



## **EXPLORING MOSQUES IN SELANGOR: THEIR ROLE AS HUBS FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Historically, mosques can function as centers for community economic development, drawing from their historical role dating back to Prophet Muhammad's (*sal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) era. The study specifically investigates how mosques in Selangor are contributing to community sustainability through various microeconomic initiatives. By employing a qualitative study, the derivation of the primary data is based on in-depth interview and open-ended questions to obtain information regarding the execution of the mosque economic activities. The interview sessions were conducted with the mosques' management within Selangor district. In addition, the secondary data were based on the library research which consist of analyzing books, journals, fatwas, websites as well as newspapers related to the contribution of mosques in facilitating social economy. The result indicates that the execution of the microeconomic-based mosque has impacted positive social economic activity among people who live in Selangor area. This turns the opportunities for the local people to get involved in small and medium entrepreneurship and reducing unemployment there. Also, the idea of developing the mosque as one stop center for the society to perform economic activities was highly recommended by the authorities. This finding demonstrates how mosques in Selangor can be effectively transformed into vital centers for community economic development. This

study has the potential to be the pioneer in addressing the necessity of enlarging the role of the mosques as a centre of microeconomic development.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mosques have long served as pivotal institutions within *Muslim* societies, extending their role far beyond the realm of religious practice. Since the era of the Prophet Muhammad (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*), mosques have been integral to human resources development and have played a crucial role in enhancing the social and economic well-being of the community. Recognizing this historical significance, the present study seeks to explore the evolving role of mosques as centers for microeconomic development, with a particular focus on several mosques in Selangor, a state in Malaysia.

Mosques in Selangor comprise two categories: Royal Mosque and Community Mosque (*Kariah* Mosque). Both categories have their criteria provided by the authority that governs mosque management, namely the Selangor Islamic Religious Council. From the finding through this study, it is evident that both categories have been a center for economic building based on a microeconomy nature, with different challenges addressed.

This study delves into the experiences and impacts of microeconomic activities facilitated by mosques in Selangor. Findings from the research reveal that the implementation of microeconomic activities within mosques has positively influenced the socio-economic development of the Selangor region. This initiative has created opportunities for local communities to engage in small and medium-sized enterprises, thereby contributing to reduced unemployment rates. The study also highlights the strong endorsement from authorities regarding the development of mosques as central hubs for economic activities within the community.

The practical implications of this study suggest that mosques and *Islāmic* institutions hold significant potential to serve as centers for economic growth and community development. By showcasing the success of these microeconomic initiatives, the study aims at pioneering a new perspective on the role of mosques, advocating for

an expanded recognition of their capacity to drive economic progress and improve social welfare. Overall, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by underscoring the necessity of broadening the role of mosques as facilitators of microeconomic development, positioning them as vital players in the economic and social fabric of their communities.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 THE DIVERSE FUNCTIONS OF MOSQUES DURING THE PROPHETIC ERA

The Arabic term for the mosque is *masājīd* (pl. *masājīd*) which is mentioned 27 times in the *Qur'ān*: 21 times as a singular noun and six times as plural noun. Both 'mosque' and *masājīd* are used exclusively for a building dedicated to *Islāmic* worship. However, the latter has a broader meaning. *Islāmic* history proves that mosques have a central function in the lives of *Muslims* (Koehrsen, 2021). During the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) in Madinah, the first and immediate task relating to the built environment, as well as to the community building process, that he embarked on fulfilling was building the city's central mosque, also called the Prophet's Mosque (Al-Masjid An-Nabawi). The mosque was not only intended for religious activities (prayers) but also served as centers for conducting other activities, whether in the form of social welfare, socio-economic matters, or even as administrative centres (Safei and Armstrong, 2023; Jamsari et al., 2010), a place to resolve health problems, economic management of the *ummah*, military training, and war preparation (Agus Kurnia et al., 2020).

According to Sulaiman (2014), from only serving as a place of worship to the society, the Prophet Muhammad (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) has optimized the mosque's function as a center of knowledge and education, intellectual discourse, preaching center and social function. Furthermore, Ritonga and Wijaya (2022) delineate that dynamics of life and human problems were discussed and resolved at the mosque. The Prophet's Mosque was the first and undeniably most outstanding *Islāmic* center of learning. There under the Prophet's vigilant eye studied the generation, both men and women, as mentioned in the Holy *Qur'ān* 48:29). Based on this verse, Sulayman (2017) noted that during the prophetic era, the mosque used to be where the companions memorized the *Qur'ān*, transmitting the

prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*) and shaping the life of the young generation.

Apart from that, during the prophetic era, the Al-Masjid An-Nabawi played the role of the seat of the first *Islāmic* government. The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to spend long hours on a daily basis discussing, deciding and executing many affairs related to administering the state. *Jihad* (striving in the way of God) and state defence strategies were also initiated and concluded in the mosque. The Prophet's Mosque also served as a welfare and charity center. There, the poorest companions of the community resided. A shaded structure called *suffah* (a raised platform or bench) was erected for them in a corner of the northern side of the Mosque. Those people were called *ahl al-suffah* or the "People of the *suffah*". The 'People of the *suffah*' would frequently go out to perform whatever work they could find in order to procure their sustenance. They actively participated in *jihad* and some of them died as martyrs on different battlefields. Notwithstanding their difficult state, they abhorred remaining a liability to the community.

The Prophet's Mosque partly functioned as a detention and rehabilitation center. However, many aspects of this role remained shrouded in a number of ambiguities. It is reported that a man called Thumama ibn Uthal from the Bani Hanifah clan in Najd was captured and fastened to one of the pillars of the Mosque. The Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*), however, later ordered some of his people to release him. The man thereupon went to a garden next to the Mosque, took a bath and entered the mosque proclaiming *shahadah*, i.e., he embraced *Islām* (Al-Bukhari, 2009). There was occasionally a place reserved for medical treatment and nursing as well. A tent or more at times were erected for the purpose. On the day of the battle of the Ditch (*al-khandaq*), a companion Sa'd ibn Mu'adh was injured, and the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) pitched a tent in his mosque so that he could be looked after properly. Besides, the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) wanted to be near his friend and close companion so as to visit him on a regular basis and monitor his condition (Al-Bukhari, 2009).

The mosque of the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was a place where some sport and recreation activities were occasionally held, both inside and outside it. A'ishah, the Prophet's wife, narrated that once during an Eid festival, she saw the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) at the door of their house watching some Ethiopians who were playing in the Mosque proper displaying

their skill with spears, whereupon she joined him (Al-Bukhari, 2009). Also, some companions of the Prophet (*ṣal-Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) would sometimes practise archery inside the Mosque in the Prophet's presence till the full darkness descended and the targets were no longer visible, as reported by al-Bukhari (2009).

## 2.2 THE ADMINISTRATION OF MOSQUE IN SELANGOR

The mosques in Selangor have a rich history of development, serving not only as places of worship but also as reflections of the local community's culture (Saifulamri et al., 2024). The designation of mosque has been placed under the right of the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS), as stipulated in the Selangor Islamic Administration Enactment (State of Selangor) 2003. It is stated in the Section 96(2), each mosque, along with its site and any land connected to and used for the purposes of that mosque, except for government land or land reserved for public purposes, shall, as soon as it is registered under written laws relating to land, and without any transfer, surrender, or conveyance, vest rights in the Council for the purposes of this Enactment.

No institution or individual would have the authority to build, erect building for matters than can only be done at or by a mosque, unless they received written permission from the Council, as maintained by Section 97(1) of the said enactment. For the Section 98(1), the Council is the authorized to permit a building to be erected for use as a mosque, allow the use of any building as a mosque, and designate any prayer hall, school, or other building as a mosque.

Based on the Section 99(1) and (2), the Council must ensure that all mosques in the state of Selangor are in proper condition and that their surroundings are maintained in a clean state, and may obtain and use, or allow the acquisition and use of, special funds for the purpose of repairing and maintaining mosques, or it may cover the costs of such repairs and maintenance from the Baitulmal. Apart from this, the Council also has the authority for the administrator and mosque officer appointment. This is based on the Section (100)(1)(2)(3), which maintains the responsibility of the Council to appoint them. The important criterion for this appointment is the officer should be part of the civil servant who serves the state government or any qualified candidate who is adequate for the appointment.

This enactment aims at enhancing the management of mosques in Selangor. Consequently, in its implementation, mosques are classified as Royal Mosque (*Masjid Di Raja*) and Community Mosque (*Masjid Kariah*) (<https://mais.gov.my/>). Both categories have divergent roles in manifesting the functions of the mosque in Selangor, resulting in different impact to society, particularly for economic building of the community.

Under the 2003 Selangor Islamic Administration Enactment, MAIS (Selangor Islamic Religious Council) maintains sole responsibility for mosque classification in Selangor. This regulatory framework, designed to strengthen mosque administration, establishes various categories of management mosques, specifically:

- All Royal Mosques in the State of Selangor
- All Community Mosques
- Some newly constructed mosques
- Some community mosques facing issues and conflicts with community members.

Any decision to designate a mosque as falls under the jurisdiction of the Mosque and *Surau* Governance Committee of Selangor (JATUMS), established to represent MAIS in fulfilling its responsibilities, duties, or exercising its powers according to Section 27 of the Selangor Islamic Administration Enactment 2003 (Amendment 2016). Section 104(1) of the Selangor Islamic Administration Enactment 2003 provides that the Council may, with the approval of His Royal Highness the Sultan, make regulations for:

- The establishment of a Community Committee for a mosque;
- The establishment, appointment, and termination of the Mosque Management Committee, and the functions of the Mosque Management Committee.

Section 104(3) of the Selangor Islamic Administration Enactment 2003 states. notwithstanding anything contained in this Enactment, the council may, for the smoothness and benefit of the administration of a mosque and *surau* or for any other reason as may be determined through regulations made under this Enactment

:

- Establish a Mosque Management Committee for a community mosque or establish a Surau Management Committee for a community surau; or
- Cancel the establishment of any community committee for a mosque or cancel the establishment of a Surau Committee and instead establish a Mosque Management Committee or a Surau Management Committee with any terms and conditions deemed appropriate and proper.”

### 2.3 MOSQUE’S PROSPECT FOR ECONOMIC BUILDING

The diverse functions of mosques have made them the most revered institutions. Besides congregational prayers, which are the primary activity of mosques, various activities based on education, community, administration, sports, and even entrepreneurship can be developed through the mosque institution (Che Omar et al., 2015). Topic regarding enhancing mosque’s role as a driver of economic activity and the development of the *Muslim* community is a theme that has almost disappeared from dictionaries and discussion lists of the *Muslim* community’s ecosystem. In fact, in the view of half of the parties, such themes and titles should not be announced in order to maintain the integrity and sanctity of the institution (Bakar, 2019). In conjunction with rejuvenating the impact that any mosque could deliver, some eighty-nine mosques seemed to have potential of being centers of enlivening mosque’s atmosphere and economic activities (Sinar Harian, November 17, 2020). Based on this spirit, more than 1 million persons have received financial assistance regardless of their backgrounds.

Today, many mosques are starting to carry out economic activities to optimize the function of mosques in helping the local community (Ismail, 2022). Raga Utama et al. (2018) stress that empowerment could be in the form of business capital assistance to increase people’s income and avoid *ribawi* practices. For instance, Masjid Umm al-Mukminin located in Surabaya, Indonesia offers financing to the society. The financing recipient must pay the instalment to the mosque as the fund without additional cost or payment.

Mosques also become the center of aiding poor and needy people in financial aspect. The fund is based on the public donations and certain economic initiatives, such as mosque cooperative, wedding equipment rentals, catering, dining halls, and other services

that can meet the community needs and aspirations (Abdul Rahman et al., 2019). These initiatives will open the opportunities for the local community to involve in small and medium businesses to support them financially. According to Ismail (2022), besides encouraging the mosque in a spiritual way, *mu'amalat* and economic activities can also be carried out to increase funds and finance all mosque activities without having to rely on the government. One of the ways to invigorate this initiative is by the establishment of a mosque cooperative as a catalyst for economic development. Masjid Nurul Yaqin Cooperative is registered under the Malaysia Cooperative Societies Commission (MCSC) and since 2015, it has involved in various economic activities and branding as follows:

TABLE 1  
Economic Activities by Masjid Nurul Yaqin Cooperative

| No. |                | Activities  |
|-----|----------------|---|
| 1.  | Yaqin Bina     | It is established to undertake construction sector involving maintenance and development works. Until 2021, it has reached RM 1.3 million from this business.   |
| 2.  | Yaqin Travel   | The establishment of this travel agency received cooperation with other's travel agencies in which its objective is to organize tourism activities for the member, local community as well as their family members. |
| 3.  | Yaqin Café     | The operation of this cafe started in 2017. The establishment aims at preparing breakfast for the participant of <i>subuh</i> prayer in congregation.   |
| 4.  | Yaqin Catering | The operation of this catering is to serve dinner course and prepare cuisine for <i>iftar</i> (breaking the fasting) during Ramadan.  |
| 5.  | Yaqin Mart     | The idea of this mart is to be one stop centre in promoting local products involving basic necessary items for the community to purchase with affordable prices.  |

Source: Created by the authors

In addition, the economic project carried out by Taman Desa Ilmu Mosque in Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, implements fertigation on chili cultivation using Internet of Things (IoT) technology. With a capital of RM5,000, this project generates a harvest of up to 45 kilograms (kg) of chillies for one harvest for 1,000 trees with a market price of chillies and rice of RM30 per kilogram. Through this project,

Taman Desa Ilmu Mosque generates up to RM1,350 for a single harvest (Berita Harian, January 13, 2022).

In Indonesia, mosques have a strategic function in *Islāmic* society. In addition to being a place of worship, the mosque also serves as a medium of holistic development of people (Wahab et al., 2021). Mosques have been community development and empowerment centers. For instance, Jogokariyan Mosque has initiated certain economic-based programs in helping the local community to improve their financial flow especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following initiatives were done by the mosque.

The aforementioned points demonstrate that mosques have the potential to serve as hubs for economic development, with benefits flowing back to the community. This reflects the spirit emphasized by *Islām* since the establishment of the mosque in *Quba'*. This historical precedent underscores the idea that mosques can and should be catalysts for economic development today, echoing the principles of community benefit and social responsibility emphasized in *Islāmic* teachings.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a qualitative approach, and it involves the library method of data collection and semi-structured interviews. The qualitative study consists of five main designs: narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. This study focuses on one of the research designs, which is the grounded theory. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), a grounded theory is one that inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. In addition El Hussein et al. (2014) explains that the characteristics of this research design are it is developed from the particular issues or phenomenon, the arrangement of the theory must be in form of inductive data collection, and it must fulfil its purposes; fit, understanding, generality and control.

TABLE 2  
Economic activities by Jogokariyan Mosque, Indonesia

| No. | Initiative of the mosque     | Description  |
|-----|------------------------------|--|
| 1.  | Program for less unfortunate | <p>The mosque made a special program for the poor. This program is specifically for the poor who are considered not to have the ability to make more efforts to improve their economy. Therefore, the mosque must create a program that helps directly for the sustainability of the life of its poor congregation.</p> <p>a. Rice ATM<br/>Rice ATM or Rice Automated Pavilion. This rice ATM program is a gift of rice for the poor. The rice ATM can be accessed by Jogokariyan Mosque congregations every day. In this rice ATM program, according to Welly, as the administrator of the Jogokariyan Mosque, the mosque has provided approximately four tons of rice every month for the poor and needy. Currently, there are 425 rice ATM recipients registered at the Jogokariyan Mosque.</p> <p>b. Even though they are able to try to meet the needs of daily life, entrepreneurs experience obstacles in continuing their business. The problems faced by the Jogokariyan Mosque are the lack of business capital and the lack of buyer interest during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>To solve the congregation's business problems, the Jogokariyan Mosque holds a people's market around the mosque every Saturday and Sunday after <i>subuh</i> prayers. The people's market of the Jogokariyan Mosque has the motto "<i>Dari masjid rakyat bangkit, segera merdeka dari belenggu COVID</i>". With the existence of this people's market, it is hoped that it will be able to overcome the problems of the congregations MSMEs.</p> |

TABLE 2 (continued)

| No. | Initiative of the mosque                 | Description  |
|-----|--|--|
| 2.  | <i>Al-Qard al-Hasan</i> loan             | <p>a. Business capital is one of the main problems faced by people's market participants; therefore, the Jogokariyan Mosque makes business capital loans for people's market participants. In contrast to other lenders who increase the loan amount when repaying it, the Jogokariyan Mosque provides <i>Al-Qard</i> loans to market participants.</p> <p>b. This business capital loan makes it easier for participants to start a business or those who want to develop their business for the better. This business capital is used by some market participants to buy raw materials or carts to make it easier for sellers to move their goods to those who live far from the mosque environment. This is because most of the participants in the people's market are those who have just opened a business and have not had the preparation in doing business, so the mosque provides business capital loans and education about entrepreneurship.</p> |
| 3.  | Program for the entrepreneurship starter | The Jogokariyan Mosque provides free stalls and also does not charge fees for the local entrepreneur participating in the people's market. The absence of fees for participating in the people's market will certainly reduce the burden on the people's market participants. Without this fee, all participant benefits can be enjoyed by participants without the need to incur additional costs from their business results.  |

Source: Created by the authors

For the interview, the respondents were given a set of open-ended questions, as it gives flexibility to them to answer the questions. Empirical data is considered as the primary source of this study. A semi-structured interview is a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions, according to Longhurst (2023). The principle of this kind of interview is so that the main narrative is produced independently by the interviewees, even if in particular cases it is framed rather in the style of a brief report or a piece of argumentation (Hopf, 2004).

### 3.2 DATA COLLECTION

To fulfil the theoretical framework part, this study requires library research as it relied upon the various sources from the classical sources as the major references and the contemporary discourses. Both approaches are applied in this study by referring to books, journals, newspapers, policies as well as the point of views from the scholars. To arrive at a conclusion from the data gathering, library data were analyzed using the content analysis method. Content analysis is described as a method that falls in the interface of observation and document analysis (Prasad, 2008). It is any technique for making inference by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages.

The interview session was conducted using semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in mosque management. It is important to understand that mosques in Selangor are categorized into three types: Royal Mosque, State Mosque, and *Kariah* Mosque (community). The Selangor Islamic Religious Council has the authority to classify these categories, each of which has distinct roles. This study examines all three categories to provide comprehensive and reliable insights, as each type of mosque has a different impact on socio-economic development. Additionally, the study employed a sample approach to focus on practical aspects while keeping the sample size manageable.

The respondents were selected based on the areas of specialization associated with the topics discussed throughout the research. On top of that, respondent selection was based on the mosques' experience in operating microeconomic activities. Five experienced officials who served in the mosque management were chosen for their insight into the matters. Furthermore, considering

their position, this study believes that all respondents can give their contribution in making this study impactful.

The field data were analyzed via a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis approach is a method for identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterns of meaning or ‘theme’ within qualitative data. Using thematic analysis is important in this qualitative study as it provides accessible and systematic procedures for generating themes where it provides a framework for organizing and reporting the researcher’s analytic observation (Clarke and Braun, 2017). The approach borrows what some other researchers feel are the more useful techniques from each theoretical and methodological camp and adapts them to an applied research context (Guest et al., n.d). Other than that, this approach is suitable for this research as it provides flexibility for the researcher to communicate with the selected respondents.

TABLE 3  
List of Respondents

| Interviewees | Designation                    | Mosque  | Category                                |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| IR1          | Head of Imam                   | Masjid Bandar Seri Putra, Kajang, Selangor.                   | <i>Kariah</i> Mosque (Community Mosque) |
| IR2          | Head of Mosque Management Unit | Masjid Al-Hasanah, Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor                | <i>Kariah</i> Mosque (Community Mosque) |
| IR3          | Manager                        | Masjid Tengku Ampuan Jemaah, Bukit Jelutong, Selangor         | Royal Mosque                            |
| IR4          | Manager                        | Masjid Raja Haji Fi Sabilillah, Cyberjaya, Selangor           | <i>Kariah</i> Mosque (Community Mosque) |
| IR5          | Head of Imam                   | Masjid Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, Shah Alam, Selangor | Royal and State Mosque                  |

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1 MOSQUES AS MAIN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

Based on the interview, IR1 emphasised the crucial roles played by mosques in developing sustainable communities. The respondent emphasized that mosques should be at the forefront of community support, serving as both a reference point and a foundation for social and entrepreneurial programs. According to IR3, society increasingly turned to mosques during the COVID-19 pandemic, establishing them as key support institutions as a role that continues to the present day. IR1 outlined several activities organized by mosques in Selangor. For instance, Masjid Bandar Seri Putra has diversified its offerings to include religious studies, *silat* (a traditional Malay martial art), *talaqqi* sessions (traditional learning method), and an “APEL Certificate” (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) accredited by MQA (Malaysian Quality Assurance) for advanced studies. Additionally, the mosque serves as a community reference center through its public library and website for religious information access. Masjid Bandar Sri Putra also provides entrepreneurship guidance for local entrepreneurs through collaborations with Bank Muamalat, Bank Rakyat, and the *zakāt* center.

IR2, representing Masjid Al-Hasanah management, noted that while religious teachings and forums attract community participation, their activities extend beyond these traditional roles. The mosque has optimized its surrounding areas for various commercial ventures, including café and dining services, a car wash center, and other business spaces. These economic activities, managed by the mosque's cooperative and economic bureau, aim at creating employment opportunities for the local community.

According to IR3, Masjid Tengku Ampuan Jemaah played a vital role in providing financial assistance and essential support to those affected by the pandemic. The mosque expanded its humanitarian activities to flood-affected areas across Malaysia, including Sabah, Pahang, and Kedah. With its active volunteer base, the mosque also collaborates with Selangor hospitals to organize blood donation campaigns, promoting awareness and supporting hospital blood banks.

IR4, representing Masjid Raja Haji Fi Sabilillah, acknowledged the importance of community engagement. The mosque functions as a comprehensive center offering religious

classes, professional entrepreneurship training, and employment opportunities, while maintaining its welfare support through *zakāt* distribution and financial assistance for orphans and underprivileged communities. Similarly, Masjid Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah implemented the Social Responsibility Consent (SRC) concept, providing direct assistance to 91 *asnaf* (*zakāt*-eligible individuals).

#### 4.2 MICROECONOMY-BASED MOSQUES AND LOCAL COMMUNITY ECONOMIC BUILDING

Based on the interview, IR1 explained the mosque's economic plan for developing the *Muslim* community, which was officially structured in 2024. The mosque currently focuses on entrepreneurship programs across various fields alongside establishing a cooperative. These entrepreneurship initiatives include product development, marketing, and business management training. The mosque also offers digital advertising and financial management services, as well as *qard al-hasan* loans to eligible individuals. The entrepreneurship program benefits from collaboration with Bank Muamalat, and participants receive ongoing monitoring throughout the program. Masjid Bandar Seri Putra also welcomes community participation by allowing vendors to sell their products at the mosque.

According to IR2, Masjid Al-Hasanah implements its local economic development strategy through two main channels: the Economic Bureau and the mosque cooperative, both regulated by the mosque's board. These entities work complementarily, with the cooperative's initial funding coming from the Economic Bureau. To support the community, the mosque provides business spaces for local microeconomic activities. Business owners can rent various facilities, including shop lots, vending machine spaces, and cabins.

IR3, IR4, and IR5 presented a different approach to creating economic sustainability for the local community. As royal and state mosques, their management must adhere to specific regulations set by the Selangor Religious Islamic Council. These mosques leverage existing facilities such as wedding halls, seminar rooms, and multipurpose halls to create job opportunities for the community. They allow local business owners to participate in the mosque's bazaar without charging fees. Additionally, IR4 noted that the mosque organizes business training and courses to support individuals starting or expanding their businesses. The management also makes facilities available to catering service providers at negotiable rates.

#### 4.3 THE COMPETENCY OF MOSQUES TO INVOLVE IN THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Based on the interview, all respondents agreed that mosques' ability to respond quickly and efficiently to economic issues and opportunities demonstrates their operational agility. This competency ensures timely assistance and implementation of programs that positively impact the community's economic well-being. Furthermore, by partnering with external agencies, the mosques can leverage additional resources, expertise, and support networks, enhancing their capacity to develop and execute more comprehensive and impactful economic development programs.

IR1 emphasized the essential role of mosques in encouraging economic development within the *Muslim* community. Masjid Bandar Seri Putra supports the local community by creating micro-entrepreneurship opportunities through its funding initiatives. For example, the mosque offers grants to *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (Malaysia Certificate of Education) graduates who are not pursuing further studies but are interested in starting online businesses. The mosque has allocated RM10,000 to support 10 applicants, with two individuals already receiving a RM1,000 grant each. One beneficiary has successfully launched a nasi lemak business. Beyond financial support, the mosque provides entrepreneurship training to educate recipients about business management.

According to IR2, Masjid Al-Hasanah supports the local community by providing affordable rental spaces, including shop lots, cabins, and vending machine locations. These strategic locations help vendors and business owners sustain their businesses, as mosques naturally attract regular foot traffic. The mosque has also established a cooperative under its management, allowing both entities to coordinate economic activities and create channels for microentrepreneurs to become vendors or suppliers.

IR3 and IR5 noted that despite their status as royal and state mosques and the strict regulations from religious authorities, their institutions continue to support local entrepreneurial activities. Both mosques utilize their facilities by providing spaces, halls, rooms, and bazaar lots to local business owners, charging minimal fees for most facilities and offering bazaar spaces free of charge.

#### 4.4 CHALLENGES FACED BY THE MOSQUES MANAGEMENT DURING INITIATING SOCIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENDAS

The respondents identified several key challenges in building social economic development through microeconomic-based mosques. A primary challenge is insufficient personnel to coordinate business activities run by participants. The respondents emphasized the need for greater involvement from committee members and volunteers. IR1 specifically noted that their recently developed entrepreneurship program requires strong community support to succeed.

IR2 highlighted a second challenge: the absence of specific *fatwa* guidelines in Selangor regarding mosque trading activities. This lack of clear religious rulings leaves mosque management and local communities uncertain about the Shari'ah perspective on conducting business within mosque premises, leading to frequent inquiries about permissibility.

Committee member rotation presents another significant challenge. According to IR1 and IR3, Selangor Mosque committee members serve three-year terms, which differs from cooperative committee appointments. While cooperatives can maintain operations despite committee changes after selection meetings, mosque management transitions often result in shifting directions that may lead to declining economic activities.

IR4 identified multiple operational challenges:

- Limited financial resources for executing and sustaining economic initiatives
- Shortage of trained and experienced personnel in economic development
- Inadequate knowledge and skills among mosque committee members
- Insufficient community participation in organized initiatives

IR5 emphasized that stakeholder constraints pose the biggest obstacle for state mosques. Under the control of the Selangor State Islamic Religious Department, these mosques cannot generate business income directly and are limited to managing existing assets and infrastructure. This creates a distinct economic model compared to community mosques, which enjoy greater flexibility in business activities. The categorization of mosques by the Selangor Islamic

Religious Department results in varying levels of operational freedom, with state mosques facing more restrictions than community mosques.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In this section, the study finds that all respondents agree that mosques' roles have changed. Mosques are not only demonstrated for the worshipping acts, rather their roles have broadened in serving the community via programs and initiatives provided by the mosque management. The interviews indicate the perspective of every mosque about the roles they must play in the modern day. From their point of view, it is agreed mosques nowadays become a center of attention for the communities to refer. From being only a place of worship, mosques also provide financial assistance to the targeted eligible community. They also create opportunities for them to involve in entrepreneurship is one of the key objectives for the mosque. Through the entrepreneurship programs, mosques have indicated rooms for the community to start their businesses such as carwash services, dining services, or being supplier to the mosques' cooperative. Other than that, mosques also collaborate with other agencies such as banks, and professional trainers to provide financial assistance to the start-up entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship skills classes.

The second conclusion of the study is that mosques have been viewed as a center with a lot potential to develop society economic sustainability through microeconomic programs. The table below indicates how mosques in Selangor state develop their own strategies to encourage microeconomic programs, leading the society by opening opportunities for gaining entrepreneurship incomes.

Mosques can significantly boost local economic development by implementing several key strategies. By establishing cooperatives and promoting community entrepreneurship, mosques provide essential resources and support for small businesses. They can act as training centers to enhance entrepreneurs' skills, which contributes to business success. Collaborating with banks for digital advertising and financial assistance further aids local traders. Utilizing digital platforms to promote mosque activities increases community engagement and potential financial support. Dedicated economic bureaus within mosques streamline and focus economic activities, while offering space for vendors to generate rental income and support affordable business opportunities. Additionally, renting out mosque facilities for events creates additional revenue streams and fosters

local economic activity. Through these efforts, mosques serve as vital hubs for both spiritual and economic growth in their communities.

Mosques can significantly contribute to economic development in their communities through several strategic approaches. By initiating and supporting financial and funding programs for the local community, mosques can alleviate poverty and stimulate local economic activity. Leveraging social media platforms to connect individuals with job opportunities and vocational training further enhances local economic prospects by creating a more interconnected job market. Strengthening the economic bureau within the mosque ensures effective resource management and targeted economic planning, while adhering to Shariah principles in financial guidelines fosters transparency and ethical practices. Quick response to financial issues faced by community members, such as providing emergency funds or financial counselling, helps stabilize and uplift the community, enabling more effective participation in local economic development. Finally, operating according to principles of corporate governance, including transparency and accountability, enhances the mosque's financial management and fosters trust within the community. Collectively, these strategies enable mosques to play a pivotal role in driving economic growth and development.

In general mosques often grapple with several operational challenges, primarily centered around financial stability and effective management. A significant issue is the heavy reliance on public donations, which can lead to financial instability given the fluctuating donation levels. This challenge is compounded by the lack of expertise in managing entrepreneurial ventures at the mosque level, making it difficult to execute business ideas successfully. Additionally, confusion among the public about the use of mosque funds and the nature of charity can lead to mistrust and dissatisfaction, as congregants may expect tangible returns from their contributions. The absence of specific fatwas on trading activities further complicates this, leaving mosques without clear religious guidelines on permissible business practices. Frequent rotation of committee members every three years can disrupt continuity in leadership and project execution, while limited financial resources and shortages of trained personnel hinder program implementation and economic initiatives. Finally, being controlled by a state religious department can restrict the mosque's ability to generate income through business activities, posing a significant obstacle to financial self-sufficiency. Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning, increased transparency, and effective resource management to ensure the

mosque can continue to serve its community while adhering to its religious and operational principles.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, mosques play a crucial role in generating employment opportunities and betterment for society through strengthening the economic framework. Different categories of mosques impact their communities in various ways. For instance, *kariah* mosques tend to be more innovative and adaptable, while royal and state mosques often attract greater interest. This creates opportunities for the public to increase their income through mosque-driven initiatives and allows mosques to generate revenue independently.

However, significant challenges remain, particularly in terms of the need for support from authorities due to legal restrictions imposed on royal and state mosques. A pressing need is to empower the economic aspects of mosques while maintaining effective governance. Evidence indicates that mosques have the potential to generate substantial monthly and annual revenues and provide opportunities for the public to engage in microeconomic activities supported by the mosques. Various micro-businesses forms, such as services, training and dining can be explored. The establishment of cooperatives and funding initiatives is also essential to involve the community in entrepreneurial activities and secure funding.

Currently, mosques lack a specific economic development plan tailored for the *Muslim* community. Implementing such a plan is a complex and demanding task, especially within a limited three-year period. The challenge of turnover among mosque committees results in shifts in policies and management practices. Furthermore, the risks associated with the economic investments present a concern. Should a mosque or its community invest in assets and incur losses, questions arise regarding who would bear the loss. In this regard, it is crucial for the authorities to design a comprehensive guideline to facilitate mosques in managing their social-economic activities, especially in terms of governing mosques' financial management.

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