

Adult Learners' Understanding in Learning Islam Using Andragogy Approach: A Study in Kampung Siglap Mosque and Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute

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Abstract

This study describes adult learners' understanding in learning Islam using andragogy approach in which the study was conducted in Kampung Siglap Mosque and Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) educate his companions of who are adults from the shackles of *jahiliyyah*, spiritual and intellectual darkness which includes the culture of silence and structural poverty towards Islam. Islam as taught by Prophet Muhammad since he first received the revelation has been through 14 centuries. Learn Islam remains the duty of Muslims. Many Islamic education models focused on the education of children but not for adult learners. Muslim adult learners have become the subject of experimentation using the trial and error method in deciding ideal education model. Singapore is a secular state where freedom of religion is encrypted in the constitution and Malay/Muslim comprises 13.3% of the population. Adults learn Islam to deepen their understanding and to practice the teachings of Islam due to their strong conviction to the religion. To illustrate this study, a qualitative research was adopted. The source of the research data come from the Muslim adult learners who attended the Islamic religious class either at Kampung Siglap Mosque and/or Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute. To determine the source of the data, the snowball sampling was used. The emphasis of this study are on adult learners understanding in learning Islam, adult learners approach to learning Islam and adult learners' transformation from the learning of Islam. The findings of this research illustrate adult learners' positive attitude in learning Islam, the intent of transforming to be an excellence Muslims, different styles of understanding Islam, characteristics of the learners who wanted to practice Islam. Adult learners formulated their own comprehension through their personal experiences. Adult learners initiated their own learning, inquisitive and engaged. They have a preconceived idea of learning the topics based on their needs related to Islam. Adult learners' eagerness to learn depended on teachers teaching method. They aspired to be responsible Muslim and role model to family members inspired them to achieve their learning goals; having self-confidence and family support facilitates their learning of Islam effectively. The intention establishes on adult learners strengthen their determination to actualize the intention of learning Islam is to succeed in life and the hereafter. In conclusion, what is understood by adult learners as correct is not necessarily true and what is understood by adult learners as incorrect is not necessarily wrong so adult learners understanding of Islam are shape by divine intervention. Adult learners learning experience has the elements of spirituality that provide them with a different level of enlightenment that includes understanding, insightful, self-reflection, critical and analytical, self-awareness, knowledge-oriented, wisdom, spiritual advancement, aroused morale, character refinement, and cultivation of curiosity. This understanding in learning Islam is different from the assumption of learning non-religious, which states that learning is equipping with particular competencies; learning is imparting of information and technology; and learning is for passing of examination. The outcome of the learning process in learning Islam involves physical and spiritual transformation of adult learners' personality.

Keywords: Learning, Islam, Adult, Learners

1. Introduction

All human movement has a learning measurement. Individuals learn, consistently, casually and formally, in various settings: in working environments, in families, through recreation exercises, through group exercises, and in political action "but the brain-based principles of learning put forward, contrasting sharply with conventional views, can be applied at any level and in any learning situation" (Hart, 1983). Salih-Uddin et. al. (2014), describes Imam Bukhairi as teacher of the teachers and his teaching experiments that will bring benefit to educators and adult learners. Imam Bukhairi strongly encouraged to those individuals in the adulthood of their life to seek knowledge and be taught. Teacher should conduct debate on the topic taught in their classroom in motivating adult learners and coach them to be attentive in listening to lecture. The used of examples during teaching is to give better understanding to adult learners enable them to make connections with the lesson that was taught. Adult learners learning differs from the way children's learn. Typically, adult learners will go through four stages of

learning, that is, formal education in which is the manifestation of adult learning; non-formal education, a sort of learning happens when individuals see a requirement for a methodical instruction; informal learning, where learning happens when individuals deliberately attempt to learn from their experience; and incidental learning, where learning happens while individuals perform different activities. Such learning is incidental to the activity in which the individual is connected, and is frequently assumed and not seen as learning (Foley, 2004).

Teachers must allow adult learners to digest the information by delivering the lecture slowly and steadily, in which Salih-Uddin et. al., highlighted Imam Bukhairi as reported in the Hadith of Anas (RA) to justify his argument,

“Whenever, the Prophet (PBUH) would talk, he would repeat (the words) three times to give chance to the listener to learn it. The Prophet (PBUH) did not use to repeat each and every saying three times everywhere, but this would happen in such cases where there would still be some confusion. For example, when the Prophet would be sure that the listener could not understand his words. Similarly, He (SAW) would make repetitions in such situation when the aim would be transmission and education or the gathering was greater. When the gathering would be huge and his (SAW) voice would not reach all of them, he (SAW) would repeat it.”

Adults are objective in judging the value of learning that takes place and its relevance to their lives and needs in acquiring skills and knowledge that suit them. Adults are demanding and expect the learning experience meets their expectation. Unlike in the classroom, the teachers are not subject to scrutiny even if they are not effective. According to O’Toole and Belinda (2012), “attention spans between adults and children are not as wide as one might think. Good teachers work hard to change the dynamics of the classroom regularly... via regular activities, delivery, and mixing talk with participation and action. Only the best adult trainers take this approach” but often than not adult educators falsely assume to have the adult learners engaged just because the adult learners ‘staring’ and ‘listening’ at them. Adult learners has a lot of experience that influences their learning, knowledge, skills, (Knowles 1998, Maznah 2000, Cross 2000) ability to cope with situational problems, expand their horizon and able to live independently (Maznah, 2000). Adult learner consistently strives to improve their life experience of becoming more mature in improving the quality of life (Maznah, 2000). Dewey (1997) acknowledges the importance of experience and linking it to learning, actually theorizing how and when experience prompts learning. Habit is the transformation of experience that forms the basis of the characteristics of habit. Every experience effect and affect people who act and be an influence, whereas this modification affects, it has implications on the quality of the experience.

Older adult learners motivation to learn are complex and more varying than other age group as it shows that older adult learners have high intrinsic motivation in all five constructs which measures desire for stimulation, learning for a sense of accomplishments, generativity, emotional regulation, and learning for new knowledge. And from these five constructs, desire for stimulation and generativity present the most salient motivations (Lin and Lorilee, 2012). Adult orientation learning-centered on life, thus learning does not confine in getting good grades but more importantly, adults are motivated to improve their lives (Cross, 2000). With learning, an adult will gain more and more experience, so learning for adults is more focused on increasing and improving the experience of life and not only in search of certification only but also spiritual development.

Adults no longer an object of socialization that was shaped and influenced by others to adapt to the wishes of the authorities upon themselves, but in the perspective of education, adults direct themselves to achieved identity stabilization and reinforce their self-identity. Thus the participation of adults where more women than men and higher rates of middle and upper class as compared to lower class participate in learning (Cross, 2000) has a positive impact in making changes towards a better life. Adult education is not merely imparting knowledge, but it is equipped with a strong sense of trust that allows the adult learners to function effectively (Knowles, 1998) and efficiently; maximizing their full potential (Tafsir, 2010). Spiritual education is significant to teachers and learners when they can find the spiritual dimension in them as part of holistic education (Wickett 2005, Tobroni 2008)). Tobroni (2008) propounds the view that education is an earnest struggle, holy and glorious to develop the soul and personalities that created *ahsani taqwin* (humanization) and vice versa, freed from the fetters that prevents the hindrance of an emancipated as various forms of injustice, poverty, and ignorance. Education has been no integration in the human understanding.

Experience is the richest source of learning so that adults increasingly rich in experience and motivated to make efforts to improve and make meaning to their life. The nature of adult learning is subjective and unique, that's what makes the adults in every possible way make an effort to study in realizing their aspirations. It has created the impression that a region of thinking may be lost in numerous contemplations of critical thinking and by and largely absent from advanced education and the development of human resources (Elliott and Turnbull 2005, Moon 2008, Endut and Wan Suhaimi 2009).

The conspicuous talk of learner-centeredness in adult learning settings concentrates on the necessity for versatile techniques that can suit particular learner attributes, inclinations, motivations and objectives; to investigate locale of learners' attitudes, perceptions, and convictions about learning and about themselves as

learners, together with the results of these perceptions on learning results.

There isn't enough research done on Muslim adult learners learning needs in particular their understanding in learning Islam. Adult learners' understanding of Islam will lead them to the interpretation and practice the teachings of Islam. Mosque has always been a preferred choice for the learning of Islam and has always been a venue for adult learners in learning Islam. In the 1950s and 1960s, seem bustling adult learners who learn Islam in unorganized setting. "Education for most members of the Malay/Muslim community in the early days of the twentieth century centered around the learning of the Koran...Koran classes were conducted mainly in mosques, *surau*, and the homes of teachers or students" (Fui, 2006).

There are many Muslim voluntary organizations promoting the learning of Islam in fulfilling the Muslim physical and spiritual needs. Aside from that, there are private institutions complements in organizing the program for adult learners. Learning is seen as an obligation for adult learners to acquired knowledge. Allah elevates the status of those people who are knowledgeable.

There has been gradually increased in adult learners' participation in the learning of Islam. Learning Islam is merely a personal development of the learners as a devotion to Allah and also serves as a social intervention in providing solution faced by the Muslim community. There is a growing concern of misinterpreting Islam that can cause disunity and blaming culture in defending individual or group perspectives. In one of the Friday sermon it was highlighted the needs to learn Islam by not sticking to any particular teacher or their teachings, "we need to keep an open mind and heart when seeking religious knowledge, particularly when Islam is a religion of morals and principles. This is reflected by not being fanatical (*ta'asub*) towards a certain teacher or his teachings" (Friday sermon on 13th February 2015).

2. Statement of the Problem

Based on the above description this study was guided by the following research questions: What is Adult Learners' Understanding in Learning Islam Using Andragogy Approach: A Study in Kampung Siglap Mosque and Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute?

The following research questions were investigated:

1. What is adult learners' understanding in learning Islam?
2. How does the andragogy approach promote the learning of Islam?
3. How does learning of Islam transform adult learners' personality?

2.1 Purpose of the Research

1. To describe the adult learners' understanding in learning Islam.
2. To describe the andragogy approach in promoting the learning of Islam.
3. To describe the learning of Islam transform adult learner's personality.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Adulthood

According to Santrock (2011), the developmental period of adulthood are divided into three stages. They are early adulthood at the age of 21 to 39 years old, middle adulthood the age ranging from 40 to 60 years old and late adulthood the age begins from 61 years and above. In each stage of adulthood as shown by Santrock, requires a different set of challenges and personal needs. Through these stages adult learner needs may differ from one stage to another stage as such the learning objective must meet this group of adult learners.

The vast of experience of adult learner accumulated over the years have taught them the valuable lesson in life. "When adults come to your course, they carry with them the baggage of all their learning experiences. These experiences... will be a mixture of negative and positive... have a wide range of backgrounds, ages, attitudes, and experience" (Corder, 2002). The personality of adults' learner is determined by the varying experiences they went through during childhood under the care of their parents, exposing to physical environments, people around them, and the school they studied.

3.2 Definition of Learning

Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (1998) "define learning as the process of gaining knowledge and/or expertise". Jarvis (2002) explain the inter-related between learn and learning depending on its contexts.

Pritchard (2009) provide a list of definition that relates well to our daily learning, "...learning is the process of gaining more knowledge or of learning how to do something". Such definitions given by Pritchard are a change in behavior as a result of experience or practice, the acquisition of knowledge, knowledge gained through study, to gain knowledge of, or skill in, something through study, teaching, instruction or experience, the process of gaining knowledge, a process by which behavior is changed, shaped or controlled, and the individual process of constructing understanding based on experience from a wide range of sources.

3.3 Islamic Learning

“Recite in the name of your Lord who created, Created man from clinging substance. Recite and your Lord is the most Generous, Who taught by the pen, Taught man that which he knew not.” (Al-Alaq: verse 1-5)

These verses explain clearly the importance to acquire knowledge as it is the great gift of Allah to mankind and the significance relations between knowledge and Islam. These verses contain the message to all mankind the importance of reading, teaching, learning, thinking, experimenting, explore, research, innovate and etc.

The Quran defines Islam as a living system. Quran is a source of absolute truth that contains the revelation of Allah. Islam can be understood as submission and obedience. For a person who behaves as mentioned in Islam is called a Muslim, which is to obey and submit to the will of Allah. The teaching of Islam was directed to actualize the blessing to nature phenomenon in the universe (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*).

A man with his intelligence and freedom of choice is invited to the will of Allah to become a Muslim. The fundamental of Islam as a religion is based on *Iman*, *Islam*, and *Ihsan*. *Iman* means belief or faith, *Islam* means to obey and submission to Allah while *Ihsan* means to improve the practicing of Islam by pleasing Allah and abide by His commands.

A Muslim who embraces Islam must demonstrate his belief by practicing the five pillars of Islam. The five pillars of Islam are the framework of Muslim life in which they have to adhere to as part of their commitment to the teaching of Islam.

Iman is the pillars or requirements which is generally known as the six pillars of Islam: belief in Allah, belief in the Angels of Allah, belief in the scriptures of Allah, belief in the Messengers of Allah whom His revelation was conveyed to mankind, belief in the eternal life after death and Allah last day of perfect judgement, and belief in predestination.

The basics teaching of Islam are essentially discussing the general framework of Islamic teachings, and that does not mean other aspect of Islam is not important as the teachings of Islam cannot be segregated from one another. There are three basics teaching of Islam for a Muslim to learn, to know and to practice. They are first, *aqeedah* (creed), secondly, *sharia*, and thirdly, *akhlak* (character).

Muslim abides by only two absolute references or sources of Islam, which is the Quran and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad also known as the Sunnah. These references constitute Allah’s revelation that was sent to Prophet Muhammad. Prophet Muhammad was inspired by Allah with the Quran and the Sunnah. Hence, all beliefs and acts of worship rely on these two sources of reference. Any thoughts, deeds, or practicing is in aligning with the Quran and the Sunnah may be accepted, and if any of those that contradicts the Quran and the Sunnah will be rejected.

The Quran is Allah’s word that touches the human heart, mind, and soul and therefore it is unique in its characteristic. It is engaging in the reciting of the Quran when it moves from one topic to another topic that reaches the attention of the reader and at times putting the words subconsciously in the reader’s own mouth. The Quran explain all aspect of life which is always relevant to any context or condition or situation with a reminder of its ultimate goal the essential for humanity to be dutiful to Allah.

The relationship between the Quran and the Sunnah is very meaningful and important. The implementation of the content of the Quran was demonstrated through the Sunnah. The Sunnah provides the practical explanation on the teaching of the Quran to avoid any misunderstanding on the intent of the Quran. The Quran defines the character, behavior, and laws to provide crystal clear of its meaning. Allah guidance is holistic by means of the Quran and the Sunnah for the accessibility to all mankind.

3.4 Andragogy Learning Model

The andragogical model is a model of assumptions based on sixth assumptions taking into account of newer additional assumptions added in the later years (Knowles et. al., 1998) as mentioned below:

The need to know. Adult learners need to know the purpose of learning before getting committed in the learning process. On the learners own accord, they must be able to initiate to learn something; by knowing the benefits of learning it will then develop an inner drive within the learners that pull them through the learning journey and reap from the learning gain. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) stated that the purpose of learning is normally involving social intervention that requires for problems to be solved. To what extent it is seen as problematic depends on learner’s value, social status in the society, and perspectives.

The learners’ self-concept. “Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives.” Adults take pride in them. A mental image and consciousness inherited in adult as being responsible for their doings will have an impact on their lives. These will then translate in the form of attitudes, cognition, and opinions that others will preconceive ideas upon adult learners on “being capable of self-direction” (Knowles, 1986). Adults are able to respond to situations when they feel being challenge or threatening that resulted in a positive or negative behavior.

The role of learner’s experiences. Adults are equipped with remarkable strength and diverse nature of experience from adolescents. They bring their experiences along as they enter the world of education. Distinctly,

adult lived longer and by virtue, they accumulated more experience as compared during the adolescent years. Yet they additionally have had an alternate sort of experience. According to Dewey (1997) “I have taken for granted the soundness of the principle that education in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learner and for society must be based upon experience-which is always the actual life-experience of some individual”.

Readiness to learn. The willingness of adult to learn depended on the learning itself. Adults get to be prepared to realize those things they have to know and have the capacity to do so to adapt adequately to their actual circumstances. A basically rich wellspring of receptiveness to learning is the developmental stage to the accompanying. The separating consequence of this assumption is the essentialness of timing learning experiences to match with those developmental tasks

Orientation to learning. Learners see training as a procedure of creating expanded fitness to accomplish their maximum capacity in life. They need to have the capacity to apply whatever learning and ability they pick up today to living all the more successfully tomorrow. In like manner, learning encounters ought to be sorted out around competency-improvement classes. Individuals are execution focused in their introduction to learning. Adults are prodded to make sense of how to the extent that they see that learning will help them perform endeavors or oversee issues they go up against in their life circumstances.

Motivation. While adults are receptive to some outer helpers (better occupations, advancements, higher pay rates, and so forth), the most strong inspirations are inner power, for example, the longing for expanded employment fulfilment, respect toward oneself, personal satisfaction and so forth. According to Corder (2002), adult learners’ motivation for attending courses varies according to their personal preferences. Adult learners’ motivation can be categorized into two broad categories, first, ‘instrumental’, and second, ‘intrinsic’ motives.

4. Research Method

To understand how adult learners learn at Kampung Siglap Mosque and Al Zuhri Higher Learning Institute, a qualitative research design was adopted. The data collected is not in the form of numbers, but the data is derived from a script interviews, field notes, personal documents, notes or memos, and other official documents (Moleong, 2006), so that the objectives of a qualitative descriptive study was to gives an overview of empirical reality in accordance with existing phenomena in depth, detailed, and complete (Nazir, 1988).

The rationale for choosing Kampung Siglap Mosque is because it is the first mosque in Singapore that focuses on the teaching of Al-Quran. They set-up a Centre called Darul Quran to serve the Muslim Singaporean to memorize and learn Al-Quran. As for selecting Al Zuhri Higher Learning Institute, the rationale is because it is the first private institution in Singapore that has a comprehensive Islamic program ranges from certificate level to Master level and also the first institution to offered full-time diploma program in Islamic studies since 2002.

The source of the research data come from the Muslim adult learners who attended the Islamic religious class either in the Kampung Siglap Mosque and/or Al Zuhri Higher Learning Institute. To determine the source of the data a snowball sampling was used. The emphasis is on adult learners’ understanding in learning Islam, adult learners approach to learning Islam and adult learners’ transformation from the learning of Islam.

During the interview, the questions ask are not in sequence. If the informants responded with an answer that already covers some parts of the questions, no questions will be repeated again to the informants. According to Patton in Afifuddin and Beni (2009), in the interview process using general guidelines interviews, interviews equipped with interview guides were very common, as well as specifying the issues that should be covered without specifying the order of questions, even perhaps not formed an explicit question.

Observations are needed to understand the process of the interview and the interview can be understood in context. Observations are carried out on the subject, the subject’s behavior during the interview, the subject interaction with the researcher, and the things that are considered relevant in order to provide additional data on the results of interviews (Afifuddin and Beni, 2009). This allows researcher to be objective, oriented to the discovery of the evidence and retains the option to approach the problem inductively. Having to observe the actual situation allows the researcher to see things less recognized research subjects and to reflect and act introspective to research conducted. Impressions and feelings of observations will be part of the data which in turn can be used to understand the phenomenon under study.

5. Findings

In general, adult learners understanding in learning Islam in Kampung Siglap Mosque and Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute is not much difference as compare to the prior research and other learning Institutes; the focus of the adult learners is always centre on the desired outcomes of the learning. But, most of the past research focusing on adult learners with no relation to the study of religion or if there are only focusing on the education of children in Islam but not in adult learners in learning Islam. In terms of the adult learners’ personality and the purpose of learning Islam in a secular country like Singapore; requires a high tolerance in respecting other faiths, school of thought, and races. Learning Islam is for “perfection of soul and for the purification of personality and wisdom” (Noraini and Langgulung, 2008); an obligation of Muslim adult learners to know, to understand, and to

practice as a sign of obedience to the commandments of the Almighty.

5.1 Attitude towards Learning Islam

In comparison to adult learners' attitude in learning Islam in Kampung Siglap Mosque and Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute, there are disparities in terms of the adult learners' learning objectives. Nevertheless, there are similarities in adult learners' commitment and consistency to learn Islam as part of their devotion to Islam.

Adult learners that learn Islam in Kampung Siglap Mosque pays more attention to putting to practice what they have learned. They strongly felt that Islam is about practicing as can be seen from their eagerness in asking questions repeatedly to the teachers that lead to practicing Islam. They are inclined to micro learning in knowing for details and the arguments that direct them to a specific school of thoughts. The teacher who taught them has a lot of influence on the adult learners understanding in Islam; at times the teacher perception may differ from the statements made by the authority.

Besides the teacher, the mosque also influences the attitude of the adult learners because the mosque ambience is able to provide the necessary stimulus as it is seen as a place of worship and adult learners make a connection to Allah before learning takes place. Adult learners' change roles when entering the mosque and saw themselves as the servants of God. They performed the prayers in the mosques before proceed to the religious class which is part of the mosque building. This act of worships to Allah has indirectly disciplined informants' with admirable values as part of pre-learning before the learning begins.

The attitude of the adult learners begins with the early preparation from the mental aspect and the soul as the instinctive desire is more focused to want to practice the commands of Allah as stipulated in Islam. Adult learners recognize that learning is a lifelong process and an integral part of human life until death comes.

Kampung Siglap Mosque adopts a non-formal learning as the learning are not guided by a formal curriculum and led by a qualified religious teacher with a degree in Islamic studies. There is no certification or assessment to gauge the adult learners' understanding of the subject taught. Even though it is considered as non-formal learning, adult learners are life-long learners as they used their experience to influence their understanding. The learning mainly relies on a specific book which was decided by the teacher and the topics taught are determined by the teacher himself. Sometimes certain chapters that were taught can be very lengthy as it depends on the discretion of the teacher whether the adult learners understand the lesson. Adult learners' attitudes in practicing Islam in Kampung Siglap Mosque are motivated by their intrinsic values such as a sense of accountability because of their strong devotions to Islam; teacher's influence and adult learners' experience shape their thinking and behavior.

Adult learners' learning Islam in Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute is more concern in acquiring the knowledge from various sciences of Islam. They wanted to contribute to the development of the community from the perspectives of the Islamic worldview. The adult learners felt that the more they understand Islam they are able to make changes to the society and to correct misconceptions about Islam as part of their missionary efforts. Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute adopts a formal education even though most of their courses are conducted for part-time adult learners. They are organized and provide a formal curriculum that leads to certification such as certificate, diploma, degree and master levels. The curriculum is structured to meet the requirements of each certification level.

Adult learners in Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute learn various subjects as part of their learning requirements and naturally, they wanted to know as much as possible to grasp the understanding of the subject that was taught. Adult learners' attitudes to learning is to introspect themselves for self-improvements and to deepen their understanding of Islam. They form a mental model with the assumptions that they lack the knowledge of Islam and/or there are more to learn about Islam. The ability of the teacher to relate the subject with the current issues whether in the local or global context excite the adult learners and reinforce their understanding. In addition to the purpose of adult learners learning Islam is to worship Allah, there is also a desire among the adult learners to spread the knowledge within their families, friends, and the community.

As a formal learning center, Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute conducts examination and assessment on adult learners; a pre-requisite for them to obtain certification. Even though informants have the fear and anxious in taking the examination, they allay their fear by preparing early prior to the examination and often ask for examination tips from the teachers. Adult learners assume the examination results as an indicator of their level of understanding on the Islamic subject taught by their teachers. Sometimes they have a perception if they get low marks; they assume that the teachers are too strict in marking the examination papers.

Al-Zuhri Higher Learning Institute provides a conducive learning environment for adult learners where there are books lining up on the shelves in most of its classes. Having reading material resources encourage adult learners to explore and increase their knowledge and to support them in their presentation and discussion. The environment set the mood for adult learners to learn and inquisitive in their thinking are obvious from the questions that were pose to the teacher.

5.2 Purposeful Learning Outcomes

Adult learners have a high expectation of learning Islam and hope that teachers are able to teach them of what they do not know to knowing and what they know to a missing link in the knowledge that it gives a clear overview of what is being taught. Adult learners expect by learning Islam can bring changes in themselves to be a responsible Muslims to their religion, family, and society. This can be seen from their thought and behavior as they discuss Islam with passion and enthusiasm. Their intuitive learning aligns with the spiritual relationship with Allah who has the power to make changes in the behavior of themselves.

Adult learners acknowledge that the character is a reflection of Islam and adult learners are seen to exhibit good manners in conversation among them. They have much respect for the teachers and try their best to come to class early before the teachers enter the class and if there are adult learners who come to class late, they will knock the door to seek permission to enter the class and say sorry to the teacher or move quietly to take their seat. This reflects on the habitual transformation on the ethics of learning.

Adult learners expect the learning must be useful to them that they are able to apply it in their daily lives or practice it as an act of worshipping to Allah. Adult learners have the tendency of seeking immediate results to know everything that they have to learn as they see themselves having to invest their personal and family quality time, money, social life just to attend the religious class. They want to ensure the time spent is worth the effort and fulfill their personal satisfaction. Ultimately, adults' purposeful learning outcome is goal-oriented with the intent of transforming to be an excellence Muslims who are obedience to the command of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a role model in their lives.

5.3 Adult Learners way of Thinking

The physical state of adult learners, age, and the learning gain from the experience determine and influence the way adult learners think. As adult learners grow older their perspective of life has an impact in the way they think and doing. The fact that young adult learners have a healthy physical condition and they are able to think quickly as compared to the older adult learners due to ill health. But older adult learners have extensive experience and wisdom and they are not hasty to do an action, unlike young adult learners. The way both groups of adult learners differ in terms of learning, understanding, and applying the teachings of Islam. Young adult learners in the range of early adulthood are idealistic in their thought and don't have the patience for learning; at times felt that they are knowledgeable. Being energetic with full of ideas, they wanted to transform the society for betterment in line with the teachings of Islam. They see themselves as a true Muslim devoted to Islam by obeying Allah's command and trying to follow the footsteps of the messenger of Allah, ie Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Adult learners in the range of middle adulthood are in midlife integration beginning to understand the purpose of life better from their understanding and observations. They are more rational in their thinking and accept the reality in the local context. They appreciate the life today and are concerned with the state of society and felt unease when they perceive injustice happening around them especially the Muslims and the public in general that will impact the future generations. Older adult learners in the late adulthood have strong inclination towards spirituality and have the capability to face with the calmly of the tensions of the opposites. They focus more on their personal well-being that will have an impact in the hereafter. They are worried by the preparation for death. They adopt comparative thinking in reviewing their past actions with the reality. They are becoming more realistic in setting their expectations. Their forward thinking is that Islam fits in every period and the Muslim must be able to adapt and adopt based on situation and conditions.

Adult learners in the late adulthood acknowledge that are in the last phase of life and adopt reflective thinking as they reflect their past on the mistake and the sins they have committed. They feel grateful every time getting out of bed that Allah prolongs their age. Their learning of Islam is towards preparing for death to come. They feel that age is not on their side anymore and focus on repenting for their past deeds. The thought of doing good deeds must be accompanied with sincerity without expecting anything in return. They want to die in the pursuit of knowledge of their optimistic thinking that Allah will pave the way for them the road to heaven. They put much hope in their wishful thinking and feel helplessly hoping Allah will forgive and accepts their repent.

5.4 Adult Learners Understanding Styles

Adult learners have different styles of understanding that according to the responses of adult learners indicate their understanding of Islam. The adult learners' understanding comes from visual understanding, auditory understanding, textual understanding, action understanding, and sacred understanding. By perceiving they understand Islam is to assert what they understood is deem to be right.

The visual understanding demonstrates adult learners' preference by looking at the whiteboard or at the PowerPoint presentation as explained by the teacher on the subject matter. They try to transmit the information that was written on the whiteboard or the information display with their experience by being objective in their thinking and create meaning to it. They are more inclined to factual and concrete evidence in understanding Islam.

The auditory understanding proves the adult learners modes of listening to the teacher explanations on

the subject matter. The gatherings of the information utter by the teacher were put into abstract thinking and then cluster it to give meaning to it. In using the listening modes, adult learners can be selective in receiving the information as not all the information goes into the hearing of adult learners, hence there are possibility of missing key information.

The textual understanding ascertains the adult learners through the reading of the notes or book or scripture that was read by the teacher to the adult learners that formulate their understanding. As adult learners go through the notes, each word printed on the notes influence the adult learners understanding of the meaning of the statements printed on the notes. The explanations were given by the teacher by means of interpretation of the printed statements accepted by the adult learners as their forms of understanding.

The action understanding establishes the adult learners in putting to practice from what has been taught by the teacher and begin to understand the concept of the subject matter. This is especially true when the teacher lectures consisting of many words that are difficult to understand, hence, by action facilitates adult learners understanding as quoted by one of the adult learners “understanding is gathering of information that we are able to practice it...if we practice it, it will give us a better understanding of the information”.

The sacred understanding related to spiritual connection with Allah as this understanding could lead to a long process to grasps hold of true understanding. The early phase of understanding assume by adult learners is regarded as temporary understanding until Allah gave them a true understanding. Adult learners create their knowledge from the explanations by the teacher or through reading the scripture or practicing Islam, they assume to have understood Islam. But this assumption is only temporary understanding.

The sacred understanding with divine intervention will provide the meaning by superseding the adult learners’ initial understanding of Islam as quoted by one of the adult learners “...the factor that impact on me is when I can understand a verse of the Quran and Hadith even though I have learned the same verse many years ... but at that moment I gained a new understanding, enlighten my mind, add to my faith”. And for this to happen, adult learners could not understand the rationale behind the new-found understanding granted upon them by Allah.

The visual, auditory, textual, and action understanding styles is a process based on experiences and lessons taught by the teacher in which adult learners create their own knowledge as understood by them. The adult learners understanding of Islam varies depending on their modes of understanding. The sacred understanding style is a personal understanding that has a direct divine intervention recognizing that Allah, the All Knowing is the source of all knowledge that grants the individual the divine knowledge that give adult learners the true understanding.

5.5 Characteristics of Adult Learners

The characteristics of adult learners are much determined by their level of maturity. As they grow older from early adulthood to middle adulthood and late adulthood, they accumulate a lot of experiences in life that shape their spiritual personality as adult learners. The following are the characteristics of the adult learners:

a. Spiritual-driven

Adult learners learn Islam because of their strong belief in Allah and their desire to enter the paradise. It is due to their religious ideology that has shrouded all their thoughts and actions. Their facial expression and the tone of their voice projected during the interview describe the fear to face the Day of Judgment. They are fully aware that their doings in this world will be held accountable. The spiritual connection provides informants with the extraordinary spiritual energy to cling on to the divine revelations when they quoted the divine revelations during the interview and during the class discussion as if Allah is communicating to them in directing them to the right path. Feeling of guilt often surrounds adult learners and feel the presence of a strong connection with Allah are able to eliminate the anxiety in their lives. The element of spiritual is motivated by means of divine revelations provide tranquility in adult learners’ lives.

This spiritual relationship to adult learners has different levels of increase in faith and sometimes they felt there was a decline of faith. The increase and decrease of faith among adult learners depends on how far they are able to maintain the connection with Allah to always remember Him in all matters. Adult learners felt that if Allah is always in their mind, it will trigger the hearts to produce the spiritual energy that will determine their attitude towards learning Islam.

b. Zeal for Knowledge

Adult learners learning Islam to increase their knowledge because they felt the lack of knowledge will hinder their understanding of Islam holistically. Adult learners acknowledge that the science of Islam is borderless and there is a lot for them to know; each time they learn Islam they start to reflect upon themselves acknowledging there are a lot of Islamic sciences they have not known before. The zeal for knowledge gradually improves the self-esteem of adult learners towards being a pious Muslim. Adult learners are fully aware that there are differences between knowledgeable people than those who are not knowledgeable that trigger them to consistently upgrade their knowledge and life skills for the sake of Allah.

c. Autonomy

Adult learners realized that their learning is self-initiated on a voluntary basis. Adult learners learning are on the basis of the willingness without dependent on others. As a volunteer-learner, they are more comfortable making their own decisions in determining the type of learning that suit their learning needs. Adult learners are inclined to conducive learning environment that stimulates their minds to think reflectively.

Adult learners prefer their views or suggestions during the learning process are given due attention. Adult learners have their own way of learning and how they understand a subject will vary depending on their age and interests. They are aware of the responsibility of learning is the personal responsibility and the nature of this responsibility will be held accountable before Allah.

d. Experience

Adult learners bring their experience together when attending Islamic study. They often associate their experiences when trying to understand whether a subject that is being taught or when they are involved in class discussions. Their experiences relate with what is taught by the teacher affect the perception of adult learners. Experience is the fact that serves as a concrete evidence of adult learning throughout their lives.

There are two types of experiences that adult learners went through, ie internal and external experience of which can be positive or negative. Internal experience is an inner feeling that is in the soul of mankind such as have a feeling of jealousy on others that are negative or pray for the good of others that are positive, only adult learners and Allah knows. External experience is the situation or condition experienced by adult learners, such as doing harm and verbally abused towards others that affect the relationship which is negative or preaching on others to perform kind deed but was rejected which is positive. These experiences serve as a learning point or a reflective tool for adult learners to reevaluate with cross reference to the knowledge they acquired.

e. Multi-Responsibilities

Adult learners are categorized as working adult with huge responsibilities. They have different roles to perform in carrying out their responsibilities. The responsibilities include managing their family, parents, relatives, working colleagues, employer, friends, and their own private space. Adult learners can be classifying as grandparents, parents, professionals, laborers, engineers, homemakers, and etc. But once these adults attended the religious class in learning Islam, they become adult learners' despites their other significant roles. Learning can become difficult for adult learners if the family economic situation is not stable as most of the enrollment for religious classes involves payments or fees.

The desire to learn Islam will be ignored or compromised if adult learners to face the pressures of life because life in a cosmopolitan country are very demanding as there is intense competition. The high cost of living, sometimes forcing adults to focus on the job so there is no time to learn or discontinue in learning Islam and stopped halfway.

6. Conclusion

In accordance with the purposes of this study were to describe the 1) adult learners' understanding in learning Islam, 2) andragogy approach in promoting the learning of Islam, and 3) learning of Islam transform adult learners' personality, so based on the data obtained it is possible to conclude as follows:

What is understood by adult learners as correct is not necessarily true and what is understood by adult learners as incorrect is not necessarily wrong so adult learners' understanding of Islam are shape by divine intervention. Adult learners' learning experience has the elements of spirituality that provide them with a different level of enlightenment that includes understanding, insightful, self-reflection, critical and analytical, self-awareness, knowledge-oriented, wisdom, spiritual advancement, aroused morale, character refinement, and cultivation of curiosity. This understanding in learning Islam is different from the assumption of learning non-religious, which states that learning is equipping with particular competencies; learning is imparting of information and technology; and learning is for passing of examination. The outcome of the learning process in learning Islam involves physical and spiritual transformation of adult learners' personality.

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