

Digital Podcast: Perceptions and Attitudes Among Students at The Centre for Foundation Studies, IIUM

Nur Farrah Syazwanie Ismail^{1*}, Noor Asiah Aling¹, Mohd. Syauqi Md. Zahir¹,
Nurhafizah Saidin², Suraya Hassan², Bahirah Mohd Bashah²

¹ Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge, Centre for Foundation Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Pahang, Malaysia

² Department of Mathematics, Centre for Foundation Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Pahang, Malaysia

*Corresponding Author: nurfarrahsyazwanie@iium.edu.my

Received: 15 July 2024 | Accepted: 1 December 2024 | Published: 1 March 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55057/ajress.2025.7.2.8>

Abstract: *Podcast-based learning which combines technology into the teaching and learning process has deviated from conventional methods and encourages a narrative approach to teaching, thus revolutionizing education. With this cutting-edge medium, students can interact with their learning materials at any time and from any location by leveraging the ease of use and accessibility of digital audio platforms. Podcasts grant information through storytelling, which makes learning more meaningful, interactive and engaging. Podcasts also support a variety of teaching and learning styles and enhance students' comprehension. This study aims to investigate the impact of using Digital Podcast on the students' perceptions and attitudes toward the course Understanding Islam 1 at the Centre for Foundation Studies, IIUM. This podcast incorporates online audio storytelling, which is designed to highlight essential classroom teaching and learning characteristics like creativity and reflection towards the course. A quantitative research approach was used to gather data through questionnaires comprising 13 items, examining students' perceptions and attitudes. The data were then recorded in SPSS and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Additionally, interviews were conducted with selected students to further assess students' perceptions and attitudes. The findings indicate that the Digital Podcast received positive perceptions among students, who expressed interest and comfort with podcast-based learning as a supplementary material in the course. They were reported to be more open and motivated to continue learning through podcasts in the future. Overall, it is obvious that using technology in audio podcasts has improved the students' learning and given teachers the courage to abandon the antiquated model of traditional education.*

Keywords: Podcast, Perception, Attitude, Narrative, Technology

1. Introduction

A dynamic dimension has been introduced to our educational resources where the rise of digital podcasts as a medium or tool for entertainment and information transmission. They are becoming more and more popular, and they have a lot of promises to improve educational opportunities. However, little attention has been paid to their use as a teaching tool in academic settings particularly at the Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS IIUM) of the International Islamic University Malaysia. Even with its benefits, students still encounter difficulties and

have differing opinions about using podcasts for learning. Some of these challenges include figuring out how students interact with podcasts, assessing how they affect learning, and identifying both the advantages and disadvantages. It is essential to look at whether podcasts can be effectively included into the curriculum to support and enhance traditional teaching methods.

Furthermore, the higher education system has already changed as a result of digital technology which has brought forth new methods to deliver knowledge and student engagement. Among these advancements, podcasts provide a personalized and adaptable way to consume educational content. As mentioned by Oslawski-Lopez & Kordsmeier (2021), the audience listening to podcast increase from 22% to 51% in 2019 which shown that the podcasts' popularity in education is indicative of a global trend.

According to Ananda et al. (2022), who discovered that audio-based learning podcasts were both efficient and appropriate for teaching social science in elementary schools, the utilization of educational podcasts is progressively gaining popularity in Malaysia. The result demonstrates the potential of podcasts as adaptable online resources which enhances traditional teaching strategies by providing accessibility and flexibility to accommodate a range of learning requirements.

Acknowledging this potential, CFS IIUM attempted to incorporate the digital audio into the required Understanding Islam I course (RKFF 0413), which covers fundamental Islamic ideas like Ibadah (worship), Akhlaq (moral character), and Akidah (faith). Since students frequently find it is difficult to give thorough explanations during tests therefore this course has been challenging for them. In order to overcome this issue, digital podcasts have been created with an emphasis on Akhlaq. This podcast use storytelling and Quranic narratives to convey concepts such as Hasad (envy), Amanah (trust), Shukr (thankfulness) and Al-Kibr (arrogance). The purpose of utilizing this approach is to increase learning's impact, relatability and engagement.

Nevertheless, the success of digital podcasts as a learning tool depends on understanding students' perceptions and their effectiveness in achieving learning outcomes. This requires evaluating how students interact with and benefit from podcasts as well as identifying barriers that may hinder their usage.

The primary aim of this research is to look at the perspectives and attitudes of students at the Centre for Foundation Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), regarding digital podcasts as an educational resource. This involves studying their usage habits, preferences, perceived benefits, and problems. Furthermore, the study intends to investigate the particular use of digital podcasts in the "Understanding Islam 1" course, as well as the influence of podcasts on students' views and learning outcomes. By focusing on these objectives, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and practicality of integrating podcasts into higher education. Moreover, it is aims to educate our institutions and teachers on the most effective ways to use podcasts to develop dynamic, creative, and captivating learning environments. By adapting teaching methods to students' changing requirements and preferences, the project ultimately hopes to improve the educational experience at CFS IIUM.

2. Literature Review

Education has been greatly impacted by the internet's broad use and the information and communication technologies (ICT) rapid progress. One significant innovation is podcasting, which is highlighted by Ibrahim (2022), defined as a digital stream of audio or video that can be downloaded and listened to on mobile devices. Podcasts are a versatile learning tool that can be accessed on a variety of devices. In addition, it also covers a variety of topics, including information, education, storytelling, and entertainment. Students nowadays opt for online learning due to podcasts' flexibility and portability (Muthuprasad et al., 2021). The research presents that podcast are beneficial and students can engage better with it compared to conventional lectures in class or physical books. Podcasts present as an effective way to grasp knowledge of lecture notes and also can close knowledge gaps by providing on-demand access to educational resources (Evans, 2008). Podcasting is becoming more and more recognised by educators as a dynamic, powerful learning paradigm with significant educational potential (Tavales & Skevoulis, 2006).

According to research, podcasts can improve the quality and delivery of lectures, givin students a more interesting educational experience (Campbell, 2005; Cebeci & Tekdal, 2006). Studies have specifically shown how beneficial podcasts enhance students' abilities, particularly their listening comprehension (Rahman, Atmowardoyo, & Salija, 2018). According to König (2021) emphasises that adopting podcasts in the classroom may increase educational outcomes and student motivation. According to research that demonstrates their favourable effects on attitudes, behaviours, and self-efficacy, podcasts can improve students' academic achievement and personal development. This shows that podcasts are a flexible and valuable tool in modern education, complementing traditional teaching methods and meeting the needs of today's students. Additionally, research suggests that listening to podcasts can influence students' attitudes, behaviors, and confidence in their abilities (Chester, Buntine, Hammond, & Atkinson, 2011).

3. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to examine the perceptions and attitudes among students at the Centre for Foundation Studies IIUM on Digital Podcast. The study's goal was to ascertain students' perceptions and attitude towards the Digital Podcast considering the factors which are usefulness, quality and attitude. A non-probability sampling method, namely purposive sampling is used in this investigation. Purposive sampling was chosen in this research based on the specific characteristics of the target population. The population of this study are all students enrolled in the subject Understanding Islam 1 (course code RKFF 0413). This course was chosen to innovate using Digital Podcast since this subject university required courses and all students are compulsory to take this subject. The consistent structure of this course makes it suitable to be digitalized and exposed to students.

All CFS IIUM students enrolled comprised the target population for this study. Among the population, 48 participants completed the survey as a pilot study. The demographic variables included in this investigation were the students' gender. Every student received the survey via Google Form sent through the Telegram application.

The main instrument for this study is using a questionnaire adapted by Chan, Chi, Chin, and Lin (2011). The questionnaire is a validated survey used in previous studies, using five-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The usefulness, quality

and attitude are the three components of the survey that need to be explored. For providing thorough coverage of the students' perceptions toward the Digital Podcast, each perspective has its own set of items.

The component of usefulness consists of 8 items and is used to measure how students perceived the practical usage of Digital Podcast in their learning. For the usefulness component, it includes statements such as "The Digital Podcast helps me understand the course content better". Next, the quality component measures the perceived quality of the podcast in terms of clarity of the podcast, content delivery, and accessibility of the podcast which is virtual. There are 3 items in the quality component, with one of the statement such as "The audio quality of the Digital Podcast is clear and easy to understand". Finally, the components of attitude used to assess on how the students feel and how they act toward using Digital Podcasts as a learning tool. The attitude component only consists of 2 items. One example of the item is "I enjoy using the Digital Podcast for my studies".

The selected items based on the three components were justified based on their alignment with the study's objectives and their ability to capture specific different aspects of student experiences with the Digital Podcasts. This structure provided a comprehensive framework for evaluating students' perceptions.

Each component's reliability statistics were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Table 1 below shows the result of the reliability test, where this study concluded that the reliability of all the three components was high (Streiner, 2003). Scaled scores of usefulness, quality and attitude are 0.933, 0.906, and 0.729, respectively. Thus, this shows that the reliability and consistency of the instrument to measure all the three components.

Table 1: Reliability Test

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha value	N of items
Usefulness (U)	0.933	8
Quality (Q)	0.906	3
Attitude (ATT)	0.729	2

Next, the data will further be evaluated by using a mixed methods approach. There are two types of analysis, which are quantitative and qualitative. For quantitative analysis, the data will be evaluated using SPSS to find the demographic data and the descriptive mean. Meanwhile, for the qualitative analysis, interviews were conducted to know further on students' perception and attitude towards Digital Podcast where the students' responses will be transcribed, coded and themes from the data will be analyzed.

Even though the study employed a small sample size of 48 participants, it provides a strong rationale since the nature of homogeneity of the population. All participants were enrolled in the same course since this is a university required course, and all students had direct virtual access to Digital Podcasts. Apart from that, this study uses a small sample size since this is the initial project. Pilot studies are often conducted with a limited number of participants, as their primary purpose is to ensure that the proposed study design and procedures are viable before turning the research into a larger-scale investigation in the future (Thabane et al., 2010).

4. Results and Discussions

In this section, the study findings on assessing the students' perceptions and attitudes on Digital Podcast among CFS IIUM students are presented. This section begins with the demographic data of the respondents. The data is presented in figure 1 below.

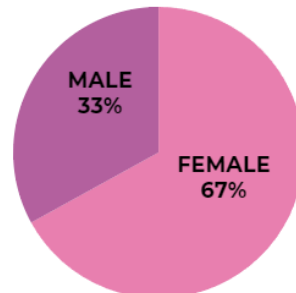


Figure 1: Demographic Data.

Out of all 48 respondents participated in this survey, 33% are male, while 67% are female. Hence, this indicated that majority of the respondents are female.

Next, SPSS were used to analyse quantitative data, which is descriptive statistics as shown in figure 2.

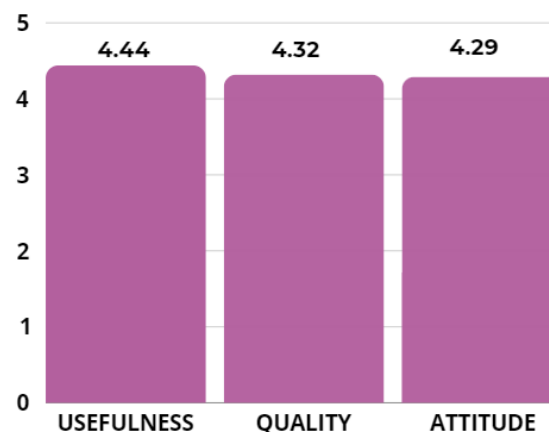


Figure 2: Overall Mean Score for Students' Perception and Attitude Towards Digital Podcast

After the intervention of Digital Podcast in learning the course, the mean score was utilized to evaluate students' perceptions and attitudes towards the innovation in teaching and learning using the audio podcast. Based on Figure 2, we can see that majority of students have a positive perception towards the usage of Digital Podcast. The mean values for usefulness construct is 4.44, for quality is 4.32 and for attitude is 4.29. Considering the middle value of the numerical scale range of 1 to 5 of the Likert-scale, we can conclude that these values of overall mean are relatively high which is more than middle value of 2.5. All three constructs tend to be towards the upper end of the scale. This suggests a positive impact of the Digital Podcast, where students view it as useful towards their journey to understand the course, have a high quality in the audio and have a positive attitude to continue using Digital Podcast in the future.

Next, interviews were done to assess more on the perceptions of students towards Digital Podcast. Figure 3 provides a summary of the several advantages and disadvantages of Digital Podcast from the analysis.

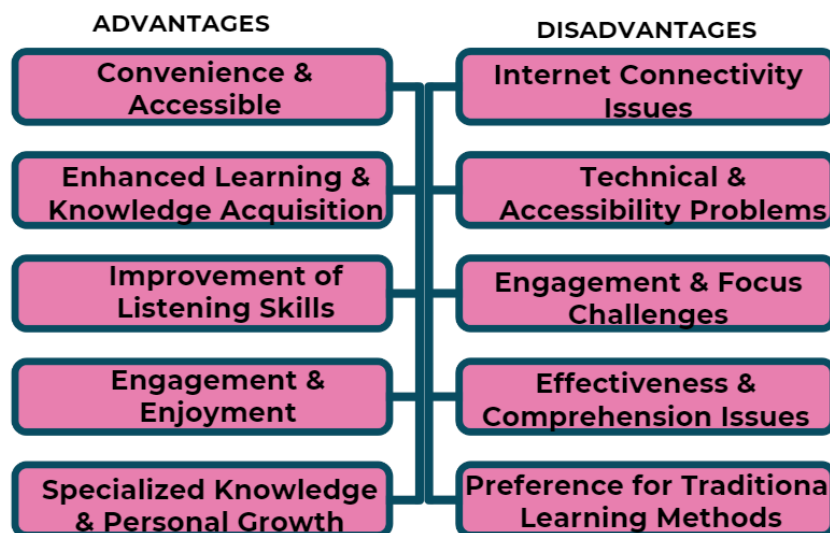


Figure 3: Advantages and Disadvantages Of Digital Podcast

From figure 3, we can conclude that there are many advantages of Digital Podcast mentioned by the students, including convenience of the technology imbued because it is accessible anytime and anywhere. Students' positive perceptions demonstrate the effectiveness of podcasts in facilitate flexible and independent learning by allowing access to content anytime and anywhere, which complements varied schedules and lifestyles. A similar study also had be shown by Al-Rahmi, Zeki, Alias, and Saged (2017), which showed that podcast may open new insights and thoughts of Islamic content to be digitalized and can be accessed safely from anywhere.

Furthermore, the benefit of Digital Podcast is the fact that it is engaging due to the narrative approach of Digital Podcast. The narrative-based format of the podcasts made complex topics like *Akhlaq* easier to understand and approach, proving the value of digital storytelling as a teaching tool, particularly in Islamic education. As a result, adding podcasts to the course not only improves accessibility and fits a variety of learning styles, but also creating a more engaging and inclusive learning environment. This approach can be used by educators at CFS IIUM and beyond to update their teaching strategies in line with the overarching objective of incorporating technology into education within an Islamic framework (Ahmad & Khalid, 2024).

A remarkable and slightly unexpected observation was the variability in students' responses based on their learning preferences. While most students praised the auditory and narrative aspects of the podcasts, a subgroup found it challenging to maintain focus, particularly those who favored visual or text-based learning methods. This situation shows that even though it can be useful in some situation, podcasts are not always useful as stand-alone materials (Kulkov, Kulkova, Rohrbeck, & Menvielle, 2024).

The disturbance caused by poor internet connection is the other issue brought up by the students which periodically prevented them from easily accessing the podcasts. Hence, it is important to develop additional resources such as transcripts or visual aids to lessen the barriers of connectivity issues and different learning preferences.

Despite its positive findings, serving as a pilot study on the use of digital podcasts in education at CFS IIUM, this study has certain limitations which the relatively small sample size (n=48)

limits the results' applicability to educational contexts. Next, the use of self-reported data also raises the risk of response bias, since students may have given answers that were socially accepted instead of completely honest feedback. Also, because most of the data collection was done online, it might not have included students with poor internet connection which could have affected the results. Despite these drawbacks, which emphasize the study's early nature, the results offer insightful information and can be used as a starting point for larger, future studies.

5. Conclusion

Podcasts have been demonstrated to be a very effective tool in supporting students' learning process and facilitating their understanding of the topics covered in traditional textbooks and classroom instruction. Podcast can significantly enhance independent learning by providing access to lectures and experts in the fields of Islamic teaching. The use of podcast in Understanding Islam 1 (RKFF 0413) has contributed to diversification of the teaching materials that are presented due to the increase of students' pleasure & engagement with digital education. Hence, this method has significantly given positive impacts and increasing motivation as well as encouraging student's attention in their engagement with Islamic subjects. This approach engages student's auditory attention and integrates educational resources effectively which enables them to study without solely relying on text-based materials. Therefore, using podcasts to teach Understanding Islam 1 has a significant impact on students and help them to achieve the learning outcomes of the subject. At the same time, the findings of this study may benefit the educators to innovate teaching methods by integrating podcasts more comprehensively into the curriculum. Various approach can be employed in the academic environment such as to treat podcast as supplementary materials, included in blended learning models or utilize in flipped classroom.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge Department of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Department of Mathematics, Centre for Foundation Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia. We are grateful to the CFS IIUM students for their ongoing participation in this study and support of the Digital Podcast initiative.

References

- Ahmad, N., & Khalid, M. U. (2024). Digitalization of religious (Islamic) education: Bridging tradition and innovation for global learning. *IQAN*, 6(2).
- Al-Rahmi, W. M., Zeki, A. M., Alias, N., & Saged, A. A. G. (2017). Information technology usage in the Islamic perspective: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, 7(3), 129-138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2017.1335758>
- Ananda, F. T., Ramadhani, F. A., Fadilah, Z. P., Ramadhani, S., & Nugraha, D. (2022). Pengembangan media pembelajaran audio berbasis podcast pada materi IPS di SD. *Indonesian Journal of Social Science Education (IJSSE)*, 4(1), 59. <https://doi.org/10.29300/ijssse.v4i1.6678>
- Campbell, G. (2005, November-December). There's something in the air: Podcasting in education. *Educause Review*, 40(6), 34-40.
- Cebeci, Z., & Tekdal, M. (2006). Using podcasts as audio learning objects. *Interdisciplinary Journal of e-Skills and Lifelong Learning*, 2, 29-38. <https://doi.org/10.28945/400>

- Chan, W. M., Chi, S. W., Chin, K. N., & Lin, C. Y. (2011). Students' perceptions of and attitudes towards podcast-based learning – A comparison of two language podcast projects. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 8, 21-33.
- Chester, A., Buntine, A., Hammond, K., & Atkinson, L. (2011). Podcasting in education: Student attitudes, behaviour, and self-efficacy. *Educational Technology and Society*, 14(2), 136-148.
- Evans, C. (2008). The effectiveness of m-learning in the form of podcast revision lectures in higher education. *Computers & Education*, 50(2), 499-508.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2007.09.016>
- Ibrahim, A. (2022). The positive impact of using podcasts in education in El Baha University College of Science and Arts Elmikhwa Branch. *International Journal of Educational Research Review*, 7(4). <https://doi.org/10.24331/ijere.1174579>
- König, L. (2021). Podcasts in higher education: Teacher enthusiasm increases students' excitement, interest, enjoyment, and learning motivation. *Educational Studies*, 47(5), 613-625. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2019.1706040>
- Kulkov, I., Kulkova, J., Rohrbeck, R., & Menvielle, L. (2024). Leveraging podcasts as academic resources: A seven-step methodological guide. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241266197>
- Muthuprasad, T., Aiswarya, S., Aditya, K. S., & Jha, G. K. (2021). Students' perception and preference for online education in India during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, 3(1), 100101.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2020.100101>
- Rahman, A., Atmowardoyo, H., & Salija, K. (2018). Podcast effects on EFL learners' listening comprehension. *ELT Worldwide: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 5(2), 95-104. <https://doi.org/10.26858/eltww.v5i2.7374>
- Streiner, D. L. (2003). Starting at the beginning: An introduction to coefficient alpha and internal consistency. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 80(1), 99-103.
https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327752JPA8001_18
- Tavales, S., & Skevoulis, S. (2006). Podcasts: Changing the Face of e-Learning. In *Software Engineering Research and Practice* (721-726).
- Thabane, L., Ma, J., Chu, R., Cheng, J., Iskander, K., Rios, L. P., & Robson, R. (2010). A tutorial on pilot studies: The what, why and how. *BioMed Central Medical Research Methodology*, 10, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-10-1>
- Oslawski-Lopez, J., & Kordsmeier, G. (2021). "Being able to listen makes me feel more engaged": Best practices for using podcasts as readings. *Teaching Sociology*, 49(4), 335-347. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X211003228>