New Norm For Islamic Co-Curricular Activities In Schools

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the world since early 2020 has also affected the education system in Malaysia. The push for change across all aspects of schooling, including Islamic co-curricular activities in schools, necessitated implementation according to the new norm, namely online. This study uses a qualitative approach aimed at exploring the types of Islamic co-curriculum practices and identifying the challenges of online implementation in secondary schools in the Putrajaya locality. Eleven Islamic activity coordinator teachers were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Data collected through interviews were analyzed thematically using ATLAS.ti version 9.0 software. The results of the study found that four types of school Islamic co-curricular activity are implemented namely lecture, religious practice, contest, and modular activity. The main challenges in implementation are internet access problems, interaction limitations, student motivation, digital device ownership, and technical skills. Therefore, to ensure that the implementation of the Islamic co-curriculum has a positive impact on students, these problems need to be adequately addressed. For the future study, it is a need to examine quantitatively the impact of online Islamic co-curriculum activities on students.

Keywords: New norm, Islamic co-curricular activities, education

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Contagion of the COVID-19 epidemic throughout the world recorded 267,156,259 cases, causing 5,271,226 deaths as of the 10th of December 2021 (WHO, 2021). Various measures were initiated by authorities to deal with the alarming situation leading to changes in the ways and systems of everyday life for people in Malaysia. Among the measures taken was the temporary closure of educational institutions at all levels to reduce close contact among people to break the chain of COVID-19 transmission. The National Security Council (MKN), Prime Minister's Department of Malaysia enforced the nationwide Movement Control Order (PKP) with effect from the 18th of March 2020, causing all levels of education to close. Realizing the importance of conducting an alternative method of implementing education, the Ministry of Education of Malaysia (KPM) endeavored to implement online teaching and learning. COVID-19 has indirectly changed the landscape of national education, especially for students who should be learning face-to-face, to online learning as the new norm.

This change presents challenges in conducting a co-curricular activity, which is only allowed online. It is a new experience of doing an activity, particularly, Islamic co-curricular activities which previously were not done online. Maybe some activities are better implemented in a virtual environment because they are not tied to location, but some other activities cannot be properly run due to constraints of virtual implementation. According to Lall & Singh (2020), even though the majority of students like the new norm of online learning, they are also aware that not many co-curricular activities can be offered to them. They need online activities which are fun to stay enthusiastic. Although not all activities can be conducted in this new environment and not all students can follow the activities, there is no option but to continue with available capacities. The objective of this article is to explore the types of Islamic co-curricular activities practiced and analyze the challenges of online implementation in Putrajaya.

School co-curriculum was introduced to balance academic achievement with the physical, emotional, and spiritual development of students. It allows them to augment, strengthen and practice knowledge, skills and values learned in the classroom (Nor Suhara Fadzil, 2010). Islamic co-curriculum is based on the policy to achieve the aspiration of the National Education Philosophy (FPK), namely, through an ongoing effort, holistically and in an integrated manner, to develop the potential of individuals who are well-balanced and harmonious intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically based on faith in and obedience to God. This co-curriculum is implemented as a practical guide for the Islamic Education subject, as well as to develop student talent in mastering Islamic religious practices and hone student leadership talent. Hence, co-curriculum activities are very helpful in equipping a student to be balanced spiritually and physically. Therefore, the Ministry of Education is very committed to supporting g implementation of Islamic Education co-curricular activities by stating that being ethical and spiritual are the prime characteristics of students in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (PPPM) 2013-2025. The Islamic Education Division (BPI) in the Ministry is given the responsibility to formulate the policy and oversee the operation of the Islamic co-curriculum at the federal level, while the at the state level, it is managed by the Manners and Values Unit, Islamic Education Section, State Education Department.

Islamic co-curriculum began to be implemented in Malaysia since the year 1976 through a Ministry directive circular (Surat Pekeliling Ikhtisas Bil. 9A/1976). The circular states that a school administrator is required to implement activities for religious guidance of Muslim pupils and students, such as instruction in Quran reading classes, religious lectures, nasyid (poetic songs), and so on. Later, Islamic cultural activities such as nasyid, qasidah (poem of praise or mourning)), marhaban (poetry about Prophet's Seerah), and Hadrah (ode, song or chant praising Allah and

Prophets, accompanied by beating of tambourines) are also included in the circular (Surat Pekeliling Ikhtisas bil.3/1984). In the year 1985, a program was implemented for special proficiency classes in al-Quran reading and memorization (Kelas Khas Kemahiran Membaca dan Menghafaz Al-Quran (KKQ)) to empower students with the skills of tajwid, rasm Uthmani, hafazan, ulum al-Quran, Qiraat al-Sab'ie, and tarannum. Further, the government through the j-QAF program (Jawi, Al-Quran, Bahasa Arab, and Fardhu Ain) in the year 2005 makes it compulsory for all primary schools to implement the Prayer Smart Camp (Kem Bestari Solat) four times a year outside school hours to ensure pupils master reading, practice, knowledge, and appreciation of prayer (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1976;1984; 2004). This means that the Islamic co-curriculum has become an extension of Islamic education teaching but its implementation is more independent from the classroom.

Implementation of the Islamic co-curriculum was further enlivened by organizing contests at the national level, such as for nasyid, khat (calligraphy), and tarannum (chanting) al-Quran. The contests are organized by the Islamic Education Division (BPI), with short-listing in stages at school, district, state, and finally at the national level for successful state contestants. Among the competitions that have been organized for a long time is the Al-Quran recitation competition with tarannum since 1974. In addition, the Islamic Education Division (BPI) also organizes shariah-compliant cultural activities such as nasyid, Kompang Salawat (tambourines singging with salutations for the Prophet SAW), and Kalam Sya'bi (Traditional Malay group singing in Arabic) an alternative entertainment relevant to recent developments, and capable of attracting the interest of students (Ahmad Sahlan, 2019). This program trains pupils to comply with religious teachings through wearing modest and veiled attire, decency of body gestures, and politeness in speech. Through this program, many talented celebrities and iconic national artists were discovered, such as Mohd Fakhrul Radhi bin Khamaruddin (UNIC nasyid group) and Mohd Suffian Amrin (Saujana nasyid group).

Besides that, activities are conducted to empower students in increasing appreciation of Islam and understanding of principles of the Islamic system, such as through the inter-school contest for the Ministry of Education Award for the Most Enlivened School Surau (Anugerah Surau Imarah Sekolah-sekolah (ASISS). This contest has succeeded in changing the dakwah (preaching) climate in schools and turning the school surau (small mosque) into an active center for spiritual practices as well as preaching activity. (Hidayat & Hayati, 2019). Further, the Ministry's program Forum for School Islamic Leadership (Nadwah Kepemimpinan Islam Sekolah-Sekolah) succeeded in training many pupils relating to Islamic leadership. Table 1 below displays the Islamic co-curricular activities organized by the Islamic Education Division (BPI) according to year, beginning from the year 1974 and continuing into the year 2019.

Table 1. Islamic Co-curricular Activities at National Level organized by the Islamic Education Division (BPI)

Islamic Co-Curricular Activity	Year Implemented
Majlis Tadarus Al-Quran (contest)	1975
Majlis Ihtifal SMKA (contest)	1988
Nadwah Kepemimpinan Islam (camp)	2003
Festival Nasyid (contest)	2004
Kompang Selawat Berzanji Marhaban (contest)	2008
Kalam Jamaie (contest)	2008
Anugerah Surau Imarah (contest)	2013
Khemah Ibadah (camp)	2014
Karnival Dakwah Murid Orang Asli (contest)	2015
Kalam Sya'bi (contest)	2018
Pertandingan Seni Khat (contest)	2018

Source: 2019 Islamic Education Division (BPI), Ministry of Education (KPM)

Table 1 above shows that Islamic co-curricular activities organized at the national level are mostly in the form of a contest as compared to a camp. Contests receive the most popular response as it is a dakwah (preaching) approach to revitalize efforts to uphold the syi'ar Islam (symbols of Islam) to show society the greatness of Islam. Abdullah & Siti Norfariza (2013) stated that the Tilawah Al-Quran contest is organized so that the Muslim society can feel the blessings of Islam as a pillar of unity for the Muslim ummah in Malaysia. In addition, it allows students to gain more marks in the Assessment of Physical Sports Activity and Co-curriculum (PAJSK) compared to participation in camp. Despite the high cost of organizing activities at the national level, it becomes an inspiration and the drive for organizing at the state, district, and school levels. It also offers a very valuable experience for students. They learn to be competitive mentally and physically. It also tests their knowledge, skills, and talents in certain fields. The meaning of being resilient and perseverant in the pursuit of success, and being patient as well as accepting of contest results is the philosophy underlying the contest, learned in the struggle to compete and win in a contest.

Briefly, the Islamic co-curriculum is an important part of Islamic Education at school, particularly to reinforce the subject. In addition, co-curricular activities are also the vehicle to teach and inculcate spirituality balanced by physical demands in students. Even though not all students participate in activities, due to various constraints, it uncovers the talent of those who can compete and achieve at the next level.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Online learning has caught the attention of researchers since the internet was first introduced. Teaching and learning models in the online environment have been discussed, such as e-learning, distance education, website learning, computer-based learning, blended learning, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning was already practiced through the Smart School (Sekolah Bestari) concept from the year 2006 through the initiative of computer equipment supply and schoolnet networking services. It linked Ministry schools to increase the effectiveness of Teaching and Learning (PdP) as well as interactive school management (Shahadan, 2008).

This facility was further upgraded through the 1Bestarinet Services Project in cooperation with YTL Communications Sdn. Bhd. from the year 2010. Through this project, high-speed internet services with 4G technology were supplied to 10,000 schools in Malaysia so that students can access the internet and benefit from the world-class integrated educational facility (Mohd Baharan, 2019). Through this initiative, a web-based system called Virtual Learning Environment Frog (VLE Frog) was supplied to schools as one of the interactive teaching materials in line with Information Technology and Communications in Education (2010) and Malaysia Education Blueprint (PPPM) 2013-2025 (Ministry of Education of Malaysia, 2015). VLE Frog enabled teachers to give assignments, tests, and marks virtually. Likewise, students submitted their assignments and checked their marks obtained through VLE Frog, parents could communicate with teachers, and a school administrator could announce the school calendar through the internet (KPM, 2012). Beginning in June 2020, a new digital learning platform, Digital Educational Learning Initiative Malaysia (DELIMa), was introduced to replace Frog Virtual Learning Environment. This system comes with added applications from two main IT companies, namely, Microsoft and Apple (Sandhya Menon, 2020).

Students who find difficulty in accessing the internet are availed of the method of Teaching and Learning at Home (Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran di Rumah (PdPR) aided by Educational TV (TV Pendidikan) broadcast on channels TV Okey, Astro Tutor TV, and DidikTV@NTV7 from

11 a.m. every day for the benefit of students, teachers and parents. Beginning on the 27th of January 2021, the DidikTV@NTV7 program is especially broadcast for examination candidates for the 2020 Malaysian Certificate of Education (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) to help them revise for the examination postponed to start on the 22nd of February 2021 (Ministry of Education of Malaysia, 2021). Although the facility for e-learning infrastructure at school was ready before the COVID-19 epidemic, the situation is quite different for implementation at the general level involving mainstream education. Some past research has explained the challenges of implementing online learning. There are three main challenges relating to education frequently arising in a virtual environment:

First: Internet access problem. This poses the biggest challenge, for without access, communication would be cut off and none of the parties would be able to benefit due to distance and no face-to-face interaction (Muhammad Adnan, 2020; Rashid et al., 2020; Mailizar et al., 2020; Maatuk et al., 2021; Radu et al., 2020; Ayebi-arthur, 2017). Ayebi-Arthur (2017) stated that infrastructure needs to be solidly and adequately in place for learning without hindrance. According to Adnan (2020), the problem of internet access causes a large number of students in Pakistan to be unable to follow online learning. Internet access is the first infrastructure that needs to be provided by the government. In Malaysia, the government spent more than RM4 billion to make the 1BestariNet project successful. This big-scale initiative connected teachers with six million students from 10,000 schools nationwide through high-speed 4G Internet access. However, internet access for pupils (primary school children) is not included in this initiative, and parents needed to subscribe to the internet for their children. Khalidi et al. (2020) explained that even in the year 2019, the national penetration rate of mobile broadband for every 100 persons was about 120%, but for the faster and more stable fiber optic broadband, the rate was only about 8% for every 100 persons. This illustrates that the rate of high speed and stable internet access for Malaysians is still low.

According to Gaung et al. (2019), in comparing the virtual class with the traditional classroom, found that one of the challenges in e-learning is caused by the failure of participation by students in the virtual class. This failure is related to student's access to computer software. This is in line with research by Mohamed Nazul (2020), who that found students face some problems in e-learning, including the ability to adapt to technological development related to digital learning. Likewise with teachers, Ayebi-Arthur (2017) in his research acknowledged that it is difficult to assist all teachers during a period of crisis because of various existing constraints.

Second: Problem of poor student attendance for an online classes. A press excerpt on 25th June 2021 stated that only about 40% of students attended e-learning sessions (Utusan Malaysia, 2021). There were various reactions from the public on this issue. On investigation, it was found to be closely related to the factors of gadget ownership, internet access facility, family financial ability, monitoring by parents, and student motivation. Maatuk et al., (2021) stated that even though e-learning lessens teachers' burden, it increases pressure on the student. It also impacts students already less interested in studying, causing them to lose motivation to follow the class (Mailizar et al. 2020). As of writing this article, no research has yet been found relating to attendance for co-curricular activities during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Third: Constraints in two-way communication in the new media environment. Students who attend class are faced with the challenge to be actively involved in the class. Not all students are ready to communicate two-way face-to-face, especially quiet and introverted students. In a classroom, teachers have to motivate and encourage students to be active in class. However, in a virtual environment, students have to learn skills to use equipment and software and cope with

hindrances to interact in the environment. Hebebci et al. (2020) placed the issue of limitations to interaction as the main problem because follow-up action cannot be done to assess the effectiveness of learning. Dhawan (2020) explained that the new media environment makes it difficult for teachers to monitor and assess the learning process. It is fully left to the student, with family support and the environment, to practice what is learned. Learning becomes very complex, especially relating to the theoretical content of lessons which need much exercise. Research by Lall & Singh (2020) found that students are not that enthusiastic about following online learning because of the constraints in two-way communication. Even though they live in this age of technology, they are not fully prepared to live and learn in a virtual world.

In summary, there are various challenges in implementing e-learning, relating to internet access, limitations in interaction, student motivation, ownership of digital devices, and technical skills, which need due attention. Even though this research focuses on co-curriculum, all past research on the practice of online learning is significant given the shared main element, such as increasing student learning experience from the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor perspectives.

3.0 METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach through a case study design to explore different practices of Islamic co-curricular activity and identify the challenges of its online implementation in Putrajaya. Interviews, involving 11 research participants who are teachers of Islamic Education from all secondary schools in Putrajaya, were conducted between May and June 2021. The teachers are experienced in planning school dakwah (preaching) activities. Table 2 explains the demography of research participants and their experiences. Their experience is important to ensure the information given is truly relevant to online implementation. The selection of research participants used purposive sampling by suggesting names obtained from the Department of Education, Putrajaya Federal Territory.

Table 2. Demography of Research Participants

Variable	Category	n=11	%
Gender	Male	3	27.7
	Female	8	72.7
Age	20 – 29	1	9.0
	30 – 39	3	27.2
	40 – 49	4	36.3
	50 – 59	3	27.2
Experience	1 – 8 years	5	45.4
	9 – 16 years	3	27.2
	17 – 22 years	1	9.0
	23 – 30 years	2	18.1
School Type	Day School	9	81.8
	Boarding School	2	18.1

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Ministry of Education of Malaysia through Educational Research Application System (eRAS) version 2.0. Interviews were conducted online using the platform Google Meet. Interview data were analyzed using the software, ATLAS.ti version 9.0, and divided into two main themes, namely, the type of Islamic co-curriculum practice and the challenges of implementing it online in Putrajaya. This research focuses on secondary schools in the Putrajaya locality, thus primary and private schools are not within the scope of this research. Putrajaya was selected as a research location because it is the national administrative

center and has received smart city (Bandar Pintar) status utilizing information technology and communications and the Internet of Things (IOT) (Rosziati Ibrahim et al., 2019). Putrajaya's population in the year 2015 recorded 88,300 residents (Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia, 2015). A check on internet access at portal jendela, we found 6 Internet Service Providers (ISP) in Putrajaya, namely, Celcom, Maxis, Digi, U Mobile, Unifi Mobile, and YES. Information obtained from this portal found the whole locality has an internet access facility with 4G high-speed wireless broadband. 4G technology allows internet access speed up to 300 Mbps for its users (Karani & Aithal, 2017). Our initial impression was that Putrajaya locality would not have problems with internet access facility infrastructure. However, internet access may become poor due to other factors such as weather, high building hindrance, remoteness of the area, and the internet plan subscribed by the user (Yahaya, Adnan, & Pascasiswazah, 2021).

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1. Online Islamic Co-Curriculum Practices At School

Based on interviews conducted, the researcher found that 20 activity practices were implemented online. The activities are categorized into 4 forms, namely, lectures, religious practices, contests, and modular activities. First, lectures are easier to implement as not much preparation is needed in terms of place and location, except for equipment to live broadcast the host and speaker. The audience or listeners may be anywhere as long as they have internet access. This activity allows students to hear various advice, raising awareness through exemplary stories and increasing appreciation of laws to comply with daily life. As this research was conducted in the months of Syaaban and Ramadan, the lectures organized related to Israk Mikraj and Nuzul Qur an. In addition, a tazkirah (brief religious talk) lasting 5 minutes was frequently inserted in between religious rituals.

Second, many religious practical activities are implemented to train students to perform ibadah (worship) learned in class. Even though not face-to-face, teachers and students continue to play their role in leading recitation of Al-Quran and chanting Takbir Raya (Magnification of God for Eid Festivals). The research found that almost all schools implemented the Khatam al-Quran (Completion reading al-Quran from beginning to end) activity online in Ramadan, the month in which the activity of Tadarus al-Quran (taking turns to read in a group and to review)is the pinnacle. Some schools implemented a weekly ceremony for the recitation of Surah Yasin every Friday (between Maghrib and Isyak) compared to the usual Friday (7.15-7.45 a.m.) implemented face-to-face. The online Eid Takbir is an innovation in Islamic co-curricular activity and received an encouraging response.

Third, contests were held online subject to terms and conditions set by the Ministry of Education (KPM). Through contests, students have availed of the opportunity to hone and display their talent in Tarannum al-Quran (chanting), hafazan (memorization of al-Quran), and singing nasyid (religious songs). Even though the participants are not many, talented ones are allowed to appear and present their abilities and skills. It is implemented not just at the school level but continues to district state and national levels.

Fourth is the activity of modular appreciation, such as classes for Mimbar Daie (preachers' pulpit), Tahfiz Elit (memorization of al-Quran), Sinergi Dakwah (synergy of preaching), and Usrah (support group). It is an extension of face-to-face activity. Even though implemented in only certain schools with particular groups of students, this activity has its attraction due to the

consistent commitment to participate. The names of activities and frequency of implementation are as shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3. The online practice of Islamic co-curricular activities

	Name of Activity	Frequency	Classification
1.	Majlis Khatam al-Quran	10	Religious Practice
2.	Majlis Bacaan Surah Yaasin	9	Religious Practice
3.	Ceramah Nuzul Quran	8	Lecture
4.	Ceramah Israk Mikraj	7	Lecture
5.	Mimbar Daie	7	Contest
6.	Tilawah al-Quran	6	Contest
7.	Tadarus al-Quran	5	Religious Practice
8.	Nyanyian Solo Lagu Kerohanian	5	Contest
9.	Takbir Raya	4	Religious Practice
10.	Hafazan al-Quran	4	Contest
11.	Tazkirah Mingguan	3	Lecture
12.	Tazkirah Khas	3	Lecture
13.	Berbuka Puasa	3	Religious Practice
14.	Infaq Ramadan	2	Religious Practice
15.	Ceramah Maulidur Rasul SAW	1	Lecture
16.	Majlis Bacaan Surah al-Kahfi	1	Religious Practice
17.	Kelas Tahfiz Elite	1	Modular Activity
18.	Kelas Mimbar Daie	1	Modular Activity
19.	Program Sinergi Dakwah	1	Modular Activity
20.	Usrah	1	Modular Activity
	Total	82	

Table 3 shows the online practices of Islamic co-curricular activities implemented by secondary schools in Putrajaya. Activities relating to reciting al-Quran are the main choice of schools because it is the practice and culture of the Muslim society in the Nusantara (Malay Archipelago). The culture of reading surah Yasin is usually implemented on Thursday nights or Friday mornings, while the Majlis Khatam al-Quran is implemented at the end of Ramadan as a closing ceremony for the Tadarus al-Quran activity.

Various applications are used to conduct online co-curricular activities. Most schools use Google Meet for Tadarus Al-Quran because it is similar to leading recitation during Teaching and Learning at Home (Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran di Rumah (PdPR). Students can interact with the lead reciters in the video session. For activities in the form of religious practice, such as Majlis Bacaan Yasin (Surah Yasin Recitation Ceremony), Majlis Khatam al-Quran (Completion of Reading the whole al-Quran Ceremony), Takbir Raya (Eid Takbir), and Tazkirah Minggu (Weekly Brief Reminder), schools prefer to use Facebook Live and YouTube Live because these can accommodate more viewers to stream to the platform compared to Google Meet. A student can also view it anytime if he could not participate at the scheduled time. WhatsApp and Telegram are also used to announce the broadcasting of activities through class groups and the Parents and Teachers Association (PIBG). This is in line with the view of Fadzliyah Hashim et al. (2020) that the applications used by Islamic Education teachers for PdPR are WhatsApp, Google Classroom, YouTube, and Google Meet, while the applications Quizziz, Kahoot, and Tik Tok are not as widely used.

Table 4. Type of Applications Used

Research Participant	Google Meet	Facebook	YouTube	StreamYard	Whatsapp	Telegram	Others
PK #1	X	X			X	X	
PK #2		X	X	X			X
PK #3	X	X					
PK #4	X		X	X	X		
PK #5	X	X	X	X			X
PK #6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
PK #7	X	X	X		X	X	X
PK #8	X	X	X	X			
PK #9	X		X		X		X
PK #10	X	X	X				
PK #11	X	X	X	X			

Based on Table 4, most activities were held using cyber media applications with synchronous communications (in real-time or live). Off-line applications such as Whatsapp and Telegram are relatively less used and not popular choices.

In summary, not all Islamic co-curricular activities can be implemented online. The change to online implementation using media applications will probably be the future trend if teachers and students accept it. The virtual environment, not bound to a location, is an advantage to increase access for more students. However, some benefits might be missed out, such as interaction and relations between students and the development of interpersonal skills. Even so, the use of online applications needs to continue with the hope that its advantages will overcome its shortcomings later on.

4.2. Challenges To Online Implementation Of Islamic Co-Curricular Activities

During the COVID-19 Movement Control period (Lockdown), the government gives priority to implementing the Islamic co-curriculum, and its activities were given space to be implemented online. This situation allows for dakwah (preaching) activity a place in the weekly schedule of a student's time. Based on interview data, the researcher categorized five themes relating to challenges that schools face in conducting online Islamic co-curricular activities, such as in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Challenges to Online Implementation of Islamic Co-curricular Activities:

Challenges		Frequency	%
1.	Internet Access	8	28.5
2.	Limited Interaction	7	25
3.	Lack of Response	6	21.4
4.	Shared or No Device	4	14.2
5.	Lacking Technical Skills	3	10.7
	Total	28	100

4.2.1. Internet Access

The problem of Internet access is the main problem faced by research participants. Based on interviews conducted, frequent disconnection of access is the main problem faced by them. Many factors contribute to poor connection, such as the height of the building, hindrance in hilly areas, and weather. " At my house when it rains heavily, the line (internet) becomes very slow indeed. " is among the grievances of PK #7 who works for the online program secretariat.

Even though all schools in Putrajaya are equipped with internet facilities, teachers at locations where activities are held might be far from the wireless router, causing a weak internet connection. PK #3 stated that " Internet (connection) at my school is not good, not strong, becomes intermittent. Really unsatisfactory. Students can hear, then can't hear. Hear, not hear. Cut off. Then lagging." This forces the teachers to use personal internet access with limited speed. As dakwah (preaching) activities are held outside official school hours, some teachers are forced to go online at the homes of colleagues to get a strong and high-speed internet signal. PK #1 stated that " At home, we use our own data. Sometimes we gather at the house of the secretariat. At the house of this ustaz, his internet line is high speed.".

This disturbance does not just happen to teachers, but also students because of the problem of limited internet data quota and gadget ownership very closely related to the family's financial situation. " Sometimes we see that parents and students probably cannot afford, " PK #1 reported. This is in line with research by Yahaya et al. (2021) and Adnan et Anwar (2020) which found that one of the constraints of online learning is not having or sharing gadgets due to low income or limited financial resources.

4.2.2. Limited Interaction

The limitations of interaction between speaker and participants is the biggest challenge faced by an organizer. This challenge arises from a speaker's use of Facebook and YouTube platforms which only allow one-way communication. Usually, a speaker uses eye contact to build rapport with an audience. However, this is not possible because Facebook and YouTube cannot support a two-way video session. Using Google Meet and Zoom Cloud does support two-way communication in a video session application, but then not all participants turn on the camera during the lecture. This makes the speaker unable to monitor the students' response to lecture content. PK #10 stated that " I see one of the shortcomings, possibly lack of eye contact. Little eye contact with the speaker when we do with Facebook".

In addition, a teacher's role becomes quite limited in observing student behavior during the activity. PK #7 stated, "It would be easier if we can meet face-to-face. But here we use gadgets as a medium. Some give a response but others don't respond." Even though students can respond in the comment space, it depends on the participant's attitude during the program. This is in line with research findings by Mustafa Tevfik et al. (2020) that acknowledged limited interaction as the main problem in distance learning. This leads organizers to shift to using the Streamyard application that can support more than 6 panelists during the live session, to enliven the ambiance. The role of the forum moderator or host is to read the audience's response in the comment space, more or less alleviating the problem of limited interaction.

For contest activity that involves training, mentors also face difficulty to guide students directly compared to the face-to-face method. PK #9 stated that " Mentor teachers find it quite difficult to monitor and guide participants due to different locations and limited time." Training sessions involving the recording of presentations are quite difficult to manage because trainers are unable to give direct coaching for improvement. PK #2 stated that " Because we cannot see the student, he records himself. Sometimes he over-rates himself. Soft toned. That's where the constraint is." This situation makes the task of coaching students shift to the parents to increase the quality of presentation recording for their child.

4.2.3. Lack of Response

Research findings stated that online Islamic co-curricular activities received a somewhat less response than using the face-to-face method. This is deducted from the number of viewers for a lecture activity compared to the overall total of a school's student population. PK #8 stated, "Every time we do it live, we notice that not all students join in. Looking at the number of viewers, we know that many students don't join in". For that, a teacher frequently has to remind students to participate in school dakwah (preaching) activities. PK #8 also stated that "When we do on YouTube Live, not many will view during live (session). But after we mention it in class many times, then they will view it." Teachers need to take the effort of using various applications to publicize programs. The researcher had the chance to survey the YouTube channel of some schools and found only about 200 to 400 views in some dakwah activities conducted. This is very low compared to the average number of 700 and above students enrolled in secondary schools.

This finding is in line with a statement by a former Minister of Education of Malaysia that student attendance in PdPr was less than 80% (Utusan Malaysia, 2021). Likewise, a finding by Yahaya et al. (2021) that students lacked the focus to study because the house environment is not conducive, they have to help with house chores, and some even work to help parents increase family income.

For contest activities, schools also faced the challenge of difficulty finding participants. For the Tilawah Al-Quran event, PK #2 stated that " The biggest constraint is to find participants. Up to today, it still feels difficult. Because he sits quietly. Even if we pm him, he gets upset, "Oh dear, do you mean me, me? (No,) I don't want, don't want". Only at the last minute, he will agree. Maybe he feels sorry (for the teacher). Finally, alright teacher." The problem arises probably because the event is more toward the art of Tarannum (chanting) Al-Quran. The Tarannum module is only offered in some schools which implement the KKQ program. This challenge led some teachers to suggest organizing online guidance courses for tarannum by paying external teachers.

4.2.4. Sharing or No Devices.

In this COVID-19 crisis, the high need of using gadgets causes gadget ownership to become a critical problem. A student with many siblings needs to wait his turn using the gadget. There are also students without gadgets who depend on their parents' gadgets. The situation becomes more unfortunate when working parents do not provide gadgets for their children to follow Islamic co-curricular activities online. This usually happens to Form One student. PK #9 stated that "An example is the online Tadarus program involving Form One students, the majority of whom do not have their handphones". This is possible because the family's low-income status and the values of the local community raise concern that teenagers might misuse the gadget to surf forbidden websites. The threat of misuse and lack of effective control may adversely affect not only social and national stability but erodes the holy norms of Islam (Aina Sabariah et al., 2021).

4.2.5. Lacking Technical Skills

The digital world needs efficiency and specific technical skills. The researcher finds a lack of technical skills a challenge faced by teachers especially those who are somewhat senior in age. They need assistance from younger teachers or school ICT coordinators to maintain Facebook and YouTube accounts. PK #1 stated, " If we cannot link up with Facebook, we don't use it. We use GM (Google Meet)". This challenge sometimes forces the program secretariat to change the platform at the last moment, in turn inviting many communication problems. For that, PK #7

suggested that "...there needs to be a test or rehearsal for matters which involve gadgets or technology so that fewer problems occur". This test run is important to ensure that equipment functions properly during implementation. PK #11 suggested that schools provide a special room to function as a studio for placing technical equipment. PK #9 stated that in his school's planning for smooth implementation, skilled students form a group to help teachers manage technical equipment and related matters. This finding is in line with the study of Khodijah Abdul Rahman et al., (2018) who stated that teachers' ICT knowledge and skills need to be improved in order to be utilized in PdP. Similarly, Sharifah & Kamarul (2012) suggested that all parties, especially the MOE, need to ensure aspects of readiness such as physical infrastructure are perfect and complete so that the use of ICT achieves its goals.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This research concludes that Islamic co-curricular activities can be implemented online during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Despite the many challenges, its implementation was adjusted according to the school requirement to fill time outside PdPR hours. The constraint of internet accessibility needs attention from the relevant party. Even though 4G internet technology is applied worldwide, some situations interfere with access. The organizer's creativity is much needed in dealing with current challenges so that more students can benefit. The support of all stakeholders is necessary so that online implementation stays relevant in the post-COVID-19 future. Even though this research is focused on the Putrajaya Federal Territory, it can give an idea regarding the implementation of Islamic co-curricular activities nationwide. However, more comprehensive research on the whole of Malaysia is needed for more accurate findings. Research is needed on the effectiveness of implementing the Islamic Education co-curriculum to achieve the aspirations of the National Education Philosophy and Malaysia Education Blueprint (PPPM) 2013-2025.

Acknowledgement

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