



Exploring The Reading Command From Qur'anic Studies And Its Benefits

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Abstract

The command to read, which stems from a heavenly revelation in Hira's cave, establishes literacy as a sacred and transforming act for mankind. The Quranic phrase expressly advises the Prophet Muhammad to recite, underlining the intrinsic connection between reading and knowledge. This divine directive is strengthened by the Prophet's hadiths, which emphasize the importance of each letter of the Quran. The complex beauty of the Arabic language, as well as the numerical focus on multiplying rewards for each letter, highlight the Quran's precise perfection. The revelation of specific verses in reaction to historical events, as explained by Asbab Nuzul, gives contextual richness to divine instruction, supporting the Quran's applicability across time. Using literature review, this research enhances some results that the advice and virtue of reading the Quran should serve as a constant source of encouragement for Muslims to enhance their understanding, encouraging an active and enriching engagement with the sacred text throughout their lives. There are numerous ways to become accustomed to reading, but not everyone is encouraged to read as a leisurely activity. Most folks only read what's important. However, it is a loss if you are unaware of the benefits and significant influence that reading for enjoyment provides. Reading has a high correlation with human imagination, excitement, and creativity, making it less appealing. We must treat pleasure reading with the same seriousness as academic reading, because reading will be more enjoyable once it becomes a habit.

Keywords: *Reading behavior, Reading benefits, Qur'anic studies*

INTRODUCTION

The Quran stands as a timeless testament to the divine revelation received by Prophet Muhammad, providing Muslims with a moral and spiritual compass to navigate the complexities of life (Faris, 2023). Its verses are considered the literal words of Allah, offering guidance on matters ranging from individual conduct to societal interactions. This sacred scripture is not confined to a specific time or cultural context but transcends temporal boundaries, making it relevant to believers across generations. The Quran's universality lies in its ability to address the perennial concerns of humanity, offering insights into the nature of existence, morality, and the ultimate purpose of life.



As believers engage with the Quran, the command to read emerges as a central directive, inviting them to embark on a transformative journey. Reading, in this context, goes beyond the literal act of deciphering words; it is an invitation to explore the depths of divine wisdom encapsulated in the verses. The Quranic teachings are not arbitrary proclamations but intentional and purposeful guidance meant to steer individuals towards righteousness and a profound understanding of their Creator. Through the exploration of these reading commands, believers are encouraged to delve into the heart of Islamic theology, seeking to decipher the layers of meaning embedded in the sacred text (Sardar, 2017).

The historical context surrounding these commands adds a rich layer to their significance. Understanding the circumstances in which specific verses were revealed provides believers with insights into the immediate challenges and concerns faced by the early Muslim community. This exploration aims to bridge the temporal gap, allowing contemporary readers to draw parallels between the challenges of the past and the complexities of the present. By unraveling the linguistic nuances and virtues associated with the reading commands, believers can glean a deeper understanding of their relevance and application in various aspects of life (Faris, 2023).

In delving into the multifaceted nature of literacy in Islam, this exploration recognizes that reading is not merely an intellectual exercise but a gateway to a profound connection with Allah. The Quranic directive to read encompasses a holistic approach to knowledge acquisition, encouraging believers to seek wisdom, understanding, and spiritual enlightenment. As we embark on this journey of exploration, the aim is not only to decipher the words on the page but to grasp the underlying wisdom that continues to shape the intellectual and spiritual landscape of the Muslim world. This comprehensive understanding fosters an appreciation for the enduring impact of the Quranic commands on the lives of believers, providing timeless guidance for those seeking a deeper connection with their faith.

In this paper the author limited the discussion by providing the literature review on how Allah's command to read in the Quran and what are the benefits of reading activity?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Command in Qur'an

The directive to read originates from the divine words of Allah SWT, conveyed to the Prophet Muhammad through the mediation of the angel Gabriel in the cave of Hira. This marked the initial command in the Quran, explicitly instructing the act of reading. Allah SWT articulates in the Quran: "Recite in the name of your Lord who created, created man from a clot. Recite, and your Lord is the Most Gracious, who imparts knowledge through the pen. He teaches humanity what it does not know". This verse elucidates the imperative to engage in reading, and further insights can be gleaned from the Prophet's hadith. Aisyah narrated a hadith that contains Asbab Nuzul, providing insights into the circumstances surrounding the revelation of specific Quranic verses to Prophet Muhammad. Asbab Nuzul encompasses the events or reasons that led to the revelation of particular Quranic passages, be it a single verse, a sequence of verses, or an entire surah. This conceptual



framework arises from historical accounts found in biographies of the Prophet, Quranic histories, and Islamic histories, affirming the existence of specific situations or contexts that prompted the revelation of divine words (Akrom, 2022).

The divine command to read is explicitly conveyed by Allah in Surah Al-'Alaq, underscoring the paramount importance of literacy for humanity. This directive emphasizes that reading is not merely a mundane activity but a source of profound benefits. The act of reading, especially the Quran, is a means of enlightenment and guidance for individuals seeking spiritual and moral growth. The Quran serves as a timeless repository of wisdom and divine teachings, fostering a deep connection between believers and their Creator. It is through the engagement with these sacred verses that individuals find solace, direction, and a comprehensive framework for leading a righteous life (Mansyur, 2021).

The virtue of reading is further elucidated in the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has strongly emphasized the importance of seeking knowledge through reading (Husaini, 2020). His saying, "Demanding knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim" (narrated by Ibn Majah, Al-Baihaqi, Ibn Abdil Barr, and Ibn Adi, from Anas bin Malik), is the main foundation that encourages Muslims to continue expanding their horizons through literacy. By reading, we not only access information, but also open the door to a deeper understanding of various aspects of life, religion and science. In this context, the Prophet taught that knowledge is the main provision for every Muslim, and reading books is one of the recommended ways to achieve it (Mansyur, 2021). Following the teachings of the Prophet, reading books is not only about gaining information, but it is also a form of obedience to Allah's command to seek knowledge. Hadith references taken from various sources emphasize that learning and pursuing knowledge is the responsibility of every Muslim. Therefore, reading books is not only considered an intellectual activity, but also an act of worship that is encouraged in Islamic teachings. By recognizing the virtues of seeking knowledge through literacy, Muslims are encouraged to make reading a constant habit, so that they can continue to develop spiritually and intellectually in accordance with religious teachings (Akrom, 2022).

Reading books not only expands our knowledge, but also has a positive impact on our faith in Allah SWT. The Prophet's saying, "Whoever desires the affairs of the world must have knowledge of them; and whoever desires the Hereafter must have knowledge of them; and whoever desires both must have knowledge of them" (HR. Bukhari and Muslim), provides a complete view of the importance of seeking knowledge. By reading books, we not only gain knowledge about the world, but also deep knowledge about religion and the hereafter. Thus, every book we read can be a means to strengthen our faith, remind us of the greatness of Allah, and provide a rational basis for our beliefs. In this context, reading a book becomes a spiritual journey that involves understanding the issues of the world and the hereafter. Rasulullah SAW taught that knowledge of the world and religion is the key to achieving prosperity in both worlds. Therefore, reading books is not only an effort to fulfill intellectual desires, but also a part of worship that supports spiritual development and strengthens faith. Thus, reading books not only adds insight, but also brings us



closer to Allah SWT, through understanding and practicing knowledge that brings blessings (Afiifah & Yahya, 2020).

Reading books, especially those related to Islam, is the key to increasing our understanding and knowledge of this religion (Munawaroh, Tabroni, & Rahmawati, 2023). The saying of the Prophet SAW which states, "Whoever takes the path in order to study, Allah will make it easy for him to go to Heaven. Indeed the angels flap their wings because they are pleased with the pursuer of knowledge. Indeed, the pious are forgiven by the creatures of the heavens and the earth, even the fish in the sea." (At-Tirmidhi narration no. 2682, Abu Dawud narration no. 3641, and Ibn Majah narration no. 223). Dishahihkan Shaykh Al-Albani), provides strong confirmation of the virtue of studying knowledge, especially Islamic knowledge (Afiifah & Yahya, 2020).

The importance of religious knowledge, such as the science of modern Sufism, the science of Islamic monotheism, and various other disciplines, is a guide for Muslims to heaven (Lubis & Nasution, 2019). The Prophet's words also provide an illustration of the superiority of scholars, who are compared to worshipers, like the superiority of the moon over all the stars. The virtue illustrates that religious knowledge is the most valuable inheritance from the Prophets. The Prophets did not bequeath worldly possessions such as dinars and dirhams, but they bequeathed knowledge, which the seeker of knowledge takes as a great advantage. Therefore, reading books, especially those containing Islamic religious knowledge, is not only a means of increasing knowledge, but also a concrete step towards Heaven, in accordance with the instructions given by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The following discussion explores the benefits of reading activity.

The Benefits of Reading

For some, reading may come from reminiscing on a rainy day with a warm cup of tea and a blanket soaking in the story. Or perhaps frequent visits to libraries or bookstores, where they can get to know someone by name and what genre of reading they like. Research has shown that reading for pleasure is the most effective way to manage stress by increasing pleasure and relaxation. This is very good for one's brain and cognitive development. Recreational reading is also beneficial for concentration, increasing vocabulary, reading and writing skills, and improving working memory (Nikita Thadani, 2022).

In addition, reading is also a common adult activity, with around 74% of adults reporting that they had read at least one book in the past year in 2018, according to Statista. Even though the average time spent reading is actually quite low. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also reports that the average daily reading time for adults', ranges from 7 to 18 minutes, and for those aged 65 and over the average is between 35 and 51 minutes (ELLIE WALBURG, 2020). The National Library Trust (UK), defines reading for pleasure, also referred to as recreational, or independent reading. Students who read a lot for pleasure become better readers because they really engage with the text and really understand what is read. Students who consistently read for pleasure show a fairly strong level of textual and grammatical comprehension. Students can interact with



texts at a deep level because they can make deep meaningful connections with texts, the world and themselves. When reading for pleasure, children are not limited to texts provided by educators or workbooks. Instead, children use their free will to choose texts they like, texts they want to read independently. From the pleasure of reading, students will be able to gain greater content knowledge, grow phonemic awareness, increase vocabulary and spelling, and gain high self-confidence as readers (Behavior, 2022).

Currently a professor of education at Concordia University, Martin-Chang studies how reading storybooks and novels influences cognitive development. In a new study published in *Reading and Writing*, she and her colleagues found significant differences between students who read for pleasure outside of class—immersing themselves in fantasy novels or spy thrillers, for example—and those who primarily read books to satisfy school assignments. Not only was there a powerful link between reading for fun and stronger language skills, but students who disliked reading frequently attributed their negative outlook to experiences they had in classrooms. Too much emphasis on analyzing the compositional nuts and bolts of texts and reading merely to absorb information came at a psychological cost, the researchers found, as students disengaged from voluntary reading.

Most importantly, if students are encouraged to read for pleasure, they will actually reap the benefits. It may not seem like a very important task, but in fact, research shows that reading for pleasure can be directly linked to children's success throughout their time in school and even into adulthood. Reading for pleasure opens up a whole new world for children. This gives them the opportunity to use their imagination to explore new ideas, visit new places and meet new characters. Interestingly, reading for pleasure also improves children's well-being and empathy. It helps them to understand their own identity, and gives them insight into the world and views of other people. (Oxford University Press , 2023)

Reading Definition

Reading is a process that is carried out and used by readers to get messages to be conveyed by writers through the media of words/written language (Henry Guntur Tarigan, 2008: 7). Reading is a language skill related to other language skills. Reading is an active process that has a purpose and requires a strategy. This is supported by the following definitions. Hodgson (in Tarigan, 1985: 7) argues that reading is a process that is carried out and used by readers to obtain messages conveyed by the author through the medium of written language. In this case, besides reading as a process, it also has a purpose (Kompas.com, 2021).

According to Dalman (2014: 5) states "Reading is an activity or cognitive process that seeks to find various information contained in writing. Reading is the activity of looking at the text and the process of understanding the contents of the text aloud or silently. Reading is expressing an imagination towards a reader who is liked by the general public and also understood by someone



who is loved. Reading activities include reading aloud and reading silently. Reading aloud is a reading activity that is carried out by reading aloud in public. Meanwhile, reading silently is a careful reading activity that is carried out to understand and understand the author's intent or purpose in written media.

Reading is a type of language skill through receptive writing because by reading a person will gain information, knowledge, and new experiences that have never been known before. Everything that is obtained through reading will make that person able to increase his mind power, sharpen his views, and broaden his horizons. This has an impact on the ability to finish school and lead an easier life. Reading can also be interpreted as an individual process of obtaining meaning from print. Reading activity is not just a passive and respective activity, but requires the reader to actively think while looking at the words contained in the book. In the context of teaching and learning such as at school or on campus, reading is seen as a process towards understanding as a product that can be measured. There are many standardized ways to measure individual reading ability. A number of techniques for measuring reading ability that are often used include using true-false forms, completing sentences, multiple choice, making summaries or summaries, tests, C-tests, and so on (Deepublicstore, 2019). Reading requires you to have the patience to build a cognitive perspective. This is considered to be a prime brain-stimulating activity to sharpen your mind. Individuals engaged in reading have a slower memory decline than those who avoid reading. It also improves memory and builds focus (Team leverage Edu, 2023).

The purpose of reading varies depending on the reading material. For example, someone who is reading non-fiction books about trains is likely reading with the intent to find out more about trains. The purpose of reading in this scenario is to learn something new. Another individual may be interested in reading a classic Shakespeare play, hoping to find some moral wisdom. This individual's purpose is also to learn something, albeit through poetry. Fiction is a bit more difficult to define through a purpose, as there are entertainment aspects as well as a moral aspect. People read fiction to be transported to different worlds and live vicariously through the life of a character, during which certain lessons are learned. Even religious texts such as the Bible are interpreted as true and read with the necessary seriousness (Austin Valenzuela, 2022).

The main goal in reading is to seek and obtain information, include content, and understand the meaning of reading (Tarigan, 2008: 9) as well as concludes that if you want to know what the contents of a text are, you must first read and understand what is in the text.

According to Farida Rahim (2008: 11) there are several reading purposes which include: Pleasure, Perfect aloud reading, Using a certain strategy, Updating knowledge about a topic, Associating new information with information that is already known, Obtaining information for oral and written reports, Confirming or rejecting predictions, Performing an experiment or applying information obtained from a text in some other way, Learn about the structure of the text, and Answer specific questions (Admin Diandra Nessia Alisty, 2020).



While the benefits of reading for fun, are exciting fun/immersive fun is when the reader gets lost in a book and gets stuck inside. It is a prerequisite for experiencing many other pleasures; it develops the capacity to engage and immerse oneself, to visualize meaning, to relate to a character, and to be able to participate in making a meaning. Intellectual pleasure is when the reader is involved in finding out what something means and how the text has been constructed to convey the message/meaning and its effects. Benefits include developing sufficiently deep understanding, being proactive, resilience, and fortitude. Moreover, Social enjoyment is when readers relate to writers, characters, other readers, and themselves by exploring and staking their own identities. This pleasure develops the capacity to experience the world from another perspective; learn from and appreciate others who are far from us in space, time, and experience; and to relate to, repay, care for, and help others who are different from ourselves.

The enjoyment of work is when the reader develops the tools to get something functional done — it encourages the transfer of these strategies and insights into life. as well the inner working pleasure is when the reader imaginatively exercises for his life and considers what kind of person he wants to be and how he can connect to something bigger or strive to become something bigger. When our study participants engage in this pleasure, they express and develop a growth mindset and a sense of personal and social possibility. Taken together, these pleasures explain why pleasure reading promotes cognitive progress and social possibility, and even a kind of wisdom and wholeness, and, in a broader sense, the project of democracy (Jeffrey D. Wilhelm, 2017)

There are some reasons why we should reading, as cited in (LIFELONG LEARNING MATTERS, 2020), the author shared seven reasons why you should be reading just for the fun of it.

1. Build vocabulary

Find them and learn their meaning when reading at leisure. Growing your vocabulary can expand your choice of words used in writing and help you learn more about a language. And, of course, it might make those who study sound smart in the eyes of friends around.

2. Learn something

Just because you read for fun doesn't mean you can't learn something at the same time. Whether fiction or non-fiction books, stories, or articles, these can continue to learn about specific settings, eras in history, principles of leadership, ways to improve mental health, and much more. Use what you learn to apply to your career or personal life to continue to be the best version of yourself. With genres such as biography, historical fiction, adventure, self-help, drama, business and several others, there is sure to be a collection of books that are interesting and can provide new insights.

3. Reducing stress

This does not include last minute textbook readings that need to be completed for class or proposals that need to be reviewed for work. Reading to reduce stress involves choosing a



preferred genre and taking a break from the busy environment you often experience. Taking short breaks, whether short or long, can help refocus, relax, and approach life's circumstances in a new way.

4. Grow Imagination

Having a strong imagination isn't just for kids. While we can have a tendency to grow out of our imaginative and creative selves as we age, imagination and creativity are skills that can be applied in any environment. Expand imagination through learning and experiencing stories and information from books, magazines, and non-fiction and fiction articles.

5. Become a better writer

Experienced and thoughtful writer, writer Annie Dillard has written several published works, including many about the art of writing. In his book “The Writing Life,” he writes, “He was careful about what he read, because that was what he would write in the future. He is careful with what he studies, because that is what he will know next.” In this simple phrase, he shows the importance of the writer being the reader, because one influences the other.

As students, employees, parents, and leaders, we are communicators—both through the written and spoken word. What we read influences that communication. By reading more, you can learn from other writers' communication styles and find new ways to express ideas or concepts. Good writers are frequent readers.

6. Improves Brain Function

Since reading is a mental exercise, this activity also provides beneficial benefits to the human brain. Psychology Today notes a study from “Brain Connectivity” which found that reading fiction can improve brain connectivity and help brain function. Immerse yourself in the settings and scenes created by the author to allow you to experience the story from the perspective of the characters.

7. This is Convenient Entertainment

Have a phone, tablet, computer or other device nearby? Just like that, having access to tons of reading material right at your fingertips. Whether people are waiting in line at the grocery store, at halftime for a football game, or just needing a mental break from a tough task, all of them can access the latest news, e-books, articles shared via social media, multimedia and more. If you don't want to use your eyes, you can also use your ears.

The Pew Research study found that college graduates were five times more likely to read books than those with a high school diploma or less. No matter your age or career path, reading can provide many benefits that apply wherever you are. And degree programs can help improve reading skills while also bringing those valuable practical applications into personal life. Discover how you can develop a reading habit while achieving personal and professional goals. Connect with our enrollment team or view our degree programs for more information.



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the directive to read, originating from the divine revelation in the cave of Hira, establishes the foundation of literacy as a sacred and transformative act for humanity. The Quranic verse explicitly instructs the Prophet Muhammad to recite, emphasizing the profound link between reading and acquiring knowledge. This divine directive is further reinforced by the Prophet's hadiths, underscoring the immense value placed on every letter of the Quran. The intricate beauty of the Arabic language and the numerical emphasis on the multiplication of rewards for each letter illuminate the meticulous precision with which the Quran is composed. The revelation of specific verses in response to historical events, as elucidated through Asbab Nuzul, adds a contextual richness to the divine guidance, reinforcing the Quran's relevance across various situations and eras.

Furthermore, the virtues of reading extend beyond the immediate spiritual realm, offering promises of special rewards in the Hereafter. The hadiths, narrated by 'Aisha and Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn Al-'Aas, speak to the elevated status and recognition accorded to those proficient in Quranic recitation. The inclusive nature of divine rewards, accommodating even those who face challenges in reading, exemplifies the mercy inherent in the message. The call to engage in Quranic reading is not only a call to proficiency but also a call to sincerity, good intentions, and earnest effort. Every letter spoken and understood is viewed as a pathway to spiritual encouragement, increased closeness to Allah, and the accumulation of great rewards. Therefore, the recommendation and virtue of reading the Quran should serve as a continuous source of motivation for Muslims to deepen their understanding, fostering an active and enriching engagement with the sacred text throughout their lives.

There are many ways to get used to read, but not everyone is encouraged to read as an enjoyable habit. Most people only read what is important. But it's a loss if you don't know the benefits and the big impact you get if you read for your own pleasure. Reading has a strong relationship with human imagination, enthusiasm and creativity, so it is less desirable. We need to take reading for pleasure as seriously as academic reading. Because reading will be more fun if it becomes a habit. Applying ways that can be used to make reading enjoyable makes a person grow a lot.

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