

A Comprehensive Literature Review on the Role of Masjid (Mosque) as an Important Development Hub

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 04 April 2025

Revised 14 January 2026

Accepted 07 February 2026

Online first

Published 01 July 2026

Keywords:

Masjid

Masjid Role

Development Hubs

AI tool

DOI:

10.24191/bej.v23i2.5858

ABSTRACT

Masjids are important development hubs that support the social, economic, educational, and spiritual facets of the Islamic society. However, researchers indicate that whereas certain masjids are effectively performing these expansive functions, others encounter difficulties and are not completely achieving their potential as centres of development. Thus, the aim of this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of 50 articles is to provide a comprehensive examination of the best practices and limitations relevant to masjids carrying out their role as a development hub in towns. In order to conduct this SLR, the following procedures are recommended: determine the research question, choose which study categories to include, create a search to find those studies, and evaluate the studies' findings and relevance. Reviewing research published between 2014 and 2024 using five (5) reputable, open-access academic web databases—Web of Science, Science Direct, Scopus, Emerald Insight, and Google Scholar—is the stated set of guidelines used in this SLR. Every database is an intellectual internet resource that is accessible through the university library for scholars. To examine the chosen literature efficiently and transparently, the researchers employ Google Notebook LM, an AI tool. Notwithstanding its primary purpose as a house of worship, the SLR's results show that masjid serves a variety of purposes for the community. Fulfilling its social, economic, and educational responsibilities without sacrificing its primary purpose is the masjid's finest practice. The results of the literature gap are significant for future studies on the function of masjids as a hub for social, economic, educational, and spiritual development.

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<https://doi.org/10.24191/bej.v23i2.5858>

INTRODUCTION

Masjids, or mosques, have traditionally functioned beyond just sites of worship, assuming social, economic, and educational responsibilities within Muslim communities. Historically, masjids have served as sites for worship, education, discourse, healthcare, and accommodation. They have served as the central focus of political, social, cultural, and ritual life (Baharudin & Ismail, 2014). Masjids have functioned as community centres, encompassing public areas and activities, with circulation around and inside them being essential. Historically, masjids have served as hubs for economic development, encompassing the administration of zakat, business transactions, loans, and other associated activities (Ujang, 2016). They have operated as educational institutions, delivering religious teaching and aiding in the development of human capital (Asharsinyo et al., 2019; Nasution et al., 2015). Masjids have served as venues for social gatherings and meetings, promoting community bonds and providing refuge during disasters. Currently, numerous mosques are broadening their roles to encompass social events, humanitarian initiatives, and services such as hall bookings for weddings and recreational amenities. Certain masjids engage in community economic development by administering *zakat*, *infaq*, and *sadaqah* monies to support Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). However, researchers indicate that whereas certain masjids are effectively performing these expansive functions, others encounter difficulties and are not completely achieving their potential as centres of development (Baharudin & Ismail, 2014; Othman & Bakar, 2024).

Certain masjids function as venues for networking and collaboration, linking MSME proprietors with partners, suppliers, and clients (Ayhan & Cubukcu, 2010). Masjids may serve as educational centres, offering religious instruction, ethical teachings, and practical skills to fortify communities. They contribute to social services by fostering solidarity and a sense of social duty (bin Mislan & Sari, 2024). Three (3) essential attributes draw communities to masjids as public spaces: accessibility, comfort and hygiene, and social dimensions. Accessibility is a crucial element encompassing closeness, convenience, and social acceptability. Proximal travel lengths, interconnecting roadways, and mixed-use development enhance accessibility (Alnaim et al., 2023). Unambiguous primary entrances and directional signage also encourage individuals to congregate at the masjid (Alsuda'iri et al., 2023). Masjids situated in proximity to residential zones are generally more accessible. The comfort of the environment, including sufficient capacity for extensive religious and social events, affects the frequency of gatherings at masjids. The primary prayer hall is a crucial area, and its comfort is significant. Sanitation and comfort are essential factors that augment the efficacy of a masjid (Othman & Bakar, 2024). From a sociological perspective, masjids serve not just as places of worship but also as sites for social interaction and community engagement.

Masjids function as centres for several events, including communal prayers, morning and evening speeches, Quranic recitations, weddings, and educational programs. Social and religious activities are a crucial element in drawing individuals to the masjid. These activities foster a sense of community and belonging. The mosque serves as a focal point for the Muslim community, encapsulating its defining attributes. Masjids serve as venues for individuals to engage irrespective of their backgrounds. Social connections and a sense of community are fundamental factors in establishing attachment to the masjid (Nasution et al., 2015). These three (3) attributes enhance the masjid's function as a pivotal assembly point, transcending its position as a site of worship and promoting social sustainability within the community.

Researchers assert that the objective of a systematic literature review (SLR) is to evaluate existing studies to achieve a comprehensive grasp of a subject, pinpoint deficiencies in the literature, and inform subsequent research endeavours (Alnaim, M. M. et al., 2023). This systematic literature review aims to analyse the content of chosen publications from published journals or proceedings that address the research subject regarding the role of the masjid as a development node. The objective is to deliver an exhaustive overview of a subject through an integrative and thorough literature study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Numerous pertinent hypotheses are associated with the subject of masjid as a development hub. These theories offer distinct perspectives for comprehending the multifaceted dimensions of mosques, encompassing their architectural design, spatial arrangement, and their social, cultural, and religious functions within the community. Several theories include place attachment theory, which posits that individuals develop emotional bonds with locations influenced by their physical characteristics, activities, and associated meanings, as well as urban planning and design theories that prioritise social principles and cultural influences to enhance public spaces. Related theories encompass urban form theories that articulate the concept of visual links, which define visual connectivity through nodes and corridors. Alternative ideas, such as social capital theories, delineate the relationships among individuals that facilitate collective activities in problem-solving and routine interactions. Theories concerning human-environment interactions encompass perspectives on the impact of spatial dynamics on interpersonal relationships (Chun-Leung et al., 2024). Additional theories pertinent to the research subject include sustainable development principles that inform the design of mosque spaces to ensure accessibility and durability. Islamic Jurisprudence encompasses the examination of the Qur'an, Hadith, Al-Ijma'a (consensus), and Al-Qiyas (deductive analogy) as foundational sources for the establishment of architectural principles.

METHODOLOGY

This systematic literature review pertains to the five-step methodology as proposed (Khan et al., 2003). In performing a systematic literature review, the research topic is crucial, the selection of pertinent and high-quality studies is essential, and the synthesis of data together with the interpretation of findings is fundamental. This study commenced by defining the research issue, specifically how a masjid fulfils its duty as a development node. The initial stage involved searching six (6) online databases accessible to the researcher via their library membership. The databases utilised in this systematic literature review are Scopus, IEEE, Emerald Insight, Science Direct, Web of Science (WoS), and Google Scholar. The first database is an online Scopus database, supplied by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. This database is regarded as an effective instrument for locating scholarly articles and monitoring research trends across several disciplines. The online database search engine facilitates the retrieval of articles based on keywords, titles, and abstracts pertinent to the research topic.

This systematic literature review selected articles published within the last decade, specifically from 2014 to 2024, to focus on research that is more contemporary. The researchers employed the keywords "role of mosque, development, community," utilising filtering for literature in social scientific disciplines. The search initially produced 179 documents in the Scopus database. After additional reviews of the researchers' abstracts, the search was refined to 20 publications deemed pertinent to the research subject. The second online database chosen was Emerald Insight, recognised as one of the premier digital-first publishers globally. The search with identical terms initially yielded 12 articles. The researchers refined their search and selected three (3) papers pertinent to addressing the research issue. We identified seven (7) publications from the Science Direct and WoS databases, which are also available via Google Scholar, along with 20 pertinent articles sourced from Google Scholar related to the subject of this study. 50 papers were chosen from the online database subscribed to by the researchers' university library. The study's limitations encompass restricted online access to complete publications due to the university's subscription. We recognise that alternative databases may provide further pertinent articles; nonetheless, the selected papers for evaluation are high-quality, peer-reviewed studies published in reputable databases and are related to the study issue.

Upon obtaining the complete texts of these articles for examination, we uploaded them to an AI tool, namely Notebook LM produced by Google, for additional categorisation according on the researchers' enquiries and suggestions. The impetus for utilising this AI tool was its time-saving capabilities and efficiency (Fabiano et al., 2024) as well as the considerable potential for enhancing efficiency in the research workflow through the integration of AI tools into the systematic review process. Authors are responsible for verifying the accuracy of the information presented. Furthermore, AI technologies for scientific writing should be extensively utilised, however experts caution that researchers and authors must maintain scientific ethics when employing AI. The ethical utilisation of AI can be encapsulated as adhering to truthfulness and integrity, avoiding data distortion, and refraining from pursuing advancement by inequitable means. The selected publications for review are categorised into the following classifications: roles, best practices, restrictions, and gaps (Sauer & Seuring, 2023).

FINDINGS

Key Descriptions of Masjid's Role

The AI tool Google Notebook LM functions by linking the articles compiled by the researcher and synthesising information across many publications. The summary or highlighted material in Table 1 is contingent upon the prompts and queries posed by the researchers, as it is a query-based AI system. Consequently, it is the researcher's obligation to authenticate the information and the cited sources. The examination of information corresponds with the emphasis of the researcher's enquiries. The subsequent Table 1 reviews the best practices, roles, constraints, and deficiencies of the selected publications, which have been confirmed and cross-checked by the researchers. The primary functions recognised in the assessment process include the masjid's role in fortifying the community, fostering economic development, serving as an educational institution, offering social support, functioning as a catalyst for community empowerment, and aiding in disaster mitigation.

Table 1. Summary of Key Descriptions of Masjid's Role as a Development Node Review

Articles/Authors	Role	Best Practices	Constraints	Gaps
Alsudairi, A., et al. (2023). Accessibility and spatial integration evaluation of masjid in Saudi Arabia using space syntax. <i>Journal of Engineering Research</i> (2307-1877).	Community Hub	• Providing spaces for social interaction and community gatherings.	• Limited suitable spaces and facilities for various activities.	• Need to expand the scope of community programs and services to address diverse needs.
Alnaim, M. M., et al. (2023). The impact of generative principles on the traditional Islamic built environment: The context of the Saudi Arabian built environment. <i>Ain Shams Engineering Journal</i> , 14(4), 101914.		• Offering a variety of activities and programs that cater to community needs.	• Some masjids primarily used for religious practices with limited broader community engagement.	• Lack of specific spaces for interactive contacts and shared activities.
Baharudin, N. A., & Ismail, A. S. (2014). Communal mosques: Design functionality towards the development of sustainability for the community. <i>Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences</i> , 153, 106-120.		• Creating welcoming environments with good accessibility, comfort, and cleanliness. • Acting as a focal point for		

Othman, N., & Bakar, N. R. A. (2024). Community empowerment through mosque activities: A bibliometric mapping and analysis. <i>International Journal of Mosque, Zakat and Waqaf Management (Al-Mimbar)</i>, 4(2), 47-59.	political, social, cultural, and ritual life.			
Kessler, K. (2016). Conceptualising mosque tourism: A central feature of Islamic and religious tourism. <i>International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage</i>, 3(2), 2.				
Ujang, N. (2016). Defining place attachment in Asian urban places through opportunities for social interactions. <i>Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal</i>, 1(1), 28-35.	Economic Development	• Managing <i>zakat, infaq, and sadaqah</i> funds effectively to empower MSMEs. • Providing financial resources, such as interest-free loans. • Offering training and capacity-building programs for MSME owners. • Facilitating networking opportunities for MSMEs. • Localising <i>zakat</i> distribution to reach remote communities.	• Limited awareness of the role of mosques as Zakat Collection and Distribution Centres. • Need for clearer regulations to enhance mosque-based zakat management • Challenges in managing funds and resources efficiently.	• Need for improved financial management and transparency • Need to increase awareness of the crucial role of mosques as Zakat Collection and Distribution Centres.
Asharsinyo, D. F., et al. (2019, October). Degree level of publicness through meaning of public sphere in Bandung City, West Java, Indonesia. In <i>IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering</i> (Vol. 636).				
Rarasati, I., & Priyadi, U. (2024). Empowering MSMEs: The role of mosques in community economic development. <i>Shirkah: Journal of Economics and Business</i>, 9(3), 397-410				
Azmi, N. A., & Kandar, M. Z. (2019). Factors contributing to the design of environmentally sustainable mosques. <i>Journal of Building Engineering</i>, 23, 27–37. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jobe.2019.01.024.				
Akanni, A. A. (2013). Location of mosques and town planning laws in Nigeria: Imperatives for integration. <i>Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies</i>, 3(1), 41-68.				
Bakar, A. A. (2020). Establishing issues on children at <i>masjid</i> in Malaysia through a desktop study. <i>Journal of Architecture, Planning and Construction Management (JAPCM)</i>, 10(2).				

Azmi, E., & Ismail, M. Z. (2016). Cultural heritage tourism: Kapitan Keling Mosque is a focal point & symbolic identity for Indian Muslims in Penang. <i>Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences</i>, 222, 528-538. Bin Mislan Cokrohadisumarto, W., & Sari, Y. I. (2024). Mosque-based integrated community empowerment model. <i>Islamic Social Finance</i>, 4(1). Farina, A., & Stevenson, C. N. (2024). Ethical navigations: Adaptable frameworks for responsible AI use in higher education. In <i>Exploring the Ethical Implications of Generative AI</i> (pp. 63-87). IGI Global. Zulhaimi, N., Abd Halim, M. S., & Mohamad, S. B. (2019). Motivation and volunteerism activities as mosque tour guide in Terengganu, Malaysia. <i>International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences</i>.	Educational Institution	• Providing religious instruction and promoting Islamic values. • Teaching ethics, morality, and practical skills. • Acting as a centre for knowledge acquisition and dissemination • Offering educational activities, marriage activities, and recreational activities.	• Limited resources to support educational programs. • Challenges in allocating time and teachers. • Distance between schools and mosques.	• Need for more innovative and comprehensive educational programs. • Need for enhanced educational resources and materials.
Najafi, M., & Shariff, M. K. B. M. (2014). Public attachment to religious places: A study of place attachment to mosques in Malaysia. <i>International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences</i>, 8(1), 284-295. Anggoro, Y. (2018). The analysis of infaq fund administration Masjid Jogokariyan Mantrijeron Yogyakarta in Islamic perspective. <i>Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam (Journal of Islamic Economics and Business)</i>. Hamzah, M. (2024). The role and legal aspects of infaq, sadaqah, and waqf in realising economic equality and people's welfare. <i>Al-Iqtishadiyah: Ekonomi Syariah Dan Hukum Ekonomi Syariah</i>, 10(1), 107-124. Gale, R. (2004). The multicultural city and the politics of religious architecture: Urban planning, mosques and meaning-making in Birmingham, UK. <i>Built Environment</i>, 30(1), 30-44. Mardian, S., et al. (2024). Revealing the meaning of mosque "cash balance": A phenomenological approach. <i>Jurnal REKSA: Rekayasa Keuangan, Syariah dan Audit</i>, 11(1), 1-14.	Social Welfare and Support	• Providing social services and welfare programs. • Acting as a place of refuge and support during disasters. • * Creating social solidarity and promoting social responsibility • Providing healthcare. • Serving as counselling centres.	• Challenges in ensuring social services are inclusive and address diverse needs. • Financial constraints that limit the reach of social programs. • Lack of resources to support educational and social programs.	• Need for comprehensive and inclusive social programs that cater to the entire community. • Need for collaboration with health institutions to provide medical services.

Khalili, A., & Nayyeri Fallah, S. (2018). Role of social indicators on vitality parameters to enhance the quality of women's communal life within an urban public space (case: Isfahan's traditional bazaar, Iran). <i>Frontiers of Architectural Research</i>, 7(3), 440–454. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2018.06.001.		
Abul Qaraya, B. (2015). The civic and cultural role of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. <i>Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences</i>, 211, 488–497. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.065.		
Rasdi, M. T. M., & Utaberta, N. (2010). The design of mosques as community development centres from the perspective of Sunna Wright's organic architecture. <i>Journal of Islamic Architecture</i>, 1(1). Chun-Leung, J. L., et al.. (2024). Reinventing the coexistence of [Title incomplete in source].	Community Empowerment	• Acting as a catalyst for community development and transformation. • Involving community members in mosque activities and decision making. • Promoting social cohesion and interfaith dialogue. • Offering training and mentoring programs. • Acting as a community centre for all people around the mosque. • Lack of community participation in mosque programs and management . • Limited resources and capacity to implement empowerment programs. • Need to improve the integration of digital technologies in mosque management to reach a wider audience and community. • Need to strengthen the collaborative efforts with other stakeholders, such as universities and government agencies.
Ilyasa, F. F. et al. (2024). The role of the mosque as a medium of da'wah in building religious tolerance in the community: An analysis of Kampung Toleransi. <i>Islamic Communication Journal</i>, 9(2), 267. Kotani, H. et al. (2023). Activities and roles of mosques in Japan after the recent major earthquakes: A comprehensive study. <i>Progress in Disaster Science</i>, 20, 100297.	Disaster Response and Mitigation	• Providing immediate assistance, such as food and shelter, in the short term after disasters. • Participating in recovery efforts, such as repairing damage and restoring services. • Lack of resources and training for disaster response. • Need to improve disaster preparedness and response plans, including capacity building and resource allocation for such events.

Zaimeche, S. (2002). Education in Islam: The role of the mosque. United Kingdom: Foundation for Science Technology

- Implementing disaster mitigation measures, such as stockpiling food.

Source: Authors (2026)

Table 1 demonstrates that the themes or functions of the masjid are multifaceted, embracing various categories. The majority of the articles included for the review highlight social welfare and support as the primary function of the masjid, followed by economic development in the context of *zakat*, *infaq*, which includes *waqf* (Anggoro, 2018), in promoting the economy for community welfare (Hamzah, 2024), and *sadaqah* management, while also promoting small and medium business initiatives. Nonetheless, the difficulty of effective management and openness in fund administration persists. Furthermore, the writings emphasise the function of the masjid as an educational institution, serving as a hub for knowledge acquisition and dissemination. The literature discusses additional responsibilities of the masjid as a catalyst for community development, functioning as a community hub, which aligns with social capital theory as previously mentioned, despite constraints stemming from limited involvement due to staffing and financial resources. Some examined literature also classified the masjid as offering short-term assistance for disaster response and mitigation but contended with the limitation of insufficient technical resources and preparedness strategies. The articles emphasise the mosque's pivotal position as a multifaceted institution that transcends mere religious observance. Mosques are essential for community growth, education, social welfare, and economic advancement. Efficient administration, inclusive methodologies, and a awareness of the requirements of all users are essential for optimising the beneficial influence of mosques in varied communities. Figure 1 illustrates the Masjid as a multifaceted hub for Community Development.

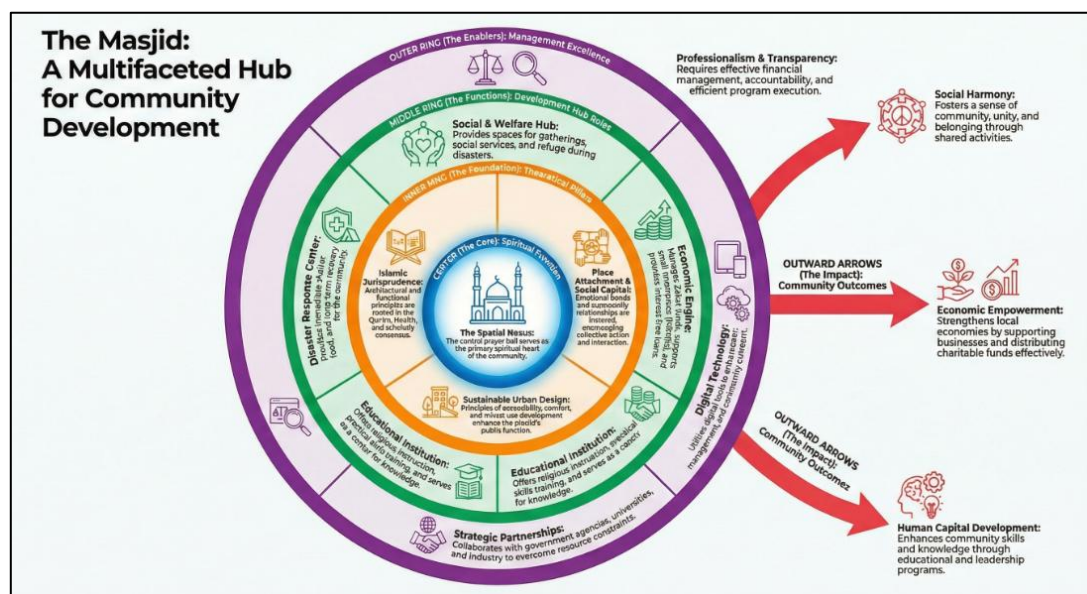


Fig. 1. The Masjid as a Multifaceted Hub for Community Development

Source: Authors (2026)

Role of Masjid and Best Practices

The Google Notebook LM AI tool was utilised to derive significant information regarding the masjid's position among the neighbourhood. The pertinent inquiry yielded multiple insights. The mosque fulfils a diverse role within the community, transcending its fundamental purpose as a site of worship. Historically, mosques have served as centres for religious, social, economic, and educational activity, with their primary function being a place of worship. The primary function of the masjid is to provide a venue for Muslims to engage in prayer and acts of devotion, regarded as a site for formal transformation, with the central prayer hall acting as the spatial nexus. Historically, masjids have served as places for education, imparting religious instruction and teaching the Quran, Hadith, and Islamic traditions. They may also serve as libraries and information centres, with certain mosques providing courses on ethics and practical skills. Masjids serve as a central venue for community assemblies and social activities. They cultivate a sense of community and camaraderie among Muslims and serve as a venue for interpersonal connections. Masjids can function as a secure environment for everyone, including children. Masjids frequently deliver social services to the community, including support for the impoverished and disadvantaged. This may encompass food programs, clothing distribution, and the provision of temporary shelter as centres for advocacy and social change, fostering equality, human rights, and peace (Hamid et al., 2012). Masjids can provide as a venue for interaction and discourse on societal issues. From an economic development standpoint, masjids can facilitate the management and distribution of zakat monies to bolster local enterprises (Othman & Bakar, 2024). Certain masjids provide interest-free loans and establish marketplaces for small enterprises.

From a social support standpoint, masjids can offer various social welfare initiatives designed to improve the community's quality of life, including assistance for the impoverished and aged. An example mentioned from the literature review is the Jogokariyan Mosque in Indonesia, which actively participates in community empowerment by using *zakat*, *infaq*, and *sadaqah* donations to assist the community (Rarasati & Priyadi, 2024). It administers a community market, extends loans, and delivers business training for MSMEs. Another example cited from the literature review was the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, which serves as a beacon of moderation and religious tolerance, fulfilling monotheistic, social, and communicative objectives. It functions as a hub for education, cultural pursuits, and social interaction. Concurrently, from the literature reviewed, masjids in Malaysia are progressively providing services beyond worship, including hall rentals, sports amenities, and social gatherings. Masjids are evolving to meet contemporary demands by providing technology centres, healthcare services, and recreational areas. They are also utilising digital technologies to coordinate activities and disseminate information while meeting the changing needs of the community, offering programs and services that support education, health, economic development, and social well-being (Baharudin & Ismail, 2014).

Constraints Faced by the Masjid and Gaps in Executing Its Function

In executing its function as a vital social and educational support system, economic growth, and community centre, problems necessitate consideration. Effective administration is essential for masjids to accomplish their diverse functions, encompassing financial responsibility and transparency, along with the execution of efficient programs. The mosque must ensure its relevance by expanding its functions beyond worship to encompass a range of community activities. In terms of children's inclusion, this aspect can be a challenge when sometimes masjid is seen as exclusive to adults (Bakar 2020; Hamid et al., 2012). There are also efforts to make masjids more child-friendly by providing spaces and activities for them (Bakar, 2020). The lack of community participation in mosque programs and management can be a challenge when there are limited resources and capacity to implement empowerment programs and lacking deeper understanding about the outcomes of these programs (Ilyasa et al., 2024).

The masjid's role in the community is dynamic and multifaceted. It serves not only as a place of worship, but also as a centre for education, social interaction, community development, and economic empowerment. Despite these challenges, the masjid, administrators' supportive community and stakeholders are aware that the masjid needs to adapt to the changing needs of the community and embrace modern approaches without compromising its main role as a place of worship and devotion to Allah SWT. How the management of masjid can be more efficient to provide for the community within a social and physical aspect is a major research gap. To address this question, a strategy could include collaboration with other stakeholders and expanding the scope of the community programs to address diverse social and economic needs.

DISCUSSIONS

Diversifying the role of the masjid by expanding the masjid's role beyond worship to include a variety of social and community-oriented programs, such as camps and seminars, as well as providing facilities for weddings and recreational activities, could promote social harmony aligns with sustainable development principles. These roles further enhance the current best practices of masjid as a development hub. However, it is important that certain regulations must be in place and respected for example, when it concerns prayer sessions and time. The minimum size of the main hall must be adequate for 40 people praying.

A possible inclusive environment for all members of the community, fostering social interaction, unity and a sense of belonging, can be achieved by having the masjid be a centre for interfaith dialogue and community engagement. Therefore, masjid management could further encourage active participation from the local community in mosque programs and activities. This includes planning and execution of activities.

The masjid can also play a role in facilitating social gatherings and meetings in the masjid to promote networking and strengthen relationships within the community to provide social services such as feeding programs, clothing distribution, and support for the needy, elderly, and disabled. The masjid can also serve as a centre for disaster relief and emergency response. It may be necessary to designate spaces and activities for children to make the masjid more inclusive for families.

Accountability and ensuring transparency in financial management, particularly in the handling of *zakat*, *infaq*, and *sadaqah* funds (Abdel-Hady, 2010) is an important role of masjid management. Meanwhile maintaining a good and transparent *zakat* management effective i.e. distribution of *zakat* funds to empower local businesses and support the needy can be more efficient with integrated technology and more easy access to the funds. Proper management in providing financial assistance and support to MSMEs through interest-free loans and other financial instruments must be in place. Creating planned marketplaces or platforms for local businesses to highlight and sell their products can enhance their visibility and sales. The masjid can also play a role in promoting halal products. In the effort to empower the communities, Economic Empowerment Programs, such as training and mentoring programs to support the economic development of the community can be conducted at designated areas in the masjid.

The role of masjid as a centre for knowledge acquisition and learning of religious education specifically the teachings of the Quran, Hadith, and Islamic practices can be done through regular classes and study programs, giving public access to educational resources both online and face-to-face. Other practical programs include offering practical skills, such as social skills, leadership, and work skills to empower community members in line with social theory. The role of masjid administrators should be current and skilled with the use of digital communication tools and online platforms to provide broader access to

education and to create awareness about mosque programs. Relevant activities or programs could attract those interested in knowing more about the religion of Islam.

The masjid could be easily accessible to all members of the community, with clear entrances, signs, and active monitoring by volunteers. Inviting the community to weekly cleaning and beautification of the masjid and its surroundings could enhance the sense of belonging of the community. An effective use of the masjid's compound is through creating spaces for various social activities, including sports and recreation. However, this should be conducted with clear regulations and conditions imposed while incorporating modern facilities. This should go hand in hand with efficient management strategies. The governance of masjid could implement effective organisational structures and enhance the quality and professionalism of mosque management. Strategic partnerships through collaboration with government and industry could be an avenue in overcoming financial and human resources constraints. Academic institutions could step up to provide quality volunteering services and improve community welfare as part of overcoming human resource constraints. The masjid administrators and the community elders should continue to collaborate and collaborate in the decision-making processes related to the mosque's activities and programs and invite the youth and younger generation to be involved to strengthen the sense of brotherhood. Thus, training for leaders/chairperson/manager nominated by the community in effective management and modern communication technology are good investments. In line with quality standards, regular evaluation and assessments or performance audits and seek feedback from the community to continuously improve the mosque's programs and services.

Finally, with the advent of technological advancements, the masjid personnel and community can learn to utilise digital tools to enhance management, communication, and coordination. By implementing these strategies, masjids can transform into vital centres for community development, addressing their spiritual, social, economic, and educational needs.

CONCLUSION

Masjids have the potential to be effective development nodes, and some are successfully fulfilling this role. However, many face challenges that limit their capacity to serve their communities. The way forward for optimising the function of masjids as development nodes, the sources suggest enhancing mosque management, improving financial management and transparency, providing training for religious leaders and strengthening collaboration with other stakeholders, such as universities and government agencies. Other strategies may include expanding the scope of community programs and services and localising zakat distribution through mosques to address the challenges of reaching remote *mustahik* (those eligible to receive *zakat*) (Hamid et al., 2012). Overall, the literature reviewed emphasises the need to recognise and support the multifaceted roles of masjids, encouraging their evolution as dynamic centres for community development and empowerment. The literature suggests that to enhance the role of the masjid in community development, various strategies can be implemented, focusing on utilising the masjid's potential as a multi-functional community hub. These strategies encompass social, economic, educational, and infrastructural improvements, as well as effective management practices.

Despite the potential, some masjids are primarily used for religious practices, with limited engagement in broader community development (Omar et al., 2019). Some masjids face financial constraints and lack resources to support their educational and social programs (Zulhaimi & Mohamad, 2019). There is a need for clearer regulations to enhance mosque-based *zakat* management (Gale, 2005). Mosque leaders, particularly *Imams*, may need training in effective management methods and modern communication technology (Karimullah, 2023). There can be challenges in ensuring that social services provided by masjids are inclusive and address the diverse needs of the community.

From the literature reviewed, masjids play a significant role as development nodes within their communities, extending their function beyond just a place of worship (Najafi & Shariff, 2014). They serve as centres for a range of activities that contribute to social, educational, and economic development, and function as community centres, hosting a variety of social events, including carnivals, camps, and seminars. They also provide facilities such as hall rentals for weddings and futsal courts. These activities encourage social interaction, strengthen community bonds, and foster a sense of belonging. Masjids are also viewed as a place for social interaction through educational activities and religious study gatherings as many masjids offer religious classes. Although formal education has largely shifted to schools, masjids still play a role in informal religious learning in most states in the country. Some mosques have attached madrasahs (religious schools), which provide formal education to younger students. In addition, sustaining the tradition of the functions of a masjid, it always provides other forms of educational programs, such as Quran reading and learning sessions, study programs, and talks. Through education, masjids strengthen religious understanding and equip individuals with the necessary skills and values to contribute positively to society (Ujang et al., 2018).

From the aspect of economic development, masjids are increasingly involved in community economic development, for example, by distributing *zakat*, *infaq*, and *sadaqah* (Abul Qaraya, 2015). On certain occasions, some masjids create marketplaces to enhance the visibility and sales of local halal foods and businesses (Azmi & Ismail, 2016). In the development of community welfare, masjids are increasingly focused on social welfare, going beyond just prayers to meet community needs (Kessler, 2016). Masjids can also function as temporary shelters for the homeless or travellers (Azmi & Ismail, 2016; Kotani et al. Tamura, 2023). They can act as centres for disaster relief and emergency response, as well as provide long-term social services to the community (Kotani & Tamura, 2023; Johansen, B., 1981). From a physical and spatial development view, masjids, through their physical presence, can play a role in urban development, including the area surrounding a mosque can also become a node for community activities (Vongvisitsin et al., 2024). From the literature, there is an idea to make better use of the spacious compounds of mosques in Malaysia for social events, and highly accessible oriented (Kuppinger, 2011). The location and accessibility of masjids are essential for their role as a community node (Abdullah et al., 2013).

In the context of administrative functions, masjid administration in Malaysia is governed by the State Islamic Religious Department (Najafi & Shariff, 2014). These departments provide guidelines, advice, and support for mosque management. More efforts are required to improve the quality and professionalism of masjid management, as masjid committees are crucial in planning, managing and organising the activities (Ilyasa et al., 2024).

In summary, masjids are evolving into multi-functional centres that are crucial for community development; however, continuous efforts by management in various aspects and active involvement of the public are necessary. By addressing the spiritual, social, educational, and economic needs of the community, masjids are becoming essential nodes for social and urban development. Future research employing different methodologies could cover more urban development and management aspects to further contribute to the body of knowledge of masjid as an important development hub.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/FUNDING

This work is supported by the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (Reference: FRGS/1/2023/SS06/UITM/02/14; Project Title: Pembentukan Konsep Bandar Madani melalui Pemerkasaan Masjid dan Tanah Wakaf bagi Revitalisasi Bandar Tempatan di Malaysia).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Siti Mazwin Kamaruddin researched, wrote and revised the article. Salbiah Mokhtar conceptualised the central research idea and provided the theoretical framework. Kamariah Abdullah, Norainah Abdul Rahman, Arina Rahmat and Azila Ahmad Sarkawi researched and reviewed the article.

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