

# The Influence of Curriculum Mastery with Teacher Competence and Elements of Tahfiz Teachers Enrolled in Tahfiz Curriculum in Malaysian Teacher Education Institute

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## Abstract

This study concerns Quran memorization skills, revealing incompetency through the *Syafawi* test and lack of proficiency based on the established rules or *maudhu'* in Tahfiz curriculum. It also highlights challenges in maintaining memorization skills. The research evaluates curriculum mastery, teacher components, and teacher competency in Tahfiz curriculum at the Malaysian Teacher Education Institute. Data was collected using Google Form Questionnaires from 215 Tahfiz teachers comprising of 129 male and 86 female respondents, who enrolled in the Interim Tahfiz PDPP (Postgraduate Diploma in Education) Course Intake 2020 in Malaysian Teacher Education Institute. The respondents are placed in MOE secondary schools nationwide, with a minimum service requirement of 3 years in designated MOE schools. They are required to complete a one-year (3-semester) course at selected Malaysian Teacher Education Institute to specialize in teaching, to qualify for interviews conducted by the Education Service Commission (SPP) for permanent appointments. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for analysis. Results indicate high levels of curriculum mastery, competence, and teacher competency elements. A strong and significant correlation exists between curriculum mastery and competence ( $r = .874^{**}$ , Sig  $p = .000$ ). However, the correlation between curriculum mastery and competence elements is weak and insignificant ( $r = -0.042$ , Sig  $p = 0.541$ ). Similarly, the correlation between curriculum competence and competence elements is low and insignificant ( $r = .023$ , Sig  $p = .739$ ). Overall, the study underscores the correlation between teacher competency and curriculum mastery based on teacher skills.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Competence, Malaysian Ministry of Education, Malaysian Teacher Education Institute, Descriptive Statistics, Inferential Statistics.

**Introduction**

According to Utami (2020), teachers play a crucial role in addressing the learning difficulties experienced by their students. Additionally, teachers have a significant role, especially in the endeavor to develop their students' personality and human values that enable them to shoulder responsibilities to society, nation, and the state. Therefore, teachers are recognized as educators of children, guides, and advisors to the community. Moreover, they need to fulfill numerous responsibilities and diverse roles, whether related to education or otherwise. Thus, teachers play a vital role in understanding, consistently demonstrating commitment, and maintaining a high level of dedication in implementing new strategies and approaches to enhance the quality of national education. In learning about Islam, Quranic Education is one of the core areas required, starting with the most basic learning about the Quran, including recognizing the Arabic alphabet and mastering the ability to spell, read, and study the rules of tajweed, and completing the Quran. In a study by Ismail and Mohd Poad (2021), the initial stage of Quranic Education serves as the foundation in educating their children, where various exemplary aspects can be applied, including aspects of faith, morality, worship, and many more. Ashraf Ismail in his work (2018), Quran memorization is, in essence, the highest form of authentic transmission effort.

**Problem Statement**

Mohamed (2021), in his assessment on achievement of Tahfiz students, affirmed that the students' performance is yet to reach the educational objectives outlined, which involve fluent Quran memorization. Additionally, Tahfiz students were found to struggle with understanding the meanings of verses, memorizing the Quran while understanding the reasons for revelation (*Asbab al-Nuzul*), and memorizing the Quran while knowing the context of verses. The skills in Quran memorization also remain weak, as evident in the results of the Syafawi test. Furthermore, the ability to correctly recite specific verses based on their rules or context (*Hukm* or *Maudhu'*) was found to be lacking. Unfortunately, the retention of memorization skills also indicates a low level (Ismail, 2018).

Therefore, students' learning practices are highly influential on academic achievement (Muhammad Hafizan Abd Hamid, 2021). Learning practices provide a mechanism that challenges students appropriately and offers precise feedback regarding their academic performance. A study conducted by Saleh, Ismail, and Hussin (2018) identified weaknesses in students' Quran memorization achievement resulting from inefficient strategies, techniques, and motivation in Tahfiz learning practices among the Tahfiz students.

It is indisputable that in discussing the significance of education, teachers not only play fundamental role as the imparter of knowledge and skills to students but are also responsible in nurturing their interests and fostering the development of their talents and capabilities. Teachers are also instrumental in fostering analytical, critical, and creative thinking in individuals, enabling them to adapt to the evolving changes in their surroundings, in line with the educational system's goals. Teachers serve as implementers of the curriculum and play a pivotal role in defining the standards, quality, and effectiveness of the educational system.

To ensure that teachers can adapt more effectively to the demands of the contemporary global era, it is imperative that they possess a diverse set of skills. Teachers in the 21st century must be versatile and adaptable, proficient in a range of skills, including the adept use of electronic media and computers to enhance the efficiency of their teaching.

**Study Objectives**

This research is carried out with the aim:

1. To assess the mastery level of Tahfiz Teachers enrolled in the Tahfiz curriculum in Malaysian Teacher Education Institute.
2. To evaluate the teacher components and elements level of Tahfiz Teachers enrolled in the Tahfiz curriculum in Malaysian Teacher Education Institute.
3. To analyse the correlation between Tahfiz curriculum mastery and competency of Tahfiz teachers in Malaysian Teacher Education Institute.

**Literature Review**

Competence, as viewed by Zaini et al. (2020), is the standard requirement for an individual to perform specific tasks correctly. This implies that competence is the ability to possess relevant and adequate skills, knowledge, and experience to carry out duties. Additionally, competence involves the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and considerations required by an individual to achieve success in specific skills within any given job (Charles, 2021).

The study by He et al. (2021) underscores that professional teachers need to possess specific knowledge and skills within their respective fields. These findings align with those of Husamah et al. (2022), who also emphasize that the role of modern-day teachers goes beyond mere teaching; it encompasses management aspects such as handling student records, fee collection, textbook loan schemes, student attendance, and student performance reports. Furthermore, teachers are also tasked with participating in subject panels to disseminate and monitor curriculum implementation and subject syllabi. Additionally, teachers are actively involved in school co-curricular activities, attending courses, conducting research, and more. All these multiple responsibilities demand that teachers allocate their time and energy to various commitments, which can potentially impact teaching and professional development. In another study, Rahmatova (2021) employed four components of professional teacher competence to assess the level of teacher competence. These components include achievement motivation, teamwork, service orientation, and self-development. This research analysis reveals that previous scholars have identified a range of competencies for each teacher. The careful selection of appropriate teacher competencies is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs associated with each competency and its constituent elements.

The level of competency exhibited by teachers is a significant matter and often subjected to debate among various education stakeholders, including parents, educators, and educational administrators, who play a role in selecting and hiring the teachers (Swank, 2019). A competent teacher not only possesses pedagogical skills and subject expertise but also demonstrates efficiency in managerial aspects. Consequently, it is essential to scrutinize and evaluate teachers' competence in both educational management and instructional delivery. As highlighted by Swank & Houseknecht (2019), it is crucial to consider teachers' perspectives on competency elements in addition to the viewpoints of administrators and policymakers. Various research approaches are employed to identify the components of teacher competence. Ithnain and Saidin (2021) adopted a quantitative method, including descriptive and inferential statistics, to evaluate the level of teacher competence. Their study considered the viewpoints of vocational teachers regarding competence elements. In contrast, Swank and Houseknecht (2019) conducted a three-round Delphi study. While the Delphi technique is regarded as the most effective approach for obtaining expert consensus in identifying teacher competence elements, it does have its drawbacks.

This method entails extensive and repetitive research, potentially leading to incomplete data. The second limitation is that expert decisions are influenced by individual competencies and can be highly subjective (Rahmatova, 2021). Furthermore, Boud and Dawson (2021) highlighted three weaknesses of the Delphi method: firstly, it can raise doubts about data reliability if researchers fail to select genuine experts; secondly, it may induce boredom among experts due to the repetitiveness of the studies; and finally, the number of experts often used is insufficient to assess a significant subject comprehensively.

### **Research Methodology**

This research adopts a quantitative approach, encompassing both descriptive and inferential statistics. The utilization of this quantitative methodology aligns with the research objectives. The distribution of a survey questionnaire (Google Form) is considered the preferred method for data collection when compared to assessing attitudes, orientations, and priorities, as suggested by Robinson (2007). The quantitative research approach serves to offer a systematic examination of various characteristics deemed more appropriate for scrutiny (Hair, 2007).

The self-administered survey questionnaire targeted at interim Tahfiz teachers who previously completed the PDPP (Postgraduate Diploma in Education) program in Malaysian Teacher Education Institute as a specialization qualification for their roles as permanent government educators. In this study, the researchers employed a quantitative approach, conducting descriptive analyses using a questionnaire format. Data were collected from a total of 215 Tahfiz teachers, comprising 129 male and 86 female teachers. These interim Tahfiz teachers completed the PDPP program under the supervision of the Malaysian Teacher Education Institute, which operate under the Malaysian Ministry of Education, in 2020. Subsequently, they commenced their service in schools under the Ministry of Education, Malaysia (KPM).

The survey methodology was employed to acquire practical data within real-life contexts. In this study, the questionnaire was created by adapting and reorganizing it from previous research to better suit the research objectives. The analysis in this study primarily involves descriptive statistics, such as percentages, minimum values, standard deviations, and correlation tests, to offer an initial portrayal of the gathered data. Additionally, the research and inferential analysis conducted serve to complement the statistical assumptions under study.

### **Finding Analysis**

The demographic profile of the study participants encompasses five key aspects: gender, age, teaching experience, academic qualifications, and specialization. Among the respondents, there are 129 males (60.0%) and 86 females (40.0%). In terms of age distribution, 115 respondents (53.5%) are below 25 years old, 94 respondents (43.7%) aged between 25 and 35 years, and only 6 respondents (2.8%) are in the 35 to 45-year age group.

Regarding teaching experience, 93 respondents (43.3%) have 1 to 3 years of teaching experience, while 122 respondents (56.7%) have 4 to 6 years of experience. With regard to academic qualifications, 125 respondents (58.1%) hold a Certificate/STPM/Diploma, while 90 respondents (41.9%) are Bachelor's degree holders. Finally, in terms of specialization, 130 respondents (60.5%) have a Diploma in Education, 50 respondents (23.3%) have completed the KPLI (Teacher Training Institute Program), and 35 respondents (16.3%) hold a Teaching Certificate. Further details are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Demographic profile of Tahfiz Teachers enrolled in the Tahfiz curriculum in Malaysian Teacher Education Institute*

Variables		No (N)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender	Male	129	60.0%
	Female	86	40.0%
2. Age	Less than 25 years	115	53.5%
	25 to 35 years	94	43.7%
	35 to 45 years	6	2.8%
3. Teaching Experience	1 to 3 years	93	43.3%
	4 to 6 years	122	56.7%
4. Academic qualification	Certificate/STPM/Diploma	125	58.1%
	Bachelor's degree	90	41.9%
5. Specialization	Diploma in Education	130	60.5%
	Teacher Training Institute Program	50	23.3%
	Teaching Certificate	35	16.3%

### Descriptive Level

To determine the level descriptively, interpretation of the result involved categorization based on the minimum value and standard deviation. The research results were assessed using mean values at a high level (5.00-3.67), the moderate level (2.67-3.66), and the low level (1.00-2.66).

Mean Value	Level
5.00-3.67	High
2.67-3.66	Moderate
1.00-2.66	Low

Source: Pallant (2010)

The findings indicate that curriculum mastery shows a high score, with mean value (M) of 4.12 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.579. Similarly, curriculum competency demonstrates high scores, with M=3.84 and SD= 0.658. Additionally, teacher competency in curriculum-related aspects also exhibits high scores, with M=3.95 and SD=.559. These results collectively suggest a significant level of competency across all three variables examined in the study.

Table 2

*Variable Level of Tahfiz Teachers Enrolled in the Tahfiz Curriculum in Malaysian Teacher Education Institute*

Variable level	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. Curriculum mastery	4.12	.579
2. Curriculum competency	3.84	.658
3. Element of teacher competency	3.95	.559

### The Correlation between Curriculum Mastery, Curriculum Competence, and Competence Element

The correlation test for the variables in this study is carried out using the Davies Scale Correlation Coefficient Estimation (1971), assessed through Pearson correlation analysis.

Table 3

*Davies Scale Correlation Coefficient (1971)*

No	Range mean	Strength level
1.	0.70 to 1.00	Very High
2.	0.50 to 0.69	High
3.	0.30 to 0.49	Medium High
4.	0.10 to 0.29	Low
5.	0.01 to 0.09	Ignored

(Adapted from the Davies Scale (1971); Teh & Embi (2009))

Results of this study reveal that the correlation between curriculum mastery and competence exhibits a substantial and statistically significant association, with a correlation coefficient of  $r = .874^{**}$  and a significance level of  $\text{Sig } p = .000$ . In contrast, the relationship between curriculum mastery and competence elements is found to be weak and not statistically significant, as indicated by a correlation coefficient of  $r = -.042$  and a significance level of  $\text{Sig } p = .541$ . Furthermore, the correlation between curriculum competence and competence elements is minimal and lacks statistical significance, with a correlation coefficient of  $r = .023$  and a significance level of  $\text{Sig } p = .739$ .

Table 4  
 Correlation Test for Each Variable

Correlations				
		Curriculum mastery	Curriculum competency	Competency element
Curriculum Mastery	Pearson Correlation	1	.874**	-.042
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.541
	N	215	215	215
Curriculum Competency	Pearson Correlation	.874**	1	.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.739
	N	215	215	215
Competency Element	Pearson Correlation	-.042	.023	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.541	.739	
	N	215	215	215
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

**The Difference Between Curriculum Mastery and Curriculum Competence with Competence Elements**

The analysis indicates that the regression test with an R value in the table showing R= .528 implies a good relationship with the predictor variables. However, there is an R Square value of .279, indicating that only 27.9% of these findings have a low determination relationship between the dependent and independent variables. From the model summary above, it is evident that the R square is 0.272, meaning that 27% of the variance can be attributed to the correlation between the IV and DV, with a standard error (SD) of .49477.

Table 5  
 Model Summary of Regression Test

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.528 <sup>a</sup>	.279	.272	.49477
<b>a. Predictors: (Constant), competency element, teacher competence</b>				
<b>b. Dependent Variable: curriculum mastery</b>				

Table 6 below presents the outcomes of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) designed to assess the overall quality of a regression model. The analysis indicates that the employed regression model is effective in explaining the relationships between various variables. Specifically, the results highlight that, within one group, the F= 20.088, M=10.044, and the significance level (Sig p) is as low as .000. Conversely, within another group, the mean value is at .245, and the p-value (p) is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05, signifying statistical significance. These findings strongly imply that the independent variable (IV) exerts a notable influence on the dependent variable (DV), as evidenced by low sig-value= .000.

Table 6

*Anova Analysis on Overall Quality of Regression Model Under Study.*

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.088	2	10.044	41.031	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	51.896	212	.245		
	Total	71.984	214			
<b>a. Dependent Variable: Curriculum mastery</b>						
<b>b. Predictors: (Constant), competency element, teacher competence</b>						

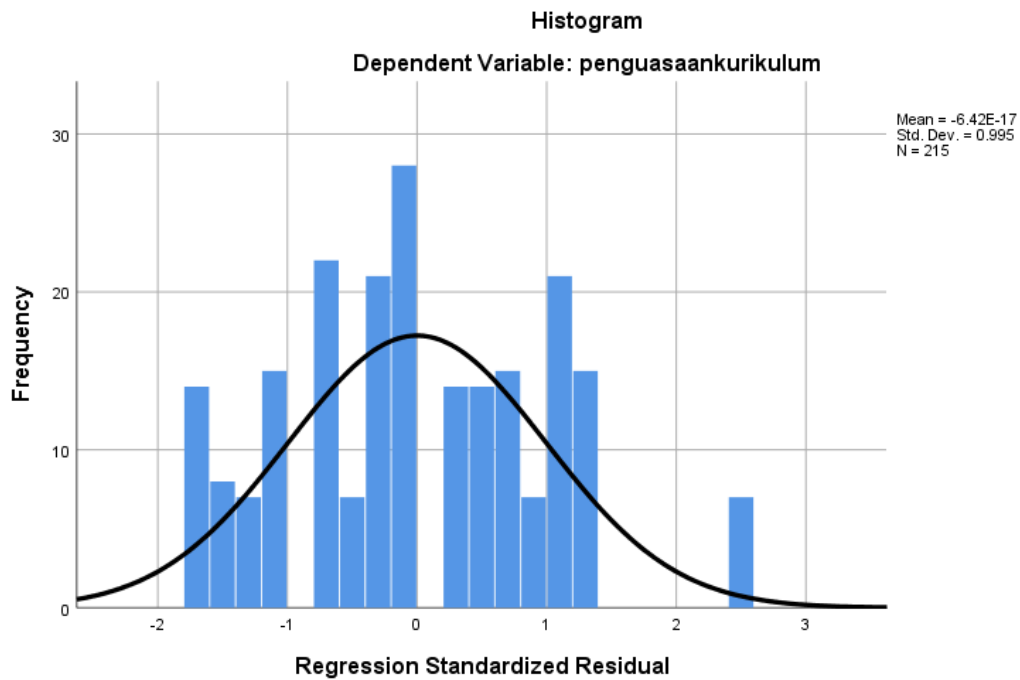
Table 7 below presents the results of the analysis of the correlation between the dependent and independent variables, namely IV and DV. The research findings indicate that the significance level among the analyzed results is significant within the group, as the findings do not exceed 0.05 (<0.05) Sig .000. The research findings further reveal that teacher competence has a significant value, with  $\beta = -.956$ ,  $SD = .442$ ,  $t = 2.162$ ,  $sig = .032$ , while the respondents' competence elements have a  $\beta = .148$ ,  $SD = .062$ ,  $t = -2.404$ ,  $sig = .017$ , both at a lower significance level of  $P (<0.05)$ . The research findings indicate a substantial difference between the variables.

Table 7

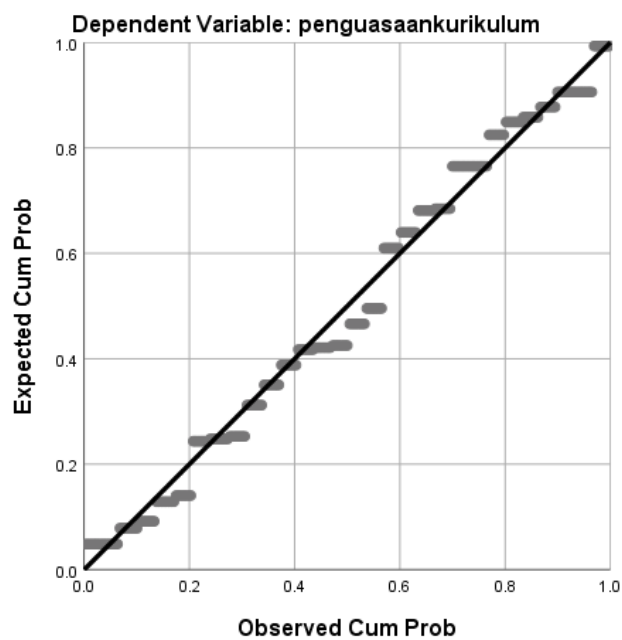
*Analysis on Correlation Between Dependent and Independent Variables.*

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.956	.442		2.162	.032
	Teacher competence	.929	.103	.536	9.030	.000
	Competency element	-.148	.062	-.143	-2.404	.017
<b>a. Dependent Variable: Curriculum mastery</b>						





Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



### Findings and Suggestions

The main findings of the study indicate that the entire process can assist stakeholders in making decisions based on strong and reliable evidence in selecting competent and qualified tafiz teachers, as outlined in the framework below:

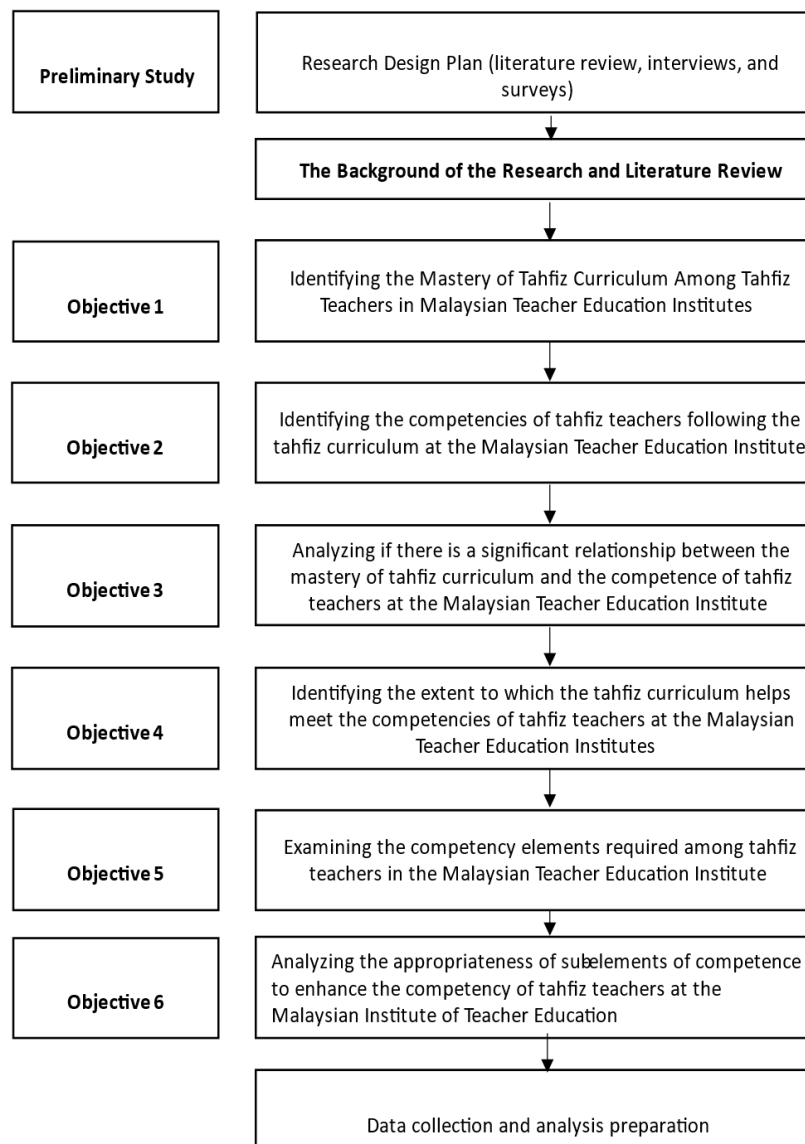


Table 8: Proposed research design framework (research findings)

Based on the limitations of the study that only focused on the Malaysian Teacher Education Institutes, it is suggested that any researchers and students conduct future studies with a broader scope, involving teachers serving in private tahfiz schools and others. By expanding the scope of the study locations, it will allow the findings of this research to be more generalized. This is because, although the Teacher Education Institution has its own curriculum and guidelines for the formation of Tahfiz education teachers, each Tahfiz institution may have different needs, challenges, and approaches in the teaching and learning of the Quran. With a broader and more comprehensive study, it will make a valuable contribution to the development of policies and strategies for tahfiz education in this country, ensuring high-quality Quranic education for future generations.

**Conclusion**

The results of this study suggest that there is a high level of mastery in the curriculum, teacher competence, and the elements of teacher competence. Correlation tests were carried out to confirm the relationship between curriculum mastery and teacher competence, showing a

correlation coefficient of  $r = .874^{**}$ , Sig  $p = .000$ . These research findings highlight that the curriculum has a substantial impact on teacher competence, and it is performing exceptionally well in this regard. Regression analysis also underscores a significant distinction between teacher competence and the elements of teacher competence.

These results suggest that teacher competence plays a substantial role in education. This assertion aligns with the views of Noor Erma and Leong (2014), who emphasized the importance of attitudes and interests in determining student achievement. Muhamad Abdillah and Haleefa (2011) also share a similar perspective, recognizing the significance of interest as a determining factor in an individual's success in their chosen field.

Norlia et al. (2006) have asserted that the adoption of suitable and effective learning styles can significantly contribute to students achieving high performance in a specific subject. Furthermore, Mohamad Johdi et al.'s (2009) study has highlighted the strong connection between the socioeconomic status (SES) background and parental commitment in relation to their children's examination outcomes. In summary, the research outcomes suggest variations in teacher competence aspects in teaching, particularly in terms of curriculum mastery, depending on the teachers' skills.

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