

Student Collaboration In Maintenance Of Muslim Places Of Worship: A Case Study At Rajamangala University Of Technology Krungthep Thailand

Kolaborasi Mahasiswa dalam Pemeliharaan Tempat Ibadah Muslim: Studi Kasus di Universitas Teknologi Rajamangala Krungthep, Thailand

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Abstract - This international community service aims to provide real support and contribution in the maintenance of the prayer room at Rajamangala University, Thailand. This community service activity is carried out by a cross-country team involving students, lecturers, and educators from various disciplines. The main focus of this community service is the maintenance of the physical facilities of the prayer room, such as repainting, repairing prayer facilities, and cleaning the surrounding environment. In addition, this program also seeks to strengthen relations between international Muslim communities and raise awareness of the importance of a decent place of worship as a center of spirituality in the campus environment. This community service is expected to have a positive impact on the comfort of Muslim students and staff in worship, as well as strengthening international cooperation in the social and cultural context.

Keywords: Religion, Campus Spirituality, Maintenance, Social

Abstrak - Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat internasional ini bertujuan untuk memberikan dukungan dan kontribusi nyata dalam pemeliharaan mushola di Universitas Rajamangala, Thailand. Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini dilaksanakan oleh tim lintas negara yang melibatkan mahasiswa, dosen, dan tenaga pendidik dari berbagai disiplin ilmu. Fokus utama pengabdian masyarakat ini adalah pemeliharaan fasilitas fisik mushola, seperti pengecatan ulang, perbaikan fasilitas, dan pembersihan lingkungan sekitar. Selain itu, program ini juga berupaya untuk mempererat hubungan antar masyarakat muslim internasional dan menumbuhkan kesadaran akan pentingnya tempat ibadah yang layak sebagai pusat spiritualitas di lingkungan kampus. Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini diharapkan dapat memberikan dampak positif terhadap kenyamanan mahasiswa dan staf muslim dalam beribadah, serta mempererat kerja sama internasional dalam konteks sosial dan budaya.

Kata Kunci : Agama, Spiritualitas Kampus, Pemeliharaan, Sosial

1. INTRODUCTION

Places of worship play a crucial role in supporting religious practices and strengthening social bonds within communities. Pasaribu, Manurung, Farasi, and Panjaitan [1] emphasize that these spaces are fundamental in fostering religious harmony and tolerance in diverse societies. They describes places of worship as sacred spaces where the divine and human realms intersect, making their preservation essential. Furthermore, Huda et al. [2] highlight that well-maintained religious spaces contribute to spiritual development and social cohesion, reinforcing the importance of proper upkeep. Ensuring the cleanliness and comfort of places of worship is necessary for creating a conducive environment for religious activities. Kusuma, Abdulloh, and

Maulana [3] found that maintaining and improving prayer facilities enhances worshippers' comfort and engagement. Similarly, Ferdiyansyah, Qisti, and Sihombing [4] argue that proper cleanliness management in mosques not only improves the religious experience but also promotes environmental responsibility. Collective cleaning initiatives, as studied by Rahim et al. [5], strengthen community bonds and encourage active participation in religious practices. In addition, Rifai [6] and Suryawati [7] highlight that places of worship serve as centers for religious education and social activities, further emphasizing their role beyond prayer.

Beyond student participation, institutions play a critical role in ensuring adequate religious facilities for all students. Universities should

support religious diversity to foster an inclusive academic environment. Azhar et al. [8] emphasize that collaboration between students and institutions in maintaining worship spaces enhances social engagement and collective responsibility. Addressing the needs of religious students also aligns with principles of institutional responsibility, which advocate for inclusive policies in educational settings [9].

To raise awareness about the importance of maintaining worship spaces, a community service project was conducted at the Musholla of Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep. This initiative involved Muslim students. The project aligns with previous findings that revitalizing religious facilities enhances spiritual engagement and strengthens communal ties.

2. METHOD

This activity focused on Muslim students at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep (RMUTK) in Bangkok, Thailand, where Islam is a minority religion. The study employed a qualitative approach, emphasizing an in-depth understanding of human experiences and social phenomena through narrative interpretation, descriptive analysis, and contextual exploration. The implementation utilized a collaborative method, specifically aimed at revitalizing Muslim places of worship within the RMUTK campus. This approach aligns with the principles of participatory research, where researchers engage directly with the subjects to create meaningful and applicable interventions.

The data collection process involved observation, interviews, discussions, implementation, and evaluation. Observations were conducted during the first and second weeks of the Summer Semester Program at RMUTK to assess the condition of mosques or prayer facilities both on and around the campus. Additionally, these observations sought to analyze interactions between Muslim students and the surrounding Muslim community while evaluating the effectiveness of collaborative initiatives. Interviews were conducted with a purposive sample, comprising three Muslim students, two members of the local Muslim community, and two lecturers or university staff members. This respondent selection aimed to ensure a diverse perspective, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the existing challenges and potential solutions related to the maintenance and utilization of worship spaces.

Following the data collection phase, students engaged in discussion and consultation sessions to determine appropriate steps for the

revitalization initiative. These discussions involved collaborative decision-making with the Head of Faculty, ensuring that the planned activities aligned with institutional policies and facilities management guidelines. The revitalization efforts were subsequently implemented within the designated places of worship on campus, particularly within faculty buildings that required maintenance and improvement.

The evaluation phase served as a critical component in assessing the program's impact and effectiveness. This stage involved all students participating in the Summer Semester Program, alongside Muslim students, faculty members, and university staff. Through structured feedback sessions and participatory assessments, the evaluation process aimed to measure the outcomes of the revitalization initiative, identify areas for further improvement, and encourage sustained involvement in maintaining religious facilities within the university environment.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Observation

Observations during the Summer School Program at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep revealed challenges in accessing Muslim places of worship. The nearest mosque was approximately 5 km away, requiring transportation, making the campus prayer room the primary option for Muslim students. However, the prayer room was poorly maintained, with dusty floors, disorganized items, and improperly arranged shelves for religious books. This aligns with research by Ferdiansyah et al. [4], which emphasizes that cleanliness and proper maintenance significantly impact the comfort of worshippers. The limited availability and accessibility of Muslim worship facilities in non-Muslim-majority areas, as noted by Huda et al. [2], highlight the difficulties faced by minority religious communities in practicing their faith.

The prayer room was also underutilized due to its secluded location and lack of awareness among students. This issue aligns with findings from Kusuma et al. [3], which suggest that improving accessibility and awareness of religious facilities can encourage more frequent use. To address these challenges, structured maintenance efforts and increased student involvement are essential. Research by Pasaribu et al. [1] highlights the importance of fostering religious tolerance in multicultural environments, while Azhar et al. [6] emphasize the role of student-led initiatives in maintaining religious sites and promoting social cohesion. Encouraging universities to support

these efforts can contribute to a more inclusive and culturally aware academic environment.

Interview and Discussion

After making observations, it also conducted interviews with Thai students who are Muslim and often use the prayer room facilities provided by Rajamangala Technical University Krungthep. The questions that ask are:

- a. Are the facilities for Muslim places of worship at Rajamangala Technical University Krungthep adequate?
- b. Is the prayer room comfortable to use?
- c. What do you hope for the future for the prayer room at Rajamangala Engineering University, Krungthep?

The interview process was assisted by P'Krit, the Student Affairs Officer, who provided translation into Thai due to the limited English proficiency of many Thai students. One of the interviewees, Pakin Kuna Anuvit, commonly known as Mark, expressed his appreciation for the availability of a prayer room on campus despite the considerable distance to the nearest mosque. He acknowledged that the presence of this facility facilitates religious observance for Muslim students, reducing the challenge posed by the lack of nearby places of worship. However, Mark also highlighted concerns regarding the inadequate maintenance of the prayer room, particularly issues such as dust accumulation, a slippery ablution area, and the presence of chairs that obstruct access and diminish the overall functionality of the space. He emphasized the need for improved facility management, including regular cleaning and reorganizing the prayer room to ensure a conducive environment for worship. In addition to Mark, several of his peers shared similar concerns about the condition of the prayer room at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep.

Based on the interviews with Muslim students at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, it can be concluded that they aspire to have a well-maintained and hygienic prayer room with neatly arranged religious books and Qurans. Additionally, they emphasized the necessity of optimizing the spatial arrangement by removing unnecessary furniture that restricts movement within the room. They also expressed their expectation for greater institutional support in ensuring the upkeep of the facility, thereby enhancing accessibility and comfort for students utilizing the prayer room. These findings highlight the importance of structured maintenance efforts and institutional responsiveness in fostering an

inclusive and accommodating campus environment for religious practices.

Activity Planning

a. Technical Meeting

Before the process of the Rajamangala Engineering Krungthep University Prayer Room Maintenance, a Technical Meeting must be held with the aim that during the process, the division of tasks is evenly distributed and the work is completed quickly. The Technical Meeting procession was held several days before the implementation activity began, and the results are:

- The implementation of the Rajamangala Engineering Krungthep University Prayer Room maintenance was held on Friday, July 19, 2024, after Friday prayers or at 14.00 Bangkok Time.
- Coordinate in advance with P'Krit regarding cleaning tools such as brooms, mops, rags, soap, and others to support the cleaning activities of the Prayer Room
- Inviting 2 Thai students who are Muslim to participate in the implementation of the Prayer Room maintenance activities, namely *Pakin Kuna Anuvit (Mark)* and *Nattawat Jirochitikul (Fourth)*
- Inviting Mr. Tubagus Achmad Darodjat, a lecturer at Rajamangala Engineering Krungthep University as the person in charge of the activity

The objectives to be achieved by the maintenance, which were agreed during the Technical Meeting were that the prayer room would be cleaner and more comfortable to worship use for Muslim students, staff, and lecturers. In addition, the ablution place would be clean and not slippery, so it would be safe to use and not dangerous. Then it is plan to donate the Al-Quran which is placed on the bookshelf in the prayer room, to replace the poor condition Al-Quran in the prayer room. When conducting a previous survey, it is found that the prayer room was often used by the campus to store chairs and tables, which caused the prayer room to become narrow and dusty, so during the technical meeting it is proposed that the items will be moved to the warehouse.

In this meeting, all parties involved. Students, supervisors, and representatives of Muslim students at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep were present to discuss the technical details of the activity implementation. One of the important results of this meeting was the preparation of a detailed

activity schedule and a clear division of tasks for each student, so that the activity can run effectively and efficiently. The committee structure for the maintenance activities is shown in Table 1, the activity rundown is in Table 2.

Table 1. The Committee Structure

No	Position	Name
1	Penanggungjawab kegiatan	Mr.Tubagus Achmad Darodjat
2	Pemimpin Kegiatan	Faiz Umar Hadi
3	PIC Perizinan	Vania Amanda
4	PIC Mushola Laki-laki	M. Idris Ariyanto
5	PIC Mushola Perempuan	Nur Shadrina Prameswari
6	PIC Perlengkapan dan alat-alat	Gerald Reyhan G
7	PIC Dokumentasi	Amadea Syahbani Rachela P
8	PIC Buku dan Alquran	Intan Kusumaningsih

Tabel 2. Activity Rundown

No	Nama Kegiatan	Estimasi Waktu	PIC
1	Pembukaan kegiatan dan Kumpul Peserta	14.00-14.15	Faiz Umar Hadi
2	Kegiatan dimulai	14.15-15.30	M.Idris Ariyanto
3	Sesi Dokumentasi Foto Bersama	15.30-15.35	Amadea Syahbani R.P

Implementation Day

The outreach activity starts by meeting with several Thai students to coordinate the activities that will begin on Friday, July 19, 2024 (Figure 1).



Figure 1. The Implementation Meeting

This activity began by looking at the condition of the prayer room (Figure 2). Due to the muslim minority in Rajamangala Technology krungthep University, there was minimal awareness to clean the prayer room and complete its facilities. There are two rooms, namely a prayer room for women and for men. The condition of the

men's and women's prayer room before it was cleaned and tidied up, are shown in Figure 3 and 4, respectively.



Figure 2. Prayer Room Inspection

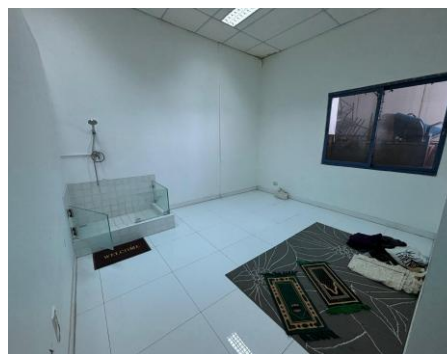


Figure 3. Men's Prayer Room

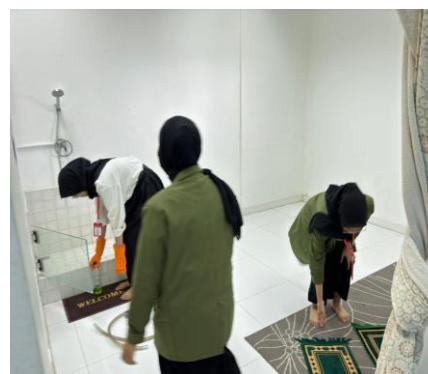


Figure 4. Women's Prayer Room

The activity begins with cleaning the ablution area, and folding the prayer mats and mukenah. It is importance to always tidying up the prayer mats and mukenah so that when it is used by all prayer, the equipments remains clean and holy. In addition, it was also tidied up the area where the Quran and reading books are placed (Figure 5), added the new Quran to increase the enthusiasm in remembering the Quran.

The cleaning process in men's prayer area was faced some additional challenges, such as a dustier room condition and fewer supplies. The ablution area cleaning process ensuring that every faucet and sink was functioning properly. Furthermore, the lighting and ventilation systems

were also checked. It was ensured that every corner of the room received sufficient lighting and proper ventilation to create a comfortable and serene atmosphere for prayers.



Figure 5. Tidied up the Quran area

Evaluation

The results of the technical meeting greatly influenced the success of the community service activities. With the same agreement and understanding among all parties involved, the activities ran orderly and follow the plan. Initial evaluations showed that the technical meeting played a major role in minimizing potential problems during implementation, and ensuring that the main objective of the activity, namely maintaining the cleanliness and comfort of the worship place, could be achieved properly.

With the completion of the improvements and cleaning of both the men's and women's prayer areas, it is hope that with better facilities and a cleaner environment, the spirit of worship and religious activities at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep will be further enhanced. Hope that all these efforts will bring great benefits to the Muslim community at the university, foster a harmonious atmosphere and strengthen the sense of togetherness among students.

Through these activities, there are some outcomes identified such as testimonials from Muslim students who felt more comfortable and motivated to use the prayer rooms. The addition of facilities and improvements to the condition of the worship spaces contributed to a more conducive environment for worship. Feedback received from local students also indicated that they appreciated the improvement efforts and hoped that the cleanliness and maintenance of the prayer rooms would continue to be prioritized.

Discussion

By employing a qualitative and collaborative framework, this initiative not only facilitated the physical enhancement of Muslim places of worship but also fostered greater awareness and responsibility among students. Furthermore, the findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on religious inclusivity within academic institutions, particularly in contexts where certain religious groups represent a minority.

This project not only improved the Musholla's physical condition but also encouraged ongoing maintenance efforts. Religious spaces, regardless of affiliation, must be well-maintained and respected, as they hold significant meaning for worshippers. Yussoff and Shaharuddin [10] suggest that fostering a well-maintained and inclusive religious environment encourages greater participation among students. Future initiatives should explore similar projects in other universities to further promote religious inclusivity and strengthen social cohesion in academic institutions.

To maximize the impact of student collaboration in preserving Muslim places of worship at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, it is advisable for the university to establish a structured community service program. This initiative could incorporate regular workshops on cultural and religious sensitivity to ensure that all participants gain a thorough understanding of the significance of these sacred spaces. Such educational efforts would enhance awareness and foster respect among students from diverse backgrounds.

Furthermore, the active involvement of religious leaders and local communities in the planning and execution of these initiatives would strengthen partnerships between the university and the surrounding community. This collaboration would not only facilitate the effective implementation of maintenance efforts but also promote mutual respect and cooperation among all stakeholders. By integrating community engagement into institutional programs, universities can create a sustainable framework for preserving cultural and religious heritage.

Additionally, expanding the initiative to include students from other universities and diverse backgrounds would encourage greater intercultural exchange and understanding. By engaging in joint projects with other academic institutions, students can broaden their perspectives, develop a more comprehensive view of community service, and cultivate global citizenship. Such interactions would foster

meaningful dialogue and enhance cross-cultural appreciation, contributing to a more cohesive and inclusive social environment.

This approach would not only improve the upkeep of religious sites but also play a significant role in shaping a culturally aware and socially responsible society. Encouraging collaborative efforts among students, educational institutions, and community members would ensure the long-term success of such initiatives while promoting inclusivity, respect, and shared responsibility in multicultural settings.

4. CONCLUSION

The involvement of students in maintaining Muslim places of worship at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, Thailand, underscores the significance of community participation in the preservation of cultural and religious heritage. This initiative not only strengthens relationships between students and local communities but also fosters a deeper appreciation and respect for the religious and cultural practices of Muslim communities in Thailand. Through active engagement in the upkeep of these sacred spaces, students develop essential skills in responsibility, teamwork, and cultural awareness. Moreover, this case study highlights the critical role of student involvement in community service, as it cultivates a sense of collective ownership and shared responsibility. The collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds further facilitates intercultural dialogue, thereby promoting a more inclusive and harmonious academic environment.

The successful maintenance of these worship facilities serves as tangible evidence of the positive impact of student-led initiatives in fostering social cohesion and religious tolerance. This initiative demonstrates how student engagement in community-based activities can contribute to strengthening social bonds and enhancing mutual understanding among individuals from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of integrating community service into higher education to instill civic responsibility and cultural sensitivity in students.

In conclusion, the collaborative efforts of students at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep serve as an exemplary model for other educational institutions. By actively participating in service-learning projects such as the maintenance of religious sites, students can make meaningful contributions to society while

acquiring valuable life skills. This study underscores the broader role of universities beyond academic instruction, emphasizing their responsibility in shaping socially conscious, culturally competent, and responsible individuals who are committed to fostering inclusivity and mutual respect within diverse societies.

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