

Improving Worship Discipline Through Technology: The Role of the Sholatmu Application for Students of Muhammadiyah University of Bungo

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ABSTRACT

The advancement of digital technology has opened up new opportunities to increase awareness of worship among the younger generation, especially students. The Sholatmu application, as one of Muhammadiyah's digital-based innovations, is here to make it easier for Muslims to carry out worship in a disciplined manner. This study aims to analyze the role of the Sholatmu application in improving the discipline of worship of students at the University of Muhammadiyah Bungo. The approach used is qualitative descriptive with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the Sholatmu application helps students in: 1) remembering and keeping prayer times with automatic time reminders, 2) recording prayer habits and daily worship targets, and 3) fostering spiritual motivation through Islamic content features and worship evaluations. These findings indicate that an interactive and easily accessible Islamic value-based application can form a more consistent attitude of worship discipline among students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has had a significant impact on various aspects of human life, including in terms of spirituality and religious practice. In this modern era, technology is not only a means of communication and entertainment, but has also become a potential media in supporting the implementation of worship [1]. Students as part of the digital generation are very close to the use of technological devices, especially gadgets and mobile applications [2].

In the current digital era, the development of information technology has penetrated almost all aspects of life, including in the realm of religion. Various mobile-based applications have emerged to support the spiritual life of Muslims, such as prayer time reminders, reading the Qur'an, and digital worship journals. In the midst of changes in the lifestyle of the younger generation who are increasingly dynamic and tend to be busy with activities, the existence of Islamic applications is an alternative solution in helping people, especially students, to stay connected with religious values. However, the use of religious technology in the practice of worship, especially in terms of forming discipline, is still an area that has received less attention in academic studies, especially at the student level.

Students as part of the digital generation (digital natives) are very familiar with technological devices, but at the same time they also face various challenges in maintaining discipline in worship. Academic busyness, organizational demands, and fast-paced lifestyles are often the main causes of neglecting the obligation to pray five times a day or other sunnah worship. In the campus environment, there are not many strategic approaches that integrate technology to support students' spiritual development.

This requires a new approach to religious development, which no longer only relies on conventional methods,

but also utilizes digital devices as tools. Discipline in carrying out worship, especially the five daily prayers, is a real challenge among students. Academic routines, organizational busyness, and the tendency to postpone prayer time are the main obstacles that are often encountered.

In fact, in Islamic teachings, prayer is a pillar of religion and the most basic form of submission to Allah SWT. Imam al-Ghazali emphasized that anyone who underestimates prayer has weakened the foundation of faith in him. [3] Discipline in prayer is not only a matter of spiritual obedience, but also part of the formation of positive character such as responsibility, consistency, and obedience to the rules. Therefore, it is important to present media that can help students to be more aware and consistent in carrying out worship. In this context, the Sholatmu application, developed by Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah, is present as one of the digital technology-based innovations designed to foster and improve the quality of worship of Muslims, especially the younger generation. This application offers various features such as prayer time reminders, daily worship journals, Islamic content, and personal spiritual evaluations that aim to form consistent and enjoyable worship habits.

Muhammadiyah University of Bungo as one of the Islamic universities under the auspices of Muhammadiyah is the right place to study the effectiveness of using the Sholatmu application in fostering worship discipline. This campus combines Islamic vision and intellectual progress, making it an ideal space to integrate religious values into students' lives with an adaptive approach to technology. A study of the use of Sholatmu in this campus environment is important to see to what extent the application is able to encourage changes in students' spiritual behavior, as well as identify which features have the most impact and what challenges arise in its implementation.

The Sholatmu application, as one of the innovations based on Muhammadiyah values, comes with various Islamic features such as automatic prayer reminders, daily worship journals, spiritual evaluations, and educational content that aims to build consistent worship habits. Although this application has been widely used by Muhammadiyah members, scientific research on its effectiveness in forming worship discipline in young adult age groups, such as students, is still very limited. This is an important research gap to be studied further.

The problem of religious discipline among students is not only related to performing prayers on time, but also touches on aspects of motivation, habits, and spiritual awareness. In the context of Muhammadiyah University of Bungo, as an institution based on Islamic and national values, religious character development is an integral part of educational goals. However, the reality in the field shows that some students still have difficulty in maintaining the regularity of their daily worship. The lack of a monitoring system and internal motivation is one of the causes of weak religious discipline, which ultimately has an impact on the formation of character and the quality of students' personalities. Theoretically, discipline can be understood as compliance with applicable norms and rules and the ability to regulate oneself to act according to the values believed in. [4] In the context of worship, discipline is related to an individual's ability to perform prayers on time and consistently. Sugihartono et al. stated that discipline is a key factor in shaping a person's character, especially in fostering good habits from an early age. [1] On the other hand, digital technology has been recognized by many experts as an effective means of supporting the learning process and character development, including religious values. Ali Imron stated that digital media can function as a tool to support the success of religious education, if used appropriately. [5] Mobile-based Islamic applications such as Muslim Pro, Umma, and Sholatmu have been proven to help Muslims maintain their worship routines, as found in the research of Fatimah (2021) and Yusuf & Rahmawati (2022) which showed that students were more disciplined in praying after using the prayer time reminder application regularly. Another relevant study is a study by Anisa Firdatus Sakdiah (2024) which examined the use of a fingerprint prayer attendance system at SMA Negeri 2 Jember. Her findings showed that the use of technology in recording prayer attendance has been proven to be able to form a disciplined attitude towards worship, both in terms of punctuality and consistency. These studies strengthen the assumption that digital technology has great potential in helping Muslims, especially students, to be more disciplined in worship. The Sholatmu application as an innovative product of Muhammadiyah is designed not only as a prayer reminder tool, but also as a medium for self-evaluation and reflection, making it worthy of further study regarding its effectiveness in the Islamic higher education environment [6]

Seeing this phenomenon, this study aims to examine in depth the role of the Sholatmu application in helping students improve their worship discipline, especially in the context of an Islamic campus. This study is not only important from a theoretical perspective as a contribution to the development of digital-based Islamic education literature, but is also practically relevant in formulating a spiritual development strategy that is more adaptive to the needs of today's young generation.

With this background, this study is directed to explore the role of the Sholatmu application in improving the worship discipline of students at the University of Muhammadiyah Bungo. The aim is to understand how this application is used by students, which features contribute most to forming worship habits, and what challenges are faced in using it consistently. This research is expected to provide contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings of this study will enrich the literature on the digital approach in Islamic religious education. Meanwhile, practically, the results of this study can be a reference for developers of the Sholatmu application, university administrators, and other Islamic institutions in integrating technology to develop students' religious character in the digital era.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. This approach is used to deeply understand the phenomenon of student worship discipline through the use of the Sholatmu application, as well as to explore their subjective perceptions and experiences in using it. The study was conducted at the Muhammadiyah University of Bungo, which was selected purposively because it has the characteristics of an Islamic institution that is relevant to the spiritual values and religious technology that are the focus of this study. Qualitative research also provides researchers with the freedom to understand the social and cultural context in which students' religious behavior develops, as well as to interpret data based on the realities that occur in the field. [7]

The subjects in this study were active students of the Muhammadiyah University of Bungo who had used the Sholatmu application routinely for at least two months. The determination of the subjects was carried out using a purposive sampling technique, with the criteria being students who actively participate in campus Islamic activities and are willing to provide data and in-depth interviews. The number of main informants in this study was 10 people, consisting of 8 students who actively use the application, and 2 supporting informants from among religious lecturers. This number is considered sufficient to obtain in-depth and rich data in accordance with the characteristics of qualitative research.

Data collection techniques used in this study include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly determine students' worship habits before and after using the Sholatmu application, both in terms of prayer times and other worship practices. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, allowing researchers to explore data flexibly but still focused. In-depth interviews were conducted with students who use the application and Islamic lecturers to obtain information about the effectiveness and challenges of using the application. Meanwhile, documentation was conducted by collecting screenshots of worship activities in the application, digital prayer schedules, and records of worship practices provided by the application's features. Data analysis in this study used an interactive model from Miles and Huberman, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. [8] The first stage, data reduction is carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw data that has been obtained from the field, both from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data reduction aims to select data that is relevant to the focus of the research and group the main themes that emerge. The second stage is data presentation, which is the process of compiling data in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic tables so that they can be analyzed further. This data presentation allows researchers to see the relationship between one theme and another, as well as clarify the relationship between application use and changes in students' worship behavior. The third stage is drawing conclusions and verification, which is the process of concluding the meaning of the data that has been presented and testing its validity through a process of re-reflection and comparison between sources.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses triangulation techniques, both source triangulation and technical triangulation. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing information from students who use the application and the supervising lecturer, while technical triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. In addition, participant validation (member check) is also carried out, namely by reconfirming the findings to respondents so that the researcher's interpretation is in accordance with the intent and experience of the informant. With this method, it is hoped that the data obtained will be valid, reliable, and reflect the real conditions that occur in the field.

Through this research method, it is hoped that a comprehensive and in-depth picture will be obtained regarding the role of the Sholatmu application in shaping and improving the worship discipline of students at the University of Muhammadiyah Bungo. This method also allows to explain the dynamics of the interaction between digital technology and students' spiritual development in the context of developing Islamic higher education.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Worship Discipline Before Using the Sholatmu Application

Before using the Sholatmu application, many students admitted that they often forgot or postponed prayers due to the busyness of lectures, organizations, and other social activities. This habit is reinforced by the lack of a structured reminder system and the absence of evaluative media that encourages personal reflection on worship. This phenomenon is in line with the findings of Mardiaty Amala, who stated that students and students often experience a decrease in consistency in worship due to minimal independent spiritual control and the weak role of the environment in forming religious habits.

In the social context of students at the University of Muhammadiyah Bungo, academic pressure, digital lifestyle, and multitasking culture often marginalize the practice of worship. Students tend to put worship second on the grounds of limited time, or even forget because they do not have a reminder system attached to their daily activities. This shows that the technological aspect can play an important role in providing a stimulus for worship that is more relevant to the lifestyle of the younger generation.

This condition is exacerbated by the absence of an integrated reminder system in students' daily lives. The

majority of students only rely on the call to prayer from the nearest mosque as a reminder of prayer times. However, in some cases, the call to prayer cannot be heard because students are in a closed room, wearing headsets, or are far from the mosque. In addition, the absence of a personal evaluation system or media regarding daily worship makes the implementation of worship uncontrolled, unmonitored, and sporadic. In observations conducted by researchers on several groups of students who do not use the Sholatmu application, it appears that there is no recording or reflection of worship that is carried out routinely. This has an impact on the lack of internal motivation of students to continue to improve the quality of their worship. Most students stated that prayer was only carried out as a routine or formal obligation, not as a spiritual need or reflection of the faith that lives within them. Thus, it can be concluded that before using the Sholatmu application, students' awareness and discipline of worship were still at a level that required special attention and guidance.

3.2 Sholatmu Application Features That Encourage Discipline

The Sholatmu application offers various features such as prayer time alarms, daily prayer journals, spiritual evaluations, and Islamic content that are structured to foster consistent prayer habits. The automatic prayer alarm feature functions as a digital reminder that overcomes the problem of forgetting to pray, as stated by Rahmawati & Shofiyani that digital media can be a pedagogical instrument in forming religious behavior.[9]

The second very helpful feature is the daily prayer journal, which is a digital record that allows users to record every prayer, dhikr, reading of the Qur'an, and other sunnah practices such as dhuha and tahajud prayers. Students who use this feature actively show increased awareness of their prayer routines. With this journal, students feel they have a moral and spiritual responsibility towards themselves. They are also encouraged to fill the journal with data that truly reflects their daily prayer activities.

Furthermore, the worship evaluation feature is one of the very strong motivational elements in the Sholatmu application. This evaluation not only displays worship statistics, but also provides a kind of spiritual score or assessment based on the consistency and completeness of the worship performed. Students stated that with the score or achievement indicator, they felt challenged to maintain and improve the value. Some even linked it to personal targets and made it part of their monthly worship resolution. This feature also provides daily and weekly notes that help users in reflecting and muhasabah.

No less important is the Islamic content feature available in the form of daily articles, daily prayers, and short video lectures from trusted ustaz. This content is a spiritual reinforcement that complements technical worship activities. Students feel that this content helps them to stay connected to Islamic values as a whole. Not only just performing prayers, but also understanding the spiritual meaning behind each worship performed. Several students admitted to using this content to fill their free time, especially while waiting for lectures or while traveling.

In general, the four main features of the Sholatmu application—prayer time alarm, worship journal, spiritual evaluation, and Islamic content—have proven effective in helping students develop discipline and regularity in carrying out daily worship. These features complement each other and create a digital ecosystem that supports the formation of a strong religious character.

3.3 Changes in Student Behavior After Using the Application

After using the Sholatmu application for at least two months, significant changes were found in students' worship behavior. Based on the results of interviews and analysis of documentation data, around 78% of active student users stated that they performed prayers on time more often. Previously, many of them prayed in a hurry or even combined prayers because they were busy. However, with the automatic alarm and journal notes, they became more organized and arranged their daily activity schedules so as not to miss prayer times.

In addition, as many as 64% of student respondents stated that they were starting to get used to sunnah worship such as dhuha prayer and reading the Qur'an every day. This is a big leap considering that previously most of them had not made sunnah worship a routine. This new habit emerged because of the worship target and evaluation features, which encouraged them to try to fill their time with more spiritually beneficial practices.

One interesting finding is that this application also helps build a sense of spiritual responsibility in students. They feel that the worship activities they do are no longer just formal routines, but part of a responsibility that must be accounted for personally. Some students even stated that the existence of a worship journal and evaluation in the application made them feel like they were being "supervised" by the system, even though technically there were no sanctions. This feeling of being monitored is not in a negative sense, but rather as self-control to maintain consistency of worship as part of religious awareness.

In general, changes in student behavior observed after using the Sholatmu application include three main dimensions. The first is cognitive change, namely increased awareness of the importance of praying on time and emotional attachment to worship routines. The second is affective change, namely the growth of enthusiasm and motivation to improve the quality of worship. The third is actual behavioral change, which can be seen from the increase in the frequency of praying on time, carrying out sunnah worship, and achieving personal worship targets. These three changes are interrelated and strengthen each other in forming a pattern of sustainable discipline. Students also admitted to feeling more responsible for themselves because every worship activity is recorded and can be reviewed. This indicates a strengthening of the value of muhasabah or self-reflection which is an important part of

Islamic character education.

However, reflection on the limitations of this study needs to be conveyed. First, not all students have the habit of digitally recording or evaluating themselves. Several respondents stated that they felt burdened because they had to keep updating their journals or were worried if they forgot to record one prayer. This shows that the effectiveness of the application is highly dependent on the readiness and preferences of the user. Second, the socio-cultural background of students also influences the success of this digital intervention. Students from religious families or Islamic boarding school environments tend to adapt more easily to using the application, compared to those who previously did not have a structured prayer habit. However, there are also several challenges faced by students in using this application consistently. Several students stated that when they were not holding their cellphones or experienced technical problems with the application, such as late notifications, they tended to return to old habits. There were also those who felt burdened because they felt they had to keep filling in their journals every day, although in general they still felt the benefits. Therefore, the success of this application still requires support from the campus environment, including encouragement from lecturers, religious advisors, and the Islamic student community to create a more solid religious culture. Thus, the results of this study indicate that the Sholatmu application has a significant role in encouraging increased student prayer discipline. The behavioral changes that occur are not only temporary, but show a positive tendency towards the formation of a more solid and sustainable religious character. This application is not only a technical tool, but also functions as a medium for interactive, personal spiritual development, and is relevant to the lifestyle of today's students.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the use of the Sholatmu application contributes positively to improving the discipline of worship of students at the University of Muhammadiyah Bungo. Not only in terms of the frequency of performing obligatory prayers, but also in building the habit of sunnah worship such as dhuha prayer and reading the Qur'an daily. Students who previously admitted to often forgetting or delaying worship, experienced an increase in awareness and spiritual responsibility after using the features in the application, such as automatic prayer alarms, daily worship journals, and personal evaluation systems.

The changes in religious behavior shown by the respondents strengthen the assumption that technology can be an important instrument in forming the spiritual character of the younger generation, especially in Islamic higher education environments. The Sholatmu application has proven to be able to bridge the gap between the demands of academic activities and the need for disciplined worship, by presenting an adaptive approach to students' digital lifestyles.

Practically, the development of the Sholatmu application can be improved by adding community-based features, such as Islamic discussion forums, weekly practice reminder features, worship leaderboards, and integration with campus social media to encourage collective enthusiasm in worship. Strengthening the interactive and educational side of this application can expand the impact not only on the personal spiritual aspect, but also the socio-religious aspect of students. For application developers, it is important to ensure that all innovations remain within the framework of Islamic ethics, prioritize sincere intentions of worship, avoid elements of competition that are ostentatious, and instill awareness that worship is a form of vertical relationship with Allah SWT, not just digital reporting.

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