



The Impact of Mosque-Based Economic Activities on Local Communities: A Case Study in Sarawak

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Abstract

The mosque has a comprehensive function covering the spiritual, educational, economic, and social aspects. However, mosques' potential as economic development centers within local communities remains underexplored and underutilized. Many mosques lack the strategic framework and resources to implement economic activities that could benefit their communities effectively. This study aimed to examine the impact of economic activities in mosques on the local community. Furthermore, this study also analyzes the implementation of economic activities through waqf. The qualitative methodology was chosen for this study, where a selection of respondents was made by purposive sampling. Therefore, the sampling involved 20 informants, including officers from the religious Islamic department and a committee from 10 mosques throughout the Sarawak state. These have been identified as actively carrying out economic activities. The list of mosques is derived from the Sarawak Islamic Religious Department. The instruments used for this study are semi-structured interviews and content analysis, whereas the data obtained is analyzed using an atlas.ti software. The finding shows that economic activities at the mosque can be implemented and impact the community. Besides that, waqf helps the mosque enhance its economic activity. The positive impact of the economic activities carried out in the mosque undeniably improves the community's standard of living and increases the mosque's funds. Moreover, it indirectly attracts more people to come to the mosque.

Keywords: *Mosque, community, economic, waqf, Sarawak*

Abstrak

Masjid memiliki fungsi yang komprehensif yang mencakup aspek spiritual, pendidikan, ekonomi, dan sosial. Namun, potensi masjid sebagai pusat pengembangan ekonomi dalam komunitas lokal masih belum banyak dieksplorasi dan dimanfaatkan. Banyak masjid yang kekurangan kerangka strategis dan sumber daya untuk secara efektif melaksanakan kegiatan ekonomi yang dapat menguntungkan komunitas mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dampak kegiatan ekonomi di masjid terhadap masyarakat setempat. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menganalisis pelaksanaan kegiatan ekonomi melalui wakaf. Metodologi kualitatif dipilih untuk penelitian ini, di mana pemilihan responden dilakukan dengan purposive sampling. Oleh karena itu, pengambilan sampel melibatkan 20 informan, termasuk petugas dari departemen agama Islam dan panitia dari 10 masjid di seluruh negara bagian Sarawak. Masjid-masjid ini telah diidentifikasi sebagai yang aktif melaksanakan kegiatan ekonomi. Daftar masjid diperoleh dari Departemen Agama Islam Sarawak. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk penelitian ini adalah wawancara semi-terstruktur dan analisis konten, sedangkan data yang diperoleh dianalisis menggunakan perangkat lunak atlas.ti. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan ekonomi di masjid dapat dilaksanakan dan berdampak pada masyarakat. Selain itu, wakaf membantu masjid meningkatkan kegiatan ekonominya. Dampak positif dari kegiatan ekonomi yang dilakukan di masjid secara tidak dapat disangkal meningkatkan standar hidup masyarakat dan menambah dana masjid. Lebih jauh lagi, hal ini secara tidak langsung menarik lebih banyak orang untuk datang ke masjid.

Kata Kunci: Masjid, masyarakat, ekonomi, wakaf, Sarawak

Introduction

The mosque, a cornerstone of Islamic society, has historically served as more than just a place of worship. Its multifaceted role encompasses spiritual, educational, social, and economic dimensions, reflecting the comprehensive nature of Islamic teachings. The etymology of the word "*masjid*," derived from Arabic roots signifying respect, submission, and kneeling, underscores its primary function as a place of devotion.¹ However, the mosque's influence extends far beyond its spiritual capacity, playing a pivotal role in the development of human civilization.²

¹Muhammad Abid Akmal Ishamuddin and Norsaleha Mohd. Salleh, "Peranan Masjid Mendepani Pandemi COVID-19: Kajian di Masjid Temin, Jerantut Pahang," *International Journal of Mosque, Zakat And Waqaf Management (Al-Mimbar)*, (2021), p. 40–48. Iskandar Usman, "Revitalizing the Role and Function of the Mosque as a Center for Da'wah Activities and Community Development," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 4, No. 1 (2020).

²Ab. Halim Tamuri, "Konsep dan Pelaksanaan Fungsi Masjid Dalam Memartabatkan Masyarakat," *International Journal of Mosque, Zakat And Waqaf Management (Al-Mimbar)*, (2021), p. 1–12.

The Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) establishment of the Quba Mosque, considered the first in Islamic history, set a precedent for mosques as multifunctional institutions. This foundational act laid the groundwork for mosques to become centers of spiritual growth, education, political discourse, administrative activities, and economic development. In the contemporary context, the economic function of mosques has gained renewed attention. Successful implementations of mosque-based economic activities are evident across the Muslim world. For instance, Malaysia's Taman Bertam Indah Attaqwa Mosque has diversified into various business ventures, including retail, car wash services, food stalls, and hotel rentals.³ Similarly, the Jogokariyan mosque in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, has become a model for enhancing community value through economic initiatives.⁴

The waqf (endowment) concept is crucial in bolstering these economic activities. As a unique form of sustainable charitable giving, waqf provides a stable foundation for long-term economic growth and wealth redistribution within communities. Other than that, it offers a framework through which mosques can implement various economic activities, benefiting generations of community members. Implementing waqf-based economic activities also fosters a sense of ownership and participation among community members. Hence, individuals contribute to and benefit from these endowments, strengthening social cohesion and reinforcing the mosque's role as a central institution in community life.

In mosque-based economic activities, waqf is a financial instrument and a social development tool. Moreover, it provides the necessary resources for mosques to expand their economic initiatives while ensuring that the benefits of these activities are equitably distributed within the community.⁵ This synergy between religious principles and economic development exemplifies the holistic approach of Islamic teachings to community welfare.

In the face of global economic uncertainties and rising living costs, the economic role of mosques has become increasingly significant. Deeply embedded within local communities, mosques are ideally positioned to assist in income generation, particularly for those in need. However, despite the presence of 469 mosques in Sarawak as of 2024, only 5-7% actively engage in economic activities, indicating a vast untapped potential.

This study aims to bridge a critical gap in the literature by examining the implementation and impact of mosque-based economic activities in Sarawak, an area

³Yusman Yacob. et. al., "Peranan Koperasi Kariah Masjid Dalam Memperkasakan Sosio Ekonomi Umat Islam: Isu Dan Cabaran," *Proceedings Borneo International Islamic Conference* 14 (2023), p. 90–95.

⁴Abdulloh Azzama, "Manajemen Masjid Jogokariyan Yogyakarta Sebagai Pusat Kegiatan Masyarakat," *Journal of Communication Science and Islamic Da'wah*, vol. 3, (2019), p. 197-205.

⁵Abdulloh Syaikhu Syaikhu, et.al., "The Empowerment of Infaq and Waqf Evaluation in light of Maqasid al-Sharia Perspective in Mosques in Palangka Raya, Indonesia," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 5, No. 2 (2021). Muttaqin Choiri and Farid Ardyansyah, "The Politics of Waqf Practice in Pesantren Kyai Families in Bangkalan Madura, Indonesia," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, No. 1 (2024).

previously unexplored in this context. By highlighting successful models and analyzing their effects on local communities, this research seeks to enhance understanding of mosques' economic potential. Furthermore, it aims to shift perceptions of mosques from purely spiritual institutions to multifaceted community centers capable of addressing spiritual and economic needs. Through this study, we hope to provide valuable insights to inform policy, inspire broader implementation of mosque-based economic activities, and ultimately contribute to local communities' economic resilience and well-being in Sarawak and beyond.

The Role of Mosques from the Economic Aspects of the Prophet Era

Nowadays, separating the mosque's institution from the community's is impossible. The mosque becomes a center for community programs. The mosque was an essential center of Islamic activity during the Prophet. The finest way to carry on and inherit the task of Islamic da'wah is to begin in the mosque. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) established the companions' and generations' personalities and characters.⁶ The Quba Mosque was the first mosque constructed in Islamic history when the Prophet and his companions arrived in Medina. He then constructed the Prophet's Mosque to strengthen the Islamic message. The Prophet's Mosque serves several purposes, one of which is serving as the community's hub for business. However, this does not imply that all commercial transactions, such as buying and selling, occur in mosques. Nonetheless, mosques are essential to the development of Islamic economic theories and practices that can produce revenue for Muslims.

Mosques play a role as significant agents of change in helping improve the community's economic capacity based on Islamic values.⁷ Mosques have the potential to become a center for the implementation of economic activities. In an effort to achieve this, the role and function of mosques should be maximized as best as possible. The mosque was the center of the national treasury during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It was centered in the Prophet's Mosque and played a role in the collection and distribution of wealth.

The Prophet's Mosque in Medina has also developed into the center of all significant events during the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) lifetime. Following the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) move to Medina, the state treasury system experienced several developments and modifications, including the imposition of *jizyah*, the *zakat* obligation, and the division of war spoils, or *ghanimah*. He emphasized to his people that they can handle every facet of life and that mosques

⁶Ahmad Putra and Prasetyo Rumondor, "Eksistensi Masjid di Era Rasulullah dan Era Millennial," *TASĀMUH* 17, no. 1 (2019), p. 245–64.

⁷Mohamad Akbar, et al. "Peran Masjid Sabilih Huda Boki Owutango dalam Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Syariah Di Tamalate," *Islamic Economics and Finance Journal*, (2024) p. 1-15. AM Hasan Ali, "Community-based Economic Development and Partnership Cooperation: The Economics Strategy for Prosperity of the Ummah," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 8, No. 2 (2024).

may be used for religious activities at all levels, including individual, family, community, and state.

The above literature indicates that mosques have played various roles in creating the Madani civilization since the prophetic period. Mosques have been placed as centers for community activity, including economic activity, and this role should be practiced by mosques from generation to generation.

This study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate the implementation of economic activities in Sarawak mosques. The research methodology combines document analysis and in-depth interviews to gather comprehensive data on the subject matter. Note that the document analysis phase involved thoroughly reviewing relevant academic journals, books, and websites. These sources were analyzed and reviewed thematically to provide a robust theoretical foundation and context for the study. This process helped in understanding the broader landscape of mosque-based economic activities and the role of waqf in supporting such initiatives.

For the primary data collection, in-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 20 respondents. These respondents were carefully selected to represent two key stakeholder groups: officials from the Department of Sarawak Religious Officer and management committee members from 10 mosques in Sarawak. The selection of mosques was based on a list provided by the Department of Sarawak Religious Officer, which identified institutions actively engaged in economic activities. This purposive sampling method ensured that the selected mosques were relevant to the research objectives and could provide rich, pertinent data.

The selection of the 10 mosques and their respective respondents was further refined based on recommendations and records provided by authority officers at the Islamic Religious Sarawak Department. This approach guaranteed that the chosen mosques were known to be actively involved in economic activities, enhancing the quality and relevance of the data collected. Consequently, the interviews were designed to gather detailed information on mosque-based economic activities. These included the implementation processes, the impact of these activities on the local community, the role of waqf in supporting these economic initiatives, and the challenges and successes encountered in implementing such activities.

A detailed breakdown of the informants is presented in Table 1 to provide a clear overview of the study participants. This table illustrates the diverse representation of mosques across different divisions in Sarawak, including Kuching, Sri Aman, Betong, Miri, and Saratok. The inclusion of various positions within the mosque management committees, such as Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, ensures a comprehensive perspective on the economic activities undertaken by these institutions. The data collected through document analysis and interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were prioritized. This included obtaining informed consent from all

participants, ensuring confidentiality, and allowing participants to withdraw from the study at any time.

It is important to note that while this study provides valuable insights into mosque-based economic activities in Sarawak, the findings may not be generalizable to all mosques in the region or beyond due to the specific nature of the sample and the qualitative approach employed. However, the methodology allows for an in-depth exploration of the research questions, providing rich, contextual data on the implementation and impact of economic activities in Sarawak mosques while capturing the unique perspectives of those directly involved in these initiatives.

Table 1: List of informants

Respondent/Institution	Division	Number of Informants	Position
Sarawak Islamic Religious Department	Kuching	1	Islamic Affairs Office (Unit Pengimarahkan Masjid)
Masjid Nurir Rahmani	Kuching	1	Chairman
Masjid Darul Hana, Jalan Tol	Kuching	1	Chairman
Masjid Abyad	Kuching	3	Deputy Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer
Masjid Bandar Sri Aman	Sri Aman	1	Secretary
Masjid Al-Amin Beladin	Betong	1	Chairman
Masjid An-Naim Lutong	Miri	4	Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee
Masjid Darul Naim, Muara Tebas	Kuching	3	Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer,
Masjid Darul Hana Patingan	Kuching	2	Secretary, Treasurer
Masjid Darul Hana Lambir Miri	Miri	2	Secretary, Committee
Masjid Al-Muhtadin Saratok	Saratok	1	Chairman

The Role of the Mosque From the Economic Aspect in the Contemporary Era

From the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) until now, mosque-centered economic activities have been carried out, and the strategies used are still appropriate for the local community and the present demands. The mosque is a center of civilization that serves as a socioeconomic hub and a place of prayer and devotion. Furthermore, the mosque serves as a remedy for the ummah's political, educational, and economic issues. The mosque is viewed as an organization that may help the government protect and enhance the neighborhood's welfare in line with the ummah's objective for economic empowerment.

The mosque's management engages in various activities to support the local economy and the mosque itself. One way to achieve this is by implementing the mosque kariah cooperative (KKM). According to the state cooperative policy, KKM is one of the target branches of cluster cooperatives.⁸ The Malaysian Cooperative Commission has developed a two-point concept strategic plan for cooperative development to enable small and medium enterprises to participate in cooperatives and allow local communities to enhance socioeconomic standards. Based on the statistics record, as of 2022, the total number of mosque cooperatives in Malaysia is 526. This represents 7% of the total number of mosques, which is 6,837.⁹

Mosques that participate in their kariah cooperatives engage in various social business activities. Throughout the cooperative, the mosque could conduct many types of business that can benefit the members and community¹⁰. One of the projects proposed under the cooperative is offering kiosks renting to business owners, especially for those in need, such as the poor and jobless.

Therefore, implementing economic empowerment in the community is essential.¹¹ It improves the lifestyle of the community. In economic empowerment, especially in Indonesia, mosques are seen as a necessary role in the agenda of economic empowerment towards the local community based on several factors:

⁸Roziah Mohamed & Nur Anizah Aziz, 'Cabaran Dalam Pengurusan dan Pentadbiran Koperasi Kariah Masjid di Semenanjung Malaysia', *Malaysian Journal of Co-operative Studies*, (2021), p. 1-14

⁹Shawaliah Hadir, "Koperasi Kariah Masjid Perlu Berperanan Basmi Kemiskinan," *Malaysia Gazette*, April 9, 2023.

¹⁰Haris Fadilah Ahmad, "Koperasi Kariah Masjid Mampu Ringan Beban Pengguna," *Utusan Malaysia*, 2022.

¹¹Rizqi Anfanni Fahmi, "Enhancing The Economic Role of The Mosque Through Empowerment A Case Study in Yogyakarta City," *E-Mabis: Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen Dan Bisnis* 19, no. 1 (2018).

1. The mosque is close to the community because it is within the area's residences.
2. Mosque funds can be used for productive activities. According to Adnan (2013),¹² unused money amounted to USD30 million in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This is a massive loss if the available funds are not utilized.
3. There are approximately 700,000 mosques in Indonesia. If each mosque can maximize its role, then more people will be able to enjoy its benefits.
4. The mosque is a trusted institution in the local community. Thus, the community does not hesitate to contribute funds to be utilized.

In addition, the mosque's economic role is through waqf. The mosque's area and space can be used for productive activities such as rental activities. Consequently, the concept of waqf implemented in the mosque can benefit the local community, especially those in need.

In Malaysia, several mosques have implemented economic activities. For example, the Al-Azim Mosque in Pandan Indah, Kuala Lumpur, provides a mosque's Mariah cooperative to generate the economy of its members and for charitable purposes. Mariah cooperatives carry out many economic activities, such as car wash services, dairy products, Samak and search products, disposal of the al-Quran, halal hub grocery stores, cattle suppliers, and rice wholesalers.

Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin mosque in Putrajaya has taken the initiative to implement and organize economic activities such as sales activities. Every Friday, the mosque will organize the Saiyidul Ayyam exhibition. This program provides an opportunity for Muslim traders to generate. On Friday, the mosque will be full of people to perform the jummah prayer. Apart from that, the mosque management provided 10 shop lots to traders and entrepreneurs so they could visit the mosque compound for business activities. Among services offered are a cafeteria, laundry, bookstore by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), Muslim dress, Religious Officers Staff Association (PKPU), and household appliances. While performing ibadah at the mosque, jamaah can also meet their physical and daily needs through the services provided. This aligns with the mosque's objective, including the community's development.¹³

Furthermore, the mosques at Kubang Pasu Kedah can be set as an example of practicing economics.¹⁴ Besides the mosque, the community will also benefit from the implementation of economic activity in the mosque. Building rentals are among the activities carried out by the mosque in Kubang Pasu. Note that shop lots are provided by mosques to be rented out to the locals. The shop rental can contribute

¹²Adnan, M. A. An Investigation of The Financial Management Practices of the Mosques In The Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia. In Sharia Economics Conference. (2013), p. 118–130. Hannover: Leibniz Universität Hannover.

¹³Ahmad Rijal Ghazali and Ahmad Irdha Mokhtar, "Interment at The Mizan Zainal Abidin Mosque (MTZAM), Putrajaya," *Al-Hikmah* 11, no. 1 (2019).

¹⁴Mohd Hashim & Noraini Hydzulkifli, "Pengurusan Kewangan Dana Masjid: Satu Kajian Di Daerah Kubang Pasu, Kedah," *International Journal of Management Studies*, (2015), p. 115-134.

towards the mosque fund and generate a local community economy. Besides that, mosques in the Kubang Pasu district are involved in agriculture, such as paddy, rubber, and oil palm sectors, generating mosque income. This indirectly creates employment opportunities for the local community.

In Indonesia, Ainul Yaqin Mosque can be set as an example. It is a center for redeveloping cattle breeding in Central Lombok, Indonesia. The mosque was also created as an Integrated Community Empowerment Institution. The impact on the community is to enhance the knowledge and skills of the community about the management of cattle farming. Furthermore, Al-Ikhlas Mosque in Indonesia has created Baitul Maal Al-Ikhlas (BMA) to manage matters related to the distribution of zakat, infaq, and sadaqah. Among the types of assistance provided by the BMA are:

1. Provide capital loans to traders in need.
2. Provide loans for education.
3. Provide basic food needs assistance.
4. Provide loan assistance for the sick.

At the Taqwa Mosque in Surabaya, Indonesia, sewing courses are implemented to generate the local community's economy. This kind of course enhances human capital, makes it independent, and generates an economy. Implementing these activities will create the mosque's economy and impact the local community.

The method used by the Ummul Mu'minin Mosque, Surabaya, Indonesia, to help the community is capital assistance to start the business. The assistance provided is based on a lack of capital or funds to start the business and avoid getting involved with usury loans.¹⁵ Social business concepts such as fundamental economic activities such as rental of shop lots, rental houses, telecommunication tower sites, tents and feast equipment, hall rental, lecture room rental, and homestay business are part of the mosque lecture activities. Correspondingly, the profits can be used by the needy and the mosque institutions.¹⁶

Several existing facilities in the mosque can be used as a source of income and economic generation. Mosques with assets such as buildings can be used for rent for facilities and organizing community activities such as walimatul management ceremonies and feasts related to the community. Among the mosques that organize the rental of mosque assets to the general public is Masjid Jamek Bandar Baru Uda. The mosque has a multipurpose hall which is used for various activities such as social functions, weddings, sports, and so on. In addition, the mosque also provides a team

¹⁵RB Dandy Raga Utama et al., "Can Mosque Fund Management for Community Economic Empowerment?: An Exploratory Study," *International Journal of Islamic Business Ethics* 3, no. 2 (2018), p. 451.

¹⁶Ahmad Rafliis et al., "Perniagaan Sosial Menerusi Aktiviti Ekonomi Masjid," *Journal of Global Business and Social Entrepreneurship (GBSE)*, vol. 1, 2017.

that offers catering services to meet the needs of organizing any event held at the mosque.

Looking at the implementation of mosque-centered economic activities, it is clear that mosques can play an essential role in helping and improving the standard of living of the local community. In addition, financial and business activities are part of the worship, which can attract more people to the mosque. However, economic and business-related activities are given little attention to be implemented in the surrounding areas of the mosque.

The mosque can serve as a center to generate economic and entrepreneurial activities throughout the compound. This opportunity will attract the community who wish to participate in business activities. In addition, the opportunities provided will benefit the local Muslim community to sell and market Muslim-made products and goods. Indirectly, it is a two-pronged effort to help generate the Muslim economy and encourage the community to buy Muslim products.¹⁷

Mosques' educational syllabi should be given attention and reassessed to support and strengthen the implementation of mosque-centered economic activities.¹⁸ The syllabus should include three core elements of the Islamic religion: Faith, Islam, and Compassion. In addition, knowledge related to the management and implementation of business is appropriate for the mosque. Through business-related classes taught, it will be possible to foster a business culture among the local community.

The role of the mosque institution is broadly to unite all Muslims. One activity and filling that can be carried out in the mosque is implementing economic activities to enliven the mosque. Therefore, implementing economic activities in the mosque will attract the community and indirectly generate the economic development of the ummah in a better direction. The literature reviewed shows that mosques have carried out numerous mosque-based economic activities, positively impacting mosques and the community. The main impacts were helping the community independently generate income and creating opportunities for those in need.

¹⁷Nor Azlina et al., "Pemeriksaan Peranan Masjid di Malaysia Era Kontemporari," *Academia Journal UiTMT*, vol. 5, (2016)

¹⁸Ajmain, Talhah, and Sharul Abdul Majid. "Masjid Medium Pendidikan Membina Masyarakat Berakhlak," (Kertas Kerja Seminar Kebangsaan Keluarga Sejahtera di UTM Skudai Johor Bahru, 25-26 September 2019)

Type of Economic Activities in Sarawak Mosque

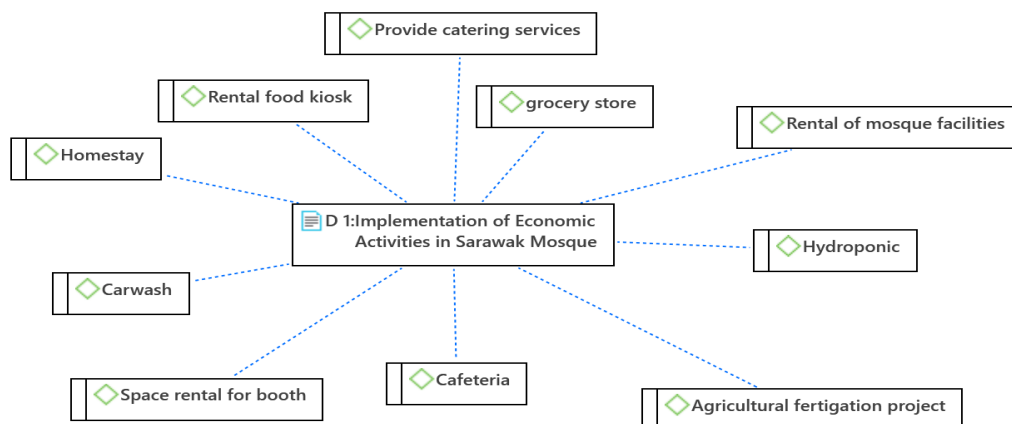


Figure 1: Type of Economic Activities in Sarawak Mosque.

Based on the interview findings, several categories of economic activities are carried out by mosques in Sarawak.¹⁹ The activities implemented can be classified into several themes as follows:

1. Employment Opportunity
2. Rental of Mosque Facilities and Assets
3. Agriculture
4. Business

1. Employment Opportunity

Masjid Abyad has provided job opportunities to 16 professional workers, such as mosque officials who manage mosque administrative affairs, and non-professional employees, such as security guards and janitors.²⁰ In addition, other mosques in Sarawak provide employment opportunities to the local community, including the An Naim Lutong Mosque in Miri, which employs administrative officers to manage mosque administration. Masjid Darul Hana Jalan Tol, Kuching, also provides job opportunities for assistant administrative officers with equivalent qualifications to carry out matters related to mosque administration.²¹

Professional Staff

Officers and professionals are appointed based on academic qualifications, while non-professional staff, such as security guards and cleaning staff, are appointed based on qualifications. The mosque committee prioritizes local

¹⁹Interview with Mohamad Jol Ahmad, Religious Officer at Department of Islamic Religious Sarawak , January, 2024

²⁰Interview with Masjid Abyad Committe, January, 2024

²¹Interview with Chairman Masjid Darul Hana Jln Tol, February , 2024

community members and those in need to fulfill the jobs. Note that the professional staff will be paid according to their qualifications.

Through the job opportunities provided by the mosque, it can help local graduates to get jobs. This indirectly supports the government's agenda of reducing the unemployment rate among graduates. In addition, the job opportunities provided by the mosque can be used as an opportunity for graduates to gain experience in the world of work that will be utilized in the future.

Support Staff

Those appointed as support staff are paid an allowance according to the minimum wage implemented by the government, which is RM1500.00 monthly, among the jobs performed by support workers such as security guards, janitors, and gardeners. This job is important to ensure the smooth operation of the mosque and to ensure that the mosque is in a neat, beautiful, and comfortable condition. The job opportunities provided by this mosque can help the local community to get a source of income, especially for those in need.

2. Rental of Mosque Facilities and Assets

From the findings of the study, several mosques have implemented the rental of mosque facilities and assets to raise funds, including the Abyad Mosque, Darul Hana Mosque on the Toll Road, Darul Hana Lambir Miri Mosque, Nurir Rahmani Santubong Mosque, Darul Hana Patingan Mosque, Al-Muhtadin Saratok Mosque and Al-Amin Beladin Mosque and An-Naim Lutong Mosque. Among the forms of rental of facilities and assets provided by the mosque are halls, homestays, and mosque spaces. Mosques widely carry out this form of activity. Through the rentals charged, the mosque can generate a decent income. This also indirectly opens up employment and business opportunities to the local community through employment in the form of public workers and catering services.²² Among the rentals in high demand in the mosque is the wedding rental. The mosque, located close to the community settlement, is an ideal place to perform a ceremonial ceremony. In addition, the large parking lot area is also an advantage in organizing events involving the public.

Besides that, some mosques provide food kiosk rentals to entrepreneurs in need. The rental rate is minimal to help those in need do business. The mosque also includes business site rentals by implementing stalls or food trucks. For example, the Abyad Mosque is carried out once a week on Fridays. In addition to performing Friday prayers, people can support the local community's businesses. Among the forms of business carried out are the sale of food and beverages.

²²Interview with Committee Masjid An- Naim Lutong, January 2024.

The concept of homestay rental implemented by the Nurir Rahmani Mosque is strategic and suitable for the location in the resort area.²³ It is the focus of both local and foreign tourists. The committee of the Nurir Rahmani Mosque has taken the ideal step by opening waqf opportunities to those who wish to contribute. Through the collection of waqf that is carried out, it is possible to build homestays around the mosque area. The homestay has four rooms with a rental rate of RM150.00 for a single room and RM250.00 for a family room. The rental rates charged are reasonable. The estimated profit earned through homestay rental is RM3000.00 to RM4000.00 per month.

The mosque also earns income by renting telecommunication transmitter towers built in the mosque compound. Usually, these telecommunication transmitter towers are owned by state-owned companies or telecommunication companies in Malaysia. These companies have special licenses for constructing and developing telecommunication transmitter systems. Most telecommunication transmitter towers are erected on leased or leased sites. The site rental rate is usually a transmitter tower in the range of RM3000.00 to RM4000.00 per site.

3. Agriculture

Some mosques took the opportunity to carry out agricultural activities through hydroponics, fertigation, and pineapple cultivation. The organization of agriculture can generate an economy for the mosque and the local community. Other than that, agricultural activities are carried out through participation among participants from the local community. Some mosques implement large-scale agricultural activities in collaboration with government agencies to cultivate pineapples. Among the government agencies that can be involved in the success of mosque-centered agricultural activities are MARDI, FAMA, and the Department of Agriculture.²⁴

The concept of fertigation and commercial agriculture is among the forms of agriculture implemented by the mosque management committee. Among the crops cultivated are chili, vegetables, and pineapple cultivation. Moreover, fertilization agriculture can be carried out in the compound of the mosque area. Among the mosques that carry out agricultural activities is the al-amin Beladin mosque through pineapple planting. As for fertigation, among the mosques that implemented it were the Bandar Sri Aman Mosque and the Darul Hana Lambir Mosque.²⁵ The demand for vegetables is high in the local community. This shows that through the

²³Interview with Chairman Masjid Nurir Rahmani, January 2024.

²⁴Interview with Chairman Masjid Al-Muhtadin, January 2024.

²⁵Interview with Committee Masjid Darul Hana Lambir, January 2024.

implementation of agricultural activities, it has succeeded in generating profits and indirectly generating income for mosques and the local community.²⁶

There are many benefits derived from the organization of mosque-centered agricultural programs. Among them is encouraging the local community to practice healthy activities such as cultivating crops. When the country was faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, various sectors were affected. They had to bear losses, but this differs from the agricultural sector, which was unaffected during the pandemic (Amirah, 2021). Agriculture or agriculture can not only be implemented in rural areas but also in urban areas. Urban agriculture is a sector that provides great benefits to the Malaysian community. Hence, implementing mosque-centered agriculture can support the government's intention to realize urban agriculture. The Urban Agriculture Programme was first officially introduced in Malaysia in 2014. Normally, urban agriculture is often carried out in limited areas such as idle areas, corners, or empty spaces. Depending on suitability, various agricultural methods can be used, such as fertigation, aeroponics, hydroponics, nutrient film techniques, and nutriplot techniques.

To ensure the security and sustainability of the supply of adequate and quality foodstuffs, urban agriculture is seen as one of the best alternatives to overcome the problem. Agricultural food supplies can meet not only their own needs but also the needs of the surrounding community. Other than that, abandoned land and open areas can be utilized by implementing agriculture, including around the mosque. In addition to making the mosque a green area, the mosque also profits from the agriculture implemented. This activity beautifies the scenery and environment, adds shade, and can control the environment's temperature, especially in the city. Through carbon dioxide gas absorbed by plants, it is able to reduce greenhouse levels. However, all agricultural activities are not necessarily carried out in mosques. Implementing agriculture can be done outside the mosque as appropriate. The mosque serves as the center for agriculture administration in the local community.

4. Business

Cafeterias are among the forms of business carried out in the mosque. Furthermore, having a cafeteria in the mosque is ideal and unique because besides the worshippers can perform worship, the congregation can also dine without having to leave the mosque area. Masjid Darul Hana Patingan and Majid Nurir Rahmani implemented a cafeteria at the mosque. Mosques that are the focus of the community in performing special worship are seen as ideal to provide a cafeteria as an attraction for certain groups to go to the mosque.²⁷ Implementing this business will indirectly

²⁶Interview with Secretary Masjid Bandar Sri Aman, January 2024.

²⁷Interview with Committee Masjid Darul Hana Patingan, January 2024.

open up opportunities and places for the local community to start and execute businesses with minimal capital rates.

The provision of cafeterias in mosques will make it easier for the community to get food sources that are guaranteed halal and hygienic. People also do not have to go far to get food. This is because the mosque is strategically located close to the locality of the community settlement. In addition, it will help boost the economy of the Islamic community.

There is also a mosque that rents a site for business implementation at masjid Abyad. The mosque provides space in the parking area for traders to carry out business once a week on Fridays. The rental rate charged is a minimum of RM10.00 per business site lot. The low rental rates charged to traders are intended to encourage and assist small traders to run their businesses. Compared to other places, the rental rates charged to traders to conduct business are usually higher, and the rental objective is for profit to the tenants. Unlike what is implemented by mosques, the rent charged is to help and not for profit alone.

The concept of implementing this business is strategic because it is carried out on Fridays at the mosque, which is usually filled with worshippers who perform Friday prayers. The goods sold are food, drinks and prayer necessities such as clothes and perfume. Meanwhile, the Al-Muhtadin Saratok Mosque provides kiosks to be rented out to small traders. Priority is given to those in need, such as the poor and poor asnaf. The rental rate charged is minimal to assist small traders in starting a business. Note that the concept adopted is based on a two-pronged prong, where the kiosk rental can generate the mosque's economy and provide returns to the needy in doing business and generating income. Some mosques provide free sales sites to those who want to do business, as implemented by the Nurir Rahmani Mosque in Santubong. The mosque provides opportunities for the local community to do business at certain times regularly. Usually, business sites are offered in conjunction with programs or carnivals organized by mosques. This is to help and attract the local community to do business in the area provided. Darul Naim Muara Tebas Mosque also offers a free business site. The mosque provides business sites to the local community for free without charging any fees. The business site is organized together with the program organized by the mosque and bazaar during Ramadan.

The concept of site rental provided by the mosque can attract community participation in doing business. This encourages the Muslim community to generate income through business. With small-scale businesses starting through site rental in the mosque, traders can gain experience implementing business on a larger scale. The opportunities and spaces provided by the mosque are seen as golden opportunities, especially for the local community, to carry out business further. Therefore, the opportunities available should be seized and used to the best of their ability.

Impact of Mosque Economic Activity on Community

The implementation of economic activities in mosques has demonstrated significant and multifaceted impacts on local communities in Sarawak. These impacts extend beyond financial benefits, encompassing social, educational, and economic dimensions. Figure 1 illustrates the various ways in which mosque-based economic activities influence the surrounding community.

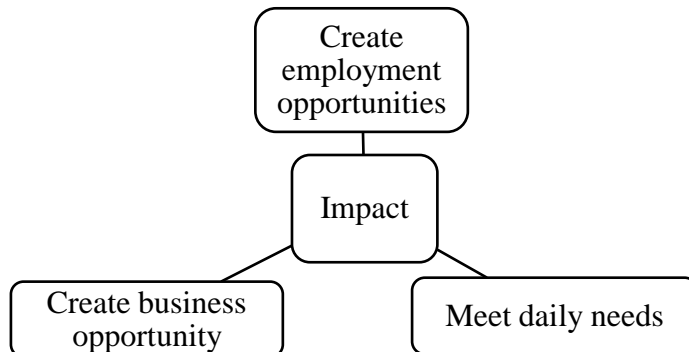


Figure 1: Impact of Mosque Economic Activity Towards Community.

a. Employment Opportunities

One of the most direct and tangible impacts of mosque economic activities is the creation of employment opportunities for residents. Mosques require a diverse workforce, including maintenance staff, administrators, educators, and various support roles. This demand for labour has led to job creation in positions such as imams, administrators, cleaners, security guards, and educators. A notable example is the Abyad Mosque in Kuching, which has successfully generated employment for 10-15 individuals, ranging from professional workers to general staff like cleaners and gardeners. Importantly, the mosque adheres to ethical employment practices, ensuring that workers receive fair compensation based on the government-mandated minimum wage of RM1500.00. This approach provides immediate financial support to individuals and promotes dignity and self-reliance within the community.

b. Stimulation of Local Business

The presence of active, economically engaged mosques has a ripple effect on the local business ecosystem. It encourages establishing and growing businesses in the surrounding areas, particularly those catering to the needs of mosque visitors and the broader Muslim community. This includes businesses selling religious items, bookstores, eateries, and various service providers. The mosque's role in fostering entrepreneurship is further enhanced by its policy of offering low rental rates to tenants, especially targeting individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. This initiative serves as a form of social responsibility, providing a

platform for community members to start businesses with minimal initial investment, thus promoting economic independence and growth.

The opportunities provided by the mosque are also able to market Muslim products. The mosque can be used as a platform to highlight the products of the local community. Furthermore, it can make the mosque a halal hub for producing products produced by the local community. It can indirectly attract people to spend through the platform provided by the mosque. This will help increase the production of halal local community products.

c. Support for the Underprivileged

Mosque-based economic activities are crucial in supporting the community's less fortunate members. By offering affordable business spaces and opportunities, mosques enable individuals with limited resources to engage in income-generating activities. This approach aligns with the concept of providing both "rods and fish" – not just offering immediate assistance but also equipping community members with the means to sustain themselves in the long term.

Less fortunate individuals can also use the opportunity provided by the mosque to start a business. Businesses started on a small scale at minimal costs can help individuals in need to generate income. This is a great opportunity for small traders to start and grow their businesses. The mosque management can also collaborate with relevant government agencies to help and empower individuals in need to start a business. To attract more people to visit the mosque, the management can take the initiative by holding a massive carnival with various fillings and activities. In addition, the mosque can also provide business sales opportunities to the local community. This will indirectly help increase the sales of products sold by participating merchants.

d. Skill Development and Training

Mosques have expanded their role to include educational and skill development initiatives. Through collaborations with government agencies such as MARDI, FAMA, and the Department of Agriculture, mosques offer various training programs. These include practical courses in fertigation, culinary arts, and entrepreneurship workshops. Such initiatives facilitate skill transfer within the community, empowering individuals to start businesses or enhance their employability. This educational aspect of mosque economic activities contributes significantly to human capital development in the local area.

In addition, mosque management can collaborate with educational institutes such as community colleges, polytechnics, and local universities to organize relevant courses to improve the skills of the local community regardless of age and background. Through this organization, it can increase individual human capital and

produce a society and a generation that has knowledge and skills in line with current technology. Note that the organization of skills courses can indirectly educate the community in a better direction in line with the government's aspiration to create a civilized society.

e. Community Cohesion and Social Responsibility

The economic activities of mosques strengthen community bonds and promote a sense of shared responsibility. By involving local community members in various economic initiatives, mosques foster a sense of ownership and participation. This enhances social cohesion and reinforces the mosque's position as a central institution in community life, extending its influence beyond spiritual matters to practical, everyday concerns.

f. Sustainable Community Development

The implementation of economic activities in mosques contributes to sustainable community development. By providing a stable platform for economic engagement, skill development, and social support, mosques help create resilient communities capable of addressing their needs and challenges. This self-sufficiency aligns with broader development goals and reduces dependency on external aid or government support.

Positive Feedback from Stakeholders: Interviews with respondents revealed unanimous agreement on the positive impact of mosque economic activities. All interviewees suggested that such initiatives should be implemented more widely across mosques, recognizing their potential to benefit both the community and the mosques themselves. This positive feedback underscores these economic activities' perceived value and effectiveness in addressing community needs and aspirations.

The economic activities of mosques in Sarawak have demonstrated a profound and positive impact on local communities. By creating employment opportunities, stimulating local businesses, supporting the underprivileged, facilitating skill development, and fostering community cohesion, these initiatives exemplify the potential of religious institutions to contribute meaningfully to socioeconomic development. The success of these programs highlights the importance of viewing mosques not just as spiritual centers but as integral components of community infrastructure capable of driving positive change and sustainable development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, implementing a mosque-centered economy is a reality and possible. This can be proven by the involvement of several mosques that have successfully carried out economic activities. During prophetic times, mosques played various roles and were not limited to a place for worship. The mosque at that time became the center of the community. Numerous progressive implications can be obtained through the implementation of the economic activities of the mosque.

Furthermore, waqf enhances the implementation of economic activity at the mosque. The funds from waqf can be channeled to activities that benefit the community and mosques. In addition, economic activities also impact the local community's economy through opportunities provided, such as business opportunities and job opportunities for people in need. The economic concept of the mosque indirectly helps the government increase the community's income and standard of living. Funds the mosque raises through weekly collection, public donations, and donations from certain parties can be used productively. The implementation of economic activities in mosques is realistic, as it can be implemented through the organization of several activities such as business, rental, and services, the economy of the mosque, and the local community. Here, the mosque is seen as an ideal institution for helping the needy. Mosques can serve as economic centers within communities through various channels, including financial contributions, business activities, community development programs, tourism, microfinance, entrepreneurship support, and social services. Their role extends beyond spiritual matters to encompass economic empowerment and community development. Many beneficiaries can benefit from the economic activity implemented by the mosque. The mosque's role should be utilized and maximized to nurture ummah and produce a thriving community here and hereafter.

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