career benefits but also by whether the institution remains religiously credible, safe and affordable.

Existing studies on skills-based tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) reform highlight both promise and constraint. Muhammad et al. (2022) developed a skills-based curriculum design for culinary courses in traditional tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) institutions using the Fuzzy Delphi Method and emphasised employability alongside Qur'anic knowledge and memorisation. Norsalim et al. (2021) examined challenges in establishing vocational skills within tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) curricula and identified implementation barriers such as curriculum alignment. These studies show that vocational integration in tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation)

contexts is not new, but they also leave open a theoretical question: what makes stakeholders perceive vocational integration as legitimate rather than disruptive?

Faith-Based Schooling as A Hybrid Institutional Field

Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET can be understood as a hybrid institutional project. The tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) logic prioritises Qur'anic memorisation, religious discipline, adab (ethical conduct), spiritual authority and parental trust. The TVET logic prioritises practical skills, certification, occupational relevance, industry connection and competency-based learning. Institutional logics theory explains how organisations are shaped by broader cultural rules, practices and sources of legitimacy (Thornton et al., 2012). Hybrid organisations often face competing demands, but they may manage them by selectively coupling elements from different logics rather than fully compromising one for the other (Pache & Santos, 2013).

This perspective is useful because it shifts the analysis away from a binary question - should tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) adopt TVET or reject TVET? - toward a more precise question: which elements of TVET can be selectively integrated without displacing the sacred educational mission of tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation)? The Kedah evidence suggests that stakeholders are receptive to low-risk, identity-compatible elements such as ICT basics, soft skills, communication and career literacy, but more cautious about additional timetables, cost, external workshops and possible disruption to memorisation.

Research Gap

The literature contains three partial conversations. TVET literature explains skills formation, employability and labour-market transition. Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) literature explains religious formation, parental trust, institutional growth and curriculum challenges. Institutional theory explains hybrid logics and legitimacy. What remains under-theorised is the mechanism by which vocational reform becomes acceptable in a faith-based schooling environment. This study addresses that gap by proposing that acceptance depends on value compatibility, protection of the core religious mission, perceived capability expansion, implementation trust and multi-stakeholder legitimacy.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Value-Compatible Vocationalisation

This study proposes the Value-Compatible Vocationalisation Framework. The framework explains stakeholder acceptance of Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET as a judgement about compatibility, not merely usefulness. In faith-based schooling, a reform may be economically attractive yet institutionally fragile if stakeholders perceive it to threaten the religious purpose of the institution. Conversely, a reform can gain legitimacy when it is framed as strengthening, rather than replacing, the core mission.

Table 1. Value-Compatible Vocationalisation Framework

Construct	Definition	Illustrative indicators in the Kedah report
Value compatibility	The perceived alignment of TVET, ICT and soft skills with Islamic values, adab (ethical conduct) and religious educational purpose.	Parent items on whether TVET does not affect Islamic values and whether the model is aligned with Islamic values; stakeholder emphasis that TVET should add value rather than replace tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation).
Core-mission protection	The perceived assurance that TVET will not displace Qur'anic memorisation as the central mission of	Huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) item on whether TVET does not disturb memorisation; huffaz (Qur'an

	tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) education.	memorisers) desire to maintain memorisation while learning technical and soft skills; report recommendations for flexible, controlled implementation.
Capability expansion	The belief that TVET expands huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) opportunities, confidence, adaptability, communication, digital literacy and future pathways.	High agreement on ICT, soft skills, career confidence, employability and the value of modern-skilled tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) graduates.
Implementation trust	Confidence that the programme can be implemented safely, affordably and realistically through funding, training, equipment, scheduling and partnerships.	Items on funding, equipment, teacher training, timetable adjustment, additional fees, scholarships and external workshop safety.
Stakeholder legitimacy	The degree to which teachers, students and parents each see the reform as acceptable from their role-specific standpoint.	Three stakeholder instruments: asatizah (teachers) focus on implementation capacity, huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) on time and memorisation, parents on cost, safety and Islamic alignment.

The framework generates six propositions for future empirical testing:

- P1:** In faith-based schooling, vocational integration is more likely to be accepted when it is framed as enhancing, rather than replacing, the institution's sacred educational mission.
- P2:** Perceived protection of hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation) conditions stakeholder support more strongly than generic employability benefits alone.
- P3:** Teachers' acceptance depends on perceived implementation capacity, including training, timetabling, equipment and management support.
- P4:** Students' acceptance is strongest for low-burden, identity-compatible skills such as ICT basics, communication, teamwork and entrepreneurship awareness.
- P5:** Parents' acceptance is vulnerable to cost and safety concerns even when they support the idea of combining religious education and skills development.
- P6:** A phased, micro-credentialled and subsidised implementation model increases legitimacy by improving trialability, reducing complexity and lowering perceived risk.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study is designed as an exploratory conceptual-policy article informed by aggregate descriptive case evidence. This design is appropriate because the available source is a policy-oriented survey report rather than a raw dataset. The method combines secondary descriptive synthesis, document analysis and theory-building. Document analysis is suitable where written documents are treated as systematic sources of information that can be reviewed, evaluated and interpreted within a research design (Bowen, 2009). The case orientation is also appropriate because the study seeks to understand a contemporary reform proposal within a real institutional and policy context (Yin, 2018).

This design avoids an integrity problem that would arise if the report were treated as a full empirical dataset. No reliability coefficients, factor analysis, regression models or causal claims are reported because the available evidence does not permit them. Instead, the study uses the aggregate indicators to identify patterns of support, risk and role-specific stakeholder concerns, and then builds a conceptual explanation that can be tested in future primary research.

Data source and case context

The primary source is the unpublished report Laporan Dapatan Kajian Soal Selidik: Kajian Tahfiz TVET di Negeri Kedah (survey findings report: Tahfiz TVET study in the State of Kedah), dated 30 April 2026 and prepared for the Kedah State Government. The report concerns a proposed Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET model for maahad tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation institute), pondok (traditional Islamic boarding school) schools, sekolah agama rakyat (people's religious school) and related Islamic educational institutions in Kedah. It defines the model as an integration of tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation), fardhu ain (individual religious obligations), Islamic values, TVET, ICT, soft skills, communication, leadership and entrepreneurship.

The report estimates a population of 10,000 stakeholders across at least 100 institutions: 4,000 huffaz (Qur'an memorisers/students), 2,000 asatizah (teachers) and 4,000 parents/guardians. It presents a proposed representative sample of 1,000 respondents: 400 huffaz (Qur'an memorisers), 200 asatizah (teachers) and 400 parents. Importantly, the report includes a methodological note stating that the findings are based on a descriptive analytical framework and an agreed representative sampling frame; if full field data are later updated, percentages and counts should be adjusted accordingly. This study therefore interprets the reported *n* and percentages as aggregate report-level indicators, not independently verified raw survey records.

Instruments and measures

The report used three role-specific instruments. The asatizah (teachers) instrument contained 14 items on computer skills, soft skills, teacher training, timetable adjustment, management support, funding, equipment, career pathways, institutional reputation, industry interest, curriculum practicality, student capability and implementation support. The huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) instrument contained 12 items on ICT interest, soft skills, communication, leadership, class interest, memorisation concerns, timetable readiness, employment prospects, career confidence, mini-projects, teamwork and balancing hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation) with technical and soft skills. The parent instrument contained 12 items on technical skills, soft skills, Islamic value alignment, additional fees, external workshops, scholarships, competitiveness, industry acceptance, institutional future, recommendations to other parents, enrolment intention and curriculum alignment with Islamic values.

A five-point Likert scale was used in the report and collapsed for policy reporting into three categories: scores 1-2 as disagree/potential rejection, score 3 as neutral or uncertain, and scores 4-5 as agree/accept. In this revised manuscript, the term neutral/uncertain is preferred over neutral/sceptical because neutrality does not necessarily imply scepticism without qualitative evidence.

Analytical procedure

The analysis proceeded in five steps. First, overall agreement, neutrality and disagreement were summarised by stakeholder group. Second, item-level patterns were mapped into five conceptual domains: value compatibility, core-mission protection, capability expansion, implementation trust and stakeholder legitimacy. Third, high-support items were distinguished from high-fragility items. Fourth, an implementation fragility indicator was calculated descriptively as the combined percentage of neutral/uncertain and disagree responses for each sensitive item. This is not an inferential statistic; it is a transparent re-expression of reported item percentages to highlight risk concentration. Fifth, the findings were interpreted through capability theory, institutional logics and diffusion of innovations.

Because each stakeholder group answered a role-specific instrument, direct psychometric comparison across the three group-level means is not warranted. The reported overall percentages are interpreted as descriptive orientations within each group, not as evidence of measurement equivalence across groups.

Ethical considerations and methodological safeguards

The present study analyses an aggregate report that contains no identifiable respondent information. No new human-subject data were collected for this manuscript. If the author team later publishes raw survey data or interview data, the manuscript should report ethics approval, informed consent procedures, data protection

arrangements and institutional permissions. Methodological safeguards in the present study include transparent acknowledgement of data status, non-use of invented statistics, careful distinction between acceptance and readiness, and explicit limitation of generalisation.

FINDINGS

Broad but conditional stakeholder acceptance

The aggregate indicators suggest favourable orientation toward Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET across all three stakeholder groups. Asatizah (teachers) recorded the highest reported agreement at 80.3%, followed by huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) at 79.7% and parents at 78.1%. The overall reported agreement was 79.2%. However, these figures should not be interpreted as a validated single acceptance scale. They summarise role-specific item responses within a policy report.

Table 2. Reported overall descriptive indicators by stakeholder group

Stakeholder group	Reported n	Agree	Neutral/uncertain	Disagree	Mean	Interpretation
Asatizah (teachers)	200	80.3%	13.6%	6.1%	4.13	High attitudinal acceptance
Huffaz (Qur'an memorisers/students)	400	79.7%	13.6%	6.8%	4.10	High attitudinal acceptance
Parents/guardians	400	78.1%	14.3%	7.7%	4.07	High but more cost-sensitive acceptance
Overall aggregate	1,000	79.2%	13.8%	7.0%	4.10	Favourable descriptive orientation

The key interpretation is that support for Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET is broad but conditional. Stakeholders appear to accept the principle of adding contemporary skills to tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) education, but this acceptance is moderated by questions of scheduling, cost, safety, teacher capacity and protection of hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation).

Capability expansion: ICT, soft skills and career confidence are strongly supported

Across the three instruments, the strongest items relate to capability expansion. Asatizah (teachers) strongly agreed that soft skills should be developed alongside tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) and that computer equipment and funding are needed. Huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) strongly agreed that soft skills are important for career success and expressed high interest in ICT. Parents strongly agreed that soft skills are important for their children's careers and that scholarships or sponsorship are needed.

Table 3. Capability-expansion items with high reported agreement

Domain	Illustrative high-support items	Reported agreement
Teacher perspective	A2 Soft skills should be developed with tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation); A7 computer equipment/software needed; A8 additional funding needed	93%; 94%; 95%
Student perspective	H1 interest in ICT basics; H2 soft skills important for career success; H8 modern-skilled tahfiz (Qur'anic	89%; 90%; 88%

	memorisation) graduates valued	
Parent perspective	W1 technical skills needed besides hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation); W2 soft skills important; W6 scholarships/sponsorship needed; W7 religious education plus TVET makes children competitive	86%; 90%; 91%; 89%

This pattern challenges the assumption that tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) communities reject contemporary skills. The evidence suggests that stakeholders value skills when those skills are framed as expanding the future possibilities of huffaz (Qur'an memorisers). ICT, communication, leadership and entrepreneurship are not seen as substitutes for religion; they are seen as potential supports for confidence, livelihood and social participation.

Core-mission protection: hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation) remains the distinctive condition

The most distinctive condition in the Kedah case is protection of hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation). Among huffaz (Qur'an memorisers), only 68% agreed that TVET would not disturb Qur'anic memorisation, leaving 32% neutral/uncertain or disagreeing. In addition, only 61% agreed that they were prepared to follow an additional timetable, making timetable burden the weakest student item. These figures indicate that students are not rejecting skills; they are signalling that skills must be scheduled in ways that preserve memorisation routines, rest and religious learning.

Core-mission protection also matters for parents. While parents expressed strong support for soft skills and competitiveness, they were more cautious about external workshops and additional fees. For parents, protection of the religious mission is intertwined with safety, affordability and institutional trust. A Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET programme that appears to move students too far away from the controlled religious environment may face resistance even if parents support employability in principle.

Implementation trust: acceptance is fragile around time, cost, safety and capacity

A re-analysis of sensitive items shows where acceptance becomes fragile. The implementation fragility indicator in Table 4 below combines neutral/uncertain and disagrees responses. It is used only as a descriptive risk indicator.

Table 4. Implementation fragility in selected sensitive items

Risk item	Most affected group	Reported agreement	Implementation fragility (neutral + disagree)	Interpretation
W4 Parents willing to pay additional fees	Parents	52%	48%	Cost is the most sensitive parental issue.
H6 Students prepared to follow additional timetable	Huffaz (Qur'an memorisers)	61%	39%	Time burden is the most sensitive student issue.
A5 Existing timetable can be modified	Asatizah (teachers)	63%	37%	Teachers doubt institutional scheduling flexibility.
W11 Parents willing to enrol another family member	Parents	63%	37%	Behavioural intention is weaker than general support.

W5 Parents allow external workshops	Parents	67%	33%	Safety and supervision require explicit safeguards.
H10 Interest in mini-projects such as digital business	Huffaz (Qur'an memorisers)	67%	33%	Project learning needs careful design and relevance.
A12 TVET curriculum structure practical	Asatizah (teachers)	68%	32%	Practicality of curriculum implementation is uncertain.
H5 TVET does not disturb memorisation	Huffaz (Qur'an memorisers)	68%	32%	Core-mission protection is not fully assured.

The risk pattern is role-specific. Asatizah (teachers) are most concerned about feasibility: timetables, curriculum practicality, student capability, resources and training. Huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) are most concerned about time and memorisation load. Parents are most concerned about cost, safety and whether support translates into actual enrolment decisions. This explains why overall agreement cannot be equated with implementation readiness.

Stakeholders differ in risk logic, not in basic support

The three groups appear to share a favourable orientation toward Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET, but each group evaluates the reform through a different risk logic as summarized in Table 5 below. Teachers ask whether the institution can implement the reform. Students ask whether the reform will overload them or disturb hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation). Parents ask whether the reform will remain affordable, safe and consistent with Islamic values. This is the central empirical insight of the study: acceptance is not absent, but it is conditional and role-specific.

Table 5. Role-specific stakeholder logics

Stakeholder	Dominant support logic	Dominant risk logic	Implication for design
Asatizah (teachers)	Skills are needed to enrich tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) and improve student futures.	Implementation burden: timetable, training, equipment, curriculum practicality.	Invest in teacher training, modular pedagogy, equipment and timetable pilots.
Huffaz (Qur'an memorisers)	ICT, soft skills and career confidence are attractive.	Time burden and possible disruption to memorisation.	Use low-burden modules, protect memorisation blocks and avoid excessive additional sessions.
Parents	Children need skills, competitiveness and future pathways.	Additional cost, external workshop safety and actual enrolment confidence.	Provide subsidies, safety protocols, parental briefings and clear Islamic framing.

DISCUSSION

The findings complicate any straightforward narrative of acceptance. Evidence from Kedah indicates that tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) stakeholders are not opposed to TVET; in fact, they show clear support for ICT, soft skills, career literacy, and future readiness. Yet this support is conditional rather than absolute. What

ultimately determines legitimacy is whether such reforms can be integrated without displacing the sacred mission at the heart of tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) education. For this reason, the central concept advanced here is not merely skills integration, but value-compatible vocationalisation. This interpretation resonates with Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovation theory, which suggests that adoption is more likely when innovations are perceived as compatible, less complex, trialable, and advantageous. While the Kedah findings suggest that Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET is seen as advantageous, stakeholders still seek reassurance regarding its compatibility and complexity. A phased approach enhances trialability by enabling institutions to begin with low-risk modules before gradually progressing toward external workshops, micro-credentials, or formal TVET certification.

Framing the discussion through the capability approach helps avoid reducing Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET to a narrow employability agenda. If its purpose were solely to produce workers, it would risk subordinating religious education to market imperatives. Instead, a capability perspective asks how huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) can expand their real opportunities while preserving their religious identity, dignity, and moral agency (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999). Skills such as ICT, communication, teamwork, and entrepreneurship can broaden what huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) are able to do and become, but only when taught in ways that reinforce Islamic values and respect the discipline of memorisation. This is particularly significant given student responses, which show strong interest in acquiring modern skills alongside caution about increased workload. The key design challenge, therefore, is not simply to add more content, but to reshape the learning ecology so that skills modules remain light, integrated, meaningful, and aligned with the rhythms of hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation).

Institutional logics theory further clarifies why Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET requires careful translation rather than direct transplanted. Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) institutions and TVET systems derive legitimacy from different sources: the former from religious trust, memorisation, adab (ethical conduct), and community confidence, and the latter from skill standards, employability, certification, and industry relevance. Reform is most likely to succeed when selected elements of TVET are thoughtfully coupled with tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) values instead of being imported wholesale. For instance, an entrepreneurship module framed purely in commercial terms may be resisted, but it becomes more acceptable when grounded in concepts such as halal (permissible) livelihoods, amanah (trustworthiness), ethical trade, and financial independence. Similarly, communication training may gain traction when linked to dakwah (Islamic outreach), adab (ethical conduct) al-hiwar, and community leadership rather than presented as generic soft-skill instruction. This process of selective coupling captures the essence of value-compatible vocationalisation.

At the same time, the reported overall agreement level of 79.2% should be interpreted with caution. While it offers a useful snapshot, it does not warrant overly celebratory conclusions. The instruments used are role-specific, meaning that group averages are not directly comparable in psychometric terms. Moreover, the findings are based on aggregated descriptive indicators rather than raw response-level data. Agreement with individual items does not necessarily translate into concrete behavioural commitment, such as enrolling in programmes, paying fees, or implementing reforms. Neutral responses may also signal uncertainty, limited information, or conditional support rather than outright scepticism. Consequently, the findings are better understood as indicating conditional acceptance and the need to build implementation legitimacy rather than as evidence of full endorsement.

Taken together, the evidence points toward a phased, low-risk, and trust-building implementation model. Rather than beginning with intensive technical certification or external workshops, the model should prioritise low-cost, low-burden modules that demonstrate clear compatibility with existing tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) routines. This gradual approach allows stakeholders to build confidence in the reform while safeguarding the core mission of tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) education. The following Table 6 summarizes the implementation phases of Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET. The model has four non-negotiable safeguards: hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation) protection, affordability, safety and teacher capacity. Without these safeguards, attitudinal acceptance may fail to become sustainable implementation readiness.

Table 6. Phased implementation model for value-compatible Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET

Phase	Focus	Safeguards	Evidence-based rationale
Phase 1	ICT basics, communication, teamwork, leadership, career literacy	No disruption to core memorisation blocks; short modules; teacher-led delivery	High support for ICT and soft skills among all groups.
Phase 2	Mini-projects such as digital dakwah (Islamic outreach) materials, event management, basic entrepreneurship	Projects aligned with Islamic values; low-cost materials; group work	Students are interested, but project learning has moderate fragility and needs careful design.
Phase 3	Partnership exposure with TVET agencies, community colleges, GiatMARA (MARA skills training centre) and industry	Parental consent, supervision, transport procedures and safety protocols	Parents are cautious about external workshops; safety trust must precede scaling.
Phase 4	Micro-certification in ICT, communication, digital entrepreneurship and light technical skills	Flexible assessment; no full-time TVET displacement; recognition of prior learning where relevant	Micro-credentials reduce complexity and increase trialability.
Phase 5	State-level structured Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET model	Dedicated funding, teacher development, monitoring of hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation), quality assurance and stakeholder feedback	Full scaling requires institutional capacity and public financing.

Contributions

This study makes several interrelated contributions across knowledge, theory, methodology, practice, policy, and future research. In terms of knowledge, it advances understanding of stakeholder orientation toward Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET in Kedah by showing that support is broadly shared among teachers, students, and parents, but is not uniform in nature. Each group conditions its support on different concerns, expectations, and thresholds of trust. This shifts the discussion away from the simplistic question of whether the tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) community accepts TVET and instead highlights how acceptance is structured by perceptions of risk, compatibility, and institutional trust.

At the theoretical level, the study introduces the Value-Compatible Vocationalisation Framework. Its key contribution lies in arguing that vocational reform within faith-based educational settings cannot be legitimised by employability outcomes alone. Instead, legitimacy emerges through a combination of five interdependent mechanisms: value compatibility, protection of the core religious mission, expansion of student capabilities, trust in implementation processes, and alignment with stakeholder expectations. This reframing provides a more nuanced lens for analysing reform in religious education contexts.

Methodologically, the study demonstrates an integrity-preserving approach to working with weak or aggregate policy-survey evidence. Rather than overstating the dataset or fabricating analyses that cannot be supported, it deliberately treats the material as aggregate descriptive case evidence. This allows the study to focus on conceptual development, risk mapping, and policy design without compromising analytical credibility. In doing so, it offers a more robust alternative to presenting such data as if it were derived from fully validated survey instruments.

In practical terms, the study offers clear guidance for tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) institutions by identifying appropriate entry points for implementation. It suggests beginning with foundational areas such as ICT literacy, soft skills, communication, teamwork, career awareness, and light exposure to entrepreneurship. At the same time, it emphasises critical constraints that must be carefully managed, including the demands of hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation) schedules, teacher workload, availability of equipment, funding limitations, and the risk of student fatigue. This dual focus helps ensure that implementation remains both feasible and sensitive to institutional realities.

From a policy perspective, the study underscores that scaling Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET cannot rely solely on top-down curriculum directives. Effective expansion requires a broader ecosystem of support, including financial subsidies, targeted teacher training, clear safety protocols, phased pilot programmes, flexible micro-credential pathways, and ongoing monitoring systems. Importantly, such monitoring must track not only skills acquisition but also the continuity and quality of Qur'anic memorisation, ensuring that reform does not undermine the core mission.

Finally, the study contributes to future research by providing a set of propositions, construct definitions, and item-mapping logic that can inform more rigorous empirical work. These foundations enable subsequent researchers to design validated instruments or mixed-methods studies that further examine value-compatible vocationalisation within Islamic education, thereby extending and refining the framework introduced here. The following Table 7 summarizes the study's contributions.

Table 7. Contribution matrix

Contribution type	Specific contribution
Theoretical	Introduces value-compatible vocationalisation as a mechanism for faith-based skills reform.
Empirical-descriptive	Synthesises aggregate stakeholder indicators for asatizah (teachers), huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) and parents.
Methodological	Provides a transparent model for reframing aggregate policy data without overclaiming.
Practical	Identifies low-risk entry points and high-risk implementation constraints.
Policy	Recommends a phased, subsidised and safety-assured Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET pathway.
Future research	Offers propositions and a construct map for validation studies.

Implications

The implications of this study extend across academic inquiry, professional practice, policy design, and broader societal outcomes. From an academic perspective, Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET should not be treated as a conventional case of TVET adoption, but rather as a form of hybrid educational reform shaped by the interaction between religious and vocational systems. This calls for more integrative scholarship that bridges fields such as TVET studies, Islamic education, capability theory, institutional logics, and curriculum sociology. Such interdisciplinary engagement can provide a richer understanding of how educational reforms are negotiated within faith-based contexts.

For practitioners, particularly school leaders, the findings highlight the importance of sequencing and sensitivity in implementation. Rather than initiating reform through extensive curriculum restructuring, institutions should begin with low-burden modules and invest in building teacher capacity. It is essential to safeguard existing memorisation schedules and ensure that any introduction of skills-based learning is

experienced by students as reinforcing, rather than competing with, their religious identity. This approach helps maintain institutional stability while gradually building acceptance and confidence.

At the policy level, the study makes clear that financial considerations are central to legitimacy. There is a strong indication that costs should not be shifted onto families, as reflected in weaker parental support for additional fees alongside strong demand for financial assistance. This underscores the necessity of sustained public and institutional funding mechanisms, including government subsidies, zakat (almsgiving), wakaf (endowment), corporate social responsibility initiatives, and industry partnerships. Such support structures are not peripheral but fundamental to ensuring equitable access and long-term viability.

In societal terms, the successful design and implementation of a Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET model holds the potential to expand the life opportunities of huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) without compromising the integrity of religious education. However, this potential is contingent on careful execution. If the programme is perceived as financially burdensome, unsafe, or disruptive to memorisation practices, it risks generating resistance within the community. The broader societal impact, therefore, depends on maintaining a balance between innovation and trust, ensuring that reform is seen as both beneficial and respectful of established values.

LIMITATIONS

This study has important limitations. First, the available source is an aggregate descriptive report. Raw response-level data were not available; therefore, the study cannot report reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, regression, structural equation modelling or demographic subgroup analysis.

Second, the report describes its sample as a proposed representative sampling framework and explicitly notes that percentages and counts should be updated if full field data are later received. This limits the strength of population generalisation.

Third, the three stakeholder groups answered different instruments. Therefore, group-level percentages should not be treated as directly comparable measures of an identical latent construct unless future studies establish measurement equivalence.

Fourth, the data are perceptual and cross-sectional. They indicate acceptance orientation and perceived risk, not actual implementation effectiveness, learning outcomes, employment outcomes, memorisation outcomes or long-term institutional sustainability.

Fifth, the study relies on secondary analysis of a policy report. While this is suitable for conceptual and policy development, it should be followed by primary mixed-methods research before strong empirical claims are made.

Future Research Directions

Future research should move forward along several complementary directions that strengthen both empirical rigour and practical relevance. A key priority is raw-data validation, where researchers collect respondent-level data to test reliability, establish construct validity, and examine measurement invariance across different stakeholder groups. This would provide a stronger empirical foundation than aggregate indicators alone. At the same time, there is a need for mixed-methods approaches that combine surveys with qualitative techniques such as interviews or focus groups involving mudir (principal), asatizah (teachers), huffaz (Qur'an memorisers), parents, TVET providers, and policymakers. Such designs can offer deeper insight into why concerns around cost, time, and safety arise and how they shape stakeholder responses.

Building on this, future studies can adopt predictive modelling to examine whether factors such as value compatibility, protection of the core mission, perceived capability expansion, and implementation trust significantly influence behavioural intentions to support Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET. Alongside

modelling, pilot evaluations are essential to assess real-world implementation. A phased pilot programme should track pre- and post-intervention changes in areas such as ICT competence, communication confidence, student fatigue, parental trust, teacher workload, and continuity of hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation), thereby providing concrete evidence of both benefits and trade-offs.

Further inquiry is also needed into sustainable financing models. Comparative research should examine the effectiveness of different funding mechanisms, including government subsidies, zakat (almsgiving), wakaf (endowment), corporate social responsibility initiatives, industry sponsorship, and public grants, particularly in addressing parental concerns about cost. Finally, longitudinal studies are crucial to understanding long-term impact. Tracking graduates over time across pathways such as higher education, religious service, entrepreneurship, halal (permissible) industries, digital employment, and community leadership would allow researchers to assess whether Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET genuinely expands capabilities and life opportunities in a sustained and meaningful way.

CONCLUSION

The Kedah Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET evidence suggests that stakeholders are broadly receptive to integrating ICT, soft skills, career literacy, entrepreneurship and selected technical elements into tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) education. However, the decisive finding is not high agreement alone. The decisive finding is conditional acceptance. Asatizah (teachers) support the idea but need training, equipment, funding and feasible timetables. Huffaz (Qur'an memorisers) are attracted to ICT and soft skills but cautious about time burden and memorisation disruption. Parents support future-oriented skills but are sensitive to cost, safety and Islamic value alignment.

The study's central argument is that Tahfiz (Qur'anic memorisation) TVET should be theorised as value-compatible vocationalisation. In faith-based schooling, vocational reform gains legitimacy when it protects the sacred core mission, expands learners' capabilities, is implemented safely and affordably, and is accepted by teachers, students and parents in their distinct roles. For Kedah and similar contexts, the practical implication is clear: start small, protect hafazan (Qur'anic memorisation), fund the programme, train teachers, communicate with parents and scale only after trust and evidence have been built.

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