

Effectiveness of Worship Practice Program in Higher Education: Challenges and Solutions

Efektivitas Program Praktik Ibadah di Perguruan Tinggi: Tantangan dan Solusi

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Abstract: This research aims to provide a clearer picture of the effectiveness of worship practice programs in increasing student spirituality as well as the challenges and possible solutions in improving student spirituality and character at UIN Raden Intan Lampung. A qualitative approach with an analytical descriptive method is used in this study to explore the implementation and impact of the program. The research design applied is a cross-sectional study that examines the phenomenon within a specific period of time. The sources of research data consist of students who have participated in the Worship Practice Program at the university studied, the head of Ma'had Al-Jamiah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, the head of the Integrated Laboratory of UIN Raden Intan Lampung and several other supporting informants. The results of the study show that the Worship Practice Program in the *ma'had* is taught more intensively and holistically using a *halaqoh* approach. In the faculty environment the program focuses more on preparing practical worship skills that can be applied in social and community religious activities such as *tahlil*, sermons and funeral prayers. The intensive approach implemented in the *ma'had* encourages the development of student spirituality through the integration of the physical environment and structured programs.

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Keywords: program effectiveness; worship practices; spirituality; character; students.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan gambaran yang lebih komprehensif mengenai efektivitas Program Praktik Pengamalan Ibadah (PPI) dalam meningkatkan spiritualitas mahasiswa, serta mengidentifikasi berbagai tantangan dan alternatif solusi dalam penguatan spiritualitas dan pembentukan karakter mahasiswa di UIN Raden Intan Lampung. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif-analitis untuk mengeksplorasi implementasi program serta dampaknya terhadap perkembangan spiritual mahasiswa. Desain penelitian yang diterapkan adalah cross-sectional study, yang mengkaji fenomena pada suatu periode waktu tertentu. Sumber data penelitian terdiri atas mahasiswa yang telah mengikuti Program Praktik Pengamalan Ibadah di perguruan tinggi yang diteliti, Kepala Ma'had Al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, Kepala Laboratorium Terpadu UIN Raden Intan Lampung, serta beberapa informan pendukung lainnya yang relevan dengan fokus penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Program Praktik Pengamalan Ibadah yang dilaksanakan di lingkungan ma'had diselenggarakan secara lebih intensif dan holistik melalui pendekatan halaqah. Sementara itu, pelaksanaan program di lingkungan fakultas lebih berorientasi pada penguatan keterampilan ibadah praktis yang dapat diterapkan dalam berbagai aktivitas keagamaan sosial kemasyarakatan, seperti tahlil, khutbah, dan penyelenggaraan salat jenazah. Pendekatan intensif yang diterapkan di ma'had terbukti mendorong perkembangan spiritualitas mahasiswa melalui integrasi antara lingkungan fisik yang kondusif dan program pembinaan yang terstruktur.

Kata kunci: efektivitas program; praktik ibadah; spiritualitas; karakter; mahasiswa.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Indonesia plays a very important role in the development of intellectual aspects and professional skills, as well as in the formation of character and readiness of students to face challenges in the world of work. In this context, higher education serves as a vehicle for building soft skills, such as communication and teamwork skills, which are very much needed in the modern professional environment (Khodijah et al., 2023). Research shows that student participation in organizations and extracurricular activities can improve interpersonal and leadership skills, which are essential in the workplace (Khodijah et al., 2024). In addition, higher education also plays a role in integrating technology and innovative learning methods, which not only improve the quality of teaching but also the relevance of the curriculum to industry needs (Suherman et al., 2023). Therefore, professional development for teachers and improving the quality of the curriculum are key to creating graduates who are ready to compete in the global market (Disas, 2017). Thus, higher education in Indonesia must continue to adapt and innovate to meet the demands of the times and create quality and highly competitive human resources (Mustopa et al., 2021).

Higher education also seeks to shape character and instill spiritual values in students. One way to achieve this goal is through the Worship Practice Program (WPP). This program is implemented in various universities, especially in Islamic higher education institutions. Research on the effectiveness of the worship practice program in universities in Indonesia is essential to understanding the challenges and solutions in its implementation. This program aims to integrate spiritual values into higher education, with the hope of forming better student character and improving the overall quality of education. However, challenges that arise include a lack of understanding and support from universities and students who are not yet fully aware of the importance of worship practices in academic and social contexts. Previous research has shown that programs such as *Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) have the potential to provide space for student self-development, but less than optimal implementation can hinder the achievement of these goals (Zuhri et al., 2022).

In addition, the negative stigma against religious practices in academic environments is often an obstacle, where the practice is considered less relevant to the world of education. As a result, students can feel alienated or less motivated to participate in programs related to religious practices (Sukinem et al., 2022). Research also shows the importance of strengthening the curriculum that includes spiritual and moral aspects in order to create an inclusive learning environment and support the development of student character (Sudaryati & Raharja, 2022). Therefore, the proposed solutions include increasing collaboration between universities and religious organizations, as well as developing programs that are more attractive to students (Alfarizi et al., 2024). This study aims to provide a clearer picture of the effectiveness of the worship practice program in improving student spirituality, as well as the challenges and solutions in improving the quality of education and character of students at UIN Raden Intan Lampung.

METHODS

A qualitative approach with analytical descriptive methods is used in this study. The approach was chosen to analyze the effectiveness of the Worship Practice Program (WPP) in universities objectively and measurably. The research design used was a cross-sectional study, where data was collected at a certain time to provide an overview of the effectiveness of the current WPP program. The research data sources consisted of students who had participated in the Worship Practice Program at the university studied, the head of the Ma'had al Jamiah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, the Head of the Integrated Laboratory of UIN Raden Intan Lampung and people who were considered capable of providing information on the effectiveness of the WPP program.

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, direct observations of program implementation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interview guidelines were utilized to facilitate the collection of rich and comprehensive information from participants while allowing flexibility to explore emerging issues during the interview process. Observations were conducted to examine learning activities, mentoring processes, worship practices, and interactions between students and supervisors within the PPI program. In addition, relevant institutional documents, guidelines, reports, and assessment records related to the implementation of PPI were analyzed to strengthen data credibility and provide contextual understanding.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The analysis process was conducted continuously throughout the study to identify patterns, themes, and meanings emerging from the data. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis. Member checking and peer debriefing were also employed to enhance the credibility and validity of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this discussion and debate, it is important to look deeper into how the Worship Practice Program (WPP) is structured and applied in various educational contexts. Based on the research results, WPP held in faculties and in *ma'had*s has uniqueness and significant differences in several aspects. These uniqueness and differences are summarized in the following table 1.

Table 1. Research Findings

No	Indicator	Faculty	Ma'had
1	Objectives of the WPP program	The purpose of the Worship Practice is to equip students with competencies in religious practices that reflect the moderate character of Islam. The Worship Practice is also an integral part of academic activities that support the achievement of graduate learning outcomes in accordance with the university's excellence. The passing grade of the Worship Practice is one of the requirements for taking the <i>munaqasyah</i> exam.	Worship Practice is one of the worship activities that involves all students. In it there are various kinds of practical worship activities. The main objective of the Worship Practice Program is to improve the understanding and application of worship values in everyday life, so that students can integrate spiritual aspects into various aspects of life, both personally and in the social environment.
2	Relevance of the program	The Worship Practice Program (WPP) is designed to equip students with basic skills in carrying out worship that can be applied practically in society.	WPP plays a role as part of the effort to form the integrity of Muslim individuals. This activity also contributes to the formation of the character of Islamic college students as fighters and mujahids of Islamic da'wah.
3	Mentor/teacher	WPP is supervised by a Supervisor of Practice who is selected and appointed through a Rector's Decree. The WPP Supervisor is a permanent lecturer of the faculty who has sufficient competence and qualifications to provide guidance.	In the <i>ma'had</i> , WPP is implemented with direct guidance from the <i>mu'allim</i> (teachers). Prospective <i>mu'allim</i> are generally alumni of the <i>ma'had al jami'ah</i> who are selected based on competencies that match the needs.
4	Facilities and amenities	Worship Practice can be carried out in lecture halls, mosques or other places determined based on an agreement between the student being supervised and the Worship Practice Supervisor.	WPP learning is carried out in an integrated environment, such as dormitories, mosques, halls, and prayer rooms. For 3rd semester students, special activities are carried out in mosques, indicating an emphasis on deeper spiritual experiences.
5	Learning materials and resources	In the odd semester (semester 3), students study reading, writing, and memorizing the Quran, especially short verses from <i>juz</i> 30 or selected verses. While in the even semester (semester 4), they are given training in lectures, sermons, <i>tahlil</i> , and funeral prayers.	WPP is taught more intensively and holistically. The material is delivered through <i>halaqoh</i> , which is considered very effective in helping students master and understand WPP better. In addition to verbal delivery, WPP is also practiced in real life with direct guidance from the <i>mu'allim</i> (teachers).
6	Teaching methods	The practice of practicing worship is carried out through structured guidance at least eight times, accompanied by independent assignments, and ends with an exam at the end of the semester.	The WPP pattern is implemented with the <i>ta'lim muta'alim</i> pattern. The <i>Ta'lim al-Muta'allim</i> method emphasizes the importance of manners in teaching and learning, with students who respect teachers and teachers who are moral and spiritual role models.
7	Time	The time for the Worship Practice is carried out during the semester, the implementation of guidance is arranged separately by the supervising lecturer.	<i>Ta'lim muta'alim</i> is held every day three times. However, on Saturday and Sunday, it is only carried out once.

8 Results and feedback	<p>Evaluation by the supervising lecturer aims to measure the effectiveness of students in achieving the objectives of the Worship Practice Practice. The assessment includes the quality of attitude, mastery of the material, implementation, and reflection of moral and ethical messages in the actual behavior of the practicum. The evaluation process is carried out continuously through observation and analysis of the results of the filling, which are recorded in the assessment form.</p>	<p><i>Mu'allim</i> was asked to conduct a pretest and posttest to students. The pretest was conducted at the beginning to determine their initial level of understanding. After the learning process took place until the end of the semester, a posttest was conducted to assess the development and improvement of students' understanding, so that changes in their learning outcomes could be analyzed through graphs.</p>
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Source: Processed by the Author(s)

1. Program Effectiveness

Education in the *ma'had*, especially in the context of the Practice of Worship Practice (WPP), applies a more intensive and holistic learning method through the *halaqoh* approach. *Halaqoh*, as a small group learning method, allows for in-depth interactive discussions and more personal relationships between teachers and students. This is in line with research that shows that the *halaqoh* method is very effective in increasing students' spiritual understanding, because this approach allows for direct supervision of individual development and more personal interactions (Wafa & Kuswandi, 2024). In the context of Islamic education, this approach also supports educational theory which emphasizes the importance of *tazkiyah* (purification of the soul) through direct interaction with teachers (*mu'allim*), where students not only learn theory, but also practice worship in everyday life (Olfah, 2024).

Furthermore, research by Syafitri & Jamilus (2023) shows that *halaqoh*-based learning can increase students' religious and moral awareness, which is an important aspect in Islamic education. This is also supported by findings that show that regular religious studies, which often use the *halaqoh* method, have a significant contribution in increasing religious awareness among students (Zahara & Ritonga, 2024). Thus, the *halaqoh* approach not only functions as a learning method, but also as a means to form the character and spirituality of students, which is the main goal of Islamic education (Syafi'i, 2020).

In a broader context, *halaqoh* also plays a role in developing a more adaptive and integrative Islamic education curriculum. The values taught in *halaqoh* can be integrated with local and humanitarian values, thus creating a more relevant and contextual curriculum. (Sanusi et al., 2023). The *halaqoh* method applied in the *ma'had* allows teaching to be carried out in depth, both from the aspect of worship rituals and spirituality. As stated in the study by Syafitri & Jamilus (2023), *halaqoh* provides space for in-depth discussions that encourage a better understanding of the meaning of worship, not just its technical implementation. Students are invited to understand the philosophical values contained in worship, so that they can be internalized in everyday life.

Furthermore, the *halaqah* approach not only contributes to deepening the meaning of worship, but also plays a role in building moderate religious literacy among students. Contextually, *halaqah* serves as a forum for religious literacy that can build religious moderation through open discourse, joint study, and strengthening the balance (*tawazun*) between the understanding of classical texts and contemporary Islamic perspectives. Research by Afifuddin et al. (2023) confirms the importance of classical Islamic texts literacy accompanied by deliberation and *halaqah* activities in shaping a moderate mindset (*wasathiyah*) among Mahad Aly students in South Sulawesi. This approach has been proven to improve religious literacy while fostering social tolerance among students (Afifuddin et al., 2023). Meanwhile, research by Nasri & Mulyohadi (2023) shows that although traditional methods such as *talaqqy* and *halaqah* are still predominantly used in some Islamic boarding schools, the integration of moderate religious values is an important requirement in contemporary Islamic education policy in order to shape inclusive citizens (Nasri & Mulyohadi, 2023). Thus, *halaqah* not only functions as a means of transmitting religious knowledge, but also as a mechanism for forming a religious identity that is moderate, tolerant, and contextual to the needs of the local community (Afifuddin et al., 2023; Nasri & Mulyohadi, 2023).

In the Faculty, WPP is designed to develop practical skills that can be applied directly in the community, which is a different approach compared to *ma'had* which emphasizes spiritual mastery and ritual awareness. The emphasis on practical skills, such as sermons and *tahlil*, reflects the adjustments needed to meet the needs of students who will enter the community, especially in Real Work Lecture (KKN) and Field Experience Practice (PPL) activities. Research by Hidayatullah (2023) shows that students who

have been equipped with these practical skills tend to be more mentally and technically prepared to face challenges in the field, which is in line with other findings showing that practical skills can improve students' readiness to face real situations (Wang, 2023).

Furthermore, the Faculty of WPP also contributes to the formation of professional competencies that are relevant to the demands of today's workforce. In this context, higher education must function as a bridge between theory and practice, where students not only learn academic concepts but also apply them in real situations. This is in line with research showing that practical experience in higher education can improve students' skills and readiness to contribute to society. Involvement in practical activities such as KKN and PPL allows students to develop interpersonal and leadership skills, which are very important in today's workforce (Thomas et al., 2019). Thus, the approach taken by the Faculty of WPP is not only relevant but also crucial in preparing students for the challenges they will face in society.

Students who take WPP at the faculty are equipped to directly apply their worship skills in society. This can be seen as part of an education that focuses on learning by doing, where students not only learn concepts but also apply them in real social and religious activities. According to Syamsuddin (2022), student involvement in religious activities in the community through KKN and PPL strengthens their relationship with the community and makes a positive contribution to the spiritual development of the community.

This practical experience also shows that the implementation of WPP is not only aimed at improving students' worship skills, but also plays a role in shaping the character and social competencies needed in society. In the context of the Faculty, WPP emphasizes practice-based learning that aims to shape students' social and professional skills through field experiences, such as Real Work Lectures (KKN) and Field Experience Practices (PPL), in addition to strengthening their understanding of worship and religious rituals. Several research shows that students equipped with practical skills tend to be more mentally and technically prepared to face challenges in the field. These findings are in line with other studies that highlight the role of higher education in shaping the work competencies and professional readiness of graduates (Ahmad et al., 2023; Yahya et al., 2025). In addition, cultural literacy of moderation and prophetic leadership related to the quality of education also emphasizes the importance of integrating *halaqah* learning into the institutional curriculum (Chotimah et al., 2022). This integration can be realized through a mentoring mechanism that encourages character building, professional ethics, and social responsibility among students as future intellectuals who are ready to serve the community (Chotimah et al., 2022). Thus, the synergy between WPP and religious values reinforced through the *halaqah* approach not only improves students' worship competencies but also strengthens their contribution to the goals of Islamic education and broader community development.

Both in the *ma'had* and faculty, the role of the mentor or *mu'allim* is very crucial in the teaching process of the Worship Practice Practice (WPP). In the *ma'had*, the mentor is not only responsible for teaching academic material, but also providing direct guidance in carrying out worship. This is important because the guidance provided can have a significant impact on the internalization of students' worship values. Research by Hawari (2023) shows that effective guidance can improve students' understanding and self-development (Hawari, 2023). In addition, other studies also emphasize the importance of guidance in the context of education, where mentors play a role in developing students' independence and awareness of the importance of self-development (Suryahadikusumah & Dedy, 2019). Thus, effective guidance in the *ma'had* can help students not only in academic aspects but also in their spiritual and moral development.

Furthermore, the guidance provided by *mu'allim* at the *ma'had* serves as a means to shape the character and personality of students. In this context, the mentor acts as a facilitator who helps students understand and internalize religious values in everyday life. Research shows that consistent guidance can improve students' readiness to face challenges in academic and social environments (Astutik et al., 2020). In addition, mentors also play a role in facilitating the development of students' talents and potential, which is an integral part of education at the *ma'had* (Maulana & Wahyudi, 2022). Thus, the role of *mu'allim* in guidance at the *ma'had* is very important to create an educational environment that supports students' spiritual, moral, and academic growth.

2. Challenges and Solutions to Program Effectiveness

The implementation of the Worship Practice (WPP) in the faculty has a more academic approach, with a structured division of modules between odd and even semesters. In the odd semester, the main focus is on developing basic skills such as reading, writing, and memorizing the Qur'an. Mastery of religious literacy is

very important, because good religious literacy plays a significant role in strengthening students' worship practices. This is in line with findings that state that increasing religious literacy can help students understand the practical function of religious teachings in social and political contexts, which in turn supports national stability (Yusuf, 2021; Ilyas, 2023). Therefore, the development of these basic skills is a crucial foundation for students' religious knowledge.

Meanwhile, in the even semester, students are given more emphasis on practical worship exercises, such as lectures, sermons, *tahlil*, and funeral prayers. These exercises provide opportunities for students to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned into a practical context. Research shows that the experience of practicing worship not only improves students' religious communication skills but also strengthens their social involvement in the community (Maisyarah et al., 2023; Galugu, 2023). Thus, the implementation of WPP that focuses on worship practices supports the development of students' religious character and social skills, which are very important in building a tolerant and harmonious society (Salsabilah, 2023; Raikhan, 2023).

In terms of learning intensity and frequency. In *Ma'had*, the approach used is *ta'lim muta'alim*, where the teaching and learning process between teachers and students is carried out routinely with a frequency of three times a day on weekdays and once on Saturdays and Sundays. This shows that in *Ma'had*, WPP learning takes place with high intensity, providing more opportunities for students to engage in worship activities and deeply understand the meaning and practice of daily worship. According to research by Al-Ma'shum et al. (2023), an intensive approach like this can improve spiritual understanding and the application of religious values in everyday life because students are given enough time to reflect and internalize the teachings. The intensity of this learning not only strengthens conceptual understanding, but also strengthens emotional connections and real practices in everyday life.

In contrast, in the faculty, WPP is implemented outside of lecture hours with a minimum of eight meetings in one semester. This approach is more limited in terms of meeting frequency, so students have less time to study worship material intensively. However, this does not necessarily reduce the effectiveness of the program. According to research conducted by Susanto (2022), even though the intensity of meetings is lower, if guidance is carried out well and integrated with practical learning that is relevant to each student's field of study, the program can still have a positive impact on their understanding of worship and spirituality.

WPP in the *ma'had* is implemented in a more integrated environment, such as dormitories, mosques, halls, and prayer rooms. This shows that the physical environment is integrated strongly supports students' spiritual experiences. Several studies have shown that a deep religious environment can have a positive impact on the formation of students' spirituality and religious experience. Semester 3 students whose activities are specifically carried out in the mosque also show an emphasis on deepening spiritual experiences. This emphasis is important, because the mosque is considered a center for spiritual development that provides space to interact with worship in greater depth.

The challenge leads to further questions about the effectiveness of the two approaches in enhancing student spirituality. High frequency in *Ma'had* can improve understanding and practice comprehensively, but programs in faculties, with less frequent meetings, tend to focus more on practical application in the context of students' knowledge and profession. A study by Rahman and Wahyudi (2023) also confirmed that the integration of worship learning in students' academic and professional lives can produce more relevant and applicable spirituality. A more intensive approach in *ma'had* encourages student spirituality through the integration of the physical environment and programs, while the approach in faculties tends to separate theoretical and practical aspects. Both approaches have important contributions in shaping students' understanding and practice of worship, although with different focuses. Thus, the differences in intensity and approach need to be understood by policy makers and program implementers in a broader context, where both have advantages that can be adjusted to the needs of students in their respective environments.

In addition to differences in intensity and learning approaches between programs implemented in *ma'had* and faculties, the effectiveness of religious guidance programs is also influenced by how Islamic values are integrated into the learning process and institutional support in their implementation. The integration of Islamic values in learning activities has been proven to strengthen conceptual understanding and foster religious attitudes among students through spiritual reflection and the application of contextual learning (Zulkarnain et al., 2025). In the context of higher education, the successful implementation of religious guidance programs also requires adequate institutional support, particularly through leadership that is capable of encouraging innovation and sustainable program development. Transformational

leadership, for example, is considered to have a strategic role in building a shared vision and motivating the academic community to develop an adaptive and quality learning environment (Bernadus, 2025). Thus, the integration of spiritual values in learning, supported by visionary institutional leadership, can be an important factor in strengthening the effectiveness of worship practice programs in shaping students' spiritual understanding and experiences more comprehensively.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this article is that the Worship Practice Program (WPP) at UIN Raden Intan Lampung shows effectiveness in improving students' spirituality and worship skills through different approaches in *ma'had* and faculties. WPP in *ma'had* uses a more intensive and holistic *halaqoh* method, which supports deep understanding and internalization of spiritual values. Meanwhile, WPP in faculties focuses more on the application of practical skills in a social context, such as sermons and funeral prayers. Although there are differences in approach, both complement each other according to students' needs. The implementation of this program, despite facing challenges such as negative stigmas against worship practices in academic environments, can still be improved through further collaboration between universities and religious organizations.

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