



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v8-i3/421>

DOI: 10.6007/IJARPED/v8-i3/6421

Received: 03 Aug 2019, **Revised:** 19 August 2019, **Accepted:** 02 September 2019

Published Online: 08 September, 2019

In-Text Citation: (Tukimin, Yusoff, & Baharudin, 2019)

To Cite this Article: Tukimin, R., Yusoff, N. M. R. N., & Baharudin, H. (2019). Academic Qualification and Teaching Experience on the Level of Use of Innovative Teaching Strategies among Arabic Primary School Teacher. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 8(3), 279–290.

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Vol. 8(3) 2019, Pg. 279 - 290

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Academic Qualification and Teaching Experience on the Level of Use of Innovative Teaching Strategies among Arabic Primary School Teacher

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Abstract

This study was conducted to identify the level of innovation in teaching and learning strategies among primary school Arabic teachers. Data were collected using a questionnaire on 109 Arabic teachers in all primary schools in Malaysia. The questionnaire consists of 15 items with 5 options of Likert scale and descriptively analyzed using SPSS software. The findings show that the use of innovative teaching strategies in teaching and learning among primary school Arabic teachers is at a moderate level (mean = 3.15, SP = 0.480). Meanwhile, ANOVA analysis found that there was no significant difference in the level of innovative teaching strategy among primary school Arabic teachers based on academic qualification and teaching experience. Overall, this study is expected to generate action plans to promote the improvement of innovation practices in teaching and learning of teachers especially for Arabic subjects in schools.

Keywords: Innovative Teaching Strategy, Innovative Teacher, Innovator, Arabic Education, Innovation.

Introduction

Reformation in the education system is based on the centralization of power and bureaucratic systems that are too dependent on government directives and resources to decentralization policy, demonstrating the power of the teacher to be strengthened. Teachers have also been involved in policy-making and decision-making processes. Teacher innovation studies and action studies are encouraged to enhance teaching practices that focus on the Innovation, Excellence and Research (PIER) with much funding since 1993 (Lee, 1999). Teachers are required to change and be more innovative in line with the demands of changes in curriculum content, teacher delivery methods, methods of assessment and evaluation in the education system (Tan, 2004).

Teachers should act as a key that can actualize the transformation in education. Along with the Transformation era in education in conjunction with the National Transformation idea (TN 2050), teachers are widely regarded as an engine of transformation and innovation in the curriculum (Talip, 2012). The 21st Century Challenge requires teachers to change teaching

approaches to more innovative teaching approaches and strategies and equip them with various skills.

Innovative teaching strategies and innovation practices in teaching and learning is also emphasized in the statement of the Standard Curriculum for Primary and Secondary School documents. For example, the Revised KSSR Year 1 Arabic DSKP which emphasizes on fun learning and student-centered strategies through discovery inquiry, cooperative learning, brainstorming, demonstration, simulations, games, projects and visits in teaching and learning (TnL). Even the elements that were emphasized were the application of creativity and innovation in teaching and learning as well as higher level thinking skills (HOTS), entrepreneurship elements and information and communication technology (ICT). This is consistent with the purpose of Revised KSSR to be implemented to offset the set of knowledge and skills such as critical thinking, creative and innovative, problem-solving and leadership to enable students to compete globally (Zuhairi, 2017).

Thus, Arabic teachers are not left out of the responsibility of contributing to the improvement of teaching practices with innovation for the purpose of improving the achievement and mastery of students as well as school performance.

Statement of the Problem

Arabic language has not yet achieved the expected mastery of learning due to student weaknesses to understand, remembering and memorizing thousands of vocabularies and using them in the formulation of sentences (Noorhayati, 1998) in addition to the weaknesses of grammar, speech, reading and writing (Habibah, 2016; Teh & Hazli, 2008; Yusoff & Ghani, 2008; Rijal & Samah, 2006) This problem certainly has an impact on the diminishing performance, motivation and interest in learning.

The disadvantages of the students in mastering the Arabic language are largely attributed to the weaknesses of teacher teaching practices in terms of strategy and teaching approaches and the use of less innovative instructional materials (Hat et al., 2014; Noh, 2013; Noh, 2010; Ahmad et al., 2012; Jasmi, 2010; Jasmi et al., 2011; Lubis, 1991). Still many Arabic teachers are still comfortable with traditional teaching approaches and do not practice the use of teaching and learning aids or some are still comfortable with the user's mentality (Ahmad & Tamuri, 2010). Teachers of Islamic Education and Arabic language are often associated with passive and non-innovative teaching methods and are too attached to traditional teaching methods (Tukimin et al., 2018; Razak, 2014). In order to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and learning (TnL), teachers as the main elements need to apply innovation in their practice.

The innovative teaching and learning approaches and strategies are the approaches that interact with the educational process to form a healthy environment for the practice of innovation (Almatari, 2012; Ahmed, Isa, Majid, Zin, & Amin, 2017). These approaches are like Self-Directed Teaching and Learning Strategies, Problem-Based Teaching and Learning Strategies, Project-Based Teaching and Learning Strategies and Cooperative Teaching and Learning Strategies. Hence, based on the need to promote innovation in education, this study was

conducted to examine the level of practice of innovative teaching strategies in Arabic teaching and learning among primary school teachers.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the level of innovation of teaching and learning strategies among Arabic teachers in primary schools. Among the objectives of this study are:

1. Identify the level of involvement of primary Arabic teachers in innovation research.
2. Identify the level of involvement of primary Arabic teachers in the action research.
3. Identify the level of use of innovative teaching strategies in teaching and learning among primary school Arabic teachers.
4. Identify the differences in the use of innovative teaching strategies in teaching and learning among primary school Arabic teachers based on academic qualification and teaching experience.

Research Methodology

This study uses quantitative methods with a survey study design. The data were collected using a questionnaire that was constructed and tested the reliability level of Cronbach's Alpha at a high level of 0.899. Questionnaire is one of the most practical and effective measuring tools for a survey in the form of surveys especially when it involves large numbers of populations or distant subjects from one another. The use of this questionnaire is more cost-effective, time and energy (Konting, 2005).

The survey questionnaire consisted of two parts, Part A, which focuses on the demographic background of respondents, academic qualifications and teaching experience. While Section B consists of 1 closed question to measure the level of teachers' involvement in innovation research, 1 closed question to measure the level of teachers' involvement in action research and 15 item Likert 5-point questions to measure the level of use of innovative teaching strategies in teaching and learning Arabic among Arabic teachers in primary school. The 5 selected scales are 1 for Never, 2 for Sometimes, 3 for Average, 4 for Frequent and 5 for Very Frequent.

The questionnaires were distributed to 109 samples that were selected randomly (convenience sampling) based on the easily accessible features of researchers. This type of sampling can be used, but researchers need to collect information related to the subject demographic as well as other important features so that their background can be identified (Idris, 2013). Data collection methods are made online using Google Forms and distributed in the community group of teachers of Arabic language teachers to be answered using the medium of Telegram app. The data were analyzed descriptively using SPSS statistical software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Data and Discussion

Respondent Distribution

With reference to Table 1 on respondents' profiles, it was found that out of all 109 primary school Arabic teachers involved in this study according to academic qualifications showed that 7 (6.4%) of the Diploma of Teaching, 91 (83.5%) of the Bachelor Degrees and the remaining 11 (10.1%) more than Master Degrees. In terms of teaching experience, 23 (21.1%) had teaching experience consisting of 1 - 5 years, 47 (43.1%) from 6 - 10 years and the remaining 39 (35.8%) had 11 teaching experiences years and above.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent Demographics (N = 109)

	Number	Percentage
Academic Qualifications		
Teaching Diploma	7	6.4
Bachelors' Degree	91	83.5
Masters' Degree	11	10.1
Teaching Experiences		
1-5 years	23	21.1
6-10 years	47	43.1
11 years and above	39	35.8

Level of Arabic Language Teachers' Engagement in Innovation Research

The results of the study as shown in Table 2 can be seen that the majority of primary school Arabic teachers of 78.0 percent (85 persons) are never involved in innovation research. Meanwhile, the remaining 22.0 per cent (24 persons) have been involved in innovation research.

Table 2. Engagement Levels in Innovation Research (N=109)

	Number	Percentage
Never	85	78.0
Ever	24	22.0
Total	109	100.0

Level of Arabic Language Teachers' Involvement in Action Research

Referring to Table 3, the results showed that a majority of primary school Arabic teachers, 68 (62.4%), were never involved in action research. Meanwhile, the remaining 41 people (37.6%) were involved in the action research.

Table 3. Level of Involvement in the Action Research (N=109)

	Number	Percentage
Yes	41	37.6
No	68	62.4
Total	109	100.0

The Level of Use of Innovative Teaching Strategies among Primary School Arabic Teachers

In this study, the use of innovative teaching strategies in teaching and learning among primary school Arabic teachers was measured by 15 items. The table shows one item has a high score, while fourteen more items have a moderate score. The findings show that the most innovative teaching strategy that has the highest score is item U5: I practice student-centered teaching methods in the classroom (mean = 3.74, SP = 0.798).

While the items that have a moderate level of score are item U14: I practiced singing strategies during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 3.57, SD = 0.906), U13: I practice the strategy of playing games during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 3.53, SD = 0.834), U4: I practice the teaching materials-centered strategy during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 3.48, SD = 0.789), U8: I practice the 21st Century teaching and learning approach during lessons in the classroom (mean = 3.47, SD = 0.856), item U7: I practice the HOTS strategy while teaching in the classroom (mean = 3.27, SD = 0.835), U10: I practice self-directed learning strategies during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 3.21, SD = 0.771), U11: I am practicing a project-based learning strategy during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 3.13, SD = 0.818), U9: I am practicing a problem-based learning strategy during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 3.08, SD = 0.709), U3: I use technology equipment during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 3.00, SD = 0.828), U2: I use multimedia equipment during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 2.94, SD = 0.698), U6: I am practicing an inquiry-based learning strategy during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 2.93, SD = 0.729), item U1: I use the Power Point program during teaching and learning activities (mean = 2.79, SD = 0.861), U12: I practice a computer-assisted learning strategy during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 2.66, SD = 0.819) and the innovative instructional strategies that scored the lowest was item U15: I practice the strategy of reducing the use of traditional approaches such as the method of explanation and memorization during the lessons in the classroom (mean = 2.49, SD = 0.835).

Table 4. Use of Innovative Teaching Strategies in Teaching and Learning (N=109)

Number of Item	Scale					Mean	SP	Interpretation
	1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Average	4 Frequent	5 Very Frequent			
U1	9 (8.3)	25 (22.9)	57 (52.3)	16 (14.7)	2 (1.8)	2.79	.861	Moderate
U2	1 (0.9)	26 (23.9)	62 (56.9)	19 (17.4)	1 (0.9)	2.94	.698	Moderate
U3	4 (3.7)	23 (21.1)	53 (48.6)	27 (24.8)	2 (1.8)	3.00	.828	Moderate
U4	0 (0.0)	7 (6.4)	56 (51.4)	33 (30.3)	13 (11.9)	3.48	.789	Moderate
U5	0 (0.0)	4 (3.7)	40 (36.7)	45 (41.3)	20 (18.3)	3.74	.798	High
U6	2 (1.8)	25 (22.9)	63 (57.8)	17 (15.6)	2 (1.8)	2.93	.729	Moderate
U7	2 (1.8)	16 (14.7)	47 (43.1)	39 (35.8)	5 (4.6)	3.27	.835	Moderate
U8	2 (1.8)	9 (8.3)	45 (41.3)	42 (38.5)	11 (10.1)	3.47	.856	Moderate
U9	0 (0.0)	20 (18.3)	63 (57.8)	23 (21.1)	3 (2.8)	3.08	.709	Moderate
U10	1 (0.9)	16 (14.7)	55 (50.5)	33 (30.3)	4 (3.7)	3.21	.771	Moderate
U11	2 (1.8)	19 (17.4)	56 (51.4)	27 (24.8)	5 (4.6)	3.13	.818	Moderate
U12	8 (7.3)	37 (33.9)	48 (44.0)	16 (14.7)	0 (0.0)	2.66	.819	Moderate
U13	1 (0.9)	7 (6.4)	48 (44.0)	39 (35.8)	14 (12.8)	3.53	.834	Moderate
U14	0 (0.0)	11 (10.1)	45 (41.3)	33 (30.3)	20 (18.3)	3.57	.906	Moderate
U15	13 (11.9)	41 (37.6)	44 (40.4)	11 (10.1)	0 (0.0)	2.49	.835	Moderate

***(Level: Low = 1.00 – 2.33, Moderate = 2.34 – 3.66, High = 3.67 – 5.00) (Ahmad, 2002)**

Overall, the level of use of innovative teaching strategies in teaching and learning (min = 3.15, SP = 0.480) among primary school Arabic teachers is at a moderate level as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Mean Value and Standard Deviation of the Level of Use of Innovative Teaching Strategies (N=109)

	Min	SP	Level
The use of innovative teaching strategies	3.15	.480	Moderate

*(Level: Low = 1.00 – 2.33, Moderate = 2.34 – 3.66, High = 3.67 – 5.00) (Ahmad, 2002)

The Difference between the Uses of Innovative Teaching Strategies among the Primary School Arabic Language Teachers Based on Academic Competence

The results of the one-way variance analysis in Table 6 show that there is no significant difference in the level of the use of innovative teaching strategies [$F(2, 106) = 0.336, p = 0.715$] among primary school Arabic teachers based on academic background. This means that there is no difference in the level of use of innovative teaching strategies among primary school Arabic teachers based on different academic backgrounds.

Table 6. One Way ANOVA of the Use of Innovative Teaching Strategies Based on Academic Competence (N=109)

		JKD	DK	MKD	F	Sig. P
The use of innovative	Between groups	.157	2	.078	.336	.715
	In groups	24.749	106	.233		
	Total	24.906	108			

The Difference between the Uses of Innovative Teaching Strategies among the Primary School Arabic Teachers Based on Teaching Experience

The results of the one-way variance analysis in Table 7 show that there is no significant difference in the level of the use of innovative teaching strategies [$F(2, 106) = 0.878, p = 0.19$] among primary school Arabic teachers based on respondent's teaching experience. This means that there is no difference in the level of use of innovative teaching strategies among primary school Arabic teachers based on the different teaching experiences of respondents.

Table 7. One Way ANOVA of the Use of Innovative Teaching Strategies Based on Teaching Experience (N=109)

		JKD	DK	MKD	F	Sig. P
The use of innovative teaching strategies	Between groups	.406	2	.203	.878	.419
	In groups	24.500	106	.231		
	Total	24.906	108			

From the findings, it can be concluded that the level of innovation in the teaching and learning strategies among primary school Arabic teachers is at a moderate level with a mean score of 3.15 and 14 items out of the total of 15 items also obtained a mean score of average. However, item 5 on the student-centered teaching and learning approach was found to have high scores because it was one of the features of the 21st Century teaching and learning which

emphasized its implementation in schools (Griffin & Care, 2014; KSSR Revised Arabic Year 1, 2017; Ahmed, Umrani, Qureshi, & Samad, (2018). The findings are consistent with the findings of Razak (2014), where the student-centered teaching strategy is the fifth highest strategy with a high score of mean practiced by teachers at the Kuala Langat District religious school. While most forms of innovative teaching strategies are simply used by primary school Arabic teachers, traditional approaches such as explanation and memorization are still practiced by them in an average manner. This shows that Arabic teachers feel that traditional approaches are still significant in the teaching of certain skills in Arabic as well as innovative teaching strategies and approaches either with technology or emphasis on the latest skills according to age demands. The memorization method (hafazan) is an example of a memory-based teaching and learning strategy which is also based on revelation and has been applied in the event of the descendant of the Holy Quran to the Prophet (pbuh) via the angel Jibril as the Word of Allah in surah al-A'la verse 6 (Hashim et al., 2013; Basmeih, 1999).

This study also found that the use of Arabic teaching strategies based on the use of technology either using applications or equipment was among the least used strategies by Arabic teachers in primary schools in this study. This may be contributed by the lack of facilities and technology equipment provided in schools due to financial problems (Som & Kamaruzaman, 2011; Razak, 2014; Hafidah & Rahman, 2010 and Antonites, 2003; Ahmed, Majid, & Zin, (2016). This is consistent with the findings of Razak's (2014) study, which shows the use of technology equipment obtaining the lowest mean score in teachers' teaching practices.

The findings also show that there is no significant difference in the practice of teaching and learning strategy innovation among primary school Arabic teachers based on academic competence and teaching experience. This means that educational backgrounds or long periods of teaching are not the determining factor of the innovative features of a teacher.

Conclusion

The practice of innovative teaching strategies is important to improve education practices to ensure that their implementation is relevant to current changes. Innovative practices in teaching and learning should be practiced by teachers including in Arabic language education to ensure the adaptability and capacity of innovative teaching and learning models developed at the national curriculum level.

Overall, the practice of innovative teaching strategies has not been fully applied by Arabic teachers in primary schools due to a variety of factors that need to be studied more specifically in further studies. According to Hashim et al. (2019) in her study of lecturers at Polytechnics, practicing innovative teaching approaches is something that is still difficult. Hence, more specific action plans need to be planned to enhance the practice of innovation in teaching and learning among teachers in schools and educational institutions to ensure successful transformation in the national education system.

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