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The Muslim Community's Understanding of the Basic Laws of Qurban Distribution

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Abstract

By adopting a quantitative research approach, the study examined the level of understanding of the Muslim community in Malaysia with regard to the fundamental aspects of Shariah or Islamic laws pertaining to Qurban and its distribution. The findings are significant for the religious authority in assessing the level of knowledge of the Muslims and identifying the specific laws that are subject to potential misunderstanding. On a 4-scale of classifications i.e., poor, weak, satisfactory and strong level, the study revealed that the respondents merely have a satisfactory level of understanding of the relevant Qurban laws. A majority of the respondents had wrongly assumed that the Qurban ritual can be performed on behalf of a deceased person, and incorrectly perceived that the Qurban meat could be given to the slaughterer and the committee members in charge for the management of Qurban. There was also a lack of understanding with regard to the laws of performing Qurban by those who have vowed to do it as well as the distribution of Qurban meat to the different categories of beneficiary.

Keywords: Qurban, Sacrifice, Knowledge, Understanding, Shariah Laws

Introduction

Qurban is a special form of worship which is performed by Muslims during the month of Zulhijjah in the Islamic calendar. Qurban is performed by slaughtering livestock animals and distributing the meat to specified categories of beneficiary. In Malaysia, it is a common practice that Qurban rituals be managed by the mosque on behalf of the Qurban participants. As a special form of worship, there are specific religious guidelines that need to be observed by the Qurban participants and the managers. For instance, it is compulsory for the Qurban meat to be distributed at the appropriate percentage to the poor and needy group. Besides, a person who performed Qurban ritual in order to fulfil his vow is prohibited from consuming the Qurban meat. Non-adherence to the guidelines might render the Qurban worship performed as unacceptable or invalid from the religious perspective.

There are many literatures that assess the Muslims understanding of various religious and other issues. Nonetheless, studies on the understanding of the laws pertaining to Qurban distribution are still lacking. In order to minimise the gap, the study analyses the level of

understanding among Muslims regarding the fundamental laws relating to the implementation of Qurban by using questionnaires distributed to respondents among kariah members i.e., the muslims residing in the vicinity of mosques in Malaysia. Various key principles were tested with a view to assess the level of the Muslims understanding on the fundamental laws of Qurban distribution. Results from the study are important in order to identify the areas of potential misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the fundamental laws of Qurban distribution. Findings from the study are useful in assisting the religious authorities in the country in educating the Muslim community and guiding the Qurban managers.

Literature Review

According to Thalib (2018) who studied the characteristics of Sharia and Fiqh on Islamic laws, sharia has a broad scope that encompasses the entire action and human performance, and consists of the provisions found in the Quran and Sunnah. In the sharia economic system, regulations refer to things that have been outlined by Islamic religious principles (Arfah et al., 2020). Qurban or sacrifice is a special Islamic ritual which is performed by slaughtering livestock during specific dates in the Islamic calendar and then distributing the meat to the specific categories of recipients (Salleh et al., 2021). The study also highlighted the needs for mosques and other Qurban managers to adopt a proper system of internal control consisting of policies, procedures and guidelines for the distribution of Qurban meat in order to achieve a fair and equitable distribution in line with the requirements of the Shariah. In a different study, (Salleh et al., 2020) highlighted that there is a risk that the Qurban distribution might not comply with the requirements of sharia and the education programmes such as seminars or talks need to be conducted to the qariah and committee members as part of the efforts to create a conducive control environment for Qurban management.

There were many studies undertaken in order to gauge the Muslims understanding on specific aspects of the Islamic laws, rules and regulations. For instance, (Chaouch, 2017) studied the Tunisian customers' awareness about Islamic banks' principles and products and their perception of respecting Islamic banks' underlying principles and how they distinguish themselves from conventional banks whereas (Bordoloi et al., 2020) Bordoloi et al (2020) studied the awareness level of the Shariah and equity investment decisions among the Muslims population in the selected districts of Assam, India. In another study, (Abdul Halim, 2017) investigated the level of knowledge regarding Islamic accounting among first and final year accounting undergraduates; and analysed whether there is any significant difference in their level of understanding and awareness of Islamic accounting.

There is a marginal implementation of the Islamic principles by most organisations which claimed that their practices are in line with the principles of Islam and they care a lot about fair treatment and honesty, (Ayyat et al., 2020). Close cooperation between the Islamic religious groups and legal experts is needed since confusion and misunderstandings of the essential aspects of the Islamic laws might result in negative perception towards the reputation of the Muslim society (Urus & Azhar, 2020). The understanding of the Islamic values is fundamental as it affects the ethical and religious reputations (Ab. Wahab & Masron, 2020).

There exists a good deal of misunderstanding regarding laws in general (Wan Muhammad, 2019). Qurban related issues during the covid-19 pandemic may arise because there are still Muslims who understand the shariah guidelines textually rather than contextually. In this context, social interpretation in the practice of sacrificial worship is

important and the Muslims need a proper system to remain involved in taking the right from the distribution of sacrificial meat. (Syatar et al., 2020).

Although in-depth understanding of the Qurban laws, rules and regulations is important in order to ensure that the ritual performed conform with the stipulated religious requirements, there was a lack of available literature particularly on the Muslims understanding of the issue. In this regard, Salleh et al (2021) suggested that more researches should be carried out on the existing practice of Qurban meat distribution handled by the mosques such as a field study in order to assess whether the Muslim society at large have a firm grasp of understanding of the guidelines for distribution of Qurban meat. The research was carried out in order to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To analyse whether the Muslims community in Malaysia has a good understanding or not of the fundamental laws relating to Qurban and its distribution.
- ii. To identify the specific fundamental laws on Qurban and its distribution laws that might potentially be misunderstood by the Muslims.

Methodology

This study applied the quantitative study approach to identify the Muslim community's understanding towards the fundamental rules governing Qurban and its allocation in Malaysia.

Research Population and Sampling

The targeted respondents for the research are Muslim residents aged 18 and above in the southern region (Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor) and Central Region (Selangor, Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur) of Malaysia. These regions were chosen because both regions have the same characteristics in terms of procedure for implementing the Qurban. The researchers applied the sample determination table by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) as a reference, in order to facilitate the process of determining the number of samples that need to be taken so that the number of samples could represent fairly the entire population (Bukhari, 2021; Okpu & Eke, 2020; Sulaiman & Chau, 2021). According to the sampling schedule of Krejcie and Morgan, the number of samples to be taken in the study is at least 384 samples as the number of populations in both regions was 9,108,400 Muslims in 2020 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021). All samples were then selected through a convenience sampling technique since it is a simple, fast and effective technique. (Ferber, 1977; Fleetwood, 2022; Ponchio et al., 2021). Only responses obtained from Muslim respondents who agreed to answer the questionnaire were chosen as samples of the study.

Research Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire technique was applied to collect the data and information needed since it is more practical and effective due to the large size of the population. The development of research instruments involved input from various contributors including the Guidelines for the Implementation of Qurban Ritual (JAKIM, 2013) which among others, outlined the fundamental Islamic laws that need to be followed by Muslims and the Qurban Managers in the implementation of Qurban ritual.

The constructed instruments were given to a specialist for the purpose of content validity and the items in the instruments were refined for the purpose of obtaining the accurate results. In order to measure the level of understanding among Muslims regarding the fundamental laws relating to the implementation of Qurban, a total of 15 TRUE or FALSE

questions were asked on the general knowledge of Qurban and the specific knowledge on Qurban distribution to the beneficiaries as prescribed in the Islamic laws. Respondent who provided the correct answer is deemed to be knowledgeable. All of the data were used and analysed by using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0.

The scope of the research only covers the assessment of the Muslims understanding towards the laws pertaining to Qurban and its distribution. Other issues such as compliance to the slaughtering procedures and the internal control for Qurban distribution are not covered in the study.

Results and Discussions

Demographic Profiles

A total of 441 respondents were involved in the study where 59.2% of them are female Muslims and the remaining 40.8% are male Muslims. A majority of the respondents (44.4%) aged between 18 to 30 years old. About 51% of the respondents are married and 41% of the respondents are students from various colleges and universities.

Table 1

Demographic Profiles

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	180	40.8
Female	261	59.2
N	441	100
Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 - 30 years old	196	44.4
31 - 40 years old	71	16.1
41 - 50 years old	62	14.1
51 - 60 years old	86	19.5
61 years old and above	26	5.9
N	441	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	206	46.7
Married	225	51
Divorce	10	2.3
N	441	100
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students	181	41
Public Sector	112	25.4
Private Sector	53	12
Self Employed	38	8.6
Retiree	45	10.2
Housewife	11	2.5
Not Working	1	0.2
N	441	100

Level of Understanding

Each questionnaire consists of 15 questions on the relevant issues relating to Qurban and its distribution. The respondents were required to indicate whether each of the given statements is TRUE or FALSE. For every question, the correct answer carries a score of 1 whereas 0 score is given for the inaccurate answer. The maximum possible score of the understanding level is 15 marks (15 questions x 1 mark) and the minimum possible score is zero (15 questions x 0 mark). The total score for each respondent is then calculated by adding the scores of all the correct answers obtained by a particular respondent. The mean of scores for each question is derived by accumulating the average of the total scores of all correct answers for a particular question. The overall level of understanding among Muslims regarding the fundamental laws relating to Qurban and its distribution is derived from the mean of the total score for all questions. The total score is then classified into 4 levels of understanding: low, moderate and high as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Interpretation of Overall Scores

Score value	Classification of scores
0 – 3	Poor level of understanding
4 - 7	Weak level of outstanding
8 – 11	Satisfactory level of understanding
12 - 15	Strong level of understanding

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Score	441	10.73	2.076

The use of four classifications are in line with the study undertaken by Abd Rahman et al (2017) which concludes that the levels of understanding the content of the Quran among diverse groups of people can be divided into four levels; Naive, Novice, Intermediate, and Expert, which are influenced by the differences in the dimensions of diversity.

Based on the information in Table 3, the mean of the total score obtained by the respondents on all questions is 10.73 which is equivalent to 11 and lies under the satisfactory level of understanding as per Table 2. Thus, it can be inferred that the Muslims from the Central and South regions of Malaysia have a satisfactory level of understanding towards the fundamental laws relating to Qurban and its distribution. It is pertinent to highlight that the level of understanding of the Muslims do not achieve the strong level of understanding (score value of 12-15), thus indicating that they still do not have a firm grasp of understanding of the Islamic laws relating to Qurban and its distribution.

Further analysis was carried out on each of the issues tested in the questionnaire in order to identify the specific issues that might be subject to misunderstanding by the Muslims. As shown in Table 4.1, the first eight questions tested the respondents' understanding on the general laws of Qurban ritual. In Table 4.2, the remaining seven questions relating specific laws on Qurban distribution were examined.

Table 4.1

Understanding of General Laws of Qurban

No.	Items	Mean
1.	In general, Qurban ritual can be performed for a deceased person. (Correct answer: FALSE)	0.35
2.	The original law of performing a Qurban is Sunat Muakkadah i.e., Qurban ritual is not compulsory but it is highly recommended to be performed. (Correct answer: TRUE)	0.97
3.	Performing Qurban is optional or not compulsory for those who have vowed to do it. (Correct answer: FALSE)	0.60
4.	The person who performs the sacrifice of the vow and the family members under his/her responsibility are forbidden to eat any portion of the Qurban meat. (Correct answer: TRUE)	0.66
5.	The skin, fat, meat, milk, legs, head and feathers can be sold by people who perform Qurban Sunat i.e., Qurban performed voluntarily. (Correct answer: FALSE)	0.85
6.	The slaughter of Qurban livestock should be done on the Nahar day (10 th of Zulhijjah) and the Tasyrik days (11 th to 13 th of Zulhijjah) in the Islamic Calendar. (Correct answer: TRUE)	0.93
7.	Qurban is not valid to be performed on the night before the Hari Raya (10 Zulhijjah). It is also not valid to be performed on the night of 14 Zulhijjah in the Islamic Calendar. (Correct answer: TRUE)	0.89
8.	The slaughter of Qurban livestock done after sunrise and before the time of the Aidil Adha prayer is not rewarded and does not count as a Qurban ritual. (Correct answer: TRUE)	0.73
Total Mean Score		0.7472

Table 4.2

Understanding of Laws of Qurban Distribution

No.	Items	Mean
9.	Parts of the slaughtered Qurban livestock can be given to the slaughterer as rewards for the slaughter. (Correct answer: FALSE)	0.47
10.	A portion of the meat or parts of the sacrificed animal such as bones, liver and so on can be given to the committee members of the mosque as rewards for helping with the slaughtering and distribution of the Qurban. (Correct answer: FALSE)	0.40
11.	According to the Shafi'i school of thought, the most afdhal (preferable) Qurban is to distribute the whole meat to the poor and needy. (Correct answer: TRUE)	0.84

12.	According to the Shafi'i school of thought, 1/3 of the portion of the Qurban can be taken by the person performing the Qurban and his family members. (Correct answer: TRUE)	0.88
13.	According to the Shafi'i school of thought, 1/3 of the Qurban is to be given as charity to the poor and needy. (Correct answer: TRUE)	0.83
14.	According to Shafi'i school of thought, 1/3 of the Qurban may be given to friends, including rich people or neighbours. (Correct answer: TRUE)	0.68
15.	According to the Shafi'i school of thought, giving Qurban or sacrificial meat to non-Muslims is forbidden. (Correct answer: TRUE)	0.65
Total Mean Score		0.6796

Based on the information in Table 4.1, it was discovered that a majority of the Muslims misunderstood significantly on the general Islamic laws which do not allow Qurban to be performed on behalf of a deceased person (Question 1). The finding is alarming as such misunderstanding might adversely affect the validity of the Qurban ritual performed, resulting in the ritual to be considered as null and void. For instance, the wrong perception that Qurban can be performed on behalf of a deceased person might result in invalidity of the ritual if it is performed by the Qurban participant on behalf of his/her deceased parents or relatives. Results of the analysis also suggest that the Muslims do not have a good level of understanding with regard to the laws pertaining to the performance of Qurban by a Muslim who has vowed to perform the ritual (Question 3 and Question 4).

The findings in Table 4.2 discovered that there was significant misunderstanding of the Muslims with regard to the laws which prohibit any portions of the slaughtered Qurban livestock from being given to the slaughterer as rewards for the slaughter (Question 9). Similarly, a large percentage of the Muslims had misunderstood the laws which prohibit any portions of the meat or parts of the sacrificed animal from being given to the committee members of the mosque as rewards for helping with the slaughtering and distribution of the Qurban (Question 10). It was also noted that some of the Muslims do not have a good level of understanding with regard to the laws on distribution of Qurban meat to the rich people as well as to the non-Muslims (Question 14 and Question 15).

Conclusion

Major findings of the study revealed that the Muslims in the central and southern regions of Malaysia have not acquired a firm grasp of understanding on the overall fundamental laws relating to Qurban and its distribution. Specifically, their level of understanding is still not outstanding, and may only be deemed as satisfactory. Besides, the misunderstanding that it is permissible for the Qurban meat to be distributed to the mosque committee members and the animal slaughter as wages or rewards for managing the Qurban process is indeed intimidating and worrying. There was also lack of understanding by some of the Muslims on the performance of Qurban by a Muslim who has vowed to do it as well as distribution of Qurban meat to the rich people and the non-Muslims.

The misunderstanding of certain key aspects of the fundamental laws of Qurban and its distribution needs to be addressed by the religious authorities due to the fact that it might adversely affect the validity of the Qurban ritual performed. In this regard, considerable

initiatives in educating the members of the Muslims community through a series of talks, seminars or forums should be taken. It might also be relevant to suggest that the syllabus for the Islamic religious subject at the secondary school level be reviewed in order to assess the adequacy of coverage on the Islamic laws of Qurban and its distribution.

More research should be carried out on the misunderstanding of the Islamic laws pertaining to Qurban and its distribution. For instance, a study may be undertaken in order to examine the factors contributing to the different level of understanding among Muslims of diverse profile backgrounds. Alternatively, similar study may also be carried out in the other regions of Malaysia such as in the east coast region and east Malaysia, or in the other countries.

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