

The Impact of the Islamic Peer Mentoring Module on Student Religious Personality in Higher Education

Noraini Ismail
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Perlis

Mardzelah Makhsin
Northern University of Malaysia

Islamic peer mentoring program is one of the guidance methods practiced in Islamic education. Researchers agree that it can improve Islamic practices and understanding of religion, but in some cases, a modular guide must be implemented. Therefore, an Islamic peer mentoring module has been developed and tested empirically to develop religious personality among university students. A result from a quasi-experimental research design shows that this module has successfully increased religious personality among university students in Malaysia. Thus, it makes the Islamic peer mentoring module an excellent alternative to the successful Islamic peer mentoring program at the university.

Keywords: peer mentoring, Islamic mentoring, mentoring module, religious personality, university students

INTRODUCTION

Religious practices are closely related to the formation of an individual's behavior and personality. According to the Islamic perspective, individuals who practice religion well will be people with better behavior and personality. Many researchers agree that religious practice is the main factor in determining the changes in religious personality (Tahir et al., 2018; Ismail et al., 2022). Therefore, various guidance methods and strategies are carried out by various parties to ensure that every Muslim practice religion in the best way to form an excellent Muslim personality. Among the guidance methods used is Islamic peer mentoring programs. Usually, this program is implemented in small groups, and many are pioneered by the field of counseling and Islamic education. In Islam, this program is also known as 'usrah' (Zahir et al., 2019; Nasirudin & Yusak, 2019; Rahimi & Kawangit, 2018) and also 'halaqah' (Armansyah, 2020; Ismail et al., 2010; Rosmanah, 2016).

In Malaysia, Islamic mentoring involving peers as mentors has been implemented starting from the school level up to the university level. Many studies prove that the involvement of peers as mentors is a good added value to the effectiveness of mentoring implementation since peers greatly influence the mentee's social life and their relationships are more intimate (Kachaturoff et al., 2020; Nichols, 2011; Seery et al., 2021; Stigmar, 2016; Venegas-Muggli et al., 2021). In addition, Lan (2023) also shows that peer acceptance positively impacts students' academic achievement and creates healthy competition to succeed in academics. It also indirectly forms positive values among students in line with the Malaysian Education

Development Plan 2013-2025. In this plan, the Malaysian Ministry of Education has put a third shift which outlines that Malaysians who have a high appreciation of values are born (Guntol & Kutty, 2020)

At the higher education level, many studies have found that mentoring programs are successful in building and influencing mentee progress in various aspects, such as academic improvement, career development, fostering values, and also to increase knowledge and awareness of religious life (Lubis et al., 2021; Venegas-Muggli et al., 2021; Busu et al., 2018; Mackh, 2020). Therefore, this program is highly encouraged to be implemented in every school, college, and university (Sabri et al., 2016). However, there needs to be more clarity when the mentoring program implemented does not provide peer mentors with a systematic and structured guide or module. Mentors are only provided with a book or syllabus called the '*usrah* syllabus'. Thus, the researcher has built an Islamic peer mentoring module to be used as a guide for mentors in guiding mentees. This module aims to improve religious personality among students, especially in universities. Thus, this article will report the findings of a study on the effectiveness of Islamic peer mentoring modules implemented at MARA University of Technology, Perlis Branch, Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Module Development

Modules make learning easier and allow students to learn something faster (Jalal et al., 2021). According to Noah & Ahmad (2005), a module refers to a unit of teaching and learning that focuses on a topic in a systematic, organized and sequential manner. It is a package of teaching and learning related to a learning topic that allows students to master a learning topic before moving on to another (Russell, 1974). Thus, in building a module, especially the guidance and motivation module, the activities and content of the module need to be organized systematically to make it easier for students to master each topic and then achieve the objectives of guidance and motivation (Noah & Ahmad, 2005).

The mentoring module is one of the mediums for providing guidance and motivation based on the mentor and mentee system (Du Preez et al., 2013; Taha et al., 2019). It is an approach or a medium of training, guidance, and motivation for students at school and at the university that makes peers, teachers, or counselors as mentors to achieve various guidance and education objectives (Cinderey, 2018; Sider, 2019; Busu et al., 2018). With the module, mentors plan activities and knowledge delivery methods more effectively. In the religious field, the development of the mentoring module is to provide religious guidance and personal development. Therefore, Islam makes the construction and implementation of Islamic mentoring modules as tools, materials, resources, and guides for mentors in conducting mentoring sessions (Ismail et al., 2022; Abdullah et al., 2020).

Many studies are related to the development of modules with an Islamic perspective, but only a few focus on mentoring. Opir et al. (2021) focus on using MyUsrati Prophetic Module to develop students' character. Saper (2012) highlights the *Tazkiyyah al-Nafs* module in increasing religiosity and resilience among teenagers and Saper et al. (2016) related to the effect of the I-Sc (Islamic Spiritual Counseling) module on students with behavioral problems. Abdullah et al. (2018) study focuses on the Ulul Albab Character Strengthening Module for developing Muslim students' attitudes. Thus, the study of module development in Islamic mentoring, which significantly improves religious personality, has yet to be implemented. Therefore, it must be carried out to see its effectiveness in improving religious personality among students (Ismail et al., 2021).

Mentoring Program

Mentoring program is one of the guidance methods to improve professionalism or self-development practiced in various institutions. It involves mentor and mentee relationships that occur formally or informally for various purposes (Ard & Beasley, 2022; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; Jacobson et al., 2020). Mentors are experienced individuals who share knowledge, experience, and advice with less experienced mentees (Ard & Beasley, 2022; Connolly, 2017). Based on previous research, mentors and mentees obtain various benefits and positive effects throughout the mentoring program, such as developing knowledge, improving communication skills, learning new perspectives, building networks, and even career

advancement. Higher education also places mentoring programs as one of the required guidance methods that can positively affect students (Mason, 2016). Among the goals of mentoring in higher education are academic development, personality improvement and moral support throughout the study (Jalal et al., 2021; Sabri et al., 2016). Among the mentoring program implemented in universities is peer mentoring, which involves peers as mentors. According to Fauchald et al. (2022), peer mentoring is a situation where mentors can serve as learning facilitators, supportive coaches, and familiar role models. In addition, sharing experiences with peer mentors give impacts and inspires the mentee to achieve the set goals.

Islamic Peer Mentoring

In Islam, peer mentoring is also known as '*usrah*' or '*halaqah*' (Armansyah, 2020; Yaacob & Kawangit, 2020; Rosmanah, 2016; Nasirudin & Yusak, 2019). According to Andrian et.al (2018), this *halaqah* or *usrah* is an effective alternative in shaping the personality of a Muslim who earnestly practices Islamic teachings. It also describes a small group of Muslims who sit together to learn and live the values and teachings of Islam routinely (Andrian et al., 2018; Rahimi & Kawangit, 2018). A study by Rahimi and Kawangit (2018), shows that the Islamic mentoring system is very relevant and suitable to be implemented in the existing Islamic education system. It can further increase the appreciation of Islam among Muslims and keep Muslims away from the various adverse effects of globalization and modernization. In addition, the implementation of Islamic peer mentoring can also be an essential tool for empowering the role of peers as guides in forming religious values, manners, and personalities among students. It is also a manifestation of Islamic education in fostering values to face education challenges in the era of *Society 5.0* (Ismail et al., 2022). It coincides with the recommendation of Putra (2019) for Islamic education to be highlighted as a medium capable of solving problems critically and creatively in parallel with the change of times.

Religious Personality

According to Islam, religion is believing in God and obeying all His teachings and commands. While some Western philosophers define religion as belief in spiritual beings, a middle way between magic and science, and some also place religion as a belief system related to things that are considered sacred (Wahab & Razali, 2021). On the other hand, personality refers to a particular set of characters that exist in humans (Nawi & Othman, 2016). Thus, Islam defines personality as morality (*akhlak*) or character (*sahsiah*) (Ghani et al., 2013). It refers to a person's behaviour or morals towards Allah, oneself, husband, wife, children, family, friends, society, and nature as a whole that is displayed when there is an interaction between the two parties (Nawi & Othman, 2016). In addition, morals relate to a person's faith in Allah SWT and Rasulullah SAW.

Based on this definition, religious personality in Islam refers to behaviour or morals formed in a person due to a person's religious teachings or religious practices. It is in line with the definition of religious personality presented by Krauss et al. (2005), which is a person's personality and outlook on life guided by Islamic teachings. It includes behaviour, motivation, attitude, and emotions that reflect obedience to Allah SWT and the Prophet SAW. Therefore, in building a religious personality, the four elements of relationship in Islamic practice and also the formation of morals, which are the relationship with Allah SWT, the relationship with oneself, the relationship with other people, and the relationship with nature, should be emphasized (Krauss et al., 2005).

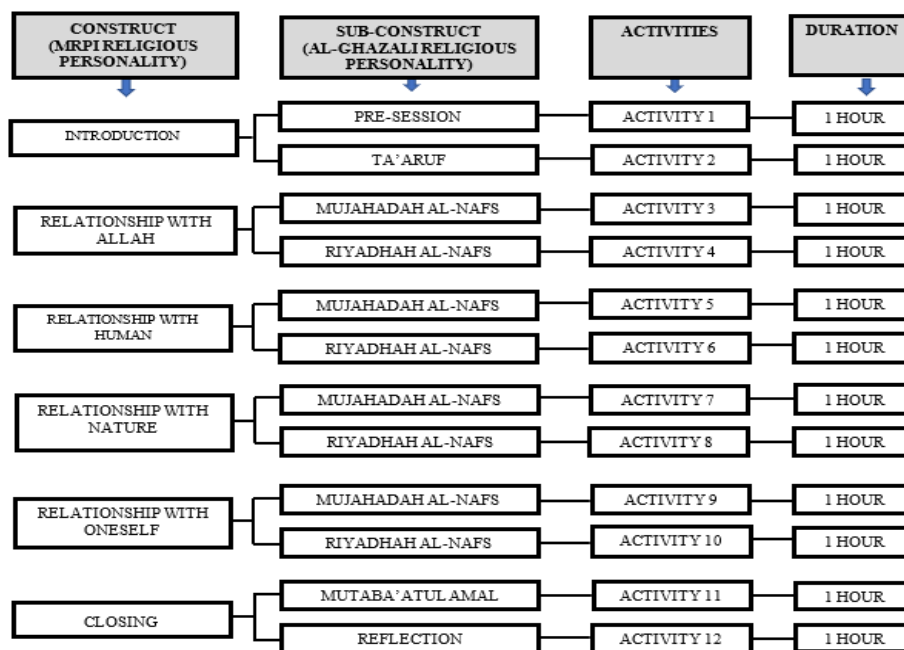
According to al-Ghazali (1988), two bases of 'morality' in building a religious personality are commendable and reprehensible morals. Thus, in forming an excellent religious personality, al-Ghazali (1988) emphasizes the concept of *tazkiyyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul). *Tazkiyyah al-nafs* consists of two main practices, which are *mujahadah al-nafs (al-takhalli)* and *riyadhah al-nafs (at-tahalli)*. *Mujahadah al-nafs* means trying to distance oneself from all reprehensible traits, and *riyadhah al-nafs* means decorating the person with all noble qualities (Sham et al., 2013; Ismail et al., 2022). The strengthening of all the essential elements in constructing a religious personality will produce an individual with an excellent religious personality and subsequently be able to develop a good society. Many studies show that cultivating a wonderful religious personality in an individual will form a person with strong religious beliefs, faith, and many contributions to society. Conversely, if the level of an individual's religious personality is low, then

their behaviour is worse and can have a negative impact on the society (Aghababaei, 2012; Grubbs et al., 2016; Ismail et al., 2021; Ghani & Musa, 2018)

ISLAMIC PEER MENTORING MODULE

The construction framework of peer Islamic mentoring modules uses Sidek and Jamaluddin's Module Construction Model (Noah & Ahmad, 2005). The content of the module in achieving the objective of increasing the level of religious personality is based on two main models, namely al-Ghazali's personality construction model (al-Ghazali, 1988) and The Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI) Model (Krauss et al., 2005). A literature review has been done critically and extensively to identify the module's content and produce a draft module with six primary constructs. Each of these constructs is divided into sub-constructs based on al-Ghazali's Personality Building Model, which is *mujadahah al-nafs* and *riyadhah al-nafs*. There are twelve activities in the module, with six mentoring sessions. There is the introduction, the four dimensions of MRPI's religious personality building: building a relationship with Allah SWT, building a relationship with other people, building a relationship with oneself, and building a relationship with nature, and the last is closure. The activity delivery method is according to the objectives and the suitability of the activity for each session. Each meeting takes two hours, and twelve hours for the whole activity. According Mahmud et al. (2016), a program or intervention has a positive effect if the implementation exceeds five sessions and 1 hour 30 minutes for each meeting. The module framework is as in figure 1:

FIGURE 1
ISLAMIC PEER MENTORING MODULE FRAMEWORK



PROBLEM STATEMENT

The objective of the peer Islamic mentoring module is to improve the students' religious personalities at the university. It is a necessity today to produce holistic and balanced spiritual and physical human capital. Thus, the issues often associated with the appreciation of religion and morals among university students are significantly related to the level of the religious personality of students that needs to be

improved and given attention by the university. In addition, some studies show that there are higher education students who do not practice what they understand about worship, morals and beliefs even though the overall understanding of religion is good (Shafie & Othman, 2016; Jurami & Sham, 2013). Likewise, the study by Sihes et al. (2006) found that the level of religious knowledge among university students is high, but their appreciation and practice of religion are moderate. These studies' findings indicate a need for new approaches to improve and empower religious practices among students and youth, especially in universities. It also coincides with the suggestion made by Ismail et al. (2019) where a specific model for building religious life needs to be developed so that empowerment can be done from time to time on students with monitoring from the university. The findings of Ismail et al. (2021) also showed that implementing Islamic peer mentoring in universities is still at a moderate level and needs improvement. The implementation also needs to be more comprehensive for all students to make the impact more significant.

In addition, according to Ismail et al. (2019), a good level of religious personality among students can indicate that they are a group that can be shaped for the better by the university. Increasing the level of religious personality through implementing peer Islamic mentoring modules can help overcome the fading values and morals involving highly educated students, which is increasing today. Among them is the involvement of students in the symptoms of drug addiction, concealing the birth and abandonment of babies, cases of bullying, drug addiction, murder, crimes of seclusion, cohabitation, and others (Marzuki et al., 2021). Similarly, the title of "lazy student" is a manifestation of the failure of students to form high personality values. Misbehavior and misconduct of students at the higher education level need to be dealt with immediately with the involvement of all parties (Marzuki et al., 2021). These problems also prove that the religious element cannot be ignored in this globalized world full of challenges. Many studies show that religious aspects can curb more complicated social problems and help build a more prosperous life. Therefore, the application and strengthening of religion in all age groups of society must be given attention. University students who will become the nation's human capital should possess outstanding religious personalities. Failure to produce individuals with outstanding personalities who will take over leadership can destroy the country in a short time (Eusope et al., 2021)

OBJECTIVES

Studying the effect of Islamic peer mentoring module on the religious personality of university students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Is the Islamic peer mentoring module effective in improving the religious personality of university students?

HYPOTHESIS

This study aims to investigate the effect of Islamic peer mentoring module on the religious personality of university students. In line with personality development theory (Dweck, 2017), the implementation of peer Islamic mentoring modules is predicted to increase the level of religious personality of students because it lies in the interaction or positive relationship between peer mentors and mentees as well as value reflection and feedback through the mentoring program conducted. Thus, the research hypothesis is: *There is a significant difference between score mean religious personality for pre-test and post-test between treatment group and control group.*

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quasi-experimental design to test the effect of an Islamic peer mentoring module on students' religious personalities. One hundred twenty university students from two faculties at the

University of Technology MARA Perlis Branch, Malaysia, were used as study subjects. These students were divided into two groups, 60 for the treatment group and 60 for the control group. Students from the treatment group went through an implementation session of the Islamic peer mentoring module. Pre-test and post-test using instruments adapted from the Muslim Religiosity-Personality Inventory (MRPI) (Krauss et al., 2005) and Ummatic Personality Inventory (UPI) (Othman, 2011) were conducted for the treatment group and the control group. Table 1 displays detailed information about the quasi-experimental procedures.

TABLE 1
EXPERIMENTAL STUDY DESIGN FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ISLAMIC PEER MENTORING MODULES

Type of Group	Pre-Test	Intervention	Post-Test
Treatment Group	01	X	02
Control Group	01		02
Description:	01 =	Pre-Test	
	X =	Islamic Peer Mentoring Module	
	02 =	Post Test	

Data analysis was done descriptively, and inferential data analysis was done through SPSS 26. Independent T-Test and Paired sample T-Test were used to see the difference in mean pre-test and post-test scores between treatment groups and control groups. The preliminary analysis to test the normality was conducted before starting the analysis.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

The data normality test uses the Skewness and Kurtosis values to determine if the available data has a normal or abnormal distribution. According to Chua (2012), a distribution that has a value of Skewness and Kurtosis less than +1.96 or greater than -1.96; $(-1.96 < \text{Skewness and Kurtosis} < +1.96)$ can be considered normal. Thus, the findings show that both groups' pre-test and post-test data are normally distributed. This dataset is qualified to be analyzed using SPSS 26 with Independent T-Test and Paired Sample T-Test procedure. The test results are as in table 2.

TABLE 2
TEST OF NORMALITY

Group	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Treatment Group					
- Pre-Test	60	4.03	0.13	0.61	1.10
- Post-Test	60	4.96	0.38	0.32	0.08
Control Group					
- Pre-Test	60	4.01	0.26	-0.36	-0.44
- Post-Test	60	4.21	0.26	-0.18	0.61

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

A descriptive analysis of the pre-test and post-test was conducted to see the effect of the Islamic peer mentoring module based on the mean score. Table 3 and Table 4 show an increase in the mean score in the religious personality post-test and the religious personality subscale compared to the mean score in the pre-test for the treatment group and the control group. This means that the level of the religious personality of students increases whether through the implementation of peer Islamic mentoring module or not. Despite this, the mean score increase was greater for the treatment group than for the control group. Thus, this

proves that the Islamic peer mentoring module is a good added value for improving the religious personality of university students.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST
FOR RELIGIOUS PERSONALITY

Group	N	Mean (Pre-Test)	Mean (Post-Test)	Mean Difference	Interpretation
Treatment Group	60	4.03	4.96	0.93	Increase
Control Group	60	4.01	4.21	0.20	Increase

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST FOR RELIGIOUS
PERSONALITY SUB SCALE

Group/Variable	N	Mean (Pre-Test)	Mean (Post-Test)	Mean Difference	Interpretation
Treatment Group					
1) Relationship With Allah	60	3.62	4.75	1.13	Increase
2) Relationship With Human and Nature	60	4.26	5.19	0.93	Increase
3) Relationship With Oneself	60	4.22	4.94	0.72	Increase Increase
Control Group					
1) Relationship With Allah	60	3.56	3.77	0.21	Increase
2) Relationship With Human and Nature	60	4.39	4.54	0.15	Increase
3) Relationship With Oneself	60	4.07	4.31	0.24	Increase

HYPHOTESIS TESTING

Hypothesis testing was conducted to see if there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test for the treatment group and the control group. Independent Sample T-Test and Paired Sample T-Test are used with a significant value of $p > 0.05$. Table 5 shows the findings for Independent Sample T-Test. t value (N=60) obtained for the religious personality pre-test of the treatment group and the control group is -0.69 , and the significant value obtained is 0.49 . While the t value (N=60) obtained for the religious personality post-test of the treatment group and the control group is -12.56 , and the significant value obtained is 0.00 . This shows that there is no difference in the level of religious personality between the control group and the treatment group at the pre-test. However, there was a significant difference between the treatment group and the control group in the post-test. Thus, this proves that there is an effect of the Islamic peer mentoring module in improving the religious personality of students in the treatment group where the mean score is higher. This finding answers the research hypothesis that there is a significant difference between score mean religious personality for pre-test and post-test between treatment group and control group.

TABLE 5
FINDINGS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST FOR PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST
(RELIGIOUS PERSONALITY)

Variable/Test	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig.
Pre-Test						
- Control Group	60	4.01	0.26	85.23	-.69	.49
- Treatment Group	60	4.03	0.13			
Post-Test						
- Control Group	60	4.21	0.26	103.40	-12.56	.00
- Treatment Group	60	4.96	0.38			

Table 6 shows the findings for Paired Sample T-Test. *t* value (N=60) obtained for the pre-test and post-test religious personality of the control group is -7.45, and the significant value obtained is 0.00. While showing the *t* value (N=60) obtained for the pre-test and post-test religious personality of the treatment group is -21.86, and the significant value obtained is 0.00. This shows that both groups showed a significant difference in religious personality levels between the pre-test and the post-test. Thus, the findings show that the level of the religious personality of students does not depend entirely on the peer Islamic mentoring module but rather is influenced by other factors.

TABLE 6
FINDINGS OF PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST FOR PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST
(RELIGIOUS PERSONALITY)

Group/Test	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig.
Control Group						
- Pre-Test	60	4.01	0.26	59	-7.45	.00
- Post-Test	60	4.21	0.26			
Treatment Group						
- Pre-Test	60	4.03	0.13	59	-21.86	.00
- Post-Test	60	4.96	0.38			

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The findings of the study show that the implementation of the Islamic peer mentoring module is effective and helps in improving the religious personality of students. All of the religious personality subscales, namely the relationship with Allah SWT, the relationship with humans and nature, and the relationship with oneself, also showed an increase after going through the implementation of Islamic peer mentoring. This finding is in line with previous studies that show that mentoring programs have a positive impact on mentors and mentees. In addition, it is also in line with the findings of other module effectiveness studies where modules are the best alternative in building identity, student personality, academic improvement, and so on (Collier, 2017; Taha et al., 2014, Taha et al., 2019; Jalal et al., 2021).

The findings of the study also show that there is an increase in the religious personality of university students who do not go through the Islamic peer mentoring program. However, the increase is lower compared to students who follow guidance through the Islamic peer mentoring module. This shows that the Islamic peer mentoring module is a good added value in further enhancing the religious personality of university students. This finding is in line with previous studies that state an individual's personality is influenced by various factors (Aghababaei, 2012; Annalakshmi & Abeer, n.d.; Paloutzian et al., 1999; Idris et al., 2019).

Increasing religious personality can help produce individuals with good morals and noble personalities (Tahir et al., 2018). Therefore, the implementation of this Islamic peer mentoring module can be a platform to form a society that has a good religious personality and further form well-being in a country. The effectiveness of the Islamic peer mentoring module also proves that the application of the Muslim Religious Personality Inventory model (Krauss et al., 2005) which emphasizes four relationships, namely the relationship with Allah SWT, the relationship with human, and nature, and the relationship with oneself should be used as a basis in the construction of religious personality through modular guidance. This is in line with the findings of a study by Aisy & Sulaiman (2022), Ismail et al. (2021) and Zahir et al. (2019).

Based on this finding, the Islamic peer mentoring module can be highlighted to be adopted by educational institutions, especially in higher education, to ensure that students receive continuous guidance, especially in improving the religious personality of students. In addition, the focus on religious personality building among university students, in particular, needs to be emphasized in Society 5.0 because of the various negative influences and effects of globalization and modernization that are easily absorbed into the thinking and behaviour of students. This requires the empowerment of values and manners holistically based on the appreciation of religious values through various available mediums (Ismail et al., 2022). This can help the country form a holistic human capital as targeted in the National Higher Education Plan.

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