

Exploring the Factors Affecting Competitors' Performance at Qur'anic Recitation Competition: A Case of Compliance with Techniques of Recitation (Ahkamut-Tajweed)

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ABSTRACT: The role played by techniques of recitation of the Glorious Qur'an remains significant in sharpening appreciation capacity and level of compliance with the rules which ultimately enhances the competitors' chances of emerging as the best. In spite of the role played by various schools and non-school-based capacity building practices, performance of most participants at recitation competitions remained not as impressive as anticipated in a bid to maintain an unchanged position in the international competition. This research intends to arrive at an empirical conclusion on the relationship between both direct and indirect factors and competitors' performance in the context of compliance with rules of recitation of the glorious Qur'an especially as they manifest at recitation competition (Local, national or International). The study population was six thousand (6000) constituted by the three (3) major (population) centers of Gombe state (represented by three senatorial districts) in the Northeastern Nigeria. Gombe has 300, Akko, 180 and Kaltungo, 120 with corresponding samples of 169, 123 and 92 respectively. This is driven based on (Krejci and Morgan 1970). The justification behind the choice of the population is facilitated by the level of success recorded by the state in the competition (National and International) leading to emergence of champions in recent times. The study established the significance or otherwise of linguistic elements, parental background/occupational status, geographical location, nature of schools, training or capacity building methods adopted by schools among others in the determination of competitors' propensity to perform well at recitation competition regardless of levels of such completion.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The role played by techniques of recitation of the Glorious Qur'an remains significant in sharpening appreciation capacity and level of compliance with the rules which ultimately enhances chances for competitors to comply with such rules hence their performance during recitation competition at local, state or national level. In effect, the ability of competitors or even their states of origin to be identified with any sort of excellence in this regard depends solely on competitors' ability to comply on one hand and institutional ability to entrench a practice (training and related packages) to develop the skills in the competitors on the other hand.

This work, which hopes to, using compliance with the techniques of recitation, will examine the strength or otherwise of the relationship between both direct and indirect factors and competitors' performance. A combination of systematic and stratified sampling was adopted due to geographical concentration of respondents in the study areas and the decision to generalize results obtained there from the general population. The expected outcome from the work is to determine the significance or otherwise of each of the identified parameters notably linguistic elements such as accent, occupational orientation of parents, socio economic status of parents, geographical location, mode of capacity building and training adopted by schools, denominational variations, system of reading (Hafs/Warsh) and host of others to competitors performance.

It has become evident that Qur'anic recitation competition has become a major, (although not absolutely formalized in the national calendar of events) multi-level activity observed by the Muslim population of the country. This same activity is instituted with most if not all the paraphernalia of a regular formal process where control is exerted through established behavior or actions superintended and regulated by appointed judges with a view to measuring compliance with such techniques (Ahkam Al-Tajweed) as provided in the observed framework.

In attaining the above, competitors emerge from similar practice at lower levels commencing from local government to national on knock out basis. The major concern of this research work is to examine the factors that aid the competitors in performing at the competition regardless of the level at which the competition holds. It is only natural to understand that Islamiyyah schools play role in preparing such competitors although it may not necessarily always be the case, but to a significant extent, they perform larger part of the task. It is the preoccupation of this work to measure if each of the identified parameters plays any role in that direction or not. By using the appropriate methodology, the parameters will be rated as contributory or otherwise. To be conducted in the three senatorial districts of Gombe state, this research will unearth the exact quantum of influence that training, linguistic factors, denominational orientation and parental status among others have on the propensity of a competitor to apply/observe the techniques of reciting the Holy Qur'an.

Statement of problem/ Justification

In spite of the role played by various schools and non-school-based capacity building practices, performance of most participants at recitation competitions remained unimpressive over a long period of time resulting in Nigeria's inability to consolidate intellectual influence by maintaining an unchanged position in the international competition or at most emerging overall in all categories over the years. This doesn't remain restricted to training practices as other socio-demographic elements such as orientation of family, occupation of parents, linguistic identity to mention but a few have remained influential in the determination of one's performance but they continue to deter compliance in different respects.

Relevant still, the corresponding legislations (recitation and related issues) are scarcely obtainable. This should have been integrated into the conventional curriculum or adoption of the existing ones by all national examination bodies offering Arabic/Islamic studies.

Objective(s) of the Study

This research intends to arrive at an empirical conclusion on the relationship between both direct and indirect factors that play key roles in competitors' performance in the context of compliance with rules of recitation of the glorious Qur'an especially as they manifest at recitation competition (Local, national or International). Specifically:

I- To measure the influence of Mother tongue on performance of competitors.

II- To determine the effect of environmental factors on performance of competition.

III- To identify most preferred style of Qur'anic recitation.

Qur'an and its related sciences, being the most important field of study among Muslims, have received attentions from Muslim and non-Muslim writers right from the early days of Islam. A lot of literatures have been developed on the area by scholars from different background. For the purpose of this research, we shall review few literatures in the following lines. Al-Imam (al-Suyuty, 2003) in his famous work *al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*, which is published in four volumes, has extensively discussed on various issue related to the science of the Qur'an. In the first volume, he examines the merit of reciting the Qur'an in its correct mode and the lots of rewards attached it to by Allah. He quoted a number of Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions on the merits and rewards of not only the recitation of the Qur'an but reciting it in a perfect manner. The book is a rallying point in the area of place and manner of articulation of the Qur'anic alphabets. The book was written in the tenth century after *Hijrah* in a purely Arabic dominant society which does not require any explanation on the impact/effect of correct pronunciation of the letters in the recitation of the Qur'an. Another book of interest to this research is (al-Zarqany, 2001) *Manahil al-Irfan fi Ulim al-Qur'an* which also discusses extensively on a number of topics related to the sciences of the Qur'an. He discusses in details the revelation of the Qur'an in 'seven letters' and the development of the science of Qur'anic recitation as well as the popular reciters of the Qur'an in the early days of Islam. Other books that are equally important in this area include (al-Idreesy, 2005) *Ahkaam al-Tanzeel...*, (Zalt, 2006) *Ahkaam al-Tajweed...*, (al-Jamzury, 2003) *al-Qa'idah al-Madaniyyah...*, (A'zamī, 2011.) *The History of the Qur'anic Text...* etc.

Equally important to this research is the work of (Toranto) *Help Yourself in Reading Qur'an* which was written in English to guide non-Arabic speaking readers on proper manner of articulation of Arabic alphabets and its impact in correct recitation of the Qur'an. The author started with simple pronunciation to complex and presented the letters in different forms.

However, there are very little and scanty materials written on Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Nigeria, particularly the factors that affects the participants' performance and the factors responsible for that. The few researches done in this field, mostly concern with historical development, challenges and prospects of the competition rather than the factors influencing the participants' performance in the competition. Some researchers assess the impact of the competition on a particular section of the Nigerian society; one of such researches is (Muhammad Gusau, 2012) "The Effects of Qur'anic Recitation Competition to the Contemporary Muslim Women in Northern Nigeria." This research highlights some significant effect of *Musabaqah* on Women in Northern Nigeria with particular reference to North Western States of Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara and

Kano states. (Abdulhamid, 2015) "Impact and Challenges of Qur'anic Recitation Competition in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja." also discuss issues relating to the competition in the FCT. Another similar work in this area include (Muhammad, 2014) "The Development and Integration of Qur'anic Schools in Nigeria" a Ph.D. work which discusses the effect of integrating Qur'anic Schools in the UBE curriculum in promoting good recitation of the Qur'an. Others are Murtala Muhammad's work "Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Bauchi" a B.A Degree project in the University of Maiduguri, 2012.

Another literature which is of significance to this study (Mustapha, 2012) is titled "*kaifa Tahfizu Al-Qur'an*" written by Murad Mustapha. This book is a contemporary literature on the subject because the second edition was published in 2012. Considering the title of the book which is "How to memorize the Qur'an" the author has taken different approach to his predecessors. This is a book written for students seeking to memorize the Qur'an and as the author is obviously accustomed with their requirement, he has made the book to look as a compendium of the subject matter at hand despite its compact size of two hundred and fifty pages. The book consists of ninety-three short chapters; the first seven of these chapters pertains to the etiquettes of memorising the Qur'an. Then followed by about eleven chapters that deals with Qur'anic phonetical rules as is contained in most books that deals with the subject, but with a different approach since the author has encapsulated these rules in tables and diagrams giving the reader a general overview of the whole concept.

Looking at the contents of the above literatures, there is a wide area that needs to be covered, particularly the extent of impacts of some variables such as mother tongue, environmental impact, compliance to the rules of *Tajweed* in the recitation of the Qur'an and the participants' performance at local, state, national and international levels of the Qur'anic Recitation Competition.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used survey method in order for information so generated to prove evidence-based and non-spurious. This translated into the use of the following:

a. Population of the Study

The study population is six thousand (600) constituted by the three (3) major (population) centers of Gombe state (represented by three senatorial districts) in the Northeastern Nigeria. Gombe has 300, Akko, 180 and Kaltungo, 120 with corresponding samples of 169, 123 and 92 respectively. This is driven based on (Krejci and Morgan 1970). The justification behind the choice of the population was facilitated by the level of success recorded by the state in the competition (National and International) leading to emergence of champions in recent times.

b. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sample size was 384 as indicated above. This was calculated using Krejcie and Morgan, (1970). This certainly assures higher representation as dictated by conventional wisdom which supposes that the higher the sample, the more accurate the results. In addition, the percentage is considered as scientifically representative and statistically significant. A combination of systematic and stratified sampling was adopted due to geographical concentration of respondents in the study areas and the decision to generalize results obtained there from the general population (Saunders, 2009).

c. Source(s) of Data

The primary data: This study, in a bid to ensuring that first-hand information provides platform for reliable conclusion, both questionnaires and interview schedules were administered and conducted respectively. The later becomes necessary in the interest of enhancing the findings that may emerge from responses so gathered from field using close-ended questions.

The secondary data: In order to also situate the research in an uncompromising position, current trends will be allowed the opportunity for moderation. This is largely attained through the use of existing literature sourced through books, journals and other forms of periodicals. This strengthens conclusion built on constructive opinion.

a. Methods of Data Analysis

The study intends to use advanced statistical tools to assess the existence of relationship between the set of responses generated from the three centers as well as logistic regression (multiple) to determine the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable

Data Measurement and Variable Descriptions

Multinomial logistic regression.

Multinomial logistic regression is the linear regression analysis to conduct when the dependent variable is nominal with more than two levels. Thus, it is an extension of logistic regression, which analyses dichotomous (binary) dependents. Since the SPSS output is somewhat different to the logistic regression's output, multinomial regression is sometimes used instead.

To empirically analyze the factors affecting competitor's performance at Qur'anic Recitation Competition(s), the research used the multinomial logistic regression model; hence the specification of the model is as follows:

Competitors performance = f (mother tongue influence, environmental factors)

Competitors_performance

= f(taakid, unilateral orientation, national curriculum, hallmark perfection)

$$Y = F(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4,)$$

Where

Y = Competitors performance

X₁ = taakid Lafzi

X₂ = unilateral orientation

X₃ = national curriculum

X₄ = hallmark perfection

Multinomial regression is a multi-equation model, similar to multiple linear regression. For a nominal dependent variable with k categories the multinomial regression model estimates k-1 logit equations. Although SPSS does compare all combinations of k groups it only displays one of the comparisons. The multinomial regression procedure in SPSS allows selecting freely one group to compare the others with. Hence this research used the last category 'strongly disagree' (SD) as the reference category.

There are several tests that are commonly used in association with the multinomial logistic regression model. First, we can test that all of the coefficients associated with an independent variable are simultaneously equal to zero (i.e., test that a variable has no effect).

Second, we can test whether the independent variables differentiate between two outcomes; this test is commonly used to determine if two outcomes can be combined using either the Hausman test or the likelihood-ratio (LR) test proposed by McFadden et. al (1976) and improved by small and Hsiao (1985). Given the difficulties of interpretation that are associated with multinomial logit model. When models are constructed based on prior testing using the same data, significance level should only be used as a rough guideline.

$$\text{logit}(y = 1) = \log\left(\frac{p(y=1)}{1-p=1}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_{11} + \beta_2X_{12} + \beta_3X_{13} + \beta_4X_{14}$$

$$\text{logit}(y = 2) = \log\left(\frac{p(y=2)}{1-p=2}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_{21} + \beta_2X_{22} + \beta_3X_{23} + \beta_4X_{24}$$

$$\text{logit}(y = 3) = \log\left(\frac{p(y=3)}{1-p=3}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_{31} + \beta_2X_{32} + \beta_3X_{33} + \beta_4X_{34}$$

$$\text{logit}(y = 4) = \log\left(\frac{p(y=4)}{1-p=4}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_{42} + \beta_2X_{42} + \beta_3X_{43} + \beta_4X_{44}$$

Construction of Indices

Competitors' performance can be approximated by constructing indices which summarize various variables capturing phenomena of interest. We construct indices of competitors' performance and factors affecting it. Our proxies were 'Linguistic adaptation bridges the gap between mother tongue oriented recitation and the science of *Ahkam Al-Tajwid*' "*for competitors performance*", "*taakid*" for 'Stress is capable of influencing accent and other linguistic characteristics of a competitor'(influence of mother tongue), "*unilateral orientation*" for 'That *Islamiyyah* School considering their unilateral orientation (specific) have higher tendency of producing more successful competitors'(Environmental factor), "*national curriculum*" for 'That Public schools with standard (Nation) Islamic religious studies curriculum tend to train competitors more excellently'(Environmental factor), "*hallmark perfection*" for 'Hallmark perfection (*Alamatul kamal*) manifests in absolute compliance with *Ahkam Al-Tajwid* by a competitor (influence of mother tongue).

Results (Expected outputs/Results)

The study established the significance or otherwise of linguistic elements, parental background/occupational status, geographical location, nature of schools, training or capacity building methods adopted by schools among others in the determination of competitors' propensity to perform well at recitation competition regardless of levels of such completion. This will also have implications for curriculum

development or formulation of capacity building frameworks of schools and related supervisory or regulatory bodies charged with corresponding responsibilities.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This segment highlights the analysis of the results and major findings of the study. Therefore, it gives summary statistics of the variables used in the study, presents the multinomial logistic regression results estimated from the software, SPSS v23, test the hypothesis earlier raised in chapter one, evaluate the model and draw some policy implication of the findings.

Data Presentation/ Summary Statistics

Chronbach's alpha analysis.

Generally, a questionnaire with an alpha (α) of 0.8 is considered reliable (Field, 2009). Hence, this questionnaire is certainly reliable, since the α is 0.81. However, since the α of this questionnaire is higher than 0.8, we can assume that it is reliable (Field, 2009).

Parameter Estimates.

B.: these are the estimated multinomial logistic coefficients for the models.

An important feature of the multinomial logit model is that it estimates k-1 models, where k is the number of levels of the outcome variable. In this instance, SPSS v23 is treating the SD (Strongly Disagreed) as the referent group and therefore estimated a model for SA (Strongly Disagreed) relative to SD, a model for A (Agreed) relative to SD, N (Neutral) relative to SD and D (Disagreed) relative to SD. Therefore, since the parameter estimates are relative to the referent group, the standard interpretation of the multinomial logit is that for a unit change in the predictor or independent variable, the logit of outcome relative to the referent group is expected to change by its respective parameter estimate (which is in log-odds units) given the variable in the models are held constant.

Std. Error: these are the standard errors of the individual regression coefficients for the four respective models estimated.

Wald: this is the Wald chi-square test that tests the null hypothesis that the estimate equals zero (0).

Df: this column lists the degrees of freedom for each variable included in the model. Each of these variables, the degree of freedom is 1.

Sig.: these are the p-values of the coefficients or the probabilities that, within a given model, the null hypothesis that a particular predictor's regression coefficient is zero given that the rest of the predictors are in the model. They are based on the Wald statistics of the predictors.

Exp(B): These are the odds ratios for the predictors. They are the exponentiation of the coefficients. The odds ratio of a coefficient indicates how the risk of the outcome variable falling in the comparison group compared to the risk of the outcome variable falling in the referent group changes with respect to the variable in question. The Exp (B) column is the most important column in interpreting a multinomial logistic regression.

SA relative to SD Exp(B).

For 'Taakid Lafzi' in a one-unit increase in response, the 0.370 Exp(B) value of this variable shows that respondents on the category of SA are less likely to SD that Taakid Lafzi affects competitors' performance and the variable is statistically significant in explaining the dependent variable with 0.001 significance level.

'Unilateral orientation' shows while in one-unit increase here postulates that respondents on the category of SA are less likely to SD that unilateral orientation affects competitors' performance with the value less than 1 of 0.623, though the variable is statistically insignificant as the significance level is greater 0.05 (0.107).

For a one-unit increase in response as well here, the Exp(B) 1.291 value indicates, those in the category of SA are more likely to SD that 'National curriculum' influence competitors' performance but the variable happens to be statistically insignificant (0.420).

'Hallmark perfection' as an independent variable here, comes with the Exp(B) 0.619 value indicating that a one-unit increase in this variable, respondents on the category of SA are less likely to SD that Hallmark perfection affects or influence competitor's performance. The variable is statistically significant.

A relative to SD Exp(B).

In this category, the Exp(B) 0.549 of the 'Taakid' variable shows that, respondents in the category A having one-unit increase in the variable are less likely to SD, that Taakid influence competitor's performance. In this category as well, the variable is statistically significant.

The variable 'unilateral orientation' have the Exp(B) 0.709 meaning, in this category (A) in a one-unit increase in the variable, it is less likely to SD that 'unilateral orientation' influences competitors' performance. The variable is statistically insignificant.

National curriculum as an independent variable here, have the Exp(B) 1.299 value meaning, a one-unit increase here, respondents on the category A are more likely to SD that 'National curriculum' influences competitors' performance. It is a statistically insignificant variable.

For hallmark perfection Exp (B) 1.019, a one-unit increase in response, those on the category A are more likely to SD that the variable influences competitors' performance. The variable is also statistically insignificant.

For N relative to SD Exp(B).

For Taakid in this category Exp (B) 0.658, indicating that with a one-unit increase in response, those in this category (N) are less likely to SD that Taakid influence competitors' performance. The variable is statistically insignificant here.

A one-unit increase in unilateral orientation with Exp (B) value of 0.788, respondents on this category N are less likely to SD that it actually influences competitors' performance. The variable is statistically insignificant.

With one-unit increase in 'National curriculum' response with the coefficient of Exp(B) 1.243. Respondents on this category N are more likely to SD that the variable influences competitors' performance. This variable is statistically insignificant as well.

In the same fashion, one-unit increase in Hallmark perfection having this coefficient Exp(B) 0.804, respondents in this category N are less likely to SD that the variable influences competitors' performance. The variable is statistically insignificant.

For D relative to SD Exp (B).

Taakid in this category has Exp(B) 0.788 value, whereby, a one-unit increase in the variable will make respondents in this category D to less likely SD that the variable influence competitors' performance. The variable is statistically insignificant though.

The same way, a one-unit increase in unilateral orientation (Exp(B) 0.736) will make respondents in this category D to less likely SD that the variable influences competitors' performance. Unilateral orientation is statistically insignificant.

A one-unit increase in National curriculum having the coefficient Exp(B) 1.221, respondents in D category are less likely to SD that the Variable influences competitors' performance. The variable is statistically insignificant.

Hallmark perfection as a variable with the coefficient Exp(B) 1.030. meaning, a one-unit increase in the variable, will cause the respondents in this category D more likely to SD that Hallmark perfection influences competitors' performance.

III. CONCLUSION

The parameters used concentrate more on topographical/topological information rather than the core issues affecting the performance. More important issues like ability to read Arabic alphabets and words, understanding the language, certain signs in the Qur'an such as *alamah al-waqaf*, etc are important in this regard.

Nigeria makes significant performance at international level with 1st to 3rd positions in different international Qur'anic competition.

Relevant still, the corresponding legislations (recitation and related issues) are scarcely obtainable. This should have been integrated into the conventional curriculum or adoption of the existing ones by all national examination bodies offering Arabic/Islamic studies

It should have been Tahfiz or Islamiyyah/Tahfiz because nowadays, tahfiz are distinct from ordinary Islamiyyah and takes Qur'anic recitation and memorization as their specialization.

This response is contrary to the reality because most of those who participate in the competition are privately trained by Tahfiz/islamiyyah schools which largely belong to the communities and/or religious organizations.

To maintain that Warsh and Hafs are the most preferred styles of recitation may not hold water with most people engaged in the actual conduct of the *Musabaqah* or Qur'anic competition since all the seven most authentic riwayat are allowed at the *Musabaqah* platform even though not in all circumstances.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Nigeria should adopt workable framework for the consolidation of her identity as a country that makes significant performance at international level. This can be achieved by acknowledging mother tongue, linguistic related variable and other socio-demographic elements in the development and implementation of operational frameworks.

Considering the fact that corresponding legislations (recitation and related issues) are scarcely obtainable, all interested states of the federations should fast track the integration of Ahkamu-at-tajweed into the conventional curriculum or adoption of the existing ones by all national examination bodies offering Arabic/Islamic studies

Following the trend where most of those who participate in the competition are privately trained by Tahfiz/Islamiyyah schools which largely belong to the communities and/or religious organizations, government should integrate such institutions in the development of education sector budget estimate, ensure allocation of funds as well as hold them accountable in the contest of quality assurance and best practices.

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