

A FRAMEWORK TO ANALYZE THE EFFICIENCY OF PRIVATE TAHFIZ IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

The increasing demand for Tahfiz has increased the number of Tahfiz institutions operating in Malaysia. Many Tahfiz institutions have been developed to fulfill the market demand. Unfortunately, this institution is reported to face several problems that can hinder its performance. Hence, measuring its efficiency is crucial because society needs to know the level of efficiency of the institutions that are responsible for student memorization and ensure the objectives can be achieved. Hence, Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) is chosen as a measurement approach to measure the efficiency of the Tahfiz institution. Thus, this concept paper will highlight the importance of measuring performance and proposing a measurement approach to measure the performance of tahfiz institutions in Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

Regardless of all development of Tahfiz institutions in Malaysia, some major issues have been frequently highlighted by previous studies. One of the major issues of Tahfiz institutions in Malaysia is the insufficient fund received (Anas, Samori, Hamid, Zulkipli, & Noor, 2019; Azha, Baharuddin, Suyurno, Rani, & Hamid, 2013; Kamal & Seman, 2017). Currently, both private and public Tahfiz institutions fully depend on students' fees to support their operating costs. However, the amount received is insufficient to support their activities. They obtain funds from the federal government, state government as well as the public in terms of Tahfiz, sadaqah, and zakat. Hence, for the sustainability of their institutions, excellent performance is crucial. The failure of Tahfiz institutions to achieve good performance will lead to failure to achieve the objectives. Indirectly, it will reduce public confidence towards the Tahfiz operators. Therefore, maintaining excellent performance is not an option, it is a requirement for all organizations (Noor, Rasool, Rahman, Yusof, & Ali, 2012).

In addition, other issues that are often associated with Tahfiz institutions in Malaysia are related to the unstandardized curriculum provided by the Tahfiz institution based on their owner preferences. Most of the private Tahfiz did not have recognition from the government-authorized body. Therefore, this

certificate cannot be used to continue their study in other government institutions such as collage and universities. Hence, the government through Darul Quran has introduced Sijil Tahfiz Malaysia (STM) for all private Tahfiz students that need recognition of their memorization. They need to sit for the exam organized by Darul Quran to get the certificate. Most of the private Tahfiz did not take the new Tahfiz curriculum by the government due to several issues such as they need to prepare a competent teacher following the rules and regulations by the government. There is also a mentality that the government will take over their institutions once they follow the government curriculum.

Furthermore, issues related to the characteristics of teachers who teach memorization subjects are also among the debated issues. According to Prof Dato Dr. Ab Halim Tamuri, Rector of Kolej Universiti Islam Selangor (KUIS) has stated that The Tahfiz Teacher Training Institute needs to be established to coordinate the curriculum and standard teaching methods in the Tahfiz schools (Yahaya, 2018). Besides, the public also cannot consider teachers to graduate in Islamic Education studies can become good Tahfiz teachers because Tahfiz requires teaching specialization. Meanwhile, a study by M. Yahaya (2017) stated that there are about 40% of non-Tahfiz graduates become a Tahfiz teacher in MRSM Ulul Albab in Negeri Sembilan, Terengganu, and Pulau Pinang. Whereas only 20 out of 62 Tahfiz teachers in MRSM Ulul Albab have undergone training to become Tahfiz teachers. Even though Tahfiz graduate is increasing, the issue of lack of graduate teachers in Tahfiz institutions is still not enough. This problem occurs simply because the certificate is not recognized by Darul Quran.

The concerns of efficiency of Tahfiz institutions arise when most of the studies conducted in the Tahfiz area are focusing on memorization techniques (Muhaidi Hj Mustaffa al-Hafiz & Sawari, 2018; Sedek, Mustaffa, Mohd, & Khader, 2014) and competencies of teachers (Ghani, 2018; Hashim, Rahim, & Abdullah, 2016; Hashim, Tamuri, & Jemali, 2015). In Malaysia, Tahfiz is managed and administered by different authorities namely federal, state, and individual. Consequently, measuring the efficiency of Tahfiz institutions is crucial as this may affect the potential benefit received by the beneficiaries and may reduce public confidence towards Tahfiz institutions.

Thus, the rest of the paper will be organized as follow. The next section will discuss the background of Tahfiz institutions in Malaysia. This followed by measuring the efficiency of Tahfiz institutions in Malaysia and lastly proposed an approach to be used to measure the Tahfiz efficiency.

BACKGROUND OF TAHFIZ INSTITUTIONS IN MALAYSIA

In the pre-independence period, Muslims in Malaya learn Islam informally through Quranic teachers and Islamic scholars. They learned only basic things in Islam including writing al-Quran (Jawi), all matters related to the Fardhu Ain, the pillars of Islam, and the pillars of Faith (Amin & Jasmi, 2012). In Melaka, residential schools known as Pondok emerged as the prototype institutions offering an organized form of Islamic education. The method employed was the *Talaqqi* (opening the book) by which a Tok Guru would sit at the center of a semicircle formed by his students when delivering lessons, with an emphasis on memorization. Tok Guru himself graduated his student with a simple testimonial (Hamid, 2017).

In the 18th century, education on Islamic fundamentals was growing with the migration of scholars and preachers from the Middle East to Malaya (Abdullah, Abdullah, & Rosman, 2015). The migration has further stimulated the spread of Islam in Malaya. However, the spread of Islam faced a few obstacles such as the lack of teachers and schools. Hence, to overcome the problem, some of the scholars made their homes as well as a mosque for teaching the Quran.

After the independence on August 31, 1957, jurisdiction over Islamic education has occupied a gray area between the federal government and the nine state governments whose Malay Rulers act as the Heads of the Islamic religion in their respective states. In Malaysia, Islamic school is divided into two namely formal and informal educations. Formal Islamic schools are part of the national education system and offer general subjects alongside the religious curriculum. Students of formal Islamic schools are obligated to sit for the national examination and may use their high school qualifications to further their

studies at the tertiary level. Most formal Islamic schools are public, either managed by the Ministry of Education or the State Islamic Religious Council, but there has been an increasing number of formal private Islamic schools in recent years.

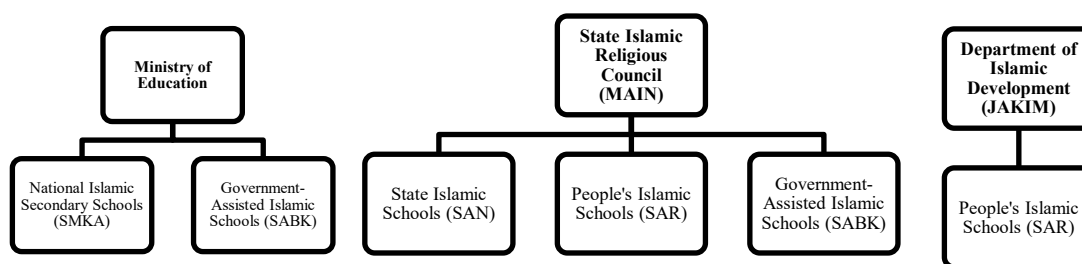


Figure 1. The Management of Islamic Schools in Malaysia

As shown in Figure 1 below, the management of Islamic schools in Malaysia involves overlapping jurisdictions of three agencies namely the Ministry of Education (via the Islamic Education Section), the State Islamic Religious Council, and the Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM). Meanwhile, informal Islamic schools are *Pondok*, Tahfiz institutions, and some People's Islamic Schools (SAR). These schools offer an exclusively Islamic curriculum, and in the case of Tahfiz institutions, the sole focus is memorizing the Al-Quran. Many Muslim parents send their children to these institutions because they believe that their children would receive a more rigorous religious learning than informal Islamic schools, which in turn, prepares their children to become better Muslims (Hassan, Fakhruddin, Mutalib, & Jaafar, 2015). However, a few years back Tahfiz institutions have been embedded into formal Islamic schools such as Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SMKA), Sekolah Berasrama Penuh (SBP), and Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan (SABK) with the addition of Tahfiz subject.

Despite the advances of public Tahfiz institutions, such development is not evident among privately funded Tahfiz institutions. This is probably due to a lack of systematic framework or governance in managing Tahfiz institutions in the country. Currently, the overall curriculum and schooling system in Tahfiz institutions are not standardized due to the different objectives of the owner or founder of Tahfiz institutions as mentioned earlier. This intends to influence the governance of the institutions as well. As an organization, lack of governance contributes to the issue of determining the efficiency and effectiveness of Tahfiz institutions. Thus, this leads to difficulties in measuring the efficiency of Tahfiz institutions (Ridza, Jalil, Sipan, & Nukman, 2017). The current scenario post difficulties in determining the efficiency of Tahfiz institutions. Despite the difficulties in measuring efficiency, there is a critical need to ensure these institutions achieve their goal and objective.

EFFICIENCY OF PRIVATE TAHFIZ IN MALAYSIA

Performance measurement is an important component of organizations. The performance measurement overall is determined by the ability of the organization or individuals to increase their funds to fulfill their mission and objectives (Alfirevic, Pavicic, & Najev-Cacija, 2014). Besides, the funders need to know how successful the organization is in achieving its mission with the resources provided by them. Due to the important role of performance measurement within the organization, it is widely known that accurate performance measurement is significant for the continuous improvement of the organization (Achterbergh, Beeres, & Vreien, 2003). Thus, measuring its performance is crucial to maintaining public confidence in this institution. By measuring the performance, all stakeholders can get information about the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions and suitable action can be taken to improve their performance.

DEA was developed to measure the efficiency of a set of units named Decision Making Units (DMU) with a proposed model called the CCR model (Charnes, Cooper, & Rhodes, 1978). By using the linear programming approach, the DEA will measure the efficiency of the DMU in utilizing their input and output. Besides the CCR model, Banker, Charnes, and Cooper (BCC) model is another version of DEA

which is commonly used in measuring efficiency. The main difference between CCR and BCC model is the treatment return to scale. The CCR model is more to constant returns to scale (CRS) while the BCC model is more flexible and allows variable returns to scale (VRS). Initially, this method is used to measure the performance of the public sector such as government and not-for-profit organizations (Bowlín, 1998).

A few studies have been conducted to measure the efficiency of education institutions by using the same method of DEA such as Kashim, Kasim, & Abd Rahman (2018) studied the efficiency of a university faculty using a hierarchical network Data Envelopment Analysis model. Meanwhile, Ali, Pant, Rana, & Jauhar (2017) analyzed the performance of 15 academic departments in government PG college in India for the academic year 2011 to 2012. This study tries to compare two types of efficiency 1) teaching efficiency and 2) research efficiency. By using the same method, Alabdulmenem (2016) analyzed the efficiency of 25 public universities in Saudi Arabia. He mentioned that there is a difference between public and private universities even though both are regulated by the government.

From the past studies, there are several studies been done on the efficiency of educational institutions but mostly from other countries. There is a lack of studies conducted in Malaysia specifically on Islamic education.

EFFICIENCY OF TAHFIZ INSTITUTIONS

Based on the previous study in this area, this study proposed DEA be used to measure the performance of Tahfiz institutions in Malaysia. In addition, DEA is widely used by researchers to measure performance due to its strengths. DEA does not require the input prices as it is not possible to get the price for the services provided by the NPO. Besides, DEA can be used to measure efficiency by using multiple inputs and multiple outputs. It also did not require the functional relationship between inputs and outputs and DMUs are combined directly between its peer or combination of peers. Furthermore, DEA also can determine the efficient and inefficient unit between the DMU and the changes in units of measurement (e.g. measuring revenue per year instead of per month) will not change the value of efficiency measure. DEA is seen as a suitable approach to measure the performance of waqf institutions because it can determine the efficient and inefficient unit.

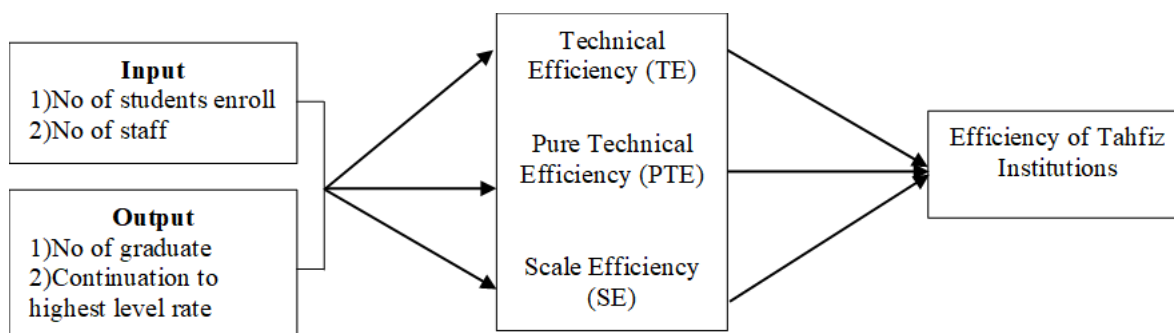


Figure 2. Proposed Framework for Measuring Efficiency of Tahfiz Institutions

As shown in Figure 2 above, DEA indicated three different dimensions of efficiencies namely Technical, Pure Technical, and Scale Efficiencies. Technical efficiency (TE) is the result of a combination of Pure Technical (PTE) and Scale Efficiencies (SE). The DEA score falls between the intervals 0 and 1. By obtaining the result of PTE and SE, the organization can observe the inefficiency of the DMU that has resulted from managerial underperformance or the choice of inappropriate scale size. The relationship between these three efficiencies is shown below.

$$[\text{Technical Efficiency}] = [\text{Pure Technical Efficiency}] \times [\text{Scale Efficiency}]$$

Since the DEA can measure a few numbers of institutions simultaneously, the study can involve both selected public and private tahfiz institutions in Malaysia as DMUs. But, the chosen minimum number of DMU is based on the 'rule of thumb' of DEA; the number of DMUs must be at least two times the number of input and output combined (Golany and Roll, 1989).

$$\text{DMUs} \geq 2 \text{ m x s}$$

Where m is the number of inputs and s is the number of outputs.

In the case of Tahfiz institutions, the possible inputs for tahfiz institutions can be the number of students enrolled, and the number of teachers. While output can be the number of graduate students and continuation to the highest level rate. The summary of input and output explain in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Explanation of Inputs and Outputs

Input / Output	Variables	Explanation
Input	Number of Students enroll	Total number of students enroll in every Tahfiz institutions
	Number of Staff	Total number of staff of every Tahfiz institution
Output	Number of Graduate (<i>Huffaz</i>)	Total number of graduate students (<i>Huffaz</i>) of every Tahfiz institution
	Continuation to the highest level rate	Rate of the student who continues their study to the next level

CONCLUSION

Undeniably, Tahfiz institutions gives a positive impact on Islamic education growth. The increasing popularity of Tahfiz among Malaysians lead to an increase in the establishment of the Tahfiz institutions. However, this phenomenon must be taken seriously by the authorized bodies to ensure that there are no issues of malpractice by the Tahfiz provider. But as far as this study is concerned, there is still no study conducted to measure the efficiency of Tahfiz institutions in Malaysia, especially for the private institutions. Thus, DEA is chosen to be used as a measurement approach because DEA can measure performance by using multiple inputs and outputs. DEA also can determine the effective and not effective units so that improvement can be done to the selected institution to make sure the objective can be achieved. Thus, this paper will focus on the need to measure the efficiency of tahfiz institutions in Malaysia and suggested the best approach to measure the efficiency.

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