

Mosque-based youth leadership cadre



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Abstract The mosque is one of the most important places for the Muslim community to practice religious values (such as prayer and remembrance), which are also integrated with muamalah in their daily lives. However, in this era of modernization, there is a phenomenon that is quite strange and occurs in big cities like Yogyakarta – Indonesia, namely the decreasing awareness and interest of youths to visit mosques. When youths are away from the mosque, they tend to be free from control to engage in immoral behavior, for example, engaging in acts of delinquency. Therefore, an alternative model that is offered and can be used to overcome juvenile delinquency is to make the mosque a place for character building and the cadre of youths. Youth development in mosques aims to explore youth resources born from mosque-based programs to create youth who have noble and Qur'anic morals who can make a positive contribution to the benefit and welfare of society as a whole. Because historically, the mosque at the time of the Prophet Muhammad played a very important and broad role, that, it is not only functioned as a place of worship (such as praying and remembrance) but also served as a place for education and coaching of the people, a place for military training and preparation for war, reconcile and resolve disputes, receive envoys or delegates, provide social assistance, and as a centre for enlightenment and defence of religion to build a glorious civilization.

Keywords: cadre, youth leadership, mosque.

1. Introduction

In the pursuit of theories for community development that foster motivation, growth, and societal well-being, scientists are exploring various approaches. One such alternative is the study of Mosque Theory, which posits that the mosque plays a pivotal role in nurturing individual and community spirit through the practice of religious values. The mosque serves as a guiding force, offering insights into what should be done and the potential future outcomes. According to Mosque Theory, Muslim individuals and communities utilize mosques as spaces for personal and communal growth, including the formation of brotherhood relationships, knowledge creation and dissemination, learning, self-reflection, repentance, and experiencing divine mercy.

Historically, the mosque has held significant importance for the Muslim community as a place to engage in worship practices, which are integrated into their daily lives through muamalah, encompassing congregational prayers, da'wah (proselytization), dhikr (remembrance of Allah), and other acts of obedience. The mosque also serves as an educational center, providing Islamic instruction to children. Therefore, the mosque acts as a hub for Muslim activities, contributing to the development of a glorious civilization (Ahlan 2022; Hidayat 2014; Movahed 2014).

It comes as no surprise that Allah states in QS. At-Taubah: 18, specifically addressing the management and functions of the mosque:

The mosques of Allah should only be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish prayer, pay alms-tax, and fear none but Allah. It is right to hope that they will be among the 'truly' guided (QS. At-Taubah: 18).

The mosque serves as a center for worship, facilitating congregational prayers, da'wah, remembrance, and various other forms of muamalah, as well as community development. Scholars such as Astari (2014), Dalmeri (2014), and Sholihin (2019) highlight the mosque's significant potential for empowering and economically uplifting the surrounding community.

According to Serageldin (1990), the mosque fulfills two primary functions: as a nurturing environment that enlightens the people and as a center for spiritual worship. Throughout Islamic civilization's history, the mosque has served as a primary source of inspiration for shaping individual character and facilitating worldly pursuits, including the development of economic strength (Prabowo 2019; Rifa'i 2022; Riwayat et al 2018), fostering brotherhood and unity among Muslims, and serving as a central hub for worship, preaching, and remembrance, ensuring well-being in both this life and the hereafter.



1.1. Juvenile delinquency problem

Juvenile delinquency is a term commonly used in academic literature to describe immoral and criminal acts committed by young individuals, disturbing societal peace. In Indonesia, adolescents are defined as residents aged 10-18 years according to the regulation of the Minister of Health (Republic of Indonesia 2014). However, the age range for adolescents, as defined by the Population and Family Planning Agency, extends up to 24 years and includes unmarried individuals. Consequently, individuals ranging from 12 to their mid-20s may be subject to legal proceedings if involved in delinquent acts that disrupt public order and harm others.

A recent case reported by www.merdeka.com on December 3, 2022, involved the arrest of 13 teenage motorcycle riders in Yogyakarta. These individuals were apprehended for carrying sharp weapons, causing concern among the public as they rode through Bantul street, Sewon District, Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). The police took action to prevent potential crimes among these youths, such as inter-group brawls or plans to engage in street crimes or *klitih*.

Another case reported by www.merdeka.com on November 29, 2022, illustrates delinquency committed by a 22-year-old youth. The police arrested the youth, residing in Mertoyudan Village, Magelang Regency, Central Java, for allegedly poisoning his family members (father, mother, and older sister) by adding poison to their tea and coffee.

In a previous case, reported by yogyakarta.kompas.com on February 12, 2022, a young man from Srihardono Village, Bantul, Yogyakarta, was reported to the police by his mother. He had sold all the furniture and roof tiles from the house he lived in to purchase gifts for his girlfriend.

The social bond theory provides a detailed explanation of juvenile delinquency. This theory posits that individuals are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior when their social bonds are weak (Craig et al 2022; Chui et al 2022; Pritchett and Moeller 2022). Originally introduced by Hirschi (1969), the theory identifies four elements of social bonds that influence an individual's propensity for delinquency (Hirschi 2002): (1) *Attachment*, involving emotional connections with family, peers, school, and other social institutions; (2) *Commitment*, representing an individual's investment in conventional societal goals, such as career and future prospects; (3) *Involvement*, encompassing participation in conventional activities like clubs or extracurricular endeavors; and (4) *Belief*, referring to an individual's acceptance and adherence to societal norms, values, and moral beliefs. Active engagement in these elements reduces the time and opportunities for delinquent behavior.

Hirschi argued that family attachments, particularly the bond between parents and their children, play a key role in understanding juvenile delinquency. Without a strong attachment to their parents, adolescents are more likely to engage in immoral acts, including delinquency (Hirschi 2004). However, when adolescents have strong bonds with their parents, they are motivated to avoid behaviors that could harm these relationships. This can be attributed to effective parental supervision, whether physical or psychological, wherein parents are present, united, and close to their children (Stillman et al 2009). Therefore, establishing strong family bonds between parents and children is crucial for preventing juvenile delinquency.

Parents should dedicate time and pay special attention to interacting with their children, accompanying and monitoring their various activities, and showing genuine concern for their well-being (Dufur et al 2016). According to Coleman (1988), parents must consistently be present, actively monitoring their children's development, and engaging in harmonious interactions to foster emotional closeness and instill values that promote achievement. This interaction should begin during pregnancy, continue through childhood and adolescence, and involve monitoring and encouraging the child's prosocial activities, as well as instilling desired values. By doing so, children of all ages can consistently engage in positive social behavior (Dufur et al 2015).

Another effective alternative model for addressing juvenile delinquency is to transform the mosque into a center for character development and youth empowerment. Youth development programs within the mosque aim to tap into the potential of young individuals and cultivate noble character traits based on Islamic teachings (Aslati et al 2018). This approach seeks to produce youths who possess exemplary moral values derived from the Quran, enabling them to make positive contributions to the overall benefit and welfare of society.

1.2. Solutions to the existing problems

In the present era of modernization, there is a concerning phenomenon occurring in major cities like Yogyakarta, which is the diminishing awareness and interest of young people in visiting the mosque. However, when we look back at the historical significance of the mosque during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, we realize its multifaceted role. The mosque served not only as a place of worship, but also as a center for education, community development, military training, conflict resolution, diplomatic engagements, social assistance, and as a hub for enlightenment and the defense of religion. The coaching and guidance provided by the Prophet in the mosque gave rise to influential figures who played crucial roles in the development of Islam worldwide, such as Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, and Ali ibn Abi Talib. Therefore, it is essential to present various mosque activities in an engaging and inclusive manner, attracting young people to spend more time in the mosque, fostering a closer relationship with the Divine, nurturing a spirit of compassion, utilizing time productively, and exploring the teachings of Islam for personal and societal benefit.

The position of youth in relation to the mosque holds immense significance, as they represent the younger generation and are the hope for the mosque's prosperity in the present and future. In the history of Imam Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad stated, "*There are seven whom Allah will shade in His Shade on the Day when there is no shade except His Shade: a just ruler; a youth who grew up in the worship of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic; a man whose heart is attached to the mosques; two men who love each other for Allah's sake, meeting for that and parting upon that; a man who is called by a woman of beauty and position (for illegal intercourse), but says: 'I fear Allah'; a man who gives in charity and hides it, such that his left-hand does not know what his right hand gives in charity; and a man who remembered Allah in private and so his eyes shed tears*" (HR. Bukhari & Muslim).

Hence, it is crucial to design various mosque activities in an interesting and enjoyable manner with the aim of: (1) transforming the lifestyle and mindset of young people, highlighting that the best among them are those who are close to the Qur'an, regularly attend religious teachings (ta'lim), enthusiastically study religion, and perform prayers punctually and congregationally at the mosque, (2) altering the perception of youth regarding Islam as a beautiful religion that offers a comprehensive way of life, providing optimal solutions to life's challenges, (3) presenting inspirational figures who serve as ideal role models for leadership, and (4) nurturing youth who are guided by the teachings of Islam, with the Prophet Muhammad as their exemplar in leading a purposeful life.

2. Materials and Methods

The community service activities, encompassing mosque-based youth leadership cadre training, were conducted at the Nurul Salam Mosque in Mrisi, Bantul on April 7, 2023. These activities comprised several stages, which are described below:

a. Preparation: The preparation phase encompassed various tasks, including conducting surveys to identify suitable service locations at the Nurul Salam Mosque in Mrisi, applying for activity permits, managing administrative arrangements such as correspondence, gathering tools, materials, and accommodations, as well as setting up the training site.

b. Core activities: The core activities consisted of an opening session and introduction for the targeted participants, providing training on ethical leadership and knowledge management, and facilitating debriefing sessions with the activity participants.

c. Closing: The closing phase involved recognizing the most active participants by presenting door prizes, capturing photographs with the participants, and preparing comprehensive reports documenting the community service activities.

The primary focus of these activities was the youth residing in Mrisi - Bantul. Despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, a total of 43 individuals actively participated in and successfully completed the program.

The community service activity aimed to achieve the following expected outputs:

a. Enhanced understanding of leadership concepts, particularly Islamic leadership, and a comprehensive grasp of the functions performed by mosques among the participating youths.

b. Development of a strong connection and attachment to the mosque, fostering a character trait of remaining closely tied to the religious institution. c. Application of Islamic leadership principles to enable self-care and community building among the youths.

The anticipated outcomes of the mosque-based youth leadership cadre training, as a form of community service activity, encompass:

a. The cultivation of enhanced individual, group, and community behaviors among the youth.

b. The substantial impact of mosque-based youth leadership cadre training activities on enhancing individual competence, particularly in terms of the ability to lead and be led within society as a whole.

3. Results and Discussion

The community service activities conducted at the Nur Salam Mosque in Mrisi, Tirtonirmolo, Kasihan - Bantul focused primarily on addressing issues related to youth, particularly in the prevention and mitigation of mosque-based juvenile delinquency. During the presentation, Dr. Udin, the speaker, underscored the potential of mosques as spaces for the holistic development of adolescents, enabling them to become exemplary individuals who are resilient and well-educated (Figure 1).

By instilling strong character traits in mosque-based youth, such as leadership, empathy, communication, and cooperation, they can effectively contribute to the betterment of society and disseminate beneficial values. Consequently, this approach has significant implications in reducing the occurrence of juvenile delinquency. The orientation of the youth towards the application of Islamic principles fosters a sense of brotherhood and encourages them to make positive contributions to their communities.

During the event, Ustadz Doni Riwi, a speaker from Angkringan Dakwah, reiterated the pivotal role of mosques in nurturing the younger generation and developing leadership within the ummah (Muslim community). Ustadz Doni encouraged youths to maintain a close connection with the mosque, allowing their hearts to be intertwined with its teachings and values. He emphasized the significance of incorporating these principles into their social interactions, referencing a saying of Prophet Muhammad SAW that highlights the importance of individuals whose hearts are attached to mosques.



Figure 1 Heroic presentation of the mosque-based youth leadership cadre.

Moreover, Ustadz Doni emphasized the responsibility of Islamic leaders in creating a supportive and inclusive environment for young individuals. By promoting Islamic values and providing guidance, these leaders play a crucial role in ensuring that youths feel valued, guided, and supported. Their efforts contribute significantly to the prevention of juvenile delinquency and the overall well-being of the community.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant role of mosques in the development of youths' character and morals. By imparting Islamic values, such as honesty, empathy, patience, sincerity, and leadership, within the mosque setting, young individuals can enhance their social skills, leadership abilities, and spirit of cooperation. This, in turn, fosters a strong sense of responsibility and concern for the surrounding environment and the broader community.

Furthermore, the mosque serves as a nurturing environment for youth, providing them with guidance and support. Creating an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere in the mosque enables young individuals to develop their Islamic identity, contribute to the community, and effectively navigate the challenges they face in their daily lives.

The implementation of mosque-based youth leadership cadres is highly enlightening, challenging the conventional perception that mosques are solely a place for prayer and Quranic recitation. Historically, the character of youths has been shaped to be better and more positive through their involvement in socio-religious activities within mosques, under the guidance of *ustadz* and *ustazah*. This involvement aims to inspire youths to develop a better character, facilitate mutual assistance, and promote the strengthening of positive social values.

The findings of this study can be applied to Islamic communities worldwide, emphasizing the importance of establishing mentorship programs within mosques. These programs can offer guidance, positive reinforcement, and assistance in steering young people away from delinquent activities, promoting productive and healthy behaviors.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors strongly declare that they have no conflict of interest in this study.

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