

ASSESSING FIQH JURISPRUDENCE CATEGORISATION COMPREHENSION AMONG ISLAMIC STUDIES STUDENTS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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(Received 07th June 2026; revised 11th August 2026; accepted 06th September 2026)

Abstract. Fiqh, defined as the human comprehension of Islamic jurisprudence derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, is a fundamental component of Islamic Studies education and provides a framework for directing practical areas of Muslim life. The fundamental importance of jurisprudential categorisation is essential in fiqh education, however it poses persistent obstacles for students. This study aims to assess the comprehension level of fiqh jurisprudence classification among Islamic Studies students at UiTM Shah Alam as an initial investigation. This study adopted a survey design involving Diploma in Islamic Studies and Education students (n=59) from the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, UiTM Shah Alam, selected through simple random sampling in line with Johanson and Brooks' (2010) recommendation for preliminary research. The findings indicate that the understanding of Fiqh classification among UiTM Shah Alam students predominantly falls under the "Good" (39–52.5%) and "Very Good" (30–39%) categories, although the "Excellent" level is rather low (1.7–15.3%). In conclusion, this preliminary study indicates that Islamic Studies students at UiTM Shah Alam possess a robust understanding of fiqh categorisation, primarily within the "Good" and "Very Good" ranges, but face challenges in attaining "Excellent" mastery, implying a necessity for pedagogical improvements to address this deficiency.

Keywords: *fiqh jurisprudence, quantitative, Islamic studies, higher education*

Introduction

Fiqh, defined as the human comprehension of Islamic jurisprudence derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, is a fundamental component of Islamic Studies education and provides a framework for directing practical areas of Muslim life (Solihin et al., 2024). In higher education, the proficiency in fiqh encompasses not only the memorisation of rulings but also the capacity to analyse, categorise, and apply them suitably across various settings. At universities like UiTM Shah Alam, enhancing students' understanding of fiqh categorisation is essential for fostering advanced reasoning that corresponds with the overarching goals of Islamic jurisprudence. Inquiry-based teaching strategies have demonstrated the capacity to augment students' analytical engagement with fiqh subject and enhance their systematic classification of rulings (Salaeh et al., 2024). Likewise, contextual methodologies in teaching *usul al-fiqh* cultivate significant links between theoretical concepts and students' real-life experiences, so enhancing both understanding and application (Mohd Nawawi et al., 2024). An in-depth examination of students' understanding of fiqh categorisation is thus opportune, providing empirical insights into current educational efficacy and practical implications for curriculum improvement in Islamic Studies.

The fundamental importance of jurisprudential categorisation is essential in fiqh education, however it poses persistent obstacles for students. Numerous Islamic Studies students persist in difficulties with the application and classification of rulings,

frequently stumbling over terminology, contextual application, and exam differentiation, indicative of broader concerns such as passive or monotonous teaching methods and inadequate pedagogical support (Syahidan and Mukminin, 2024). Similarly, at the university level, students struggle to categorise intricate subjects like fiqh mawāris due to time limitations, insufficient review, and limited conceptual understanding (Zahrawani et al., 2021). The challenges indicate that understanding of fiqh cannot be presumed to arise solely from traditional lectures; it necessitates intentional educational methods designed for classification skills. Failing to address these deficiencies, students risk graduating with merely surface knowledge, incapable of translating jurisprudential ideas into accurate classification or practical application in modern circumstances.

This study aims to assess the comprehension level of fiqh jurisprudence classification among Islamic Studies students at UiTM Shah Alam as an initial investigation. Assessing students' capacity to categorise and implement fiqh decisions is likely to illuminate their intellectual involvement and contextual reasoning beyond simple memorisation. Previous studies demonstrate that the implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) methods in Islamic education, where academic material is intricately connected to real-world contexts, substantially improves critical thinking, problem-solving, and understanding (Haidar, 2025). Innovative methodologies, including game-based learning within the ADDIE instructional design framework, have shown quantifiable improvements in students' comprehension of fiqh principles, as indicated by enhanced assessment scores and increased motivation (Pradana and Aisyah, 2024). This study, situated in a higher education context, provides empirical evidence to the scarce research on categorisation abilities in fiqh, essential for connecting theoretical jurisprudence with practical application. The findings are anticipated to offer practical recommendations for curriculum designers and educators in Islamic Studies programs, specifically aimed at improving pedagogical methods that facilitate critical engagement with jurisprudential material.

Review of literature

The students' understanding of categorising fiqh jurisprudence has been consistently associated with the accessibility and quality of educational resources. Recent studies indicate that digitalised fiqh teaching materials, particularly those using contextual teaching approaches, effectively assist students in categorising and organising intricate jurisprudential information (Adzim, 2022). Furthermore, contextual modules facilitate students in accurately identifying categories such as wajib (obligatory), haram (forbidden), and mubah (permissible), rather than depending solely on memorisation. Furthermore, Yemmardotillah et al. (2024) emphasise that modules aligned with 21st-century skills enhance comprehension, especially in categorisation tasks, by promoting critical engagement with textual sources. The modernity of educational resources directly influences the capacity of Islamic studies students, particularly those at UiTM Shah Alam, to comprehend fiqh classification. Pedagogical practices significantly influence understanding levels. Problem-based learning (PBL) has demonstrated the capacity to enhance comprehension by necessitating that student actively categorise jurisprudential topics within real-world contexts, so refining their classification skills (Listrianti et al., 2025). Moreover, inquiry-based methodologies cultivate an atmosphere in which students can develop their own conceptual frameworks, hence enhancing their capacity to distinguish between distinct kinds of fiqh (Rahmiati et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, conventional lecture-centric approaches persist in many institutions, frequently resulting in a superficial understanding that constrains students' capacity to accurately classify jurisprudence. As a result, UiTM Shah Alam Students' comprehension levels are expected to enhance when active learning tactics are methodically implemented in fiqh instruction.

The use of digital and mixed learning methodologies has become a crucial element affecting understanding. The integration of blended learning in Fiqh courses, combining available online resources with conventional classroom instruction, demonstrated efficacy in enhancing students' understanding of jurisprudential concepts (Khotimah et al., 2024). Furthermore, internet platforms offer students access to interactive categorisation assignments, so improving their analytical and classification abilities in jurisprudence. Furthermore, despite infrastructural obstacles, students engaged in AI-enhanced fiqh education exhibited much superior understanding levels compared to their counterparts in conventional environments (Khoir et al., 2024). Consequently, the classification of fiqh jurisprudence is rendered more accessible when students benefit from efficient technological integration within their learning environment. Alongside technology, contextual methods and critical pedagogy enhance comprehension outcomes. Modules utilising direct-contextual learning, where students relate jurisprudential principles to their daily experiences, improved their capacity to accurately classify fiqh verdicts (Budiman et al., 2021). Similarly, Hussien et al. (2021) emphasise that Hikmah pedagogy—a philosophical, inquiry-based methodology, encourages students to enhance their critical thinking by assessing, categorising, and substantiating judgements within Islamic educational settings. Nonetheless, in the absence of regular engagement with contextual applications, students frequently find it challenging to classify jurisprudential notions beyond a superficial understanding. Thus, the integration of contextualisation and critical pedagogy is vital for enhancing comprehension among Islamic studies students, particularly in the classification of fiqh.

Ultimately, institutional preparedness and backing influence the efficacy of these tactics in improving understanding. Thomas et al. (2022) underscore that institutional frameworks—consisting of explicit strategic agendas, structural preparedness, and support—are essential in enhancing students' understanding and accurate classification in blended-learning environments. Moreover, Amemasor et al. (2025) underscore that even the most meticulously crafted pedagogies are ineffective if teacher training and infrastructure are insufficient. They emphasise that in the absence of an institutional culture that prioritises innovation, novel pedagogical methods, regardless of their potential, are improbable to last. The institutional culture that prioritises innovation in pedagogy frequently affects the sustainability of new teaching methods. Consequently, UiTM Shah Alam must maintain institutional preparedness to enable students to properly enhance their understanding of categorising fiqh jurisprudence. The literature indicates that Islamic studies students' understanding of fiqh classification is considerably affected by pedagogical and technological advancements. Firstly, updated and contextualised instructional materials improve students' capacity to classify jurisprudential decisions. Secondly, pedagogical methods like problem-based and inquiry-based learning promote enhanced understanding and critical involvement. Third, blended and digital learning offer resources that enhance students' capacity to structure and categorise fiqh classifications. Fourth, contextual techniques connect jurisprudential information to practical applications, so enhancing meaningful

understanding. Ultimately, institutional support and preparedness are essential for maintaining advancements in classification skills.

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a survey design involving Diploma in Islamic Studies and Education students (n=59) from the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, UiTM Shah Alam, selected through simple random sampling in line with Johanson and Brooks' (2010) recommendation for preliminary research. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire based on established *usul al-fiqh* literature to assess comprehension of fiqh categorisation. The responses were analysed using descriptive statistics in IBM SPSS Statistics, with Microsoft Excel used to support tabulation and presentation. This pilot investigation employed a basic random sampling procedure to guarantee that each student in the selected population had an equal opportunity for selection. In accordance with the recommendations of Johanson and Brooks (2010), who advocate for a minimum sample size of 30 to ensure stable parameter estimations in preliminary research, a total of 59 students were recruited, surpassing this threshold to improve dependability. *Table 1* illustrates that the sample consisted of 27 students from the Muamalat course and 32 students from the Halal Industrial Management curriculum, so encompassing viewpoints from two areas where fiqh principles are directly applicable. The gender distribution revealed that female students (n = 43) significantly exceeded male students (n = 16), illustrating the prevailing demographic trend of greater female enrolment in Islamic Studies. This composition establishes a solid basis for initial insights into students' understanding of fiqh categorisation, while also allowing for future research to increase the sample size and implement more stratified methodologies.

Table 1. Sample size of participants.

Category	Male	Female	Total
Academic program			
Muamalat	8	19	27
Halal industrial management	8	24	32
Total	16	43	59

The questionnaire for this study was meticulously designed to evaluate students' understanding of fiqh classification, utilising known literature in *usul al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence). *Table 2* illustrates that the questionnaire was organised such that each cluster of items aligns with a specific topic of fiqh categorisation, thereby encompassing the entirety of jurisprudential understanding. The initial domain, denoted by A1 and A2, investigates the categorisation and legitimacy of primary evidences (*al-thubut*, *al-dalalah*, *Qur'an*, *sunnah*, *ijma'*, *qiyas*), which constitute the fundamental ground for legal derivation (Nasrullah, 2021; Mirwan, 2020). The second area, addressed by A3 and A4, pertains to secondary sources and linguistic classifications, illustrating the interpretive instruments that students must acquire to correctly categorise verdicts within jurisprudential frameworks (Alghifari et al., 2024; Khan, 2018). The third area, illustrated in A5 and A6, examines methodological approaches across various *madhahib* and strategies for reconciling textual discrepancies, emphasising the comparative and analytical aspects of fiqh classification (Muthalib, 2023; Munir, 2022).

The fourth domain, examined in A7 and A8, encompasses advanced constructions such as *ijtihad*, *ikhtilaf*, *ittiba'*, *taqlid*, and *tatabbu' al-rukhas*, which investigate students' comprehension of juristic reasoning and scholarly dissent (Makhlouf, 2020; Ibrahim, 2016). A9 contextualises understanding within institutional implementation, evaluating students' awareness of the fatwa institution as a contemporary mechanism for applying jurisprudence to modern issues (Suhaimi et al., 2024). This design guarantees that the instrument is both content-valid and construct-valid, as each item set corresponds precisely to the conceptual domains of fiqh categorisation: textual foundations, interpretative tools, methodological principles, scholarly reasoning, and institutional application.

Table 2. *Questionnaire items on comprehension of fiqh categorisation.*

Code	Item	Reference
A1	Classification and characteristics of shariah evidences based on <i>al-thubut</i> (definitiveness of source) and <i>al-dalalah</i> (clarity of meaning)	Nasrullah (2021)
A2	The role and authoritativeness of primary sources of Islamic law such as the <i>Qur'an</i> , the <i>sunnah</i> , <i>ijma'</i> (consensus), and <i>qiyas</i> (analogy) in legal derivation (<i>istinbat al-hukm</i>)	Mirwan (2020)
A3	Concepts and application of legal sources such as <i>istishan</i> (juristic preference), <i>masalih al-mursalah</i> (consideration of public interest), <i>istishab</i> (presumption of continuity), <i>sadd al-zarai'</i> (blocking the means), ' <i>urf</i> (custom), <i>madhhab al-sahabi</i> (companion's opinion), and others	Khan (2018)
A4	The classification of wording in the <i>Qur'an</i> and <i>hadith</i> , and concepts such as ' <i>am</i> (general), <i>khas</i> (specific), <i>haqiqah</i> (literal), <i>majaz</i> (figurative), and <i>ta'wil</i> (interpretation)	Alghifari et al. (2024)
A5	Methods of legal derivation according to the <i>hanafi</i> and <i>shafi'i</i> schools, such as <i>ibarat al-nass</i> (explicit textual indication), <i>mafhum al-muwafaqah</i> (implied agreement), and <i>mafhum al-mukhalafah</i> (implied contradiction)	Munir (2022)
A6	Approaches to resolving contradictions between evidences, such as <i>naskh</i> (abrogation), <i>tarjih</i> (preference), and methods of reconciliation between texts	Muthalib (2023)
A7	The concept of <i>ijtihad</i> (independent reasoning), <i>ikhtilaf</i> (scholarly disagreement), and their implications in contemporary fiqh (jurisprudence)	Makhlouf (2020).
A8	The differences between <i>ittiba'</i> (following evidence), <i>taqlid</i> (blind following), and <i>tatabbu' al-rukhas</i> (pursuit of concessions), and their application in the practice of <i>madhhab</i> (school of thought)	Ibrahim (2016)
A9	The concept, pillars, and role of the fatwa institution in addressing contemporary issues	Suhaimi et al. (2024)

Results and Discussion

Table 3 illustrates the comprehension level of Islamic Studies students at UiTM Shah Alam in categorising fiqh jurisprudence, evaluated using nine evaluation items (A1–A9) utilising a five-point Likert scale from Poor (1) to Excellent (5) (Figure 1). The response distribution reveals that most students consistently self-rated between Good and Very Good across all categories, with percentages generally ranging from 39% to 52% in the Good category and from 30% to 39% in the Very Good category. For example, item A3 exhibited the highest percentage of Good replies (52.5%), although item A7 demonstrated an equal distribution between Good (39%) and Very Good (39%), indicating robust knowledge in that domain. In contrast, Excellent ratings were limited across all categories, varying from 1.7% to 15.3%, with A2 exhibiting the highest rating at 15.3%. Negative comments were scarce, with poor ratings occurring solely in A5 and A8. The chart indicates that students exhibit a generally robust understanding of fiqh classification, with their performance predominantly in the middle-high bands and a limited number attaining the greatest level of competence (chart 3).

Table 3. *Comprehension level in categorisation of fiqh jurisprudence among Islamic studies students of UiTM Shah Alam.*

Category	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent
A1	0	8	27	21	3

	Percentage (%)	0	13.6	45.8	35.6	5.1
A2	Frequency (N)	0	6	23	21	9
	Percentage (%)	0	10.2	39	35.6	15.3
A3	Frequency (N)	0	6	31	19	3
	Percentage (%)	0	10.2	52.5	32.2	5.1
A4	Frequency (N)	0	14	25	18	2
	Percentage (%)	0	23.7	42.4	30.5	3.4
A5	Frequency (N)	1	11	27	19	1
	Percentage (%)	1.7	18.6	45.8	32.2	1.7
A6	Frequency (N)	0	11	31	13	4
	Percentage (%)	0	18.6	52.5	22	6.8
A7	Frequency (N)	0	7	23	23	6
	Percentage (%)	0	11.9	39	39	10.2
A8	Frequency (N)	2	12	25	19	1
	Percentage (%)	3.4	20.3	42.4	32.2	1.7
A9	Frequency (N)	0	11	24	19	5
	Percentage (%)	0	18.6	40.7	32.2	8.5

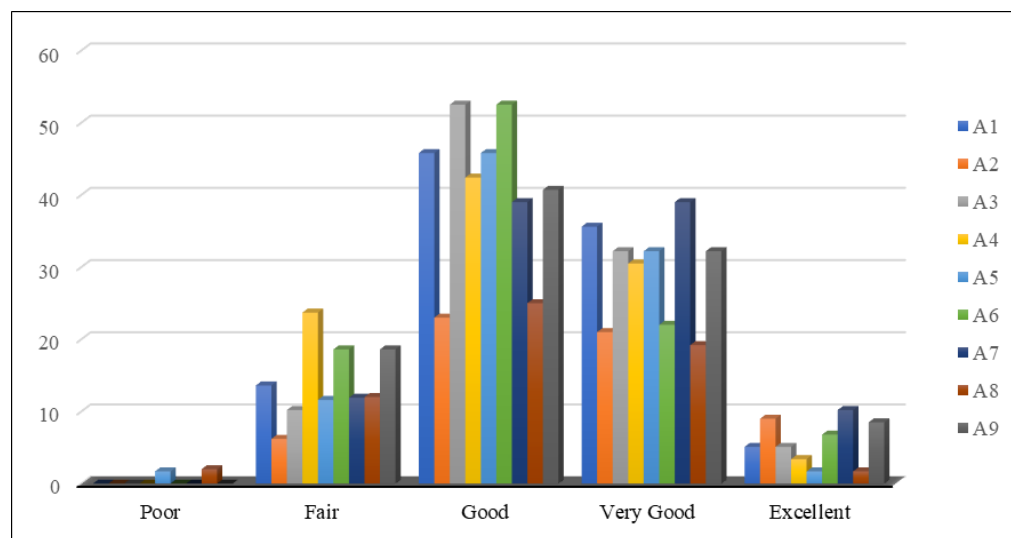


Figure 1. Comprehension level in categorisation of fiqh jurisprudence among Islamic studies students of UiTM Shah Alam.

The findings indicate that the understanding of Fiqh classification among UiTM Shah Alam students predominantly falls under the “Good” (39–52.5%) and “Very Good” (30–39%) categories, although the “Excellent” level is rather low (1.7–15.3%). This trend indicates that students possess a robust foundation in jurisprudence yet encounter difficulties in achieving advanced knowledge. A significant aspect affecting this tendency is students' preparedness to deal with sophisticated jurisprudential notions, which is largely contingent upon their underlying knowledge. Kamis et al. (2020) indicated that competency in Arabic is significantly associated with students' comprehension of Usul Fiqh terminology, potentially elucidating why certain learners stagnate at the intermediate level. Zahrawani et al. (2021) observed that challenges in understanding mathematical concepts impede students' comprehension of Fiqh Mawaris (inheritance law), emphasising how deficiencies in foundational disciplines influence performance outcomes. The plateau in Table 3, where numerous items like A3 and A6 achieve over 50% at the “Good” level but only approximately 5–7% at “Excellent”, indicates that instructional strategies may be bolstering competence without advancing students towards mastery. Pedagogical approaches that prioritise rote memorisation may guarantee fundamental understanding but do not promote advanced cognitive skills. Reskiani et al. (2022) contend that including modern challenges into the Fiqh curriculum increases its relevance and fosters greater participation, thereby remedying

this stagnation. Mardhiah et al. (2024) advocate for contextual teaching that integrates jurisprudence with contemporary concerns, enhancing both engagement and critical analysis. This aligns with the findings of A7, where an equitable distribution of “Good” and “Very Good” ratings (39% each) may indicate enhanced engagement when students relate Fiqh categories to contemporary circumstances.

The disparity in items within Table 3, exemplified by A2’s comparatively elevated “Excellent” rating of 15.3% versus A5’s 1.7%, demonstrates that certain topics are more accessible than others. This gap may be affected by the curriculum’s provision of clear examples and cultural relevance. Alsaadi et al. (2024) emphasise that contextualising Fiqh within the socio-cultural frameworks of students’ communities enhances relatability and facilitates successful categorisation of the content. Marinsah et al. (2024) similarly demonstrate that situating law within local contexts enhances understanding by enabling learners to recognise the practical significance of their studies. The more related and significant the job, the higher the probability of pupils transitioning from “Good” to “Excellent.” The limited incidence of “Poor” and “Fair” ratings, present solely in A5 and A8, suggests that UiTM students typically eschew the lowest levels of comprehension, indicative of excellent fundamental training. The restricted success in the highest category indicates that although students can classify jurisprudence, they may lack the intellectual depth necessary for mastery. This corresponds with extensive research indicating that curriculum design and pedagogical decisions profoundly influence learning results in Islamic Studies (Jazil et al., 2022). By incorporating inquiry-based methodologies, critical discourse, and interdisciplinary reinforcement, educators can establish conditions that enable a greater number of students to achieve “Excellent” comprehension. Recent Islamic education research indicates that digital and contextual teaching methodologies can significantly transform this process.

The results indicate overarching dynamics affecting the understanding of Fiqh categorisation at UiTM Shah Alam. Students have robust fundamental knowledge; nevertheless, deficiencies in Arabic and mathematics, along with pedagogical methods that emphasise rote learning rather than critical engagement, hinder the progression to mastery. Pedagogical innovations that incorporate modern themes, highlight contextual applicability, and adapt to students’ socio-cultural realities might elevate comprehension from “Good” to “Excellent.” Addressing these interrelated aspects comprehensively would ensure that students not only comprehend fiqh classification but can also apply it critically and meaningfully in both academic and real-world circumstances.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this preliminary study indicates that Islamic Studies students at UiTM Shah Alam possess a robust understanding of fiqh categorisation, primarily within the “Good” and “Very Good” ranges, but face challenges in attaining “Excellent” mastery, implying a necessity for pedagogical improvements to address this deficiency. The findings highlight the impact of fundamental abilities such as Arabic proficiency and mathematics comprehension, in conjunction with pedagogical approaches that frequently favour rote memorisation over critical analysis, as significant determinants constraining advanced competency. The study recommends implementing innovative instructional strategies, including contextual teaching and learning (CTL) models that link fiqh principles to contemporary issues and students’ experiences, as well as

incorporating game-based learning or the ADDIE framework to enhance engagement and analytical skills. Subsequent research ought to augment the sample size to encompass students from various programs and institutions throughout Malaysia, utilising stratified sampling to achieve a more comprehensive demographic representation, and integrating longitudinal designs to evaluate the enduring effects of these pedagogical interventions. Furthermore, investigating the impact of digital tools and AI-enhanced learning platforms on fiqh education may yield valuable insights into their efficacy. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, could reveal students' perceptions and obstacles, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding to enhance curriculum design and foster higher-order thinking in Islamic jurisprudence.

Acknowledgement

The author thanks the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, for technical support.

Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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