

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**EXPLORING THE
DIGITALISATION ADOPTION AND
COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT
TOWARD POSITIONING AND
MANAGING MOSQUE TOURISM IN
MALAYSIA**

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ABSTRACT

The unique architectures of mosques in Malaysia are bound to attract global tourists and contribute to the glory of Islamic tourism. However, several management issues have affected the development of mosques as a tourism attraction. Therefore, this study aims to explore the effects of digitalisation adoption and community empowerment on the positioning and management of mosque tourism in Malaysia. This study is qualitative in nature (multi-case study) and employs the method of triangulation (content analysis, interviews, and observations). The investigation involves sixteen mosques including twenty informants as the sample population. The Atlas.Ti22 software is utilized to analyse the collected data. For Research Question 1, three types of mosque tourism are found in Malaysia namely government, semi-government, and private, all of which are equipped with the necessary facilities and of which management has been upgraded to industry standards. For Research Question 2, almost all the mosques are found to have transitioned to digital management systems which are believed to offer a better development impact in terms of social media, digital infrastructure, cashless payment, application, and online platform. Finally, for Research Question 3, community empowerment is identified as one of the alternatives that can improve the positioning strategy and management of mosques, and that the existence of volunteerism and collaboration can help boost the effectiveness of the tourism industry in accordance with SDGs 9, 11, and 16. The findings of this study are significant to the literature, theory, methodology, practice and industry in enhancing, modernising, positioning, and managing mosque tourism in Malaysia.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Mosques are currently gaining attention as attractions in the tourism industry. In Malaysia, the unique architectures of the Seri Sendayan Mosque, Putra Mosque, Kristal Mosque, and others are set to attract the attention of global tourists and contribute to the glory of Islamic tourism. However, several management issues have affected the development of the mosques as a tourism attraction. Digitalisation and community empowerment are seen as alternatives for improving the positioning strategy and management of these mosques to make them more efficient in line with SDGs 9, 11 and 16. There is a need to promote their regeneration and to preserve cultural heritage and city communities, on top of strengthening the institution of the mosque as a peaceful place for community gathering. Therefore, this study explores the attributes of digitalisation and community empowerment towards improving the positioning and management of mosque tourism in Malaysia. Chapter One conceptually discusses the background of the research study (Section 1.2), particularly in the Islamic tourism sector, in terms of its the potential for digitalisation and community empowerment. Section 1.3 discusses in detail the research problems, followed by the research objectives in Section 1.4, and the research questions in Section 1.5. Next, Section 1.6 discusses the research scope and limitations followed by the significance of the study in Section 1.7. Section 1.8 presents the operational definitions before the chapter ends with the summary in Section 1.9.

1.2 Background of the Study

Tourism is a major driver of a country's economy and success and is the biggest contributor to economic growth (Yehia, 2019). The high demand for tourism activities has led to the growth of economics in terms of culture, environment, and community (Khan et al., 2020). The Malaysian government has been giving serious attention to the development the tourism industry following the drop in oil price and the world economic recession in the 1980s (Puah et al., 2018). The prime minister launched