

Involvement in the Mosque Programs and its Relationship in Strengthening the Islamic Faith among Muslim Converts in Malaysia

Mariam Abd Majid¹
Razaleigh Muhamat Kawangit²
Marlon Pontino Guleng³

¹Department of Da'wah and Management, International Islamic University College, Selangor, Malaysia

²Department of Da'wah and Leadership Studies, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia), Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

³Department of Da'wah and Management, International Islamic University College, Selangor, Malaysia
raza@ukm.edu.my

Abstract: Mosque responsible for organizing any program involving various of community members including Muslim converts, especially in matters of strengthening the faith of these group of people. This study aims to analyze the involvement of the Muslim converts in the mosque programs and its relationship in strengthening the Islamic faith among them, in addition to identifying the activities conducted by the mosque. The research methodology is in quantitative form with survey method towards 210 respondents among the residents around the mosque area. Questionnaires were distributed using simple random sampling. The obtained data were processed and analyzed by descriptive and inferential using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21.0. The findings descriptively show that the involvement of Muslim converts in the mosque programs is at a high level (mean = 3.03), while the strengthening of the Islamic faith is also at high level (mean = 3.31). The results of Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant relationship between the involvement in the mosque programs ($r = 0.689$, $p < 0.01$) and strengthening the Islamic faith among Muslim converts ($r = 0.765$, $p < 0.01$) in Malaysia.

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1. Introduction

Mosque nowadays is not just a place of listening and collecting knowledge within the framework of strengthening the faith alone but also covers the spiritual development and civilization of the society. By looking at the development of contemporary institutional mosques, there are more than 5490 mosques in Malaysia, whether in its capacity as the national, state, district, institutional, residential, local or Friday mosque. The mosque is necessary to design the program broadly and be more positive to the Muslims in general and Muslim converts in particular in strengthening their faith and beliefs as contained in the teachings of Islam.

2. Research Methodology

This is a quantitative study. The population in this study are those Muslim converts who lives near the mosques in the city such as the State Mosque in Shah Alam, Federal Territory Mosque, National Mosque and others. About 210 of Muslim converts were selected as respondents. The sample is a part of population whose the characteristics are to be investigated and considered as representative of the overall population and the number is less than or equal to the number of population. The author has

used random sampling in distributing questionnaires to the converts around the mosque.

Literature Review

Most of previous studies focused on the role of the mosque in da'wah activity, management, development and so on. Among them is a research by Aziana binti Ariffin (2008) entitled "The Role of Mosque in Personal Development: A Study in Gombak District". The research focuses on whether the role of the mosque as a place for development of Muslim individuals or as a place of worship alone. She also touched on the level of effectiveness of community development within the area. Three mosques were chosen as samples in the study. She only provides a general overview of the role to be played by each of the mosque committee in developing Muslim characters.

While Mahayudin bin Abu Bakar (2007) in his dissertation entitled "Da'wah Activities in The Mosques Under the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (DIDM): An Assessment," focused to find and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of da'wah activity in the mosque under the authority of DIDM. The study includes organizational structure, mission, vision, objectives,

goals and management of daily activities which include basic teaching of Islam. This study focused on the aspect of da'wah activities carried out in the mosques involved. The results show the effectiveness of the activities held in the mosque in all contexts and its successful impacts towards Muslim society.

Next, Munir bin Md Amin (2005) in his study entitled "Da'wah Program of the Mosques in Gombak District: A Study on Effectiveness". The study is related to the mosque programs and its position in Islam. The author focused on the effectiveness of the da'wah program in the mosques in Gombak. The findings show the effectiveness of preaching in the mosque programs in Gombak area. This study only focused on the da'wah program only, although the author was actually aimed to bring the study in evaluating the mosque as one-stop centre in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. His research focuses more on the da'wah activity forms carried out in the mosque.

Mohd Ismail bin Mustari et. al. (2009) in his paper entitled "The Mosque as the Heart of Ummah". This study focuses on the mosque like a heart of community as a reflection to explain the enormity of its role in the development of the community institutions. If the role of the mosque is not maximized it will create an impact on the spiritual development of the nation. Any problems that occur today in the Muslim community is very closely linked with the prosperity of the mosque. Public awareness on the role of the mosque should be spread out. Thus, this paper will present the roles of the mosque and its effects on the faith from the perspective of Qur'an, al-Hadith, views of the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and Islamic scholars.

3. Results

Respondents Demography

The respondent demography of Muslim converts around the few mosques in Malaysia consisted of gender, religious affiliation, age, marital status and academic qualifications. Demography is important as a source of information related to the study.

Gender

In terms of gender, the results indicated that most of the respondent among the residents are male accounted for 51.4% and the rest population is female respondents with 48.6%. It shows that the male respondents make up the majority of the population with total of 108 respondents from 210 people live in the vicinity of the mosque. In this study, the male respondents are more cooperative in giving their views on the mosque programs compared to female

respondents as they are more accessible and available in the mosque (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of respondents' gender

Gender	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Male	108	51.4
Female	102	48.6
Total	210	100

Source: Questionnaires, 2015

Religious Affiliation

In terms of religious affiliation, the results showed that Hindu is a head of those converts in this study. A total of 123 respondents (58.6%) represents Hinduism followed by other religions such as Buddhism with 63 respondents (30%), Christianity with 21 respondents (10%) and other religions with 3 respondents (1.4%). The results showed the most number of converts around the mosque is a group derived from Hinduism while the fewest number among the other religions is atheist (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents' religion

Religion	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Hindu	123	58.6
Budhha	63	30
Christian	21	10
Others	3	31.4
Total	210	100

Source: Questionnaires, 2015

Ages

The information of the respondents' ages are displayed in Table 3. The ages were categorized into four levels, 21 years and below, 22-30 years, 31-45 years and 46 years and above. The results showed that the total of 210 respondents, most are indicated by the respondents in the age below 21 years with 69 respondents (32.9%), followed by the group of 31-45 years with 66 respondents (31.4%). The smallest number of respondents is 46 years of age, which accounted for 30 respondents (14.3%) and followed by a group of 22-30 years with 45 respondents (21.4%). The study showed the highest respondents is of 21 years and below while the lowest is in the group of 46 years and above (Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of respondents' ages

Ages	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
<21	69	32.9
22-30 years	45	21.4
31-45 years	66	31.4
>46	30	14.3
Total	210	100

Source: Questionnaires, 2015

Marital Status

The results in table 4 shows that the majority of respondents are single of the 108 respondents (51.4%), followed by 99 respondents (47.1%) whom are married and 3 respondents (1.4%) is a widower/widow. There is no significant difference of marital status as most of single and married Muslim converts work as committee and live within the mosque area.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents' marital status

Marital Status	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Single	108	51.4
Married	99	47.1
Widower/Widow	3	1.4
Total	210	100

Source: Questionnaires, 2015

Academic Qualification

The findings related to academic qualifications is depicted in Table 5. Majority of respondents, 111 people (52.9%) holds a diploma/degree, followed by 69 respondents (32.9%) graduated with Malaysian Certificate of Education/Lower Secondary Assessment (SPM/PMR), while 27 respondents (12.9%) reached the stage of Evaluation Test of Elementary School (UPSR), no education and three respondents (1.4%) are master/PhD holders. This means that most of the respondents who live around the mosque are mostly educated.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents' academic qualification

Academic Qualification	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Master/PhD	3	1.4
Diploma/Degree	111	52.9
SPM/PMR	69	32.9
Others	27	12.9
Total	210	100

Source: Questionnaires, 2015

Perception On The Mosque Programs Implemented

The respondents' perception is divided into three categories, types of mosque programs, the mosque concern on Muslim converts and their perception on the mosque programs. The measurement of mean level to the challenges is determined and described as in Table 6.

Table 6: Interpretation of the mean scores for the findings of descriptive statistics

Mean Scores	Interpretation
1.00-2.00	Low
2.01-3.00	Medium
3.01-4.00	High
4.01-5.00	Extremely High

Source: Azhar Ahmad, 2006

The Involvement of Muslim Converts in the Mosque Programs

The results in Table 7 shows that each item of the perception on the mosque programs is relatively at moderate and high level. Item with the highest mean is "I received free medical assistance which is provided to the Muslim converts" (mean = 3.41 and SD = 1.13) was at high level. In terms of frequency and percentage indicate that a total of 108 respondents (51.4%) agree, 39 respondents (18.6%) stated strongly agree and not sure, while about 18 respondents (8.6%) disagreed and 6 respondents (2.9%) stated strongly disagree on the item. Most of the respondents admitted that they are equipped with the free medical assistance which covers not only themselves but also their family members. The medical services is a basic requirement which is costly and thus it helps them much in reducing the financial allocation on that matter.

The item with the lowest mean is "I was invited by the mosque to celebrate any sport activities been organized" (mean = 2.57 and SD = 0.98) was at moderate level. In terms of frequency and percentages indicate that about 81 respondents (38.6%) said definitely not sure, 75 respondents (35.7%) disagreed, 27 respondents (12.9%) strongly disagree, 15 respondents (7.1%) agree while 12 respondents (5.7%) stated strongly agree. Majority of the respondents are not sure of their involvement in the sport activities held in the mosque due to time constraints and they do not interest in such programs. In overall, it shows that the involvement of the respondents in the organized programs lies on a high level (mean = 3.03 and SD= 1.01).

The Mosque Programs in Strengthening the Faith of Muslim Converts

In the context of the mosque programs in strengthening the faith of Muslim converts, there are two variables with the highest scores in overall out of 10 items. The item, "My teacher have extensive knowledge in the science of Islamic faith" (mean = 3.92) and item, "My teachers used to associate the teaching of Islamic faith with my life as a Muslim convert" (mean = 3.89). It is clearly proof that the mosques have appointed the eligible teachers with Islamic educational background in order to ensure the Muslim converts receive the effective teaching of Islam. It is one of the important role to be played by the mosque to equip the new Muslims with interactive and comprehensive Islamic education and later will create the real Muslim generation. In average, respondents who agree to the item 8 are of 138 respondents (65.7%) and item 7 of 147 respondents (70.0%). It is revealed by the findings as shown in Table 8.

Table 7: The Involvement of Muslim Converts in the Mosque Programs

No	Item	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	SD	Interpretation
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)			
1	Mosques let the involvement of Muslim converts in social activities	12 (5.7%)	39 (18.6%)	99 (47.1%)	27 (12.9%)	33 (15.7%)	3.14	0.83	High
2	The mosque activities inspired me to get to know about Islam	3 (10.0%)	54 (25.7%)	39 (18.6%)	84 (40.0%)	12 (5.7%)	3.06	1.13	High
3	I was invited by the mosques to attend celebration of 'Eid (Muslim Festival)	21 (10.0%)	45 (21.4%)	66 (31.4%)	36 (17.1%)	42 (20.0%)	3.16	0.98	High
4	I was invited by the mosques to involve in the organized carnival	18 (8.6%)	81 (38.6%)	57 (27.1%)	42 (20.0%)	12 (5.7%)	2.76	1.27	Medium
5	I was invited by the mosque to involve in sport activities	27 (12.9%)	75 (35.7%)	81 (38.6%)	15 (7.1%)	12 (5.7%)	2.57	0.98	Medium
6	Mosques provide Islamic classes for Muslim converts	36 (17.1%)	39 (18.6%)	90 (42.9%)	33 (15.7%)	12 (5.7%)	2.74	0.93	Medium
7	Free counseling services are provided for Muslim converts	12 (5.7%)	30 (14.3%)	105 (50.0%)	42 (20.0%)	21 (10.0%)	3.14	0.88	High
8	Mosques are greatly welcome my visit to the programs provided	9 (4.3%)	42 (20.0%)	63 (30.0%)	84 (40.0%)	12 (5.7%)	3.23	1.11	High
9	I receive free medical assistance which is provided for Muslim converts	6 (2.9%)	18 (8.6%)	39 (18.6%)	108 (51.4%)	39 (18.6%)	3.41	1.13	High
10	Mosques allow me to use the facilities such as library and internet access	27 (12.9%)	18 (8.6%)	90 (42.9%)	54 (25.7%)	21 (10.0%)	3.11	0.81	High
Overall							3.03	1.01	High

Source: Questionnaires, 2015

Table 8: The Mosque Programs in Strengthening the Faith of Muslim Converts

No	Item	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	SD	Interpretation
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)			
1	I feel that the religious activities are useful for me	3 (1.4%)	45 (21.4%)	60 (28.6%)	78 (37.1%)	24 (11.4%)	3.36	0.99	High
2	I can feel the behavioral enhancement when learning the teaching of faith in the mosques.	21 (10.0%)	21 (10.0%)	30 (14.6%)	105 (50.0%)	33 (15.7%)	3.51	1.17	High
3	The teaching of faith in the mosques enhances my faith to Allah SWT	27 (12.9%)	81 (38.6%)	39 (18.6%)	48 (22.9%)	15 (7.1%)	2.73	1.16	Medium
4	The mosques provide the teaching tools for the Muslim converts	30 (14.3%)	30 (14.3%)	36 (17.1%)	81 (38.6%)	33 (15.7%)	3.27	1.29	High
5	I love to ask to my teacher about the Islamic faith.	24 (11.4%)	6 (2.9%)	54 (25.7%)	96 (45.7%)	30 (14.3%)	3.49	1.13	High
6	My teachers have successfully instilled my interest to learn about Islamic faith	18 (8.6%)	15 (7.1%)	102 (48.6%)	54 (25.7%)	21 (10.0%)	3.21	1.02	High
7	My teachers used to associate the teaching of Islamic faith with my life as a Muslim convert.	6 (2.9%)	15 (7.1%)	9 (4.3%)	147 (70.0%)	33 (15.7%)	3.89	0.86	High
8	My teachers have extensive knowledge in the science of Islamic faith	3 (1.4%)	15 (7.1%)	15 (7.1%)	138 (65.7%)	39 (18.6%)	3.92	0.82	High
9	My teachers keep to relate the issues of Muslim converts while teaching the Islamic faith	42 (20.0%)	60 (28.6%)	72 (34.3%)	30 (14.3%)	6 (2.9%)	2.51	1.05	Medium
10	My teachers have enhanced my understanding about Islamic faith	21 (10.0%)	21 (10.0%)	69 (32.9%)	87 (41.4%)	12 (5.7%)	3.22	1.05	High
Overall							3.31	1.05	High

Source: Questionnaires, 2015

Involvement In The Mosque Programs And Its Relationship In Strengthening The Islamic Faith Among Muslim Converts In Malaysia

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the involvement in the mosque programs and its relationship in strengthening the Islamic faith among the Muslim converts as shown in Table 9 below:

Table 9: Pearson correlation of the involvement in the mosque programs and its relationship in strengthening the Islamic faith among the Muslim converts

Relationship	Mosque Programs		Interpretation
	r	Sig.	
Involvement in the Mosque Programs	0.689	0.000	Medium
Strengthening the Islamic Faith	0.765	0.000	Medium

Table 9 shows that there is a significant relationship between the involvement in the mosque programs and strengthening the Islamic faith among the Muslim converts with the value of $r = 0.689$ and $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$). The strength of relationships is fairly positive. There were no significant correlation between the mosque programs with the level of strengthening the Islamic faith with the value of $r = 0.765$ and $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$). The strength of the relationship is also fairly positive.

4. Discussion

The results of this study showed that there was a significant correlation between the mosque programs and strengthening of the Islamic faith among the Muslim converts ($r = 0.689$, $p < 0.01$), while the overall mean value of descriptive findings for the mosque programs involving Muslim convert who lived in the vicinity as a whole is (3.01). This suggests the involvement of the converts in the mosque programs is high. The findings of this study in particular found that the involvement is high from the point of engagement of the mosque programs held especially item 9, "I receive free medical assistance which is provided for Muslim converts" and item 8, "Mosques are greatly welcome my visit to the programs provided"

These findings also support the findings revealed by Nur A'thiroh Masyaa'il Tan Abdullah (2013) which examines appropriateness of the venue in organizing program for the converts. In her study, a total of 123 respondents from 265 Muslim converts agreed with the program venue in which can attract their participation. Even as many as 46.4% among the respondents agreed and said that the program

venue can help to increase their focus on the activities and programs.

Similarly, a study conducted by Zulfadhli Zafik (2012) which examines the guidance and Islamic counselling to Muslim converts. He suggests the needs of providing the services to this group such as guidance and Islamic counselling, basic education, welfare and financial assistance to them.

A study conducted by Fariza Md Sham et. al. (2014), explains that building a progressive attitude in life is through a smart reading. Thus, the program is very necessary mosque in strengthening the Islamic faith of the converts as they had just get to know the beauty of Islam.

While from the point of strengthening the faith of the converts group in this study showed that there was a significant relationship between the group involvement in the mosque program and strengthening their Islamic faith with the value of $r = 0.765$, $p < 0.01$. The descriptive finding of total mean is 3.31. This suggests that the strengthening of the Islamic faith among the Muslim converts through involvement in the mosque programs in Malaysia is high.

This study found that the programs in strengthening the Islamic faith among Muslim converts is high particularly "My teacher has extensive knowledge in the science of Islamic faith" and "My teachers used to associate the teaching of Islamic faith with my life as a Muslim convert". Both of these items are essential to be emphasized as Islamic faith is the fundamental requirement in Islam which need continuous efforts to strength it. This statement is in line with the findings reported by James Laeng and Yusman Wazir (2014) in their study entitled, Meeting the Challenge of Tarbiah Non-Government Organization and Welfare of Muslim Converts. The study explains that any organization or individual who is interested in the development of Muslim converts should emphasize the aspect of strengthening the Islamic faith, spirituality, social welfare, implementation of centralized programs and economic development.

5. Conclusion

The study was conducted to determine the involvement in the mosque programs and its relationship in strengthening the Islamic faith among the Muslim converts in Malaysia who live near the mosque area. In overall, this study provides a preliminary picture of the ability of mosque programs to strengthen the Islamic faith among the converts. The mosque's role is not only to guide the converts to preserve their Islamic faith but also to educate them as a good quality of Muslim and not Muslim by name. Instilling a true Islamic faith to themselves

lead them away from negative ideologies and teachings that deviate them away from the path of Islam. The failure to plan and put together the comprehensive Islamic programs may result in the increase of neglected Muslim converts whom later will easily leave Islam as their way of life.

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