

**ISLAMIC EDUCATION FOR MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN
SINGAPORE: A CASE STUDY OF ANDALUS INSTITUTION**

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ISLAMIC EDUCATION FOR MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN SINGAPORE: A CASE STUDY OF ANDALUS INSTITUTION

ABSTRACT

Islamic education in the multi-racial, multi-religious and secular Singapore faces a multitude of challenges and problems that have existed for decades. There are basically three major areas of concerns on the subject matter. First, the dualistic and non-integrated education system, inherited from the colonial era that involve profound philosophical and conceptual ramifications that resulted in the serious confusion on the true meaning and purpose of Islamic education. Secondly, the issue of authority and leadership with regards to the administration of Islamic education in a secular State. Thirdly, the rapidly and continuously changing global city, the societies as well as the complexities involved and its resultant effect on Islamic education. The position of the secular State with regards to Islamic education in general, has to do with the long historical tradition and policies the authority has adopted since independence; not only to studies relating to Islam but to other religious beliefs. This thesis postulates however, the fundamental challenge to Islamic education is not the secular nature of the State and the policies of the government on matters pertaining but secularization as a philosophical program that affects the mind, soul, values and learning by the Muslim individuals and the community. Thus, the Muslim intelligentsia and leadership ought to understand these problems profoundly in order to guide the community at large to have realistic and positive engagements with the relevant authorities with regards to Islamic education. Although the challenges mentioned seem overwhelming, the Muslims in Singapore has the rare but golden opportunity to prove that it has the commitment, conviction and capability to make positive changes and transformations with regards to Islamic education. Andalus as a private educational institution which is the case study of this thesis has shown that this is possible. The case

study that covers over a period of 19 years from 1996 to 2015, showed that educational institution has grown significantly across the island. Andalus offers part-time Islamic education in a structured and systematic manner for about 10,500 students from nursery to diploma level and the student number has kept increasing. This case study provides a comprehensive analyses on the success factors of Andalus, based on the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) framework and envisage a scenario that a successful Islamic educational institution for the indigenous Muslim minority in Singapore is naturally, advantageous for both the community and the State. The key elements for the design and implementation for the case study, encompassing the research questions, propositions, data analysis as well as explorations via multitude of lenses are addressed via this framework. Finally, the thesis forwards a prognosis of the future on Islamic education in Singapore by providing clear pathways, focusing on the priorities, optimizing the resources and expertise and thereafter, mobilizing them in the most effective ways. These would eventually equip the Muslims with the capabilities and confidence to overcome eventually, the challenges mentioned earlier. Thereafter, Islamic education would be firmly established based on proper foundations and worldview as well as adopting a framework for an excellent organization, deemed suitable for the country.

PENDIDIKAN ISLAM UNTUK MASYARAKAT MUSLIM DI SINGAPURA: KAJIAN KES INSTITUSI ANDALUS

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Islam dalam konteks pelbagai bangsa dan pelbagai agama di negara sekular Singapura, menghadapi pelbagai cabaran dan permasalahan yang wujud secara berlarutan sejak berdekad-dekad. Terdapat tiga daerah keprihatinan utama dalam ehwal berkenaan. Pertama, sistem pendidikan dualisma bersifat tidak sepadu yang wujud sejak era penjajahan, melibatkan isu-isu mendasar dan kompleks dari aspek-aspek falsafah dan konseptual sehingga berlaku kekeliruan serius berkaitan makna dan tujuan sebenar pendidikan Islam. Kedua, isu otoriti dan kepimpinan berhubungan pentadbiran pendidikan Islam dalam negara sekular. Ketiga, perubahan ketara dan berterusan dalam kota global, masyarakat dan pelbagai kerumitan berkaitan sehingga memberi kesan kepada pendidikan Islam. Dasar pemerintah sekular berkaitan pendidikan Islam secara am, mewarisi tradisi dan polisi pihak berwajib sejak kemerdekaan; bukan terhad kepada pengajian Islam malahan ugama-ugama lain. Tesis ini mengutarakan bahawa cabaran pokok kepada pendidikan Islam bukan kerana dasar sekular negara dan polisi-polisi pemerintah dalam hal-hal berkaitan, tetapi sekularisasi sebagai program falsafah yang mempengaruhi pemikiran, jiwa, nilai dan pendidikan individu dan masyarakat Islam. Maka, para cendekiawan dan kepimpinan Muslim harus memahami permasalahan ini secara mendalam agar dapat membimbing masyarakat Islam supaya berinteraksi secara realistik dan positif dengan pihak-pihak berwajib dalam ehwal pendidikan Islam. Walaupun cabaran-cabaran yang disebutkan amat besar, masyarakat Islam di Singapura mempunyai kesempatan dan peluang keemasan untuk membuktikan ia memiliki kesungguhan, keyakinan dan keupayaan untuk mengakibatkan perubahan positif dan transformasi dalam ehwal pendidikan Islam. Andalus sebuah institusi pendidikan swasta

sebagai kajian kes tesis ini membuktikan bahawa ini boleh berlaku. Kajian kes yang merangkumi tempoh 19 tahun, dari 1996 sehingga 2015, menunjukkan bahawa institusi pendidikan ini berkembang dengan ketara di merata pulau ini. Andalus menyediakan pendidikan Islam secara sambilan dari tahap nurseri sehingga diploma secara berstruktur dan sistematik untuk sekitar 10,500 pelajar dan jumlah pelajar ini terus meningkat. Kajian kes ini menganalisa secara komprehensif faktor-faktor kejayaan Andalus berdasarkan kerangka *Singapore Quality Class* (SQC) dan memberi gambaran sebuah institusi pendidikan Islam berjaya untuk masyarakat pribumi minoriti sehingga mendatangkan kebaikan bagi masyarakat dan negara. Ciri-ciri teras desain dan pelaksanaan kajian kes, merangkumi soalan-soalan kajian, pernyataan, analisa data serta penelitian melalui pelbagai lensa diberi perhatian dalam kerangka ini. Akhir sekali, tesis ini memberi peramalan (*prognosis*) masadepan pendidikan Islam di Singapura dengan mengemukakan laluan-laluan jelas, memberi fokus kepada hal-hal utama, mengoptimum sumber dan kepakaran dan memanfaatkannya secara terbaik. Ini semua memberi keupayaan dan keyakinan kepada masyarakat Islam agar dapat mengatasi secara bertahap cabaran-cabaran yang disebutkan lebih awal. Urutan dari ini, pendidikan Islam boleh dibangunkan berpaksikan dasar-dasar dan pandang alam bertepatan serta memanfaatkan kerangka institusi pendidikan cemerlang yang bersesuaian dengan negara ini.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APIUM	:	Akademi Pengajian Islam Universiti Malaya [Academy of Islamic Studies, Malaya University]
ACTA	:	Advance Certificate in Training and Assessment
ADDIE	:	Analyse, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate
aLIVE	:	Learning Islamic Values Everyday
AMLA	:	Administration of Muslim Law Act
AP	:	Action Plan
ATO	:	Approved Training Organisation
BAP	:	Bengkel Asas Perguruan [Basic Teachers' Training]
BE	:	Business Excellence
BH	:	Berita Harian
BOD	:	Board of Directors
BPLL	:	Business, Performance, Learning, Learners
CASIS	:	Centre for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science, and Civilisation
CE	:	Compulsory Education
C.E.	:	Common Era
CIR	:	Critical Incident Report
CSB	:	Customer Service Blueprint
DACE	:	Diploma in Adult Continuing Education
DPPI	:	Diploma Perguruan Pendidikan Islam [Diploma in Teaching of Islamic Studies]
DST	:	Digital Story Telling
EDGE	:	Executive Development and Growth for Excellence
FGS	:	Focus Group Sessions
HRD	:	Human Resource Development

HRM	:	Human Resource Management
IPC	:	Institute of Public Character
JMS	:	Joint Madrasah System
KRA	:	Key Result Area
LDP	:	Leadership Development Platform
LBKM	:	Lembaga Biasiswa Kenangan Maulud [Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) Bursary and Scholarship Board]
MMC	:	Madrasah Management Committee
MOE	:	Ministry of Education
MUIS	:	Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura
MOM	:	Ministry of Manpower
NIE	:	National Institute of Education
NLP	:	Neuro Linguistic Program
NTU	:	Nanyang Technological University
PIENET	:	Private Islamic Education Network
PMS	:	Performance Management System
PWP	:	Pertemuan Waris Pelajar [Parents Meet Teachers]
WSQ	:	Workforce Skills Qualifications
WIM	:	Wadah Integrasi Minda [Platform for Mindset Integration]
SOP	:	Standard Operating Procedures
SME	:	Subject Matter Expert
SMS	:	Short Messaging System
SPH	:	Singapore Press Holdings
SRP	:	Strategic Review and Planning
SSS	:	Staff Suggestion Scheme
SPH	:	Singapore Press Holding

SQC	:	Singapore Quality Class
TNA	:	Training Needs Analysis
TCTP	:	Total Company Training Plan
UIKA	:	Universitas Ibn Khaldun
UM	:	Universiti Malaya
UTM	:	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
WDA	:	Workforce Development Agency
WP	:	Work Plan

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Colonization and its Consequences

Prior to the British colonization of Singapore, the island was largely populated by the indigenous Malays who were homogenously Muslims. Being part of Malaya, in the Malay Archipelago, the Malay identity in Singapore had been shaped for hundreds of years by Islam and the Malay language, culture and tradition which were in many ways similar with other Malays in the region.¹ With the British dominance however from 1819 to 1965 and as the colonial master for about 146 years, the population demography on this tiny island changed gradually but significantly with both the invitation offer from the British as well as the voluntary coming of the migrant workers, mostly from China and India.² From being a majority population prior to the coming of the British and before the separation from the Malay Peninsula in 1965,³ the Malays in

¹ On the coming of Islam to the Malay world, the researcher had adopted largely, the views of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. Although there were many diverse and conflicting views by different scholars on the subject, the researcher considers Al-Attas to be authoritative enough and a well-respected scholar by many in these areas; as well as to delimit the debates on matters pertaining in relation to this thesis. Please see, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. (1969). *Preliminary statement on a general theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka; Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. (2011). *Historical Fact and Fiction*. Johor Bahru: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Press.

² The coming of the European powers namely the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish and British to the Malay world and later resulting in the immigrants from China and India particularly in Malaya, requires a comprehensive treatment of its own. The trading port in Singapore established by the British proved to be successful and attracted large numbers of Chinese migrants came mostly from Southern China to escape economic hardship at home and in search of better opportunities. The Indians also came in large numbers from Southern India and became Singapore's second-largest immigrant community. After 1825, the British handed Bencoolen on Sumatra to the Dutch and brought thousands of Indian prisoners to Singapore to construct buildings and clearing the lands. Upon completing their sentences, many of the Indians stayed in Singapore as free men. See Frommer. History. Retrieved from <http://www.frommers.com/destinations/singapore/677256#ixzz4814FFXVN>; Carolina Lopez. C. (2001). The British presence in the Malay world: a meeting of civilizational traditions. *Sari*, 19, 3-22. Selangor: Institut Kajian Malaysia dan Antarabangsa (IKMAS), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

³ Singapore separated from Malaysia on 9 August 1965 to become an independent state after a union of less than 23 months. This was largely due to deep political and economic differences between the ruling parties of Singapore and Malaysia. See History.SG. Singapore separates from Malaysia and becomes independent. Retrieved from <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/history/events/dc1efe7a-8159-40b2-9244-cdb078755013>.

Singapore had been reduced considerably into a minority community now representing only 13% of the population.⁴

The British had not only influenced and caused the significant change of the population demography, more importantly; they had introduced a profound, foundational and metaphysical shift in the worldview and believe systems that were unknown to Islam and Malay culture called secularism.⁵ Secularism brought about by the European powers into the Malay world had impacted not only Malays and Muslims, but also other races and their religious beliefs. This worldview and believe system were considered alien initially but progressively encroached, influenced and subsequently determined major and crucial areas of the Malay life such as religion, education, culture, economy and others. These were planned in both implicit and explicit manners and carried out progressively and continuously via various channels such as political, constitutional, legal, religious, social and especially education. It is important to note, the legacy of the colonial masters particularly by British and other western secular powers, particularly in relation to secularism was very deep rooted and resulting in the deep seated problems for Muslims in Singapore and for Muslims in most if not all countries, that were once colonized, over vast areas and for hundreds of years.

Secularism is basically a Western Christian worldview embraced by the Europeans largely as a result of their historical, religious, cultural and political upheavals and these phenomenon were very alien to Islam and Muslims. These had caused significant confusion from spiritual, rational and almost all aspects of life of the

⁴ Department of Statistic Singapore. Population Trends 2015. Retrieved from http://www.singstat.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/publications_and_papers/population_and_population_structure/population2015.pdf. Hereafter called Population Trends 2015.

⁵ For a detailed exposition and profound discourse on secularism particularly in relation to knowledge and education, please read Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. (1978). *Islam and secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM); Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. (1989). *Aims and objectives of education*. Jeddah: Hodder and Stoughton; Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. (1989). *Islam and the philosophy of science*. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC); Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (1998). *The educational philosophy and practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas: an exposition of the original concept of Islamization*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC. 121-132.

Muslims who had been colonized for hundreds of years.⁶ This will be deliberated more in Chapter 3.

1.1.2 Nation Building and Key Prerogatives

The current government, having embraced and continued significant aspects of the colonial legacy and in particular the secular nature of governance, must safeguard the political, constitutional and judicial systems as well as, the multitude of policies in order to be transparent, fair and just to all racial and religious groups; comprising of citizens and non-citizens. It has also to vouchsafe the needs and interests of the multitude and varying interests of the multi-culture and multi-religious societies and communities.

For the last 50 years, after independence in 1965 until now, it is apparent, this government has by and large been successful in administering this tiny metropolis to be an exemplary model country particularly in this part of the world and is oft-quoted by many developing and developed countries to be emulated for its par excellence nation building efforts and well-being of the population. Singapore prides itself to be a thriving global cosmopolitan city-state that provides abundant and optimal opportunities for its own citizen as well attracting multitude of foreign talents from various countries and diverse backgrounds.

By the year 2015, the total population in this tiny island is about 5.5 million which comprises of Singapore citizens, permanent residents and non-residents. From this number, 3.3 million (60%) are citizens and 2.2 million (40%) are non-citizens.

⁶ The British and the French ruled over vast Muslim territories in Africa, Asia and the Arab world. The Germans, Spanish, Portuguese and Russians held Muslim territories in East Africa, the Philippines, Malaya (what is now known as Malaysia), the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Dutch ruled over territories that later became Indonesia. See S.V.R. Nasr. European colonialism and the emergence of modern Muslim states. Oxford Islamic Studies Online. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/book/islam-9780195107999/islam-9780195107999-chapter-13>; For a good discourse on the Islam and modernity as well as the role of religious leaders, see Mumtaz Ahmad. (2013, Mar). Religious scholars in the modern world. Paper presented at the Madrasah Convention by Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS).

Muslims are now the minority and make up about 13% of the whole population or 715,000 in terms of absolute numbers.⁷

The country invests significantly in education and the highest only after the military expenditures.⁸ It vaunts several world class universities and education system as well as other services like finance, banking, healthcare, tourism, among others. The government investment arm like Temasek Holdings has large and healthy investments in local government linked companies (GLCs) as well as investments in neighboring countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Thailand and several other countries, mostly in Asia. Meanwhile, another government investment arm GIC, focuses on wider global interests like China, India, US, Europe and elsewhere.⁹ As such, Singapore needs and continues to establish excellent international relationships with the Muslim majority and Muslim minorities' countries, largely through arrays of foreign services as well as trade missions. Chapter 2 will discuss the above, with greater details giving particular attention on the development of Islamic education in Singapore over the years before, during and after independence, taking into consideration the indigenous minority Muslim status as well as ever increasing challenges in a global city.

1.1.3 Major Challenges Faced by the Muslim Community

It has been widely acknowledged currently, that the basic needs and interests of the population including the Muslims citizens such as housing, education, employment, health and other key areas are by and large, well taken off by the government. However,

⁷ Population Trends 2015. *op. cit.*

⁸ For the budget allocations in relations to education in particular, please see Budget 2015. Analysis of revenue and expenditure, Financial Year 2015. Retrieved from http://www.singaporebudget.gov.sg/data/budget_2015/download/FY2015_Analysis_of_Revenue_and_Expenditure.pdf

⁹ Temasek Holdings Pte Ltd (or Temasek) owns and commercially manage investments and assets previously held by the Singapore Government. Temasek is also an investment company with a global portfolio and manages its investments. See Temasek. Retrieved from <http://www.temasek.com.sg/>; GIC Private Limited (or GIC), formerly known as Government of Singapore Investment Corporation, is a sovereign wealth fund to manage Singapore's foreign reserves. Its mission is to preserve and enhance the international purchasing power of the reserves, with the aim to achieve good long-term returns. See GIC. Securing Singapore's Financial Future. Retrieved from <http://gichistory.gic.com.sg/>

there are substantial concerns and significant improvements needed for the religious understanding and practice of Islam. In addition, the lower than national benchmarks for capabilities, performances and attainments in terms of education and employment as well as the persistent social ills such as drug and substance abuse, unemployment, divorce and dysfunctional families, involving the Muslims are still a perennial cause of concern.

The six full time madrasahs (thereafter called madrasahs) currently admits about 3,460 students representing only about 5% of the total school going Muslim children.¹⁰ While the other 95% of these school going Muslim children, would seek Islamic education elsewhere such as the mosques, Muslim organizations and a growing number of Muslim private educational service providers. Based on the study by MUIS, from a total of 89,000 Muslim children between ages of 7 to 16, only 40% or about 35,600 of them attend formal Islamic education.¹¹ The other 60% or about 53,400 of these children were not accounted for, as far as Islamic education was concerned. Even a larger percentage of youths and adults from the ages of 17 years and above, had not been identified to have undergone formal or structured Islamic education.

In the committee report ‘Musyawwarah Conversation with the community. Committee Report 2013’, the following concerning religious education was noted:

Many participants are convinced that if members of the community truly understood Islamic teachings and values and embraced the faith as a way of life, then many of the social challenges which affect the community — for example drug abuse, dysfunctional families and educational underachievement — would be significantly reduced. They also pointed out that the concept of *Fardhu Kifayah* makes it an obligation for members of the community who are able, to help contribute to the development of the community and the country at large. Consequently

¹⁰ Ministry of Education Singapore. Education Statistic Digest 2015. 15. Hereafter referred to as Education Statistic Digest 2015.

¹¹ The survey was carried out in 2014 by MUIS’s endorsed Private Islamic Education Network (PIENet), indicated from the 35,600 Muslim children attending formal religious classes, about 20,400 attend classes by private service providers and Muslim organisations, 11,400 attended MUIS aLIVE and 3,900 attended the mosque madrasah. See Belajaragamaok.com. Retrieved from <http://www.belajaragamaok.com/news-3/>. Hereafter referred to as MUIS survey 2014.

the shared faith of the community has the potential to make the community an asset to the country. Concerns were expressed by some that religious values or practices were diminishing among certain segments of our community, for example the more socially vulnerable groups.¹²

It is common knowledge that the Malays are largely under-represented in educational and professional achievements. According to a report by the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP) in 2012, over the last decade the community was beleaguered with the same three core issues of low-income families, high divorce and drug abuse rates, which have since become more multifaceted.¹³ Although the Muslim community was continually reminded by the politicians in the government of the noteworthy progress it has made in the past decades, yet in a perception survey commissioned by AMP in 2012, only 31% of the respondents felt that the state of the Muslim community in Singapore has improved in the last five years. A majority of the respondents (59%) felt that there has been no change.¹⁴ The challenges with regards to Islamic education and social problems mentioned above may be due to complex and multifaceted factors. Some amount of exasperation may be noted in the said AMP report:

In the past few years, newer issues have emerged. The effect of long-term unemployment and reliance on assistance on the esteem and sense of efficacy of family members, especially the head of the family, is becoming increasingly apparent. Members of households who have tried to be self-sufficient but failed to do so due to unemployment or insufficient income to meet the family's growing needs will resign to

¹² See the report 'Musyawwarah Conversation with the community. Committee Report 2013.' 15-16. Hereafter referred to as "Musyawwarah Conversation with the community. Committee Report 2013". Minister in-charge of Muslim Affairs, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, endorsed the formation of the independent, non-partisan committee to engage the Malay/Muslim community and gather feedback on the community's thoughts, concerns and aspirations. The committee's main role was to tap on the collective wisdom and experience of the community and form a broad consensus on the issues in order to chart a course for the future of the Muslims in the island.

¹³ See the report by the Association of Muslim Professional (AMP). (2012). The next decade – strengthening our community architecture. 3rd National Convention of Muslim Professional, Singapore. 67-84. Hereafter referred to as 3rd National Convention of Muslim Professional, Singapore 2012.

¹⁴ See Suriani Suratman. (2004, Jun). *Problematic Singapore Malays – The making of a portrayal*. Paper presented at the International Symposium on Thinking Malayness by the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA), Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS).

being dependent on assistance. This then brings about a sense of helplessness and, in time, hopelessness. The children of the family, being firsthand witnesses to their parents' deteriorating sense of self-efficacy, will adopt and internalize the same attitude. In due course, they themselves lose their own sense of belief and start to underperform.¹⁵

1.1.4 Secularism as a Philosophical Program

The problems mentioned above are largely in relation to Islamic education and social concerns. However, the researcher believes that there are deep seated issues and fundamental problems that had caused and resulted in the above phenomenon. These are profound concerns at the philosophical and conceptual levels, faced by the community that have resulted in such proverbial long lasting problems and predicaments. Until and unless these profound concerns are resolved substantively and successfully, the problems are there to remain.

This particular major and profound underpinning concern which is metaphysical in nature is secularization as a philosophical program, brought about by the British and the legacy continued by the current government resulting in these serious and perennial predicaments.¹⁶ According to al-Attas, "But the philosophical and scientific process which I call 'secularization' necessarily involve the divesting of spiritual meaning from the world of nature; desacralization of politics from human affairs; and the deconsecration of values from human mind and conduct."¹⁷ This problem has resulted in the confusion of knowledge and the inability to place matters in its proper places or *loss of adab*, among the affected general population from various racial and religious affiliations including the Muslims.

¹⁵ 3rd National Convention of Muslim Professional, Singapore 2012. *op. cit.*, 67-84.

¹⁶ The detailed exposition of the issues related to secularization as a philosophical program via-a-vis the Western world and Christianity is indeed overwhelmingly complex and tedious. These require extensive knowledge, expertise and rather lengthy discourse. The researcher would like to delimit such discourse to the impact of the above to the Muslims and in particular Islamic education, as a consequence of colonization. See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. (1978). *op. cit.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Preface to the second printing (1993). xvi.

The researcher has adopted the philosophical, conceptual framework and perspectives to address this particular concern based on his reading, understanding and reflections over the years from the works and the discourses by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and elucidated by Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud Wan Daud.¹⁸ Thus, according to Al-Attas, educational, intellectual and civilizational problems were largely due to factors that are both external and internal. The external factors were caused by political, cultural and religious hegemony introduced by the western culture and civilization for hundreds of years on the peoples in the colonized lands. Even after many of the colonized lands have gained independence and the peoples granted freedom for the last 50 years at least, the western supremacy and domination agenda still permeated, pursued and inherited until today. Concurrently, the internal factors were due to the consequential or resultant intrinsic metaphysical control in the minds and hearts of the once-colonized peoples leading to confusion and error in the meaning and application of knowledge resulting in the *loss of adab*. These in turn lead to the rise of unqualified and false leaders in all fields and perpetuated the problems. Regarding the internal problem and to quote al-Attas at some length:

As to the internal causes of the dilemma in which we find ourselves, the basic problems can – it seems to me – be reduced to a single evident crisis which I would simply call the *loss of adab*. I am here referring to the loss of *discipline* – the discipline of body, mind, and soul; the discipline that assures the recognition and acknowledgement of one's proper place in relation to one's self, society and Community; the recognition and acknowledgement of one's proper place in relation to one's physical intellectual, and spiritual capacities and potentials; the recognition and acknowledgement of the fact that knowledge and being are ordered hierarchically. Since *adab* refers to *recognition* and *acknowledgement* of the right and proper place, station, and condition in life and to self-discipline in positive and willing participation in enacting one's role in accordance with that recognition and acknowledgement, its occurrence in one and in society as a whole reflects the condition of justice. Loss of *adab* implies loss of justice, which in turn betrays confusion in knowledge. In respect of the society and community, the confusion in knowledge of Islam and the Islamic world view creates the condition which enables false leaders to emerge and to thrive causing the condition of injustice.

¹⁸ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. (1978, 1989). *op. cit.*; Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (1998). *op. cit.*

They perpetuate this condition since it ensures the continued emergence of leaders like them to replace them after they are gone perpetuating their domination over the affairs of the Community.¹⁹

The researcher needs to emphasize and make it evidently clear that secularism adopted by the State in terms of the constitution, governance and legalities are not the fundamental or the crux of the issue here, bearing in mind the context, expectations and sensitivities concerned vis-à-vis the multi-religious, multi-racial and matters pertaining.²⁰ The subject of concern that is relevant and will be elaborated in this thesis is secularization as a philosophical program that affects the way of knowing, and thus experiencing life of a Muslim as an individual, a member of the community, society as well as a citizen of the state. Chapter 3 will provide a detailed exposition on the background, meaning and impact of secularization as a philosophical program and the dynamics in the multiracial society and in particular on Islamic education. In this chapter, the researcher took the opportunity to highlight a controversial issue and the debates pertaining to the introduction of the Compulsory Education (CE) in relation to Islamic education. The selective and preferential treatment given by the secular State to Christian missionary schools and the Special Aided Plan (SAP) schools are discussed within the context of CE. In addition, comparisons will be made on the impact of secularization as a philosophical program on Islamic education in selected Muslim countries. Thereafter, main causes of the above issues, controversies are discussed at some length.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰ See Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act (Chapter 167A), Original Enactment: Act 26 of 1990. Revised Edition 2001. Singapore Statutes Online. Retrieved from <http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/aol/search/display/view.w3p?page=0;query=DocId%3A77026343-e30d-40e2-a32e-b1f5d46c5bd7%20%20Status%3Ainforce%20Depth%3A0;rec=0>. Hereafter referred to as Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act (Chapter 167A); Also, please read very different and divergent perspectives on matters pertaining by Lily Zubaidah Rahim. (2009). Governing Islam and regulating Muslims in Singapore's secular authoritarian State. Working Paper No.156, University of Sydney.

1.1.5 Andalus as the Case Study

As a follow up to the earlier chapters, Chapter 4 elaborates in significant details how a private educational entity, namely Andalus Corporation Pte Ltd (subsequently referred to as Andalus) which is the case study of this thesis, managed to take roots in Singapore and then gradually expand its services progressively and significantly over a period about 19 years, from 1996 to 2015. In what ways, Andalus played relevant roles and contributed strategically and effectively to the local Islamic education landscape? How was it possible for Andalus to gain traction and gradually acceptance as well as recognition from the local Muslim society, intelligentsia and leadership? In what ways, Andalus existence and contributions fit into the secular environment and appropriate itself to the permutations and the challenges that permeates? Could Andalus be a suitable model for Muslim minorities in other secular States? Andalus started very modestly in 1996 in a rented classroom with about 30 part-time students only. After about 19 years in existence and by 2015, Andalus has gained tremendous acceptance from the community and currently has about 10,500 students in 17 locations across the tiny island. It provides Islamic educational programs on part-time basis from pre-school to diploma levels, mostly on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) and during the late afternoons and early evenings during the weekdays. These students attend normal conventional schools during weekdays or they are working adults. Andalus has sister educational institutions namely Cordova Education Centre Pte Ltd (subsequently referred to as Cordova) and Institut Pengajian Tinggi Al-Zuhri (subsequently referred to as al-Zuhri); both were established since 1999 and currently have an additional 4,000 students. From a current total students' population of 14,500 students, these group of educational institutions has targeted a total enrolment of 40,000 (about 10% of the Malay population) students by 2025 providing education from pre-school until postgraduate levels mostly on part-time basis and much fewer in number of students, on

full-time basis. Darul Andalus Pte Ltd (subsequently referred to as Darul Andalus), a book publishing arm was also established in early 2000 and has successfully published textbooks from pre-school to tertiary levels to be used in Andalus, Cordova, Al-Zuhri and other educational institutions locally and abroad.

Andalus was awarded the Approved Training Organization (ATO) by Workforce Development Agency (WDA) in 2008, a government agency, for its capabilities to develop and conduct trainings in prescribed manners.²¹ More importantly, Andalus was also awarded the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) accreditation in 2015 by Spring Singapore, another government agency for credible corporate governance. This certification was first introduced in 1997 by the said government agency to enhance the various types of performances and services rendered; and as such most, if not all, government and government linked institutions which include the universities, polytechnics, junior colleges and schools have adopted this qualification. Many among the established companies in the private sectors followed suite and obtained similar accreditation.²² It is interesting and noteworthy to mention that Andalus was the first and to-date, the only Muslim private enterprise in Singapore that was granted the SQC certification. More details about Andalus as a case study of this thesis will be deliberated in Chapter 4.

The researcher in his MA dissertation has written “The role of madrasah education in Singapore: A study on the philosophy and practice of madrasah education in secular State and plural society”.²³ This PhD thesis is a continuation and an extension of the earlier study, providing wider coverage, in-depth study and putting Andalus into context as a case study. Thus, the researcher hopes to acquire more extensive, in-depth

²¹ For details see, Workforce Development Agency (WDA) website. Retrieved from <http://www.wda.gov.sg/content/wdawebiste/L209-001About-Us/L209A-History.html>

²² See SPRING Singapore. Retrieved from <http://www.spring.gov.sg/About-Us/Pages/spring-singapore.aspx>.

²³ Abdullah Othman. (2007). *The role of madrasah education in Singapore: A study on the philosophy and practice of madrasah education in secular State and plural society*. (Unpublished master’s thesis). International Islamic University Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

and profound body of knowledge towards improving Islamic education for the Muslim minority community in the country.

1.2 Definition of Key Terms

At this juncture, it would be important to provide the specific operational definitions of the key terms, particularly in relation to the title of the thesis. Operational definitions allows the observations and measurements of several phenomenon, objectively and consistently across several contexts, so that their outcomes can be analysed, interpreted and benchmarked.²⁴ The thesis is titled, “Islamic Education for Muslim Community in Singapore: A Case Study of Andalus Institution”. It is important therefore, to frame these definitions within the context of the thesis to ensure relevancy and thus realizing the main objectives. Further elaborations of the key terms and the context of the discussions on the issues relating to the key terms, are deliberated comprehensively throughout in the thesis.

‘Islamic Education’ in this thesis, refers to the teaching and learning of Islam. It also refers to the meaning and purpose of acquiring knowledge in close relation to the revelation, as the prerequisites towards understanding and practicing the religion of Islam.²⁵ In the context of this thesis, Islamic Education will focus on the revealed knowledge and related disciplines. As such, it will not encompass or include, all the classifications and branches of knowledge that are normally taught in conventional secular educational institutions.

‘Muslim community’ refers to the Muslim population residing in Singapore.

This thesis however, provides significant emphasis and focus on the indigenous Malay

²⁴ For further discussions and comparisons regarding operational definition, please see, Mike Fisher, et al. (2017). *Operational definitions for WaSH monitoring and evaluation*. North Carolina, The Water Institute, University of North Carolina (UNC); National Association of County and City Health Officials. (2005). *Operational definition of a functional local health*. Washington, DC.

²⁵ There are a diverse and varying views on the definition of Islamic education. For some authoritative examples on the definition of Islamic education, please see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. (1989). *Aims and objectives of education*. Jeddah: Hodder and Stoughton; Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (1989). *The concept of knowledge in Islam: It's implication for education in a developing country*. New York and London.

Muslims that are the vast majority, in terms of the demography of the Muslim population in the country. The indigenous Malay Muslim community also has very long historical roots and traditions in relation to Islamic education, as well as have special position enshrined in the Singapore constitution regarding its political, educational, religious, economic, social and cultural interests.²⁶ Thus, this thesis will not elaborate on the Islamic education for the non-Malay Muslim segment amongst the Muslim community or the Muslim migrant workers that came many years after the independence. It is also necessary to delimit the scope as well as, provide direct co-relation with the case study that focus largely on the indigenous Malay-Muslim population. The study on the Islamic education for the non-Malay Muslim population, is a huge area and merit a separate research of its own.

The 'case study' refers to the use of a qualitative research approach to obtain an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon, where a variety of techniques may be employed to describe the events. The case study would provide valid and reliable data as well as results and analyses that may be referred to objectively and accurately for future studies.²⁷ In the context of this thesis, the case study was based on the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) framework with the relevant instruments that were crafted and endorsed by Spring Singapore, a dedicated agency within the Singapore government. The SQC framework and accreditation has been employed by government bodies, including most educational institutions as well as non-government entities.²⁸ Since the

²⁶ Article 152 and 153, revised edition 1999 (1st July 1999). *The statutes of the Republic of Singapore*. Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Chapter const).

²⁷ For a good and succinct overview of the case study methodologies, please see Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/2>. Also see, Zaidah Zainal. (2007, Jun). Case study as a research method. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*. 9. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Faculty of Management and Human Resource Development. Retrieved from http://psyking.net/htmlobj-3837/case_study_as_a_research_method.pdf

²⁸ SPRING is a government agency that sets national standards and accreditation body. Internationally-recognized standards and quality assurance infrastructure are among the keys areas of interest and responsibilities. See SPRING Singapore. Retrieved from

SQC accreditation was awarded to Andalus in 2015, the data and analyses provided on Andalus as the case study for this thesis, was until that particular year.²⁹ Subsequent and detailed studies on Andalus after that year would very useful indeed.

‘Andalus institution’ refers to the educational entity that provides Islamic education for the Malay Muslim community in Singapore. ‘Andalus’ is a name in commemoration of the great Islamic civilization in the ancient Iberian Peninsula that lasted for about 700 years. While ‘institution’ refers to an organization that focus its objectives and resources towards providing Islamic education. Thus, this thesis will focus on the Andalus institution as the case study, towards achieving high performing organization, dedicated for the Muslim community in Singapore, based on the SQC framework.

After the specific operational definition of the key terms in the title of thesis and the context of these terms, for the remaining of this chapter, the researcher will elaborate on the important and significant areas of the thesis such as the problem statement, objectives of study, literature review, research methodology and delimitation of the study.

1.3 Problem Statements

Islamic education in a multi-racial, multi-religious and secular Singapore faces a multitude of challenges and problems that have existed for decades with no clear resolutions.³⁰ There are basically three major areas of concerns on the subject matter.

<http://www.spring.gov.sg/About-Us/Pages/spring-singapore.aspx>. Hereafter referred to as SPRING Singapore. For the attributes for high performing organization, please see Business Excellence Framework from Spring Singapore. Retrieved from (http://www.spring.gov.sg/Building-Trust/Business-Excellence/Apply-for-a-BE-Certification-Award/BE-Awards/Documents/BE_Framework.pdf....).

²⁹ Please see the Assessment Report on Andalus Corporation Pte Ltd (Spring/SQC/150085 September 2015 Report) in Appendix A-2. 235. Hereafter called Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report.

³⁰ These issues have been discussed by the national and community leaders since five decades ago. Unfortunately until today, there are no clear direction and vision with regards to Islamic education that are unanimously agreed and accepted by the vast majority of the community. For a background understanding of these issues, please see Ahmad Mohd Ibrahim. (1966, Sep). *Islamic Education in*

First, the dualistic and non-integrated education system inherited from the colonial era that involve profound philosophical and conceptual ramifications that resulted in serious confusion on the true meaning and purpose of Islamic education. Secondly, the issue of leadership and authority with regards to administration of Islamic education in a secular State. Thirdly, the rapidly and continuously changing country, society and the complexities involved and its resultant effect on Islamic education. These quandaries and challenging prospects, concomitantly, exist in many other countries with Muslim populations that have very different social, economic and political circumstances.³¹ Thus, the problems and challenges faced by Muslims in Singapore with regards to Islamic education may be considered a microcosm of the problems and challenges that are widespread among Muslims in other parts of the world.

1.3.1 Dualistic and Non-integrated Education System

The first issue requires one to examine deeply and intensely issues such as the sources, classification and hierarchy of knowledge in Islam. This would open the windows to a better understanding of the sources of various types of knowledge, the

Singapore. Paper presented at the seminar on Islamic Education in Singapore by University of Singapore Muslim Society; *Kongres Pendidikan Anak-Anak Islam*. (1982, May). [Educational Congress for Muslim Children] by Mendaki and self-help Muslim organizations, Singapore. Hereafter referred to as *Kongres Pendidikan Anak-Anak Islam*; Soon Teck Wong. (1988). *Singapore's education system: educational reform for national development*. Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies. 6-7; Abu Bakar Hashim. (1989, Mar). *Madrasah di Singapura: Masa lampau, sekarang dan masa depan* [Madrasah in Singapore: past, present and in future]. Paper presented at seminar by the Education Committee, Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) [Islamic Religious Council] and the Kesatuan Guru-Guru Melayu Singapura (KGMS) [Malay Teachers' Union], Singapore. Hereafter referred to as Seminar Pendidikan Islam; Mohd Yusuf Zuhri. (1993, Nov). *Memfaatkan Potensi Pendidikan Madrasah* [Optimise the Potential of Madrasah Education]. Paper presented at the Seminar, Commemorating MUIS's 25 Years Achievements and Its Future Directions, Singapore; Charlene Tan & Hairon Salleh. (2014). *Reforming madrasa curriculum in an era of globalization: The Singapore case. Reforms in Islamic Education – International Perspectives*. Charlene Tan (Edit.). United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic.

³¹ It is common knowledge that issues concerning the state and Islamic education in Muslim nations have been discussed at national and international levels for many years. For example, within a short period of 5 years (1977-1982) there were four World Conferences on Islamic Education held in King Abdul Aziz University (Saudi Arabia), Quaid-i-Azam University (Pakistan), Institute of Islamic Education and Research (Bangladesh) and Indonesia. See Erfan, Niaz & Valie, Zahid A. (1995). *Education and the Muslim world. Challenges and response. Recommendations of the four world conferences on Islamic education*. Lahore: Islamic Foundation and Institute of Policy Studies. Later, within the period of 25 years (1987 to 2012), the 5th to 8th conferences were held in Egypt, South Africa and Malaysia respectively. See Mujadad Zaman, Nadeem A. Memon. (Eds.). (2016). *Philosophies of Islamic Education: Historical Perspectives and Emerging Discourses*. New York and London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. Hereafter both references are referred to as World Conferences on Islamic Education (1st to 8th).

role and purpose of these knowledge and the relationship and dynamics between these knowledge. Thus, addressing the challenges of integrating the Revealed knowledge and Acquired knowledge within the proper framework of Islamic education. These may eventually provide the agenda and clear mechanisms for the process of Islamization of modern day knowledge. The dual education system that has caused significant confusion and conflicting notions of Islamic education among the Muslim should be resolved and eradicated gradually.³²

1.3.2 Leadership on Religious Matters

Secondly, as far as leadership on religious matters are concerned, it is evidently clear that as a statutory board and an arm of the government, Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) is obliged to serve and protect the interests of the secular political establishment as well as attending to the requirements and aspirations of the Muslim community. It has to play a complicated and unpleasant balancing role between the secular State and the spiritual needs of the Muslim community. It assumes the role to regulate, standardize and control the activities of the Muslims including the administration of the Islamic education. It would provide leadership and render assistance to the Muslim community but within the framework and boundary set by the authority. The legislation contained in Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) is a double edged sword. It provides clear guidelines, procedures and framework on the legal status of the Muslims in Singapore. On the other hand, it acts as an effectual and convenient conduit to regulate and control the Muslim community, as deemed necessary by the secular State. Thus, MUIS mirrors the function and acts as the main agent to

³² These have been discussed by scholars for many years and such discussions should be pursued but appropriated for different contexts. There is now, a better body of knowledge and understanding of the core issues and possible causes of actions. For examples of such discourses, please see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. (1978). *op. cit*; Husain, Syed Sajjad & Ashraf Syed Ali. (1979). *Crisis in Muslim education* London/Jeddah: Hodder and Stoughton/King Abdul Aziz University; H.H. Bilgrami & S.A. Ashraf. (1985). *The concept of an Islamic university*. Cambridge: Hodder and Stoughton; Erfan, Niaz & Valie, Zahid A. (1995). *op. cit*; Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai. (Eds.). (2006). *Secularism and spirituality: Seeking integrated knowledge and success in Singapore madrasah education in Singapore*. Singapore: Institute of Policy Studies and Marshall Cavendish Academic; Charlene Tan & Hairon Salleh (2014). *op. cit*.

operate AMLA. Doing away with AMLA may not be a viable and realistic option. However understanding clearly the motives and history behind AMLA as well as the contents and the ramifications may shed some knowledge and understanding how this law manifests itself.³³

1.3.3 Competition in a Global City

Thirdly, the competition among Singaporeans of different races is getting much keener over the years in various domains, particularly in education and economy. It is made more acute with the arrival of significant number of foreigners, both professionals and menial workers, from the region and other various parts of the world who are very hungry for success. The Muslim community has to prepare itself to face the inexorable changes in many fronts. It must possess the key pre-requisites to face and respond to this rapid tsunami of change. It must also understand the main traits of the other communities that allowed them to excel and outperform the Muslims as far as the Singapore context is concerned. If suitable course of actions failed to be implemented, the Muslim minority may possibly become further marginalized and forms an underclass community. This thesis will focus more on the Islamic education in relation to the challenges mentioned above and its role and influence in charting the design, dream and destiny of the community.

³³ The function of AMLA and role of MUIS are unfortunately not considered to be among the major concerns among Muslims here. In addition, the ability of the community leaders to understand such laws profoundly and then to navigate effectively the suitable course of actions within the limits and opportunities available warrants serious attention. Please see Mohamed Noordin Sopiee. (2005). *From Malayan Union to Singapore separation*. Kuala Lumpur: University Malaya Press; Kevin Y.L. Tan & Tio Li-ann. (1997). *Tan, Yeo and Lee's constitutional law in Malaysia and Singapore*. (2nd ed.). Butterworths Asia; Zahoor Ahmed F. Hussain. (1966). Growth of Islamic Education in Singapore. Paper presented at the seminar on Islamic Education in Singapore; Roff, William R. (1966). *The origin of Malay nationalism*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press; Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1965). *The legal status of the Muslims in Singapore*. Singapore: Malayan Law Journal Ltd; Kerstin Steiner. (2015). Governing Islam: The State, the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) and Islam in Singapore. *Australian Journal of Asian Law*, 16(1), Article 6: 1-16.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The researcher has identified the objectives for this thesis as follows:

- a) To analyze the real issues and challenges in relation to Islamic education in Singapore from historical, philosophical, conceptual, political, economic and social as well as practical perspectives.
- b) To examine Andalus as practicable model and a viable option for Islamic education in the country that addresses key aspects of the issues and challenges.
- c) To provide a prognosis of the future on Islamic education in order to focus on the priorities and optimize the resources in the most effective ways.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The researcher has formulated the significance of this thesis as follows:-

- a) To provide a comprehensive and critical analysis on the historiography of Islamic education and in particular, the position adopted by the secular State vis-a-vis Islamic education. By and large, this has to do with the long historical tradition and policies the authority has adopted since independence from the British colonialists. These are relevant and pertinent not only to studies relating to Islam but to other religious beliefs.³⁴ By doing so, the root causes for the current dualistic education system and the complexities involved will better understood by all interested parties. Thereafter, better navigational perspectives and skills, within Singapore context will be introduced gradually to alleviate and subsequently nullify the problems pertaining. The above however, ought to be done in cognizance of the continuous concerns, efforts and struggles by the government and the relevant agencies to ensure the relevancy, survival and

³⁴ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. (1978). *op. cit.*

quality of the national education system in relation to the success of nation building and the well-being of its citizens in the global village.

- b) To provide an exposition on the position of the State, the function of AMLA and role of MUIS and the dynamics involving the Muslim community, particularly in relation to Islamic education.³⁵ By doing so, the community will be more informed and adopt realistic perspectives on forwarding various demands and expectations from the government. In addition, the community will be well acquainted with the areas and possibilities that they could and ought to be more self-reliant and independent. This thesis postulates that there are other principal reasons that have contributed significantly to the problems and challenges to Islamic education other than the secular nature of the State and the policies of the government with regards to race and religion.
- c) To envisage a scenario based on a case study and the prognosis that a successful and confident Muslim minority in Singapore is naturally advantageous for both the community and the State. Although the problems and challenges seem overwhelming, the Muslims in Singapore have the golden opportunity to prove that they have the commitment, conviction and capability to make positive changes and transformation with regards to Islamic education. In addition, it would be an admirable showcase by the State to the governments and Muslims in the neighboring countries and in other parts of the world. It demonstrates that the policies in relation to Muslims minority population here are well positioned, plausible and successful to be emulated by others. The success story of Andalus as the case study, during the 19 years period (1996-2015), is a clear and credible example to demonstrate this phenomenon.

³⁵ Discussions and debates on the role the Singapore government and the relationship with the institutions for Islamic learning were done openly in the local media and at times behind closed doors among the leaders. For a detailed discourse, See Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai (Eds.) (2006). *op. cit.*; Charlene Tan & Hairon Salleh. (2014). *op. cit.*

1.6 Literature Review

1.6.1 Approach for the Literature Review

The scholarly written works associated to the Islamic education in Singapore were largely associated and in response to the critical turn of events and the corresponding developments, the time frame and the key personalities involved. The issues, ideas, debates and written works on matters pertaining by the Singapore based scholars in particular, were largely critical observations, analyses and the corresponding problem solving approach for pragmatic considerations and follow up actions. This literature review adopts the chronological approach taking into consideration the historiography of the events, issues and the written works by the scholars involved in Singapore, Malaysia and beyond the region. Although in chronological order, rather similar themes and concerns may be observed in the written works, that span across the various periods and the scholars involved.

1.6.2 Works by Early Scholars in Singapore

The literatures on Islamic education in Singapore were more evident from the 1960s onwards, written by very few local researchers particularly on the history, legal status, common challenges and prescriptive solutions. These works were initially documented as seminar papers, journals and magazines and subsequently in books or academic publications. A notable contribution on the area of interest, during the 1960s was by Ahmad Mohammed Ibrahim, a legal expert, who had written some serious works related to Muslims and Islamic education but mostly from the legal and constitutional perspectives. He was the State Advocate General in 1955 and Singapore's first non-British Attorney General in 1966. Thus, naturally he was well trained, equipped and thus concerned about rights of Muslims and the legal status of the Islamic education vis-à-vis the constitution and governance. In 1965, he wrote in

the Malayan Law Journal Ltd, “The Legal Status of the Muslims in Singapore”.³⁶ In 1966, he presented a paper during a seminar on Islamic Education, organized by the University of Singapore Muslim Society, titled “Islamic Education in Singapore”.³⁷ His works were during the pre-independence and post-independence and the early formative period nation building and had close relations to the crafting of the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA). This act was passed in 1966 and with that, the establishment of Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS). Ahmad Ibrahim was instrumental in crafting the Singapore constitution as well as the AMLA. However, these writings lack the profound philosophical and conceptual ideas, if any, on education and in particular Islamic education. The legal and constitutional aspects of his thought and writings served the interests of the political and community leaders in terms of governance and nation building. Unfortunately, there was a lull period of about 20 years after the pioneering works of Ahmad Ibrahim where there were negligible, if any, literatures specifically on Islamic education in Singapore. His recommendations on Islamic education per se, became largely academic and as such, no specific and practical follow up actions taken. Also, concerns pertaining Islamic education were largely on the periphery and were no apparent anxieties on these areas affecting the community including the intelligentsia during most part of the 1960 to 1980s; and the above resulted in a serious dearth of researches and writings. It would be an interesting area of research to discover the reasons for this rather extended period of indolence.

During the mid-1980s however, there was a resurgent interest on Islam in the Muslim world globally including Singapore, resulting in widespread renewed and heightened interest in many aspects of Islam including Islamic education. Coincidentally or possibly for pragmatic reasons in response to these dramatic

³⁶ Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1965). *op. cit.*

³⁷ Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1966). *op. cit.*

developments, AMLA pertaining to Islamic education was enacted and leading to the formation of the Religious Education Unit in MUIS in 1989. Thus, more interests were observed from the 1980s onwards involving the Muslim intelligentsia, community leaders and members of the public. During this period, Muhammad Hussain Mutalib in particular, a political scientist in the local university, was quite prolific writing about Malays and Muslims issues in Singapore and the region in general as well as Islamic education in particular.³⁸ Again, like the works by Ahmad Ibrahim mentioned earlier, his writings unfortunately lack the profound philosophical and conceptual ideas on education general and in particular Islamic education. It was more a response from a largely political and sociological imperatives due to the heightened global Islamic revivalism and increasing nationalism in many Muslim nations in the years after post-colonialism, largely an after effect from the freedom gained and confidence from the cusps of Western political, military, economic and intellectual hegemony. It was also probably due to the growing concern by the State of these developments and the impact on Singaporeans at large and Muslims in particular as mentioned earlier. In 1986, he wrote a paper title, “Malays’ Concept of Progress” in Proceedings of Seminar on Challenges facing Malay-Muslims in Singapore organized by the National University of Singapore Muslim Society / Malay Language Society. In 1989, he wrote an article titled “Education and Singapore Muslims: An Overview of the Issues, Parameters and Prospects.” published in *Fajar Islam* a journal by MUIS. In 1990, he wrote a book, “Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics”. In 1997, he wrote “Islamic Education in

³⁸ Muhammad Hussain Mutalib. (1986). Malays' concept of progress. In Proceedings, *Conference on Challenges Facing Malay-Muslims, Singapore*. 13-21. Paper presented at seminar on challenges facing Malays/Muslims in Singapore, National University of Singapore Malay Language/Muslim Society, Singapore, National University of Singapore; Muhammad Hussain Mutalib (1989). Education and Singapore Muslims: an overview of the issues, parameters and prospects. *Fajar Islam*. MUIS. 1-18; Muhammad Hussain Mutalib. (1997). Islamic Education in Singapore: Past trends and challenges for the future. *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 6, 233-241. United Kingdom; Muhammad Hussain Mutalib, Johan Saravanamuttu (Eds.). (2010). Authoritarian democracy and the minority Muslim polity in Singapore. *Islam and politics in Southeast Asia*. Routledge; Muhammad Hussain Mutalib. (2012). *Singapore Malays: Being ethnic minority and Muslim in a Global City-State*. Routledge.

Singapore: Past trends and challenges for the future”. Later in 2012, he wrote “Singapore Malays: Being Ethnic Minority and Muslim in a Global City-State.”

Besides the two scholars mentioned above, there was a serious dearth of research and writing on Islamic education in Singapore, if any, by other local researchers during the 1960s and 1980s. This could be due to an overwhelming lack of concern, interest or knowledge on the subject matter by the leadership, intelligentsia or general public. Also, we may deduce generally, that serious writings on Islamic education in Singapore by the two scholars during the period mentioned above were mostly expedient responses to the urgent legal, sociological and political imperatives or needful circumstances rather than being profound, proactive and well considered with a long term premeditated intents. In addition, the legalistic, political and sociological approaches by two scholars mentioned, in the researcher’s evaluation may not be the ideal approach and had not resolved successfully many of the complex issues and multifaceted challenges faced by Muslims and in particular the profound philosophical and conceptual issues related to Islamic education.

1.6.3 Works by Academicians and Practitioners in Malaysia

Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, an illustrious and highly respected Malaysian scholar especially on Islamic thought, civilization and education, had written extensively and profoundly for more than 5 decades since 1960s until now, on various issues such as history, civilization, philosophy, sufism and education. Vastly different compared to Ibrahim and Mutalib mentioned earlier, Al-Attas writings on Islamic education in particular were profoundly philosophical and conceptual while infusing traditionalism and Sufism.³⁹ Al-Attas works written for seminars and published in books are well known and highly regarded particularly among the intellectuals and in the academic circles at regional and international levels. In 1969, Al-Attas wrote a book,

³⁹ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. (1969, 1978, 1989a, 1989b, 1995, 2011). *op. cit.*

“Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago”. In 1977, he wrote a keynote paper “*Preliminary Thoughts on the Nature of Knowledge and the Definitions and Aims of Education*,” presented at the First World Conference on Muslim Education held at Mecca. In 1978 also, he wrote a book, “Islam and Secularism” and in 1991, he wrote the book, “The Concept of Education in Islam. A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education”. His magnum corpus, a masterpiece and a compilation of several of his works “Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: an Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the World View” published in 1995 laid the metaphysical foundation and intellectual framework on a grand scale covering many aspects of Islamic thought, civilization including Islamic education. There were also recent literatures written by his former postgraduate students and scholars at national, regional and international levels in his honour; which was in fact a tremendous recognition and tribute during his lifetime for his scholarly achievements.⁴⁰ The researcher was in fact a student of al-Attas at ISTAC and had taken the liberty to incorporate many of al-Attas key ideas, thoughts and suppositions in this thesis as the guiding framework and building blocks of the ideas, observations, arguments and discourses.

Wan Mohd Nor Daud, an ardent and competent disciple of Al-Attas, continued the legacy of his teacher by elaborating and elucidating further Al-Attas ideas that may be quite difficult for the untrained mind to comprehend. In 1989, he wrote a book, “The Concept of Knowledge in Islam and Its Implications for Education in a Developing Country”. About 10 years later in 1998, he wrote the book “The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas: An

⁴⁰ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud & Muhammad Zainiy Uthman (Eds.). (2010). *Knowledge, language, thought and the civilization of Islam – Essays in honour of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas*. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia; Mohd Zaidi Ismail & Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah. (Eds.). (2012). *Adab dan peradaban – karya pengi'tirafan untuk Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas*. Kuala Lumpur: MPH Group Publishing Sdn Bhd.

Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization”⁴¹ Wan Daud also established the Centre for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science and Civilisation (CASIS) at the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM).⁴²

The researcher had numerous opportunities since his postgraduate days in 1997 to 2000 as a student to both al-Attas and Wan Daud at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), to understand their thinking and taken the liberty to incorporate key ideas and principles of their thoughts appropriately in this thesis. It is important to highlight again, the written discourses relating to issues pertaining to Islamic education in Singapore at philosophical and conceptual levels are very lacking and should be addressed sooner than later. The researcher is of the opinion, however, that these ideas, philosophy, concepts and works written by Al-Attas and Wan Daud, while extremely pertinent and valuable, need the contextualization, pragmatic framework and *modus operandi* that are specific and concrete and ought to be translated into a proven, self-evident, demonstrable and lasting Islamic educational institution as a model. This is in fact, a challenge the researcher would like to embark in this thesis, putting Singapore as a secular State into context and Andalus as the case study.

Furthermore, there are numerous scholars and proponents of Islamic education in Southeast Asia and Malaysia being closest to Singapore, in terms of geography and

⁴¹ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (1989). *The concept of knowledge in Islam: it's implication for education in a developing country*. New York and London; Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (1991). *The beacon on the crest of a hill*. ISTAC; Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (1990, 2003). *Penjelasan budaya ilmu [An exposition on the culture of knowledge]*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and (the second edition published by Pustaka Nasional Singapore 2003 has two additional chapters); Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (1998). *The educational philosophy and practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas: an exposition of the original concept of Islamization*. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC); Hadhari Muslim Society: An epistemological and educational approach towards national unity. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud & Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. (2007). *Leadership competency model: an Islamic alternative*. International Centre for Leadership in Finance (ICLIF). Kuala Lumpur; Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (2012). *Rihlah ilmiah Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud: dari neomodernisme ke Islamisasi (An intellectual journey: from neomodernism to Islamization)*. Kuala Lumpur/Jakarta: CASIS/INSIST; Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (2012). *Knowledge culture and concept of Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Prime Minister's Department/CASIS.

⁴² CASIS is within the Faculty of Islamic Civilisation (FTI) and it focuses at post-graduate level scholarship in the fields of study in relation to Islam, Science and Civilisation as well as their allied sciences. These are under the auspicious of the worldview of Islam and in cognizance to the worldviews of other civilisations. It is well understood and generally accepted that CASIS was continuing the earlier legacy by al-Attas at ISTAC.

history that have contributed significantly in Islamic education in the region in varying capacities.⁴³ Two respectable and notable persons in neighboring Malaysia are Mohd Kamal Hassan and Abdul Halim Tamuri. Both of them are well known contemporary scholars in Malaysia, who are actively involved scholarly works relating to the key tenets and facets of Islamic education and equally important, the developments of Islamic education tertiary levels. Mohd Kamal was the Rector in the International Islamic University, Malaysia IIUM from 1999 to 2006 and well known for the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) agenda.⁴⁴ While IOK agenda has protagonists as well as antagonists, it has generated much discourses and researches in the Muslim world over the years that contributed significantly to the body of knowledge in these domains. The discourses relating to IOK are also relevant to the discussion on matters pertaining in Chapter 3 of this thesis. In a paper presented in 2000, Mohd Kamal asserted that “institutionalizing the culture of quality” was one of the key challenges for Islamic Studies in Southeast Asia today.⁴⁵ This in fact has been given significant attention in Chapter 4 of the thesis, detailing the efforts by Andalus as the case study, in adopting the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) standards for Islamic education. Abdul Halim is the Rector of the Kolej University Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS) from 2013 until now. He is very prolific in areas of research and publication and has consistently contributed in numerous academic publications, as an individual researcher or in collaboration with several others. The areas of interests are largely, the role of Muslim educators, research designs and methodologies, best teaching methodologies and developing model students. His works are relevant to this thesis particularly in

⁴³ Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad & Patrick Jory. (Eds.). (2011). *Islamic studies and Islamic education in contemporary Southeast Asia*. Yayasan Ilmuwan Malaysia.

⁴⁴ M. Kamal Hassan. (1996). *Towards actualizing Islamic ethical and educational principles in Malaysian society: some critical observations*. Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia: Malaysia; Nur Saidah Omar (2017). Is Muhammad Kamal Hassan Framework Of Acquired Knowledge New? *International Journal of Management and Applied Science*, 3(1).

⁴⁵ For an overview of the ideas by Mohd Kamal on Islamic education, please see, Mohd. Kamal Hassan. (2000). Islamic Studies in Contemporary South East Asia: General Observations. In *Islamic studies in ASEAN – presentations of an International seminar*. College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkhla University Pattani (pp. 486, 490-91). Pattani, Thailand: Prince of Songkhla University Pattani.

understanding and addressing the social problems faced by Muslims youths vis-à-vis Islamic education, discussed in Chapter 2.⁴⁶ Also, the discussions on the research methodology are relevant especially in the use of the case study in Chapter 4. The researcher, unfortunately did not have the golden opportunities to have rigorous intellectual engagements on areas of interests with both Mohd Kamal and Abdul Halim. As such, much of their thoughts and aspirations are derived from literature reviews.

1.6.4 Works by Scholars Beyond the Region

Beyond the region, there are several researchers like Kerstin Steiner and Lily Zubaidah who wrote about religious education in relation to AMLA and the government as well as matters relating to Muslims in general. Their writings may be considered quite critical and offered different perspectives compared to the academicians mentioned earlier.⁴⁷

The extremely tumultuous event as in September 2001 in United States as well as the events relating and pursuing in various parts of the world, resulted in a very different and paradigmatic shifts in the perception of Islam, Muslims and Islamic education resulting in enormous security concerns at national, regional and global levels. The Jemaah Islamiyyah (JI) network in Singapore, in particular which entails parts of this region occurred in the same year and lingered mostly for about five ensuing years until 2005.⁴⁸ There were many discourses and literatures discussing Islam and Islamic education and its possible links with security threats and acts of terrorism. Fortunately, the local government found no links that associated terrorism activities with Islamic

⁴⁶ For examples on the works by Abdul Halim, please see, Abdul Halim Tamuri et al. (2013). The importance of positive self-concept for Islamic education teachers as a role model. *US-China Education Review B*, ISSN 2161-6248, 3 (1) 29-35; Abdul Halim Tamuri et al. (2013). Religious education and ethical attitude of Muslim adolescents. *Malaysia. Multicultural Education & Technology Journal*, 7 (4) 257-274.

⁴⁷ Kerstin Steiner. (2015). *op.cit*; Kerstin Steiner. (2011). Madrasah in Singapore: Tradition and modernity in religious education. *Intellectual Discourse*, 19, IIUM Press; Lily Zubaidah Rahim (2009). Governing Islam and Regulating Muslims in Singapore's Secular Authoritarian State Working Paper 156, University of Sydney.

⁴⁸ HistorySG. (2001, Dec 8). Operation against Jemaah Islamiyah in Singapore begins. Retrieved from <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/history/events/90267935-71ef-4829-8faf-f6039a086cda>

education whatsoever, as far as Singapore is concerned. This thesis will not dwell on such issues as they have been covered well by others.

1.6.5 Works by Contemporary Local Writers

Mohd Yusuf Zuhri since the early 1990s, was active mostly writing and presenting papers on Islamic education for seminars held locally and had contributed once for a journal. His writings and elaborations reflected the experienced educationist background, his passion and dedication for Islamic education as well as functioning effectually as the director in the Religious Education Department, MUIS from 1993 to 1996.⁴⁹ His writings were very insightful based on long years of experience and keen observations as an educator, an inspector of schools (including madrasahs) and a principal in the conventional school. Thus, his thoughts and writings had infused significant practical considerations and imperatives but grounded on spiritual grounds and professional perspectives. The researcher was fortunate to work very closely with him on a daily basis dealing with conceptual perspectives as well as strategic and operational imperatives for several years in MUIS, in the earlier part of the 1990s. Upon retirement from MUIS, he continued his works as one of the directors in Cordova and Al-Zuhri with the researcher, to continue the efforts and pursue the agenda.

From 1998 onwards, probably due to the controversies highlighted at the national levels related to the introduction of the Compulsory Education (CE) by the government, and the immediate impact on madrasahs specifically and Islamic education generally, there were again renewed interests. As a result, there was a significant

⁴⁹ Mohd Yusuf Zuhri. (1993, Nov). *Memfaatkan potensi pendidikan madrasah [Optimise the potential of Madrasah education]*. Paper presented at the seminar Commemorating MUIS's 25 Years Achievements and Its Future Directions in Singapore. Mohd Yusuf Zuhri. (1995). *Islamic education – shaping the future Generation. Fikrah – Shaping the Future*. Singapore: Majlis Ugama Islam; Mohd Yusuf Zuhri (1995, Jul). *Ke arah sistem pendidikan madrasah yang sesuai dan berkesan di Singapura [Towards an appropriate and effective madrasah education system]*. Paper presented at the seminar *Muzākarah Islam [Discourse in Islam]* by MUIS, Singapore. Mohd Yusuf Zuhri. (2005, Sep). *Perancangan dan tindakan strategik untuk sistem penilaian dan peperiksaan dalam pendidikan Islam [Strategic planning and action for assessment and examination system in Islamic education]*. Paper presented at the symposium *Penilaian dan Peperiksaan dalam Pendidikan Islam [Assessment and Examination in Islamic Education]*, by Institute Pengajian Tinggi Al-Zuhri, Andalus Corporation and Darul Andalus, Singapore.

increase in the number of serious academic works for the intervening years; this time involving mostly Muslim and several non-Muslim academicians as well as postgraduate students from the local tertiary institutions like the National University of Singapore and the National Institute of Education (NIE), which is within the ambit of the Nanyang Technological University. Nor Aisha and Lai had edited a book in 2008, relating spirituality and secularism in relation to madrasahs' education in Singapore context from the political, sociological, pedagogical and philosophical perspectives. The title of the book was, "Secularism and Spirituality: Seeking Integrated Knowledge and Success in Singapore Madrasah Education in Singapore".⁵⁰ The researcher found this book very relevant and the discourses pertinent; relating secularism and spirituality vis-à-vis Islamic education in Singapore. The researcher noticed the works in this book, written by several researchers specialized in their respective domains, were in-depth and pertinent source of reference particularly in the context of this thesis. However, the focus of this book was more on the madrasahs that caters to only 5% of the Muslim school going children and does not dwell on the Islamic education at large involving particularly the part-time Islamic education. It is evident that the articles in the book were written mostly by academicians in the local universities and were crafted responses to the controversies related to introduction of the Compulsory Education (CE), which had direct impact on the madrasah education. In 2009, Sa'eda Buang, in her PhD dissertation had written "The Evolution of the Madrasah School System in Singapore: With Special Emphasis on its Curriculum Development." She has also written or edited a number of literatures on Islamic education but her focus was mostly on curriculum, language, pedagogy and again mostly and largely for the madrasah education in Singapore and with some exceptions elsewhere.⁵¹ Mukhliz Abu Bakar also

⁵⁰ Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai (Eds.). (2006). *op. cit.*

⁵¹ Sa'eda Buang. (2009). *The evolution of the madrasah school system in Singapore: With special emphasis on its curriculum development.* (Unpublished PhD thesis). Nanyang Technological University/National Institute of Education, Singapore; Sa'eda Buang. (2007). *Madrasah and Muslim*

did a significant amount of work on madrasah education and his papers were well documented and provided a very good overview as well as detailed examination on the dynamics and multifaceted issues relating to madrasah education.⁵² There were recent works by Charlene Tan that discussed the latest trends in Islamic education in Singapore vis-a-vis the national, regional and global imperatives.⁵³ Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew however was among the few who did a research on part-time madrasah on a selected module (*Sadaqah*) in the A.L.I.V.E. program in a mosque and made a comparative study with modern pedagogy and teaching objectives.⁵⁴

The researcher himself had a few written contributions in the area of Islamic education, juxtaposing the role of researcher as well as an active practitioner. In 2003, he presented a paper “Evaluating the Resources in Current Islamic Education System’. In 2005, he presented another paper “The Experiences and Approaches Relating to Assessment and Examination in Islamic Education’. While in 2007, he completed the MA thesis, “The role of madrasah education in Singapore: A study on the philosophy and practice of madrasah education in secular state and plural society”. In 2010, he prepared the paper with Mohd Yusuf Zuhri for a seminar, ”Balance between Spirituality

education: Its interface with urbanization. In Pink, W.T. & Noblit, G.W. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Urban Education*. Netherlands: Springer; Sa'eda Buang & Mastura Ismail. (Eds.). Muslim education-challenges, opportunities and beyond. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. 27 (1); Sa'eda Buang. (2008). Religious education as locus of curriculum: A brief inquiry into madrasah curriculum in Singapore. In Lai Ah Eng (Ed.), *Religious Diversity in Singapore*. Singapore: Institute of Policy Studies; Sa'eda Buang. (2010). Muslim education and globalization: the re-(de)positioning of languages and curriculum contents in Southeast Asia. In Vaish, V. (Ed.), *Globalization of language and culture in Asia, Advances in Sociolinguistics Series*. London: Continuum Books. Asia Pacific Journal of Education Special Issue; Sa'eda Buang. (2012, Mar), *Realistic Teaching and Learning in Islamic Education: The Singapore Experience*. Keynote Address at the International Seminar on Islamic Teaching and Learning, jointly organised by Faculty of Islamic Civilization (Universiti Teknologi Malaysia), the KUPUSB (Brunei) and MARSAH (Johor), Johore Bharu, Malaysia.

⁵² Mukhlis Abu Bakar. (1999, Jun). *Islamic religious schools: Recent trends and issues*. Paper presented at the fourth ASEAN Inter-University Seminar on Social Development, Pattani, Thailand; Mukhlis Abu Bakar. (2009). Islamic religious education and Muslim religiosity in Singapore. James A. Banks (Ed.). *The Routledge International Companion to Multicultural Education*. New York: Routledge.

⁵³ Charlene Tan & Hairon Salleh. (2014). *op. cit.*

⁵⁴ Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew. (2014). Coming to grips with modernization. The Teens ALIVE programme and the teaching of *sadaqah* (giving of alms). *Muslim Education in the 21st Century Asian Perspectives*. Sa'edah Buang & Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew (Eds.). London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. 143-161. This book re-evaluates the Muslim education in Asia with special attention to Muslim schools' perception of educational changes and the reasons for such changes. It highlights and explores the important question of whether the Muslim school has been reinventing itself in the field of pedagogy and curriculum to meet the challenges of the 21st century education.

and Rationality in the Context of a Global City and Secular State Singapore: Understanding the Issues and the Integrated Approach from the Perspectives of the Al-Zuhri Institute of Higher Learning.”⁵⁵

Like the earlier literatures in 1960s and 1980s, the later works in the 1990s and 2000s, were indeed timely but again were largely due to pragmatic imperatives in response to the immediate concerns or crisis. The focus in the 1990s during the CE saga was how to make madrasah education as whole, relevant to educational, workforce and societal standards prescribed by the State. The spotlight was however, had always been on the students in madrasah that make up only about 5% of total Muslims population at school going age.

Studies on the needs for Islamic education for the vast majority of the Muslim students who attend secular government schools, youths and working adults have remained largely ignored or poorly studied. Furthermore, it is important to reiterate that a formal and structured Islamic education ought to be provided for Muslims across all age groups and not limited to those in the school going age. Andalus has existed for 19 years and has significant positive impact and contribution on Islamic education in the country as mentioned earlier; but no proper studies have been done on this phenomenon.

⁵⁵ Abdullah Othman. (2003, Oct). *Menilai sumber-sumber dalam sistem pendidikan Islam masakini [Evaluating the resources in current Islamic education system]*. Paper presented at the symposium “Pelbagai Sumber dalam Pendidikan” Islam [Various Sources in Islamic Education] by Andalus Granada Resource Centre and Curriculum Division Andalus Corporation, Singapore; Abdullah Othman. (2005, Sep). *Pengalaman dan pendekatan berkaitan penilaian dan peperiksaan dalam pendidikan Islam [The experiences and approaches relating to assessment and examination in Islamic education]*. Paper presented at the symposium “Penilaian dan Peperiksaan dalam Pendidikan Islam” [Assessment and Examination in Islamic Education], Institute Pengajian Tinggi Al-Zuhri, Andalus Corporation and Darul Andalus, Singapore; Abdullah Othman. (2007). *The role of madrasah education in Singapore: A study on the philosophy and practice of madrasah education in secular State and plural society*. (Unpublished master’s thesis). International Islamic University Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Abdullah Othman & Mohd Yusuf Zuhri. (2010, Oct). *Keseimbangan rohani dan rasional dalam konteks kota global, negara sekular Singapura: Memahami permasalahan dan pendekatan sepadu dari perspektif Institute Pengajian Tinggi Al-Zuhri [Balance between spirituality and rationality in the context of a global city and secular State Singapore: Understanding the issues and the integrated approach from the perspectives of the Al-Zuhri Institute of Higher Learning]*. Paper presented at the Seminar “Asean Tamadun Andalusia bertema Membentuk Pendidikan Mapan, Penerapan al-Ruh dan al-Naf: Sorotan Tamadun Andalusia” [Asean Andalusian Civilisation – Developing an Established Education, incorporating the Ruh and Nafs] jointly organised by Islamic Centre, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Jabatan Perdana Menteri, JAKIM, Ministry of Education Malaysia (Islamic Education Department), International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC) and Yayasan Dakwah Islam Malaysia (YADIM), Malaysia.

Thus, in the researcher's observation, the above clearly justifies the need for further research and studies on these areas in this thesis.

1.7 Research Methodology

The research methodologies employed for this thesis should be suitable and most appropriate to address the research problems as well as the purpose and objectives of the thesis mentioned earlier in this chapter.⁵⁶ As such, there were basically two research methodologies utilized and optimized by the researcher for this thesis. The first method was largely qualitative which involved the identification, collation, organization and analysis of available literatures, documents and information on areas of interest. These provided the body of knowledge which included ideas, notions and perspectives by individuals, organizations or various entities which addressed the historical, philosophical, conceptual and contextual concerns in relation to the areas of interests of the thesis.⁵⁷ The second method was using the case study of Andalus as a private educational institution based on a well-established framework. This involved triangulation of qualitative and quantitative aspects involving quite a massive amount of data and information that were interrelated and connected.

1.7.1 First Research Methodology - Critical Analyses of Literatures

The first method was via comprehensive researches and analyses of existing literatures on Islamic education in particular and Muslims in general, largely within Singapore context. These included analyses of selected books or chapters in the books identified, suitable articles in journals or examinations of the relevant reports from government or non-governmental agencies. Also, thesis or dissertations on areas of

⁵⁶ Please see pages 12 to 16 of Chapter 1.

⁵⁷ For a good understanding of literature review, please see, Kathleen Liston. Literature Review Methods: Point of Departure. Retrieved from <http://web.stanford.edu/class/cee320/CEE320A/POD.pdf>

concerns were subjects of interests. These had been elaborated to some extent in the literature review.

The above were also evident in the discussions or content throughout thesis, multiple references at the footnotes with the shorter elaborations and the bibliography. Cross referencing of information and benchmarking of relevant data with agencies or private entities were also done throughout the thesis. In addition, regular discussions were held since the onset of the researcher's candidature period in early 2008 with the thesis supervisors namely, the late Prof Dr Abdul Halim Mat Diah and Dr Abdullah Yusof.⁵⁸ The focus of the discussions with thesis supervisors was given specifically to areas meeting the requirements of the university such as thesis topic, problem statements, research methodologies, chapters and bibliography.

1.7.2 Second Research Methodology – Case Study of Andalus

The second research methodology is the case study of Andalus as an educational institution for the period between 1996 and 2015 (or about 19 years), based largely on the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) framework. Andalus has been identified as a model of a suitable institution that constantly embarks on the pursuit of national standards, proven to be well accepted by a sizeable number among the Muslim community over a significant number of years; in cognizance of the multi-racial and multi-religious society in the secular State. It was also the first and to-date the only Muslim educational institution to be awarded the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) accreditation. The period for the case study is from the beginning of establishment of the institution in 1996 until it was awarded the SQC accreditation in 2015. The data collation and analyses in accordance to the prescribed SQC criteria, were however for three specific years and those were 2012, 2013 and 2014.

⁵⁸ Prof Dr Abdul Halim Mat Diah passed away on 17 August 2009.

The case study approach has been considered since it included a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analysis, in reference to the seven key drivers, juxtaposed with the attributes of excellent organization.⁵⁹ The Singapore Quality Class (SQC) framework was formulated and endorsed by Spring Singapore, a government agency. This framework has been very well researched, conceptualized and applied effectively over many years in various types of organizations including educational institutions. This tried and tested framework has provided clear and concrete examples of many successful case studies and thus proven to be a fail-safe approach and methodology.⁶⁰

The researcher would juxtaposed the SQC framework with the philosophical and conceptual framework developed by al-Attas, further elucidated and expanded by Wan Daud. Thus, the cross fertilization or dovetail of both frameworks would result in a fascinating blend involving the structural and organizational prerogatives grounded on strong spiritual and philosophical foundations. A very detailed exposition on the above would be discussed in Chapter 4.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

This thesis focuses on the Islamic education from the institutional perspectives. Thus, the thesis will not dwell on the detailed analysis and exposition of the curriculum for Islamic education in both madrasahs and part-time madrasahs that involves various

⁵⁹ For a good and succinct overview of the case study methodologies, please see Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). *op.cit.* Also see, See Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded source book* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; Zaidah Zainal. (2007, Jun). Case study as a research method. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*. 9. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Faculty of Management and Human Resource Development. Retrieved from http://psyking.net/htmlobj-3837/case_study_as_a_research_method.pdf

⁶⁰ SPRING is a government agency that sets national standards and accreditation body. Internationally-recognized standards and quality assurance infrastructure are among the keys areas of interest and responsibilities. See SPRING Singapore. Retrieved from <http://www.spring.gov.sg/About-Us/Pages/spring-singapore.aspx>. Hereafter referred to as SPRING Singapore. For the attributes for high performing organization, please see Business Excellence Framework from Spring Singapore. Retrieved from (http://www.spring.gov.sg/Building-Trust/Business-Excellence/Apply-for-a-BE-Certification-Award/BE-Awards/Documents/BE_Framework.pdf). Hereafter referred to as BE Framework.

as well as detailed aspects of the syllabus, teaching methodologies, educational materials and a spectrum of related matters. Based on the literature review, there are already a significant amount of researches carried out on curriculum matters in relation to Islamic education. Although, there are still many more issues and concerns that need to be explored and improved upon in relation to curriculum matters, the researcher may embark specifically on these concerns in future works after the successful completion of this thesis. Thus, the focus on Andalus as the case study in this thesis, would be on the comprehensive aspects of developing an excellent Islamic educational institution within the context of a secular State.

Also, this thesis will not discuss issues relating to security threat, terrorism or matters pertaining in relation to Islamic education in the country. As mentioned earlier, the government had stated clearly that there were no such concerns and thus these are not an area of interest in this thesis. Also, there are several others who had written in relation to such issues.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND ANALYSIS OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN RELATION TO ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE

2.1 Overview of the Chapter

The general and basic historiography of Islamic education in Singapore ought to be understood by a significant, or at least, a critical number of discerning adult Muslims in Singapore.⁶¹ Until now, the level of understanding of the historiography of Islamic education among adult Muslims, as well as the number of persons well acquainted with the subject matter could not be ascertained because there are no comprehensive study on this to refer to, or available relevant data to measure or benchmark against.⁶² It may be highlighted however, at this juncture, there are already quite a good number of literatures and credible references on the subject matter addressed from political, sociological, legal, and economical as well as various other perspectives, written by Muslim and non-Muslim researchers, locally based or from abroad. Thus, the information on matters pertaining is quite readily available and conveniently accessible, written by a comparatively small community of credible researchers, academicians and contributors for public consumption.⁶³ Evidently, the formal or informal Islamic education available here have not factored the need to educate the Muslims here on the subject matter. More so, the conventional educational system has for years and persisted

⁶¹ Historiography may be briefly defined as the writing of history based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particulars from the authentic materials and the synthesis of particulars into a narrative that will stand the test of critical methods. For a very detailed elaboration on historiography, please see Maryanne Cline Horowitz, (Ed. In-Chief) (2005). *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*. vol 1 xxxv-xxx, Thomson Gale, a part of the Thomson Corporation.

⁶² This observation is based largely on the literature review, discussed rather extensively in Chapter 1.

⁶³ For the local Muslim scholars and academicians, see the works by Ahmad Ibrahim, Hussin Mutalib, Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman, Mukhlis Abu Bakar, Sa'eda Buang, Azhar Ibrahim, Hairon Salleh and Syed Muhammad Khairudin. There may be other such researchers that the researcher unfortunately, may not be aware of. Please the relevant pages in Chapter 1 for the literature review. 20-28.

until now, not regarded this body of knowledge and information as important or relevant for national heritage and identity or for social and cultural development.⁶⁴

2.1.1 Issues and Polemics

As mentioned in Chapter 1, particularly in the literature review section, the issues, polemics and debates regarding Islamic education were raised based mostly on exigencies and usually prompted by the turn of significant events, either anticipated or otherwise. First, it was during the period, pre-independence and post-independence in the tumultuous 1960s, during the crafting of the AMLA vis-à-vis the constitution.⁶⁵ Second, about twenty years later, during the heightened and resurgent consciousness to understand and practice Islam among Muslim populations at global, regional and national levels during the 1980s. It was during this period, the Muslim community and the State were grappling on the need to identify the suitable sort of Islamic education and thus the Muslim mannerisms and behaviors, suitable for Singapore context. During this period also, there were vigorous and rather extensive efforts to redevelop and upgrade the madrasahs and part-time madrasahs particularly in terms of infrastructure, facilities and manpower albeit in a rather haphazard way, in order to provide and cater to more and sufficient places to cater for the growing demands.⁶⁶ Lastly, it happened again, during the controversies prompted by the scathing comments by the senior politicians on the madrasah education, benchmarked against similar national parameters, prior to introduction of the Compulsory Education (CE) in the late 1990s.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Gopinathan. (2013, Mar). *Singapore's education system: Leading the way for the 21st century: Some personal reflections*. Paper presented at the Conference on Madrasah Education by Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), Singapore.

⁶⁵ Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1965). *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ Muhamad Hussin Mutalib (1986, 1989, 1997, 2010). *op. cit.* Muhamad Hussin Mutalib & Johan Saravanamuttu. (Eds.). (2010). *Authoritarian democracy and the minority Muslim polity in Singapore. Islam and Politics in Southeast Asia*. Routledge.

⁶⁷ Please see, 'Report of the Committee on Compulsory Education in Singapore July 2000. Hereafter will be referred to as Committee on Compulsory Education. The report was submitted to the Minister for Education by the 15 member committee on Compulsory Education (CE) that was set up in December 1999 to study whether CE should be introduced in Singapore, and if so, what form and duration it should take. In this study, the committee had considered how CE can contribute to the two key objectives of giving the children a common core of knowledge and skills for further education and the knowledge-

2.1.2 Understanding the Historiography

An in-depth understanding and appreciation of the historiography of Islamic education in Singapore would be paramount, especially for those who assumed leadership roles, policy setters and decision-makers among the Muslims and the designated non-Muslim office bearers. It would be unfortunate and problematic, if the subject matter remained ambiguously or worse erroneously understood, by these key players because efforts towards defining, correcting, improving and refining matters in relation to Islamic education within Singapore context, should be based on proper understanding and analysis of the history, ideas, efforts and legacy of the early Muslims, the British colonialists, the government and related agencies, important institutions and personalities that influenced the religious education landscape until today. It is worth reminding that Islamic education has direct impact on the state of the Muslim community; the fact that Islam has been embraced homogenously by the community for more than 1000 years and thus has tremendous influence on the worldview, values, culture, language and many key aspects of the Muslim life.

It may be interesting to investigate the extenuating factors to the disquiet phases and years mentioned above in the 1960s, 1980s and late 1990s that had resulted in more rigorous debates and the accompanying research and writings. By doing so, we may ascertain, the chief precursors and drivers in conceptualizing and determining the strategies, agenda, key issues and the desired objectives as far as the historiography of Islamic education is concerned, particularly after independence. Based on the three scenarios mentioned above, the researcher believes, it is quite evident that the State has played significant and eventually determinant roles in qualifying, justifying and extenuating such issues. The Muslim community including the relevant leaders, as

based economy and a common educational experience to help build national identity and cohesion. In formulating its recommendations, the committee had also taken into account the wishes and aspirations of the different groups and communities who would be affected if CE was introduced.

noted by the researcher were by and large reacting and responding to the issues and imperatives in the expedient manners, rather argumentative behaviors or worse tailgating ways.⁶⁸ Thus, the researcher believes it is timely to train and make available, somehow, a critical numbers of capable and independent minded Muslim intelligentsia and leadership to acquire the right body of knowledge as well as the insightfulness and profundity to address such issues with appropriate levels of sophistication and finesse. By doing so, these well respected thinkers and leaders among the community may engage effectively the State and relevant interested parties, for the best possible outcomes and for immediate as well as long term ramifications and considerations.⁶⁹ It is worth mentioning that non-Muslim researchers locally and researchers locally and abroad albeit still in small numbers, were already doing serious works on the madrasah education. The local non-Muslim researchers were mostly academicians from the local tertiary institutions and their roles and contributions could be associated with the exigencies and contingencies involving the State and its apparatus. While the Muslim and non-Muslim researchers from countries outside Singapore, could be interested due to security, political and economic imperatives especially after the 9/11.⁷⁰ The non-Muslims researches and writings on Muslims affairs in general and specifically on Islamic education, would naturally or inadvertently adopt worldviews, axioms, presupposition and methods that were very different from those adopted by their Muslims counterparts while conducting researches and the recordings and writings of their findings. They may eventually offer very different, critical and objective observations, evaluations and conclusions. But the intentions, motivations and outcomes

⁶⁸ Kerstin Steiner. (2015). *op. cit*; Kerstin Steiner. (2011). Madrasah in Singapore: tradition and modernity in religious education. *Intellectual Discourse*, 19, IIUM Press. 41-70.

⁶⁹ For a good discourse on the role of religious leaders in Modern context, see Mumtaz Ahmad. (2013). *op. cit*.

⁷⁰ For works by academicians based in the local tertiary institutions, see the writings by S.Gopinathan, Lai Ah Heng, Charlene Tan, Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew. For works by academicians based abroad, see works by Kerstin Steiner, Warnk, Holger, Johnson Tan and Lily Zubaidah. Please see Chapter 1 for the literature review. 20-28.

of such works should still be subject to critical and objective evaluations for acceptance or otherwise by Muslims thinkers, leaders and institutions.

Islamic education in the context of this chapter and thesis, includes the madrasahs where lessons and classes are held on daily basis and the part-time madrasahs where classes are held once a week, mostly on weekends. This chapter will discuss both the madrasahs and part-time madrasah since the early ninth-century to the present day.⁷¹ These have to take into consideration and context, the various aspects of developments at national level and in particular the bold policies changes and systems reformations that were incorporated periodically to the education system and landscape in response to both internal and external imperatives, resulting in the significant transformation of the national education system, principally after independence.⁷² It is important to recognize and acknowledge that Singapore has now been acknowledged and recognized at regional and global standpoints, for its excellent education system and its direct correlations with other key aspects of governance and nation building. Thus, madrasahs, part-time madrasahs and corresponding Islamic education history and evolution have to take cognizance of these changes and developments.

2.2. The Four Stages in the Historiography

Four stages in the historiography of Islamic education in Singapore may be delineated. They are the pre-colonial period (9-18th century C.E.), the colonial period (19-20th century C.E.), post-colonial period (20th century) and lastly from the 1980s onwards, with the dynamics in the madrasahs, mosques, self-help Muslim organizations

⁷¹ The researcher had identified these concerns based on his observations, engagements, researches and reflections over the years since 1992 until 2015 (about 23 years). First, interacting with various institutions and individuals in the madrasah fraternity while working as an education officer in the Religious Education Department, MUIS for almost five years from 1992 to 1997. Second, the researcher had the opportunity to analyze and understand these issues more profoundly from the historical, philosophical and conceptual perspectives while being a full-time postgraduate student in ISTAC from 1997 to 2000. Third, the researcher has been actively involved since 1997 until now, in establishing and managing several private Islamic education centers and a private Islamic college. Lastly but not least, the researcher has been researching these matters while doing his MA and writing this PhD thesis,

⁷² For an overview of the major policy changes and significant developments in the national education, see Gopinathan. (2013). *op. cit.*

and private educational agencies and direct involvements or otherwise from MUIS and the State.⁷³

More attention will be given to the last stage i.e. the observable trends from the 1980s onwards, when the relevant laws pertaining to the madrasahs were passed by the Singapore government in parliament and later the formation of the Religious Education Unit in MUIS, before the end of that decade.⁷⁴ During this period, several rather spectacular changes in trends occurred resulting in a surge in public interests among Muslims for Islamic education and particularly the heightened confidence in the madrasah education. For example, the number of applications for entry into primary 1 classes in the madrasahs throughout most part of the 1990s, surged to heights never been encountered before since gaining independence from the British. The overwhelming demand for places in the madrasahs demonstrated higher and better acceptance among parents for madrasahs' education.⁷⁵ Also, the concurrent demand for formal and structured part-time religious classes offered in the mosques, Muslim organizations, private educational agencies and elsewhere increased considerably in tandem. The demand for Islamic education thus became a reliable barometer, measuring the concerns of parents, directly and indirectly with regards to the multitude of challenges and in particular conformity to the Islamic code of conduct and values as well as responding to the perennial social ills that had bogged down the community. As

⁷³ This could be an original attempt to delineate the madrasah history into four stages. Previous writings and discussions on this subject by others may not address the matter using this approach.

⁷⁴ The Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), also known as the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, was established as a statutory body in 1968 when the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) came into effect. Under AMLA, MUIS is to advise the President of Singapore on all matters relating to Islam in Singapore. By virtue of section 87 and 88 of the AMLA, all activities relating to religious activities is the responsibility of MUIS. The role of MUIS is to see that the many and varied interests of Singapore's Muslim community are looked after. In this regard MUIS is responsible for the promotion of religious, social, educational, economic and cultural activities in accordance with the principles and traditions of Islam as enshrined in the Holy Quran and Sunnah. For a quite comprehensive discourse on the position of MUIS vis-a-vis the state, please see Walid Jumblatt Abdullah. (2002). *Religious representation in secular Singapore: a study of MUIS and Pergas*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Singapore (NUS).

⁷⁵ Mukhlis Abu Bakar. (1999, Jun). *Islamic religious schools: Recent trends and issues*. Paper presented at the fourth ASEAN Inter-University Seminar on Social Development, Pattani, Thailand.

a result of the above, all primary entrance classes in the madrasahs and part-time madrasahs by the mosques, Muslim organization, private educational agencies and elsewhere were mostly fully occupied. The waiting lists of names in most, if not all of the institutions were widespread, leading to some level of frustration, exasperation and angst among parents. This chapter will discuss possible reasons for the heightened interest among the Muslim community for Islamic education.

It was during this period, the government intervened and thereafter introduced the Compulsory Education (CE). Derisive and critical comments were made on the madrasah education in particular by senior politicians and were covered extensively in the national media. These resulted in significant polemics and controversies involving, particularly the administrators, teachers, parents and children who were directly involved in the madrasah education as well as the Muslim community at large from across all walks of life. MUIS was caught in a tightrope and in a very unenviable position to manage both the concerns of the State and needs of the community. These developments also attracted the attention of non-Muslims nationwide, who were mostly, prior to these controversies, oblivious of the madrasah education. As mentioned in the literature review, it is interesting and important to reiterate, that more Muslim and non-Muslims academicians from the local universities were involved in researches regarding the madrasah and Islamic education particularly in relation to the Compulsory Education (CE) saga from the year 2008 onwards. The direct involvement of several local non-Muslim academicians' vis-a-vis Islamic education was a new and recent phenomena. Subsequently, several major changes like the Joint Madrasah System (JMS) were introduced also in 2008, affecting the madrasah education that have stayed until today. More of this will be discussed later in this chapter.

Almost concomitantly too, the part-time madrasahs, particularly those held in the 36 mosques also went through massive changes but in this context, without prior

intervention or influence from the State. Under the MUIS driven flagship called Singapore Islamic Education System (SIES), the mosque madrasah curriculum underwent comprehensive review, revamp and major transformation. Thereafter a brand new curriculum called aLIVE, a fashionable acronym for Learning Islamic Values Everyday was introduced in 2004, which was significantly different, replacing the earlier curriculum that had been adopted for decades.⁷⁶ The 4th of the MUIS Three Year Plan (2013 – 2015), placed particular focus on Islamic education in order to strengthen the quality and thus performance of madrasah students as well as developing more resilient families.⁷⁷ In fact, MUIS' most recent Fifth Three-Year Plan (5M3YP) that spans from 2016 to 2018, continues to focus on four key areas which includes increasing pathways for Islamic Education; expanding the capabilities of *asatizah* (religious teachers), enhancing madrasah's value and empowering the mosque sector. By 2015, the number of participants in the aLIVE program had reached 16,000 and these students were mostly from the same set of mosque madrasahs but underwent conversions, thus adopting a new curriculum. In addition, \$1 million were disbursed under the Islamic Education Fund (IEF) to help about 2,800 students from low income families to attend religious classes.⁷⁸ The other incumbent Islamic education service providers were the Muslim organisations and a number of them had played important roles in missionary and educational activities even before independence and prior to the establishment of MUIS.⁷⁹ However, these organisation have evolved and changed significantly over the years and some are diverting significant resources for other interests, primarily social in nature, like halfway houses for ex-drug abusers, teenage

⁷⁶See MUIS Annual Report (2013). Retrieved from http://www.muis.gov.sg/documents/Annual_Reports/muis-html/edit-capabiliti.html; MUIS aLIVE program.

⁷⁷ MUIS Annual Report (2014). MUIS President Message. 2. Retrieved from <http://www.muis.gov.sg/About/annual-report.html>

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, MUIS Chief Executive Message. 5.

⁷⁹ The well-known Muslim organisations known for actively providing Islamic education on part-time basis and their dates of inceptions are namely, Jamiyah (1932), Singapore Kadayanullar Muslim League, SKML (1941), Pergas (1957), Persatuan Muhammadiyah (1957), Perdaus (1964), Pertapis (1970), Darul Arqam (1979), Fellowship of Muslim Students Association, FMSA (1983).

pregnancies and juvenile delinquents. Some also provide old folks homes and before and after care services for the aged. There were almost no progressive change in these organisation as far as Islamic education was concerned and this lasted for decades. The private educational agencies are however, a new phenomenon and a sizeable number of them had sprouted, beginning from the 1990s. However, not many could be sustained and ceased operations or remained stagnant. While a few others remain and played important roles in the Islamic education landscape.

About 10 years after the introduction of the aLIVE initiative, MUIS mooted another initiative called the Private Islamic Education Network or PIENet in 2014. After a series of discussions involving MUIS and several operators from the Muslim organisations and private entities, a PIENet protem team was formed to look into ways to improve the capabilities of the service providers and to increase participation in Islamic education. MUIS would facilitate training initiatives and increase public awareness campaign on the importance of Islamic education.⁸⁰ These were considered important since only 40% or 35,600 Muslim children from the age of 7 and 16 years old were on record, to be attending formal Islamic education. About 20,400 of them attended classes run by the Muslim organization and private operators and the balance attended the classes in the mosque madrasahs.

Against the above backdrop, Andalus Corporation Pte Ltd (thereafter called Andalus) which is the case study of this thesis, came into picture. Andalus presence came about in an unprecedented manner and had somehow managed to alleviate or addressed some of the anxieties of the parties involved namely; the parents, students and members of the public. Even the madrasahs, mosque administrators and MUIS have by and large, accepted the 'new kid on the block' presence and role. Andalus offered and

⁸⁰ Speech by Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister-In-Charge of Muslim Affairs. (2014, March 11). *Strengthening the community, home for all*. The 2014 Committee of Supply debate. Retrieved from https://www.mccy.gov.sg/en/news/speeches/2014/Mar/COS2014_MinMASpeech.aspx.

provided new possibilities and refreshing perspectives in relation to Islamic education. More options for the various types of Islamic education across all age groups and more places for entry were made available. Over a period of about 19 years, since its inception in 1996 until 2015, Andalus managed to offer a structured, systematic and comprehensive Islamic education on part-time basis at preschool, primary, secondary and diploma levels, thus catering to 17 years of continuous education, covering a complete spectrum of ages from pre-school, children, teenagers, youths and adults. Concurrently, over almost the same period, Andalus initiated the formation of affiliate educational companies namely, Cordova and Al-Zuhri. By 2015, the number of students in Andalus has reached 10,500 and in the three institutions combined has about 14,500 students located at 26 locations in the tiny island. More of this will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

2.2.1 Pre-Colonial Period (9-18th Century C.E.)

The beginnings of the Islamic education during the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Companions during the seventh century Common Era (C.E.), as well as several centuries after that were well researched and documented. The development of general knowledge of Islam into the respective religious sciences and disciplines took several centuries.⁸¹ The beginnings of the madrasah education in Baghdad initiated by Nizam al-Mulk of the Seljuk dynasty during the 11th century C.E. and the details pertaining were also well studied.⁸² For this section, the focus will be during the 9-18 century in Singapore prior to the arrival, presence and dominance of the British colonialist. The early missionaries Muslims who came to the Malay world from the ninth century onwards, were mainly from Arabia and later from India and elsewhere. It is important to mention, to-date there are still lively debates among

⁸¹ For a detailed exposition on the development of religious sciences in Islamic education, please see Alparslan Acikgenc. (1996). *Islamic science: towards a definition*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC.

⁸² Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied & Dayang Istiaisyah Hussin. (2005). Estranged from the ideal past: Historical evolution of madrasahs in Singapore. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 25(2), 249-250. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

historians specializing in this field or among interested scholars in general, as to whether the main mediators of propagating Islam were dedicated and qualified missionaries from Arabia who were motivated solely in disseminating and carrying out teachings of Islam, or they act as both missionaries and traders. As mentioned in the first chapter, the researcher is inclined to align himself to the position of Al-Attas that the early propagators of Islam during the early ninth century onwards to the Malays in the Malay Archipelago were mostly well trained missionaries from Yemen and particularly from Hadhramaut province.⁸³ The fact, Islam was properly and well taught by qualified and dedicated individuals, the authenticity and veracity of the religion were ensured, safeguarded and the key tenets well understood and embraced by the vast majority of the Malays as the indigenous peoples for hundreds of years. It was not possible for common traders who lacked the pre-requisite trainings as well as the rigour, discipline and focus to execute such important responsibilities well with tenacity, perseverance and sagacity.

Thus, the early Muslim missionaries were well trained, experienced and very earnest in their efforts to propagate the religion. Although there were no formal religious educational institutions or programs during the early days, the informal educational activities conducted by these early missionaries were very effective. They were so successful that the rulers themselves became convinced and willingly embraced the religion followed by the elite ruling class and the rest of the population. By the end of the 13th century, Islam had been established in North Sumatra and by the 14th century in northeast Malaya, Brunei, the southern Philippines and East Java. By the 15th century, in Malacca and other areas of the Malay Peninsula. The newly converted rulers

⁸³ For an elaborate discussion on this, see Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. (1990). *Islam dalam sejarah dan kebudayaan Melayu [Islam in the history and the culture of the Malays]*. Petaling Jaya: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM). 17-24; Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. (2011) *op. cit.*; H. Meuleman, Johan. (2005). The History of Islam in South East Asia: Some Questions and Debate. In K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali Islam (Eds.). *South East Asia, Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*. Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies. 22-38.

and community elites were actively supporting religious activities. Learning activities were carried out at allocated areas in the royal palace as well as in the mosques, *suraus* (designated public areas smaller than the mosques for congregational prayers and learning of the religion) and homes of the religious teachers or the students. The teachings were focused mostly on the fundamental religious creed and the practices of the religion. The approach and methodologies adopted and employed by the missionaries amalgamated well with the dominant cultures and traditions within the right context and circumstances. These made the understanding, appreciation and acceptance of the religion by the indigenous people, apt and very well received.⁸⁴ Thus, the education and Islamization processes were gradual, continuous and by and large very effective and successful. Malays who were formerly largely Hindus, Buddhists or Animists were successfully convinced and accepted Islam in large numbers particularly during the 14th to 16th century.⁸⁵

However, the generations of Muslims after this were more contented and interested in practicing and preserving their religious beliefs rather than to propagate them. By the end of the 18th century, the majority of the indigenous people were already Muslims. They were mostly adhering to the '*aqidah* of *al-Ash'ārī* and *al-Māturīdī* and the teachings were basically *arkān al-Imān*, *arkān al-Islām* and *taṣawwuf*. At this stage, the active propagation of the religion amongst the local Muslims to attract others of different beliefs was not as significant as compared to the earlier missionaries. There was no concerted effort to convey Islam to the Chinese and Indian migrants who came to Singapore much later, what more the British colonialists who encouraged and supported the coming of the migrants. As such, until today, the majority of Muslims in

⁸⁴ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1990). *op. cit.* Also see Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied & Dayang Istiaisyah Hussin. (2005). *op.cit.*, 250-252.

⁸⁵ There are various alternative and conflicting views on the spread of Islam, taking over the predominance of Hindu, Buddhist or animist believes. Some scholars attributed the phenomena to trade, cultural interactions, inter-marriages, political expedience, antagonism to the European missionary activities and others. These debates requires extensive discourses but the researcher prefer to delimit them to remain focus to the crux of this chapter and thesis.

Malaya and Singapore included are Malays. Could the European colonialists who colonized and subjugated the Malay world from the 15th to 19th century, caused the Islamic missionary activities to be largely restrained or impeded? As to why Islam was not well and successfully propagated by the indigenous Malays to the migrant Chinese and Indians, warrants a study of its own.

2.2.2 During the Colonial Period (19-20th century C.E.)

The British colonized the island from 1819 to 1965 for about 146 years.⁸⁶ Besides controlling the trade and economy, they were more interested in establishing Christian missionary schools and churches rather than stopping the teaching and learning of Islam or impeding the religious activities among the Muslims.⁸⁷ According to Meuleman:

Generally speaking, Great Britain did not interfere much in the administration of justice among its Malay subjects and left this task to the Sultan and other pre-colonial, indigenous leaders. It also treated Islamic jurisprudence as the principal source and decisions among its Muslim subjects.⁸⁸

William Roff also commented that the British did not interfere with the Islamic education because Islam did not exert much influence on the political and public affairs. The religious elite or '*ulemā*' were also not very organized to be considered a political threat. The Arabs who were respected by the Muslims then were also loyal to the

⁸⁶ The European powers who were naturally Christians had successfully conquered various parts of the Malay Archipelago resulting in the fall of the Muslim rulers. This resulted in decreases in political influence of Islam in the region and the growing presence and influence of Christianity. Malacca fell to Portuguese on 1511 and later to the Dutch on 1641, Manila to the Spaniards on 1521 and Indonesia fell to the Dutch on 1594. On 1768 British occupied Penang. These happened mostly in the 16th - 18th century C.E. See Muhammad Abdul Rauf. (2001). *The Muslim mind*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. 280-281.

⁸⁷ In the 19th century CE, secular education began to develop in the Straits Settlement in Penang, Singapore and Malacca with the establishment of Government English Free School and Mission schools. The mission schools were to promote Christianity and secular education. These were funded substantially by British and the ensuing governments after independence until now. For more details on the teaching and learning Islam during the early days among Muslims in Singapore, see Zahoor Ahmed F. Hussain. (1966). *Growth of Islamic education in Singapore*. Paper presented at the seminar on Islamic Education, Singapore.

⁸⁸ H, Meuleman. Johan. (2005). *op. cit.*, 36.

British.⁸⁹ Stamford Raffles in 1823, laid down rules that was agreed by the Sultan and Temenggong such that,

in all cases regarding the ceremonies of religion, and marriages, and the rules of inheritance, the laws and customs of the Malays will be respected, where they shall not be contrary to reason, justice and humanity. In all other cases the laws of the British authority will be enforced with due consideration to the usages and habits of the people.⁹⁰

During the early nineteenth century, the Qur'ān schools were popular and studies were mostly conducted in the mosques, *suraus* and homes of teachers and students. Focus was given to the recitation and memorization of the Qur'ān. With emphasis on rote learning, there were insignificant efforts at getting learners to understand or comprehend the sacred text. The British colonialists were largely responsible for initiating and propagating the Malay schools. They began using the Qur'ān schools as the starting point and the foothold for their endeavors. These schools were then regulated and the teachings of the Qur'ān and Malay language were separated. The Malay language schools were under the purview of the government and held in the morning while the Qur'ān lessons were left to the private individuals to be taught after school hours in the afternoon. While the government paid the Malay language teachers, the Qur'ān teachers were paid by the parents. This was the first initial attempt to demarcate the teaching of language and non-religious subjects from religious education. A small number of Qur'ān schools continued their traditional ways and received the support of parents who still wanted the teachings of Qur'ān to be the dominant aspect of the curricula. Aljunied and Hussin described in some details of the education and schools promulgated by the British:

The mission schools were not designed to overtly convert pupils to Christianity, although they did aim to inculcate Christian values with the

⁸⁹ Roff, William R. (1966). *The origin of Malay nationalism*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

⁹⁰ Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1965). *op. cit.*

hope of probable conversion in the future. Such schools were assisted by the secular British government despite their evangelical mission. Ironically, the Bible was also used as a schoolbook in Malay schools where Quranic lessons were held. This had invited protests from Muslim parents. Consequently, Malay parents refused to send their children to the Malay vernacular schools. In 1872, A.M. Skinner, first Inspector of Schools, tried to improve vernacular education but faced 'hostility that sprang from fear that their [Malays'] children might lose faith. A similar situation was reported in the Federated Malay States. For example, in Pahang, the District Officer reported that the natives would send their children miles away to learn and recite the Quran or seek religious instruction. They were apathetic to secular education, for fear of foreign and Christian bias, resulting in their turning to Islam instead. The Malays saw little advantage in vernacular education with Christian elements in it unless the vernacular education led to further instruction in English that could help Malay children in getting government jobs.⁹¹

Consequently, there arose two distinct types of education system amongst the Muslims thereby creating a dichotomy between the Malay schools and the Qur'an schools. While the Malay schools no longer exist today, the dichotomy first established by the British colonizer is still entrenched and exists until today. As S.M. Hossain notes:

By dividing education into secular and religious education and by establishing separate institutions for both divisions, the British scheme of dual education replaced the unitary Islamic system of education resulting in perennial discord among products of the two systems.⁹²

This policy became more apparent in the early part of the 19th century CE and clearly demonstrated the British government policy of not stopping but not supporting the religious education among Muslims. The role to provide religious education was assumed by a few Arabs and a few local Malay individuals. This policy of not supporting the religious institutions, first initiated by the British government, is still upheld by the present government.

However, it would be interesting to note that Islamic studies were introduced in the Malay schools from 1958 onwards while the country was under self-rule. Then,

⁹¹ Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied & Dayang Istiaisyah Hussin (2005), *op.cit.*, 254.

⁹² Hossain, S.M. (1979). A plea for a modern Islamic university: resolution of the dichotomy. In Syed Muhamad Naquib al-Attas. (Ed.). *Aims and objectives of education*. Jeddah: Hodder and Stoughton. 101

Islamic studies were offered as an examination subject for the Cambridge/Malayan Certificate.⁹³ This was a unique situation where Islamic studies were introduced in Malay vernacular schools which had secular curriculum. This was in vogue until the closing of the last Malay schools in the 1970s due to declining in popularity and low student enrolments.⁹⁴ It is also interesting to note that the subject Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) was introduced in the government schools as an examinable subject in the 1982 but unfortunately the policy was rescinded a few years later.⁹⁵

It is worthy to note that the six madrasahs still in existence and active now were built during the colonial period. None was built in the post-independence era particularly with the presence of AMLA in 1966. Why was AMLA written and enacted? While this law was popularly accepted as a positive development for the Muslims, why were there no new madrasahs established after 1966? Was AMLA written more to regulate or to control and inhibit the activities of the Muslims especially with regards to madrasah education? Could it be due to the lack of interest and realization or sheer ineptitude among key personalities involved in Islamic education that lead the extended period of inactivity? The answer to these questions would be an interesting but should be extensive area of study somewhere.⁹⁶

It may interesting to note that the gradual and progressive development of more structured learning institutions for Muslims in Singapore mirrors in a similar fashion;

⁹³ Kongres Pendidikan Anak-Anak Islam. (1982). *op. cit.*, 60.

⁹⁴ The period before independence from the British and until the independence of Singapore (1956-1965), saw a tumultuous relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. This had to some extent, influenced some of the policies with regards to religious studies in the secular schools. Malaysia being a Muslim majority country and adopting Islam as State religion would embrace a policy that liberally incorporates Islamic studies in the school curriculum. However, Singapore has a Muslim minority and no official religion, thus making it difficult to have religious studies in its secular curriculum. For some discussion with regards to the merger of Singapore into Malaysia, see Mohamed Noordin Sopiee. (2005). *op. cit.*, 112-115. Also see Kevin Y.L. Tan & Tio Li-ann. (1997). *op. cit.*, 888-889. The issue with regards to secular State and religion will be discussed again with greater detail in Chapter 3.

⁹⁵ Students may still take Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) classes. But these are normally held outside curriculum time. They may also sit for the examination for this subject but the results may not be used for entry into tertiary institutions. These classes are not popular anymore and many schools no longer offer this subject. For the reasons religious knowledge was introduced in the curriculum and later taken out, see Kevin Y.L. Tan & Tio Li-ann. (1997). *op. cit.*, 890-892.

⁹⁶ Kerstin Steiner. (2015). *op. cit.*

albeit taking a longer time compared to the developments of formal religious educational institutions in the Middle East. According to Nashabe, the first madrasah established on record was built in Khurasan on 1014 C.E. or about 400 years after *hijrah*.⁹⁷ However, the first madrasah to be established here took about 600-700 years after the arrival of Islam to the island.

In the early part of the 20th century CE, a number of Arabic schools or madrasahs were established by wealthy Arabs philanthropist.⁹⁸ The main motivations to set up these schools were to propagate Islam and to promote Arabic language and culture. The early teachers in the madrasahs were from Arabia and taught Arabic to the students and enabled them to understand Arabic texts. These students eventually became religious teachers and preachers because of their ability to read Arabic text.

Madrasah Alsagoff, Madrasah Aljunied and Madrasah Al-Maarif were built on *wakaf* lands by Muslim philanthropist in the years 1912, 1927 and 1937 respectively. Meanwhile, Madrasah Al-Irsyad, Madrasah Al-Arabiah and Madrasah Wak Tanjong were built during the years 1946, 1950 and 1955 respectively.⁹⁹ There were a number of other madrasah like Madrasah Al-Iqbal (1908), Madrasah Al-Khairiah (1932) and Al-Firdaus College (1937) but these were of less significant importance and relevance now compared to the six madrasahs mentioned earlier.

There was a clear trend that the most of the madrasahs were rebuilt in the 1980s and 1990s. This showed the growing consciousness and public support for the madrasahs. Most of the funding for the redevelopment came from the donations from

⁹⁷ See Nashabe, Hisham. (1989). *Muslim educational institutions*. Beirut: Institute of Islamic Studies.

⁹⁸ C.M. Turnbull. (1977). *A history of Singapore 1819-1975*. Singapore: Oxford University Press. 100-101.

⁹⁹ These information is consistently found in almost all existing literatures on madrasah history in Singapore like the '*Assirat*' the magazine published by Madrasah Alsagoff in 1982 to commemorate its 70th anniversary; also in the '*Inspiration*' a magazine published by Madrasah Al-Maarif on March 1987 to commemorate its 50th anniversary and the official opening of its new building.

the Muslim public. In addition to public donations, Madrasah Al-Maarif was rebuilt from the grant given by the Islamic Bank based in Jeddah.¹⁰⁰

Now only Madrasah Alsagoff and Madrasah Al-Maarif stand on *wakaf* lands because the government had acquired the *wakaf* properties of Madrasah Aljunied. It is again worthwhile to note that, all *wakaf* properties are also under the control of MUIS by virtue of section 58 and 59 of AMLA. This brings to question again the role of MUIS as a statutory board, the objectives and functions of AMLA. Are MUIS and AMLA designed to regulate and thereafter encourage the activities of the Muslims in general for the betterment? Or are they meant to control and restrain the religious activities of Muslims here, when deemed necessary by the secular State. As mentioned earlier, there should be an extensive and thorough study and review on the role and function of AMLA.

Besides the madrasahs, the vast majority of the Muslim children at school going age as well as youths and adults were attending religious classes organized by the mosques, Muslim organizations and individual teachers.¹⁰¹ They attended classes before or after school during the weekdays and on weekends. They attended the lessons once, twice or thrice per week and took subjects such as *Tawhīd*, *Fiqh*, *Sirāh*, *Akhlāq*, *Qur'ān*, Arabic Language and *Jāwī*.

¹⁰⁰Madrasah Alsagoff building was restored in 1992. The *wakaf* property belonging to Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah was acquired by the government in 1996. The madrasah is now operating on a new building that was constructed on a small portion of the acquired property with a 30 years lease from the government. Madrasah Al-Maarif Al-Islamiah was redeveloped in 1986 but later moved to a new freehold property in 2007. Madrasah Wak Tanjong was redeveloped in 1993 and currently stands on leasehold property of 30 years like Madrasah Aljunied. Madrasah Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiah was relocated due to redevelopment projects by the government and now is residing permanently in a building adjacent to MUIS. Madrasah Al-Arabiah moved to a temporary premises that was formerly a government school with the help of MUIS.

¹⁰¹The mosques in Singapore organize multitudes of activities besides the congregational prayers. The bulk of these activities are rituals, educational and social in nature. See Mansor Sukaimi. (1982). *Dynamic functions of mosques – the Singapore experience*. Singapore: Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura. 11. Also see the MUIS Annual Reports (2005-2015). Retrieved from <http://www.muis.gov.sg/About/annual-report.html>

2.2.3 Post Colonial Period (1965- 1989)

Singapore was under self-government in 1959 but still under British rule until 1965. After the war, there was a proliferation of religious schools in villages from 14 schools in 1959 to about 50 schools by 1966 with about 5,000 students. These schools were not registered with the government and were run by committees set up by the villagers themselves.¹⁰² The quality of religious education generally did not change much after independence. The religious schools were poorly managed and had no proper administration. These were privately owned and had no controlling body. Each school developed its own tradition and culture. There were barely any benchmark, standardization in policies and procedures in the administration, finance, curriculum, examination, recruitment of teachers and teachers' training. The religious schools had traditionally been a private enterprise with minimal involvement and interference from the government. For years the religious schools were barely able to survive because of lacking in funding and expertise. It could attract only a handful of students because many parents were doubtful of the system. Students who left religious schools were said to have significant problems finding jobs since there were limited opportunities and their qualifications were not recognized by many employers.

The religious schools were then a melting pot of students who joined the schools since young and older students who left the government schools prematurely to join these schools. A number of religious schools could not be sustained and closed down. There were many religious schools that died of natural deaths since they received little support from the community in terms of student enrolment and financial aid.¹⁰³ However, it was due to the perseverance and sacrifices of a number of Muslims that a few religious schools managed to pull through the difficult times and existed until the present day. By 1982, the number of religious schools or more popularly known as

¹⁰² See Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1966). *op. cit.*, 77-84.

¹⁰³ See Kongres Pendidikan Anak-Anak Islam. (1982). *op. cit.*, 59.

madrasahs, was reduced to only six, providing primary level education and four of them continue to provide secondary level education. The rest were called part-time madrasahs provided by the mosques and Muslim organisations.¹⁰⁴

There were several factors leading to this situation such as the rapid urbanization, the disappearance of villages and the relocation of the villagers and the Muslim community to new housing estates. In addition, parents preferred English or Malay schools to the madrasahs as these schools were deemed to offer better employment prospects. As a result of reduced support and dwindling enrolments, many madrasahs had to close. According to Teck Wong:

A further consequence of the transformation of the economy was the sharp rise in the demand for education in English. Increasing external trade, tourism, and the growing role of Singapore as financial centre created many job opportunities for those fluent in English. This did not escape the notice of pragmatic parents who came to believe that an English education would give their children better career prospects.¹⁰⁵

2.2.4 Later Developments and the Establishment of the Religious Education Unit, MUIS (1989 onwards)

Although AMLA was passed in 1966 for the establishment of MUIS, it was only in 1989, some 23 years later that the Religious Education Unit (REU) was formed in MUIS. Soon after, a seminar was convened to solicit ideas to formulate the roles and functions as well as to charter the direction of the newly formed unit.¹⁰⁶ On 1 March 1990, the Singapore Parliament enforced sections 87 and 88 of AMLA that gave MUIS widespread control over the madrasahs.¹⁰⁷ Besides madrasahs, all other activities relating to religious activities in the country came under the direct purview of MUIS.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁰⁵ Soon Teck Wong. (1988). *Singapore's education system: educational reform for national development*, Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies. 6-7.

¹⁰⁶ See Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1966). *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁷ Mohd Yusuf Zuhri. (1993, Nov). Memanfaatkan potensi pendidikan madrasah [Optimise the potential of madrasah education]. Paper presented during the Seminar Commemorating MUIS's 25 Years Achievements and Its Future Directions, Singapore.

Concurrently, the madrasahs also fall within the Education Act under the Ministry of Education where they are considered as private schools. It would be interesting to study why it took so long to enact the said law and take needful actions to improve the madrasahs. During the intervening years for about 10 years from early 1980s to late 1980s, MENDAKI or Council for the Development of Singapore Muslim Community, played the interim role to coordinate the madrasahs education since there was no other body during that period that was looking into it.¹⁰⁸ But it was promptly handed over once MUIS was ready to assume the responsibility. To-date, MENDAKI provides annual financial contribution to MUIS as its commitment to religious education.¹⁰⁹

There are at present about 3,460 students studying in the six madrasahs. Each madrasah has its own Management Committee (MMC) that is registered under the Education Act. Ministry of Education (MOE) appoints the members of the MMC and the appointments are renewed every 2 years. MOE would consult MUIS before confirming the committee members.¹¹⁰ The MMC members are sometimes affiliated to the founders of the madrasahs or volunteers from members of the public.

Even after the 1990s, MUIS had not exercised fully its authority and has given much autonomy to the madrasahs' administrators to run the institutions independently. This was partly due to historical reasons since the madrasahs had existed for many years before MUIS and they had always been independent of MUIS. In addition, the administrators of some madrasahs had for some period of time shielded their institutions covetously against the encroachment by MUIS and other bodies. Thus, they operated independently without much interference from external agencies. In addition, MUIS

¹⁰⁸ *Kongres Pendidikan Anak-Anak Islam*. (1982). *op. cit.*, 59-67.

¹⁰⁹ For MENDAKI's role in madrasah education, see Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai. (Eds.). (2006). *op. cit.*, 16-18.

¹¹⁰ There are political appointments in the Ministry of Education who are Muslims, given the role as the Minister of State for Education or Senior Parliamentary Secretary. Their focus are on all the students in the conventional schools and not the Muslim students only. However, their efforts and contributions to improve the madrasahs seemed minimal and thus insignificant.

lacked sufficient manpower, financial strength, experience and competencies to exert its authority and take full control over the administration of the madrasahs.

Nonetheless, a number of initiatives were taken by MUIS since early 1990s to improve the conditions of the madrasahs as well as part-time madrasahs. By and large, these received quite favorable response from the madrasahs' administrators and members of the Muslim community. The Religious Education Department (RED), MUIS in 1995 crafted the 5 strategic intents as follows: ¹¹¹

- a. To establish the full-time madrasahs as exemplary institutions, standing on par with the other academic schools in Singapore in terms of resources, management, programmes and product.
- b. To upgrade the part-time madrasahs in terms of physical and manpower resources and to provide sufficient number of places for Muslim pupils enrolled in government schools.
- c. To devise a systematic and comprehensive Islamic education system that will promote the development of good and responsible practicing Muslims. Students and graduates from this system will be guided by Islamic principles and values and be aware of and sensitive to the needs of the nation. This system will serve as a standard model for all madrasahs.
- d. To produce religious teachers and ulama who are not only fluent in two or three languages (e.g. Malay, English and Arabic) and have a good grasp of secular subjects but who can assume leadership roles and guide the community rightly according to the principles and values of Islam, taking cognizance of national interests.
- e. To provide a system whereby the madrasahs' pupils can opt to continue their studies in secular schools and can find employment other than religious teachers.

The madrasahs had in general benefited from the initiatives by MUIS and had in fact, responded positively to them. It was an accepted fact that MUIS had managed to

¹¹¹ Mohd Yusuf Zuhri. (1995). Islamic education – shaping the future generation. *Fikrah – Shaping the Future Generation*. Singapore: Majlis Ugama Islam. 1-10. The Religious Education Unit (REU) was upgraded to a department called Religious Education Department (RED) in 1992-1993. There was an increase in manpower in the department and also in the scope of activities.

make some strategic inroads into the madrasahs and had successfully helped the madrasahs to progress significantly in a number of critical areas.¹¹²

During the late 1980s and most part of the 1990s, there was a significant and a very apparent increase in the Muslim confidence and support for the madrasahs here. There were a number of factors that could be attributed to this increase. First, there was a global and regional interest among Muslims worldwide to discover and practice Islam.¹¹³ Secondly, since the formation of the REU and later RED in MUIS, there were more concerted efforts to improve the madrasahs at national level which, in turn, generated positive publicity in the mass media. These involved the collaborative efforts between MUIS and all the madrasahs.¹¹⁴ Third, there were some, albeit very few, graduates from the madrasahs who became successful in both the religious and non-religious educations and spheres of life and their achievements were well covered by the local media. They became role models for the community. Fourth, the growing number of well-educated Muslim parents who wanted their children to have a balanced education in both religious and non-religious sciences. Fifth, there were serious concerns about the increasing number of juvenile delinquency cases like gangsterism, drug abuse, substance abuse and premarital sex amongst Muslim children in secular schools. Also, the government schools have not allowed the female students who have reached puberty to observe *hijāb*. The issue of hijab had caused significant uproar and controversies involving the government, quite akin to the CE and until now has not been resolved concretely. According to Jumlatt:

¹¹²See Mohd Yusuf Zuhri. (1995). *op. cit.*

¹¹³ World Conferences on Islamic Education (1st to 8th). *op. cit.*

¹¹⁴ There were various efforts to reform the madrasahs to meet the community, national and global prerogatives and challenges. Some were made independently by the madrasahs' administrators utilizing their own resources. There were also initiatives spearheaded by MUIS in close collaboration with the interested madrasahs' administrators as well as the parents, students and appointed external consultants. These initiatives may be considered quite recent and the long lasting results and impacts may be observed within probably 15-20 years' time frame from the start of these initiatives. A case study on the changes made in a particular madrasah was given in the article, Charlene Tan & Hairon Salleh. (2014). *op. cit.*

When a Muslim community asks for the right to adorn the Muslim headscarf (hijab) for the female students in national schools or in the uniformed groups, for example, it is highly probable that they have to enter the political sphere to do so, either through elected officials pursuing this cause in legislative assemblies or (Muslim) civil society groups pressurizing the government. This is not likely to be tolerated in authoritarian settings. Even in liberal democracies, like France, the act of covering the face with a *niqab* (the veil) is considered to be against French values and is disallowed.¹¹⁵

There are however, concerns about the compatibility and matching of goals set by the madrasahs and the aspirations of the parents who sent their children to the madrasahs. The popularity of the madrasahs would be a positive phenomenon only if the parents are aware and actively involved in their children education. In addition, madrasahs should have proper and reliable mechanisms to identify students with the right aptitude, attitude and interest before accepting them. Zainah Alias in her study on this area commented:

... if a great percentage of parents who intend to send their children to madrasahs have confidence in their children's ability and their interest to study in madrasahs, have the commitment to be involved in their children's study and spiritual development and share the aspirations of the respective madrasahs, the popularity for madrasah education would be a blessing for the madrasahs' vision.¹¹⁶

The government had traditionally been apathetic and oblivious to the problems and challenges faced by the madrasahs since independence. However, when they realized the sudden popularity and surge in demand for places in the madrasahs from the Muslim community, several actions were swiftly introduced to address the situation. A quota was introduced in 2000, allowing only 400 students to enter the madrasahs at primary one per year. In addition, they decided to introduce Compulsory Education (CE) with effect from 2003. This implies that madrasahs have to adhere to similar

¹¹⁵ See Walid Jumblatt Abdullah. (2002).*op. cit.*, 8-9.

¹¹⁶ This study was done to analyze the aspirations of the parents who sent their children to madrasah vis-à-vis the goals set by madrasahs themselves. See Zainah Alias. (1997-1998). *The goals of madrasah educational system in Singapore: obstacles and recommendations*. (Unpublished Academic Exercise). National University of Singapore, Department of Sociology. 53.

curriculum offered in the secular schools as prescribed by MOE in tandem with the religious curriculum. The government will evaluate the performance of madrasahs' students at primary 6 during PSLE in the year 2008. If the madrasahs' students fail to perform in this examination, the government may take actions it deemed suitable on the affected madrasahs, even to the point of closing them down.

Possibly knee jerk reactions and direct consequences to the CE, several major revamps were made to the madrasahs' system initiated and led by largely by MUIS. It was noted several of the madrasahs notably Al-Arabiah, Aljunied and Wak Tak Tanjong were struggling hard to meet the PSLE requirements. Rather than to allow these madrasahs fail and fade, pragmatic solutions were chartered by the affected and interested parties. The Joint Madrasah System (JMS) was introduced involving three of the six madrasahs. Madrasah Al-Irsyad-Zuhri focuses on primary education, while Madrasah Aljunied and Al-Arabiah specialise in secondary education. Madrasah Aljunied offers the *ukhrawi* or religious stream that offers intensive religious education curriculum for students who are interested to pursue Islamic education at secondary and post-secondary levels. Madrasah Aljunied will tie-up with the Al-Azhar University in Egypt for its curriculum planning. Meanwhile, Madrasah Al-Arabiah offers the academic stream for students who are more inclined to study academic subjects, but will include Islamic Studies and Arabic Language within Islamic ambience. Whilst Madrasah Al-Irsyad will serve as the feeder school for both Aljunied and Al-Arabiah.¹¹⁷ There other three madrasahs namely Madrasah Alsagoff al-Arabiah, Madrasah Al-Maarif al-Islamiyyah and Madrasah Wak Tanjong that stayed out of JMS for various reasons, but probably had to do with the ownership and control of the respective institutions. Madrasah Wak Tanjong at some stage failed to make the mark for CE and were disallowed to take in primary one students for two consecutive years. Fortunately,

¹¹⁷ For more details, see MUIS. Joint Madrasah System (JMS). Retrieved from <http://www.muis.gov.sg/madrasah/Journey/index.html> <http://www.madrasah.sg/About/index.html>

after the corrective actions made and the desired results achieved, the institution resumed taking students.

Although there are only six madrasahs in the tiny island, unfortunately the madrasah fraternity was split into JMS and non-JMS madrasahs. As such, the limited resources were divided and resources such as manpower, finance and expertise cannot be mobilized and optimized effectively. All these institutions are still under MUIS as stipulated under AMLA but the JMS and non-JMS madrasahs operate quite differently. The JMS madrasahs are directly under MUIS and thus accorded special considerations, although assistance by MUIS is generally provided to all six madrasahs.¹¹⁸ It can be concluded at this juncture, the concern of the government to limit the intake of primary one students into the madrasahs was largely successful. As a consequence, the overall population of the madrasahs was controlled and stabilized. Also, the need to revamp the curriculum was achieved partly, via the JMS system.

For the part-time madrasahs, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the aLIVE program was introduced to replace the older mosque madrasahs' curriculum. The four major segments of the new program introduced include, kids (5 to 8 years old), tweens (9 to 12 years old), teens (13 to 16 years old) and youths (17 to 20 years old). In addition to the thematic approach, new terms were introduced such as Faith and Practice (instead of *Aqidah* and *Fiqh*), Character and Life Skills (instead of *Akhlak*), Social and Civilisational Islam (instead of *Sirah* and *Tarikh*) and Reading (Quranic literacy and Understanding). New teaching pedagogies such as role play, modelling, reflective practice and others were adopted, and whatever approaches deemed suitable that employ the latest modes of teaching and learning. These were significantly different from the traditional ways of knowing Islam that may have been considered by the policy

¹¹⁸ For a good overview of JMS see, Farah Mahamood Aljunied. (2013, Mar 15-16). *Integrated and holistic madrasah education curriculum*. Paper presented at Conference on Madrasah Education by MUIS.

setters and decision makers in MUIS as antiquated and outmoded. As a result, the curriculum content, pedagogy, assessment methods, language of instruction and others underwent major changes.¹¹⁹ The rather massive changes mentioned above, resulted in mixed reactions and attracted a fair share of criticisms and concerns, since it was mooted and directed largely by MUIS. Thus, the mosque madrasah administrators and the teachers had little options, if any, to provide differing opinions or decide otherwise. Still, they were warmly welcomed and given positive feedbacks by segments of the mosque madrasah community. Gradual improvements were introduced to the aLIVE initiative, like the home version for the Kids aLIVE programme, where relevant teaching materials were provided at no costs to assist parents and interested members of the public to guide their own children learning Islam at home. In addition, the Islamic Education Fund (IEF) was formed, to help those with financial difficulties to attend classes at the mosque madrasahs. This fund may also be utilised to improve the quality aLIVE programs rendered by the mosque madrasahs and teachers. Continual initiatives to SIES were made like the ADIL or Adult Islamic Learning for those 21 years old and above.¹²⁰

It is interesting that Andalus, a private Islamic educational enterprise which is the case study of this thesis, surfaced in the midst of the major changes at the madrasahs and mosque madrasahs. The beginnings of Andalus since 1996 was in fact, not a deliberated or well planned, nor was it a coordinated initiative among the Malay elites or the general masses. Rather, it was simply an intuitive initiative from a very few, young, sincere and quite uninitiated undergraduates as well as fresh graduates from an Islamic university. They were basically finding avenues to provide a meaningful service

¹¹⁹ See Charlene Tan & Hairon Salleh. (2014). *op. cit.*; Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew. (2014). Coming to grips with modernization. The Teens ALIVE programme and the teaching of sadaqah (giving of alms). *Muslim Education in the 21st Century Asian Perspectives*. Sa'edah Buang & Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew (Eds.). London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. 143-161.

¹²⁰ See MUIS Adil. Retrieved from <http://www.adil.sg/About/faq.html>. As at 2014, there were 13 mosques that offer ADIL with 2,300 participants; See MUIS Annual Report 2014, 18. *op.cit.*

to the community relevant to their education and training; as well as supporting themselves financially. Thus, they embarked on providing small scale tuition and religious classes to interested audience. Such initiatives were in fact, not very novel nor amazingly new at that period of time because there were already similar initiatives and enterprises by various individuals or groups on similar grounds. However, Andalus embarked on a very interesting journey that proved to be rather spectacular and made it stood out from the rest. From a humble beginning of a class with about 30 students, now Andalus has 17 centres across the island with about 10,500 students. Eventually, Andalus formed affiliate companies such as Cordova Education Centre (hereinafter called Cordova) in 1999 and Institute Pengajian Tinggi Al-Zuhri (hereinafter called Al-Zuhri) in year 2000. To-date, the total number of students in the three educational institutions stands at 14,500 offering Islamic education pre-school to postgraduate levels. Darul Andalus was also formed in year 1999 and publishes textbooks from pre-school to tertiary levels. More about Andalus will be discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN RELATION TO ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE

3.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter will analyze the state of affairs of Islamic education in a secular State and plural society Singapore, focusing on the period after the enactment and implementation of AMLA with regards to Islamic education from 1989 until current circumstances.¹²¹ The nature of secularism as understood and practiced within the context of Singapore and how the secular State governs the country and the people particularly Muslims and Islamic education would be the area of particular interest in this chapter.¹²² In addition and focusing on education per se, it would be interesting to analyze and compare the selective and distinctive types of relationships the secular State develops with the Christian missionary schools that are faith based, the Special Aided Plan (SAP) schools that are ethnic and language based and the madrasahs as well as Islamic education that have both faith and ethnic components. It would be interesting to ascertain whether the secular State that champions multi-religious, multi-cultural and meritocracy has been objective, neutral and transparent in its policies and dealings with the different types of educational institutions mentioned above or there could be grey areas of inconsistencies and biasness that require clarifications, justifications and improvements.¹²³

¹²¹ It was largely upon the conception and completion of AMLA in 1966, that there were formal records on the gradual and progressive amount of activities and writings, albeit very slowly regarding Islamic education. Upon the enactment of the relevant sections in AMLA in 1989, there are significantly more interests and activities on areas of interests. However, with these also, new challenges occurred faced by both the State and the Muslim community. AMLA. *op. cit.*

¹²² For a more thorough discussion and perspectives on the weaving intricacies between education, religion, race, economy and nation building within the context of Singapore's multi-religious, pluralistic and modern society, please see Mukhlis Abu Bakar. (2009). Islamic religious education and Muslim religiosity in Singapore. James A. Banks (Ed.). *The Routledge International Companion to Multicultural Education*. New York: Routledge. 437-228; Also see Walid Jumblatt Abdullah. (2002). *op. cit.*

¹²³ Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai (Eds.). (2006). *op. cit.*

3.1.1 The Controversies and Issues Relating

A particular issue, as a point of reference and substance for discussion in relation to this chapter, where significant controversies erupted involving the Muslim community when the government delivered a barrage of stinging criticisms on the madrasah education preceding the introduction of Compulsory Education (CE) in 2002.¹²⁴ The researcher will analyze these concerns from multifaceted perspectives, identify the root causes and thereafter provide some responses to the issues raised. It should be noted however, there were positive developments that occurred, albeit gradually and progressively within the 10 years after the introduction of CE and the controversies pertaining. The adaptations and appropriations of the policies and actions taken during this period may be considered to be sensible and pragmatic conflict resolutions and problem solving measures, for short term and long term considerations and implications. It was also probably due to the active engagements in both public domains and behind closed doors negotiations among the community at large, the community leaders, politicians and policy makers. As a direct or indirect consequence of the CE, and as discussed in the previous chapter, there were massive and sweeping changes introduced by MUIS in the madrasah system as in JMS. Also, the mosque madrasah curriculum was vastly revamped to aLIVE. These initiatives by MUIS, which is a government body, were met with mixed reactions from the Muslim community and the outcomes of these major changes, in the short term and long term basis require further scrutiny. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it may be anticipated that the government had, by and large identified the main strategies, pre-determined the key agenda and set the goals to be attained ultimately. As such, it was most probable that all deliberations, negotiations and constructions with all parties and individuals involved done on matters pertaining were done within the framework, terms, conditions and

¹²⁴ Please see, Report of the Committee on Compulsory Education in Singapore July 2000. *op. cit.*

intimately linked to the perimeters of long held axioms and presuppositions adopted by the secular State.¹²⁵

Some analyses and comparisons would also be done in this chapter to relate the Islamic education here to some Muslim countries that have very different and diverse geographical, socio-economic and political experiences. This is deemed necessary to identify root causes of the problem in Islamic education tracing from the historical, philosophical and epistemological perspectives. It would be interesting to note that the same fundamental, perennial and existential concerns in relation to Islamic education, occurred across these nations that have very different backgrounds.¹²⁶ This comparison will also allow us to discern whether the secular nature of the State or the issues relating to secularization as a philosophical program are the main or major contributing reasons for challenging and in some areas, debilitating circumstances faced by the Islamic education in Singapore and elsewhere.

3.1.2 Possible Options to Alleviate Concerns

Incidentally, Andalus was already in the Islamic education landscape during the CE active engagements period between 2002 and 2015, in a noteworthy but unassuming as well as unassertive ways. Andalus may be considered quite successful in providing positive alternatives and options that alleviated substantial concerns on matters pertaining. Andalus as a private educational institution offers Islamic religious education on part-time basis from pre-school to diploma levels or 17 years of continuous education in a structured, systematic and organized manner. As at 2015,

¹²⁵ See Kerstin Steiner. (2015). *op. cit.*, 1-16.

¹²⁶ The researcher had preferred to make comparisons regarding the Islamic education in countries such as India, Pakistan, Egypt and Indonesia that have very significant Muslim populations vis-a-vis colonial influences in order to frame the discussion and issues relevant to the thesis. Comprehensive studies on Islamic education in Southeast Asia were already done by several authors with various emphasis and nuances. Please see the review article on such works by Holger Warnk. (2009). Review article alternative education or teaching radicalism? New literature on Islamic education in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 4. Germany: German Institute of Global and Area (GIGA) Studies, Institute of Asian Studies and Hamburg University Press. This article focuses on three recent publications on Islamic education in Southeast Asia. Two of them were monographs on South Thailand and Myanmar/Burma and one was a collection of essays on Indonesia, Malaysia, South Thailand, Cambodia, and the Southern Philippines.

there were 10,500 students across all levels in 17 centres and the numbers kept rising. As such, parents and students have more choices and avenues to study Islam, contextualized and customized according to their respective needs and aspirations. The school going children would concurrently optimize the best form of conventional education offered by the State, while acquiring Islamic knowledge outside school hours on part time basis. Employment options are expanded by Andalus for graduates from Islamic institutions by providing more and varied job opportunities. The Andalus model may have addressed and thus inadvertently arbitrated the role of the State, MUIS and the needs of the Muslim community rather harmoniously. The State may have alluded by giving the silent consent to Andalus, the fact that it was allowed to exist and continue to prosper from 1996 to 2015 or for 19 years consecutive years. The Andalus model may be considered one of the suitable options for current context and future perspectives where there are conflicting and competing demands as far as the secular State and Islamic education are concerned. More about Andalus as the case study will be discussed in Chapter 4.

3.2 Nature of Secular State and Plural Society in Singapore

Being secular in nature, the State has traditionally, left much the religious obligations to the individuals concerned in the respective religious groups. According to Kevin Y.L and Thio Li-ann:

...the principle of mutual non-interference by the State and by the institutionalized religion means that the State does not interfere with religion and religious institutions do not interfere with the running of the State. Singapore strives towards this form of accommodative secularism, as reflected in the symbolic recognition of public holidays of the various faiths. Alternatively, hostile secularism (an atheist ideology) may demand that religion (a theist ideology) retreat from any domain the State desires to occupy *e.g.* education or social services. It may go so far as to

oppressively persecute and discriminate against religions, as in the case of militant communist States.¹²⁷

The State plays more a regulatory, monitoring and enforcement roles to ensure that there are religious tolerance and harmony among its multi-racial and multi-religious communities. The government is generally tolerant to the religious inclinations of the various groups and has taken steps such that the religious responsibilities and aspirations of the various groups are catered for, although not in totality. But the government is always wary of religious revivalism or worse radicalism of any group, Islam included.¹²⁸ It ranks religious tolerance and harmony among the various racial and religious groups very highly on its agenda. It cannot afford to have any religious conflict between the various groups concerned. Any effort that sows the seed of discord and elements of contention would be addressed quickly and concretely. According to Kevin Y.L. Tan and Thio Li-ann, “A fundamental issue is: which approach is both workable and equitable within the context of a heterogeneous religious landscape such that the things that are Caesar’s are rendered to the Caesar and the things that are God’s rendered to God?”¹²⁹ The White Paper for the *Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill* (Cmd, 21 of 1989) States,

The Government must claim ultimate political authority from the Constitution, and not from any divine or ecclesiastical sanction...The Government should not be antagonistic to the religious beliefs of its population, but must remain neutral in its relations with the different religious groups, not favoring any of them in preference to the others. Its duty is to ensure that every citizen is free to choose his own religion, and

¹²⁷ Kevin Y.L. Tan & Tio Li-ann. (1997). *op. cit.*, 882.

¹²⁸ The issues concerning radicalism vis-a-vis Islamic education has attracted substantial interests especially after the tragic 11 September 2001. As such, there were ever increasing volume of works on these from researchers from all sorts of backgrounds and interests. It may not be possible to discuss the issues relating to radicalism and terrorism in this thesis but it is important to note the overwhelming concerns to eradicate the problem from all spheres of life including Islamic education. See Warnk Holger. (2009). *op. cit*; Muhammad Haniff Hassan. (2008). *Singapore’s community-based counter-ideology initiatives*. Nanyang Technological University, S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore; Charlene Tan. (2011). *Islamic Education and Indoctrination. The case in Indonesia*. New York: Routledge.

¹²⁹ Kevin Y.L. Tan & Tio Li-ann (1997). *op. cit.*, 883.

that no citizen, in exercising his religion or his other rights infringes upon the rights and sensitivities of other citizens (para 5).¹³⁰

The large majority of the society gets to practice most of their religious obligations and requirements. For Muslims in particular, there are numerous mosques for worship as well as madrasahs, mosques and education centers to learn Islam. The Muslim community is by and large not maltreated for their religious belief and practices. Racial or religious biases are also not very apparent. Thus, the Muslims generally enjoy relatively peaceful existence as far as basic religious rights and practices are concern. The separation of politics from religion while maintaining a balanced function of the government vis-à-vis the religious dynamics in the country was also aptly described by Mukhlis:

The political system that emerged in response to these challenges featured a government that relied on a centralization of authority and one that is prepared to engage in extensive social engineering to bring about orderly social change. The strategy was to confine politics within the realms of technocratic problem-solving and limiting its concerns to issues pertaining to the economy, bring legitimacy to a non-particularistic and achievement oriented elite, build new institutions and mechanisms to entrench supportive elements, and isolate those seen as overly committed to ethnic or religious based loyalties.¹³¹

However, according to Tay Keong, religion and way of life for Muslim cannot be articulated in similar ways as dealing with ‘economics rationality and cost benefits’. The government has to be very discerning and tactful on the choice of language and context on matters relating to the Islamic faith and way of life as they have discovered during the polemics during the CE saga. According to him:

So, the government leaders should learn to construct their cases in a way that is comprehensible and persuasive to the target population. Should the government leaders speak in religious terms? Should government leaders

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 888.

¹³¹ Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai. (Eds.) (2006). *op. cit.*, 29.

factor in religious meaning and significance to a community when an issue is closely tied to religion and the community sense of identity? These are important considerations when dealing with issues with religious contents and implications.¹³²

The government currently, does not allow the teaching and learning of religion during curriculum time in conventional schools under its purview. The teaching of Religious Knowledge (RK) was introduced in 1982 in government schools but the initiative was rescinded about 7 years later when in 1989, Minister of Education Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam, announced the reversion of the decision in Parliament.¹³³ According to Chee Kwong:

Dr Tan justified this abrupt decision by citing the "heightened consciousness of religious differences and a new fervor in the propagation of religious beliefs" in recent years. In this changed climate, he argued that the Singapore government must remain neutral in religious matters and must not give the appearance even unintentionally of favoring any particular religion. Schools as government supported institutions should not be used as a vehicle to transmit religious belief; this should be done by parents and religious institutions. This represented a shift by the government from attempting to maintain its neutrality via a multi-religious approach to a purely secular one.¹³⁴

Female Muslim students in primary, secondary and junior colleges are prohibited from donning the *hijab* or the headdress, prescribed by Islam. Among the reasons and justifications provided for this, were to maintain uniformity, conformity and cohesion among the students from diverse backgrounds and to reduce religious affiliations in school grounds. Nonetheless, they are allowed to do so at tertiary

¹³² *Ibid.*, 163.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 30. The government was concerned that RK had increased religious consciousness and revivalism among the various groups resulting in competition for new adherents and polarization among the various groups. Also, see Kevin Y.L. Tan & Tio Li-ann (1997). *op. cit.*, 890-892.

¹³⁴ Ow Chee Kwong Dominic. (2014). *The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore 1972-2001: an examination of its pragmatic institutional development*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Department of History, National University of Singapore. 44-45.

institutions such as the polytechnics and universities where uniforms are not required. The controversies surrounding the issue of *hijāb* also ensued in a number of working environments particularly those that require uniforms such as nurses, police force and immigration office where the personal freedom and choice on the attires types, even though in compliance to religious obligations were strictly disallowed. However, flexibilities were given some other professions such as dress code for Muslim lady politicians in parliament, teachers in schools and offices workers. Such inconsistent policies and anomalies are quite baffling and are unfortunately not resolved in a rational and amicable ways until now. Male students at primary and lower secondary levels are not allowed to wear long pants in schools during school hours but all upper secondary school students wear long pants. There are no special provisions like allotted time and place for Muslim students to perform the five times daily prayers conveniently within the school premises although it is not strictly forbidden. Thus, students need to find their own personal space and time for the obligatory prayers.¹³⁵ However, there are special provisions for male Muslim students to perform Friday prayers and to leave school early during Ramadan so that they can reach home in time for *iftār* or the breaking of the fasting at late afternoons for Muslims during the month of Ramadan.

The Christian missionary schools (Catholic and Protestants) however, inherited historical presuppositions, policies and dogmas from the British colonial masters and retained them until now.¹³⁶ Although these schools ought to be strictly secular in nature, the observances of Christian religious practices are markedly evident in these schools.

¹³⁵ These government policies may have contributed to the reasons why some parents opted for madrasah education as an alternative thus driving up the demand for places in madrasahs. See Zainah Alias. (1998). *op. cit.*, 74.

¹³⁶ Catholic Education in Singapore as an example, refers to the education services provided by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore within the Singapore education system. From 19th century foundations, the Catholic education system has grown to be the second biggest sector after government schools in Singapore, with more than 65,000 students. The Catholic Church has established kindergarten, primary, secondary and junior colleges educational institutions in Singapore. Roman Catholicism in Singapore has its roots from the Portuguese established Diocese of Malacca soon after Alfonso de Albuquerque's conquest of Malacca in 1511. It is believed that there had been Portuguese missionaries operating out of Malacca in Singapore during the Portuguese period, 1511–1641, prior to the British conquest.

Large religious symbols of the cross or figures depicting Jesus Christ or Mother Mary are prominently displayed within these school compounds. The daily morning assembly would include the recitations of Christian hymns and prayers. Christian students are also encouraged to attend chapel services within the school compound after curriculum time. The appointment of key officers in these schools such the School Management Board and school Principals are also closely linked to similar religious affiliations and inclinations. Most missionary schools are funded partially by the Ministry of Education.¹³⁷ Teachers teaching in government aided missionary schools are paid, trained and posted by the National Institute of Education and the Ministry of Education. Basic essentials such as tables, chairs, computers and whiteboard are provided by the Ministry of Education while the construction of the school building or building maintenance are paid for by the school through the Archdiocese of Singapore. Students enrolled in government aided Catholic schools are also subsidized by the government. All students enrolled in missionary schools in Singapore are required to sing the national anthem and recite the pledge similar to government schools. While missionary schools must adhere to the broad requirements of Singapore's secular education system, they are free to provide Christian education ethos. There are sizeable numbers of Muslim students and students from other faiths studying in these missionary schools, but they are neither obliged nor forced to participate in these practices or sessions. It is officially forbidden for any staff members to proselytize students to accept the Christian faith although these may happen indirectly or in the quiet.

Meanwhile, the Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools are elite schools and placed very high emphasis on Chinese language as the main language in addition to English. Many SAP schools were historically Chinese language medium schools and they taught all academic subjects in Mandarin including science and mathematics.

¹³⁷ See Ow Chee Kwong Dominic. (2014). *op. cit.*

English meanwhile was taught as a foreign language. Following Singapore's independence in 1965, the government recognized four official languages in Singapore namely English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil. However, English was designated the main language of basic and higher education and normal aspects of daily life in as in law, trade and business. Even though, official recognition is conferred to the languages of different races, English remained largely the lingua franca and thus common language that bind the various communities at common spaces. English was also the main language in tertiary institutions. In 1980 however, the Ministry of Education (MOE) designated nine Chinese-medium secondary schools as SAP schools. These schools allow the study of both English and Mandarin as first languages, for top-scoring primary school leavers. These schools were designed to preserve the character of traditional Chinese-medium secondary schools and allay fears that the Government was indifferent to Chinese language and culture amid declining enrolments in Chinese-medium schools. A student's admission to a SAP school or any secondary school for that matter, is decided based on their results in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). To enter a SAP school, a student must achieve a PSLE aggregate score that puts him in the top 10% of his cohort, with an 'A' grade for both the mother tongue and English. This means that only a relatively small group of students who are academically and linguistically strong may enter a SAP school. Consequently, SAP schools have a reputation of being the "elite" group of secondary schools in the country, alongside independent and autonomous schools. These take roots from the Singaporean tradition of effective bilingualism in the education of the elite students from SAP schools. Some students, regardless of whether they are in a SAP school, are offered a chance at effective tri-lingualism in secondary education starting from age 12. The first language, English, is the international language of commercial, the administrative and legal language. The mother tongue reflects the cultural and ethnic identity or in recent times,

the linguistic interests of the students; like for example, Malay and Indian students who opt to study Mandarin as second Language. The 'third languages' are foreign languages which are considered by MOE to be "economically, politically and culturally vital", such as Japanese, German and French. As described by Barr:

Every Singaporean is allocated an official racial designation, being Chinese (about three-quarters of the population), Malay, Indian or one of the smaller minorities such as Eurasian or Arab. This designation is a factor in determining the schools they and their children attend; what languages they learn at school; what special help might be available for education; where they live; and which parliamentary constituencies they can contest. Racial classification is the only piece of information on the front of a Singaporean identity card apart from one's name and photograph. In fact, Singaporeans outside the dominant Chinese majority are unlikely to think of themselves as Singaporean without hyphenating their Singaporeanness with their racial marker. Thus an Indian is more likely to think of himself or herself as an Indian-Singaporean than as simply a Singaporean. This feature is in part an inheritance of the colonial construction of a plural society but it has been perpetuated and reinforced in post-colonial Singapore, even as the government has sought to minimise and ameliorate communal tensions in the republic. The myth of the meritocracy is designed to cut across ethnic communalism, but the government undermines its own efforts in a dozen ways by exercises in ethnic ascription, such as the publication of matriculation and university results according to race.¹³⁸

Despite multitude proclamations that Singapore is meritocratic and champions multi-culture and multi-religious agenda, non-Mandarin speaking students are grossly disadvantaged in terms on entry into such institutions. Thus, almost all the students in these SAP schools are Chinese. These schools enjoy possibly the finest treatments in terms of leadership, finance, teachers among others. Many of these schools are supported by prosperous Chinese clans or ethnic groups who played significant roles in the school leadership and finance. The graduates from these schools to a significant extent eventually gained successful careers in the civil service, government linked

¹³⁸ Michael D. Barr & Zlatko Skrbiš. (2008). *Constructing Singapore elitism, ethnicity and the nation-building project*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies. 10.

companies (GLCs) or large multinationals. Having minimal contact with non-Chinese during a significant segment of their educational life, begs obvious concerns if they are conscious of inter-racial, inter-cultural and inter-religious prerogatives and sensitivities. There were ideas mooted for SAP-type schools for the non-Chinese especially for the Malays, although it originated from a very small minority in the community. However, the idea was not well received even by the Malay community at large for fear of it become a failure due to the much smaller population size and the unique history, philosophy and psychology of the Malays with regards to education. The fact was, there were already several Malay medium schools that died a natural death due to weakening support and confidence among the community as a result of many intrinsic and extrinsic factors.¹³⁹

Markedly different from the above examples as per the Christian missionary schools and the SAP schools, the government has positioned itself in obvious ways unfortunately, that it cannot be perceived in the context of multi-racial and multi-religious society, to be bias or giving special preferences to the madrasahs or Islamic education. It is quite apparent that the government has by and large, emulated and perpetuated similar role and function as the British colonial masters on matters pertaining. Thus, the policies and procedures, which clearly do not to allocate special privilege or assistance for Islamic education. As mentioned earlier, the madrasahs currently have about 3,460 students from primary school to pre-university levels. It is common knowledge, the financial aid from the government for the madrasahs which is classified as private schools under the Ministry of Education, are negligible or almost non-existent. The capitation grants given to the madrasahs have not been revised since

¹³⁹ The Malays are the indigenous people of Singapore and the Malay language, is ceremonially recognised as the national language of island. By mid-1980s, the Malay-medium secondary received very poor response and eventually caused a natural demise. Currently, the Malay Language Council of Singapore [Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura], played the role of standardising Malay spelling in Singapore and promotes the usage of the Malay language through the Bulan Bahasa Melayu Singapura [Malay Language Month].

the British occupation. The seminar report in 1966 which contained a number of clear recommendations to improve the madrasahs was submitted to the government 50 years ago; but it remained largely stagnant on paper. Many of the problems mentioned in the said report persisted until today without significant governmental participation or assistance.¹⁴⁰ According to the Musyawwarah report:

The Committee acknowledges that madrasahs are classified as private institutions and that enrolment in full-time madrasahs is a personal choice. Although the madrasah student population is relatively small, they are part of the community and should be developed to their full potential. Therefore they should be given sufficient educational support and resources as their peers in national schools. It would be good if we could tap on Edusave for our Madrasah children. Since Madrasahs are under the Joint Madrasah System (JMS) under MUIS, we can be considered under the government schools right? So we are entitled to Edusave, Edusave funds can help in funding overseas trips, excursions, school fees and enrichment programmes for our children's O-level preparations. Since the JMS initiative has aligned the Madrasah system closer to the national education system, the Committee recommends that MOE consider extending the Edusave scheme to madrasah students.”¹⁴¹

In recent years, some basic exceptions made by the government such as Edusave grants for madrasah students who claimed citizenship rights. Also, more financial as well as various kind of aids and assistance were given but via MUIS as a conduit; which is a statutory board and one of the many arms of the government. More will be elaborated and debated on the above issues regarding the Christian missionary schools, the SAP school and the madrasahs within the context of secular State Singapore again, later in this chapter after the deliberations on the part-time madrasahs.

At this juncture, it may be appropriate to discuss and provide some explanations on a different sort of Islamic education in comparison to the madrasah education, mentioned earlier. Different from the madrasahs that offers places to about 5% of the Muslim school going age population, the part-time madrasahs offers Islamic education

¹⁴⁰ See the introduction to the report Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1966). *op. cit.*

¹⁴¹ See “Musyawwarah Conversation with the community. Committee Report 2013”. *op. cit.*, 34-35.

for the vast majority of the Muslim population and not limited to the school going age. Evidential facts from the historical, socio-political perspectives and ensuing challenges, the prospects of the madrasah in a secular State are very different compared to the part-time madrasah. While there are direct and indirect co-relation between the two types of Islamic education, the researcher believes the two kinds of Islamic education may be treated quite uniquely and independently from each other under such circumstances.

Based on current population statistics, there are about 715,000 Muslims or 13% of the population and 89,000 of them are school going age from ages of 7 until 16.¹⁴² In addition, it is important and necessary that the working adults too need formal and structured Islamic education for life-long learning, for a balanced and integrated knowledge. The Islamic education on part-time basis, are offered in both structured and formal as well as the unstructured and informal ways by the mosques, Muslim organizations and private educational agencies. For these part-time madrasahs, the governmental involvement or interference are largely not an issue and almost non-existence; so long and so far the power and authority to govern is not challenged and the multi-culture and multi-religious harmony are not put at stake. This phenomenon is consistent with the history and policy inherited from the British to separate and provide clear demarcations of the various types of secular activities in schools and at work place with religious obligations and in this context Islamic education. Also, the fact is, these Islamic educational programs are run, by and large independently by the service providers who are largely self-reliant and independent in terms of infrastructure, governance, finance, manpower and others. Thus, the government is not obliged and committed to provide any kind of patronage, support or official endorsements.

¹⁴² Population Trends 2015. *op. cit.*

Currently, there are about 36 mosques offering structured Islamic education from preschool to secondary levels.¹⁴³ In addition, there are also about six Muslims organisations and another 11 private educational agencies offering similar services. According to the survey by MUIS announced during the Private Islamic Education Network (PIENet) seminar in 2014, about 40% or about 35,600 Muslim children between ages of seven to 16 are attending formal Islamic education. From these, 20,400 are attending program offered by Muslim organisations and private institutions, 11,610 follows MUIS aLIVE and 3,900 in the mosque madrasahs.¹⁴⁴

The mosques offer largely aLIVE programs and under the direct purview of MUIS.¹⁴⁵ While, the Muslim organization and private agencies have the flexibility to offer aLIVE or other types of curriculum deemed suitable. It is important to note that the non-mosque service providers are currently associated rather loosely with the PIENet, an initiative mooted by MUIS since 2013. This initiative was to increase exposure to the young to structured Islamic education programs. As such, ways were considered to level up the capabilities of the sector and increase the participation of the young. There were efforts made via training and public awareness campaign on Islamic education. There was a PIENet seminar in 2014 as mentioned above and review of the Education Fund.

The researcher believes that the madrasahs should definitely be protected, improved upon significantly and allowed to grow in tandem with the increasing

¹⁴³ Under the new Singapore Islamic Education System (SIES), all mosque madrasahs are required to adopt aLIVE curriculum. As of 2010, 36 mosques with madrasahs run the aLIVE programmes during the academic year, with at least one level of Kids, Tweens, Teens or Youth aLIVE. To date, aLIVE curriculum from Kids to Youths have been fully developed, comprising 12 levels and 8 modules. Number of students taking aLIVE programmes have increased from 4,500 in 2007 to 11,610 in 2010. A further increase to more than 25,000 students were expected by 2015 when the programme is implemented in all mosques. A subsidy and support scheme was also implemented for children from low income families. Since 2008, 2,200 students have benefited from the Islamic Education Fund (IEF) under this scheme. See Mosque Convention 2011, Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (Islamic Religious Council of Singapore). 106

¹⁴⁴ MUIS survey 2014. *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁵ Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew. (2014), *op.cit.*, 43-161. For now, only religious programs offered in the mosques are required to adopt the aLIVE program. Those run by the Muslim organizations and private agencies are given the liberty to adopt it or otherwise.

expectations and aspirations of the students, parents and the community. There should also be clear and positive shifts by the authorities with regards to the status of madrasahs in cognizance of the special or privileged treatments rendered to Christian missionary schools and Chinese based SAP schools. However, based on historical precedence and circumstantial evidences for the last 50 years at least, these may be very challenging prospects, difficult to achieve in significant ways and the success may be limited due the multitude of causes, issues and factors. As a consequence and most probably related, there will always be perennial concerns in terms of consistently proven quality education provided by the madrasahs as well as the performances attained by a significant majority of the madrasah students at national examinations vis-a-vis the national standards. The researcher would like to reiterate his personal position, expectations and aspirations that the madrasahs should not suffer the same fate as the Malay medium schools that were closed down due to dwindling enrolments. Thus, the Muslim community ought to think effectively and perform their optimal best for the betterment of madrasah education, but at the same time be prepared for all sorts of eventualities either positive or otherwise. Under such circumstances and as backup alternatives, the researcher believes that the part-time madrasahs have more capacities, flexibilities and offer higher potentials for significant improvements and expansions. Since the case study of this thesis is Andalus, which falls under the category of part-time madrasah, a very detailed treatment will be given in Chapter 4.

3.3 Analysing the Issues and Concerns in Relation to Islamic Education

Against the backdrop mentioned above, we may now dwell into specific cases and state of affairs by elaborating into the problems, controversies and debates in relation to Islamic education in Singapore. The government has been traditionally oblivious of the madrasahs for decades. As mentioned earlier, such position is not new since the policies of the British with regards to Islamic education pervaded years after

independence. The researcher wish to reiterate the fact that the British were not supportive nor explicitly against Islamic education. Also the madrasahs were dying a natural death due to dwindling support from the community and the numbers were decreasing significantly. However, when the madrasahs gained tremendous popularity and support from the Muslim public in the early 1990s in particular, due to multitude of reasons mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, the government became gravely concerned, gave significant attention and thus started making inroads into the madrasahs' fraternity. Unfortunately, the effects of the government's involvement during the early phases of these interventions had been more deleterious and detrimental than anything else. Starting from 1998, the key policy and decision makers in the government started making scathing remarks and derisive comments on the madrasah education. These comments were unquestionably injurious and harmful to the years of image building and the ongoing developments of the madrasahs by the Muslim community. This was an absolute cause of concern for the Muslim community since the existence of the madrasah was put at stake.¹⁴⁶

These comments by the government caught the attention of the nation. Many among the population that included the Muslims and non-Muslim were largely unaware or oblivious of the madrasah education were now exposed to the controversies and intricacies that evolved gradually but significantly. It was made possible because of their influential and dominant position of the government and the supportive and largely pliant role played by the mass media to air their views widely.¹⁴⁷ There were a series of

¹⁴⁶ See Mukhlis Abu Bakar (2009). *op. cit.*, 437-228; Report of the Committee on Compulsory Education in Singapore July 2000.

¹⁴⁷ This issue was covered extensively in the local national newspapers especially the New Straits Times and Berita Harian. These are State controlled newspapers that promote and propagate the government's agenda and policies. However, there are also attempts by the editors of these papers to provide a more balanced coverage of the opposing views. This objectiveness in reporting was deemed necessary to counter the influence of non-official discussions platforms via the internet. For example, there were heated discussions and exchanges in the Cyber Ummah, an internet discussion platform by Persatuan Ulama dan Guru-Guru Agama (Pergas) that allowed critical and cynical views of the government and the Malay politicians with regards to the CE; see Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai. (Eds.). (2006). *op. cit.*, 157-159. Now, the social media platforms allow unfettered, immediate and lively discussions and

public statements involving the most senior political leaders of the country who took turns to comment critically on the madrasah issues. Unfortunately, even the Muslim politicians who had before expressed wholehearted support for the madrasahs were now aligning themselves to their political chiefs.¹⁴⁸ The main argument laid by the government was that the madrasahs were not relevant in a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious society. They argued that Muslims should not be segregated and isolated from the other races and thus should join the main stream education, instead of joining the madrasah. They argued that all young Singaporean children must be given the exposures to interact and communicate openly and effectively with the other racial and religious groups. They asserted that this would not be possible if Muslim children attend madrasahs. They also mentioned the high attrition rate of madrasahs students. Only a handful of the madrasah students compared to the initial enrolment managed to complete the education at secondary education and eventually sat for the national examinations i.e. General Certificate of Education Examination or GCE 'O' levels. And even fewer managed to pass the examinations well. They further argued that the curriculum of the madrasahs was outdated and not suitable for a country which has to adapt to the rapidly changing technology and knowledge based economy (KBE). They feared that madrasah graduates would find themselves irrelevant with the trainings and qualifications and would not be able to meet the challenges of the new economy. They fear that graduates from the madrasahs would find it difficult to secure themselves proper employments and these would in turn result in other sorts of related problems.

Having mentioned the above, the government, however, clearly stated their stand repeatedly that it has no plans to close the madrasahs but encouraged the

debates among interested members of the communities and societies on a plethora of issues and especially on sensitive ones.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, there were congruent and concerted efforts by the politicians to address the issue. The Muslim politicians had to publicly submit their allegiance to the ruling party although their position on madrasahs was markedly different before. This to some extent showed the difficulties faced by the Muslim politicians as a minority group operating within a non-Muslim majority political framework and in a secular State.

administrators to review the curriculum and carry out the necessary changes to make the madrasahs more responsive and thus relevant to the rapidly changing economy. At the same time they requested the Muslim community to accept favorably their criticisms and worries over the madrasah and thus encouraged, most if not all, Muslim children to attend the government schools.¹⁴⁹ The Committee on Compulsory Education in Singapore (CCES) was formed headed by the Minister of State for Education to look into the idea mooted by the Prime Minister to introduce CE.¹⁵⁰ After many deliberations, CE has now become a law and all children must attend schools until primary six. Fortunately, madrasahs were still allowed to operate and accept students but they are required to follow strictly the national curriculum in addition to the religious curriculum. With effect from 2008, all madrasah students were required to sit for the national examinations at the end of primary six. These students are required to achieve certain minimum standard at the national examinations, failing which, the future of the madrasah may be at stake. According to Mukhlis:

The push – pull experienced by the community along multiple dimensions – ideological, educational, economic, and social – resulted in the community being faced with numerous decisions and dilemmas that are not easy to resolve. For example, both the leaders of the madrasahs and the government want to equip students with relevant knowledge and skills needed for the economy and to forestall what is perceived as insidious individualism and Westernization. However, the fact that religion is legitimated within a separate system of education that involves a small but significant number of citizens gives the government cause for concern because, in the event of a contest between religious beliefs and government ideology, religion is likely to triumph. The compulsory

¹⁴⁹ The Straits Times, Singapore. 28 Dec 1997, 21 Jan 1998, 26 Jan 1998, 1 Mar 1998, 2 Apr 1999, 8 Apr 1999, 24 Apr 1999, 5 Aug 1999, 23 Aug 1999, 5 Sept 1999, 19 Sep 1999, 24 Dec 1999, 1 Apr 2000, 19 Apr 2000, 8 May 2000, 5 Aug 2000, 15 Aug 2000, 16 Aug 2000, 10 Nov 2000, 4 Mar 2001.

¹⁵⁰ The Muslim community was extremely concerned over this issue and a series of feedback sessions were held to solicit views from various individuals and sectors. A number of committees involving MUIS, madrasahs and some self-help Muslim organizations were also formed to look into the matter. The report by CCES recommended “that the benchmark for madrasah be pegged at the average PSLE aggregate score of EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils in the six lowest-performing national schools, based on the ranking of the performance of their EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils in the PSLE for the same year. Each madrasah must attain an average aggregate score which meet the benchmark.” Cited from Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai. (Eds.) (2006). *op. cit.*, 52.

education policy ameliorates this concern, at least at the level of elementary education.¹⁵¹

It may be interesting to note that the concerns raised by the political leaders mentioned above seem analogous to the views expressed by several local and contemporary Muslim academicians themselves. In his problem-oriented study that examined the madrasah education focusing on pedagogical styles, curriculum content and educational objectives, Azhar Ibrahim forwarded several views of some Muslim intellectuals.¹⁵² In his concluding remarks, he mentioned:

Madrasah education, like any educational system, must be subjected to continuous revision, readjustment and reevaluation. Reform must be seen as an attempt to improve the educational system, with the main aim being to ensure that its graduates could function effectively in the modern economy and society they live in. Before we speak of the ideals of what madrasah should and can produce, we need to identify some of the key obstacles to the improvements of madrasah education.

Madrasah education was deemed problematic by the government in many ways and it requires significant re-evaluation, revision and changes to suit modern day needs and challenges. Unfortunately, the authority adopted the largely hands off approach when it comes to rendering the assistances sorely needed to work on those challenges. The State continues the policy of indifference and lack of sympathy in terms of aiding the madrasah as discussed in an earlier. A number of the concerns raised by the government vis-a-vis the CE were already raised by the Muslim community since 1966.¹⁵³ Unfortunately, no significant changes or achievements were possible because

¹⁵¹ See Mukhlis Abu Bakar. (2009). *op. cit.*, 437-448.

¹⁵² Here Ibrahim quoted and commented the views of Fazlur Rahman, Basam Tibi and several other Muslim intellectuals. However, more efforts need to be made to read and comprehend the written works of these intellectuals in their entirety to have comprehensive and accurate views of the thoughts on matters pertaining. For more details of the discussion, see Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai. (Eds.). (2006). *op. cit.*, 100-114.

¹⁵³ See Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1966). *op. cit.*

of severe lack of resources and government reluctance to help.¹⁵⁴ The community badly wanted changes and improvement to be made to the madrasahs but was incapacitated to execute those changes due to inherent weaknesses.¹⁵⁵ When the madrasahs were deemed to be in bad shape, they were severely chastised by the government and drastic changes were demanded. This to some extent demonstrated significant amount of negligence on the part of the authority. Or probably, it reflects the pathetic state of the community and thus making wishful expectations from the government to render help.

For the politicians to conclude that the madrasahs have become less relevant in today's context is surely being insensitive and unsympathetic to the Muslim community. As mentioned early in Chapter 2, this reflects the poor understanding and appreciation of the historiography of Islamic education and the religious aspirations of the Muslim community. Efforts to do away, reduce or minimize the role of the local madrasahs may directly cripple the robust and comprehensive trainings of students in Islamic knowledge, the production of religious elites and eventually the dissemination and practice of Islam especially among Muslims in the country.

It is evident that the government is adopting a double standard with regards to its demand for madrasah students to be exposed to multi-cultural and multi-racial students mix and not remain insulated. It is a well-known fact that the government has dedicated tremendous amount of resources over the years to develop the Christian missionary schools and the SAP schools where the Chinese language and culture were given extra emphasis.¹⁵⁶ As mentioned earlier, the Christian missionary schools are allowed to

¹⁵⁴ This position was consistent with the policy adopted by the British during the colonial times. The secular nature of the State in a multi-racial and multi-religious society made it very difficult for the government to adopt a different policy on these matters.

¹⁵⁵ These 'inherent' weaknesses could be due to the internal weaknesses in various ways within the Muslim community. However, it may be possible that it was due to planned and deliberate efforts or even engineered by the relevant parties to ensure that madrasah education remain weak and unable to compete with mainstream education. It is difficult however, to prove these conspiracy theories and thus they should not be elaborated in this work.

¹⁵⁶ The SAP schools have been regularly under scrutiny and criticized as being communal, elitist and may give rise to Chinese educated chauvinists or extremist who are insensitive to other races. Even some

dovetail and manifest aspects of the Christian ethos in conjunction with the secular education. There are non-Christian students in such schools, but they are exposed and influenced directly or otherwise by aspects of the Christian traditions and practices. While the Muslim students in such schools normally remain steadfast to their religion, it is not surprising to see significant number of conversions from students of other faiths to Christianity during their student days or into their adulthood.

In the SAP schools, which accept only the top students, Chinese is taught as a first language together with English. By doing so, the other races like Malays and Indians are deprived of studying in such schools because of the language barrier. While the SAP schools are important specifically to the Chinese community, the madrasahs for its own specific reasons are important to the Muslim community. Since the government cannot expect other races to learn Chinese, we find very few non-Chinese students in SAP schools. In the views of Hill:

...but it is Christianity that has shown the most rapid recent growth, especially among younger, more highly educated Chinese from wealthier, English-speaking backgrounds; so that Christians in 1988 were thought to comprise between 13 and 18% of the population, compared with just over 10% in 1980, while the Muslim and Hindu proportions in the population remained stable. Conversionism has been a strong motif of the evangelical and charismatic churches (whose activities are particularly prominent on the university campus) and it seems very largely to have been successful among young Chinese, having had minimal impact on the Muslim community.¹⁵⁷

The religion of Islam taught in madrasahs teaches universal values, which are relevant in a multi-racial and multi-cultural environment. In Singapore, besides the

English educated Chinese expressed their worry publicly about this. However, the government has been steadfast in defending their policy on SAP schools. This was due to many reasons like trying to appease to the Chinese voters and wanting to ensure the continuity of Chinese values and culture while facing the Western secular influences.

¹⁵⁷ Michael Hill. (1998). *Conversion and subversion: Religion and the management of moral panics in Singapore*. Asian Studies Institute Working Paper 8. Victoria: University of Wellington Asian Studies Institute.

Malays there are Chinese, Indians, Eurasians and some other races who have embraced Islam. Some of their children, although very few in number, may be attending madrasah education. Given the right and positive exposure by the family, society and the authorities, students in the madrasahs should not face much problem relating effectively with the other races and engage themselves on national issues in a constructive way. As a matter of fact, many madrasah students have continued their post-secondary studies in the local colleges, polytechnics and even the universities and interacted very well with their non-Muslim friends.

The government statistics mentioned that the drop-out rate in the madrasah was very high and alarming. However, the statistics on so called 'madrasah drop-outs' may be considered grossly misleading. Some madrasah students did not complete their studies in the local madrasahs because they have decided to continue their religious studies in other Muslim countries that offer better and cheaper educational opportunities. Not all madrasah students take the national GCE 'O' level examinations, particularly those who wish to enter institutions that do not require GCE 'O' level qualifications as an entry requirement. Thus, the national examinations for the madrasah students are optional.¹⁵⁸ The 'drop-out' cases from the madrasah were mostly students who had actually dropped out or were transferred out from the secular schools and admitted to the madrasahs. Prior to late 1980s, the madrasahs accepted at various levels, drop-outs from the secular schools who were themselves weak academically. They also accepted students who wished to transfer from the secular schools as they were not able to cope with the pressures and competition in these schools.¹⁵⁹ Thus, it is not surprising

¹⁵⁸ The Muslim community had provided the reply to explain the issue concerning the high attrition rate but the government kept mum about their error concerning the statistics. This showed that the comments were made based on wrong assumptions and estimations. This reflected the poor knowledge and understanding of the madrasah education on the part of the government.

¹⁵⁹ The problem of dropouts from the government schools are no longer a serious concern. With the streaming exercise and various options for students with different academic abilities, this problem has been kept to a bare minimal. See, Gopinathan. (2013). *op. cit.*, 15-17; It may be important to note however, there are tendencies for Malay students to aggregate in certain classes or schools because of

for these students to fail again in the madrasahs system and thus dropped out. The madrasahs cannot be blamed for this. However, from 1993 onward, more stringent selection criteria was introduced for entry into the madrasah. It was no longer on first-come-first-serve basis except for Madrasah Al-Sagoff that continued such practices for some years. As a result, relatively better children from supportive parents and conducive homes were accepted into the madrasahs at primary one level. The higher demand of places in madrasahs had enabled the administrators to be quite selective and preferences were given to students who were better prepared for madrasah education.¹⁶⁰ As a result, the problem of failures and drop-outs had been minimized considerably. Most of the students from these cohorts were in much better positions to complete the madrasah education successfully and continue to tertiary level locally or elsewhere.

The concerns about the availability of jobs for the products from the madrasah system may not be justified. Currently there is a high demand for the religiously-trained personnel in various institutions like the mosques, mosque madrasah, private education centres, Muslim organizations and a number of Muslim agencies. In fact, the community is facing shortage of religious teachers to teach Muslim children who are attending the secular schools. There are about 89,000 Muslim children in the secular schools from age of 7 years old to 16 years old. Only about 35,600 or 40% of them are attending religious classes in the mosques, organizations, private education agencies and at homes.¹⁶¹ Thus, there are still a large number of Muslim children who do not have the opportunity to attend religious classes at all due to lack of awareness, finances, space and teachers. If enough efforts are made to ensure all these students

generally poor academic performance. Thus they tend to form groupings among themselves and interact less with other communities.

¹⁶⁰ The researcher was the chairman of the *ad hoc* committee that was formed to coordinate the first joint registration procedures involving the madrasah. Although, it received mixed reactions initially, the initiative was later deemed to be very crucial to ensure only capable students having supportive parents enter madrasah. This was deemed necessary due to the dual curriculum and demanding workload. After several years since the start of the joint registration exercise, it was evident that these students performed better in their examinations and there were fewer repeat students and the dropout were almost non-existent.

¹⁶¹ MUIS survey 2014. *op. cit.*

learn Islam since this is obligatory and a responsibility that needs to be met by all possible means, there will definitely be shortage of religious teachers. Based on a ratio of one religious teacher to 200 students, the number of religious teachers required for 715,000 Muslim population would be about 3,575 persons. In addition, there is a constant need to have the religiously qualified individuals to hold various positions in MUIS, the Shari'ah courts, the Registrar of Muslim Marriages, *imams*, pilgrimage guides and religious councilors. For long term economic and employment reasons, a comprehensive statistical studies on manpower requirements and projections should be done to know the number of religious elites and teachers needed by the Muslim community. By doing so, there would be some guidelines to the intake of students at primary one level in the madrasahs every year and the total number of students undergoing the madrasah education system. A dynamic equilibrium steady state status, should be established looking into the variables such as the rate of students' intake, rate of producing graduates as well as pegging them to the manpower needs. By doing so, a win-win situation may be achieved where the needs and aspirations of the Muslim community are met and the concerns of the government are attended to.

The madrasahs need to be protected covetously because they have been the traditional route for the training of the religious elites. The religious teachers and elites have been the source of reference and they play important roles in preserving and propagating the teachings of Islam. As discussed before, there are currently serious deficiencies in some fundamental aspects of the madrasah education like the curriculum, educational methods, management and others. These may be improved gradually and eventually significantly in a structured and directed manner. Until a new model has been found and fully tested, then only can we change the system for a better one. To close any of the madrasahs conveniently for the inherent problems without giving it enough opportunities and support to improve, may be deemed as gross injustice.

3.4 Addressing the Problem of Knowledge and Consequently Leadership

As mentioned in the earlier chapters, the politicians in the government have always been for decades prior to the CE controversies, largely indifferent to the state and developments in the madrasahs. Thus, it is not unexpected that the key figures in the government were not well informed about Islamic education in relation to its history, philosophy and methodology. The Muslim politicians, who were supposed to advise their non-Muslim colleagues on such issues, were unable to do so since they themselves were not given sufficient exposures and briefings on the relevant areas.¹⁶² To aggravate the problem, the non-political leaders among the Muslim community were not able to respond and engaged the relevant issues in the most appropriate and constructive manners. The report by AMP indicated the following:

The community's positions on the issues affecting Islam and Muslims have not been effectively articulated and this has led to lack of appreciation on part of the State and the larger society. For example, the debate on compulsory education and madrasah education, revealed a lack of convergence that has led others to conclude that Malays/Muslims are themselves not clear about what is good for them in the long run. What is needed is a more positive and systematic form of engagement with the State and the larger Singapore society on contemporary issues at both national and community levels with the view of articulating the Islamic perspective. Furthermore, such engagement is also an opportunity for Malays/Muslims to better understand and appreciate the other side of the arguments.¹⁶³

To the political leaders and a significant number among the Muslim leadership, all kinds of knowledge from the various sources are neutral and need to be acquired for specific, practical and worldly reasons. Unfortunately, this is different and evidently

¹⁶² To read the views of a few of the Malay politicians regarding the controversies, see Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai. (Eds.). (2006). *op. cit.*, 152-153.

¹⁶³ See the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP) (2005, Nov 4-5). Second Convention of Singapore Malay/Muslim. Professionals, Singapore. Hereafter referred to as Second Convention.

contrary to Islamic thought and principles. There are significant differences between Revealed knowledge and Acquired knowledge in terms of its sources and purpose. There are also differences in terms of the hierarchy and classifications of knowledge. Unmistakably, it may be said that the definition of and purpose of education in Islam and the secular education are markedly different. Al-Attas in his *Risalah* commented:

We should know, and earnestly realize that knowledge is not truly neutral (*sebenarnya tidak bersifat neutral*); that different cultures have their own conceptions about knowledge, even though there are similarities. There exist such profound and absolute differences between Islam and Western culture such that they cannot be reconciled.¹⁶⁴

The definition and objective of education for Muslims may not be analogous with that of the government in a secular State. Could there be some kind of reconciliation to this situation? A political scientist, Paige Johnson Tan noted:

What is knowledge? It has different definitions for different people. What the Singapore government defines as knowledge is very different from how some Muslims leaders perceive it. To the government, knowledge is the technocratic skills and capabilities needed to secure good jobs in the modern KBE that leads to material prosperity. To some Muslims, the important knowledge is spiritual teaching that leads to good life within the context of a religious community. Spirituality, not prosperity, is what matters most. In any society, there are different shades of meaning to the idea (of knowledge).¹⁶⁵

The error and confusion in knowledge particularly among the leaders themselves may be considered to be a very serious fundamental and deep seated problem. Such a situation was described by al-Attas as the consequence to the *loss of adab* that he had comprehensively discussed this in a number of his writings. According to him, the problem usually starts with the confusion and error in knowledge, which in turn leads to

¹⁶⁴ Al-Attas, *Risalah untuk Kaum Muslimin* [Message to the Muslims] quoted from Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (1998). *op. cit.*, 72.

¹⁶⁵ Johnson Tan was a visiting fellow at the Master in Public Policy Program at the National University of Singapore from 1998 to 1999. Cited from *Secularism and Spirituality. op. cit.*, 164-165.

the *loss of adab* in the community, and the consequence to this is the rise or election of false leaders. Thus a vicious cycle has been created.¹⁶⁶

Many of the Muslim intellectuals and leaders nowadays, believe that among the greatest contribution of Islam and Muslims to humanity was through the development of physical sciences in the middle ages like medicine, mathematics, astronomy and others. They fondly and regularly refer to famous names like Ibn Sinā, Al-Farābī, Al-Kindī and other Muslim scientists and list proudly their famous contributions to science. Unfortunately, Muslims have lost the fervor and initiative to learn and make discoveries about science particularly since the sixteenth century. There was a significant stagnation and decay in Islamic science for several hundred years. The affection then shifted to modern secular science pioneered by the West. Unfortunately, modern science had mutated itself to be very different from the scientific activities of the Muslim. According to Mumtaz Ali:

The main characteristic of the modern philosophy of science lies in its aim and objectives to control nature. The motive behind this control of nature is the promotion of happiness to mankind. Man would be delivered from his present state of anxiety and discontentment to that of contentment, peace and happiness through his control over nature. It has led to the deification of man from one side and the denigration of nature on the other. It is maintained that through the advancement of scientific knowledge, nature would be conquered and man would become fully autonomous of God and nature. Thus, advancement in science and technology would render man such great power, that he would in effect become 'god' himself and would create a world of happiness. The notions of progressivism and utilitarian are thus explicit in the modern philosophy of science.¹⁶⁷

Muslims in general and in particular the leaders ought to be fully conscious of the types of knowledge they have acquired, the basis and purpose of such knowledge and how it is relevant to them as creations and servants of God. The purpose of

¹⁶⁶ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud (1998). *op. cit.*, 73-74.

¹⁶⁷ Mumtaz Ali, Muhammad. (1994). *Islam and the western philosophy of knowledge: reflections on some Aspects*. Selangor: Pelanduk Publications. 63; For a thorough discourse on the Islamic philosophy of science, see Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1989a). *op. cit.*

education in Islam is to produce a good man. This man will eventually be able to form a good family and be able to contribute effectively to his community, society and country.

In this respect, it may be useful to refer to the views of al-Attas:

The purpose of seeking knowledge is to inculcate the goodness or justice in man as man and individual self, and not merely in man as a citizen or integral part of the society: it is man's value in his microcosmic kingdom, as a spirit, that is stressed, rather than his value as a physical entity measured in terms of the pragmatic or utilitarian sense of his usefulness to the State and the world.¹⁶⁸

One of the main objectives of modern secular education is to produce good citizens. Educated individuals are supposed to contribute to the well-being of the country, society and community. However, a good citizen in a country may not necessarily be a good man. But a good man would naturally be a good citizen.¹⁶⁹

Madrasahs and the secular schools cannot be compared on equal terms because the philosophy, vision and mission of the two institutions are different. To do so is like comparing between the sun and the moon. The madrasahs are meant to produce individuals who have in-depth understanding of the Islamic sciences like Qur'ānic studies, Prophetic Traditions, Islamic jurisprudence, Theology, Logic and Arabic. The secular schools will not and cannot produce Muslim students who are well-trained in religious sciences. Knowledge and the concept of education in Islam, its philosophy and methodology and how these are translated into the teaching and learning in madrasah are different compared to secular education. According to Ashraf:

Modern Western education places an exaggerated emphasis upon reason and rationality and underestimates value of the spirit. It encourages scientific inquiry at the expense of faith; it promotes individualism; it breeds skepticism; it refuses to accept that which is not demonstrable; it is

¹⁶⁸ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1978). *op. cit.*, 141.

¹⁶⁹ The researcher is reiterating the views by al-Attas with regards to the purpose and meaning of education.

anthropocentric rather than theocentric. Even when it does not directly challenge faith, it relegates it to the background as something much less important than reasons.¹⁷⁰

It may be generally accepted that madrasah students by and large still lagging behind in subjects like English, Mathematics and Science compared to their counterpart in the secular schools. There are a number of reasons for this problem. First, the focus of madrasah education is traditionally on religious sciences and these resulted in the academic studies being relegated to a secondary status. Second, it is due to the dual curriculum that burdens the whole educational system and set unrealistic expectations and goals among teachers, parents and students. Third, there are insufficient financial resources which lead to the inability to attract qualified and trained teachers to teach these academic subjects properly in the madrasah. There are already some credible efforts to address the above concerns, particularly the since the CE saga, but these will take tremendous amount of resources and discipline over an extended period of time. The problems and weaknesses may be improved significantly if there are enough assistance from the government. In this respect, the Christian missionary schools and the Special Aided Plan (SAP) schools are comparatively doing far better because the government has invested tremendously in terms of expertise and finance while the madrasahs suffered because there was negligible assistance from the government.¹⁷¹

Some may argue that Muslim children may learn Islam intensively when they are older. Or Islam may be studied and understood well on a part time basis in the mosques or elsewhere. To some politicians, madrasahs may not be necessary to provide early and comprehensive Islamic education.¹⁷² It is common believe among Muslims

¹⁷⁰ Syed Sajjad Husain & Syed Ali Ashraf (Eds.). (1979). *op. cit.*, 2.

¹⁷¹ The SAP and Christian missionary schools follow strictly the rules and regulations stipulated by the Ministry of Education. However, madrasahs are not obliged to follow these rules and regulations strictly for reasons already mentioned in the earlier chapter. However, madrasahs may enjoy these privileges if they are willing to be subsumed under similar conditions as the SAP and missionary schools.

¹⁷² A few Malay Members of Parliament (MPs) mooted the idea that students may start full time religious education after four or six years of education in conventional schools. This notion was however rejected

that Islam is a way of life and learning Islam must start from young. This is especially important for those who aspire to be well versed in the religion and have a balanced outlook in life. The early exposure in religious studies in madrasahs may enable young children to be sufficiently grounded on religious sciences and later on confident and capable to convey the authentic knowledge about the religion to others. Without enough number of students undergoing madrasah education from young, there will be significantly lesser individuals trained in religious disciplines. Not many Muslim youths may want to learn Islam on full time basis when they are older. Consequently, the Muslims at large may have lesser opportunity to learn Islam, read the Qur'ān and learn Arabic. If this situation persists for a few generations, the later Muslim generations may discover that their Islamic traditions and religious beliefs have been eroded gradually but significantly.

It may not be obligatory for Muslims to seek constant approval from the government or the political leaders on all matters pertaining to their own religion; so far as it do not infringe on the other religious communities, disrupt religious harmony, undermine the political leadership or affect stability and progress of the country. The Muslim community should be strong and resilient to prove the importance and relevancy of the madrasah education. They should not allow any move to weaken the madrasah education without taking productive and realistic counter actions. Failing which, the madrasah education may not be able to sustain itself and may succumb to a natural death. May be two or three of the madrasahs may eventually survive.

The government will claim that it cannot be blamed for the closure of the madrasahs since it died a natural death due to a dwindling enrolment and the lack of support from the Muslim community, similar to the fate of the Malay schools. It may be

by the Muslim community. Cited from Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai. (Eds.) (2006). *op. cit.*, 78. The idea of Compulsory Education for the first four years had actually been mooted by then Prime Minister (PM) Goh Chok Tong in October 1999, during a speech before Parliament. See Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai. (Eds.) (2006). *op. cit.*, 150-151.

very difficult and challenging to convince the government on the relevance and importance of the madrasahs in Singapore. Rational reasoning and argumentations may not be sufficient to convince these leaders and change their perception of madrasah education. Instead the Muslim community needs to be tactful and proof themselves by forwarding concrete examples and evidences that the madrasah education is clearly relevant and important for the Muslims vis-a-vis the success and prosperity of the country.

3.5 Basic Comparisons and Analysis of Islamic Education in Selected Muslim Countries

The secular nature of the State and the role of the government in Singapore are often accredited by the Muslims here to be one of the major causal factors for the debilitating conditions leading to the incapacitating state of the madrasah education here. Should the State and the government be made responsible and accountable for this problem? Or is it due to the intrinsic weaknesses among the Muslim themselves that resulted in such difficult, unpleasant and embarrassing situation. At this juncture, it would be interesting to compare and analyze the experiences of Muslims elsewhere under similar or different context and circumstances. Azhar Ibrahim did an analysis of Islamic education in four countries where three are Muslim majority countries and one has a sizeable Muslim population; namely Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt and India.¹⁷³ There seem to be noticeably similar problems relating to Islamic education in the countries mentioned despite the geographical distance between them and the significant differences in their social, economic and political circumstances.¹⁷⁴ The problems mentioned by Azhar in these countries relating to Islamic education were focused on the

¹⁷³ See Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai (Eds.). (2006). *op. cit.*, 93-118. For an in-depth discussion on this, see Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (1998). *op. cit.*, 121-132.

¹⁷⁴ Unfortunately, Malaysia was not included in the article since this country share in common to Singapore in its history, geography and ethnicity than any of the countries mentioned earlier.

curriculum, the pedagogy, the mentality of the madrasah administrators, the mindset of the religious elites and teachers as well as public support and funding. These six major issues or concerns mentioned above were also pervasive in Singapore, a secular State, though there may be minor variations. Indeed, it is quite inconceivable that these similar fundamental problems regarding Islamic education exist in all of these nations with large Muslim populations and the Muslim minority in secular Singapore when they all have very different social, economic and political backgrounds.

However, it is remarkable to note that all the four countries mentioned and Singapore shared to some extent similar history, that is, they were once colonized and the people were dominated and subjugated by Western Christian powers for several centuries. India, Pakistan and Egypt were once occupied by the British while Indonesia by the Dutch. It was during this era that secular education and dual education system were introduced to these Muslim countries for the first time and remain deep-rooted in their education milieu and system until today. According to Husain:

The Muslims, when exposed to Western thought, thus finds himself confronted with something which repudiates the basic premises on which the whole edifice of his religious and cultural life rests. This is the reason why the alliance from without between the modern Western system and the Islamic system does not seem to work. The Islamic system tries to impart a set of values which are contradicted by the modern system and the people feel bewildered and confused. But since the modern system is better geared to the kind of life that industrialization has created, the tendency on the part of a Muslim youth exposed to it without adequate precautions would be to assume that the old system which he has inherited from his own past is totally irrelevant to his modern needs. This is the problem that educationists are called upon to tackle.¹⁷⁵

The populations in these nations with Muslims in large numbers faced rather similar problems as Muslims in Singapore during the British colonial period and post-colonial period as discussed in Chapter 1. For example, describing the problem in Pakistan after independence, Qureshi mentioned:

¹⁷⁵ Husain, Syed Sajjad & Ashraf, Syed Ali (1979). *op. cit.*, 57.

... despite a general recognition of the fact that education should reflect the ideals of Islam, nothing was done to give feeling a concrete shape. In spirit and form the children of Pakistan receive their education in the same secular and amoral manner as they had been doing under alien rule.¹⁷⁶

We may attribute this to a problem that is very deep-rooted, philosophical and conceptual, that is the problem of knowledge and the ensuing perplexity in the same domain introduced by the colonizers that persisted until today. The confusion in knowledge resulted in the inability to put things in its proper order of things. Consequently this would lead to the debilitating intellectual crisis inflicting the academicians, religious elites, political leadership and the masses. According to Bilgrami and Ashraf:

Modern education entered Islamic countries mainly through the back door, through either cultural influences or political dominations. It relegated the Islamic education to the background and introduced the western system into all stages of education, from the primary level to the university. The government of each of the Muslim countries thought that only by adopting the western system could their country make any progress in the modern world. Traditional and Muslim educational institutions, the madrasahs and *dārul ‘ulūms*, were therefore left to private enterprise and were housed either in the mosques or in private houses, or were given some help by the government so that they could exist as religious seminaries or theological institutes. On the other hand a network of new colleges and schools were established in healthy surrounding with a pomp and dignity of their own. This new system of education opened job opportunities to students in colleges and universities.¹⁷⁷

According to Wan Daud, “Other Muslim nations that came out from the shackles of colonialism have not pronounced such a conviction to Islam as a reference for national development, including education’.¹⁷⁸ The report from the World Conference on Islamic Education mentions,

¹⁷⁶ Qureshi, Ishtiaq Hussein. (1975). *Education in Pakistan: an inquiry into objectives and achievements*. Karachi: Ma’ref Ltd cited from Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud (1998). *op. cit.*, 127.

¹⁷⁷ H.H. Bilgrami & S.A. Ashraf. (1985). *The concept of an Islamic university*. Cambridge: Hodder and Stoughton. 32.

¹⁷⁸ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. (1998). *op. cit.*, 127.

The Western classification of knowledge, underlying the modern system of education prevalent in Muslim countries, based on secular concepts which ignore the necessity of faith as the basis of action as required by Islam. It considers whatever training of feelings, imagination and reason natural sciences, social sciences and humanities can give as sufficient for the growth of human personality.¹⁷⁹

As discussed above, there was significant amount of confusion with regards to the conception of knowledge and Islamic education, introduced principally and largely during colonization period in many parts of the Muslim world. The problem was deep seated and permeated many years after independence, largely as a result of the secularization as a philosophical program. Besides the confusion, there was also a period of stagnation in religious education in Muslim nations including Singapore many years after independence. We may conclude to a significant extent that the problems of Islamic education are very widespread even among Muslim majority nations. Singapore being a secular State with a Muslim minority in multi-religious and multi-cultural societies is not excluded.

¹⁷⁹ Erfan, Niaz & Valie, Zahid A. (1995). *op. cit.*, 2-3.

CHAPTER 4: A FRAMEWORK FOR AN EXCELLENT ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION: A CASE STUDY OF ANDALUS AS A PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION (1996-2015)

4.1 Overview of the Chapter

Muslims have by and large, inherited and accumulated a significant amount and varying types of idealisms and propositions concerning the best ideas, philosophies, concepts and forms of Islamic education, deemed suitable for modern day environment and expectations. These are usually and largely based on sound traditions over many years that are exceptionally rich, immensely profound and extremely valuable. Unfortunately, they could also occasionally, be based on naive, simplistic presumptions and assumptions that are largely nostalgic or romantic in nature. Most probably, the developments and the current status of such ideas, philosophies, concepts and forms of Islamic education are driven by the dire need, urgency and importance to respond effectively and successfully to the multitude of challenges faced, due to the fast changing times and ambiguously mutating circumstances. As deliberated in Chapter 1, there have been considerable amount of discourses on the philosophies and methodologies of Islamic education, amongst mostly Muslim scholars as well as Muslim and non-Muslim academicians across both local and international spectrum for the last 50 years at least. As such, there are now quite a considerable amount of written literatures that recorded these ideas, discussions and debates on matters pertaining.¹⁸⁰

While these idealisms as well as philosophical, conceptual and largely intellectual discourses remain important and should continue for many years to come,

¹⁸⁰ Please see, World Conferences on Islamic Education (1st to 8th). *op.cit*; See Mujadad Zaman, Nadeem A. Memon. (Eds.). (2016). *Philosophies of Islamic education: historical perspectives and emerging discourses*. New York and London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. Also, please see the literature review section in Chapter 1 for the writings by the local academicians particularly from year 1989 after the enactment of AMLA and around the year 2008 prior and after the introduction of Compulsory Education (CE). 18-28.

pragmatic mindset as well as specific, systematic and concrete efforts that are highly functional, coherent, contextualized and thus relevant should be embarked on, deliberated and followed through, towards establishing excellent Islamic educational institutions and best suited for modern day needs and challenges. These institutions should have the finest in terms of leaderships, visions, missions, strategies, policies, systems, planning, processes and procedures as well as attaining remarkable results that are largely measurable and highly credible. These should be based on reliable framework or interconnecting frameworks that are well crafted, established and recognized. In addition, these ought to be benchmarked against national and international standards as well as validated by the relevant authorities. Thus, inability to establish proper, credible and functional operating frameworks and modus operandi that are relevant and suitable for current circumstances and demands, may lead to waste significant amount of idealisms, propositions, resources and opportunities.¹⁸¹

This chapter will elaborate on Andalus Corporation Pte Ltd (also referred to as Andalus) as the case study of the thesis. The researcher will discuss with significant details, the initiatives and breakthroughs Andalus has achieved as a private educational service provider for the last 19 years (1996-2015), towards achieving a framework for an excellent Islamic institution for an indigenous Muslim minority in a secular State Singapore. The researcher wish to reiterate that the focus of this chapter is the case study based on a framework for an excellent Islamic institution. As such, matters related and relevant to the framework alone are quite massive and would require much deliberations to be robustly and comprehensively dealt with. Thus, issues relating to the curriculum and matters pertaining, although very important, would not be the focus

¹⁸¹ There were a sizeable numbers of educational institutions established by various Malay-Muslim groups or personalities, many years prior to Andalus. Unfortunately, these institutions were perennially bedeviled with multitude of problems that made many of them largely mediocre in various ways. Many of these institutions have struggled and by and large, failed to compete effectively in terms of providing quality education compared to the educational institutions established and run by the Christian missionaries and the Chinese clans.

here. Selected and key aspects of the curriculum relevant to the context of this thesis will be discussed in the Chapter 5. Also, there are already quite an ample quantity of quality works on various aspects of Islamic education curriculum by several other researchers in Singapore or abroad, as mentioned in the literature review. Having mentioned the above, the researcher may want at some other opportunities after the successful completion of this thesis in particular and the PhD program in general, to revisit the issues relating to curriculum in Andalus specifically and Islamic education in general; and address them appropriately according to the contemporary circumstances and requirements deemed necessary. It is an acceptable fact that curriculum matters are never cast on stone and must always be subject to regular and continuous reviews, modifications and enhancements.

While writing this fourth chapter, the researcher has taken into cognizance and with keen awareness, the three preceding chapters in order to ensure alignment, congruence and continuity in terms of ideas, thoughts and areas of concerns. Thus, the deliberations in this chapter ought to be properly framed, contextualized and articulated vis-à-vis the overall thesis. In addition, the key issues, problem statements and desired outcomes of the thesis would be mitigated and addressed appropriately; directly or indirectly in this chapter. In particular, the desired outcome of forwarding an example or a model of a suitable institution with best practices, proven to be well accepted by a sizeable number among the Muslim community over a significant number of years, in cognizance of the multi-racial and multi-religious society in the secular State that constantly embarks on the pursuit of global standards. The researcher would like to achieve this in this chapter, by demonstrating and providing clear examples and by having Andalus, a private educational institution as the main subject in the case study.

4.1.1 Case Study as a Research Methodology

There are several areas of concerns regarding case study as the research methodology and matters pertaining that need to be identified and verified properly.¹⁸² First, the identification of the key elements for the design and implementation, deemed important and suitable for this case study. This includes the identifying and writing of the research questions which will eventually lead to crafting suitable propositions. Second, to identify, determine and eventually select the most suitable type of case study among the several other types of case studies available, which is deemed most appropriate and suited in context of this chapter in particular and this thesis in general. Third, binding or delimit the case study which includes the analysis and discussion of only pertinent and relevant data sources via-a-vis triangulation, with the body of knowledge made available for the case study as well as in the earlier chapters of this thesis.¹⁸³ The case study will thereafter, allows the research and exploration the areas of interests in the chapter and the thesis, within the specified range and context as well as adopting and optimising a variety of relevant and appropriate data sources. The key elements, research questions, propositions, data and analysis will be examined via multitude of lenses which allows for various perspectives on the areas of interests to be highlighted, analysed and understood. Robert Yin and Robert Stake forwarded two key approaches that are quite unique and distinct from each other as a guide for case study methodology. They used different terms to describe a variety of case studies. Yin categorizes case studies as exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. He also differentiates between single, holistic case studies and multiple-case studies. While,

¹⁸² For a good and succinct overview of the case study methodologies, please see Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). *op. cit.*

¹⁸³ Triangulation allows the validation of data on a particular subject of concern, through cross referencing and multiple verifications from several sources. This implies several research methods are utilised to study a particular phenomenon. See Nahid Golafshani. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*. 8(4), 597-607. Ontario Canada: University of Toronto. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-4/golafshani.pdf>.

Stake identifies case studies as intrinsic, instrumental or collective.¹⁸⁴ However, both Yin and Stake would eventually like the important areas in the case study and the key elements to be very well explored and examined. Yin believes, a case study design should be considered when the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; the behaviour of those involved in the study cannot be manipulated, the contextual conditions are relevant to the phenomenon under study or the boundaries are not clear between the context and phenomenon. The case is defined by Miles and Huberman as, “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context”.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the analysis of the programs, processes, individuals or benchmarking between organisations are necessary to delineate and determine the type case study to embark on. Once the case has been determined, it is necessary to scope, bind and set limits to the case to determine the perimeters what the case will be and what it will not be. Thus, it is necessary to avoid addressing a question that is too broad or a topic that has too many objectives for one study. Yin, Stake and several authors have agreed to place boundaries on a case by time and place, time and activity and by definition and context. Binding the case will ensure that the study remains reasonable in scope.¹⁸⁶ Once the research questions have been determined to be best answered using a case study; the case and its boundaries have been determined, then the next phase is, what type of case study will be conducted. The selection of a specific type of case study design will be guided by the overall purpose of the thesis in general and this chapter in particular.

The researcher would like to dovetail the best elements and approaches identified and forwarded by Yin and Stake as well as other researchers, as far as the case study methodology is concerned. The above concerns in relation to the case study methodology are thereafter and very aptly addressed specifically and comprehensively

¹⁸⁴ See Stake, R. E. (1995). *op. cit.*

¹⁸⁵ Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *op. cit.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

by adopting the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) framework, formulated and endorsed by Spring Singapore, a government agency. This framework has been very well researched, conceptualized and applied effectively over many years in various types of organizations including educational institutions. This tried and tested framework has provided clear and concrete examples of many successful case studies and thus proven to be a fail-safe approach and methodology to be applied effectively for this thesis.¹⁸⁷ Thus, the key elements for the design and implementation for the case study which encompasses research questions, propositions, data analysis as well as exploration via multitude of lenses are given due attention and treatment via this framework. More about the Andalus as the case study, adopting the SQC framework will be discussed extensively and comprehensively, later in this chapter.

4.1.2 Andalus as the Case Study

The experience and expertise garnered as well as the successful narratives by Andalus over the years would be a valuable as a source of reference and bench marking for other Islamic educational institutions in Singapore. It may also be relevant and useful to many other Islamic educational institutions in the neighboring countries as well as countries in varying parts of the world.¹⁸⁸ It may be useful to note that Singapore as a city State is already a well-known brand and acknowledged to be a global city with credible and quality standards and services across many areas. Generally, these are well accepted and recognized by both the local population and the international community.

¹⁸⁷ SPRING is a government agency that sets national standards and accreditation body. Internationally-recognized standards and quality assurance infrastructure are among the keys areas of interest and responsibilities. See SPRING Singapore. Retrieved from <http://www.spring.gov.sg/About-Us/Pages/spring-singapore.aspx>. Hereafter referred to as SPRING Singapore. For the attributes for high performing organization, please see Business Excellence Framework from Spring Singapore. Retrieved from (http://www.spring.gov.sg/Building-Trust/Business-Excellence/Apply-for-a-BE-Certification-Award/BE-Awards/Documents/BE_Framework.pdf). Hereafter referred to as BE Framework.

¹⁸⁸ Based on the researcher's research and evaluations, for now there are no proper referencing or benchmarking whatsoever, for standards and best practices between the Islamic educational institutions in the local, regional or global levels. Thus, it may be a novel and useful idea to introduce gradually some sort of referencing and benchmarking based on general and universal yardsticks and eventually on niche areas for references and possible collaborations.

Thus, operating under such environment and doing well is indeed valuable and advantageous.

Andalus was awarded the Approved Training Organisation (ATO) in 2010 by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), a statutory board under the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).¹⁸⁹ More importantly, Andalus embarked on a gradual and consistent preparatory journey of about eight years since 2008 and was eventually accredited with the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) in 2015 by SPRING Singapore, a statutory board under the Ministry of Trade and Industry.¹⁹⁰ The recognitions by the two government agencies mentioned above are deemed important as clear marks and evidences for validation and accreditation of an excellent organization or institution. It also empowers Andalus to operate effectively, confidently and successfully in cognizance of organizational, industry and legal imperatives. The other Islamic educational institutions in Singapore which include the madrasahs and part time madrasahs, unfortunately have not embarked on the accreditations such as ATO and SQC for multitude of factors and reasons. Thus, they may lack the sophistication, finesse and pre-requisites to operate effectively in the short term and long term basis within the challenging and constantly changing environment or commonly known as VUCA, an acronym for volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. It is

¹⁸⁹ In addition to providing educational services for members of the Muslim community, Andalus also provides in-house trainings for its non-teaching and teaching manpower. It also offers the training programs to employees from other institutions. It optimizes the legal framework, guidelines and grants offered by the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) for the range of trainings, recognized by the agency. The WDA was established in September 2003, as a pragmatic and practical responses to the economic crisis in early 2000 in order to assist the affected workers through training and skills upgrading. The WDA focus is to enhance competitiveness and employability of the Singapore workforce by spearheading and championing workforce training and development. For more details of WDA, please see Workforce Development Agency (WDA). Retrieved from <http://www.wda.gov.sg/content/wdawebbsite/L209-001About-Us/L209A-History.html>.

¹⁹⁰ Andalus is the first and only Muslim owned private entity to-date that has received the SQC accreditation. SPRING Singapore is an agency under the Ministry of Trade and Industry that focuses on developing and growing Singapore enterprises as well as building confidence in Singapore products and services. As such, SPRING collaborates with various government agencies and partners in the private sectors to assist enterprises in capability and capacity building such as financing, management development, productivity, technology and innovation and improving access to local, regional and global markets. By doing so, SPRING identifies, develops internationally-recognized standards and enhances quality assurance infrastructure as well as setting clear benchmarks, standards and provide accreditations. For more details, please see SPRING Singapore *op. cit.*

important to note that many government and government-linked institutions in Singapore including universities, junior colleges, polytechnics and schools are expected by the authorities to acquire the prescribed qualifications and accreditations; and thereafter most of them if not all, have met the standards for the SQC or other prevailing standards such as People Developer (PD), Service Class (SC); or even better accreditations such as SQC Star and Service Quality Award (SQA).

4.1.3 The Singapore Quality Class (SQC) Framework

The SQC framework that Andalus has adopted is meant to be very comprehensive and with very clearly defined stipulated standards. The causal effects and links between the seven drivers identified and results must be evident and clearly demonstrated. These seven drivers or categories in the framework are leadership, customers, strategy, people, process, knowledge and results. This framework functions and operates like a rubric or a matrix and there are dynamic linkages of the criteria, standards, data and analysis within and across between the seven drivers. As such, there would be some reinstatements or repetitions within the seven criteria to ensure the linkages are well juxtaposed, nicely connected and firmly established. In addition, the attributes of excellence for high performing organization should cut across and permeate throughout the seven drivers.¹⁹¹ The contextualization of the framework should be done according to the specific needs of Andalus. The figure below shows the Business Excellence (BE) model, from which the SQC is based on: ¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ BE Framework. *op.cit.*, 5.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 4.

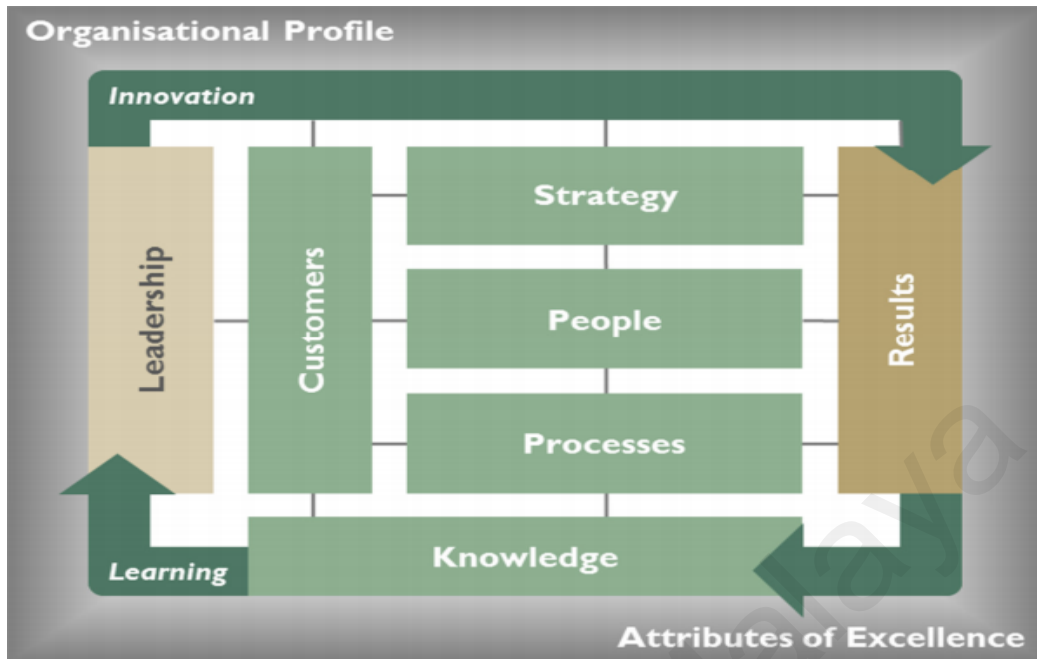


Figure 4.1: Model for the Business Excellent framework as the basis for Singapore Quality Class (SQC)

In order to be exact and not to cause or effect varying nuances to the interpretation, the researcher would like to quote the official description of the framework as follows:

The Business Excellence (BE) framework provides a comprehensive set of management standards for business excellence. It illustrates the cause and effect relationships between the drivers of performance and the results achieved. The attributes of excellence describe key characteristics of high performing organisations and are embedded throughout all the critical drivers of the framework. The organisational profile sets the context for the way the organisation operates and serves as an overarching guide for how the framework is applied. In the framework, there are seven categories used to assess an organisation. Leadership sets the strategic direction for the organisation and drives the mind set of excellence. Customers are positioned after leadership to demonstrate the focus on customer-centricity. Strategy is developed based on understanding internal and external stakeholder requirements, which guides the development of People and Process capabilities to achieve desired Results. Knowledge is part of the feedback loop of Learning and Innovation, which supports decision-making and drives improvements. Sound approaches and effective deployment help organisations know where they are on the excellence journey and what they need to do to improve their performance.¹⁹³

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

As mentioned earlier, in this chapter the researcher will elaborate on Andalus as the case study, based largely on the SQC framework but within the overall design, guidelines and perspectives of the research. It is also important to reiterate and emphasise again that Andalus, although a private entity, is not based or driven solely for profit, but fundamentally to provide services that are largely guided by the vision, mission and objectives. Although the framework is for business excellence, it may be appropriated and thus contextualised for organisational excellence, and in this context for Islamic education.¹⁹⁴ The SQC process started 2008 and followed by several continuous years of preparatory, familiarisation and acclimatisation process. After seven years of preparations, the formal application process to Spring Singapore began in 2014 and eventually the successful accreditation given in 2015, thus taking in total about eight years of gradual and continuous efforts. A Steering Committee was involved in the formulation of the report and prepared the draft report for submission. The relevant data and analysis on Andalus according to SQC requirements are given for last three preceding years namely 2012, 2013 and 2014 in accordance to the standard submission requirements and leading to approval a year later in 2015. The SQC formal application process was indeed rather demanding, challenging, time consuming and required significant amount of commitment and competencies as well as mobilisation of resources. In total, it took more than a year of continuous efforts for whole application process from initial stage to completion. In addition to the SQC steering committee, comprising of the Andalus directors, the SQC secretariat was concurrently formed, comprising of the managers from the three divisions in the headquarters. Specific tasks

¹⁹⁴ The contextualization initiative may be considered as the Islamization initiatives of the principles, objectives, processes and matters pertaining. Thus, faith based elements and spiritual principles were embedded though not necessarily mentioned explicitly. There are a plethora of literatures on the topic of Islamization since the 1970s and the two key proponents in this field are Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Ismail R. al-Faruqi. Please see, Rosnani Hashim & Imron Rossidy. (2000). Islamization of knowledge: a comparative analysis of the conceptions of al-Attas and al-Faruqi. *Intellectual Discourse*, 8 (1), 19-44.

were identified and expediently delegated to the secretariat members and their supporting officers to prepare quite voluminous amount of data, reports and all relevant documents. Briefings on SQC and details of the application process were given to the management and staff via special briefings and follow up emails. The application was made in early 2014 via prescribed procedures determined by Spring Singapore which included the submission of the application form with a detailed initial write-up of the company as well as self-assessment report using the format and template provided. It took many months of communications and clarifications between the parties involved before the application was eventually processed. Based on the application and the corresponding documents submissions; and once deemed fit to be considered for the SQC accreditation, dedicated Spring officers, including the Principal assessor followed up and provided a list of guidelines that indicated the very detailed list of reports, data, documents and also a series of preparatory activities necessary. Once all of the above documents were submitted, follow up actions via several emails and phone communications; several week later a team of two Spring appointed assessors spent a whole day on 15 September 2015 at Andalus to get detailed and direct input, clarifications and communication with the leadership, management officials as well as about 25 number of employees who were pre-selected by them prior to the session.¹⁹⁵ The external assessors were Gerard Lim Oon Hee, Principal Assessor, Spring Singapore and Zainab Ibrahim, Senior Auditor, TUV SUD PSB Pte Ltd. All the relevant documents related to the seven drivers in the SQC, compiled and carefully catalogued into several files were also checked. The face-to-face meetings with the top leadership, key appointment holders, pre-listed employees and checking of the prerequisite

¹⁹⁵ The beginnings of the SQC formal application initiatives with Spring were made in early 2014 with the assistance of the consultants from Suhaimi Salleh Consulting (SSA). After numerous efforts and communications with Spring over many months, the formal application was eventually made in August 2015. After submitting all the documents and making detailed and comprehensive preparations, the appointed assessors visited Andalus on 15 September 2015. After the visit, the formal and positive outcome of the application was given on 11 October 2016. While the complete assessment report was given on 15 November 2016. Hereafter referred to as Andalus SQC accreditation.

documents were necessary and a critical part of the accreditation process to ensure authenticity, veracity and thus meet all the accreditation requirements. The whole day event was fortunately well planned and proceeded very well. By the end of the day-long session, the two assessors were visibly impressed, assured and the principal assessor gave an impromptu and largely positive comments during the debrief session. Among others, he mentioned the family-like culture in Andalus, teamwork was apparent among the staff members, transparency and thus the willingness and openness to express opinion and give frank feedback, clear lines of communications, company core values were affectively embraced, sense of pride among staff members and robust in terms of procedures and processes.

The success of the SQC application was given officially on 11 October 2015 by Gerard Lim Oon Hee, the Principal Assessor, SPRING. Prior to the notification, the assessment report had been reviewed and endorsed by the Business Excellence Certification Committee appointed by Spring. The details of the members in the said committee were however not made available. The SQC assessment report was given later on 14 November 2015. Please see a copy the SQC certificate awarded to Andalus and the Assessment Report on Andalus Corporation Pte Ltd Spring/SQC/150085 September 2015 in Appendix A-1 (page 235) and Appendix A-2 (pages 236 and 237) respectively. For this chapter, the researcher will highlight and focus on the Areas for Improvements (AFIs) mentioned in the SQC assessment report and the follow up actions deemed necessary. The strengths of the organisation mentioned in the assessment report were largely the evaluations and reiterations of the information already made available by Andalus during the submission process.

It is also important and thus necessary to mention that the SQC exercise was within the secular environment and the officials involved in this exercise were mostly non-Muslims from a governmental agency namely Spring Singapore. As such, the

report on Andalus as an Islamic educational institution was crafted in ways to enable the relevant government officers, comprehend the data, descriptions and analysis provided. In this chapter, the researcher has made significant rearrangements and reorganisation to the original prescribed format of the SQC report and make editions deemed necessary, suitable for a thesis as well as to maintain congruency with the rest of the chapters. However, the key guiding principles and thrusts of the SQC framework are maintained as well as the authenticity, analysis and accuracy of the data remained validated.

As mentioned in earlier chapters and may be worth mentioning again, Andalus has effective and important collaborations with affiliated companies such as Cordova Education Centre Pte Ltd, Institute Pengajian Tinggi Al-Zuhri Pte Ltd and Darul Andalus Pte Ltd since late 1990s. These companies focus on education and publishing that are closely related to Andalus core activities. These collaborations enable shared resources in terms of research and development (RnD), manpower mobilisation, economies scale for publicity, sharing best practices, pilot new initiatives and expansion initiatives according to designated domains or territories. Thus, collaborative efforts with the above affiliate institutions have enhanced the SQC position of Andalus.

4.2 An Overview of Andalus

Andalus was formed in 1996 and it provides part-time Islamic educational programs for a niche Muslim segment of the population in Singapore focusing on the learning, understanding and practicing of Islam.¹⁹⁶ Although Andalus exists as a company and thus a private enterprise, its intention and motivations are evidently not

¹⁹⁶ The pioneers of Andalus were several young undergraduates and graduates from the Islamic universities who had completed their studies or would be completing their studies soon. They were motivated most evidently by the mission to provide meaningful and purposeful educational services to the community as well as providing source of income as means of livelihood for themselves. They were namely Zulkifli Othman, Kamsari Sanuh, Azhari Mustapha and Mohd Fuad Md Aris. The researcher was involved in 2007 or one year after Andalus inception, at the juncture when Andalus was about to start the second centre.

focused solely by personal or monetary gains and optimization of profits.¹⁹⁷ Andalus aspires to develop individuals and eventually a community that appreciates and practices its religious, traditional, moral and cultural values with appropriate and sufficient levels of profundity and in the best possible ways within the range and contexts as well as in cognizance of the various constraints, challenges, difficulties or opportunities that exist in the country.¹⁹⁸ Thus, the learners in Andalus are provided the opportunities to improve themselves better and thereafter optimize their full potential. By doing so, they should be consistently conscious and compliant to teachings of the religion, exhibit good characters such as appreciating and respecting parents, family members, relatives, neighbors and friends. They should be able to live harmoniously as well as graciously in a multi-cultural society and be successful in their studies and respective professions. Thus, they will become virtuous members of the community and society as well as honorable citizens of the country.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Being a company, Andalus has to be registered by the Registrar of Companies (ROC) and the business license has to be renewed every two years. ACRA is a government agency that acts as the national regulator of business entities, public accountants and corporate service providers. ACRA also facilitates the development of business entities and the public accountancy profession. It is mandatory for all business, Andalus included, to be very familiar and conform strictly to the stipulated regulations. Failing which, the penalties are usually swift and may be quite hefty. On matters relating ROC, please see the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) website. Retrieved from <https://www.acra.gov.sg/home>

¹⁹⁸ Besides Andalus, there were also a number of other private education agencies operating on similar circumstances. The classes organized by Andalus were conducted at government commercial properties located in the midst of the public housing estates or in a few cases, in privately owned commercial properties. For the last 19 years at least, the government has not intervened and prevented the setting up and operations of these private Islamic educational institutions since their services were seen to be needed and appreciated by the community. The Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) [Islamic Religious Council, Singapore] which acts as the regulating body for religious education has also supported these initiatives although in a non-tacit manner, initially. For the past few years however, MUIS had initiated the PIENet to collaborate and link the various private educational agencies as discussed in Chapter 1. Unfortunately, quite a number of these private educational agencies have floundered and ceased operations mostly due to problematic management issues and financial difficulties. Many among the remaining ones are struggling badly due to multitude of issues and problems. Andalus and its affiliate organizations have successfully weathered the challenges thus far.

¹⁹⁹ Such description of Andalus need to be contextualized, appropriated and deemed suitable for the non-Muslim assessors in Spring Singapore for the accreditation of SQC or for non-Muslim readers general. While the key aspects of the description of Andalus are not lost or misleading, but the choice of words, terms and sentence adopted should be suitable for secular environment and its imperatives.

4.2.1 Organisational Environment

The organisational environment in Andalus is guided largely by the vision, mission, objectives and values.²⁰⁰ Andalus vision statement is “Towards developing individuals to be God conscious and virtuous in character”. The mission statement is “To provide quality Islamic educational programs with sincerity, passion and patience towards developing virtuous individuals”. The objectives of the institution are to develop individuals who understand, appreciate Islam and achieve virtuous characters, practises good values in everyday life and thereafter able to educate the younger generations with good values. Andalus adopts four key values as part of the journey, to ensure Andalus employees contribute to the success of the organization, as follows:

- Customer Focus: Committed to building good relationships with the parents and students. Respect each of them as an important individual with rights of his/her own.
- Staff Development: Strive to create an environment which enables employees to optimize their potential and have better career opportunities.
- Teamwork: Believe in the spirit of teamwork in the work culture. Appreciate the contribution of all employees, parents and students.
- Innovation: Committed to continuously improve services. Ensure that any fees charged are reasonable and affordable to all.

4.2.2. Educational Pathway

Andalus offers part-time Islamic educational programs that spans from pre-school to adults. Thus, a learner who starts at Andalus at preschool level and continues until diploma will have at least 17 years of structured, gradual and continuous

²⁰⁰ Organisational environment describes the organisation’s operating environment and its key relationships with customers, suppliers, partners and stakeholders. BE Framework. *op. cit.*, 6.

education. The chart below shows the educational pathway in Andalus:

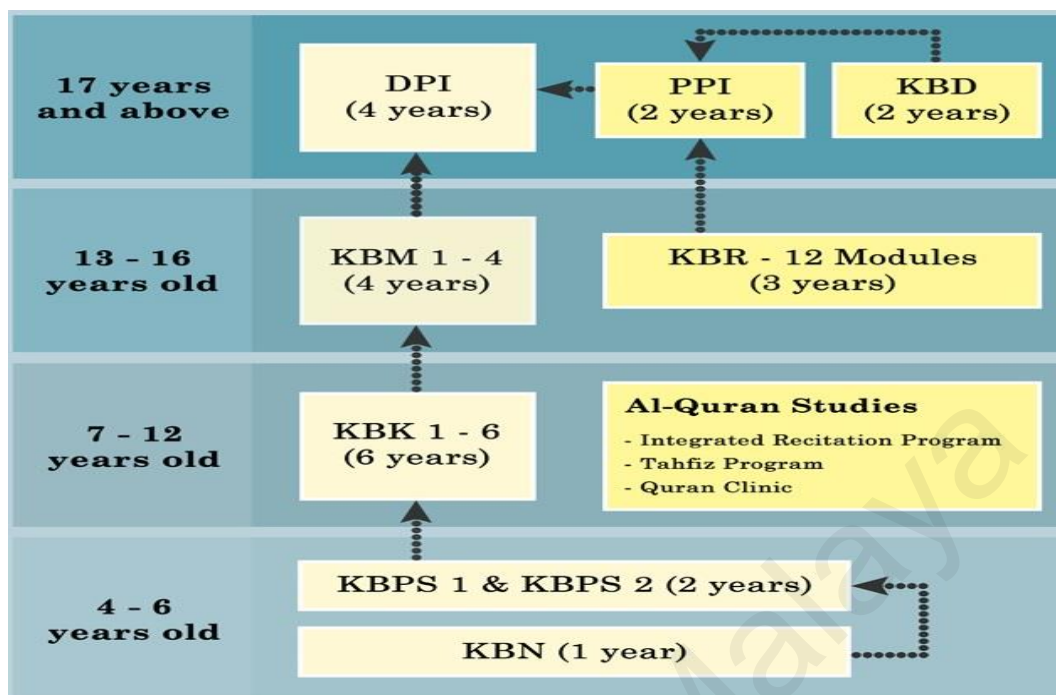


Figure 4.2: Chart showing the various types of programs from pre-school to diploma levels

- KBN - Kelas Bimbingan Nurseri (Enrichment for Nursery)
- KBPS - Kelas Bimbingan Pra-Sekolah (Enrichment for Kindergarten 1-2)
- KBK - Kelas Bimbingan Kanak-Kanak (Enrichment for Primary 1-6)
- KBM - Kelas Bimbingan Menengah (Enrichment for Secondary 1-4)
- KBR - Kelas Bimbingan Remaja (Enrichment for Youths – 3 years)
- KBD - Kelas Bimbingan Dewasa (Enrichment for Adults – 2 years)
- PPI - Pra- Diploma Pengajian Islam (Pre-Diploma in Islamic Studies - 2 years)
- DPI - Diploma Pengajian Islam (Diploma in Islamic Studies - 4 years)

The above educational programs are largely classroom based with teacher to student ratio of about 10 to 30 students per class. Classes are mostly held on Saturdays and Sundays, although there are options to attend classes on weekdays; during the day or in the evening.²⁰¹ An e-learning platform is provided to engage parents in their children's

²⁰¹ The long hours in schools and work places during most parts of the weekdays have resulted in huge expectations and conflicting demands from various quarters and thus had taken a heavy toll in terms of availability of time and effort for religious classes. In addition to normal school hours, there are non-ending requirements for home works, assignments, projects and co-curricular activities. Thus, religious education has taken a back seat and second fiddle compared to the rigorous demands and robust expectations in the secular schools. The conflicting demands and multitude of challenges during schooling years by and largely permeated until working life. For some elaborations on the problems in the education system, please see selected discussions as examples, in the local newspaper, Denise Phua. (2016, January 28). 3 unhealthy trends plaguing education. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from

learning and to broaden learning experience beyond classroom settings. Andalus has also developed the on-line learning platform as part of the strategic initiative to cater to diverse groups of learners with different needs and wants. Such initiatives are necessary under current circumstances because of the busy workloads and tight schedules faced by all age groups including the students, youths and adults due to school or work commitments. The flexibility in the choice of space and time to study Islam provide more options and acceptance from diverse groups. Also, the infrastructure and content to optimise educational technology are more feasible and the costs to develop, run and use the facilities available deemed affordable.²⁰² Currently, the on-line learning is offered for adults' level (KBD programs) and will eventually be expanded to more programs. Thus, the settings used in the teaching and learning towards meeting the objectives of the different types of educational programs are varied, such as lectures in classrooms, assignments and discussions, e-learning and on-line learning (on-site or off-site), workshops and symposiums as well as outdoor activities like camps and stayover at the mosques during the term breaks.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/education/3-unhealthy-trends-plaguing-education-denise-phua>; Andy Chen (2016, Apr 8). Changes to PSLE: Less stress for students but don't dumb down education system. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/education/changes-to-psle-less-stress-for-students-but-dont-dumb-down-education-system>.

²⁰² There are numerous online learning options and versions for all sort of courses available and the numbers of these online learning are growing fast. These services are provided by the government agencies as well as private enterprises. This rather steep upward trend has been observed for the last five years at least and online learning are now quite commonly practiced in educational institutions, from primary to tertiary levels. For some references regarding online learning, please see, Amanda Lee. (2013, September 27). Ministry's online learning portal for students to be ready by 2016. *Todayonline.com*. Retrieved from, <http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/ministrys-online-learning-portal-students-be-ready-2016>; Loy Chia Yin. (2015, November 2015). 6 Websites with Free Online Courses in Singapore. 2minutestoday.com retrieved from <http://2minutestoday.com/free-online-courses-in-singapore/>. Also see relevant materials regarding blended learning, Dhaval Trivedi & Lokesh Kumar. Blended Learning: The way ahead for an always learning organization. London: Upside Learning. Retrieved from <https://www.ial.edu.sg/ialeads/pdfs/The-way-ahead-for-an-always-learning-organisation.pdf>.

4.3 Organisational Leadership

4.3.1 Senior Leadership

The mission and vision of Andalus were first crafted by the Board of Directors (BOD) in 1997 during a retreat session. The retreat participants which included the Management team at that time were encouraged to provide their insights into the crafting of the mission and vision of the organisation. All inputs were keenly heard and reviewed during the course of the retreat by the BOD and finally the mission and vision statements were developed. The philosophy and values inculcated by the senior management in organisation has been ubiquitously presented across the organisation and promoted regularly during the day-to-day activities. Concerted efforts are made by the senior management to impart the mission, vision and values at every given opportunity during town-hall meetings, seminars, focus groups, emails and others. These mission, vision and values statements are regularly subject to reviews and changes, if deemed necessary during Strategic Review and Planning (SRP) sessions held twice a year and these have been done conscientiously for many years.²⁰³ The BOD made it known regularly during meetings to the key stakeholders about the different levels of responsibilities, prerogatives and priorities involving business, performance, learning and learners (BPLL) needs. For each and every concern, the treatment should be exact, appropriate and effective. The Strategic Review Planning (SRP) sessions, the crafting of the Action Plan (AP) and Work Plan (WP), the identification of the Key Result Areas (KRAs) in the Performance Management System (PMS) and all the follow up actions as well as the resulting reports are integrated and directed towards achieving the desired performances. The above are reviewed two to three times per year for

²⁰³ The vision, mission and values statements of Andalus, although subject to regular reviews, remained consistent over the years since it was first crafted. This indicated to a large extent, the relevancy and resilience of these statements. This also shows that Andalus remained focus and steadfast to the founding principles that permeated and lasted through the times and circumstances. For the details of the Andalus vision, mission, values statements, please see, Andalus Corporation Pte Ltd website. Retrieved from http://andalus.sg/andalus_eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=68&Itemid=84.

updates and compliance. Regular ad-hoc meetings are also held to address issues and concerns in a specific and timely manner, particularly on areas affecting business and performance. The BOD and management are always actively and appropriately involved in almost all aspects of the thinking, planning and execution of the key company initiatives. The culture of trust, empowerment and delegation is prevalent but as the same time ensuring responsibility, accountability and validity. The communication channels are always available and active via formal and informal meetings, emails as well as the latest digital communication applications. Employees who showed commitment, discipline and key competencies, as well as having good track records on daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis are identified and selected for promotions as part of their career progressions. Their performances are monitored and measured through informal observations by the immediate and non-immediate supervisors and the formal PMS. The Leadership Development Program (LDP) was initiated in 2014 to train, coach and mentor selected employees towards developing new leaders. Future leaders are given due recognitions in terms higher job designation, attractive remunerations and better benefits adjustments. Efforts are also taking place to enable proper succession plans such that the transition of senior leadership from the older and retiring teams members to the younger ones, are well anticipated and planned in advance. For the organisational charts of Andalus at the headquarters (HQ) and centres, please see Appendix B-1 and Appendix B-2.

The SQC assessors from Spring gave a comprehensive and balanced report that included the strengths as well as the Areas For Improvements (AFI).²⁰⁴ The strengths from the assessors report are derived from and basically reiterations from the description already mentioned in the comprehensive report submitted by Andalus. Thus,

²⁰⁴ The outcome of the SQC application (No 150085) was delivered by Gerard Lim from the Business Excellence Secretariat, SRING Singapore who was also the Spring Assessor for Andalus, via email dated 11 October 2015. The detailed report of the assessment was given to Andalus later on 15 November 2016. Hereafter referred to Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report.

as mentioned earlier, the researcher will focus only on the AFI of the said Spring's assessment report in this section and the proceeding sections. For this section on senior leadership, the AFI are as follow:

While the organisation's leaders drive performance, stakeholder involvement and employee empowerment, it does not have a process of leadership evaluation. It could consider adopting the practice of assessing its senior leaders by peers, direct reports, board of directors and employees. This way, as part of the organisation's robust and iterative processes, it could better measure and understand the performance attributes of leadership effectiveness and the linkage to its organisational excellence.²⁰⁵

Based on the AFI recommendations, the follow up actions deemed suitable would be, to allow and even encourage frank and objective feedbacks by the subordinates to their respective superiors as and when necessary and especially during the PMS sessions. During the one-to-one PMS conversation, there should be open interactions and the feedbacks should be both ways. In addition, employees are also needed to give feedback on the BOD and management teams via the official organizational climate survey and the internal climate survey. The findings of the surveys should be analysed, evaluated and considered valuable feedbacks and recommendations to the superiors and in particular the senior leadership.

4.3.2 Organisation Culture

Andalus adopts largely the ADDIE (analyse, design, develop, implement and evaluate) process to ensure alignment, congruency and continuity in various aspects of the organisation. As such, the thinking, conceptualising, strategizing, planning, execution and evaluation processes vis-a-vis alignment of the vision, mission and values are conscientiously ensured throughout the process. The ADDIE process has been

²⁰⁵ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *Op Cit.*

consistently practised with active involvements of the BOD and management and after which, cascaded to the rest of the employees.²⁰⁶

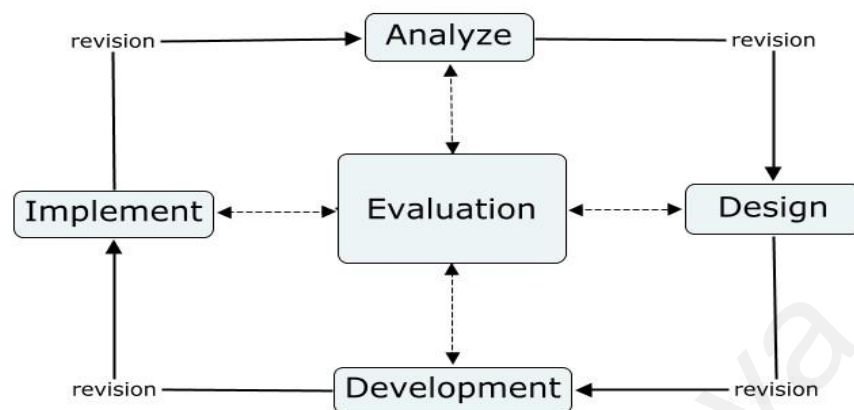


Figure 4.3: The diagram showing the ADDIE model

A strong values system is always emphasised to enhance organisational requirements such as customer focus, staff development, teamwork and innovation. Strategic review and planning meetings are regularly conducted to review past and plan new strategies. These meetings are attended by the BOD and management. The vision, mission and values are also highlighted through various channels like organisation's website, posters at centres, Panduan Waris dan Pelajar (PWP) or Parents' and Students' Guide Book, Programmes Files at the centres, Orientation Day or Induction Programme, Annual Prize Giving Day (WISUDA) and Company Wide 'Wadah Integrasi Minda' (WIM) or Strategic Alignment Platform. Trainings for all Andalus employees are planned and implemented in a structured, directed and continuous manner to ensure relevancy and currency. The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and the Total Company Training Plan (TCTP) embrace regular learnings and trainings for continuous

²⁰⁶ The ADDIE model allow a comprehensive, structured, systematic and flexible flow for ideas, concepts, design, plan and execution as well as continuous and regular monitoring and interventions. It is conventionally used by instructional designers and training developers but it may be appropriated and adapted for management, projects and performance related activities or programs. ADDIE has five consequential phases which includes Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation. The evaluation aspect occurs continuously, consistently and dynamically throughout the whole process. For some details on the ADDIE model, please see, Ed Forest. (2014, January 29). The ADDIE Model: Instructional Design. Education Tecnology.net. Retrieved from <http://educationaltechnology.net/the-addie-model-instructional-design/>.

improvements and positive changes.²⁰⁷ The trainings include the government initiated programs like the Work Skills Qualifications (WSQ) by the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and the non-WSQ types that are designed by Andalus in collaborations with several private training agencies. Since Andalus embraces a philosophy of being a thinking and learning organisation, almost all aspects in the organisation are subject to regular reviews, change and improvements. The Staff Suggestion Scheme (SSS) enables many ideas, suggestion and recommendations from all employees for changes and improvements to be made consistently. There is no culture where monopoly of wisdom is prevalent. As such, everybody has the chance to contribute ideas for improvements, learning and innovations. The annual surveys, focus groups and post training feedbacks, all provided ample feedbacks for improvements and changes. There are rotations for the key appointment holders every three to five years at headquarters (HQ) and centres to allow dynamic changes to occur and adaptations to these changes made. Thus, comfort zones, ossification of perspectives and resistant to changes are largely avoided. The structure, organisation and functions of the organisation are subject to reviews and changes every three to five years to ensure relevancy. Reviews and planning sessions are held consistently for all areas at strategic and operational levels. New methods, processes and technology are embraced and adopted on occasions deemed necessary to increase efficiency and productivity. Please see samples pictures of the three Andalus directors engaging the employees in Appendix C.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the Areas For Improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the organisational culture are as follow:

²⁰⁷ The investment and mobilization of resources for training and development need to be carefully crafted for optimal return of investment. The specific needs of the individuals, the general requirements for the departments and the overall challenges and strategies for the organization have to be factored in when conceptualizing, planning and executing training initiatives. For more discussions on Training Needs Analysis, please see Som, H. B. M., & Nam, R. Y. T. Organizational - level training needs analysis (TNA): findings from the top 1000 companies in Malaysia. Malaysia: Faculty of Management and Human Resource Development, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

The organisation could begin to look at understanding how international markets for Muslim-enrichment operate as part of its next-phase sustainability. As the market-leader in Singapore, its view could already be maximised and limited by its position and niche industry. It could benefit from different market perspectives and be able to set in context of similarities and differences, its own organisational bearings, in contrast with overseas competitors.²⁰⁸

Based on the AFI, the report is recommending an expansion and exploratory phase beyond the country. This requires comprehensive and continuous researches on similar initiatives in the neighbouring countries, as well as other countries that share similar background and circumstances as the Muslims in Singapore. From these benchmarking and comparisons, good and suitable practices may be identified leading to innovative ideas, interesting perspectives, new strategies and suitable programs that may be incorporated into the organisation. It is worth noting that SPRING would like the local enterprises to have a regional, global outlooks and should always consider ways and means to expand the business and operations overseas. Thus, benchmarking and good practices at national and international levels are always emphasised. Having mentioned the above, the researcher firmly believe, there are still ample opportunities for Andalus to learn from its own body of knowledge and experiences and make the relevant improvements. Also, there are still numerous local enterprises locally that Andalus can benchmark against to improve organisational culture from within the same industry or from different industries.

4.3.3 Corporate Governance and Social Responsibility

Operating Manuals and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for various aspects of the company policies, procedures and processes are largely in place to ensure consistency in understanding and compliance.²⁰⁹ Thus, there are SOPs for educational

²⁰⁸ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

²⁰⁹ The standard operating procedure (SOP) provides detailed information and explanation on the day to day or whatever time frame deemed suitable for effective operations in accordance to the specific and customized needs of the organization. The SOP must also be in cognizance of the industry, legal, customers and whatever needs in conformance to operational expedencies. For an example of the SOP,

matters, manpower, finance, administration, customer service, emergencies and others. These SOPs are reviewed and updated on needs basis or urgently if the situation warrants. The Action Plan (AP) and Work Plan (WP) for the various HQ divisions and centre managements are crafted every year and reviewed twice yearly to ensure compliances and the desired performances. The AP are mostly for new initiatives introduced or for problematic areas that are of constant or continuous concern. While the WP are mostly routine activities and duties that are always important and require attention throughout the years. The crafting of the AP and WP are done by the management and endorsed by the BOD. All employees are familiar with the AP and WP particularly in areas that are of their own direct concern or responsibilities. Weekly, monthly, biannual and yearly reports on key and critical functions of the organisation based on prescribed formats are submitted to the management and BOD via emails for consistent monitoring and interventions when deemed necessary. Reports on critical business and operational imperatives are presented during the management and BOD meetings every two months for verifications, validations and compliance. Announced and unannounced audits at the centres are done by the Inspectorate Department involving the officers from the HQ divisions. The BOD and Management also carry out unannounced visits to the centres. External auditors conduct annual audits on financial records. Audits by WDA for the ATO status given to Andalus are done every two years cycle. Audits by Spring Singapore for the SQC status are done every five years to ensure compliance, improvements and best practises. The above practices are done in largely disciplined and rigorous manners and may appear to be very tedious and cumbersome for the new and uninitiated. However, once they become normal and

please see, Singapore Civil Defence Force guidelines for company emergency response plan (ERP). Retrieved from <https://www.scdf.gov.sg/content/scdf.../en.../Guidelines%20to%20ERP.pdf>. Also see, Brampton Small Business Enterprise Centre. What is a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)? Retrieved from [https://www.brampton.ca/EN/Business/BEC/resources/Documents/What%20is%20a%20Standard%20Operating%20Procedure\(SOP\).pdf](https://www.brampton.ca/EN/Business/BEC/resources/Documents/What%20is%20a%20Standard%20Operating%20Procedure(SOP).pdf).

routine, they operates in an auto-poetic or automated yet nimble ways. These allow sufficient room for the staff and the leadership in particular to engage in high order thinking and deep reflections. For the tabulation and results for the Key Result Areas (KRAs) for three years (2012, 2013 & 2014), please see Appendix D (1-7).

Students from less fortunate households are given fee subsidies. No students especially from preschool to secondary levels have been terminated for not paying fees. Learners at post-secondary levels may however be suspended from classes, if they have three consecutive months outstanding fees. Still, there are opportunities for appeal cases. Employees and their immediate family members are exempted from paying fees when attending courses offered by Andalus. A student once enrolled in Andalus, will not be deprived of education because of financial hardship. The amount subsidies and wavier of course fees, Andalus provide to children from less fortunate families were as follow:

Table 4.1: Figures for the annual subsidy given to needy students.²¹⁰

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
Value of subsidy (\$)	8,956	9,492	10,027

Annual contributions are given to the Lembaga Biasiswa Kenangan Maulud (LBKM), or Prophet Muhammad Birthday Memorial Scholarship Fund Board, a self-help body with the Institution of Public Character (IPC) status that provides educational bursaries to needy students.²¹¹ Donations are also given on needs basis to various charitable and

²¹⁰ All the figures in Chapter 4 were obtained from the relevant Andalus's divisions and centers for three consecutive years namely 2012, 2013 and 2014. The collation and presentation of these data as well as the analyses were in accordance to the stipulated requirements of the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) framework. These information are thus contained on the SQC report submitted to Spring Singapore. The validity and veracity of the data were inspected and verified by the Spring appointed assessors, based on the report submitted as well as, the site visit to Andalus premises. Hereafter, referred to as Andalus Data for SQC accreditation.

²¹¹ LBKM was formed during the independent year of 1965 as a result of concerted efforts by about 70 Malay-Muslim organisations. It was during this tumultuous period and the pressures to have decent education particularly for the poor and needy, the leaders within the Muslim community formed the self-

welfare organisations but mostly to student bodies in the local tertiary institutions. The table below shows Andalus contribution to LBKM for the three years mentioned:

Table 4.2: Figures for the annual donation to LBKM²¹²

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
Value of donation (\$)	5,000	10,000	10,000

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the corporate governance and social responsibility are as follow:

The organisation could consider framing its contributions to the community within a larger context of impact. As a market-leader, it has the opportunity to effect grass-root change for its customers in the area of education and 'future-employability', both short and long-term, which could possibly lead to the establishment of new standards, regulation & policies for this niche. Additionally, it could also envision itself playing a 'validation' role for curriculum conducted by other learning institutions.²¹³

As a follow action to the AFI, Andalus would positioned and strengthened itself as an organization that proved to be the standard bearer in the private Islamic education service provider or within similar niche areas. By doing so, Andalus will be frequently referred to or benchmarked against in terms of ensuring high quality and reliable standards in key standards and services. The critical areas in education such as curriculum development, teaching methodologies, educational materials, educational technology, manpower management, financial control and others. Thus, Andalus would be institution of choice for seeking employment as well as seeking knowledge. Other learning institution may want to learn and get validated by Andalus in a formal or informal ways to recognized and accepted by the industry and the community. Also, it would be admirable for Andalus to have enough reserves, sufficient funds and

help organization. LBKM focus and consistently for more than 50 years has been awarding bursaries to the needy in particular. Please see Lembaga Basiswa Kenangan Maulud (LBKM). Retrieved from <http://lbkm.org.sg/>

²¹² Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit.*

²¹³ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

generosity that enables as many children and participants from low income background to enjoy quality education. By achieving the above, Andalus may effect grass-root change and support from the community.

4.3.4 Financial and Market Performance

There was a gradual increase of revenue from 2012 to 2014 and overall the revenue had increased by 11.9% in the three years. However, the labour costs had increased at a rather alarming rate for the same period at 22.1%. The increase in labour costs were due largely to significant increase in manpower costs due to expansion in the number of centres leading to increase in manpower headcount as well as upward revision in salary for both new employees and current employees in order to remain competitive and attractive in the job market. It is also deemed important to remunerate employees well, in cognizance of the very high costs of living in the country. The imbalance due to the significant increase in labour costs, should be rectified soonest possible by increasing the number of students and thus increasing the revenue. Improving productivity of the teachers should be attained by having a targetted teacher to student ratio. The details are as follows:

Table 4.3: Figures for revenue and labour costs²¹⁴

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
Revenue	\$5,117,875	\$5,424,079	\$5,729,631
Labour Cost	\$3,209,278	\$3,535,406	\$3,918,893

The operating ratio (A/B as showed in the table below) has been increasing steadily over the years.²¹⁵ This was largely due to very high amount of takeover fees for several

²¹⁴ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit.*

²¹⁵ There are various types of ratios in relation to finance that allow analysis, projections, corrections, anticipations and all sorts of prerogatives that allow prudent and proper financial management and control. Operating ratios include operating cash flow to sales ratio, operating expenses to gross margin

newly acquired centres during the years involved, increase in manpower costs, increase in rentals, increase in maintenance costs and other costs in tandem with the increase in number of centres and inflationary costs. There are already continuous efforts to cut costs and various initiatives to improve productivity. Within the three years, the operating ratio has increased by 7%. The figures are as follows:

Table 4.4: Financial ratio for operating expenses over revenue²¹⁶

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
Operating Expenses (A)	\$2,505,373	\$2,805,784	\$3,182,764
Revenue (B)	\$5,117,875	\$5,424,079	\$5,729,631
Operating Ratio (A/B)	49%	52%	56%

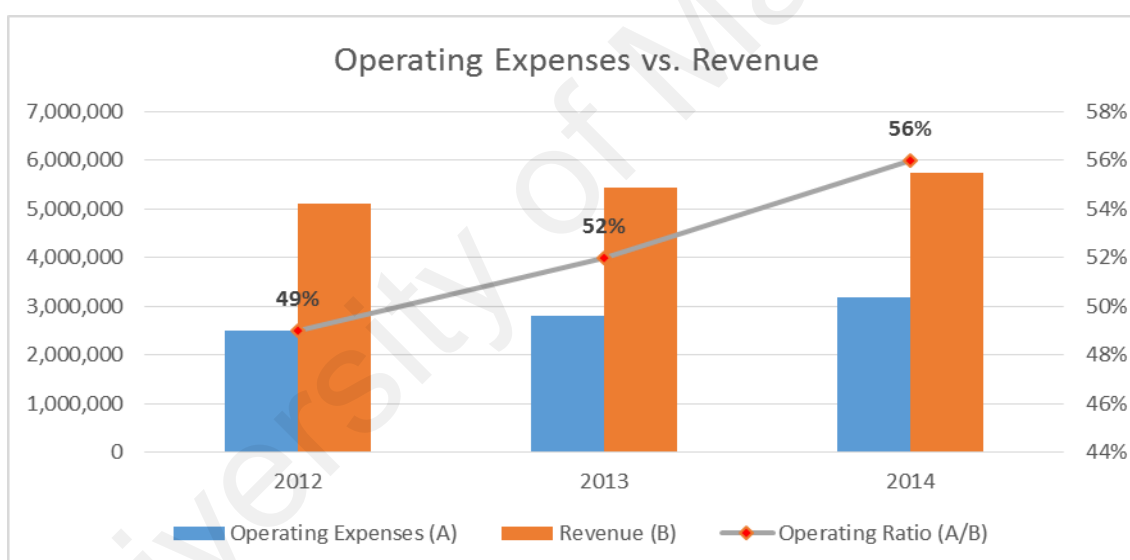


Fig 4.4: Graph of financial ratio for operating costs over revenue²¹⁷

The bad debt status was quite manageable at 2-3% per annum. Specific, systematic and concrete efforts were made continuously to ensure the figures are under tight control.

ratio, operating expenses to sales ratio, operating performance ratio and many others. For more details on operating ratios, please see Business Dictionary. *Financial Ratio*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/financial-ratios.html>.

²¹⁶ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit.*

²¹⁷ Ibid

Table 4.5: Bad debt figures and percentages²¹⁸

Year (Dec)	2012	%	2013	%	2014	%
Amount of Bad Debt	\$105,065	2%	\$118,777	2%	\$164,002	3%

National Cost of Quality (NCOQ) is a ratio that measures the manpower costs over revenue.²¹⁹ The figures were increasing gradually from 0.43 to 0.47 (or 0.04%) over three years. This implies the manpower costs were increasing at a higher rate than the revenue. Again, measures to improve manpower productivity are being carried out vigilantly to ensure successful implementation. The relevant figures are shown below:

Table 4.6: NCOQ ratio for manpower costs over revenue²²⁰

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
Manpower costs (A)	2,270,359	2,485,558	2,828,367
Revenue Received (B)	5,277,832	5,710,411	6,048,701
NCOQ (A/B)	0.43	0.44	0.47

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the financial and market performance are as follow:

The organisation is not combining the full scope of information that it could already measure (national/industry averages are already available), in context with its financial and market performances. This could provide a deeper, holistic insight or overview of the components in its ecosystem. Examples of this would be its website performance in terms of traffic and volume and all education data available on data.gov.sg. The organisation could also consider incorporating competitors and industry standards in its overall data set to provide more value in its own assessments and learnings.²²¹

²¹⁸ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit.*

²¹⁹ Productivity is crucial for private enterprises in particular to remain resilient and competitive. This means, all cost saving measures should be systematically and effectively in place but not at the expense of efficiency and quality. For more details on NCOQ, please see, PSB Learning. Cost of Quality (COQ) – Reducing Costs the Smart Way by PSB. Retrieved from [https://e2i.com.sg/wp.../CostofQuality\(COQ\) ReducingCoststheSmartWaybyPSB.docx](https://e2i.com.sg/wp.../CostofQuality(COQ) ReducingCoststheSmartWaybyPSB.docx).

²²⁰ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit.*

²²¹ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

As follow up to the AFI, more comprehensive and in-depth researches, data collections and analyses need to be done on the competitors and industry standards vis-à-vis the areas of interests and concerns. The best strategies, systems and mechanisms for these needs to be identified. Thereafter, the best practices and suitable strategies need to be contextualized and appropriated specifically for Andalus. Concurrently and equally important is to deep dive into the existing financial policies, procedure, budgetary controls, expenses and others to ensure optimum revenue, mitigate costs, increase productivity and improve profitability.

4.4 Customers (Parents, Participants, Students)

4.4.1 Customer Requirements

The types of programs Andalus offers covers a wide range of customers' age and preferences, thus catering to an almost complete spectrum of the market segments. The whole educational program offers structured continuation and progression from pre-school to diploma levels for a total of 17 years. The data and statistics of the students for various age groups and programs attended are monitored and analysed carefully on weekly, monthly and annual basis. The demography for the customers' age and gender profiles are obtained from the Statistics Department and analysed carefully for strategic and operational imperatives for short and long terms basis. During the SRP sessions, targets are set with regards to the types of clients to be given emphasis and priorities in terms of resources allocations and requirements. Feedbacks during the annual surveys, focus group discussions and interactions with the employees at the centres, the demand and supply aspect for the market needs are carefully evaluated, calibrated and follow up actions deemed necessary taken. A serious but perennial concern is the attrition rate of students across all levels which could be the result of multitude of factors and reasons, involving both internal and external influences. Since

one of key values of the organisation is customer focus, the philosophy, strategies and operations place customers' needs and expectations high on the agenda leading to strategic imperatives and operational priorities. Customer expectations in Andalus are regularly monitored and appraised based on a number of fronts such as the number of students' registrations, students' statistics, attrition rate, annual surveys and focus groups discussions. Publicity to attract customers are executed throughout the year optimising various platforms such as the Malay national newspaper Berita Harian (BH) owned by the Singapore Press Holding (SPH) and the national radio Warna 94.2 FM owned by Mediacorp.²²² Please see Appendix E 1-2 for examples of the advertisement and advertorial in the local newspaper (BH). In addition, the social media conduits such as the Facebook and Instagram as well as traditional means by distributing brochures and putting up banners were also actively carried out. This multi-prong publicity and marketing initiatives are meant to reach out to various segments of the targeted customers. During the SRP, AP and WP meetings, the market demands and customer's expectations are among the driving force for the various prerogatives and initiatives made.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the customer requirements are as follow:

The organisation has not optimised its efforts in understanding customers. It has shown segmentation by age and educational-needs but lacks depth in demographic, psychographic, insight-based profiles and consumption data. Its varied listening channels are not well-leveraged as they are primarily used for 'managing dissatisfaction, issues and problems, rather than collecting compliments and generating new ideas to delight customers. It could consider a segment study into identifying psychographic profiling for its customers, to better map customer expectations and loyalty into its overall plans. This could help the

²²² The local traditional mass media are monopolized largely by Singapore Press Holdings Ltd (SPH) and Mediacorp. Also, they are both highly monitored and regulated by the relevant government agencies. SPH was incorporated in 1984 and has news in both print and digital versions for the major local language that includes English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil. For more details, please see Singapore Press Holding. Retrieved from <http://www.sph.com.sg/about-sph/sph-corporate-profile/>. Mediacorp started as broadcast radio in 1936 and later into television in 1963. It provides largely news and entertainment services. For more details please see Mediacorp. Retrieved from <http://www.mediacorp.sg/en/about>.

organisation understand its customer profiles in depth and allow it to map future products and services with its 'Pre', "During" and "Post" stages of its different student pathway.²²³

The AFI indicated that in order to satisfy and meet the customers' requirements, they should first be very well profiled and properly understood. In order to achieve that, suitable actions should be taken to increase the breadth and depth of customer information. These in turn require better data gathering, analysis and profiling. Thus, a more complex as well as sophisticated and accurate competencies involving specially trained personnel and suitable instruments, IT hardware and software of data gathering, data analysis and data understanding. These will allow accurate profiling and faster responses to the customers' specific requirements and expectations. These would enable Andalus, as suggested in the AFI, to understand profoundly the demographic, psychographic, insight-based profiles and consumption data. By doing so, the products and services rendered that Andalus offer would be scientifically mapped and thereafter customised or contextualised to meet the exact needs and expectations of the targeted audience. The listening posts before, during and after should incorporate better capabilities and be sensitive to the overall map of the customer needs and expectations. Thus, compliments, complains, ideas, suggestions and all sorts of feedback are acquired, analysed and follow up actions taken to are holistic and methodological to eventually improve and enhance the products, services and customer expectations.

4.4.2 Customer Experience

The annual surveys and focus groups sessions are held by Andalus once every two years. These important initiatives enable feedbacks, suggestions and criticisms from parents of the students and adult learners to be available directly to the Management and BOD in significant quality and quantity. From analysis of these feedbacks, the products, processes and services are constantly reviewed, improved or if necessary, revamped.

²²³ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

The Staff Suggestion Scheme (SSS) is carried out throughout the year and the scheme enables ideas, concepts, strategies from all employees to be read, understood, analysed by the management and BOD. The ideas deemed suitable are selected, implemented and monitored until completion. The Mystery Caller initiative was activated on a regular and organised manner to monitor and ensure compliance in service standards. The directors and management conduct announced and unannounced visits to the centres and these provide windows of opportunities to meet and engage parents and staff in an informal and casual manners. All feedbacks from customers via annual surveys, focus groups are collated, analysed and actions taken where deemed important and necessary. Reports on actions taken are made and progress reports are reviewed in a planned and organised manner. If the issues are related to policy or strategic concerns, they will be addressed directly and expediently by the BOD. If a particular feedback is serious and the issue concerned was widespread or rampant, a taskforce would be formed to attend to the problem until fully resolved. The Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA), is given due attention to protect and ensure privacy.²²⁴ Feedback by customers on all sorts of concerns may be given quickly and immediately by having direct meetings with the officers concern, emails or even via Facebook and Instagram engagements. An email account was set-up for customers to give feedbacks or air grievances directly. The Pertemuan Waris Pelajar (PWP) or parents meet teacher sessions are normally held once a year and they provides opportunities for face-to-face meetings and exchange information, ideas and concerns. Parents also may meet the administrators or teachers at any time but based on scheduled appointments.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the customer experience are as follow:

²²⁴ The PDPA focus on protecting the confidentiality of personal data or particulars. This protection law covers various rules on the acquisition, usage, disclosure and all matters regarding protection of personal data involving individuals, government agencies and corporations. For more details on PDPA, please see Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC). (2016, February 29). Retrieved from <https://www.pdpc.gov.sg/legislation-and-guidelines/overview>.

The organisation could consider an overall exercise of mapping the information collected against a defined student pathway of "pre", "during" and "post" stages of engagement. This could help it better understand how it solicited feedback (eg: new student survey, module survey), unsolicited feedback (eg: social media, emails, complaints) and learning strategies (eg: industry advisory groups, MOE directives, competitive surveys), are able to assist it in enhancing staff-customer and user system-customer interactions.²²⁵

As a follow up to the AFI report above, information gathered via various feedback channels either solicited or otherwise will be analysed, categorised, sorted and mapped to provide better scope, definition, classification and follow up pathways to be taken. These mapping of data, information and knowledge derived will be used to meet different customer needs and expectations. For example, the knowledge derived will be used to identify new learning ways, propose new programs, modify existing programs and others improvements. It will lead to enhanced interactions with customers via human engagements or systems approaches. These will eventually make customer's experience fulfilling, fascinating and memorable.

4.4.3 Customer Satisfaction

There is a Customer Service Blueprint (CSB) as a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for customer service to ensure service standards. The annual surveys and focus group sessions as well as the follow up actions are held by Andalus to show concern and openness to feedbacks. Teacher meet parent sessions were conducted where feedbacks were readily obtained and then duly analysed for follow up actions. The prize giving ceremony are held on yearly basis where the top performing students are recognized and awarded prizes with their parent's attendance. Updates are given via briefings for parents of new students, specific guidelines and feedback given in 'Panduan Waris dan Pelajar (PWP)' book or Parent Student Guidebook and advertorials in BH. Feedback forms are given to participants after every module for post-secondary programmes and

²²⁵ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

outdoor activities to identify concerns and for improvements. Constantly monitoring and benchmarking with the latest industry standards and initiatives, particularly in the similar industry. BOD and Management staff attending seminars, courses on matters pertaining. Follow up actions were taken conscientiously based on multitude of feedbacks given in the annual surveys, focus groups and teachers meet parents' sessions. Pilot-runs of new initiatives are made with a good sample size of customers to ensure efficacy and suitability before involving the larger majority. Feedbacks on critical areas that affects particularly the business and performance are raised during the SRP sessions and thereafter incorporated into the AP and WP sessions. These sessions are carried out two or three times per year. The concerns will be included in the KRAs for in the employees' PMS and these are reviewed twice a year.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the customer satisfaction are as follow:

The organisation could consider comparing its customer, product and service levels with alternative offerings in different markets. This way, it could start to benchmark and predict customers' future needs and behaviours which may be used to guide the development of future plans as well as to enhance current levels or standards.²²⁶

The AFI above has forwarded an interesting suggestion to compare and benchmarking Andalus products and services with service providers from different markets. This approach may offer fresh and fascinating ideas and options that have never been mooted or considered. These may eventually lead to breakthrough innovations as well as anticipate or offer new experiences to meet or even enhance customer expectations and preferences, leaving them fully satisfied. As the same time, it is always good and important to be conscious and concern that current initiatives on related matters may still be improved or enhanced.

²²⁶ BE-SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

4.4.4 Customer Results

As mentioned above, annual surveys are done every two years by Andalus, involving all the parents to measure customers' satisfaction.²²⁷ The relationship between the services provided and customers' satisfaction are closely monitored and established. The unsatisfactory feedbacks were highlighted and escalated to senior management for follow up corrective actions. Based on three cycles of the annual surveys held in 2009, 2011 and 2013 and a very large sample sizes of 4,346, 5,791 and 4,449 respectively, the positive feedbacks on two categories combined, namely 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' were more than 97%. The details of the surveys are as follows:

Table 4.7: Result figures for the customer satisfaction surveys²²⁸

Year (Dec)	2009	%	Total	2011	%	Total	2013	%	Total
Very Satisfied	701	16.1	97.9	1,122	19.4	98.5	1,089	24.5	98.4
Satisfied	3,555	81.8		4,580	79.1		3,289	73.9	
Not Satisfied	90	2.1	2.1	89	1.5	1.5	71	1.6	1.6
Highly Unsatisfied	0	0		0	0		0	0	
Total Respondents	4,346	100		5,791	100		4,449	100	

²²⁷ Currently, there are numerous and interesting ways of formulating, implementing and optimizing the outcome of customer surveys. For some discussions on the subject matter, please see, Micah Solomon. (2014, March 18). Forbes. 6 mistakes to avoid when designing your customer service/customer experience surveys. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2014/03/18/how-to-design-a-customer-service-survey-that-actually-captures-the-customer-experience/#35b8493c1ff6>; Also see, Gregory Ciotti. (2016, April 24). 10 essential tactics for creating valuable customer surveys. Retrieved from

<https://www.helpscout.net/blog/customer-survey/>.

²²⁸ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit*

For the sample letter and survey form of the 2009 Annual Customer Satisfaction and the corresponding report for that year, please see Annex F (1- 2). Focus Group Sessions (FGS) are done every alternate year.²²⁹ Customers who have expressed concerns in writing in the annual survey forms over the services rendered were identified and invited for the FGS. The written and verbal complains have however stabilised and tapered downwards for the 2011 and 2013. The number of attendees and the feedbacks received were monitored closely and follow up actions taken on areas of concern. The figures are as follows:

Table 4.8: Participations figures for the focus group sessions²³⁰

Year (Dec)	2009	2011	2013
No. of participants	70	42	40

Symposiums for post-secondary levels programs are held by Andalus every year. The number of participations for the symposiums are good indications of the positive response to such events. The figures are as follows:-

Table 4.9: Participation figures in the symposiums for post-secondary levels programs²³¹

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
No. of participants	512	650	875

²²⁹ Focus group discussion maximize group dynamics and interactions among the participants involved in the discussions to gather feedback, perspectives, grievances, compliments, suggestions and all sorts of data relevant to the issues raised. It offers very different discursive environment and experiences compared to individual interactions. For more references on focus groups, please see, Geoff Browell (2014, May 14). How to run a successful focus group. Language of Access Project. Retrieved from <http://languageofaccess.org/2014/05/14/how-to-run-a-successful-focus-group/>; Also see, Community Tool Box. Retrieved from <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/conduct-focus-groups/main>.

²³⁰ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit*

²³¹ *Ibid*

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the customer results are as follow:

Results for Customer are reported in aggregate and not segmented (eg by age, by demographic, by psychographic, by needs-states etc). The lack of segmented data makes it difficult for the organisation to truly understand its customer performance and to address its strategic priorities. One example of this application could possibly be in the area of student attrition which the organisation acknowledges as high (ranging between 14-15.6%). While the set reasons have been addressed, having detailed segmented data could aid in establishing root indicators and/or identifying additional groups of customers for acquisition. The organisation could also implement the practice of consistent and systematic KPI-setting across all the indicators measured.²³²

The key word that had been repeated across several areas of the AFI including this area was proper segmentation of the data. In this instant, the customer results should be analysed by segmentation into specific domains such as age, demographic, psychographic, needs-states and others. This would lead to better and accurate analysis of the data and the types of follow up actions necessary to rectify problems or to increase performances. In particular, the detailed and proper analysis of the data regarding attrition would lead to better understanding of the causal problems and implying the best solutions. Since the attrition rate is an organizational concern and a major issue, a task force involving officers from the HQ, centres as well as key officers from the affiliate companies was formed to deal with the issue in a comprehensive and robust manner.

4.4.5 Service and Product Performance

The students' population in Andalus had been increasing gradually and consistently from 2012, 2013 and 2014 (3 years). The higher rate of increase per any particular year may be attributed mostly to more students being accepted with the opening of new centres. Within the three years period, the average increase in student is

²³² Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

5.6%. The figures were as follows:

Table 4.10: Number of students and percentage increase²³³

Year (Dec)	2011	2012	2013	2014
No. of students	9,005	9,739	9,969	10,598
Increase compared to previous year	853	734	230	629
Year on Year % student increase	-	8.2%	2.4%	6.3%

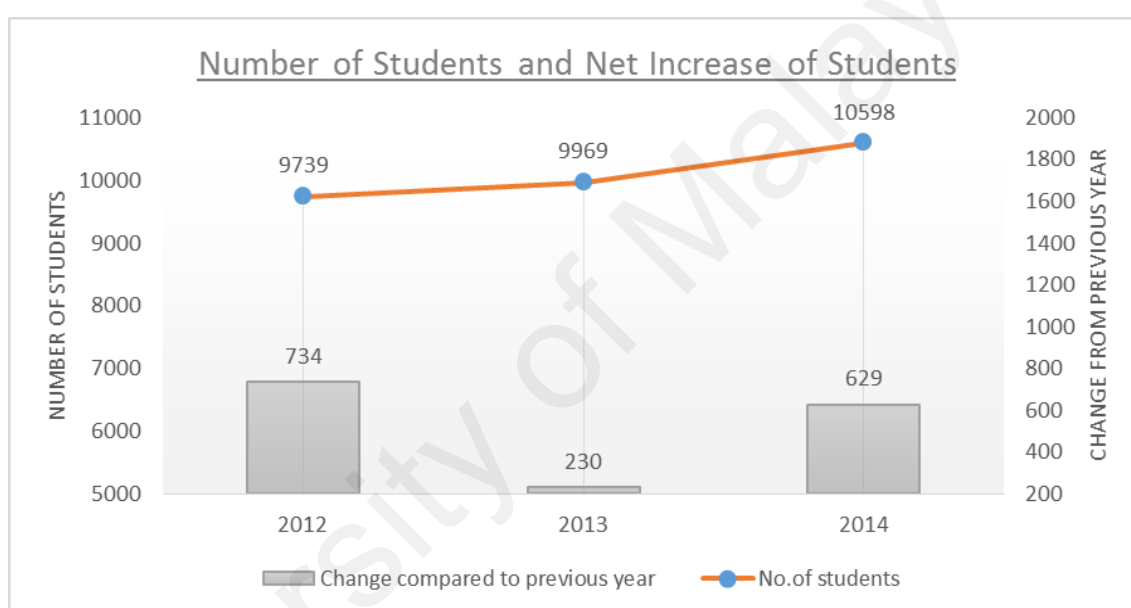


Fig 4.5: Graph of the number of students and the net increase²³⁴

Some programs had significantly higher student population like the KBK (1-6) and KBM (1-4). However, during the period of the three years, the intake for the post-secondary programs (KBD, PPI and DPI) had increased significantly compared to the lower levels. The shift in the above pattern had been identified and suitable course of actions would be introduced in a timely and appropriate manner. The figures were as follows:

²³³ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit*

²³⁴ Ibid

Table 4.11: Figures for the breakdown of student population according to the major programs (not including Iqra, Quran classes)²³⁵

Year (Figures in Dec)	2012	%	2013	%	2014	%
Pre-School (KBN, KBPS 1-2)	741	8.9	727	8.4	749	7.0
Primary (KBK 1-6)	4,624	55.4	4,542	52.6	4,583	42.6
Secondary (KBM 1-4)	1,759	21.1	1,873	21.7	2,010	18.7
Teens (KBR)	181	2.2	226	2.6	233	4.0
Adult (KBD)	395	4.7	390	4.5	558	9.9
Pre-Diploma (PPI)	139	1.7	267	3.1	235	4.3
Diploma (DPI)	506	6.1	611	7.1	747	13.4
Total Intake	8,345	100	8636	100	9,115	100

Comparing 2013 to 2014, the number of new students registering through the Andalus website had jumped significantly from 25.0% to 51.3% of the total number of registrations. This was consistent with the general trend for online activities. More attention had been given in conjunction with this trend. The figures were as follows:

Table 4.12: Figures for registrations of new students via Andalus website²³⁶

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
No. of Online Registration	NA	596	1,274
Total Registration	NA	2,268	2,483
% Online Registration	NA	25.0	51.3

²³⁵ Ibid

²³⁶ Ibid

The students' performance at the joint Primary 6 and Secondary 4 were generally good indicators of the educational program in particular the assessment and evaluation. The following were the details:

Table 4.13: Summary of the results for the Primary 6 Common Examinations²³⁷

Subject	2012			2013			2014		
	No of passes	No of students	%	No of passes	No of students	%	No of passes	No of students	%
Fiqh (Jurisprudence)	435	583	74.6	513	624	82.2	631	624	79.2
Tauhid (Creed)	435	583	74.6	513	624	82.2	631	624	79.2
Sirah (History)	489	585	83.6	574	631	90.9	749	631	91.9
Arabic (Oral)	473	575	74.6	527	645	81.7	656	645	80.2
Arabic (Written)	271	584	46.4	409	625	65.4	385	625	47.7
Prayers (Practical)	556	573	95.2	634	643	98.6	794	643	97.3

Table 4.14: Summary of the results of the Secondary 4 Common Examinations²³⁸

Subject	2012			2013			2014		
	No of passes	No of students	%	No of passes	No of students	%	No of passes	No of students	%
Fiqh (Jurisprudence)	221	271	81.5	243	276	88.0	370	414	89.4
Aqidah (Creed)	230	278	82.7	211	273	77.3	338	425	79.5
Sejarah (History)	176	278	63.3	198	277	71.5	291	424	68.6
Arabic (Oral)	210	274	76.6	215	265	81.1	267	305	87.5
Arabic (Written)	184	261	70.5	182	266	68.4	229	290	78.9

The students' attrition rate was a serious and a major area of concern since the figures were considered high and thus problematic. There were several main factors contributing to the attrition rate and these were being addressed by both the directors and management. Common factors that may have resulted in attrition rate include hectic

²³⁷ Ibid

²³⁸ Ibid

schedules in the conventional school, unable to pay fees for an extended period of time, moving house which was a distant from the existing centre, preference for other service providers and others factors. The figures were as follows:

Table 4.15: Figures for the percentage of students' attrition rate²³⁹

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
% Attrition Rate	15.6	15.4	14.0

The figures above had included the number of students who had completed KBM 4 and Diploma programs. Thus, they may be considered as having completed their studies and should not be under attrition rate. This problem would be addressed in future data gathering and analysis.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the operational results are as follow:

Operational results have gaps as some of its key indicators such as number of revised and new curriculum, vendor performance and results from WDA checks etc, were not represented. The organisation's absence of comparative and benchmark data on operations makes it difficult to show how it evaluates its relative performance and sets stretch improvement targets to better demonstrate its role as a leader in the provision of a suite of part-time, life-long enrichment programs for the niche local Malay-Muslim market.²⁴⁰

Based on the AFI above, the gaps in the operational results provided should be identified and listed. The root causes of these gaps should be then carefully identified, meticulously analysed and the possible options and solutions prescribed. The benchmarking of the results with suitable agencies or parameters would be of paramount importance to constantly measure, compare and mitigate areas of strengths

²³⁹ Ibid

²⁴⁰ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

and weaknesses. After which suitable and realistic targets are set to optimise the possibilities of achieving better results within the parameters identified.

4.4.6 Organisational Challenges

There are a number of other service providers for Islamic education other than Andalus and generally they offer the same types of programs for the same age groups. Only the mosques have more locations, cover more areas and have more students attending part-time madrasahs compared to Andalus. However, mosques have to cater to a gamut of activities like regular daily and weekly Friday prayers needs, welfare needs and social events as well as many sorts of activities. Thus, the mosques leadership and administrators may not be able to focus and specialize on educational programs only. Also, the number of places available in the mosques for education purposes may be limited due to competing needs for the various activities.²⁴¹ Periodic or seasonal leadership and management changes at MUIS and mosque managements, budgetary and manpower constraints and limitations may also pose significant and perennial challenges to the mosques. MUIS has invested significant attention to aLIVE program in the mosques and major revamps have been implemented in phases over several years. These are interesting initiatives indeed but the outcomes ought to be monitored closely and the results analysed objectively. Perdaus, Pergas, Pertapis, Jamiyah, Muhammadiyah and Darul Arqam (Muslim Converts Association) are the six major non-profit, self-help bodies that offers Islamic educational programs. There are several other smaller organisations that cater to a smaller pool of students. Several of these organisations have been around for decades or even earlier than MUIS and are led largely by volunteers and supported by limited numbers of full time employees. They may be hindered largely by leadership changes, organisational dynamics, finances and

²⁴¹ To evaluate the range and types of the activities managed by the mosques, please see the information available in three selected mosques at three different parts of the island namely, al-Istighfar Mosque (eastern). Retrieved from http://www.alistighfar.org/subindex.asp?id=A023_10; Al-Iman Mosque (western). Retrieved from <http://www.alimanmosque.org.sg/>; Assyafaah Mosque (northern). Retrieved from <http://assyafaahmosque.sg/>.

continuity of initiatives. The Islamic educational activities in the mosques and organisations have been discussed at some length in Chapter 3. The table below shows the list of part-time Islamic education providers:

Table 4.16: The list of part-time Islamic education service providers²⁴²

Education Centres	Preschool	Primary	Secondary	Post-Secondary	Certificate Courses	Diploma	Degree	Post-graduate	Ad-hoc or Specialised Training
Andalus and Affiliate Companies (Cordova and Al-Zuhri)									
Andalus (17 locations) http://www.andalus.sg/webandalus/index.php	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Cordova (8 locations) http://www.cordova.com.sg/webcordova/index.php	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Al-Zuhri (2 locations) http://www.zuhri.com.sg/					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mosques Madrasah									
(36 locations) http://www.muis.gov.sg/mosque/mosque-directory.html	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
Muslim Organisations									
Darul Arqam (1 location) http://www.darul-arqam.org.sg/		✓	✓			✓			✓
Jamiyah (4 locations) http://www.jamiyah.org.sg/main.asp	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Pergas (2 locations) http://en.ipip.sg/				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Muhammadiyah (2 locations) http://www.muhammadiyah.org.sg/	✓	✓	✓				✓		

²⁴² Ibid

Education Centres	Preschool	Primary	Secondary	Post-Secondary	Certificate Courses	Diploma	Degree	Post-graduate	Ad-hoc or Specialised Training
Muslim Organisations									
Pertapis (4 locations) http://pertapis.org.sg/		✓	✓						
Perdaus (3 locations) http://perdaus.org.sg/	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
Private Service Providers (Educational)									
Al-Nasry (4 locations) http://www.al-nasry.com/	✓								
Aspire Institute (4 locations) http://aspireinstitute.com/	✓		✓	✓					✓
At-Tartil (1 location) http://attartil.com/									✓
Darul Huffaz Learning Centre (1 location) http://darulhuffaz.sg/		✓	✓	✓					✓
Simply Islam (1 location) http://www.simplyislam.sg/	✓	✓							✓
Safinah Institute (1 location) http://safinah.sg/					✓				
Zulfa Kindergarten (5 locations) www.zulfa.edu.sg	✓	✓							
Cavenur Kindergarten (1 location) www.cavenur.edu.sg	✓								

Andalus remains in the forefront as a private education provider due to the greater number of centres, more places offered and the recognition for quality service. There must be however, regular monitoring, checks and balances to ensure good standards are being maintained always and benchmarked against well established and

recognised educational institution. Competition with the rest of the service providers are always within the radar of concerns of the management teams and BOD to ensure Andalus is always in the pole position in terms of quality and reliable service.²⁴³ Two examples of private operators for comparison are Zulfa Kindergarten (www.zulfa.edu.sg) and Cavenur Kindergarten (www.cavenur.edu.sg). Both operators cater to the same Malay-Muslim segment as Andalus especially at pre-school levels. Zulfa Kindergarten, been in operations for about fifteen years and has five outlets. It focuses largely on niche areas such as pre-school (full time) while their enrichment programs (part time) are largely supplementary activities. The owners are also involved in several other non-educational related businesses to augment income. Zulfa, a largely husband and wife initiative, is able to attract parents and students based on its location and attracting the niche Malay-Muslim market staying nearby. Parents may also be attracted to the customised or 'boutique' style curriculum and pedagogy. However, Zulfa may lack the infrastructure and organisation to continually develop the curriculum, resource materials, attract and develop talents and all these may hinder expansion. Cavenur Kindergarten has been in operations for about seven years has only one location. It also focusses on kindergarten and does not offer enrichment programs yet. It has high demand but because of its very limited resources in terms of space and manpower, can only accommodate a very limited number of students. It was basically driven by a key person and hinges on impressive personality and individual tenacity and drive. It provides quality and credible education but lacks the organisational sophistication to expand its operations. Although, being the biggest player as a private operator in the industry, Andalus philosophy is not for monopoly. It develops

²⁴³ Benchmarking is a useful approach to compare and measure a series of relevant and related evidences such as best practices, competitiveness, customer acceptance and others. After which a review of a series of activities like strategic planning, product developments, service standards and others deemed necessary are done in order to improve gradually or significantly the affected areas, depending on the gap and opportunities. For detail on the various aspects of benchmarking, please see, Study.Com. What is benchmarking? - Definition, types, process and examples. Retrieved from <http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-benchmarking-definition-types-process-examples.html>

collaborative aspirations with all service provider towards providing best services thus encouraging efforts to develop as many virtuous individuals. Still ‘competition’ and ‘competitors’ are constantly assessed during strategic review meetings held twice a year.

4.5. Strategy

4.5.1 Strategy Development

The Strategic Review and Planning (SRP) sessions in Andalus are held twice a year involving the BOD and management and these sessions normally identify current and future challenges and risks.²⁴⁴ Subsequently, the Work Plan (WP) and Action Plan (AP) sessions ensures all challenges and risks are mitigated and addressed in a specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound (SMART) manner. The use of several instruments for SRP such as Strength-Weakness-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis, Appreciative Inquiry (AI), Organisational North-East-West-South (NEWS) navigation and other instruments deemed suitable, allow systemic evaluation and assessment of challenges and risk from various fronts and perspectives. Engaging consultants on needs basis were done to carry out independent assessments of the organisation and make the desired recommendations. Latest demographic data of Malay-Muslim population in Singapore is regularly analysed to understand the changes in the market and demands of potential and existing customers. The SRP sessions are carried out consistently twice a year for the last three years at least (2012, 2013 & 2014) and the planning covers three, five and 10 years’ time frame. The vision, mission and values statements are subjected to review during every SRP sessions. The AP and WP

²⁴⁴ Strategic planning exercise requires very broad perspectives on designated areas of concerns, deep understanding on matters pertaining, good body of knowledge, far sightedness as well as sharp and practical acumens. From the initial exercises thereafter clear, specific and systematic approaches are identified using the relevant tools for short, and mostly long term imperatives. For example on the matters relating to strategic planning, please see, Chin Kian Keong & Grace Ong. (2015, November). Smart Mobility 2030 – Intelligent Transport System (ITS) Strategy for Singapore. *Journeys I*. Land Transport Authority (LTA) Singapore. Retrieved from https://www.lta.gov.sg/ltaacademy/pdf/J15Nov_p04Chin_SmartMobility2030.pdf; businessdictionary.com. Strategic planning. Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/strategic-planning.html>.

sessions are held twice a year to address operational and short term issues for one year period. Training sessions on related areas are carried on needs basis by subject matter experts (SMEs). The outcomes of the AP and WP are made known to other employees by cascading effect via meetings and emails. Parents and students are updated on matters pertaining via letters, advertorials in SPH-BH and social media (Facebook and Instagram).

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the strategy development are as follow:

The organisation could consider the use of information obtained from Muslim education scenarios, approaches and certification bodies from other markets such as Malaysia, the Middle-East and Europe, to aid in its strategy development process. This could help it extend the value of its curriculum beyond local shores and aid its franchise and training opportunities overseas.²⁴⁵

The idea of licensing and franchising mooted in the AFI is to encourage Andalus expand its operations and services beyond Singapore. These require researches and explorations of the potential markets in the region and parts of the world deemed suitable. While overseas expansion seems attractive and should be considered positively, the researcher believes the local demand is still strong and there are still many potential customers to attract. Also, new technologies will allow and enable the teaching and learning initiatives to be done across boundaries and this mode may prove to be more productive and popular.

4.5.2 Strategy Implementation

Planning and review sessions are held conscientiously by Andalus during the SRP, AP and WP sessions in a structured, integrated, organised manner and all discussions are recorded and documented. The Key Result Areas (KRAs) in the Performance Management System (PMS) for every employee are linked to the AP and

²⁴⁵ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

WP. The PMS sessions involving the supervisors and respective subordinates are held three times year.²⁴⁶ Regular meetings involving the BOD and management are held to ensure the operational performances are closely linked with the strategic intents. The Inspectorate Department will audit the effective implementations of the strategies and submit relevant reports. The Finance Division allocates the budget required by the various divisions and centre management. The HRD department ensures enough and quality manpower requirements are met. Relevant trainings are held on needs basis. Sufficient time are allocated to plan and review these initiatives in a structured and disciplined manner. Due consultations between BOD and management are made during meetings and review sessions. Pilot runs were carried out to evaluate suitability and acceptance by employees and clients of new initiatives. All employees are informed of the latest initiatives by cascading effect largely via meetings and emails.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommendations for the strategy implementation are as follow:

It could also consider a review of its planning tools in terms of effectiveness for its current stage of organisational growth. For example, using a 'Balanced Scorecard' methodology might help it better map different objectives to evaluating achievements in relation to targets. This could aid, enhance and/or streamline both its 'development planning' as well as 'deployment'.²⁴⁷

The AFI recommended the introduction and use of the 'Balanced Scorecard' methodology in addition to the various tools already employed. This methodology supposedly links the planning, objectives and results more accurately based on a more

²⁴⁶ Performance management is one of the key components of high performing organisation. It focusses on the performance and competencies necessary for the individuals required to achieve the key result areas and the targets set. It is closely related to the roles, designation and the tasks assigned to be achieved by the individuals, departments and organisation which are interlinked. Individuals who performed well are identified and promoted. While those who failed to performed need to be trained, monitored or mentored to improve themselves to achieve the required benchmarks. For more details on performance management, please see, MSG Management Study Guide. Performance management - Meaning, system and process. Retrieved from

<http://www.managementstudyguide.com/performance-management.htm>.

²⁴⁷ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

distinct and defined map. Thus the development and deployment phases are better and accurately linked and streamlined. Thus, efforts will be mobilised to study the new methodology and evaluate its suitability and efficacy in Andalus prior to implementation.

4.5.3 The Competitive Position

Andalus has probably the biggest share of students compared to the other private education service providers. This is based on the 10,500 number of students and 17 number of outlets as at end of 2015, not including Cordova and Al-Zuhri. There were however no officially verified data about market share but there is significant room for growth for Islamic education program in Singapore. Based on the figures provided by the MUIS survey, there are approximately 89,000 numbers for the age group of 7 to 16 years old.²⁴⁸ The Andalus current number of 10,500 students represents 11.8% of the total market size. Majority of school going children and young adults form the potential target market for pre-school to post-secondary enrichment programs. To offer sustainable structured courses for preschool, primary, secondary, post-secondary and diploma courses require significant resources like curriculum development, manpower for teaching and non-teaching, finance, administration and all these demands tremendous resources and expertise that are very daunting to existing or new competitors. For example, to administer the common examinations at primary six and secondary four levels, requires an Examination Board comprising of members who are subject matter experts, several dedicated and specialised examination officers and a good number of general administrators, which many competitors do not currently possess. Andalus also stays ahead by having better qualified and well-trained employees, specialised curriculum developers with ACTA (Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment) and DACE (Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education)

²⁴⁸ Population Trends 2015. *op. cit*

qualifications.²⁴⁹ As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Andalus collaborates with affiliate companies (Cordova, Al-Zuhri, Darul Andalus) that focus on education and publishing, thus providing good leveraging, best practises and shared resources.

4.5.4 The Key Success Factors

Andalus offers a comprehensive and complete suite of educational programs from preschool to diploma levels. It also adopts customer focussed and nimbleness in responding to customer needs and expectations. Sufficient number of dedicated officers for specific job functions are provided to enable better specialisation and focus. Economies of scale with 17 centres across Singapore that ensure availability of options to a wider targeted audience. Well qualified, experienced employees as well as DPPI, ACTA and DACE trained curriculum developers ensure the quality of Andalus courses are maintained at comparatively high standards. As a thinking and learning organisation, Andalus has very high focus on training, innovation and quality service. Productivity mind set among its employees ensure optimising all kinds of resources are given high priority, always.

4.5.5 The Key Challenges in the Competitive Environment and Growth Opportunities

Competition may get keener with existing and new operators offering greater challenge with better resources and competencies. Thus, Andalus has to keep on improving and increasing competencies among employees across key domains, functions and keep on raising the bar for standards and quality provided. Saturation in some Andalus centres due to lack of space available, will cause problems to attract and allow new students to register. Thus, Andalus should keep opening new centres in

²⁴⁹ The WSQ ACTA and DACE are programs under Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications System (WSQ) Training and Adult Education framework. Both are relevant for practicing adult educators and DACE is a prerequisite qualification to be Curriculum Developers for WSQ Approved Training Organisations (WSQ ATOs). For more detail, please see Workforce Development Agency (WDA). Retrieved from <http://www.wda.gov.sg/content/wdaweb/L207-AboutWSQ.html>. Hereafter referred to as WDA; also see Institute of Adult Learning. Retrieved from <https://www.ial.edu.sg/index.aspx?id=11>

calibrated manner to avoid untimely saturation and overcrowding. It is also important to manage the financial reserves and cash flow prudently to prevent over exposure and financial concerns. There could be preferences for programs in English and other languages as the medium of instruction. Thus, Andalus although remaining steadfast to Malay as the lingua franca, should consider and cater to special needs as far as language competencies were concerned. Already, Andalus has been providing programs in English for non-Malay speaking students. The targeted market is still huge and ample opportunities for expansion in student population for the next 20 years at least. Thus, Andalus should capitalise on such opportunities in best ways possible.

4.5.6 Strategic Challenges

Capital outlay is a significant concern in Andalus since the initial capital requirements for opening new centres are always significant. Cash flow must always be prudently managed since, continuous cash injections are required to sustain operations for several years before the break-even point is achieved. Rising operating costs is always a pressing issue particularly manpower and rental costs are always rising due to inflation and competing market forces. Talent recruitment and talent development are significant challenges due to limited talent pool and the high costs of training and retention. Opening new centres may be problematic with new HDB rulings that prohibit takeover of premises with effect from October 2016. As such, the open bidding process may limit places to select and the rental costs may escalate and become prohibitive.

4.5.7 Organisational Directions

Existing curriculum has to be continually enhanced including the competency based approach that is new, refreshing and attractive to customers. Andalus should be on constant on lookouts for new technologies in particular IT software and hardware for various aspects of the operations to increase innovation and productivity. It should offer various options for learning to cater to varying customers' segments. There are basically

three options namely, (i) classroom based, (ii) blended learning involving classroom and online and (iii) purely online learning. Venture into new markets especially at regional or international, through licensing and franchise should be taken seriously as mentioned earlier. Collaboration with parents to make effective learning available at home is always possible and should be enhanced.

4.6 Knowledge

4.6.1 Knowledge Management

To ensure information, understanding and knowledge are always dynamically progressive in Andalus, the Strategic Review and Planning (SRP) sessions are conscientiously held twice a year involving the Board of Directors (BOD) and Management. In addition, the Work Plan (WP) and Action Plan (AP) sessions are held three times per year also involving the BOD and Management. The Performance Management System (PMS) sets the business and performance targets and these PMS sessions involving every staff are held three times a year. The PMS includes the Key Result Areas (KRA), Competencies Map and Critical Incident Report (CIR). The Board of Directors set the KRAs in the PMS in collaboration with the supervisors and subordinates. Thus, there are close links between the various initiatives mentioned above with all the personnel involved to ensure accuracy, clarity, certainty in terms of data, information, knowledge, analysis, decisions and follow up actions. This will be reinforced and demonstrated further with the examples below.

Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and Total Company Training Plan are held on annual basis involving the BOD and Management. Input are also obtained from all employees. Training Sessions are carried out in according to TCTP to acquire the relevant and updated knowledge, skills attitudes. Monthly reports are provided on various aspect of the operations. Scheduled meetings are planned carefully well in advance for the whole year, involving the BOD and Management. The Wadah Integrasi

Minda (WIM) – company-wide initiative are held three times per year involving the BOD, Management and all employees. Staff Suggestion Scheme (3S) celebrate ideas from all employees. All suggestions are vetted by the BOD and actions to be taken, monitored on annual basis. Training evaluation feedback forms are given at the end of every program. The Annual surveys are held every two years involving all parents and adult students. The reports are generated and follow up action taken and monitored on annual basis. Focus group sessions are held every two years with parents and adult students. Relevant reports are generated and follow up action taken and monitored on annual basis. Website and social media (Facebook and Instagram) provide communication on a regular and consistent basis. All data and reports follow prescribed format and submitted on a specified time frame. Monthly reports are submitted with the previous reports attached to ensure continuity and cross referencing. All reports are available in both digital (web-based) and print versions. Most reports are available and accessible online via the Andalus Information Management System (AIMS) software that links all aspect pertaining to education, finance and administration. Directors and managers are required to present and verify their respective reports during scheduled meetings throughout the year. External auditors are appointed on annual basis for financial matters. Audit is conducted every two years by WDA on the ATO status of the organisation. Audit would be done by Spring Singapore for the SQC status every five years.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the strategy implementation are as follow:

Given the volume of information collected, the organisation could consider assigning a dedicated headcount for full-time knowledge management. This way, it could optimise a single-point of contact to provide a consistent view of information and correlated indicators that would in the medium and long-term, aid its strategic planning efforts.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ BE-SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

Based on the AFI above, is clear that dedicated and trained personnel with a robust software for big data would be necessary to manage the huge amount of data, information, communication and documents. These information would be analysed effectively, accurately and churned into useful information, critical for strategic planning, policy making and decision matters. The array of data, information and reports should be current, easily accessible and most importantly allow good analysis as well as provide a good comprehensive overview of the critical aspects of the organisation, available at all times.

4.7 People

4.7.1 Human Resource Planning

Headed by three Executive Directors and several management teams, Andalus operates a headquarters and 17 fully equipped educational centers. As at 2014, Andalus has about 106 full-time staffs and an additional pool of about 100 employees working on either a contractual and/or part-time basis.²⁵¹ The employees, according to educational profile of the full time employees for the three years are as follows:

Table 4.17: The number of employees and their qualifications²⁵²

Year	O-Levels	A-Levels	Diploma	Degree	Total
2012	19	11	18	56	104
2013	19	11	18	53	101
2014	23	10	17	56	106

²⁵¹ Andalus is probably the largest private Islamic educational agency in Singapore providing work opportunities for those trained in religious disciplines as well as non-religious disciplines. There had been concerns previously, raised mostly by the politicians and senior officers in MUIS that religiously trained persons may lack enough employment opportunities upon completing their studies, potentially less economically viable and have limited or unattractive job prospects.

²⁵² Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit*

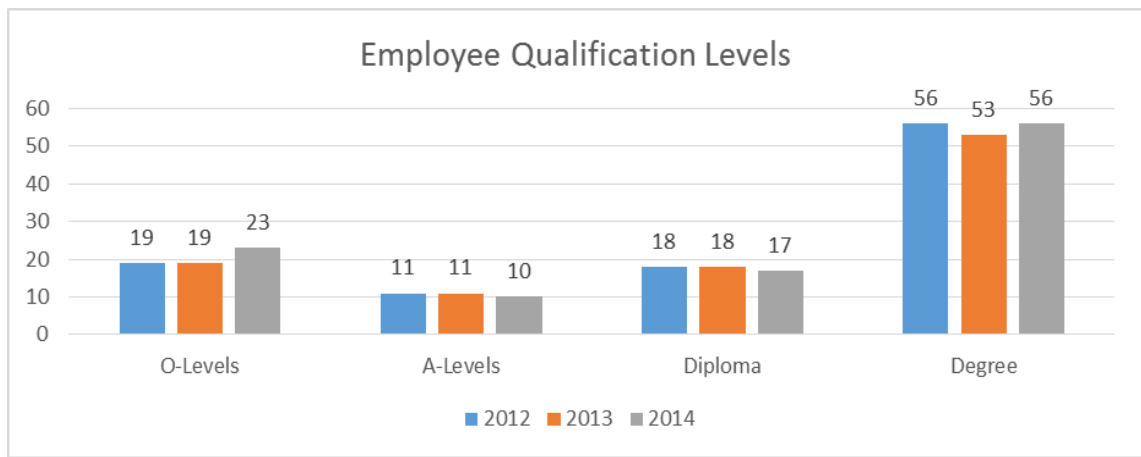


Figure 4.6: Graph showing the number of employees according to their qualifications²⁵³

From the above, it is clearly noticeable that a significant percentage of the manpower in Andalus, or 55% of them are graduates or having postgraduate qualifications. They are mostly teachers, managers and executive officers. The non-graduates are mostly junior officers who are largely customer service officers, doing administration and front line vocations attending to various needs of the parents, students and members of the general public. There are still a small number of non-graduates promoted to be managers or executive officers due to their impressive skills set, competencies and years of good performance. Also, the number and types of employees over the three years period mentioned are quite constant even though the number of students are increasing gradually. This is a deliberate and conscious effort to control the increase in headcounts to mitigate operating expenditures and best manage costs. The teachers are mostly graduates from Islamic universities from Muslim majority countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria. Most of them are Singaporeans and a small minority are Malaysians and Indonesians. Their qualification are mostly in Islamic Studies, *Syariah* (Jurisprudence), *Usuluddin* (Islamic Creed), Arabic Language and some others. Having teachers who are trained from various countries and diverse background do pose some challenges in terms of

²⁵³ Ibid

acclimatization and adjustments to the vision, mission, standards and expectations set by Andalus. However, with proper training, mentoring and coaching by more senior officers, the standardization and acclimatization are achieved gradually and successfully. All new teachers are required to undergo the *Bengkel Asas Perguruan* (Basic Teachers' Training) on part-time basis for one year followed by a more elaborate and comprehensive *Diploma Perguruan Pendidikan Islam* (Diploma in Teaching Islamic Studies), a three year part-time program. In addition to content and pedagogical techniques, they are trained and encouraged to think, analyse and make decisions deemed suitable for the range and context of the country as well as the needs and expectations of the institution, parents, students and the community and society at large. The above teachers training programs are in-service programs, held during office hours and fully funded by Andalus. By end of 2017, there will be a steady supply of graduates from the local degree program in Islamic studies jointly organized between Universitas Ibn Khaldun, Bogor and Al-Zuhri.²⁵⁴

It may be worthwhile to mention here that the costs of operating a private enterprise or a business setup in Singapore are extremely expensive and can be prohibitive in many ways. Notably, the salary structure of the employees must be appropriate to the living standards and pegged to job market expectations within the same industry. The annual increment in salary and bonus must always be in cognizant to the increase costs of living due to inflation. Besides salary, the cost of rental is very high as well as other costs such as utilities, equipment, facilities, repair and maintenance and others. Thus, the revenue stream that is wholly dependent on the students fees must be managed in the most efficient and productive ways. There are at times, different sort of

²⁵⁴ Universitas Ibn Khaldun (Ibn Khaldun University) was founded in 1961. It is a private higher education institution located in the city of Bogor, West Java. Accredited by the Kementerian Riset, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan Tinggi [Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia]. For details of the university please see, Universitas Ibn Khaldun, Bogor. Retrieved from <http://uika-bogor.ac.id/>.

grants available from the government to alleviate the cost costs of doing business, as well as to increase productivity and quality service.

While providing educational services and earning revenue largely from the fee collections, Andalus provides employment for Muslims on full-time and part-time basis in a gradually increasing manner. This contributes to some extent employment opportunities, economic activity and most importantly provide regular income for the employees in Andalus. It is noteworthy to mention at this juncture that many Islamic educational institution here are overly reliant on donations and zakat contributions. Besides relying on student fees, donations and zakat, all the madrasahs depend quite significantly on funding from MUIS. The dependence on funding from outside sources becomes more apparent, when the madrasahs do not have self-generating funds from wakaf like Madrasah Alsagoff. Andalus main source of income is from student fees since as a company and according to Company's Act, it cannot accept any kind of donations, zakat or any sort of funding from MUIS. Such limitations and constraints for financial contributions, proved to be a great challenge to Andalus. This has however, provided strength in terms of commitments to be strongly financially self-reliant, independence and thus allow significant flexibility and nimbleness to manage own finances for optimal results. The strategies and formula adopted by Andalus with regards to managing its finances are deemed quite successful by and large for the last 19 years, at least.

A strong advocate and wanting to be a learning and thinking organization, Andalus invested consistently and considerably significant amount of resources into employees' training and development. The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) is crafted carefully by the Human Resource Department (HRD), according to industry standards to meet organizational requirements for three years. After which, the annual Total Company Training Plan (TCTP) is developed and training roadmap and schedule for

individual employees are drafted and eventually approved by the Management. Thus, every employee is put through carefully planned training programs to enhance their knowledge, skills and attitude (KSA) over the years. There are basically two sets of training programs divided into the Work Skills Qualifications (WSQ) and the non-WSQ programs.²⁵⁵ The WSQ programs are heavily funded and subsidized by the Workforce Development Agency (WDA). In this respect, Andalus as an Approved Training Organisation (ATO), is in a privileged position to optimize the services and funds offered by WDA. As such, Andalus employees, according to their designations and job requirements, participated in major courses under WSQ framework such as, Diploma in Adult Continuing Education (DACE), Advance Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA) and Executive Development and Growth for Excellence (EDGE). In addition, Andalus run in-house WSQ courses conducted by its own qualified trainers. Andalus also runs non-WSQ courses in collaboration with its sister companies namely Cordova, Al-Zuhri and Darul Andalus such as the BAP and DPPI for the teachers, education officers as well research and development officers, mentioned earlier. For the non-teachers, courses like the *Program Integrasi Ilmu* (PII) or Integration of Knowledge Program, Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), the Leadership Development Program (LDP) and few others are held from time to time. As such, the total number of training hours per employee per year on average is about 100 hours or more, which is comparable or better than national average. For sample pictures of the training sessions for the employees at all levels appointments, please see Appendix G.

Since starting operation in 1996, Andalus has expanded quite dynamically to 17 centers and has about 10,500 students by 2015. There are plans to open two new centers per year for subsequent years, subject to the demand and other mitigating

²⁵⁵ The Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) is a national credentialing system. It trains, develops, assesses and recognises individuals for the key competencies that companies look for in potential employees. See WDA *op.cit.*

factors. The increase in students' intake is about 5% annually.²⁵⁶ Andalus has two sister companies that provide Islamic educational services. First, Cordova established in 1999 provides almost similar services to Andalus but segmented and differentiated from Andalus according to specific and designated locations. Currently, Cordova has eight centres with about 3,000 students. Second, Al-Zuhri established in the year 2000 and focuses on postsecondary program at certificate, diploma, degree and post-graduate levels. Al-Zuhri has two centres and about 1,200 students. Thus, the cumulative student population in the three educational institutions is about 14,700 which quite a sizeable number, considering the comparatively small size and demography of the Muslim population in Singapore. In addition, another affiliate company, Darul Andalus focuses on publication and has published textbooks and workbook from pre-school to tertiary levels. These books are used in Andalus, Cordova, Al-Zuhri as well as several educational institutions locally and abroad. The collaborative initiatives provided by Andalus, Cordova, Al-Zuhri and Darul Andalus provided the economies of scale that are rather comprehensive, sophisticated and unleashed far reaching possibilities.

The Human Resource and Development (HRD) department in Andalus conducts the manpower review and planning session on an annual basis with the Board of Directors, division and centre managements.²⁵⁷ HRD department also conducts Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to formulate the Total Company Training Plan (TCTP). This is a company-wide initiative involving all the employees. The Personnel Policies and Procedure (PPP) manual is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. This is in tandem

²⁵⁶ The impressive increase in number of centers and students reflect clearly the needs and aspirations of the parents and the Muslim community. Although the education in the conventional schools is given high importance and preference, religious education remain very high on the agenda and their children were made to study Islam wherever possible. The mosques and Muslim organizations that were established much earlier have in fact unable to meet the huge demands and expectations of the parents and the community.

²⁵⁷ Proper manpower planning enables the human capital management to be fully optimized in terms of quantity, quality, competency, productivity and performance to meet individuals and organizational goals. For more details on these areas, please see Dharamvirsinh Parmar & Prashant Makwana (2012). *Approaches and Techniques in Manpower Planning. International Conference on Management, Humanity and Economics*. Phuket Thailand August 11-12. Retrieved from <http://psrcentre.org/images/extramimages/28%20812003.pdf>.

with the latest policies introduced by the various government agencies. Organisation and employee performance is measured via the Performance Management System (PMS). The Key Result Areas (KRAs) are determined by the Board of Directors and the management.

Employees that clearly exhibit key competencies for high performance are identified via the Performance Management System (PMS), informal observation and evaluations by the respective supervisors. These competencies are observed by immediate supervisors and higher appointment holders based on their commitment, discipline, quality of daily works, quality of projects done, targets achieved and reports submitted as well as the quality of communications during meetings and emails. The potential high performers are given additional duties and higher appointments on probation basis for one to three years, depending on the seniority of the appointments. For example the probation for senior teacher position is one year while executive director position is for two to three years. The job scope, promotion and remuneration package are adjusted accordingly. Suitable training and coaching sessions are conducted to enhance the competencies.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the human resource planning are as follow:

It is not apparent that there is a structured approach in managing its contract staff. The number of contract staff is high, a total of 100 contract staff in addition to the 129 full time staff, and thus, they may have an impact to the overall success of its organisation. The organisation could determine how contract staff may fit in the organisation's achievement of its stated objectives and goals, and the policies and procedures to be put in place in managing them. This could help the organisation adopt a more structured and formalised way, end-to-end in managing contract appraisals as well as providing full-timers with a systematic career pathways. While high potential staffs are selected based on their performance in KRA (Key Results Areas), the organisation could have a more structured approach towards career development policy to attract and retain talent, staff from within the organisation and from the industry.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

In response to the above AFI, there should be a comprehensive review and thus a revamp on the employment strategies involving full time and contract staff. The outcome of the review would lead to better strategies with regards to manpower planning and manpower mobilisation, ensuring better quality manpower and optimal manpower costs management. For the contract staff, there should be the right numbers and appropriate ratio in relation to full-time staff. They must also possess proper qualifications, experiences and right competencies. The details and database of all part-time staff would be established clearly and effectively. These would lead to improved employment contracts with suitable and attractive terms that includes remunerations, orientations, trainings and career development. There would also be a pool of competent and pre-selected list of contract staff ready to be mobilised on needs basis. The career development pathways for the full-time staff needs to be crafted carefully to allow optimal allocation of resources based on competencies and potentials. Also, the talent pool from both external and internal sources should be best managed with good recruitment, employment and career path development policies.

4.7.2. Employee Learning and Development

Training Needs Analysis (TNA) is conducted in Andalus once every two years and the total company training plan (TCTP) crafted every year. Discussions on competencies requirements and expectations between supervisors and subordinates are done during the formal TNA and PMS sessions. Training sessions are carried to explore new possibilities, enhance capabilities as well as to provide the relevant and current competencies requirements. Post training activities like the Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation are done to ensure relevancy and application to workplace requirements.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ Post training effectiveness evaluation are traditionally carried out via Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model or the Four Levels of Evaluation, by Donald Kirkpatrick. The four levels of evaluation are the immediate reactions and their thoughts about the training experience; the resulting learning and increase in knowledge from the training experience; the behavioral change and improvement after applying the skills

Recommendations from suitable consultants vis-a-vis organizational business objectives are solicited on needs basis. Officers from various departments analyse data and information gathered such as training needs, examination results and survey data. The analysis is then presented to the management and Board of Directors for further deliberations and decisions. The results are used in the formulation of new criteria in the KRAs and new policies in the HR manual.

The types of courses are a good mix of WSQ-WDA and non-WDA types covering knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant for the organisation, departments and individuals. For example, training for leadership development are conducted in a directed, regular and organised manner such as Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), Appreciative Inquiry (AI), Toastmaster, Employability Skill System (Managerial level), Executive Development for Growth Excellent (EDGE), Training of Trainers (ToT), Advance Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA) and Diploma in Adult Continuous Education (DACE). The Leadership Development Programme (LDP) is a platform for high performers. Under this programme, the selected employees are exposed to strategic level initiatives and sponsored for senior executive level training programmes. In the LDP, the members work closely with senior management and learn strategic and key leadership skills. Career development planning is provided for employees. A career development plan is shown in the HR manual. Employees with outstanding performance may be given special task like leading a centre or more depending on the individual's capability. Organisation inducts new employees and existing employees are given new job functions. HRM department conducts an Orientation Programme once a year for new staffs. At centre level, staff will be given an induction by the centre's senior management for new job functions.

on the job; and the results or effects on the performance has on the business. For more details, please see Donald L. Kirkpatrick, James D. Kirkpatrick & Wendy K. Kirkpatrick. trainingindustry.com. Retrieved from <https://www.trainingindustry.com/wiki/entries/four-levels-of-evaluation.aspx>.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the employee learning and development are as follow:

While job descriptions have been drawn up, the organisation could consider building competency profiles for each job function in terms of qualification, work experience, and specific skills, knowledge and attributes. This is especially important since the academic and non-academic staff have different competency requirements. The competency profiles would provide the standard for organisation to hire and outsource the right people and better tailor its training plans with its organisational needs. There is currently no induction courses for contract staff. The organisation could consider orientation programmes for them in its HR development plans. This way, it could learn and adopt best practices that other progressive industries have mandated for both full-time and contract employees.²⁶⁰

Based on the AFI above, the job functions and the respective competency profiles need to be further defined, elaborated and accurately framed. For these, there should be clear demarcation between the teaching and non-teaching roles and functions. Based on these clear job functions and the respective competency profiles, the eventual recruitment of the right candidates would be better executed and the right candidates recruited and the proper talent requirements achieved. Also, all new recruits including the contract staff should under a properly planned and executed induction and orientation program as well as training programs.

4.7.3 Employee Engagement and Well-Being

The Strategic Review and Planning (SRP) sessions conducted in Andalus every six months allow the BOD and Management to share insights, findings, set targets as well as ensure alignment of strategic goals. The Leadership Development Programme (LDP), allows and encourage participants at individual and team levels to acquire knowledge, skills and attitude and implement ideas with guidance and support from Board of Directors. The Work Plan (WP) and Action Plan (AP) sessions are held twice

²⁶⁰ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

a year involving the BOD and management and this allows active discussions and deliberations. The outcome of these sessions are shared with the rest of the employee via follow up meetings and emails. The crafting of the key Result Areas (KRAs) leading to strategic objectives are done with due consultations involving the BOD, management and the employees. The *Wadah Integrasi Minda* (WIM) platform allows sharing of ideas, concept and values across all levels of employment taking into perspectives the organisation's vision, mission and values using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Digital Storytelling (DST) methodologies. Projects done involving employees of different positions promotes a harmonious relationship that enhances cohesiveness to meet both long-term and short-term organisational strategic goals. Meetings and discussions are planned and organised in various creative ways such that communications between employees across all levels were made possible. The Staff Suggestion Scheme (SSS) encourages all employee to write their ideas, suggestions and recommendations confidently in structured and organised manners. All ideas are carefully analysed by the respective superiors and BOD and the ideas deemed suitable are shortlisted, implemented and the employees concerned remunerated and celebrated.

The job scope, remunerations, benefits and working hours are by and large attractive within the same industry. Employees' comfort, safety, health and well-being are given due attention. Flexi-work has been introduced to enhance productivity and well-being. The organisation strives to accommodate employees' needs for work-life balance and ensure that its various other policies are also comparable to national standards.²⁶¹ Workplace insurance with third-party coverage like carrying cash, fire

²⁶¹ The flexi-hour arrangements are becoming more common and acceptable by both employers and employees. This has to do with the constantly changing working environments and landscapes. It has also to do with increasing innovative, creative and productive ways to attract and retain talents of different generations, work cultures and expectations as well as work-life balance. These includes flexi-time, permanent part-time work, job-sharing, compressed work week, teleworking and other options. Ultimately, the business imperatives and objectives are achieved and operations are viable and the business fully functional and profitability ensured. For more details, please see Ministry of Manpower (MOM) Singapore. Retrieved from

prevention are ensured. Well-wisher hamper are provided when affected employees are on maternity or hospitalised. Annual health screening checks are conducted for all employees. Program Bina Insan (PBI) or Character Development Program for both male and female employees are organised for healthy lifestyle and enhancement of esprit de core among those involved. Activities like swimming, badminton, trekking, bowling, archery, golf and visits to suitable government agencies like libraries and museums are organised on weekly basis through most part of the year, with the support from the grant provided by Health Promotion Board (HPB). The staff turnover rate is manageable and considered quite healthy compared to national average.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the employee engagement and well-being are as follow:

The Employee Climate Survey is a global best practice widely used by many successful organisations to measure staff satisfaction. The organisation could consider using Employee Climate Survey to solicit employee opinions on a variety of issues such as the company's success in deploying its Mission, and Core Values, and other areas of concerns such as staff benefits, creativity and innovation etc. The feedback process would provide the organisation with an understanding how the employee perceives the organisation along different dimensions; and compare and benchmark its performance against other leading organisations. Additionally, the organisation could consider this internal survey to incorporate the grading of HQ staff from its learning centres to further monitor the effectiveness of its HQ service and support provided.²⁶²

Based on the AFI above, the Employee Climate Survey may be re-introduced to solicit feedbacks, views, suggestions or even criticisms on important aspects of the organisation that of interest and relevant to employees across various job functions. The survey should be well crafted in line with industry standards and the eventual findings benchmarked against prevailing standards too. The outcome of the survey may be

<https://www.mom.gov.sg/~media/mom/documents/employment-practices/flexible-work-arrangements.pdf>

²⁶² Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

incorporated in the PMS to measure and improve employees' competencies and performances.

4.7.4 Employee Performance and Recognition

The Performance Management System (PMS) in Andalus enables high performers to be identified, recognised and rewarded accordingly. The Work Plan (WP) and Action Plan (AP) allow performance and achievements to be tracked at organisational, divisional and departmental levels. All new job opportunities are first advertised internally to allow current employees to apply. Only when the talent needed is not available within the organisation, the job advertised externally. These can be seen from the internal staff promotion records.

Competitive and attractive compensation and benefits are provided for employees for the same industry. These are reviewed every three to five years. Career advancement options are made available for talented and capable individuals. Trainings are provided during working hours and fully funded. Provisions are allocated for transport claims to attend official functions/courses, Program Bina Insan (PBI) held during working hours on weekly basis.²⁶³ Staff performance are measured objectively via the Performance Management System (Key Result Areas and competencies). Recognition are given by the directors and management by announcing the names of good performing employees and congratulating them while conferring performance awards. The Performance Management System (PMS) ensures that the salary increment and bonus are pegged to performance. Long Service Awards are presented to employees who have served minimum of 5 years and every subsequent years. Healthy Staff

²⁶³ Employees are the one of the most valuable asset of the organization, if not the most. As such, they must be looked after, protected and supported in many ways in order to contribute effectively for their own well-being, their peers and their organization. They spend significant number of waking hours over many years at the workplace and as such their health and well-being are closely related to their good spirit, effort and performance. Also, the number of absence due to sick days may be reduced or controlled. Thus, it is very rational and necessary for the organisation to promote and support healthy lifestyle initiatives. For more details on such initiatives, please see, Health Promotion Board (2013, April 22). *Overview of Work Health Promotion*. Retrieved from http://www.hpb.gov.sg/HOPPortal/health-article/HPBSUEXTAPP1_4024627

Awards are presented to employees who have not taken any Medical Certificates (MC) or medical leave in a calendar year. The Staff Suggestion Scheme (3S) Awards are given to individuals who provided good ideas and are rewarded in terms of cash awards. The Swim Awards are given to staff who have passed certain qualifying test like the Swim Saver, Long Distance, Lifesaving and Bronze Medallion.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the employee engagement and well-being are as follows:

The organisation's recognition plans are conducted annually. Staff interviewed mentioned that 'recognition' is verbal. It could consider formal recognition mechanisms in terms of simple printed materials such as certificates and awards. This could also be conducted on a more frequent basis (monthly or quarterly) for simple staff achievements that demonstrate high performance. Longer-term, this could help the organisation ensure that it recognises service excellence across all tasks and continues to motivate its employees towards a continual standard of organisational excellence, as well as reinforce its mantra of enrichment and learning.²⁶⁴

Based on the AFI above, the recognition of positive performances by employees and subordinates should be more regular and in explicit in ways that are tangible, memorable and boost the confidence and morale of the intended recipients. Thus suitable mechanism that allow such initiatives should be crafted for easy implementation as well as effective and credible. By doing so, the employees are constantly conscious and motivated to perform well for their own well-being, their peers and the organization.

4.7.5 Results of Employee Engagement and Well-Being

The number of MCs taken by employees are monitored closely and special attention as well as corrective actions are taken by the supervisors on the few problematic individuals. Corrective actions considered are counselling, flexi-work hours

²⁶⁴ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

or shorter work hours and with their remunerations appropriated accordingly.²⁶⁵ The figures for MCs are quite manageable as follows:

Table 4.18: Figures showing average annual MC's taken per employee.²⁶⁶

Average MC per Employee (Per Annum)	
2012	2.95
2013	3.10
2014	2.70

All full-time staff members of Andalus are required to submit minimum of three ideas for the Staff Suggestion Scheme (3S). Good ideas are identified and the employee duly rewarded.²⁶⁷ The table below shows the percentage of suggestion received against the expected total number of suggestions (three per staff):

Table 4.19: Figures showing Staff Suggestion Scheme (3S) responses²⁶⁸

Year	No of Employees	Expected Suggestions	No of Suggestions	%
2012	98	294	259	88.1%
2013	116	348	316	90.8%
2014	110	330	255	77.3%

²⁶⁵ Employees are allocated 14 days per year for their sick leave. However, based on a survey, the average number of days taken for sick leave per employee is about 4 days at national level. For more details, please see Linette Lai & Nur Asyiqin Mohamad Salleh (2013, December 1). *Employees take 4 days of sick leave a year: Poll*. The Straits Times. Retrieved from <http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/employees-take-4-days-of-sick-leave-a-year-poll>

²⁶⁶ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit*

²⁶⁷ There are many creative ways to encourage and support employees to provide suggestions to improve performance and conditions at work place. For example, mobile applications that are very accessible and convenient are utilized to allow employees give suggestions on the go. Please see Melissa Lin. (2013, Nov 14). *Public service officers recognized for innovative ideas and projects*. The New Straits Times. Retrieved from

<http://news.asiaone.com/news/singapore/public-service-officers-recognised-innovative-ideas-and-projects?page=0%2C1>; Also see an interesting article, Ethan R. Burris (2016, January 26). *Employee Suggestion Schemes Don't Have to Be Exercises in Futility*. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2016/01/employee-suggestion-schemes-dont-have-to-be-exercises-in-futility>.

²⁶⁸ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit*

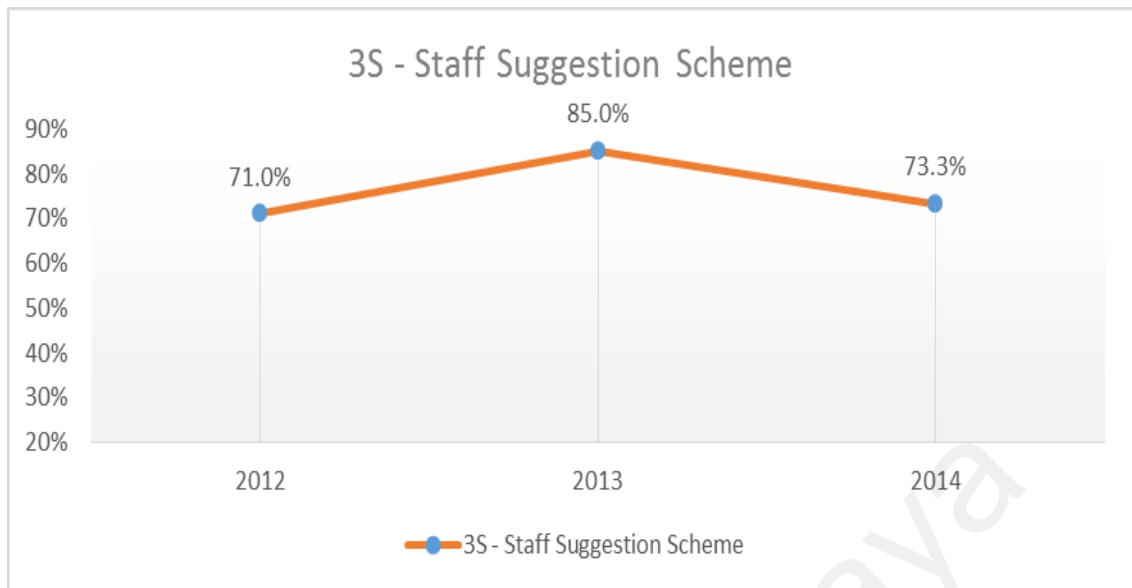


Fig. 4.7: Graph showing Staff Suggestion Scheme (3S) response²⁶⁹

Weekly sporting activities are organised in Andalus during working hours or 2 hours per week for employees like swimming, badminton and trekking. It is highly recommended but not compulsory especially for employees who are tied down to urgent and important work to settle. The average number of participants for male and female employees, for the activities were quite positive especially in 2014. For sample pictures of the weekly sporting activities, please see Annex G. The figures are as follows:

Table 4.20: Figures showing average staff participation in weekly sporting activities²⁷⁰

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
Swimming	31	24	39
Badminton	31	25	29
Trekking/Pilates	31	-	40

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid

4.7.6 Results of Employee Learning and Development

There is a gradual increase of employees' participation for WDA courses as follows:

Table 4.21: Figures showing staff participation in WDA approved training programs²⁷¹

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
No. of ACTA trained	4	4	5
No. of DACE trained	-	-	8
No. of In-house WSQ programs trained	27	26	29
No. of EDGE trained	-	98	68
No. of Statement of Attainment (SOA)	31	128	110

There is a gradual increase in training hours (WSQ and non WSQ) per employee (annually) as follow:

Table 4.22: Figures showing average annual number of training hours per employees²⁷²

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
No. of training hours per employee (average)	95	102	105

4.7.7 Results of Employee Performance and Recognition

Employees who keep healthy are recognised and rewarded.²⁷³ The number of employees receiving the Healthy Staff Award (for zero MC) is consistent are as follows:

²⁷¹ Ibid

²⁷² Ibid

²⁷³ Employees ought to be commended for good service and there are many creative ways to do so effectively. Please see Aditi Sharma Kalra (2015, May 1). 7 steps to build a culture of employee recognition. *Human Resource Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.humanresourcesonline.net/7-steps-build-culture-employee-recognition/>

Table 4.23: Figures showing the number of employees given the healthy staff award²⁷⁴

Year	Healthy Staff Award
2012	21
2013	21
2014	19

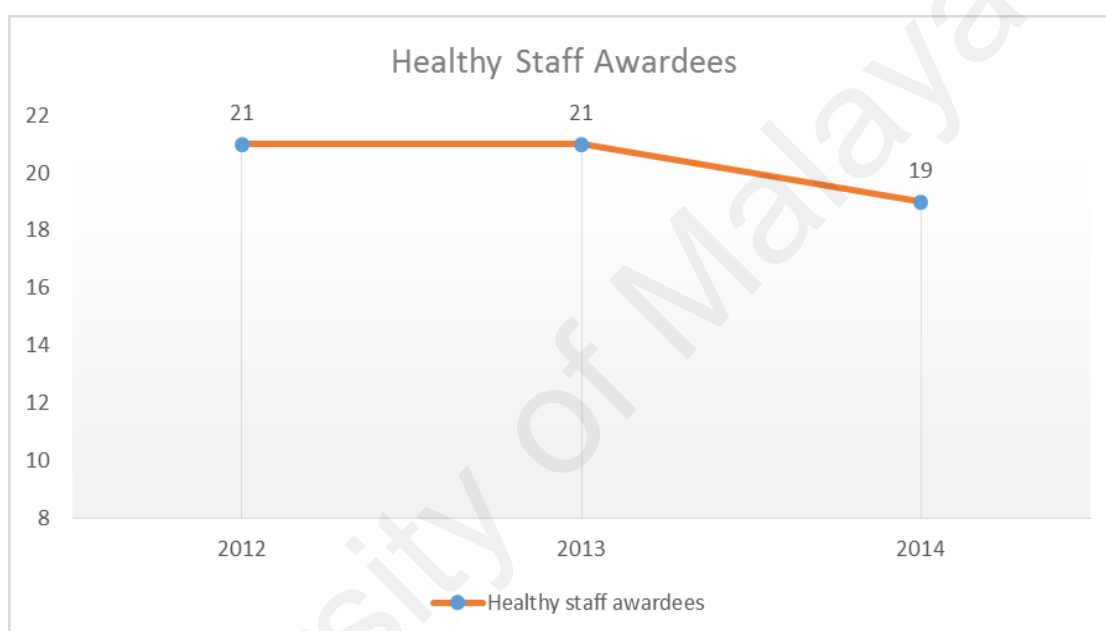


Figure 4.8: Graph showing number staff given the healthy staff award²⁷⁵

There is no official comparison survey conducted yet to compare the organisation's workforce with competitors or benchmark. Based on the low turnover rate of employees in the same industry, we can deduce that there is a high possibility that employees in Andalus feel secure to be in the organisation.²⁷⁶ Consistent or lower employee turnover rate are as follows:

²⁷⁴ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit*

²⁷⁵ Ibid

²⁷⁶ The staff turnover has to be managed effectively to ensure continuity and quality of the manpower availability in the organization. The job market conditions, working conditions, career advancements and career prospects are among the reasons for staff movement. For more details, please see Ministry of Manpower, MOM. (2016, September 16). *Summary Table: Labour Turnover*. Labour Market Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM. Retrieved from

Table 4.24: Figures showing number of staff resignations²⁷⁷

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
No. of Resignations	22	23	19

The number of promotions annually have been in line with the capability development are as follows:

Table 4.25: Figures showing number of staff receiving promotions²⁷⁸

Year (Dec)	2012	2013	2014
No. of Internal Promotions	7	18	13

Number of long-service award recipients are given yearly to recognise the continuous contributions by staff and the details are as follows:

Table 4.26: Figures showing number of staff receiving the long service awards²⁷⁹

Year (as at December)	2012	2013	2014
15 years award	1	3	5
10 years award	1	1	3
5 years award	11	6	6

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the people results are as follow:

Results are not presented for some of key indicators described, such as number of staff participant in LDP, WIM and PBIR. Result to measure its overall staff satisfaction level was not available. Targets were not provided for some of its results such as weekly sporting activities, number of staff participation in WDA course and number of staff training hours. Thus, the relative performance vis a vis its target could not be evaluated. Results for People are reported in aggregate such as

<http://stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/Labour-Turnover-Summary-Table.aspx>.

²⁷⁷ Ibid²⁷⁸ Ibid²⁷⁹ Ibid

training hours, internal promotions and are not segmented. Lack of segmented data makes it difficult for the organisation to truly understand its people performance and to address its strategic priorities. Lack of comparative and benchmark data on People makes it difficult to show how the organization evaluates its relative performance and sets stretch improvement targets to demonstrate its role as a leading provider in offering a suite of part-time, life-long enrichment programs for the niche local Malay-Muslim market.²⁸⁰

From the above, it was made evident a number of results of the key indicators were not explicitly stated or missing. Thus, the missing items or those not clearly stated should be addressed and reported clearly. Also, there were no targets set for some of the indicators. As in most cases, there were no clear segmentation and benchmarking to analyse the results with better precision and clarity. As such, targets, segmentations and detailed collations, analyses and reporting of these information should be given more attention.

4.8 Processes

4.8.1 Innovation Capabilities

The Staff Suggestion Scheme (3S) has been implemented in Andalus with success for many years including the last three years (2012, 2013 & 2014). Every employee is required to moot three ideas per year. All ideas are collated, organised and reviewed by the management and Board of Directors.²⁸¹ Follow up actions are taken for the ideas deemed suitable for implementation. The Annual Surveys and Focus Group sessions involving the clients are held every two years. There are ample feedback, suggestion, criticisms given for evaluation and follow up actions needful. Meetings are

²⁸⁰ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

²⁸¹ Among the best ideas and suggestions may have originated from employees, especially on areas that they are involved in or committed to on regular or daily basis. As such, they should be treated with respect and their input valued. Thus organization should create a thinking and learning culture and continue being innovative and creative by encouraging, acknowledging and rewarding employees to contribute ideas in an organized and systematic manner. Please see more details on these areas see, Wayne Marshall. *Suggestion Scheme*. Immigration Department. Retrieved from <http://reform.gov.bb/page/newspdf/archive/the%20suggestion%20scheme.pdf>

held on a structured and regular basis to discuss and elaborate on ideas, concepts and strategies involving various levels such as the Board of Directors, management and employee. Taskforce are formed on needs basis to review areas of concerns, embark on new initiatives or projects. The Leadership Development Program (LDP) was initiated in 2014 to dwell on ideas, concepts and strategies and to work on projects to enhance business needs like online learning, e-commerce, social media marketing, attrition rate, and other relevant areas. The key stake holders for the above are the BOD and the management teams at the HQ divisional levels and management teams at centres' operational levels.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the innovation capabilities are as follow:

The organisation could consider comparative studies from overseas education markets to enhance its innovation and design processes. This will help shorten its cycle time, improve design quality and reduce costs over time.²⁸²

Based on the AFI above, the research initiatives should be done to study and benchmark against institutions overseas that are deemed most suitable. There would be tremendous amount of data, information and various options and possibilities to consider. The greatest challenge would to identify the best ideas and practises suitable for Andalus and appropriate them accordingly. These requires significant amount of knowledge, experience, skills and particularly wisdom. The researcher believes more can still be learned from the local market, particularly from the mosque madrasahs. The rather new ALIVE curriculum needs to be thoroughly studied and evaluated from various perspectives. Andalus may want to encourage and support suitable employees to do postgraduate studies that look into these areas. Also, consultants trained and specialised in these areas may be identified to carry out comprehensive studies. A particular area of

²⁸² Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

interest are the e-learning and on-line learning that are quite common and well accepted mode of learning. Also, the internet radio may be considered to disseminate information.

4.8.2 Process Management

Manpower planning, projections and recruitments are done in Andalus in a planned and disciplined manner to guarantee sufficient and quality service. Also, the costs and productivity concerns of the organisation are always ensured. New Andalus centres at suitable locations are opened to ensure the demand and supply factors are always in tandem. There are manuals for policies and procedures covering various aspect of the organisation as well as standard operating procedures (SOP) for most operational matters. An Inspectorate Department was formed to ensure compliance in service standards in all areas. The National Costs of Quality (NCOQ) for manpower has been introduced for more than three years. It measures the utilisation of manpower in terms of manpower costs divided by the revenue. The ratio of 0.4 has been set as a good standard reference for best optimisation of manpower costs. The review of the NCOQ are made every two months. The ratio of number of students per teacher is good indicator of the optimisation of teachers' resources. It has been introduced since 2014. The ratio is assessed twice a year. The outstanding fee amount are monitored per centre over 90 days, 60 days and 30 days. The corrective actions taken by the designated officers such as the number of phone calls, number of SMS made and number of letters sent are monitored and ensured. This is in place for more than three years. The figure allowable for bad debt is 1% or less. Audit of the centre operations are carried out on regular basis and thus planned and coordinated by the Inspectorate Department. The SOP and KPI are used as reference during the inspection and reports. Manuals and SOPs for various aspects of the company functions are made available and reviewed periodically reviewed on a yearly basis. Pilot-runs are conducted to improve the

processes by initiating user acceptance tests (UAT). One example of this is the implementation of a biometric system or fingerprint scanning for staff attendance, which later will be extended to students and associate trainers. The biometric system will also be fully integrated with Andalus Integrated Management System (AIMS).

The Leadership Development Program (LDP) that was established in 2014 provides the succession plan for company leadership for short term and long term expediencies as well as best case and worst case scenarios. It has insurance policies such as Cash insurance, Fire insurance and Liability insurance. The IT Department has off-site backup of data, which provides parallel backup of company data (mirror-backup) at a different locations. On-site backup is also taken in the form of Network Access Storage (NAS). It utilises web based IT resources for communication, data and resources storage.²⁸³ The server has been outsourced to a credible and reliable vendor for proper and safe storage as well as fast and reliable access. The e-learning, e-books and online learning are alternative options for teaching and learning in case the centres have to be closed for an extended period of time due to infectious diseases and health concerns. It has several vendors for critical and urgent needs such as IT, repairs and renovation, electrical, air-condition system, etc. It has CCTV installed at several centres for pilot to monitor activities via remote devices. It is in the process introducing IP cameras instead of CCTV due to better features and lesser costs.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the process management are as follow:

²⁸³ Information Technology (IT) has proven to be vital and critical to the strategic success and operational efficacy of organisations. Thus, it has to be best managed to improve and enhance in a gradual or quantum leap various key aspects of the organization. However, the proper management of IT resources should be high on the agenda to minimize risks or failures on matters pertaining. For more details on these areas, please see, Monetary Authority of Singapore. (2013, Jun 21). *Technology risk management guidelines*. Retrieved from <http://www.mas.gov.sg/~media/MAS/Regulations%20and%20Financial%20Stability/Regulatory%20and%20Supervisory%20Framework/Risk%20Management/TRM%20Guidelines%20%20201%20June%202013.pdf>

The organisation has demonstrated its role as a leading provider in the provision of a comprehensive suite of part-time, life-long enrichment programs for the niche local Malay-Muslim market. It could however, consider gaining recognition of its offering through accreditation and validation by third party institutions that have the 'market recognition' for curriculum development. This will add value to its offerings since this industry is still highly unregulated. The will also resonate well with its strategy of venturing into international market through licensing and franchising. The organisation could also consider implementing a formalised Vendor Evaluation Process for its suppliers and partners. This could enable it to validate their contribution and input in generating innovations that would improve internal processes, marketing and customer experiences.²⁸⁴

Based on the AFI above, better and stronger collaborative relationships with government agencies like Spring, WDA and MUIS would go a long way to build credibility, trust and confidence. Andalus direct relationship with Al-Zuhri that has links with several foreign universities also builds up credibility. The above will enhance credibility and acceptance for both local and overseas markets. A proper Vendor Evaluation Process will be introduced formally which will allow cost effective and efficient procurements of services and products.

4.8.3 Analytics for Performance Management

Information and data collated are deliberately analysed and synthesised in Andalus to create clearer, better and meaningful understanding and perspectives on the various areas of concern.²⁸⁵ The ADDIE method (analyse-design-develop-implement, evaluate) is mostly employed by at division, department or individuals levels. Taskforce are formed on needs basis to address concerns such as students' performance in examinations, attrition rate, bad debt, etc. The finding of the taskforce are presented and validated by the BOD, management and later presented to affected employees.

²⁸⁴ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

²⁸⁵ Singapore aspires to be a Smart Nation, thus new and updated skills have to be acquired constantly in the fast and ever changing environment. Thus, the IT skills requirements for short and long terms imperatives should always be in the radar, planned and implemented accurately. For more details, please see Amit Roy Choudhury. (2016, August 17). Tackling Singapore's IT skill shortage. *The Business Times*. Retrieved from <http://brandinsider.business-times.com.sg/sasanalytics/tackling-singapores-skill-shortage/>

Consultants may be engaged on needs basis to address specific areas of concerns and to offer suitable options and resolutions at strategic and operational levels.

Andalus would like to benchmark against national standards across various departments within the organisation. Since specific industry benchmarks relevant to Islamic programs for niche Malay-Muslim market are not readily available, Andalus often benchmark against its own past performance and continually seeks to be on the path of improvement whether it may related to financial performance, customer satisfaction, employee engagement and well-being.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the process management are as follow:

It is not clear how the organisation uses comparative and benchmarking information to set goals, stretch targets and improve its organisational strategies, policies and systems. The organisation could consider a clear segmentation of its people such as: academic versus non-academic, contract versus non contract staff, to better understand the requirements and needs of these people, and then use comparative and benchmarking information to track and improve the people performance. The same could be done for its customers; a clearer customer segmentation would allow the organisation to better understand the differing requirements for each customer segment and use the analysis data to address its strategic priorities. In the area of marketing, the organisation could consider studying the performance of its social media and website in terms of platform optimisation and channel application. This way, it could align its content and messaging with its business objectives such as lead generation, brand awareness, advocacy and referrals.²⁸⁶

Further to the lengthy AFI above, it is clearly evident that this is a major area of concern which is lacking in Andalus. This AFI in particular, requires substantial resources and attention for gradual and continuous improvements over a period of time. The optimal use of information technology, utilising the right software, having trained and competent personnel and other pertinent resources would enhance the capabilities in this area. Also the areas of concerns such as employees' and customers' detailed profile and

²⁸⁶ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

precise segmentation, the analysis of publicity campaigns via multiple platforms will lead to better strategies, planning and execution.

4.8.4 Supplier and Partner Management

For teaching and administrative staff, the centre managements in Andalus have a pool of pre-qualified teachers and customer service officers (CSO) to cover duties in case full time staff are not available due to sickness, long term leave, etc. Contracted employees' performances are evaluated through supervisor mentoring, observation, inspectorate visits and customers' feedbacks. For curriculum development, review and sale of books, Andalus collaborates with sister company Darul Andalus Pte Ltd on terms that both parties have agreed upon. For management of facilities and equipment's, several vendors are contracted to provide various types of services on areas such as IT, electrical, air-condition system, repair and renovations, etc. Vendors are required to present quotations, make presentations and service contracts are given for pre-qualified vendors that are reviewed on annual basis. Centre managements have to submit performance feedback report to evaluate the performance of contracted vendors. For publicity and marketing, contracts and professional engagements are made with the national media providers such as SPH-BH and Mediacorp (Warna 94.2 FM). It has also an agent to provide daily publicity via official website and social media (Facebook and Instagram).²⁸⁷

For curriculum and content development, officers from the Education Division collaborate with officers from the RnD Department in the sister company Darul Andalus Pte Ltd. For software development, officers from the Administration and IT department

²⁸⁷ A comprehensive and robust vendor's management is crucial to ensure operational and organizational readiness as well in compliance with regulatory and legal requirements. Thus, sufficient resources should be dedicated to formulate policies, allocate resources especially financial, set procedures and appoint suitable teams to evaluate, select and monitor vendors for optimal gains as well as anticipate risks and challenges. For more details, please see Devaraj Chithur. Effective vendor management: improving supply chain efficiencies, reducing risk. Tata Consultancy Service. Retrieved from <http://www.tcs.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/White-Papers/Effective-Vendor-Management-Supply-Chain-Efficiencies-0115-1.pdf>.

collaborate with a vendor Itechview Sdn Bhd, to develop and enhance the Andalus Integrated Management System (AIMS) on a continuous basis – either by retainer or project basis. For publicity via website and social media, the officers from the Administration and IT department collaborate with a vendor Ihsan Productions, to manage the company website and provide social media content management. For training, suitable training agencies are engaged according to their areas expertise such as IAL, SSA, Adlerblick, Competence Strategies, etc.

Based on the Spring SQC assessors' report, the areas for improvement (AFI) observed and recommended for the supplier and partner management are as follow:

It is not apparent that there is a systematic process for selection, qualification and continuing evaluation of its key vendors. The organisation could consider defining the procedure for evaluation of its key vendors and subsequent maintenance of approved qualified vendors. This is to ensure that only quality vendors that meet its set criteria are engaged and the organisation is kept abreast of current relevant trends and developments which can be incorporated into their development plans.²⁸⁸

Following up to the AFI, the proper and effective Vendor Evaluation Process would be formalised as a SOP. Thus, the whole procurement process and cycle from the pre, during and post engagements with the vendors for products and services should be organised, systematic, robust with reliable and desirable outcomes. The above should in tandem with the industry standards.

4.8.5 Major Equipment, Facilities and Technologies Used

The Andalus Information Management System (AIMS), a proprietary software for the school management system has been developed to allow almost seamless integration of various aspects of the operations such as administration, education, human resource and finance to enable significant efficiency and enhance

²⁸⁸ Andalus SQC Spring Assessment Report. *op. cit.*

productivity.²⁸⁹ In addition, Andalus optimises e-book, e-learning, online learning and several other aspects of information technology (IT) to make teaching and learning contextualised, meaningful and enjoyable. Andalus also utilises several other softwares such as Peachtree, Point of Sales (POS) and Netiquette for functions not yet available in AIMS. The HQ and all centres have broadband internet service and were equipped with PCs, laptops, projectors, LCD TVs. Educational content were in available in both print and digital versions. Having 17 branches at HDB heartlands across Singapore, provide easy access for parents and students.

4.8.6 Regulatory Environment

Andalus adheres and complies with all regulatory and statutory requirements from Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Central Provident Fund (CPF) on matters relating to employment and salary; Housing Development Board (HDB) on matters relating to rental and tenancy; Singapore Civil Defence Force (SDCF) on matters relating to fire-safety, etc. All its premises are insured and staff were protected under Workmen Compensation Act.²⁹⁰ Andalus is also in the Private Islamic Education Network (PIENet) under the ambit of MUIS.

4.8.7 Key Requirements for the Products and Services.

The services provided by Andalus have to meet the varying and changing expectations and requirements of the parents and students from pre-school to adult. Most of the programs (80%) are offered on weekends (Saturday and Sundays) and the

²⁸⁹ Schools and educational institutions are managing more complex operations, issues and have to deal with tremendous amount of data at varying but significant speeds. Various aspects related to manpower, students, parents, finance, administration and many other facets of managing schools can be bewildering. Thus, a proper structure, organization and system should be in place. These would be very advantageous to have a robust and reliable school management software. For more details, please see, Edsys (2014, November 10). 7 Characteristics of Highly Effective School Management Software. Retrieved from <http://www.edsys.in/7-characteristics-highly-effective-school-management-software/>

²⁹⁰ Proper understanding and compliance of the legal and regulatory requirements are paramount especially in Singapore context. Thus, organizations are better equipped and prepared to avoid compliance problems and to resolve issues expediently, once surfaced. For more details, please see, Debbie Troklus. (2016, June 20). What Singapore companies need to know about compliance? *Singapore Business Review*. Retrieved from <http://sbr.com.sg/professional-services/legal/commentary/what-singapore-companies-need-know-about-compliance#sthash.mWdwzAKl.dpuf>.

balance (20%) on weekdays (3.30 pm to 10 pm). The locations of the centres at the HDB heartlands and nearby to homes play a critical role in parents and student considerations. A combination of traditional and contemporary teaching strategies were employed which is deemed attractive to parents and students. The use of technology is optimised to enhance teaching made learning fascinating.

4.8.8 Special Relationship with Key Customer Groups

Andalus has collaborations with Darul Andalus Pte Ltd (an affiliate company) to develop or enhance material such as textbooks and workbooks in both print and digital versions. E-learning and on-line learning platforms were also jointly developed. The sales figures from Darul Andalus to Andalus are as follows:

Table 4.27: Figures showing the amount of books sold by Darul Andalus to Andalus²⁹¹

Year	2012	2013	2014
Amount of Sales Per Annum (\$)	1,050,136.51	1,062,615.27	1,050,198.30

It also has collaborations with Cordova for shared resources, economies of scale for publicity, pilot of programs and others. Collaborations are done with Al-Zuhri for shared resources, economies of scale for publicity, studies at diploma, graduate and postgraduate levels, etc. Collaboration are held with several companies like SSA Consulting Group, Adlerbicks, Competence Strategies and others for consultancy projects and trainings. Andalus aspires to maintain long term and professional relationships with various partners for mutual benefits. Thus far, there are no major issues or concerns with the ways Andalus engages and collaborates with partners and

²⁹¹ Andalus Data for SQC accreditation. *op. cit*

vendors. This could be attributed to the clear terms of reference, clarity of thoughts, positive values, as well as specific, systematic and concrete modes of operations.

Andalus engages contract staff (teaching and non-teaching) for short term and long term requirements. Photocopy services are provided by a vendor on retainer basis to maintain and repair machines on needs basis. Air-condition servicing are provided by several vendors to service and repair air-condition units on needs basis. Renovation and repair are provided by several vendors to carry out renovation works and repair as and when necessary. The key requirements for suppliers and/or partners are responsiveness, reliability, cost and good track record. It has achieved 100% for all divisional inspections for the announced and unannounced centre inspections.

Table 4.28: Figures showing the number of inspections carried out at Andalus centres²⁹²

Number of Inspections	2013			2014		
	Planned	Carried out	%	Planned	Carried out	%
Announced	3	3	100	3	3	100
Unannounced						
Education	72	72	100	74	74	100
Finance	26	26	100	29	29	100
Inspectorate	19	19	100	53	53	100
Management	26	26	100	20	20	100

AIMS software increases productivity and thus reduces time of operational activities. Examinations results are computed and the results were published faster compared to

²⁹² Ibid

manual transactions. The table below shows the increase in productivity by using AIMS:

Table 4.29: Figures showing the reduction in time taken to process examination results²⁹³

Releasing of Examination Results	Before AIMS	AIMS
Key in marks	2 weeks	2 days
Checking of marks	4-5 days	1 hour
Analysis	3 days	1 hour
Time required to print result slips	2-3 days	2-3 hours

4.9 Juxtapose SQC with the Islamic Education Framework

The above is the case study of Andalus, as a private education institution that provided part-time Islamic education for the Muslim community in Singapore for the period 1996 and 2015 or about 19 years. The case study was based largely on the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) framework which is endorsed by Spring Singapore, a government agency. Such accreditation by a government body is deemed important because the services Andalus offers for the Muslim minority should be in context and in cognizance of the multi-racial, multi-religious society in a global and secular city-State. The case study which is a major research methodology for this thesis included a comprehensive and exhaustive amount of qualitative and quantitative information and corresponding analyses by adopting the seven key drivers, juxtaposed with the attributes of excellent organization. The researcher had also included the Areas For Improvements (AFI) from the report by the Spring Assessors and provided the responses deemed suitable.

²⁹³ Ibid

While the SQC framework itself may be deemed secular and devoid of spiritual meanings, the researcher would like dovetail or juxtaposed it with the philosophical and conceptual framework based on the worldview of Islam propounded by al-Attas, further elucidated and expanded by Wan Daud. This was achieved by formulating, organizing, as well chairing a series of formal lectures cum discussion sessions during the course of the researcher's candidature in Singapore with two prominent contemporary scholars who are subject matter experts and specialized in areas particularly relevant to this thesis; namely Prof Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Prof Dr Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud.²⁹⁴ The key objectives of the above sessions were to have first-hand and direct access to the authoritative and contemporary scholars and have sound understanding of the important but difficult issues written in their books such as the correct definitions of terms relating to Islam and education, efforts to integrate various kinds of knowledge, challenges of secularization and secularism, Islamization of contemporary knowledge, concept of Islamic university as well as possible actions to resolve certain issues and some others. Since Andalus is a case study in this research, the leaders and teachers in Andalus were deliberately and actively involved in these seminars organized over three years for a total of about 50 hours, so that they are familiar with the important ideas and concepts. These key ideas and concepts were eventually incorporated and embedded in the Andalus such as objectives of the Islamic education, curriculum design, writing of educational materials, teachers' training and others. The seminars with Prof Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib al-

²⁹⁴ This action oriented approach which involved organizing a series of lectures and discussions involving selected speakers and targeted audiences on subjects or topics relevant to the thesis. During these sessions, information, perspectives, concerns and suggestions raised by the speakers and audiences were carefully collated and analyzed. These were also based on keen observations by the researcher that factored aspects of cognition, emotion and social dimensions of the individuals involved. Thereafter, information deemed important and suitable by the researcher were incorporated into the thesis. Please see Christine Steeples. (2004). Using action-oriented for participatory research methods for research on networked learning. Networked Learning Conference. Lancaster University. Retrieved from <http://www.networkedlearningconference.org.uk/past/nlc2004/proceedings/symposia/symposium4/steeple.htm>

Attas were held on 5 and 6 November 2008 (6 hours) organised in Andalus premises (in Singapore) and the topic was “The Arrival of Islam in the Malay Archipelago” Another seminar was organised on 20 July 2010 (3 hours) and the topic was “Key Concepts of an Islamic University.” The first session was attended by about 100 participants, namely the directors, administrators and teachers from Andalus and associate companies and tertiary students in Islamic studies. The second session was attended by a smaller closed group of about 30 persons from the first group and a number of personal friends. The five seminars series (each series about 9 hours) were held with Prof Dr Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud at Andalus on 21-23 April 2008, 18-20 November 2008, 19-21 May 2009, 20-22 October 2009, and 26-28 Oct 2010. These seminars series were attended by about 100 persons who were the directors, administrators and teachers from Andalus and associate companies. The focus of the above seminars with Prof Dr Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud was largely an elucidation of the educational philosophy and methodology of Islamic education, based largely on the views and thoughts of Prof Dr Syed Naquib al-Attas. The discourse, elaborations and discussions were done taking into cognizance the local contexts as well as regional and global perspectives. In addition to the formal sessions, there were several private sessions the researcher had with the two mentioned scholars.

It may not be necessarily expressed outwardly in explicit ways to avoid confusions and complications with the government officers and the accrediting body. Thus, the spiritual presence, meaning and purpose vis-à-vis Islam, should be all-pervading throughout the thinking, planning and execution of the SQC. The leadership in particular and the rest of the employees must recognize and submit that all the intentions, thoughts and actions are ultimately for Allah swt blessings. The customers who are the parents and student are the *amanah* or responsibility that must be looked after with utmost care and effort. The process strategy, people and process should in

line with the vision, mission and values which are guided by the Divine presence, inspiration and grounded on the tenets of Islam. The educational programs and the services rendered are all based and concurrent with the teachings of Islam. Thus, the cross fertilization or dovetail of both pragmatic and spiritual frameworks would result in a fascinating blend involving the structural, pragmatic and organizational prerogatives grounded on firm spiritual, philosophical and conceptual foundation.

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CHAPTER 5: THE PROGNOSIS OF THE FUTURE FOR THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE

5.1 Overview of the Chapter

The preceding chapter has discussed with significant details, giving various scenarios with specific and concrete examples, Andalus as a case study and workable model of an excellent Islamic educational institution. The model is based on a framework deemed suitable in a secular State, global city with a multi-religious and multi-cultural population, but without losing ground or sight of the vision, mission and objectives deemed fundamental for Islamic education. The key attributes of an excellent organization, the seven main drivers and the modus operandi of the SQC framework, are basically compliant to the principles of the religion and relevant to Islamic education as well as cognizant of the environment and challenges. As mentioned earlier, the key issue is not the secular nature of the State but the fundamental and existential challenge is, secularization as a philosophical program that enduringly and perennially influences and sways the minds and souls of the individuals and the community. The case study discussed in Chapter 4 has provided clear evidences and proved that it is possible to provide successful and comprehensive Islamic education to a sizeable Muslim population. This may be achieved by having the prerequisite values and core competencies to navigate the map towards realizing the possibilities and opportunities as well as the maneuvering the difficulties and challenges.

5.1.1 Prognosis of the Future

Chapters 2 and 3 have addressed the first and second objectives of the thesis. While chapter 4 has discussed the third objective of the thesis. In this 5th and final chapter, the researcher will deliberate on the third objective and thus offer prognosis on

the future on Islamic education.²⁹⁵ The prognosis should be appropriate taking into consideration the variables, challenges and potentialities discussed in earlier chapters. These key issues and problems are indeed very complex, multifaceted and involved many parties that have lasted over an extended period of time. In addition, they ought to be placed in the right perspectives and contexts as well as engaging them in the appropriate manners within the many constraints available. It would be unwise however, to claim that these issues and problems may be addressed comprehensively and conclusively in this thesis as well as guarantee its successful implementations in the short term basis or long term future. Concomitantly, the researcher firmly believes that high levels of optimism and steadfastness are crucial and necessary towards identifying the right and possible solutions to these problems by having profound understanding, providing accurate analysis and forwarding realistic and attainable targets. In this chapter, for every issue raised and addressed, the researcher will show how Andalus and its three affiliates namely Darul Andalus, Cordova and Al-Zuhri played relevant roles appropriately and proved that important ideas, notions and plans may be successfully implemented, albeit with modest beginnings and regular incremental improvements, pursued vigorously with conviction and consistency.

Based on the analysis of the previous chapters, the prognosis in this chapter will have to take into consideration two major areas of concerns, each with their sub-categories.²⁹⁶ Firstly, with regards to the dualistic and non-integrated knowledge, the issues are in relation to curriculum development such as defining the objectives and goals of Islamic education, developing educational materials, improving educational methods and establishing the Assessment and Examination Board. Secondly, with

²⁹⁵ Please see page 18 for the objectives of the thesis.

²⁹⁶ There are many areas that have to be remedied but two major problems have identified and considered to be focused on. The researcher is quite confident and optimistic that if the two major areas are corrected, there would be significant and paradigmatic improvements in the Islamic education landscape that may last for years. The others problems or issues need to be examined still, but these will probably be resolved eventually if these two areas are effectively and conclusively managed.

regards to the problem of leadership on religious matters, the issues are improving the role and function of MUIS, the proper governance of educational institutions offering Islamic education, positive government involvements and establishing institutions for Islamic studies at tertiary levels. It is important to state however, that this last chapter will provide the broad overview and general prognosis of the issues mentioned above as well as showing brief examples and explanations of how these are implemented by Andalus and its affiliates. The researcher will not be able to dwell into each of them in great detail, otherwise, it will not be realistically achieved or attainable within a chapter. Each of these areas mentioned, require rigorous study and careful reporting for a significant number of years involving substantial amount of data and analysis, quite similar to the exercise in Chapter 4. It may be mentioned again, some of these issues have in fact been dealt with by other researchers with significant breadth and depth but for differing or varying reasons and objectives.²⁹⁷

5.2 Curriculum Development

5.2.1 Defining the Objectives and Goals for Islamic Education

It is of overriding importance for the policy and decision makers in particular, to understand appropriately and profoundly, fundamental issues and key concerns pertaining to Islamic education. This should include a thorough understanding of the historiography of Islamic education particularly in reference to Singapore context, the views of well-regarded scholars from credible institutions, as well as the contemporary challenges in Singapore as a global city vis-à-vis a secular State. Thereafter, a thorough review of the philosophy, objectives and goals of Islamic education should be carried out on a structured and guided manner.²⁹⁸ This process must be conducted and then

²⁹⁷ Please see the details of such works and relevant discussions in the literature review mentioned in Chapter 1.

²⁹⁸ AMLA dictates that MUIS decides the policies on these areas. However, MUIS as a statutory board and the staff as government employees are obliged to comply with the government agenda and directives. Concurrently, MUIS has to be very sensitive and accommodative to the Muslim community. For now,

reviewed or evaluated on a regular basis within the Singapore landscape as well as the global perspectives that are very dynamic and constantly changing.

Intellectual discourses should be carried out in these areas involving the relevant individuals or organizations towards creating a better understanding of the key ideas, concepts, frameworks and important institutions or events. These should eventually lead to some general common understanding and consensus on purpose and definition of Islamic education. Efforts need to be made to examine and discuss the views of suitable Muslim scholars from various backgrounds in the classical, modern or contemporary epochs on these subjects. Taking as an example, the purpose of education according to a contemporary scholar, al-Attas is to produce a good man, a man of *adab* in the most inclusive sense. *Adab* according to Al-Attas “is the recognition and acknowledgement of various hierarchies (*maratib*) in the order of being and existence and knowledge, and concomitant action in accord with the recognition and acknowledgement”²⁹⁹ Thus, Wan Daud reiterated *adab* or education “is the recognition and acknowledgement of the right and proper places of things, the acquisition of good qualities and attributes as well as actions to discipline the mind and soul, and the performance of correct and proper actions as opposed to the erroneous ones”.³⁰⁰ Education, thus according to al-Attas, “is the inculcation of *adab*, for it is *adab* in the all-inclusive sense here meant as encompassing the spiritual and material life of man that instills the quality of goodness that it sought after.”³⁰¹ Besides having the profound knowledge and understanding on the definition and purpose of Islamic education, it is also important to understand properly the sources, hierarchy and classifications of various kinds of knowledge. This would enable one to appreciate and appropriate the various types of knowledge, revealed or acquired and their rightful applications in different period of time and space.

unfortunately there is no clear consensus with regard to the philosophy and goals of Islamic education even though this has been deliberated and stipulated by MUIS.

²⁹⁹ Al-Attas. (1993). *op. cit.*, 150.

³⁰⁰ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud (1998).*op. cit.*, 225.

³⁰¹ Al-Attas. (1993). *op. cit.*, 151.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr mentions, “the confusion which reigns in current modern education curricula in most Islamic countries today was due to blind imitation of Western models blended in an *ad hoc* fashion with the remnants of the madrasah system”. This was to a large extent, according to him again due to the

loss of the hierarchic vision of knowledge as one finds in the traditional Islamic education system. In the Islamic intellectual tradition, there existed a hierarchy and inter-relationship between various disciplines which made possible the realization of unity in multiplicity not only in the domain of religious faith and experience but also in the realm of knowledge.”³⁰²

Muslim scholars added Nasr, had spent significant amount of efforts on the classification of the sciences. To add further to such views, Osman Bakar commented:

Between al-Farābi and Qutb al-Dīn there was a historical span of four centuries. During this whole period remarkable and significant developments and progress occurred in the realm of the sciences were Islamized and developed and new sciences created. It would be an interesting study to investigate whether or not these developments and changes affected or influenced in any manner the fundamental basis and structure under study, written as they were under different philosophical and religious climate.³⁰³

Alparslan Acikgenc espoused the real need to define and identify the true characteristics of Islamic science. Science now is clearly a force that influences the human society. Science is a special kind of knowledge that is organized into a discipline and systematized with the certain method geared at the same time towards enhancing

³⁰² See Osman Bakar. (1992). *Classification of knowledge in Islam: a study in Islamic philosophy of science*, Kuala Lumpur: Institute for Policy Research, p. xi. The classification of knowledge was also elaborated in the Erfan, Niaz & Valie, Zahid A. (1995). *op. cit.*, 4-8.

³⁰³ This is an elaborate study by Osman Bakar as a student of Nasr, to analyse the views and works relating to knowledge involving famous classical scholars such as al-Farābi, Al-Ghazzālī and Qutb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī covering from 1058 A.D. to 1311 A.D. This period may be considered among the most active works among Muslims in acquiring and appropriating various kinds of knowledge from various sources or different civilizations. See Osman Bakar. (1992). *op. cit.*, 3.

that knowledge itself. Science is also a power when it manifests itself as technology that can dominate the world.³⁰⁴

Once we have covered the grounds mentioned above, we need to agree on the suitable and realistic desired outcomes of Islamic education in Singapore. There are a number of important, but difficult questions to be posed and addressed. How different or similar these would be compared to the conventional system? The problem of dual curriculum involving both Islamic and secular education systems has proven to be a major challenge and burden for everyone including administrators, teachers, students and parents and these need to be resolved. How can we address the grossly unrealistic and utopian mindset of achieving excellence in both secular and Islamic education systems vis-à-vis the issue of the secularization as a philosophical program that is the basis of secular education and the severe constraints and limitations that are inherent in the Islamic education system as mentioned in the earlier chapters?³⁰⁵ The prospects and challenges in introducing the integration and Islamization of knowledge have been discussed on many occasions at varying platforms for many years. Will these continue to be philosophical, conceptual and theoretical exercises or can these be translated into a viable and practical *modus operandi*? It would be of interest to note the views of Ahmad Mohd Ibrahim:

For many centuries Muslim studies preserved a certain freedom in the curriculum which included not only the theological, linguistics and legal subjects but also science, medicine and philosophy. Scholars like Al-Farābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd, Al-Rāzī, Al-Khawārizmī and Al-Kindī rose to international levels of scholarship were splendid examples of the products of classical Muslim education. But with the gradual breakup of the Muslim empire, the emergence of subsequent provincialism and the

³⁰⁴ Alparslan Acikgenc. (1996), *op.cit.*, 3-4.

³⁰⁵ This is indeed a very serious problem that underlines the problematic frame of mind of the general Muslim leadership including those who manage the Islamic education directly. In order to cater to varying need, demands and expectations, the dual curriculum was incorporated into the Islamic education system without much research and analysis. There was an apparent lack of proper understanding of the divergent goals and objectives of religious and secular education. This inevitably resulted in a situation where the expectations placed upon madrasah education in many ways are grossly unrealistic and by and large unachievable. See Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai (Eds.). (2006).*op. cit.* 58-85.

adoption of intellectual conservatism, the educational horizon became narrower and narrower until it was reduced, in the name of Muslim education, to one of theological definitions in which the study of alien subjects was discarded and even viewed with grave suspicion.³⁰⁶

Although these issues have been mentioned on numerous occasions for more than 50 years, they have yet to be addressed thoroughly and conclusively. For the last 24 years at least since 1991, there have been several bold initiatives by MUIS to review and implement new policies and strategies on these areas. But the successes of these initiatives are yet to be clearly perceived and widely appreciated due to the constraints and limitations faced by MUIS vis-à-vis the multitude of problems faced by the community and the pervasive challenges in the country. Possibly, it would be indispensable to have a specialized agency that employs a number of well-trained and qualified officers who will focus solely on these areas and issues. Research grants and scholarships should be considered and allocated to encourage and intensify the effective and continuous studies on these areas.³⁰⁷ This agency may also be responsible to conceptualize, design, review and revise the curriculum and syllabi, develop instructional materials and monitor the implementation of the curriculum.³⁰⁸ There is a

³⁰⁶ See Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1966). *op. cit.*

³⁰⁷ In recent years MUIS has increased the budget and expanded the education department and employed more officers. This is a positive change. However, MUIS as an organization is also oversee many other major areas in the Muslim community such as *Haj*, *Halāl*, *Zakāt*, etc. As a result of this, the focus by the MUIS leadership on Islamic education per se is spread out thinly. In addition, the job scope and challenges are too huge to be managed effectively and realistically by several officers in a small department in MUIS. An autonomous body on religious education (akin to MOE) may be formed by MUIS. It may have a staff of 15 to 20 or more personnel and headed by an Executive Director who would be able to focus and execute the task and responsibilities more effectively focusing solely on Islamic education.

³⁰⁸ Currently, the relevant department in MUIS is doing all these aided by appointed consultants and selected service providers. It is emulating an outmoded approach by MOE that was carried out Curriculum Planning Division (CPD) and Curriculum Development Institute (CDIS). But both CPD and CDIS were phased out in 1996 and replaced by newer agencies called Educational Technology Division (ETD) and Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD) with different strategies and objectives. Despite the severely limited resources and capabilities, MUIS had committed itself to be responsible in these areas. This may prove to be unwise because it would be better for MUIS to perform the regulatory role rather than the active and executive hand in the detailed implementations. We have seen the dire difficulties MUIS faced for the last few years to produce, market and distribute these educational materials affectively. This has brought some disrepute to MUIS credibility. See Abdullah Othman. (2003). *op. cit.*

need to prepare a complete curriculum and syllabus for all levels from pre-school, primary, secondary and post-secondary for both madrasah and part-time madrasah education. These need to be done comprehensively, reviewed and updated every three to five years in tandem with the contemporary changes. All of these will definitely require significant number of experts in a broad spectrum of fields to produce the desired and successful results.³⁰⁹ The notion of integration of knowledge and Islamization of knowledge should be given significant attention in the development of educational materials. Currently these are being done by several MUIS officers in the relevant department in collaboration several other agencies. But a more structured, organized and formal entity need to be established and entrusted on these areas.³¹⁰

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Andalus had embarked since 2001 and continued for five consecutive years to accurately and properly comprehend the meaning, objectives and methodology of Islamic education, by organizing a series of carefully planned and structured lectures and discourses by authoritative scholars such as al-Attas and Wan Daud. Each of these sessions were attended by about 100 persons comprising of the directors, management teams, educational officers and senior teachers. As such, key ideas, definitions, notions, principles and presuppositions on matters pertaining are commonly understood and a general consensus agreed upon. As a continuation, selected modules relevant to these concerns are embedded in the Diploma Perguruan Pendidikan Islam, DPPI (Diploma in Teaching of Islamic Studies] that are made compulsory for trainee teachers. Also, relevant modules of similar concern are included in the Sarjana Muda Pengajian Islam, SMPI (Degree in Islamic Studies) by Al-Zuhri for the SMPI undergraduates who would be potential teachers. In addition, relevant modules and

³⁰⁹ For some broad ideas on the development of the curriculum, see Erfan, Niaz & Valie, Zahid A. (1995). *op. cit.*, 20-39.

³¹⁰ Currently the conventional schools enjoy the services provided by MOE in the Educational Technology Division (ETD) and Curriculum Planning Division (CPDD). For more details on the comparison between the developments of educational materials for conventional schools and madrasahs, see Abdullah Othman. (2003). *op.cit.*

discourses on matters pertaining are included in the Pasca Sarjana Pengajian Islam, PSPI (Postgraduate in Islamic studies) by Al-Zuhri attended by selected Andalus and affiliate agencies' employees. Correspondingly, the education division in Andalus was beefed up with the appointment of an Executive Director, a manager and several education officers who have specific job functions and responsibilities. The course content, teaching methodologies, teaching materials, education technology, examination and assessment as well as multitude of areas for educational needs are subject to serious attention as well as regular reviews and improvements. The main objectives of the division and the specific roles of the individual officers are aligned to and guided fundamentally by the meaning and purpose of Islamic education that have been agreed upon earlier. From the above, there are clear signs that strategies have been developed, with organized plans and followed up with systematic implementations to ensure the concerns are addressed and objectives met. However, these efforts ought to be pursued and improved upon diligently and consistently as well as audited and validated to ensure compliance and quality.

5.2.2 Developing Quality Educational Materials

There should be clear and specific guidelines provided by MUIS or other credible agencies on the writing of textbooks, workbooks, supplementary books and relevant educational materials to ensure high standards are observed and the desired outcomes achieved.³¹¹ A system should be in place to safeguard and ensure quality control on the production and use of such educational materials. The educational materials should incorporate contemporary pedagogical approaches such as life skills, thinking skills, problem solving skills and reflective practice, among others. It is also important to have teachers' guide books for proper and effective use of textbooks and workbooks. By doing so, these educational materials will assist teachers in the teaching

³¹¹ For some ideas and guidelines on the writing of textbooks, see Erfan, Niaz & Valie, Zahid A. (1995). *op. cit.*, 40-50. Also see Abdullah Othman. (2003, Oct). *op.cit.*

and learning processes especially on current issues in profound yet pragmatic manners. There should be a five years blueprint that describes in specific details the strategic work plan and action on the areas mentioned above. While we have many good and noble ideas, it would be wasteful if we do not implement them in a specific, systematic, concrete and effective manners.

Private companies may also be encouraged to be involved in the research and development for educational materials. They should be included and aided in the promotion and sales of these materials to ensure financial viability. They should also explore non-traditional ways to teach and learn Islam by optimizing the latest cutting edge technologies such as web-based teaching and learning applications like e-learning and on-line learning that transcend time and space. By doing so, we will encourage and develop a symbiotic, dynamic and even competitive relationship between non-profit agencies and private companies in areas that will eventually benefit all particularly the teachers, parents and most importantly, the students.³¹²

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Darul Andalus, a close affiliate of Andalus has been publishing textbooks since year 2000 and to-date after 15 years, has successfully published wide-ranging textbook series from pre-school to diploma levels.³¹³ These books are used by students in Andalus, Cordova, Al-Zuhri and several other institutions like mosques, Muslim organizations and private agencies. There are also demands for these textbooks particularly those written in English, from abroad like Malaysia and Australia, but the numbers are still comparatively small. The writings of such books by Darul Andalus are done largely by the in-house team of researchers or by external

³¹² Since 2001, the publications of textbooks and workbooks for conventional schools have been done by private companies (except a few books like the Malay language textbooks) that act as publishers and distributors based on the guidelines set by MOE. For some information on the rather successful initiatives by a Muslim company to produce and market educational product for madrasahs, see paper by Zulkifli Othman. (2003, Oct 4). Pelbagai Bahan dan Sumber oleh Pusat Sumber Andalus Granada [Various Materials and Sources by the Andalus Granada Resource Centre] by the Andalus-Granada Resource Centre and Curriculum Division, Andalus Corporation, Singapore.

³¹³ Please see Zulkifli Othman. (2003). *op. cit.*

researchers and agencies commissioned by the company. The development of these materials are in collaboration with the education officers and teachers in Andalus, Cordova and Al-Zuhri. The principles and protocols while preparing these materials are largely guided by the meaning, purpose and methodology of Islamic education that have been agreed upon. All materials are vetted and must be approved by the Board of Directors before publication to ensure compliance to the objectives and standards set. These materials are written in Malay and later translated to English. It may be translated to other world languages if there are demands. In addition to print version, there are also digital version that may be downloaded and used conveniently in Singapore or abroad. These material are also converted for e-learning and on-online learning that are incorporated for blended types of programs involving classrooms and non-classrooms setup.

5.2.3 Improving Educational Methods

The religious teachers play a pivotal role in translating and transmuting important ideas, concepts, strategies and plans into reality and thus made them practical to be practiced on the day to day basis. Their roles as educators, role models and as agents of change are instrumental in the success or failure of most, if not all, of the initiatives mentioned earlier. Their knowledge, believe system and skills must be synchronized with the philosophy and goals set. Thus, all the teachers in Islamic educational institution should be trained in a structured and formal manner. Courses and workshops must be tailored to suit their needs and this must be made available on a regular and developmental manner.³¹⁴ New untrained teachers should be categorized as trainee teachers or apprentices and should expediently undergo teachers training within a stipulated time frame. This should be regulated and implemented religiously. The adhoc and piece meal approach towards teachers training, if still in existence, should be

³¹⁴ For a general guide on teachers training, see Erfan, Niaz & Valie, Zahid A. (1995). *op. cit.*, 74-86.

eradicated with earnest and seriousness.³¹⁵ Husain raised the concern of the bond between teachers and students in modern societies that differs from the Islamic tradition and practice:

We have seen before how in modern commercialized societies the relationship between the teachers and the taught has acquired an impersonal complexion. This we presume is the greatest danger which needs to be faced immediately. As long as the teacher continues to be a kind of faceless person, that is a functionary without a warm personality who does not respond emotionally to the needs of the pupils, he is more or less useless. So in addition to the right kind of textbook, and the right kind of training, we must also insist that the teacher should possess a warm personality which young people can respond enthusiastically.³¹⁶

In addition to the courses and workshops, it would be very useful to establish a common and effective communication platform for teachers that will provide the avenue for the teachers to exchange ideas, best practices, knowledge, information, skills and experience.³¹⁷ This platform should be well structured, planned, regulated and monitored by an entity or agency with clear objectives, procedures and processes. By doing so, the hearts, minds and efforts of all the religious teachers will be directed and mobilized toward achieving and realizing the philosophy, vision and mission of the religious education already determined earlier on. While there have been efforts to provide teachers training by MUIS and other agencies, these efforts require more improvements. It would be imperative to form a department in MUIS or elsewhere that

³¹⁵ Teachers in Islamic educational institutions are recruited and paid by the respective institutions. They may not be trained before given teaching responsibilities on permanent basis. Thus teachers in these institutions may lack the minimum qualifications and formal teaching in education. This is very different in conventional schools where the recruitment, remuneration and training are done by MOE and NIE. Islamic educational institution should have an agency that can play the role of MOE effectively in recruitment, remuneration and training.

³¹⁶ Husain, Syed Sajjad & Ashraf, Syed Ali (1979). *op. cit.*, 106.

³¹⁷ The notion of a consultative forum among the professionals, asatizah and Muslim scholars was mooted by AMP; see Second Convention (2005), pp. 116-119. It was a creative idea but unfortunately was not carried out due to inadequate follow up actions and poor response from others concerned. The forum for asatizah may be less ambitious but more realistic, have specific objectives and guided by clear objectives and concrete deliverables. Such initiative called Wadah Integrasi Minda (WIM) [Platform to Integrate the Minds] was successfully organised by Andalus Corporation for its religious teachers for several years since 2002 until now.

focuses solely and entirely on teachers training and development and well as enhancing effective communication. The conventional educational system has formalized the core teachers' training program for new teachers as in the diploma in education and post-graduate diploma in education offered by the National Institute of Education (NIE) under the ambit of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU).³¹⁸ These ought to be studied and benchmarked against to cater the needs of teachers for Islamic education. Despite the serious problems and tough challenges mentioned earlier, Islamic educational institutions may learn and adapt from government agencies like MOE or NIE in all relevant areas. Thus, the government agencies deemed suitable should be open and receptive to help and improve the Islamic education, particularly the madrasah since the madrasahs are registered with MOE, albeit, as private schools and adhering to many of the policies and standards stipulated by the ministry.³¹⁹ There are already some initiatives by MUIS with the relevant government agencies particularly MOE and NIE to provide educational management and teachers' training to officers and teachers in madrasahs, and these ought to be strengthened further.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the directors, management teams and teachers in Andalus have undergone various types and series of structured and organized trainings over the years, crafted via the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and followed up by the Total Company Training Plan (TCTP). These included teaching and non-teaching aspects to improve largely the knowledge, skills and attitude. They could the WSQ based that are largely government initiated or non-WSQ based trainings that are designed Andalus with designated individuals and companies deemed suitable. The

³¹⁸ Please see the NIE portal for details of the various programs offered. National Institute of Education Retrieved from

<http://portal.nie.edu.sg/>

³¹⁹ MOE is not providing enough assistance needed by the madrasahs due the private school status of the madrasah. In addition, madrasahs do not follow strictly the curriculum and policies stipulated by MOE. However, in recent years, there are obvious trends in the liberation of education policies and strategies. Thus it may be timely for MOE change the existing position with regards to the madrasah. It ought to be more flexible, willing and accommodating in rendering assistance to the madrasahs. Once the desired assistance and expertise is given, the madrasahs stand to benefit tremendously and may enjoy a significant positive changes in quality in many ways.

BAP (1 year part-time) and DPPI (3 years part-time) are the core teachers' training that are meant to impart relevant knowledge and teaching methodologies, contextualized to the needs of the organization. In addition, there are numerous types of regular trainings for pre-school, problem based learning (PBL) for secondary school, ACTA and DACE for adult learners.

5.2.4 Establishing the Assessment and Examination Board

There is an urgent and critical need to review the existing objectives, policies and procedures with regards to assessment and examination (AE) in Islamic education.³²⁰ This would eventually lead to proper accreditation and recognized certification. Fundamentally, the AE should clearly serve to meet the objectives set for Islamic education. Thus, the approaches with regards to AE must be taken in context of Islamic education which differs quite significantly in some areas compared to the secular education. However, it should be cognizant to the circumstances and expectations of the country as well as the demands of the society and community. The various approaches in AE should be systematized and formalized so that it can be evaluated and monitored in a consistent and reliable manner. Concurrently, it should keep abreast with the latest trends on these areas. The approaches with regards to AE should factor in three common and usual domains such as affective, cognitive and psychomotor but within the Islamic spiritual foundation. There should be a variety of approaches incorporating the formative and summative modes of assessments towards meeting the objectives of teaching and learning. Multitudes of appropriate assessment approaches should be considered such as classroom evaluations, project based and self-

³²⁰ MUIS conducted the primary six examinations for part-time madrasah since 1993 but decided to phase it out in 2006 (after conducting it for about 13 years); despite objections from a significant number of managers of these part-time madrasahs. The decision was made to phase in a new ALIVE program that was not deemed to be examination oriented. For the madrasah, MUIS also conducts the PSTE since 1994, but quality of the examinations and its future is uncertain.

assessments. All of these should be based on proper assessment principles that are valid and reliable.³²¹

To realistically achieve the above, an Assessment and Examination Board for Islamic education may be established. This board may conduct thorough researches on relevant aspects of AE vis-à-vis Islamic education here. It can set the standards and guidelines with regards to the policies, procedures and methods. The board can also monitor and evaluate all forms of AE procedures on a regular basis. It may conduct the national based examination at the end of primary six and secondary four. The board may also conduct trainings for the religious teachers as well as provide consultancy services to the madrasahs and part-time madrasahs as well.³²² This board may learn much from the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB) and after which perform the various appropriations deemed suitable within a suitable time frame.³²³ By doing all these, there will be some form of quality control on the system, procedures and the effectiveness of the outcomes and objectives of AE of Islamic education.

Andalus has already established the Lembaga Penilaian dan Peperiksaan Islam, LPPI (The Examination and Assessment Board for Islamic Studies) for at least 10 years that looked into the Primary 6 common examinations and Secondary 4 Common Examinations. Already there are significant number of batches that have completed both examinations. The LPPI enables proper policies, procedures, standards and results to be set objectively and performance monitored and regulated. The certifications issued

³²¹ For more detailed treatment and several examples of this topic, see paper by Zubaidah Abdul Ghani. (2005, Sep 10). *Pelbagai Kaedah Dalam Penilaian dan Peperiksaan dalam Pengajian Islam* [Various Methodologies in the Assessments and Examinations in Islamic Education]. Paper presented at a symposium Assessment and Examination in Islamic Studies by Institute Pengajian Tinggi Al-Zuhri, Andalus Corporation and Darul Andalus, Singapore.

³²² This is another massive area that MUIS cannot effectively handle with its current infrastructure, organization and manpower. An independent body (either public or private) may be established and entrusted to look into these areas. For comparison sake, the conventional schools system has the MOE and Singapore Examination and Assessment Board (SEAB) to oversee these areas effectively.

³²³ For more details Singapore Examination and Assessment Board (SEAB). Retrieved from <http://www.seab.gov.sg/>.

by LPPI provides proper recognition and encouragements for the continuation of studies at higher levels.

5.2.5 Active Collaboration with Stakeholders

Issues, concerns and needs pertaining Islamic education from various perspectives, some of them mentioned above, ought to be studied comprehensively and conclusively. Once accomplished, the findings and resulting proposals should be communicated and discussed with the relevant stakeholders in order to be consultative and inclusive. Their feedbacks, suggestions and concurrence are vital towards getting their endorsement, support and effective implementation. We may learn from the MOE experience based on a report that the success of curriculum changes requires an inter-dependent approach, not top-down:

While top down initiation of curriculum changes has been relevant and useful, insufficient feedback from the ground level and inadequate contribution from the middle mean that the top management has to depend on first principles, personal initiative and whatever appreciation of the ground level they could gather from informal channels.³²⁴

Failure to get a strong mandate from the key stakeholders may result in disagreements and disunity on these critical and fundamental areas. The past mistakes of ignoring or negating the feedbacks from the relevant parties which may have resulted in dissatisfaction and disrepute among the important players and this should not be repeated.³²⁵ Once the above have been clearly defined and widely endorsed, all efforts thereafter by various parties and individuals involved, particularly those in the leadership and management positions should be directed toward attaining these broad

³²⁴ Ministry of Education, *Curriculum Development*, A working paper prepared by the Curriculum Section, Education Development Division, 1978.

³²⁵ Although there are only a handful of Islamic educational institutions including madrasahs, they remain quite autonomous and not firmly united among themselves and with MUIS. As a result it proved to be very challenging and time consuming to reach a common consensus among them on many important issues. The past mistakes involving MUIS and the Jawatankuasa Bersama Pendidikan Madrasah (JBPM) [Joint Committee on Madrasah Education] and the Joint Madrasah Committee (JCM) and the disputes resulting should not recur.

goals. There should be clear structures, organization, system, procedures and processes in place and these must be well executed. There should be work plans with clear timelines to meet deadlines and achieve targets.³²⁶

In Chapter 4, Andalus has shown how the stakeholders namely the parents and adult students are being engaged actively and systematically particularly via the Annual Survey and Focus Group discussions. These are carefully planned and implemented rigorously in systematic manners every two years. Based on the survey report, written and verbal feedbacks, follow up actions deemed important and necessary are implemented via the Work Plans and Action Plans. The engagements with the education officers and teachers in Andalus are held via meetings, workshops and town hall meetings on regular as well as need basis. If deemed necessary, a taskforce would be formed comprising of suitable stakeholders to collect data, analyse them and when needful, review the existing policies and procedures and formulate new ones.

5.3 The Problem of Leadership

5.3.1 Improving the Role and Function of MUIS

MUIS as the governing body stipulated by AMLA must assume a more authoritative, regulatory but yet responsive, responsible and reliable role. It should actively support Islamic education in key areas such as instructional, administration, human resource and finances. It has to play an acting role akin to the MOE for Islamic education until another entity can take over that role effectively and reliably. Currently, MUIS has embarked on leadership roles in certain areas mentioned earlier but in other areas, MUIS is still largely playing more of a supportive, coordinating and complementary role. It has been noted that MUIS has not been able for significant

³²⁶ There have been occasions, where important ideas, concepts, strategies and plans discussed and agreed upon by various parties but evaporated into thin air as a result of lack in specific, systematic and concrete follow up actions.

number of years to exert its authority comprehensively on the Islamic educational institutions in several ways, for reasons already mentioned in the earlier chapter. Thus MUIS needs to mobilize more resources, gain better expertise and eventually able to exert its position and authority effectively but at the same time garner the trust and command the respect of the parties involved. Without strong and effective leadership and control, Islamic educational institutions, involving the madrasahs and part-time madrasahs cannot be regulated and managed effectively in a progressive, consistent and developmental manner.³²⁷ It would be interesting to quote a research and conclusion by Min Fui, on this concern as follows:

For a long time, the schools (madrasah) functioned without a co-ordinating body. This was seen as a challenge by some Malay/Muslim organizations and sections of the community who highlighted the weakness stemming from the lack of uniformity and co-ordination. But this independence was and still is very jealously guarded. Different organizations have tried to act as the co-ordinating bodies – Pergas, Mendaki and MUIS. MUIS has achieved the most in terms of co-ordination due in part to the weight of legislation. To date, a unified system of madrasah education does not exist.³²⁸

Studies, discussion and debates on the madrasahs and religious education have always involved members of the Muslim community only. However, with the intervention of the government and the madrasah education becoming a national concern after the significant controversies relating to CE in the years 1998-2000, a number of non-Muslims are also involved in various capacities such as doing researches and making their contributions known. This is quite a recent and interesting phenomenon as far as the historiography of Islamic education in Singapore is

³²⁷ The current setup in MUIS and the number of officers employed is definitely insufficient and incapable to respond sufficiently to the tremendous needs of the Islamic education. There should be enough funding and expertise to cater to this. In addition, MUIS must take all possible ways to get MOE to help. It would be a great waste if MUIS cannot get MOE help for whatever reasons and excuses. If the problem remains, it is quite impossible for Islamic education, particularly the madrasahs to break away from the current predicaments.

³²⁸ See Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai. (Eds.). (2006). *op. cit.*, 23.

concerned. Hopefully, the involvement and contributions of non-Muslims in the Islamic education arena may bring in more frank, objective and accurate analysis of the subject matter. Not surprisingly, non-Muslims researchers could contribute new, fresh and interesting outlook and approaches to resolve Islamic education problems that have lasted for decades.

As mentioned in Chapters 2 and Chapter 3, there should be competent and committed individuals who working in groups as think tanks or working individually as subject matter experts, to continuously work on various ways and means improve the role and function of MUIS. They could either be full time employees of MUIS or in institutions related to MUIS like the madrasahs or mosques. They could be academic researchers who specialize in these areas, activists in Muslim organizations or owners of private education agencies. However, the overarching framework, direction, principles, values and objectives should be largely agreed upon by these key personnel. As such, the various types of resources would be mobilized and optimized for common and mutual benefits. Although, this may sound wishful, it may be achieved with earnest, strong and enlightened leaderships.

Thus far, Andalus and its affiliate institutions have played complimentary and supportive roles to MUIS as far as Islamic education is concerned. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the dire need to create more places for Islamic education on part-time basis has been alleviated with the presence and role of Andalus. With the high number of school going children not yet attending structured Islamic education and the mosques having difficulties to cater to big numbers, Andalus has managed to offer significant number of places. In fact, Andalus as a private entity may enjoy better nimbleness and flexibility based on demand and supply as market forces, to create more space than the mosques. Andalus also create decent employment opportunities for graduates from Islamic universities as well as the Muslim community in general. The growth and

creative initiatives may provide healthy competition and comparison to the aLIVE program spearheaded by MUIS and offered largely by the mosques. MUIS is kept informed the profile of the Andalus teachers as well as the number of students. Andalus was in the protem committee of the PIENet and participate in programs by MUIS related to Islamic education. As such, Andalus may be seen by and large as complementing as well as enhancing MUIS position and its role.

5.3.2 Proper Governance of Islamic Educational Institutions

There should be a comprehensive and total review of the governance of Islamic educational institution. This review, should redress the problem of ownership and management of these institutions. For example, although madrasahs are categorized as private schools, they receive grants on regular basis from the government and MUIS as well as direct donations from the public. Thus, the office bearers in the MMCs must be nominated and selected from respectable members of the public based on clearly regulated procedures and not based on cronyism, nepotism or political obligations.³²⁹ The procedures and processes of appointment of the MMC members must be made transparent and accountable to all concerned. Thus, the MMC members must perform well and may be subjected to proper performance evaluations by MUIS or other suitable bodies based on reliable and agreed criteria. Those who fail to meet the standards, benchmarks and expectations should not be allowed to continue as office bearers, whatsoever. A strong and effective leadership in the madrasahs and part-time madrasahs could garner confidence and support from all those in the hierarchy, including the administrators, teachers, parents as well as students.

Islamic educational institutions especially those run traditionally by individuals, among family members or close associates must be subjected to clear policies and robust regulations. It is very important to emphasize the importance of standards,

³²⁹ So far there are no evidences to suggest political impositions with regards to the appointment of MMCs. However, after the CE saga and the huge controversies, this issue may be a probable concern.

procedures, policies and processes to be done in a very transparent, comprehensive, specific, systematic and concrete manners because these may be lacking and problematic in a number of such institutions. The financial records and accounts must be subjected to audit by accredited audit companies. Their financial statements must be made available for scrutiny by MUIS, appointed members of the public or relevant government agencies, if deemed necessary. It is important to be very diligent on these matters to avoid the possibility of wrong doings or abuse. With more transparency and accountability, the public will have better confidence and more willing to support these institutions.³³⁰ We may learn from the study and report on the problematic management of Muslim educational institutions in secular India where Muslims are the minority.

According to Siddiqui:

The result of present investigation have proved that, for climate, leadership and low morale reasons, the minority schools could not perform well. The findings, that on the other hand, the school suffered from lack of facilities in teaching and, on the other, the teachers in these schools were a dissatisfied lot, not too willing to work due to the closed climates, and that principals lack imagination, thrust, and managerial abilities, suggest to the educational administrators that besides seeing to improve the physical lot of these schools, an ample amount of interest and motivation has to be enthused among the teachers of these schools for better performance. In this regard, the principals have to be educated and re-educated in how to develop better human relations with the subordinate by just not creating familiar environment in schools or maintaining a rigid work-oriented aloof attitude but by presenting examples of hard work, initiative and responsibility and following a considerate approach towards teachers.³³¹

Thus, it is paramount that Islamic educational institution must have a proper structure, organization and governance covering key areas such as instructional, administration, finance and human resource. There must be a strong management teams comprising of the principal, vice-principal, a few senior teachers and several executives

³³⁰ Although MUIS has been given the powers by AMLA, it lacks the resources, the ability and the will to govern and controls the Islamic educational institution effectively. As a result, decisions and initiatives by MUIS may or may not be taken serious by the institutional leaders.

³³¹ Mohd Akhtar Siddiqui. (1995). *Management of education in Muslim institutions*. New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House. 160-161.

for the various but specific functions. The management team must be empowered by the Board of Directors to effectively run the day to day activities. There must be clear terms of reference, policies and procedures for the team and targets to be achieved. Institutions should recruit only employees with the relevant qualifications, training and experience to execute their duties well. These employees should be properly remunerated and trained. Concurrently their performances must be well monitored and evaluated to ensure good and reliable performance. It is imperative that institutions attract and retain good employees to ensure standards and quality in many ways. If they fail in this area, the whole Islamic education may not meet the expectations of MUIS, parents as well as the public at large.³³²

Already, some major initiatives on these areas have been quite well strategized, planned and executed by MUIS, as in the JMS involving three madrasahs namely Al-Irsyad, Aljunied and Al-Arabiah. The mosques have been instructed by MUIS to adopt the ALIVE curriculum. In addition, the Private Islamic Education Network or PIENet involving the private service providers and the Muslim organisations have been formed to offer some kind of collaboration in the regulation and standardization towards ascertaining and improving the quality. These have been mentioned and discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Still, these initiative are rather new and as such, the efficacy, performance and results of such changes have to be monitored by parties directly involved as well as independent parties. Along the journey, in tandem with these changes, suitable adjustments and corrective interventions deemed necessary should be taken in a timely fashion by the responsible agencies or individuals such that the objectives are met and the results are measured, achieved and demonstrable. There are however, three other madrasahs that chose to remain outside JMS for reasons that

³³² It may be argued that madrasahs are still unable to attract and retain good candidates and employees. The remuneration package, the employment benefits, the job specifications, career developments are sorely missing or unclear. Thus, madrasahs have to contend with employees who are generally average or even below average in terms of their qualifications, skills, experience and potential. As long as madrasahs are unable to attract good talents, it cannot set for higher standards.

require more data, analysis, evaluations, discourses, debates and ultimately the best options and conclusions possible. Whatever, the split between the JMS and non JMS within an already a small community is a cause of grave concern. The aLIVE curriculum in the mosques is relatively new and quality of the programs as well as the acceptance by the teachers, parents and students should be carefully monitored and mitigated. Regarding the PIENet, there are still quite a sizeable number of operators who have yet to join the group and as such, the challenge remains to involve the significant majority, if not all of them, not by coercion but on a voluntary basis.

The importance mentioned above is deliberated in Chapter 4, by Andalus as a case study that has adopted the SQC framework which is recognized at the national level. Andalus experience adopting the SQC framework may be a useful benchmark and successful models on the management of private schools in Singapore or elsewhere may be studied and emulated as deemed suitable.

5.3.3 Positive Government Involvement

The country and society at large have progressed well and responded effectively in the rapidly changing global world. The challenges are different from before and are continuously evolving in a complex, uncertain and perplexing future. If the country fails to respond effectively to these changes and challenges, it may not be able to respond to the global challenges and may eventually lose its economic advantage and prosperity as well as political and social stability. The thinking and planning in a constantly changing landscape has made the education system, its policies in particular, subject to regular and continuous review and changes.

Islamic education cannot be dissociated from the mainstream education in order to face the changes and challenges mentioned above. The consequences and outcomes of the madrasahs, as a result of being left outside mainstream education for many years, may disadvantage the community and eventually the society and the nation. Much

changes and development have occurred in mainstream schools in tandem with the global challenges. If the madrasahs are left behind, the perennial problems for the last 50 years may remain without any concrete and effective resolution. It was mentioned in the 1939 prominent English language Muslim journal “Genuine Islam” that suggested the setting up of Muslim grant-in-aid schools in Malaya:

If private English schools are conducted by several individuals and non-Muslim bodies; as grant-in-aid school, cannot the Muslims leaders give a thought to this and tackle this problem at a conference and start a new English high institution reflecting their own ideals of education – both religious and secular (?) Straits Budget, 24 Aug 1939: 11³³³

The national education and the schools with various models have proven to be flourishing in meeting these national and global challenges thus far. They have catered broadly to the needs of the various communities with its various tendencies and preferences. While the education system itself is secular in nature, the various religious groups such as the Christians and the Buddhists in particular have established schools, meeting many of their concerns and aspirations. The careful blend of secular education system vis-à-vis political infrastructure, the ethnic preferences and the religious groups have all resulted in schools of various school genres namely Christian missionary schools, SAP schools, schools by Chinese clans and a number of Buddhist schools.

Mohd Ibrahim too espoused the idea of grant-in-aid education for the madrasah:

The Arabic schools are however neither Government schools nor grant-in-aid schools and the provision of free education do not extend to them. While therefore the Christian mission schools, for example, are fully grant-in-aid schools, the Muslim religious schools are not. The most urgent reform appears to be to integrate the Arabic and Islamic schools into the education system in Singapore.³³⁴

³³³ Cited from Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai (Eds.). (2006). *op. cit.*, 11.

³³⁴ See Ahmad Mohamed Ibrahim. (1966). *op. cit.*, p. 17.

What caused the madrasah to be excluded from the current set up? Why was the madrasah very different from the others schools mentioned above? Could it be the choice of the community at large or the decision by the MMCs who wish to retain the absolute control of the madrasahs? Or could it be due to a lack of mutual understanding between the government and MMCs? What is the most appropriate role of MUIS and its position as the government linked body responsible over madrasah education?

As mentioned above, several bold and audacious initiatives had been taken to introduce schools of varying categories like the independent and autonomous schools. These are new initiatives in addition to the existing Christian missionary schools, Buddhist schools and Special Aided Plan (SAP) schools. Surely a suitable formulae and model may be designed and crafted to fit the madrasah education. In order to manage these changes effectively, this initiative may be piloted with two of the madrasah. Then there could be a clear comparison between the old and the new systems. It is common knowledge that people can be better convinced by positive changes that are evident and proven. Careful and objective analysis may be made by a panel of experts who will then advise the modifications and changes deemed necessary.

As discussed in Chapter 3, there are already several positive changes with regards to the Government engagement with regards to madrasah education, particularly after the CE saga. MUIS as the government agency has taken various initiatives to address the needs of the government and the Muslim community. Thus far, the initiatives have addressed several concerns but the long term implications ought to be monitored. It may be difficult for the government to change its position with regards the madrasah education due to long historical precedence inherited since the colonial times. However, it should be sensitive to the history of the madrasah, its philosophy and believe system as well as the psyche of the community at large. It must honor and respect the rights of Muslims to practice their religions as enshrined in the

Constitution.³³⁵ There must be open and effective communications toward developing a better understanding between the relevant parties involved.

Thus far, for the last 19 years at least since 2006, Andalus has been able to grow and flourish by gradually increasing the number of centres and students. As mentioned earlier particularly in Chapter 4, Andalus existence and function is acknowledged by MUIS and given the silent approval by the relevant authorities. There were no major issues or problem raised thus far that required intervention by the relevant authorities. This implies that the Andalus model is well suited and functions well in the global city and secular State. Efforts are being made to ensure the services provided fulfil the true aspirations of the religion as well as the needs parents and student as far as Islamic education is concern. Also these are done in proper cognizance of the State, societies, communities and changing circumstances.

5.3.4 Establishing a College for Islamic Studies

The Islamic education here lacks well-established institutions of higher learning that offer students to pursue their post-secondary education locally. Due to this, a number of problems have resulted and permeated for decades. It is of paramount importance that this problem is addressed by the relevant individuals or institutions. Failing which, we will be operating within the old paradigm and no significant changes may be expected within the old framework. It is unfortunate that some of the madrasah particularly the non-JMS ones (al-Maarif, Alsagoff and Wak Tanjong) are still providing education for two or three levels (primary, secondary and pre-university) under a single roof and under a single management. This means, under the current set-up, the management in a madrasah has to juggle and cope with three very different sets of challenges and expectations. For example, the needs of primary school education are different compared to secondary or pre-university levels in various ways such as the

³³⁵ For a thorough discussion on the relationship between the State and religion; see Kevin Y.L. Tan & Tio Li-ann (1997). *op. cit.*, 882-897.

curriculum, co-curriculum, teachers training, textbooks and others. Separation of the various levels will allow for specialization, better focus, utilization and optimization of resources. A single college catering for all madrasah students who have completed secondary education may offer better consolidation of resources and a focal point for post-secondary education. Upon completing their secondary education, madrasah students seek places in four local madrasahs such as Al-Maarif, Aljunied, Wak Tanjong and Alsagoff for their pre-university education. However, quite a number of them traveled abroad mainly to Malaysia to further their studies. Many of these students may be unprepared since they are still quite young to travel abroad and be there on their own. Being away from their parents at a young age and for a long period of time of about three to four years or longer, they risk being exposed and influenced by elements that may be undesirable to their personal development and character.

There is a serious dearth for highly educated religious elites with post-graduate qualifications. There may be several reasons for this predicament. Among others are the lack of demand for highly trained individuals in religious disciplines and lack of opportunities for them to work and improve their careers. With the college, more job opportunities may be created to employ better qualified individuals. The college can also provide remunerations which commensurate their qualifications. The absence of an institution like a college for Islamic education and scholars teaching in such a college has resulted in a lack of significant effort to develop the intellectual potential or capacity of the community, particularly, in the domains of Islamic education. Consequently, this resulted in a lack of interest and ability to carry out researches and developments relating to religious education here. There are no academic journals and periodicals on Islam being published on a regular basis. There is a serious lack of credible and well known scholars and researchers to write on issues pertaining to Islam and Muslims based on objective, analytical and accurate evaluations and observations. The discourses

on such matters are usually quite superficial and difficult to be substantiated. As a result the whole community has limited intellectual capital and capability to deal effectively and successfully with the various challenges that are faced by the community in ways that are most benefiting and useful to them.³³⁶

The idea of having a college for Islamic studies is not new and has been discussed in a number of occasions. Unfortunately, for decades the idea was not followed up by concrete, systematic and specific course of action. It was until the year 2000, a private college called Institut Pengajian Tinggi Al-Zuhri (or Al-Zuhri) offering diploma in Islamic studies was established.³³⁷ It was well received by the community and the student intake is gradually increasing from a meager 12 students to about 1,200 students for both full time and part-time programs. The programs offered are short courses, certificate level, diploma, higher diploma, degree and postgraduate levels. For the degree program, the twining was done with Universitas Ibn Khaldun (UIKA), Bogor Indonesia while the postgraduate program with CASIS-UTM. The establishment of Al-Zuhri is an important landmark achievement particularly for the religious education here.³³⁸

5.4 Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Study

5.4.1 Addressing the Problem of Knowledge Profoundly

A key area need to be given precedence and concentration in the efforts to resolve the profound and deep seated problems is the confusion in knowledge. Thus the

³³⁶ Some may argue that this was a deliberate and systematic effort by the government to control and keep Muslims in check as well as inhibit its progress. However, the researcher does not fully subscribe to this notion because a confident and successful Muslim community augers well for the nation.

³³⁷ The idea was conceptualized in the year 2000 involving several personalities including the former Parliamentary Secretary and Member of Parliament (Wan Husssin Zoohri), the former Director of Religious Education Department in MUIS (Mohd Yusuf Zuhri) and a few other individuals including the researcher. MUIS accepted the idea and gave its full blessings to the initiative.

³³⁸ A number of tertiary institutions in Malaysia have agreed to accept to graduates from Al-Zuhri to enroll in their undergraduate programs. They include Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), International Islamic University, Malaysia IIUM), Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia (KUIM), Kolej Universiti INSANIAH (KUIN) and a few others.

need to examine deeply and intensely issues such as the sources, classification, and hierarchy of knowledge in Islam. Eventually, a better understanding of the role and purpose of these knowledge and the relationship as well as the dynamics between these knowledge. This would subsequently address the challenges of integrating the Revealed and Acquired knowledge within the proper framework of Islamic education. It may also provide the agenda and clear mechanisms for the process of Islamization of modern day knowledge.

The researcher thinks that the highly unrealistic objectives and goals by adopting the dual curriculum in madrasah must be addressed quickly and concretely. These issues if not resolved concretely may result in very serious consequences that may lead to significant confusion, disappointment and resentment in terms of aspirations and expectations involving many parties including teachers, administrators, parents and students,

5.4.2 Developing Sound Leadership for Islamic Education

The demise of credible leadership and authority in many parts of the Muslim world including the Malay Archipelago particularly in the sixteenth century A.D. onwards had a direct impact and gave an appalling blow that crippled the spirit of learning and inquiry among Muslims worldwide. The subsequent rise of Western powers and the subjugation and suppression of Muslims under their rules and set of laws for several centuries thereafter and until a few decades ago had a debilitating impact on Islamic education. Historical, political, economic and religious dynamics involving the Muslims and the West could contribute significantly to this problem. The British who colonized Singapore for 165 years initiated their own conception of knowledge and education that separated religion from education. This resulted in a significant level of confusion with regards to meaning and objective of education among Muslims during the intervening years of their long colonization. This had subsequently

led to the dualistic education system which has since become deeply imbedded in the minds of Muslims and permeated years after independence. The philosophy and methodology of education introduced by the British vis-à-vis religious study are still largely employed by the secular State now. Thus, the British legacy on these matters ought to be well studied and understood towards liberating implicitly the Muslim minds from being virtually colonized.

The researcher hopes Muslims leaders here should inquire, rediscover and experience their own authoritative traditions and know their own glorious legacy and civilization in order to counter effectively and deconstruct the colonial frame of mind. This would eventually equip the Muslim community with the capability and confidence to face mounting challenges and influencing forces in the past, present and to reconstruct an educational framework based on the proper Islamic worldviews. These are difficult issues that have existed and permeated for decades. While these problems are complicated and imperative, an array of options and solutions are always on the table as discussed in this thesis. Prior to addressing the above key issues, there should be first, significant clarity and consensus among the leaders and proponent of Islamic education on the purpose and definition of Islamic education as well as the realistic goals for Islamic education in Singapore context. These ideas and concepts ought to be well understood by the relevant leaders, policy makers, administrators, teachers, parents and students.

5.4.3 Effective Engagements with the Authorities

The position of the government with regards to madrasah education in particular, has much room for improvements, albeit acknowledging several positive progress after the CE saga. This has to do with the long historical tradition and policies the authority has adopted since independence with regards to religious education; not only to studies relating to Islamic but to other religious beliefs. The Muslim community ought to

understand the historical background, the guiding policies and the constraints of the government in a secular State vis-à-vis religious education. The Muslim community should do away with the suspicion of an ominous plot by the government to uproot and abolish the madrasah education.³³⁹ But concurrently, it should always be very vigilant against possibilities of such motives by the government or related agencies and intelligent enough to react in the most appropriate ways.

This thesis postulates the fundamental challenge to Islamic education is not the nature of the secular State and the policies of the government on matters pertaining but secularization as a philosophical program that has affect the mind, soul, values and ways of knowing by the Muslim individuals and the community. Thus, the Muslim intelligentsia and leadership ought to understand the problem profoundly to guide the community at large to have realistic and positive engagements with regards to Islamic education.

Meanwhile, the Muslims here must also be realistic in terms of expecting and forwarding multitude of requests and demands for the government to improve Islamic education. It must learn to be strong, independent and self-reliant with the initiatives to upgrade Islamic education and therefore should prove itself to be successful with or without government support. MUIS as a statutory board and an arm of the government, is obliged to protect and serve the interests of the political establishment first before acceding to the requirements and aspirations of the community. It has to play a very complicated and unpleasant balancing role. It assumes the role to regulate, standardize and control the activities of the Muslims including the administration of the Islamic education. It would provide leadership and render assistance but within the framework and boundary set by the authority. AMLA was and still is a double edged sword. It provides clear guidelines, procedures and framework on the legal status of the Muslims

³³⁹ See Nor Aisha Abdul Rahman & Ah Eng, Lai (Eds.). (2006). *op. cit.*, 97, 154-159.

in Singapore. On the other hand, it acts as an effectual and convenient conduit to regulate, control and possibly impede the initiatives by the Muslim community, if deemed necessary by the secular State. MUIS mirrors the function and acts as the main agent to operate AMLA. Doing away with AMLA may not be a viable and realistic option. However understanding clearly the motives and history behind AMLA as well as the contents and the ramifications may shed some knowledge and understanding how this law manifests itself. The researcher hopes more studies could be done with regards to AMLA and the role of MUIS as well as their impact on the Muslim community since 1966. The Muslim community should understand well the history and functions of MUIS and AMLA as well as how to engage these entities in the best possible ways for optimal benefits for all concerned.

Muslims in Singapore are to some extent, successful in areas such as the development of *wakaf* properties, management of *zakāt*, *haj* and mosques among others, with minimal government intercessions and support. The government should also consider the fact that a successful and confident Muslim minority in Singapore would be an admirable showcase to the governments and Muslims in the neighboring countries. It demonstrates that the policies in relation to Muslims minority population here are well positioned, plausible and successful to be emulated by others.

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Andalus Corporation Pte Ltd

In Recognition of
Commendable Performance
In Business Excellence

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ted Tan'.

Ted Tan
Acting Chief Executive

Date of Issue: 31 October 2015

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Certificate No: BE15054

SPRING
SINGAPORE





ASSESSMENT REPORT ON ANDALUS CORPORATION PTE LTD

SPRING/SQC/150085

SEPTEMBER 2015



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INTRODUCTION

1. This report summarises the Business Excellence assessment done for ANDALUS CORPORATION PTE LTD. The assessment was conducted on 15 September 2015. The assessment team comprised
 - a) Zainab Ibrahim, Senior Auditor, TUV SUD PSB Pte.Ltd.
 - b) Gerard Lim Oon Hee, Principal Assessor, SPRING Singapore.
2. The Business Excellence Framework enables organisations to adopt a total approach in managing people, processes and customers to achieve better business results. An assessment based on the holistic business excellence standard of this framework was carried out for the organisation. Organisations that have achieved at least 400 points on the assessment are granted the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) certification.
3. This report is based on the information provided in the application documents, on-site verification of documentation and interviews with management and staff in the organisation. It is divided into three parts:
 - a) Part I summarises the overall results and findings of the assessment;
 - b) Part II highlights the key strengths and areas for improvement of the organisation; and
 - c) Part III summarises the organisation's performance by category and item.
4. All submissions of the organisation are reviewed and evaluated through a four-step process:
 - a) Analysis of the organisation's application submission by the assessment team;
 - b) On-site interview of the management team and staff to verify and clarify the organisation's responses and supporting documents;
 - c) Preparation of the feedback report on the performance of the organisation by the assessment team; and
 - c) Review and endorsement of the assessment results by the Business Excellence Certification Committee.

PART I OVERALL PERFORMANCE

SINGAPORE QUALITY CLASS (SQC)

1. The overall result of the organisation's business excellence assessment for the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) certification is given below.

Certification	Your Score	Band
SQC	450 - 474	3

The descriptors for the overall scoring bands are at Annex 1.

2. The organisation has met the requirements for certification to the SQC.

The organisation specialises in enrichment programs (part time) for a niche Malay-Muslim market focusing on the development and enhancement of cultural, ethical, moral values and character building. The organisation provides structured learning with a comprehensive curriculum that spans pre-school to Diploma-level programmes.

It started in 1996 with a single class and over 15 years, has grown to 18 education centres. Each education centre is led by principals who graduated from top Islamic universities. They are assisted by teachers from local religious schools and Islamic universities such as Aljunied, Alsagoff, Almaarif and others.

Overall, the organisation has 129 staff (69 are degree-holders) serving 11,000 students. This customer segment comprises of students from national schools – enrichment class offered outside school hours; adult learners who prefer structured and formal enrichment programs; and working adults who prefer flexi-hour programmes and multi-platform learning.

MUIS, the statutory body in Singapore that oversees Islamic education, sees the organisation as a market leader in terms of establishing systematic programmes, standards and benchmarks in the Muslim community's education sector.

The organisation uniquely differentiates itself in the following areas: Multi-platform learning that caters to different learners' needs; flexibility of learning entry points; standardised assessment at every level that adheres to ministerial guidelines for assessments and moderations; and comprehensive technology implementation for e-books, e-learning and on-line learning.

The organisation demonstrates strong leadership and robust organisational culture. It's Vision and Mission is consistently anchored to its 4 core values of customer focus, staff development, team work and innovation. The senior team ensure clear communication channels and role model desired behaviours with defined plans already deployed, to grooming future leaders. Staff interviewed across all levels was able to demonstrate high-level of detailed response, positive traits of awareness, commitment and dedication that are strongly aligned with the organisation's DNA.

Central to the organisation's strategic approach and deployment is its commitment to continuous learning for both its employees and customers.

It has achieved this by having well-trained curriculum developers with ACTA (Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment), DACE (Diploma in Adult and Continuing education)

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training and qualifications based on Aust/UK/German standards, development and provision of specialised Officers (for Primary 6 and Secondary 4 levels) that are able to administer MOE standards of assessment, WDA ATO status for Early Childhood Framework as well as publishing collaborations for educational syllabuses.

Overall, the organisation's sustainable strategy focuses on the potential to franchise & license its Andalus Learning Innovation Franchise (ALIF)

The organisation is new to the journey of business excellence and has no equitable competitor in Singapore for Muslim education.

As such, while its foundation of systematic planning and deployment is comprehensive, iterative and robust, they are still unfamiliar with developed practices such as trend-spotting, benchmarking, comparative studies as well as the importance of ensuring that their education certification has accreditation in markets outside Singapore.

As part of its holistic planning, the organisation could study different offerings from the Middle East and Europe to identify the type of accreditation that its courses could undertake so as to increase the value for its customers if their qualifications are recognised in different countries, similarly to GCE standards. This may also assist them in pushing the boundaries for service and innovation.

The organisation has met the requirements of the standard, and is recommended for certification to the Singapore Quality Class (SQC).

PART II STRENGTHS & AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1 Leadership

A Senior Leadership
<p>Strengths</p> <p>The organisation's senior leaders have developed a clear vision, mission and set of values which drive excellence and they personally exemplify the values.</p> <p>Senior leaders are continually involved in the process of stakeholder engagement. Priorities for business performance, learning and learning needs are built into the organisation's Strategic Review & Planning (SRP), Action Plan (AP) and Work Plan (WP) processes. These are set within an overall Performance Management System (PMS) & reviewed 2-3 times annually for compliance.</p>
<p>Areas For Improvement</p> <p>While the organisation's leaders drive performance, stakeholder involvement and employee empowerment, it does not have a process of leadership evaluation.</p> <p>It could consider adopting the practice of assessing its senior leaders by peers, direct reports, board of directors and employees. This way, as part of the organisation's robust & iterative processes, it could better measure and understand the performance attributes of leadership effectiveness and the linkage to its organisational excellence.</p>
B Organisational Culture
<p>Strengths</p> <p>In terms of achieving strategic goals, the organisation uses the ADDIE process (analyse, design, develop, implement and evaluate) to ensure alignment, congruency and continuity for its thinking, planning and execution processes.</p> <p>It evolves and enhances its offerings and teachings by leveraging CDG & service ATO initiatives, notwithstanding, using its Training Needs Analysis (TNA), Total Company Training Plan (TCTP), Staff Suggestion Scheme (SSS), to enable continual learning, participation and innovation.</p> <p>The organisation practices sustainable change by ensuring its key appointment holders from HQ & learning centres are rotated within a 3-5 year cycle. This is also aligned to the review cycles of its own organisation audit and to facilitate flexibility, growth & agility for staff & organisation alike.</p>
<p>Areas For Improvement</p> <p>The organisation could begin to look at understanding how international markets for muslim-enrichment operate as part of its next-phase sustainability. As the market-leader in Singapore, its view could already be maximised and limited by its position and niche industry. It could benefit from different market perspectives and be able to set in context of similarities and differences, its own organisational bearings, in contrast with overseas competitors.</p>

C Corporate Governance and Social Responsibility

Strengths

The organisation has strong governance practices.

It develops its manuals and SOP repository for all aspects of the business, has established an Inspectorate Department to perform over 150 planned and spontaneous audit across the 18 learning centres in Singapore.

The organisation ensures compliance and best practice standards for its ATO status are upheld via WDA audits

From a CSR standpoint, the organisation provides fee subsidies for the less fortunate as well as contributing to the LBKM, which provides educational bursaries for needy students. For its employees, immediate family members are exempted from paying fees when attending courses.

Areas For Improvement

The organisation could consider framing its contributions to the community within a larger context of impact. As a market-leader, it has the opportunity to effect grass-root change for its customers in the area of education and 'future-employability', both short & long-term, which could possibly lead to the establishment of new standards, regulation & policies for this niche.

Additionally, it could also envision itself playing a 'validation' role for curriculum conducted by other learning institutions.

2 Customers

A Customer Requirements
<p>Strengths</p> <p>The organisation has a strong foundational understanding of its customers. It divides them into 4 key segments: 4-6 yrs old, 7-12 yrs old, 13-16 yrs old, 17 years & above. Annual surveys and bi-annual focus groups are conducted to enable feedback and monitor customer expectations. This is over-laid against multiple business indicators such as student registrations, statistics, attrition as well as information from its social platform and website.</p> <p>Annually, the organisation engages in periodic (seasonal) publicity initiatives with key media owners such as SPH-Berita Harian, Mediacorp Warna and radio station, 94.2FM, to reach out to its different customer segments.</p>
<p>Areas For Improvement</p> <p>The organisation has not optimised its efforts in understanding customers. It has shown segmentation by age and educational-needs but lacks depth in demographic, psychographic, insight-based profiles and consumption data.</p> <p>Its varied listening channels are not well-leveraged as they are primarily used for 'managing dissatisfaction, issues and problems, rather than collecting compliments & generating new ideas to delight customers.</p> <p>It could consider a segment study into identifying psychographic profiling for its customers, to better map customer expectations and loyalty into its overall plans. This could help the organisation understand its customer profiles in depth and allow it to map future products and services with its 'Pre', 'During' and 'Post' stages of its different student pathway.</p>

B Customer Experience

Strengths

The organisation uses its annual surveys and bi-annual focus groups to refine and improve customer experience. It has put in place, a Staff Suggestion Scheme (SSS) to enable ideas, concepts and strategies be analysed by its management & BOD. Together with its public email account, Student-Parent Guidebook (written feedback), Facebook and Instagram access, there are multi-touchpoints which provide feedback access to enhance the customer experience.

Annual "Meet the parents" sessions, provide additional opportunities to engage customers and exchange ideas to enhance services & experience. Two key examples of co-created services include the development of the organisation's social media presence as communication channel and its examination portal for pre-school results.

Areas For Improvement

The organisation could consider an overall exercise of mapping the information collected against a defined student pathway of "pre", "during" and "post" stages of engagement.

This could help it better understand how its solicited feedback (eg: new student survey, module survey), unsolicited feedback (eg: social media, emails, complaints) and learning strategies (eg: industry advisory groups, MOE directives, competitive surveys), are able to assist it in enhancing staff-customer and user system-customer interactions.

C Customer Satisfaction

Strengths

The organisation determines customer satisfaction across multiple channels already described above. There is a Customer Service Blueprint SOP to ensure basic service standards are upheld. Updates are conducted via specific group briefings, its Parent-Student Guidebook publication and advertorials in SPH-BH. Feedback forms are also provided for each post-secondary module and outdoor activities conducted, to ensure that current customer sentiment is monitored.

The organisation benchmarks its customer satisfaction drivers against industry standards and initiatives. Its BOD and management team regularly attend seminars and courses to ensure the relevancy of their knowledge. Feedback and learning are incorporated into its Action & Work Plan sessions, 2-3 times a year.

Areas For Improvement

The organisation could consider comparing its customer, product and service levels with alternative offerings in different markets. This way, it could start to benchmark and predict customers' future needs & behaviours which may be used to guide the development of future plans as well as to enhance current levels or standards.

3 Strategy

A Strategy Development
<p>Strengths</p> <p>The organisation uses established tools such as SWOT analysis, Appreciative Inquiry (AI), Organisational NEWS navigation and PESTLE, to systematically evaluate its challenges and prepare for external change & risks. This is its preparatory lead-up to its Strategic Review and Planning sessions (SRP) held twice a year with its BOD & management team.</p> <p>The SRPs are conducted for 3,5 & 10-year outlooks whereas accompanying Action Plan (AP) and Work Plan (WP) sessions are to address operational and short term issues for a 12-month period. Trainers and consultants are engaged on a needs-basis to provide subject-matter expertise or independent assessment.</p> <p>Overall, relevant stakeholders are involved and outcomes of AP & WP are shared with employees via subsequent meetings and emails; parents & students updates are done via letters, advertorials and social media.</p>
<p>Areas For Improvement</p> <p>The organisation could consider the use of information obtained from muslim education scenarios, approaches & certification bodies from other markets such as Malaysia, the Middle-East and Europe, to aid in its strategy development process. This could help it extend the value of its curriculum beyond local shores and aid its franchise & training opportunities overseas.</p>
B Strategy Implementation
<p>Strengths</p> <p>The organisation adopts a structured framework for its planning and deployment. It records and documents all its SRP, AP & WP sessions, with Key Results Areas (KRAS) in its Performance Management System (PMS-held 3 times a year) for every employee, linked to the latter two (AP & WP). The annual WIM (Wadah Integrasi Minda) acts as a platform for management & staff to share and exchange ideas.</p> <p>Its finance & HR department allocate the budgets and manpower required while the organisation's Inspectorate Department audits & reports, the implementation of strategy.</p> <p>Before mass implementation of key initiatives, the organisation practices 'pilot' runs to ensure suitability and acceptance by employees and customers. This ensures clear alignment of its staff & department's objectives with its strategic intent.</p>
<p>Areas For Improvement</p> <p>It could also consider a review of its planning tools in terms of effectiveness for its current stage of organisational growth. For example, using a 'Balanced Scorecard' methodology might help it better map different objectives to evaluating achievements in relation to targets. This could aid, enhance and/or streamline both its 'development planning' as well as 'deployment'.</p>

4 People

A Human Resource Planning

Strengths

The organisation adopts a structured framework for its HR Planning Process. The HRD department is tasked to conduct annual manpower review and planning session, along with Training Needs Analysis and Total Company Training Plan. Personal Policies and Procedures (PPP) Manual are in place to regulate the HR processes.

The Performance Management System (PMS) is one of its key tools used to identify and select high performance staff. All management staff are to attend the Leadership Management Programme - a comprehensive strategic leader initiative to groom and equip its leaders & potential leaders with key management skills to be effective leaders.

Additionally, the HR development-action plans are mapped to Key Result Areas of its employees.

Areas For Improvement

It is not apparent that there is a structured approach in managing its contract staff. The number of contract staff is high, a total of 100 contract staff in addition to the 129 full time staff, and thus, they may have an impact to the overall success of its organisation. The organisation could determine how contract staff may fit in the organisation's achievement of its stated objectives & goals, and the policies & procedures to be put in place in managing them. This could help the organisation adopt a more structured and formalised way, end-to-end in managing contract appraisals as well as providing full-timers with a systematic career pathways.

While high potential staffs are selected based on their performance in KRA (Key Results Areas), the organisation could have a more structured approach towards career development policy to attract and retain talent, staff from within the organisation and from the industry.

B Employee Learning and Development

Strengths

As an educational provider, the senior management emphasises on life-long learning for its staff, in line with its philosophy of being a thinking and learning organisation. This is well reflected in the systematic staff learning and development processes from the Training Needs Analysis (TNA), Total Company Training Plan (TCTP), Leadership Development Programs (LDP), and Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Process. This clearly demonstrates the management's commitment to invest in its people development program.

Being a WDA Approved Training Centre, the staff enjoys WDA's training courses. Many of the staff are qualified by WDA in Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA), and Diploma in Adult Continuing Education (DACE).

Areas For Improvement

While job descriptions have been drawn up, the organisation could consider building competency profiles for each job function in terms of qualification, work experience, and specific skills, knowledge & attributes. This is especially important since the academic and non-academic staff have different competency requirements. The competency profiles would provide the standard for organisation to hire & outsource the right people and better tailor its training plans with its organisational needs.

There is currently no Induction courses for contract staff. The organisation could consider orientation programmes for them in its HR development plans. This way, it could learn and adopt best practices that other progressive industries have mandated for both full-time & contract employees.

C Employee Engagement and Well-Being

Strengths

The organisation uses a variety of mechanisms to create a conducive work environment that supports staff engagement and well-being. Staff participation is clearly evident in WIM (Wadah Integrasis Minda) - a platform for sharing ideas, concept, values using various management tools; KRA (Key Results Areas) - a platform for setting and reviewing its individual staff performance; and Staff Suggestion Scheme (SSS) ; and Program Bina Insan - to promote healthy lifestyles.

The organisation practices good staff communication and transparency. KRAs are 'shared' in email attachments to employees & supervisors, as well as published in restricted areas of its website.

Most of the enrichment programs are offered during weekends. To accommodate to employees needs for work life balance, the organisation has introduced the Flexi-Work Hours arrangement. During the staff interviewed, majority of the staff quoted flexi work hours arrangement as one of the attractive packages of the company.

Areas For Improvement

The Employee Climate Survey is a global best practice widely used by many successful organisations to measure staff satisfaction. The organisation could consider using Employee Climate Survey to solicit employee opinions on a variety of issues such as the company's success in deploying its Mission, and Core Values, and other areas of concerns such as staff benefits, creativity and innovation etc.

The feedback process would provide the organisation with an understanding how the employee perceives the organisation along different dimensions; and compare and benchmark its performance against other leading organisations.

Additionally, the organisation could consider this internal survey to incorporate the grading of HQ staff from its learning centres to further monitor the effectiveness of its HQ service and support provided.

D Employee Performance and Recognition

Strengths

The organisation employs a systematic process to measure its staff performance. Key Results Area (KRA) for each staff is being set based on the annual work plan & action plan. Staffs are being reviewed on their performance twice yearly based on the KRA via Performance Management System (PMS). This systematic process allows staff performance to be reviewed objectively and rewards & recognition to be allocated accordingly.

The key awards given out by the organisation to recognise staff contributions in specific areas include Long Service Award, Healthy Staff Award, Staff Suggestion Award and Swim Award.

Areas For Improvement

The organisation's recognition plans are conducted annually. Staff interviewed mentioned that 'recognition' is verbal.

It could consider formal recognition mechanisms in terms of simple printed materials such as certificates and awards. This could also be conducted on a more frequent basis (monthly or quarterly) for simple staff achievements that demonstrate high performance. Longer-term, this could help the organisation ensure that it recognises service excellence across all tasks and continues to motivate its employees towards a continual standard of organisational excellence, as well as reinforce its mantra of enrichment and learning.

5 Processes

A Innovation Capabilities
<p>Strengths</p> <p>The organisation uses several platforms to gather feedback and harness creative ideas at various levels from SRP exercise (Strategic Review and Planning, WIM (Wadah Integrasi Minda) meeting, Focus Group Session with Clients, and Collaboration with Affiliated Companies & other Consultants such as Darul Andalus and through Staff Suggestion Scheme.</p> <p>3 key innovations that have arisen from these platforms are: the developmental switch of competency-based learning from syllabus-based curriculums, the transformation of its examination results process and the provision of online learning programmes.</p> <p>All staff suggestions are personally reviewed by one of the management team. Staff are rewarded with monetary gains & certificate for implementable ideas. One of the ideas from Staff Suggestion Scheme under implementation is the On Line Course Registration & Payment for Students. Staff interviewed, acknowledged that its management team highly encourages generation of new ideas and suggestions.</p>
<p>Areas For Improvement</p> <p>The organisation could consider comparative studies from overseas education markets to enhance its innovation and design processes. This will help shorten its cycle time, improve design quality and reduce costs over time.</p>

B Process Management

Strengths

The organisation adopts the ADDIE process (i.e. Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate) to ensure the development and delivery of its curriculum/ programs are carried out in a systematic manner. It has an Inspectorate Department set up to ensure that the high quality standard of teaching is being maintained by its academic staff in all its centres. Manual and SOPs are available to define operational control of its processes.

The organisation is a WDA-accredited training centre providing Workforce Skills Qualification Courses (WSQ) since 2008. A robust system endorsed by WDA is in place to maintain quality of its program delivery.

The organisation has established several measurement processes to monitor and measure its operational performance such as key indicators such as NCOQ (National Costs of Quality) - for manpower utilisation against revenue, Student /Teacher Ratio, Student Outstanding Fees etc.

Areas For Improvement

The organisation has demonstrated its role as a leading provider in the provision of a comprehensive suite of part-time, life-long enrichment programs for the niche local Malay-Muslim market. It could however, consider gaining recognition of its offering through accreditation and validation by third party institutions that have the 'market recognition' for curriculum development. This will add value to its offerings since this industry is still highly unregulated. The will also resonate well with its strategy of venturing into international market through licensing and franchising.

The organisation could also consider implementing a formalised Vendor Evaluation Process for its suppliers and partners. This could enable it to validate their contribution and input in generating innovations that would improve internal processes, marketing and customer experiences.

C Supplier and Partner Management

Strengths

The organisation works closely with its affiliated companies such as Darul Andalus and vendors such as ITechview Sdn Bhd for some of its key services.

Areas For Improvement

It is not apparent that there is a systematic process for selection, qualification and continuing evaluation of its key vendors. The organisation could consider defining the procedure for evaluation of its key vendors and subsequent maintenance of approved qualified vendors. This is to ensure that only quality vendors that meet its set criteria are engaged & the organisation is kept abreast of current relevant trends & developments which can be incorporated into their development plans.

6 Knowledge

A Knowledge Management
<p>Strengths</p> <p>The organisation leverages on IT platforms to manage its key information, such as its Performance Management System (PMS) and Online Andalus Information Management System (AIMS).</p> <p>Currently, the AIMS system is being enhanced to incorporate On-Line Course Registration Payment for Students, and a Biometric System (Fingerprint scanning) for staff attendance.</p>
<p>Areas For Improvement</p> <p>Given the volume of information collected, the organisation could consider assigning a dedicated headcount for full-time knowledge management. This way, it could optimise a single-point of contact to provide a consistent view of information and correlated indicators, that would in the medium & long-term, aid its strategic planning efforts.</p>
B Analytics for Performance Management
<p>Strengths</p> <p>The organisation is using sufficient foundation information gathered, to support its learning and growth.</p>
<p>Areas For Improvement</p> <p>It is not clear how the organisation uses comparative and benchmarking information to set goals, stretch targets and improve its organisational strategies, policies and systems.</p> <p>The organisation could consider a clear segmentation of its people such as: academic versus non academic, contract versus non contract staff, to better understand the requirements and needs of these people, and then use comparative and benchmarking information to track and improve the people performance. The same could be done for its customers; a clearer customer segmentation would allow the organisation to better understand the differing requirements for each customer segment & use the analysis data to address its strategic priorities.</p> <p>In the area of marketing, the organisation could consider studying the performance of its social media & website in terms of platform optimisation and channel application. This way, it could align its content & messaging with its business objectives such as lead generation, brand awareness, advocacy and referrals.</p>

7 Results

A Customer Results

Strengths

For its customer satisfaction and experience, the organisation has a respondent base of between 4300 and 5700 (representative of 40-50% of its student base). It has achieved over 97% 'very satisfied & satisfied' customers consistently over the past 3 years, with corresponding increase in its post-secondary symposium attendance over the same period.

Overall student registration has also increased year-on-year with KPIs for customer compliments met and exceeded. The results for its online registration option has also doubled since its inception in 2013.

Areas For Improvement

Results for Customer are reported in aggregate and not segmented (eg by age, by demographic, by psychographic, by needs-states etc). The lack of segmented data makes it difficult for the organisation to truly understand its customer performance and to address its strategic priorities.

One example of this application could possibly be in the area of student attrition which the organisation acknowledges as high (ranging between 14-15.6%). While the set reasons have been addressed, having detailed segmented data could aid in establishing root indicators and/or identifying additional groups of customers for acquisition.

The organisation could also implement the practice of consistent and systematic KPI-setting across all the indicators measured.

B Financial and Market Results

Strengths

While the organisation has met & grown its revenue targets over the past 3 years, it recognises that manpower costs and overheads (rentals and takeover costs) have also risen faster than its revenue. It has adopted the National Cost of Quality (NCOQ) index to help it monitor the former and has set increased student intake and productive measures to improve its financial performance.

Market-wise, it has the highest number of students amongst its competitors with its average increase of student enrolment at 5.6% per year.

Areas For Improvement

The organisation is not combining the full scope of information that it could already measure (national/industry averages are already available), in context with its financial and market performances. This could provide a deeper, holistic insight or overview of the components in its ecosystem. Examples of this would be its website performance in terms of traffic and volume and all education data available on data.gov.sg

The organisation could also consider incorporating competitors and industry standards in its overall data set to provide more value in its own assessments and learnings.

C People Results

Strengths

Results on number of MCs taken, participation in weekly sporting activities, and number of long service award recipients showed an positive trend since 2012. The number of ideas collected via its Staff Suggestion Scheme remained high at over 70 % for the last 3 years although it is below its stretch target of 100 % or 3 suggestion per staff.

The results for number of staff participation in WDA courses and number of staff training hours showed a gradual increasing trend from 2012 to 2014.

The reported number of employee turnover remained steady since 2012 and comparative with national standard, while the number of internal promotions increased from 7 in 2012 to 13 in 2013.

Areas For Improvement

Results are not presented for some of key indicators described, such as number of staff participant in LDP, WIM & PBIR. Result to measure its overall staff satisfaction level was not available.

Targets were not provided for some of its results such as weekly sporting activities, number of staff participation in WDA course & number of staff training hours. Thus, the relative performance vis a vis its target could not be evaluated.

Results for People are reported in aggregate such as training hours, internal promotions and are not segmented. Lack of segmented data makes it difficult for the organisation to truly understand its people performance and to address its strategic priorities.

Lack of comparative and benchmark data on People makes it difficult to show how the organization evaluates its relative performance and sets stretch improvement targets to demonstrate its role as a leading provider in offering a suite of part-time, life-long enrichment programs for the niche local Malay-Muslim market.

D Operational Results

Strengths

Centre Performance (Key Results Areas for Education) for the 3 year achievement against the annual targets were tabulated in the areas of passing rate, continuation rate and attrition rate. While performance varies from centre to centre, results generally indicated consistent performance.

Results for planned centre inspections by Inspectorate Department for the 2012 & 2013 showed 100 % achievement. This was in spite of higher number of inspections conducted in 2013.

The time taken to process examination results has shown a significant improvement with the implementation of AIMS. The results indicated an improvement for time taken to process examination results from few week/days to few days/hours e.g. Time Taken to Key In Marks improved from 2 weeks to 2 days, and Time Taken to Check of Marks improved from 4 to 5 days to 1 hours.

The number of subsidies awarded was maintained at 2.5 % of its revenue for the last 3 years while contribution to LBKM for last 2 years was doubled that of 2012.

Areas For Improvement

Operational results have gaps as some of its key indicators such as number of revised and new curriculum, vendor performance and results from WDA checks etc, were not represented.

The organisation's absence of comparative and benchmark data on Operations makes it difficult to show how it evaluates its relative performance and sets stretch improvement targets to better demonstrate its role as a leader in the provision of a suite of part-time, life-long enrichment programs for the niche local Malay-Muslim market.

PART III PERFORMANCE BY CATEGORY AND ITEM**SINGAPORE QUALITY CLASS (SQC)**

CATEGORY/ITEM	SCORING BAND				
	1	2	3	4	5
1 Leadership			✓		
1.1 Senior Leadership					
1.2 Organisational Culture					
1.3 Corporate Governance and Social Responsibility					
2 Customers					
2.1 Customer Requirements		✓			
2.2 Customer Experience			✓		
2.3 Customer Satisfaction					
3 Strategy					
3.1 Strategy Development					
3.2 Strategy Implementation					
4 People					
4.1 Human Resource Planning					
4.2 Employee Learning and Development					
4.3 Employee Engagement and Well-Being					
4.4 Employee Performance and Recognition					
5 Processes					
5.1 Innovation Capabilities					
5.2 Process Management					
5.3 Supplier and Partner Management					
6 Knowledge					
6.1 Knowledge Management					
6.2 Analytics for Performance Management		✓			
7 Results					
7.1 Customer Results					
7.2 Financial and Market Results					
7.3 People Results			✓		
7.4 Operational Results			✓		

ANNEX

ANNEX 1
DESCRIPTORS FOR OVERALL SCORING BANDS

SCORING RUBRIC (FOR CATEGORIES 1-6)

Take the lower of the two scores for Approach and Deployment

BAND	1	2	3	4	5
	LIMITED	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
Score	1% – 19%	20% – 39%	40% – 59%	60% – 79%	80% – 100%
Approach	Reactive and undefined	Beginning of a planned approach	Sound and aligned with basic organisational needs	Effective, progressive and well-integrated with organisational needs	Exceptional, innovative and fully-integrated with organisational needs and recognised as best practice in the field
	No planned review and refinement		Ongoing review and refinement		
Deployment	Not deployed	To few functional/ operational areas	To key functional/ operational areas	To most functional/ operational areas and is consistently practised	To all functional/ operational areas and is consistently practised
	No planned review and refinement		Ongoing review and refinement		

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SCORING RUBRIC (FOR RESULTS CATEGORY)

Take the lower of the two scores for Reporting of results and Performance levels

BAND	1	2	3	4	5
	LIMITED	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
Score	1% – 19%	20% – 39%	40% – 59%	60% – 79%	80% – 100%
Reporting of results	Not reported for all key areas	Reported for some key customer, financial, people and operational requirements	Reported for most key customer, financial, people and operational requirements	Results reported for all customer, financial, people and operational requirements	
Performance levels	Poor	Good in few areas	Good in key areas	Good and sustained in most areas	Excellent and sustained in all areas
- Improvement trends			Some comparisons and benchmarks	Favourable comparisons and benchmarks in key areas relative to the industry	Excellent comparisons and benchmarks in most areas with evidence of global best practices
- Comparative information					

Appendix B-1

Table 1: The organizational structure for the Andalus headquarters as at 2014. There are three divisions in the organization namely, Education, Finance and Management. Each division is headed by the respective Directors, Executive Directors and Managers.

Andalus Board of Directors		
Education Division	Finance Division	Management Division
Director I: Muhammad Fuad Md Aris Director II: Zulkifli Othman	Director I: Zulkifli Othman Director II: Muhammad Fuad Md Aris	Director I: Abdullah Othman
Executive Director: Fathurrahman Dawood	Manager: Jorah Hasan	Acting Manager: Abdul Rashid Abdul Wahid
<u>Post-Secondary Education Department</u> Senior Executive: Khairulnizah Abdul Hamid Executive: Ahmad Qushairy Mohd Ariff	<u>Finance Department</u> Assistant Manager: Junaidah Bte Shafie Executive: 1) Noorliza Kalid 2) Nurfilah Muhamad	<u>Human Resources & Development Department</u> Senior Executive (HRM): Zaharuzzaman Sulaiman Executive (HRD): Mirhaini Mohammad
<u>Secondary & Primary Education Department</u> Senior Executive: Nuritah Abdul Rahim (LPPI) Executive: 'Aadilah Mohd		<u>Administration and IT Department</u> Assistant Manager: Mohd Yassin Rozali Executive: 1) Siti Farhanah Abdul Kadir 2) Muhd Alfa Affendi
<u>Pre-school Education Department</u> Senior Executive: Siti Fadilah Padale		
<u>Inspectorate Department</u> Senior Executive: Ruhaidah Munir		

Appendix B-2

Table 2: The organizational structure for the management of Andalus centres as at 2014. Four or five centres are clustered together and each cluster managed by the manager, executive officer and senior teachers.

Andalus Board of Directors			
Branch Management Andalus 1 (BMA1) Admiralty, Ang Mo Kio, Jurong West 1, Jurong West 2, Jurong West 3	Branch Management Andalus 2 (BMA2) Bukit Batok 1, Bukit Batok2, Woodlands Point, Yishun 1, Yishun2	Branch Management Andalus 3 (BMA3) Bedok Reservoir, Changi, Guthrie Building, Tampines 1, Tampines 2	Branch Management Andalus 4 (BMA4) Choa Chu Kang, Teck Whye
Senior Manager: Adam Ismail	Senior Manager: Ahmad Dahlan Ibrahim	Senior Manager: Zulaikha Ishak	Manager: Lokman Hakim Hassan
<p>Senior Executive: Fauziah Mohamed Omar (Admiralty, Ang Mo Kio, Jurong West 1, Jurong West 2, Jurong West 3)</p> <p>Senior Teachers: 1) Muhammad Najib Shapandi (Admiralty)</p> <p>2) Hasanah Muhammad Salihin (Admiralty)</p> <p>3) Raduan Abdul Ghani (Jurong West 1)</p> <p>4) Acting Senior Teacher Muhammad Fitry Reduan (Jurong West 3)</p>	<p>Senior Executive: Lela Moidu (Bukit Batok 2, Marsiling, Yishun 1, Yishun 2)</p> <p>Executive: Rabiul Nisha (Bukit Batok 1, Woodlands point)</p> <p>Senior Teachers: 1) Nur Marsita Zainal (Bukit Batok 1)</p> <p>2) Farani Mohamed (Bukit Batok 2)</p> <p>3) Nur Ruhaidah Chumadi (Marsiling)</p> <p>4) Hasbi Ahmad Saiful Bahri (Marsiling)</p> <p>5) Mohd Hafiz Sanban (Woodlands Point)</p> <p>6) Siti Nurlizan Nawi (Yishun 1)</p> <p>7) Siti Zafirah Md Wahid (Yishun 2)</p>	<p>Executive: Normah Arshad (Tampines 1, Tampines 2)</p> <p>Executive: Ruzizah Safuan (Bedok Reservoir, Changi, Guthrie Building)</p> <p>Senior Teachers: 1) Muhammad Afiq Ariff (Bedok Reservoir)</p> <p>2) Nur Aishah Abd Rahim (Tampines 1)</p> <p>3) Siti Zaidah Ismail (Tampines 1)</p> <p>4) Salamah Lajim (Tampines 2)</p>	<p>Senior Executive: Hasnah Powrie (Choa Chu Kang, Teck Whye)</p> <p>Senior Teachers 1) Nursyahidah Abdul Wahid (Teck Whye)</p> <p>2) Karimah Ya'acob (Choa Chu Kang)</p>

Appendix C

The pictures below are examples of Andalus directors who are very actively involved in communicating the vision, mission and objectives as well in various aspects of the organisation.

Picture 1: Director for Management Division (Abdullah Othman)



Picture 2: Director for Education Division (Md Fuad Md Aris)



Picture 3: Director for Finance Division (Zulkifli Othman)



Appendix D-1

Table 3: The results for the Action Plan and Work Plan for the education division and centers from 2012-2014

Evaluation Criteria	Involvement	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
1.1 Passing Rate P6 LPPI Loghah	Manager, Snr. Teacher, Teacher						
PCA 1	Admiralty	60% Grade D	59.8	60% Grade D	67.9	70% Grade D	70.0
	Ang Mo kio		NA		NA		NA
	Jurong West 1		61.8		64.9		58.6
	Jurong West 2		NA		86.4		71.4
	Jurong West 3		77.8		NA		NA
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	60% Grade D	83.3	60% Grade D	69.0	70% Grade D	51.6
	Woodlands		60.0		75.0		65.5
	Bukit Batok 2		NA		60.0		100.0
	Marsiling		67.6		65.3		63.3
	Yishun		75.0		58.7		71.4
PCA 3	Bedok	60% Grade D	55.6	60% Grade D	100.0	60% Grade D	100.0
	Changi		84.6		66.7		78.5
	Guthrie		NA		NA		NA
	Tampines 1		53.1		61.7		82.1
	Tampines 2		78.8		65.7		70.0
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	60% Grade D	62.0	60% Grade D	79.2	60% Grade D	65.2
	Teck Whye		57.1		46.8		70.0
1.2 Passing Rate P6 LPPI Al-Quran	Manager, Snr. Teacher, Teacher	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
PCA 1	Admiralty	60% Grade C	62.9	70% Grade C	63.0	70% Grade C	45.5
	Ang Mo kio		NA		NA		NA
	Jurong West 1		68.5		63.0		42.1
	Jurong West 2		88.9		83.0		51.3
	Jurong West 3		NA		NA		NA
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	60% Grade C	78.4	70% Grade C	89.0	70% Grade C	65
	Woodlands		84.4		44.0		21.4
	Bukit Batok 2		NA		80.0		50.0
	Marsiling		75.6		69.0		58
	Yishun		83.6		47.0		33
PCA 3	Bedok	60% Grade C	84.2	70% Grade C	100.0	70% Grade C	81.0
	Changi		83.3		78.0		75.0
	Guthrie		NA		NA		NA
	Tampines 1		51.6		62.0		45
	Tampines 2		82.4		89.0		11
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	60% Grade C	66.2	70% Grade C	84.6	70% Grade C	NA
	Teck Whye		35.7		50.0		77.8

Appendix D-2

Table 4: The results for the Action Plan and Work Plan for the education divisions and centers for 2012, 2013 & 2014

1.3 Continuation Rate KBM 4 & KBRL 4 to DPI	Manager, Snr. Teacher, Teacher	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
PCA 1	Admiralty	60% to continue DPI	34.0	65% to continue DPI	43.5	65% to continue DPI	45.5
	Ang Mo kio		NA		NA		NA
	Jurong West 1		91.0		43.5		42.1
	Jurong West 2		63.0		52.9		51.3
	Jurong West 3		NA		NA		NA
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	60% to continue DPI	55.0	65% to continue DPI	42.1	65% to continue DPI	65
	Woodlands		75.0		60.0		21.4
	Bukit Batok 2		NA		80.0		50.0
	Marsiling		51.0		45.6		58
	Yishun		63.0		4.3		33
PCA 3	Bedok	60% to continue DPI	0	65% to continue DPI	0.0	65% to continue DPI	81.0
	Changi		NA		80.0		75.0
	Guthrie		NA		NA		NA
	Tampines 1		37.0		65.2		45.0
	Tampines 2		58.0		64.7		11
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	60% to continue DPI	28.0	65% to continue DPI	0.0	65% to continue DPI	NA
	Teck Whye		65.0		64.7		77.8
1.4 Passing Rate Sec 4 LPPI students in 3 subjects	Manager, Snr. Teacher, Teacher	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
PCA 1	Admiralty	75% with 3 Credits	71.0	75% with 3 Credits	81.0	75% with 3 Credits	90.0
	Ang Mo kio		NA		NA		NA
	Jurong West 1		50.0		40.0		83.0
	Jurong West 2		42.0		67.0		63.0
	Jurong West 3		NA		NA		NA
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	75% with 3 Credits	76.0	75% with 3 Credits	62.5	75% with 3 Credits	71.0
	Woodlands		81.0		80.0		84.0
	Bukit Batok 2		NA		50.0		100.0
	Marsiling		68.0		76.0		83.0
	Yishun		81.0		62.0		65.0
PCA 3	Bedok	75% with 3 Credits	33.0	75% with 3 Credits	100.0	75% with 3 Credits	75.0
	Changi		NA		80.0		82.0
	Guthrie		NA		NA		NA
	Tampines 1		69.0		68.0		81.0
	Tampines 2		83.0		70.0		88.0
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	75% with 3 Credits	47.0	75% with 3 Credits	NA	75% with 3 Credits	59.0
	Teck Whye		65.0		67.7		65.0

Appendix D-3

Table 5: The results for the Action Plan and Work Plan for the education divisions and centers (2012, 2013 & 2014)

1.5 Completion Rate KBN, KBPS, KBK, KBR & KBM on E-Learning	Manager, Snr. Teacher, Teacher	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
PCA 1	Admiralty	100% by Oct 12	79	100% by Oct 13	70	100% by Oct 14	70
	Ang Mo kio		NA		NA		69
	Jurong West 1		92		85		92
	Jurong West 2		99		99		97
	Jurong West 3		100		94		66
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	100% by Oct 12	100	100% by Oct 13	100	100% by Oct 14	100
	Woodlands		100		60		53
	Bukit Batok 2		100		100		100
	Marsiling		67		67		79
	Yishun		73		58		71
PCA 3	Bedok	100% by Oct 12	82	100% by Oct 13	100	100% by Oct 14	100
	Changi		69		100		NA
	Guthrie		NA		NA		96
	Tampines 1		69		90		91
	Tampines 2		100		100		71
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	100% by Oct 12	73	100% by Oct 13	81	100% by Oct 14	52
	Teck Whye		100		95		51
1.6 Attrition Rate of Student for Levels KBN to KBM3/KBRL3 Per Teacher	Manager, Snr. Teacher, Teacher	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
PCA 1	Admiralty	5% or Less from Feb 12 to Feb 13	21.1	5% or Less from Feb to Nov 13	9.5	5% or Less from Feb to Nov 14	7.7
	Ang Mo kio		NA		NA		16.4
	Jurong West 1		10.2		9.6		7
	Jurong West 2		13.0		8.3		8.1
	Jurong West 3		1.1		3.1		11
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	5% or Less from Feb 12 to Feb 13	16.5	5% or Less from Feb to Nov 13	11.1	5% or Less from Feb to Nov 14	6.4
	Woodlands		13.9		12.1		13.6
	Bukit Batok 2		10.3		6.6		9.8
	Marsiling		9.1		7.1		13.5
	Yishun		15.2		8.3		9.7
PCA 3	Bedok	5% or Less from Feb 12 to Feb 13	11.8	5% or Less from Feb to Nov 13	8.3	5% or Less from Feb to Nov 14	11.4
	Changi		3.1		3.2		17.2
	Guthrie		NA		NA		10.5
	Tampines 1		9.1		5.8		6.1
	Tampines 2		6.2		3.0		6.1
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	5% or Less from Feb 12 to Feb 13	8.5	5% or Less from Feb to Nov 13	5.5	5% or Less from Feb to Nov 14	10.7
	Teck Whye		8.1		5.2		10.3

Appendix D-4

Table 6: The results for the Action Plan and Work Plan for the finance divisions and center for 2012, 2013 and 2014

Evaluation Criteria	Involvement	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
2.1 Maintain Outstanding fees	Manager, EO, CSO						
PCA 1	Admiralty	All Centres-1%	2.0	All Centres-1%	2.0	All Centres-1%	2.5
	Ang Mo kio		NA		NA		NA
	Jurong West 1		2.0		1.0		2.0
	Jurong West 2		3.0		4.0		6.2
	Jurong West 3		1.0		2.0		1.9
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	All Centres-1%	4.0	All Centres-1%	4.0	All Centres-1%	3.4
	Woodlands		2.0		2.0		1.2
	Bukit Batok 2		1.0		1.0		0.4
	Marsiling		1.0		1.0		0.4
	Yishun		1.90		1.0		1.0
PCA 3	Bedok	All Centres-1%	3.0	All Centres-1%	2.0	All Centres-1%	2.8
	Changi		2.0		2.0		1.6
	Guthrie		NA		NA		0.6
	Tampines 1		4.0		3.0		3.9
	Tampines 2		1.0		2.0		1.0
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	All Centres-1%	1.0	All Centres-1%	1.0	All Centres-1%	0.4
	Teck Whye		1.0		1.0		0.7
2.2 GIRO	Manager, EO, CSO	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
PCA 1	Admiralty	92	89	All Centres-90%	83	All Centres-90%	88
	Ang Mo kio	NA	NA		NA		75
	Jurong West 1	92	77		84		84
	Jurong West 2	95	86		83		89
	Jurong West 3	92	85		85		85
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	86	83	All Centres-90%	75	All Centres-90%	79
	Woodlands	93	89		83		81
	Bukit Batok 2	92	93		92		88
	Marsiling	92	87		92		90
	Yishun	86	86		85		85
PCA 3	Bedok	86	71	All Centres-90%	76	All Centres-90%	76
	Changi	86	83		74		93
	Guthrie	NA	NA		NA		76
	Tampines 1	86	71		78		82
	Tampines 2	86	78		81		81
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	92	87	All Centres-90%	93	All Centres-90%	95
	Teck Whye	92	83		89		90
2.3 NCDQ	Manager, EO, CSO	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
PCA 1	Admiralty	0.36	0.37	All Centres – 0.37	0.38	0.37	0.40
	Ang Mo kio	NA	NA		NA	0.50	2.05
	Jurong West 1	0.45	0.39		0.41	0.37	0.45
	Jurong West 2	NA	0.45		0.48	0.37	0.41
	Jurong West 3	0.35	0.46		0.42	0.37	0.48
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	0.40	0.57	All Centres – 0.37	0.49	All Centres – 0.37	0.56
	Woodlands	0.50	0.59		0.60		0.52
	Bukit Batok 2	0.35	0.72		0.63		0.72
	Marsiling	0.50	0.36		0.38		0.49
	Yishun	0.35	0.41		0.38		0.39
PCA 3	Bedok	0.50	0.70	All Centres – 0.37	0.66	0.37	0.60
	Changi	0.50	0.36		0.49	0.37	0.65
	Guthrie	NA	NA		NA	0.50	0.62
	Tampines 1	0.35	0.41		0.39	0.37	0.43

	Tampines 2	0.40	0.66		0.58	0.37	0.63
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	0.35	0.37	All Centres – 0.37	0.43	All Centres – 0.37	0.50
	Teck Whye	0.35	0.39		0.33		0.39

Appendix D-5

Table 7: The results for the Action Plan and Work Plan for the management divisions and centers for 2012, 2013 and 2014

Evaluation Criteria	Involvement	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
3.1 Staff Suggestion Scheme	All staff						
PCA 1	Admiralty	3 Suggestions by every Staff	128.9	3 Suggestions by every Staff	151.1	3 Suggestions by every Staff	104.2
	Ang Mo kio		NA		NA		66.7
	Jurong West 1		61.9		94.4		20.0
	Jurong West 2		106.7		111.1		77.8
	Jurong West 3		NA		NA		NA
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	3 Suggestions by every Staff	146.7	3 Suggestions by every Staff	116.7	3 Suggestions by every Staff	150.0
	Woodlands		88.9		116.7		77.8
	Bukit Batok 2		55.6		90.9		122.2
	Marsiling		19.0		29.2		75.0
	Yishun		60.0		61.1		0.0
PCA 3	Bedok	3 Suggestions by every Staff	75.0	3 Suggestions by every Staff	91.7	3 Suggestions by every Staff	66.7
	Changi		100.0		75.0		111.1
	Guthrie		NA		NA		NA
	Tampines 1		76.2		80.0		77.1
	Tampines 2		50.0		100.0		72.4
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	3 Suggestions by every Staff	66.7	3 Suggestions by every Staff	55.6	3 Suggestions by every Staff	85.7
	Teck Whye		66.7		122.2		116.7
3.2 Net Increase of Student (Feb 13 – Feb 14)	Manager, EO, Snr. Teacher, CSO	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
PCA 1	Admiralty	5%	-2.2	5	2.0	5	-5.6
	Ang Mo kio	NA	NA	NA	NA	500	233.3
	Jurong West 1	5%	07	15	-5.3	10	-4.9
	Jurong West 2	20%	0.2	15	9.5	10	1.7
	Jurong West 3	100%	18.7	20	10.1	20	-10.9
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	5%	-7.9	20	3.5	20	-2.9
	Woodlands	5%	13.9	15	-2.3	15	-8.7
	Bukit Batok 2	15%	15.8	20	-4.5	20	0.5
	Marsiling	20%	5.8	10	0.0	10	-0.6
	Yishun	10%	17.2	15	-0.8	15	-2.3
PCA 3	Bedok	40%	16.4	20	6.6	20	14.8
	Changi	40%	1.6	20	8.5	20	21
	Guthrie	NA	NA	NA	NA	100	17.4
	Tampines 1	10%	3.1	5	4.8	5	11.0
	Tampines 2	5%	4.6	20	4.0	20	-4.2
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	5%	-14.8	15	23.1	15	9.7
	Teck Whye	50%	38.5	15	1.6	15	-5.8

Appendix D-6

Table 8: The results of the Action plan and Work plan for the management divisions and centers for 2012, 2013 and 2014.

3.3 Ration of Teacher to Student	Manager, EO, Snr. Teacher, Teacher	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved		
PCA 1	Admiralty	<u>Teacher Cat. C</u> Not less than 150 students <u>Teacher Cat. B</u> Not less than 180 students <u>Teacher Cat. A</u> Not less than 200 students	80.9	<u>Teacher Cat. C</u> Not less than 150 students <u>Teacher Cat. B</u> Not less than 180 students	108.9	<u>Teacher Cat. C</u> Not less than 150 students <u>Teacher Cat. B</u> Not less than 180 students	73.4		
	Ang Mo kio		NA		NA		NA		
	Jurong West 1		76.9		78.9		58.0		
	Jurong West 2		62.9		97.4		73.3		
	Jurong West 3		NA		NA		NA		
	PCA 2		Bukit Batok 1		54.7		<u>Teacher Cat. A</u> Not less than 200 students	69.6	<u>Teacher Cat. A</u> Not less than 200 students
Woodlands			57.6	55.8	64.3				
Bukit Batok 2			38.7	53.5	25.0				
Marsiling			76.3	81.5	63.2				
Yishun			81.7	83.3	77.6				
PCA 3	Bedok		59.3		63.3		54.4		
	Changi		NA		47.6		27.0		
	Guthrie		NA		NA		NA		
	Tampines 1		76.9		89.5		66.3		
	Tampines 2		81.5		77.1		60.9		
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang		63.4		75.0		64.7		
	Teck Whye		74.0		93.0		82.6		
3.4 Medical Leave	Manager, EO, Snr. Teacher		Targeted for year 2012		Year 2012 achieved		Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014
PCA 1	Admiralty	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	3.7		All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below		5.8	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	4.1
	Ang Mo kio		NA				NA		0.0
	Jurong West 1		2.6	2.6		3.3			
	Jurong West 2		1.8	0.7		0.2			
	Jurong West 3		NA	NA		5.0			
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	4.0	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	3.3	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	4.0		
	Woodlands		1.2		2.5		5.8		
	Bukit Batok 2		1.8		1.0		0.3		
	Marsiling		4.1		7.9		5.0		
	Yishun		3.0		5.1		5.9		
PCA 3	Bedok	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	2.3	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	6.0	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	6.5		
	Changi		0.5		2.0		0.3		
	Tampines 1		3.4		2.5		1.2		
	Tampines 2		3.3		1.5		0.7		
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	2.0	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	2.3	All centres - 2.0 Man Days or Below	1.9		
	Teck Whye		4.0		2.7		6.3		

Table 9: The results for the Action Plan and Work Plan for the centres for 2012, 2013 & 2014

Evaluation Criteria	Involvement	Targeted for year 2012	Year 2012 achieved	Targeted for year 2013	Year 2013 achieved	Targeted for year 2014	Year 2014 achieved
4.1 Ensure the Purchase of books by student in post secondary	Manager, EO, Snr. Teacher, CSO						
PCA 1	Admiralty	80% of students purchase of books	87.2	80% of students purchase of books	72.0	80% of students purchase of books	35.0
	Ang Mo kio		26.0		64.0		94.0
	Jurong West 1		73.0		81.0		50.0
	Jurong West 2		97.4		87.0		55.0
	Jurong West 3		57.6		94.0		50.0
PCA 2	Bukit Batok 1	80% of students purchase of books	41.2	80% of students purchase of books	19.0	80% of students purchase of books	29.0
	Woodlands		37.1		36.0		38.0
	Bukit Batok 2		28.8		64.0		55.0
	Marsiling		62.2		67.0		61.0
	Yishun		45.8		63.0		59.0
PCA 3	Bedok	80% of students purchase of books	46.0	80% of students purchase of books	85.0	80% of students purchase of books	85.0
	Changi		67.5		NA		NA
	Guthrie		NA		NA		NA
	Tampines 1		91.0		85.0		88.0
	Tampines 2		82.0		88.0		84.0
PCA 4	Choa Chu Kang	80% of students purchase of books	26.0	80% of students purchase of books	64.0	80% of students purchase of books	85.0
	Teck Whye		0.06		14.0		41.0

Example of Andalus branding advert in BH published on 17 May 2014.

“Telah datang kebenaran, lenyaplah kebatilan,
sesungguhnya kebatilan itu pasti lenyap.”
(Al-Isra: 81)

الحقيقة

Menimba Ilmu untuk Mencari Kebenaran

Membina Insan Adabi Dengan Pendidikan Sepadu Sepanjang Hayat

Kita mendambakan kebenaran (haqiqah) agar memahami realiti kewujudan di alam nyata dan alam ghaib. Hakikat kebenaran boleh tercapai dengan menghayati ilmu-ilmu Fardhu 'Ain dan ilmu-ilmu Fardhu Kifayah secara beradab. Insan yang sentiasa mencari dan menegakkan kebenaran akan sedar peranannya sebagai hamba Allah swt dan berusaha melaksanakan perintahNya.

Kami menyokong dengan sepenuh hati usaha gigih anda menimba ilmu dan mengamalkan agama dengan menyediakan pengajian Islam sepadu, bertahap dan berstruktur untuk peringkat pra-sekolah, kanak-kanak, remaja, belia dan dewasa. Marilah kita bersama-sama membentuk insan-insan mulia dan masyarakat berwibawa bagi kejayaan di dunia dan di akhirat.

Sila Buat Pilihan Anda Dari Program-Pendidikan Andalus, Cordova dan Al-Zuhri.

Program Andalus dan Cordova	Program Al-Zuhri	Perkhidmatan Darul Andalus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kelas Bimbingan Nursery (KBN) Kelas Bimbingan Pra-Sekolah (KPS) Kelas Bimbingan Kanak-Kanak (KKB) Kelas Bimbingan Menengah (KBM) Kelas Bimbingan Remaja (KBR) Kelas Bimbingan Dewasa (KBD) Pra-Diploma Pengajian Islam (PPI) Diploma Pengajian Islam (DPI) Islah (Bimbingan kanak, remaja dan dewasa) Tahfiz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarjana Muda Pengajian Islam (SMPI) Diploma Pengajian Islam (DPI) Diploma Perguruan Pendidikan Islam (DPP) Diploma Pengajian Al-Quran dan Al-Sunnah (DPQS) Diploma Pengajian Bahasa Arab (DPBA) Pre-Diploma Pengajian Islam (PPI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sijil Pengajian Ugama (SPU) Sijil Pengajian Al-Quran (SPA) Sijil Pengajian Bahasa Arab (SPBA) Sijil Psikologi Islam dan Kaunseling (SPK) Sijil Pengajian Ibadah Harian (SPH) Kursus-Kursus Pendek Penerbit dan Pengedar Buku Teks/Latihan, Quran, Kamus Arab dan Buku-Buku Bacaan Umum Andalusia Mensial pelbagai jenis produk gaya hidup Muslim.

Cawangan-Cawangan Andalus

Admiralty : Blk 678A Woodlands Ave 6 #03-06 Tel: 6269-1180	Ang Mo Kio : Blk 619 Ang Mo Kio Ave 4 #01-1072 Tel: 64596016	Bukit Batok I : Blk 153 Bukit Batok St 11 #04-286 Tel: 6567-1570	Bukit Batok II : Blk 276 Bukit Batok East Ave 4 #02-110 Tel: 6567-8981	Changi : No. 5 Jalan Masjid #01-10 Kembarangan Court Tel: 6440-6343	Choo Chu Kang : Blk 220 Choo Chu Kang Central #01-266 Tel: 6757-8393	Guthrie : 150 Changi Road #02-01 Guthrie Building Tel: 6348-6205	Jurong West I : Blk 503 Jurong West Ave 1 #04-853 Tel: 6563-6796
Jurong West II : Blk 962 Jurong West St 91 #03-302 Tel: 6794-7870	Jurong West III : Blk 153 Yung Ho Road #01-35 Tel: 6265-0586	Marling : Blk 306A Woodlands St 31 #04-01 Tel: 6363-6269	Tampines I : Blk 2010 Tampines St 21 #02-1155 Tel: 6784-2154	Tampines II : Blk 361 Tampines St 34 #01-401 Tel: 6784-8769	Teck Whye Woodlands : Blk 140 Teck Whye Lane #02-361 Tel: 6760-0512	Woodlands : 268 Woodlands Centre Rd #04-04/05 Woodlands Point Tel: 6363-9424	Yishun : Blk 102 Yishun Ave 5 #02-107 Tel: 6257-7986

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AL-ZUHRI WISMA INDAH : 448 Changi Road #04-07 Tel: 6344-9252

Cawangan-Cawangan Cordova

Hougang I : Blk 452 Hougang Ave 10 #01-565 Tel: 6387-2117	Hougang II : Blk 445 Hougang Ave 8 #01-1615 Tel: 6387-2117	Hougang III : Blk 444 Hougang Ave 8 #01-1591 Tel: 6387-2117	Hougang IV : Blk 222 Hougang St 21 #01-134 Tel: 6283-6771
Pasir Ris I : Blk 473 Pasir Ris Dr 6 #01-498 Tel: 6582-2127	Pasir Ris II : Blk 474 Pasir Ris Dr 6 #01-568 Tel: 6582-2127	Pasir Ris III : Blk 476 Pasir Ris Dr 6 #01-538 Tel: 6582-2127	Pasir Ris IV : Blk 452 Pasir Ris St 21 #01-203 Tel: 6582-2127

DARUL ANDALUS UBI : Blk 3017 Ubi Road 1 #02-129 Tel: 6746-1657
DARUL ANDALUS WISMA INDAH : No 448 Changi Road #01-04 Tel: 6440-7086

DARUL ANDALUS GOLDEN LANDMARK : 390 Victoria Street #01-45 Tel: 6296-7489
AL-ZUHRI WISMA INDAH : 448 Changi Road #04-07 Tel: 6344-9252

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Cawangan-Cawangan Cordova

Hougang I : Blk 452 Hougang Ave

Example of Andalus advertorial in BH published on 19 October 2013

KELUARAN KHAS PENDIDIKAN

Mengasuh generasi INSAN ADABI

Pengajian di Andalus jadi bekal bagi keluarga bercang topik-topik semasa dan ehwal agama dengan lebih menyeluruh

SHAMSUL JANGARON
shamsul@bh.com.sg

SESI makan malam bagi Encik Mohamad Fazlun Abdul Wahid kini menjadi peluang bagi beliau bersama isteri dan anak-anak membincangkan pelbagai isu dan keprihatinan semasa.

Namun berbeza dengan perbincangan ala 'keda kopi', ia dipenuhi pandangan dan perspektif yang berhubung kait dengan nas-nas atau panduan Islam.

Ini katanya membolehkan beliau, seorang guru, membekalkan anak-anak dan isteri bukan sahaja tentang pandangan yang biasa dibincangkan ramai, tetapi juga pandangan yang lebih menyeluruh dari sudut agama, dalam usahanya mengasuh generasi insan adabi semasa dan akan datang.

"Alhamdulillah, pengajian yang saya ikuti di Andalus telah mampu membekalkan saya dengan pengetahuan dan kefahaman agama yang membolehkan kami sekeluarga membincangkan topik-topik semasa dan ehwal agama dengan lebih menyeluruh, namun berlandaskan pada prinsip-prinsip agama yang berpegangan. Bukan sekadar buai-buai kosong," kata Encik Mohamad Fazlun, 37 tahun.

Misalnya, antara topik yang beliau sekeluarga bincangkan di meja makan itu termasuk masalah kewangan dan hutang, sesuatu yang disifatkan beliau sebagai antara masalah yang sering dihadapi masyarakat Melayu Singapura.

Malah, menurut bapa empat orang anak itu, isterinya pernah menanyakan tentang hukum menjaga dan menghormati aurat wanita.

"Pada dasarnya, isu menghormati aurat ini boleh menjadi kontroversial. Tapi hasil ilmu yang diraih di Andalus, saya mampu menjelmakan keprihatinan tersebut dengan bersandarkan pandangan berdasar prinsip-prinsip agama, dan dengan membincangkannya bersama, kami sekeluarga dapat memahaminya dengan lebih baik," kata Encik Mohamad Fazlun.

Encik Mohamad Fazlun merupakan antara beberapa karyawan yang memilih untuk memperkayakan pengetahuan Islam di Andalus kerana selain aspek teori, kelas turut membincangkan tentang amalan teoritik dalam konteks kehidupan di Singapura yang serba moden dan berbilang kaum dan agama.

Turut menguak pandangan beliau, seorang lagi peserta DPI di Andalus, Cik Hazirah Djuanda, 25 tahun, berkata perbincangan dalam kelas menjadikan pengalaman menimba ilmu agama di pusat itu sesuatu yang progresif dan sesuai bagi konteks kehidupan di republik ini.

Selain itu, beliau juga menggunakan nilai-nilai dan pendekatan yang sesuai untuk menarik perhatian para pelajar agar dapat memberikan tumpuan yang lebih baik dalam pelajaran mereka.

Menurut Pemangku Pengarah Eksekutif Divisyen Pendidikan Andalus, Ustaz Fathurrahman Dawood, konsep ini adalah yang diterapkan dalam program-program yang ditawarkan di Andalus diterima baik oleh peserta kerana ia "sangat serasi dan sesuai memelihara tempat dan masa".

"Konsep ini membimbing para peserta memahami dan menghayati prinsip-prinsip penting dan nilai-nilai murni bersandarkan ajaran Islam dalam setiap aspek kehidupan, sesuai dengan peranannya sebagai seorang ibu atau bapa, pekerja, pelajar dan sebagainya... Mudah-mudahan, setiap pemikiran serta tingkah laku mereka berteraskan ilmu serta nilai mulia yang dipelajari semasa pengajian."

— Ustaz Fathurrahman Dawood
«Pemangku Pengarah Eksekutif Divisyen Pendidikan Andalus»



MEMBINA KELUARGA SAKINAH: Encik Mohd Fazlun bersama isteri, Cik Noorani Samat, dan anak-anak mereka, (dari kanan) Ahmad Nabih, Ainaa Nushrah, Aftas Nur'ayni dan Anis Nurisya. Sesi makan bersama sering dijadikan mereka sekeluarga membincangkan tentang isu-isu semasa yang diseling-seling dengan pandangan Islam. — Foto SHAMSUL JANGARON

CIK HAZIRAH DJUANDA: Peserta DPI di Andalus ini turut pengalaman menimba ilmu agama di pusat itu sesuatu yang progresif dan sesuai bagi konteks kehidupan masa kini.

diajar dalam DPI di Andalus mempunyai nilai-nilai universal yang baik yang dapat diterapkan dalam tugas harian sebagai seorang guru.

"Pernah timbul satu konflik di antara beberapa pelajar saya dan saya menggunakan nilai-nilai tersebut untuk membantu menguraikan konflik itu," kata guru bahasa Melayu itu.

Selain itu, beliau juga menggunakan nilai-nilai dan pendekatan yang sesuai untuk menarik perhatian para pelajar agar dapat memberikan tumpuan yang lebih baik dalam pelajaran mereka.

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Andalus dan Cordova berkembang

ANDALUS dan Cordova akan membuka enam cawangan di beberapa kawasan sedia ada dan baru pada awal tahun depan bagi memenuhi permintaan mendapatkan pendidikan agama yang terus meningkat.

Cawangan-cawangan tersebut terletak di Teck Whye, Chua Chu Kang, Ang Mo Kio, Changi Road, Hougang dan Pasir Ris.

Beberapa cawangan baru tersebut telah pun membuka pendaftaran bagi kelas-kelas 2014, termasuk dari peringkat prasekolah hingga ke tahap dewasa. Manakala, baki cawangan baru dijangka akan buka permohonan tidak lama lagi.

Pembukaan cawangan-cawangan tambahan dan baru itu akan menjadikan bilangan pelajar yang mampu mengikuti pengajian di institusi pendidikan agama swasta meningkat kepada sekitar 11,000 di 17 lokasi Andalus, dan 3,900 di 10 lokasi Cordova.

Menyifatkan permintaan itu sebagai "satu trend positif", Pengarah Divisyen Pengurusan Andalus, Encik Abdullah Othman, berkata ia lebih ketara di tahap posmenengah.

"Kini berhadapan dalam 10 tahun mendatang, khusus bagi golongan yang berusia 17 tahun ke atas, 80 peratus masyarakat kita akan mendapat pendidikan agama sehingga tahap menengah, dan 20 peratus ke tahap posmenengah (diploma dan ijazah)," kata Encik Abdullah.

Sementara itu, beliau menambah pihaknya sedang meneka wadai pengajian agama secara dalaman talian dan, jika semua berjalan lancar, "ia dijangka berfungsi pada 2015".

Berkenaan tenaga pengajar tambahan yang diperlukan bagi menyokong cawangan-cawangan baru itu, Encik Abdullah berkata pihaknya tidak



ENCIK ABDULLAH OTHMAN: Pembukaan cawangan baru "satu trend positif". — Foto BH

melihatnya sebagai satu masalah kerana "kami terus menerima permohonan perijawatan yang positif dari kalangan asatizah dan karyawan sepanjang tahun".

"Secara am, ramai yang sudah dan ingin berkhidmat dan berbakti di Andalus dan Cordova, terdorong dengan visi dan misi ke arah mewujudkan insan mulia dan masyarakat berjaya, sejajar dengan ajaran Islam," kata Encik Abdullah.

Bagi seorang ibu, Cik Rasiyah Buang, beliau menghantar dua anaknya — Hidayat dan Khairi Malik — ke kelas agama di Andalus cawangan Teck Whye kerana yakin dengan format pendidikan berstruktur yang diamlkan.

"Format ini membolehkan saya melihat kemajuan yang dicapai anak-anak saya, dan saya harap Andalus dapat mendorong mereka untuk terus menyambung pengajian agama di peringkat yang selanjutnya," kata Cik Rasiyah, yang turut mengikuti kelas Pra Diploma Pengajian Islam di Andalus.

Al-Quran Perkata bakal diterbitkan

SEBAGAI menyokong misi dan visi Andalus, syarikat penerbitan Darul Andalus bakal menerbitkan Al-Quran Perkata yang dijangka siap tahun depan — Al-Quran pertama seumpama itu yang dihasilkan sebuah syarikat penerbitan Singapura.

Al-Quran Perkata mengandungi penterjemahan ayat dan penterjemahan bagi setiap perkataan.

Semua penterjemahan dari bahasa Arab kepada bahasa Melayu.

Menurut Penguasa Jabatan Penyelidikan dan Pembangunan Darul Andalus, Ustaz Siti Hafizah Ismail, langkah menerbitkan Al-Quran Perkata itu dijangka bukan sahaja mampu membolehkan masyarakat memahami isi kandungan ayat Al-Quran, malah secara langsung mempelajari perkataan-perkataan Arab.

"Dengan pengalaman menerbitkan Al-Quran Perkata yang pertama, ia membolehkan Darul Andalus meluaskan penerbitan Al-Quran di masa akan datang dalam pelbagai versi untuk memenuhi keperluan masyarakat," kata Ustazah Siti Hafizah.

Selain buku-buku agama, sebahagian besar buku yang dicetak Darul Andalus merupakan buku-buku teks agama yang digunakan pelbagai institusi pendidikan Islam setempat



SUMBER ILMU: Ustazah Siti Hafizah Ismail (duduk) dan Ustazah Siti Raudha Abdulnabih menunjukkan contoh salinan Al-Quran Perkata yang diterbitkan Darul Andalus. — Foto SHAMSUL JANGARON

termasuk Andalus, Cordova dan Al-Zuhri.

Memandangkan Singapura belum mempunyai badan penerbitan Al-Quran, Darul Andalus kini sedang dalam proses mendapatkan kelulusan dari Malaysia, iaitu menerusi Kementerian Dalam Negeri (KDN) dan Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia

(Jakim).

"Dengan kelulusan ini, Al-Quran Perkata yang bakal diedarkan terjamin kesahliannya, insya-Allah," jelas Ustazah Siti Hafizah.

Inisiatif menghasilkan Al-Quran ini dimulakan sejak 2010 dan ia melalui satu proses yang rumit bagi memastikan ia bebas dari sebarang kesalahan, termasuk sekutif dakwat mengotori halaman".

Tambah Ustazah Siti Hafizah, satu dorongan utama Darul Andalus membuat keputusan menerbitkan Al-Quran Perkata itu ialah kerana pihaknya "mendapati permintaan bagi Al-Quran, sama ada dalam versi cetak mahupun digital, terus kuat dan berkembang".

Mengalusi-luaskan penerbitan Al-Quran Perkata itu, seorang peserta Diploma Pengajian Al-Quran dan Al-Sunnah (DPQS) kendalian syarikat ke-rah Andalus, Institut Pengajian Tinggi Al-Zuhri, Cik Syafiqah Baderushah, 24 tahun, berkata Al-Quran sedemikian "dapat membimbing dan membantu pelajar seperti saya dalam memahami Al-Quran dengan lebih baik".

"Saya juga dapat memperkukuhkan penguasaan bahasa Arab melalui Al-Quran Perkata," tambah Cik Syafiqah, seorang pengawal trafik udara.

PENDAFTARAN 2014 SUDAH DIBUKA

CAWANGAN-CAWANGAN ANDALUS:

ADMIRALTY	: Bk 478 Woodlands Ave 6 #03-06	Tel: 6269-1180
BEDOK RESERVOIR	: Bk 660 Jalan Temasek #01-134	Tel: 6748-0270
BUKIT BATOK I	: Bk 153 Bukit Batok St 11 #04-286	Tel: 6567-1570
BUKIT BATOK II	: Bk 276 Bukit Batok East Ave 4 #02-119	Tel: 6567-9881
CHANGI	: No. 5 Jalan Masjid #01-10 Kembangan Court	Tel: 6440-6343
CHOA CHU KANG	: Bk 220 Choa Chu Kang Central #B1-226	Tel: 6767-8393
GUTHRIE	: 150 Changi Road #02-01 Guthrie Building	Tel: 6348-6205
JURONG WEST I	: Bk 503 Jurong West Ave 1 #04-853	Tel: 6563-6796

CAWANGAN-CAWANGAN CORDOVA:

HOUGANG I	: Bk 452 Hougang Ave 10 #B1-565	Tel: 6387-2117
HOUGANG II	: Bk 445 Hougang Ave 8 #B1-1615	Tel: 6387-2117
HOUGANG III (Kovan)	: Bk 222 Hougang St 21 #B1-134 (berdekatan MRT Kovan)	Tel: 6283-6771

JURONG WEST II	: Bk 962 Jurong West St 91 #03-302	Tel: 6794-7870
JURONG WEST III	: Bk 153 Yung Ho Road #B1-35	Tel: 6265-0586
MARSILING	: Bk 306A Woodlands St 31 #04-01	Tel: 6363-6269
TAMPINES I	: Bk 201D Tampines St 21 #04-1155	Tel: 6784-2154
TAMPINES II	: Bk 361 Tampines St 34 #01-401	Tel: 6784-8769
TECK WHYE	: Bk 140 Teck Whye Lane #02-361	Tel: 6760-0612
WOODLANDS	: 268 Woodlands Centre Road #04-04/05 Woodlands Centre Road	Tel: 6363-9424
YISHUN	: Bk 102 Yishun Ave 5 #02-107	Tel: 6257-7986

PASIR RIS I	: Bk 473 Pasir Ris Drive 6 #B1-498	Tel: 6382-2127
PASIR RIS II	: Bk 474 Pasir Ris Drive 6 #B1-568	Tel: 6382-2127
PASIR RIS III	: Bk 476 Pasir Ris Drive 6 #B1-538	Tel: 6382-2127

	ANDALUS	CORDOVA
Yuran Pendaftaran	\$12	\$12
Yuran Bulanan	Giro	Giro
KBN, KBPS, KBK, KBR	\$41 sebulan	\$40 sebulan
KBM	\$56 sebulan	\$40 - 2 1/2 jam
KBD	\$38 sebulan	\$35 sebulan
PPI	\$74 sebulan	\$70 sebulan
DPI	\$79 sebulan	\$75 sebulan
PIT (Cordova)	-	\$17 sebulan
PIS IQRA dan PIS Al-Quran	-	\$40 sebulan
PIS (Andalus) Tafriz Al-Hifz bil Fahmi	\$36 sebulan	-
Klinik Al-Quran	\$44 sebulan	\$40 sebulan
IIE Primary	\$66 - 6 sesi	\$65 - 6 sesi
IIE Secondary	\$46 sebulan	-
	\$56 sebulan	-

Waktu Pejabat:
Isnin - Khamis: 9 pagi hingga 5 petang
Sabtu - Ahad: 8 pagi hingga 5 petang
Jumaat: Cuti

Appendix F-1

The sample letter for the Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2009.
The survey was conducted every 2 years.

Andalus Corporation Pte Ltd



13 Julai 2009
20 Rejab 1430H

Waris Pelajar Yang Dihormati,

Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Tuan/Puan

TINJAUAN TAHUNAN ANDALUS 2009

Semoga anda sekeluarga sentiasa bahagia dan dirahmati Allah s.w.t.

Andalus ingin menjalankan tinjauan tahunan di semua cawangannya. Matlamat tinjauan tahunan ini ialah untuk mengumpulkan maklumat dari anda mengenai khidmat yang kami sediakan. Dengan adanya maklum balas berkenaan, kami boleh meninjau dan mengambil langkah-langkah bersesuaian untuk aspek-aspek perkhidmatan yang masih perlu dipertingkatkan, insya Allah.

Besar harapan kami agar anda dapat meluangkan sedikit waktu untuk memberikan maklum balas berkaitan. Sila isikan borang tinjauan ini dan pulangkan ke cawangan kami sebelum akhir Ogos 2009.

Maklum balas anda amat bernilai dan kesudian anda memberi respon kepada tinjauan ini amat kami hargai. Terima kasih. Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Salam hormat,

Abdullah Bin Othman
Pengarah Pentadbiran

Bagi setiap kenyataan di bawah ini, sila tandakan (X) di dalam kotak yang paling hampir menggambarkan pengalaman anda dengan kami.

A Asatizah		Sangat Setuju	Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Pasti
1	Asatizah memberikan contoh teladan yang baik.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Asatizah bijak menguruskan isu-isu yang saya anggap sensitif dan peribadi.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Mudah membuat temujanji untuk berbincang dengan asatizah yang mengajar anak saya.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Asatizah peramah terhadap para waris.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Rungutan saya tidak segera diselesaikan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Asatizah memastikan semua pertanyaan saya dijawab.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Maklum balas mengenai permasalahan anak saya tidak diberikan dengan segera.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Asatizah mendorong anak saya agar lebih bermotivasi.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Pelajar		Sangat Setuju	Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Pasti
9	Anak saya lebih cenderung belajar agama.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Ada peningkatan ilmu agama pada anak saya.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Ada peningkatan amalan (<i>ibadah</i>) pada diri anak saya.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Ada peningkatan amalan (<i>akhlak mulia</i>) pada diri anak saya.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C Khidmat Pelanggan		Sangat Setuju	Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Pasti

13	Keperluan saya di kaunter diurus dengan berkesan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Pegawai membuat saya merasakan yang mereka menghargai saya.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Pegawai memberi beberapa saranan yang berguna untuk memenuhi keperluan saya.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Pegawai berpengetahuan mengenai produk atau perkhidmatan yang saya inginkan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Jangkamasa menunggu sebelum saya dilayani oleh pegawai tidak munasabah.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Pegawai mengekalkan keramahannya walaupun pada waktu sibuk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Pegawai kurang bijaksana apabila berurusan dengan isu yang saya rasakan sensitif dan bersifat peribadi.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Pegawai akan memastikan semua pertanyaan saya dijawab.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D	Telefon	Sangat Setuju	Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Pasti
21	Pegawai tidak dapat memberi sepenuh perhatian pada saya semasa berbual di telefon.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	Pegawai berupaya menjawab semua pertanyaan saya dalam satu panggilan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	Jangkamasa yang diambil untuk menjawab pesanan suara (voice mail) saya adalah munasabah.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Panggilan saya dijawab dengan segera.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	Khidmat Keseluruhan	Amat Berpuas Hati	Berpuas Hati	Tidak Berpuas Hati	Amat Tidak Berpuas Hati	Tidak Pasti

- | | | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 25 | Pada keseluruhannya saya berpuas hati dengan perkhidmatan di cawangan ini. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Amat Berpuas Hati | Berpuas Hati | Tidak Berpuas Hati | Amat Tidak Berpuas Hati | Tidak Pasti |
| 26 | Pada keseluruhannya saya berpuas hati dengan kualiti pengajaran di cawangan ini. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Pasti Akan Sarankan | Akan Sarankan | Tidak Akan Sarankan | Pasti Tidak Akan Sarankan | Tidak Pasti |
| 27 | Saya akan sarankan Andalus kepada teman-teman dan saudara-mara. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Amat Wajar | Wajar | Tidak Wajar | Amat Tidak Wajar | Tidak Pasti |
| 28 | Yuran yang saya bayar pada Andalus adalah wajar dengan kualiti keseluruhan perkhidmatan. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | | | | |

F Komen-komen tambahan

F Sila tuliskan butiran anda

Nama _____ Emel: _____

No. telefon _____ (Rumah) _____ (Bimbit)

G Sila tandakan (X) di kotak cawangan anak anda (Cawangan Andalus)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admiralty | <input type="checkbox"/> Changi | <input type="checkbox"/> Marsiling | <input type="checkbox"/> Teck Whye |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedok Reservoir | <input type="checkbox"/> Choa Chu Kang | <input type="checkbox"/> Tampines 1(Blk 201D) | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodlands Point |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bukit Batok 1(Blk 153) | <input type="checkbox"/> Jurong West 1(Blk 503) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tampines 2(Blk 361) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yishun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bukit Batok 2 (Blk 276) | <input type="checkbox"/> Jurong West 2 (Blk 962) | | |

- Saya membayar yuran melalui kaedah: ☐ GIRO ☐ Bukan GIRO

Terima kasih di atas kerjasama dan sokongan anda.

A sample report for the Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2009.

REPORT: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY (2009)¹

The Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted in July 2009 and the findings finalized in March 2010. This survey aims to gauge the satisfaction level among Andalus customers and identifies possible areas for improving its services. Collectively, the result of the survey allows Andalus to work towards the following objectives:

- To determine the perceived quality of its services and customer care
- To improve its customer retention
- To acquire the relevant quality service accreditation

Survey Methodology and Design

The primary customers targeted for this exercise are the parents. The survey instrument contained 28 statements. In order to gain a substantial insight, the instrument was divided into 3 segments. The first segment measured the service quality rendered through three critical customer contact points: Customer Service Officers, Asatizah and the Telephone. The second segment probed for Andalus's teaching effectiveness and the third segment queried for the organisation overall image. (See Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire).

The servqual model is used in the survey exercises. Customer interaction is an interplay between the Task Dimension and Human Dimension. Task Dimension refers to doing the best to give customers what they needed or requested. Human Dimension refers to the interpersonal interaction between the service providers and customers. Within each Dimension are critical and relevant service attributes.

¹ The survey was carried out by the Andalus Administration and Information Technology Department. The writer (Abdullah Othman) was the Director of this department and overall in charge of the planning, execution and the production of the report. Ms Khairunnuda Ismail as the Executive Officer in this department assisted the writer in carrying out the survey and she was also assisted by Ms Zaiton Hashim. The use of the data for this survey for this thesis was agreed upon by the Andalus Board of Directors.

Table 10: Elements that were measured.

Dimensions	Service attributes	Descriptions
Task	Reliability	Accurate and consistent when processing customers' needs
	Responsiveness	Prompt and willing to take appropriate actions to serve customers
Human	Empathy	Sensitive and attentive to customers' needs, making customers feel valued and appreciated
	Assurance	Inspire customers' trust and confidence towards the organisation.

Distribution of Questionnaires and Response Rate

A self-completion approach was adopted for this exercise. A total number of 8164 questionnaire forms were distributed to all parents via their children at the respective centres between 13 July 2009 to 31 October 2009. The target sample size was set to 70% of the population as at July 2009 (which is 5714).

A total of 4879 forms (60%) were returned by the 31 October 2009. 350 (4%) forms were subsequently rejected for improper or incomplete entries. In the final analysis, 4529 forms were used. This equates to 56% of the population size. This is a gap of about 14% from the targeted sample size (70%):

Actual forms used	Students population	Percentage
4529	8164	56%

Table 11: Submission status from each Andalus centre.

Centre	Student population @ Jul 2009	Forms received	Forms used in analysis	% based on received forms
Admiralty	1616	1129	1054	70
Bedok Reservoir	124	102	76	82
Bukit Batok 1	503	289	284	57
Bukit Batok 2	73	53	53	73
Changi	102	52	48	51
Choa Chu Kang	618	432	407	70
Jurong West I	691	506	478	73
Jurong West 2	335	241	229	72
Marsiling	826	435	390	53
Tampines 1	1589	777	706	49
Tampines 2	424	190	181	45
Teck Whye	295	226	199	77
Woodlands	398	199	193	50
Yishun	570	248	231	44
Total	8164	4879	4529	60

Analysis Methodology

The rating scale used has five response alternatives on an agreement scale:

1. Totally Agree (Sangat Setuju)
2. Agree (Setuju)
3. Disagree (Tidak Setuju)
4. Totally Disagree (Sangat Tidak Setuju)
5. Not Sure (Tidak Pasti)

To reduce the possibility of any bias or skewed results, the survey statements consisted of a combination of positively and negatively worded statements. These were then interpreted into the appropriate favorable and unfavorable responses. At the same time, the “Not Sure/ Tidak Pasti” scale was intentionally included.

Table 12: Rating interpretation

Ratings	Interpretations	
Totally Agree (Sangat Setuju)	A highly favourable response, indicating very good service performance	Very Satisfied customers
Agree (Setuju)	An favourable response, indicating good service performance	Satisfied customers
Disagree (Tidak Setuju)	An unfavourable response, indicating poor service performance	Dissatisfied customers
Totally Disagree (Sangat Tidak Setuju)	A highly unfavourable response, indicating very poor service performance	Very Dissatisfied customers
Not Sure (Tidak Pasti)	A situation where customers do not have any impression or opinion on the service performance	Neutral customers

Findings of the Survey

Overall Service Rating in Task Dimension

Chart 1 illustrates the organisation face-to-face service level within the Task Dimension at two contact points – CSO and Asatizah. The attributes measured here are Reliability and Responsiveness.

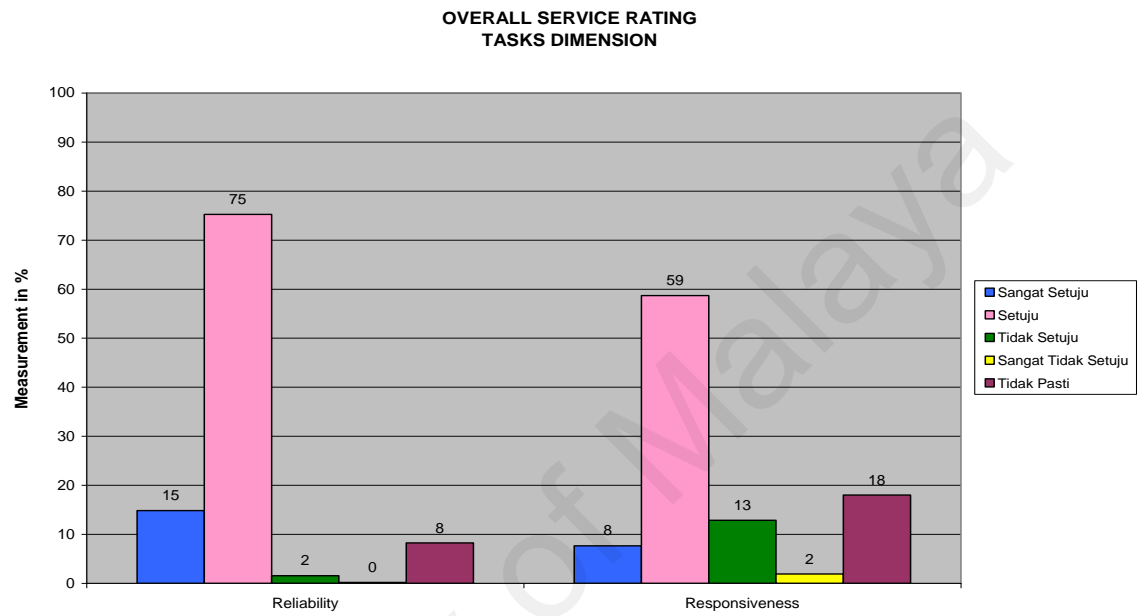


Chart 1: Measurement of reliability and responsiveness in Task Dimension

Keynotes for Task Dimension:

- The satisfaction average rating in task dimension is 78.5%.
- 11.5% of the respondents were registered as Very Satisfied and 67% were registered as Satisfied.
- The dissatisfaction average rating in task dimension is 8.5%.
- The neutral average rating is at 13%

Task	Ratings
Satisfaction	78.5%
Dissatisfaction	8.5%
Neutral	13%

Breakdown of Task Dimension - Reliability

Task	Ratings
Satisfaction	90%
Dissatisfaction	2%
Neutral	8%

Breakdown of Task Dimension - Responsiveness

Task	Ratings
Satisfaction	67%
Dissatisfaction	15%
Neutral	18%

Overall Service Rating in Human Dimension

Chart 2 illustrates the organisation face-to-face service level in the Human Dimension at two contact points – CSO and Asatizah. The attributes measured here are Assurance and Empathy.

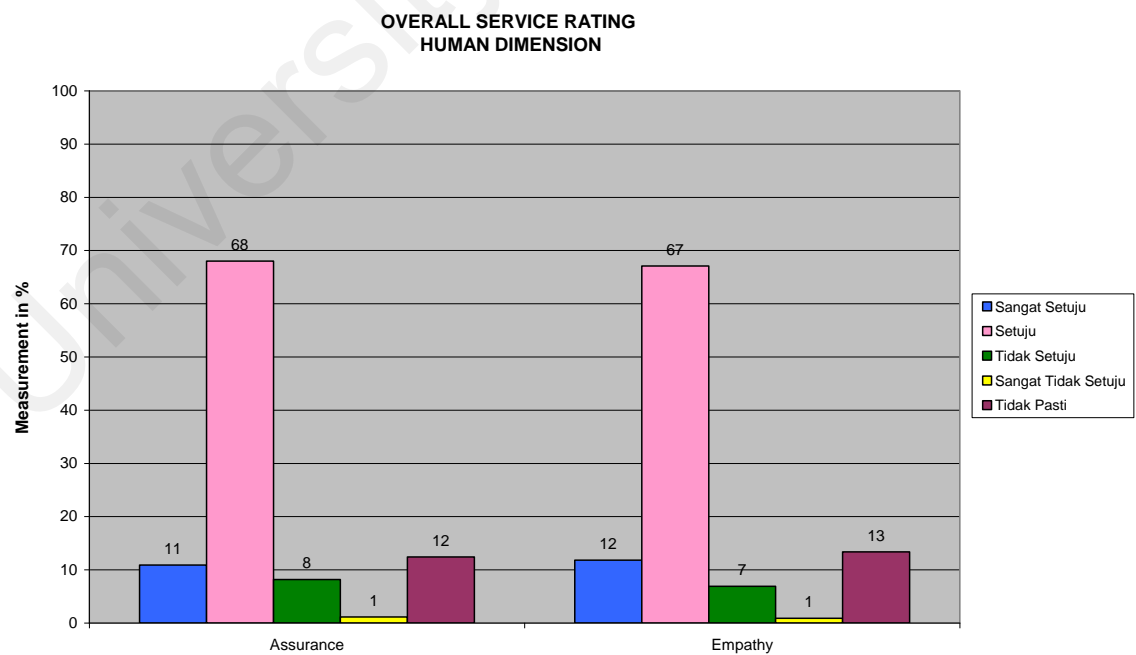


Chart 2: Measurement of assurance and empathy in Human Dimension

Keynotes:

- The average number of satisfied customer is 79%.
- 11.5% of the respondents were Very Satisfied and 67.5% were just satisfied.
- The average number of dissatisfied customer is 8.5%
- The average number of neutral customer is 12.5%

Human Dimension	Ratings
Satisfaction	79%
Dissatisfaction	8.5%
Neutral	12.5%

Breakdown of Human Dimension - Assurance

Human Dimension	Ratings
Satisfaction	79%
Dissatisfaction	9%
Neutral	12%

Breakdown of Human Dimension - Empathy

Human Dimension	Ratings
Satisfaction	79%
Dissatisfaction	8%
Neutral	13%

Overall Service Rating in Telephone Services

In the provision of service over the telephone, professionalism is very much dependent on the service providers' ability to provide reliability and responsive service. Chart 3 illustrates the organisation telephone service level.

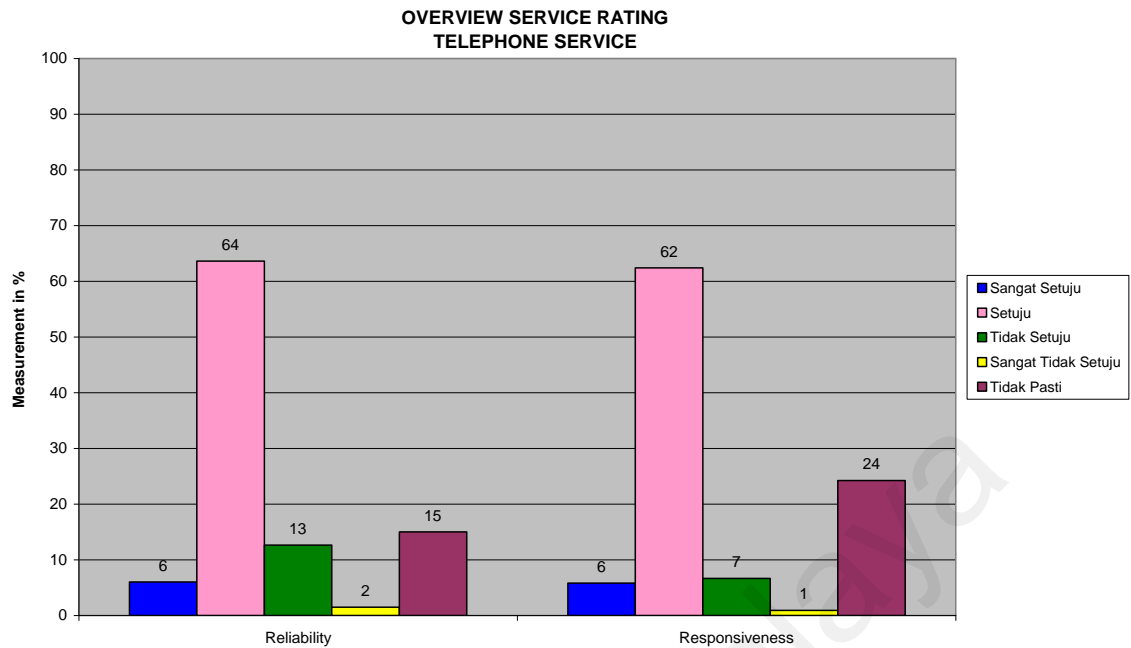


Chart 3: Measurement of reliability and responsiveness in Telephone service

Keynotes:

- The average number of satisfied customer is 69%.
- The average number of dissatisfied customer is 11.5%. Evidently, there is a lesser number of overall dissatisfied customer in the face to face interaction (8.5% - Task Dimension and 8.5% - Human Dimension).
- The average number of neutral customer is 19.5%.

Task	Ratings
Satisfaction	69%
Dissatisfaction	11.5%
Neutral	19.5%

Breakdown of Task Dimension – Reliability

Task	Ratings
Satisfaction	70%
Dissatisfaction	15%
Neutral	15%

Breakdown of Task Dimension – Responsiveness

Task	Ratings
Satisfaction	68%
Dissatisfaction	8%
Neutral	24%

Conclusion: Organization Performance at the Three Customer Contact Points

- The combined average number of satisfied customer is 75.5%.
- Face-to-face or direct customer contact of satisfied customers averages at 79% (Task and Human Dimensions).
- Telephone contact of satisfied customers averages at 69%
- The combined average number of dissatisfied customer is 9.5%
- The combined average number of neutral customer is 15%

Task	Ratings
Satisfaction	75.5%
Dissatisfaction	9.5%
Neutral	15%

Breakdown of Task Dimension

Task	Ratings
Reliability	90%
Responsiveness	67%
Assurance	79%
Empathy	79%
Telephone -Reliability	70%
Telephone - Responsiveness	68%

Strengths:

Balanced performance is noted between the Task (78.5%) and Human Dimension (79%). This positively implies that the service providers are adept at balancing both the technical and interpersonal aspects of their job.

Areas of Concern:

- While there is an improvement with telephone service, the rating of 70% and 68% can be further improved with consistent training and upgrading of telephone system.
- More can be done to bring up the responsiveness level of the staff
- Industry standard in Telephone Service rating is 80%

Breakdown in Service Rating – CSO

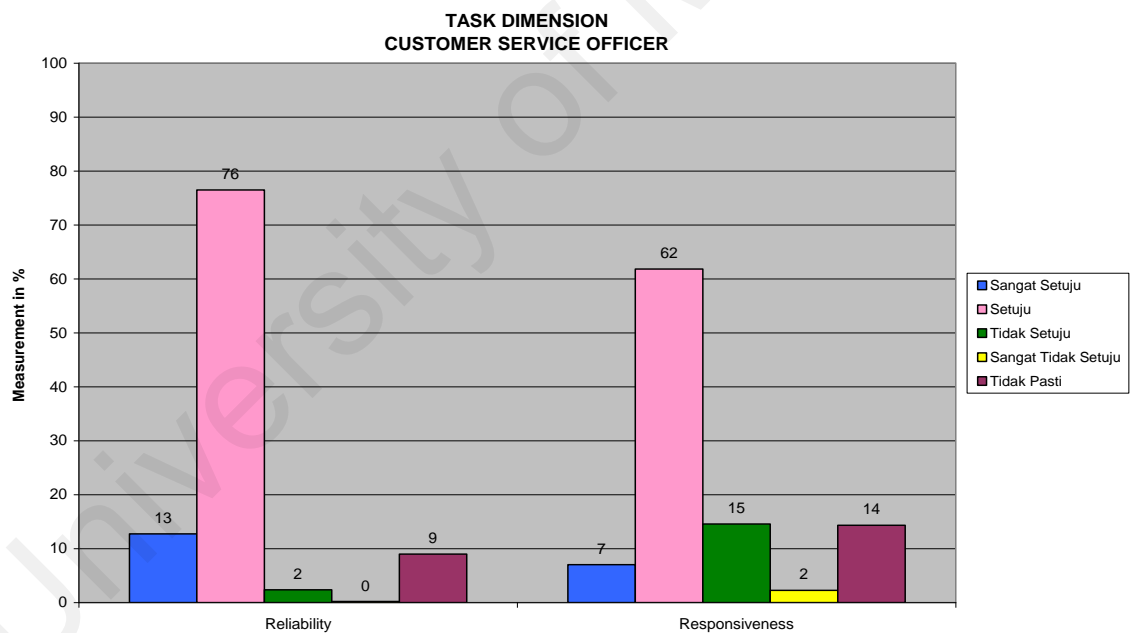


Chart 4a: Measurement of reliability and responsiveness of Customer service officer

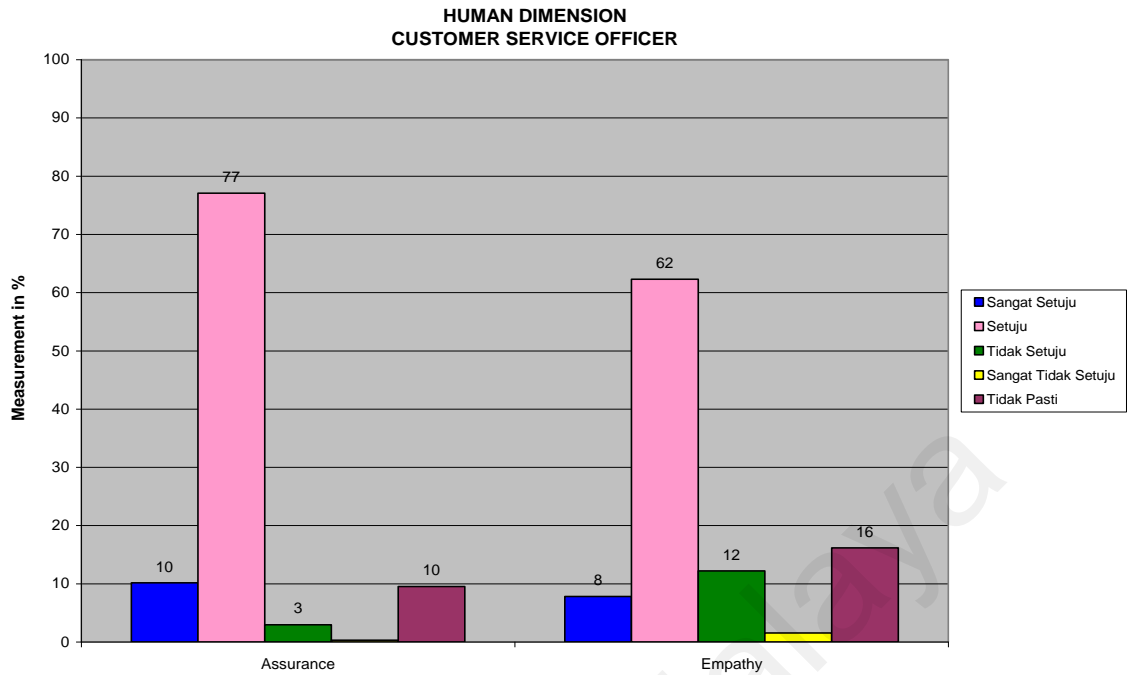


Chart 4b: Measurement of assurance and empathy of Customer service officer

The CSO service level is illustrated in Chart 4.

Keynotes:

- The average number of satisfied customer for both Dimensions is 79%
 - 9.5% of the respondents were Very Satisfied with the service quality delivered by the CSO and 69% were Satisfied.
 - The average number of dissatisfied customer is 8.5%.
 - The average number of neutral customer is 12%
 - The CSO are more adept at being reliable (89%) rather than being responsive (69%).
- On the other hand, they are better in their assurance factor (87%) rather than empathy (70%)

Task and Human	Ratings
Satisfaction	79%
Dissatisfaction	8.5%
Neutral	12%

Breakdown of Task and Human Dimension

Task and Human	Ratings
Reliability	89%
Responsiveness	69%
Assurance	87%
Empathy	70%

Further analysis into the unimpressive rating for Responsiveness revealed that the lack of speed and/or immediate attention as the major cause. The table below shows the tabulation of the Responsiveness rating

Table 13: Responsiveness rating

	Total score					Total response
	<i>Sangat Setuju</i>	<i>Setuju</i>	<i>Tidak Setuju</i>	<i>Sangat Tidak Setuju</i>	<i>Tidak Pasti</i>	
Statement on responsiveness: promptness						
** <i>Jangkamasa menunggu sebelum saya dilayani oleh pegawai munasabah</i>	132	2265	1214	191	727	4529
	2.9%	50%	26.8%	4.2%	16.1%	

** *Reversed questions used in the questionnaire*

Breakdown in Service Rating – Asatizah

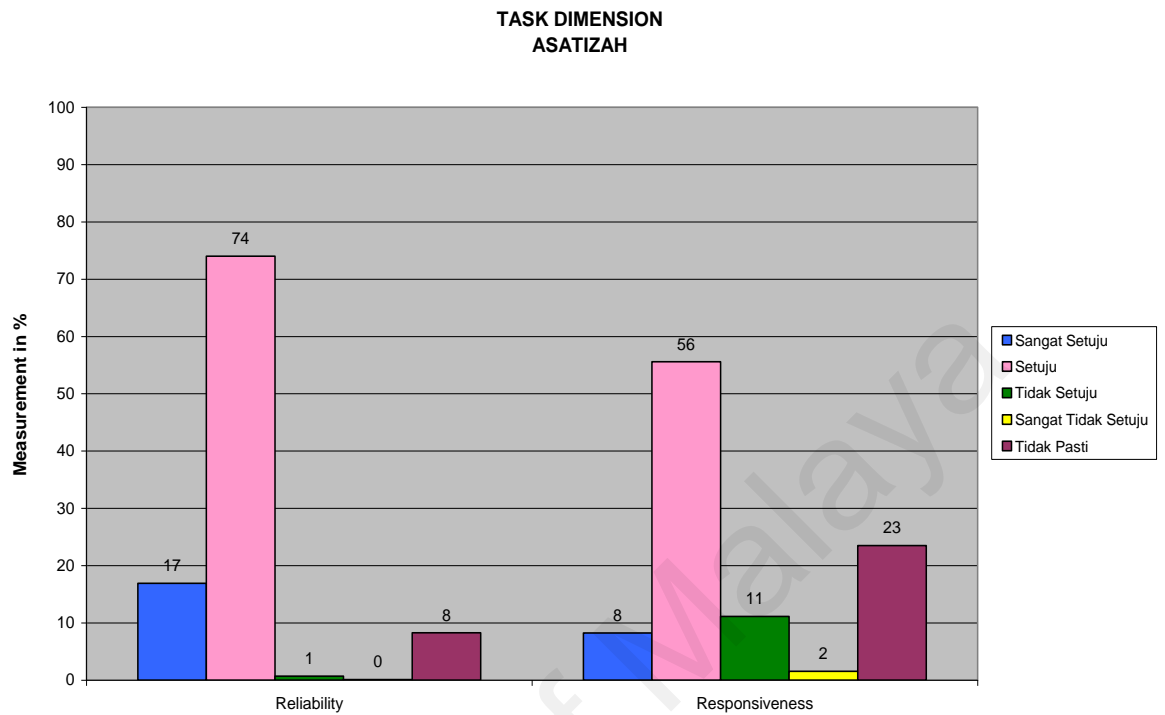


Chart 5a: Measurement of reliability and responsiveness of Asatizah

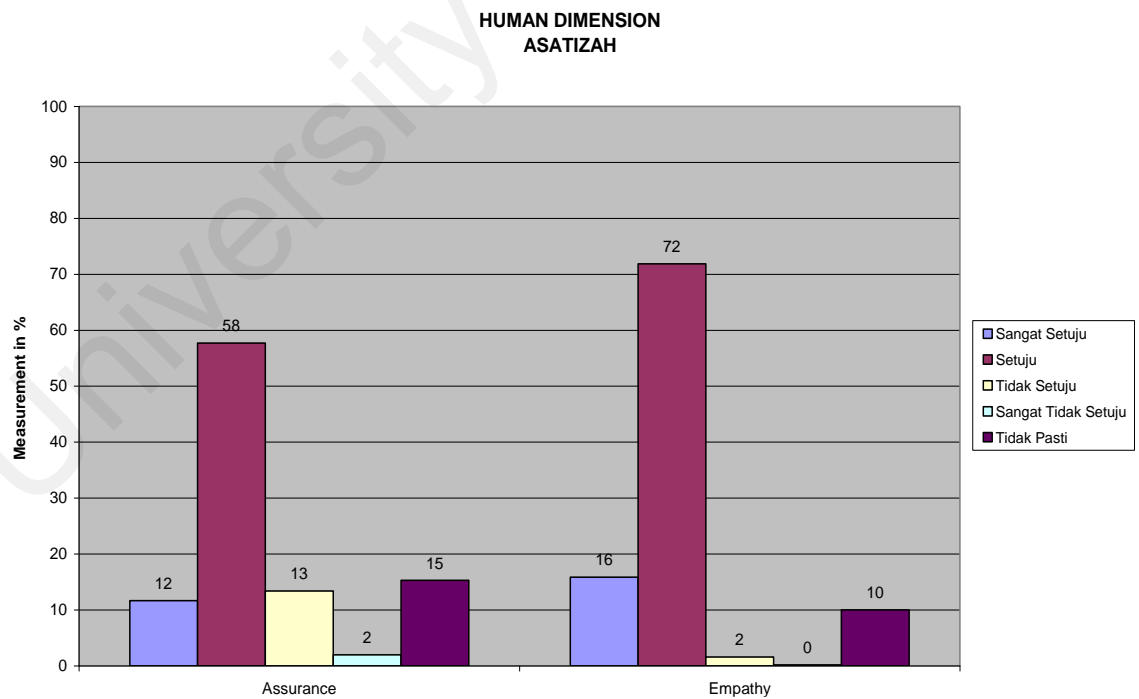


Chart 5b: Measurement of assurance and empathy of Asatizah

The Asatizah performance service level is illustrated in Chart 5.

Keynotes:

- The average satisfaction rating in both dimensions is 78%
- 13% of the respondents were registered as Very Satisfied with the service quality delivered by the Asatizah and 65% were Satisfied
- The dissatisfaction average rating is 8%
- The neutral average rating is 14%
- In the Task Dimension, the Asatizah were rated 91% for their Reliability and 64% for their Responsiveness. There is a significant gap between Asatizah Reliability and Responsiveness
- In the Human Dimension, the Asatizah performed better in Empathy (88%) rather than Assurance (70%)

Task and Human	Ratings
Satisfaction	78%
Dissatisfaction	8%
Neutral	14%

Breakdown of Task and Human Dimension

Task and Human	Ratings
Reliability	91%
Responsiveness	64%
Assurance	70%
Empathy	88%

- There is a significant improvement in Asatizah's Reliability and Empathy attributes by 12% and 12% respectively.
- There is a decrease in Asatizah's responsiveness by 1%.

Detailed study to the figures tabulated for Responsiveness indicated that the main cause is once again for the apparent lack of prompt and/or immediate service.

	Total score					Total response
	Sangat Setuju	Setuju	Tidak Setuju	Sangat Tidak Setuju	Tidak Pasti	
<i>Statement on responsiveness:</i>						
<i>Rungutan saya tidak segera diselesaikan</i>	230	2021	916	131	1231	4529
	5.1%	44.6%	20.2%	2.9%	27.2%	100%

**** Reversed questions used in the questionnaire**

Conclusion on respective performance by Astizah and CSO:

The table below summarise the strength and areas of concerns

Strength

Service attributes	CSO	Asatizah
	Satisfaction average	Satisfaction average
Reliability	89%	91%
Assurance	87%	-
Empathy	-	88%

Areas of concern

Service attribute	CSO	Asatizah
	Satisfaction average	Satisfaction average
Responsiveness	69%	64%
Assurance	-	70%
Empathy	70%	-

Overall Rating in Teaching Effectiveness

As customers, their main purpose when patronizing Andalus is to have their children educated and instilled with values and practices of good Muslims. The respondents were asked to provide their perception on Andalus's effectiveness in partnering them to accomplish this objective through their children development in four main areas: Interest to learn, Increase in knowledge, Improvements in "Ibadah" and Improvement in "Akhlak"

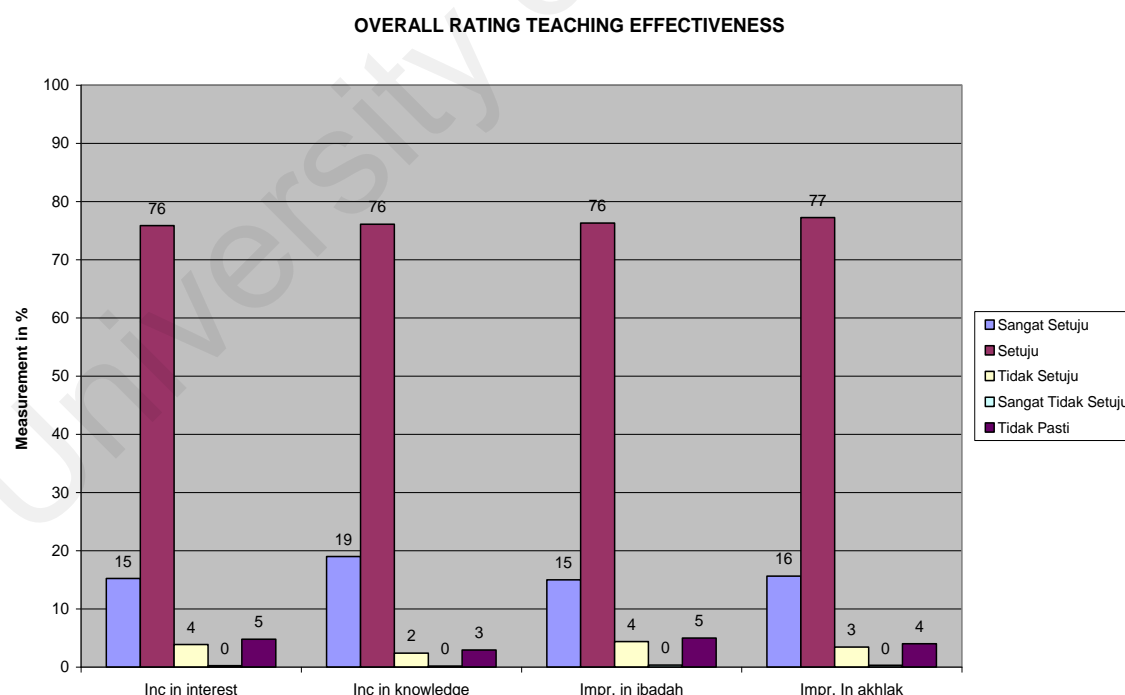


Chart 6: Measurement of teaching effectiveness in four main areas of development.

Keynotes

- A positive show of Andalus teaching effectiveness. An average of 92.5% respondents indicated positive development in their children.
- 16% of the respondents were Very Satisfied and 76% were Satisfied
- The average number of respondents who were dissatisfied with their children development is only 3.25%
- The average number of neutral customer is also 4.25%
- The breakdown for the 4 areas assessed are:
 - 91% noted that there is an increased level of interest among their children to learn and know more about the religion
 - 95% noted that their children are now more knowledgeable
 - 91% highlighted improvement in the children “Ibadah”
 - 93% indicated improvement in their children ‘Akhlak’

Areas	Ratings
Increase in interest	91%
Increase in knowledge	95%
Improvements in ibadah	91%
Improvements in akhlak	93%
Total average	92.5%

Overall Rating for Organisation Effectiveness

The findings in this section revealed the customer’s perception on Andalus overall effectiveness. It is also provides for useful reading to gauge future demands for Andalus services.

Chart 7 illustrates how the customers perceived the overall service level and the teaching quality rendered by the organisation

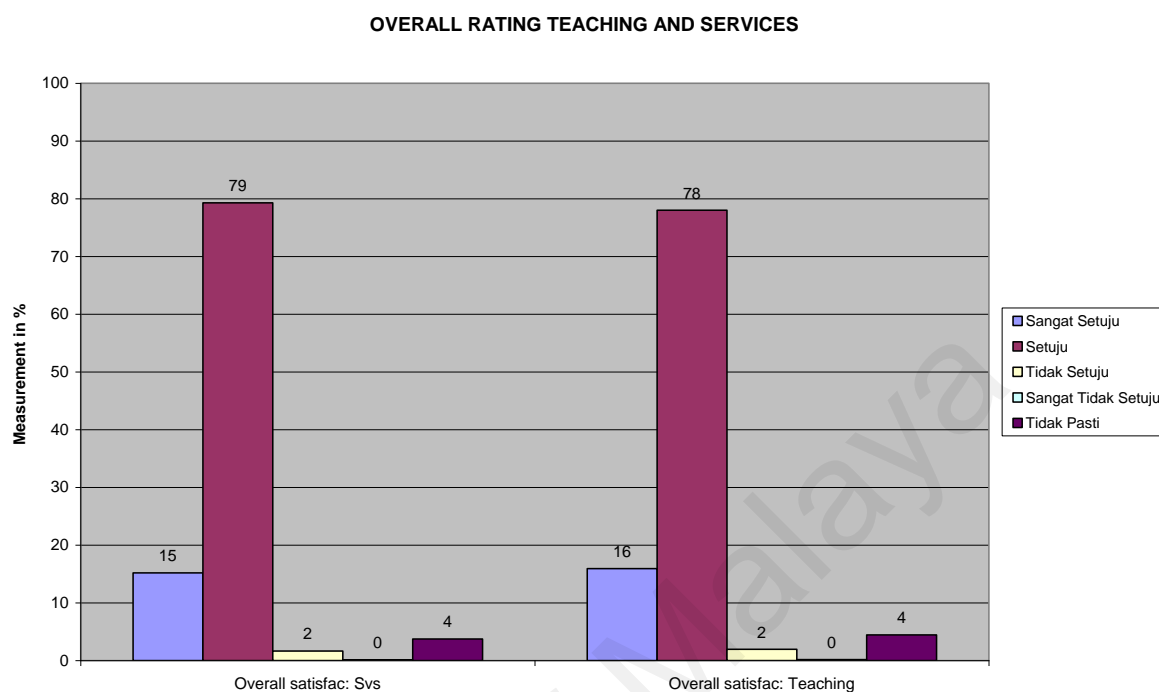


Chart 7: Measurement of overall teaching and services

Keynotes

- A satisfaction rating of 94% is registered for overall service quality
- A satisfaction rating score of 94% is registered for the overall teaching quality.
- A dissatisfaction rating of 2% is noted for overalls service quality
- A dissatisfaction rating of 2% is noted for overalls teaching quality
- 4% indicated a neutral response for service and 4% for teaching

Subject	Ratings
Service	94%
Teaching	94%

Keynotes:

- There is a high level of customer satisfaction on the service and teaching level
- The number of neutral respondents is not very high.

Chart 8 and 9 indicated a couple of revelations for future developments.

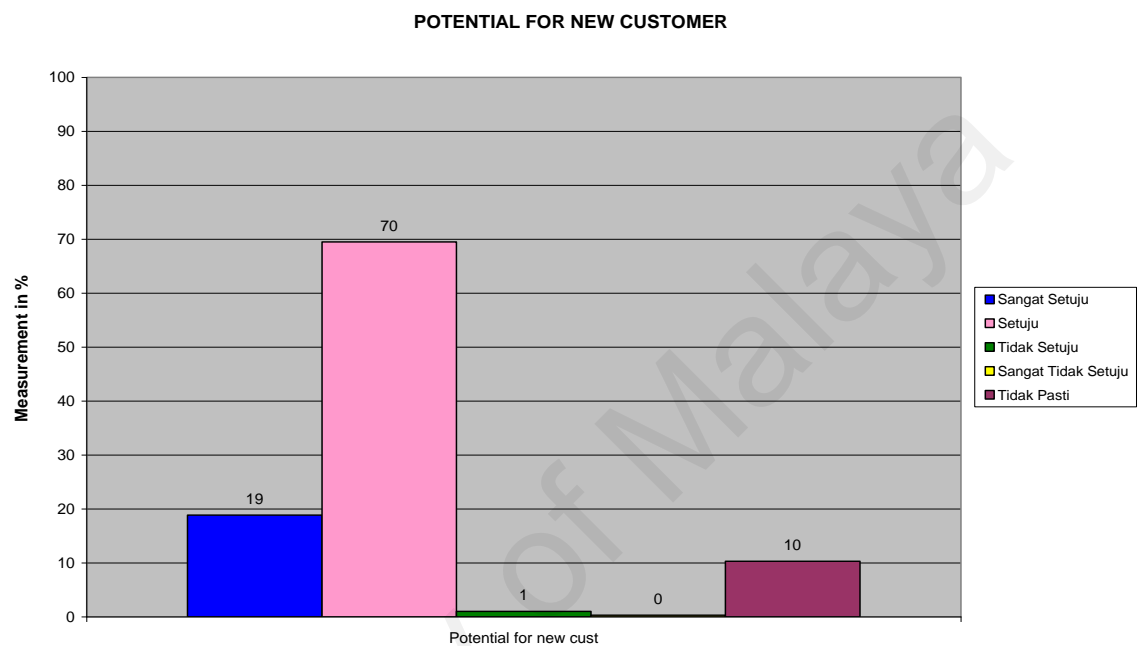


Chart 8: Measurement for potential for new customer

Keynotes

Respondents were asked to rate the likelihood of them recommending Andalus to their relatives and friends. Chart 8 illustrates the outcomes to this statement.

- 89% indicated that they would recommend Andalus to their relatives and friends.
- Those not likely to recommend Andalus is an insignificant number (1%)
- 10% of the respondents chose to be neutral
- This translates to a positive demand and expectations for more of Andalus services
- This also translates that Andalus has firm support from its current base of customers.

Subject	Rating
Potential for customers	89%

There is an increase of 10% in the number of customers who will recommend Andalus to their relatives and friends. The figure translates to about 453 potential customers (assuming 1 customer recommend 1 other customer). If we assume that 1 customer has a potential to recommend 5 other customers. Andalus may expect an increase of up to 2265 potential customers.

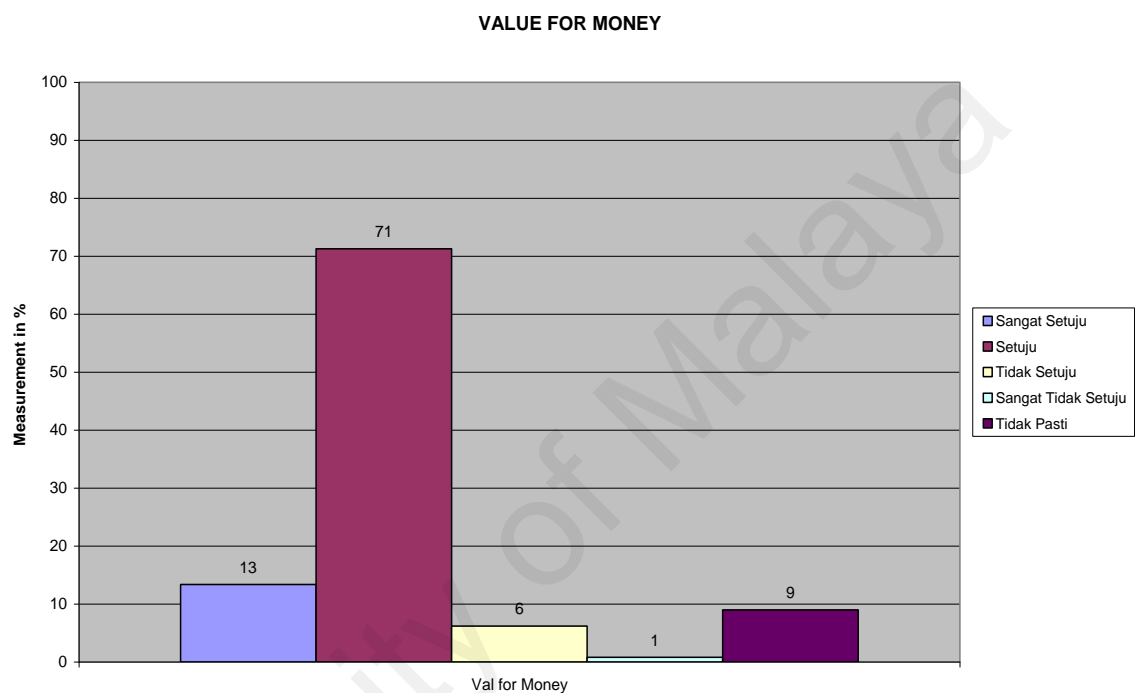


Chart 9: Responses for value for money

Respondents were asked to rate how they perceived their fees paid to Andalus in relating to its service quality. Chart 9 illustrates the respondents' view.

- 84% of the respondents indicated that the fees paid to Andalus are good reasonable and value for their money.
- 7% questioned the value of their investment
- 9% of the respondents were neutral

Subject	Ratings
Value for money	84%

Keynotes

There is a high percentage of people who felt that Andalus is giving good value for their money spent

Written Responses

557 written comments were recorded. These have been categorized into 3 groups:

- Positive statement
- Negative statement
- Suggestion

The highlight of the written comments has been compiled and attached in Appendix 2. While some minor interpretation of the written comments was undertaken to assist with the grouping, this was only done when the intent of the written comment was clear. Where the issues were not clear, the comments have not been included.

Table 14: Summary of written responses received

Category	Number	%
Positive	88	16%
Negative	304	55%
Suggestions	160	28%
Others	5	1%
Total	557	100%

Suggestions

Suggestion To Improve On Employee Overall Service Dimension:

- 1) Automation of IT services (eg. Integration System, Product Knowledge). This would help in the responsiveness of the overall service
- 2) WIM Platform (digital story telling). This would encourage the staff to use their creativity in serving the customer. Through WIM platform, their ideas can be shared in the organization. However, it is recommended to look and study the suggestions
- 3) Reflection / Tazkirah session. This will instil the organization values pertaining to Customer Focus

Suggestion To Improve On Employee Telephone Techniques:

- 1) Automation of IT services would help the Staff in providing reliable and responsive service over the telephone
- 2) To continue on current telephone service program with more emphasis on role play, case study and sharing of best practices

Conclusion

Positive Findings

Based on the analysis on the findings of this survey, it is apparent that the respondents are generally satisfied with Andalus and the services it provides. This is most evident from:

- ***The overall satisfaction rating improved.*** 75.5% satisfaction rate for the overall performance.
- ***Improvement in telephone service.*** The rating can be further improved with relevant programs and training on telephone system.

Areas of Concern

Based on the responses to the survey questions and the written comments, the following are issues to consider:

- To further improve the telephone services in areas of responsiveness and reliability. The satisfaction level is rated (69%)
- The lack of responsiveness is a widespread issue among the CSO and the Asatizah. The findings show that the lack of responsiveness creates negative perception on the service providers' inter-personal relationship.

Appendix G

Pictures below are examples of the various types of training offered to the employees based on the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and Total Company Training Plan (TCTP)

Picture 1: Leadership Development Workshops (LDP for key appointment holders) in 2014 and 2015 conducted by an external trainer.



Picture 2: Diploma in Adult Continuous Education (DACE) in 2014 for the management and educational officers



Picture 3: Executive Development for Growth and Excellence (EDGE) course in 2014 and 2015 for senior and mid management officers



Appendix H

The pictures below are examples of the weekly Program Bina Insan (PBI) for male employees to encourage healthy life style and enhance *esprit de corps* among employees.

Picture 1: Sporting activities like the swimming life-saving course



Picture 2: Appreciating nature like trekking activities in the forest reserves



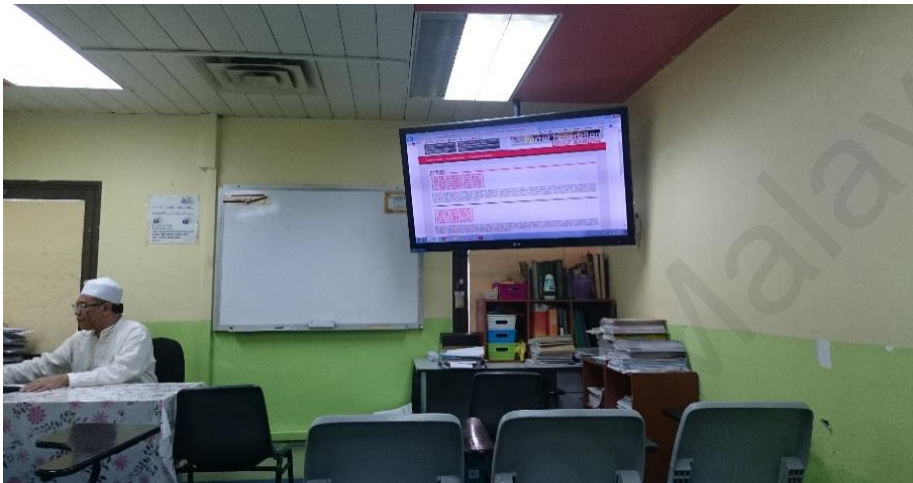
Picture 3: Recreational activities like golf



Appendix I

The pictures below are examples of normal classrooms setup at Andalus centres. All classrooms are air-conditioned and each classroom can accommodate about 20-30 persons. The classrooms are equipped with lecture chairs, computers, projectors and screen or LED TV and broadband internet connection.

Picture 1: LED TV (or LCD projectors) and web based applications and contents available from the web are commonly used during lessons.



Picture 2: Pre-School class at Andalus Yishun 1 branch. These classrooms have special features such as lower tables and smaller chairs which are suitable for pre-school and lower primary programs. There are also decorated in ways suitable for children of young ages. There are also corners for various types of activities.

