

Mahayana Ritual Services Associates to Learning Interests of Buddhist Lay People in The Buddhist Monastery

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ABSTRACT

Mahayana ritual services express respect and implementation of Buddhist teachings as a form of belief in the Three Jewels. The main purpose of devotional service is to give strength to practitioners, encourage good deeds, and bring blessings, merits and happiness to oneself and others. On the other hand, interest in learning has a big influence on concentration and learning activities. A strong interest in the material being studied can increase the concentration of students. In addition, high interest also makes it easier to understand and store the information learned. In this context, this study examines the effect of Mahayana ritual services on interest in learning Buddhist Dharma at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center in Medan. The research method used is descriptive quantitative. The analysis results show that mahayana ritual services significantly positively influence the interest in learning Buddhist Dharma at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center. This influence occurs through devotional service, which involves reverence and prayer, reverence for the Buddha's name, determination to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings, introspection on one's actions, and sharing virtue with others. The statistical test results show that the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.305 or 30.5%. This indicates that the variable Ritual Services of Mahayana explains about 30.5% of the variation in interest in learning Buddhist Dharma. Thus, it can be concluded that Mahayana ritual services significantly influence the interest in learning Buddhist Dharma at the Buddhist monastery.

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Introduction

Buddhism spread and developed everywhere, of course, also experiencing adaptation to the local culture. This is very clear in the development of Buddhism in China, especially the Mahayana school, inseparable from the philosophy, beliefs and traditions there. But Buddhism does not reject or directly accept everything, as long as it is considered that all of them do not conflict with Buddhism and bring benefits to all then it can still be taken. This is proven by Mahayana Buddhists in China with various cultural forms of living the dharma in daily life as well as other places such as Indonesia (Southeast Asia). Performing Ritual Services ceremonies in the Mahayana tradition and listening to Dharma teachings is one form of non-formal education that can be realized through good deeds and behavior in everyday life, both through physical actions (kaya), speech (vaci), thoughts (mano), and compassion (metta). Thus, a perfect foundation of moral virtue will be created in the form

of praiseworthy, wise, and compassionate attitudes and behaviors towards all beings. The Buddha once said, "A person who possesses perfect moral virtue, wisdom and a purposeful mind, is always introspective and has pure mindfulness, will successfully cross the stream of the great flood" (Sn, 174). To attain perfect enlightenment like the great master Sakyamuni Buddha, one needs to develop compassion and wisdom.

The Mahayana devotional service is held every Sunday, cap-go (15th of the lunar calendar), che-it (1st of the lunar calendar), and includes rituals, lectures, and almsgiving. These activities are carried out regularly so that devotees have the opportunity to practice self-development such as cultivating faith, increasing insight into goodness and truth, generosity or generosity consistently. Through this, the interest in learning the Dharma in Buddhists at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center Medan is expected to increase appropriately. In the implementation of Mahayana puja bakti, one of the aspects to be achieved is the increased interest in learning the Dharma of Buddhists at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center Medan. Dharma in Buddhism is a collection of Buddhist teachings that must be practiced and repeated as one of the guidelines for Buddhist life. The implementation of Mahayana devotional puja, one of the aspects to be achieved is the interest in learning the dharma and the change in the behavior of Buddhists according to good Buddhist teachings. Controlling thoughts, speech, and actions forms good and beneficial behavior that brings happiness to oneself and everyone (A.I.147).

After the puja, the researcher made an initial observation and found that some Buddhists were less interested in listening to the dharma. This can be seen from the actions of some devotees who immediately left the baktisala room after finishing the ritual services. The understanding of the precepts in Buddhism is also still low, as seen from the behavior of some devotees who tend to consume intoxicating drinks, gamble, and do not fully practice Buddhist teachings. In addition, there are still Buddhists who have a low level of faith in the Buddha Dharma, making them easily influenced and doubtful in their beliefs. The implementation of mahayana devotional puja by Buddhists at Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center Medan has never been assessed either quantitatively or qualitatively. Seeing the above phenomenon, the researcher is interested in conducting research to find out "The Effect of Mahayana Devotional Puja on Buddhists' Dharma Learning Interest at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center Medan.

Literature Review

Mahayana Ritual Services

Puja bhakti or ritual services is a form of respect and implementation of Buddhism, a manifestation of belief (sraddha) in God and the Tri Ratna to give strength to practitioners and encourage actual virtuous deeds to bring blessings, merits, and happiness to oneself and others (Mukti, 2006: 81). Puja bhakti as a form of respect for Buddhism has various elements, including (a) to repeat the Buddha's sermon, (b) to increase goodness in thought, speech, and physical action, (c) to strengthen faith in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, (d) to strengthen the implementation of Buddhist morality (Buddhist Pancasila), and (e) to do patina, which is to bestow or share the merit of good deeds that have been done to other beings. Mahayana means "great vehicle", so called because the great Mahayana chariot or vehicle is fit to carry all beings to salvation. The essence of Mahayana is liberation for all beings, for all who are in the causal nexus, and the mind is the source of the cause. But the Buddha mind and beings are one. The true goal of Mahayana Buddhism is to achieve

enlightenment, eliminate delusion and benefit other beings without expecting anything in return (Suzuki, 2009:25-26). Mahayana emphasizes helping all beings in various ways called Causal Effort. Upaya kausalya is a method in Mahayana to explain the dharma, and it is practical in nature as it guides people to understand the Buddha Dharma (Priastana, 2004: 97).

Dharma Learning Interest

Interest is the interest, attention, and desire that a person has for something without being influenced by others. Students are expected to have a high interest in learning in order to increase concentration in learning (Kurniawan, 2021), making it easier to understand the material being studied. Good learning interest can reduce students' boredom with lessons. This shows that interest and learning are interrelated. Therefore, interest in education affects students' learning achievement (Rofiqah & Sunaini, 2017). Factors that influence learning interest can be internal and external (Mesra & Kuntarto, 2021), namely:

1) Internal Factors

Internal factors are things that arise from within a person, such as attention, curiosity, motivation, and needs. Internal factors include psychological aspects, such as interest, comfort, and desire to learn, as well as physiological characteristics, such as participation and health (Syahputra, 2020).

2) External Factors

External factors are factors from the external environment that affect interest in learning, such as encouragement from parents or guardians, teachers, and the surrounding environment. External factors include environmental aspects, such as family support and learning atmosphere, and aspects of the learning atmosphere, such as learning facilities (Syahputra, 2020).

To foster interest in learning, an interesting learning approach is needed so that students' attention and interest are focused on the material presented by the teacher. The following steps can be taken to attract learners' attention to learning.

- 1) Implement open communication. Teachers should encourage learners to be available to everything or subject matter presented, so that learners can absorb it and use it as an apperception in their thinking.
- 2) Providing new knowledge; learners' interest and attention should be directed to new knowledge gained in the learning process.
- 3) Provide examples of good behavior; learners can observe and imitate appropriate behavior in the teaching-learning process (Hamruni, 2009: 88-89).

Method

Sugiyono (2018: 2) explains that quantitative research methods are used in this study, which are based on the philosophy of positivism. This method is used to collect data from specific populations or samples through the use of questionnaires as instruments, then analyze the data quantitatively with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses. This research uses descriptive quantitative analysis to examine Mahayana ritual services' effect on Buddhists' Dharma Learning Interest at Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center Medan. Sugiyono (2018: 308) also states that data collection techniques are a very important step



in research, because the main goal is to obtain quality data. In this study, data collection techniques include the use of questionnaires, literature, and documentation as data sources. A questionnaire is a general technique used to collect data by providing a list of statements to respondents to find out their responses.

Results and Discussion

The validation test or trial of the research instrument was carried out by involving the participation of 35 people who were at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center. Based on the problem of the research instrument regarding the Influence of the Implementation of Mahayana Ritual Services on the Interest in Learning Buddhist Dharma at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center in 2022, that the x variable statement item is valid from 40 items and 37 items of the y variable statement item are declared valid while 3 statement items are declared invalid with item no 26, 32, 38.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics of Variable X with 35 respondents

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.971	40

(Source: SPSS 25.00 Data Processing Results)

Table 2. Reliability Statistics Variable Y with 35 respondents

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.897	37

(Source: SPSS 25.00 Data Processing Results)

Data collection instruments are considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items score exceeds 0.334. After testing the reliability of the variable X instrument consisting of 40 items, no unreliable items were found. The reliability analysis results show a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.971, which is greater than 0.334 ($0.971 > 0.334$). Similarly, the reliability test of variable Y instrument consisting of 37 items also did not show any unreliable items. The reliability analysis results show a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.897, which is also greater than 0.334 ($0.897 > 0.334$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the data collection instruments used in this study are reliable. For the normality test, the One Sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used with a significance level of α (0.05). Ho will be rejected if $Asymp. Sig. \leq 0,05\%$. The results of the normality test in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov column show that the significance value for all variables is greater than 0.05. Thus,



it can be concluded that the data population has a normal distribution. More detailed information can be found in the following table.

Table 3. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		35
Normal Parameters ^b	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	13.11679412
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.088
	Positive	.088
	Negative	-.059
Test Statistic		.088
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

(Source: SPSS 25.00 Data Processing Results)

Data analysis to answer the problem of the influence of Mahayana ritual services on Buddhists' lay people learning interest at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center. To find out the questionnaire answers from respondents, it will be calculated using the percentage formula of each research questionnaire variable consisting of 40 statement items to collect data from respondents, namely Buddhists at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center.

Table 4. Significance of Test Results

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2573.033	1	2573.033	14.515	.001 ^b
	Residual	5849.710	33	177.264		
	Total	8422.743	34			

a. Dependent Variable: Dharma_Learning_Interest

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mahayana_ritual_services

(Source: SPSS 25.00 Data Processing Results)

In this analysis, it is found that the significance value of F (0.000) is smaller than α (0.05), thus rejecting H₀. This indicates that there is sufficient evidence that the Mahayana ritual services variable has an influence on Buddhist Dharma Learning Interest.



Table 5. Regression Coefficient Test Results

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	94.840	11.315		8.382	.000
	Mahayana_Puja_Bakti	.297	.078	.553	3.810	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Dharma_Learning_Interest

(Source: SPSS 25.00 Data Processing Results)

From testing the regression coefficient of the Mahayana Ritual Services variable, it can be concluded that the significance value of t (0.000) is smaller than α (0.05), so H_0 is rejected. This shows sufficient evidence that the Mahayana Ritual Services variable positively influences the Interest in Learning Buddhist Dharma at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center.

Table 6. Determination Coefficient Test Results

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.553 ^a	.305	.284	13.314

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mahayana_Ritual_Services

b. Dependent Variable: Dharma_Learning_Interest

(Source: SPSS 25.00 Data Processing Results)

Based on the table presented, the R Square (R^2) value is 0.305 or 30.5%. This shows that the independent variable (Ritual Services Mahayana) contributes 30.5% to the variation in the dependent variable (Interest in Learning Buddhist Dharma). In other words, the variation in the independent variable (Ritual Services Mahayana) is able to explain about 30.5% of the variation in the dependent variable (Interest in Learning Buddhist Dharma). The partial regression coefficient test results (t-test) in table 4.13 show that the Ritual Services Mahayana variable has a significance value of t (0.000), so H_0 is rejected. This indicates that the Mahayana Ritual Services variable has a sufficient positive influence on the Interest in Learning Buddhist Dharma at the Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center. The practice of Mahayana Ritual Services, which causes the impact includes actions such as

respecting and praying, glorifying the Buddha's name, being determined to achieve Buddhahood for the sake of all beings, introspecting on one's own actions, and channeling benevolent services to others.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of Mahayana Devotional Puja on Buddhists' Dharma Learning Interest. Based on the results of the t test analysis related to Buddhist Dharma Learning Interest which Mahayana Ritual Services influence through simple linear regression analysis, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is obtained which measures the extent to which the model is able to explain variations in the Buddhist Dharma Learning Interest variable. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.305 or 30.5% indicates that the Mahayana Devotional Puja contributes 30.5% in explaining variations in Buddhist Dharma Learning Interest. Causal efforts are made through a variety of varied methods, such as devotional puja, recitation of prayers, religious actions, incense offerings, candle lighting, sutra recitation, meditation, and so on. These methods of causal effort are practical and appropriate to the conditions and situations for cultivating virtue, enhancing spirituality, and spreading the dharma to achieve the high goal. With this causal effort, preaching the dharma at a time and in a place is adaptive and contextual. The Causal Effort aims to have people understand, comprehend the Buddha's teachings and act, perform in achieving the ideal of liberation. Thus the causal effort is concerned with the ability, skill or art of understanding, propagating, practicing virtue and the various methods of attaining freedom. But mental qualities such as maitri karuna and prajna. The causal action that is often used is ritual puja. There are many ritual pujas in Mahayana such as verses praising the Buddha Dharma.

Based on the descriptive results, it appears that some Buddhists have the enthusiasm to participate in activities held at the Maha Cetiya on Uposatha day regularly. The sincerity of Buddhists to participate in Maha Cetiya activities is shown in their efforts to participate in activities held at the Maha Cetiya and enthusiasm to go to the Maha Cetiya. Because with Buddhists going to the Maha Cetiya and participating in activities held at the Maha Cetiya, people are more interested in practicing the dharma. The influence occurs because Buddhists participating in activities carried out by Ritual Services leaders in Maha Cetiya can understand and understand Buddhist teachings in everyday life. Many benefits are obtained if Buddhists follow activities seriously and can be practiced daily so that Buddhists can become knowledgeable and valuable people for themselves and others. This understanding arises because of the high level of awareness for the people so that Buddhists have a sense of responsibility for the tasks they have been given. Ritual Services activities at Maha Cetiya aim to instill sraddha and devotion in Buddhists to increase the faith of Buddhists on an ongoing basis. Ritual Services at Maha Cetiya aims for changes. Changes that occur as a result of the learning process have permanent characteristics and are the result of active interaction of individuals with their environment. Learning is a process that occurs within the individual that is initiated and activated by the individual himself.

In general, Ritual Services aims to increase Buddhists' belief in the Tri Ratna so that they always remember their beliefs or teachings. Through the understanding of Buddhists, the benefits obtained are felt directly from the implementation of Puja bakti, which has a positive impact on the development of Buddhists in the Maha Cetiya Maha Cetiya Prajna

Buddhist Center. Buddhists must be more responsible for what they receive by having high awareness and practicing Buddhist teachings in everyday life, for example, being able to do tasks by practicing morning and evening devotions and not adequately forgetting their responsibilities as devotees. Ritual Services at Maha Cetiya influenced the interest in learning dharma by 30.5% and 69.5% was influenced by other factors. This assumes that Ritual Services at the Buddhist Maha Cetiya affect interest in learning dharma.

Conclusion

From the results of the research and data analysis that has been carried out, it can be concluded as follows: Mahayana ritual services influence Buddhists' Dharma Learning Interest at Maha Cetiya Prajna Buddhist Center Medan. The effect of Mahayana ritual services on interest in Dharma learning is 30.5%, while other factors influence 69.5%. This shows that Ritual Services at Buddhist monasteries affect interest in learning dharma. In addition, the results of testing the regression coefficient of the Mahayana Ritual Services variable show that the sig. t value (0.000), so it can be concluded that the Mahayana Ritual Services variable provides sufficient evidence to positively affect Buddhists' Dharma Learning Interest in the Buddhist Monastery.

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