

Involvement of Undergraduate Students with the Holy Qur'an: A Study based on State Universities in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Learning the Holy Qur'an is obligatory for both Muslim men and women since it is a perfect guide for human life in this world and hereafter. However, it is surprising that the Muslim society is far from the Holy Qur'an due to an increased desire for worldly life. It is possible to identify, especially among university students, that their connection or involvement with the Holy Qur'an is becoming spiritually retrograde. Therefore, the study employed a convergent mixed-method research design to identify the involvement of university students with the Holy Qur'an. A total of 315 university students voluntarily participated in this study by filling self-administrated questionnaires, conducting unstructured interviews and telephone conversations. Moreover, the secondary data was collected from various sources of information such as books, journal Articles, web-publications. The collected data was analysed by way of descriptive method. Findings of the study were presented in the form of tables, charts, sentences and texts. This study concludes with the argument that the university students were lack of involvement with the Holy Qur'an, and they are rarely involved in learning and memorizing the Holy Qur'an. Moreover, the numerous factors are there as obstacles to learning the Holy Qur'an and the majority have realized that they will not be able to respond to the inquiry in this regard on the day of judgment.

Keywords: Holy Qur'an, Involvement with Qur'an, Legal Rules of Al Quran, Memorization, Recitation of Qur'an, State Universities, Surah Al-Fatihah, University Students

Published Online: March 20, 2022

ISSN: 2736-5522

DOI: 10.24018/ejsocial.2022.2.2.226

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I. INTRODUCTION

Holy Qur'an is the final scripture which was revealed by Almighty to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through Angel Jibreel. This book is the last scripture which was given by Allah to the messengers, who were sent to this world from Prophet Adam to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In addition, it is seen as a proof of prophethood (Risalah). This holy Qur'an was gradually descended to the Prophet (PBUH) according to the time and circumstances in the gap of about twenty-three years from the age of forty until his death. Teaching this holy scripture to the people is also seen as one of their prophetic missions of the Prophet (PBUH). Based on this concept, the Qur'an was taught by the Prophet (PBUH) to the Arab community in which they lived and showed it in practice. The Quranic verses taught by the Prophet were protected through memorization by their companions, as well as they were protected through writing it on the dry clay, lead straw, and animal skins. The process of compiling the whole Qur'an was undertaken during the period of the four guided caliphs who ascended the throne after the death of last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). During the period of first Caliph Abu Bakhr (Rali), the process of compiling the Qur'an was entrusted to Sayyid Bin Tabid (Rali). Eventually, the collected copy of Al Qur'an was handed over to Hafsa (Rali). Moreover, during the period of third caliph Usman (Rali), the Qur'an, which was recited in seven languages in one tradition was compiled in its entirety in one language, copied and sent to many countries (Bukhari, 4987). The process of inserting vowel coding was undertaken by the caliph Haroon Rashid to simplify the pronunciation of Al Quran. This final version of the Qur'an only is being read by the Muslims all over the world today. This holy Qur'an which was descended by the exalted Allah, seen as the most memorized book in the world.

Learning the holy Qur'an and implementing it in practice is seen as a huge responsibility and duty of every Muslim. A community of young people interested in learning the Qur'an has been existed throughout the Islamic history since the time of the Prophet (PBUH). Because, the hadiths which were revealed by the Prophet (PBUH) indicate the merits of learning Qur'an. Despite many persecutions were raised by the Meccan Quraysh in the early days of Islam, the youth who lived during that period never gave up trying to

learn the Quran. Islamic classes were presumably conducted to expand and spread the knowledge about Islam in the residence of Arqam (Rali) during the period when many hardships were being inflicted upon those who accepted Islam. This Islamic classes were consisting of teaching the Qur'an, clarifying the verses of the Qur'an, and giving advice by witnessing the Qur'an. It is noteworthy that Arqam (Rali)'s residence was the first Qur'anic school in the Islamic history (RafiqSaman, 2013). After the emigration of Prophet (PBUH) to Medina there was a beautiful atmosphere appeared where he could freely and fairly carry out the commandments. Here the Masjid which was built by the Prophet (PBUH) served as a place of worship, court and state council or Parliament. Further, the classes for teaching the Qur'an were also conducted in one area of this Masjid Un Nabavi (Imamuddin, 1984). The people who were living in Medina worked hard to learn the Qur'an and teach it to others.

The relationship between a Muslim with the holy Qur'an can be divided into four main categories. They are learning the Qur'an, memorizing the Qur'an, clearly understanding it and teaching the Qur'an to other people. It has been narrated by the Prophet (PBUH): "[Whoever recites a letter] from Allah's Book, then he receives the reward from it, and the reward of ten the like of it. I do not say that "Alif Lam Mim" is a letter, but "Alif" is a letter, "Lam" is a letter and "Mim" is a letter." (Tirmidhi 2910). Moreover, he narrated, "Recite the Qur'an, for on the Day of Resurrection it will come as an intercessor for those who recite It" (Muslim 804).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said the following about those who reciting the Qur'an and preserving it in the heart: "Read the Qur'an often and preserve it. Swear by Allah, who holds the life of Muhammad! (If it is not recited over and over again and does not protect the Qur'an) That holy Qur'an will run away (from your hearts) very much faster than a camel tied to a rope will run away " (Bukhari, Muslim).

Due to the hyper modern technology development, the ways of learning the holy Qur'an have been simplified according to the people's convenience. There have been 6 teaching techniques proposed under the modern teaching method. They are as follows: Drawing a blueprint for learning the Qur'an in the Qur'anic way, Classifying the students who are interested to learn the Qur'an into groups for learning the Qur'an. Teaching Quranic recitations, Making Qur'an reciting as a daily practice and memorization of the recitation, testing the ability of recitation of the Qur'an and giving required feedback, and last but not least Conducting the final examination for the recitation of Qur'an (Supriyadi & Julia, 2018). Thus, despite the many modern guidelines for learning the Qur'an, the lack of interest was noticed by the researchers among the growing teenage groups.

Today's young men and women are living far away from this scripture which was descended by the exalted Allah as a lifetime guide in this world and the next everlasting life after death. Therefore, spiritual regression, moral decline, and obsession with worldly pleasures are rampant. This present circumstance has led to liberal engagement in the matters that are explicitly forbidden by Islam, disobedience to the country's common law and social behaviour without following social norms. Consequently, they forget to be a prototype Muslims who spreads and expands the teachings of Qur'an to those who are following Islamic religion in the countries like Sri Lanka where it constitutes the minority of Muslims. Sri Lankan state university undergraduates are also no exception to this circumstance. It vividly observed by the researchers that, the sincerity and engagement which they have on their education and preparing themselves for the examination are not in the same category in case of reciting the holy Qur'an, memorizing the Qur'an and implementing the Quranic teachings in practice. Based on this major issue, the present study aims to identifying the involvement of undergraduates (who are pursuing their higher studies in the State Universities of Sri Lanka) with holy Qur'an.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To effectively carry out this mixed method study (Qualitative and Quantitative) and primary and secondary data collection were used. There were five universities randomly selected to conduct this research out of 15 universities situated in Sri Lanka on the basis of simple random sampling method. Especially for this research, final year undergraduates, pursuing their education in the current year (2021) were selected from the chosen sampling five state universities. Particularly, the required data related to the study were collected from three hundred undergraduates (300) through the closed-ended questionnaires and with 15 additional undergraduates through the unstructured interview and conducting telephone conversation. The interviews were conducted with 15 undergraduates to confirm the acquired data which were collected through the questionnaire (In-depth interview). The details of the selected sampling research were summarized in the following table.

TABLE I: SELECTED SAMPLING

No	Universities	Distributed Questionnaire	Interviews & Telephone onversation	Reseach Samples
1	South Eastern University of Sri Lanka	60	8	68
2	University of Peradeniya	60	8	68
3	University of Colombo	60	6	66
4	Eastern University of Sri Lanka	60	3	63
5	University of Jaffna	60	3	63

Moreover, direct sources which were received from the Qur'an and the Sunnah were utilized to learn the characteristics of the holy Qur'an. In addition to these, the secondary data, accumulated through the Essays, Books, Magazines, Internet publications and other creations were beneficial to the research structure and research theory.

The data obtained through the questionnaire have been subjected to the descriptive analysis in MsExcele-2016 software and the results were described through graphical description. The data received through the interview and over the phone call conversation have been analysed through the coding system and the received results of it have been highlighted as writing or letters and sentences.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

When the past studies which relates to the same topic of this present study were reviewed, it reveals that, there were several studies conducted worldwide on the significance of the holy Qur'an, importance and the barriers of learning the Qur'an. However, during the literature survey, researchers discovered a study gap that lack of research has been carried out based on Sri Lankan context. This research has fulfilled this knowledge gap with the research findings. Some general studies were reviewed as follow.

There was a research article conducted entitled "Andi Irlina (2019) "Teaching the Holy Quran to young learners (7 - 12 years old)" aims at suggesting the Learning and teaching methods for learning the holy Quran to the young growing children. The initial part of this study investigated the techniques and methods to teach the holy Qur'an among the young generation. As well, the second part of this study investigated the tactics of reciting the Qur'an and memorizing it. There is a notable thing in this study is that, the participated research samplings are 7 - 12 age group children.

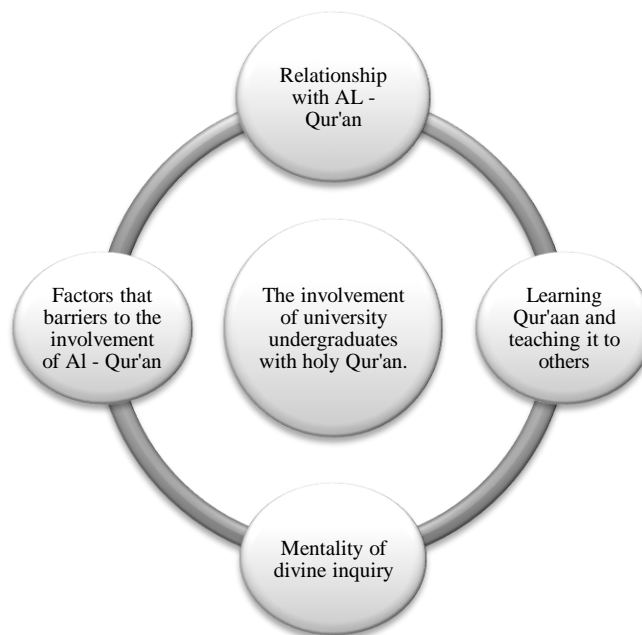
Supriyadi and Juliya's (2019) dissertation entitled "The Problems of Students in Reading the Quran Reflective Critical Treatment through Action Research" discusses the obligation of learning and teaching the Qur'an and the development of recitation methods in reciting the Quran. In relation to the recitation of the Qur'an, there are 06 stages for learning the Qur'an. The final test is analysed in 06 stages.

Nayef and Wahab's (2018) research paper "The Effect of Recitation Quran on the Human Emotion" suggests topics related to the recitation of the Qur'an according to the Tajweed method and the need for dialogue between man and God in dealing with the psychological problems faced by college students. This review article also analyses the important role of the Qur'an. This article or section needs sources or references that appear in credible, third-party publications.

Moreover, the following studies: Sari *et al.* (2012)'s "Factors affecting the learning of hloy Qur'an among Severely and Profoundly Hearing - Impaired children with a cochler Implant", Lubis and Din's (2011) "Challenges faced by teachers in teaching Quranic tarannum", Aderi *et al.* (2014)'s "The study of Quranic Teaching and Learning: United Kingdom Experience" were undertaken which relate to learning and teaching the holy Qur'an. Even though there were several studies undertaken regarding with holy Qur'an, the particular studies were not found relate to the involvement which university undergraduates contains with AL - Qur'an. It's noteworthy thing is that, there were no research conducted so far regards this present topic in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the present research is conducted to fill this particular literature gap.

IV. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

It can be observed the divisions, detected on the present research in the following research framework diagram. It can be able to define the limitation of the study through this research structure. The study framework diagram as follows:



The factors can be identified by four evaluations of a Muslim' involvement with the holy Qur'an. This is exactly what the research framework above represents. According to this initially, reciting the holy Qur'an every day and bringing the recited Qur'an version into practice after every five prayers are the notable things. Thus, the particular Muslim, spending his precious time for Qur'an can be evaluated through his involvement with Qur'an and his curiosity on it.

Secondly, learning the holy Qur'an and teaching it others: Typically, an individual should be keen to learn the Qur'an properly and teach it to other people. Islam highly refers to those who do so as the best. For this reason, it is feasible to identify the students' involvement with the Qur'an by evaluating their position in this regard.

Thirdly, mentality of divine enquiry: The exalted God Allah created mankind and descended the holy scripture Al-Qur'an to guide them in the good way. According to the teachings of Qur'an, the mankind is expected to setting up their worldly life as Allah prefer. Moreover, the human beings should be bringing their life up based on the teachings mentioned on the Qur'an in relation to this world and the everlasting world after the death. Muslims strongly believe that, those who ignore the Quranic teachings and lose themselves in the seducing of world life, verily will be inquired on the day of resurrection. As a consequence of this, this present topic is investigated in case of identifying the students' involvement with Quran by assessing their mind-set in this regard. The major belief that a person depends on it determines his behaviour is an undeniable fact.

Eventually, the factors that barriers to the involvement of Al - Qur'an: When the spiritual progress occurs in a person, it can be observed that he engages himself in obligatory and other acts of worship with great interest. The reason for this, the love of God and the longing for heaven. In contrast, when a man becomes overly greedy in this worldly life, he experiences a spiritual decline and a setback in worship.

Thus, by identifying the factors that alienate the students from the involvement of Qur'an, it will also be an opportunity to identify the factors that are a spiritual barrier for students. Thus, it is possible to increase the involvement with Quran by degrading the identifiable factors of poverty and the relationship with the Qur'an.

The four divisions, reported in the research framework have been described in this section.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The discussion of this present research was undertaken through four major divisions. Those are follows: Relationship with AL - Qur'an, Learning Qur'an and teaching it to others, Mentality of divine inquiry, Factors that barriers to the involvement of Al - Qur'an. Each of these have been described through the separate headings.

A. *The relationship with Al-Qur'an*

Continuous involvement with the Qur'an in learning the Qur'an, deep faith on it, an analysis of the correct understanding of its significance are as follows.

1. *Reciting the Qur'an*

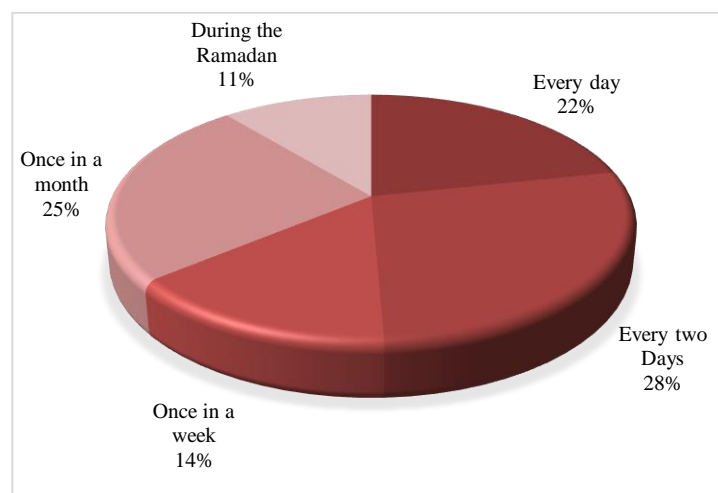


Fig. 1. The relationship with Al-Qur'an.

The given pie chart illustrates that, when the research samples were researched, fewer of them only maintain a stable relationship with Quran with the percentage of 22. Further, when it was analysed based on the sex, it was found that women (14%) were more properly maintained than men (8%).

Similarly, it was found that, the relationship with Quran was maintained on the basis of once in every two days (28%), once in a week (14%), once in a month (25%) and during Ramadan only (11%). When it is taken as whole, most (78%) of the research samples failed to maintain a daily relationship with the Qur'an.

When the interview was undertaken with randomly selected students in this regard, they indicated that they are unable to focus on the Qur'an due to the large amount of time which is they spent on university works and related exercises. Moreover, those who maintained daily connection with the Qur'an, found some difficulties to communicate with Qur'an during their exam periods. Research samples have stated that they are unable to maintain a connection with the holy Qur'an since they are busy on retrieving university subjects and preparing for their exams. It can be known through the above statement that, most of the men (57%) are far away from holy Quran.

When the question inquired about the relationship with the Qur'an at home before entering the university, most of them (80%) said that, the relationship with the Qur'an at home atmosphere has been properly maintained and that the university environment is a huge barrier to it. In particular, it can be detected that, those who are pursuing their education in the fields of Science, Maths, Commerce and Technology encountering this obstacle.

2. Memorization

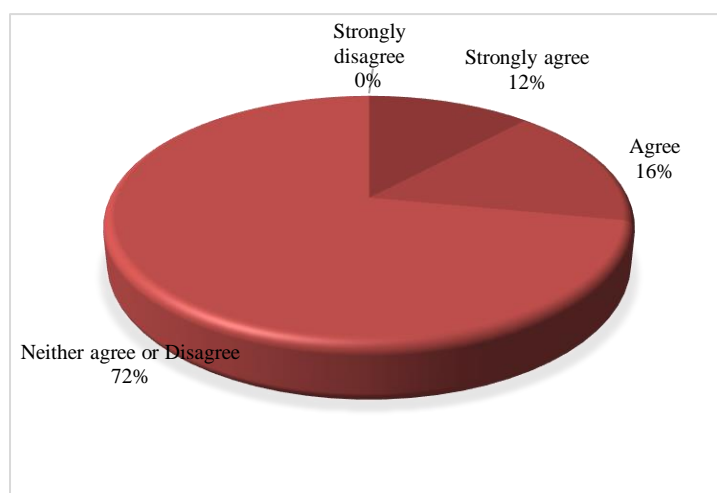


Fig. 2. Memorization.

The given pie chart depicts that, 24% of students are interested in memorizing the Qur'an and also they are not interested in retrieving the Qur'an on a daily basis. However, they are interested to retrieve it only on certain days. In addition, the desire to memorize the Qur'an was found to be present in all research samples. Furthermore, differences are found in the mind-sets of the research samples in memorizing the holy Qur'an. They are as follows,

12 % of research samples have reported that, "memorizing the Qur'an is easy task". At the same time, they assume that, it is simple to learn the Quran as well.

In case of memorizing the Qur'an easy and difficult, there were 20 percentage of students selected the option neutral. Further, 34% of students assume that it is difficult to memorize the Quran. As well as 26 percent of students assume that it is very difficult to memorize the Qur'an.

Considering the above mentioned information, it can be concluded that, very few people are interested in things like reciting the Qur'an and curious to memorize it. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that, everyone has understood the significance of the holy Qur'an.

3. Reciting Qur'an in the daily prayers with realizing its meaning

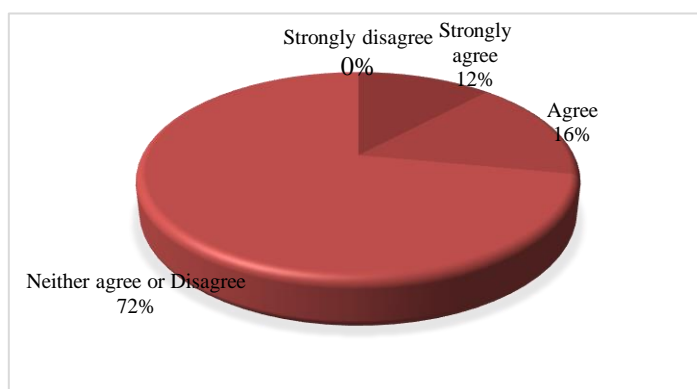


Fig. 2. Reciting Qur'an in the daily prayers with realizing its meaning.

The following pie chart displays that, there were 12% of students deducted that they are reciting the Qur'an in their daily prayers with knowing its meaning. There were 24% of students deducted that they are reciting the Qur'an in their daily prayers with partly knowing its meaning. At the same time 26% of students realizing its meaning in the low level. Meantime, 38% of students recite Qur'an in their daily prayers with the comprehension of it in the very low level.

Without the knowledge of Qur'an, prayer will not be alive. In particular, the prayer would not be acceptable without Surah Al-Fatihah. Prayer won't be alive without a deep knowledge of other Qur'anic verses.

There is no compulsion that the prayer should be undertaken with the large surahs. "The believers have indeed attained true success. those who, in their Prayers, humble themselves. and who guard their Prayers. (Al - Qur'an 23: 1,2,9)

4. Returning to al Quran when the time of stress

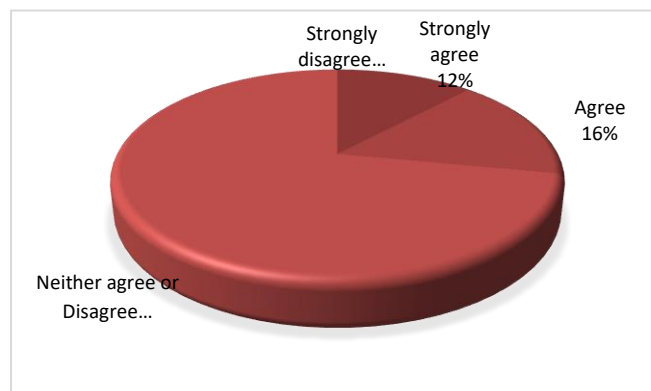


Fig. 4. Returning to al Quran when the time of stress.

The given pie chart illustrates, it is agreed by all the research samples that, the noble Qur'an is the lifetime guidance for all mankind. It was identified there are 32% of students detected that they return the side of al Qur'an when they stress and 20% of students are very low.

In addition, those who are partly less or less inclined, when they were inquired what other activities they engage themselves in besides reciting the Qur'an during stress, more than half said that "they engage themselves in listening to cinematic songs". Research says that today's young generation keeps a close connection with cinematic songs. It is also known that cinema contains a variety of substances that can destabilize the community. Recent studies show that cinema has a greater impact on children. (Fathima Minsara, J., & Mazahir, S.M.M 2015). Moreover, some particular songs provoke pornography, romance, and improper communication. They often contain things that are contrary to the Islamic religion. As well as motivational songs and there are also songs related to parent-child relationships. Nevertheless, these people use to listen to ear-splitting songs during their worries and stress. It is very rare to identify those people who listen to relationships, parents, and motivational-related songs. Hence, today's young generation is pursuing cinematic songs instead of engaging themselves with the Qur'an. It's a remarkable negative thing that, the people who agree that the Holy Qur'an is lifetime guidance for mankind, fail to bring it in practice when they suffer from stress and depression.

B. Learn Al - Qur'an

This section illustrates the level of involvement of university students in reciting the Qur'an in accordance with the rules of the Qur'anic law and the meaningful recitation of the Qur'an and investigates the efforts of researchers to learn the Qur'an.

1. Following the legal rules of Al Quran

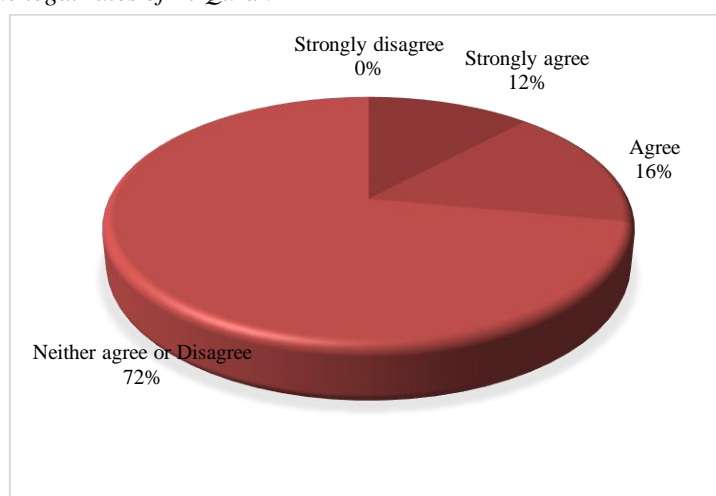


Fig. 3. Learn Al - Qur'an.

The given pie chart shows the results of reciting Al - Qur'an by following its legal rules. It was identified, there are 12 % of students agree that they are able to recite the Qur'an by completely following its legal rules and few more students agree that they could recite the Qur'an by partly following its legal rules. They are 16%. Further, exactly

72 % of students agreed that, they are able to recite the Qur'an by less following its rules. It is known that, those who agreed to recite the Qur'an by completely following its rule were graduated from Arabic College. The exact amount of them is 27 with 9%. Further, when the results are taken as a whole, 3/4 of the students are in the position of not able to recite the holy Qur'an by following its legal rules.

2. Recite Quran with realizing its meaning

The following pie chart emphasize that, there were 10% of undergraduates identified, who recite the holy Qur'an by fully understanding its meaning. Meanwhile, there were 2% of undergraduates found, who recite the Qur'an by partly realizing its meaning. Moreover, 26% of undergraduates recite Qur'an with the low level comprehension of it. Last but not least, 62% of undergraduates recite the holy scripture Al-Qur'an without the intelligible of its meaning. Eventually it was concluded that, Inadequate competency in Arabic Language is the major factor for not reciting Qur'an with knowing its meaning. According to the above indicated information, more than 3/4 of undergraduates are in the position of not able to recite the Qur'an by the without the clear intelligible of its meaning.

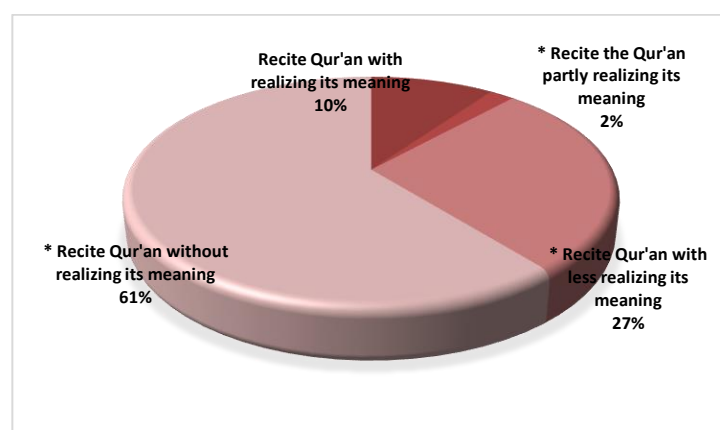


Fig. 6. Recite Quran with realizing its meaning.

3. Factors impact on not being able to learn the Qur'an properly

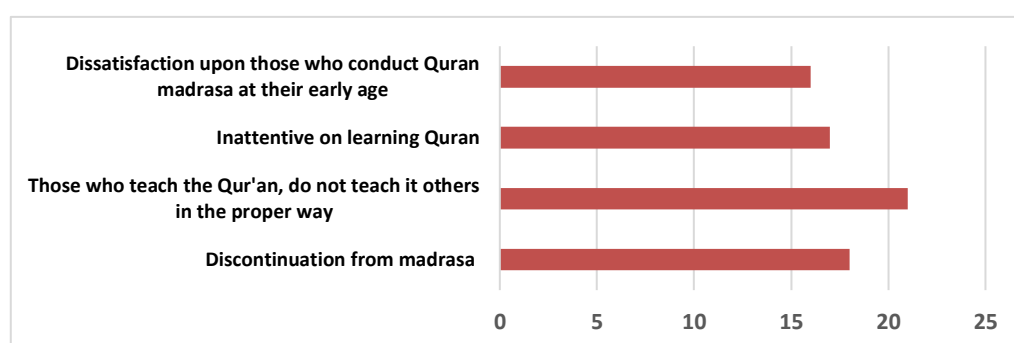


Fig. 4. Factors impact on not being able to learn the Qur'an properly.

There were 72% of students agreed that, they were unable to learn the Quran at their early age due the difficulties of learning the Quran based on its rules. At the same time, there were 16% of students found, who were inattentive of learning the Qur'an at their young age due to the dissatisfaction upon those who conduct Qur'an Madrasa. As well as, there were 21% of students identified, they were unable to learn the Qur'an due to the improper guidance of Qur'anic teachers. Finally, rest of the 17% of students discontinued their Qur'anic education at Qur'an Madrasa. These are the major factors impacting on learning Qur'an. The detected factors are interrelated with each.

C. The Current Position in Learning the Holy Qur'an

At the present time, 16% of students are trying to learn the Qur'an while 32% of them say that they thought of learning the rules of the Qur'an. As well, 52% of students say that they did not think about learning the legal rules of Al Qur'an so far.

However, everyone is interested to learn the Qur'an, and there is a distinction in the endeavors undertaken to learn it. They prefer to learn the Qur'an. However, no actions are undertaken to execute that desire. They condense their desire of learning the Qur'an by merely with words.

Even though they are knowing that learning the Qur'an is mandatory, the following factors keep them away from learning the holy Qur'an.

- i. Giving their full focus, energy and prominent to the secular education
- ii. They think that, Quranic education doesn't support to their economic development
- iii. The holy Qur'an should be learned from their young age. Thus, their think learning Qur'an beyond particular age is not feasible.

D. Position Related to the Day of Resurrection

When the question was asked about the disgrace of not being able to learn the Qur'an properly among such young people and not being able to relate to the Qur'an, everyone answered "yes" that they feel ashamed of not learning the Qur'an properly. Similarly, there were another question asked about that they will be questioned on the day of resurrection for not learn the Qur'an. There were two answers received from them.

92% of people agreed that there is no escape for any reason on the day of judgement. It was said that, "certainly we will be inquired for not striving to learn the instructions found even though there were several resources available." At the same time, 8% said that they believe "the deeds depend on the intention."

E. Factors Those Barriers the Connection with the Qur'an

There were several impediments presented that directly impact maintaining the stable connection with Quran. Heavy workload, university courses, not being able to recite the Qur'an properly, fatigue, keep the concentrate on hobbies, not being able to remember, engaging on part-time jobs, not having a basic understanding of what the Qur'an contains as a basis for the whole life are the major important obstacles which are encountered by the students in case of engaging themselves with Qur'an.

VI. CONCLUSION

Eventually, through this study it was concluded that, students who are pursuing their education in universities are keeping very less engagement with Quran such as reciting the Qur'an, memorizing the Qur'an, seeking refuge from Al - Qur'an during their stress. Although the education system was divided as secular education and religious education, while the religious education is also emphasized as a pivotal education system the significance is only provided for the secular education in this world. There were no opportunities given properly for the religious sector.

As a matter of fact, since the present young generation was inspired to listen to the cinematic songs, they literally failed to return to exalted Allah. For this reason, the relationship between this young generation and holy Qur'an is deviated far away. It is crystal clear that, the traditional significance of Al - Qur'an was not realized at the people who did not learn the Qur'an properly and practice its verses in their daily prayers. Taken as a whole, the present study reveals that young people do not properly understand the prominent of the holy Qur'an.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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