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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Edito	rial Board	iii
Recto	or's Message	iv
From	The Desk Of The Head Of Faculty	vi
1.	JAWHAR AND WAQF DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA Dahlia Ibrahim, Zuraidah Mohamed Isa & Norhidayah Ali	1
2	INTRODUCTION TO MICROCREDIT INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA Zuraidah Mohamed Isa, Dahlia Ibrahim, & Norhidayah Ali	3
3	UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT Nurul Hayani Abd Rahman & Zuraidah Mohamed Isa	5
4	GRIT AND SUCCESS. A BRIEF OUTLOOK Azfahanee Zakaria & Syed Mohammed Alhady	7
5	AN OVERVIEW OF FOOD DELIVERY BUSINESS Azyyati Anuar, Zainuddin Mohd Piah & Siti Noor Syalwani Mustapa	10
6	FOOD DELIVERY BUSINESS: A NEW TREND IN 2020 Siti Noor Syalwani Mustapa, Azyyati Anuar & Zainuddin Mohd Piah	13
7	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS Shazwani Mohd Salleh, Berlian Nur Morat & Sitti Aminah Baharuddin	16
8	USAGE OF ANIMATIONS AS ADVERTISING TOOLS Baderisang Mohamed & Malawanis Mohd Noor Kamal	20
9	THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICESCAPE UPON RETAILERS ON CUSTOMER VALUE IN MALAYSIA  Baderisang Mohamed & Aliaa Adriana MohdDamanhuri	23
10	ONLINE CUSTOMER REVIEWS AS A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL Baderisang Mohamed & Nor Fitrah Anaik Ali	27
11	IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON AIRLINES INDUSTRY Baderisang Mohamed & Maryam Nabila Muhammad	31
12	DIGITAL MARKETING IN ONLINE SHOPPING Baderisang Mohamed & Aimy Zatul Akhmar Muhamad Nor Azeri	34
13	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT ON MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN MALAYSIA Baderisang Mohamed & Nurul Nisa Mat Jamail	37
14	DIVERSIFICATION AS AN EFFECTIVE BUSINESS STRATEGY Baderisang Mohamed & Siti Nurhidayu Sharin	41
15	PEST FORCES ON AGRICULTURE SECTOR Baderisang Mohamed & Nurul Najiha Azhar	44

16	MISSION AND VISION IN INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT Baderisang Mohamed & Nurul Amira Ahmad Murad	47
17	DO WE RECOGNISE THE HALAL LOGO? Sitti Aminah Baharuddin, Shazwani Mohd Salleh & Berlian Nur Morat	51
18	VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION: A PROPOSED STUDY AT A MATURED TOWNSHIP Mahadzir Ismail, Junaida Ismail, Etty Harniza Harun & Muna Abdul Jalil	62
19	ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE ERA OF COVID- 19 PANDEMIC: A PRELIMINARY REVIEW Mahadzir Ismail, Jamilah Laidin & Siti Qurratuaini Mahadzir	66
20	THE DIGITAL ERA: WILL YOU TRUST ME?  Norhidayah Ali, Zuraidah Mohamed Isa & Dahlia Ibrahim	70
21	WORKPLACE HAPPINESS MATTERS Rosliza Md Zani & Shuhaimi Samanol	72
22	POWER DISTANCE AND EMPLOYEE SILENCE: A REVIEW IN THE SUPERIOR SUBORDINATES RELATIONSHIP Etty Harniza Harun, Hasni Abdul Rahim, Musdina Mohamad Salleh & Junaida Ismail	75
23	COVID-19 AND JOB STRESS Rosliza Md Zani & Shuhaimi Samanol	79
24	PARADIGM SHIFT: ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) Norhidayah Ali & Azni Syafena Andin Salamat	81
25	BUSINESS FAILURES AND PROBLEMS IN MALAYSIA Law Kuan Kheng & Wan Irham Ishak	83
26	WOMAN IN AVIATION, REALLY? Yong Azrina Ali Akbar, Syahirah Atikah Mohd Sabri & Siti Liyana Yusrizan	89
27	ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: A BRIEF INSIGHT Azfahanee Zakaria & Syed Mohammed Alhady	92
28	UNTOLD HEALTH ISSUE: COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME Mohd Fazil Jamaludin, Mohd Shafiz Saharan & Khairul Azfar Adzahar	94
29	COMPARATIVE STUDY ON FINANCING LIMIT, MARGIN OF FINANCING AND SAFEKEEPING FEES AMONG AR RAHNU OPERATORS Mohd Shafiz Saharan, Mohd Fazil Jamaludin, Khairul Azfar Adzahar & Norwahida Wagiran	96
30	A COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL VERSUS ELECTRONIC WORD OF MUTH AS MARKETING TOOLS Ramli Saad & Rosliza Md Zani	100
31	THE ROLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A PLATFORM FOR CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT  Ramli Saad & Wan Shahrul Aziah Wan Mahamad	103

## JAWHAR AND WAQF DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA

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Waqf is an Islamic instrument that can give positive impact in the economic development of a society; especially its role to improve the quality living of the Muslims. In Malaysia, the State Religious Councils (SIRCs) carry the responsibility as trustees to register, regulate, monitor and manage waqf as to promote the socioeconomic justice of the waqf institution. However, there are no clear guidelines as how the SIRCs should manage the waqf. In specific, some waqf officials do not put development of waqf as their priority. Hence, managing waqf is a complex task. It is not unfamiliar to hear about the difficulty in developing unproductive waqf properties. Not to say, no single effort has been taken up to effectively develop waqf, but most attempts seem to be fruitless. To rectify this situation, the Malaysian government took a big step and established an entity called Department of Wakaf, Zakat and Haj (Jabatan Wakaf, Zakat dan Haji also known as JAWHAR). The Malaysian Former Prime Minister, Abdullah Bin Badawi, announced the establishment of JAWHAR on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2004 (Mohd Salleh & Muhammad, 2008).

Mohd Salleh and Muhammad (2008) further indicated that JAWHAR's vision is to be the best government department in driving the society's development through the strengthening of the waqf. As such, its mission is to apply the best administration and delivery system in managing the waqf as to improve the socioeconomy of the ummah. Based on the mentioned vision and mission, JAWHAR's objectives are to establish close contact with each State Islamic Religious Council (SIRC), give assistance in the administration of all the waqf institutions, create familiarity and understanding among the society on the concept of the waqf as a tool to improve the quality of the society and to encourage the society to perform the proclamation of the waqf, and at the same time coordinate, supervise and reinforce the quality of waqf management. In all, the functions of JAWHAR are to plan, monitor, and coordinate the waqf development, carry out research/publication, and to assist SIRCs in the management of the human resource, finance and ICT (Information & Communications Technology).

In 2016, Head Director of JAWHAR, Datuk Ana C Mohd stated that there were 11,091.82 hectors of abandoned waqf land. Nonetheless, since the inception of JAWHAR, quite a number of successful developments have been done to some of the unproductive waqf land. As a matter of fact, there were 17 projects successfully developed through collaboration between JAWHAR and SIRCs. These projects involved 23.771 hectors waqf land with injected funds of RM290.62 millions (Hamid, 2016). Table 1 shows the relevant SIRC and successful development done on waqf land.

Table 1: Developments done on Waqf land: Collaboration JAWHAR and SIRC

Project	SIRC	Location of Waqf
Pantai Puteri Hotel	Majlis Agama Islama Melake	Pantai Puteri, Malacca
Klana Beach Resort Hotel	Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Sembilan	Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan
Business Center	Majlis Agama Islam Perak	Ulu Kinta, Perak
Maahad Al-Mashoor Education Complex	Majlis Islam Pulau Pinang	Balik Pulau, Pinang
Dialysis Center	Majlis Agama Islam Johor	Batu Pahat, Johor
Grand Puteri Hotel	Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Melayu Terengganu	Kuala Terengganu,erengganu
Imarah Tower	Majlis Agama Islam Selangor	Jalan Tun Perak, Kuala Lumpur

Source: Hamid, 2016

The successful development of waqf land in recent years opens up to new developments on waqf land in Malaysia. One example of an on-going project on waqf land is the Taman Sultan Salehuddin project. It is a project between Uda Waqf Holdings and Kedah Islamic Religious Council, MAIK. This locality project is being built on Telok Chengai Waqf land in Alor Setar, Kedah. The size of the waqf land is 27.23 acres and will place 286 business and residential properties (Bernama, 2018). Although JAWHAR did not inject any funds into this current project, it plays an important role in giving advice to the SIRC before proceeding with any project. It shows that JAWHAR's play a major role in the success of waqf development in most states in Malaysia.

In a nutshell, the government did the right decision in coming up with an entity such as JAWHAR to actively develop the enormous abundant waqf land. In fact, in 2008, the government establish Malaysian of Foundation (Yayasan Wakaf Malaysia-YWM) to assist JAWHAR in developing waqf land. It is hopeful that with the existence of these two federal entities, waqf land in Malaysia will be develop to the fullest.

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