



INSTITUTE OF KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION

RESEARCH PAPER

(ITKI6300)

Topic:

**EXPLORING CONFOUNDING FACTORS AFFECTING SINGAPOREAN
MUSLIM STUDENTS IN ḤIFZ (MEMORIZATION) AL-QUR'ĀN IN THE
CONTEXT OF SINGAPORE MUSLIM SCHOOLS**

Prepared by:

HALIMAH BINTE MOHAMED IBRAHIM (PG21020012)

Prepared for:

**ASSOC. PROF. DR. FATMIR SHEHU
(The IKI Academy Supervisor)**

OCTOBER TRIMESTER

2023

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Allah s.w.t revealed *al-Qur'ān* to Prophet *Muhammad s.a.w* by showing the finality of Prophethood, as well as the universality of the Prophetic Message. Also, *al-Qur'ān* is the primary Source of *Dīn al-Islām* (Allah's Comprehensive way of life), the only accepted Source of Knowledge by *Allah s.w.t*, as well as the main foundation of the *Muslim Ummah*.

Traditionally, education was imparted by schools (*Madrasah*) where the *Qur'an* was taught through memorization (*Hifz*). *Masājid* are both places for worshipping *Allah s.w.t* and obtaining educational instructions about Islamic teachings starting with the basic learning of Arabic letters (*Hija'iyyah*) to enable the learner to read and recite *al-Qur'ān*. Although various contemporary *Muslim* organizations grew rigorously to implement Islamic legislation (*Sharī'ah*) and jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), *Hifz al-Qur'ān* (memorization of *Qur'an*) seemed to have been marginalized due to confounding factors.

The removal of 'religious knowledge' as part of the national curriculum in 1990 was to prevent religious revivalism and polarization which threatens religious harmony in Singapore. Hence, the government schools are regarded as secular because religious education is not allowed in the national curriculum¹. In 2003, the 'Compulsory Education' act excluded home schooling and special needs students. In other words, there were pressures to align *Madrasah* education to

¹ 'Madrasah Education in Secular, Modern and Multicultural Singapore: Challenges and Reforms' Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355173596_Madrasah_Education_in_Secular_Modern_and_Multicultural_Singapore_Challenges_and_Reforms, at 1030hrs on 30/11/23

achieve minimum national benchmarks, particularly for Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE).

For the *Muslim* community in Singapore, there are at least 6 full-time madrasahs² which excluded non-*Muslim* children or children with non-*Muslim* parents. In 2009, the ‘Joint *Madrasah* System’ (JMS) was introduced. *Madrasah Al Junied Al Islamiah* and *Madrasah Al Arabiah Al Islamiah* caters to only secondary school education and *Madrasah Al Irsyad* specializes in primary school education. Both all-female schools, *Madrasah Alsagoff Al Arabiah* and *Madrasah Al Maarif* continued to provide primary and secondary school education which did very well as there were overwhelming demand to educate girls. The part-time madrasahs are operated by mosques or private institutions and are well-attended by local *Muslim* students mostly from Singapore public/national schools. Most *Asatizah* agree that a full-time *Madrasah* is needed for *Muslim* students because they provide in-depth learning and internalization of knowledge than the mosques or private institutions.

The primary role of the *Madrasah* is to spread *Islam*. *Madrasah* is expected to produce Islamic religious leaders who can teach Islamic subjects such as *Qur’an*, Islamic law and jurisprudence, metaphysical oriented logic and Prophetic traditions. There is also a mistaken approach to observe the extent to which the *Madrasah* is able to achieve within their respective contexts, like modern schools. In fact, *Madrasah* is comparable to national schools and often negatively perceived as to be ineffective and irrelevant for the economic development of Singapore or the knowledge-based economy. Ironically, in other parts of the world, *Madrasah* education is an opportunity to get out of poverty or gain some form of literacy and practical skills. For children,

² ‘Key Facts About Our Full Time Madrasahs’ Retrieved from <https://www.muis.gov.sg/madrasah/About/Key-Facts-About-Our-Full-Time-Madrasahs>, at 1015hrs on 30/11/23

they are protected against social ills such as child labor and sex trafficking³. The Singapore Islamic Education System (SIES) was then established as an intervention to alleviate ‘Islamophobia’ and reform the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI) against terrorism. *Hifz al-Qur’ān* is to be an integral element for national security and positive moral development. Though *Madrasah* is legally defined as a religious school in Singapore, it also implies religious education, religious instructions, transmission of knowledge, and wisdom.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Throughout the years, the local *Muslim* population has diligently increased in religiosity and pursued diverse strategies to integrate into mainstream society as a reflection of success⁴. The outcomes included a highly skilled workforce and a world-class education system. The schools in Singapore have been criticized due to the discriminatory practice of ‘streaming’ students based on their academic abilities. Malay/Muslim parents do not usually enroll their children in any other courses/enrichment programs outside of school. Consequently, there is an added pressure and increased expectations to local parents as they now have to deal with the inconvenience of competitiveness to secure desirable outcomes for the choice of education made for their children. In other words, those who have chosen the *Madrasah* system will not be deprived of economically viable routes and a good life. Even though the majority who send their children to public/national schools do not have serious dissatisfaction with mainstream education, they are not guaranteed that their children will make it to prestigious Islamic universities in the region and the Middle East.

³ ‘Islamic Education System In Singapore: Current Issues and Challenges’ Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342015014_Islamic_Education_System_in_Singapore_Current_Issues_and_Challenges_pp.217-218, at 1000hrs on 30/11/23

⁴ ‘Social Class, Piety and the Formation of the Singaporean Muslim: Exploring Educational Choices in a Highly Regulated Society’ Retrieved from [\(PDF\) Social Class, Piety, and the Formation of the Singaporean Muslim: Exploring Educational Choices in a Highly Regulated Society | Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir - Academia.edu](#) at 1000hrs on 13/12/23

In addition, the pious *Muslim* is responsive to modernity through mechanisms forming the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI). However, being secular, these Muslims may regard as burdensome to reform institutions with Islamic culture and historical value. Such people will give priority to accept western-style institutions so that they appear contextual and do not contradict the political elites who are at the forefront of controlling the revival efforts of Islam within the Muslim community in Singapore. In other words, religious teachers should be adept at performing global roles and not be elites. Students cannot be molded to be the future of the community if their learning styles do not include critical thinking skills.

Research Questions

This research will answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Singaporean *Muslim* parents about the current function of the Singapore Islamic Education System (SIES)?
2. To what extent do *Asatizah* agree with the indicators of the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI)?
3. What are the factors that can affect the economic participation of Singaporean *Muslim* students and religious teachers in Singapore?

Research Objectives

This research will arrive at the following objective:

4. To explore the perceptions of Singaporean *Muslim* parents about the current function of the Singapore Islamic Education System (SIES).

5. To examine *Asatizah*'s position on their agreement with the indicators of the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI).
6. To discuss the factors that can affect the economic participation of Singaporean *Muslim* students and religious teachers in Singapore.

RQ1 – What are the perceptions of Singaporean Muslim Parents about the current function of the SIES?

Like the Singapore government, the philosophy of education in Malaysia is to produce balanced, harmonious, and skilled human beings. Education is also defined as the development of human potential, learning to obey elders, indoctrination, acquisition of skills and knowledge, becoming familiar with the roles of society, and learning respect, beauty, truth, others, environment, and the self as well.

In Malaysia, there is a growing demand for *Tahfiz* institutions as alternatives to modern, fast-paced educational institutions by parents. The parents perceive that memorization of *Qur'an* (*Hifz*) will enhance their children's well-being. The concerns for *Tahfiz* schools in Malaysia is no different from those of *Madrasah* in Singapore such as quality of teaching and learning, the uniformity of the syllabus or learning modules and finances, as well as future problems of these students after they finish their studies⁵.

The Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI) is represented by 10 desirable attributes⁶ to articulate the local Muslim's aspirations and practice of his religious life, which promotes a progressive,

⁵ 'The influence of curriculum and school climate on the academic attitude of tahfiz students in Malaysia' Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1313257.pdf> at 1030hrs on 14/12/23

⁶ PM Lee Hsien Loong's Written Interview with *Berita Harian* Retrieved from <https://www.pmo.gov.sg/Newsroom/prime-minister-lee-hsien-loongs-written-interview-berita->

adaptive, and inclusive practice of Islamic religious life in line with Singapore's multi-racial and multi-religious society. This research seeks firstly to establish the perception of Singaporean *Muslim* parents about the SIES.

RQ2 - To what extent do asatizah agree with the indicators of the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI)?

The Singapore government manages the affairs of the local *Muslim* community and recognizes diversity to be the outcome of different applications of the belief system. The efficiency of this function may be the reason that bilateral ties have improved particularly with *Muslim*-majority governments. The political elites in Singapore is shaped by a central government which is also a strong and dominant party, People's Action Party (PAP). The Prime Minister (PM), Senior Ministers, Ministerial Cabinet, Members of Parliament (MP) and the President of Singapore are examples of positions within the Singapore government office. The appointment of our first lady president, Mdm. Halimah Binti Yacob, who won the presidential elections uncontested in 2017 was due to her qualifications.

Mdm. Halimah, who is a political elite, spoke against terrorism and extremist ideologies involving religious teachers⁷. She supported to cancellation of the religious teacher accreditation of those who propagated controversy within the multi-racial and multi-religious context in Singapore. According to her, the wrong ideologies and terrorism by extremists are dangerous and will gnaw the social fabric. Eventually, she encourages such individuals to seek rehabilitation and counseling.

[harian#:~:text=The%20Singapore%20Muslim%20Identity%20\(SMI\)%2C%20with%20the%2010%20desired,Singapore's%20multi%2Dracial%20and%20multi%2D](#)

⁷ 'Religious Teachers Have Responsibility to Lead Community Based on True Teachings of Islam' Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/religious-teachers-have-responsibility-to-lead-community-based-on-true-teachings-of-islam> at 1014hrs on 20/08/24

However, she also mentioned that religious teachers should lead their followers based on the true teachings of Islam which cannot consist of any violent elements, divisive racial beliefs, or demonstrating militant tendencies. She expressed concerns over self-radicalization over the internet. This meant that efforts to revive Muslims should not be made through unreliable resources. According to PM Lee Hsien Loong, the *asatizah* will guide Muslims to understand Islam correctly and live as good Muslims in a modern, progressive society without being led astray by radical and extreme ideologies. *Asatizah* also play a critical role in social services for the community. Consequently, this research will ascertain if *asatizah* are aligned to the SMI indicators.

RQ3 - What are the factors that can affect the economic participation of Singaporean Muslim students and religious teachers in Singapore?

Religious teachers or *asatizah* are usually graduates of Islamic universities. As fellow Singaporeans, they need to attend training and retraining to ensure their skillsets and attitudes remain relevant for globalized roles and life-long learning. Singapore's economy is highly developed and has a significant global presence. In 2023, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was valued at approximately USD\$464 billion, thus making it one of the world's most prosperous economies on a per capita basis (USD\$80,000). Singapore maintains bilateral relationships with various *Muslim*-majority countries. These relationships are multi-faceted and encompass areas such as trade, education, defense, culture, and diplomacy. Singapore has strong economic ties with several Muslim-majority countries, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. These relationships involve trade agreements, investment partnerships, and economic cooperation initiatives.

Singapore maintains diplomatic relations with numerous Muslim-majority countries through its network of embassies, consulates, and high commissions. These diplomatic ties facilitate

dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration on various regional and global issues. Singapore collaborates with Muslim-majority countries on defense and security matters, including joint military exercises, counterterrorism efforts, and defense technology partnerships. These collaborations aim to enhance regional security and stability. Singapore promotes cultural and educational exchanges with Muslim-majority countries to foster mutual understanding and cooperation. This includes student exchange programs, cultural festivals, and academic collaborations between institutions.

Singapore provides humanitarian assistance and development aid to Muslim-majority countries affected by natural disasters, conflicts, and other challenges. This support reflects Singapore's commitment to global humanitarian efforts and international development cooperation. Overall, Singapore's bilateral relationships with Muslim-majority countries are characterized by mutual respect, cooperation, and shared interests in various fields, despite differences in religion, culture, and governance systems. These relationships contribute to regional integration, economic growth, and stability in Southeast Asia and beyond. Singapore is a major global trade hub and a key player in international finance. The financial services sector is a major contributor to the GDP.

Narrated Abu Hurayrah *r.a* that Prophet *Muhammad s.a.w* said “If anyone acquires knowledge that should be sought seeking the Face of *Allah*, but he acquires it to get some worldly advantage, he will not experience the fragrance of paradise.⁸” Both religious and formal education is important as they facilitate our journey back to our Creator. The religious education provides a base to

⁸ ‘Chapter Regarding Seeking Knowledge for other than the sake of Allah’ Retrieved from <https://sunnah.com/abudawud:3664> at 1112hrs on 30/11/23

facilitate the formal education.⁹ However, religious education is the first preferred knowledge taught to us by our parents.

Tahfiz institutions are chosen by parents for the well-being of children. The *Qur'an* brings back nature and happiness. Moreover, those who are engaged in its memorization are promised a high status, immense rewards and salvation. The memorizers of *Qur'an* (*Huffaz*) are inculcated with three attitudes namely; true and strong intentions, sincerity and consistency¹⁰. In addition, they also acquire skills such as encoding, storing and retrieving the *Qur'anic* text. Other roles of a memorizer of *Qur'an* (*Hafiz*) include showing exemplary physical and moral characteristics as well as acquiring other legitimate skills as a means to livelihood.

During the pandemic, the role of technology became more dominant worldwide¹¹. It has led to the rediscovery of the strengths of the current religious teachers. The Singapore government believes that a progressive *Muslim* community produces *Asatizah* who can positively contribute towards nation-building. According to Minister *Masagos* who is the Minister in charge of *Muslim* Affairs, *Asatizah* must adopt competencies to professionalize the industry, enable themselves to be re-employed into other sectors in the future and grow the community's skillsets to ensure progress within the *Muslim* community¹². *Hifz*, including work in Islamic and other disciplines, is a skill that will enhance scholars and students in the foundations for the higher order scholarly work and comprehension. The overall contributions of *asatizah* should benefit the entire nation.

⁹ 'Effectsof Memorizing the *Qur'an* By Heart (HIFZ) On Later Academic Achievement' Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2c6e/73d749213ee5c8987adad69c6db15f2c5dbe.pdf> at 1100hrs on 22/08/24

¹⁰ 'Tahfiz Students' Academic Achievement In Relation to Number of Chapters Memorized By Them and Their Type of Schools' Retrieved from https://edb6b4cf-b071-4213-9dab-d57b7d5c2bd2.filesusr.com/ugd/44b25e_4e456e983cd34d1ea9bff002e2924ebd.pdf at 2020hrs on 30/11/23

¹¹ 'The Challenge of Muslim Youth' Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/opinion/global/the-challenge-of-muslim-youth.html>, at 1950hrs on 30/11/23

¹² 'Strengthening Religious Leadership for a Community of Success' Retrieved from <https://www.muis.gov.sg/-/media/Files/Corporate-Site/COFA/COFA-Report.pdf?la=en&hash=7FE404772359FE0731A82A3424A1BDC558943F3>, at 2000hrs on 30/11/23

The recent health pandemic has also led to a host of socio-economic problems which left many people struggling and contributing to poverty. In the *Muslim* economy, *Zakat* is the alternative resource to help those in need resolve their financial issues. It is a compulsory contribution of 2.5% to be paid to a religious authority for redistribution to eligible *asnaf* (categories) which includes the *fakir*, *miskin*, *amil*, *muallaf*, *algharimin*, *fisabilillah* and *ibnussabil*¹³. This technique of wealth redistribution suffers from imbalances due to a lack of consensus in the *Muslim* world. In Singapore, *Zakat* aid is said to have a significant impact on the quality of education and the social participation of the poor¹⁴. In building financial capacities, it is incumbent to embark on long-term projects whose effects are suitable and timely. This research will identify the factors affecting the economic participation of Singaporean *Muslim* students and religious teachers.

Research Methodology

Q1 - What are the perceptions of Singaporean Muslim parents about the current function of the Singapore Islamic Education System (SIES)?

a) Close – Ended Questionnaire

The GoogleForm was used to create an online questionnaire¹⁵. There were 16 questions exclusively designed to encompass plausible perceptions about the stakeholders within the SIES. The scaling method was utilized to elicit responses. These responses are then summarized and presented in pie-chart/percentage format.

b) Convenience Sampling

¹³ ‘Qur’an 9:60’ Retrieved from <https://quran.com/9/60?translations=84,17,85,95,101,22,20>

¹⁴ ‘Combating Poverty In Malaysia’ Retrieved from <https://www.koreascience.or.kr/article/JAKO202112748675064.page> at 2220hrs on 2/12/23

¹⁵ Appendix - Online Questionnaire

This method is chosen as it enables the responses to be done quickly and at a low cost. There are also minimal qualifications required to attempt the online questionnaire. This is also the most suitable method for an exploratory study with limited resources. However, the outcomes may indicate biases as they relate to those who are available at the time.

Q2 - To what extent do asatizah agree to the indicators of the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI)?

a) Structured Interview

A set of 12 interview questions¹⁶ were created to acknowledge the varied experiences in the *asatizah*'s job performances. These questions are systematically emailed/whatsapp to the *asatizah* to get more accurate responses and enhance the validity of the research.

b) Purposive/Snowball Sampling

These techniques are chosen to enhance the reliability of the research. *Asatizah* selected are those with accreditation (ARS tier 1 or ARS tier 2) within the *Muslim* community in Singapore. No minimum sample size is recommended.

Q3 - What are the factors that can affect the economic participation of Singaporean Muslim students and religious teachers in Singapore?

a) Descriptive Data

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool, *ChatGPT* is employed to automatically summarize data which can be time-consuming and labor-intensive to obtain with accuracy. This method is utilized to gain an in-depth understanding and identify relevant themes or textual data to be used to identify future areas of study.

¹⁶ Appendix – Interview Questions

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

As Singapore is a multicultural society, the use of the English language has become more prevalent due to multicultural identity and diversity¹⁷. Religion which has also caused initial disparities, is now diminishing differences, particularly amongst the younger cohorts and economically developed countries¹⁸. The influence of familiar languages, mass media, leadership, and institutions also facilitated the embrace of modern values and liberalism at the expense of the *Muslim* world. Religiosity varies amongst Muslims. Hence, the aspirations and realities of a *Muslim* minority may be regarded as whimsical by *Muslim*-majority¹⁹.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite a world-class education system, Singaporean parents are not spared from the additional pressure and competitiveness associated with their children's education. The inconvenience of selection is a real concern regardless of whether the choices of institutions are private or public. Furthermore, the advent of AI bereft of educational perspectives, gave rise to critical gaps such as what AI technologies could do to education. For *Muslim* parents, how they are being implemented in authentic educational settings²⁰ where the Qur'an is known to be taught and memorized, particularly the *Tahfiz* Institutions, *Muslim* Associations and at home should contribute to their children's well-being. For students and religious teachers, it should lead to enhanced skillsets that

¹⁷ 'Singaporeans Feel That English Should Be Main Language Used In Public, With Space for Other Languages' Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singaporeans-feel-english-should-be-main-language-used-in-public-with-space-for-other> at 2220hrs on 8/12/23

¹⁸ 'Women's Education In The Muslim World' Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324398662>

¹⁹ 'The Muslim World and The Challenge of Modernity' Retrieved from [The Muslim World and the Challenge of Modernity | Lawfare \(lawfaremedia.org\)](https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/the-muslim-world-and-the-challenge-of-modernity) at 1120hrs on 10/12/23

²⁰ 'AI technologies for education: Recent research & future directions' Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2021.100025> at 1300hrs on 22/5/24

would make them to be capable of contributing and part of a competent workforce. This study aims to recall success in the transformation of the local *Madrasah* system from being ultra-conservative through its stakeholders while negotiating the pressures brought about by the politics and national government towards adjusting to the identity and aspiration of the local, *Muslim* minority, modern, and secular society.

Tahfiz Institutions

This research intended to highlight the reasons why parents would naturally choose the *Tahfiz* institutions for the well-being of their children. A study²¹ was done in Malaysia to research the relationship between the academic achievements of *Tahfiz* students (15–17 years old), the number of chapters of *Qur'an* memorized by them, and the types of schools they attend. It was found that academic achievements are closely related to the number of chapters they memorize. It is better to memorize the *Qur'an* before puberty because it can be done more quickly and memory retention is higher. This is to enhance spiritual well-being, build financial capabilities and promote leadership characteristics amongst *Muslim* students. *Huffaz* are molded to benefit the nation through their intelligence²². Their academic excellence is the beginning of mastery to become *khalifah* in various disciplines. However, none of these achievements convincingly measure the real happiness or contentment of the students, their parents or religious teachers.

In addition, students' admissions into *Tahfiz* institutions often come with very stringent criteria. The findings of a qualitative study showed several important criteria for the admission of students into *Tahfiz* schools in Malaysia. Among the criteria evaluated by the interviewers are the

²¹ 'Combating Poverty in Malaysia' Retrieved from

<https://www.koreascience.or.kr/article/JAKO202112748675064.page> at 2130hrs on 30/11/23

²² 'Determination of Huffaz Academic Achievement Using Binary Logistic Regression Model' Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353978317_Determination_of_Huffaz_Academic_Achievement_Using_Binary_Logistic_Regression_Model at 2100hrs on 30/11/23

ability to recite the *Qur'an* with the correct pronunciation of *tajweed*, memorizing abilities, academic excellence, student interests, and attitudes. In Malaysia, it was found that Information Technology (IT) was not commonly used as teaching aids. However, teaching and learning the *qiraat* curriculum increased the mastery of students²³. While the rest of the students and religious teachers become acquainted with the skillsets associated with *Tahfiz* institutions, there is a concern about its relevance to the Singapore workforce.

On the contrary, the Arabic language has become trendy amongst young *Muslims* in Singapore²⁴. Thus, *Tahfiz* schools may be instrumental in catering to the needs of parents who aspire to provide their children with a religious education program through enhanced technological support. With the Arabic language and prevalent usage of English, one can reasonably expect religious teachers and students to produce local higher-order scholarly works that will benefit the nation.

Muslim Associations

The *Malay/Muslim Organizations* (MMOs)²⁵ in Singapore mainly carry out interest-based activities for the effectiveness²⁶ of the community. The community leadership must take on the role of educating Qur'anic values that have been misplaced to encourage constructive reforms. *Al-Qur'ān* is the main foundation of an Islamic civilization (*Ummah*). It is the source of research, discovery, development, and improvement of the quality of life. In *Islam*, all Muslims must seek

²³ 'The influence of curriculum and school climate on the academic attitude of tahfiz students in Malaysia' Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1313257.pdf> at 1020hrs on 15/12/23

²⁴ 'Kanak-Kanak 6 Tahun dari Singapura menang peraduan Bahasa Arab antarabangsa' Retrieved from <https://berita.mediacorp.sg/singapura/kanak-kanak-6-tahun-dari-spura-menang-peraduan-bahasa-arab-antarabangsa-627666?cid=berita-fb> at 2230hrs on 8/12/23

²⁵ 'MalayMuslim Organizations Network Directory of Program & Services' ~~Accessed~~ Retrieved from https://www.m3.gov.sg/files/PDF/MMO_Network_Directory_of_Programmes_and%20Services_840KB.pdf at 0935hrs on 28/08/24

²⁶ 'Perception Survey On The Malay/Muslim Community In Singapore' Retrieved from https://amp.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/11-Section-8_Perception-Survey.pdf at 0945hrs on 29/08/24

guidance before knowledge. Therefore, the role of an educational institution and scholars is considerably regarded as superior to worship.

According to a search led by an Indonesian conglomerate (Lyman Group & Al Irsyad Satya), there is no such thing as religious schools that are not too religious²⁷. Schools in Singapore are mostly modern and embark on a secular-scientific approach to education. *Muslim* students in Primary schools should familiarize themselves with learning the *Qur'an*, poetry, calligraphy, and ethics. In fact, until recently, the role of education had been to create professionals who may lack a vision for morality and social justice. However, this sort of concern is regarded sensitive and may lead to endless speculations about the economic participation of religious teachers. Excellence in education should inculcate familiarity with virtues and leaders being morally good²⁸. There should be a proper distinction between practical work and intellectuals.

In Singapore, youth behavior is cited as one of the biggest community concerns. Community leaders in *Muslim-majority* countries instill in youths practical and spiritual knowledge about *Islam* to help deal with daily challenges²⁹. There seems to be a direct relationship between Islamic religiosity and organizational commitment. Islamic religiosity³⁰ should measure not just the ability to articulate pillars of *Islam* and *Iman*. It should inculcate religiosity by introducing stress-coping strategies among *Muslim* students³¹ before taking into account their organizational commitment.

²⁷ 'Singapore School Offers A New Model for 'Madrasah'' Retrieved from <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2009/04/27/2003442106> at 2115hrs on 2/12/23

²⁸ 'Prospects of Morality-Based Education in the 21st Century' Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.111.01> at 2130hrs on 2/12/23

²⁹ 'What's Wrong With Muslim Youth' Retrieved from <https://onepathnetwork.com/whats-wrong-with-the-muslim-youth/> at 2130hrs on 2/12/23

³⁰ 'The Development and Validation of a Qur'an-Based Instrument to Assess Islamic Religiosity: The Religiosity of Islam Scale' Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15564900701624436> at 2150hrs on 2/12/23

³¹ 'Religiosity Among Muslims: A Scale Development and Validation Study' Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324134748_Religiosity_among_Muslims_A_Scale_Development_and_Validation_Study at 2200hrs on 2/12/23

There are some similarities between local *Muslim* students and *Muslim* students³² from Canada and America at the University of Illinois. Both organize gatherings for religious and social purposes. At the same time, *Muslim* students are encouraged to participate in interfaith programs comprising of other students from different religious and secular backgrounds. Local *Muslim* student associations such as 'National University of Singapore Muslim Society (NUSMS), Singapore Management University Muslim Society (SMUMS), and Fellowship of Muslim Students Association (FMSA) propose intra-faith programs to reduce the occurrence of self-radicalized *Muslim* youths.

On the other hand, *Madrasah* education in Singapore are criticized as hindering racial and social cohesion due to its conservative culture³³. In the West, for example, *Imam* Suhaib Webb works with youths to explain how their hip-hop preferences need not be against *Islam*. However, *Muslim* youths who have adopted the path of deviation through music and hip-hop culture are experiencing intellectual and philosophical challenges. According to hip-hop journalist, Harry Allen, Islam is the unofficial religion of hip-hop as it articulates social and global concerns (such as human rights, state management, and gender issues) in unambiguous terms³⁴. While the traditional practices become less common, the cultural identity of *Muslim* youths is celebrated. Over time, assimilation to dominant cultures seemed to be more desirable to families³⁵. Despite being adept in many ways, *Muslim* youths are often the target of reformative movements by elders in the community.

³² 'Muslim Youth: The Next Generation' Retrieved from <https://pluralism.org/muslim-youth-the-next-generation> at 2145hrs on 2/12/23

³³ 'Madrasah Education in Secular, Modern and Multicultural Singapore: Challenges & Reforms' (PDF) [Madrasah Education in Secular, Modern and Multicultural Singapore: Challenges and Reforms \(researchgate.net\)](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354111111_Madrasah_Education_in_Secular_Modern_and_Multicultural_Singapore_Challenges_and_Reforms) at 2208hrs on 6/12/23

³⁴ 'Hip Hop & Islam' Retrieved from [Hip-Hop and Islam - Islamic Studies - Oxford Bibliographies](https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190263093/obo-9780190263093-0111.xml) on 22/12/23

³⁵ 'Youth In Islam-Culture, Faith and Generation Gap' Retrieved from <https://www.arabnews.com/news/525521>, at 2211hrs on 2/12/23

By sustaining long-term community programs through *Muslim* organizations, financial capabilities need to be improved. *Zakat* will enable *Muslim* students and religious teachers to receive regular contributions as beneficiaries. Business owners and employees should provide accordingly based on their accounted wealth. These categories are not mutually exclusive and should increase social mobility, especially for those who are categorically poor, and the overall accessibility to good quality education.

Home Schooling

Housing support was perceived to be the most inaccessible form of social assistance and the least successful to the *Muslim* community in Singapore. The elites are those who have adopted a strategy to overcome any domineering attempts by the state on their children's identities³⁶. *Muslims* in Singapore can develop an alternative strategy particularly expatriate families and parents who want to impart stronger religious values³⁷. Even though exemption to Compulsory Education included home schooling³⁸, there needs to be regulatory measures against polarization.

³⁶ 'Social Class, Piety and The Formation of the Singaporean Muslim: Exploring Educational Choices in a Highly Regulated Society' Retrieved from [\(PDF\) Social Class, Piety, and the Formation of the Singaporean Muslim: Exploring Educational Choices in a Highly Regulated Society | Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir - Academia.edu](#) at 1135hrs on 10/12/23

³⁷ 'The Whys and Hows of Homeschooling in Singapore' Retrieved from https://parents.koobits.com/whys-and-hows-of-homeschooling-in-singapore/?gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7YC6t_W7hgMVyKlmAh1BPQfJEAAAYAiAAEgIkbyD_BwE at 1105hrs on 02/06/24

³⁸ 'Homeschooling In Singapore' Retrieved from https://wolseyhalloxford.org.uk/about-us/internationalhomeschooling/singapore/?utm_term=home%20school&utm_campaign=Singapore&utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=ppc&hsa_acc=1220852074&hsa_cam=617380550&hsa_grp=29574426746&hsa_ad=671236294310&hsa_src=g&hsa_tgt=kwd10692171&hsa_kw=home%20school&hsa_mt=b&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_ver=3&gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7YC6t_W7hgMVyKlmAh1BPQfJEAAAYASAAEgK5wfD_BwE at 1100hrs on 02/06/24

Conclusion

As a minority and secular society, the Singapore *Muslim* population have the means to ensure that the entire nation will continue to be progressive without compromising pertinent aspects of the Islamic faith. This can be done through systematically adopting *Al Qur'an* as its main source of reference. *Al Qur'an* should be taught to reform human values. In addition, parents should be guaranteed the well-being of their children. Religious teachers can play the role of community activists to help alleviate humanitarian issues only if they are willing to go through training and retraining. Vulnerable *Muslim* should be prevented from self-radicalization through the right guidance. Religiosity can then be more accurately measured through organizational commitment. The *Malay/Muslim Organizations (MMOs)* can be further developed through *Zakat*. However, there needs to be competent and well-grounded social and financial capabilities to sustain relevant programs and services for the community.

CHAPTER TWO

REBUILDING ISLAMIC EDUCATION FOR YOUTHS

Introduction

Amongst the areas that the Muslims in Singapore perceived to have gotten worse is the youth delinquency which has become a social problem due to the weakening of traditional values within the community³⁹. Hence, the Malay/Muslim community had regarded strategies to get young people involved in the community and dealing with juvenile issues as somewhat important. The local youth movement, especially in performing arts, has been a positive sign of cultural renaissance. Although, there have been notable academic achievements amongst Malay/Muslim students, those aged between 18-24 years old continue to express more concern for the social behavior among youths and their academic achievements.

Definition of Youth

The definition of a youth is disputable according to age group due to its fluid nature⁴⁰. In addition, most countries allocate the age of 15 as the beginning of the youth period. There are differences in opinion on the end of the youth age range from 25 to 40⁴¹. It is said in *Sunan Al-Tirmidhi*, on the Day of Judgment, no man will be able to move from his place until he answers five questions

³⁹ 'Perception Survey On The Malay/Muslim Community In Singapore' Retrieved from https://amp.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/11-Section-8_Perception-Survey.pdf at 1030hrs on 9/9/24

⁴⁰ 'Definition of Youth' Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf> at 1000hrs on 20/12/23

⁴¹ 'Classification of Youth by Several Organizations Around the World' Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Classification-of-youth-age-by-several-organizations-around-the-world_tbl1_304907577 at 1015hr on 20/12/23

“How did he spend his life? How did he utilize his youth? How did he earn his wealth? How did he spend it? And, how did he practice what he learnt?”⁴² In Islam, young people are taught accountability for every moment of their time. It has a bearing on their future standing and the legacy that they would leave behind for others. If they were beneficial, it could continue to reap rewards for them even after they die.

In another narration by *Bukhari & Muslim*, “There are seven people for whom *Allah Ta’ala* will provide His shade on the day when there will be no shade except His shade: 1. A just ruler. 2. A youth who grew up in the worship of *Allah*. 3. A man whose heart is attached to the mosque. 4. Two men who love each other for *Allah’s* sake; they meet for the sake of *Allah* and part for His sake. 5. A man who is invited by a woman of beauty and position, but he refuses saying: ‘I fear *Allah*.’ 6. A man who gives in charity secretly such that his left hand does not know what his right hand gives. 7. A man who remembers *Allah* and whose eyes shed tears when in private.”⁴³ It is considered virtuous for young people to practice seclusion in the House of God. It will be a means of protection for their pure nature against a corrupt environment. In *Islam*, God guarantees such young people with His refuge regardless of any opposition.

An advise by the Prophet *s.a.w* quoted by *Ibn Abbas*, “Youth before old age, health before sickness, wealth before poverty, free time before preoccupation, and life before death.”⁴⁴ In Islamic traditions, the youth period is acknowledged as the most crucial for positive growth and development. However, it does not overlook other aspects such as health, wealth, free time and

⁴² ‘Youth In Islam- Culture, Faith & Generation Gap’ Retrieved from <https://www.arabnews.com/news/525521> at 1000hrs on 31/08/24

⁴³ ‘Chapter: Excellence of Weeping out of Fear from Allah (swt)’ Retrieved from <https://sunnah.com/riyadussalihin:449> at 1145hrs on 31/08/24

⁴⁴ ‘5 Before 5 Hadith & Arabic Meanings’ Retrieved from [5 Before 5 Hadith Arabic And Meaning \(imanupdate.com\)](https://imanupdate.com/5-Before-5-Hadith-Arabic-And-Meaning) at 1050hrs on 20/12/23

life in general as important to fully function as a human being. The intent is to not procrastinate to do what is beneficial before being overcome by debilitating factors.

Education System in Singapore and its Impact on Muslim Youth's Development

In Singapore, the literacy rate has significantly improved since 2010. The education system consists of 3 levels; primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. Primary education is compulsory for all citizens and residents. The *Muslim* population in Singapore is dominated by Malays. The current full-time *Madrasahs* operate on their premises. There are a total of 6 *Madrasahs* excluding a full-time *Tahfiz* school for teenagers, *Sekolah Ugama Radin Mas (SURM)*⁴⁵.

In 2003, the Singapore government restated the compulsory education policy to make primary education mandatory at public schools. *Madrasahs* were challenged to meet basic standards by 2010, failing which they will not be able to continue to teach primary school students. This was done due to the government's concern over dropout rates, employability, and poor performance of nonreligious subjects amongst *madrasah* students. The number of residents who reported no religion in Singapore was also on an increasing trend⁴⁶.

In 2020, there are a total of 180 primary schools in Singapore. Students need to attend 6 years of compulsory education before they take the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). Over the last decade, enrolment in primary schools has decreased. However, the teacher-student

⁴⁵ 'Sekolah Ugama Radin Mas' Retrieved from <https://www.surm.edu.sg/our-history/> at 1020hrs on 20/12/23

⁴⁶ 'No religion: Why more in Singapore are turning away from traditional faiths' Retrieved from https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/cna_no-religion-why-more-in-singapore-are-turning-away-from-traditional-faiths_290621.pdf?sfvrsn=88dc2a0a_2#:~:text=In%202020%2C%2024.2%20per%20cent,increased%20across%20all%20age%20groups. at 1530hrs on 31/08/24

ratio is reduced due to an increase in the number of primary school teachers. This seemingly implied that the government had increased spending to reduce inequality at the onset of formal education. The PSLE results will determine the future undertakings of the child.

The aLIVE curriculum has been implemented at mosques around Singapore to enable students from mainstream schools to develop psycho-social skills through Islamic teachings appropriately. It is perhaps one of the means to measure progressive reforms to the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI). Historically, the absence of religious education in secondary schools has been a ground for debates amongst parents, teachers, and the government of Singapore. Many parents also expressed that the prospect for them to send their children overseas for further studies is bleak due to affordability and academic eligibility⁴⁷. It is, therefore, quite timely to address the correct implementation of memorization of the Qur'an (*Hifz*) to impact *Muslim* students in Singapore.

Outcomes from the Interfaith Approach

The Singapore government also encouraged youth-led initiatives to propagate ideas on race and religion. To further exercise control, the Presidential Council for Religious Harmony was formed to facilitate inter-religious dialogues on matters of religious harmony. All citizens are urged to commit to common values and ideals which can be identified by all communities. This is known as the Declaration of Religious Harmony (DRH) which the dominant political party in Singapore, the People's Action Party (PAP) did not make binding. The Inter-Religious Harmony Circle (IRHC) was formed to educate religious groups on its principles⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ 'Perception Survey On The Malay/Muslim Community In Singapore' Retrieved from https://amp.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/11-Section-8_Perception-Survey.pdf at 2100hrs on 20/08/24

⁴⁸ '2020 Report On International Religious Freedom: Singapore' Retrieved from [Singapore - United States Department of State](https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/singapore) at 1055hrs on 20/12/23

In the Islamic civilization, religious laws are categorized into Muftis, jurists and Sufis⁴⁹. The Sufi practices transcend beyond religions as it gives depth into extraordinary events and experiences. To believe that all things possess innate powers which bring realities, forms and matters into existence is to manifest the framework of later Sufis. Despite being controversial, Sufism has the potential to promote multi-faith presence due to its inclusivity. True happiness is achieved beyond sensual perceptions and metaphysics, through Sufi practices and purification of the soul.

A mistaken understanding may have led to complacency in acquiring good deeds.⁵⁰ In Zoroastrianism and Judaism, God is said to send a messiah to restore the Kingdom of David to realize the absolute good in the other world. Christianity emphasizes that the other world is where the “saved” would truly feel joy, sweetness, and bliss. *Islam* warned that all man’s hopes and duties are to be fulfilled in this world, not in another space-time. *Islam* teaches that the realization of absolute is possible in this world and that every man and woman must bring it about.

Justice (*Al ‘Adl*) lies not just in what is apparent but extremism (*Al-Ghuluw*) is to be avoided. Equality must be meted out according to revelation. The ethical principles in the *Qur’an* should be practiced by mature individuals. Although Islamic legislation (*Shari’ah*) is administered through consultation, basing agreements on mutual acceptance as well as preserving the balance of justice without compromising justice even in the face of the wrongdoing and excesses of others, the outcomes of a judgment are limited to theory. The Day of Judgment serves a purpose for matters left unresolved by disputing parties.

⁴⁹ Ahmad, Z (2003) *The Epistemology of Ibn Khaldun*, pp. 66’ RouteledgeCurzon. London&NewYork.

⁵⁰ ‘*Islam’s Universality and The Risale-I Nur’s Method of Interpreting the Qur’an’s Universality*’. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304465588_Islam's_Universality_and_the_Risale-i_Nur's_Method_of_Interpreting_the_Qur'an's_Universality at 1030hrs on 20/12/23

According to *Sheikh Yusuf Qadarawi*, *Al Wasatiyyah* is the most prominent characteristic of Islam⁵¹ and involves four aspects: The first one is in the creed (*‘Itiqad*) or article of faith. Islam is distinguished from other beliefs such as atheism, pantheism, materialism, naturalism, rationalism and humanism. The second one is in worship and rituals which are deemed comparable to Buddhism or Buddhist practices. The third aspect is mannerisms (*Al Akhlaq*) which is against extreme idealism & realism as human instincts is influenced by the purification of the heart (*Tazkiyah*) towards the hereafter. The final one is legislation where balance is established by practices in marriage and family life as well as daily transactions to determine whether the acceptability (*Halal*) and forbidden (*Haram*) are based on evidence (*Dalil*) from *Qur’an* and *Sunnah*. However, without justice, the testimony cannot be accepted.

Challenges

Problematic practices that go against Islamic legislation (*Shari’ah*) such as monasticism are shunned as a means of success in Hereafter. In other words, heavy responsibilities and indulgence are not encouraged in all situations. It is encouraged to choose easier options especially when there are proofs of benefits and permissibility. Muslims are people without excessiveness or laxity. Another element quoted by Ibn Kathir is benevolence (*Al Khairiyah*) which results in happiness and reform of the best nation (*Khaira Ummah*) through guidance that necessitates excellence in both moral and material affairs. There is also the element of the center of power or unity and security (*Al Aman*). Thus, mentorship to *Hifz* should take care that the energies of the young generation are channeled in a positive direction.

⁵¹ ‘*Sheikh Dr. Yusuf Al Qadarawi: His Contributions to the Wasatiyyah Discourse*’ Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/gVBylrULePk> at 1035hrs on 20/12/23

Terrorism is meaningless unless it is used to leverage the acts of violence. USA has been killing numerous women and children thus, justifying state violence. It is statement to not acknowledge the moral destruction which it has caused. Muslims are thus disposable as there is zero accountability on violence afflicted on the population. It is a means of implementing national security acts. Muslims in America feel that these acts are asymmetrical warfare to dehumanize the population. There are five dimensions of ‘war on terror’: 1) Militarism and warfare 2) Draconian immigration policies 3) Surveillance 4) Federal terrorism prosecutions 5) Detention and torture.

Islamophobia is manifested against black Muslims and may be classified as racism or white supremacy. In America, it is more often a geopolitical tool and used systemically in oppressing black Muslims. According to Dr. *Maha*, hatred and bigotry are very deep seated in Islamophobia⁵². She said if it is used against Muslims to, it will create institutionalized racism which dehumanizes and hampers development in the community. Muslims are a very diverse population. There should be a better way to deal with internal differences such as *Shi’a* antagonism. Muslims can work on non-oppressive narratives to prevent themselves from being targeted. Islamophobia is being experienced differently by Muslims from different states.

God has given man varying thinking abilities for the sake of establishing His laws in the land. As revelation (*Wahy*) cannot be influenced by human intellect, the traditions are used to interpret these laws using Analogical Reasoning (*Qiyas*) to give an understanding of the intended principles in religious laws and their applications to human life. The idiosyncratic lifestyle of modern Muslims which has arisen due to democratic rights now seems to be at risk of scrutiny due to widespread technology and pluralistic society. Therefore, the definition of violence should neither

⁵² ‘*Innocent Until Proven Muslim: Islamophobia, the War on Terror and the Muslim Experience since 9/11*’ Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM6diRxxDII> at 1100hrs on 20/12/23

be imposed nor justified in isolation. The violent acts should not lead to further violence or oppression. This is especially after the doors of alternative opinion (*Khilaf*) have been closed due to a decline in Islamic scholarship capabilities and imitation (*Taqlid*) becomes more rampant amongst Muslims. According to *Ibn Khaldun*, the ambiguities in the *Qur'an* should not be subjected to allegorical interpretation apart from within the revelation itself⁵³. Hence, one can remain hopeful to establish jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) in a secular state since it is a science to the development and growth of cities⁵⁴ to become a well-structured and systematic *Muslim* society.

Elite groups are often characterized by their wealth, education, expertise, or social status. They are known to possess superior abilities to justify their dominant positions and have exclusive needs that may be different than the broader population. They are also known for superior knowledge, skills or achievements to carry out their roles. Thus, this may lead to problems of inequality and lack of representation which can hinder democratic participation.

An *asatizah* may be susceptible to elitism due to several factors. Firstly, *asatizah* who have access to global knowledge and educational opportunities may develop a sense of exclusivity and superiority by viewing themselves as more competent and knowledgeable than those who don't have similar opportunities. Such trends can easily lead to elitism within the *asatizah* community. Secondly, *asatizah* who are involved in global activities, such as international conferences, collaboration with well-known scholars, or publication of scholarly articles in prestigious journals may receive greater recognition and prestige within the community. This could fuel feelings of elitism and superiority amongst *asatizah* who are less involved in such activities. Thirdly, as

⁵³ Ahmad.Z (2003). '*The Epistemology of Ibn Khaldun*' pp. 60-62. Routledge. London & New York.

⁵⁴ '*Ibn Khaldun's Concept of the History of Fiqh and its Impact on the Historiography of Islamic Law in the Modern Era*' Retrieved from <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/admin-001-2-necmettin-kizilkaya-en.pdf> at 1200hrs on 30/8/24

globalized roles may involve engagement with English-speaking audiences or participation in international forums where English is the *lingua franca*, this can cause misperception of *asatizah* with English or other global languages proficiency as more elite or cosmopolitan than those with less. Lastly, *asatizah* who are adept at utilizing technology for global outreach may gain a wider audience and influence compared to those who are less technologically savvy. This could create a divide within the *asatizah* community between those who embrace and excel in technological advancements and those who do not, potentially leading to feelings of elitism among the former group. Thus, it is important to ensure that *asatizah* receives appropriate trainings for their respective specializations. As a minority, there may be some benefits to adopt from the concept of classification and hierarchy of knowledge based on revelation (*Wahy*) guidelines⁵⁵.

Role of *Asatizah* in Educating the *Muslim* Youth in Singapore

In Singapore, *asatizah* play a fundamental role in providing a holistic education to not just Muslims. Hence, the following table provides a comparison of traditional and globalized roles which has contributed to the vibrancy and resilience of the *Muslim* community in a modern, secular, and contemporary Singapore:

Traditional Roles	Globalized Roles
Religious Education: <i>Asatizah</i> are responsible for providing religious education to Muslims in Singapore.	Diverse Educational Backgrounds: Many <i>Asatizah</i> in Singapore now receive their education from institutions outside of the

⁵⁵ 'The Effects of Islamic Teachers Education Training on Teachers Human Capital Quality among Novice Teachers' Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i2/13267> at 2245hrs on 31/08/24

<p>This education encompasses various aspects of Islam, including theology (<i>aqidah</i>), jurisprudence (<i>fiqh</i>), ethics (<i>akhlaq</i>), and spirituality (<i>tasawwuf</i>). They may teach at mosques, Islamic schools, community centers, and other educational institutions.</p>	<p>country, including renowned Islamic universities in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Malaysia, and even Western countries. This exposure to diverse educational systems and methodologies contributes to a more globalized approach to teaching and understanding Islam.</p>
<p>Spiritual Guidance:</p> <p><i>Asatizah</i> offer spiritual guidance and counseling to individuals seeking advice on religious matters, personal struggles, or life decisions. They provide support and assistance in navigating religious obligations and addressing spiritual concerns.</p>	<p>Interfaith Dialogue and Outreach:</p> <p>In a globalized world, there is an increasing emphasis on interfaith dialogue and understanding. <i>Asatizah</i> in Singapore are engaging in more outreach activities aimed at promoting mutual understanding and respect between different religious communities. They participate in conferences, seminars, and workshops both locally and internationally, fostering connections with scholars and practitioners from various backgrounds.</p>
<p>Leading Worship:</p> <p><i>Asatizah</i> lead congregational prayers (<i>salah</i>) at mosques and other Islamic gatherings. They also deliver sermons (<i>khutbah</i>) during Friday prayers, religious festivals, and other</p>	<p>Cultural Sensitivity:</p> <p>As Singapore is a multicultural society, <i>Asatizah</i> are increasingly mindful of the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of their audience. They incorporate global</p>

<p>special occasions, providing guidance and reminders to the community.</p> <p>Fatwa Issuance:</p> <p>Some <i>Asatizah</i> possess the knowledge and authority to issue religious rulings (<i>fatwa</i>) on various matters affecting Muslims in Singapore. These fatwas provide guidance on issues related to Islamic law, ethics, and contemporary challenges, helping individuals navigate complex issues within the framework of Islamic teachings.</p>	<p>perspectives on Islam that are relevant and relatable to the local context, fostering a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of the religion.</p>
<p>Community Leadership:</p> <p><i>Asatizah</i> often serve as community leaders and representatives, playing a vital role in fostering unity, cohesion, and social harmony within the Muslim community. They may participate in community events, interfaith initiatives, and advocacy efforts aimed at addressing the needs and concerns of Muslims in Singapore.</p>	<p>Access to Global Knowledge:</p> <p>With the advent of the internet and increased access to global sources of Islamic knowledge, <i>Asatizah</i> in Singapore now have access to a wide range of perspectives and resources from scholars around the world. This allows them to stay updated with global trends, interpretations, and discussions within the Islamic community.</p>

<p>Islamic Outreach:</p> <p><i>Asatizah</i> engage in outreach efforts to promote understanding and appreciation of Islam among non-Muslims in Singapore. They participate in interfaith dialogue, educational programs, and community events aimed at building bridges of communication and cooperation with people of other faiths.</p> <p>Youth Development:</p> <p><i>Asatizah</i> are actively involved in youth development programs, mentoring young Muslims and guiding them in their religious and personal development. They organize youth camps, workshops, and activities designed to instill Islamic values, cultivate leadership skills, and promote positive social engagement.</p>	<p>Technological Integration:</p> <p><i>Asatizah</i> are utilizing technology to disseminate their teachings beyond physical boundaries. Through social media platforms, websites, and online courses, they are able to reach a global audience and engage with Muslims from different parts of the world. This allows for the exchange of ideas and perspectives on a scale that was previously unimaginable.</p>
---	---

Teaching the Qur'an and the Pedagogical Implications

An emerging framework to teach and learn the *Qur'an* in religious education when teachers are exposed to social and political pressures is from the works of *Mohammed Arkoun*⁵⁶. He suggested a methodology that was Western, scientific, and critical while at the same time related to the Living Tradition, faith, and thought. Through this, the Algerian-Sorbonne professor created a space for creativity, criticism, and dialogues between different worldviews which opened new possibilities to teach and learn the *Qur'an*. According to him, the struggle between traditional and more secular approaches towards the divine nature of the *Qur'an* emphasized historicity and critical analysis of the religious text. The outcome is free-thinking students who have a rooted sense of belonging whilst being aware of divinity and do not limit themselves to interpreting the countless wonders of the *Qur'an* in their lives. This technique does come with teaching difficulties such as crystalizing the un-thought and lack of criticisms for ontological assumptions about the *Qur'an*.

The pedagogical implications of this technique involve the teacher analyzing in a “back and forth” movement the Qur'anic verses in four different ways: 1) Semantically & Linguistically 2) Through historical analysis 3) Axiologically 4) Metaphorically. The first method enables the teacher to recite the verses to the students just like how Prophet Muhammad s.a.w was instructed to give a discourse to the community of believers. The second method will be a rigorous analysis of the events that took place in *Mecca* and *Madina*, highlighting the circumstances and conditions of the revelation. The third method focuses on the specific historical, cultural, social values, and political environment that influenced the current *Muslim* living tradition today. The final method

⁵⁶ 'How to Read the *Qur'an* in Religious Islamic Education: What Educators Can Learn from the Work of Mohammed Arkoun' Retrieved from <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/14/1/129> at 1915hrs on 24/12/23

gets the students to reflect as it appears in their own experiences as well as make comparisons with other monotheistic religions.

There is the phenomenon of prophecy which requires the correct understanding of its role and function due to the various perceptions existing as part of Islamic culture and civilization. Not all human beings are privileged to receive knowledge about the future of things. This is unlike knowledge acquired by soothsayers and astrologers. Prophetic knowledge is always accurate and beyond humanity. There will be social, political and legal repercussions should prophecies be neglected. On the other hand, the human intellect enables man to earn his livelihood and progress to achieve higher purposes in life. His extra-sensory abilities develop greater consciousness in his thinking, thus, letting him obtain pictures in his mind of events. Due to the fallibility of man's thinking, the spiritual world is acquired by heart (*fu'ad*) through *shari'ah*. Prophets are infallible and thus, tasked to convey the revelation⁵⁷. Man is expected to use his thinking ability for survival purposes. Without skills and mastery, quality habits cannot be obtained. Without political stability, there will be disintegration such as *Qayrawan* in *Maghrib* and *Cordoba* in Spain. The human intellect cannot be used to derive the revealed sciences, particularly the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, as they are revealed by God to establish His Laws in the land. In a secular society, *shari'ah* is also regarded as secondary.

⁵⁷ 'The Infallibility of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. as a Human Being (A Study of His Ijtihad)' Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338283251_THE_INFALLIBILITY_OF_THE_PROPHET_MUHAMMAD_PBUH_AS_A_HUMAN_BEING_A_Study_of_His_Ijtihad on 22/09/24 at 2200hrs

Conclusion

While an Islamic education for *Muslim* youths is regarded as virtuous, the preference to remain with no religion seems dominant in secular and modern Singapore. The lack of competent *asatizah* who can be good and suitable role models may have been the main contributing factor. The expectations to perform beyond their roles may have exceeded being part of a minority, secular and modern Singapore. In addition, other social issues such as Islamophobia and terrorism have affected the learning styles and appreciation on the Islamic faith. Ironically, these negativities seem to help the democratic nation continue to grow its people as a capital resource. There needs to be justice and balance in a progressive country where religion should be moderately practiced. The prophecies from exceptional human beings should not be neglected to prevent deterioration in social, political and legal spheres of the country.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO EXPLORE CONFOUNDING FACTORS AFFECTING SINGAPOREAN MUSLIM STUDENTS IN HIFZ AL QURAN IN THE CONTEXT OF SINGAPORE MUSLIM SCHOOLS

Introduction

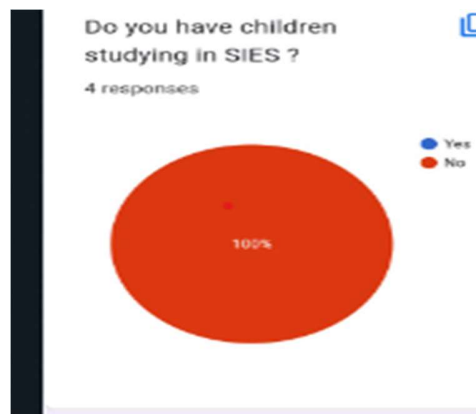
The percentage of *Muslims* in Singapore is reported to be 14.7%. Local Muslims are represented by 88.12% while the remaining 11.88% are attributed to immigrants who declare themselves as Muslims⁵⁸. Most have left their countries to pursue more suitable opportunities and quality of life. Challenges and criticisms are still being faced in issues such as integration, cultural adjustment, and socio-economic disparities. It is important to do extensive research related to the SMI indicators as it will provide insights into the religious practices and observances, perceptions of religious authority, social integration, education and knowledge, identity and belonging, challenges and concerns as well as youth and generational differences amongst the minority Muslims residing in multicultural Singapore.

Analysis of Data Collected from the Online Questionnaire

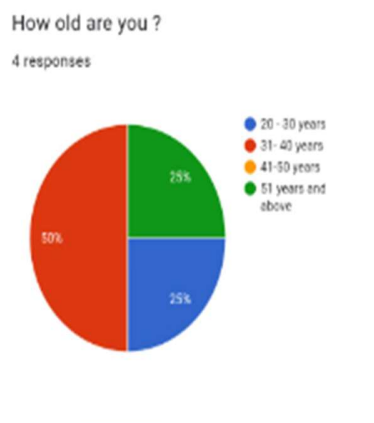
The online questions were randomly designed and distributed to gather initial perceptions of the SIES from stakeholders who are assumed to either be parents or guardians to current and/or future students at mosques, private institutions or *Madrasah*.

⁵⁸ 'Muslim Expatriates' Retrieved from <https://amp.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/5-Muslim-Expatriates-Paper.pdf> at 1150hrs on 5/6/24

The online questionnaire was tabulated into percentage/pie-chart format and derived the following responses:

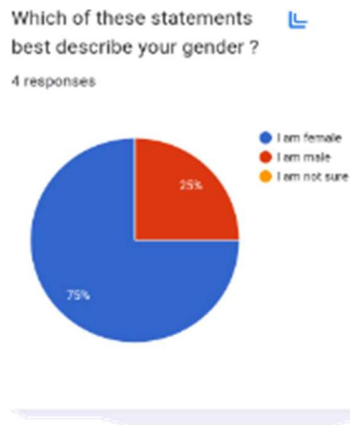


The respondents are parents who do not have children studying within the SIES. Since 100% respondents indicated 'No', it may suggest that they could be former parents, would-be parents or guardians of students. Being a respondent will enable them to think through their decisions whether they have met the expectations for the right choice of Islamic education of their children. The responses will provide some insights about their perception of the current SIES.

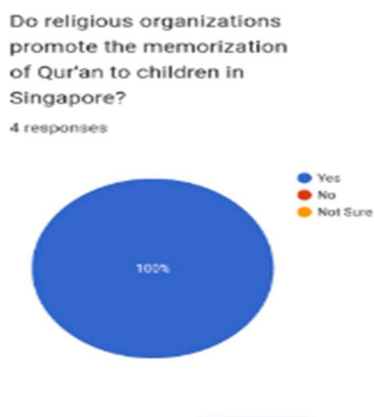


The respondents who were 20-30 year olds were 25% and can be categorized as young parents. The respondents who were 31-40 year olds were 50% and can be categorized as middle-

aged parents. The respondents who were 51 year olds and above made up 25% and can be categorized as elderly parents.

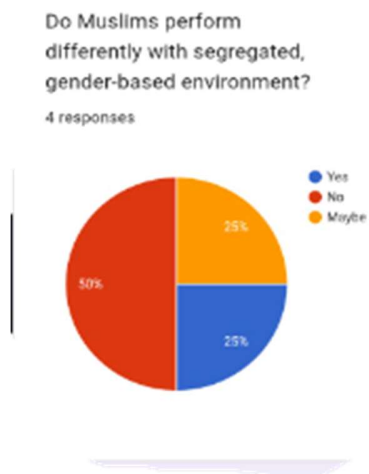


In Singapore, same-sex relationships are not forbidden and will face challenges related to family life especially since they cannot have the same rights to have children either through adoption or surrogacy as heterosexual couples. Nonetheless, the respondents have identified their respective gender. There were 75% female respondents and 25% male respondents.



Religious organizations are formed mainly to implement Islamic legislation (*Shari'ah*) and jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), *Hifz al-Qur'an* (memorization of *Qur'an*) seemed to have been marginalized due to confounding factors. However, 100% of the respondents indicated that religious

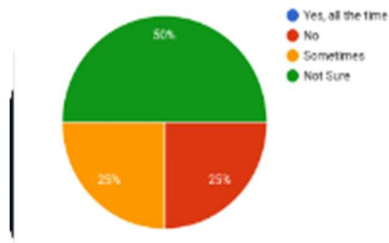
organizations promote memorization of *Qur'an* to children in Singapore. This may suggest that the *Muslim* community in Singapore expect *Muslim* organizations to provide at least foundational teachings of the *Qur'an* to Singaporean *Muslim* students.



As gender roles become less defined, Muslims in Singapore are becoming more tolerant to non-segregated environment due to inclusivity. However, 50% of respondents indicated ‘yes’ to suggest that as traditional Muslims, gender-based environment is important especially when it comes to observing religious practices in prayer spaces at mosques. 25% of respondents indicated ‘maybe’ and 25% of respondents indicated ‘no’ to suggest that modern norms may have overtaken the traditions especially in public spaces and institutions which no longer observe gender-based segregation.

Do Muslim students receive harsh treatment at religious organizations for not performing during examinations?

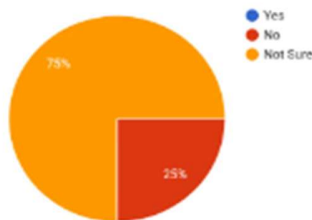
4 responses



Religious organization are sometimes challenged with problematic practices which may involve affect the treatment of *Muslim* students. Problematic practices are especially counterproductive if it does not lead to happiness and reforms of Muslims. 50% of the respondents indicated ‘not sure’ to suggest that they are not sure if the treatment being implemented to maintain the *Muslim* student standards within the organization is categorically harsh. 25% of the respondents indicated ‘sometimes’ to suggest that alternative measures are also taken to retain *Muslim* students who do not meet the standards. 25% of the respondents indicated ‘no’ to suggest either no actions were taken to regulate standards or actions taken were mild and not effective to *Muslim* students to improve performances. This may also imply the impeccable use of alternative means for stronger religious education which is home schooling. These indicators may be the cause of rising Islamophobia which are experienced differently by Muslims in Singapore. There needs to be more regulations to define violent acts and extremism in Singapore schools. These acts should not lead to greater violence or oppression. Maturity is needed to mete out legislation and mannerisms before dealing with unresolved matters by the disputing parties on the Day of Judgement.

Do Muslim students who demonstrate higher academic achievements memorize the Qur'an?

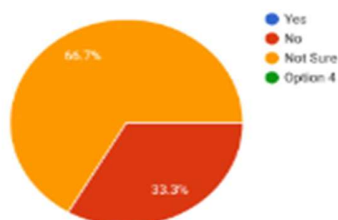
4 responses



The respondents who indicated 'not sure' made up 75% which suggested that *Muslim* students academic achievement may not have direct relationship to their ability to memorize *Qur'an*. The other 25% indicated 'no' which may mean that they are unrelated factors.

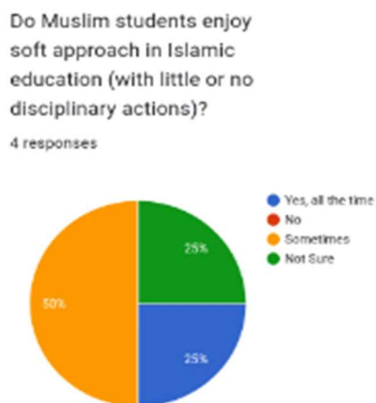
Do Muslim students perform better in Information Technology (IT) or computer-related subject?

3 responses

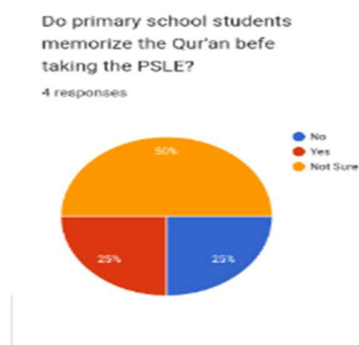


The respondents who indicated 'not sure' made up 66.7% which may mean that *Muslim* students have generally shown better progress for many subjects and not just 'Information Technology' (IT) or computer-related subjects. The other 33.3% responded with 'no' to suggest that IT is not what *Muslim* students perform better in as they are expected to spread *Islam* as a

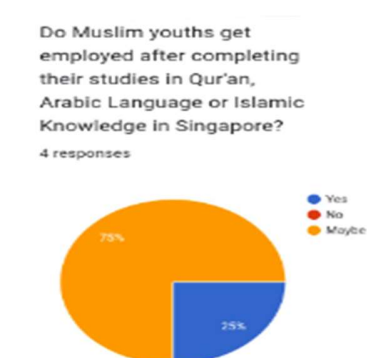
religion with subjects such as *Qur'an*, metaphysical-oriented logic, *Shari'ah*, *Fiqh* and Prophetic traditions (*hadith*). In fact, computer-related subjects are not to be expected from a religious teacher who can also be a leader. It seems to be introduced to forge productivity from otherwise incompetent *Muslim* or *Madrasah* students for sustainability and economic development of Singapore.



50% of the respondents indicated that ‘sometimes’ *Muslim* students enjoy soft approach in Islamic education (with little or no disciplinary action). 25% of the respondents indicated ‘not sure’ which may imply that they are not aware of the existing disciplinary measures taken to deal with *Muslim* students. 25% of the respondents indicated ‘yes, all the time’ to suggest that soft approach is necessary for effectiveness with *Muslim* students in Islamic education.

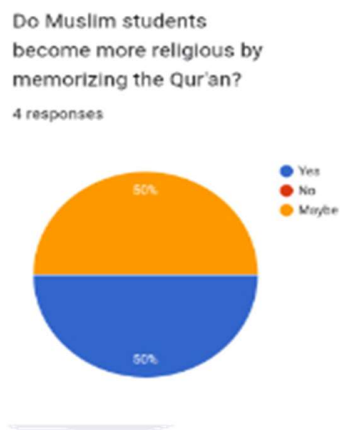


50% of respondents indicated 'not sure' to mean that it may not be a common religious practice to memorize the *Qur'an* before taking the PSLE. 25% of the respondents indicated 'no'. Hence, the memorization of *Qur'an* (*Hifz*) became a marginalized practice for local school students. This seemed congruent to ensure religious harmony with the removal of religious knowledge from the national curriculum in 1990. To date, there has not been any parallel for compulsory education towards *Hifz* for Singapore *Muslim* students. 25% of respondents also indicated 'yes' which means that primary school students should familiarize with learning *Qur'an*, poetry, calligraphy and ethics which goes beyond articulation of fundamentals.



25% of respondents indicated that 'yes' *Muslim* youths will get employed after completing their studies in Qur'an, Islamic Knowledge or Arabic language in Singapore. This shows that the

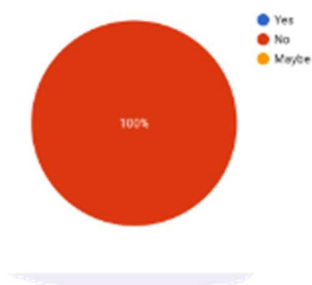
Muslim community in Singapore have pursued diverse paths to integrate into mainstream and emerge as success stories. So, those who chose religious education will not lack economically viable routes. However, 75% of respondents indicated ‘maybe’ there will be jobs made available and not deprive *Muslim* youths of a good life in Singapore.



50% of respondents indicated ‘yes’ that memorizing *Qur'an* will make *Muslim* students more religious while another 50% of respondents indicated ‘maybe’. These seem to suggest that the integral element of *Hifz* as part of the national security in Singapore may have an impact on critical thinking skills and responsiveness towards modernity. However, it is highly likely to be excluded to alleviate Islamophobia, particularly among *Muslim* youths. It also implies that *Hifz* should be an important mechanism needed to become an *asatizah* and to prevent the erosion of pious Muslims in Singapore.

Do Muslim students
embark upon terrorism as
an easier option for the
hereafter ?

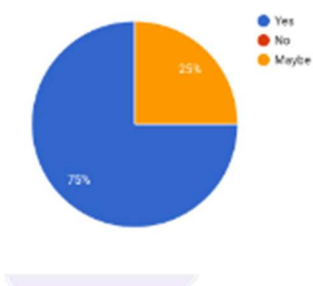
4 responses



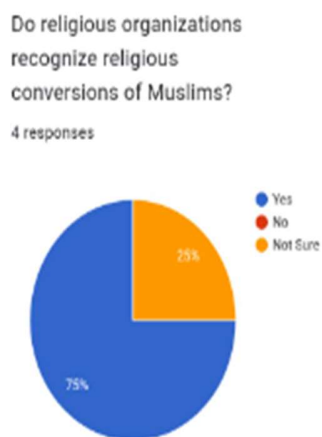
100% of the respondents indicated 'no' to imply that terrorism is not an easier option for the Hereafter, especially for *Muslim* students. In fact, terrorism is a means used by governments of developed countries for national security purposes to mitigate violent acts on the population.

Do Muslim students
implement Qur'anic values
to cope with stress and
daily challenges?

4 responses

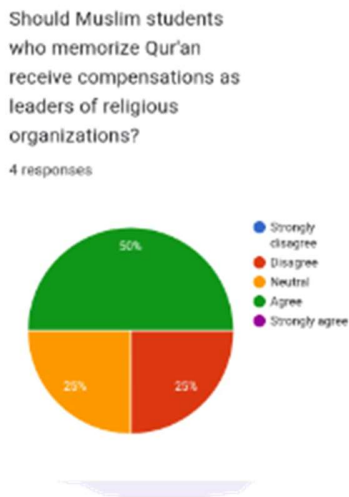


25% of the respondents indicated ‘maybe’ and 75% of the respondents indicated ‘yes’ which means that Qur’anic values are generally understood and used to cope with stress and daily challenges. These also imply that practical interventions or stress-coping techniques have been introduced into the SIES such as minimal admission criteria for part-time religious education for *Muslim* students in Singapore. On the other hand, the full-time *madrasah* has stricter admission criteria to provide in-depth learning and internalization of knowledge. There are other benefits from implementing Qur’anic values such as better memory retention, academic excellence and lifetime salvation.



75% of respondents indicated ‘yes’ that religious organizations recognize religious conversions of Muslims in Singapore. The educational outcomes of Islamic education may appear to be contrary to the objectives. *Madrasah* students are no longer expected to teach religion or attend prestigious Islamic universities. They may be replaced by others who are more akin to serving the objectives of SIES or religious education in Singapore. Only 25% of respondents indicated ‘not sure’ which may also mean that religious conversions are still regarded as uncommon within religious

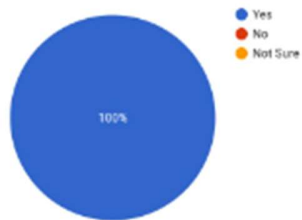
organizations. The increase in the number of religious organizations may be due to diverse implementation of *Shar'iah* and *Fiqh* within the *Muslim* community in Singapore.



50% of the respondents indicated 'agree' and 25% of respondents indicated 'neutral' which may imply that it is not wrong for *Muslim* students who have memorized the Qur'an to receive compensation as leaders of religious organizations. 25% of respondents indicated 'disagree' which may mean that leaders of religious organizations need to run effective programs for the community and should be well paid to ensure top performance. Moreover, providing compensation for national security purposes is not a proven strategy against prevalent acts of violence or misguidance. *Muslim* students may possess exemplary characteristics such as true and strong intentions, sincerity, and consistency. They may also be required to demonstrate legitimate skills such as encoding, storing, and retrieving text from the *Qur'an* for their livelihood. Therefore, they are unlike professional role models through physical and moral characteristics, who may lack a vision for morality and social justice.

Do religious organizations
implement Zakat Aid?

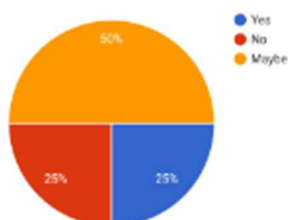
4 responses



100% of respondents indicated ‘yes’ which imply that *Zakat* function is important to religious organizations regardless of whether they receive them to carry out legitimate activities or redistribute to reward workers and other beneficiaries including *Muslim* students. Significant impacts for the community can be attained such as high quality education and social participation of the poor or less privileged without any discrimination.

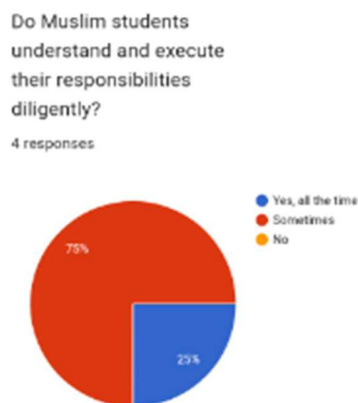
Do Muslim students
recognize the contributions
of their teachers in
academic subjects?

4 responses



50% of respondents indicated ‘maybe’ and 25% indicated ‘yes’ which suggests that *Muslim* students can develop a positive relationship with teachers who teach them academic subjects. Those who thrive in academic subjects ensure that academic teachers who teach them are not

discriminated from teachers who teach the religious subjects. 25% of respondents indicated ‘no’ which imply that teachers who teach religious subjects are treated much better than those who teach academic subjects to *Muslim* students and not many would remember their contributions.



75% of respondents indicated ‘sometimes’ and 25% of respondents indicated ‘yes, all the time’ which means that *Muslim* students are reliable because they can understand and execute their responsibilities diligently. Traditionally, Muslims rely on *madrasah* for religious education and *masjid* for religious instructions as well as worship. The only time they are dispensable is where national security acts are concerned, thus, requiring them to either flee or carry out less ambiguous roles.

Results of Interview with *Asatizah*

The table below is a representation of collated responses after the interview questions were administered to 10 randomly selected *asatizah*. No responses were received from 7 *asatizah* over a span of two weeks. However, the remaining 3 *asatizah* responded to all the questions.

Interview	<i>Asatizah</i>									
Question	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
Q1	Yes	Maybe	Insyaallah yes if they really follow Islamic teachings	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Q2	>5 years	>5 years	>5 years	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Q3	yes	yes	yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Q4	yes	yes	It depends on situation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Q5	yes	Not really	Yes insyaallah	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Q6	yes	Not neccessarily	Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Q7	yes	yes	Yes of course	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Q8	yes	Yes	yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Q9	yes	yes	Not sure	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Q10	ARS Tier 1	ARS Tier 1	ARS Tier 1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Q11	yes	Inshaallah	yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		yes								
Q12	yes	Not all the	yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		time								

The responses from *asatizah* seem to suggest an imbalance in their professional commitment. There were more positive responses expressed than negative. There may be specific reasons why the majority of the *asatizah* have chosen to not respond to the questions. However, these reasons are not known perhaps due to time constraints or factors that may suggest inequality and misrepresentation. Nonetheless, the results can be an indication that elitism is prevalent amongst *asatizah* which may affect the overall professional development and work performances in the long run.

Conclusion

Both local and immigrant Muslims look forward to their personal development. The online questionnaire has provided additional insights into the religious practices and observances, perceptions of religious authority, social integration, education and knowledge, identity and belonging, challenges and concerns as well as youth and generational differences amongst minority Muslims in multicultural Singapore. Thus, an extension needs to be undertaken to further understand the implementation of the SMI indicators in order to improvise professional development of *asatizah*.

CHAPTER FOUR

OTHER FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Muslims in Singapore felt that the economy and employment are likely to be worse off in comparison to other Singaporeans in the future. The employment issues are attributed to foreign competition and lack of suitable job opportunities. Even though the community regarded the involvement of *Malay/Muslim* women in the workforce as a positive development, there is no guarantee that the cost of living and economic pressures will not continue to be a challenge. This chapter will address factors that can affect the economic participation of Singaporean *Muslim* students and religious teachers in Singapore.

Findings:

One of the most important determinants of economic participation for *Muslim* students and religious teachers is the accessibility to high-quality education and training programs. Those who lack the right skills can identify with trade qualifications and IT skills as a means to progress into the right career. Thus, there is little to complain about economic opportunities unless one is older and earning low-income with lower academic qualifications. However, many believed that their personal employment and business starting prospects are disadvantaged particularly in specific day to day issues. *Muslim* students have equal opportunities within Singapore's education system and are capable of good academic performance. *Malay/Muslim* community is optimistic about future prospects.

Social factors can increase economic participation of *Muslim* students and religious teachers. A strong community network will provide support, mentorship and suitable

opportunities. However, there are various levels of social integration and inclusiveness will determine accessibility to various economic opportunities. Specific cultural expectations and religious practices may influence career and workplace choices. Another related factor is the socio-economic status. The family income of the *Muslim* student and religious teacher has an impact on their ability to pursue higher education and career opportunities. For students, the availability of resources such as tutoring, extracurricular activities and career counseling can impact educational and economic outcomes. Religious factors will certainly influence the career options of *Muslim* students and religious teachers with Islamic values. Religious institutions can play the role of providing education, training and support to religious teachers and *Muslim* students. However, their roles and services offered should not be duplicated to prevent wastage of resources.

The government policies should promote equal educational opportunities and prevent discrimination at workplaces. Unfortunately, scholarships and grants are selective to unknown criteria which may not be applicable to *Muslim* students and religious teachers. Therefore, the government needs to strategize sufficient programs such as digital literacy, entrepreneurship or public speaking within Islamic institutions to support the professional growth and development of religious teachers. Their skillsets can then be maximized for specialized sectors such as finance, education and technology to prevent obsolescence. Partnerships should also be forged between Islamic schools and local businesses to accommodate *Muslim* students and religious teachers for practical experiences such as internship, mentorship or apprenticeship. They can then run their own startups with the targeted industries. The government should enable business grants and networking events to increase the participation of *Muslim* students and religious teachers. There should be organized feedback platforms to monitor data collection for both personal and community.

It was discovered that women's participation in higher education is lower where *shari'ah* family law is more strictly practiced⁵⁹. However, due to religious differences, *Muslim* women's educational advantage cannot be attributed to *Islam*. There needs to be more comparative studies in regards to *Muslim* women's educational gains across countries. *Muslim* women, particularly those from Middle East and *Muslim* majority countries tend to have fewer years of education and lower rates of labor participation when compared with women from other countries. This is due to extremist values which sees western education and gender equality as threats to traditional Islamic values. Economic development is the key factor on access of schooling, school resources and quality which will determine how far progress is made for a girl or woman in school. Democratic countries are assumed to be more supportive of gender equality and also where women are supposedly allowed greater opportunity to demand changes to education policies. Cross national studies show low female attainment and wider gender gaps within the *Muslim* population. Amongst younger cohorts, the religious differences diminish. However, a more important divide should be between the religious and the secular.

Recommendations

Perhaps, in the long run, there can be a program or systematic study conducted within the contexts of Singapore *Muslim* schools. The *Muslim* community in Singapore excluded non-*muslim* children or children with non-*muslim* parent from full time madrasahs. This may be due to the teaching and compulsory memorization of *Qur'an* which is highly controversial to non-muslims social norms and cultural sensitivities. In fact, there needs to be better measures taken to ensure a good

⁵⁹ 'Women's Education In the Muslim World' Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324398662> on 15/09/24 at 2245hrs

understanding of SMI indicators by stakeholders especially religious teachers. Understanding the confounding factors affecting Singaporean *Muslim* students in the memorization of the *Qur'an* in Singapore *Muslim* Schools will enable *Muslim* students and *asatizah* to fully understand and execute their responsibilities diligently for the best overall outcomes to affect SMI before reforming SIES.

References

1. *Madrasah Education in Secular, Modern and Multicultural Singapore: Challenges and Reforms* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355173596_Madrasah_Education_in_Secular_Modern_and_Multicultural_Singapore_Challenges_and_Reforms, at 1030hrs on 30/11/23
2. *Key Facts About Our Full Time Madrasahs* Retrieved from <https://www.muis.gov.sg/madrasah/About/Key-Facts-About-Our-Full-Time-Madrasahs>, at 1015hrs on 30/11/23
3. *Islamic Education System In Singapore: Current Issues and Challenges* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342015014_Islamic_Education_System_in_Singapore_Current_Issues_and_Challenges_pp.217-218, at 1000hrs on 30/11/23
4. *'Social Class, Piety and the Formation of the Singaporean Muslim: Exploring Educational Choices in a Highly Regulated Society'* Retrieved from [\(PDF\) Social Class, Piety, and the Formation of the Singaporean Muslim: Exploring Educational Choices in a Highly Regulated Society | Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir - Academia.edu](#) at 1000hrs on 13/12/23
5. *'The influence of curriculum and school climate on the academic attitude of tahfiz students in Malaysia'* Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1313257.pdf> at 1030hrs on 14/12/23
6. *PM Lee Hsien Loong's Written Interview with Berita Harian* Retrieved from [https://www.pmo.gov.sg/Newsroom/prime-minister-lee-hsien-loongs-written-interview-beritaharian#:~:text=The%20Singapore%20Muslim%20Identity%20\(SMI\)%2C%20with%20the%2010%20desired,Singapore's%20multi%2Dracial%20and%20multi%2D](https://www.pmo.gov.sg/Newsroom/prime-minister-lee-hsien-loongs-written-interview-beritaharian#:~:text=The%20Singapore%20Muslim%20Identity%20(SMI)%2C%20with%20the%2010%20desired,Singapore's%20multi%2Dracial%20and%20multi%2D) at
7. *'Religious Teachers Have Responsibility to Lead Community Based on True Teachings of Islam'* Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/religious-teachers-have-responsibility-to-lead-community-based-on-true-teachings-of-islam> at 1014hrs on 20/08/24
8. *'Chapter Regarding Seeking Knowledge for other than the sake of Allah'* Retrieved from <https://sunnah.com/abudawud:3664> at 1112hrs on 30/11/23

9. *Effects of Memorizing the Qur'an By Heart (HIFZ) On Later Academic Achievement* Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2c6e/73d749213ee5c8987adad69c6db15f2c5dbe.pdf> at 1100hrs on 22/08/24
10. *'Tahfiz Students' Academic Achievement In Relation to Number of Chapters Memorized By Them and Their Type of Schools'* Retrieved from https://edb6b4cf-b071-4213-9dab-d57b7d5c2bd2.filesusr.com/ugd/44b25e_4e456e983cd34d1ea9bff002e2924ebd.pdf at 2020hrs on 30/11/23
11. *'The Challenge of Muslim Youth'* Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/opinion/global/the-challenge-of-muslim-youth.html>, at 1950hrs on 30/11/23
12. *'Strengthening Religious Leadership for a Community of Success'* Retrieved from <https://www.muis.gov.sg/-/media/Files/Corporate-Site/COFA/COFA-Report.pdf?la=en&hash=7FE404772359FE0731A82A3424A1BDC558943F3> , at 2000hrs on 30/11/23
13. *'Qur'an 9:60'* Retrieved from <https://quran.com/9/60?translations=84,17,85,95,101,22,20>
14. *Combating Poverty In Malaysia'* Retrieved from <https://www.koreascience.or.kr/article/JAKO202112748675064.page> at 2220hrs on 2/12/23
15. Appendix – Online Questionnaire <https://forms.gle/tptu1v2j8A9jALtY9>
16. Appendix – E-Interview Questions
17. *'Singaporeans Feel That English Should Be Main Language Used In Public, With Space for Other Languages'* Retrieve from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singaporeans-feel-english-should-be-main-language-used-in-public-with-space-for-other> at 2220hrs on 8/12/23
18. *'Women's Education In The Muslim World '* Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324398662>
19. *The Muslim World and The Challenge of Modernity'* Retrieved from [The Muslim World and the Challenge of Modernity | Lawfare \(lawfaremedia.org\)](https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/the-muslim-world-and-the-challenge-of-modernity) at 1120hrs on 10/12/23
20. *'AI technologies for education: Recent research & future directions'* Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2021.100025> at 1300hrs on 22/5/24

21. 'Determination of Huffaz Academic Achievement Using Binary Logistic Regression Model' Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353978317_Determination_of_Huffaz_Academic_Achievement_Using_Binary_Logistic_Regression_Model at 2100hrs on 30/11/23
22. 'Kanak-Kanak 6 Tahun dari Singapura menang peraduan Bahasa Arab antarabangsa' Retrieved from <https://berita.mediacorp.sg/singapura/kanak-kanak-6-tahun-dari-spura-menang-peraduan-bahasa-arab-antarabangsa-627666?cid=berita-fb> at 2230hrs on 8/12/23
23. 'MalayMuslim Organizations Network Directory of Program & Services' Retrieved from https://www.m3.gov.sg/files/PDF/MMO_Network_Directory_of_Programmes_and%20Services_840KB.pdf. at 0935hrs on 28/08/24
24. 'Perception Survey On The Malay/Muslim Community In Singapore' Retrieved from https://amp.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/11-Section-8_Perception-Survey.pdf at 0945hrs on 29/08/24
25. 'Singapore School Offers A New Model for 'Madrasah'' Retrieved from <https://www.taipetimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2009/04/27/2003442106> at 2115hrs on 2/12/23
26. 'Prospects of Morality-Based Education in the 21st Century' Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.111.01> at 2130hrs on 2/12/23
27. 'What's Wrong With Muslim Youth' Retrieved from <https://onepathnetwork.com/whats-wrong-with-the-muslim-youth/> at 2130hrs on 2/12/23
28. 'The Development and Validation of a Qur'an-Based Instrument to Assess Islamic Religiosity: The Religiosity of Islam Scale' Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15564900701624436> at 2150hrs on 2/12/23
29. 'Religiosity Among Muslims: A Scale Development and Validation Study' Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324134748_Religiosity_among_Muslims_A_Scale_Development_and_Validation_Study at 2200hrs on 2/12/23
30. 'Muslim Youth: The Next Generation' Retrieved from <https://pluralism.org/muslim-youth-the-next-generation> at 2145hrs on 2/12/23
31. 'Madrasah Education in Secular, Modern and Multicultural Singapore: Challenges & Reforms' (PDF) Madrasah Education in Secular, Modern and Multicultural Singapore: Challenges and Reforms (researchgate.net) at 2208hrs on 6/12/23

32. 'Hip Hop & Islam' Retrieved from [Hip-Hop and Islam - Islamic Studies - Oxford Bibliographies](#) on 22/12/23

33. 'Youth In Islam-Culture, Faith and Generation Gap' Retrieved from <https://www.arabnews.com/news/525521>, at 2211hrs on 2/12/23

34. 'Social Class, Piety and The Formation of the Singaporean Muslim: Exploring Educational Choices in a Highly Regulated Society' Retrieved from [\(PDF\) Social Class, Piety, and the Formation of the Singaporean Muslim: Exploring Educational Choices in a Highly Regulated Society | Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir - Academia.edu](#) at 1135hrs on 10/12/23

35. 'The Whys and Hows of Homeschooling in Singapore' Retrieved from https://parents.koobits.com/whys-and-hows-of-homeschooling-in-singapore/?gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7YC6t_W7hgMVyKlmAh1BPQfJEAA_YAiAAEgIkbnD_BwE at 1105hrs on 02/06/24

36. 'Homeschooling In Singapore' Retrieved from https://wolseyhalloxford.org.uk/about-us/internationalhomeschooling/singapore/?utm_term=home%20school&utm_campaign=Singapore&utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=ppc&hsa_acc=1220852074&hsa_cm=617380550&hsa_grp=29574426746&hsa_ad=671236294310&hsa_src=g&hsa_tgt=kwd10692171&hsa_kw=home%20school&hsa_mt=b&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_ver=3&gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7YC6t_W7hgMVyKlmAh1BPQfJEAA_YASAAEgK5wFD_BwE at 1100hrs on 02/06/24

37. 'Definition of Youth' Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf> at 1000hrs on 20/12/23

38. 'Classification of By Several Organizations Around the World' Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Classification-of-youth-age-by-several-organizations-around-the-world_tbl1_304907577 at 1015hr on 20/12/23

39. 'Chapter: Excellence of Weeping out of Fear from Allah (swt)' Retrieved from <https://sunnah.com/riyadussalihin:449> at 1145hrs on 31/08/24

40. '5 Before 5 Hadith & Arabic Meanings' Retrieved from [5 Before 5 Hadith Arabic And Meaning \(imanupdate.com\)](#) at 1050hrs on 20/12/23

41. 'Sekolah Ugama Radin Mas' Retrieved from <https://www.surm.edu.sg/our-history/> at 1020hrs on 20/12/23

42. 'No religion: Why more in Singapore are turning away from traditional faiths ' Retrieved from https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/cna_no-religion-why-more-in-singapore-are-turning-away-from-traditional-faiths_290621.pdf?sfvrsn=88dc2a0a_2#:~:text=In%202020%2C%2024.2%20per%20cent,increased%20across%20all%20age%20groups. at 1530hrs on 31/08/24

43. '2020 Report On International Religious Freedom: Singapore' Retrieved from [Singapore - United States Department of State](#) at 1055hrs on 20/12/23

44. Ahmad,Z (2003) 'The Epistemology of Ibn Khaldun ', pp. 66' RouteledgeCurzon. London&NewYork.

45. 'Islam's Universality and The Risale-I Nur's Method of Interpreting the Qur'an's Universality'.Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304465588_Islam's_Universality_and_the_Risale-i_Nur's_Method_of_Interpreting_the_Qur'an's_Universality at 1030hrs on 20/12/23

46. 'Ibn Khaldun's Concept of the History of Fiqh and its Impact on the Historiography of Islamic Law in the Modern Era' Retrieved from <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/admin-001-2-necmettin-kizilkaya-en.pdf> at 1200hrs on 30/8/24

47. 'Sheikh Dr. Yusuf Al Qadarawi: His Contributions to the Wasatiyyah Discourse' Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/gVBylrUePk> at 1035hrs on 20/12/23

48. 'Innocent Until Proven Muslim: Islamophobia, the War on Terror and the Muslim Experience since 9/11' Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM6diRsdII> at 1100hrs on 20/12/23

49. 'The Effects of Islamic Teachers Education Training on Teachers Human Capital Quality among Novice Teachers' Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i2/13267> at 2245hrs on 31/08/24

50. How to Read the Qur'an in Religious Islamic Education: What Educators Can Learn from the Work of Mohammed Arkoun' Retrieved from <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/14/1/129> at 1915hrs on 24/12/23

51. 'Muslim Expatriates' Retrieved from <https://amp.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/5-Muslim-Expatriates-Paper.pdf> at 1150hrs on 5/6/24

52. *The Infallibility of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. as a Human Being (A Study of His Ijtihad)*
Retrieved from
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338283251_THE_INFALLIBILITY_OF_THE_PROPHET_MUHAMMAD_PBUH_AS_A_HUMAN_BEING_A_Study_of_His_Ijtihad
on 22/09/24 at 2200hrs

53. Chatgpt.com

Appendix - Online Questionnaire <https://forms.gle/tptu1v2j8A9jALtY9>

1. Do religious organizations promote the memorization of the *Qur'an* to children in Singapore?
2. Will *Muslim* students perform differently in a segregated, gender-based environment?
3. Do *Muslim* students receive harsh treatment at religious organizations for not performing during examinations?
4. Do *Muslim* students who demonstrate higher academic achievements memorize the *Qur'an*?
5. Do *Muslim* students perform better in IT or computer-related subjects?
6. Do primary school students memorize the *Qur'an* before taking the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE)?
7. Do *Muslim* students enjoy a soft approach in Islamic education (with little or no disciplinary actions)?
8. Do *Muslim* youths get employed after completing their studies in *Qur'an*, Arabic language, and Islamic knowledge in Singapore?
9. Do *Muslim* students become more religious by memorizing the *Qur'an*?
10. Do *Muslim* students embark on terrorism as an easier option for the hereafter?
11. Do *Muslim* students implement *Qur'anic* values to cope with stress and daily challenges?
12. Do religious organizations recognize religious conversions of *Muslims*?
13. Do religious organizations implement *Zakat* aid?
14. Do *Muslim* students who memorize the *Qur'an* receive compensations as leaders of religious organizations?
15. Do *Muslim* students recognize the contributions of their teachers in academic subjects?

16. Do *Muslim* students understand and execute their responsibilities diligently?

Appendix - Interview Questions

1. Do you believe that learners will be able to be progressive and practice *Islam* beyond forms/rituals to ride the modernization wave?
2. How long have you been an *Asatizah* (religious teacher) in Singapore?
3. Do you appreciate Islamic civilization and its history?
4. Do you appreciate other civilizations and their belief system?
5. Do you have a good understanding of contemporary issues and interact confidently and learn from other communities?
6. Do you believe that good Muslims are also good citizens?
7. Do you believe that teaching *Islam* will develop its learners into a well-adjusted contributing member of a multi-religious society and secular state?
8. Do you believe that *Islam* should be a model for inspiration and blessing to all because it promotes universal principles and values?
9. Do you believe that *Islam* is inclusive and allows pluralism?
10. Which category are you currently recognized for your accreditation?
11. Does teaching Islamic beliefs enable learners to hold on to Islamic principles while adapting to changing contexts?
12. Are you confident that teaching Islamic beliefs has enabled learners to be morally and spiritually strong to face the challenges of modern society?