The Significance of the MSU Quranic League in Promoting al-Quran Awareness in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

The growing need to strengthen Quranic awareness within higher education institutions underscores a significant gap in the availability of structured, engaging, and sustainable platforms that foster both Quranic literacy and holistic student development. This study addresses this gap by examining the significance of the MSU Quranic League (MQL) as a model initiative that promotes Quranic engagement across diverse educational levels. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to (i) analyse the development and key components of the MQL, (ii) evaluate participation trends across categories and institutions, and (iii) assess the league's role in enhancing Quranic awareness. A quantitative research approach was adopted, drawing upon library research, documentary analysis, and secondary sources, including academic publications, official reports, and interviews with faculty members, organisers, and religious authorities. The findings indicate that the MQL has expanded considerably since its establishment in 2021, evolving from a university-level competition into a national and international platform that engages participants from higher education institutions, secondary schools, and community groups. Participation trends between 2024 and 2025 demonstrate a marked increase in the *Hafazan* and *Tahriri* categories, suggesting a shift towards deeper intellectual and analytical engagement with Quranic knowledge. This diversification also reflects broader national efforts to formalise Quranic studies within Malaysia's educational landscape. In conclusion, the MSU Quranic League plays a pivotal role in promoting Quranic literacy, nurturing spiritual development, and integrating faith-based values with contemporary educational practices. Its continued expansion indicates strong potential for long-term impact, particularly through strengthened community outreach, sustainable funding mechanisms, and structured mentorship frameworks.

Keywords: *Hafazan*, Islamic education, MSU, MQL, Quranic, *Tahriri*.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Al-Quran al-Karim is the divine and final revelation from Allah SWT, sent down to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a comprehensive guide for humanity (Osmani, 2023). Regarded as the ultimate source of spiritual, moral, and legal guidance, the Quran encompasses timeless wisdom, covering every aspect of life—faith, ethics, law, and personal conduct. Its verses are characterized by linguistic excellence, profound meaning, and miraculous preservation, making it not only a religious scripture but also a literary masterpiece in the Arabic language (Zamziba, M. N. F. et al., 2023). Beyond its recitation, the Quran encourages deep reflection (*tadabbur*) and application (*tatbiq*) of its teachings, fostering a holistic approach to life rooted in compassion, justice, and submission to the will of Allah SWT.

Consequently, the Management and Science University (MSU) Quranic League, which was founded in 2021, represents the university's commitment to merging religious and intellectual interests. Initially, the league served as a competitive forum for university students to showcase their

Quranic recitation and memorization (Abu Bakar, B., 2022). Over the last five years, it has grown dramatically, introducing new categories, such as Quranic knowledge and *Fardhu Ain* quizzes increasing its educational impact and popularity.

The MSU Quranic League today attracts students from high schools and primary schools around the country, emphasizing not only correct and beautiful Quranic recitation but also fostering a deeper understanding of its teaching and broader Islamic scholarship (Abu Bakar. B., et al., 2020). Its development reflects Malaysia's national trend of integrating Quranic studies within the academic framework at all levels of education.

In today's digital age, technology fundamentally transformed the educational, and Quranic learning is no exception (Moazzam, 2024). In university settings like MSU, where students are already familiar with digital tools and platforms, integrating technology into Quranic initiatives ike the MSU Quranic League can significantly enhance accessibility, improve quality, and foster deeper engagement.

One of the most noteworthy breakthroughs in this regard is the proliferation of digital training platforms and mobile applications dedicated to Quranic study (Noor Jamaliah Ibrahim et al., 2013). These tools democratize the learning process by allowing students to practice independently and receive quick feedback, especially when access to trained instructors is limited.

MSU could benefit significantly from developing its own digital portal that featuring video tutorials from expert Quran reciters (*hafiz*), quizzes, mock competitions, progress-tracking tools, and interactive forums. Such a website would not only help students prepare for the Quranic League, but also courage ongoing study and engagement throughout the year.

From an operational perspective, technology offers practical for organizing events such as the MSU Quranic League. Implementing an online system for submitting and evaluating recitations could significantly reduce administrative workload while expanding the league's reach. Participants could securely upload their recitations for judges to review remotely using standardized rubrics. This hybrid format allows for multi-stage tournaments, beginning with online preliminaries and semifinals and culminating in a live, in-person final round. This approach not only encourages participation, but it also results in a more streamlined and efficient judging process.

Furthermore, for outreach and promotion, social media platform such as YouTube, Facebook Live, and TikTok are essential. Livestreaming major events and publishing short recitation excerpts or behind-the-scenes content can help the league attract more attention. This approach is particularly effective for engaging younger audiences and increasing public interest in Quranic arts. Student testimonies, highlight reels, and educational content can help the MSU Quranic League gain a strong internet presence, making it into a well-known and recognized event.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

While Quranic awareness is becoming more prevalent in higher education, integrating secular and religious education remains a challenge (Nurrohmah & Syahid, 2020). This tension may hinder the full implementation of Quranic teachings in academic context, prompting additional investigation into appropriate educational methodologies.

In an academic setting, al-Quran al-Karim awareness takes several forms, including recitation proficiency, comprehension, application of teachings, historical knowledge, and appreciation for its literary beauty. This awareness goes beyond rote learning emphasizing genuine engagement with the text, which leads to a better comprehension of its ethical and moral implications in everyday life (Mursalin, 2024; Arif & Aprison, 2023).

Furthermore, existing frameworks for faith-based learning in higher education call for incorporating spiritual education within secular curricula, which promotes character development and social awareness through interactive teaching approaches (Arif & Aprison, 2023). Successful programs, such as those seen in several higher education institutions, show the ability to increase religious knowledge and engagement among students (Shah et al., 2020).

As a result, the distinctiveness of student-led projects such as MQL needs further investigation, as they represent a grassroots approach to developing Quranic engagement, potentially leading to creative teaching approaches that resonate with modern student experiences (Syahazizamir et al., 2024).

3.   METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, mostly based on library research methodologies (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). To gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject, a thorough analysis of key documents and secondary sources, such as scholarly books, journals, and articles, is required.

The documentary analysis focuses on papers, academic articles, and government documents related to the MSU Quranic League. Concurrently, key stakeholders were interviewed, including faculty members, league organizers, and officers from Malaysia's Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM). While noting limitations such as the small number of interviews and the case-specific character of this study, the findings provide a solid foundation for future research into Islamic education projects.

4.   FINDINGS

The main conclusions from the documentary analysis and stakeholder interviews carried out for this project are outlined in these findings. The MSU Quranic League's structural components, quick growth, shifting participant demographics, and shifting competitive trends are all revealed by the data. These results make it easier to comprehend how the league encourages educational success and Quranic knowledge across generations and institutions.

4.1 MSU Quranic League Elements

The documentary analysis focuses on papers, academic articles, and government documents related to the MSU Quranic League. Concurrently, key stakeholders were interviewed, including faculty members, league organizers, and officers from Malaysia's Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM). While noting limitations such as the small number of interviews and the case-specific character of this study, the findings provide a solid foundation for future research into Islamic education projects.

The MSU Quranic League features two distinct Quran Memorization Competitions. Category 1 focuses on developing *Huffazul Quran* (memorizers of the Quran) in *Juzu' Amma* and a selection of specific surahs including surah an-Naba' to *an-Nas, Yasin, al-Sajadah, al-Waqiah, al-Mulk, ar-Rahman, al-Kahfi* (verses 1-10), *Nuh*, and *al-Insan*. This category targets foundational memorization skills and familiarity with frequently recited portions of the al-Quran al-Karim. Category 2 builds upon this foundation challenging participants to memorize *Juzu'* from 1 until 10 of the al-Quran al-Karim, thereby nurturing more extensive memorization abilities.

Next, beyond memorization, the MSU Quranic League strongly emphasizes recitation skills through its Quran Recitation Competition. The primary objective here is to encourage and refine participants' ability to recite the Quran accurately and melodiously. Complementing this is the *Tilawah* Competition, which specifically aims to enhance Tarannum (melodic chanting) and overall

recitation proficiency, adding an aesthetic and spiritual dimension to the participants' skills. The summarize as the table below:

Table 1: Summary of MSU Quranic Leagues Competition Category

Number	Type of Competition	Objectives
1	Quran Memorization Competition (Category 1)	To develop a Huffazul Quran in Juz Amma and the chosen surah (Surah an-Naba' until an-Nas, Yasin, al-Sajadah, al-Waqiah, al-Mulk, ar-Rahman, al-Kahfi verse 1-10, Nuh, al-Insan).
2	Quranic Memorization Competition (Category 1)	To develop a Huffazul al-Quran al-karim from Juzuk 1-10
3	Quranic Memorization Competition (Category 2)	To encourage the Quran recitation skills.
4	Tilawah Competition	To encourage the Taranum and recitation skills.
5	Quran and Fardhu Ain's Quiz	To relate the ability of problem solving and scientific skills. Plus enhancing the leadership and teamwork skills.

Lastly, the Al-Quran Al-Karim and *Fardhu Ain* Quiz broadens the scope of the MSU Quranic League beyond just memorization and recitation. This competition is designed to connect participants' problem-solving and analytical skills with their Quranic knowledge.

Moreover, it actively promotes the enhancement of leadership and teamwork skills, transforming the learning experience into a collaborative and analytical endeavour. This diverse set of competitions collectively underscores the MSU Quranic League's holistic approach to developing well-rounded individuals deeply rooted in Quranic awareness and Islamic principles.

4.2 Statistics of Participation in the MSU Quranic League

The MSU Quranic League has demonstrated remarkable growth and diversification in its participant base and competition categories over the past five years (2021-2025), reflecting its expanding reach and evolving strategic focus.
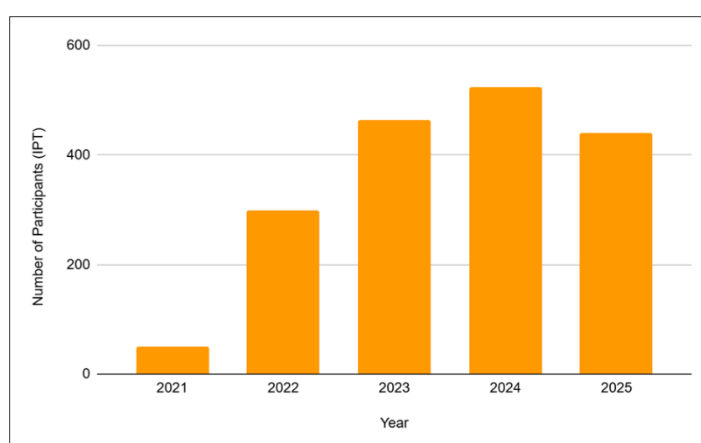

Figure 1: Number of Participation from Higher Education Level (IPTA/S)

Initially, the league primarily served Institutions of Higher Education (IPT), showing consistent growth from 50 participants in 2021 to a peak of 523 in 2024. While there was a slight decline to 441 participants in 2025, this indicates a strong initial establishment and sustained

engagement within the higher education sector. However, the most striking trend is the league's successful expansion into broader demographics.
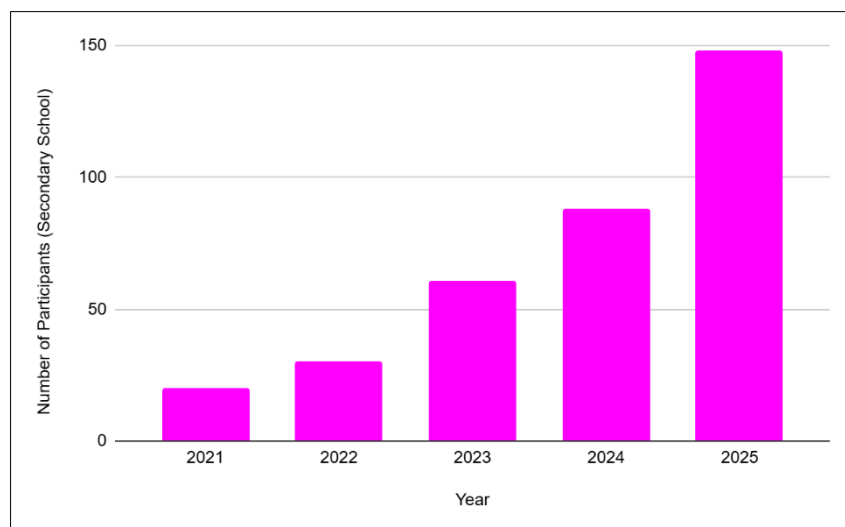

Figure 2: Number of Participation from Secondary Schools

Participation from Secondary Schools has shown continuous and robust growth, escalating from 20 in 2021 to 148 in 2025, suggesting increasing engagement and success in attracting younger students.
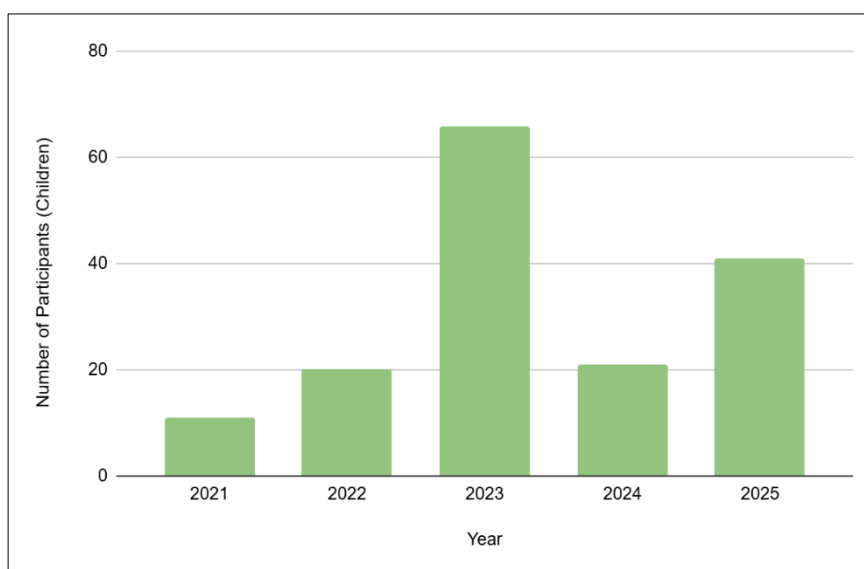

Figure 3: Number of Participation from Children

Similarly, while Children's participation saw a significant surge to 66 in 2023, followed by a dip to 21 in 2024, it recovered to 41 in 2025, indicating a sustained, albeit fluctuating, interest from this young group. Most notably, the adult category has experienced an astonishing rise, from a mere 5 participants in 2022 to an overwhelming 797 in 2025. This explosive growth underscores the league's success in attracting and serving the wider community, effectively transforming it from a university-centric event to a comprehensive platform for Quranic engagement across all age groups.
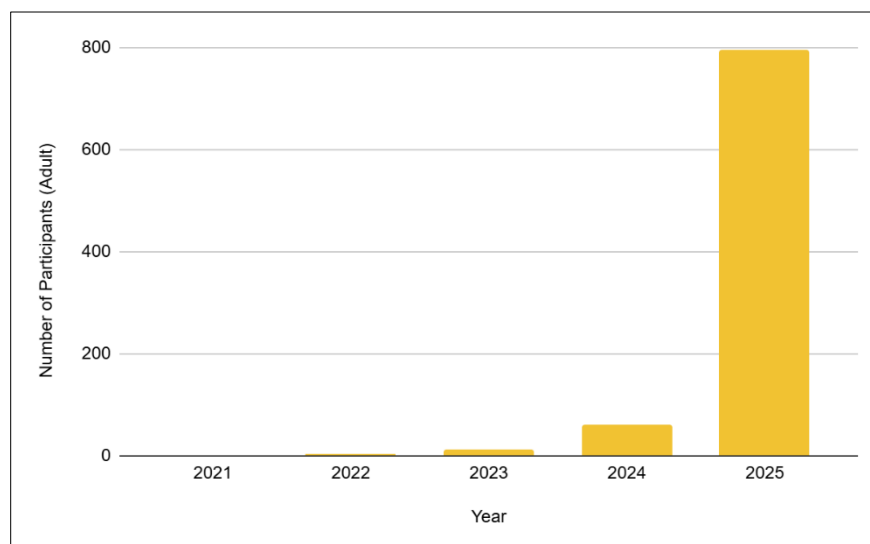

Figure 4: Number of Participation from Adult

An analysis of participation by category between 2024 and 2025 further reveals a clear shift in participant interest and the league's evolving emphasis. The *Hafazan* (Quran Memorization) category saw a substantial increase, more than doubling its participants from 121 in 2024 to 278 in 2025. Concurrently, the *Tahriri* (Quiz/Written) category experienced an even more dramatic surge, rising from 10 participants in 2024 to 53 in 2025, highlighting a growing interest in intellectual and analytical engagement with Quranic knowledge.

Conversely, the *Tilawah* (Recitation) category witnessed a notable decline in participation, dropping from 41 in 2024 to 23 in 2025. This shift suggests that while traditional recitation remains a core component, there is an increasing demand and focus on comprehensive Quranic understanding, encompassing both memorization and cognitive assessment.

The rapid growth in adult participation, coupled with the surge in *Hafazan* and *Tahriri* categories, collectively signifies the league's success in fostering a holistic approach to Quranic learning that resonates with diverse segments of the population and encourages deeper intellectual engagement beyond mere oral proficiency.

5.   CHALLENGES

While the MSU Quranic League has achieved notable success in promoting Quranic literacy and elevating the spiritual life on campus and beyond, it is not without its challenges. To sustain and enhance its impact, it is essential to critically assess the limitations that currently hinder its full potential. Addressing these issues will not only ensure the league's continued success but also foster a more inclusive and sustainable environment for Quranic education.

One of the most pressing challenges facing the MSU Quranic League is the limited access to qualified mentors and trainers, particularly in the specialized areas of Tarannum, Tajwid, and Quran memorization. Although the MSU Quranic League aspires to uphold high standards in Quranic recitation, many participating institutions, and even some faculties within MSU itself, struggle to provide consistent access to experienced instructors. Students from rural or under-resourced areas

often lack formal guidance, which can lead to disparities in performance and subsequently discourage participation.

Moreover, the absence of a well-structured mentorship programme can hinder students from improving their skills beyond basic proficiency. Without a well-supported training ecosystem, the league risks becoming an uneven playing field where only those with pre-existing access to elite instruction can compete effectively.

Closely linked to the training gap are the financial and logistical constraints that challenge the league's scalability and sustainability. Hosting a high-quality, multi-category competition involves considerable expenses, including venue costs, specialized equipment, transportation and accommodation for out-of-state participants, and honorariums for judges and trainers.

While MSU and its partners have done commendable work thus far, relying on intermittent funding or ad hoc sponsorships can make long-term planning difficult. As the l MSU Quranic League's popularity and participation continue to grow, so too does the complexity of its management. This necessitates a more professional and technologically supported administrative framework. Without adequate staffing, robust technological tools, and reliable funding, the league may face significant limitations in expanding its reach or maintaining consistent quality standards across its diverse events.

Another key challenge lies in the difficulty of balancing academic responsibilities with extracurricular commitments. Preparing for Quranic recitation, particularly in demanding categories like *Hafazan* or *Tarannum*, requires a considerable amount of time and dedicated focus. University students, however, must often juggle intensive coursework, assignments, examinations, and other demanding academic obligations.

This inherent time conflict can be especially burdensome during peak academic periods such as midterms or finals, potentially leading to reduced participation or compromised performance quality. Students from other Islamic faculties may feel particularly strained, lacking both the time and institutional encouragement to pursue rigorous Quranic training alongside their core studies. To address this, greater alignment between academic calendars and league activities is needed, along with potential academic accommodations or incentives such as elective credits or co-curricular recognition to ease the burden on participants.

Equally important is the perception of exclusivity that continues to surround the MSU Quranic League. While the initiative is officially open to all students, it is often viewed as being tailored mainly to Islamic Studies majors or students with prior formal Quranic training. This perception can deter those from other faculties who may have an interest in Quranic recitation but lack prior experience or confidence. The absence of clearly advertised beginner-friendly categories, foundational workshops, or lack of explicit messaging about inclusivity reinforces this barrier

As a result, the MSU Quranic League risks missing out on the opportunity to engage a broader and more diverse student population. Overcoming this issue requires intentional efforts to rebrand the league as a universal spiritual and educational platform, genuinely open to learners at all levels and from all disciplines. Establishing entry-level competitions, offering structured mentorship for newcomers, and running targeted cross-faculty promotional campaigns can make a significant difference in diversifying participation and fostering a more inclusive environment.

6.   CONCLUSION

To recapitulate, the MSU Quranic League has evolved into a vibrant platform that effectively integrates academic enrichment with religious observance, cultivating a culture of Quranic excellence among people of all ages. Its inclusive approach and astute use of technology suggest significant long-term impact potential. To ensure long-term viability and increased community

participation, future programs should emphasize community outreach, sustainable funding, and accessible mentorship.

7.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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