

**REINVENTED TRADITION: PROMOTING *QIRĀ'ĀT* SCIENCE LEARNING
THROUGH QUR'ANIC COMPETITIONS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Islamic Studies at the Faculty of
Islamic Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



by:

Nasir Yahaya

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

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The acceptance of the Qur'an as a unified text with acceptable variations in its recitation is evident and clear to all Muslims. For centuries, Muslims have preserved the Qur'an in multiple ways, including through Qur'anic competitions popularly known as Musabaqah. However, the Malaysian government took the initiative to organize the Musabaqah at the international level in 1961 with the goal of instilling enthusiasm and motivation in Muslims for the constant companionship of the Qur'an. The phenomenon spread to various parts of the globe. Nigeria, being a Muslim-dominated country, has joined the trend of organizing Musabaqah competitions across the nation since 1986. The event was managed and supervised by Usmanu Dan Fodio University, which successfully initiated several categories for Musabaqah participants to compete in. Interestingly, the international inclusion of the Qirā'āt competition in Saudi Arabia in 2023 led to the introduction of a novel approach to the Nigerian Musabaqah. The new approach requires mastery of the seven recitations (Qirā'āts) and their narrations (Riwāyats). By utilizing a qualitative research approach and interviewing individuals who have experience and knowledge of Musabaqah, this research explores Musabaqah's contribution to Qirā'āt learning among its participants in Kaduna State of Nigeria, the historical development of Qirā'āt in Northern Nigeria, and the unique ways and methods of teaching Qirā'āt in the state. The findings show that Qirā'āt knowledge flourished and developed through a series of phases before and after colonialism. This includes the Islamization of the Hausa Emirates, scholars' visits and migration, the establishment of traditional Qur'anic schools, and the strong relationship between the Hausa Emirates and the Islamic world. Interestingly, the inclusion of Qirā'āt in the competition in 2023 has a positive impact on the state. First, it led to the establishment of more Qur'anic centers; it served as a source of inspiration for educational institutions and both local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that focus on organizing Qur'anic competitions in the region; it serves as a significant factor that motivates individuals to actively engage in learning the science; and it familiarizes the Musabaqah participants with various disciplines associated with the Qur'an. Furthermore, the study identifies several approaches used by Kaduna State's Qirā'āt teachers in teaching Qirā'āt. These approaches include Talqin, Tasmi', individual and group recitation, Musaffah group practice, and Qur'anic camping, all of which aim to enhance students' memorization of the Qur'an and the Shātibiyya book. The study identifies inadequate financial support, incorrect planning or timing, inadequate Qirā'āt teachers, a lack of a unified syllabus, marriage, and a lack of uniformity as challenges related to Musabaqah and Qirā'āt learning in the state. The study suggests the development of a unified syllabus, organizing both online and offline seminars and workshops, and establishing new regulations that limit the age of participation in each category and prohibit competitors from forging another state's identity.

Keywords: *Musabaqah, Qirā'āt, Musabaqah Participants, Northern Nigeria*

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كلية الدراسات الإسلامية الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية الإندونيسية

حافظ المسلمون القرآن لقرون عديدة من خلال عدة طرق ووسائل أبرزها المسابقات القرآنية، والتي اشتهرت على ألسن الشعب باسم المسابقة. ومع ذلك، تعد الحكومة الماليزية أول من بادرت بتنظيم المسابقة على المستوى الدولي في عام ١٩٦١م بهدف تقوية العلاقات بين الدول الإسلامية، وتربية الجيل الناشئ على حفظ القرآن وإتقان تجويده وعلومه. وقد انتشرت هذه الظاهرة إلى شتى أنحاء العالم بما في ذلك دولة نيجيريا، باعتبارها دولة ذات أغلبية مسلمة، حيث أقامت أول مسابقتها على المستوى الوطني في عام ١٩٨٦م، وذلك تحت إشراف وإدارة جامعة عثمان دان فوديو. ومنذ ذلك الوقت، قد شاركت نيجيريا العديد من المسابقات الدولية في فروع مختلفة. ومن المثير للاهتمام، أن إضافة فرع القراءات في المسابقة العالمية بالمملكة العربية السعودية عام ٢٠٢٣م أدى إلى إضافة هذا الفرع في المسابقة النيجيرية حيث يتنافس المتسابقون في القراءات السبع مع رواتهن. فعليه يعمد هذا البحث إلى دراسة إسهامات المسابقات القرآنية في تطوير تعليم علم القراءات لدى المتسابقين، والتطور التاريخي للقراءات في نيجيريا، والطرق والأساليب المستخدمة لتعليم علم القراءات، مدينة كدونا نموذجاً. وذلك من خلال المنهج البحث النوعي وإجراء المقابلات الشخصية مع أصحاب الخبرة والصلة بالموضوع. وتشير النتائج إلى أن علم القراءات قد ازدهر وتطور في نيجيريا من خلال سلسلة من المراحل ما قبل وبعد الاستعمار. ويشمل ذلك أسلمة إمارات هوسا، والزيارات العلمية والعلاقات الدبلوماسية، وظهور المدارس القرآنية التقليدية. ولا شك أن إضافة فرع القراءات في المسابقة كان له تأثير إيجابي على المنطقة. أولاً، أدى ذلك إلى إنشاء المزيد من المراكز القرآنية التي لها إمام كبير بالقراءات؛ كما يعد عاملاً محفزاً للأفراد على الانخراط بنشاط في تعلم هذا العلم الجليل والتعرف على التخصصات التي لها صلة بالقرآن. وعلاوة على ذلك، تحدد الدراسة عدة طرق ووسائل التي يستخدمها معلمو القراءات في ولاية كادونا في تعليم القراءات. وتشمل هذه الطرق التلقين، والتسميع، والتلاوة الفردية والجماعية، والخيمة القرآنية، والمصفي، وكلها تسعى وتهدف إلى تقوية حفظ القرآن وكتاب الشاطبية لدى الطلاب. وأشارت الدراسة إلى عدة عوائق المحيطة بالمسابقة وتعليم القراءات منها على سبيل الحصر نقص الدعم المالي، التخطيط أو التوقيت الخاطئ، قلة معلمي القراءات، عدم المنهج الموحد، والتكاليف المرتبطة بالزواج. وبناء على ذلك، تقترح الدراسة لمن يهتم الأمر إلى السعي في تطوير منهج موحد، وتنظيم ندوات وورش عمل، وإصدار لوائح جديدة تحدد عمر المشاركة في كل فئة من فئات المسابقة، وتمنع المتسابقين من تزوير هوية ولاية أخرى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المسابقة، القرآن، القراءات، المتسابقون، شمال نيجيريا

TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman
ا	a	س	s	ل	l
ب	b	ش	sh	م	m
ت	t	ص	ṣ	ن	n
ث	th	ض	ḍ	و	w
ج	j	ط	ṭ	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ي	y
خ	kh	ع	'		
د	d	غ	gh		
ذ	dh	ف	f		
ر	r	ق	q		
ز	z	ك	k		

Short Vocal

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
اَ	a	جَلَسَ	<i>jalasa</i>
اِ	i	رَكِبَ	<i>rakiba</i>
اُ	u	كُتِبَ	<i>kutiba</i>

Long Vocal

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
اِي/اِ	ā	جَرِي/سَافِر	<i>jarā/sāfar</i>
يِ	ī	سَلِيم	<i>salīm</i>
وِ	ū	سَجُود	<i>sujūd</i>

Diphtong

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
اَوْ	aw	مَوْلَا	<i>mawlā</i>
اَيِّ	ay	غَيْب	<i>ghayb</i>

Notes:

1. Consonant with shaddah (◌◌) for instance, أُمَّة is written as *ummah* (double letters).
2. Arabic letter *hamzah* (ء) at the beginning of a word is transliterated into “a” not into “`a”. For instance, أحمد is written as *aḥmad* not *`aḥmad*.
3. Arabic script of *alif-lam qamariyah* (ال) is written as “al” at the beginning of words and *alif-lam shamsiyah* (ا) is written in accordance with the first letter at the beginning of words. For instance:
المائدة : al-mā'idah
الرحمان : ar-rahmān
4. Arabic letter *ta' marbutah* (ة) is written as “h” when it is located at the end of the words, such as البقرة is written as *al-baqarah*. When located in the middle of a sentence is written as “t”, such as أُمَّة وَسَطًا is written as *ummatan wasaṭan*.

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GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Ajzā</i>	: Quranic chapter
Hurūf al-sab‘ah	: The seven letters
<i>Musābaqah</i>	: Quranic recitation competition
<i>Qāri</i>	: The Quranic reciter
<i>Qirā’ah</i>	: The Quranic recitation
<i>Qirā’āt</i>	: The science of Quranic readings
<i>Qurrā al sab‘ah</i>	: The seven Quranic reciters
<i>Rāwi</i>	: The narrator
<i>Riwayāh</i>	: Narration
<i>Tafsīr</i>	: Quranic exegesis
Tajwīd	: The science of Quranic recitation

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The science of *Qirā'āt* has a great virtue in Islam because it is one of the most noble Islamic sciences due to its strong connection with the divine Qur'an, which is believed to be the greatest miracle, proving Prophet Muhammad's prophethood and serving as the completion of divine messages. According to al-Zarkashī (d 1392), *Qirā'āt* sciences are the differences in the wording of the revelation mentioned in the writing of the letters of the Qur'an or their manner.¹ al-Qāḍī (d. 1403) maintains that Prophet Muhammad received the Qur'an through the Angel Jibril in Arabic, with the Qur'an revealed in seven different letters known as (*Ahruf*).² Islamic scholars debated the meaning of these letters, but Ibn Jawzī concluded that they were the source for different recitations.³ The seven letters are also perceived as seven Arab dialects with one meaning, with each dialect having different standards and specifications. However, al-Zarkashī (d 1392) identified the *Quraysh, Hudahil, Tamim, Azd, Rabi'ah, Hawāzin, and Saad bin Bakr* dialects as the seven Arab dialects with which the Qur'an was revealed.⁴ Also, semantic diversity is another factor associated with variations in Qur'anic recitation, as seen in *Surah al Fatiha*, where there are two different ways of reciting the word Malik sounding either “Mālik” with little elongation on the “Mā” and “Malik” without elongation which affects the meaning.

However, the Prophet taught his companions the correct Qur'an recitation methods. He would sometimes recite the Qur'an to one companion using one letter and to another using a different letter. Each companion would then recite and instruct others based on what they had learned from the Prophet. But after his death, many Arab tribes apostatized. Abu Bakr, the Caliph, compiled the entire Qur'an and focused on spreading Islam. The companions dispersed into new Islamic states to teach the holy Qur'an. However, accuracy decreased due to variations in transmission and the high number of transmitters. Muslims agreed to accept certain Imam's readings, considering factors like credibility, trust, piety, and extensive knowledge. In the 3rd century AH, Ibn Mujāhid

¹ Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Bahādur al-Zarkashī, *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Bayrūt, Lubnān, : Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1376), 318.

² 'Abd al-Fattāḥ ibn 'Abd al-Ghanī ibn Muḥammad al-Qāḍī, *al-Wāfi Fī Sharḥ al-Shāṭibiyya fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'*, 4th ed. (Maktabat al-Sawādī lil-Tawzī', 1412), 6.

³ Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faraj 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Alī (d. ibn Muḥammad al-Jawzī, *Funūn al-Afnān fī 'Uyūn 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*., 1st ed. (Bayrūt - Lubnān: Dār al-Nashr: Dār al-Bashā'ir, 1408), 247.

⁴ al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 318–23.

outlined seven Qur'anic recitation styles connected to famous reciters in his book *Kitāb al-Sab'a*.⁵ The seven reciters identified are from the regions of Hijāz, Iraq, and Sham. They are Nāfi', Āsim, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Āmir, Abu Amr, Hamza, and kisā'i.⁶ They disseminated the various recitations as transmitted from the Prophet's companions and adherents, which gained widespread acceptance within their own regions and in neighbouring ones. Later on, scholarly works of Abū 'Amr al-Dānī (d. 371 AH), Imam al-Shātibī (d. 590 AH), and Ibn al-Jazari (d. 833 AH) serves as fundamental knowledge resources for studying the *Qirā'āt* sciences. The science has diffused across the Muslim globe, allowing every country to adapt and utilize certain narration from the Seven *Qirā'āt* as a primary form of Qur'anic recitation and transmitted to future generations in the same way.

In Nigeria, the *Qirā'āt* knowledge flourished and developed through several phases. The first stage dates back to the arrival of Islam in the region. Later on, the Islamization of the Hausa Emirates contributed to the growth of Qur'anic studies in general, and particularly the science of *Qirā'āt*, through the scholarly visits and migration of scholars to the region, the establishment of traditional Qur'anic schools, and the strong relationship between the Hausa Emirates and the Islamic world. These factors resulted in the emergence of Nigerian scholars such as Abdullah bin Fodio, who authored a book in the field. However, during colonization, Qur'anic education in Nigeria faced challenges like a lack of direct contact with Arab scholars, the impact of modern education, and resource scarcity. Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, the revival of diplomatic ties with the Islamic world led to the continuation of academic missions that enabled Nigerian students to learn *Qirā'āt* knowledge. Other factors include the impact of Hajj and Umrah, the availability of recorded Qur'an in the form of audio and CDs, and the introduction of Qur'anic competition in the region.

It is pertinent to note that the Malaysian government took the initiative to organize the Qur'anic recitation competition, known as *Musābaqah*, at the international level in 1961, and it later spread throughout the Islamic world.⁷ The competition involves male and female participants of various ages competing in different categories by reciting verses from the Qur'an in a melodious and articulate way.⁸ Qur'anic experts frequently judge the

⁵ Christopher Melchert, "Ibn Mujāhid and the Establishment of Seven Qur'anic Readings," 2000, 3.

⁶ al-Qāsim ibn Fīrah ibn Khalaf ibn Aḥmad al-Ru'aynī al-Shātibī Abū Muḥammad, *Matn Al-Shātibīyya: Ḥirz al-Amānī Wa-Wajh al-Tahānī Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'*, Muḥammad Tamīm al-Za'bī (Dār al-Hudā wa-Dār al-Ghawthānī li-l-Dirāsāt al-Qur'āniyya, 1426), 3–4.

⁷ Lois Al Fārūqī, "Qur'an Reciters in Competition in Kuala Lumpur," vol. 31, 1987, 222.

⁸ Najib Zubir, "The International Qur'an Reciters' Assembly in Malaysia," *Source: Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, vol. 2, 2000, 147.

competition and evaluate the participants based on factors including verse memorization, melody, voice, and pronunciation accuracy. The primary objective of introducing *Musābaqah* is to motivate Muslims to compete in good deeds and learn, memorize, and comprehend the meaning of the Qur'an strengthening the bonds and relationships among the Islamic countries while preserving Islamic cultural heritage.

Interestingly, many Islamic countries joined the trend in organizing the event, including Nigeria, where the practice has existed since 1985, under the management of the Center for Islamic Studies at Usmanu Dan-Fodio University, Sokoto.⁹ Indeed, the religious background of Northern Nigerian society, associated with the noble Qur'an being the most revered book by Muslims, attracts many memorizers of the Qur'an. From a social perspective, Abdulhamid highlighted some motivating factors associated with the benefits of Qur'anic memorization and participating in *Musābaqah* events, including a high reputation, positive recognition, admiration, respect, and positive societal influence.¹⁰ This makes sense because many people, including the researcher, achieve this recognition through *Musābaqah*. Also, the *Musābaqah* event has grown in such a way that it is now a major communal and religious event that brings the Qur'an to life through community members' active engagement and participation despite not being officially included in the national calendar of the nation. Yet, it played a vital role in promoting a better understanding of the Qur'an and its sciences through practice and transmission from one generation to another.

Furthermore, the competition, which has a rotational nature across the states, enables the participants to explore new places within and outside the country. Also, it offers opportunities for oneness and unity among participants, creating a room for making new friends with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. In Kaduna State, for example, one of Nigeria's 36 states, with over 8 million people in 23 local government areas, predominantly consists of Hausa Tribe, with Islam as the dominant religion. The outstanding performance and achievements of the state in *Musābaqah* at both national and international levels led to the emergence of champions like Abdulkarim Tahir Abdullah, Sahura Adam, Sulaiman Saleh Ikara, Abubakar Umar Balarabe, Sulaiman Abdulkarim

⁹ Yakubu Tahir Maigari et al., "Exploring the Factors Affecting Competitors' Performance at Qur'anic Recitation Competition: A Case of Compliance with Techniques of Recitation (Ahkamut-Tajweed)," *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 24, no. 8 (n.d.): 3, <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2408092632>.

¹⁰ Rafatu Abdulhamid, "Impact and Challenges of Qur'anic Recitation Competition in the Federal Capital Territory (Fct) Abuja," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture* 3, no. 2 (2015): 154, <https://doi.org/10.15640/jisc.v3n2a16>.

Isah, and many others. Generally, the *Musābaqah* starts on a knockout basis at the ward, local government, and state levels, allowing only the first and second-place winners to represent and participate at the next level. The overall winner of certain categories at the national level is the one representing Nigeria at the international level in Saudi Arabia. The closing ceremony mostly involves awards of scholarship offers to those who excelled, incentives, and prizes to motivate and appreciate the participants' efforts.

Since its inception in 1986, the national body of the Nigerian *Musābaqah* organizations, under the supervision and leadership of Usmanu Dan Fodio University, has initiated several categories in which the *Musābaqah* participants compete, encompassing one, five, ten, twenty, and sixty parts (*Ajza'*) of the Qur'an. Others include memorizing the whole Qur'an along with its Tafsir (exegesis). Interestingly, in Kaduna State, only three of the seven *Qirā'āt*s were permissible for *Musābaqah* competitors to employ while participating in the Qur'anic competition: Asim, Nāfi', and Abu Amr. However, in 2023, the national body of the *Musābaqah* organization adopted the *Qirā'āt* category due to its inclusion at the international level in the King Abdulaziz International Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Saudi Arabia¹¹. This unique category required proficiency in the seven authentic recitations (*Qirā'āt*s) and their narrations (*Riwāyats*), both in theory and practice, as well as the ability to justify every variation in Qur'anic recitation from the classical books such as *al-Shātibiyyah*, *al-Ibānah*, and *al-Taysīr*. This category of *Qirā'āt*, despite its difficulty and novelty, attracted *Musābaqah* participants from various states of Nigeria, including Kaduna State. This dynamic shift in paradigm within the *Musābaqah* framework is a complex issue that requires deeper investigation, as it is undoubtedly the most challenging of all the *Musābaqah* categories to date.

1.2 Research Objectives

The study aims to examine the contribution of *Musābaqah* to promoting *Qirā'āt* learning among *Musābaqah* participants in the context of Kaduna State. In order to achieve this goal, the study first traced the historical development of *Qirā'āt* in general and specifically in Northern Nigeria up to the present time. Also, it looks at the perspectives of the *Musābaqah* competitors in the *Qirā'āt* category and the judges at the state level. The goal is to get a full and clear picture of their motivations, the possible prospects achieved after the inclusion of *Qirā'āt* in the competition, and the challenges associated with both

¹¹ Competition Guide, "The King Abdulaziz International Qur'anic Competition." (Saudi Arabia: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Daw'ah and Guidance, AH 1445).

Musābaqah and *Qirā'āt* learning in Kaduna State. Furthermore, the study describes the unique ways and methods of teaching *Qirā'āt* knowledge, emphasizing their uniqueness and effectiveness in boosting students' proficiency in the subject matter. Finally, the study aims to provide the framework for future research projects that focus on the dynamics of *Musābaqah* through educational, cultural, and communal reception perspectives.

1.3 Research Questions

Below are the study questions under the study subject matter.

1. In what ways does *Musābaqah* contribute to the promotion of *Qirā'āt* science?
2. How have *Qirā'āt* sciences flourished and developed up to the present time in Nigeria?
3. What are the unique ways and methods of teaching *Qirā'āt* knowledge in Kaduna State?

1.4 Literature Review

Several countries within the Muslim globe have joined the trend of organizing the Qur'anic competition known as *Musābaqah* at different levels since its inception in Malaysia in 1961, a novel phenomenon that attracts academics and scholars to explore more about the socio-religious event. For instance, Gade et al. explore the motivation of Qur'anic recitation competition in Indonesia within the theory of ritualized religious practice. The findings show that Popular educational and performance programs evolved on the foundation of Indonesian *Musābaqah* in order to motivate and inspire individuals to engage in "motivated" activities in line with the goals and objectives of *Musābaqah*. Also, it serves as a point of view on the inspired systems of religious practice, highlighting rehearsal regimens that improve knowledge and understanding of the inspirational dynamics of prolonged, voluntary, sustained practices of piety.¹²

Rahtikawati examines Indonesian *Musābaqah* participants' motives, competencies, and experiences using the Living Qur'an theory. The data indicates that *Musābaqah Tafsiral Qur'an* (MTQ) is a well-known Qur'anic competition evaluated based on Qur'anic memorization, interpretation, comprehension of Qur'anic sciences, translation, and explanatory skills. Furthermore, the event also serves as a room for educating the public on the sciences of the Qur'an, enhancing their reading, memorization, and understanding.

¹² Anna M. Gade, Pamela J. Stewart, and Andrew J. Strathern, "Motivating Qur'anic Practice In Indonesia By 'Competing In Goodness,'" *Source: Journal of Ritual Studies*, vol. 18, 2004, 29–33, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44368693>.

Moreover, it reveals that *Musābaqah* improves participants' scientific interpretation and memorization skills. Thus, it is important to mention that obtaining guidance from Islamic clerics, commonly referred to as Kia, assists the participants in acquiring a deeper understanding of the sciences related to the Qur'an. Ultimately, *Musābaqah* fosters a unique setting where participants, judges, religious authorities, and other community members can develop meaningful friendships.¹³

Nurrahim examines the importance of *Musābaqah Hifdz al-Qur'ān* (MHQ) for students who participate in Qur'an memorization at the Pondok Pesantren Modern Islam Assalaam in Sukoharjo, Indonesia. The findings indicate that participating in MHQ is important for the participants, as it improves the ability to memorize the Qur'an for students enrolled in the competition. In addition, the event provides benefits and positive principles, such as discovering previously unknown facts related to the Qur'an, promoting an increased feeling of competitiveness between students, receiving comprehensive guidance, and achieving progress in memorization proficiency.¹⁴

Furthermore, Faizah investigates how students engage with the Quran online and offline during the pandemic outbreak at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid Paiton, Probolinggo, East Java, Indonesia. The results show that the Qur'an-focused *Musābaqah* events, such as MSQ (*Musābaqah Syarḥ al-Qur'ān*), MTQ (*Musābaqah Tilawah al-Qur'ān*), and MHQ (*Musābaqah Hifdz al-Qur'ān*), held during the given period played very important roles in helping the students interact with the Qur'an.¹⁵ Demina also proposes applying the Wafaa method, which is considered one of the Qur'anic learning strategies in *Musābaqah*. The finding indicates that the Wafaa method's implementation and evaluation in Indonesian primary schools are very useful as they help students focus more during the learning process. Thus, the method is very suitable for use in the implementation of learning strategies for achieving rapid and accurate memorization of the Qur'an.¹⁶

¹³ Yayan Rahtikawati and Lu'lu' Abdullah Afifi, "Musābaqah Tafsiril Qur'an: A Religious Scientific Contestation and Ceremonial Symbol," *al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 6, no. 1 (September 11, 2021): 8–11, <https://doi.org/10.15575/al-bayan.v6i1.14047>.

¹⁴ Ahmad Nurrohimi and Ilham Adyatma, "The Meaning of Musābaqah Hifzil Qur'an for Students Who Memorize the Qur'an," n.d., 12.

¹⁵ Thoriqotul Faizah, "Interacting with the Qur'an in Pandemic Times: The Study of Living The Qur'an At Pondok Pesantren," *Mushaf Jurnal Tafsir Berwawasan Keindonesiaan* 2, no. 1 (December 2021): 82–85, <https://doi.org/10.33650/mushaf.v2i1.3335>.

¹⁶ Demina Demina, Tachioka Rexy, and Asuncion Danyl, "The Use of Qurānic Learning Strategies Through the Wafa Method in Elementary Schools," *Journal International Inspire Education Technology* 1, no. 2 (August 2022): 65–67, <https://doi.org/10.55849/jiiet.v1i2.91>.

Similarly, Abd Aziz et al. explore using Fuzzy evaluation methods to assess Qur'anic recitation competition in Klang, Malaysia. Based on the findings, the fuzzy markings with linguistic values offer a reasonable and intelligent alternative to evaluating competitors' performance. Also, the method is useful because it can increase participants' satisfaction and help the panel of judges make reliable decisions during the competition.¹⁷ On the other hand, Akkus's research aims to detect similar rhythmic patterns in the TRT 1 Qur'an Recitation Competition in the context of Turkey, in order to evaluate their appropriateness, with a special focus on identifying and documenting frequently used melodies. The study analyzes the recordings of winners and finalists throughout all seasons of the competition. The results indicate that maqām, such as *Hijāz*, *Rast*, *Sabā*, and others, were mainly used, with *Ushshāq* being the most utilized. Likewise, the study explored the impact of melodies on the style and attitude of reciting, underscoring the significance of Maqām in improving the reciter's performance.¹⁸

Similarly, Yavuz argues that new phonetic styles were produced among the Turks due to environmental and social factors, which negatively impacted their way of recitation during the *Musābaqah*. Therefore, in order to recite the Qur'an in its original form, it is suggested that the local way of recitation must be corrected by adapting the knowledge of *Tajwid*.¹⁹ In his research into new media in the Islamic world, Galal demonstrated how traditional religious practices such as *Musābaqah* are regarded as useful in developing the Islamic identity.²⁰ Moreover, Muhammad Shalouni discusses the significance of floating endowment for Qur'anic competitions. At the same time, the good intention of the needs and the rewards are assigned to the facilitators in conformity and compliance with Islamic Sharia. The results show that endowment for Qur'anic competitions should be encouraged and promoted as it is one form of perpetual charity whose benefit continues even after death.²¹

¹⁷ Khairu Azlan Abd Aziz et al., "Assessment of Qur'an Reciting Competitions Using the Fuzzy Evaluation Method," *Journal of Computing Research and Innovation* 7, no. 2 (September 2022): 72, <https://doi.org/10.24191/jcrinn.v7i2.287>.

¹⁸ Bea Klotz, "The Central and Eastern European Online Library (Www.Ceeol. Com)," *Serials Librarian* 53, no. 1–2 (2007): 799–818, https://doi.org/10.1300/J123v53n01_15.

¹⁹ Yavuz FIRAT Doç and Erciyes Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, "Kur'an Tilâvetinde Arap Ve Türkler Arasındaki Farklılıklar," 2014, 27–29.

²⁰ Ehab Galal, "Magic Spells and Recitation Contests: The Qur'an as Entertainment on Arab Satellite Television," 2008, 16, <https://doi.org/10.1386/nl.6.1.165/1>.

²¹ Anwar Muhammad El-Shaltouni, "Endowment for Qur'anic Competitions: Its Types, Propagation and Conformity to Sharia," *Faculty of Sharia and Law Al-Azhar University* 34, no. 2 (2022): 2575.?

In the Nigerian context, Gusau explores the factors that attract female participants to the Qur'anic competition as well as the impacts of their participation on the lives of Northern Nigerian female Muslims. The findings indicate that encouraging women to participate in *Musābaqah* as a form of motivation will provide them with a sense of security and belonging and will also transform and instill positive virtues in them.²² Additionally, Sani explains the historical development of Islamic Qur'anic schools and the evolution of traditional and modern Qur'anic schools and their activities in Nigeria. The findings show that the traditional Qur'anic schools succeeded more in drilling into interested pupils and participants the importance of memorizing the Qur'an. In contrast, modern Qur'anic schools succeeded more in drilling into them the significance of reciting the Quran proficiently. This is the basis of their resounding successes in *Musābaqah*. Also, the study suggested that the two schools should connect, collaborate, and exchange experiences to improve the quality of Qur'anic recitation and memorization since they share the same aims and goals towards the Qur'an, but differ in their teaching approaches.²³

Likewise, Abdulhamid examines the impacts of *Musābaqah* on the lives of Muslims in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. The study provides that *Musābaqah* has spiritual, educational, social, and economic positive impacts on the Muslims in the area. Also, the organizers have taken action to address the challenges faced by the *Musābaqah* committee, including lack of funds, lack of publicity, and lack of a permanent secretariat.²⁴ Interestingly, Maigari explores the factors affecting *Musābaqah* participants in compliance with Ahkamut tajwid in Gombe state. The findings indicate that geographic area, parental background, linguistic factors, occupational status, and nature of training used by schools are among others that determine *Musābaqah* participants' propensity to perform well in the Qur'anic competition.²⁵

Despite a wide scope of literature exploring the *Musābaqah* practice, it is evident that previous scholars have primarily focused on the event's overall social and educational impact on the lives of Muslims. They have investigated its role as a ritualized and

²² Ahmad Muhammad Gusau, "The Effect of Qur'anic Recitation Competition to the Contemporary Muslim Women in Northern Nigeria" (The 2nd Annual International Qur'anic Conference, Malaysia: Centre of Quranic Research (CQR), 2012), 183–87.

²³ Sani Nura, "Recitation and Memorization of the Holy Quran in Nigeria: A Comparison of Traditional and Modern Quranic Schools." (worldconferences.net, 2019).

²⁴ Abdulhamid, "Impact and Challenges of Qur'anic Recitation Competition in the Federal Capital Territory (Fct) Abuja," 167.

²⁵ Tahir Maigari et al., "Exploring the Factors Affecting Competitors' Performance at Qur'anic Recitation Competition: A Case of Compliance with Techniques of Recitation (Ahkamut-Tajweed)," 47.

traditional religious practice, helping participants develop proficiency in *Tajweed* and *Tarannum*, and the application of the Wafaa method for assessing event participants. Others include discussions about the importance of endowments for *Musābaqah* and the motivational factors attracting women to participate in the event. However, there is a gap in scope and literature as none of the previous scholars explored the contribution of *Musābaqah* to *Qirā'āt* learning, given that the *Qirā'āt* category is a new and emerging trend in the system. Therefore, this research attempts to bridge the gap in the existing literature by providing a novel perspective on the subject matter. The study accomplishes this by emphasizing the importance of Qur'anic reception in a social context through *Musābaqah* events involving active community engagement. This is achieved by presenting the historical development of *Qirā'āt* in Northern Nigeria, describing the unique ways and methods of teaching *Qirā'āt* in the state and highlighting the contribution of *Musābaqah* to promoting *Qirā'āt* knowledge among its participants. This novel approach is essential to this study for two main reasons. First, it differs from previous studies in that it sees the event not only as a socio-religious practice but also as an educational tool that helps advance *Qirā'āt* knowledge in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

This study not only adds to the academic discourse about how *Musābaqah* competitions promote *Qirā'āt* learning and the different ways of teaching *Qirā'āt*, but it also gives a clear picture of the event and suggests useful methods and strategies that could be used effectively for teaching *Qirā'āt* in a different setting. Additionally, previous scholars have underestimated the potential of *Musābaqah* in promoting *Qirā'āt* education. Therefore, this study highlights the overlooked aspects and offers an extensive overview of the event, serving as a foundation for future research in this field. Finally, the primary objective of this research is to offer useful information that can be used to improve the quality of *Musābaqah* events and educational practices, to enhance their impact on *Qirā'āt* learning in Kaduna State.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Throughout history, the living practices of the Qur'an have been preserved and transformed from one generation to another. The Qur'an is presented and treated with respect by its first community (Arabs) and those who entered Islam from non-Arabs in a special and unique way, considering it not only as a text but as a spiritual source of guidance that has a universal message toward humanity. The potentiality of how Muslim communities interact with the Qur'an contributes to the emergence of creative practices

and the functioning of the Qur'an in practical life, which is a common phenomenon in the Qur'anic discourse known as *al-Qur'ān al-ḥayy*, which means the living Qur'an or the Qur'an enliven. Interestingly, the theory remains unique in analyzing the social aspect of engaging with the Qur'an in daily activities. In this context, numerous studies have examined the Qur'an from the perspective of community reception, either by analyzing the Qur'an as a scripture or text or by exploring the objects associated with the Qur'anic text. These studies aim to comprehend the context of these texts and the societal response to them. This response can manifest in various ways, such as through interpretations, the implementation or application of the Qur'an's moral teachings in daily activities, or other potential practices that connect and foster a stronger relationship between society and the Qur'an such as *Musābaqah*.

Some fundamental scholarly works exploring this concept include Navid Kermani's book titled *God Is Beautiful: The Aesthetic Experience of the Qur'ān*, which highlights the connection between the Muslim faith, spirituality, practices, and the noble Qur'an as a text. The study applied the theory to explore the communal reception and the beauty and eloquence of the Qur'an from linguistic, mystical, and theological viewpoints. It also outlined the relationship between the Qur'an and the community, clarifying the transmission trends and improvements contributing to society's understanding of the Qur'anic discourse. This discourse shapes knowledge, practices, and the Qur'anic reception from the early Islamic period to later generations. The study used several examples, including the famous history of Umar Ibn Khattab's conversion, which serves as both a fascinating intellectual journey and an essential aesthetic experience.²⁶

Therefore, it is essential to analyze *Musābaqah* using this theory, considering that *Musābaqah* is a communal and religious event that brings the Qur'an to life through community members' active engagement and participation as an additional way of safeguarding and preserving the holy Qur'an from extinction, and its vital role in promoting a better understanding of the Qur'an and its sciences through practice and transmission from one generation to another. So, it is crucial to adapt this theory in order to understand the practices involved fully. This will enable the researcher to understand the motivations behind the participants' interaction with the text (the Qur'an) and the impact of this practice on their subsequent commitments to enhance their intellectual engagement with the noble Qur'an. This includes reciting the Qur'an and delving deeper into learning and mastering

²⁶ Navid Kermani, "*God Is Beautiful: The Aesthetic Experience of the Quran.*" (Polity: Cambridge, 2015), 20–27.

the *Qirā'āt* sciences, which is an additional aspect of understanding and applying the Qur'an's teachings in daily life activities.

1.6 Research Significance

The adoption of this topic came from the overlooking of previous scholars concerning the subject matter, as the existing literature on this particular topic is limited. Therefore, this research holds significance as it bridges a gap in the existing literature by providing a novel perspective on the contribution of *Musābaqah* in advancing *Qirā'āt* learning within the context of Kaduna State, Nigeria. Examining this dynamic shift in the *Musābaqah* framework will provide researchers with a comparative scientific perspective on how Kaduna State practices *Musābaqah* compared to other states or countries across the Muslim globe. Furthermore, it will assist in understanding the challenges related to the *Musābaqah* competition and *Qirā'āt* education within the state, thereby offering potential recommendations. Moreover, the research is essential in understanding the motivational factors behind the involvement of young people in this socio-religious event, particularly at a time when their counterparts are preoccupied with worldly possessions. So, this research enhances the existing body of knowledge and paves the way for future studies in the field.

1.7 Research Methods

1.7.1. Research Design

The study uses qualitative methods with a descriptive approach to look into how *Musābaqah* contributes to *Qirā'āt* learning among *Musābaqah* participants in Kaduna State. According to Boyce, this technique is essential in examining a specific idea, program, or situation.²⁷ As a result, the researcher employs this approach to capture the richness of the *Musābaqah* phenomenon and approach the research questions from various perspectives, enriching the analysis and providing more valuable interpretations that will validate the research findings.

1.7.2. Participant Selection

The study identifies the research participants through the purposive sampling method, a technique used in selecting based on several factors, including expertise,

²⁷ By Carolyn Boyce, "Pathfinder I Nternational Tool Series Monitoring and Evaluation-2 Conducting in-depth Interviews: A Guide for Designing and Conducting In-Depth Interviews for Evaluation Input," 2006, 3–4.

experience, and position in a group or society. In this context, several studies assert that this technique can be used to select individuals with extensive knowledge and experience about the research topic.²⁸ So, this lets the researcher engage with individuals from Kaduna State who are knowledgeable and have the experience of participating in or officiating the *Musābaqah* at the state level, with a specific focus on the *Qirā'āt* category. In other words, the researcher chose the sample size for this study based on their experience and knowledge of the *Musābaqah* practice. However, the study conducted interviews with eleven individuals from two different segments: eight *Musābaqah* participants, three of whom were male and five of whom were female. In this context, the study examines both genders as participants in *Musābaqah*, highlighting the inclusive nature of their involvement in the practice. Similarly, the interview includes three panel judges at the state level, who serve as judges in the competition and *Qirā'āt* teachers. Their inclusion enables the researcher to explore their perspectives and expertise, thereby painting a clear picture of the event, contributing to an in-depth understanding of the dynamics in the subject matter, and offering more relevant and appropriate justifications. The research participants are as follows:

Table 1.1 Research participants

Name	Role	Experience	Age	Place
Dr Abdullahi Abba	<i>Qirā'āt</i> Teacher and Panel of Judges at state and National level	35 years	60	Zaria
Dr Fāiz Shuaib Adam	<i>Qirā'āt</i> Teacher and Panel of Judges at state level	15	36	Igabi
Sheikh Sulaiman Salihu	<i>Qirā'āt</i> Teacher and Chief of Panel of Judges at the state level	12	37	Ikara
Rabiu Muhammad	<i>Qirā'āt</i> contestant	6	22	Kaduna North
Ibrahim Saeed	<i>Qirā'āt</i> contestant	7	24	Igabi
Muhammad Naeem	<i>Qirā'āt</i> contestant	10	31	Soba
Farida Zakariyya	<i>Qirā'āt</i> contestant	7	23	Kaduna South

²⁸ John W Creswell, *Educational Research - Planning, Conducting, And Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research - Fifth Edition*, AORN Journal, vol. 62, 1, 2015, 66; Shoshanna Sofaer, "Articles Qualitative Methods: What Are They and Why Use Them?," n.d., 17–18.

Maimuna Adam	<i>Qirā`āt</i> contestant	12	28	Chikun
Amina Rabilu	<i>Qirā`āt</i> contestant	10	27	Igabi
Maryam Suyudi	<i>Qirā`āt</i> contestant	13	33	Igabi
Sadiya M Sani	<i>Qirā`āt</i> contestant	6	24	Ikara

1.7.3. Data Collection

The study primarily collects data through semi-structured telephone interviews, supplemented by secondary data from relevant academic books and journals. However, the researcher's geographical location at the time of the study prompted the use of this approach, provided that the researcher's position is in Indonesia and the research participants reside in Kaduna State, Nigeria, making it impossible to reach them. As such, this data collection strategy allows the researcher to conduct virtual interviews with research participants, allowing them to freely express their thoughts, ideas, and experiences on the subject matter in their own words. The researcher can also ask follow-up questions to obtain more comprehensive details and enrich the collected data. Therefore, the researcher considers this technique the most appropriate and suitable way of conducting the research.

1.7.4. Data Analysis

The study used Miles and Huberman's thematic analysis, which systematically recommended four steps for data analysis²⁹: first, collecting data through a semi-structured telephone interview via Zoom in Hausa, then transcribed, and finally translated to English. The next step involves summarizing the data through coding by selecting relevant phrases critical to the study. After data reduction, the researcher displayed the data and generated relevant themes. Finally, the researcher concluded the themes presented in the findings. Thus, it's important to acknowledge that the findings discussed in this research are the perspectives and experiences of both *Musābaqah* participants and the panel of judges in the *Qirā`āt* competition in Kaduna State. The analysis focuses on several key themes related to *Musābaqah* and *Qirā`āt* learning. These include the prospects of introducing *Qirā`āt* into the *Musābaqah* system, motivational factors attracting the *Musābaqah* participants to engage in *Qirā`āt* competition, unique ways of teaching *Qirā`āt* in Kaduna State, and the challenges associated with *Musābaqah* and *Qirā`āt* learning in the state. By

²⁹ Matthew B Miles, • A Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, "Qualitative Data Analysis A Methods Sourcebook Edition," n.d., 15.

grounding the analysis in primary sources, this research aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of *Musābaqah* practice and its contribution to promoting *Qirā'āt* learning in Kaduna State.

1.8 Thesis Outline

The structure of this master's thesis offers an extensive explanation of the contribution of *Musābaqah* to promoting *Qirā'āt* learning among the *Musābaqah* participants within the context of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The first chapter consists of an introduction, where the researcher provides a broad background of *Qirā'āt* knowledge, its origin, historical growth and development, and the role played by some Islamic scholars in the development of the science. Here, the researcher highlights the innovative method of preserving the tradition of mastering this knowledge through Qur'anic competitions, known as *Musābaqah*. At this point, the researcher highlights the primary goals of presenting the *Musābaqah* tradition in the Islamic world while also detailing the execution of the event, the characteristics of the participants, and the judges' panel. Then, the researcher narrows the scope and explains the socio-religious practice in the Nigerian context. The researcher then discusses the research problem, objectives, questions, theoretical framework, and significance of the study. Likewise, the methodology section provides a detailed explanation of the reasons behind the selection process of the qualitative research method as well as the research participants. Also, it offers comprehensive insights into the data collection process, as well as the thesis outline.

Chapter two explores the concept of *Musābaqah* and its historical development, providing valuable insights into its literal and technical definition and the scholarly debates on the legality of *Musābaqah*. The researcher then discusses the general overview of *Musābaqah* from a global perspective, examining relevant literature and narrowing it down to literature that specifically explores the concept within the Nigerian context. This approach aims to identify gaps in the literature and ensure the research's novelty is clear and transparent.

Similarly, chapter three offers a comprehensive discussion of *Qirā'āt* science, tracing its origins and development from the Prophet Muhammad's era to its current status as a field of study. The chapter achieves this by exploring the roles of classical *Qirā'āt* scholars like Ibn Mujāhid, Al Dani, and Ibn Jazari and examining the fundamentals that led to the establishment of *Qirā'āt* science. Additionally, the chapter explores the literature pertaining to *Qirā'āt* knowledge in general, then narrows it down to the Nigerian context,

where it explores the Qur'anic schools and the historical development of *Qirā'āt* science in northern Nigeria from its initial stage to the colonial era and post-colonial era.

Moreover, chapter four looks into the contribution of the *Musābaqah* to advancing *Qirā'āt* learning among *Musābaqah* participants in Kaduna State. It offers in-depth analyses of the factors motivating students to engage in *Qirā'āt* competitions, as well as the prospects achieved due to the inclusion of the category in *Musābaqah*. Then, the study exposed and described the unique ways of teaching *Qirā'āt* in Kaduna State and finally highlighted the challenges associated with *Musābaqah* and *Qirā'āt* learning.

Chapter five concludes with an overall summary section outlining the research questions, summarizing the most significant findings, and discussing how the research questions were addressed. Then, the chapter discusses the importance of the research's contribution to the knowledge of *Qirā'āt* and *Musābaqah* in general. Finally, the study highlights the study's scope and limitations, presents a proper recommendation for policymakers, and suggests potential future studies in this unique field of study.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONCEPT OF QUR'ANIC COMPETITION AND ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Literal and Technical Meaning of *Musābaqah*

Musābaqah, as defined by Al-Jawhari (d. 393 AH), is the infinitive form of the verb “*Sābaqah*” in Arabic, which means mutual racing and competition.³⁰ Similarly, Ibn Manzūr (d. 711 AH) states that Arabs use this term to describe someone who races on horses and overtakes others, popularly known as *Sābiq* or *Sabūq*.³¹ The origin of the name is that when they raced, they would place the prize on the top of a reed and the like for the goal to which they were racing, so whoever reached it first would take it. So, based on the literal definition provided, it is argued that the term literally means achieving progress, target, and goal ahead of others. The technical definition of *Musābaqah*, according to Zubir, is a Qur’anic competition whereby participants compete in different categories by reciting verses from the Qur’an in a melodious and articulate way, frequently judged by Qur’anic experts, and the participants are evaluated based on verse memorization, melody, voice, and accuracy of pronunciation.³²

However, Qur’anic competitions can be classified into recitation-based and memorization-based. Besides, the two forms of competition share common goals despite having different objectives. Moreover, competitions based on reciting the Qur’an focus on the oral part by testing how well the competitors know *Tajweed* and *Maqāmat* rules, which is how they are judged. Mostly, the participants compete while reading directly from the Qur’an. This type of *Musābaqah* is common in Asia and the Malay world and is mostly known as *Musābaqah Tilawat al-Qur’an* (MTQ). On the other hand, memorization-based competitions, commonly known as *Musābaqah Tahfīz al-Qur’an* highlight participants’ ability to retain and accurately recite passages from memory. The participants, according to their level of participation, are evaluated based on memorization, melody, voice, pronunciation accuracy, and their expertise in sciences related to the Qur’an, such as Tafsir and *Qirā’āt*. Nevertheless, despite these differences in focus, both forms of competition aim to promote a deeper connection with the Qur’an and encourage excellence in its

³⁰ Abū Naṣr Ismā‘īl ibn Ḥammād al-Fārābī al-Jawharī, *Al-Ṣiḥāḥ Tāj al-Lughā Wa-Ṣiḥāḥ al-‘Arabiyya* (d. 393 AH), Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Ghafūr ‘Aṭṭār, vol. 4 (Bayrūt: Dār al-‘Ilm li-l-Malāyīn -, 1407), 1494.

³¹ Muḥammad ibn Mukarram ibn ‘Alī Ibn Manzūr Abū al-Faḍl, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Anṣārī al-Ruwayfī ‘al-Ifriqī, *Lisān Al-‘Arab*, 3rd ed. (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1414), 151.

³² Zubir, “The International Qur’an Reciters’ Assembly in Malaysia,” 2:148.

recitation. So, the term *Musābaqah* across this research refers to the second form, as highlighted earlier, which is based on memorization with a special focus on its contributions to *Qirā'āt* sciences within the Northern Nigerian context.

2.2 Scholarly Debates on the Legality of *Musābaqah*

The Qur'anic competition remains a contentious issue within the circumference of Muslim scholars. However, the classical Islamic scholars discourse the general issue of competition. For instance, Ibn Qudamah (d. 620 AH) maintains that competition is valid based on the prophet's Sunnah and the Muslim scholars' Ijma (consensus). From the viewpoint of the Sunnah, it is narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him, raced between the marked camels from *al-Hafya* to *Thaniyat al-Wada'*, and between those that were not marked from *Thaniyat al-Wada'* to the mosque of *Bani Zuraiq*. Moreover, another hadith narration indicates that the Prophet, peace be upon him, once competed with his wife Aisha while traveling, which she won. She said, "When I had amassed enough weight, I raced with him, and he won." Also, Salamah bin Al-Akwa raced with a man from the Ansar before the Prophet, peace be upon him'. The Prophet, peace be upon him, wrestled with *Rukana* and overpowered him. Furthermore, he also passed by people who were lifting stones to determine the strongest among them, and he did not disapprove.³³ Therefore, all forms of competition are measured accordingly based on this. In this regard, Aminu argues that scholars compare warriors with experts in the study of the Glorious Qur'an. Inferentially, they rationally count *Musābaqah* among the righteous acts in which believers are encouraged to compete for the evaluation of their performance, as Q2:148 says: "So excel one another in righteous deeds." Based on the arguments mentioned above, the vast majority of Muslim scholars concur on the permissibility of *Musābaqah* due to the fact that Islam encourages various competitions, aiming to benefit humanity positively.

Similarly, al Qardawi opines that things that are initiated with the aim of man's benefit are permissible in Islam and are not limited to things and objects but also include actions and behaviors except what is prohibited by a sound and clear text. So, if the revelation is silent about something, people are free to practice it unless it has a form of harm.³⁴ As a result of this argument derived from the principles of the natural permissibility

³³ Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qudāma, *Al-Mughnī Li-Ibn Qudāma*, Ṭaha al-Zaynī, Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Wahhāb Fāyid, 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā' [d. 1403 AH], Maḥmūd Ghānim Ghayth, vol. 1 (Egypt: Maktabat al-Qāhira, 1388), 404–5.

³⁴ Yusuf al-Qardawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam* (London: Al-Birr Foundation, 2003), 7–9.

of things from the Qur'an and Sunnah, it is clear that *Musābaqah* can be perceived as permissible because it is a motivational factor towards Qur'anic learning among Muslims.

The above-mentioned argument is in line with the position of Umar et al. who propose that the vast majority of scholars contend that *Musābaqah* is permissible. A few of them regard it as impermissible and count it as part of religious innovations (*bid'ah*), containing the act of showing off (*riyah*) as the competitors recite the Qur'an to please others, and perceive it as part of gambling because the winners will rejoice while the others will be unhappy³⁵. In this connection, Ibn Manzoor mentioned that Abu Ubaid believes that the basic rule and principle of *Musābaqah* competition ought to be clear; whoever wins the race gets the price or reward. However, if both parties compete with something that only one of them will take, it is seen as a form of gambling. It's haram, and it's against the law.³⁶ The rule might slightly vary where provisions for prizes are made for the other contenders.

Furthermore, the scholars also debate the permissibility of taking a reward or prize in a Qur'anic competition. Interestingly, Ibn Qayyim (d. 751 AH) opines that the companions of Malik, Ahmad, and Ash-Shafi'i prohibit the permissibility of competing in memorizing the Qur'an, hadith, and other beneficial sciences with reward as they view that giving prizes might affect the sincerity of the participants.³⁷ In addition, Umar et al. maintain that Ibn Taimiyah argues that taking money in exchange for recitation is not permissible because recitation is an act of worship. For acts of worship, no fee is charged. Therefore, it is not acceptable to be hired for it.³⁸ On the other hand, Ibn Qayyim mentions that the companions of Abu Hanifa argue that if competition with reward is allowed in activities like wrestling or swimming as a form of support, encouragement, and motivation, then competing in memorizing the Qur'an, hadith, and other beneficial sciences should even be more permissible and preferable to being rewarded.³⁹

Based on the scholarly arguments presented above, it can be concluded that *Musābaqah* is permissible as it is considered to be among the means of memorizing the Qur'an, among the main methods of preserving the Glorious Book. Similarly, giving prizes

³⁵ Aminu Umar et al., "Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges: A Case Study of Bauchi State," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 8, 2020, 09.

³⁶ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān Al- 'Arab*, 151.

³⁷ Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb ibn Sa'd Shams al-Dīn Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Al-Furūsiyya*, Mashhūr ibn Ḥasan ibn Maḥmūd ibn Sulaymān, vol. 1 (al-Su'ūdiyya - Ḥā'il: Dār al-Andalus, 1414), 318.

³⁸ Umar et al., "Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges: A Case Study of Bauchi State," 8:96.

³⁹ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Al-Furūsiyya*, 1:318.

to the *Musābaqah* participants is also debatable among Islamic scholars. While many scholars support that because it encourages and motivates the participants to exert their effort in the memorization and perfection of recitation, others dislike it. Yet, taking prizes is allowed, provided that the competitor does it with sincerity and good intentions because actions are judged by their intentions, and taking prizes is just a means and not an end.

2.3 General Overview of *Musābaqah* from the Global Context

The trend of *Musābaqah* has grown rapidly across the Muslim globe since its inception in Malaysia in 1961 by the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, with the prime objective of promoting Qur'anic learning and strengthening the bond and relationships among the Islamic countries. However, the event's name has changed from "International Qur'anic Recitation Competition" to "International Qur'an Reciters". Since then, *Musābaqah* continues to be a significant Islamic event in Malaysia and is sponsored by the Malaysian Kingdom under the support of the Prime Minister. Generally, the participants are classified into male and female groups, and at least eight recognized Qur'anic experts comprise the panel of judges. Normally, two of the judges are from the host country, while the rest are from other countries worldwide. The organizing committee ensures that participants from Europe, South, East, Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East participate in the event. During the competition event, the focus is not on memorization of the Qur'an. Rather, participants are required to recite specific verses within a given time frame. Typically, this includes half a page or a specified number of verses. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of participating countries as well as the number of participants across the globe.⁴⁰

Similarly, Alfaruqi suggests that the event has an important impact on culture, serving as a tool for custodians and promoters of the holy Qur'an to unite under the shadow of the last revelation. As a result, the event improves Malaysia's standards for Qur'anic recitation, produces a greater number of professional reciters, and promotes the learning and accurate recitation of the Qur'an among people in general.⁴¹ Later on, several Qur'anic schools joined the trend of organizing such *Musābaqah* events as a way to produce professional Qur'anic reciters. For example, Muhammad explores the accuracy of the mastery of *Tarannum AlQur'an* among *Musābaqah* participants in Malaysia. The findings suggest that more attention must be given to the achievements of the participants, such as

⁴⁰ Zubir, "The International Qur'an Reciters' Assembly in Malaysia," 2:6–10.

⁴¹ Lois Al Fārūqī, "Qur'ān Reciters in Competition in Kuala Lumpur," vol. 31, 1987, 222.

the basic works and recording, in order to produce a great *Tarannum* of the holy Qur'an.⁴² Over time, Musabaqah attracted many Islamic countries, and they started to organize the event at an international level, sharing the same objectives but differing in the categories of participation and sponsored by different organizers. Alfuruqi maintains that the event was first organized in Indonesia in 1968, Saudi Arabia in 1979, Iran in 1982, Egypt in 1994, Qatar in 1994, Jordan in 1997, Dubai in 1997, Brunei in 1997, Turkey in 1997, and Kuwait in 1996.⁴³ This clearly shows that the multiplicity of various Musabaqah across the Muslim globe is critical, allowing individuals from different parts of the world to participate and organize their own Musabaqah in their respective countries, increasing the event's popularity across the Islamic world.

2.4 Qur'anic Competition in the Nigerian Context

In the context of Nigeria, Abdulhamid claims that *Musābaqah* has been in existence for a period of three decades.⁴⁴ Interestingly, the Center for Islamic Studies at Nigeria's Uthman Dan-Fodio University, Sokoto, proposed the first Qur'anic recitation competition in 1985, and the first national competition trial was held in the state in 1986. Since then, the competition has continued and has transformed into an entirely vibrant and exciting annual event organized by the Centre and co-hosted by various states that rotate the national event among themselves after due selection.⁴⁵ Expectedly, Abdulhamid believes that the National Qur'anic recitation competition has become a successful yearly event since its inception in 1986. Although initially, in 1986, very few states participated owing primarily to a lack of qualified participants and lack of awareness of the goal of the National Qur'anic Program, subsequent engagements yielded more positive outcomes as more Qur'anic enthusiasts showed an unalloyed interest and solidarity with the largely rewarding exercise.⁴⁶

On this note, Hussain asserts that the competition's main goals and objectives include encouraging Muslim youths to memorize and recite the Qur'an, establishing unity

⁴² Muhamad Nasir Mohamad Salleh, Sedek Ariffin, and Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff, "Mastering of Tarannum Al-Qur'an: An Analysis on Participants of al-Qur'an Reciting Competition in Klang and Sepang Secondary School," *International Journal of Qur'anic Research* 9, no. 1 (2017): 6–8, <https://doi.org/10.22452/Qurānica.vol9no1.4>.

⁴³ Al Fārūqī, "Qur'ān Reciters in Competition in Kuala Lumpur," 1987, 31:224.

⁴⁴ Abdulhamid, "Impact and Challenges of Qur'anic Recitation Competition in the Federal Capital Territory (Fct) Abuja," 158.

⁴⁵ Umar et al., "Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges: A Case Study of Bauchi State," 8:97.

⁴⁶ Abdulhamid, "Impact and Challenges of Qur'anic Recitation Competition in the Federal Capital Territory (Fct) Abuja," 161.

among the Ummah, and improving the quality of learning tajwid and other Qur'anic sciences.⁴⁷ To properly achieve these goals, the Center for Islamic Studies at Nigeria's Uthman Dan-Fodio University, Sokoto, successfully established rules and regulations for running the *Musābaqah*. Such rules include those dealing with competition eligibility, competition categories, judges' qualities and qualifications, the moral standards expected from all, including what is expected from the audience, and the criteria for awarding marks to competitors.⁴⁸ According to Abdulhamid, Nigeria has been taking part in the annual International Qur'anic Recitation Competitions in Saudi Arabia and other countries. As a result, the country's representatives once won the first and second positions among the world's 84 countries that participated in the period under review.⁴⁹

However, the Nigerian *Musābaqah* organizations in general have broadened young Muslim's knowledge of the Qur'an and encouraged many Muslim youths, particularly females, to memorize and recite the Qur'an properly, which was previously uncommon. Indeed, the competition has also brought unimaginable unity in the Qur'anic recitation and strengthened the Islamic brotherhood among Nigerian Muslims.⁵⁰ Similarly, Hussain contends that the *Musābaqah* events have a positive impact by bringing new perspectives to the field of Qur'anic studies in Bauchi state. Beyond mastering the Qur'anic recitation, *Musābaqah* significantly improves studying and understanding the meaning of the Glorious Qur'an.⁵¹

in Kaduna, which is the research focus, a Northern Nigerian one of the 36 states that predominantly consists of Hausa tribe with Islam as the dominant religion, the competition in the state is on a knockout basis, allowing only first and second winners to represent the next stage, and the overall winner at the national level represents the nation in Saudi Arabia. The state has a history of excelling in *Musābaqah* at national and international levels, with champions like Abdulkarim Tahir Abdullah and others. The competitions are categorized into two categories: male-based and female-based, each

⁴⁷ Hamza Abubakar Hussaini, "Role of Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Promoting the Study of Qur'anic Sciences in Nigeria: Reflections on Bauchi Metropolis," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*, vol. 3, 2020, 13.

⁴⁸ Umar et al., "Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges: A Case Study of Bauchi State," 8:94.

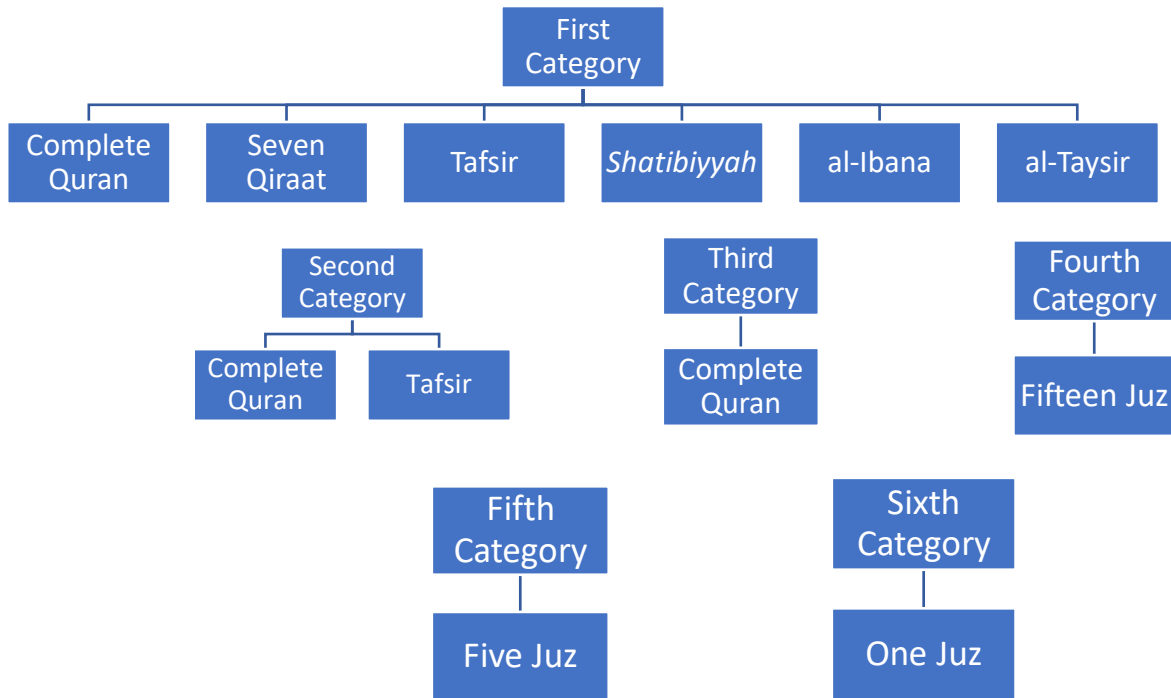
⁴⁹ Abdulhamid, "Impact and Challenges of Qur'anic Recitation Competition in the Federal Capital Territory (Fct) Abuja," 162.

⁵⁰ Umar et al., "Qur'anic Recitation Competition in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges: A Case Study of Bauchi State," 8:96–98.

⁵¹ M Husnaini et al., "Challenges Faced by IIUM Postgraduate Students in Conducting the Qur'an Memorization and Working for Living During Their Study Period," *International Journal of Asian Education* 3, no. 1 (2022): 26–27, <https://doi.org/10.46966/ijae.v3i1.239>.

holding its own avenue to avoid mixing genders. Presently, the Kaduna State Standing Committee on Qur’anic Recitation Competition has adopted only six categories, as follows:

TABLE 2.1; Categories of Participation in Kaduna State Musabaqah



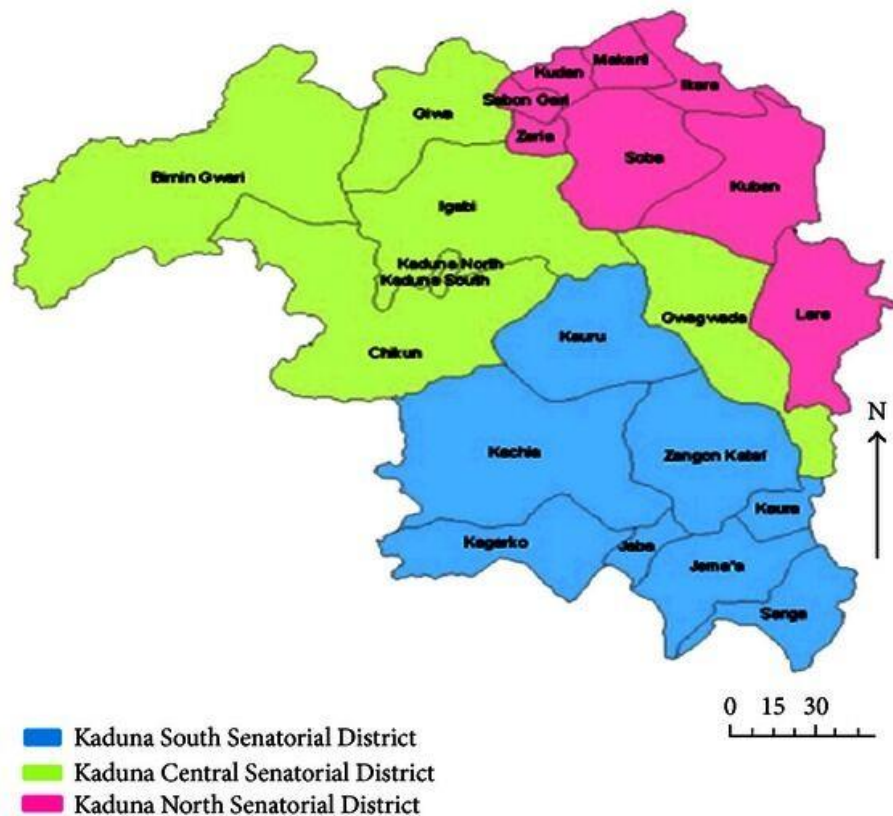
The table above indicates the six categories of participation adopted by the state standing committee on Qur’anic competition under the supervision of the national board of Usmanu Dan Fodio, which are detailed below:

- **First Category:** sixty *hizb* plus *Qirā’āt* and *Tafsir* of five *hizb*. This comprises memorization of the whole Qur’an, applying rules governing its recitation with its seven different dialects (*Qirā’āt*), in which the competitor would be given four different portions to recite with different dialects, then to answer four questions from the book of *Shātibiyyah* and three-three questions from the books of *Ibanah* and *Taysir*, respectively, followed by the questions on *Tafsir* in the book of *Kalimat al-Qur’ān* by Muhammad Hasanayn Makhluḥ.
- **Second Category:** sixty *hizb* with *Tafsir*. In this category, the competitor would be examined in the memorization of the entire glorious Qur’an and the book of *Muyassar fī garib al-Qur’ān*, followed by the final question (*su’al al-akheer*), which is specifically on Arabic grammar in the book of *I’rab al-Qur’ān*.
- **Third Category:** sixty *hizb* with *Tajweed*. The competitor would be evaluated in the whole text of the glorious Qur’an and answer questions on *Tajweed* in Arabic.

- **Fourth Category:** thirty *hizb*. In this category, a competitor would be assessed in memorizing half of the Qur'an and answering questions of *Tajweed*.
- **Fifth Category:** 10 *hizb* with *Tangeem*. In this category, the recipient would be asked to recite 10 *hizb* of the Qur'an with a sound melody and intonation.
- **Last Category:** Two *Hizb*. The memorizer would be examined in two *hizbs* of the Qur'an while observing the rules of recitation. This category is only for selected participants from Zone 3.

Furthermore, the geographic data of the Musabaqah participants in Kaduna state are provided below:

Map 2.1 Geographic Data of Musabaqah participants across the three zones of Kaduna State



The green color represents Zone 1, with a total of 7 local governments, while the pink color represents Zone 2, with a total of 8 local governments, and finally, the blue color represents Zone 3, with 8 local governments. Thus, it is crucial to note that individuals residing in Zones 1 and 2 are predominantly Muslim, while Muslims are the minorities in Zone 3.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter critically explores Qur'anic competition, popularly known as *Musābaqah*, a competition where participants compete in Qur'anic memorization in different categories at a given level. This chapter provides valuable insight into its legality among Islamic scholars and the permissibility of taking rewards and incentives for the competition's overall winners. However, by tracing the historical development of *Musābaqah* at the international level, it is evident that the Malaysian government took the initiative to organize the *Musābaqah* in 1961. Later, the practice spread throughout the Islamic world, attracting several Islamic countries to organize similar events on different occasions. The competitions which are either recitation-based, where the participants read directly from the Qur'an, or memorization-based, where the students are evaluated based on the consolidation of their memory. The first one is common in Asia and Malay world while the second one is common in Middle East and Africa, including Nigeria. Both forms aim to promote a deeper connection with the Qur'an and encourage excellence in its recitation.

Since its inception in 1986, the Center for Islamic Studies at Uthman Dan-Fodio University, Sokoto, Nigeria, has managed and supervised *Musābaqah*, resulting in its active participation in the annual international competition in Saudi Arabia. Also, the rotational nature of the event across the nation helps expose the practice to Muslims, attracting several individuals to participate in one of the six event categories. In Kaduna state, the competition generally is on a knockout basis, allowing only first and second winners to represent the next stage, and the overall winner at the national level represents the nation in Saudi Arabia. The state has three zones from 23 Local governments with a history of excelling in *Musābaqah* at national and international levels. The novel approach of including the category of *Qirā'āt*, in spite of its difficulty and novelty, attracted *Musābaqah* participants from various states of Nigeria, including Kaduna State. Recently, it is considered as the highest category among all the categories in the event.

CHAPTER 3

QIRĀ'ĀT SCIENCE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

The science of *Qirā'āt* is considered one of the most regarded legal sciences because it deals with the oral transmission of the Holy Qur'an, representing a specific field of Qur'anic studies. The field is considered highly pivotal because it is one of the oldest Islamic sciences, and it was the first knowledge the prophet Muhammad acquired. He also encourages Muslims to master the art of correct and accurate pronunciation of every letter of the Qur'an, emphasizing that "Allah the Exalted does not usually listen to anything the way He listens to a prophet of His reciting the Qur'an with a melodious voice." Despite this, al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Fattāḥ (d. 1403) maintains that the ruling of the Legislator regarding the learning of *Qirā'āt* science is that it is a sufficient obligation to learn and teach, meaning that if some people undertake it, the sin of negligence falls from the rest.⁵² However, classical Islamic scholars such as Ibn Mujāhid, al Dani, al-Shātibi, Ibn al-Jazari, and others have paid greater attention to the science and contributed significantly to the development of the field, which forms the basic frame of reference for this science. This is due to the field's deep connection and attachment to the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, it serves as a valuable tool for understanding various linguistic issues, including the diversity of various Arabic dialects, and provides guidance on other equally important grammatical, morphological, and rhetorical aspects. Ultimately, this has to do with the direct relationship between the Qur'an and the Arabic language, taking into consideration that the Qur'an cannot be understood accurately without having in-depth expertise in this language. As a result, most of the *Qirā'āt* scholars were originally Arabic linguists, meaning that they acquired the language to serve the Holy Qur'an. For several decades, the Qur'an sciences have been a research-focused area for western scholars, especially the orientalist amongst them such as Arthur Jeffery (1892–1959), Otto Pretzl (1893–1941), Gustav Weil (1808–1889), and others. Till today, the western approach to the *Qirā'āt* sciences is frequently criticized for lack of empathy and for being unperturbed by the consequences of their parochial findings and how that might affect the Muslims. On the other hand, Muslim scholars are criticized by these unrepentant Western orientalists for

⁵² 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Qāḍī, *Al-Budūr al-Zāhira Fī al-Qirā'āt al-'ashr al-Mutawātira, Min Ṭarīqay al-Shāḥibiyya Wa-al-Durra*, 1st ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1401), 54.

their sticking adamantly to their religious beliefs, especially when it comes to the absolute truthfulness of the Qur'an.

3.2 Definition of *Qirā'āt*

The term *Qirā'āt* is an Arabic word in the plural form. According to Firouzabadi, it is the plural of reading, the source of the verb "reading" and "reciting."⁵³ Moreover, Ibn Manzur opines that the term *Qirā'āt* has a literal meaning of gathering, and that is the reason why the Qur'an is called Qur'an because it collects the surahs and joins them. So, based on the literal definitions mentioned above, it is absolutely clear that the term *Qirā'āt* means gathering, reciting, and collecting readings.⁵⁴

The science of *Qirā'āt* has a great virtue because it is one of the most noble Islamic sciences due to its strong connection with the divine Qur'an. The classical Islamic scholars proposed various definitions of this scientific endeavor. According to al-Zarkashi, the Qur'an is a book revealed to the prophet Muhammad for clarification and miracle, and the *Qirā'āt* sciences are the differences in the wording of the revelation mentioned in the writing of the letters or their manner, such as lightening (*Takhfif*), heavying (*Taskil*), and other things.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Ibn al-Jazari (d. 833 AH) argues that *Qirā'āt* is the science of how the words of the Qur'an are performed and their differences depending on the transmission's attribution.⁵⁶ Likewise, Al-Damiati (d. 1117 AH) maintains that it is a science from which the agreement of the transmitters of the Qur'an and their differences in deletion and affirmation, abstraction and consolidation, separation, connection, and other forms of pronunciation and substitution, and other things related to oral transmission could be empirically established.⁵⁷ Similarly, al-Zarqani believes that the *Qirā'āt* is a doctrine followed by one of the imams of the Qur'an who differs from others in the pronunciation of the Holy Qur'an, with the narrations and paths agreeing on it, whether this difference is in the pronunciation of the letters or their forms. Abdel Fattah Al-Qadi argues that it is a

⁵³ Majd al-Dīn Abū Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Fīrūzābādī, *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, Maktab Taḥqīq al-Turāth fī Mu'assasat al-Risāla bi-ishrāf: Muḥammad Na'im al-'Arqūsūs (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasat al-Risāla li-al-ṭibā'a wa-al-nashr wa-al-tawzī', 1426), 765.

⁵⁴ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān Al-'Arab*, 874.

⁵⁵ al-Zarkashī, *Al-Burhān Fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 318.

⁵⁶ Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Khayr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf Ibn al-Jazarī, *Munjid Al-Muqri'īn Wa Murshid al-Ṭālibīn*, 1st ed. (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1420), 3.

⁵⁷ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Dimyāṭī Shihāb al-Dīn al-shahīr bi-al-Bannā', *Itihāf Fuḍalā' Al-Bashar Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Arba'ah 'Ashar*, 3 Anas Mihrah (Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 2006), 5.

science by which one knows how to pronounce Qur'anic words and the way to perform them in agreement and disagreement, with each aspect attributed to its carrier.⁵⁸

Looking at the previous definitions, it appears clear that the scholars are on one axis in their scholarly definitions, which suggests that the meaning of the *Qirā'āt* includes the agreed-upon and disputed words of the Qur'an. Also, what is relied upon in receiving *Qirā'āt* is hearing and oral transmission from the one who received them to the subsequent generation in a chain of transmission to the prophet. In the meantime, the main objective of the science is to preserve reliability from error in pronouncing the Qur'anic words, preserve them from distortion and change, comprehend and distinguish the recitation of each of the Imams, and have an extensive knowledge of the authentic and non-authentic recitation styles. Nevertheless, there is no specific person known as the founder of the science of readings, but Sheikh Abdul Fattah Al-Qādi believes that the Imams of *Qirā'āt* are the founders of the field. Abu Ubaid Al-Qāsim bin Salam was the first to write and propose Abu Omar Hafṣ bin Omar Al-Duri as the founder of the *Qirā'āt* science.⁵⁹ Similarly, Shady Nasser argues that Ibn Mujāhid became the first to use his political relationships to canonize the works he gathered.⁶⁰

3.3 The Dialectical and Semantic Aspects of the Qur'anic Recitation

Throughout the history of Islam, Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the greatest miracle, proving Prophet Muhammad's prophethood and serving as the completion of divine messages. Also, it is believed that the Qur'an was revealed to the prophet through the Angel Jibril in Arabic, as mentioned in several verses of the Qur'an. However, during that period, differences in local Arabic dialects were clearly experienced due to the variation of Arab tribes from different backgrounds. Thus, each dialect has different standards and specifications that make it easier for the locals to comprehend in terms of pronunciation because orality was more common in that period than writing and recitation. So, when the Qur'an was revealed, it was assumed that all the Arab tribes would find it challenging to recite because it descended in a format they were unfamiliar with, and it was

⁵⁸ al-Qādi, *Al-Budūr al-Zāhira Fī al-Qirā'āt al-'ashr al-Mutawātira, Min Ṭarīqay al-Shāṭibiyya Wa-al-Durra*, 5.

⁵⁹ al-Qādi, 7.

⁶⁰ Shady Hekmat Nasser, "The Two-Rāwī Canon before and after Ad-Dānī (d. 444/1052-3): The Role of Abū ṭ-Ṭayyib Ibn Ghalbūn (d. 389/998) and the Qayrawān/Andalus School in Creating the Two-Rāwī Canon," *Brill* 41, no. 1/2 (2013): 42.

unlikely that they would be able to give up their linguistic habits, especially considering that the majority of them could neither read nor write.

Interestingly, al-Qāḍī (d. 1403 AH) mentions that it was narrated that the prophet Muhammad maintained that Angel Jibril recited the Qur'an to him in one letter (*Ḥarf*). Then, he requested him to read in another letter, and continued asking him to read until he recited it in seven different letters (*aḥruf*).⁶¹ The above-mentioned Hadith is frequently transmitted, as reported by almost every Hadith compiler in their works, including Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, and others. However, Islamic scholars investigated the concept of these seven letters (*aḥruf*), and their interpretations varied in clarifying what was meant as to whether they should be understood literally or metaphorically. In this regard, Imam al-Suyuti (d. 911 AH) provided forty different opinions in his book *al-Itqan* that are in line with the ultimate meaning of the subject matter.⁶² Despite the large number of debates among the *Qirā'āt* scholars regarding their interpretations of this issue, they concluded that the seven letters are the source for the different recitations taught by the prophet based on what he learned from angel Jibril, of which only a small part remains intact to this day.⁶³

Similarly, the seven letters are perceived as seven Arab dialects with one meaning. This can be justified considering the nature of the multiplicity of Arabic dialects in expressing one meaning in various forms. So, the Qur'an was revealed in this unique form. In this connection, al-Zarkashi, believes that the Qur'an was revealed in seven Arab dialects as one of the aspects of reading, which include the dialects of *Quraysh*, *Huzail*, *Tamim*, *Azd*, *Rabi'ah*, *Hawazin*, and *Saad bin Bakr* with the primary aim of making it easier in terms of learning and recitation.⁶⁴ Interestingly, the classical *Qirā'āt* books, on the other hand, have made it clear that the noble justification for excluding and not hearing some Arabic dialects in any recitation is that they have the potential to change the overall meaning of a word in an unwanted manner such as the dialectical aspect of Qays tribe that pronounce the Shin alphabet as kaaf, which is popularly known as al Kash kasha.

⁶¹ al-Qāḍī, *Al-Wāfi Fī Sharḥ al-Shāṭibiyya Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'*, 6.

⁶² Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī Jalāl al-Dīn, *Al-Itqān Fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān'*, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm [d. 1401/1981] (Egypt: al-Hay'a al-Miṣrīya al-Āmma li-al-Kitāb, 1974), 131–68.

⁶³ ibn Muḥammad al-Jawzī, *Funūn Al-Afnān Fī 'Uyūn 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān:*, 247.

⁶⁴ al-Zarkashī, *Al-Burhān Fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 323.

Another significant aspect discussed by Islamic scholars regarding the potential of reciting the Qur'an in different ways that has nothing to do with dialectical diversity is the semantic diversity aspect. For example, in Surah al-Fatiha, there are two different ways of reciting the word Malik sounding either "Mālik" with little elongation on the "Mā" and "Malik" without elongation with a common difference in meaning but not in dialect, as the first means a sovereign or ruler, while the second means the owner. As a result, the classical interpretation of the verse states that Allah will be the ruler and owner of everything on the Day of Judgment.

Based on the scholarly discussions provided above, it is clear that the Qur'an is accepted as a unified text with acceptable multiformity in its recitation. The seven letters refer to the seven valid ways and manners in which the Qur'an was transmitted from the prophet Muhammad to the companions, relying on their ability and the way they speak to make it easier for them and the upcoming generations.

3.4 The History of *Qirā'āt* Science and the Contributions of Islamic Scholars in the *Qirā'āt* sciences.

The prophet Muhammad taught his companions the noble Qur'an, using various letters based on their backgrounds to simplify the recitation for them and future generations.⁶⁵ In this context, al-Ansari (d. 540 AH) narrated an incident related to Umar bn Khattab, who heard Hakim ibn Hizam reciting *Surah al-Furqān* in a way different from what the Prophet had taught him. So, Umar dragged him to the prophet, and the prophet asked both of them to recite the verses. Ultimately, the prophet asserts the accuracy of both recitations, citing the revelation of the Qur'an in the Seven Letters and the freedom for each individual to recite it in their own unique manner that seems simple for them.⁶⁶ But after the prophet passed away, many Arab tribes apostetized. This prompted Caliph Abu Bakr, may God bless him, to prepare the forces to fight these apostates. During these wars, many Quranic memorizers among the companions died, resulting in the Quran's compilation. Nevertheless, after eliminating the apostates, the Muslim forces set out to spread Islam. The companions dispersed to many places, preaching Islam. This resulted in many individuals from diverse countries and backgrounds embracing Islam. These companions

⁶⁵ Ali AY, *The Holy Qur'an* (Wordsworth Editions, 2000).

⁶⁶ Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Khalaf al-Gharnāṭī al-Anṣārī Abū Ja'far, al-ma'rūf bi-Ibn al-Bādhish, *Al-Iqnā' Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'* (Dār al-Ṣaḥāba lil-Turāth, n.d.), 3–4.

taught the Qur'an exactly as they had learned it from the prophet, and they transmitted it to future generations in the same manner.⁶⁷

Subsequently, the transmission differed among the followers and their students, and the number of readings increased and varied, and a large number of followers received it. Also, there were multiple individuals transmitting the Qur'an, and their recitations frequently differed to such an extent that the level of accuracy was decreasing and diminishing. Then, the Muslims were driven to make a decision. In order to gain rendering unison, it became crucial to restrict the number of authentic recitations to a specified number. Therefore, the Muslims agreed to receive certain Imam's readings with acceptance and did not disagree on them, taking into account multiple variables such as their credibility, trust, piety, and extensive knowledge.

By the 3rd century, there were significant differences in Qur'anic recitations. Therefore, in response to this growing diversity, Ibn Mujāhid al-Tamim al-Baghdadi (245–324 AH), an important figure in the field often referred to as Ibn Mujāhid, established a collection of authentic recitations. His efforts were accredited, and many scholars identified him as an exceptional and prominent authority in the field of *Qirā'āt* knowledge. In this connection, al-Dhahabi (d.748 AH) maintains that Abu A'mr al-Dāni says the following about him: "Ibn Mujāhid surpassed all his peers with his knowledge and understanding."⁶⁸ Ibn Mujāhid authored "*Kitāb al-sab'a*" (The Book of Seven Readings), which eventually became one of the discipline's foundational texts.

In his book, Ibn Mujāhid systematically outlined seven different ways or styles of Qur'anic recitations, each connected with famous reciters who demonstrated exceptional knowledge in particular ways of recitation. The importance of the book comes from the fact that it was the first book written on the seven readings and became a reference for those who wrote in the science of after him. It also greatly impacted the readings and their history, distinguishing the correct and authentic ones from the incorrect ones. The seven reciters identified are from the regions of Hijaz, Iraq, and Sham. They disseminated the various recitations as transmitted from the Prophet's companions and adherents, which gained

⁶⁷ Y. Dutton, "Orality, Literacy and the 'Seven Ahruf' Hadith," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 8–12, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/etr092>.

⁶⁸ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmān al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām Al-Nubalā'*, Muḥammad Ayman al-Shibrāwī (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1427), 273.

widespread acceptance within their own regions and in neighboring ones.⁶⁹ They are as follows:

Table 3.1 The seven reciters of the Qur'an (Al-Qurrā al Sab'a)

The Reciter (<i>Qāri</i>) and the Recitation (Qira'ah)	Teaching Area	The companions known for teaching this way of recitation
Nāfi' al Madani (d. 196 AH)	Madinah	Ubayy ibn Ka'ab
Ibn Kathir al Makki (d. 120 AH)	Makkah	Ubayy ibn Ka'ab, Zayd ibn Thābit
Abu Amr ibn Alā al Basari (d. 154 AH)	Basra	Ubayy ibn Ka'ab, Zayd ibn Thābit
Ibn Āmir al Shami (d. 118 AH)	Sham	Uthman ibn Affān, Abu al-Darda
Ashim Ibn Abi Nujud al Kufi (d. 127 AH)	Kufa	Ali ibn Abi Tālib, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, Uthman Ibn Affān, Ubayy ibn Ka'ab, Zayd ibn Thābit
Hamza al Kufi (d. 156 AH)	Kufa	Ali ibn Abi Tālib, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud
Aliyyu al Kisā'i al Kufi (d.189 AH)	Kufa	Ali ibn Abi Tālib, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud

Ibn Mujāhid obtained the cited recitations from highly acknowledged narrators, who were among many of the significant reciters of the Islamic world. The recitations spanned from the era of the followers, known as *Tabi'un*, to the early period of the 10th century AD. He explained this phenomenon: People have different ways of Qur'anic recitation, just as there are different opinions of jurisprudences (*Fiqh*) on some branches of Shar'i'a.⁷⁰ At this juncture, it is important to mention that the reciters were chosen based on the recommendation from the fundamental learning centers of the early Islamic era to which the third Caliphate, Uthman Ibn Affān, sent the initial copies of the Qur'an, known as *Mushaf al Uthmani*, along with highly qualified teachers. Nevertheless, each of the seven reciters mentioned above (*Qurrā*) has a large number of students for whom Ibn Mujāhid selected only two main narrators (*Rāwiyān*) from each reciter (*Qāri*) as provided below:

⁶⁹ Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn al-Abbās al-Tamīmī ibn Mujāhid Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb Al-Sab'a Fī al-Qirā'āt*, Shawqī Dayf (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1400), 56–78.

⁷⁰ ibn Mujāhid, 47.

Table 3.2 The seven reciters of the Qur'an (al-Qurrā al Sab'a)

The Reciter (<i>Qāri</i>) and the Recitation (Qira'ah)	The First Narrator (Rāwi) and the Narration (Riwāyah)	The Second Narrator (Rāwi) and the Narration (Riwāyah)
Nāfi' al Madani (d. 196 AH)	Qāloon (d. 220 AH)	Warsh (d. 197 AH)
Ibn Kathir al Makki (d. 120 AH)	Al-Bazzi (d.250 AH)	Qunbul (d. 291 AH)
Abu Amr ibn Alā al Basari (d. 154 AH)	Al-Duriyy (d. 246 AH)	Al- Susiyy (d. 261 AH)
Ibn Amir al Shami (d. 118 AH)	Hisham (d. 245 AH)	Ibn Dhazkwān (d.242 AH)
Ashim Ibn Abi Nujud al Kufi (d. 127 AH)	Shu'ubah (d. 193 AH)	Hafs (d. 180 AH)
Hamza al Kufi (d. 156 AH)	Al- Laith (d. 240 AH)	Al-Duriyy (d.246 AH)
Aliyyu al Kisā'i I al Kufi (d.189 AH)	Khalaf (d. 229 AH)	Khallād (d. 220 AH)

Based on the data presented above, it is evident that Ibn Mujāhid selected three representatives from Kufa, whereas only one representative was considered for the remaining regions. This could possibly be justified given his residency in Baghdad and familiarity with the local Iraqi rendering tradition. Imam al-Jazari argues that Ibn Mujāhid was not the initial person who compiled a specific number of recitations. According to al-Jazari, Abu Ubayda Qasim ibn Salam was the first to write about this topic, accumulating up to 25 recitations.⁷¹ As expected, other scholars also have various opinions, each with a certain number of recitations. Yet, Ibn Mujāhid's way of presenting data was more generally acceptable to Muslim scholars and the public than the others. Subsequent generations attempted to deepen and expand what he discussed because he alone could not have covered all of the different aspects (*Wujuh al-khilāf*) in his book.

Thus, it is important to understand that the recognition of these *Qirā'āt* is not limited to seven Ibn al-Jazari (d. 833 AH) argues that the scholars of that era reached a consensus (*Ijmā*) and agreed that other recitations could potentially be acceptable if they conform factors including the present of an authentic chain of transmitters, linguistic accuracy and consistency with Arabic grammar and conformity to the Uthmanic codex's

⁷¹ al-Dimyātī, *Itihāf Fudalā' Al-Bashar Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Arba'ah 'Ashar*, 33.

consonantal framework.⁷² Taking all of these things into account, Ibn al-Jazari (d. 833 AH) says that any recitation that fits with the Arabic language, the Uthmani texts (*al-Maṣāḥif al-Uthmaniyyah*), and has a genuine and valid chain of transmission is an authentic recitation that can't be ignored or thrown out because it is believed to have descended from one of the seven forms (*aḥruf*) in which the noble Qur'an was revealed. Therefore, people must recognize and accept such recitations.⁷³ Also, it is important to note that *Qirā'āt* science strongly discusses the concept of a chain of transmission known as *Isnad*, *Sanad*, and sometimes *Silsila*. This is crucial as it provides a clear picture of the origin of a *Qirā'āt* and in which publication we could find its exact chain of transmitters. For instance, if we say *Hafs 'an 'Āsim 'an Ṭarīq Shātibiyyah*. There are four basic links attached to the chain (*Isnad*) as follows:

1. The Reciter (*Qāri*): This is usually one of the seven, ten, or more reciters whose name identifies with the name of the recitation. For example, we could say that a particular recitation is Asim's or Ibn Kathir's recitation.
2. The narrator (*Rāwi*): This is the person who narrated one or more of these recitations directly or indirectly from a reciter (*Qāri*). This information is usually communicated as *Qirā'āt Hafs an Asim*, which literally means the recitation of Asim through the narration of Hafs.
3. The Mode Holder (*Sahib Tarika*): This is the one who transmitted from the narrator and is known as the one who took over a mode. An example could be referred to as *Qirā'āt Warsh an Nāfi 'an Tariq al-Azraq*, which literally means the recitation of Nafi via the narration of Warsh within the mode of al-Azraq.
4. The aspect (*Wajh*): This is another element in the transmission of *Qirā'āt*. *Al-Qasida al-Shātibiya* provides a detailed description of the small variations between *Wajh* and *Tarika*.

In the Islamic tradition, another important figure in the field of *Qirā'āt* is Abu A'ḥmad al-Dāni (371-444 AH). He built on Ibn Mujāhid's work in his books by expanding the concepts that kept the field developing in subsequent centuries. He authored many books, and the most popular among them related to the field are *Kitāb al-Taysīr fī al-qirā'āt al-sab'* and *Jāmi' al-bayān fī al-qirā'āt al-sab'ah al-mashhūrah*. Interestingly, Al-Shātibi

⁷² Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Khayr Ibn al-Jazarī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf, *Sharḥ Ṭayyibat Al-Nashr Fī al-Qirā'āt*, 2nd ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000), 33–36.

⁷³ Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Khayr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf Ibn al-Jazarī, *Al-Nashr Fī al-Qirā'āt al-'Ashr*, Alī Muḥammad al-Ḍabbā' (Egypt: al-Maṭba'at al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, n.d.), 09.

made another significant contribution by expanding on al-Dani's work, *al-Taysir*, on seven *Qirā'āts* and transforming it into a systematic poem in a book called *Ḥirz al-amānī wa-wajh al-tahānī fī al-qirā'āt al-sab'* which is commonly known as *al-Shātibiya*. Besides, integrity is apparent as he mentioned in the introduction of the book that his work aims to summarize and simplify the book of *al-Taysir* with the help of Allah.⁷⁴

Besides, considering the importance of oral tradition and careful memorization of such poems, the book contains full guidance for seven recitations, including 1173 verses that have remained unmodified to this day, serving as fundamental knowledge resources for people studying *Qirā'āt*. Interestingly, al-Shātibi systematically used letter and word codes to identify the reciters (*Qurrāh*) and their narrators (*Ruwat*), instead of their names, to simplify. As a result, his book added great value to the field and is highly appreciated. Many scholars argue that the book gained popularity throughout the Muslim world, inspiring many individuals to study, memorize, and recite its teachings due to its simplified nature. Many scholars believe that all *Qirā'āt* students are urged to secure a copy of this unique book. Surprisingly, it is almost possible that, even to the present day, no other *Qirā'āt* book is as deeply studied and memorized by Muslims as this particular one.

To some extent, al-Shātibiyya's popularity caused the public to misinterpret the concept of the seven *Qirā'āts* discussed by al-Shātibi as the only authentic *Qirā'āts* that correspond to the seven letters (*ahruf al-sab'a*) mentioned in the Hadīth, even though all Islamic scholars have made this point clear. In this regard, Ibn al-Jazari rejected this assumption and introduced another three valid *Qirā'āts* in his book *Tahbir al-Taysir fī al-Qirā'āt al-Ashr*, which serves as a complement to the seven *Qirā'āts* discussed in al-Shātibiyya, making a total of ten authentic *Qirā'āts* known as *al-Qirā'āt al-Ashr al-Sugra*. The newly introduced *Qirā'āts* are as follows:

Table 3.3 The three reciters of the Qur'an (*Al-Qurrā al Thalāth*)

The Reciter (<i>Qāri</i>) and the Recitation (<i>Qirā'ah</i>)	Teaching Area	First Narrator (<i>Rāwī</i>) and Narration (<i>Riwāyah</i>)	Second Narrator (<i>Rāwī</i>) and the Narration (<i>Riwāyah</i>)	Companions known for teaching this way

⁷⁴ al-Shātibi, *Matn Al-Shātibiyya: Ḥirz al-Amānī Wa-Wajh al-Tahānī Fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'*, 06.

Abu Ja'afar (d. 130 AH)	Madinah	Isa Ibn Wardān (d. 160 AH)	Sulaiman Ibn Jammāz (d.170 AH)	Ubayy Bn Ka'ab, Zaid Bn Thābit
Yaqub al-Hadrami (d. 205 AH)	Basra	Ruwais (d. 238 AH)	Ruh Ibn Abdulmu'min (d.235 AH)	Not found
Khalaf al-Bazzār (d.229 AH)	Kufa	Ishaq al-Warrāq (d.229 AH)	Idris al-Haddād (d.292 AH)	Ubayy Bn Ka'ab, Zaid Bn Thābit

In order to simplify matters, Ibn al Jazari also wrote a poem on these recitations in a book titled *al-Durra al-muḍiyya fī al-qirā'āt al-thalāth al-marḍiyya* commonly referred to as *al-Durra*. According to al-Jarmi, these ten *Qirā'āts* represent the first step in embracing today's science of *Qirā'āt*.⁷⁵ As a result, it is clear that in order to fully understand these ten *Qirā'āts*, one must first memorize the whole Qur'an and then study these two poems under the guidance of a field expert. In most cases, the students memorize these poems and can provide an in-depth analysis of the ten-way recitation technique used. Afterwards, Ibn al-Jazari expanded his research and authored *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-Ashr*, which is regarded as a unique encyclopedia in the field of *Qirā'āt* knowledge that no one has surpassed and most likely never will be. The book is an exceptional achievement because it covers several ways of transmission and provides detailed information about the ten major *Qirā'āts* that remain alive and intact (*al-Qirā'āt al-Ashr al-Kubra*). Likewise, the book was simplified into a poem that is well recognized as *al-Tayyibat al-Nashr*, which al-Jarmi regarded as the final step in mastering the science of *Qirā'āt*.⁷⁶

However, all manuals may look the same to individuals who are not familiar with *Qirā'āt* because the science is broad and complex. Yet, experts and professionals in the field believe that each manual has unique and specific information that goes beyond vowels and punctuation variations. In this context, Shady Nasser maintains that the classical *Qirā'āt* books can be categorized into three main groups: the first group primarily serves students and non-specialists to facilitate the memorization of variant forms of Quranic recitation according to each reciter (*Qāri*) and their narrators (*Ruwāt*). The books of *al-*

⁷⁵ Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Jarmī, *Mu'jam 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān*, 1st ed. (Dimashq: Dār al-Qalam -, 1422), 219–20.

⁷⁶ al-Jarmī, 220–22.

Taysir and *al Shātibiyya* belong to this category. The second group consists of detailed books that carefully describe all the transmitted variations through different channels of transmission, frequently including Shawaddh readings, comments, and personal views about certain recitations and their transmitters. Ibn Mujāhid's *Kitāb al-Sab'a* belongs to this category. The third form consists of *kutub al tawjih* or *ilal al Qirā'āt*, which are characterized by their grammatical and philological characteristics and are mainly authored as an attempt to provide justification for the numerous interpretations found in the Qur'an and analyze the underlying causes for each variation. Abu Ali Al-Fārisi's book "*al Hujja lil Qurrā al Sab'a*." falls into this category.⁷⁷

Despite the high number of recitations presented, the classical Islamic exegetes (*Mufasssirun*) argue that various Qirā'āts never render them contradictory to each other but instead complements, enriches, or confirms each other. This is one of the reasons why Muslims elevate the Qur'an to a heavenly status above human works. Besides, each of the permitted *Qirā'āt* represents a unique way of expression, a new area of meaning, and evidence that cannot be found in another, often due to the displacement of a single vowel. The value of these recitations (*Qirā'āts*) can be seen in the scholarly works of scholars like at-Tabari, al-Qurtubi, al-Zamakhsari, and others.

3.5 General Overview of *Qirā'āt* Science in the Academic Discourse

Many studies explored the *Qirā'āt* sciences from different perspectives. For instance, Ağırbaş investigates the Qur'anic and *Qirā'āt* science teaching and learning during the prophets' era. The study focuses on the approaches and techniques used by the prophet to teach the Qur'an to his companions, as well as their methods of teaching to subsequent generations, ultimately ensuring the preservation of recitation styles (*Qirā'āt*). The study underlines the significance of learning the Qur'an correctly, which requires consistent practice, careful application of recitation rules, and a qualified mentor.⁷⁸ Similarly, Fathi and Zain explore the fundamental methods and techniques utilized in teaching the science of *Qirā'āt* across the globe in an attempt to make the science of *Qirā'āt* easier and more understandable among students. The findings show that memorization and oral transmission from scholars are the most prominent methods employed.

⁷⁷ Shady Hekmat Nasser, "Revisiting Ibn Mujāhid's Position on the Seven Canonical Readings: Ibn cA_mir's Problematic Reading of Kun Fa-Yaku_na," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* (Edinburgh University Press, February 2015), 5–7, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2015.0180>.

⁷⁸ Abdülhekim AĞIRBAŞ, "Hz. Peygamber Döneminde Kur'an/Kirâat Eğitimi-Öğretimi," *Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi Cankiri Karatekin University, Turkey*. 1 (2021).

Moreover, the study suggests an introduction of new teaching methods in order to improve and make the subject matter easier.⁷⁹ Also, Tlili investigates the oral transmission of *Qirā'āt* science while offering a comprehensive understanding of the development of the field based on classical literatures, with the primary aim of providing an in-depth understanding of how students can proficiently acquire the legally permitted recitations, which are considered an essential component of revelation. The results indicate that the regulations controlling recitation are kept in systematic poems for the purpose of memorization. The study highlights the importance of *Qirā'āt* science in the Islamic history, drawing from classical Sunni sources.⁸⁰

In addition, Akaslan investigates the historical development of teaching *Qirā'āt* sciences in Turkey as well as Muslim scholars' efforts to spread Qur'anic knowledge. The research results divided the development of *Qirā'āt* sciences into three separate periods: the Challenges and Revival Era, covering the later part of the Ottoman Empire and the beginnings of the Republic, and concluding with its revival in 1968. Then, in the Modern Era, different strategies for teaching *Qirā'āt* science evolved, including the Egypt and Istanbul methods, as well as the modern-day Eda method. The study proceeds by maintaining that the Ottoman Empire experienced a highly flourishing period for *Qirā'āt* science education from the XI to XIII centuries, when numerous teaching methods were developed from the works of scholars such as Dānī, Shātībī, and Ibn al-Jezerī.⁸¹

Al-Enazi praises the Turkish Qur'anic schools and their scholars for their contributions to the science of *Qirā'āt*. The study examines their history, contributions, achievements, and teaching aspects, articulations, and authorships of exceptional Turkish scholars in the field. Based on the findings, the Turkish Qur'anic schools contributed positively to the advancement of *Qirā'āt* sciences, particularly after Egypt fell under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The scientific works of Turkish scholars during that period cannot be denied as their contributions are acknowledged and maintained in the chains of authority on the subject of Qira'ah.⁸²

⁷⁹ Mohammad Fathi Abdul Jalil and Rouhaizan Baru Muhammad Zain, "Al Tajdeed Fi Tadrīs Ilm al Qirā'āt," *Jurnal Islam Dan Masyarakat Kontemporari* 2016 (2016): 123–42.

⁸⁰ Václava Tlili, "Uṣūl Al-Qirā'āt: A Brief Overview of the Science of Qur'ān Recitations and Its Formation from the Position of Traditional Qirā'āt Literature," *Acta FF* 13, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.24132/actaff.2021.13.2.2.a>

⁸¹ Yaşar Akaslan, "The Education of Qur'ān Recitation (Qirā'āt) in Turkey," *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi* 22, no. 2 (2018): 1081–1107, <https://doi.org/10.18505/cuid.439689>.

⁸² Kamil Saud Al-enazy, "The Contribution of the Turkish Qur'anic School to the Science of Qurānic Readings," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 28, no. 2 (2016): 233–64.

In this connection, Ömer provides a detailed account of Mullah Mehmed Emin Efendi's life and his significant contributions to the field of *Qirā'āt* within the context of Turkey. The study covers his upbringing, education, and journey to becoming a prominent figure in *Qirā'āt* science. It further highlights his significant contributions to the field of *Qirā'āt*, including his teaching methods, students, and published works, which have had a profound impact on the discipline and display his remarkable expertise and proficiency in the field. The results demonstrate his substantial position within Turkish *Qirā'āt* schools and his vital contribution to the field of *Qirā'āt*.⁸³

Moreover, Ögmüş evaluates and discusses various approaches to the written form of the holy Qur'an (rasm al-Mushaf) from the *Qirā'āt* science perspective. The study criticizes the approach of limiting the holy Qur'an to its written form. The findings suggest that the oral transfer channel for transmitting the Qur'an up to the present time is as important as the written form. It, therefore, suggests that non-Mutawatir *Qirā'āt* should be named after "the famous" (*Mashhour*).⁸⁴ Likewise, Akdemir sheds light on the complex nature and multiple questions related to the measures of elongation (*Madd*) during Qur'an recitation based on the principles of *Qirā'āt* science. The results identify two schools of thought, each with its own methodology and terminology. Despite theoretical variations, the study demonstrates the importance of employing a receptive approach (*Mushāfaha*) to ensure *Madd*'s correct application while reading the Qur'an.⁸⁵

Additionally, Khairul Latif initiates a survey to evaluate the proficiency of 46 KKQ teachers in Malaysia in teaching the science of *Qirā'āt* Sab'ah. The findings reveal that teachers have different levels of proficiency in *Qirā'āt*, with an average level of knowledge. Furthermore, the most common method used by teachers to teach *Qirā'āt* knowledge is to direct students to participate in practical exercises in the class so as to evaluate their progress. In order to improve the quality of KKQ implementation and fulfill the learning objectives, the study recommends that KKQ teachers develop a deeper understanding of *Qirā'āt* and improve their expertise in the subject matter.⁸⁶ Similarly, Mohammad

⁸³ Ömer Türkmen, "Molla Mehmed Emin Efendi ve Kıraat İlmine Katkıları" 21 (2022): 141–58.

⁸⁴ Harun Ögmüş, "Resm-İ Mushaf Bağlamında Kur'an Ve Kıraat Ayrimi (Harekenin Tekâmülüne Kadarki Süreç Çerçevesinde Bir Değerlendirme)," *Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 02, no. 39 (2015): 9–28.

⁸⁵ M. Atilla Akdemir, "Problems Related To Measures of Stretching (Madd) In The Method of The Science of Qirā'āt," *Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Journal of Faculty of Theology* 1, no. 1 (2018): 175–96.

⁸⁶ Rahimi Md Saad & Samsuddin Abd Hamid. Mohamad Khairul Latif, "Islamic Education Teachers' Competency in Teaching Qirā'āt Sab ' Ah for the Qurānic Class," *Islamic Education Teachers' Competency in Teaching Qirā'āt Sab 'ah for the Qurānic Class* 3, no. 1 (2023): 19–27.

evaluates the teaching and learning methods of *Qirā'āt* science within the context of *Maahad Tahfiz Negeri Pahang*, Malaysia, with the aim of improving the methods employed by the teachers in the institution. The findings show that the teachers utilized the classical way of teaching the science of *Qirā'āt*, including *Talaqqi* and *Mushāfaha*, to ensure that the students understood the subject matter at an excellent level.⁸⁷

Moreover, Zaki et al. discuss about the creation and review of an educational smartphone application known as "*Qirā'āt Sab'ah*," which was developed for teaching and learning *Qirā'āt* as well as enabling users to engage with *Qirā'āt* at any moment and from anyplace, with a particular focus on independent learning. The study discovered that the software helps users learn the science of *Qirā'āt* and has the ability to promote, motivate, and enhance their recitation skills. However, it highlighted the need for additional content expansion and user interface improvements for future versions.⁸⁸ Furthermore, Susanto et al. explores the theoretical and practical issues of learning *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* in Indonesia's digital age. Theoretical issues consist of a lack of *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* experts, while practical issues encompass a low interest in learning *Qirā'āt Sab'ah*, with only two universities and 65 interested respondents out of 26,975 Islamic boarding schools teaching it in 2021, based on the DITPD Pontren survey and the National Statistics Agency. The article examines these issues, with a specific focus on genealogical aspects and development models. The results demonstrate that PPTQ al-Hasan Ponorogo's efforts resulted in the creation of a book in *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* called *Fayḍ al-barakāt* which was found appropriate to the features and realities of the digital age society.⁸⁹

In the same way, Nailul Ulya and Alkaff examine K.H. Muhammad Arwani's Sanad network and his contribution to the spread of *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* knowledge in Indonesia, utilizing a combination of historical methods and document analysis. The study reveals the significance of interpersonal relationships, education, and cultural and social factors in accepting *Qirā'āt Sab'ah*. It emphasizes K.H. Muhammad Arwani's intellectual inheritance and the critical role of his Sanad network in maintaining Indonesia's *Qirā'āt*

⁸⁷ Mohammad Ibrahim bin Md. Khalis, "The Reaching and Learning Method of *Qirā'āt* In *Maahad Tahfiz Negeri Pahang* (MTNP)," *Journal of Qurān Sunnah Education and Special Needs* 2, no. 2 (2018): 46–55.

⁸⁸ Zulkifly Mohd Zaki, Syahidatul Fitriah Ishak, and Khairul Anuar Mohamad, "User Interface Designs of an Educational Mobile Application: A Study of *Qirā'āt* Teaching and Learning," *Advances in Human-Computer Interaction 2021* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/6648550>.

⁸⁹ Roni Susanto et al., "Implications of Developing *Fayḍ Al-Barakat* Book on Learning *Qirā'āt Sab'ah* in the Digital Era," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 15, no. 4 (2023): 4612–25, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i4.3009>.

Sab'ah tradition. The research contributes significantly to understanding how scholars play an important role in spreading religious knowledge within society.⁹⁰ Also, Fauzia and Wahid evaluate the *Qirā'āt* teaching and learning method within the context of Langsa city in Indonesia. The results show that methods including *Talaqqi*, *Bil Ifrād*, *Bil Jam*, and *Jibrili* are employed in teaching the science, with a positive response from most community members. However, a minority perceives the science of *Qirā'āt* as less important.⁹¹

On the other hand, Yusuf et al. evaluate the prominent Mufassir Imam al-Tabari's relationship and expertise with the science of *Qirā'āt* in order to analyse his views regarding the meaning of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab'ah* using inductive and deductive techniques. The results indicate that his efforts in the field of *Qirā'āt* cannot be denied or disregarded, despite the fact that he holds a different opinion, contradicting the views of other scholars in line with the interpretation of al-Aḥruf al-Sab'ah.⁹² Likewise, Sumin analyzes the ideas, concepts, and theories of *Qirā'āt* scholars using a library research approach. The results reveal that Ibn Mujāhid and other *Qirā'āt* scholars opine that the *Qirā'āt* scholar's ought to fulfill certain criteria in order for their recitation patterns to be validated and recognized as Mutawatir.⁹³ Moreover, the study conducted by Al Maimon presents Imam Ibn Khalil al-Qabaqibi and clarifies his approach and decisions in the field of *Qirā'āt*, as demonstrated in his book "*Ihya'u ar Rumuz*." The findings demonstrated that Imam Al-Qabaqibi established incredible dedication and extensive knowledge in many Sharia sciences, particularly in the field of *Qirā'āt*. His methodological approaches were characterized by clarity, making it easier and simpler for people to understand the science of *Qirā'āt*. The study recommended that future researchers go over his books because there are only a few studies related to his scientific works despite his extensive knowledge.⁹⁴

Accordingly, Halabi explores the importance and status of the science of *Qirā'āt* by demonstrating the connection between *Qirā'āt* science and other sciences related to the

⁹⁰ Muhim Nailul Ulya and Syed Abdul Rahman Alkaff, "An Analysis of the Sanad Transmission by K.H. Muhammad Arwani (1905 – 1994) and His Role in the Dissemination of Qiraat Sab'ah Knowledge in Indonesia," *Qof* 7, no. 2 (2023): 245–62, <https://doi.org/10.30762/qof.v7i2.1400>.

⁹¹ Cut Fauziah and Fatin Nabilah Wahid, "The Development of Al-Qirā'Āt Al-Sab' Learning Method By Qāri'S in Langsa City," *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an Dan Tafsir* 6, no. 2 (2021): 267–80, <https://doi.org/10.32505/at-tibyan.v6i2.3434>.

⁹² Nor Hafizi Yusof et al., "[Al-Tabari's Character in The Knowledge of Qiraat and His View of Al-Aḥruf Al-Sab'ah]," *Jurnal Islam Dan Masyarakat Kontemporeri* 10, no. 1 (2015): 63–72, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.37231/jimk.2020.10.1.110>.

⁹³ Syar'I Sumin, "The Ulama Perspective toward The Status of Qirā'at Sab'ah," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 15, no. 1 (2015): 9–14, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v15i1.2842>.

⁹⁴ Abdulkarim Almaimoony, "Ibn Khalil al kabakaby: Manhajuhu wa juhuduhu fi Ilm al Qira'at.," *Scientific Journal of faculty of Quranic Science* 09, no. 44 (2023): 521–68.

holy Qur'an. The results indicate that the science of *Qirā'āt* is essential for maintaining the accuracy of Qur'anic recitation. It also emphasizes the ease provided by the Qur'an, which highlights the multiplicity of readings for societies' diverse languages and dialects.⁹⁵ Likewise, Al-Mustapa investigates the mutual relationships between Arabic and *Qirā'āt* throughout the history of knowledge development, utilizing descriptive and document analysis as its methodology. The findings suggest that there are interconnections between these two fields, which ultimately brought the science of *Tawjīd* into existence - a discipline that combines the use of Arabic and *Qirā'āt*. Furthermore, the study reveals that the Arabic language contributed positively to the development of *Qirā'āt*, particularly in syntax and morphology, while simultaneously, *Qirā'āt* has benefited the language by preserving some of its ancient dialects from extinction and disappearance.⁹⁶

Correspondingly, Hussein looks at the methodological differences between *Qirā'āt* science and Arabic from the perspectives of *Qirā'āt* scholars and linguists through specific examples of linguists criticizing *Qirā'āt* scholars' opinions on certain readings. The findings suggest that the *Qirā'āt*'s scientific differences in Qur'anic readings reflect linguistic reality prior to revelation, making it an important source for the study of Arabic and its dialects. The arguments between *Qirā'āt* scholars and Arabic grammarians are also due to methodological differences: *Qirā'āt* scholars place a higher priority on narration and presentation, while grammarians primarily rely on hearing and analogies. Furthermore, grammarians' criticisms of *Qirā'āt* scholars are primarily based on rare readings or linguistic school preferences, while other critiques are based on established narratives. The study underlines the significance of the Science of *Qirā'āt* in mastering the complexity and richness of the Arabic language, particularly its grammatical, morphological, and phonological aspects.⁹⁷

In addition, Sawas investigates the concepts of *Al-Ihtijaj*, *Al-Ikhtiyar*, and *Al-Tarjih* in the context of *Qirā'āt*, evaluating their origins, synonyms, and relationships. Likewise, it demonstrates the scientific importance of *Qirā'āt* science and updates researchers on its complex nature and implications. Despite the differences between them, the study reveals an interesting correlation between the two concepts of *Al-Ikhtiyar* and *Al-*

⁹⁵ Omaima Halabi, "Qur'anic Readings and the Importance of Studying Them .," *Innovations Journal of Humanities and Social Studies* 2 (2024): 1–11.

⁹⁶ A L M MUSTAPA, "Framework of Integration Between Arabic Language and Qirā'at.," *Islāmiyyāt: International Journal of Islamic Edots* 45 (2023): 75–81.

⁹⁷ Khalid Ibrahim Ali Hussein, "Science of Readings and Its Relationship to Arabic Linguistics," *Al Kirtas Journal* 17, no. 3 (2022): 57–78.

Tarjih. Al-Ikhtiyar refers to the selection of narrations based on logical reasoning, whereas Al-Tarjih refers to the selection of specific readings. The article contends that scholars use strict criteria in determining the genuine *Qirā'āts*, including the authenticity of the transmission chain, the fluency of the Arabic language, and the clarity of meaning. However, the selection procedure is not influenced by personal biases or preferences regarding particular readings.⁹⁸

Moreover, Purwanto examines the relationship between different interpretations and viewpoints in Islamic jurisprudence that arise due to the differences in Qur'anic readings (*Qirā'āt*). The author presents multiple examples, one of which is that various scholars express different opinions regarding the issue of breaking ablution. Shafi'i argues that touching women renders ablution invalid, but Hanafi and Maliki, on the other hand, maintain that such contact does not invalidate ablution. The issue originates from the different *Qirā'āt* recitation methods of the terms "lamastum" and "lāmastum" in the Qur'an, specifically in Surah al-Nisa', verse 43. The findings provide Muslims with multiple options for choosing the opinion that best suits their specific condition.⁹⁹

Interestingly, Amtul Aziz explores the emergence and development of *Qirā'āt* science on the Indian Subcontinent. The results highlight the historical significance of Qur'anic activities in the region since the advent of Islam, mentioning notable scholars and their contributions to the science of *Qirā'āt*. Also, she emphasizes the valuable intellectual heritage left by scholars in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, which is vital for researchers in this field, and underlines the significance of introducing these scholarly works and their role in preserving the science of *Qirā'āt* and its tradition across the Islamic world.¹⁰⁰ In the meantime, Mohd and Afrizal Nur employ document analysis techniques to criticize the orientalist perspectives on the authenticity of *Qirā'āt* al-Mutawatirah. The results indicate that the defense of *Qirā'āt* Mutawatirah is a solid argument, whereas the criticism against it is unjustified and invalid. This can be argued because the critics concentrate their arguments merely on human logic and not upon the divine nature of the divine message.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Sawas Abdullah, "The Concept Of Al-Ihtijaj In The Science Of Qira'at and Its Relationship With Al-Ikhtiyar and Al-Tarjih," *Ihya International Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2022): 450–74.

⁹⁹ Muhammad Roy Purwanto, "Different Qiraat and Its Implication in Different Opinion of Islamic Jurisprudence," *Jurnal Al-Mawarid* 8, no. 2 (2013): 1–12.

¹⁰⁰ Amtul Aziz, "The Emergence and Development of the Ilam al Qiraat in the Indian Subcontinent," *Nur Marifet Journal* 13, no. 2 (2022).

¹⁰¹ Mohd Faizulamri Mohd Saad and Afrizal Nur, "Orientalist Criticism To Qirā'āt Mutawatirah and Defense (A Fact and Reality)," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 24, no. 2 (2016).

Al-Azami examines the intellectual life of the great West African scholar Ibn Fudi, with an emphasis on his interpretations of Qur’anic texts associated with the science of *Qirā’āt*. The findings demonstrate that Ibn Fudi stands out with his unique style and approach to analyzing verses across different Qur’anic texts. He introduces each verse, explains their implications for interpretation and meaning, and highlights the new perspectives they add to the meaning if interpreted from the perspective of other *Qirā’āts*.¹⁰²

3.6 Qur’anic Schools and The Development of Qirā’āt Science in Northern Nigeria

The development and growth of Qirā’āt science in Nigeria can only be traced to the advent of Islam itself. This is because it is impossible to imagine the existence of a Muslim society without imagining them associating with the noble Qur’an. Many historians have confirmed the possibility of Islam arriving in Africa at an early stage. Adeyemi, for example, maintains that many historians have assumed the possibility of Islam arriving among individuals in ancient Nigeria in the 11th century¹⁰³. Interestingly, Islam spread through the means of trading, and the Da’wa agendas were conducted by Islamic preachers from the north African countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and others popularly known as the Maghreb countries.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Dawood argues that Islam entered the region in the year 666 AH, after the army of the eminent companion *Uqba bin Nafi al-Fihri* crossed the Libyan desert towards the south in the year 666 AH, where it reached a village called “*Kuwar*” on the outskirts of the land of “*El-Kanem*,” which is now located in Borno State, northeastern Nigeria.¹⁰⁵

Whatever the case, Arab traders who extended their commercial pursuits to West Africa also introduced their religion and language upon arrival, and they began the task of converting the Africans to Islam. This endeavor required not only embracing the religious principles of Islam but also learning the language of the Qur’an as a means to understand

¹⁰² Mohammed Alazami, “Qur’an Readings and Their Impact on the Interpretation of Ibn Fudi “An Applied Study,” *Journal of Düzce University Faculty of Theology* 6, no. 2 (2022): 174–93.

¹⁰³ Kamil Adeleke Adeyemi, “The Trend of Arabic and Islamic Education in Nigeria: Progress and Prospects,” *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics* 06, no. 03 (2016): 2–4, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2016.63020>.

¹⁰⁴ Rudolph T Ware, “Walking Qur’an : Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa,” *ProQuest Ebook Central* (University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 264, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ufl/detail.action?docID=>.

¹⁰⁵ Attahir Muhammad Dawood, “Qur’anic Schools in Nigeria: Their Origins, System, and Future Prospects” (The Holy Quran International Conference, International University of Africa, Sudan, 2011), 51–53.

the divine message fully, despite the challenges that come with acquiring a foreign language while having a dominant native language. Also, they played a major role in convincing and motivating traditional leaders, especially kings and princes, to accept and embrace the Islamic religion. This led to the establishment of traditional Qur'anic schools throughout the region. These traditional schools are the primary organizations where a child grows up and acquires fundamental knowledge in the Islamic legal field. In other words, these schools focus only on the Qur'anic recitation and memorization along with subjects related to Arabic and Islamic studies.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, once the child attain a specific level of proficiency, they ought to receive the responsibility of disseminating knowledge to the younger generation. The schools primarily exist in various locations and are commonly known by various names derived from the surrounding environments, such as "*Tsangaya*," "*Makaranta*," "*Dāra*," and others¹⁰⁷. However, these names do have in common that students rely on wooden boards, ink, and pens as their primary tools for reading and writing. In this connection, Ware explores the idea that the pen and wooden tablets reflect knowledge's cognitive capacity. Similarly, they represent the initial phases of knowledge in Islamic education, originating from the first verse the Prophet received.¹⁰⁸

To sum up, everything that has been said so far, the science of Qirā'āt, similar to other Qur'anic sciences, originated in North African countries, and the introduction of Islam in Borno signified the start of Qur'anic education in Nigeria. Consequently, it is essential to look into the phases of the development of Qur'anic education in Nigeria to conceptually relate it with Musābaqah and Qirā'āt sciences to fully understand the growth and development of the subject matter.

3.7 Phases of the Development of the Qirā'āt Science in Nigeria:

3.7.1 The Initial Stage

Islam was introduced to West African individuals, particularly those from Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and other regions, through trade and the efforts of Islamic scholars who came from Mali and other North African countries known as the Maghreb countries. It is certain

¹⁰⁶ Abdullahi Ibrahim Sani and Cecep Anwar, "Madrasa and Its Development in Nigeria," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 2 (2020): 11–12, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v6i2.9750>.

¹⁰⁷ Helen N. Boyle, "Islamic Education in West and Central Africa," 2018, 2–5, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64683-1_36.

¹⁰⁸ Ware, "Walking Qur'an : Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa," 38.

that they not only accepted the Islamic faith but also adopted the Maghreb recitation style, which they then transmitted to future generations using the same narrative. However, it is believed that Imam Nāfi's reading style and the narration of Imam Warsh gained popularity in the 3rd and 4th centuries AH in North Africa. This coincided with the 11th century, marking the official beginning of Islam in ancient Nigeria through the Islamization of the kings and ruling families.

However, Ibn Jazari opines that Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Khairun (D 306 AH) came to Qairawan from Andalusia and settled there. Besides, Andalusia was then a region considered to be one of the greatest regions that produced great scholars in the field of Qirā'āt who enriched the Islamic library with huge and useful publications related to the science of Qirā'āt. So, when he arrived, people from all over the region flocked together to learn Islamic knowledge from him. Among these studies was the science of Qirā'āt. In this context, it is believed that he was the first person who introduced Imam Nāfi's reading style to the people of Qairawan.¹⁰⁹ So, it can be argued that the first seed of Qirā'āt science in ancient Nigeria can be traced back to between the 7th and 11th centuries, which is the existence of individuals who embraced Islam and learned the Qur'an and other Islamic principles either by having direct contact with their preachers and teachers or via the means of trade. In one way or another, the earlier Muslims then learned the holy Qur'an from one of the narrations of the ten Qirā'āt without knowing or focusing on its name. However, it is believed that the recitation style of Imam Hamza represents the most possible narration they could have learned during that period. This is because it was the most popular among the Qairawan people before Ibn Khairun arrived.¹¹⁰

3.7.2 The Islamization of Hausa Emirate

During the period between the 12th and 18th centuries, Islam gained recognition from some of the emirates in Nigeria's Hausa land. According to Adeyemi, the King of Kano State, Ali Yaji, was the first king in the Hausa Emirate (1349–1385 AD) to embrace Islam, and many Fulani Islamic scholars migrated to Kano along with their books on Islamic theology and Maliki jurisprudence under the prominent King Yaqub's rule (1452-163), with the primary aim and objective of teaching Qur'an and preaching Islamic values

¹⁰⁹ Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Khayr ibn al-Jazarī ibn al-Jazarī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf (d. 833 H), *Ghāyat Al-Nihāyah Fī Ṭabaqāt al-Qurā'* (Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah, 1351), 217.

¹¹⁰ ibn al-Jazarī, 217–18.

and principles.¹¹¹ However, Dawood holds the belief that the entire Kano emirate did not adopt Islam until the reign of King Muhammad Rumfa (1463–1499 AD), who had a keen interest in constructing mosques, a custom common to societies that embrace Islam.¹¹²

As a result, the mosques not only served as places for worship but also as additional venues for spreading Islamic knowledge. This is because in Islamic tradition, mosques provide a space for Muslims to pray and function as educational platforms, where various sciences are learned in the form of classes, lectures, sermons, and speeches, enhancing their drive and passion. Al Makdisi argues that the establishment of mosques has been a primary focus of Islam throughout Islamic history since it plays a crucial role in nation-building. Notable mosques include the Masjid Nabawi, the Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, the Mosque of Cordoba in Andalusia, and the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, among others, are a living example.¹¹³ During this period, several factors contributed to the development of Qur’anic education in the region, including the following:

3.7.2.1 Proliferation of Traditional Qur’anic Schools and External Scientific Campaigns

Traditional Qur’anic schools developed during this period as a result of the efforts of the earlier Muslims. For the Muslim communities of that period, these schools served as a vital component of their political, social, and cultural way of life.¹¹⁴ The schools are established, ranging from primary to higher levels, and are generally connected to the sheikh’s residence or operate within a mosque’s grounds or premises. This clearly supports Ware’s argument that the widespread use of traditional Qur’anic schools during this period led to the emergence of several educational institutions across West Africa, such as Timbuktu, Djenne, Gao, Kano, Kanem, Sokoto, Ilorin, and others.¹¹⁵

Therefore, it is evident that Islamic knowledge and education were deeply ingrained in the region despite the ups and downs of various kingdoms that contributed to their establishment. In this context, several traditional Qur’anic schools emerged within

¹¹¹ Kamil Adeleke Adeyemi, “The Trend of Arabic and Islamic Education in Nigeria: Progress and Prospects,” *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics* 06, no. 03 (2016): 2–5, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2016.63020>.

¹¹² Dawood, “Qur’anic Schools in Nigeria: Their Origins, System, and Future Prospects,” 18–19.

¹¹³ George Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*. (Egypt: Madarat for Research and publishing, n.d.), 68.

¹¹⁴ Aishatu Adamu Fada, “Factors Perpetuating the Almajiri System of Education in Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of Zaria and Environs, Kaduna State.” (Masters of Science (M.Sc.) Sociology, KAduna, Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello University, 2005), 41–42.

¹¹⁵ Ware, “Walking Qur’an : Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa,” 56.

many cities across the Kano Emirate, expanded to neighboring villages and towns, and then continued to grow as a result of external scientific campaigns initiated by a group of Arab Muslim scholars. Still, the traditional Islamic ruler's relationship with the Arab and Islamic worlds strengthened during this period, and delegates from Nigeria were sent to some of the Arab and Islamic countries with the aim of delving deeper into the Qur'anic and Islamic sciences.

For instance, Abdullah al-Ilori contended that the kingdom had a strong connection with Egypt, which led to sending academic missions and allocating a wing attributed to it among the Islamic wings in al-Azhar, which is still called today the wing or corridor of Borno, where the Qur'an and Maliki jurisprudence are taught.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Maigari contended that apart from Al-Azhar, there were other delegates who studied in *Magrib* and *Timbuktu*, like Jibrin bn Umar, Uthman bn Fodio, and his brother Abdullah bn Fodio, and others who had devoted their lives to the spread of Islam and its vital culture.¹¹⁷

3.7.2.2 Scholarly Visits and the Migration of Shuwa Arab

The period also saw the migration of an Egyptian Arab tribe, believed to be Banu Hilal, which currently lives on the eastern border of Borno State and is commonly referred to as Shuwa Arab.¹¹⁸ The presence of this tribe in the region resulted positively in the development of Qur'anic studies in a way that contributed to the flourishing of Qur'anic recitation in its correct and beautiful manner. Furthermore, the region received visits from prominent Islamic scholars. According to Dawood, Imam Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 1505 AD) visited most of the scientific centers in West Africa, including Kano, and his famous Tafsir book gained popularity in the region. As a result, local scholars studied it diligently, providing valuable insights and making it a valuable resource.¹¹⁹

Another important figure who visited Kano and settled there within that period is Sheikh Hamad bn Abdul Karim Al-Maghili (D 1504). According to Binuyo, King Muhammad Rumfa invited him to Kano and appointed him as an advisor in matters of

¹¹⁶ Ādam 'Abd Allāh al-Ilūrī, *Al-Islām al-Yawm Wa-Ghadan Fī Nijīriyā* (Nigeria: Maktabat Wahba, 1985), 56–57.

¹¹⁷ Tahir Maigari et al., "Exploring the Factors Affecting Competitors' Performance at Qur'anic Recitation Competition: A Case of Compliance with Techniques of Recitation (Ahkamut-Tajweed)," 6.

¹¹⁸ Mauro Tosco, "Arabic Beyond 'Arabic': The Case of Nigeria," vol. 12, 1994, 3–4, <https://about.jstor.org/terms>.

¹¹⁹ Dawood, "Qur'anic Schools in Nigeria: Their Origins, System, and Future Prospects," 18–19.

counsel, administration, and political affairs.¹²⁰ Moreover, Sani believes that Sheikh Al-Maghili taught the Qur'an as well as other branches of Islamic education, and from there, many other schools emerged, some specializing in the Qur'an, Tafsir, and other basic Islamic sciences.¹²¹ He also introduced a system for Qur'anic learning that allows students to remain at their respective homes and visit teachers' houses to learn the Qur'an. As a result, in the evenings and mornings, scholars' homes became the equivalent of classrooms for Qur'anic education. This innovative approach facilitated the spread of Qur'anic schools, and the system continued to thrive in subsequent years across various Nigerian emirates.

The arrival of such elite scholars became a good omen for Hausa society, resulting in the production of local scholars who have emerged in various fields of science and literature, such as the eminent scholar Muhammad al-Katsnawi, popularly known as Dan Marina, and others.¹²² Yet, the largest delegation that the Hausa kingdom witnessed in that period was the migration of the *Wangarawa* Muslim scholars from Mali to Kano under the leadership of Abd al-Rahman Ziti, who was the great-grandfather of the famous Timbuktu scholar Ahmed Baba.¹²³ Furthermore, Taiwo claims that the Hausa emirates considered it an honor to host such delegates. As a result, they were offered several positions related to teaching the Qur'an and other Islamic sciences, as well as encouraging them to spread Islam throughout the kingdom. On the other hand, the ruling elite relied on these religious leaders to provide intellectual backing that legitimized their authority.¹²⁴

Over time, diplomatic embassies between Hausa emirates and Islamic and Arab countries, as well as preachers and Sufi clerics, have played a significant role in multiplying the number of traditional Qur'anic schools across the Hausa kingdom. This has exposed more local scholars and Qur'anic students to alternative aspects of Qur'anic recitation, enabling them to learn about authentic recitations beyond the common narration of Imam

¹²⁰ Nurudeen Adewale Binuyo, "Shari'ah in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective," *Lagos State University Journal (Lasu)*, no. 2 (2003): 3–5.

¹²¹ Nura Sani, "Recitation and Memorization of the Qur'an in Nigeria: A Comparison of Traditional and Modern Qur'anic Schools" (2nd International Conference on Arabic Studies and Islamic Civilization, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: <http://WorldConferences.net>, 2015), 3–4.

¹²² Joseph Schacht, "Islam in Northern Nigeria," *Brill* 8, no. 8 (1957): 135.

¹²³ M Bano, "Curricula That Respond to Local Needs: Analysing Community Support for Islamic and Qur'anic Schools in Northern Nigeria," *Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Edots*, no. August (2022): 09, https://riseprogramme.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/Curricula_Respond_Local_Needs_Qur'anic_Schools_Nigeria.pdf.

¹²⁴ Fowoyo Joseph Taiwo, "Transforming the Almajiri Education for the Benefit of the Nigerian Society," *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 2013, 245–46, <https://doi.org/10.5901/jesr.2013.v3n9p67>.

Warsh. However, Boyle believes that the Warsh recitation is the utilized recitation style in West Africa at large.¹²⁵

3.7.3 The Golden Era

From the 18th to the early 20th centuries, Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio was born (1754-1817). He initiated a reformist movement in 1804 that resulted in an essential religio-political transformation, leading to the emergence of the Sokoto Caliphate, a geo-political body that encompassed a minimum of two-thirds of today's Nigeria. The Caliphate serves as a decentralized alliance of emirates under Dan Fodio, with a total of thirty emirates under its control, each recognizing the authority of the Sultan. The Caliphate, in particular during its first leadership, was guided by devotion to Islam. Its primary objective was to purify society of non-Islamic traditions and stick strictly to the principles of sharia law. The people who were under their rule consisted primarily of people from multiple tribes residing in northern Nigeria, comprising both Muslim and non-Muslim populations. All of the ruling families were Muslim and mostly of Fulani origin.

In this connection, Al-Ilori provided that the Jihad movement, aimed at guiding people towards correct beliefs, rejecting innovations, and dispelling deviant practices, resulted in the implementation of Islamic law and justice in various aspects of governance, law, politics, socio-economic and diplomatic relationships, and academic areas.¹²⁶ Interestingly, Dan Fodio was able to unite the Hausa Emirates under Islamic law, adopting Arabic as the official language, and engaging Muslim intellectuals to ensure that Arabic was used as the primary means of contact with the kingdoms in North Africa.¹²⁷

This period is considered to be the golden age of Islamic and Qur'anic studies in Nigerian history because, ever since the consolidation of Hausa kingdoms under the leadership of Dan Fodio in Sokoto, there has been a significant increase in the popularity of traditional Qur'anic schools and their educational practices. The contributions of scholars to the advancement of Qur'anic education have positioned the region as a stronghold of knowledge and the mystical heart of Northern Nigeria. Undoubtedly,

¹²⁵ Boyle, "Islamic Education in West and Central Africa," 642.

¹²⁶ Abdullah Adam al-Iluri, *Mujaz Tarikh Nijiriya: Qamus Saghir Yulqi al-Daw' 'ala Tarikh Hadhihi al-Bilad Qadimah Wa Hadithah*, 1st ed. (Kano: Dar Maktabat al-Hayat, 1965), 67–71.

¹²⁷ Atotileto Aminu Abdus-Salam and Jelilat Adetunji, "The Language of Al-Qur'an: A Tool to the Islamic Education and Muslim Unity in Nigeria," *Journal of Nigerian Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 4, no. 1 (2017): 8.

distinguished Nigerian scholars excelled in various fields of knowledge, including the science of Qirā'āt. In this context, the contributions of Sheikh Dan Fodio and his brothers to Qur'anic scholarship are of great significance. Sheikh Abdullah bin Fodio, for example, wrote "*al-Farā'id al-Jalīlah wa-sā'it al-Fu'ād al-Jamīlah*," a renowned book that focused on Ulūm al-Qur'ān. In the book, he provided a collection of beautiful insights into the seven Qirā'āts and their aspects of recitation.

This above-mentioned book holds significance as it is the first by a Nigerian author to discuss and illuminate the Qirā'āt sciences, thereby paving the way for future scholars in the region to delve deeper into the subject matter. Fascinatingly, the Fulani continued to maintain their power and authority, but over time they faced defeat in their military struggle against Borno in the northeastern region. When the British arrived in the region, only the Igala, Idoma, Tiv, and Jukun lands were not under the control of the Sokoto and Borno Muslim empires.¹²⁸

7.3. The Challenging Era

The Qur'anic education, in general, and the traditional Qur'anic schools faced great challenges during and after the arrival of the British colonialists. According to Otto, the British initiated their infiltration into the Nigerian region during the second journey of Mungo Park across West Africa from Senegambia (1805–1806) and subsequently expanded their influence in the years 1849 and 1852. In 1900, they formed the colony of Northern Nigeria and appointed Frederick Lugard as the High Commissioner. Consequently, the troops of Britain's West African Territorial Force successfully defeated the opposing forces of multiple smaller emirates under British authority (1901–1902).¹²⁹

Regardless of the colonial authorities' assurances not to interfere with the Islamic way of living in Muslim communities, Iwobi believes that modern-day Muslim scholars argue that British rule seriously damaged the Islamic identity of these communities by imposing their language and culture on Muslims and significantly weakening the power of Sharia as the primary legal system.¹³⁰ This can be justified considering the fact that the prevailing education in government schools during the colonial period was either secular or church. For this reason, these Qur'anic schools played an educational role for the people

¹²⁸ Jan Michiel Otto, *Sharia Incorporated: A Comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present* (Netherlands: Leiden University Press, 2010), 556–57.

¹²⁹ Otto, 562–67.

¹³⁰ Iwobi Andrew Ubaka, "Tiptoeing through a Constitutional Minefield: The Great Sharia Controversy in Nigeria," *Journal of African Law* 48, no. 2 (2004): 113.

of society in the face of the cultural and intellectual invasion to which Muslims were subjected. This is done in order to preserve their Islamic identity and adhere to their religion, language, culture, customs, and traditions.

Some scholars maintain that Borno surrendered without any resistance, while Kano and Sokoto were captured in 1903 following a bloody war. In 1914, the protectorate nations of Northern and Southern Nigeria were merged into what is now known as Nigeria, ending the North's independent or traditional administration. From 1914 to 1919, Lugard served as Nigeria's inaugural governor general, having previously held the position of first High Commissioner.¹³¹

In this context, Magashi opines that Lugard asserted the existence of more than twenty-four thousand traditional Qur'anic schools in the northern part of Nigeria.¹³² Similarly, Dawood contends that Lugard mentioned the existence of more than twenty thousand Qur'anic schools with about two hundred and fifty thousand students in the northern region. Despite the general focus on Islamic education and Qur'anic studies, this period was particularly challenging. It witnessed marginalization and struggle, and it wasn't until Nigeria gained independence in 1960 that a breath of relief was felt. The absence of direct contact with scholars from the Arab and Islamic world, the impact of modern education, and the lack of resources hindered the local reciters ability to master the Qur'anic sciences ranging from the science of *Tajweed*, *Qirā'āt*, and others are considered to be some of the challenges faced due to colonialism.

7.3.1. Post Independence Era

Following Nigeria's attainment of independence in 1960, there was an increase in the practice of Islamic and Qur'anic studies in Northern Nigeria. This was due to the strengthening of diplomatic ties between Nigeria and other Arab and Islamic nations, particularly Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Libya. Each of these nations had academic missions by offering a space for Nigerian students to enhance their intellectual capacity within the realms of Qur'anic and Islamic studies. As a result, they were provided with

¹³¹ Otto, *Sharia Incorporated: A Comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present*, 567–69; Binuyo, “Shari’ah in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective,” 6–8.

¹³² Salim Bahir Magashi, “Copious Legal Frameworks Protect the Dignity of Children as Members of the Human Family . What Remains to Be Done Is Their Immediate Implementation and Judicial or Social Activism to Curb the Almajiri Practice as a Matter of Legal and Moral Duty .,” *Jstor* 61, no. 3 (2018): 68.

vital opportunities to delve into various aspects of Qur'anic recitation. In this connection, some scholars argue that some of them developed proficiency during the process, while others excelled so much that they obtained licenses (*ijazah*) in Qur'anic recitation.¹³³ During this phase, distinguished scholars began their visits to Nigeria, and over time, the academic mission with Arab academics gradually strengthened, particularly after the establishment of the Islamic University of Madinah in 1961.

Moreover, traditional Qur'anic school students in Northern Nigeria started comparing their performances to those of those who studied in Arab countries or learned in Madrasa schools from visiting Arab scholars or local teachers. This unique situation arises as a result of some observations made about their performance, especially in cases involving the application of *Tajweed* during Qur'anic recitation.¹³⁴ On the other hand, the most prominent recitation style utilized by the traditional Qur'anic school is the narration of Warsh, whereas the majority of those who studied in Arab countries learned and mastered the recitation style of Imam Hafs, and they transmitted the same narration to the next generation in the same way and manner they learned. This divergence led to each side holding its ground and maintaining its position, resulting in two forms of Qur'anic schools: traditional Qur'anic schools, which still maintain the application of Warsh, and modern Islamiyah schools, which maintain the application of Hafs.¹³⁵ In this context, it is crucial to note that the foundational texts on Qur'anic recitations and *Tajweed* knowledge were known to Nigerian scholars of that period, but the practical application was limited. Unlike those who studied in Arab countries, where students learned, mastered, and applied the rules of Tajwid accurately.

7.3.2. The Proliferation of Qur'anic Recordings

Another important aspect of the development of Qirā'āt sciences was the widespread use of Qur'anic recordings in the form of radio cassettes, recited by prominent Egyptian international reciters such as Abdulbasit Abdus Samad, Mahmud Khalil al-Husari, al-Munshawi, and others. This is in line with the argument of Kermani, which maintains that recording the Qur'an in the form of cassettes and CDs was a common

¹³³ Mohammed Ibrahim and Ahmad Kumo, "Qur'anic Schools and the Development of Education in Nigeria," n.d., 8; Adeyemi, "The Trend of Arabic and Islamic Education in Nigeria: Progress and Prospects," 2016, 2–3.

¹³⁴ Sani and Anwar, "Madrasa and Its Development in Nigeria," 213.

¹³⁵ Fallou Ngom and Mustapha H Kurfi, "'Ajamization of Islam in Africa" 8, no. 2 (2017): 11, <https://doi.org/10.2307/90017955>.

phenomenon in the early 20th century.¹³⁶The recordings mostly find their way to Nigeria through students who studied in the Arab world or via pilgrimage. The recordings not only unified the aesthetic norms but also represented new conditions of performance and reception of the Qur'an in the Northern Nigerian community, especially as many local scholars criticized the dynamic of recitation of the Qur'an by a machine. Furthermore, it should be understood that the usual and common mode of Qur'anic recitation, which they considered the norm, involves attending public recitations in mosques. The simple justification for the criticism lies in acknowledging that recordings often lead to a decline in the popularity and attendance of Qur'anic recitation events.

7.3.3. The Emergence of *Musābaqah* in Nigeria

In the year 1986, Nigeria held its first national Qur'anic competition under the supervision of Usman Dan Fodio University, showcasing Nigerian students' proficiency and a way to improve the quality of Qur'anic recitation among Nigerian Qur'anic reciters. According to Abdulhamid, very few states participated that year, owing primarily to a lack of qualified participants and a lack of awareness of the National Qur'anic Program's goal.¹³⁷ Since its inception, a group of Northern Nigerian scholars has successfully navigated the path of raising awareness about the significant virtues of competing in goodness through the means of *Musābaqah*, using the mass media, especially the FM radio channels. Among them were Sheikh Ibrahim Abubakar Ramadan in Kano; Sheikh Ali Hassan Sulaiman; Dr. Hafiz Ismail; Abd al-Hakim Galadanci in Sokoto; Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi; and Sheikh Ibrahim Arab in Kaduna State, who contributed to spreading Qur'anic knowledge and its recitation.¹³⁸

In the last two decades, the efforts of Nigerian scholars from different parts of the country, as well as the scholarly missions to Arab countries, particularly Al-Azhar University of Egypt, the Islamic University of Medina, and other Islamic universities in Sudan, Morocco, and Libya, led to Nigerian students getting licenses (Ijazah) in Qirā'āt knowledge. Consequently, many Nigerians who mastered and excelled in the Qirā'āt

¹³⁶ Kermani, "God Is Beautiful: The Aesthetic Experience of the Qurān.," 178–79.

¹³⁷ Abdulhamid, "Impact and Challenges of Qur'anic Recitation Competition in the Federal Capital Territory (Fct) Abuja," 155–56.

¹³⁸ Alexander Thurston, "Islamic Modernism and Colonial Education in Northern Nigeria: Na'ibi Sulaiman Wali (1927–2013)," *Religion and Education* 44, no. 1 (2017): 15–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15507394.2016.1267540>; Muhammad S. Umar, "Education and Islamic Trends in Northern Nigeria: 1970s–1990s," *Africa Today* 48, no. 2 (June 2001): 134, <https://doi.org/10.2979/AFT.2001.48.2.126>; Ramzi Ben Amara, "The Founder of the Izala Movement in Nigeria 1," 1937, 74.

sciences recorded the Qur'an completely in the form of either video, CD, or audio cassette in several *Qirā'āts* as an additional way of spreading the knowledge, which added to the quality of Qur'anic education and could be seen as a big step up in the level of maturity of Nigerian Qur'anic recitation. Among them were Sheikh Abdullahi Abba Zaria from Kaduna State, Goni Sadik Ibrahim Sadik from Zamfara State, and Goni Tahir from Borno State. In this context, it is essential to note that Nigeria has become a prominent international *Qirā'āt Musābaqah* participant across the Muslim world, including those *Musābaqahs* organized in Dubai, Kuwait, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and others. Nigerian *Musābaqah* participants consistently demonstrate their skill and expertise in these competitions, contributing to the advancement of *Musābaqah* in the Islamic world.

To summarize the transformation of Qur'anic recitation in Northern Nigeria, the table below shows the adopted recitation style and its phases.

Table 3.3 General overview of adopted Qur'anic recitations in Nigeria

Century	Recitation Style	Major Developments	Regions
9 th -11 th	Imam Hamza	Spread of Islam	Northern Nigeria, particularly through trade routes and <i>Da'awa</i> missions.
12 th -20 th	Warsh Narration	Establishment of traditional Qur'anic schools, migration, and Scholarly Visits	Growth of Islamic communities in cities like Kano, Borno, Katsina, and Zaria.
20 th -date	Hafs Narration	Emergence of Madrasa schools, Qur'anic recordings, external scholarships, and Musabaqah	Northern Nigeria at a whole.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter offers a comprehensive discussion of *Qirā'āt*, a field of science that deals with knowing how to pronounce Qur'anic words and the way to perform them in agreement and disagreement, with each aspect attributed to its carrier. However, Muslims believe that the revelation of the Qur'an in seven letters, which rely on dialectical and semantic aspects, refers to the seven legitimate ways of transmission that aim to simplify the Qur'anic recitation for the companions and future generations, and all these recitations are revelations from the Almighty Allah. Indeed, it is clear that the prophet taught his

companions the correct way and manner of Qur'anic recitation, using a variant recitation style. After his death, many Arab tribes apostatized, leading to a war that resulted in the deaths of numerous Qur'anic memorizers (*Huffāz*) among the companions. This incident led to the compilation of the Qur'an.

However, with the widespread acceptance of Islam, accuracy decreased due to the high number of transmitters and significant variant transmissions. As a result, Ibn Mujāhid outlined seven authentic recitations in his book, *Kitāb al-Sab'a*. He achieved this by employing the concept of a Sanad transmission chain, comprising four primary links: the reciter (*Qāri*), the narrator (*Rāwi*), the narration (*Riwāyah*), the mode holder (Sahib Tariqah), and the recitation aspect (Wajh). The seven reciters identified by Ibn Mujāhid are from the regions of Hijāz, Iraq, and Sham. They are Nāfi', Āsim, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Āmir, Abu Amr, Hamza, and Kisā'i, and each of them has two narrators. These reciters are commonly known as the Seven Reciters (*Qurrā al Sab'a*), and their recitation (*Qirā'āt Sab'ah*) gained widespread acceptance both within their own regions and in neighboring ones. Al Dani, Al Shātibi, and Ibn Jazari expanded this achievement by providing the fundamentals that led to the establishment of the Ten Major Qirā'āt Sciences.

In Nigeria, specifically the northern region, the study maintains that *Qirā'āt* knowledge flourished and developed through a series of phases. The first stage dates back to the arrival of Islam in the region through trade and *Da'awa* missions from the North African countries, potentially as early as the 9th century. It is certain that the Muslims of that era accepted Islam and adopted the Maghreb recitation style of Imam Hamza without paying attention to the name, which they then passed on to subsequent generations using the same narrative. However, after the Islamization of the Hausa Emirates and the diplomatic ties between Hausa Emirates and the Islamic world, several factors contributed to the development of Qur'anic studies in general and *Qirā'āt* science specifically in the region, including the scholarly visits and migration of scholars and an Arab tribe, known as Shuwa Arab, to the region, the establishment of traditional Qur'anic schools, resulted in adopting the Warsh narration in most of the Hausa kingdoms.

As well, the findings reveal that Sheikh Abdullah bin Fodio's book, *al-Farā'id al-Jalīlah wa-sā'it al-Fu'ād al-Jamīlah*, is considered the first book by a Nigerian author that discusses and illuminates the Qirā'āt sciences. During colonization, Qur'anic education in Nigeria faced challenges like a lack of direct contact with Arab scholars, the impact of modern education, and resource scarcity. Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, the

revival of diplomatic ties with the Islamic world led to the continuation of academic missions that enabled Nigerian students to learn *Qirā'āt* knowledge. Other factors include the impact of Hajj and Umrah, the availability of recorded Qur'an in the form of audio and CDs, and the introduction of Qur'anic competition in the region. In this time frame, the Hafs narration is considered to be predominant in the region, especially in the Madrasa schools.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONTRIBUTION OF *MUSĀBAQAH* TO PROMOTING *QIRĀ'ĀT* SCIENCE LEARNING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

4.1 Introduction

Musābaqah has been making a significant impact due to its widespread acceptance throughout Nigeria's Muslim community. Since its inception, it has played a significant role in the advancement, growth, and development of the Nigerian educational system in such a way that many Islamic schools, colleges, and centers dedicated to the recitation and memorization of the Qur'an and its sciences across the northern part of the country. In this regard, it is undeniable that the competition has so far achieved the key goals set forth by its initiators. The objectives, as mentioned earlier, include promoting Qur'anic recitation and memorization among Muslim youths, fostering unity and brotherhood within the Muslim community, improving Qur'anic recitation in an accurate and articulated way and manner, and fostering the participant's knowledge of the sciences associated with the Qur'an, such as *Tajweed*, *Tafsir*, and others.

It is evident that while Allah instructs Muslims to recite the Qur'an: "And recites the Qur'an in slow rhythmic tones" (Q 73:4). It is essential to note that this recitation must be performed accurately in order to obtain any form of reward. However, Muslims commonly recite and read the Qur'an improperly, deviating from the way the prophet and his companions originally taught it. In another context, they recite the Qur'an while considering *Tajwid* rules or the correct placement of vowel points for each letter, a practice known as *Makharij al-hurūf*. But since the inception of *Musābaqah* in the country, Muslims today are made aware that reciting the Qur'an without knowledge of *Tajwid* might result in errors and potential sins instead of rewards. In this aspect, the introduction of *Musābaqah* has significantly contributed to improving and enhancing the practical aspects of Qur'anic recitation in the nation. As a result, nowadays, Muslim parents enroll their children in Islamic schools that emphasize Qur'anic recitation and memorization, improving the oral performance standards of Qur'anic recitation in the state.

4.2 The Prospects of The Introduction of *Qirā'āt* Category Within the *Musābaqah* System

Musābaqah serves as an excellent motivating factor for participants to engage with *Qirā'āt* science, particularly for those competing in the first category. Interestingly, the Kaduna state standing committee on Qur'anic recitation competition (KSSCQRC), whose

headquarters are in Kinkinau, adopted the inclusion of the *Qirā'āt* category in the system as an additional way to motivate *Musābaqah* participants to invest time and energy in mastering the science, improving their Arabic language skills, and expanding their Qur'anic studies knowledge. Because of its inclusion, it instilled strong enthusiasm and curiosity among the participants, making the *Musābaqah* more competitive. In this aspect, Krashen maintains that this kind of motivation is particularly important where consistent practice and exposure are seen as key components of success.¹³⁹

Prior to the introduction of *Qirā'āt* in the *Musābaqah* competition, only three out of the seven *Qirā'āts* are allowed to be employed by the participants throughout the competition; the *Qirā'āt* of Asim, Nāfi' and Abu Amr. However, the inclusion of *Qirā'āt* in the competition has exposed both Muslims in general, and *Musābaqah* participants in particular to the knowledge of the Seven *Qirā'āts* as the majority of Muslims in Kaduna State were only familiar with two kinds of Qur'anic recitation, namely the narration Warsh and the narration of Hafs. Many had limited or no knowledge regarding other forms of Qur'anic recitation. Yet, due to its inclusion in the system, more students have developed a deep interest in learning more about them. The *Qirā'āt* category in the *Musābaqah* is renowned for its competitive nature, which draws a larger audience.

A panel of judges will quote a specific verse from a specific portion of the Qur'an and instruct the *Musābaqah* participant to read one of the narrations (*Riwāyah*) of the seven *Qirā'āt*, utilizing a specific aspect (*Wajh*). Each student will examine five different portions of the Qur'an and recite them with five different narrations based on the instructions. This will be followed by practical, applied questions in *Tajweed*, *Tafsir*, and *Qirā'āt*. During the process, each student is expected to spend at least 25–30 minutes. Thus, it is important to note that in order to be a judge in the *Qirā'āt* competition, one must have complete mastery of all the *Qirā'āts*. This kind of approach is implemented to guarantee that only qualified people with highly specialized field expertise judge the competition. By completing the aforementioned tasks, the judges will be able to examine the students and evaluate their performance and knowledge of various *Qirā'āts* as a way to produce genuine and strong competent that can perform significantly across all the *Musābaqah* levels.

During an interview with the chief judge of the Kaduna State Standing Committee on Qur'anic Recitation Competition, Sheikh Sulaiman Salih Ikara, questions were asked

¹³⁹ Stephen D. Krashen, *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning* (Pergamon Press, 1981), 78.

about *Musābaqah*'s contribution to promoting *Qirā'āt* science learning in Kaduna State, and the answers are as follows:

“The Qirā'āt category is the first among the six categories adopted by the competition's national board, which is led by Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, and the most highly regarded category in the Musābaqah; the category involves memorizing the entire Qur'an and applying the rules governing its recitation, including its seven Qirā'āt. Four portions of the holy Qur'an will be quoted by one of the panel of judges, and each competitor will be instructed to recite it in a different narration (Riwāyah), employing a specific aspect (Wajh). Next, they must answer four questions from the Shātibiyah book, three questions from the books Ibanah and Taysir, respectively, and finally the questions on Tafsir from the book Kalimat al-Qur'an by Muhammad Hasanayn Makhluḥ. As a result, the introduction of this category serves as a motivational factor that fuels the desire to learn and master the Qirā'āt sciences among the teachers, students, and the panel of judges in general. Each of them necessitates a thorough understanding of Qirā'āt's science. Many teachers are actively acquiring this knowledge in order to effectively teach it to their students, particularly if the students demonstrate a strong desire to learn. Therefore, if the teachers lack scientific knowledge, the students might enroll in another school or have a different teacher. On the other hand, the state's standing committee on Musābaqah competitions only considers those with expertise in the field to judge the competition. In light of this, individuals within the system who lacked field expertise were striving to acquire the necessary knowledge to uphold their positions and status within the system.”

It is evident from the statements that the introduction of *Qirā'āt* in the *Musābaqah* system is considered to be a significant factor that motivates both students, teachers, and the panel of judges in general to actively engage in learning the science. Due to their consistent practice of engaging with the Qur'an before and after the *Musābaqah* event, Muslims are increasingly realizing the significant impact of Qur'anic education, particularly *Qirā'āt* science. This claim is in accordance with Al-Halabi's view regarding the importance of *Qirā'āt* learning.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Halabi, “Qur'anic Readings and the Importance of Studying Them .,” 4–6.

Moreover, *Musābaqah*'s significance in *Qirā'āt* is endless. Prior to the category's launch in the *Musābaqah* system, individuals identified as Qur'anic memorizers (*Huffaz*) of the Qur'an read it without paying attention to understanding the divine message. Yet, with the introduction of this category in the competition, the participants now perceive it as more beneficial to figure out the variant forms of Qur'anic recitation, which significantly impact the meaning of every verse (*āyah*) and the contextual variables that caused the variation in recitation. Besides, exposure to *Qirā'āt* science also familiarizes the *Musābaqah* participants with other disciplines. In this sense, it encourages them to learn more about the classical Qur'anic sciences (*Ulum al-Qur'an*) and other areas of knowledge including Tafsir, Arabic grammar (*Nahw*), philology (*Sarf*), *Balāghah*, *Adab*, *'Ilm Tawjīh al-Qirā'āt* and *Al ashbāh wa-al-Nazā'ir*. This will help them better understand the beautiful Qur'an's complex linguistic structures and meaning, as well as improve their linguistic skills.

In this context, Farida Zakariyya, a *Musābaqah* participant, argued that after memorizing the Qur'an, she struggles to understand the meaning of several Qur'anic verses. But she considered it easier to understand after learning *Qirā'āt*, as the majority of the variations in recitation are related to the linguistic aspect, which affects the meaning. In this regard, *Qirā'āt* Knowledge expands her viewpoint on the Arabic and Tafsir disciplines, which significantly boosts her Qur'anic understanding. In this sense, I argue that the introduction of *Qirā'āt* into the *Musābaqah* exposes participants to the reservoir of various aspects of the Qur'anic sciences, which includes the Tafsir, the books of *Shātibiyyah*, *Al-Ibanah*, and *Al-Taysir*. Also, it has a positive impact on promoting their linguistic skills because it encourages the participants to memorize the entire text of these books, which is written in Arabic and boasts the highest level of linguistic eloquence. The books' linguistic style and literal eloquence are superb, and they are acknowledged by all. Therefore, by mastering the *Qirā'āt* knowledge, one becomes a reservoir of unlimited Arabic vocabularies that would in fact enhance his capacity in both written and oral forms of communication.

4.3 The Proliferation of *Qirā'āt* Learning Centers and *Qirā'āt*-Based Competitions.

Prior to the introduction of *Qirā'āt* in the *Musābaqah* system, there was only one learning center known to the researcher where students obtained diplomas in *Qirā'āt* science, located in Kinkinau, Kaduna State. Several factors, such as the high number of students, the limited study duration, and inadequate resources, may limit students to only

learning the theoretical aspects of the knowledge and not its practical applications. However, the *Qirā'āt*'s introduction led to the establishment of more Qur'anic centers in the state, either owned by governments or individuals, emphasizing both the theoretical and practical aspects of *Qirā'āt* knowledge. Also, the rotational nature of *Musābaqah*, which takes place in a different community each year, contributes to its prominence and recognition within society. Indeed, this approach exposes many individuals from diverse backgrounds to the competition and influences their interests. Consequently, many individuals perceive this as a chance to establish additional *Qirā'āt* learning centers, aiming to meet the societal demand for knowledge. We can justify this by pointing out that, up to now, only a limited number of individuals have mastered the practical application of *Qirā'āt*. In other words, only a few people have Ijaza in the seven *Qirā'āts* in Kaduna State. Also, another issue worth mentioning is that, till now, it has been difficult to precisely determine the number of schools teaching *Qirā'āt* in Kaduna due to the absence of official statistics in the state. Yet, the *Musābaqah* continues to be a significant and celebrated event across different learning institutions.

Both Islamic and governmental institutions frequently integrate the event into their primary, secondary, and university levels, serving as a motivating element for students to excel in their Qur'anic recitation skills regardless of their status or gender. The opportunity to compete in the *Musābaqah* fosters a positive relationship between competition and formal education. Educational institutions, such as Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State University, and Kaduna Polytechnic, promote Qur'anic recitation in such a way that they initiate and regulate the annual *Musābaqah* for university students under the supervision of the Muslim Student Society of Nigeria (MSSN). These institutions provide opportunities for any Muslim, regardless of their course of study, to participate in the competition.

In this context, the researcher came across a post on Facebook from Kaduna State University's official page announcing the launch of the Diploma in *Qirā'āt* Sciences. This announcement coincided with the category's inclusion in the *Musābaqah* system. One could perceive this as a deliberate attempt to capitalize on the societal demand for knowledge. During an interview, Dr. Faiz Shuaibu Adam, a graduate of the International Islamic University of Madinah, mentioned or identified several other notable examples of *Qirā'āt* learning centers, including *Nurul Huda Al-Islamiyyah Rigasa*, *Ma'ahad Banu Shareef Unguwar Dosa*, *Nurul Tilawah Zaria*, and many others.

Furthermore, the inclusion of *Qirā'āt* in *Musābaqah* has served as a source of inspiration for both local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that concentrate on organizing Qur'anic competitions in the region. Consequently, these organizations have either added *Qirā'āt* to their competitions or initiated *Qirā'āt*-based *Musābaqah* events. Several Among these organizations mentioned are *Rabidah*, *Nana Asma'u*, *Gaskia TV*, *Al Aytam* (Orphans), *Annuraniyyah* Foundation, and *Imam al-Shātibi* Foundation. The *Al Huzaify Qirā'āt* Competition, an internationally recognized organization, holds an international competition focused on *Qirā'āt* with the goal of actively involving people in learning the Qur'an. The inclusion of *Qirā'āt* in the *Musābaqah* led to the establishment of the previously mentioned organizations, while others had been operational for some time. Therefore, we have no doubts that *Musābaqah* created an expansive awareness of knowledge, which inspired people in general to acquire knowledge and actively participate in the competition.

4.4 Factors Motivating the *Musābaqah* Participants to Engage in The *Qirā'āt* Competition

Even though motivation can be viewed as a complex process influenced by numerous factors, it can generally be interpreted as either a necessity or a choice driven by various reasons to fulfill a duty, and it plays a critical role in an individual's personal and intellectual growth and development. Several studies have examined the motivations behind students' participation in competitions, concluding that they strive for excellence to obtain the incentives, uphold their status and identity, or broaden their horizons and seize future opportunities that will foster their social, personal, and intellectual growth.

However, in an interview with Gwani Abdullahi Abba Zaria, a 36-year veteran of the *Musābaqah* system who has served as the chief of the panel of judges in Kaduna State, a member of the national panel of judges, and a winner of the National Qur'anic Recitation Competition, where he represented Nigeria at the international level, he stated:

“Nothing enlivens the Qur'an more than its memorization, and Musābaqah is the key factor in motivating people to memorize the Noble Qur'an. He added that before the introduction of Musābaqah to the country, most individuals, particularly women in the rural areas, were limited to memorizing a few chapters of the Qur'an for their five daily prayers, with only a handful managing to memorize the entire Qur'an. However, the introduction of Musābaqah in the country has motivated many women to memorize the Qur'an, allowing them to participate in the event.

Surprisingly, today the number of female Qur'anic memorizers will be equal to or surpass that of men, which is a significant development in the state. Also, the introduction of Qirā'āt in the system will add additional value to the development of Musābaqah itself and will help in producing valuable participants with the potential to compete anywhere in the world, given that many organizations are now joining the trend of organizing the Qirā'āt competition, such as the Huzaifi International Musābaqah competition. Furthermore, both teachers and participants utilized the Qirā'āt competition to improve their theoretical and practical understanding of Qirā'āt science”.

From the statements above, it is evident that most participants in the *Qirā'āt* category are positioning themselves as future champions of the *Musābaqah*. Yet, three out of five female respondents are married and have successfully balanced raising their children with their commitment to mastering *Qirā'āt* knowledge. This field demands significant time and attention. Besides, their desire to excel and flourish in the competition, their ability to balance their social and private lives, their use of time management skills, and their commitment to building their future careers are the factors that influence their flexibility. This clearly illustrates that leveraging the required flexibility can enhance a woman's chances of success, provided she combines it with adequate resources and strategic planning.

In this context, Maimunat Adam, a *Musābaqah* participant who has been in the system for more than a decade and is a married woman with four kids, expressed her desire to participate in the event after her Qur'anic teacher was crowned the overall champion (*Gwarzuwar Shekara*) in 2007. Maimunat Adam stated,

"My Qur'anic teacher is my role model and has positively influenced me throughout my Musābaqah career. She added, I grew up in the system with the aim of becoming like her because she is dedicated and consistent with her daily recitation prior to or after Musābaqah periods. She guided me in the process, which made my memorization stronger. As a result, despite being married, I saw the Qirā'āt category as an additional chance and opportunity to strengthen my understanding and expand my expertise and knowledge of Qirā'āt sciences through Qirā'āt experts, which will be beneficial for me both now and in the future”

Similarly, Ibrahim Saeed, a *Musābaqah* participant for almost a decade, mentions that the genesis of his passion for *Musābaqah* was developed after realizing that those engaging in the event recite the holy Qur'an in an articulate and correct way and manner compared to those who are not participating, and his community lacks *Qirā'āt* experts. He mentioned the following:

“With Tajweed's theoretical and practical application, I achieved my dream of mastering Qur'anic recitation through Musābaqah. Therefore, for me, Musābaqah is a learning center where a participant will learn from Qur'anic experts other than his own teachers. Also, not one person in my community knows or understands the seven Qirā'āts. As a result, I faced significant challenges during my Qirā'āt learning process, as my teacher lives in a remote area from my home. However, my teacher consistently inspires me to master the science. I take pride in being the first person in my community to achieve Ijaza in the seven Qirā'āt, and I eagerly anticipate disseminating this knowledge to future generations”.

Indeed, *Musābaqah* has fostered an intense interest and passion for Qur'anic studies courses among its participants, portraying itself as an exceptional way of preparing students to pursue further academic endeavors, as many students received scholarship incentives to study abroad through *Musābaqah*. It also increases the chances of an individual obtaining scholarship slots. In this connection, Rabiū Muhammad, a participant in the *Qirā'āt* category of the state Qur'anic competition, expressed his desire in the future to receive a scholarship for his undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Qur'anic studies, with a specific ambition to study the *Qirā'āt* sciences. He uttered the following words:

“We are now on the verge of a new Musābaqah era. A generation of Muslims is emerging, full of dynamism, willing to face challenges in order to master the Qirā'āt sciences. Perhaps this 21st century will experience a new Qur'anic generation of dedicated Muslim men and women not only in Nigeria but across the globe who will not only be reciters of the Qur'an but who will understand its Qirā'āt and Tafsir and translate into action the Qur'anic teachings in their daily activities. For this reason, I pray for a scholarship in the future to study Qirā'āt, either in Egypt or Saudi Arabia, up to the PhD level, so that I can return and transform the knowledge for future generations”.

4.5 Unique Ways of Teaching *Qirā'āt* Knowledge in Kaduna State

Muslims view the tradition and practice of Qur'anic memorization as manifestations of the Living Qur'an because it involves people incorporating the Qur'an into their daily activities and making the practice a consistent habit across the Muslim globe, including Nigeria. Muslims in general are motivated by the prophet's virtues, which define the best person among the ummah as the one who learns and teaches the holy Qur'an. On the other hand, the prophet instructed the Muslims to protect and preserve what they had memorized by consistently reciting the Qur'an as a measure to preserve and safeguard it.

Without a doubt, Muslims strengthen their memorization of the Qur'an, as the Prophet (PBUH) instructed them through regular learning and teaching that involves Qur'anic recitation. Al-Bukhari records that the prophet expressed his disapproval of someone claiming to have forgotten specific verses from the Qur'an. Hence, it is essential to maintain a consistent and strong practice of reciting the Qur'an, as its ability to stay in the hearts of individuals is more fragile than the speed at which camels move. Therefore, in order to comply with these principles and put the practical part of the hadith into action, Muslims in Kaduna State are taking various measures in terms of Qur'anic learning and teaching. Regarding this, Farid Esack concluded that the Qur'an is alive in Africa due to their unique way of embodying it, a practice or tradition that grows and changes over time, depending on the specific circumstances and conditions of the community in which the Qur'an is present.¹⁴¹

Moreover, Ahmad Rafiq maintains that the societal reception of the Qur'an is either informative or performative.¹⁴² So, most Qur'anic schools in Kaduna State use a performative approach to the Qur'an, seeing it not only as a holy book for reading and understanding, but also as a tool for practical application and development in daily life. Furthermore, several studies have highlighted the various methods used in teaching the Qur'an, aiming to equip students with extensive memorization of the text. But because *Qirā'āt* is a relatively new phenomenon for participants in *Musābaqah*, Kaduna State's *Qirā'āt* teachers are using a strategic and distinctive method to teach the science, taking into account the fact that students take a series of tests regarding their Qur'anic

¹⁴¹ Farid Esack, *The Qur'an: A User's Guide*. (UK: Thompson Press, 2007).

¹⁴² Ahmad Rafiq, "Living Qur'an: Its Texts and Practices in the Functions of the Scripture Living Quran: Teks Dan Praktik Dalam Fungsi Kitab Suci" 22, no. 2 (2021): 474, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2021.2202-10>.

memorization before enrolling in *Qirā'āt* class. The particular reason for doing so is to achieve the ultimate goal of ensuring that every student successfully memorizes the Qur'an and possesses the capacity and ability to learn *Qirā'āt*. According to the test results, experts plan the *Qirā'āt* classes ahead of time using a variety of methods. Also, consider the students' time constraints, given that most Qur'anic schools in the region are not boarding schools. So, the students have limited time to study. The subsequent themes will shed light on the unique strategies employed in teaching *Qirā'āt*, based on the researcher's personal experiences and the intriguing insights obtained through interviews with *Qirā'āt* experts in Kaduna State.

4.5.1 Khatmah, And Memorization Using Single Narration (*al-Hifz bi-l-ifrād*)

During the Qur'anic test, an expert quotes a section from each Juz of the Qur'an to a student, who then recites it while recording the number of mistakes made. This actively demonstrates that each student will answer thirty questions from the thirty Juz of the Qur'an. Following the examinations, the students will be divided into two groups based on their performance, separating those with high memorization issues. These students will then begin a new journey of revising their Qur'anic memorizations, with an average of reciting ten pages per week, provided they do not make any errors. If a student makes more than two memorization errors during recitation, they will repeat the pages until they master them, after which they will proceed to the next ten pages.

This technique will continue until the student has completely recited the whole Qur'an; a process known as *Khatmah*. Once a student successfully completes the *Khatmah*, they will undergo another assessment to determine their eligibility to start learning *Qirā'āt*. If they successfully pass the test, they will begin their journey in *Qirā'āt* sciences by undertaking a new memorization exercise based on a single narration from one of the prominent Seven *Qirā'āt* Imams, a practice commonly known as *Al-Hifz Bil Ifrad*. For example, after successfully memorizing the Qur'an in Hafs' narration, a student will start memorizing with Shu'uba's narration, provided that both Hafs and Shu'uba are narrators of one reciter (*Qāri*), who is Asim. During this period, the teachers provide the students with a hard or soft copy of the Qur'an to facilitate their learning, emphasizing only the practical aspects of the newly adopted narration. The practice will continue until each student recites all seven *Qirā'āts* using a one-on-one teaching method.

Generally, the students during this period are exposed to the classical and fundamental books of *Qirā'āt* knowledge, starting by memorizing the book of Al

Shātibiyya with the expectation of reciting a minimum of twenty verses per week. However, according to Gwani Sulaiman Ikara, the suitable strategy to make it easier for students is to allow them to memorize the book gradually without rushing and to give them a chance to revise what they already memorize. He quoted the following:

“I used to ask my Qirā’āt students to memorize five verses from the book of Al Shātibiyya every day; while some of them progressed in achieving the task, others failed. As a result, I came up with the idea of asking them to memorize a single verse after every daily obligatory prayer. This effectively means that after every prayer, a student will have the opportunity to memorize a single verse and revise it over a hundred times. They will continue doing that for five days, and the remaining two days of the week will be for revising the whole memorized portion of the book. This technique effectively works, as most students consider it to be the easiest way to memorize the book”.

In relation to the above statement, it is essential to underscore a crucial aspect that warrants consideration, as all the respondents to this research assert that memorization of the book of Al Shātibiyya is extremely challenging due to the author's use of symbols and codes (*Rumuz*) to identify the reciters (*Qurrā*) and their respective narrators (*Ruwāt*). As a result, employing such a technique will be critical to simplifying the act and process.

Moreover, once the students have successfully recited the entire Qur’an, they will proceed to recite the entire Qur’an using a technique known to *Qirā’āt* scholars as *Jam’ul Qirā’āt*. This technique involves reciting each verse of the Qur’an, including all its narrational aspects. In this phase, students will be able to master all seven *Qirā’āt* and be able to identify the variations in each narration, as well as justify the variations by mentioning evidence from the book of Al Shātibiyyah. Nevertheless, when asked which of the Seven *Qirā’āts* was the most difficult to learn during an interview, all respondents agreed that there are three: the recitation of Nāfi’, specifically the narration of Warsh, followed by the recitation of Hamza, the narration of Khalaf, and finally the recitation of Abu Amr, the narration of Susi. These three *Riwāyats*, or narrations, are considered difficult because each one has a unique aspect that adheres to the principles of the narration (*Usul al-Riwāyah*). For instance, the decisions on the expansion of Madd al Badal to Warsh, the major diphthong (*Idgam al kabir*) to Susi, and the decision to remain silent on the letter of Hamza to Khalaf are examples. On the other hand, the narration of Hafs, Shu’uba, Bazzi, and Qaloon is considered to be the easiest, as confirmed by all the interviewees without

exception. Besides, they considered the remaining *Qirā'āts* to be neither excessively difficult nor excessively simple to learn.

4.5.2 *Talqin, Tasmi', Single and Group Recitation and Musaffah*

Qirā'āt experts adopt group recitation as a collaborative learning method in teaching *Qirā'āt* sciences. Upon a successful theoretical explanation session of the book of Al Shātibiyya, the teacher will move forward to demonstrate the application aspect by reading a particular portion of the Qur'an. This involves employing the narration of a certain reciter and instructing students to imitate the recitation, a tradition commonly known as *Talqin*. Afterwards, he will present the examples provided. Throughout this phase, he aims to help them recognize every aspect of variation, supporting what he says with evidence from the book of Al Shātibiyya. The importance of this technique lies in the fact that attaining proficiency in *Qirā'āt* knowledge necessitates theoretical comprehension and practical implementation, as it involves the application of fundamental concepts such as *al-Imala* (tilt) and *Taqlil* (reduction).

Hussain et al. confirm that the *Talqin* method of teaching is critical because it helps the teacher identify the oral weaknesses of every student.¹⁴³ Similarly, Fauziah and Wahid maintain that this methods are found critical and essential to Qiraat learning in the context of Langsa City, Indonesia.¹⁴⁴ Another important and noteworthy method critical to *Qirā'āt* learning is the *Tasmi'* method, an approach that involves a one-on-one recitation with the teacher. Every day, the teacher assigns the student a specific narration to recite, and they risk rejection if they commit more than three memorization errors. After each recitation session, the student will read from Al Shātibiyyah's book based on his assigned readings. The process will continue until a student memorizes and masters all seven *Qirā'āts*, along with the book of Al-Shātibiyyah. Latif et al.'s findings demonstrate the effectiveness of this teaching method in *Qirā'āt* education.¹⁴⁵

In addition, the students participate in a group recitation in the class known as *Muraja'a*, and the teacher will ask them to revise a specific portion of the Qur'an or read from the book of Al Shātibiyyah by memory. Thus, it is crucial to understand that the

¹⁴³ Husnaini et al., "Challenges Faced by IIUM Postgraduate Students in Conducting the Qur'an Memorization and Working for Living During Their Study Period," 26–27.

¹⁴⁴ Fauziah and Wahid, "The Development of Al-Qirā'Āt Al-Sab' Learning Method By Qāri'S in Langsa City."

¹⁴⁵ Mohamad Khairul Latif, Rahimi Saad, and Samsuddin Abd Hamid, "Islamic Education Teachers' Competency in Teaching Qiraat Sab'ah for the Quranic Class" 3, no. 1 (2023): 23.

Qirā'āt students have a strong motivation to master the variations of Qur'anic recitation and enhance their memorization skills. As a result, they follow a consistent tilawa practice. Interestingly, some of them, while in school, seek permission from their teachers to go and recite the Qur'an in such a way that they will hide themselves in a quiet location of the school to avoid disruption or sit within the school premises to repeat the Qur'an or the book of *Al Shātibīyyah* from memory. They do this before their turn for a one-on-one session with the teacher.

Some of the research interviewees revealed that they receive advice to recite the Qur'an both during their school journey and upon their return home. For instance, Rabiū Muhammad, a research respondent, stated that he consistently revises ten Juz (one third of the Qur'an) daily, making it a habit or routine, and he usually recites two Juz on his way to school and another two when going back home. In this sense, this technique helps and motivates the students, ensuring that each maintains a high standard of memorization capacity in both the Qur'an and the book of *al Shātibīyya*.

Another noteworthy method critical to *Qirā'āt* learning is the *Musaffah* tradition, a process whereby a group of students, primarily from the same class or age group, gather to recite the Qur'an together in a unique way and manner by forming a circle and taking turns based on their memory. During their respective turns, each member recites a specific number of Qur'anic pages as previously agreed upon, depending on the number of participants. During the recitation, all participants listened attentively. If a student makes a certain number of mistakes during the recitation process, the person sitting next to him will overtake him, and the number of mistakes he makes could lead to his dismissal. In relation to this, Nura believes that *Musaffah* is a well-known traditional approach to reciting the holy Qur'an in Northern Nigeria, aiming to enhance memorization skills among Qur'anic reciters.¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Dr. Faiz Shuaibu Adam stated the following:

“As a Qur'anic teacher in general and a Qirā'āt teacher specifically, you need to teach in a unique way and introduce entertaining methods that will make the students love the subject you are teaching them. Qirā'āt knowledge is a difficult discipline that necessitates patience, consistency, and hard work while learning. Therefore, the ultimate goal of engaging the students in Musaffah is to familiarize them with public recitation and enhance their memorization skills, because this

¹⁴⁶ Sani, “Recitation and Memorization of the Qur`An in Nigeria: A Comparison of Traditional and Modern Qur`Anic Schools,” 224.

will help them during the Musābaqah across all levels: ward, local government, state, national, and international”.

Indeed, it is evident from the above statements that the *Qirā'āt* teachers clearly take measures to ensure that their *Qirā'āt* students consolidate both their Qur'anic and *Al Shātibiyyah* memorization. They use a variety of methods to foster their understanding of the field and engage with the Qur'an in their daily activities, ensuring they are well-equipped and prepared for the upcoming *Musābaqah* competitions. Among these is *Musaffah*, a group recitation known for its effectiveness and essential role in teaching the subject matter. In this regard, Anna Gade maintains that the group recitation method is a common technique for disseminating Qur'anic knowledge.¹⁴⁷ Likewise, Mishra believes that Individuals who engage in the practice of memorizing holistic concepts have a tendency to memorize at a faster rate compared to others.¹⁴⁸

4.5.3 Qur'anic Camping

Qur'anic camping involves confining *Musābaqah* participants who place first and second in a category at a given level in a secluded place to memorize, revise, and undergo daily cross-examination of the portion they intend to compete in. Local government, state, national, and international-level competitions typically precede the process, as does the *Musābaqah* process itself. The process assigns Qur'anic experts from various parts of the state to teach, monitor, and evaluate the participants, which has proven helpful in advancing their recitation skills. Additionally, they gain exposure to various skills that enhance their understanding of *Qirā'āt* and other Qur'anic sciences, such as *Tafsir*, *Ulum al-Qur'an*, and Arabic. Additionally, they improve their ability to communicate effectively in Arabic and gain a deeper comprehension of the broader context of Arabic usage. Interestingly, some of the research interviewees provide the following explanation:

“During the Musābaqah event, most of us gain knowledge from other participants’ strengths and weaknesses in a supportive learning environment. Also, the Qur’anic camping that takes place before and during the event enhances our concentration as we refrain from using mobile phones.

¹⁴⁷ Anna M. Gade, “Recitation,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an*, ed. Andrew Rippin and Jawid Mojaddedi (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2017), 87, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118964873.ch38>.

¹⁴⁸ Jennifer Mishra, “A Qualitative Analysis of Strategies Employed in Efficient and Inefficient Memorization,” *University of Illinois Press on Behalf of the Council for Research in Music Education* 2, no. 152 (2002): 84.

Furthermore, we frequently participate in internal Qirā'āt discussions and meet new individuals who are experts in the field. These individuals train us in both the theoretical and practical aspects of Qirā'āt, as well as other skills such as Tadbiq, Ada', and other sciences related to Arabic language”.

Based on the information provided above, it is evident that each Qur'anic camp before or during the *Musābaqah* event is highly effective, as it helps students identify their areas of weakness, provides opportunities to interact with and receive training from field experts, and familiarizes them with public recitation, Arabic communication, and effective responses. According to Laal and Ghodsi, this form of collective learning through sharing resources and ideas is critical for learning because it enhances success and fosters students' social and intercultural skills.¹⁴⁹

4.5.4 Utilizing Social Media in Qirā'āt Learning

In this modern era of advanced science and technology, it is hard to make people stick only to the traditional way of learning since they are attracted to and exposed to social media. As a result, several studies consider social media to be one of the most effective tools for learning Islamic sciences. In contrast to traditional means of learning, which were both slow and expensive, social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Telegram, and others have evolved into something easily usable with rapid connections, live broadcasts, live calls, and affordability in many aspects of our lives from anywhere in the world.¹⁵⁰

In northern Nigeria, social media platforms have played a vital role in promoting the learning of Islamic sciences, including *Qirā'āt*, in the last decade, creating connections between students and *Qirā'āt* experts, creating a sense of community and strengthening the Islamic brotherhood among the Nigerian Huffaz. The aforementioned platforms have massive user bases, including people from various backgrounds. Therefore, *Qirā'āt* students take advantage of this opportunity to connect with and gain access to not only

¹⁴⁹ Marjan Laal and Seyed Mohammad Ghodsi, “Benefits of Collaborative Learning,” in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 31, 2012, 486–87, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.12.091>.

¹⁵⁰ Dindin Solahudin and Moch Fakhruroji, “Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority,” *Religions* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2019): 5, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010019>; Sedigheh Moghavvemi et al., “Social Media as a Complementary Learning Tool for Teaching and Learning: The Case of Youtube,” *The International Journal of Management Education* 16, no. 1 (March 2018): 39, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2017.12.001>.

local *Qirā'āt* experts but also others across the Muslim world, enabling them to virtually interact with each other for the sole purpose of teaching and learning *Qirā'āt*. Maryam Suyudi Adam, a participant in *Qirā'āt Musābaqah* and last year's champion, made the following statement:

“To date, I have greatly benefited from social media, and it is very rare to find a Qirā'āt student who isn't using social media for learning purposes. This is because social media makes it easier to find solutions to critical questions, especially in the application aspects of the subject matter. So, listening to the recitations of prominent experts in the field, such as Sheikh Abdurrahman Sufi, Dr. Ayman Rushdi Suwaid, and others, one will be able to understand more complex issues and expand his knowledge in the field. Recently, I obtained a certificate in the narration of Qaloon and Warsh from the Sharjah Global Qur'anic Complex, and they funded both me and my husband's trip to participate at the final closing ceremony during Ramadan 2022. In summary, social media has simplified and made life easier for students willing to diversify and expand their knowledge in the field of Qirā'āt”.

The aforementioned statements clearly demonstrate the positive impact of social media on *Qirā'āt* learning, not only in Nigeria, but also across the Islamic world. In this regard, Nurul Husna et al. maintain that the development of technological innovation is exceptionally rapid, affecting every aspect of our society. As a result, people adopt technology and use mobile applications and other social media platforms in order to learn how to read and write the Qur'an more easily.¹⁵¹ These platforms aim to provide innovative methods that assist Qur'anic readers in engaging with, memorizing, and comprehending the meaning of the Qur'an and its sciences. So, the availability of several online organizations that teach *Qirā'āt* makes it easier and attracts students all over the world to engage in *Qirā'āt*. This unique technique is important for having a global audience, fostering connections, and contributing to personal and intellectual growth. In addition, the researcher is currently a *Qirā'āt* student at the Kuwait Global Qur'anic Complex.

4.6 Challenges Associated with The *Musābaqah* Event

4.6.1 Inadequate Financial Support

¹⁵¹ Nurul Husna Mat Isa et al., “Quran Mobile Application: A Structured Review,” *Journal of Advanced Research in Applied Sciences and Engineering Technology* 34, no. 2 (December 2, 2023): 16, <https://doi.org/10.37934/araset.34.2.117132>.

Inadequate financial support is one of the most significant challenges affecting Kaduna State's *Musābaqah* system. While the state government is making every effort to help develop competition in the state, it is critical to emphasize that both the local government and the state level must provide financial assistance to cater to all participants throughout the entire event. This covers expenses for accommodation, food, medication, transportation, water, and electricity, in addition to security, which requires a substantial amount of money. Due to the challenging nature of these responsibilities, individuals often find it extremely challenging to carry them out, leading to the transfer of these responsibilities to politicians, who manipulate the situation for their political campaigns.

This clearly illustrates the major role politics plays in the system, given that the government holds the responsibility of appointing both the chairman of the state's *Musābaqah* committee and the panel of judges. So, those who oppose the ruling party are unlikely to receive appointments, regardless of their capacity, potential, ability, and eligibility to lead the committee or serve on the panel of judges. Also, if they do not align with or support the ruling party, the panel of judges may face termination or non-renewal of their appointment. If a new government takes over, appointed officials may be affected, especially if they are from a different party. Therefore, leaving the faith of *Musābaqah* in the hands of politicians generally hinders the organization's overall success, as political party differences deny many potential contributors the opportunity to participate. As a result, many individuals, Islamic groups, and philanthropists are distancing themselves from the *Musābaqah* under Dan Fodio to start organizing their own *Musābaqah*. In this regard, Sheikh Sulaiman Salih Ikara, Chief Judge of the Kaduna State Standing Committee on Qur'anic Competition, mentioned the following:

“Inadequate financial support for organizing the event plays a critical role in today's Musābaqah system. Consequently, politicians exploit this situation, causing more harm than good to the system through their influence. I believe that the Musābaqah will develop effectively under a neutral organization with philanthropic support, the same way it did during its initiation in the country. Therefore, Muslims should fear Allah, unite and embrace each other, keep their political opinions aside, and work towards the system's development through all possible means. This is because the development of Musābaqah is synonymous with the development of the Qur'an in the state as a whole.”

The statements above highlighted the significant influence and impact of politics on religious organizations like *Musābaqah*. Regarding this issue, Miller contends that politicians can control or overpower religious groups or organizations through policy influence, financial assistance, and social role determination.¹⁵² As a result, political alliances may enhance or decrease the impact and overall position of religious and social events, such as *Musābaqah*.

4.6.2 The Incorrect Timing of The Event and The Insufficient Number of Days

Other challenges associated with the *Musābaqah* include the incorrect timing of the event and the insufficient number of days allocated to complete it. In other words, organizers often overlook the number of participants and grant a few days to finish the event so as not to exceed their budget. Also, instead of scheduling the event during holidays when schools are closed, they typically do so without considering other factors that will boost the event's effectiveness and the event participants well-being. In this context, Antonio believes that religious beliefs and practices are important in maintaining an individual's psychological well-being.¹⁵³ However, Dr. Faiz Shuaib offers a deeper explanation by stating the following:

“The number of days allocated or granted by the organizers to complete the event takes into account the number of students participating. For instance, in the state-level Musābaqah, in which 23 local governments participate, each local government submits two competitors in each of the six categories from both genders, with the Musābaqah consisting of six categories. This simply means that each local government will present 24 representatives within all the categories, with a total of 276 male participants and another 276 female participants. Given the event's week-long schedule, it occasionally lasts all night, impacting the panel of judges, participants, and the audience from a greater distance”.

Indeed, Maigari and Abdulhamid previously highlighted this issue in the context of Bauchi and Abuja.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, the researcher's participation as a judge at the August

¹⁵² Kent D. Miller, “Competitive Strategies of Religious Organizations,” *Strategic Management Journal* 23, no. 5 (May 2002): 443, <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.234>.

¹⁵³ Bonnadelt Antonio and Philip Joseph Sarmiento, “Philosophical, Psychological and Religio-Cultural Roots: Contemporary Challenges to Religious Education,” *International Journal of Research Studies in Education* 10, no. 2 (December 4, 2020): 79, <https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrse.2020.5729>.

¹⁵⁴ Abdulhamid, “Impact and Challenges of Qur’anic Recitation Competition in the Federal Capital Territory (Fct) Abuja”; Tahir Maigari et al., “Exploring the Factors Affecting Competitors’

2023 *Musābaqah* in Igabi Local Government, Kaduna State, justifies this. The researcher contends that the organizers only granted three days to complete the *Musābaqah*, which is considered extremely difficult.

4.6.3 The lack of a unified curriculum and methodology in teaching *Qirā'āt*

Another significant problem in *Qirā'āt* education in Kaduna State is the absence of a unified and standardized curriculum, syllabus, and methodology. This makes sense given that individuals or private organizations own the majority of Qur'anic schools and madrasas in the region, allowing them to operate independently and develop their own teaching methods and curricula based on their unique traditions as claimed by Sani et al.¹⁵⁵ As a result, there is no uniformity among these Qur'anic schools. In this connection, some of the research respondents stated the following:

“There is a lack of a single authority responsible for supervising and controlling the curriculum and teaching methods used in Qirā'āt. The planning and execution of everything are in the hands of the school. So, students may experience different levels of achievement depending on the institution or madrasa they attend or the level of proficiency of their Qirā'āt teacher. This is because sometimes the schools or the Qirā'āt teacher himself may prioritize certain recitations over others. Consequently, this lack of consistency leads to variations in students' proficiency in Qirā'āt studies”.

The previously stated comments clearly indicate that a lack of well-defined standards and efficient supervision hinders the development of the educational system, particularly in the context of *Qirā'āt* learning in Kaduna State. Thus, it is obvious that only people with the required expertise and proficiency have the potential to become *Qirā'āt* teachers with the main aim of shaping the knowledge and skills of their Qur'anic students, enabling them to fully understand and transmit this knowledge to subsequent generations according to predetermined rules and strategies. In this connection, several studies indicated that the existence of multiple, vague, unclear, or non-unified syllabuses and unstructured curricula within the Islamic schools in Northern Nigeria, which could possibly affect the growth of a particular field of study.¹⁵⁶ Likewise, it has an effect on the

Performance at Qur'anic Recitation Competition: A Case of Compliance with Techniques of Recitation (Ahkamut-Tajweed).”

¹⁵⁵ Sani and Anwar, “Madrasa and Its Development in Nigeria,” 206.

¹⁵⁶ Saheed Badmus Suraju, “Curriculum Integration and Islamic Studies in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects,” *World Educator Forum* 9, no. 1 (2017): 8; Tahir Abdulrahman Abubakar and Abdul

assessment of teachers' proficiency, which requires a carefully planned study utilizing innovative approaches.¹⁵⁷

4.6.4 Marriage

Marriage according to Notes and Queries is a union relationship between a man and a woman, where the children born to the woman are recognized as legitimate offspring of both spouses.¹⁵⁸ Perhaps people have different tastes and preferences when it comes to choosing a spouse. Yet, Gusau argues that individuals from Northern Nigeria prefer marrying Huffaz due to their belief that they will aid in the education and upbringing of their children in compliance with Islamic principles and beliefs.¹⁵⁹ Besides that, having a supportive spouse who memorizes the holy Qur'an is a source of inspiration and motivation for those engaging in *Musābaqah*, as they receive all kinds of assistance, motivation, and support along with the help of their Qur'anic teacher.

However, marriage naturally entails many responsibilities. Generally, religious and cultural norms assign men to cater for the basic needs and demands of their family, while women are responsible for domestic duties at home, including cooking, cleaning, and others. Csapo opines that women in Northern Nigeria are traditionally relegated to family roles and rely solely on their respective husbands as their main source of income, with few opportunities for education after marriage¹⁶⁰. Yet, Gusau argues that due to education and the recognition of women's rights around the globe, many women perceive education, specifically Qur'anic studies, as a career path that enables them to pursue their aims and

Hakim Abdullah, "The Present State of Muslim-Education in Northern Nigeria: Progression or Regression," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 7, no. 5 (June 28, 2017): 439–41, <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v7-i5/2981>; Gambari Muhammad Aliyu and Abdullahi Abdul Ganiy, "The Contributions of Islamiyyah Schools To the Development of Education in Nigeria," *Development of Arabic Language and Literature in Nigeria* 1, no. 1 (2013): 29; Ibrahim and Kumo, "Qur'anic Schools and the Development of Education in Nigeria," 7.

¹⁵⁷ S A Kazeem and K Y Balogun, "Problems Facing Islamic Education: Evidence from Nigeria," *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, 2024, 113; J. K. Aina, "Educational Reforms In Nigeria: The Kaduna State Teachers' Competency Test," *Open Journal of Educational Development (ISSN: 2734-2050)* 1, no. 1 (March 10, 2020): 34, <https://doi.org/10.52417/ojed.v1i1.61>.

¹⁵⁸ E. Kathleen Gough, "The Nayars and the Definition of Marriage," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 89, no. 1 (January 1959): 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2844434>.

¹⁵⁹ Ahmad Muhammad Gusau, "The Effect of Quranic Recitation Competition to the Contemporary Muslim Women in Northern Nigeria," 2012, 189.

¹⁶⁰ Marg Csapo, "Religious, Social and Economic Factors Hindering the Education of Girls in Northern Nigeria," *Education*, vol. 17, 1981, 314.

goals even after getting married.¹⁶¹ The field of *Qirā'āt* is known for its difficulty, which demands a significant amount of time and consistency. It can be challenging for married students to balance their personal and professional responsibilities. For this reason, many students prioritize work over studies, which generally affects their time management or even distracts their time and attention from learning. Interestingly, the married students among the research respondents assert that marriage is a major challenge to *Qirā'āt* learning in Kaduna State. At this point, Dr. Faiz Shuaibu Adam stated the following:

“Many students who lack financial stability experience problems handling their education because of the financial burden of maintaining and taking care of their households. Marriage forces certain potential students to prioritize employment over their studies or hinders their ability to dedicate sufficient time to learning Qirā'āt. Although it is clear that mastering Qirā'āt knowledge demands an extensive commitment of time, patience, and constant dedication, it is still important to realize that the difficulties of managing parenthood responsibilities and academic tasks, especially for women due to factors like pregnancy and motherhood, consequently limiting the ability to maintain concentrated focus. Furthermore, extra responsibilities such as participating in social and religious activities are among the multiple variables that restrict the amount of time available for schooling. For this reason, I usually advise my students to achieve a high level of proficiency in Qirā'āt before getting married”.

The aforementioned statements indicate that the financial and emotional duties that come with married life may hinder education by distracting time and attention from academic activities, which leads to lower academic performance and limits one's ability to focus on the endeavor of acquiring knowledge.

4.7 Conclusion

Musābaqah has been making a significant impact due to its widespread acceptance throughout Nigeria's Muslim community. Since its inception, it has significantly contributed to the growth and development of the Qur'anic educational system, enhancing the practical aspects of Qur'anic recitation. This has led to the dedication of many Islamic

¹⁶¹ Gusau, “The Effect of Qurānic Recitation Competition to the Contemporary Muslim Women in Northern Nigeria,” 188–90.

schools, colleges, and centers to the recitation and memorization of the Qur'an, resulting in an improvement in the oral performance standards of Qur'anic recitation in the state.

This chapter examines the contribution of *Musābaqah* to *Qirā'āt* learning among its participants in Kaduna State, Nigeria, by exploring the prospects of introducing *Qirā'āt* into the *Musābaqah* system, motivational factors attracting the *Musābaqah* participants to engage in *Qirā'āt* competition, unique ways of teaching *Qirā'āt* in Kaduna State, and the challenges associated with *Musābaqah* and *Qirā'āt* learning in the state. The findings reveal that the inclusion of *Qirā'āt* in the competition has exposed both Muslims in general and *Musābaqah* participants in particular to the knowledge of the Seven *Qirā'āts*, as the majority of Muslims in Kaduna State were only familiar with two kinds of Qur'anic recitation, namely the narration of Warsh and the narration of Hafs. This is considered to be a significant factor that motivates both students, teachers, and the panel of judges in general to actively engage in learning the science.

In addition, exposure to *Qirā'āt* science familiarizes the *Musābaqah* participants with various disciplines. Furthermore, the *Qirā'āt*'s introduction led to the establishment of more Qur'anic centers in the state, emphasizing both the theoretical and practical aspects of knowledge. Educational institutions promote Qur'anic recitation in such a way that they initiate and regulate the annual *Musābaqah* for university students under the supervision of the Muslim Student Society of Nigeria (MSSN). Kaduna State University launched the Diploma program in *Qirā'āt* Sciences shortly after the category's inclusion in the *Musābaqah* system. Likewise, the inclusion of *Qirā'āt* in *Musābaqah* has served as a source of inspiration for both local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that concentrate on organizing Qur'anic competitions in the region.

The study identifies several approaches used by Kaduna State's *Qirā'āt* teachers in teaching *Qirā'āt*. These methods include *Talqin*, *Tasmi'*, single and group recitation, and *Musaffah* group practice. It is important to note that students undergo a series of tests to assess their Qur'anic memorization before enrolling in *Qirā'āt* classes. This ensures that every student successfully consolidates the Qur'an and is capable of engaging in *Qirā'āt* learning. Other unique ways include utilizing social media and Qur'anic camping prior to and after every *Musābaqah* at a given level. Moreover, the study identifies several goals that motivate the *Musābaqah* contestants to participate in the event, particularly in the *Qirā'āt* category. These factors involve the desire for success, an obligation to maintain their reputation, status, and identity, and the desire to deepen their perspectives as well as

capitalize on prospective opportunities that will contribute to their social, personal, and intellectual growth. Additional reasons include the desire to serve as a role model for future generations, the perception of *Musābaqah* as a solution to the shortage of skilled *Qirā'āt* teachers, and a unique approach to preparing for future academic endeavors.

Nevertheless, *Qirā'āt* students participating in *Musābaqah* in Kaduna State encounter several challenges. These challenges fall into two categories: those related to the *Musābaqah* itself, such as inadequate financial support, the significant influence of politics in the system, incorrect planning or timing, and the insufficient number of days allocated for the event. On the other hand, despite the high number of students interested in mastering *Qirā'āt*, the study reveals several challenges associated with *Qirā'āt* learning. These challenges include inadequate *Qirā'āt* teachers, a lack of a unified syllabus, varied teaching methods, and a lack of uniformity in instruction. Others arise from inadequate support, increased responsibilities, financial burdens, a lack of flexibility, and pressures that come with marriage or parenthood, which tend to affect the student's proficiency in *Qirā'āt*.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Research Findings

After examining the historical development of *Qirā'āt* knowledge in Northern Nigeria, the contribution of *Musābaqah* to promote *Qirā'āt* learning among its participants, and the unique methods of teaching *Qirā'āt* science in the context of Kaduna State, Nigeria, it becomes evident that *Qirā'āt* knowledge has permeated every nook and cranny of the Muslim world, including Nigeria. This makes sense given Islam's nature, which encourages Qur'anic education, and the desire of many Muslims to memorize and understand the meanings of the Qur'an through an extensive comprehension of its sciences, including the science of *Qirā'āt*, which are all perceived as revelations from Allah. Besides, each country has adapted and become familiar with a certain recitation style from the seven *Qirā'āt* and transmitted it from one generation to another through its own unique ways and traditions.

In Nigeria, it becomes evident that *Qirā'āt* underwent several stages of development. During the initial stage, the stage I consider the assimilative stage, which is between the 9th and 11th centuries when Islam arrived in ancient Nigeria through trade and Da'wa missions from *Maghareb* countries; it is discovered that Imam Hamza's narrations have been the recitation style used by the early Muslim. Later, after the Islamization of the Hausa Emirates and the scholarly visits of scholars such as Imam Al-Suyudi, the Muslims adopted the Warsh narration as the primary narration style used in the traditional Qur'anic schools. Indeed, *Qirā'āt* reached its peak between the 18th and early 20th centuries, a period I refer to as the golden era because it was enriched with several positive factors that emerged as a result of Usman Dan Fodio's reformist movement, which united the Hausa Emirates and focused on establishing traditional Qur'anic schools and scholarship missions to Arab and Islamic countries. These factors led Nigerian scholars to excel in various fields, including *Qirā'āt*, to the point where they began to write books on the subject matter.

In the subsequent era, particularly from 1900–1960, which I refer to as the challenging era, the decline of *Qirā'āt* reflects a general disengagement as a result of three factors identified as key issues in the region: the role played by colonialism, the impact of modern or western schools, and the lack of diplomatic ties between the Hausa Emirates and the Islamic world. After Nigeria gained its independence in 1960, factors such as external scholarships to Al-Azhar, the Hajj and Umra, Qur'anic recordings, and the emergence of

Madrassa Islamic schools contributed to the transformation and adoption of the Hafs narration, which the Warsh narration across the region had previously dominated. Interestingly, the current and last stage, which the research termed as transformative, is characterized by the adoption of *Qirā'at* in *Musābaqah* Competition. *Musābaqah*, a memorization-based Qur'anic competition that was introduced in the country in 1986 with the main aim and objective of instilling passion and motivation in Muslims for the constant companionship of the noble Qur'an, serves as one of the major factors in reshaping and exposing *Qirā'āt* science to the Muslims in the nation as a whole. In Kaduna State, for instance, even though many Muslims are aware of the existence of *Qirā'āt* knowledge, the practical aspect of the science did not receive much attention from Qur'anic memorizers (*Huffāz*), focusing on the theoretical aspect of the knowledge and limiting the practical aspect to mastering only two narrations, identified as Hafs and Warsh.

Following the adoption of *Qirā'āt* into the Nigerian *Musābaqah* system in 2023, which requires mastery of the seven authentic recitations (*Qirā'āts*) and their narrations (*Riwayats*), it becomes evident that the *Musābaqah* event is an essential element that re-invents the tradition of mastering both the theoretical and practical aspects of *Qirā'āt* because many schools, teachers, and students in Kaduna State would miss out on the chance to master *Qirā'āt* if it wasn't included in the *Musābaqah*. Moreover, the success of *Musābaqah* in socio-religious settings reflects its valuable nature in promoting knowledge, and it can be used as an extra educational tool to shape and improve students' intellectual lives. On the other hand, overlooking or neglecting the competitive aspect of the event underlines its potential to cultivate excellence and discipline. This is because *Musābaqah* creates an avenue for participants through secluded Qur'anic camping trips by meeting and learning from well-known and well-equipped scholars in the field, enabling them to become familiar with several fields related to the Qur'an including *Qirā'āt* learning, instilling a sense of community and belonging among its participants. In a nutshell, *Musābaqah* plays an essential role in upholding and keeping the value and spirit of Islamic education alive in a rapidly growing context.

Nevertheless, inadequate financial support, the significant influence of politics, incorrect planning or timing, and the insufficient number of days allocated for the event are challenges affecting the *Musābaqah* events in Kaduna State. On the other hand, inadequate *Qirā'āt* teachers, a lack of a unified syllabus, a lack of uniformity, inadequate support, a lack of flexibility, and pressures that come with marriage or parenthood are identified as challenges associated with *Qirā'āt* learning in the state.

Indeed, despite this study being only limited to the happenings in Kaduna State, it paves the way for future research in diverse areas. Potential avenues for future research include investigating similar scenarios in different contexts, conducting descriptive or comparative studies across different regions to understand the perception and practice of *Musābaqah* events, and examining their impact on educational and socio-religious settings. This would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the societal reception of the Qur'an in general and *Musābaqah* events in particular.

In a nutshell, promoting *Qirā'āt* learning through Qur'anic competition not only re-invents the tradition of *Qirā'āt* but also provides students a stronger capacity to memorize, understand, and transmit the knowledge to future generations, resulting in meeting the demand for knowledge in the region. *Musābaqah*, as a dynamic and effective educational tool in this contemporary era, is made clear by this study.

5.2 Recommendations

In light of the aforementioned findings, the study set forth the following recommendations:

Firstly, it is suggested that the National Standard Committee on Qur'anic Recitation Competition, in collaboration with the state committees, develop a unified and clear syllabus for teaching *Qirā'āt* in the region and organize both online and offline seminars and workshops on the subject matter.

In addition, it is recommended that the stakeholders in the subject matter begin allowing female *Huffāz* to officiate in a female-based Qur'anic *Musābaqah*. This is crucial because it will motivate and encourage more women to engage in the practice.

Moreover, the organizing committees should arrange workshops and training programs for the *Musābaqah* judges, equipping them with the latest developments and enhancing their abilities to judge at any level, whether local or international, while also providing training and producing competent contestants capable of competing in any global contest.

Furthermore, it is suggested that educational institutions, especially *Tahfizh* schools, should develop *Shātibiyyah*-based competitions in different categories among students, given that most students perceive the memorization of the book as challenging.

This is crucial because it will open the door for young Qur'anic memorizers to start memorizing the book at a young age and master it through active participation.

Finally, the Qur'anic recitation competition organizers should establish new regulations that limit the age of participation in each category, prohibit competitors from forging another state's identity, and encourage participants and schools to comply with the *Musābaqah* rules and regulations thoroughly.

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