

Influence of the Qur'anic Reading Competition on *Arabiyyah* and *Islamiyyah* Schools in Nigeria.

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Abstract

Influence of Qur'an teachings on *Arabiyyah* and *Islamiyyah* schools in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized, especially on the salvation to humanity. Qur'an contains all knowledge, guidance, facts, reality and rays of light which link to absolute belief and faith. It is the only divine Book ever revealed that thoroughly perfects the affairs of mankind for the betterment of his life. The Qur'an which is the last and final message of Islam is harmonious with all other fields of knowledge starting from the idea of origin of the universe to the creation of man and to the end of the universe. Allah has bestowed His servants to the full memorization of the Qur'an regardless of being of Semitic origin, and endowed Nigeria with reciters and memorizers of the Qur'an, even before reaching the age of puberty. Others write down the Qur'an out of their memory which they were only taught in local and domicile schools. This paper aimed at emphasizing the influence of the Qur'anic teaching and as well recitation competitions to the Muslims in Nigeria in order to give suggestions for a better future, and also most especially to encourage the *Arabiyyah* and *Islamiyyah* schools in Nigeria to develop more interest in Qur'anic recitation competitions with science of *Tajweed* which should also be included in their curriculum and syllabus. Qualitative research method was adopted with the use of archival materials sourced from primary and secondary sources.

Keywords: *Arabiyyah*, *Islamiyyah* Schools, Qur'an Recitation, Competition, Nigeria.

Introduction

Muhammad (1992), confirmed that Islam attached itself with knowledge. It made knowledge its condition as well as its goal. It equated the pursuit of knowledge with *Ibadah* (worship) and poured its most lavish praise on those who committed themselves to its cultivation, making them the saints and friends of God and raising their rank above the blood of the martyrs in value. Qur'an is the centre point of Islamic principles. The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic language. Its textual contents and teachings are supposed to be learnt memorized and mastered by Muslims as demonstrated by the Prophet and his companions. Abu Ameenah (1979), enumerated that learning the Qur'an, engenders preservation of its contents and teaching while memorization guarantees preservation of the text and proficiency in the daily application of its content – teachings by the faithful Muslim. Jimoh (2017), enumerated that the memorization of the entire Qur'an or parts of it becomes essentially mandatory for the Muslims as no Muslim can successfully observe the canonical prayers without reciting at least *suratul – Fatihah*. Muslims strongly believe that Allah created the entire universe and designed the means of guidance and salvation through the chosen ones who were Prophets, commissioned and sent on intervals to convey, teach and preach these messages. The Qur'an, according to Muhammad (2005) was

confirmed as the central point of the Muslims' thought, the miraculous words of Allah sent down to the last Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) in its precise meaning and wordings transmitted to the Muslim verbally and in writing.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) highlighted the benefits and the advantages of reciting the Glorious Qur'an and its teachings. It was narrated from A'isha (R.A) that the Prophet (S.A.W) said:

He who expatriately recites the Glorious Qur'an shall be gathered along

with the holy Scribes but he who recites Qur'an with difficult But pronounces it eloquently shall have double reward. (Bukhari & Muslim, 52:244)

It was also narrated from Abi. Sa'id, Kudri (296) (R.A) that the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said:

God the Almighty is saying whoever becomes pre-occupied with Qur'an recitation, I will grant him the best of favour Mendicants. (Tirmidhi/Fada'il al-Qur'an)

Through the above evidences, some Islamic scholars opined the view of encouraging Muslim learners to memorize the Qur'an by applying different strategies through explaining the rewards of learning the Qur'an including giving financial reward to the reciters of the Qur'an. Ibn Abbas, (2913) narrated the Prophet (S.A.W) explained thus:

The person who does not have anything from the Qur'an is like a ruined

house. (Tirmidhi/Fada'il al – Qur'an)

In the narration of Uthman bn-Affan. (5027), (R.A). The Prophet (S.A.W.) encouraged attaining the knowledge of the Qur'an and its recitation. The Prophet (S.A.W.) said:

Best among you is the one who recites Qur'an and teaches it to others. (Bukhari/

Fada'il al-Qur'an)

In the light of the above, and to encourage the Muslim students, various Qur'anic memorization centres across the country organize Qur'anic recitation competitions occasionally to boost the

morale and inject the habit of recitation among Muslims in Nigeria. Also, Centre for Islamic Studies, Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto organizes Qur'anic recitation competition annually to uplift the tradition of recitation among Muslim students in Nigeria. These bodies faced some challenges, despite their achievements. It is not only Qur'anic recitation that faces decline among the Muslim youths but how to translate the Qur'an, application of the laws derived from it and transmission of its knowledge on particular subjects, to guide the tongue against various mistakes and unnecessary embellishment. Science and Qur'an are always in harmony, therefore, the importance of Qur'an recitation in *Arabiyyah and Islamiyyah* schools in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. The main focus of this paper was to examine the effects/ impacts of Qur'an recitation competition on *Arabiyyah and Islamiyyah* schools in Nigeria and also to identify the role of various centres and in particular Centre for Islamic studies in uplifting Qur'anic recitation.

Some fundamental conceptual issues

The discussion begins with the meanings of some fundamental issues that need to be properly understood.

i. Effect: Pearson (2009) defined the word effect as a change that is caused by an event, action etc. to show how successful an action is.

ii. Influence: According to Longman (2009) influence refers to affect the way someone or something develops, behaves, and thinks etc without direct forcing or ordering them.

iii. Qur'an: Gyallesu and bukuly, (2008) defined the term Qur'an as the word of Allah (SWT) revealed to the prophet Muhammad (SAW) through angel Jibril for the guidance of mankind.

iv. Recitation: Gyallesu and Dukuly, (2008) gave the definition of recitation as the act of reading something recited or read as Qur'an or a poem.

v. Competition: Geddes (1994) defined the word competition as an act of competing, rival, a contest in skill or knowledge; a match.

The Glorious Qur'an is considered as the last and final eternal miracle of Islam which serves as guidance to man in all his activities and on every aspect of life, it is also considered as superior to what was revealed to the past prophets and messengers as the best guide for seeking Allah's pleasure and salvation. The above view is supported by the holy Qur'an *Alif, Lam, mim*;

This is the scripture (Qur'an) where of there is no doubt in it, it is a guidance for those who are righteous persons (al - Muttaqin) (Q2: 1-2)

الْم (1) ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ (2)

Kareem and Salahudeen (2017), ascertained that Qur'an is a unique Book. It is a Book that relieves man from distress. It is a book that contains straight forward and clear teachings. It is a book of trust and revealed to the whole of humanity and full of philosophical wisdom. Imam (1987) opined that Qur'an is a book of which every letter is a law, a book which all translators and commentators agree that they cannot give exact translation of its contents and that most of it is difficult to translate. It is true that the book (Qur'an) has been preserved that when one reads it, one is assured of reading the original text revealed to the prophet Muhammad (SAW). Over 1,400, years ago. Imam (1987) commented about the Qur'an thus:

It (Qur'an) is a literal revelation of God, dictated to Muhammad by Jibril perfect in every letter. It is an ever-present miracle witnessing to itself and to Muhammad, the Prophet of God. Its miraculous quality resides partly in its style, so perfect and lofty that neither men nor Jinn could produce a single chapter to compare with its briefest chapter and partly in its content of teachings, prophecies about the future, and amazingly accurate information such as the illiterate Muhammad could never have gathered of his own accord.

Oloyede (2012) buttressed the benefit of Qur'an recitation competition that religious studies are the tools for the study of revelations while acquired knowledge emanates from inter-personal interactions, observations, explorations of the Qur'an and the imperative first word of revelation experiments and experience. He concluded that the

first verses of the Qur'an and the imperative first word of revelation "Read" apart from commanding us to read, the Qur'an and *Sunnah* are replete with portions that stimulate reflection, observation, experimentation and exploration. For example, Qur'an 2:164

Oloyede (2012) further explained that knowledge is sine qua non for man's successful vicegerency of God on earth. It is provided through the tripartite means of intuition, revelation and utilization of extent faculties as the Almighty Allah said in (Qur'an 42:51)

Rewarding Qur'an reciters

Whoever memorized the Qur'an deserved a special respect from the Muslims. It was narrated from Abu-Musa (2012) (R.A) that the holy Prophet (S.A.W) said:

It is among reverence of Allah to respect grey hair Muslim and among that, is respecting Qur'an reciters and respecting fair leaders.

Kalarawi (2006) explained that, the Holy prophet (SAW) used to honour the Qur'anic reciters among his companions. It was narrated from Jabir bn Abdullahi (R.A) that the Holy prophet (S.A.W) used to gather between two persons in the grave of the Martyrs of *Uhud*, but would always ask:

Who has large portion in memorizing Qur'an he would first advance him to the grave.

It could be observed that the above traditions taught us to honour whom Allah and His messenger honoured and to know the status of memorizers of the Qur'an among us, by respecting them whenever we find them irrespective of their age, colour, tribes etc.

Motivating Recitation of Qur'an using good voice.

The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as guidance to mankind and whoever reads it will be rewarded by Allah (SWT), but anybody who wants to recite the Quran must adopt the rules of *Tajweed* (its recitation) Qur'an 73:4.

Educational influence/impact of the Qur'anic Recitation Competition on *Arrabiyyah and Islamiyyah* Schools in Nigeria

Khalifa (1993), stated that the main areas in which Qur'anic recitation exerted noticeable impact on Arabic and Islamic studies students are:

- i. Teaching them the knowledge that can assist them in their studies.
- ii. Influencing the minds of the students
- iii. Teaching topics approach and adding word to the students.
- iv. Acquainting students with Devine laws that have effects on human life, which they cannot know them from any other literature.
- v. The Qur'anic assists Arabic and Islamic students to master Arabic language and its eloquence through language acquisition.
- vi. To sustain the Arabic literature through the Qur'anic recitation which will eventually enrich students of Arabic language in its literature by citing or quoting the verses of the Qur'an during their research works.
- vii. To be able to ponder over issues of life and make useful solution to problem through the acquired knowledge of the Qur'an memorizations.
- viii. Impacting functional knowledge of the Qur'an to the future generation. etc.

Ibrahim (2009) maintained that the above impact of the Qur'an is a tool for Arabic language and its literature. Also, the researcher observed that those aspects encourage the establishment of the *Tahfiz* al-Qur'an sections in Muslim schools across the country to facilitate smooth learning and memorization in all forms.

Objectives of the Qur'an Recitation Competition

It could be observed that since the inception of the Qur'an recitation competition in *Islamiyyah* schools across the country, there is no doubt as to the realization of these objectives. Today, it is clear to all that there is a great leap in the memorization of the

Qur'an and remarkable improvement in its recitation with all the sciences. This is especially when compared to the situation before the competition was introduced in the world. The objectives of the competition were introduced with the following:

- i. To enhance the quality of teaching/learning *Tajweed* and sciences of the Qur'an in schools
- ii. To make the youths intensify learning the correct recitation of the Qur'an and all its sciences in the manner it was revealed to prophet Muhammad (SAW) through Jubril.
- iii. To encourage Muslim youths in the recitation and memorization of the Qur'an.
- iv. To forge unity and Islamic Brotherhood among the youths and the Muslim *Ummah* in general.
- v. To sustain the legacy in the art of reading, memorization and interpretation of the Qur'an for incoming generation.

Impact of the Qur'an Recitation Competition on *Arrabiyyah and Islamiyyah* Schools in Nigeria.

Spiritual impacts.

Rafatu (2017) explained that spiritual impact gives more opportunity for youths and Muslims in general to answer the call of Allah in form of learning and reading the Qur'an, which could be regarded as a form of worship. Although, Muslims have been reading and reciting the Qur'an before its establishment but it provided additional opportunity for those who want to put extra efforts towards its recitation. (Q 57:21).

Qur'anic recitation competition has played and is still playing a major role in training the Muslims especially the students of *Arrabiyyah* and *Islamiyyah* schools to compete with one another doing good deed. It has also trained them on how to be patient on Allah's test and to really on any conditions they found themselves, since the spirit of the Qur'an encourages perseverance.

Economic impact

Adamu and Umar (2017) enumerated that the economic impact or benefits are the gifts that individual participants receive during the cause of

competitions. Some of the participants won huge amount of money which help them to establish on their own and become self-independent. Through the prizes they received, they invest them into businesses and that help them to sustain their lives and that of their families. As a result of this, it helps them to reduce poverty while some beneficiaries become big business men.

Social impact

Adamu and Umar (2017) affirmed that the Qur'anic recitation competition has assisted the students in many ways to improve the social aspects of Muslims in Nigeria. The social benefits will be through interactions with different personalities from different parts of the country/ countries of the Muslim world. In the light of this, students from different schools get to know one another during the programme and exchange ideas. This gives them ample opportunity of knowing one another and as well to visit many places within and outside the country.

Educational impact

Rafatu (2017) encouraged Muslim youths of *Islamiyyah and Arrabiyyah* schools to learn the various forms of recitation. Also, Abdul Hamid (1995) explained the ability to understand the different speed in the recitation as contained among the various readings/ recitations. For instance, in *Hafs* form of reading, they are known as *Tartil* (slowly) *Hadr* (Quick) *Tadiwir* (between *Tartil* and *Hadr*). In *warsh* reading, they are known as *Qasribadal* (slowly) *Tausitulbadal*, (quickly) and *Tulu badal* (between “*Qasrbadal*” and *Tausitulbadal*).

It could be recalled that before the introduction of Qur'an recitation competitions in various parts of Nigeria, very few women could memorize many portions of the Qur'an, but after its establishment in Nigeria, women have been participating in all categories of the competition.

This Qur'anic memorization has proved to be the best way of preparing young stars for other academic activities as it refreshes the memories of Muslim students that offer courses in all fields of study like

Arts, sciences, social sciences and other related areas of disciplined. Gwandu (1993) elaborated the following:

we are now on the verge of a new era. A generation of Muslims is coming up full of dynamism, willing to face challenges. Perhaps the 21st century will see, not only Nigeria but in the whole world, a new Qur'anic generation of dedicated Muslim men and women who will not be only reciters of the Qur'an but who will translate into action the Qur'anic teachings of global peace and harmony of humanity and fair play. Perhaps what we are witnessing today are signs of fulfillments of Allah's pledge to make Islam prevail on all other religions.

Religious impact

Adamu and Umar (2017) explained the religious benefits of participation in the Qur'anic recitation competition are the main goal a reciter strives to achieve. Kalarawi (2006) maintained that faithful intention shall always reflect non-compliance with worldly ornaments, such as wealth, supremacy over colleagues, leadership, calling people's attention, seeking praises from men etc. But these do not deter reciters from attaining the religious benefits by their participation in Qur'anic Recitation Competition such religious benefits include:

Opportunity to be chosen among the judges or organizers of the competition, occupying a leadership position. A good reciter of the Qur'an will be the leader among his people, the Prophet Muhammad said (SAW). “A person who recites the Qur'an best shall always lead in prayer.” (Sahih Bukhari).

Another benefit is opportunity of performing Hajj. It is a tradition of some L.O.C (Hosting state Government) to award the first and the second positions of the competition air ticket for pilgrimage, at times the third position gets air ticket for lesser pilgrimage (Umrah) depending on the availability of fund by the hosting state Government. Lastly, to promote unity among the Muslims. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his companions, unity prevailed in the Ummah, because of their holding fast, to the Qur'an and Sunnah. But

later on division erupted due to deviation from the teachings of Qur'an and Sunnah.

Recommendations

Derivation of scientific concepts and Arabic rules from the Qur'an must be included into the programme so as to revive the past glory of Islamic sciences.

All avenues through which legal finance could be obtained should be undertaken by the organization/schools as this will enable them to be self-sufficient and independent.

The Secretariat of the Qur'anic Recitation Competition should be built in all the state headquarters of the federation. This should include lodge rooms and office accommodation.

The Organizers/Tutors should be motivated so that they can devote their full time on the teaching and training the reciters.

The Muslim philanthropists should always come to their aids whenever there is need and to assist the cause of Allah.

The organizers as a body should also utilize the little resources at their disposal for effective money generations or investments. These may include buying of shares from Islamic financial houses, establishing ventures and venturing into other small but legal business ventures etc.

Though, incentive/prizes have been given to the winners, but notwithstanding, other incentives that will attract reciters' interest should also be provided to encourage the young ones.

Conclusion

Qur'an is the Book of Allah sent to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through Angel Jibril, for the guidance of mankind and Jinns. The first revelation began with the command to "read" and that shows the importance of reading the Qur'an constantly and should be read in line with rules of *Tajweed* and in accordance with the way the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW.) was asked to read it. To encourage Muslim youths to recite the Qur'an with the rules of *Tajweed*, many centers and *Arrabiyyah*

schools organize the Qur'anic recitation competitions annually and prizes are given to the winners. It is not an overstatement to say that Qur'anic recitation completion has gained prominence among the Muslim community (Ummah) in Nigeria in recent years. The prominence became more pronounced with Nigerian representative's performance at the international level of the competition.

In addition, the research reveals that the Qur'anic Recitation Competition in *Arrabiyyah* and *Islamiyyah* schools in Nigeria has spiritual, economic, social, educational and religious impacts in the lives of the Muslim Community. Finally it is noted that the Qur'anic Recitation Competition is playing a vital role in the past decades on *Arrabiyyah* and *Islamiyyah* schools in Nigeria.

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