

Community Empowerment through Islamic Programs to Enhance Religious Awareness: A Study in Nagari Silago, Indonesia

Rani Safitri^{a)}, Maya Sitisholihah^{b)}, Ulil Arham^{c)}, Aldino Gusto^{d)}, Michal Mardani^{e)}

STITNU Sakinah Dharmasraya, Dharmasraya, Indonesia

^{a)}Corresponding author: ranisaaa11@gmail.com

^{b)}mayasitisholihah254@gmail.com

^{c)}michamardan803@gmail.com

^{d)}aldinoganz54@gmail.com

^{e)}ulilarham2303@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Low levels of community participation in routine religious activities remain a significant challenge in strengthening religious awareness in rural areas. Mosques, as central institutions in Muslim communities, have strategic potential to promote community empowerment through structured Islamic programs. However, the effectiveness of such programs in enhancing religious awareness, particularly in village contexts, still requires empirical investigation. This study examines the effectiveness of Islamic-based community empowerment programs in enhancing religious awareness in Nagari Silago, Dharmasraya Regency. A quantitative survey method was employed using questionnaires distributed to 50 respondents selected through simple random sampling. The findings reveal that the level of religious awareness is moderate, with a mean score of 3.2 on a 5-point Likert scale. While the implemented Islamic programs improved community interest and religious understanding, they did not significantly influence consistent religious behavior. These results indicate that sustainable, participatory, and context-based programs are necessary to foster deeper and long-term religious awareness. This study contributes to the development of community empowerment strategies in rural religious contexts.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/Received: 02 February 2026

First Revised: 12 March 2026

Accepted: 20 March 2026

First Available online: 30 April 2026

Publication Date: 30 April 2026

Keyword :

Community Empowerment

Islamic Programs

Religious Awareness

Rural Society

Religious Literacy

INTRODUCTION

Village communities hold a strategic position in building social life grounded in religious values. In this context, religious activities function not only as a means of worship but also as a medium for character formation, the enhancement of religious literacy, and the strengthening of social bonds among residents. However, the reality on the ground indicates that the level of community participation in religious activities tends to be fluctuating and seasonal, as observed in Nagari Silago, IX Koto Subdistrict, Dharmasraya Regency. Religious activities typically increase during certain periods, particularly during the month of Ramadan, but have not yet become a sustained habit in everyday life.

The mosque, as the centre of Muslim communal life, in fact holds considerable potential to promote comprehensive community empowerment, encompassing spiritual, social, and economic dimensions. This aligns with the findings (Ridwanullah & Herdiana, 2018), who argue that mosques can be optimised as a foundation for community empowerment through well-structured religious programmes. In addition, (Nata, 2021) emphasises that mosques have a strategic role in Islamic education, particularly in shaping public awareness and understanding of religious values.

Furthermore, mosque-based community empowerment is not limited solely to aspects of worship, but also encompasses the development of young people's potential and the strengthening of values of religious moderation. Research (Aslati et al., 2018) shows that youth involvement in mosque activities can enhance religious character and social responsibility. Meanwhile, (Saumantri et al., 2023) emphasise the importance of mosque-based programmes in instilling values of religious moderation among young people as an effort to maintain social harmony.

On the other hand, several studies also highlight the importance of professional mosque management, including in the development of assets and the economic empowerment of the Muslim community. (Setyorini & others, 2021) As Afiat et al. (2020) argue, optimising mosque assets can serve as a strategy to improve community welfare. Nevertheless, the implementation of mosque-based empowerment programmes at the village level continues to face various challenges, such as low community participation, a lack of programme innovation, and the absence of contextual and sustainable approaches.

This study seeks to examine more deeply how Islamic activity programmes can function as a strategy for community empowerment in enhancing religious awareness, particularly in rural areas. It not only considers the level of public understanding and interest, but also evaluates the extent to which the programmes implemented are able to encourage more consistent changes in religious behaviour.

Thus, this study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically, particularly in developing more effective, participatory, and sustainable models of community empowerment based on religious activities within rural communities.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method to measure the effectiveness of Islamic activity programmes in enhancing the religious awareness of the community. The quantitative approach is chosen as it provides a more objective picture through numerical data obtained from respondents and allows for the systematic measurement of the variables under investigation.

The study was conducted in Nagari Silago, IX Koto Subdistrict, Dharmasraya Regency, West Sumatra. This location was selected due to the relatively low level of community participation in routine religious activities, making it relevant to the research focus on community empowerment based on Islamic programmes.

The population of this study consists of the residents of Nagari Silago who are involved in or have access to religious activities in the mosque and mushalla environment. The sample comprises 50 respondents, selected using a simple random sampling technique, ensuring that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen as a respondent. This technique is employed to ensure that the data obtained more objectively represent the condition of the community.

The research instrument used was a questionnaire employing a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The instrument was developed based on three main dimensions, namely:

- Community participation, which includes attendance and involvement in religious activities;
- Religious understanding, which covers the level of knowledge and awareness of Islamic values;
- Religious behavioural practice, which relates to the implementation of religious values in everyday life.

These three indicators were designed to measure the extent to which Islamic activity programmes are able to influence the improvement of the community's religious awareness.

Before use, the instrument was tested through validity and reliability assessments. The validity test was conducted to ensure that each item was capable of measuring the intended variable, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The results showed a coefficient value of 0.82, indicating that the instrument has a good level of reliability and is suitable for use in this study.

The data analysis technique employed was descriptive statistical analysis by calculating the mean and percentage for each indicator. The mean value was calculated using the following formula:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{N} \quad (1)$$

Explanation:

\bar{x} = *Average value*

$\sum x$ = *Total score*

N = *Number of respondents*

The results of the calculations were then interpreted into categories of religious awareness levels, namely low, moderate, and high. This analysis was used to provide an empirical overview of the community's level of religious awareness following the implementation of the Islamic activity programmes. Through this method, the study is expected to produce more systematic and measurable data, thereby providing a sound basis for formulating more effective and sustainable models of community empowerment based on religious activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

Based on data obtained from 50 respondents, the findings indicate that the Islamic activity programmes implemented in Nagari Silago have a fairly significant impact on enhancing the community's religious awareness. This can be observed through the three main indicators measured, namely community participation, religious understanding, and religious behavioural practice.

For the indicator of community participation, the majority of respondents showed an increase in attendance at religious activities such as study circles, wirid, and Ramadan programmes. The mean score falls within the moderate to high category, indicating that the programmes implemented are capable of attracting community involvement, although participation has not yet become fully consistent beyond certain occasions.

Furthermore, for the indicator of religious understanding, the results show a fairly notable improvement. Respondents reported a better understanding of the fundamental values of Islamic teachings after participating in the activities organised. This is reflected in the increased awareness of the importance of worship, moral conduct, and social life in accordance with religious principles.

Meanwhile, for the indicator of religious behavioural practice, there has been a relatively positive change, although not as substantial as the improvement in understanding. Some respondents have begun to show changes in their daily worship habits, such as performing congregational prayers and reading the Qur'an; however, challenges remain in maintaining the consistency of these behaviours over the long term.

Overall, the findings indicate that Islamic activity programmes contribute to improving the community's religious awareness, with the most notable gains in the aspect of understanding, followed by participation, and then behavioural practice.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that mosque-based Islamic activities have a strategic role in promoting community empowerment, particularly in enhancing religious awareness. This is consistent with the study by Ridwanullah & Herdiana (2018), which states that mosques can be optimised as centres of community empowerment through structured and sustainable religious programmes.

The increase in community participation indicates that the programme approach has been reasonably effective in attracting public interest. However, the tendency for participation to rise only during certain periods, such as the month of Ramadan, suggests that these activities have not yet been fully internalised as a routine necessity. This also reflects one of the challenges identified in the study by Setyorini & others (2021), where programme sustainability is strongly influenced by activity management and the level of innovation carried out by mosque administrators.

In terms of religious understanding, the findings show a fairly significant improvement. This reinforces the view of (Nata, 2021) that the mosque serves an important function as a non-formal Islamic educational institution capable of enhancing the community's religious literacy. Programmes such as study circles and religious lectures have proven to be effective media for transmitting religious values to the community.

In addition, the findings of this study also demonstrate that Islamic activity programmes have the

potential to foster values of moderation and social harmony. This is in line with the studies by (Saumantri et al., 2023) and (Maulana et al., 2023), which emphasise that the mosque functions not only as a place of worship, but also as a space for social development that can strengthen attitudes of tolerance and togetherness within the community.

When viewed through the lens of empowerment, the Islamic activity programmes implemented have fulfilled several key elements, such as active community participation, the enhancement of individual capacity, and observable behavioural change, albeit still at an early stage. This indicates that the mosque holds considerable potential as a centre of empowerment, not only in the spiritual sense but also in the social dimension.

Nevertheless, this study also identifies certain limitations, particularly in terms of programme sustainability and the consistency of community participation. Therefore, more innovative and contextual strategies are required, such as the utilisation of digital media, strengthening the role of mosque youth, and more structured programme management to ensure that the impact achieved is more optimal and sustainable

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that mosque-based Islamic activity programmes play a tangible role in enhancing the community's religious awareness, particularly in the dimension of understanding. However, this improvement has not been fully accompanied by consistency in religious practice, indicating a gap between knowledge and its implementation in everyday life.

The main contribution of this study lies in emphasising that the effectiveness of religious activities is not only measured by the level of participation, but also by their ability to encourage sustainable behavioural change. These findings suggest that an incidental approach to Islamic activities is still insufficient to establish stable religious habits within the community.

Thus, this study reinforces the argument that mosque-based community empowerment should be directed towards more sustainable, participatory, and contextual models, so that it does not stop at improving understanding, but is also capable of generating more consistent transformation in religious behaviour.

It is recommended that future research adopt more in-depth approaches, such as mixed methods or qualitative designs, in order to explore the factors influencing the gap between religious understanding and practice. In addition, further studies may examine innovations in digitally based programmes or more adaptive community-based approaches in response to evolving social dynamics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank STITNU Sakinah Dharmasraya and the community of Nagari Silago for their support.

REFERENCES

- Afiat, F., Wediawati, B., & Fitri, L. E. (2020). Optimalisasi Fungsi Masjid sebagai Sentra Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Umat. *Najaha Iqtishod: Journal of Islamic Economic and Finance*, 1(1), 10–19. <https://doi.org/10.22437/jief.v1i1.11195>

- Aslati, A., Silawati, S., Sehani, S., & Nuryanti, N. (2018a). Pemberdayaan Remaja Berbasis Masjid. *Masyarakat Madani*, 3(2), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.24014/jmm.v3i2.6353>
- Maulana, F., Rohman, B., & Riam, Z. A. (2023). Peran Masjid dalam Penyebaran Toleransi. *Jurnal Bimas Islam*, 16(2), 398–420. <https://doi.org/10.37302/jbi.v16i2.1080>
- Nata, A. (2021a). Peran dan Fungsi Masjid di Indonesia dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam. *Ta'dibuna*, 10(3), 414–426. <https://doi.org/10.32832/tadibuna.v10i3.5203>
- Ridwanullah, A. I., & Herdiana, D. (2018). Optimalisasi Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Berbasis Masjid. *Ilmu Dakwah*, 12(1), 82–98. <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v12i1.2396>
- Saumantri, T., Hafizd, J. Z., & Faturrahman, R. F. (2023). Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Berbasis Kebangsaan pada Remaja. *Mafaza*, 3(2), 112–128. <https://doi.org/10.32665/mafaza.v3i2.2289>
- Setyorini, & others. (2021). Pengelolaan dan Pengembangan Aset Masjid sebagai Upaya Peningkatan Layanan Ibadah. *JPPM*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.30595/jppm.v5i1.6343>.