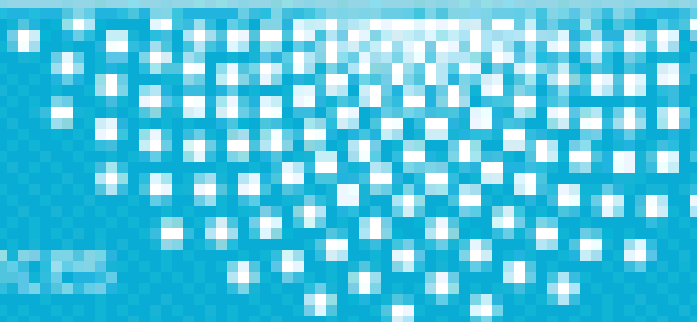


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Social and Behavioral Sciences



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ASEAN Conference on Environment-Behaviour Studies

Sukosol Hotel (Siam City Hotel), Bangkok, Thailand, 16-18 July 2012

Theme:

“Way of Life: Socio-economic & Cultural Context”

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Foreword

This Third *ASEAN Conference on Environment-Behaviour Studies*, AcE-Bs 2012 Bangkok, 16-18 July 2012, with the “*Way of Life: Socio-economic & Cultural Context*” theme managed to attract an overall total of 140 numbers of approved abstracts from 21 countries worldwide. Interest for AcE-Bs has certainly grown since the Second AcE-Bs 2011 Bandung, 7-8 June 2011 where just 13 countries participated.

While we welcome contributions again from the ‘regular’ countries namely, Australia, Brazil, Cyprus, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, UK, and USA, a special warmth of applause should be extended to the countries which are making their first appearances for AcE-Bs, namely China, Czechia, Denmark, Egypt, France, India, Maldives, Nigeria, and the UAE.

The sudden ‘viral’ spread of interest worldwide for participation certainly abodes well for the future of AcE-Bs. It certainly signaled the justification, relevance and timeliness in organizing this third annual serial conference with the objective of publicising more behavioural studies, which involved in particular, the Asian communities living in both ASEAN and non-ASEAN countries. Studies from other regions, which fit the theme of the conference, are also most welcomed.

The initial approved abstracts received were finally transformed into 97 full papers, as published in this Proceeding (Final Draft), prior to be selected further and published in Elsevier's accessible online *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences*, www.ScienceDirect.com. The papers were simply grouped generally under 17 categories, although quite a number could have been easily placed under more than one category. The top five categories in order of popularity involved the following environments:- Residential Environment (18%), City Environment (14%), Social / Religious Matters (10%) and Educational Environment together with Retail /Commercial Environment (8%).

In terms of paper contributors, majority were from Malaysia (66 %), followed by Thailand (10%), Indonesia (7%), Egypt and Taiwan (each, 3%), Iran and Nigeria (each, 2%), and China, Czechia, France, United Kingdom, South Africa, India, Maldives, Turkey, UK, and USA (each, 1%).

On a final note, the Centre for Environment-Behaviour Studies (cE-Bs), FAPS, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia, the main organiser of AcE-Bs 2012, together with the co-host, Faculty of Architecture, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL), Bangkok, Thailand congratulate all contributors on making AcE-Bs 2012 a tremendous success! Hopefully this conference will inspire and encourage more researchers to participate in our forthcoming conferences to be held annually. The increase in participation shall be most highly likely as the Conference Proceedings shall be published in Elsevier's *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences* accessible online in www.ScienceDirect.com, which shall normally also be indexed in SCOPUS and Thomson Reuters CPCI.

Thanks again for your continuous support as always, and hope for an enlightening conference!

Prof. Dr. Mohamed Yusoff Abbas

Chair, AcE-Bs 2012 Bangkok

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16th July 2012

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, our special thanks to the Faculty of Architecture, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL), Bangkok, Thailand for co-hosting AcE-Bs 2012 Bangkok. Our gratitude also to the International Scientific Committee for reviewing the Full Papers for the Proceedings.

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Spaces for Muslims Spiritual Meanings

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to seek an understanding of the spaces considered to have spiritual meaning for Muslims, and how these spaces build its spiritual meaning. Spiritual values are considered important since it can evoke the spirit that affects the balance of life. At the first place the study was conducted through a qualitative approach to 17 people from the faculty group and 10 people from the muslim's women reading Al Quran group. The results of the analysis is used to build a basic understanding of a questionnaire. Of the 200 questionnaire, only 59 returned, 56 can be used. The result is a mosque as the dominant choice and its physical attributes, spatial meaning and emotional significance to complete it.

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Keywords: Spaces; muslims; spiritual meaning; physical attributes; spatial meaning; emotional factors

1. Introduction

Spirituality is considered an important factor for balancing intellectual and emotional factors. Spirituality is the soul and spirit urge, boost energy, which in its application can relate and touch the values of concept, belief and spirituality. Spiritual values are believed to be the spirit of life, a force to motivate individuals to achieve a feat. One's spirituality can be built through the built environment.

Every individual has a different experience of spirituality in a different environment. Religious buildings are believed to be able to build one's spirituality. For the majority of the Indonesian is Muslim,

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the mosque should be the main place to build this value of spirituality. One's spirituality can be nurtured through ritual prayer of *sholat*; refer to the 5 daily obligatory prayers. This paper aims to find places where one's spiritual values can be built, and how the space is interpreted by the congregation. Research questions in this paper are: (1) what are the spaces that are considered able to waken a person when performing ritual worship, (2) how the space is interpreted by the user, and (3) are there any contributing factors and arising problems within.

2. Literature review

2.1. *Space is considered to have the reward in Islam*

Surely the *sholat* ritual prayer for Muslims is able to do in all the places on this earth as long as it meets the rules of purity. A number of verses in the Qur'an and *hadith*; a narration about the life of the Prophet Muhammad or what he approved - as opposed to his life itself. Hadith literature means the literature which consists of the narrations of the life of the Prophet and the things approved by him. (Annur letter, the hadith narrated by Muslim, Bukhari, Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, and Ibn Mas'ud) said that the level of primacy in conducting a Muslim prayer ritual is in the mosque, it is also greatly preferred to the male congregation, while for female, ritual prayers at home has a high reward value, although there is no prohibition to perform prayers in the mosque. Even someone who has physical limitation still has a duty to perform ritual worship in the mosque, therefore the mosques and houses is the best place on earth to do the *sholat*.

Statements in the Qur'an and the hadith also provide specificity regarding the eminent times of prayer. Those who walk in darkness toward the mosque, implying that dawn and evening is at high reward (*pahala*;reward for being good) value.

In addition, the distance and route to the mosque also has a major value. The further a person's journey, the higher the degree of value. Different routes between the way home and went also expressed in the letters of the Qur'an and hadith.

2.2. *Spiritual theory*

According to Reed (1992) spiritual aspects covering intra, inter, and transpersonal. Spiritual also be interpreted as the core of who enters and affects human life and is manifested in the thinking and behavior as well as in conjunction with self, others, the universe and God. (Dossey & Guazetta, 2000). All religions are teaching it, and practicing through the ritual of worship respectively. Religion is a system of belief and worship organization where someone can express his/her spirituality obviously. Therefore, a house of worship is believed to be able to build itself emotionally, to establish relationships between human beings and the most important thing is to build a transcendental value to the Almighty.

Psychologically speaking, the experience is composed of many psychological factors in mental activity, and it is associated tightly with the mental functions such as emotion attitude, imagination, intuition, understanding and comprehension. Experience -based on the deep understanding and real feeling for the things- is a kind of emotion and meaning producing activity (Jung, 2011).

Performing ritual worship in a pleasant room atmosphere will bring someone in reassuring condition. Sincere rituals will play one's feelings and take it to the atmosphere of emotion, sadness, regret, cry, happy and delight. Good space, in the end will also provide an aesthetic experience that helps bring a person in a supportive atmosphere of worship space and play the feelings and emotions as well (Jung, 2011).

3. Methodology

17 respondents were selected based on the following criteria: a university lecturer, having a quality *sholat* experience and able to express his or her opinion orally. There were also 10 respondents from the group of muslims female *majelis taklim*, who is considered to have intensive religious experience. Research was conducted in the city of Bandung, Indonesia in January 2011. Qualitative methodological approach is adopted as the research strategy to attain a deeper understanding on the experiential responses of the respondents. Open in-depth interview technique was conducted, supported by sound recording facilities.

The respondents were requested to describe their experiences while they perform their religious activity in particular during their praying time. The questions comprise (1) Any spaces considered to arouse a person in performing ritual worship, (2) how the space is interpreted by the user (3) is there any contributing factors and problems arise.

Responses given by each respondent were transliterated into a coherent text to facilitate coding process. Initial coding was then conducted by grouping keywords into relevant categories and themes. Subsequently, axial coding was carried out to look for causal relationships among categories and themes that emerged. At the end, selective coding was done to sort and reselect the coding results and to draw conclusion of the research findings.

The results of text data provide a basic understanding of the spaces that helped shape the spirit in conducting worship, and supporting or disturbing factors. To gain a deeper understanding, a questionnaire was created from previous studies data and circulated to 200 lecturers. Of the 59 questionnaires returned, only 56 can be used. Further analysis was made based on the frequency distribution to determine the consistency of the answers, prior to get thru to co relational analysis.

4. Discussion

4.1. The mosque as a main place

The mosque as a place of worship to evoke person spirituality becomes the top choice of respondents. It is chosen by the faculty, as well as among *majelis taklim* study group through the interviews conducted as shown by Figure 1 (a). The results of the questionnaires are not much different. 82.14% questionnaire respondents chose the mosque as a place able to generate value in doing spiritual worship as shown in Figure 1 (b). Figure 1 (c) shows that the mosque in the top of respondents choices, mainly dominated by the highest eminent mosques of the of Masjidil Haram in the holy land of Mecca. This is highly related to emotional factors and the knowledge of prophet Muhammad trail.

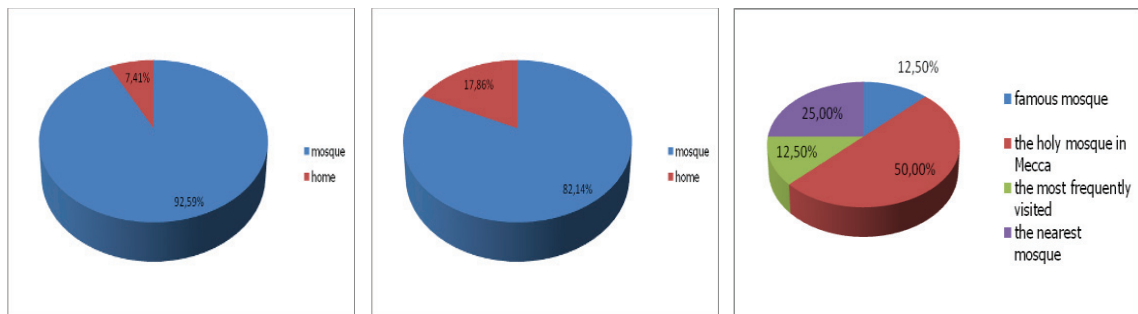


Fig. 1. (a) The choice of spaces based on interview; (b) based on questionnaire; (c) the types of selected mosques

After experiencing the ritual of worship in this mosque, every Muslim felt a deep spiritual meaning, cry, rising the intention to return and do the same. Coming in second is a mosque that is very familiar, close to the neighborhood. Level of familiarity with the environment mosque has turned out to make someone feel free to worship and peace. Neighborhood mosque turned out to be options chosen by the faculty with high levels of religious understanding and from the group of *majelis taklim*. Their involvement in the mosque maintaining and management suit the criteria, thus making them feel a better quality service. Famous mosques and frequently visited mosque are the third option. It is felt because there is an intention to visit the mosque, so as to raise people’s motivation.

4.2. Mosque ambience supporting factors

Visually, the mosque figure was a dominant factor in a supportive atmosphere to build the spirituality value, as expressed by Arg (1986), Lee (2002), and Cold in Horvath (2010). Form and space factors were the most supportive factor since people saw it first when entering the mosque neighborhood. Figure 2 (a) shows that the unity of the figure of the mosque is the dominant choice shown by the results in Figure 2 (b) that the situation occurred because the atmosphere of the mosque was able to evoke a positive emotional atmosphere. Furthermore, the atmosphere is also built by the artificial lights, giving the effect to the grandeur aspects of the mosque. When the majestic effect appears, astonished. and amazed emotions arise in a person's emotions.

This thing has proved to be very supported by the time factor, where the dominance of the morning prayers and evening prayers provide the greatest contribution as indicated by the letters of the Qur'an and hadith. Because the congregation believe in the eminence of the merit, prayers in these times perceived higher quality. In addition, the factors of silence situation and the ideal tropical country temperature in the morning and evening are giving the effect of comfort to the congregation to worship. More free time away from mundane jobs provide a sense of calm. In addition, the time in the month of Ramadan gave religiosity effect because of the atmosphere emerged throughout the city's. In the end the spirit of the worshippers arise spontaneously as well as the increase in quantity and quality.

One’s heart is a factor can not be ignored. An open heart, a genuine and sincere intention bring one to higher service quality levels. Readiness was not influenced by differences in the religion knowledge. Anyone would feel the spiritual aspects arise when there is a strong intention. For the member of *taklim*, the *Imam* (priest who lead the ritual prayer. *Imam* is an Arabic word that refers to the spiritual leader, or the one who stands above all else as the spiritual and sometimes the political leader of the Muslim community, *orummah*. An imam is also the one who leads congregations in Friday prayer at the mosque)– the priest, prayer leader- quality played important role in raising the intention to come to the mosque to worship. The provided material quality and the charismatic voice of the priest gives the sensation of religiosity in such a way.

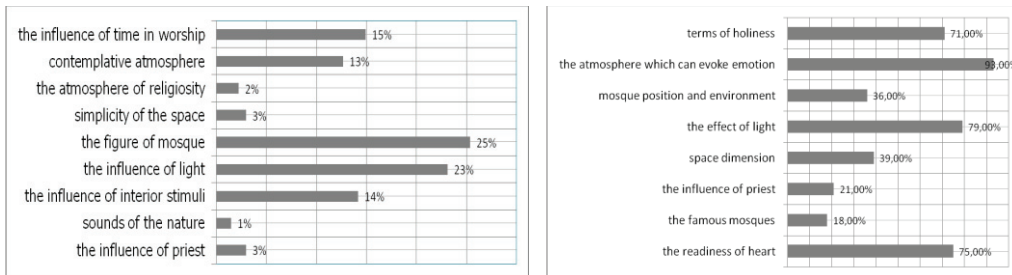


Fig. 2. (a) Contributing factors that can evoke the spiritual atmosphere based on interview; (b) based on questionnaire

4.2.1. Spatial and visual experience factor as a spiritual values developer

Effect of the mosque as a building to support spiritual atmosphere was much influenced by the spatial aspects of a person's experience. This has mentioned by Ando in Horvath (2010), that a person's spatial experience factor really helps to build the atmosphere of building spirituality. Figure 3 has shown how the relief factor, flexibility, sense of space made a person feel small in the presence of God. The mosque vast dimensions and columns free feature gives the feeling of astonishing. Figure 4 has shown that spatial experience through night time exterior space sequence will provide a stunning façade look, preparing the congregation to face God inside.

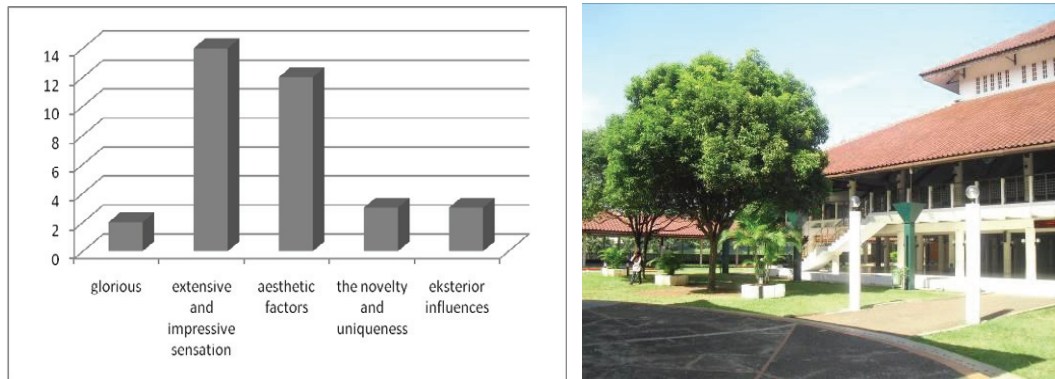


Fig. 3. (a) The effect of the mosque figure; (b) Sequential experience from outside toward main prayer room. Source: Dewiyanti, February 2012, Ukkuwah Islamiyah Mosque, Depok)

Furthermore, aesthetic mosque also affects the formation of the inside atmosphere. Building aesthetics led to the appreciation of the beauty and perfect nature of God. God's beauty is manifested in the creation of a perfect world. Humans are destroying God's creation, so the form of a beautiful mosque is actually a form of human remorse for the destruction, so that the form of houses of worship as a symbol of God's house should be totally realized in various kinds of beauty.

Beauty aspect itself is highly subjective; some people think it can be performed through the high level of complexity ornament, with all forms of luxury and splendor, while others believe that simplicity is the key to reach beauty. Beauty appreciation is also strongly influenced by cultural background and one's religion knowledge. The deeper, the more he/she liked the simplicity, though not resist the beautiful.

The newer and unique mosque also brought its own nuances. It is usually remains clean and neat that there are shades of holy prayer as an essential condition, felt more fulfilled. The uniqueness of the mosque is usually shown through concept design with a specific value, so that people feel the need to feel the unique sensation directly. Being at this mosque developed a feeling of inner satisfaction of being able to travel just to a religious house of the Lord. This feeling makes a person feel happy, excited and enthusiastic thus then impact the quality of his/her own worship. Religious journey is usually done together with other congregations that have the same intention, so that the relationships can be formed. Also foster a sense of caring attitude, tolerance and cooperation, so that communication came to the realization that humans are not alone in this world.

4.2.2. A contemplative nuance to face The Almighty

Primacy value of the of prayer in the mosque is very high as the following verse quotations: "Whoever comes out of his house in a state of *wudhu* (*To do something to become pure, the act to wash or wipe the*

specific parts of the body to become clean and ready to do the ritual prayer) for prayer five times a day (in congregation in the mosque), then the reward would be like the reward of *Haj* wearing *ihram* cloth” (HR. Abu Dawud no. 554, dan Asy Syaikh Al Albani). That means the main purpose of coming to the mosque is in order to pray together with other congregations, as it has a reward similar to a pilgrimage in Mecca.

In practice, people also need a solitude and alienation in order to establish a private communication with God. This feeling of alone frees people to confide, complain, praise and plead with all the heart. Figure 5 illustrates how to create an atmosphere of solitude and contemplation more meaningful, where light factors contribute to build the atmosphere.

Although the mosque is a public space, the atmosphere of contemplation is able to be build. This is told by God as the following verse quotations: “*Whoever develop the mosque because of a hope to meet the face of God, Allah will build for him, like in al jannah.*” (Al Bukhari no. 450). Even though the mosque was crowded as the Grand Mosque in Mecca (Figure 6), since the mosque is one of the “*masjid taqwa*” blessed by God, the mosque is still able to establish an atmosphere of privacy, although the number of pilgrims reached millions of people.

The atmosphere of personal contemplation arouse people to the level of tears, regret, fear, indeed, they often make people pass out from not being able to hold feelings. Impact on this feeling is a feeling of repentance and improvement in everyday behavior, such as the following quotations from respondents:..... prayers in the mosques, especially the big mosque in the evening made me cry, but the most influential one is when I prayed in the Holy Mosque. Though crowded, I was able to get the atmosphere of a very deep humility. There I was given a picture of my -full of sin- life journey. I sobbed until I found it difficult to breathe, after returning to Indonesia, I felt a fundamental change in my daily behavior that became calmer I want it to go back there

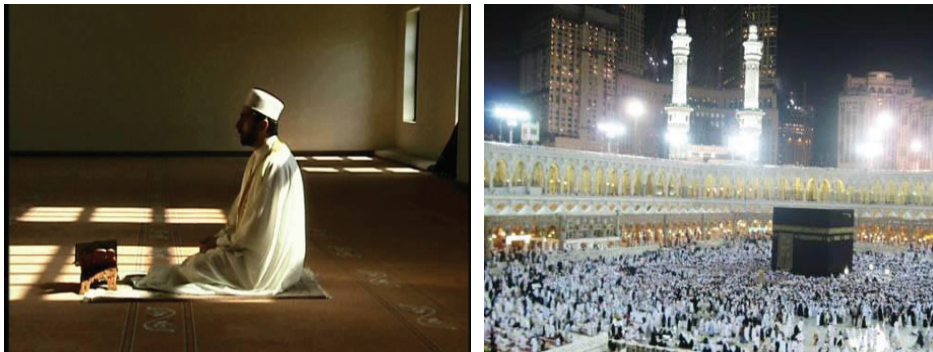


Fig. 4. (a) The need to pray in solitude ; (b) Masjidil Haram, Mecca. Source: (a) <http://puspafun.blogspot.com> retrieved March 23 2012; (b) <http://foto.detik.com>, retrieved March 23 2012).

4.2.3. *Visual sensory and concentration*

Visual sensory is of prime importance in experiencing architectural space of the mosque. Visual quality of the main hall can give significant effects to the ambiance and level of concentration of the prayers. Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jauziyah advises the prayers to keep their eyes open while performing the prayers or sholat, and only close their eyes if their immediate surroundings distract their concentration. Therefore, Al-Qaradawi Yusuf in his book “*Guide to the Mosque Building*” strongly urged that the ornaments applied in the main hall, including color, pattern, decoration and calligraphy should not give

visual distraction to the prayers. The images presented in the ornaments should be placed properly and do not allure the prayers into wild imagination.

The results of text analysis shown in Figure 7, shows that respondents influenced by visual sensor is essentially argues that the interior atmosphere can help to build the spirituality, especially if the interior of the mosque has a soft colors and thick carpet. The carpet creates warmth feeling during prostrations. Appropriate ornaments, quality materials and the use of wooden floors (parquet) are also creating visually comfortable interior stimuli to provide a positive religious atmosphere.

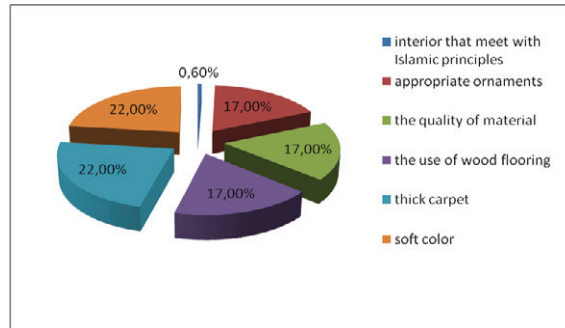


Fig. 5. Interior of the mosque who helped spiritual atmosphere.

4.2.4. Woman and Her Appreciation of The Aesthetic Value

Research findings showed that female respondents are more concerned with the existence of interior elements compared to male respondents. The presence of women as member of congregations in the mosque is not compulsory; hence they rarely visit the mosque. When they have a chance to visit it, they tend to pay more attention to the atmosphere and interior quality of the mosque compared to the male congregations.

4.3. Disturbing things in prayer

Figure 8 shows that visual factors, in addition to helping people, are also a major dominant factor emerged as a nuisance. Visual effects from the ground proved to be a major disturbance that caused the congregation to feel uncomfortable and lost concentration. By the time someone makes a ritual of worship and bowed, eyes will be drawn down, the area of view would be limited and the floor area would be the dominant factor visually seen. Excessive stimuli that appeared on the floor area will greatly affect the concentration.

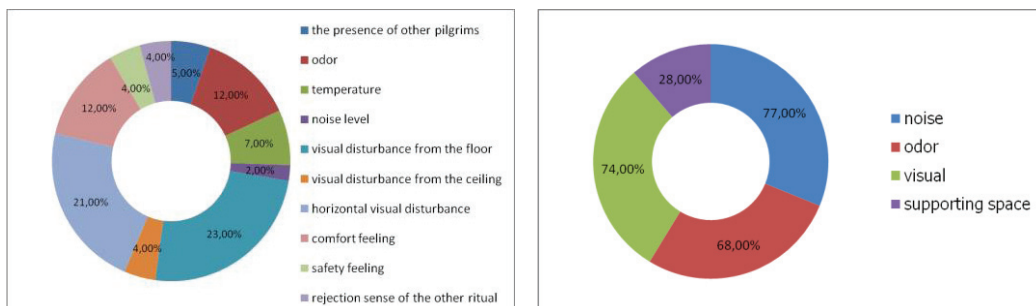


Fig. 6. (a) Distracting factors based on interview; (b) based on questionnaire

4.3.1. Interior ornaments that distract the concentration

The interior ornaments that potentially distract concentration of the respondents can be listed as follows:

- Color
Contrasted colors have profound impact on the level of concentration of the respondents. Red color is the mostly disliked, as it tends to give impression of higher temperature and hence reduces the concentration. Dark colors are also disliked, as they give impression of scary feeling. Green gives a sense of coolness, but if the gradation is too dark, it can turn the room into a frightening atmosphere.
- Motives of Ornament
Although geometric and arabesque motives on the carpets were designed in accordance with Islamic rules, they tend to incite certain fantasies and distract the concentration of female respondents. Non motive and single colored carpets are more preferable. Stained on carpets should be immediately cleaned, as they might also incite certain fantasies on female member congregations.
- Hijab Height
The hijab tend to block the visual of female respondents, in particular if it is made of opaque materials and relatively high in place. Female respondents prefer that the hijab is made of perforated material and half transparent, so that they can still observe the gesture of the imam.
- Calligraphy
Calligraphy also known as Arabic calligraphy, is the artistic practice of handwriting, or calligraphy, and by extension, of bookmaking, in the lands sharing a common Islamic cultural heritage. This art form is based on the Arabic script, which for a long time was used by all Muslims in their respective languages. They used it to represent God because they denied representing God with images. For respondents who are literate in Arabic, the existence of calligraphy can be quite disturbing, as they are tempted to read it over and over, especially if it is placed on the mihrab (A niche in the wall of a mosque or a room in the mosque that indicates the direction of Mecca). They have an opinion that calligraphy should be presented on the Quran only.

4.3.2. Sensor hearing and smell

- Noise Level
The results of the questionnaire (Figure 8 (b)) shows that 77% of respondents stated that the noise factor is also greatly affect the spiritual atmosphere. Noise is caused by vehicles from outside as well as noise from other congregation. Congregation who perform activities outside of regular worship is very disturbing. This condition is mainly caused by the mosque's diverse functions within limited space.
- Odor
Questionnaire as illustrated in Figure 8 (b) also shows that the smell factor, both an unpleasant smell and a very pungent smell is very annoying. This is in accordance with the hadith which says that: the Prophet Muhammad recommends wearing perfume during a visit to the mosque, and forbidding them to eat onions before. This letter implies a recommendation to always maintain personal hygiene and using the proper fragrances. Exaggeration is shown by the hadith: "*Women who wear perfume (which stimulates) and passes in one chamber (the man), then surely he is "this"*" (i.e. adultery) (*HR At-Tirmidzi*). Respondents stated that annoying odor came from still wet carpet, the smell of the toilet and the smell of garbage from outside. Hadiths also clearly states that: The mosques are not reasonable for urinal or trash. It is just to be a place for remembrance The Allah Ta'ala, and reading the Quran. This hadith clearly shows the prerequisite of distance and position of the shower and ablution place.

4.4. Emotional factors

Emotions that arise when someone comes to the mosque is a feeling of astonished at the greatness of God, realizing how small a man in the eyes of God, a feeling of being watched, feeling nothing compared to the transcendent power of God. The word mosques repeated as many as 28 times in the Quran. The word is taken from the root word sajada-sujuds, which means submissive, obedient. No doubt that these feelings will arise when people come to the mosque.

Furthermore, feelings also affect congregation mood to be ready to face God. The letter of Al Baqarah (2) Paragraph 157 tells us that the *salawat* (A name given to a popular Islamic phrase. So a person would say 'salawat' aloud in a congregation and they would all say together "Allahuma Salli ala Muhammed wa ala aali Muhammed" (SAW), which means "May Allah send His praise upon Muhammed and upon the Family of Muhammed"), grace, and *hidayah* (Guiding someone to the true path) do not come spontaneously, one must grasp it, before accept God's presence in the heart.

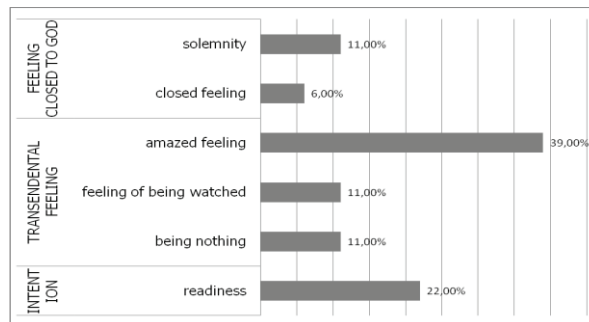


Fig. 7. Emotional factors

5. Conclusions

The results are that (1) for the Muslim community, in this regard the faculty group and the *majelis taklim* women, the mosque is a place believed to be able to establish the value of human spirituality. The choice of the mosque is strongly influenced by the background and understanding of religious congregations. Private room in the house is also a place that is able to build a spiritual atmosphere. (2) Mosque interpreted as a house of God, which in turn creates a feeling of astonished. Intention of coming to the mosque will eventually be side by side with intent as if people would visit Him. Because it is a house of God, the mosque should be performed with all the pomp. People would willingly provide the material and labor to build it. The mosque is also interpreted as a communal space where people share with others, as well as significant personal space, where people complained to the Lord (3) as a spiritual space for the Muslim community, mosques appear to support the full potential though problems somehow still exist. Among them, there is also a factor which does not affect the assembly in terms of physical and spatial space, felt by people with high levels of religious understanding.

Respondents who already have deeper understanding of Islamic religion considered that ornaments are not of prime important. As a matter of fact, they tend to give little attention to the presence of ornaments in the main hall of the mosque, therefore they do not fell distracted. For them, the mosque is a place for prayer, not a place to appreciate architectural aesthetics. Ornament is an element whose presence in the mosque is not a necessity, instead, it is an optional factor to glorify the greatness of a mosque.

Research findings showed that ornaments do not have significant influence on the level of concentration. Instead, more attention should be paid for: (1) room temperature (2) air circulation (3)

continuity of view both inside and outside the main hall, and (4) lighting quality, for the assurance of thermal and visual comfort of the main hall. Results appear following the increasing of spirituality: (1) self-confidence, believe in life/future, peace of mind, harmony or self-consistency, and self-understanding (2) harmony with nature, willingness to walk from home heading to the mosque (3) harmony with others, willingness to help (4) relationship with God in one's own way. It is too early to claim the findings as a conclusion, since the research study is still limited in scope and methodology. A deeper and thorough study still has to be carry out in order to achieve more satisfactory results.

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