The Concept of Implementation and Application Enthronement of Judges in the Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran, in the State of Terengganu Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The Government of Terengganu in collaboration with Department of Religious Affairs of Terengganu (JHEAT) has organizing the Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran (SMQ), namely as Ujian Menghafaz al-Quran Dewasa Terbuka in Terengganu, annually. For the purpose of elevating and upholding the specialty and human capital among the memorizers of al-Quran in this state, it has consumed millions ringgit recorded in each year. In the same time, under the responsibility of JHEAT and Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Terengganu (MAIDAM), the selection for enthronement of judges for this scheme is also conducted twice a year. However, the rules and criteria are not explicitly stated in the process of selecting the judges. In ensuring the credibility of the judges, supposedly a specific guideline has to be outlined. Therefore, this article aims to identify The Concept of Implementation and Application Enthronement of Judges in The Scheme of Memorizing al-Quran in the State of Terengganu. This study is applying qualitative methods by exploratory and descriptive approach by library research. Besides, twelve respondents which are from experienced candidates and expertise individuals of the scheme's judgment processes were participating in the interview sessions. Then the data were analyzed using content analysis method. The end result has shown the classification of criteria for enthronement of judges in The Scheme of Memorizing al-Quran.
Keywords: Enthronement of Judges, Scheme of Memorizing al-Quran, Criteria for Judges, Al-Quran, Al-Sunah

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Terengganu has allocated special funds for the Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran (SMQ) every year (Muhammad Zamri Nik, 2015). The implementation of this task entrusted to the Department of Religious Affairs of Terengganu (JHEAT) for conducting the memorizing's tests (Bernama, 2013). Through this test, the judges that have been appointed by the JHEAT will evaluate the performances of the participants (Akharri Ghazali, 2014). Thus, the

judges play important role for ensuring the provision of special funds invested by the government can be allocated to the right party (JHEAT, 2007).

However, it is fully governed by the authority of JHEAT and MAIDAM in selecting the judges without putting any acknowledgment on specific prerequisites, rules and regulations and clear guidelines. This situation is casting doubt on the credibility of the status of judges (Akharri Mohd Ghazali, 2014). The questions aroused; what are the concepts and specific application that are supposedly done by the judges to make a clear and transparent judgment? Are judicial enthronements executed currently considered as relevant? Therefore, this study proposes its objectives in twofold. First, identify the concept of judicial enthronement of SMQ and second; analyzing the application in the process of judges' election, based on their eligibility.

Hence, the importance of the concept and application in appointing the judge SMQ is necessary to be acknowledge by the society, particularly to ensure the judges are appointed among the qualified person so that each evaluation meets the criteria outlined as set out in the guideline of National Quran Memorization Competition (Principal Committee of National Quran Memorization, 2005).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative approach. This approach generally used to study the atmosphere or process that is difficult to be measured by the numbers and it involves case studies and the participation by researchers to get detailed and in-depth information (Sabitha Marican, 2005). In other words, qualitative research can also be defined as a process of interpretative inquiry to understand the issue or social problem by highlighting the critical uniqueness (Stake, 1995) of the studied environment.

Next, this study focuses on exploratory and descriptive study. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) expressed the view of Lincoln and Guba (1985) that exploratory research is a form of 'focus investigations' in general to help in giving instructions to the discovery of what needs to be identified in a phenomenon. Descriptive study was conducted to describe the "what", "when" or "how" of a phenomenon (Sabitha Marican, 2005). In addition, the data obtained through interviews and library research focuses on the application of judicial enthronement of Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran in the State of Terengganu.

In this study, researchers used structured interviews to obtain the data related to the implementation criteria for judicial enthronement of Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran. According to Murray Thomas (2003), the advantages of interviews are the interviewers clearly explain the purpose of the question or study as well as to avoid misinterpretation. This instrument is congruent to be used because the respondents are academically expertise and has a vast experience in running the test for Scheme of Memorizing al-Quran. Researchers interviewed 12 respondents whom have experience and expertise in Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran. Then, those respondents were labeled as R1, R2, R3 and R4.

Subsequently, the data collected was processed and compiled for data analysis. Method used for analyzing the data was content analysis method. In other words, the content analysis is a method of analysis that uses the categorization by theme (Rosmawati, 2011). In addition, the

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data obtained were classified according the unique category or abbreviation codes (R). The coding should be detailed so that data source can easily be identified.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After interviews and content analysis had been done, there are some elements identified contributed to the feasibility selection for enthronement of judges for Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran. Generally, these elements are divided into three parts: first, the criteria for implementation judicial enthronement; second, classification of judges and third, the application of enthronement judge's system.

1. **Criteria for Implementation Judicial Enthronment**

To ensure the performance and reputation of the memorizer, many parties were involved in submitting appropriate measures and initiatives to improve the quality of memorizing among *huffaz* (memorizer). The main focus is the enthronement of the judges' selection procedures. To determine the quality of memorizing al-Quran, the judges should meet the criteria and specifications that have to be presented as a judge. R1 (2015) considered that the main component for a person to be appointed as a judge is, that individual must has extensive field of knowledge related to the al-Quran and also mastery in the rulings of al-Quran, skilled in tajweed and related field of knowledge. Rasulullah PBUH said:

> *Narrated by Umm Salamah r.a. (wife of Prophet Muhammad PBUH), about the recitation of the Prophet PBUH and his Salat. She said: "What can you do compared to his Salat? He would pray and then sleep as long as he had prayed. Then he would pray as long as he had slept. Then he would pray as long as he had slept. Then he slept as long as he had prayed until the morning.' Then she described his recitation. So she described his recitation as word by word."* (HR Tirmdzi: 2923).

While R2 (2015) asserted that the judge must undergo the interview and a screening test first in order to ensure the quality of the judges. Besides, the chances should be prioritized for those who have memorized al-Quran. However, for example some *huffaz* are lacking in the angle of recitation but experienced in memorizing al-Quran. Nonetheless, this lacking is not considered as weakness of the candidates but it is one of the distinguish added value of them in the field of al-Quran. R3 (2015), response among of other required features in the selection of the appointed judges are the need of having a good religious background. The former lessons of their religious studies are supposedly helping and nurturing their skills. Selecting the judges without a religious background makes the process of qualifying scoring examinees memorization as difficult task. R1 (2015) added that the judges could be elected by a meeting chaired by the Commissioner of MAIDAM and appointed by *shura*.

According to R1 (2015), the judges also required to participate in workshops and seminars for the purpose of guiding them to develop the quality of a good judge. For instance, Department of Religious Affairs of Wilayah Persekutuan assigned a workshop known as Generation of Judge's Workshop for Ceremony of Recitation and Memorization al-Quran in the state of Wilayah Persekutuan. By participating in workshops and seminars, provide an exposure

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to the judges about the correct judgment scheme (Jawi, 2015). Apart from that, the criteria for examinees in memorizing of al-Quran had been explicitly stated according to Rules and Regulations for al-Quran Memorization and the Facilities to the Hafiz in the state of Terengganu (2007) and it has been recorded as a distinguished book. However, the guidelines are not officially released, but merely stated that the enthronement of the judges are appointed by the officers in charge at the Department of Da'wah Commissioner of MAIDAM.

2. Classification of Judges

To accomplish enthronement of the judges system, it can be concluded that there are two categories of characteristics that are fitting the standards for SMQ which is firstly, general criteria and secondly, specific criteria.

These two general and specific criteria are absorbed from the Rules and Regulations for the National Quran Memorization (Amendment) 2009 as recommended by the Secretary of National Quran Memorization Competition from 2010 to 2015 and has classifies three required characteristics that have to be existed in any particular appointed judge. First, the judge must be someone who has memorized the Quran entirely and continuously put their effort in memorizing; second, that individual has to be expertise in all fields of al-Quran and *al-Qiraat*; and third, always maintain the momentum of memorizing the Quran in everyday life. These three aforementioned features are the general criteria in completing the eligibility requirement of a judge in *hafazan* (memorize) test evaluation. (R4, 2015).

In addition, there are two more specific criteria that must be adopted by the judges. First, the judges have to portray the characteristic of *hamalat* Quran (those who carry the Quran) which are civilized and courteous; and second, the judges have to possess the piety, fairness and trust quality within themselves. Specific criteria as aforesaid are among the inevitable criteria required for each individual appointed as a judge. However, there is a gap between those general criteria. The first and third general criteria of the amended terms could be loosened and put slightly lenient. This is because even the judges who are been selected not completely memorized and remembering al-Quran, but those candidates are appropriate to be evaluated based on the particular specialties (R2, 2015; R3, 2015 & R4, 2015).

Further explanation can be understood by the division of six principles. First, Fatih Judge (Principal Judge); second, Munabbih Judge (Primary Judge); Third, *Hafaz* and Fluency judge; Fourth, Tajweed Judge; Fifth, Fasohah Judge (Smooth Judge); and sixth, Voice, Performance and Tarannum Judge. For the category of judges of fourth and sixth, the specific condition of the first and the third can be slightly considered its regulation, if the appointed judges are knowledgeable in this particular field. However, it is considered as a better and relevant proposition if those stated conditions are being adhered to. The remaining categories (the first, second, third and fifth), those respective judges must completely have fulfilled the former general criteria. This issue illustrated in Table 1 as follow:

Table 1: Distribution Categories and Criteria of Judgers Based On Justification

CATEGORY OF CRITERIA	CRITERIA	FLEXIBILITY CONDITIONS FOR JUDGES	JUSTIFICATION
General	A person who had memorized the entire al-Quran and continuing memorized	- Tajweed Judge - Voice, Performance and Tarannum Judge	Adequate skills with their field of study
	Expertise with al-Quran and al-Qiraat's study	No	
	Always maintain in memorizing al-Quran in daily life	- Tajweed Judge - Voice, Performance and Tarannum Judge	Adequate skills with their filed of study
Specific	Civilized ethical as *hamalat* al-Quran (a memorizer)	No	
	Piety, fairness and trustworthy	No	

Apart from that, the individuals that had been chosen as a judge should have the credibility in keeping the confidential elements because this is among the important criteria to complete the selection as a judge. Plus, the judges did not affected by any defects in terms of vision or hearing because these two senses are the required key in evaluating the performance of the participants. In other words, the preferred individual does not have any illness that may affect the assessment precisely. The judges should not have any relation with the participants, whether in terms of consanguinity or affinity, such as parents, aunt, uncle, niece, husband, wife and cousin (R4, 2015 & Rules and Regulations for the National Quran Memorization).

3. The Application of Enthronement Judgers System

Considering the importance of the election of judges in accordance with proper standards, tremendous initiatives should be implemented to achieve the standard quality of judgment system. In Terengganu, the selected judges participate in various workshops and seminars to enhance the existing skills (R1, 2015). The effectiveness and the input gained from the seminars or workshop is not necessarily applied thoroughly by the judges but depends on the expertise of the particular judges (R4, 2015). Compared to the system of enthronement of judges by National Quran Memorization Competition, Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) is the one that is responsible to detect the existing skills of the judges. By that, the election of the judges is agreed internally by the authoritative party of JAKIM. There are some judges are appointed due to their expertise in all fields of the Quran such as Dr. Khairul Anuar bin Mohamad, which is also a *huffaz*.

Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran for the general elders are set quite lenient due to few factors. This scheme is assessed by five judges, two of the judges are *hakim fatih* while other three judges are assessing the participants from the aspect of fluent presentation and recitation (R2, 2015). In addition, the judging process is not happened in front of audiences, but in a special room.

Figures 1 and 2 are the flow chart of the process of enthronement of judges. The candidates were *hafiz* and *hafizah* (both genders memorizer), lecturers, *qaris* (reciters) and people skilled in *Ulum Al-Quran* and *Tajweed*, highly qualification in the field of religion and academia.
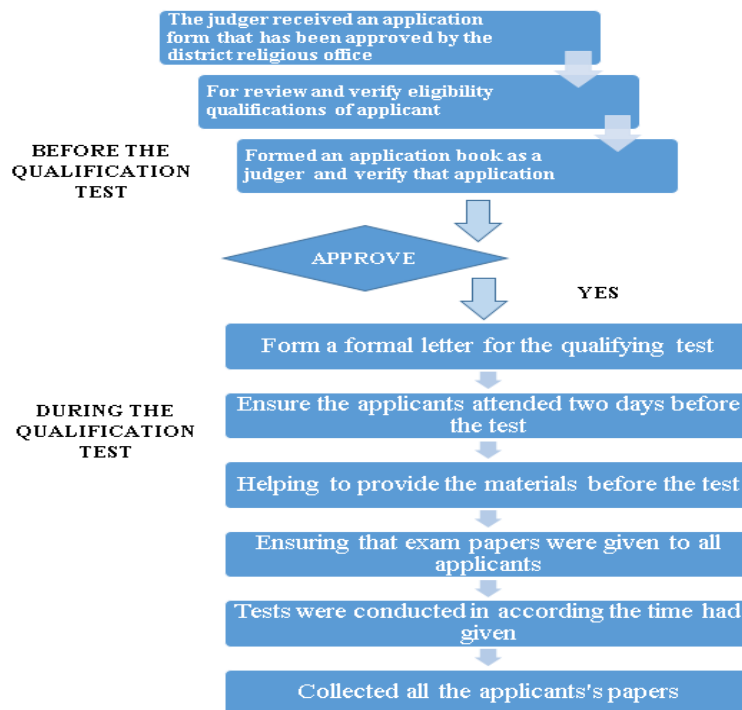

Figure 1: Flow Chart of Before and During the Qualification Test

Based on Figure 1, the process of selecting eligibility judges started at the stage of application, application screening and qualification tests. From those stated processes shown, the enthronement of judges for memorization is not classified as easy task and should be in-depth research.
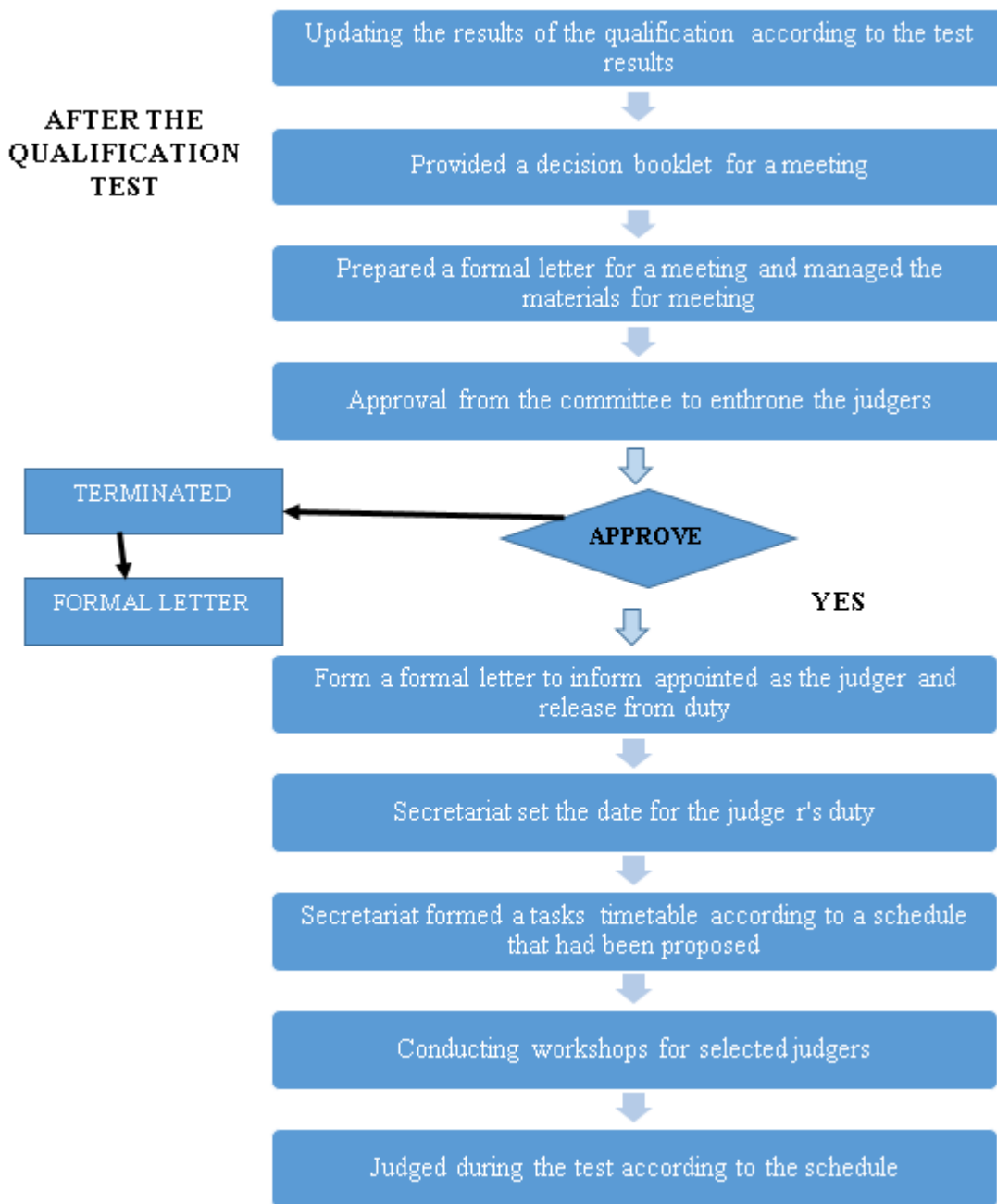
AFTER THE QUALIFICATION TEST

Updating the results of the qualification according to the test results

Provided a decision booklet for a meeting

Prepared a formal letter for a meeting and managed the materials for meeting

Approval from the committee to enthrone the judgers

APPROVE

TERMINATED

FORMAL LETTER

YES

Form a formal letter to inform appointed as the judger and release from duty

Secretariat set the date for the judge r's duty

Secretariat formed a tasks timetable according to a schedule that had been proposed

Conducting workshops for selected judgers

Judged during the test according to the schedule

Figure 2: Flow Chart of After the Qualification Test

Figure 2 shows the process of selecting judges after being decided by Principal Committee of Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran. This process aims to get approval from the committee. Hence, the secretariat will issue an employment and excuse letters to in order to perform the assigned role.

SUGGESTION AND APPROVAL FOR ENTHRONEMENT JUDGES SYSTEM

With arising the numbers of participation for SMQ indicates the dire need of eligible and justice judges in order to have a quality judgment and evaluation. Reformation of the judicial system needs to be emphasized for the sake of betterment among the *huffaz* which are supposedly to be concurrently with the increasing of the provisions allocated by the Terengganu government in the effort of upholding the strength and nature of memorizing al-Quran in this state.

According to R2 (2015), those candidates of judge, has to undergo screening test in order to appoint the most qualified person to fulfill the task. This process is one of many ways in identifying the skills and the strength of the judges in the field of al-Quran. Other than that, the selection has to be done by the *huffaz* in order to maintain the transparency and avoiding the injustice element in the assessment process if it is done by the un-authoritative party. (R4, 2015).

Besides, by the suggestion of establishing specific, parallel guidelines which is involving the committees from all states in Malaysia is one of the brilliant ideas to be supported. The prepared guidelines can be applied in all competitions in all states since the design of judgment processes are noticeably similar (R4, 2015; R3, 2015). The new guidelines must be updated and accordingly displayed on the main website of responsible departments. It is a highly recommended also in publishing the agreed guidelines in the form of booklet so the evaluation system of scoring is updated and known by the masses. Credible judicial enthronement could bolster *huffaz* excellent performance in the future. Hopefully, the SMQ able to benefit for both parties, either the judges or the participants respectively.

CONCLUSION

Based on these issues, it can be concluded that enthronement of judges and systematic judicial system is a crucial element in Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran to be well and precisely implemented, since this activity is well-supported by the masses. In the meantime, the huge sums allocated for this program have to be perfectly channeled to the right person for the sake of the various justifications. Hence, from the establishment of a transparent system of enthronement of judges for Scheme of Memorizing Al-Quran, it is a hope to be the best initiatives in solving the related problem aroused. The end results of this study is expecting the wider chance of more practical enthronement judges system which able to be applied successfully cum giving the great impact in the betterment of the assessment in the future.

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