

Students' Awareness in Performing Congregational Prayers to Prevent Radicalism

Muhiddinur Kamal¹, Nuraisyah², Muhammad Taufik³, Nelmaya⁴, Nofri Andy⁵, Penmardianto⁶

¹ UIN Syech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Indonesia; muhiddinurkamal@gmail.com

² UIN Syech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Indonesia; nuraisyah@iainbukittinggi.ac.id

³ UIN Syech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Indonesia; m.taufik@iainbukittinggi.ac.id

⁴ UIN Syech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Indonesia; nelmaya@iainbukittinggi.ac.id

⁵ UIN Syech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Indonesia; nofriandy@iainbukittinggi.ac.id

⁶ UIN Syech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Indonesia; penmardianto@iainbukittinggi.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to revealed and examined how groups of religious groups, especially student groups who are members of the congregational prayer community, provided students with the correct religious understanding to prevent radicalism on campus. The participants of this study were student religious groups belonging to the congregational prayer movement for students on campus. The number of informants in this study was 48 people with the snowball sampling technique according to research needs and the fulfillment of information. The method used is a qualitative method with interpretive analysis that reveals the meaning and analyzes facts systematically. The findings of this study were that student religious groups who broadcasted and socialized congregational prayers in can provide students with a true religious understanding and could prevent radicalism with a narrow religious understanding.

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Corresponding Author:

Muhiddinur Kamal

UIN Syech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, Indonesia; muhiddinurkamal@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Humans possess both *consciousness* and self-awareness (Morin, 2006). Both concepts are explained in Alquran in the story of human creation (Safitri, Nuskhi, Muatip, Purwaningsih, & Setiana, 2019). Humans as subjects and objects are understood by learning about how they are created.

Humans have bestowed the potentials to believe in God and religion reflected in their religious rituals (Yusuf, Nahdhiyah, & Wekke, 2019). The rituals are manifested in religion, sent from Allah through the Prophets. The prophets are responsible to deliver religious values (Ismail, 2016). The values help humans to differentiate what is allowed, not allowed, good, bad, and right and wrong (Aziz, 2021). However, the environment does influence human's thought and the way they think that often what we perform is not suitable with the religious values.

Humans are also equipped with the presence of the universe which signing the greatness of Allah (Rezi, 2018). For a human, religion is an absolute matter therefore what values that humans believe should be reflected in their daily performance (Hartati & Rezi, 2019).

Religion in human life, as a belief system, a belief toward the existence of a supernatural power that is absolutely beyond human life as well as the worship system or the ritual in terms of behavior and actions about substances that are believed to be a consequence of the belief in the existence of God, or norms that govern man and man, man and Whereas what becomes the estuary of rituals and rules is the vertical relationship between humans and God and the horizontal relationship between humans and humans to achieve safety and happiness in life, even further to have more meaningful life (Berry, 1983).

Human's ability to understand their own experiences and relate them to their religious values is an exhibit of man as a religious creature. Understanding religion is obtained by learning the religion, performing religious rituals like *shalat*, prayers. How close a man's relationship with his God depends on how deep his faith is (Islamy, 2019).

According to Bahanuddin (Bahanuddin, 2008), the implementation of religious values owned by man is reflected in man's three religious' systems. They are credo, rites, and norms. The credo system is a system that manages people to believe that there is an absolute matter beyond man's power. Moreover, rites, or often meant as a ritual system are a series of activities to show obedience to the absolute matter. In addition, the norms manage man relation to other men, man and nature, and the relation should refer to the worship rituals (Muliati & Rezi, 2018).

Prayers are a part of the implementation of religion. The worship system is absolute that every Muslim must obey. Prayers are the visualization of man's religious acts (Khair & Busyro, 2018). A man begs for help by having faith that God's blessings free them from any obstacles that they have in their life. Prayers for Muslims are medium to communicate with Allah (Firdaus, 2011). Prayers consist of words and actions started from *Takbir* for Allah and end with *salam*. Allah makes prayers as a way for a man to release themselves from being tired, to gain motivation by communicating what they feel to the Almighty (Rachmat, 2009).

Allah makes prayers as a way to show His affection that man should live happily and lead a meaningful life (Haryanto, 2002). Prayers are the source of happiness if they are earnestly performed. Prayers tie man and other men to live peacefully (A. M. Ismail, 2021). By performing prayers man can lead a better life. Compared to those who have a religion, they seem to behave no life aims (Tekke & Watson, 2017). How important prayers is should be taught to students as early as possible, since their young age since their development and education are mostly influenced by the environment (Sa'adah, 2006).

Prayers teach a person to be disciplined and obedient (Ruslan & Juddah, 2020). They obey the norms and ethics in real life. It is reflected in how prayers are performed in time, and every Muslim manages to do it by referring to the worship system (Munir & Al-Fandi, 2011). Therefore, those who perform prayers understand regulations, values, norms and concentrate their thoughts on meaningful acts, because prayers are full of meaningful verses from Alquran (Kamp, 2008).

Congregational prayers as highly recommended prayers in Islam, seen from the aspect of awareness becomes a part of religious existence and mental aspect of religious activities (Nabiela & Amalia, 2019). Awareness to perform congregational prayers is closely related to the awareness of having a religion, therefore to perform actions that follow the religious norms (Jusoh & Chowdhury, 2017). Based on some preliminary observations, it is found that students' awareness to perform congregational prayers are increased, seen in many public universities or Islamic-based universities. The assumptions are based on the fact that many students perform congregational prayers. Though not many are studying Islamic subjects, the students have the intention to do congregational prayers.

It is necessary to discuss comprehensively the phenomenon in a study. If it is related to the assumption that radicalism often interferes with academic life, such as university students as the target, where most of the targeted are those who are interested to learn the religion deeper. They

probably learn religion in primary school, but it is not yet fundamental, that they are later easily provoked. In the research, there are two focuses of the study, first the students' awareness in performing congregational prayers, and second, the factors that both support or distract them to perform congregational prayers.

Research on student religious groups that broadcast and socialize the congregational prayer movement in the campus environment is fundamental to do because of the growing suspicion or issue that religious groups among students sometimes actually lead students to the religious understanding that leads to radicalism. This research reveals and analyzes that student groups who promote congregational prayer in the campus environment play a role in providing religious understanding that is straight and far from radicalism. This is evidenced by interviews and observations that students who are members of student groups who socialize the congregational prayer movement on several public and private campuses help other students understand the true and righteous religion and away from radicalism as feared by a few people.

2. METHODS

The study focuses on university students' awareness in performing congregational prayers as a way to prevent radicalism. The design of the research is descriptive qualitative. By exploring and revealing facts in the field and then analyzing them with qualitative analysis. The selection of this qualitative method is considered suitable to be used in order to be able to raise actual facts and data and analyze them to the theme or meaning of an event. Because it aims at understanding the social symptoms that appeared (Moleong, n.d.). The descriptive method is used to describe systematic descriptions, factual phenomena, and the relations of each phenomenon. Therefore, the descriptive method emphasizes object studied description in the present time (or when the study is being conducted). By emphasizing on descriptive method, the case study technique of contemporary organized case study or observation is implemented (Suprayogo & Tobroni, 2001). The research is conducted at IAIN Bukittinggi, STKIP Adzkie Padang, STAIN Gajah Putih Takengon and STAI YDI Lubuk Sikaping. The places are selected since various phenomena in performing congregational prayers done by the students are found. Moreover, there are a lot of Islamic study discussions done before or after the prayers.

The object of the research is the students that perform congregational prayers. They are observed and interviewed. They are purposively selected as the informant since they perform congregational prayers at mosques or *mushalla* around the university. the research is done qualitatively. The objects are observed naturally, using a natural setting.

The data are collected more than one time to get right and deep information, therefore it is possible to understand the meanings behind every action. Spradley explains in Baker (Baker, 2006), that the research better suits using the qualitative method because it searches for information about behaviors or cultures in a certain social situation. The approach, according to Guba (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) believes in a paradigm that relates to the understanding of social symptoms findings in a social context.

The data in the research are collected by referring to the three phases; first, literature study, that is collecting, researching, and analyzing any literature related to performing congregational prayers. Second, deep interviews, done to the objects of the research. The objects are selected by using the snowball sampling technique. Third, by observing the act of performing congregational prayers at di IAIN Bukittinggi, STKIP Adzkie Padang, STAIN Gajah Putih Takengon Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam and STAI Lubuk Sikaping done by their students.

The research refers to the twelve steps of the ethnography model by Spradley (Spradley, 2016), modified into 9 steps, are; 1)deciding the social situation, 2)field observation, 3)environmental analysis, 4)focused observation, 5) taxonomy analysis, 6) selected analysis, 7)componential analysis, 8)cultural theme analysis, 9)research report writing. To validate the findings and authenticity of the research, a data validation standard by Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is applied. They are

1)credibility, 2)transferability, 3)defendability, 4) confirmability. The reason for choosing this method is because this method can reveal the meaning or theme that is the core of qualitative research.

A detailed description of your method in conducting research need to be provided in this section. This section explains how long the research was conducted, population and sample (research targets), data collecting techniques and instrument development, and data analysis. For research using tools and materials, please write down the specifications for the equipment and materials. For qualitative research such as classroom action, case studies, etc., there should be an increasing in existence of the research, research subjects, informants that participate in supporting the data of research, location and duration of the research and details regarding the validity of the research.

In qualitative research, the sampling technique or analysis informants use snowball sampling, or by using purposive sampling, but in this study using purposive sampling by extracting information from informants who are seen to understand what is revealed and analyzed in this study: observational research data collection, interviews, and documentation studies. Observation, interviews, and document studies carried out the data collection techniques. Meanwhile, to ensure validity, data reduction, data display, and verification are carried out. To guarantee the validity of the data is done by measuring Credibility, Confirmability, Dependability, and Transferability and assisted by Data Triangulation.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Awareness in Performing Congregational Prayers

Affective Pattern

The affective pattern in this study is a pattern signed when the students perform congregational prayers due to the need to 'meet' the Almighty. The act is manifested in forms of performing religious values brought by the religion whether it is the obligatory or the *sunnah*. From the FGD and interviews were done, it is found that mostly the students performing the congregational prayers when the time to pray is approaching and these students feel that they need to perform the congregational prayers, they no longer see it as a responsibility only, but it is already part of their needs. Often, these students ask for permission to leave the class earlier, when the prayer time is coming, even though the class is not yet over.

Performing congregational prayers, for the students, belong to affective pattern because they have 'love' for their religion and Islamic teachings. For these students, man needs are not limited to biological aspect only, but also the psychological one, or known as the spiritual one. The need to love the religion is manifested in form of experiencing religious teachings and values.

Students' awareness that belongs to affective pattern is also revealed from the interviewed data and FGD. Referring to the students' answers, it is said that the behavior is influenced by the role of the university to emerge the awareness to perform congregational prayers. University policy lets the students possibly perform their congregational prayers since they provide 'recess' during the praying time, and they socialize it to the students, therefore, students, that may be in the beginning perform the congregational prayers due to the policy, but at the end, it becomes habitual.

The affective pattern cannot be obtained at once. It requires certain phases to instill awareness. That is to realize that performing congregational prayers is not only a responsibility but also the need to show the best behaviors to the almighty.

To instill the awareness to perform congregational prayers, possible things that universities may provide are:

1. Media to socialize congregational prayers.

This information is obtained at STKIP Adzkie Padang. There, a big billboard promoting congregational prayers is available. The billboard is on the university wall where the academics can always see. The billboard delivers a message that saying *Dosen saja memanggil kamu datang? apakah ketika Tuhan Memanggil kamu juga datang?* You will be there right away when the lecturers call, will you be the same, when the Almighty does? The sentence triggers both students and lecturers to

perform congregational prayers once the praying time is coming. It contributes a significant impact on students' behavior. At first, they do it as a part of their habit, but in the end, gradually they realize the advantages, then it becomes their need.

2. The availability of a policy that supports academics to perform congregational prayers.

A legal that says students, lecturers, and staff should perform congregational prayers when *adzan* is heard is another way to instill the awareness of doing the prayers. The academics stop their activities, head to the university mosque, and perform the congregational prayers. This information is obtained at STKIP Adzkie Padang. When the praying time is approaching, *Adzan* is heard, then people start to go to the mosque to perform the prayers.

Cognitive Pattern

A cognitive pattern is obtained when the students perform their congregational prayers because they study something about congregational prayers. It relates to the knowledge that they have about the prayers. Based on interviews done at IAIN Bukittinggi, STKIP Adzkie, STAIN Gajah Putih, and STAI YDI, at the Islamic institutions such as IAIN Bukittinggi and STAIN Gajah Putih, from the interview and the focus group discussion, the cognitive pattern is dominantly found.

Mostly, the students at the higher institutions perform congregational prayers because the lecturers tell them the importance of congregational prayers. Referring to the interview data and the result of the focus group discussion, it is said that the students do the prayers because they are knowledgeable about that. This act is based on a thinking process that correlates knowledge that they have and the act of performing. Some students even confirm when it is the Almighty that highly recommends a certain action, the students question and believe there must be reasons why something should be done. By questioning and then turning it into a belief, they find that it is necessary to perform congregational prayers. The awareness is instilled.

The cognitive pattern in performing congregational prayers referring to students' ability to analyze and process information of what they know about congregational prayers. The data are obtained mostly from interviews and focus group discussion result done to students who regularly perform congregational prayers at the Islamic higher education institutions. Most of the students have a common educational background, that mostly they previously went to Islamic boarding schools during high school where the courses are Islamic based.

In the study, it is also found that students who own this pattern, the cognitive pattern, mostly are knowledgeable about religious values and norms that are reflected in their daily performance. They understand the importance of congregational prayers and the impact that they may gain so that it is a need for them to perform the prayers. Even though sometimes, they have to ask for permission from the lecturers to leave the class earlier because they need to be in a Mosque or to perform the prayer once *Adzan* is heard. When asked and dug deep, they say that they feel 'being called' and they cannot stop the intention to perform the congregational prayers in time.

Having conscience about performing the congregational prayers relates to the nature of a man who often expresses their love to the Almighty and the Prophets by obeying and conducting what is taught in Islam. Mostly the students who belong to this pattern are aware to perform congregational prayers even before they become college or university students. It is like humans to have willing to learn the religion and then express what they know by referring to the norms and the religious values and then motivate themselves to properly interact with others, and God, and the environment.

Being aware and having a will to perform congregational prayers in the cognitive pattern is closely related to spiritual intelligence that leads people to be civilized. It is found in the interview done to students from different universities that they perform congregational prayers because they feel content when they can. The intention is not merely controlled by their thinking process but also by the inner satisfaction that they get after performing congregational prayers. This triggers them to deeply understand the urgency of performing congregational prayers.

Furthermore, referring to the interview and the focus group discussion result, the students' willingness to perform congregational prayers, it is confirmed that the need to do the prayers is closely related to their religious life aspect and how they try to understand the presence of God. This skill leads people to behave properly which then results in a higher level of obedience, that every action made is based on religious values and norms.

Students within this category commonly believe in God and perform the religious teachings, both mandatory or the sunnah ones. They try their best to conduct their religious life because, mostly, they are educated in a religious family, living in a religious environment, having religious friends. They are influenced by these factors and they are shaped by them also. However, many of the students who belong to the pattern are apathetic that they are reluctant to upgrade their knowledge about religion, and they are seldom involved in religious activities. They obey basic principles such as having respect for parents and the elderly or always perform their prayers.

The Factors that influence students to perform congregational prayers.

Two factors influence students' awareness to perform congregational prayers found based on the data collected from the selected universities. They are internal and external factors:

1. Internal

The research data collected by doing interviews, having focus group discussions, and field observations. The internal factor grows from the person itself, as it is been nature for mankind to have religion as a medium to lead their life. This internal factor influences and instills the awareness to do religious norms and values. It is found that students who have internal factors are closely related to the heredity factor. The awareness to do religious values and norms is not only because the habits are there within the family, but also shaped by other spiritual aspects that cover cognitive, affective and conative. In every man, there is a 'voice' that whenever a person commits bad actions that person feels guilty. This information is revealed during the interviews and FGD done with the students at the selected universities.

Students say that when they break the religious norms, they do realize that they do sins, and they feel guilty. However, they tend to ignore the feelings that often they commit the same mistakes again. The violation of the religious norms and values such as missing the opportunity to perform congregational prayers is closely related to the students' development, where most of them are in the transition process, heading to being adult. That students are in the process of finding and understanding themselves so that they can be mature adults often triggers psychological conflict that influences them to violate the religious teachings and ignore what is recommended by the religion.

Although aging is not the only factor that determines students' awareness to perform congregational prayers. However, it is seen that the more mature the person is, the more they are aware of the importance of religious norms, values, and teachings to lead their life. The awareness is also determined by the personality factors that consist of two elements; they are heredity and environmental issues. Heredity and environment shape students' personalities that each of them become a unique person, that how each person understands religious teachings, norms, and values, is somehow also different between each other.

The personality factor is found when the students are being interviewed and in the focus group discussions. Their willingness to perform congregational prayers is already there right before they become college students because they are educated within a family and environment that support religious teachings.

a. External Factor

Man as the God creature is bestowed with the potentials to grow up and develop to learn, understand and perform religious norms, values, and teachings. Man is prepared well to be aware of external influences, what is it recommended by the religion such as performing congregational prayers. The external factors that influence students' awareness to perform congregational prayers are:

1) The environmental condition of the institution.

The students' awareness to perform congregational prayers is determined also by external factors. One of them is the institution. The situation and condition at the institution where they mostly spend most of their time, whether it provides an opportunity to do the congregational prayers determine their willingness to do so. Based on the interviews and the focus group discussion it is found that the institution has a special role to trigger and motivate students to perform congregational prayers.

At some institutions such as STKIP Adzkiia Padang, where they have the policy to be an Islamic high education institution, where the activities are meant to shape students' Islamic character, there it is highly recommended that all academics perform congregational prayers once they praying time is approaching. The timetable is set or well-organized that none of the classes is held during praying time. Therefore, there are always possibilities to perform congregational prayers.

The commitment ties all academics at the institution to perform congregational prayers. Lecturers, students, support staff all participate to obey campus regulations and policy, including the policy to perform congregational prayers. This policy makes the congregational prayers habitual which leads to students' awareness improvement. Meanwhile, at other selected institutions, such as STAIN and IAIN, the significant role is held more by the Da'wah Organization at the campus which is managed by the students. Therefore, the awareness to perform congregational prayers is more by the student organization, not by the certain institution policy.

The Da'wah organization is a current trend. Its presence is preceded by activities done mostly at mosques, then it leads to a commitment to be more serious, therefore it triggers a permanent student organization. Recently, the organization becomes students' favorite medium to support religious activities at the campus. Many students join to develop the awareness to perform religious life.

2). Society

The awareness to perform congregational prayers is not only due to the institutional factor but also determined by the environment. A commitment between the institution and the society or people around campus, such as the owners of the boarding houses nearby that support the students to perform congregational prayers influences their awareness. At STKIP Adzkiia Padang for instance, there is a commitment between the institution and the society to mutually support students' character development so that they become religious persons that conduct Islamic life every day. One of the efforts is by supporting them and encouraging them to come to mosques to perform congregational prayers.

3). Family factor

Family is the simplest social part of a man's life. family is the first and the main social environment that shapes man's awareness to conduct religious norms and values. Therefore, family is the earliest socialization to build religious life including managing the children to learn their religion and make the values become their habits since an early age. Parents' influences toward children's religious life and awareness to perform their religion should be started even earlier.

Therefore, as an intervention toward students' spiritual development, the parents are responsible for their children's development even though they have already become college students. College students, when they are home, are under parents' watch where they have to assist and help their kids learn religion. This study obtains data that confirm commitment between parents and the institution to shape and build their Islamic character holds significant impacts on students' awareness to perform congregational prayers.

4). Students' peers' factor

How the students' classmates or peers influence them also determines the students' awareness to perform congregational prayers or any other religious activities. Students which are in the transition period leaving their teens phase, and moving to the adult phase, are mostly unstable, that they are easily provoked and influenced by both positive or negative issues. The transition phase feels like a new life for them. It is a life that full of new hopes and possibilities. They are living new trends, new

lifestyles which reflect how they see the world, some are optimistic and promising and some are materialistic.

Students make performing congregational prayers become their habit sometimes is due to the bits of advice given by their friends, or simply because they are influenced by those who already perform congregational prayers habitually. Having friends is often defined as mutually influence, that they want their friends to do what they do, or they want their friends to believe what they believe. For instance, when a group of students believes the importance of congregational prayers, there is a tendency that they will try to persuade their circle friends to do so, by giving attention or just by sharing advantages of performing congregational prayers. Caring and willing to share information with peers, mates are a visualization of *Amar ma'ruf nahi Munkar*.

Congregational prayers as an effort to prevent radicalism

Islam is *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Its teaching is filled with love, affection. It is to persuade not to force, it is to respect, not to hate. However, the term *rahmatan lil 'alamin* is often violated by the stigma of radicalism toward Islam (I. Ismail, Kamal, Derta, & Rezi, 2020).

There have been many issues about radicalism at universities. To anticipate the issues, the selected campuses in the study confirm that the habit to perform congregational prayers and management of students' religious activities at the campus are some efforts conducted. Through the activities, students are assisted and taught Islamic values that the religion is a blessing for the world. It gives hope for Muslims around the world, for people, and mankind.

Religion assistance and mentoring are provided for the students. They teach them to spread Islam in peace. The campuses in the study confirm the efforts that they done to instill Islamic values to the students. The students should go through the right path as how Islam teachers, refer to the truth that becomes the nature of Man as the God creature. In the selected campuses, it is found that efforts done by the institutions to prevent radicalism at the campus by making performing congregational prayers become a habit for the students. They are assisted by certified mentors to learn and study religion contextually or textually. This was revealed through the FGD conducted during the research "the awareness to perform congregational prayers so that congregational prayer is no longer a burdensome obligation, instead, it becomes a need in the form of spiritual needs to give the best to God, one of which is by praying together in congregation. as religious advice. Congregational prayer when it becomes a necessity will be able to provide an intake of human spiritual needs where human needs are not only limited to biological needs, but humans also have spiritual desires and needs, namely the desire and need to love and be loved by God. Syiar or community prayer is not only limited to praying but there are activities to provide the true and straight religious understanding and prevent the entry of radical ideas for students. The spread of issues and assumptions about the entry of radicalism into campus circles is also alleged to have penetrated student religious study groups. The analysis carried out for the case of the congregational prayer movement among students at various Islamic religious colleges and public universities in Sumatra revealed that the congregational prayer movement group was actually present to prevent the entry of radicalism among students.

The pattern of student religious awareness is basically an affective pattern. The college should show how to maintain students' awareness in Islamic Moderation against Islamic radicalism (Rezi, 2020). Students initially enter college in a condition of low religious understanding and awareness, but with an affective approach through religious study groups, they can change the pattern of religious awareness into a pattern of awareness to understand and implement religious teachings better. The cultivation of character values and straight religious understanding by religious study groups who are fostered and guided by the campus has contributed greatly to providing a straight religious understanding and awareness and preventing the emergence of radicalism and narrow understandings of religion (Rahman, Kher, & Rani, 2018).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussions, it is concluded that; students' awareness to perform congregational prayers at some selected campuses in the study cover two pattern of behaviours. They are affective pattern and cognitive pattern. Students' affective refers to the insufficient knowledge about religious values, norms, and teachings, but due to the influence of the trends at their institutions that support the religious activities including performing congregational prayers, the students are gradually changing into better persons. This affective pattern requires assistance and character development that can instill their awareness to perform the congregational prayers. meanwhile, the cognitive pattern refers to students who are knowledgeable about the religious teachings, norms, and values even before they come to the university.

Though assistance and character development are not much provided, the students who belong to the cognitive category do perform the prayers. The supporting factors that trigger them to perform the congregational prayers are the internal factor and external factor. Internal factors are heredity, personality, while the external factors are institutional, society, environment, student organization, and peers. A distracting factor in performing congregational prayers is a system that is not designed to provide the students' opportunity to perform the prayers, such as time table offered by campus, that students have to wait or postpone their prayers because they cannot leave their class earlier, or because it is the class schedule when the praying time is approaching. The pattern of Awareness of praying in the congregation of students through the movement of awareness of praying in congregation is seen as effective in raising awareness to practice the teachings of the religion of the students, adding true and righteous religious understanding for students through deepening activities of Islamic sciences and no less important is as a forum to ward off entry. and the development of radicalism for students.

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