EVALUATION OF E-IFRAD COURSEWARE AS A TEACHING AID MATERIAL (TAM) IN QIRA'AT STUDIES

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Abstract: The Qira'at Studies Programme at the Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) continues to evolve, necessitating modern educational tools. This article evaluates the effectiveness of the E-Ifrad Courseware as a Teaching Aid Material (TAM) for Qira'at studies, focusing on user feedback regarding content relevance and user interface design. The evaluation involved 19 students and one lecturer, who provided insights through structured questionnaires. Findings reveal that 80% of respondents found the courseware beneficial, particularly in enhancing learning accessibility and engagement. This study highlights the strengths of E-Ifrad in facilitating Qira'at education and identifies areas for improvement, including content presentation and offline accessibility. The results support the potential of E-Ifrad as a supplementary digital learning tool in Qira'at-related courses.

Keywords: E-Ifrad Courseware, Qira'at studies, teaching aid material, user evaluation.

Introduction

In response to global challenges, the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE) working with public and private universities has introduced undergraduate programs in Tahfiz and Qira'at Studies within the country. This decision was prompted by the increasing difficulty faced by Qira'at studies diploma graduates in Malaysia when seeking admission to foreign universities in Arab countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. These difficulties stem from various factors, including financial constraints, family commitments, safety concerns, and more.

Local universities have responded to this demand with program offerings. For instance, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) introduced a Bachelor of Arts in Qira'at Studies with Honours (USIM, 2019), Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) offers Tahfiz and Qira'at Program (Ismail, 2019), Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS) provides a Bachelor of Arts in Tahfiz al-Quran and al-Qira'at (UniSHAMS, 2019), and Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) offers a Bachelor of Arts in Quran &

Sunnah Studies (Qira'at) (Abidin, 2020). The first cohort of Qira'at Studies students from these universities is expected to graduate in 2023.

To compete effectively in this environment, universities have undertaken various initiatives to attract prospective students. One such initiative involves the development of a courseware application, designed as a Teaching Aid Material (TAM) for Qira'at Studies. This courseware covers the knowledge of *dirayah* (theory and background of the science of Qira'at) and *riwayah* (methodology of reading the Quran), including topics like *silah mim al-Jama'*, *taqlil*, *imalah*, *tashil*, and more (al-Shatibiy, 2013).

The development of this courseware, namely 'E-Ifrad' involved gathering feedback through a survey from 20 respondents, including a lecturer and 19 students across five programs at USIM that offer Qira'at courses. The positive feedback received informed the development of the E-Ifrad Courseware, aligning it with the

needs and suggestions of those directly involved in the teaching and learning of Qira'at studies at USIM.

Materials and Methods

The development of the E-Ifrad Courseware followed the ADDIE instructional design model (Vulpen, 2023), ensuring a systematic and structured approach to align the technological system with educational objectives. In the analysis phase, the research identified gaps in Qira'at studies through surveys and focus group discussions with 19 students and a lecturer (details of the respondents are discussed in the evaluation section). The existing teaching materials and technological tools were also analysed. The screening of relevant academic and teaching materials from the students' perspectives aims to determine the requirements for an effective courseware platform.

E-Ifrad Courseware was developed as a hybrid platform, combining (a) a standalone application to enable offline access for students without consistent Internet availability; (b) a mobile application to optimise for smartphones, ensuring portability and convenience; and (c) Google Sites Integration for its user-friendly interface and free access, allowing seamless content presentation. During the design phase, detailed design specifications were developed. This includes user interface wireframes, functional requirements, and the content organisation.

Tools such as Figma (2012) were used for prototyping to ensure the alignment of the courseware structure with the curriculum's *dirayah* and *riwayah* knowledge. In the development phase, the prototype was created using a combination of standalone application frameworks, HTML, and Google Sites integration. Android Studio and Python were utilised for mobile and standalone application development. Multimedia elements such as audio recitations and interactive slides were incorporated to enhance user engagement.

Within the implementation phase, the courseware was deployed for testing on mobile devices, laptops, and as a standalone platform. A detailed installation guide was prepared to facilitate respondents' walkthrough of the courseware for testing purposes. Access to the courseware through a link to Google Sites was also facilitated for initial navigation. In the evaluation phase, semi-structured questionnaires were given to the respondents. The questionnaires focused on the relevance of the content, user interface design, as well as learning outcomes and general comments. The collected respondents' feedback was analysed and presented in the evaluation section.

Google Site

This section presents a study on the development of E-Ifrad Courseware, focusing on the use of Google Sites as its primary platform and a review of relevant literature regarding the content of Qira'at knowledge.

The advancement of information technology has transformed education, enabling the learning process to shift from traditional face-to-face methods to various online media. Among the available platforms, Google Sites has emerged as a significant choice due to its simplicity and accessibility. Google Sites, a free website creation service by Google offers an intuitive platform for both personal and professional use. According to Harsanto (2014), its ease of creation and management make it accessible to anyone, even those with limited technical expertise. However, according to Andres Ganem (2023), the accessibility of Google Sites still has certain limitations, particularly in terms of design and functionality. He suggests using more robust tools for users with advanced requirements.

This research chose Google Sites for E-Ifrad Courseware due to its alignment with the project's educational objectives and its suitability for presenting Qira'at studies content. The platform's free accessibility, combined with its user-friendly interface makes it ideal

for students and educators. As E-Ifrad is non-commercial, the advanced functionalities of more sophisticated applications were deemed unnecessary. Moreover, Google Sites supports the integration of multimedia elements and facilitates easy navigation, ensuring that users can efficiently engage with the courseware, provided they have Internet access. Future iterations may address these limitations by incorporating additional tools or platforms to enhance user experience and expand functionality, particularly for offline access.

Relevant Literature and Textbooks

In line with the advancement of information technology and the use of Android technology, various courseware and mobile applications have been developed to make the process of Teaching and Learning (TnL) in Quranic studies, especially in Qira'at studies, easy, fast, and engaging compared to traditional methods (Hayati Hussin, 2023; Jamalludin Harun, 2023). In previous literature, there has been a significant upward trend in the development of courseware for Qira'at studies. This trend is evident in Syahidatul's study (2017; 2018; 2021), where a mobile application was developed with a specific focus on the *riwayah* aspect, which involves Quranic recitation according to a specific Qira'at.

In the initial version of MyQiraat, the application included several selected *surahs* as a general guide for learning the science of Qira'at, including *surahs al-Fatihah*, *al-Ikhlas*, and *al-Humazah*. Following feedback from respondents, audio recitations for *surahs al-Fatihah* and *al-Baqarah* were incorporated into the application. However, certain aspects related to *dirayah* knowledge such as the background of the science of Qira'at, its history, the various types of Qira'at, and the acceptance criteria for Qira'at, as well as Western philosophy concerning the science of Qira'at were not addressed.

Similarly, in the development study of E-Zi Qiraat by Syahadah (2016), attention was given solely to the aspect of *riwayah*, specifically the recitation of *surahs al-Duha* and *al-Nas* based on the *riwayah* of *Hafs* and *Qalun*. The deficiency in Qira'at courseware's coverage of *dirayah* knowledge inspired the current study, which aims to create E-Ifrad Courseware, comprehensively addressing each key aspect of the science of Qira'at for easier access, particularly by the general public, and is presented in the Malay language version.

Table 1: Relevant literature and textbooks as the main references in the development of the content for E-Ifrad Courseware

Literature/Textbook	Discussion	Contribution to E-Ifrad Courseware
Mu'jam Mustalahat 'Ilm al-Qira'at al-Qur'aniyyah Wama Yata'allaqubih by 'Abd al-'Aliy al-Mas'ul, 2011, Cairo: Dar al-Salam (al-Mas'ul, 2011)	This book focuses on terminology in the field of Qira'at, offering valuable insights to the public regarding the use of specific terms that are widely employed in the realms of *dirayah* and *riwayah* knowledge.	E-Ifrad Courseware regards this book as a primary reference for word translations, although it does acknowledge the existence of some other terminologies not included in it.
Tarikh al-Qurra' al-'Asharah Wa Ruwatihim by 'Abd al-Fattah al-Qadhi, 2017, Cairo: Maktabah al-Azhariyyah Li al-Turath (al-Qadhi, 2017)	To identify the figures and imams of Qira'at, including the 10 imams and 20 narrators, it is essential to present their biographies in an easily readable and approachable manner, so as not to overwhelm readers with historical facts.	This book is highly suitable for use as a general reference when delving into the backgrounds of the imams and narrators of the science of Qira'at. Additionally, cross-referencing with several other historical books should be conducted to ensure the accuracy of the presented facts, including the spelling of names and birth/death years.

Muhadarat Fi 'Ilm al-Qira'at by Abd Muhaimin Ahmad *et al*., 2017, Bangi: Darul Shakir (Abd Muhaimin Ahmad, 2017)	This textbook serves as the primary reference for USIM students enrolled in Qira'at courses. The topics covering the science of *dirayah* and *riwayah* knowledge greatly assist the E-Ifrad Courseware in organising its content.	Some of the topics in this textbook used as references in E-Ifrad include the definition of the science of Qira'at, the methods of reading by imams and narrators of Qira'at, and the selection of specific *surahs* for sampling.
Taqrib al-Ma'ani Fi Sharh Hirz al-Amani by Abu al-Farh, Sayyid Lashin, 2015, Medina: Maktabah Dar al-Zaman (Lashin, 2015)	This book is familiar to students of the science of Qira'at and is regarded as a primary reference for the study of the science of *riwayah*. Its content pertains to the various methods of reciting the Quran according to the seven Qira'at imams, as compiled by Imam al-Shatibiy (d. 590H). Each method is organised based on *ahkam* and chapters, accompanied by detailed explanations for the seven Qira'at poems by Imam al-Shatibiy.	This book does not cover the methods of recitation according to the other three Qira'at imams. Therefore, the E-Ifrad Courseware needs to refer to several other books as supporting references.
Muqaddimat Fi 'Ilm al-Qiraat by Ahmad Muhammad Muflih al-Qudhah *et al*., 2022, Amman: Dar 'Ammar (Ahmad Muhammad Muflih al-Qudhah, 2022)	This book, authored by a scholar from Jordan is one of the references in Qira'at studies in several institutions within the country. This 262-page book has undergone five reprints, indicating its high demand among students.	The E-Ifrad Courseware uses this book as a supporting reference to supplement various discussion topics that are not mentioned in other books.
Al-Madkhal Ila 'Ilm al-Qira'at by Sha'ban Muhammad Ismail, 2003, Mecca: Maktabah Salim (Ismail S. M., Al-Madkhal Ila 'Ilm al-Qira'at, 2003)	The topics discussed in this book are not significantly different from those in the book mentioned above. Supporting references such as this book can assist researchers in analysing the validity of the facts presented.	The E-Ifrad Courseware uses this book as a supporting reference to supplement various discussion topics that are not mentioned in other books.
Al-Qira'at: Ahkamuha Wa Masdaruha by Sha'ban Muhammad Ismail, 2008, Cairo: Dar al-Salam (Ismail S. M., Al-Qira'at: Ahkamuha Wa Masdaruha, 2008)	In this book, the author solely focuses on the science of Qira'at from the *riwayah* aspect. This is because there are numerous readily accessible books on *riwayah* in the market, unlike books that delve into the aspect of *dirayah*. It is a concise and easily comprehensible writing style, making it highly suitable for use as a reference.	E-Ifrad Courseware draws guidance from this book in the form of easy presentation and concise information, particularly in *dirayah* knowledge.

The development of E-Ifrad Courseware also involved an exploration of existing literature and university textbooks in the field of Qira'at studies, as detailed in Table 1.

Results and Discussion

The E-Ifrad Courseware was innovatively designed as a hybrid platform, integrating a standalone application for offline accessibility, a mobile application tailored for smartphones to enhance portability, and Google Sites Integration, known for its intuitive interface and cost-free access, ensuring seamless presentation of content. It functions as an offline application, enabling individual students to access it freely without an Internet connection. With Malay as the primary language, it is designed for ease of learning and to benefit a wide range of users. The prototype of E-Ifrad Courseware incorporates Islamic illustrations and Quranic text, employing bright and suitable colours.

The main display features several Graphical User Interfaces (GUI), including the Home Page (*Utama*), History (*Sejarah*), Team (*Ahli Kumpulan*), Frequently Asked Questions (*Persoalan*), and a search menu. The following section describes each of these user interfaces within E-Ifrad Courseware.

Figure 1 shows the home screen upon the initial launch of the application. E-Ifrad's content has been developed in the Malay language, which

is the official language of Malaysia. Students and users can access general information about the development of E-Ifrad Courseware by clicking on the "History" and "Team" buttons located at the top right of the screen. Additionally, any inquiries and suggestions can be submitted in the FAQ section, allowing users to provide valuable feedback to the researchers for the enhancement of the E-Ifrad Courseware.

In general, this research has categorised the courseware content into four main parts or topics, as depicted in Figure 2. These topics are organised in the order of discussion and include: (i) Introduction to Qira'at Studies; (ii) The 10 Qira'at Imams and their methods of reading; (iii) Opposition from Western philosophy; and (iv) Fundamental terms in Qira'at studies.

When a user clicks on any of the main topics mentioned above, they will be directed to a page that provides detailed information related to the selected topic. For instance, let us take the first topic, "Introduction to Qira'at". Within this topic, users will find seven subtopics related to *dirayah* knowledge. Users can select any of these sub-topics to study Qira'at by simply clicking on the topic name, as shown in Figure 3.

Furthermore, the presentation of information within the sub-topic employs multimedia slides, as illustrated in Figure 4. Additionally, a "back" button is located at the bottom of the sub-topic

(https://sites.google.com/view/e-ifrad-courseware/utama)

Figure 1: Home page or main interface of E-Ifrad Courseware

Figure 2: Four main topics of Qira'at knowledge on the home page
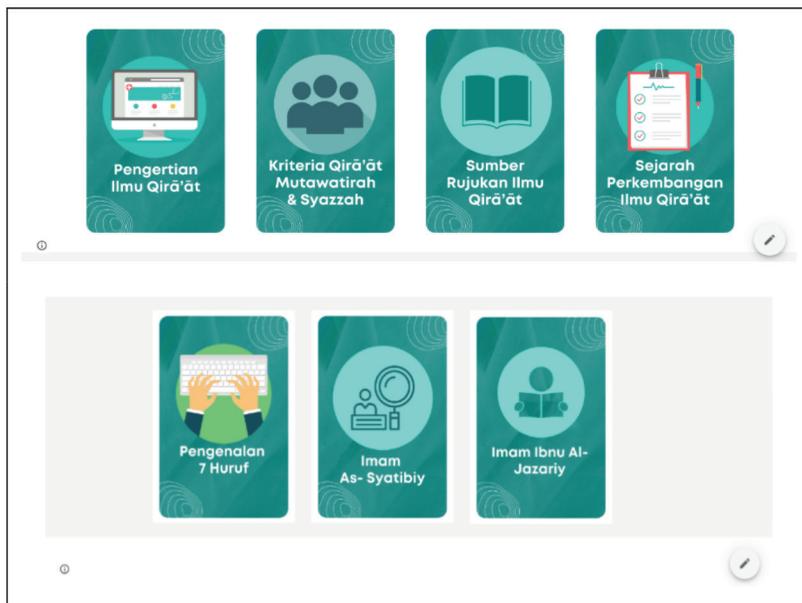

Figure 3: Subtopics of introduction to Qira'at studies of E-Ifrad Courseware

information section, making it convenient for users to navigate to the next topic without needing to use the back button on their device's screen.

Similarly, this same approach applies to all four main topics in E-Ifrad Courseware. However, for users interested in exploring the aspect of *riwayah* knowledge in Quranic recitation, they can click on the second topic, titled "The 10 Imams of Qira'at and Their

Readings". Relevant displays, including biographies of scholars and recitation videos will appear, as shown in Figure 5.

Typically, when a button or icon is pressed, video or audio content is utilised. In the case of E-Ifrad Courseware, users can access the recitation style of the 10 Qira'at Imams through various video examples performed by renowned reciters. This recitation encompasses selected *surahs* from *al-Duha* to *al-Nas*, including *surah*
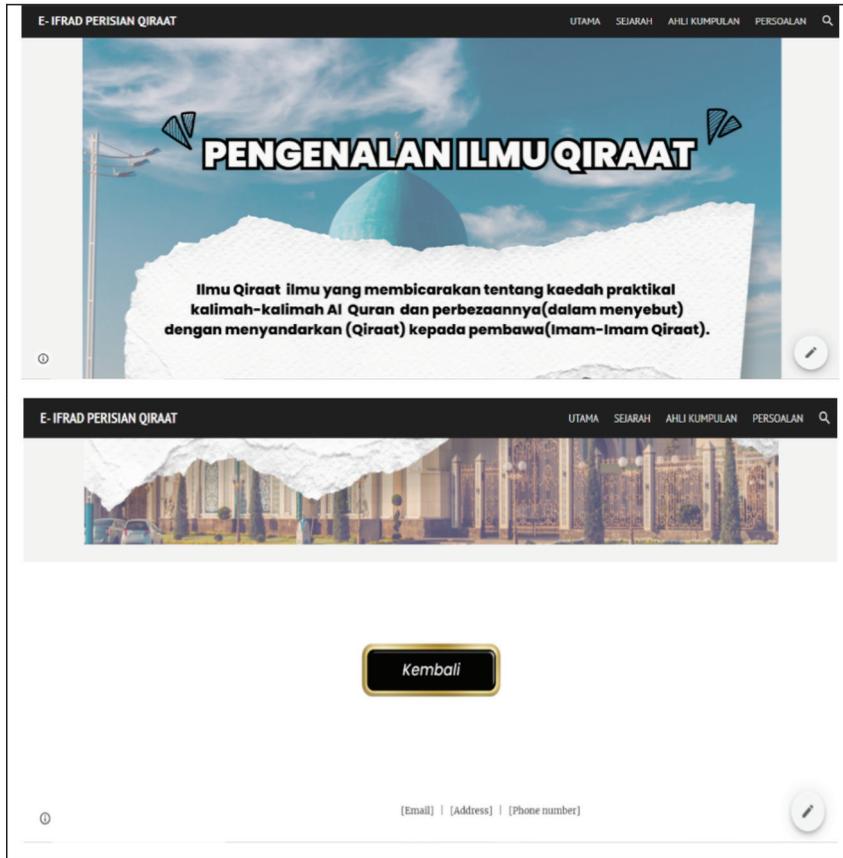
Figure 4: Information in multimedia slide

Figure 5: Biography of 10 Qira'at Imams and their recitations

al-Fatihah. The selection of these *surahs* is based on the content of the USIM textbook, with some enhancements derived from the data obtained from respondents.

To listen to the recitation in E-Ifrad Courseware, users can click on the icon, after which they can hear and learn about the variations in Qira'at recitation that have occurred. An overview of the screenshot is presented in Figure 6.

Evaluation

In this section, the results analysis of the user evaluation is presented. The evaluation focuses on the relevance of the content, user interface design, and general comments of the application to students in the Faculty of Quranic and Sunnah Studies (FPQS). The overall benefits of using the application were also examined. Through the distributed open-ended questionnaire, students contributed their feedback on the content and design of the E-Ifrad Courseware, aiming to refine the platform before expert evaluation.

(A) Respondents

This survey was conducted randomly on September 22, 2023 among students of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) enrolled in the Qira'at Studies course as part of their academic curriculum. The study programs involved are as follows:

(1) Bachelor of Quranic and Sunnah Studies

(2) Bachelor of Quranic Studies with Multimedia

(3) Bachelor of Qira'at Studies

(4) Bachelor of Arabic Language with Communication

(5) Bachelor of English Language with Commerce

19 students from five different study programs, as in the previous study participated in the evaluation. Additionally, a lecturer teaching the Qira'at course was also involved in the user evaluation.

(B) Preparation

The following were prepared before the user evaluation session:

- All respondents were given the link to the E-Ifrad Courseware to install on their mobile devices.

- Once the installation was done, all respondents were given time to navigate through the courseware to familiarise themselves with it.

- A semi-structured questionnaire was given to the respondents to capture feedback during the navigation.

Figure 6: Example of Qira'at recitation videos

(C) Evaluation Session

The evaluation of E-Ifrad Courseware was conducted using a structured questionnaire divided into three sections:

Section A: Demographics

This section collected general information about the respondents, including their name, email, gender, and study program at USIM. These details helped contextualise the feedback and understand the respondent demographics.

Section B: Content

Respondents were asked to explore the E-Ifrad Courseware, focusing on the information provided about Qira'at studies. They evaluated the sufficiency, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the content and suggested additional topics if necessary. This section aimed to assess the alignment of the courseware's content with the educational needs of its users.

Section C: Design

This section evaluated the user interface design of the courseware. Respondents provided feedback on whether the design was user-friendly, visually appealing, and aligned with their preferences. Respondents were also asked to provide general comments about the courseware. Specific features like navigation ease, colour schemes, and layout organisation were also assessed.

(D) Results and Analysis

The feedback was transcribed and analysed, focusing on the content, user interface design, and general comments. Overall, the results indicate positive responses towards the courseware, with some suggestions for improvements. Here are some specific comments:

(1) On the content of the courseware

"… The topics and information in the E-Ifrad Courseware are presented comprehensively and easily covering both *dirayah* and *riwayah* elements…"

"… Covers the basics of Qira'at…"

"… In my opinion, the topics and information on Qira'at organised in this courseware are very clear, concise, and compact in helping Qira'at students revise, as well as the public who want to explore this knowledge…"

(2) On the user interface design

"… Interesting design, suitable for today's trends...".

"… The E-Ifrad courseware is presented with attractive colours, which greatly helps users to spend more time exploring its content. In addition, the organised and concise arrangement of topics also assists users in finding the information they are looking for...."

"… User-friendly prototype with a "back" button that makes the courseware user-friendly..."

(3) On general comments

"… Include references for the sources...".

"… In my opinion, it is not very appealing to read if a PDF is attached to each topic. Perhaps write directly and attach the PDF for readers who want to save that information..."

"… The gaming section should work even without the Internet. For additional funding, you could incorporate paid ads and students could pay to remove ads or for books or anything that can pique students' interest to purchase, which would contribute to maintaining the app..."

Furthermore, a total of 16 out of 20 respondents provided positive comments regarding the efforts to make E-Ifrad Courseware one of the teaching aids for Qira'at-related courses. Some of these comments include:

"… Very suitable as a teaching aid for me to better understand the concepts of *dirayah* and *riwayah* in the science of Qira'at..."

"… The public will find it easier to learn the science of Qira'at with the support of teaching aids like E-Ifrad..."

"… In USIM, most reference books in Islamic studies are in English. With the existence of E-Ifrad Courseware in the Malay version, it greatly assists us, new students, in understanding the terms and topics in the science of Qira'at..."

Figure 7 illustrates the evaluation feedback in terms of content and interface design of the E-Ifrad Courseware and general comments. The summarised findings are as follows:

- **User Feedback on Content**: All respondents (100% or 20/20) agreed that the content of the E-Ifrad Courseware is comprehensive and relevant to their academic studies.

- **User Feedback on User Interface Design**: The feedback received from the respondents indicates a positive response (80% or 16/20) toward the design of the E-Ifrad Courseware user interface, along with suggestions for improvements (20% or 4/20) in the display and the way the content data is being presented.

- **General Comments from the User**: 90% (18/20) feedback from respondents was positive, with minor suggestions (10% or 2/20) for improvement.

Feedback from the respondents was utilised to enhance the content and design of the E-Ifrad Courseware. In summary, the respondents have emphasised several benefits of using the application. These benefits include facilitating user understanding of Qira'at. Additionally, students can now learn Qira'at at their convenience, provided the application is installed on their mobile devices. This application has the potential to serve as a valuable supplementary learning tool for both students and lecturers in FPQS. Furthermore, it has the potential to encourage greater commitment to learning Qira'at among students and the public. Hence, all relevant feedback and suggestions from the respondents will be analysed by the researchers to improve the E-Ifrad Courseware further and will be incorporated into the development of future versions.
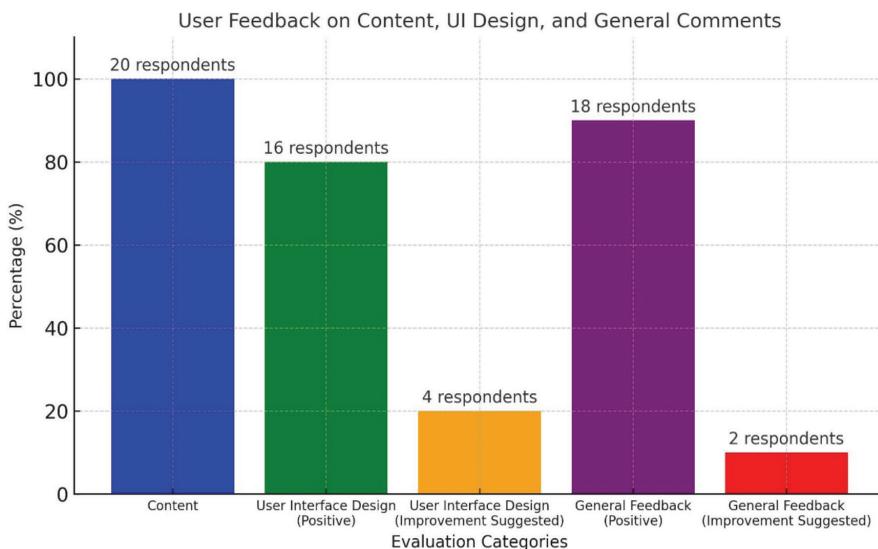

Figure 7: Feedback on content and interface design of E-Ifrad Courseware and general comments

Conclusions

In alignment with the vision and mission of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), which aims to "preserve a quality education system to develop the potential of individuals to fulfill the nation's aspirations", the proposed development of the E-Ifrad Courseware digital application in the study of Qira'at holds significant relevance in addressing the challenges posed by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0). This is primarily because the contemporary learning and teaching processes heavily rely on the Internet and other Teaching Aids Materials (TAM), which can sometimes limit access to the necessary information, subsequently impacting a student's mastery and understanding of a particular topic.

This study has demonstrated the potential of E-Ifrad Courseware to serve as an effective Teaching Aid Material (TAM) in Qira'at studies. By addressing gaps in existing resources and leveraging modern technology, the courseware fosters deeper engagement and accessibility for students and the public alike. Future iterations will integrate more sophisticated analytics and user-friendly enhancements to align further with educational standards.

The integration of Google Sites while advantageous for its simplicity posed limitations in terms of advanced functionality. To mitigate this, standalone and mobile applications were developed as complementary tools. The following enhancements are planned for future iterations: (a) Inclusion of gamified learning modules for offline access and (2) enhanced multimedia features such as animations and interactive quizzes.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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