

The Role of Islamic Centre in Building Students' Attitude in PSMZA

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ABSTRACT

A good attitude or well-rounded personality is an important element to a student. The success of a student is not just measured by his or her degree of knowledge, but it is also clarified by his or her well-rounded personality. Other than the role of an IPT, the Islamic Center of the institute is also affects the molding process to create the students' attitude since the programs and activities organized are about building the better characters of the students themselves. This study will look at how far is the role played by the Islamic Center of Politeknik Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin (PSMZA) to realize the objection. This study is in quantitative method which is using the survey instrument. The main objective of this research is to identify the effectiveness of the religious and society-related programs handled by the Islamic Center of PSMZA in building the students' attitude. The questionnaires had been distributed to the students from the second semester of December 2013 at all departments of PSMZA. The research sample includes 300 respondents who are the students of PSMZA. The result is analyzed using Statistical Packages For Social Science (SPSS) software version 21.0 based on a Likert Scale to obtain the frequency, percentage and mean. The findings show that the minimal perception of students toward the Islamic Center's role is average which is 3.58, students' involvement in activities and programs provided by the center is 2.89 whereby the minimum perception of the attractive programs by the center for the students to join is 3.42. Therefore, to increase the Islamic Center influence and role, the administration of PSMZA has to cooperate with the Islamic Center's management to realize the building of the students' greatest attitude and well-rounded personality.

KEYWORDS: Role, Islamic Center, Molding, Attitude.

INTRODUCTION

The Muslim students' perception in this country on the Islamic Center at the respective educational institution is quite restricted. For them, the function of Islamic Center is merely for the formal worship purposes. All about worshipping deeds have to be performed at the Islamic Center and other life related matters have been thought as not suitable to be done there. The trend of thought has a big implication not only because Islamic Center is an excellent institution in Islam, but it also determines the progress of ummah. The culture or mind setting of thinking of the Islamic Center is only as a place to perform prayer has to be stopped. Students as well as the society have to be educated on the real meaning and roles of an Islamic Center. Efforts have to be conducted to attract Muslim students to involve in the Islamic Center activities.

Students have to understand that Islamic Center is the noblest place alongside Allah S.W.T. and His Messenger. Islamic Center is a prayer, knowledge distribution, dakwah spreading center, as well as becoming a center of unity and welfare among students.

Research Objectives

Main research objectives are to:

1. Identify students' perception towards the Islamic Center's roles.
2. Investigate the students' involvement in the activities and programs organized by the Islamic Center.
3. Recognize the right programs and activities that can attract students to the Islamic Center.

Research Questions

From the research objectives, research questions constructed so the actual research could meet all the research questions. The research questions are:

1. What is the students' perception of the Islamic Center's role?
2. Is there any students' involvement in the programs and activities held by the Islamic Center?
3. What are the programs and activities that could attract students to the Islamic Center?

Framework of Research Concept

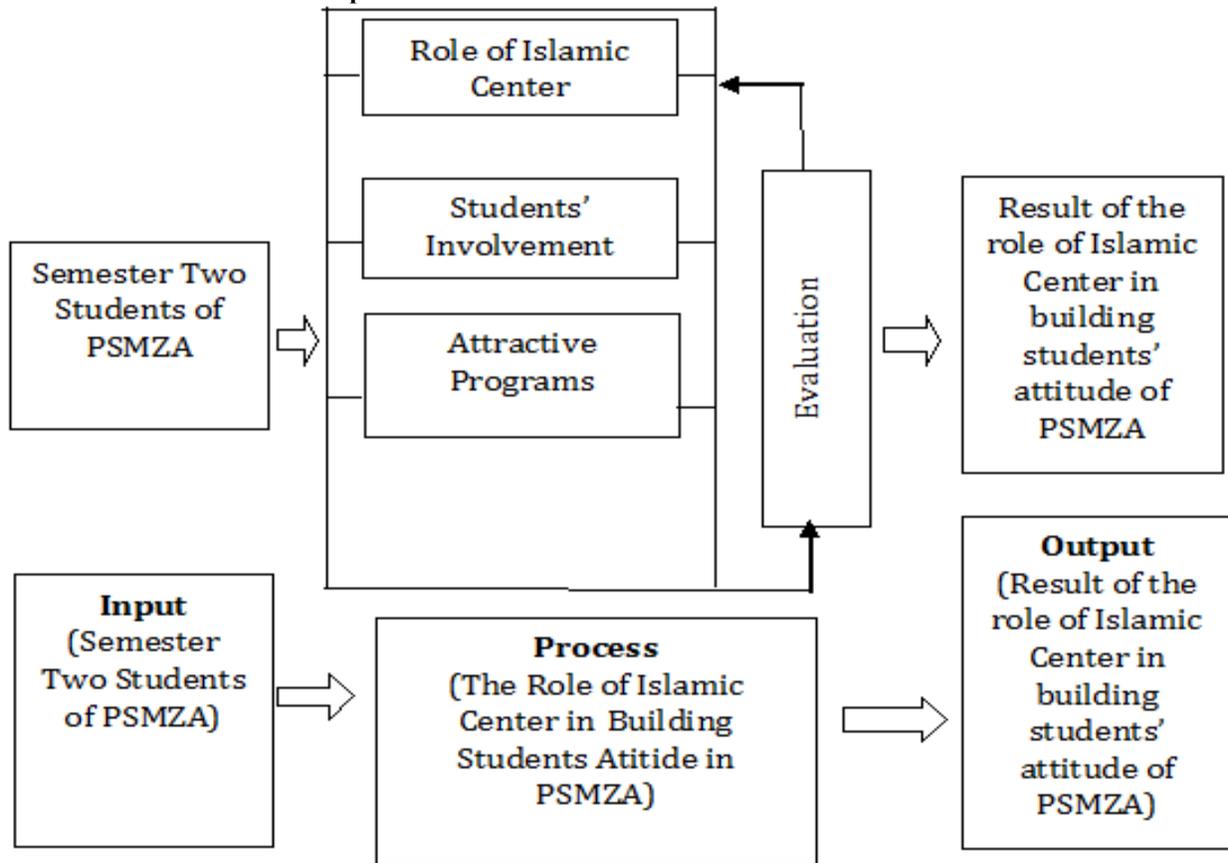


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of research on students’ perception of the Islamic Centerroles in building PSMZA students’ attitude[5].

Research Scope

This research only involved the students of PSMZA. Therefore, the findings discussed in this research only restricted to the research location. However, it still could be used by other polytechnics which have Islamic Center. This research also focuses on the roles of Islamic Center, programs and activities organized by an Islamic Center. Therefore, information received from the research is only based on the items in the questionnaire. This research is conducted to find out how far the Islamic Center plays its roles in building students’ attitude throughout the effective programs. Besides that, this research also done to investigate the students’ involvement in every program held by the Islamic Center of PSMZA.

At the same time, the research conducted could be able to help the polytechnic especially the Islamic Center itself in molding the students’ characteristic, especially for Muslim students who dominate more than a half population of students in most of the polytechnics in Malaysia. The students’ attitude formation based on religion practice is an important aspect on the religion pillar as one of the human guardians and guidelines for behavior.

Therefore, this research has a distinctive importance to the respective parties. This research is hoped to give the benefit to the Islamic Center to strengthen the organization as a knowledge center. Apart from that, it could ease the center to provide the best approach to attract all of the students as well as staffs of PSMZA to be as part of the center.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to [1], the word role means part (task) entitled, plays, what is mean by the researchers is the role or task played by Islamic Center of PSMZA to the students. Islamic Center is a place for students and staffs to worship, which has a significant role in the development of the society. History has proven the multi-functions of the Islamic Centerfor the students of higher education. The Islamic Center is not only as a place to perform the prayer, but also

as an educational center, religion learning, and other socioeconomic functions. The Prophet SAW already showed the best example in maximizing and multiply the functions of Prophets Mosque or Masjid Nabawiin building and managing all of the society's concerns; economy, politics, social, education, army, etc.

Attitude comes from Arabic word means personality or character [1]. Attitude development refers to the aspects of transformation of oneself, from either to the positive or negative side [11]. According to [2], the development of attitude includes all of the aspects within an individual; religion knowledge, knowledge of God, the Quran, family living manners, occupation, communication and relationship, characteristics, the development of the heart and soul. In other words, the trait lies within an individual that could naturally release any act or deed without any pre-thinking or outer force.

There are some researches which had highlighted the roles of mosque in building up human characteristics. One of them is the research by [4] which focused on the role of mosque in building up personal characteristics in Gombak. Her research also looked into the role of the mosque whether it is functioning as a place of human capital development or just as a place of worship alone. The next thing is the degree of effectiveness of the mosque in building up the society characteristics in Gombak. There were three mosques selected as the sample of the research. However, she had only touched on the surface on the role of a mosque in a noble character development.

In [8] focused on how the mosque could be imagined as the heart of ummah. It is a description to explain how important the role of mosque to develop the society. When the role of the mosque is not maximized, it could lead to a negative effect to the ecosystem of the society spiritual. All of the problems happen nowadays, are strongly related to the progressiveness of the mosque's role. The society awareness of the mosque actual roles should be explained.

In [6] findings revealed that the teenagers had a positive towards the mosque, although they gave less commitment. The major factors contribute to the positive perception are physical attributes, equipment and mosque facilities. From the commitment aspect, the urban teenagers commit better than the rural teenagers since the mosque in urban area is more active than the rural area. There are some suggestions had been proposed to the mosque especially in organizing interesting programs for all teenagers. All in all, this research had found that teenagers in Selangor still had the positive perception of its function as an important institution for Muslims in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Research on the role of the Islamic Center towards character or attitude development is based on observation. A survey is one of the popular non-experimental methods used in numbers of field of study. This research represents all the methods to collect the data directly from a group of subject. A survey is normally done by interviewing research subject or distributing questionnaires for the subject to answer. To study the role of the Islamic Center in character or attitude development, researches distribute questionnaires to the sample wanted who are the students of PSMZA.

Researches choose the survey method because of several features. One of them is the method which could be used widely where it could be used to state many enquiries such as the problems and issues in many perspectives especially to explain the view, beliefs, feelings, acts and others. Throughout the method, the researchers could carry out research on big sample by distributing the questionnaires to the identified subject. The size of the sample in the survey is usually bigger than the size of the sample in the experimental method.

From this method, it could give an advantage to the researchers because throughout the questionnaires distributed and data could be collected directly in a short time. The analyzed result could also be obtained faster. The result obtained from a survey method could be effectively and accurately made general to the population. To gain information about the research conducted, a few things should be noticed by the researchers. One of them is the suitability of the instruments used to meet the objectives of the research. The items in the questionnaires should be comprehensive and convenient for the respondents to easily answer them.

Research Population

Population is all members in a group [7]. The research population involves the semester 2 students in PSMZA. The selected semester two students are from every department who consists of male and female students of Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Information Technology Department. The estimated number of semester two students for the June 2014 session is about 500 persons.

Research Sample

The research sample is a subject from a population. There are 2 important elements need to be identified during the sampling, which are adequate and representative. Adequacy is the selected sample enough to be regarded as a

generalization, whereby a representation is related to the number of sample really represents the researched population [10]. The sample is a group, category, or subject appointed especially to reflect population in the research [9]. In the research, the sampling design used is random sampling involve 300 respondents from every department. This sampling design is easy to be carried out and questionnaires distribution had been helped by several lecturers from Islamic Education Unit teaching semester 2 students in June 2014 session. However, only 297 sets of questionnaires were managed to be collected.

Research Instrument

This research is being conducted using questionnaire set. The questionnaire is a tool to collect the data for the researchers. Therefore, for every research, one same questionnaire must be used for all respondents to ensure a uniform data to be processed throughout the computers where each question submitted according to its sequence.

The questionnaire constructed by the researchers themselves based on the objectives and research questions stated. The questionnaire is also consists of two sections which are Part A and B. Part A contains several questions on demographic data of the respondents. Whereby Part B, C and D are based on the objective and research questions which are to identify students' perception towards the Islamic Center's roles, investigate the students' involvement in the activities and programs organized by the Islamic Center, recognize the right programs and activities that can attract students to the Islamic Center.

Pilot Test

Researchers have carried out a pilot test on ten students from Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Communication and Information Technology Department. The rationale of selected sampling for the pilot test is because it has the same traits with the actual examined sample. The pilot test is done to identify the reliability and accuracy of the questionnaire that would be used. Besides, the test is also carried out to ensure the questionnaire distributed to the actual sample is trustworthy. The alpha value for this pilot test is 0.948.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Questionnaire Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Respondents' demographic

No. of Item	Item	No. of Students	Percentage (%)	
A1	Gender	Male	186	62.6
		Female	111	37.4
A2	Age	18-19	274	92.3
		20-21	19	6.4
		21 and above	4	1.3
A3	Department	JKA	43	14.5
		JKE	77	25.9
		JKM	136	45.8
		JTMK	41	13.8
A4	Educational background	SMK	212	71.4
		SMKA	8	2.7
		SMA	11	3.7
		SMT	66	22.2
A5	Lodging	Hostel	202	68.0
		Rental house	81	27.3
		Family house	14	4.7
		Others		
A6	Islamic Center perception	Important	274	92.3
		Not important	23	7.7

Table 1 shows majority of respondents consists of male students, which is 186 (62.6%) from 297 respondents. The majority of the respondents aged 18-19 years old (92.3%), followed by 20-21 years old (6.4%) and 21 years old above (1.3%). It also could be seen that most of the students are from Mechanical Engineering Department(45.8%), followed by Electrical Engineering Department (25.9%), Civil Engineering Department (14.5%) and Communication and Information Technology (13.8%).

Besides that, most of the respondents received their education at Government Secondary School (71.4%), followed by Technical Secondary School (22.2%), the rest is a Religious Secondary School (3.7%) and

Government Secondary Religious School (2.7%). Most of the students also stay at the hostel during their study at Polytechnic (68.0%) compared to rental houses (27.3%) and family houses (4.7%). Regarding the view or opinion on the importance of the Islamic Center, most of the respondents answer yes (92.3%) compared to no (7.7%). Respondents' opinion on the importance of the Islamic Center influence the research outcome.

Objective 1: Identify students' perception towards the Islamic Center's roles

Table 2: Students' perception on Islamic Center

No. of Item	Islamic Center's Roles	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
B1	I need the religion knowledge to strengthen my relationship with Allah.	292	98.3
B2	The role of Islamic Center is to inspire and increase students' characters.	291	97.9
B3	Islamic Center gives emphasis to students' characters and attitude, especially Muslim teenagers.	289	97.3
B4	Reminder programs organized by Islamic Center are suitable for all students.	286	96.3
B5	Organized programs and activities have taken into consideration the students' leisure time to ensure maximum participation.	254	85.5
B6	The content of scope of activities is wide.	273	91.9
B7	Maghrib preaching programs bring awareness to the students' characters and attitude.	292	98.3
B8	Character development is very important in balancing academic and skills achievement.	295	99.3
B9	The Islamic Center has done a lot of reminders about the importance days of Islam.	285	95.9

Based on Table 2, the research find out that about 292 (98.3%) respondents agree that they need the knowledge to create a better ties with Allah. This finding is supported by item B4, which show 96.3 % or 286 respondents agree that reminder programs organized by Islamic Center are suitable for the students. Besides that, about 97.9% respondents agree that the Islamic Center acts as an inspiration and added value to the characters' development and 97.3% respondents agree that Islamic Center gives emphasize on characters' development especially for the Muslim students.

Item B5 shows a smaller percentage which is 85.5% or 254 respondents agree that the programs and activities organized had taken into consideration the students' leisure time to ensure maximize participation. This had shown that Islamic Center should reflect on the suitable timing to organize its programs and activities.

Objective 2: To investigate the students' involvement in the activities and programs organized by the Islamic Center

Table 3: Students' involvement

No. of Item	Students' involvement in programs and activities organized	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
C1	I attend every preaching program organized by the Islamic Center.	231	77.8
C2	If I have personal or study problems, I will search for counselling service from Islamic Center.	156	52.5
C3	I attend knowledge activities such as religion preaches, and Quran recital classes.	215	72.4
C4	I will go to the Islamic Center to perform my prayers with other Muslims.	227	76.4
C5	I will go to the Islamic Center to break my fast, and all other related spiritual activities.	236	79.5
C6	I feel more comfortable to study at the Islamic Center.	186	62.6
C7	I am one of the student committee members of the Islamic Center.	63	21.2
C8	The Islamic Center staffs are friendly and warm, and easy to deal with.	196	66.0
C9	If there is any chance, I will attend the programs at the Islamic Center.	264	88.9

Based on Table 3, item C9 shows a high percentage which is 88.9% or 264 respondents agree that when they have a chance, they will join the programs by an Islamic Center. This shows that students would go to the Islamic Center if they have time since their study schedule is quite packed. Item C3 shows 72.4% or 215 students agree that they attend the knowledge activities such as religion preaches and Quran recital classes. This finding is supported by item C1 which is 77.8% or 231 students agree that they attend every religion program by an Islamic Center.

Item C4 shows 76.4% or 227 respondents agree that they go to the Islamic Center to perform their prayers with other Muslims. Item C5 shows 79.5% or 236 students agree that they go to the Islamic Center to break their fast, and all other related spiritual activities. Here, it could be seen that students are involved in the activities organized by an

Islamic Center. The lowest percentage is on item C7 which is 21.1% or 63 respondents agree that they are among the student committee members of the Islamic Center.

Objective 3: To recognize the right programs and activities that can attract students to the Islamic Center

Table 4: Programs and activities

No. of Item	Program and activities that could attract students to involve with Islamic Center	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
D1	The appearance of professional speaker at Islamic Center could increase students' interest in joining every program organized by an Islamic Center.	280	94.3
D2	The usage of modern equipment in a performance or program could attract students to involve in programs by an Islamic Center.	264	88.9
D3	The students' concern of apprehension, speaker selection, as well as knowledge spreading method.	285	95.9
D4	I get new information and knowledge everytime I join the Islamic Center activities.	277	93.3
D5	Invited speakers fulfill the theme of the programs.	277	93.3
D6	I really like current issues talk.	280	94.3
D7	I get to add many knowledge on family matters.	279	94.0
D8	I think it is important to add programs related to laws and order knowledge.	267	89.9
D9	I really like Islamic alternative-entertainment programs.	284	95.6

Based on Table 4, item D1 shows 94.3% equals to 280 respondents agree that the appearance of professional speaker at Islamic Center could increase students' interest in joining every program organized by an Islamic Center. This finding is supported by item D3 which are the students' concern of apprehension, speaker selection as well as knowledge spreading method where 95.9 % or 285 respondents agree with the statement which shows a high percentage.

Item D2 is about the usage of modern equipment in a performance or program which could attract students to involve in programs by Islamic Center shows a lower percentage which is 88.9% or 264 students who agree with the statement. This finding shows that students think that modern equipment do not affect the programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

All in all, it is identified that students' perception towards the role of Islamic Center is average which is 3.58, the perceptual mean towards the involvement of students in programs and activities held is moderate which is 2.89 whereas the perceptual min towards the programs and activities which could attract students to the Islamic Center is also average which is 3.42. Therefore, the management of Islamic Center should improve their efforts to attract students to involve in the programs organized. There are some suggestions that could be prepared to enhance the Islamic Center roles and functions among students:

1. Islamic Center management should be empowered by all parts of parties in PSMZA especially the administration so that every program held would get fully support from the budget, participation and manpower part. This step is hoped to enhance the image of the Islamic Center.
2. There is a need to improve the professional management to increase the image of the Islamic Center by creating a collaboration between Islamic Centers in each of the Polytechnics. With this collaboration, there would be a more conducive reference and guidelines to organize high-impact programs and activities for the students.
3. The activities and programs need to be done in various ways and strategies towards improving students' characters and attitude namely the mentor mentee group, female students' knowledge group, alternative entertainment and other programs which could attract students' attention and participation.

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