Capacity Building Workshop to Improve Mosque Accessibility For Disabled Muslims in Muhammadiyah of Bantul, Yogyakarta

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Abstract. This article aims to investigate the capacity building of the Muhammadiyah mosque administrators in Bantul, Yogyakarta, to provide accessibility for Muslim disabled persons who are willing to participate in religious teaching. As a minority group, persons with disabilities in Yogyakarta struggle to find a mosque's friendly facilities for them. Meanwhile, the mosque administrators have little attention to accommodating disabled Muslims. The reason why administrators' awareness of taking care of disabilities remains low is insufficient capacity. Despite being knowledgeable in Islam, they have been inexperienced in dealing with disabled Muslim fellows. Therefore, they have neither allocated nor prioritized a budget to serve disabled people. As a result, few mosques are ready to deal with disability issues. The proper model of capacity building that develops cognition, affection, and behavior is necessary for those who organize the Muhammadiyah's mosques in Bantul. This article finds that the participatory model is quite effective.

Keywords: capacity building, disabled people, Muhammadiyah, Mosque

1. Background

The subdistrict office of Muhammadiyah in Tamantirto Utara, Bantul, Yogyakarta has several mosques, namely Al-Amin, Al-Musyawaroh, Husnul Khatimah, Al-Falah, and Al-Muharram. Establishing such mosques in Tamantirto Utara shows a strong Muhammadiyah commitment to developing Islam and enhancing Islamic knowledge among Muslims. Each mosque has provided various Islamic programs for target audiences (PRM Tamantirto Utara, 2016). For instance, the Husnul Khatimah mosque prioritizes the economy by allowing street vendors to operate nearby (Nasruddin, 2022). These mosques have also supported Islamic activities for women and young people.

Furthermore, Muhammadiyah environmentalists, who organize Islamic preaching in Al-Muharram mosque, have introduced a green Islamic program called garbage alms (Teristi, 2023). This initiative stems from awareness of climate change and economic empowerment. Before this program, people near the mosque had no idea how to manage their waste. They only dispose of trash without first separating organic and non-organic waste. They do not realize that non-organic waste has an economic value. However, most of

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them are disadvantaged groups that require economic empowerment. Therefore, in Al-Muharram, people are trained to organize waste correctly. They collected non-organic waste and donated it to the mosque. After that, those donations are likely to be sold. The mosque will provide scholarships, food, and other financial aid in exchange for the revenue it receives from selling non-organic waste (Taufiqurrahman, 2018).

Most mosques in Tamantirto Utara require further preparation to assist Muslim members who are disabled, despite successfully organizing a variety of religious and non-religious programs (Asparina, 2019). Accessing the amenities of such mosques has proven challenging for Muslims with disabilities. The mosques that provide a particular area for disabled people are few. There are a few mosques with special accommodations for those with disabilities, such as Al-Falah and Husnul Khatimah. Disability is not only a given for everyone from birth but also an adverse incident like an accident, disease, or syndrome. The Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, Republic of Indonesia, defines persons with disabilities as people with physical, mental, intellectual, and sensory limitations for a long time. These limitations hinder people from participating in activities based on equal rights and stop them from interacting with their surroundings and the community (Kementrian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, 2019).

Despite minorities, persons with disabilities are enthusiastic about attending Islamic lectures initiated and organized by the Department of Community Development of Muhammadiyah. Muhammadiyah manages a community of over 100 disabled Muslims, comprising three groups of 10, 20, or 50 people each. They want Muhammadiyah to set up a location, create Islamic modules, and supply Islamic tutors or instructors. Muhammadiyah, a contemporary and vibrant Islamic movement, should be able to overcome difficulties faced by disabled Muslims. However, the Muhammadiyah hierarchy, including those who oversee Muhammadiyah mosques in Tamantirto Utara, does not possess comparable competence. Another reason is inexperience. As a result, they do not allocate a budget to design particular facilities for the disabled. Also, there is no training program to elevate Islamic understanding among Muslims with disabilities.

Accordingly, a workshop on capacity building for those who serve in the Muhammadiyah mosques of Tamantirto Utara is plausible. The workshop equips participants with knowledge about disabilities, including the Islamic perspective on disabilities. It also encourages the invited delegates of the mosques to participate actively in the focus group discussion (FGD). The FGD discusses amenities and initiatives that should be available to accommodate Muslims with disabilities by utilizing the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat) approach. The principles of accessibility for a disabled person are four, namely 1) ease means that those disabled people can reach public facilities easily; 2) utility means all people can indiscriminately utilize public facilities; 3) safety means buildings and public facilities are safe to be used by all people, including those with disabilities; and 4) independence means being user-friendly for everyone (Ministerial Regulation of Public Works, 2006).

2. Methodology

The first step in discovering issues the mosques overlook for Muslim people with disabilities is observation. It conducts random visits to the mosques in the Tamantirto Utara region to determine whether or not there is space for a disabled person. It is also helpful to find out the engagement of Muslims with disabilities in religious activities and gatherings. Observation reveals data on how mosques treat disabled fellow Muslims. Overall, there are two observations: physical observation by looking at building facilities and programmatic observation by investigating agendas, plans, and targeted audiences.
The second approach employed in this workshop is Student-Centred Learning (SCL). In the past, the classroom learning process relied entirely on a teacher. The teacher is the one who becomes a primary source of knowledge. At that time, students could not access alternative resources independently due to limited references. The development of advanced digital technology has allowed students to become autodidacts, and even those who do not attend universities can do so. Therefore, the workshop class utilizes SCL, where all participants share ideas, experiences, and knowledge more actively.

The third method is forum group discussion (FGD). In this session, facilitators are likely to deliver a case study. Next, participants separated into multiple groups can debate among themselves and evaluate other people’s viewpoints when solving problems that the moderator explains. This method helps participants identify their weaknesses and strengths. Also, this approach enables participants to describe opportunities and possible future threats clearly.

Figure SEQ Figure \* ARABIC 1 The Method of Workshop

3. Results and Discussion

Tamantirto Utara has experienced rapid economic and demographic development since the emergence of campuses. Students living there create new business opportunities like culinary, stationery, laundry, and rental rooms or houses. Enormous Muslim students would be a significant advantage for the inhabitants. They represent prospective customers for various business owners in Tamantirto Utara. More than 4,000 new undergraduate students from Muhammadiyah-owned campuses, namely Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, and Universitas Aisyiyah, not to mention other campuses, arrived and stayed in Yogyakarta, including in Tamantirto Utara, annually (Priyantoko, 2022; Adit, 2021).

Most Muslim students have seemingly increased congregations in the mosques in Tamantirto Utara. In this regard, some mosques renovate their physical facilities, such as prayer assemblies, ablution stations, and parking areas (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2022). In addition to this, the mosques also involve them in religious and social activities. For instance, students teach the Quran to children in the mosque. Therefore, the administrators of the Muhammadiyah mosque in Tamantirto are interested in preserving the mutually beneficial relationship between Muslim students and the mosque by providing better facilities.

In addition, lecturers and administrators of universities residing in Tamantirto also shift demography and Islamic programs. Those are commonly active or former members of Muhammadiyah. They become initiators of Islamic events, preachers for Islamic gatherings conducted by Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah, and fundraisers for mosque renovation. They assist in advancing university goals for community development initiatives and addressing local Muhammadiyah needs in Tamantirto. For example, in cooperation with local
Muhammadiyah members, they prepare a location or spot where students and other lecturers can implement their community development plans.

Greater emphasis on the group in the majority leads the mosque management to pay less attention to disabled persons as a minority group. This group has equal rights to acquire Islamic knowledge and perform worship. Nevertheless, the minority has often struggled to access mosques with minimum services for them. Because disabled people rarely use facilities, the management believes that making them accessible is not beneficial. This perspective is a reflection of disability illiteracy, in which people may become disabled as a result of unintended occurrences like accidents, natural disasters, and diseases like degenerative syndrome. In other words, it indicates less capacity among the mosque management.

This workshop invited delegates from the mosques in Tamantirto and other relevant organizations. The representatives are 25 people from Al-Falah, Husnul Khatimah, Al-Muharram, Baitunnafi, Baitul Ulum, Muthaharah, and Al-Mubarak. The rest of the participants are from Dewan Masjid Indonesia (the Mosque Council of Indonesia), Aisyiyah, and the Play Group of Surya Melati. The workshop consists of two sessions. The first session is the lecture on improving cognitive capacity related to disabilities. During the lecture session, participants learn and discuss regimes and regulations on disabilities, the design of user-friendly mosques for Muslims with disabilities, and the perspective of Muhammadiyah on a mosque.

Concerning the international regime and the national bill examined by Muhammad Zahrul Anam, participants can clearly describe that the United Nations assures the rights of persons with disabilities by enacting a convention, namely the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD, in the opinion of the UN, turns people with disabilities into subjects with rights who can assert their rights, make decisions about their lives with their free and informed consent, and participate fully in society. Previously, they were the object of charitable donations, medical care, and social safety (The United Nations, n.d.)

Regarding the national bill, the authorities passed Bill Number 19 for the year 2011 to emphasize the UN convention. This bill comprehensively explores the state's obligations and the rights of persons with disabilities. The government must take all necessary steps, including passing legislation, to change or eliminate any current laws, rules, traditions, or customs that discriminate against people with disabilities. It ensures that people with disabilities can participate in all facets of life, including work, politics, sports, the arts, culture, technology, information, and communication. The bill maintains that every person with a disability shall be free from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. They shall also be free from exploitation, violence, and ill-treatment and shall have the right to respect for their mental and physical integrity based on equality with others. It also covers the right to safety and social assistance in the event of independence or an emergency.

After that, the workshop continued with the following topic: designing user-friendly mosques for disabled people. The presenter for this theme is Ahmad Ma'ruf, a representative of Muhammadiyah's Central Board who serves on the Community Empowerment Council. Ma'ruf shared his expertise in dealing with infrastructure for disabled Muslims. According to his observations, the old mosque's facilities, such as restrooms and a notice board, are inadequate for those with impairments. Then, accessible information media like running text are unavailable in the Muhammadiyah mosque. He also proposes that preachers take the topic of impairments more seriously in their sermons. Additionally, he urges mosque management to prioritize improving their knowledge of disabilities.
Elaborated by Miftahulhaq, Muhammadiyah has guided on how to function a mosque properly. For Muhammadiyah, the foundations of managing a mosque are sincerity, integrity, honesty, modernity, fairness, collectivity professionalism, and accountability. Other pillars include inclusivity, where mosques provide accommodations for marginalized groups, and reason, where mosques can integrate scientific and religious applications. Muhammadiyah mosques have several functions. The first is education, Muhammadiyah regeneration, and Islamic preaching. The second is to train the mosque congregation. The third is to empower the Muslim community. The definition of marginalized groups in Muhammadiyah is entirely open-ended, including people with cognitive and physical disabilities.

After completing a series of lectures in the workshop, the next session is the focus group discussion. The committee creates small groups and invites participants to join those groups. Each group gives feedback on what it should prepare to make friendly mosques for Muslims with disabilities. The first opinion is the budget allocation for renovating physical facilities. The second view is the toilet for disabled people. Muhammadiyah mosques have built at least one restroom dedicated to disabled Muslims. The third perspective prefers human resources by stating that skilled people with the ability to employ sign language are essential. The presence of a sign language translator makes information more accessible to people with disabilities.

The diversity of opinions expressed by group members in the FGD session is inseparable from the participants' increased understanding during the previous session. Participants can identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The questioner gathered the participants' points of view, which are the following responses. Most participants (93%) in focus groups conducted using participatory methods agreed that mosque administrators needed to develop unique programs for worshipers with disabilities.

![Figure 2. Should mosque administrators create special programs for people with disabilities?](image)

Participants might also plan to upgrade mosque amenities for worshipers with disabilities after discussing these issues during the FGD session. When questioned about their plans, 75% reported having finished the idea, beginning with bettering the physical amenities, such as enhancing wheelchair accessibility, constructing restrooms for people with disabilities, and adding parking places. Meanwhile, 25% of participants have not determined a straightforward program.
Although participants agreed that having mosques accessible to people with disabilities was necessary, these organizations rarely held training sessions for their staff or sent representatives to attend programs of a similar nature elsewhere. Within FGD, 81.3% of the audience stated that they had not participated in the training, and 18.8% said they had. This claim demonstrates the knowledge, abilities, and capacity gaps among Tamantirto's mosque officials. The following figure depicts the gap.

**Figure SEQ Figure \* ARABIC 3** Disabilities-Friendly Mosque Program Plan

During the FGD, the feedback from participants presented a new exciting fact related to providing disability-friendly mosque infrastructure. Without adequate background expertise and training, mosque administrators speculated about delivering facilities for disability groups. They do not design the facilities more seriously unless they are purely symbolic. As a result, the current facilities are no longer persistent. Meanwhile, the rest of the administrators do not provide at all. The illustration below demonstrates that the providers of disability-friendly facilities are as many as those who do not do so, about 50-50.

**Figure SEQ Figure \* ARABIC 4** Attendance in Special Training of Disabilities-Friendly Mosque
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Overall, representatives point out that Muhammadiyah mosques in Tamantirto have accessibility standards for worshippers with disabilities. Spiritual and religious life should not discriminate, marginalize, or even stigmatize Muslims with disabilities experienced in social, political, and economic life. Muhammadiyah mosques in Tamantirto are instruments for spreading Islamic teaching widely. In this regard, the audience that employs and visits the mosque varies. As a result, mosque administrators should continue to prepare and enhance their capabilities to accommodate unusual worshippers. Below is a diagram explaining the opinions of workshop participants.

Figure 6 The Need of Capacities Improvement for Muhammadiyah Mosque Administrators

4. Conclusion

Mosques run by the Muhammadiyah must offer services to worshippers and serve them equally and without prejudice. Disability-related groups are excluded from society and have restricted access to public spaces, including places of worship. The lack of attention and service capacity is another element that makes it harder for them to enter mosques.

Implementing this course aims to strengthen the leadership skills of the Muhammadiyah mosque in Tamantirto. Participants learned about the management of mosques in Muhammadiyah, the creation of mosques that are accessible to people with disabilities, and international regimes, rules, and regulations on disability during the program. Activities for the FGD then continued. All participants from the Muhammadiyah mosques in Tamantirto who participated in the FGD activity agreed that each Muhammadiyah mosque had a plan to support disability groups. Mosque administrators also decided that each Muhammadiyah mosque had plans to improve the capacity of services to disability groups.

References


