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Development and validation of a questionnaire for teacher effective communication in Qur'an learning

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ABSTRACT

A student's perception of teacher effective communication influences the learning atmosphere. The measurement of perception indicates how students view the quality of learning. As few studies have explored the development of an appropriate measurement tool of students' perception of learning to read the Qur'an, this study aims to develop such a tool. Conceptual analysis and a survey using open-ended questions resulted in dimensions and items. Six experts and three instructors evaluated the content validity. The questionnaire was then administered to 421 participants – 201 for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and 220 for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The results successfully identified four dimensions that explained 64.6% of the variation. The instrument consisted of 13 items with satisfactory reliability and validity. The dimension with the highest coefficient path was 'understanding and friendliness' (UF), while the dimension of 'learning media' (LM) was the lowest. There was a significant influence of gender on the dimension of UF, as well as verbal (V) and non-verbal (NV) communication, while there were no differences in the dimension of LM. The questionnaire can be effectively used as a measurement device of dimensions related to students' perception of teacher effective communication in Qur'an learning.

KEYWORDS

Student perception; teacher communication; Qur'an teaching; Islamic education

Introduction

The Qur'an is the heart of a Muslim's life as it contains guidance on how to live according to the rules of the religion. Moreover, the Qur'an is recited in five daily prayers (the recited surah, namely surah al-fatihah and the surah in juz 30), and it is believed that an individual who reads the Qur'an will be greatly rewarded. Due to its significance, Qur'an teaching is the primary and first teaching given to a Muslim individual (Sawari et al. 2016). In countries with majority Muslim populations such as Indonesia and Egypt, Qur'an learning is greatly advanced (Salleh 2013). The Qur'anic language uses Arabic, and Arabic is the second foreign language in Indonesia after English. However, not all schools in Indonesia teach Arabic to their students. This condition warrants an investigation into the efforts that can be made to improve the learning of the Qur'an. Along with the development of current education, there are continued efforts to develop strategies (Musa 2015), methods (Aziz et al. 2016) and media (Muhammad 2012; Alhamuddin et al. 2018) that support Qur'an learning. However, a less

competitive yet significant component of learning – teacher effective communication – is often overlooked.

Teacher communication is the most essential and determining factor in successful learning (Frumkin and Murphy 2007). Effective communication between teachers and students is beneficial to both parties, as students can be enthusiastic about learning if teachers have a significant influence (Zhao 2018). Teachers are not only educators, but also motivators (Matteson, Swarthout, and Zientek 2011), so they must possess an effective communication style. A meta-analysis by Roorda et al. (2011) concluded that a comfortable and pleasant learning atmosphere created by teacher effective communication can help students achieve maximum learning outcomes.

It is essential to continually evaluate teachers' communication styles as they often do not realise the impact of their communication on students (She and Fisher 2002). This case is getting significant attention because in Qur'an learning, the teacher becomes a learning centre (Baba et al. 2015). However, there is no known instrument to measure students' perception of a teacher's communication style while the teacher is teaching the Qur'an. An instrument to measure students' perception in the context of science learning in Asia was previously developed almost two decades ago by She and Fisher (2002). However, we consider this instrument less feasible to measure students' perceptions in the context of Qur'an learning as characteristics of science learning significantly differ from Qur'an learning. This study has two goals. First, to develop a questionnaire of students' perception of teacher effective communication in Qur'an reading classes. Second, to investigate students' perception of teacher effective communication using the developed questionnaire. It is hoped that this instrument will identify an effective communication style expected by students from instructors.

In countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and the UK, the traditional method, which emphasises V and NV communication, has been successfully employed to assist students who are learning how to read the Qur'an (Aziz et al. 2016; Noh et al. 2013; Marhumah 2014). On the other hand, there is an effort to faze out traditional methods for modern methods by developing assistance tools using media technologies (Alhamuddin et al. 2018). Teachers often use educational media as tools to achieve learning goals. Malik and Agarwal (2012) explained that the use of LM would enhance communication between teachers and students. However, our previous findings revealed no significant differences in learning the Qur'an with or without technology, especially in terms of improving the ability to read the Qur'an (Hanafi et al. 2019). This study is also expected to confirm if using LM in an effort to modernise Qur'an learning is indeed necessary and whether it contributes significantly.

A noteworthy obstacle in the field of communication is gender. Although in recent years, gender has gradually become a lesser focus in this field of research, differences in perceptions of word definitions by males and females are problematic and a cause of concern in teacher effective communication (Netshitangani 2008). Another factor is that teachers subconsciously treat female students differently from males, even in areas where females make up the majority (Abosede 2017). In the present study, certain learning environments had a majority of female participants. On the other hand, Matos et al. (2014) showed that there were no differences in perception between male and female students in terms of learning environment. Thus, it must be clarified if the influence of gender also applies to Qur'an learning.

Method

Participants

A questionnaire was administered to 421 university students (ages 18–20) who had studied Qur'an learning for one semester at various faculties at Universitas Negeri Malang (UM), Indonesia. Qur'an learning is still part of the national curriculum in Indonesia and it is compulsory for every university student to attend this course. Qur'an learning intended in this study involves learning how to read the Qur'an and learning that is yet to reach the level of memorising or interpreting. A fundamental

reason for this is that the first and foremost obligation of a Muslim individual is to possess the ability to fluently read the Qur'an. Qur'an learning is guided only by instructors who have mastered the learning system and have at least two recent years of guiding experience. Segregation in terms of the gender of the instructors and students applies. Male instructors are only allowed to teach male students and the same applies to the female instructors and students. Sai (2018) found that the pronunciation approach was more prevalent than the understanding of meaning.

Almost half of the sample, 201 students comprising 37 (18.4%) males and 164 (81.6%) females were tested for EFA, while 220 students comprising 110 males (50%) and 110 females (50%) were tested for CFA. Students were informed that participation was voluntary and unrelated to their final grades.

Procedures

Item generation and reduction

The development of questionnaire items began with a literature review of the topic. Using the keywords 'Qur'an teaching' and 'teacher communication', we surveyed studies published in various journals of education and religion. Three primary authors conducted thematic coding to the search results, which were discussed with two other authors to test coding accuracy. Dimensions of students' perception of teacher effective communication in teaching the reading of the Qur'an emerged. The dimensions were communication, UF and the use of LM by the instructor, and they were further subdivided into 10 items of TC, 7 items of UF and 5 items of LM. Initially, 22 questionnaire items were developed which used a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 = never (teacher never exhibits effective communication behaviour), 2 = sometimes (teacher exhibits effective communication behaviour in at least four meetings), 3 = rare (teachers exhibit effective communication behaviour in at least eight meetings), 4 = frequent (teacher exhibits effective communication behaviour in at least 12 meetings), 5 = always (teacher exhibits effective communication behaviour in at least 16 meetings). Each semester consisted of 16 meetings.

The initial draft of the questionnaire was tested for conformity of items and dimensions by an expert panel and an instructor, who also made recommendations of recoveries to the items. Six experts in addition to the three instructors concluded that at least three items of communication dimension (TC) and three items of UF dimension did not fulfil the requirements. As a result, 16 items (7 of the TC (TC 1–7), 4 of the UF dimension (UF 1–4) and 5 of the LM dimension (LM 1–5)) were ultimately tested for factorial validity.

Testing factorial validity and internal reliability

The first analyses of validity were descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation) and correlations between 16 items of questionnaire and total scores using Pearson's correlation. The primary analyses used were EFA to test the newest dimension, and CFA to check factorial validity. Internal reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha (α), Construct reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Concurrent validity was checked by correlating between dimensions.

Analysing students' perception

Descriptive analysis was performed to determine dimensions that had a significant influence on Qur'an learning. Scores of total dimension and individual dimension based on gender were compared using an independent t-test to confirm if there were differences in perception between male and female students to teacher effective communication in teaching students how to read the Qur'an.

Results

Factorial validity and internal reliability of the questionnaire

From the analysis results, the mean of Teacher Effective Communication-Reading Qur'an Teaching Questionnaire (TEC-RQTQ) items was in the range of 2.96–4.13 (SD was at the range of 0.76–1.06). Scores of total correlation items were at the range of 0.34–0.71. Based on these results, scores of all items did not reach 2.5 SDs from the mean, and the score of correlation was also categorised as moderate (<0.80). Therefore, all items were considered sufficient and maintained.

The measurement of sample adequacy with KMO showed the value of 0.81, categorised as very good (Kaiser 1970). Bartlett's test yielded $\chi^2(120) = 1194.3$, $p = 0.000$, indicating that the analysis factor was suitable. EFA results showed that there was one item with factor loading under 0.5 (TC 7) and one with cross-loading (LM 5). After deleting two items, TC 6 – the only item with an eigenvalue more than 1 – was also deleted. The final dimensions were LM, UF, V communication and NV communication with total variance explained of 64.6% (Table 1). TC was further classified into two dimensions, namely V and NV communication.

We used CFA analysis with a correlated model (Figure 1) to test 13 items (Appendix 1) of the questionnaire resulting from EFA. A very good statistic of goodness-of-fit was found, with $\chi^2/df = 2.121$, RMSEA = 0.044, SRMR = 0.072, CFI = 0.949, GFI = 0.921, NFI = 0.909 and TLI = 0.932. The test using hierarchy model (Figure 2) also yielded a good result with the statistical goodness-of-fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.150$, RMSEA = 0.047, SRMR = 0.072, CFI = 0.947, GFI = 0.918, NFI = 0.909 and TLI = 0.932. Estimation values of Standardised Regression Weights (λ) in both models showed values above 0.50 with a significance of $p < 0.05$ that the observed variables were significant enough in representing its construct latent variable (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007).

The calculation of internal reliability (Table 2) shows that the CR values ranged between 0.71 and 0.87, AVE values ranged between 0.44 and 0.69, and α values ranged between 0.71 and 0.87 with the total value of 0.88. Cronbach's alpha and CR values fulfilled the requirement determined by Hair (2010). Nevertheless, for AVE, not all dimensions fulfilled the criteria. The

Table 1. Exploratory factor analysis of 13 items.

Dimension	Component				Commonality
	1	2	3	4	
Dimension 1. Learning media					
LM 1	0.743				0.707
LM 2	0.786				0.704
LM 3	0.709				0.645
LM 4	0.816				0.708
Dimension 2. Understanding and Friendliness					
UF 1		0.586			0.500
UF 2		0.575			0.705
UF 3		0.798			0.708
UF 4		0.575			0.663
Dimension 3. Verbal communication					
V 1			0.846		0.795
V 2			0.887		0.865
V 3			0.770		0.733
Dimension 4. Non-verbal communication					
NV 1				0.904	0.846
NV 2				0.819	0.813
Eigenvalue	5.702	1.887	1.615	1.126	
% of variance	35.637	11.791	10.094	7.039	
Cumulative %	35.537	47.429	57.523	64.562	

Note: Only factor loadings higher than 50 are reported.

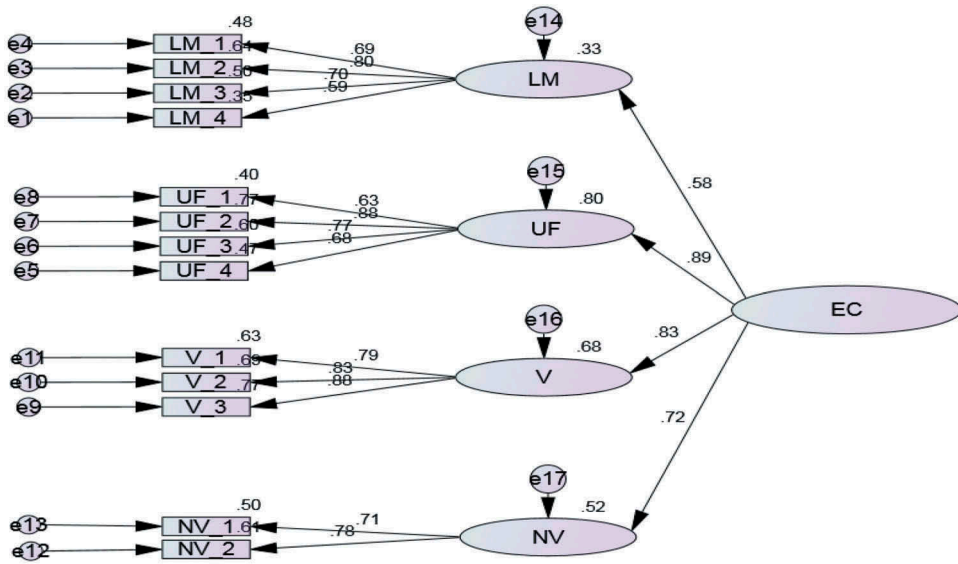


Figure 1. Confirmatory factor analysis based on 13 items and 4 dimensions with correlated model. EC = Effective Communication, LM = Learning Media, UF = Understanding and Friendliness, V = Verbal Communication and NV = Non-Verbal Communication.

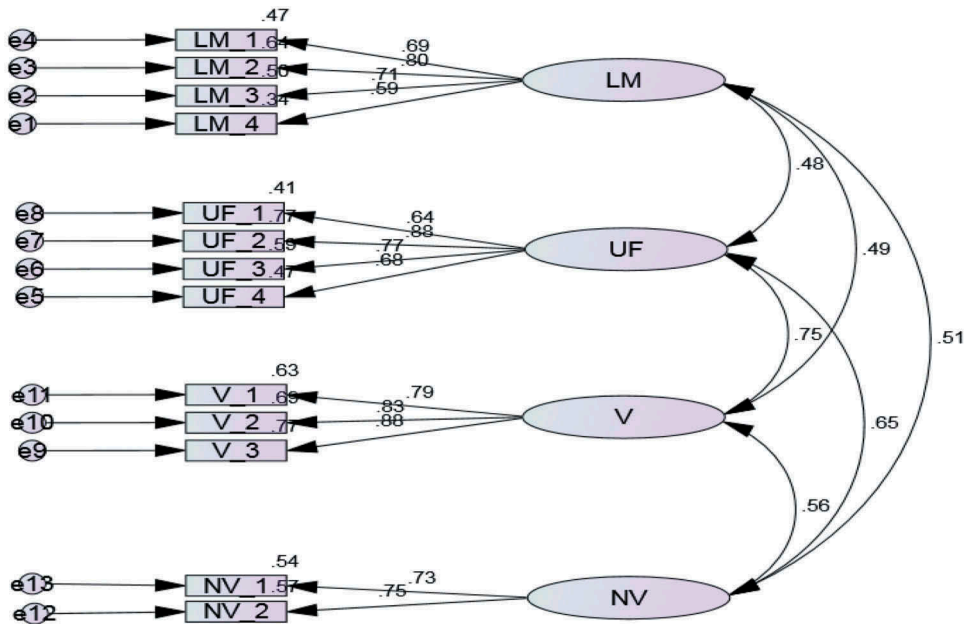


Figure 2. Confirmatory factor analysis based on 13 items and 4 dimensions with hierarchical model. EC = Effective Communication, LM = Learning Media, UF = Understanding and Friendliness, V = Verbal Communication and NV = Non-Verbal Communication.

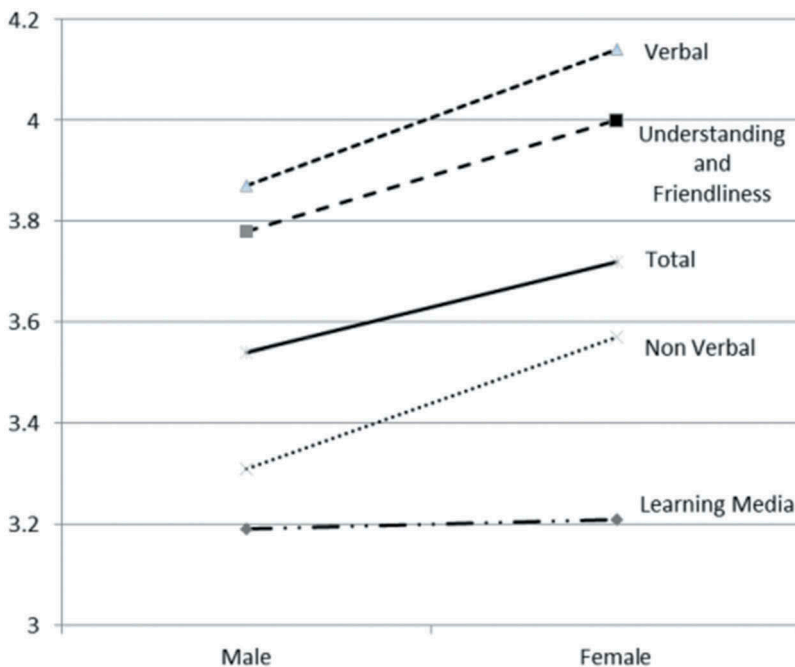
dimensions of V and NV communication met the required AVE value. Two other dimensions (UF and LM) were accomplished but only approached the minimum criteria. Fornell and Larcker (1981) explained that AVE over 0.4 still indicates very significant strength. Counting concurrent validity showed a moderate correlation within the range of 0.40–0.63. The r score between dimension and the total score was not more than 0.80 (Meyers, Gamst, and Guarino 2017).

Table 2. CR, AVE and α of 13 items & 4 dimensions of teacher effective communication.

Dimension	Criteria			
	λ	CR	AVE	A
Dimension 1. Learning media			0.47	0.79
LM 1	0.639			
LM 2	0.798	0.78		
LM 3	0.704			
LM 4	0.589			
Dimension 2. Understanding and Friendliness				0.83
UF 1	0.635			
UF 2	0.876	0.81	0.44	
UF 3	0.773			
UF 4	0.684			
Dimension 3. Verbal communication		0.87	0.69	0.87
V 1	0.793			
V 2	0.830			
V 3	0.876			
Dimension 4. Non-verbal communication				0.71
NV 1	0.708	0.71	0.55	
NV 2	0.779			
Total				0.88

Report of students' perceptions level

Using CFA results with the hierarchy model, we found that the UF dimension had the most significant path coefficient of 0.89 (significant, $p < 0.001$). Meanwhile, the LM dimension was lowest with a value of 0.58 (insignificant, $p > 0.05$). The other two dimensions were categorised as strong and significant ($p < 0.001$). In all, students' perception of learning to read the Qur'an (Figure 3) was 3.63 (SD = 0.60). Analyses on four dimensions indicated that the dimension of V communication had

**Figure 3.** Mean score of dimensions by gender.

the highest score (4.00 ± 0.75), followed by the dimension of UF (3.89 ± 0.73), and NV communication (3.44 ± 0.84). Meanwhile, the lowest score was assigned to the dimension of LM (3.20 ± 0.78).

Results of the independent t-test to all dimensions were $t = -2.189$, $p < 0.05$; the dimension of UF ($t = -2.221$, $p < 0.05$), V ($t = -2.625$, $p < 0.01$), NV ($F = -2.314$, $p < 0.05$), and these scores were significantly higher in females. Meanwhile, in the dimension of LM, there were no differences between genders ($t = -.236$, $p > 0.05$), although scores of female students were higher than those of males.

Discussion and conclusions

This study is the first step towards developing a questionnaire through a statistical and strict psychometric analytical process. The questionnaire was used to identify students' perception of teacher communication in classrooms where they learnt how to read the Qur'an, especially at the university level with the Indonesian population. It is believed that students' perception of teacher communication can create more suitable and effective learning. Students' perception should be initially identified before determining the strategy and media used to teach them how to read the Qur'an.

Thirteen items and four dimensions – LM, UF, V communication and NV communication – were developed through EFA and CFA and were proven valid and reliable. The dimensions were in line with the statement of Center for Excellence in Teaching (1999) that while communicating with students, teachers should focus on three factors, namely effective V communication, gestures and NV signs and technology facilitating communication. These results showed similarities to previous findings (She and Fisher 2002; Matos et al. 2014).

Based on the report of students' perception, we found that the dimension of UF contributed significantly to successful Qur'an learning. Aziz et al. (2016) explained that a teacher's ability to move students' hearts and friendliness were the keys to successful Islamic religion teaching method or with any method. This 'heart-to-heart method' is an essential component that must be considered in an attempt to strengthen Islamic and religious educational strategies (Salleh 2013). Similarly, Noh et al. (2013) and Noh et al. (2014) explained that in Qur'an learning, teachers should be kind and loving as well as be able to accommodate needs of all students. The relationship between students and teachers should be represented by kindness and sympathy (Mohamed and Korani 2015). This dimension is also included in three crucial points in Islamic pedagogy, as stated by Alkoutli (2018).

Two other dimensions, namely, the dimension of V and NV, are also found to significantly contribute. A finding showed that teachers' NV behaviour was extremely consistent with their V behaviour (Chaudhry and Arif 2012). Other results showed that the NV dimension has a significant efficiency similar to V in aspects that enhanced positive and emotional responses from students (Bum and Lee 2016). Therefore, both should be combined to maximise students' positive responses (Bum and Lee 2016; Yusof and Halim 2014) and support faster academic development (Bambaerero and Shokrpour 2017). Wahyuni (2018) explained that students who understood and could answer assignments well were influenced by their teacher's V and NV communication styles. Hence, they should reinforce both communication styles to create high-quality learning.

The dimension of LM did not significantly contribute to successful learning. Results of this study confirmed previous research conducted by the author that evinced that the application of LM was not significantly different from traditional learning (teacher-centred) in Qur'an learning (Hanafi et al. 2019). In other words, Qur'anic learning tends to correspond to the traditional method (passive and teacher-centred learning strategy) which emphasises V and NV communication (face-to-face). Qur'anic learning is often applied in both formal and informal education settings in Indonesia, especially at Islamic schools and Islamic boarding schools (religious schools) that implement teacher-centred methods (Marhumah 2014). This strategy has been applied for decades, and public schools also use it to teach students how to read the Qur'an. In Islamic religious education, there is a notion

that the oral tradition is essential and vital (Sabki and Hardaker 2013). We assume that the condition that causes students' perception of Qur'anic learning is teacher-centred.

Students' perception of Qur'anic learning largely holds the opinion that Qur'anic learning is old-fashioned and different from inclusive and modern science learning (Berglund and Gent 2019). Berglund (2017) explained that Qur'anic education is separate from modern teaching standards as its goal is incomparable. However, it does not mean that the two should be contested. Sai (2018) found teachers very rarely used media in Qur'an teaching and were more inclined to verbalism. The root cause of this phenomenon is the lack of understanding and knowledge of Qur'anic learning as part of an educational practice.

Qur'anic learning methods developed in Indonesia, such as *tasmik*, *talaqqi*, *murajaah*, *tahdir* and *takrar*, have characteristics that are almost identical to language learning which uses the repeated reading method by Samuels (1997). In this method, students' pronunciation is directly corrected by teachers by offering a direct instruction (V communication), while students listen to and see their teacher's faces (NV communication); following this, students repeat the words based on teachers' guidance (Badaruddin et al. 2017). Sai (2018) found that this pronunciation method is a dominant method applied in Qur'anic learning. Therefore, both V and NV communication, as well as teacher's UF to students' improvement are vital to reading in Qur'an learning. In this type of Qur'anic learning, the teacher holds the central role (Putra, Atmaja, and Prananto 2012), while LM is an insignificant component in learning.

This case is in line with the demand in the Qur'an: "*La tuharrik bihi lisanaka lita'jalabih (Al-Qur'an Surah [Q.S.] al-Qiyamah: 16)*" (don't hesitate to move your tongue to read the Qur'an); "*Inna 'alaina jam'ahu wa Quranah (Q.S. al-Qiyamah: 17)*" (Indeed, we will gather and recite the Qur'an); "*Faidza qara'nahu fattabi' Quranah (Q.S. al-Qiyamah: 18)*" (If we have finished reading it, just follow or imitate the reading).

The reported differences in perception showed that on the whole, female students scored higher than males, including on dimensions of UF, V and NC communication. These results indicate that psychologically, females are more influenced by teacher effective communication, which is congruent with previous findings that females receive a better learning environment than males from the aspect of teacher communication and friendliness (She and Fisher 2002; She 2000; Frumkin and Murphy 2007). This difference is caused by different V communication behaviours – males communicate more by using pauses, interruptions and overlapping than females (Opina 2017). Based on these results, TEC-RQTQ could be used to measure the influence of gender on some of the dimensions.

We also stress that these results do not indicate that we recommend maintaining a passive and teacher-centred learning method in teaching students how to read the Qur'an. With these results, we have provided a basis and an opportunity to develop a student-centred Qur'anic learning method mainly for LM integration. There is a belief that technology can improve students' learning motivation and facilitate the learning of the Qur'an (Alwi et al. 2014; Hammza, Daw, and Faryadi 2013; Ramdane and Souad 2017). By identifying these dimensions and the coefficient path (more than 0.5), the use of LM should be reformulated to make it more suitable and effective to be implemented in Qur'anic learning. Computer scientists should continually develop the technology of Qur'an learning (Elhadj 2010; Elhadj et al. 2012) consciously maintaining the dimension of teacher's UF as well as communication skills.

The questionnaire developed in this study can be used by educators to identify students' perception of instructor effective communication in Qur'an classes as the basis to determine a strategy and suitable media to be used while teaching students. This questionnaire can also effectively identify if there are differences in perceptions between instructors and students. Without knowledge of the relationship and distinct perceptions of instructors and students, it will be challenging to determine a strategy to be applied. For researchers, this questionnaire can be employed to identify dimensions influencing successful Qur'anic learning and test them in a quasi- and correlational experimental research. To our knowledge, research on the implementation of a learning strategy that considers determining dimensions is scarce.

Despite its significant contributions, this study has some limitations. The study used a sufficient number of samples but were however restricted to first-year students in one university, and thus, the sample could be considered limited. More samples are expected for retesting, which will yield better validity and reliability. Repeated validity should also be performed while using a population with different characteristics, for example, students in other countries, to improve the accuracy of the data. Another limitation is that this study fails to cover substantial background information on factors that can influence students' perceptions other than gender, such as cognitive skills. The effects of differences in teachers' styles and methods of teaching must be further examined. Moreover, unlike She and Fisher (2002) and Frumkin and Murphy (2007), this questionnaire does not test whether it can identify the relationship between students' perception scores and learning outcome scores. Further research is needed to ensure whether this instrument is applicable to measure and predict students' success in achieving outcomes of reading and learning the Qur'an. In other words, students' perceptions with high scores also have a high learning outcome.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Appendix 1

Items of Teacher Effective Communication in Reading Qur'anic Teaching Questionnaire

Learning Media (LM)

- (1) My teacher uses media or levelling-textbooks so that I can understand even the simplest thing.
- (2) My teacher uses picture media, which for example, describe the articulation position of each letter.
- (3) My teacher uses sound media with a cassette to provide a direct model for Qur'an recitation.
- (4) My teacher uses media such as programs on television because they are more interesting than Qur'anic teaching lessons by directly exemplifying verses.

Understanding and Friendliness (UF)

- (1) My teacher realises when I do not understand or cannot read the Qur'an.
- (2) My teacher is patient while teaching me how to read the Qur'an.
- (3) My teacher is friendly with the class.
- (4) My teacher always supervises the improvement of my reading skills.

Verbal Communication (V)

- (1) My teacher uses simple language and methods while teaching.
- (2) My teacher uses a clear voice while teaching.
- (3) My teacher explains guidelines clearly and simply.

Non-Verbal Communication (NV)

- (1) Without talking and using only eye contact, my teacher supports me as I read words or verses from the Qur'an.
- (2) My teacher nods to show support when I am struggling to learn (and spell or read) some words of verses of the Qur'an.