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Seri Iskandar Campus, Perak, MALAYSIA



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SIMPORA XVI: 2025**

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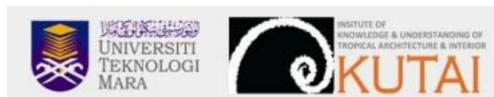
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A STUDY OF PLACE ATTACHMENT TO OMAN AL-MAKMUR MOSQUE IN BANDA ACEH

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Abstract: The Oman Al-Makmur Mosque is one of the most frequently visited mosques in Banda Aceh due to its strategic location along the city's main road and its high accessibility. Beyond functioning as a place of worship and Qur'anic learning, the mosque also serves as a center for various socio-religious activities, including marriage ceremonies, informal gatherings, assemblies, and bazaars. This study aims to analyze the level of place attachment among the community toward the Oman Al-Makmur Mosque. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining descriptive qualitative and quantitative methods. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, field observations, and literature review. The findings indicate that community attachment to the mosque is very strong, as it holds special meaning for visitors. Religious activities emerge as the primary attraction, creating memorable experiences and fostering emotional bonds. In terms of the place dimension, visitors develop attachments to specific areas within the mosque and feel a sense of familiarity with its atmosphere, either because of residential proximity or similarities to mosques in their hometowns. Regarding the process dimension, visitors experience feelings of pride and happiness during their visits and express a strong intention to return. However, the results also show that most visitors have limited knowledge of the mosque's historical background and architectural characteristics.

Keywords: *Place Attachment, Oman Al-Makmur Mosque, Religious Place, Post-Tsunami Aceh Place*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world; consequently, mosques constitute one of the most common and significant religious buildings across the country. In Islam, the mosque is regarded as a sacred space where various forms of worship and religious activities are performed. Beyond its primary function as a place of prayer, the mosque also plays an important role in social, educational, and cultural life within Muslim communities.

Aceh is a province in Indonesia with a strong Islamic identity, where mosques serve not only religious but also social functions. One of the prominent mosques in Banda Aceh is the Oman Al-Makmur Mosque, located on Jalan Tgk. Moh. Daud Beureueh, Bandar Baru, Kuta Alam District. This mosque records a relatively high number of visitors, reaching approximately 50,000 people per month. Its strategic location along a main road and within an office area

makes it highly accessible to both local residents and visitors. Although several mosques are situated along the same road, the Oman Al-Makmur Mosque attracts significantly more visitors than other nearby mosques.

The Oman Al-Makmur Mosque hosts a wide range of activities, including daily prayers, Qur'anic recitation, marriage ceremonies, bazaars, informal meetings, and religious discussions. It is also used for celebrating Islamic holidays, preaching activities, and various socio-religious events. The intensity and diversity of activities within the mosque complex have contributed to its physical and functional development. Supporting facilities such as hotels, canteens, a library, counseling services, and a Sharia cooperative have been added to accommodate community needs. Through repeated visits and sustained engagement with these activities, the community gradually develops a strong attachment to the mosque.

Place attachment refers to the emotional bond that forms between individuals or groups and specific places that hold meaningful value (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). Such attachment emerges through interest, affection, and repeated interaction with a place (Lewicka, 2011). Place attachment can occur at both individual and collective levels and is shaped by social, psychological, and environmental dimensions (Clare et al., 1996). Scannel and Gifford (2010) conceptualize place attachment as a multidimensional construct consisting of person, place, and psychological process. Furthermore, individual characteristics, community interactions, and environmental attributes influence the strength of attachment and contribute to symbolic relationships between people and places (Najafi & Kamal, 2012).



Figure 1: The Oman Al-Makmur Mosque

Within this theoretical framework, the Oman Al-Makmur Mosque represents an important case for understanding place attachment in a religious setting. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the level of place attachment among the community toward the Oman Al-Makmur Mosque in Banda Aceh, focusing on how emotional bonds, spatial familiarity, and experiential processes shape community relationships with the mosque.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Place Attachment Concept and Framework

Place attachment refers to the emotional bond that develops between individuals or groups and specific places that hold particular meaning (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). This bond is formed through repeated interactions, personal experiences, and social relationships that occur within a place over time. Place attachment can emerge at both individual and collective levels and plays an important role in shaping how people perceive, use, and value their environment (Clare et al., 1996).

Scannell and Gifford (2010) conceptualize place attachment as a multidimensional framework consisting of three interrelated components: person, place, and process. The person dimension relates to individual or group characteristics that influence attachment, including demographic factors such as age, gender, occupation, religion, and length of stay. In addition, memorable experiences, religious values, and historical significance contribute to the strength of emotional bonds with a place (Marisa & Yusof, 2020).

The place dimension emphasizes the role of physical and social characteristics of the environment. Physical features such as spatial layout, architectural elements, and environmental comfort influence perceptions and familiarity, which can enhance attachment. Social characteristics develop when a place supports social interaction and fulfills the needs of individuals or groups, encouraging repeated use and sustained engagement (Marisa & Yusof, 2020).

The process dimension refers to the psychological mechanisms through which attachment is experienced. According to Scannell and Gifford (2010), this dimension consists of affection, cognition, and behavior. Affection represents emotional responses such as pride, happiness, and love associated with a place. Cognition involves memories, beliefs, and knowledge related to the place, while behavior is reflected in actions such as repeated visits, continued use, and efforts to maintain or protect the environment. Together, these dimensions explain how place attachment is formed and maintained through emotional, cognitive, and behavioral interactions.

2.2 Place Attachment in Religious Spaces

Religious spaces function not only as physical settings for worship but also as centers of social interaction, collective memory, and cultural identity. In many societies, religious buildings play a significant role in daily life, shaping emotional bonds between individuals and their communities through shared spiritual practices and social activities. As a result, religious spaces often generate strong forms of place attachment compared to other public spaces.

In the context of Islam, mosques serve multiple functions beyond ritual prayer, including religious education, social gatherings, community meetings, and cultural activities. These repeated activities contribute to the development of emotional bonds between users and mosque environments. Attachment to mosques is influenced not only by their physical

characteristics but also by their symbolic meanings, spiritual values, and the sense of belonging they provide to worshippers.

Previous studies indicate that attachment to religious places is closely linked to feelings of sacredness, familiarity, and collective identity. The emotional connection formed through religious rituals, communal events, and shared experiences reinforces the mosque's role as a meaningful place within the community. Consequently, mosques often become spaces where personal faith and social life intersect, strengthening both individual attachment and collective cohesion.

Understanding place attachment in religious spaces is therefore essential for examining how mosques function as socially meaningful environments. By applying the place attachment framework to mosque settings, it becomes possible to analyze how emotional bonds, spatial familiarity, and experiential processes shape community relationships with religious places. This perspective provides a theoretical foundation for investigating place attachment at the Oman Al-Makmur Mosque in Banda Aceh. Place attachment describes the relationship between individuals or groups and meaningful environments through three interrelated dimensions: person, place, and process. These dimensions are illustrated in Figure 2.

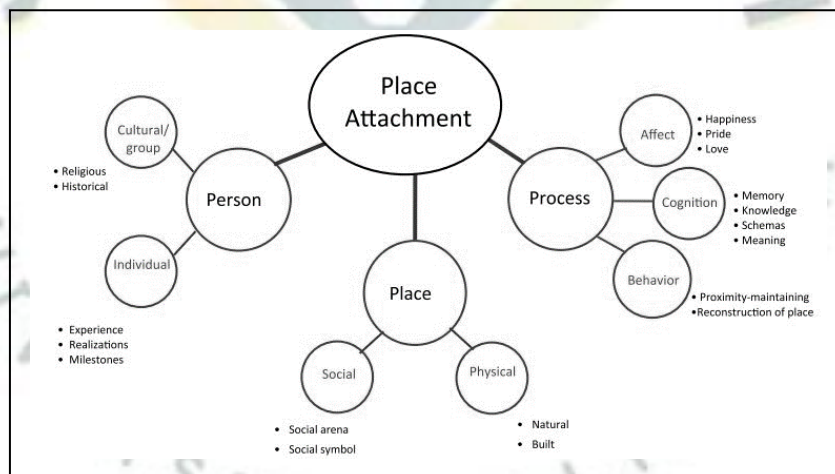


Figure 2: The tripartite model of place attachment. Scannel & Gifford (2010).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research uses qualitative and quantitative methods that are descriptive in nature. Distribution of questionnaires, expert interviews, observation, and documentation as primary data. To support primary data, secondary data is needed from the literature. The questionnaire used a Likert scale to represent respondents' perceptions by giving a score of 1 to 5. The method of determining respondents was carried out using a simple random sampling approach using the Slovin formula, so that a sample of 100 people was obtained. The results of the questionnaire will be tabulated, and the mean value will be calculated to analyze the place attachment level with the following rating scale (Marisa & Yusof, 2020).

Table 1: Place attachment level categories

Mean Value	Category
$1 \leq x < 1,8$	Veri Low
$1,8 \leq x < 2,6$	Low
$2,6 \leq x < 3,4$	Currently
$3,4 \leq x < 4,2$	Height
$4,2 \leq x \leq 5$	Very high

The variables used in this study are Person, Place, and Process, which are further explained as follows (Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

Table 2: Place attachment level categories

Variable	Indicator	Parameter
Person	Meaning	The Oman Al-Makmur Mosque means a lot to me
	Experience	I had an unforgettable experience at the Oman Al-Makmur mosque
	Religiuos value	Religious activities are the main attraction of my visit
	Historical value	The Oman Al-Makmur Mosque has a history in the process of its construction
Place	Physique	One part of the Oman Al-Makmur mosque is the best place for me
	Social	I feel familiar with the atmosphere of the Oman Al-Makmur mosque
Process	Affection	I feel happy when I visit the Oman Al-Makmur mosque
	Cognition	I know the Oman Al-Makmur mosque
	Behavior	I have a desire to visit the Oman Al-Makmur mosque again

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Person

Based on the results of the questionnaire, it is known that the meaning indicator has a mean value of 4.35. This value is included in the very high place attachment category, which means that the Oman Al-Makmur mosque has its own meaning for the community. The meaning given by the community is influenced by the mosque as a holy place. Furthermore, the experience indicator has a mean value of 3.97, which is categorized as high place attachment. Based on the results of observations, the experience felt by the community was obtained through various activities carried out at the Oman Al-Makmur mosque, such as worship, religious tourism, weddings, recitations, worship activities during the month of Ramadan, such as i'tikaf, iftar, and sahoor together, and so on.



Figure 3: Experiences felt in the Oman Al-Makmur mosque complex (a) Religious tourism activities; (b) Itikaf during the month of Ramadan; (c) Bazaar activities and competitions; (d) Marriage

The religious value indicator has a mean value of 4.12, which is categorized as high place attachment. Place attachment occurs because of religious activities, which are the main attraction for visiting people. The mosque is a place of worship for Muslims that is never empty, this is because the prayers are performed 5 times from dawn to night. In addition to prayer, other religious activities such as regular recitation, preaching, and others. Facilities continue to be improved to support religious activities. However, it is necessary to have a

special ablution area for the disabled, equipped with seats, so that persons with disabilities can perform ablution comfortably.

Then, the historical value indicator has a mean of 3.76, which is included in the high place attachment category. The Oman Al-Makmur Mosque has a history in the process of its construction, which until now is known and remembered by the public, namely this mosque received assistance from the Omani government after the previous mosque was damaged by the tsunami disaster. The name Oman in this mosque is an appreciation of the government of Oman. However, it is necessary to have a party responsible for information and data related to the history of the Oman Al-Makmur mosque so that it can support academic activities such as research. More clearly can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. The Level of Place Attachment to the Person Variable

Variable	Indicator	Parameter	Mean value	Category
Person	Meaning	The Oman Al-Makmur Mosque means a lot to me	4,35	Very high
	Experience	I had an unforgettable experience at the Oman Al-Makmur mosque	3,97	Height
	Religious value	Religious activities are the main attraction of my visit	4,12	Height
	Historical value	The Oman Al-Makmur Mosque has a history in the process of its construction	3,76	Height

4.2. Place

Based on the results of observations, the design of the Oman Al-Makmur mosque is very good and very responsive to gender. The people of Aceh have a culture of applying Islamic values in life, so that women are highly guarded by covering their genitals. This is reflected in the design of the ablution area of the Oman Al-Makmur mosque, which is closed and integrated with the mosque building, so that women don't have to feel anxious. In addition, the design of the ablution area, which blends in with the mosque building, makes it easier for the elderly, so they don't have to go far to go to the bathroom.

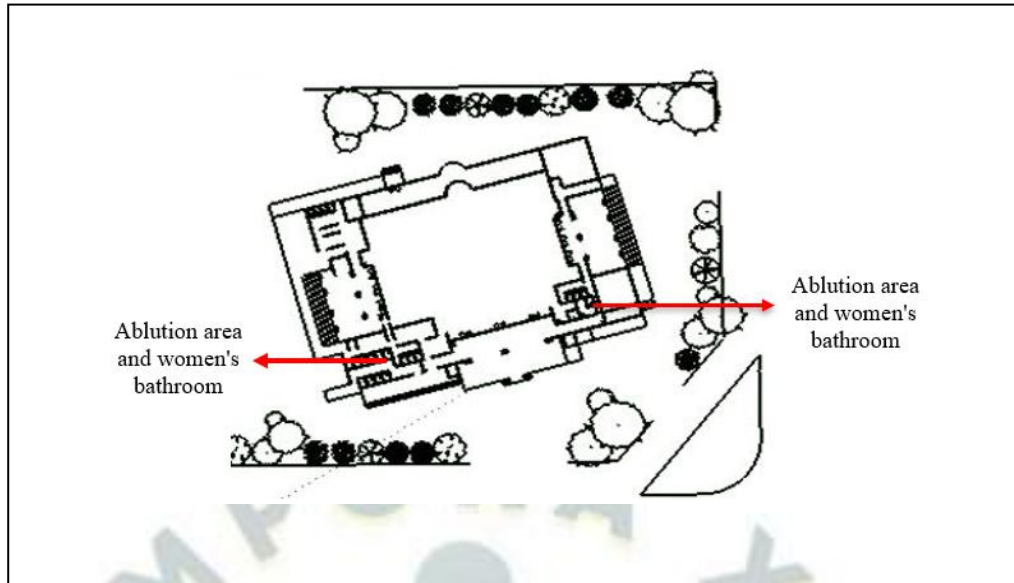


Figure 4. Oman Al-Makmur Mosque floor plan

Based on the results of the questionnaire, it is known that the mean value of the physical indicators is 4.21. This value is included in the very high place attachment category. This means that respondents have places they like and are considered the best places. In identifying the part of the Oman Al-Makmur mosque that has a place attachment, as many as 100 respondents answered the questionnaire that was distributed. Questions are given openly so that respondents can mention more than 1 place. Places that are considered to have place attachments are inside the mosque, prayer room, ablution area, bathroom, parking lot, terrace, courtyard, women's shaf, Asmaul Husna tower, and all parts of the mosque. However, as many as 7 respondents felt they did not have a place that was considered the best place. More clearly can be seen in the following figure.

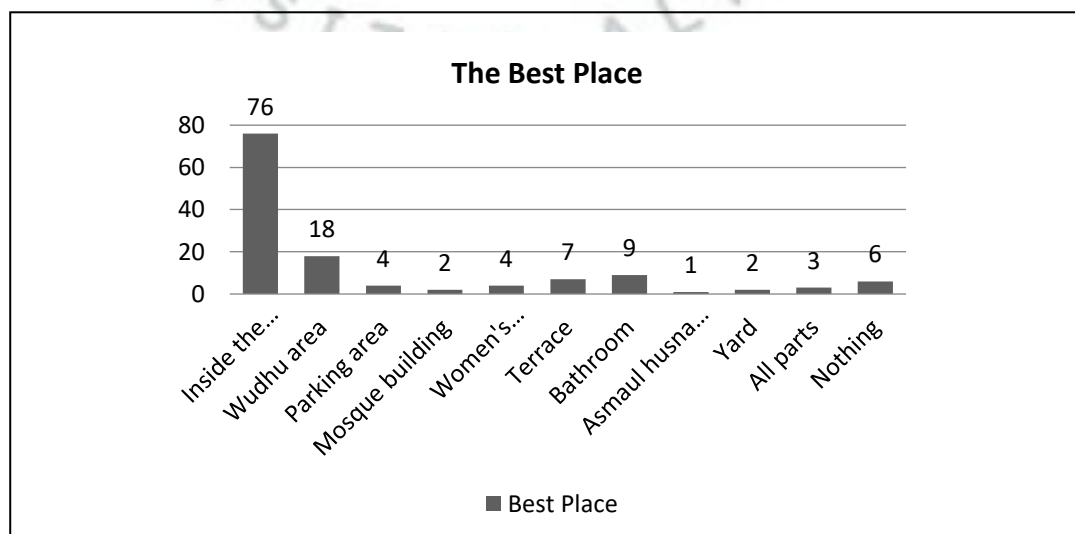


Figure 5. Places that have place attachments

Furthermore, on social indicators, it has a mean value of 4.25, which is categorized into a very high level of place attachment. The community has a place attachment to the Oman Al-Makmur mosque complex because of the familiarity they feel. Oman Al-Makmur Mosque can be used by various communities and provides access to anyone who wants to come. The Oman Mosque is an alternative to the difficulties of people with various views in Islam, thus opening up many opportunities and becoming a special attraction. Based on the results of interviews, it is known that visitors who live in the vicinity of the Oman Al-Makmur mosque already know, feel familiar and feel familiar with the Oman Al-Makmur mosque. Meanwhile, people who come from outside the city of Banda Aceh visit the Oman Al-Makmur mosque because they work in the environment around the Oman Al-Makmur mosque and feel familiar with the Oman Al-Makmur mosque. In addition, people who come from outside the city of Banda Aceh feel a resemblance to the mosques in their area of origin. The level of place attachment to the place variable can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. The Level of Place Attachment to the Place Variable

Variable	Indicator	Parameter	Mean value	Category
Place	Physique	One part of the Oman Al-Makmur mosque is the best place for me	4,21	Very high
	Social	I feel familiar with the atmosphere of the Oman Al-Makmur mosque	4,25	Very high

4.3. Process

Based on the results of the questionnaire, it is known that the affection indicator has a mean value of 4.57. This value is included in the very high place attachment category. The community feels proud and happy when they visit the Oman Al-Makmur mosque. Furthermore, the cognition indicator has a mean value of 3.36, which is categorized into medium place attachment. This value indicates that the community does not have in-depth knowledge about the Oman Al-Makmur mosque. The Oman Al-Makmur Mosque underwent 3 developments. The first construction was carried out in 1979. After the tsunami disaster hit Aceh, the Oman Al-Makmur mosque was badly damaged, so the rebuilding was carried out in 2006 and was completed in 2008. In 2012, the Oman Al-Makmur mosque again changed to the building facade. People tend to recognize Omani mosques nowadays, which are influenced by several factors, such as social media. The behavioral indicator has a mean value of 4.44, which is categorized as a very high place attachment, which means that visitors who already feel attached to the Oman Al-Makmur mosque have the desire to return to visit. More clearly can be seen in the following table.

Table 5. The Level of Place Attachment to the Process Variable

Variable	Indicator	Parameter	Mean value	Category
Process	Affection	I feel happy when I visit the Oman Al-Makmur mosque	4,57	Very high
	Cognition	I know the Oman Al-Makmur mosque	3,36	Currently
	Behavior	I have a desire to visit the Oman Al-Makmur mosque again	4,44	Very high

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that place attachment to the Oman Al-Makmur Mosque is generally very high, as reflected in the person, place, and process dimensions. In the person dimension, strong attachment emerges because the mosque holds significant meaning for the community. As a sacred place in a predominantly Muslim society, the mosque becomes closely associated with religious values and spiritual experiences. Religious activities serve as the main attraction for visitors, creating memorable experiences that strengthen emotional bonds. In addition, the historical value of the mosque's development process further contributes to its symbolic importance.

In the place dimension, attachment is shaped by familiarity and spatial preference. Community members tend to develop attachment to specific areas within the mosque and feel comfortable with its atmosphere. This sense of familiarity is influenced by residential proximity as well as perceived similarities between the Oman Al-Makmur Mosque and mosques in visitors' places of origin.

In the process dimension, visitors experience positive emotions such as pride and happiness during their visits and express a strong intention to return. However, despite this familiarity and emotional attachment, most visitors demonstrate limited knowledge of the mosque's historical background and specific characteristics.

Future research may expand this study by examining satisfaction and engagement levels at other mosques in Banda Aceh and comparing them with the Oman Al-Makmur Mosque complex. Such comparative studies would provide a broader understanding of place attachment in religious spaces and help identify the distinctive qualities of each mosque, thereby supporting efforts to enhance their social and cultural roles within the community.

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