

Students' Perceptions of Their Willingness to Attend English Programs in Mosques

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ABSTRACT

Religious values and attitudes are assumed to influence an individual's intentions and motivate him to perform the act of attending an English program in mosques. The purpose of this study is to explore students' perception of their willingness to attend English language programs conducted in mosques. The data were obtained from 160 respondents from five study programmes at UiTM Kelantan Branch. The data were analysed using SmartPLS 3 software based on a study model developed from the data. A test on the model revealed that attitudes did not influence the intention of students to attend English programs in mosques. However, religious values were reported to positively influence the respondents' intention to attend English programmes in mosques. The results of this study provide useful insights to uncover the affective components that motivate students to attend English programs in mosques. These results suggest that the importance of English from a religious point of view should be emphasised to motivate students to attend English language programmes anywhere.

Keywords: Attitudes, religious values, intentions to attend English programs, mosques

INTRODUCTION

Despite the role of Bahasa Malaysia as the official language in Malaysia, English is important for the country to progress. It is the main language in international communication that allows people from different corners of the world to interact easily and effectively with each other (Jamil, 2002). The use of English also facilitates the reception of information and to help improve the education and general knowledge of the community and indirectly catalyze the development of the country (Chew, 2008). Therefore, English is essential in gaining knowledge, international communication, technology, and business. It is also important because most encyclopedias, reference books, and other treasures of knowledge are mostly written in English. Most importantly, in this era of globalization, English is the language of telecommunications or the language of the internet. In this age of information technology, many sophisticated technological tools have been created to facilitate people's relationship with the outside world such as the internet. The language used in these tools is mostly English.

A mosque is an important institution among muslims. In addition to being a place of worship, it is also a center for developing a more comprehensive Islamic society. Since ancient times, mosques have played an important role as a center for education and the transmission of knowledge (Lokman & Muda, 1996). Among the fields taught in the mosque are Arabic and its branches such as nahu, balaghah and so on. Nowadays, scholars are aware of the importance of mastering English including the Arabic schools. Realizing the position of English as the language of global communication, the language started to be taught in mosques. For example, the English teaching program in mosques known as English@ Mosque, has started in Kelantan by the Kelantan Islamic Religious and Malay Customs Council (MAIK) since 2014. The program was introduced to increase English

language proficiency among the Muslim community. The programme, which started with two mosques in the early stages and expanded to 12 urban and rural mosques, has benefited more than 1,200 secondary and primary school students who were specially selected from the asnf group (Utusan Online, 2016).

Despite this, however, the involvement of students from public and private higher education institutions has not yet been given priority. This raises questions regarding their perception of attending this additonal English class when they already completed formal English classes at the university. With this in mind, it is important that a study be conducted on their perception of attending English language learning programs in mosques. Therefore, this study was set to examine the influence of religious values and attitudes on tertiary students' intention to attend English programs in mosques.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the definitions of the key terms and the research framework of the current study.

Intention

In Islam, "intention" is defined the basis of every act or action. While every practice depends on individual's intention, only sincere intentions are accepted by Allah SWT. Al-Sayuthi (1995) explained that intention can be understood as a desire to carry out an act for the purpose of obtaining pleasure and implementing the law of Allah (Mujiburrahman, 2011). In the field of social science, intention refers to a person's willingness to take action or accept a behavior (Ajzen, 2002; Fishbein & Azjen, 1975). The stronger a person's intention to do something, the higher their willingness to try and the higher their tendency to carry out an action. In the context of English language learning, intention also plays a role in influencing a student's actions to engage in language learning activities (Livesey, 1992).

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Attitude (ATT)

English has been recognized as an important language. Despite this, among some elderly, there is a negative stigma that may prevent them from learning the language. In Malaysia, this language has colonial roots, hence, is often seen as a "colonial language," which contributes to the resistance of some Muslim communities to learn it (Stephen, 2013). The perception of the English language as a medium to instill Western values among the society creates cultural and religious conflicts that lead to their reluctance to participate in English language learning programs (Qamariah, 2024). It is possible that such thinking among parents will affect their children's attitudes to learn English.

Attitude is defined as the tendency to react positively or negatively to something such as an idea, object, person or situation (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2012). In learning English as a second language, attitudes towards learning a second language or foreign language are influenced by the cultural background and past experiences of the learner (Truitt, 1995).

In the context of learning English as a second language or a foreign language, the findings of some studies show the influence of attitudes on a person's willingness to learn English (Brown, 2000; Alhamami, 2018) and understanding English texts (Ghaith & Bouzeineddine, 2003). These studies generally show the influence of attitudes on a person's intention to learn English as a second language or a foreign language. Following this, it is natural to assume that a positive attitude towards English will encourage a person to learn it in mosques.

Religious Values (RV)

The process of integrating Islamic values into English teaching can increase student engagement and acceptance. Approaches that involve the use of culturally relevant materials, such as Islamic texts and narratives, will create meaningful learning experiences (Rezky & Qamariah, 2024). The integration of Islamic perspectives in English language education helps align pedagogical practices with faith-based values, promoting moral education and cultural sensitivity (Sidqurrahman, 2024). The religious value in English teaching will indirectly encourage a

person to participate in the English language learning.

Values are a form of motivation that drive a person to carry out actions they think they need to do. It influences the process of setting a goal and maintaining that goal (Feather, 1992). Religious values are important in learning English because it is this value that motivates them to improve their language proficiency level to enable them to convey information related to Islam and spread the religion (Ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). Through mastery of the English language, one can interact with others of different cultures to explain about Islam and translate useful sources of Islamic knowledge to someone who wants to know more about Islam (Osailan, 2009).

Past studies have shown that religious values are important elements that influence an individual's cognitive aspect, behaviour and attitudes (Alam et al., 2012; Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994). Despite this, the extent to which these Islamic values motivate one to learn English has not been empirically proven by any studies. The current study, therefore, was set to examine to what extent these religious values encourage one to learn English, particularly in mosques.

Research Framework and Hypothesis Construction

The literature review mentioned earlier provides the basis for developing the study framework and hypothesis for the current study. Acknowledging the fact that religious values and attitudes influence one's willingness to learn English, this study examines students' perceptions of learning English in mosques in relation to these two variables. In this regard, religious values and attitude are expected to be positively related to the intention to learn English in mosques. This sets the framework of the current study, followed by two study hypotheses as stated below:

H1: Attitude positively influences the intention to attend English program in the mosques.

H2: Religious values positively influence the intention to attend English program in the mosques.

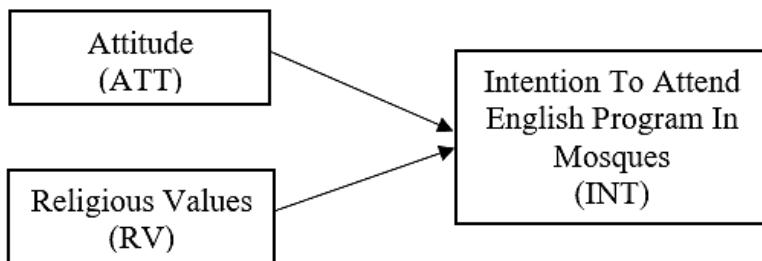


Figure 1: Research Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was used to conduct the current study. The study population is students who are currently studying at UiTM Kelantan Branch. To ensure that the selected samples fit the study goals, the random probability sampling technique was used to determine the sample size. The expected sample size required for this study was determined using G*power 3.1 software (Faul et al., 2009) i.e. by looking at the total study variables and the study items. To calculate the appropriate sample size, the software is used based on the following levels: $f^2 = 0.15$ (medium), $\alpha = 0.05$ and number of predictors = 2 and the power is set at 80% (Gefen et al., 2011). Using the above formula, the sample size required to test this model is 68.

Data collection was carried out using a survey question form. Each question item was drafted and then pre-tested to ensure its reliability. All question items used a 7-point Likert scale. Although the sample size required to achieve the forecasting power was only 68, a total of 180 questionnaire forms were distributed, and 162 completed forms were successfully obtained from students who were studying in the January-March 2018 semester. After the data cleaning process involving several tests such as remote data detection, a total of 160 data were retained for further analysis. The Partial Least Square Structured Modeling (PLS-SEM) procedure was

carried out which involved two stages of analysis, namely the item measurement model and the model structure measurement model.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The survey respondents consisted of 29% male students and 71% female students from the faculties of Management and Business, Information Studies, Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Painting and Design and Computer Science and Mathematics. Most of the survey respondents were from the state of Kelantan (45%), followed by the state of Selangor (16%), the state of Terengganu (15%) and the remaining 24% of students came from other states namely Pahang, Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Johor and Kuala Lumpur. Based on the statistics obtained, 90% of the survey respondents were educated in a traditional secondary school while only 10% of them were educated in a religious secondary school. Only 8% of the survey respondents had attended English classes held in mosques and the remaining 92% had no experience attending English classes in mosques.

Measurement Model Assessment

Table 1 describes the results of the reliability and validity tests of convergent constructs. Convergent validity refers to the degree to which a scale is positively correlated with another scale in the same construct (Malhotra, 2002). The findings of the study showed that all items achieved a high internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Chin, 1998) and the average extracted variant (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) were sufficient to confirm the convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 1: Convergent Validity Test

Construct	Item	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
ATT	B1	0.916	0.919	0.919	0.74
	B4	0.917			
	B5	0.786			
	B7	0.812			
RV	I1	0.834	0.918	0.918	0.736
	I2	0.899			
	I4	0.823			
	I5	0.873			
INT	J2	0.936	0.941	0.941	0.800
	J4	0.834			
	J5	0.901			
	J7	0.903			

ATT: Attitude , RV: Religious Values, INT: Intention to Attend Program in Mosques, CR: Construct reliability, AVE: Average variance extracted

Source: Author (2026)

The validity of discrimination is obtained through HTMT values. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) is the ratio

used to obtain the discriminant validity in PLS 3 (Henseler et al., 2015). As described in Table 2, the validity of the discrimination between the study constructs was below the set value of 0.90. If the HTMT value is 0.90 or greater than 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001), this value indicates the existence of a discriminant validity problem. All values obtained were below the HTMT level of 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001) and this indicates discriminant validity has been achieved. The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) is described in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	RV	INT	ATT
RV			
INT	0.882		
ATT	0.724	0.697	

ATT: Attitude , RV: Religious Values, INT: Intention to Attend Program in Mosques.

Source: Author (2026)

The results of the HTMT ration shows that there is no overlap or collinearity issue between the study items, and that all of these items measure the intended construct. Once the measurement model have been completed, structural analysis and hypothesis testing will be carried out.

Structural Model Assessment

Bootstrap analysis using 5000 resampling methods was performed to answer the study hypothesis (Hair et al, 2014). Table 3 shows the path coefficient values shown through the Beta values of each path. The study findings show that only one hypothesis is supported. Only religious values influenced the intention to attend English programs in mosques while the influence of attitudes was found to be insignificant. In other words, only hypothesis 2 is fully supported. Hypothesis testing is shown Table 3 below:

Table 3: Path Coefficient Test

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	SE	T-Value	BCI LL	BCI UL	Decision
H1	ATT -> INT	0.125	0.087	1.442	-0.061	0.285	Not Supported
H2	RV -> INT	0.793	0.077	10.237**	0.643	0.951	Supported

*p<0.05, t-value greater than 1.645.

**p<0.01, t-value greater than 2.33. N:160

Source: Author (2026)

Table 4 shows the quality of the study model. Religious values have a significant impact on the intention to follow an English program in mosques while attitude does not influence the intention to follow an English program in mosques. The value of $R^2=0.788$ indicates that as many as 79% of the variants of intention to follow English programmes in mosques are explained by two study variables (religious values and attitudes). The predictive relevance value (Q^2) showed that all dependent variables were able to predict the intention to attend the English program in mosques (Hair et al. 2014).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to examine students' perceptions of English learning in mosques. Only one hypothesis is supported, namely the influence of religious values on the intention to attend English language programmes in mosques. Meanwhile, attitude does not affect their intention to participate in the program.

The findings of this study have provided a useful perspective on students' perceptions of English learning in mosques. The findings suggest that the intention to follow English programmes in mosques is only influenced by the respondents' religious values. In their view, through the use of English, information related to Islam can be explained and spread to others while the sources of Islamic knowledge can be translated well. All these activities are an incentive for a person to learn and deepen the English language (Ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013; Osailan, 2009).

Meanwhile, individual's attitude was found to have no influence on the intention to attend the English program in mosques. Although contrary to what is explained by some theories that assume attitude is an important element that determines a person's intention to perform an action (Ajzen, 2002), the findings of past studies have been found to produce inconsistent findings. Not all studies produced findings that supported these theories. For example, similar to the finding of the current study, Baker (1995) found that attitudes did not affect the intention to learn English. Instead, experience was found to be an important factor influencing the intention to learn English. In addition, Campbell (2008) also found that students' attitudes did not affect their intention to learn a foreign language, namely Hispanic. The factor that is seen to have a greater impact on students' intention to master the language is the motivational factor. Therefore, it can be concluded that the attitude factor is not the main factor in determining a person's intention to perform an action. The existence of other more dominant factors such as experience and motivational elements may make attitude no longer play an important role in determining one's intentions.

Looking at the strength of the variable relationship on the intention to attend an English program in mosques, it was found that religious values have a large impact on the intention. A person's intention to attend an English program in mosques is greatly influenced by the Islamic religious values in the respondents. Although this study showed a non-encouraging attitude for respondents to follow English programmes in mosques, a small influence was still detected even though the relationship was not significant. Attitude is a factor that cannot be ignored since it can have an influence on one's intention to attend an English learning program in mosques if there are no other more significant factors such as experience and motivation.

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