

# Quranic Studies for Children and Adults Under the Supervision of Yayasan Islam Terengganu: A Study Review

Prof Madya Dr. Mohd A'Tarahim Bin Mohd Razali, Prof Madya Dr. Berhanundin Bin Abdullah, Prof Madya Dr. Nor Hafizi Bin Yusof, Dr. Mohd Faiz Hakimi Bin Mat Idris, Abdillah Hisham Bin Abd Wahab

Centre for Quranic and Sunnah Studies at the Faculty of Contemporary Islamic Studies,  
Sultan Zainal Abidin University, Terengganu, Malaysia

**To Link this Article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i4/23875> DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i4/23875

**Published Online:** 27 November 2024

## Abstract

The educational activities under the Community Service Unit, Human Development Division, Terengganu Islamic Foundation are running with encouraging reception from the community. A study was conducted to analyze the achievements in teaching and learning, community acceptance and value changes, as well as the effectiveness of the community service implementation through five educational programs. The study was carried out using a mixed-method research approach, incorporating a survey and data analysis. For the purpose of this article, it serves as a review of the study. The general findings from the 292 survey respondents across 8 districts show that 45% of participants are in the Adult Quran Learning Class, while 31% are in the Children's Quran Learning Class, with the remainder spread across the other three programs. Interview results indicated that both the Adult and Children's Quran Learning Classes were highly satisfactory and well received. Meanwhile, the Adult Religious Learning Class has managed to sustain itself in active locations. In conclusion, the study suggests that there is potential to develop a more systematic and modular (syllabus-based) Quran learning model.

**Keyword:** Quranic, Children, Supervision, Adult

## Introduction

The Terengganu Islamic Foundation (YIT) was established on 9th August 1976, and on 1st April 1978, it began recruiting officers and staff, operating from Level 2, Kuala Terengganu District Office Building. On 2nd October 1996, the foundation relocated to Menara Yayasan Islam Terengganu, Levels 10 & 11, Jalan Sultan Omar, 20300 Kuala Terengganu. The uniqueness of the Terengganu Islamic Foundation lies in its primary focus on dakwah (Islamic outreach) and research, aimed at advancing education in Terengganu. This uniqueness is highlighted by the establishment of the Human Development Division, which focuses on community service and dakwah activities. Through this division, the foundation remains committed to fostering a

knowledgeable society that practices Islamic teachings, while strengthening Islamic values within the local community.

The Community Service Unit under the Human Development Division, Terengganu Islamic Foundation, has carried out dakwah activities through five types of community service educational programs:

- i. Adult Quranic Studies
- ii. Children's Quranic Studies
- iii. Youth Religious Studies
- iv. Adult Religious Studies
- v. Berzanji Class

These programs aim to enhance Islamic knowledge and practice among various age groups in the community.

#### *Background of the Study*

The Community Service Unit under the Human Development Division of the Terengganu Islamic Foundation has been entrusted with the responsibility of managing five main programs aimed at community education. These programs seek to enhance community knowledge and education through Quranic studies, fardhu ain classes, and berzanji studies.

However, this article will focus solely on Quranic studies. The study aims to evaluate the extent to which this Quranic education program is accepted and influences the community in Terengganu, as well as its effectiveness in strengthening Quranic education in the state.

#### *Problem Statement*

The five community service educational activities are conducted in a traditional manner, following the methods of the respective instructors. Students are not provided with specific teaching methods or a comprehensive teaching module. In other words, 100% of the teaching methods are left to the instructors. Furthermore, the appointed instructors are not necessarily required to meet the specified criteria for appointment, such as qualifications, experience, and capability. Students are also not categorized by age to become teachers. Their appointment is typically based on recommendations from the local community and personal choice, as they are traditionally Quranic or religious teachers in their villages.

Due to such appointments, the monthly remuneration offered is only RM300.00, with additional compensation given if they can increase the number of teaching locations, with a maximum total not exceeding RM600.00. The management of the Terengganu Islamic Foundation (YIT) does not consider the number of students, as it is seen as a testament to the dedication of village teachers in providing community service. YIT also conducts dakwah activities to bring about changes in thinking, understanding, and the practice of religion.

#### *Importance of the Study*

This study will provide several benefits to relevant parties and fields, namely:

1. **Impact on the field of knowledge:** This study will enhance community service in the form of educational programs and dakwah activities when conducted systematically and modularly, with clear and organized mechanisms.

2. **Impact on the community and future generations:** Through changes in processes and actions carried out in a controlled and modular manner, with an emphasis on religious approaches, this study can provide benefits to the community and future generations.
3. **Impact on implementers:** This study will enhance the experience and knowledge of educators, religious teachers, or management divisions, ensuring highly satisfactory achievements.
4. **Impact on the involved institutions:** The efforts for change presented in this study can lead to the creation of new modules or systems implemented based on the findings, which have the potential to transform execution processes from traditional approaches to more flexible ones, emphasizing education and dakwah.
5. **Impact on the government:** Changes in society driven by this study can result in a paradigm shift toward positive values and help reduce social ills, thus achieving high energy generation efforts and increasing community participation.
6. **Importance of the study from several key aspects:** a. To clarify new information about current developments in community service and dakwah activities. b. To serve as a guide and to formulate policies to achieve the vision of the involved institutions. c. To act as a model and guide for dakwah workers, religious teachers, and administrators to improve performance. d. To identify methods and approaches to address existing weaknesses in the offerings of community service and dakwah. e. To develop new approaches that position the Terengganu Islamic Foundation (YIT) as the main body in driving changes in societal values.

#### *Objectives of the Study*

1. **To examine the capabilities of instructors and organizers:** To investigate the ability of instructors and organizers to enhance knowledge, positive attitudes, involvement, and spiritual appreciation among participants.
2. **To analyze community acceptance and value changes:** To analyze the acceptance and changes in values within the community and society regarding the educational programs and dakwah activities conducted.
3. **To assess the effectiveness of community service implementation:** To evaluate the effectiveness of community service and dakwah activities in achieving the established goals.
4. **To develop a more proactive model for educational and dakwah activities:** To design a model for educational programs and dakwah activities that is more proactive based on the findings of the study to enhance program effectiveness.

#### *Scope of the Study*

This study is conducted on one to five main community service programs in the field of community education implemented by the Terengganu Islamic Foundation. The study was carried out only during the years 2021 and 2022, specifically from July 2021 to January 2022. Among the programs included are Adult Quran Studies, Children's Quran Studies, Youth Religious Studies, Adult Religious Studies, and Berzanji Classes. Focus is given only to active programs and educational centers that are ongoing during the study period. It emphasizes the delivery approach and the effectiveness of teaching and acceptance among the community, students, or participants attending the relevant educational sessions.

The study was conducted in eight districts: Kuala Terengganu District, Kuala Nerus District, Setiu District, Besut District, Marang District, Kuala Berang District, Dungun District, and Kemaman District. The target community groups include children, youth, and adults based on the programs they are participating in.

### **Results and Findings of the Study**

Based on the preliminary study conducted in each district of Terengganu, the aim was also to examine the achievements of teachers in educating the community in several prioritized classes. Therefore, the Terengganu Islamic Foundation (YIT) and Sultan Zainal Abidin University (UniSZA) took the initiative to conduct a study to obtain feedback from the Community Research Group of the Terengganu Islamic Foundation (YIT).

The study of teaching and learning conducted by the community service teachers of the Terengganu Islamic Foundation focuses primarily on the delivery methods and community acceptance. This study also concentrates on five main programs, with preliminary reviews based on general information regarding the implementation of the educational programs. Subsequent analyses were carried out based on research materials through questionnaires and interviews.

All information, facts, and data have been well-analyzed, resulting in findings that align with the objectives of the study. The expected impact of this study includes:

1. Empowering instructors and organizers to enhance knowledge, positive attitudes, involvement, and spiritual appreciation.
2. Demonstrating the achievements of community acceptance and value changes.
3. Analyzing the achievements of community service implementation.
4. Developing a more proactive educational model.

### **Findings from Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with 25 respondents, consisting of Nazir, YIT religious teachers, and members of the public, including study participants. The interviews were held face-to-face at their respective locations after recommendations from YIT officers and Nazir. These interviews took place in all eight (8) districts of Terengganu, aiming to gather data and information to reinforce the results of the study based on the questionnaires. The collected data and information were analyzed based on structured questions to clarify the actual operations of teaching and learning.

#### *a. Medium of Information Reception*

The first part discusses the sources of information related to community service education received by the public. This section aims to understand how information reaches the community and their awareness of YIT's efforts. All respondents indicated that the community is aware of YIT's educational programs from sources such as mosques, YIT officers, and YIT teachers. Some participants also learned about the programs through the internet and the YIT portal. Regarding their understanding of how YIT's education operates, 12 respondents stated that it was communicated by YIT officers and Nazir, while 7 mentioned they were informed by fellow community members.

*b. Community Awareness*

In terms of community awareness regarding all these educational programs, it was found that the community welcomes YIT's efforts, especially concerning children's Quranic studies compared to other programs. Regarding personal responsibility and obligation to participate in religious education programs, it was observed that not many are particularly interested, especially in adult Quran studies. Based on information from 13 respondents, some community members are aware of their weaknesses and have made efforts to continue their studies provided by YIT. Overall, respondents noted that some members of the community are reluctant to attend Quran classes due to age factors and a lack of motivation to correct their reading in worship. In the study of Fardhu Ain, it was noted that adults show more interest compared to youths. Some respondents mentioned that youths who participated in YIT programs 20 years ago are now considered adults, while the current youth show a lack of interest in such classes, leading to the transformation of classes into adult studies, and in some cases, classes may not operate at all.

*c. Efforts to Continue Education*

Regarding the efforts to maintain community service programs, it is recommended that cooperation with other government agencies or organizations be established, whether for advertising, promotion, provision of venues, compensation, and other matters related to the resources for educational equipment and finances.

*d. Effectiveness of Educational Programs*

All respondents indicated there are two groups of attitudes among study participants: first, those who are interested and committed to their studies, and second, those who are less interested and do not remain in their studies. The group that continues their studies across all programs has shown significant attitude changes, particularly in managing their obligatory and voluntary worship time. This group prepares themselves to consistently attend the mosque and surau for their daily five prayers.

Notable changes in attitudes and actions are primarily among adults participating in Fardhu Ain classes, while children attending Quran classes exhibit different attitudes compared to other peers, especially demonstrating courage and confidence in reading the Quran.

*e. Community Involvement*

The commitment of students or participants in their studies is measured by their attendance frequency. It is challenging to gather information from the surrounding community regarding an individual student's dedication to YIT's programs. Adult religious studies can be said to have an average attendance ranging from 15 to 25 people, although in some cases and locations, attendance can reach up to 50 people. This largely depends on the teaching staff and the content delivered.

Educational programs sponsored by YIT have attracted attention and support from the community. However, there are differences in attendance numbers according to the type of educational program. Children's Quran studies have proven to attract families and have received highly satisfactory responses. In contrast, youth studies are almost non-existent and have since transformed into adult studies due to the aging participants. The current youth appear to be uninterested in YIT's educational offerings. The frequency of attendance in adult education programs strengthens the sustainability of those studies.

Participants in these educational programs predominantly consist of individuals who regularly attend prayers at the mosque or surau where the studies are conducted. They also attend classes taught by other instructors. There is a notable collaboration between participants and the community throughout the implementation of these studies.

*f. Teacher Delivery*

Teacher delivery can be divided into two situations: first, appealing delivery due to the teacher's experience in the community and external exposure, and second, a more casual delivery that is bound solely to the textbook without contemporary explanations or solutions to current issues.

The understanding and ability to apply teachings from YIT teachers depend on the delivery method; engaging delivery ensures easier application of the teachings, while casual delivery may lead to students knowing the material but struggling to apply the teachings. The effectiveness of YIT teachers' delivery relies on the frequency of lectures, participants' attendance, attitude changes, and diligence in worship.

*g. Teacher Capability*

The capability of the teachers appears to depend heavily on their commitment, experience, and age factors. Teachers are expected to be responsible, punctual for classes, and maintain attendance records. Teachers are categorized as experienced in religious education, skilled in teaching, and punctual.

Some YIT staff members are religious teachers and preachers who teach in mosques and suraus, while others are imams and bilals in mosques, including retired religious teachers. Additionally, all respondents suggested that YIT management should organize courses, workshops, seminars, or training to enhance the skills and capabilities of YIT teachers.

*h. Curriculum Suitability*

In terms of the suitability of the curriculum currently in use and for the future, all respondents stated that it is appropriate for teaching materials. However, there is hope from them for the curriculum to be improved and taught in a more organized and systematic manner.

*i. Barriers to Implementation*

Community service education programs are still suitable for implementation and functioning effectively. However, several barriers remain to ensure the sustainability of these programs. Among them are internal factors stemming from personal issues, the influence of casual cultural conversations, competition with other educational programs, and the timing of classes.

The community prefers lectures at mosques over these educational programs because mosque activities are often accompanied by other activities, food and drinks are provided, and there are cultural celebrations for Islamic holidays. Based on the respondents' experiences, one of the main reasons indicating the community's lukewarm reception of government educational programs through YIT is that classes are held during working hours, the political situation is less encouraging, and community members are busy with their own activities and responsibilities.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions**

The structure of the educational programs and the curriculum have also had limited influence on community interest. However, several suggestions from respondents can help make these programs more widely accepted and celebrated by the community, including:

#### *Program Implementation*

- a. Improve and enhance the curriculum for the education programs offered.
- b. Focus on scripture-based studies.
- c. Organize engaging side activities with the community.
- d. Conduct competitions.
- e. Hold award ceremonies.
- f. Provide meals for participants.
- g. Offer certificates as a token of appreciation.
- h. Choose conducive and comfortable venues.
- i. Facilitate Q&A sessions.

#### *Content and Curriculum Development*

- a. Detail the content of the curriculum.
- b. Relate the study content to current issues.

#### *Teacher Appointment and Development*

- a. Conduct teacher training focused on more suitable teaching methods.
- b. Create a two-way interaction during teaching sessions.
- c. Teachers should possess their own engaging teaching methods.
- d. The number of teachers should not be increased, but their capabilities should be enhanced.
- e. Recruit young, experienced, and knowledgeable teachers.

#### *Teaching Methods*

- a. Current teaching methods need improvement.
- b. New approaches should align with contemporary developments.
- c. Teaching based on scripture reading is highly necessary.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The YIT Community Service Research Program not only gathers feedback from respondents but also aids the foundation in assessing teachers and the level of learning among them. This is important because a teacher's knowledge in religious education or the Quran should not merely serve to fill leisure time or for other specific purposes. Generally, all religious study classes are beneficial; however, it is essential to emphasize the needs and effectiveness of these classes throughout the duration of the students' participation.

Therefore, a comprehensive study has been conducted covering all districts in Terengganu, including Kuala Terengganu, Marang, Dungun, Kemaman, Kuala Berang, Kuala Nerus, Setiu, and Besut. This study also involved all five educational programs implemented by YIT. However, there are two programs that have not received community support. Research related to these two programs was conducted solely through data collection and feedback from respondents.



### *Adult Quran Studies*

YIT management continues to maintain traditional methods in adult Quran studies. The foundation emphasizes the importance of Adult Quran Studies, hoping that every adult who cannot learn the Quran and is still not proficient will be encouraged to study. YIT takes on this responsibility to ensure that the governing authority fulfills its duty to provide welfare for all citizens and raise awareness about the significance of Quran studies as preparation for the afterlife.

The Adult Quran Studies program is still operational at several locations based on community demand, albeit with a small number of participants. It is conducted by experienced religious teachers who have previously taught the Quran before being appointed as YIT Quran teachers.

### *Children's Quran Studies*

For the Children's Quran Studies, it is recommended to limit the number of students if the class is too large, and to hold sessions on different days. Additionally, providing a conducive environment and higher allowances for teachers with many students should be considered.

Children's Quran Studies is a program that has received significant community support, especially in suburban areas. It offers opportunities for children who are interested in continuing their studies since they may not have had the chance to attend the YIT kindergarten program.

This program faces competition from KAFA (Kelas Al-Quran dan Fardhu Ain) classes in schools. It does not encounter resistance from the community; however, the operational area is limited, while the demand in rural areas is quite high.

## **Recommendations**

The results of the study have summarized several findings that require appropriate actions from YIT. These recommendations are based on observations and comments from various respondents. The study has formulated these recommendations along with a comprehensive model. It is essential to coordinate and enhance participation by collaborating with all government agencies, state authorities, and non-governmental organizations.

### **1. Adult Quran Studies**

The YIT management should maintain traditional methods in the adult Quran studies program. YIT needs to emphasize the importance of Adult Quran Studies with the hope that every adult who did not have the opportunity to learn at a young age can utilize their free time with beneficial activities. This is a noble effort by the YIT management. The Adult Quran Studies program should be further enhanced by including a 5 to 10-minute tafsir (interpretation) session and conducting group study formats. Implementing this approach will reduce wasted time for teachers. Teachers should also be given exposure to managing classes in groups, while individual readings are still encouraged.

### **2. Children's Quran Studies**

The Children's Quran Studies program should be maintained to provide opportunities for children who are less fortunate and live far from schools. Its operations need to be improved, similar to the implementation of KAFA Quran studies in larger groups. The



operations should not be entirely entrusted to the village religious teachers. Therefore, based on the comments presented, it is hoped that both programs will be improved in terms of teaching and learning for their sustainability in the future.

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