

The potential of *masjid* in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): From the historical perspective to Malaysia experience

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda has become a benchmark for various countries in their efforts to elevate human life. Therefore, this study discusses the potential of *masjid* in implementing the SDGs agenda for humanity. Accordingly, the study adopts a qualitative approach that uses two sources of findings: the library and the field research—the library findings of the study on historical sources of early *masjids* in humanitarian matters. The field findings are the study of in-depth interviews with 14 informants representing *masjids* in each state in Malaysia. The study results found that *masjids* have implemented the SDGs since the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW (peace be upon him), even though the term SDGs did not yet exist. This was then proven in Malaysia's current context through the *masjid* informants' experiences. Among the SDGs initiatives implemented is the end of poverty (SDG1), health and well-being (SDG3), quality education (SDG4), decent work and economic growth (SDG8), peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16), and partnership for common goals (SDG17). Therefore, the *masjid* is a place for Muslims to worship Allah SWT and for the community to meet their needs and live a prosperous life.

Keywords: history of *masjid*; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); *masjid* in society; social welfare; Islamic institution

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is defined as an approach that balances the present's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. After the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that ended in 2015, a new development document is now being prepared to extend the achievements that still need to be realized while completing more relevant targets in implementing sustainable development for the people. Therefore, post-2015 development began to be organized by overcoming various obstacles to development progress, including the issues of inequality, effective and inclusive governance, peaceful society, and several others. The completion gave birth to goals and targets organized into 17 points of purpose and 169 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will apply until 2030. SDGs are generally a global agenda that includes three main dimensions, which are social (56%), economic (20%), and environmental (24%), to be achieved by 2030. The SDG goals were created to address the diverse and complex problems faced by humans and were agreed upon by 193 UN members on September 25, 2015 (Pradhan et al., 2017; also refer to *Sustainable Development Goals* 2014).

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Examining these needs, religion has the potential to face society's current reality. Therefore, the role of religion through *masjid* can potentially meet the SDGs' needs. This is in line with the encouragement of religion that shapes the behavior of believers to tend to do good (Jamal et al., 2019). Religion also motivates a person's charitable behavior because religious obedience can increase confidence in doing good to oneself or to others (Juliana et al., 2023). Furthermore, the *masjid* also meets the community's needs in various situations. For example, Mohd Nazmi and Mohd Farid's (2024) study discusses the management of *masjids* in Malaysia in the flood disaster mission and the COVID-19 movement control order (MCO). Among those implemented are services, health, accommodation, and infrastructure to provide various incentives for the needs of communities in need. Mohd Farid et al. (2024) also found that several selected *masjids* in Malaysia have the potential to become welfare hubs while implementing *da'wah* (preaching) synergy with various parties to address the needs of the community both spiritually and physically. Meanwhile, the study by Sharifah et al. (2021) also discussed the economic aspects of *masjids*' function to meet the community's daily needs. The findings were almost the same as those of the study by Mahli et al. (2023), which also presented experiences from five *masjids* in Sarawak that are active in *masjid* management, such as welfare activities, education, and social support. The study findings also stated that contributions to the community are actively implemented through collections and donations from the public to the *masjid*.

In this regard, the *masjid* is an Islamic institution that can fulfil most of the SDGs' agenda to overcome global environmental, economic, and social concerns (Mohd Nazmi et al., 2024). *Masjids*, places of worship, have been integral to Islamic civilization's development, shaping political and economic policies. Islamic values, morals, and ethics influence Muslim decision-making, suggesting that Sustainable Development (SD) aligns with Islamic development (Khan & Aslam, 2022). Therefore, observing the needs of the discussion above, this study elaborated on the role of the *masjid* in proving its suitability for the SDGs since its establishment until now. The study also provided some examples of situations in Malaysia that illustrate the development of *masjids* and their relationship to the community.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach focusing on findings from library and field sources. The library source studies historical data about *masjids*' experience helping the needy community. The field source is a study using in-depth interviews with 14 informants representing *masjids* in each state in Malaysia. The following is a list of the *masjids* of the informants who were interviewed (Table 1), along with the transcription document reference numbers to facilitate the coding of the informants.

Table 1. The demography of *masjid* informants

No.	Institution	State	Reference number	Date and time of interview
1.	Masjid Abdullah Fahim, Kepala Batas	Pulau Pinang	Inf01-M	22 February 2023 10.00 a.m. (Physical)
2.	Masjid Jamek Pengkalan Hulu	Perak	Inf02-M	7 March 2023 12.00 p.m. (Physical)
3.	Masjid Ar-Rahmah	Melaka	Inf03-M	15 March 2023 9.00 p.m. (Physical)
4.	Masjid Zaid Haritsah	Kuala Lumpur	Inf04-M	27 March 2023 10.00 a.m. (Physical)
5.	Masjid Kota Damansara	Selangor	Inf05-M	29 March 2023 3.00 p.m. (Physical)
6.	Masjid Putra Nilai	Negeri Sembilan	Inf06-M	31 May 2023 10.00 a.m. (Physical)

7.	Masjid Ismail Petra	Kelantan	Inf07-M	3 June 2023 11.00 a.m. (Physical)
8.	Masjid Pangkalan Pandan, Chukai	Terengganu	Inf08-M	7 June 2023 9.00 p.m. (Physical)
9.	Masjid Taman Temerloh Jaya	Pahang	Inf09-M	9 June 2023 10.00 a.m. (Physical)
10.	Masjid Al-Jawahir	Johor	Inf10-M	21 June 2023 10.00 a.m. (Physical)
11.	Masjid Imam Haji Hashim	Sabah	Inf11-M	21 July 2023 9.30 a.m. (Online)
12.	Masjid As Sobirin	Perlis	Inf12-M	27 July 2023 5.00 p.m. (Physical)
13.	Masjid Sharifah Fatimah	Kedah	Inf13-M	28 July 2023 9.00 p.m. (Physical)
14.	Masjid Jamek Negeri Sarawak	Sarawak	Inf14-M	31 January 2024 (Report)

After obtaining both sources of findings, the study used thematic analysis to determine related themes. This method, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2022), who discussed thematic analysis, aims to facilitate data grouping into a theme that describes the whole. Therefore, thematic analysis helps the study interpret the data more focused using appropriate themes. In addition, through this theme, the study does not use long and overly general transcriptions of informant interviews. Instead, the study discusses the analysis in depth along with related findings.

3.0 THE CONCEPT OF *MASJID*

The *masjid* is an Arabic word from *sa-ja-da*, *yas-ju-du*, and *saj-dan*, which means prostration, submission, or obedience (Syauqi, 2004). In the Quran, '*masājid*' is the plural of the Semitic word '*masjid*' when translated into English as mosque. According to Pedersen (1961), this Arabic word is rooted in the Aramaic language with the Semitic root s-j-d, which means bow down, prostrate, fall, pray, and serve. Then, another view says *masjid* is an Aramaic word that is *masgid*, found in an inscription around the 5th century BC (Netton, 2013). *Masgid* means place of worship or holy pillar. Thus, the word *masjid* refers to the original term, which means the real meaning compared to using words from other languages, such as mosque in English.

In the *masjid*, prostration is performed by explaining some of the above meanings. The term *masjid* explains a place of worship specifically for Muslims, a place used to pray. As explained by al-Hariri (1990, 18), the term *masjid* is a place or area on the surface of the earth that is free from being owned by someone and returned to its owner because of Allah SWT and dedicated to praying and worshipping it. Even if an area is not called a '*masjid*' as is the custom of the intended *masjid*, when someone is prostrating on it, like in a house, it should also be called a *masjid* (al-Asqalani n.d., 522). According to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, "...the whole earth has been made a clean *masjid* (place of prostration) for me," (Abu Dawud 1978: 228). Based on this hadith, the *masjid* is a place for Muslims to put their foreheads on the face of the earth or to prostrate on it, which means bowing down to Allah SWT as proof of a servant's faith and obedience (al-Tawbah, 9: 18).

According to Islamic views, *masjids* extend beyond a place to pray and have evolved into functional spaces, following the modernization trend of the Prophet SAW's *masjid* model. Abd Rahman (2011) explained the function of the *masjid* in general during the time of the Prophet SAW. It was a place for various activities, such as writing letters and choosing preachers to be sent to foreign governments, providing accommodation for imams, gathering friends and people, praying, teaching various knowledge, giving religious lectures, discussing national politics, appointing governors, and national leaders, receiving national guests and representatives from foreign

governments, planning national administrative affairs, and holding meetings. During Prophet Muhammad SAW's time, the *masjid* became a multi-purpose center, aiming to meet basic human needs such as food, drink, clothing, shelter, health, education, and national security. It also ensured the fair sharing of property, wealth, income, and development results, ensuring individual and community freedom, cooperation, and justice. This multi-purpose center aims to ensure the well-being of individuals, communities, and the country.

4.0 THE HISTORICAL OF *MASJID* IN HUMANITY

4.1 The phase of Prophet Muhammad SAW (570-632 AD)

The history of the development of Islamic civilization is parallel to the history of *masjid* construction. In the development of Islam in various regions of the world, there are *masjid* buildings in various forms and activities. Until now, the *masjid* has become one of the barometers and images of how Muslims describe themselves in terms of quantity, size, shape, and interaction with the community. This shows that since the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the *masjid* has been a "symbol of Islamic civilization," and in another sense, the development of the *masjid* means the development of Islamic society; the collapse of the *masjid* means the collapse of Islamic society.

Islam has three holiest *masjids*: The Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, the Masjid an-Nabawi in Medina, and the Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. However, the existence of the Masjid Quba, the first *masjid* built by Muslims, puts it in a unique position. The Masjid Quba was the first house of worship that would become a model for the future. It symbolizes courage and pioneering in the construction of the following *masjids*. The existence of this *masjid* is a benchmark of success in the first era of Islam. In the Masjid Quba, Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions prayed in congregation and during Friday prayers for the first time (Mohamad et al., 1996, 3-4). Allah SWT praises the Masjid Quba and the people who worship there (al-Tawbah, 9: 108). However, Islamic historians believe that the first *masjid* in the world was the house of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in Medina, a place of prayer and preaching (Yulianto, 2006, 29). This *masjid* has been renovated many times, first in the year of Hijrah. Measuring 622 meters with an area of 850 square meters and a wall height of 2.9 square meters. It is a simple building consisting of four wall sections around the courtyard and rooms for the Prophet and his family.

During Prophet SAW's time, the *masjid* was crucial in promoting goodness, happiness, and Islamic teachings. Due to its importance, it attracted public visits and focused on staying (*i'tikaf*) and worshipping, as stated by Muhammad al-Sayid (1989, 27). The importance of the *masjid* is divided into two categories: 1) as a place to pray and deepen religious knowledge, and 2) as a gathering place for Muslims and unite the people. Based on the explanation above, the *masjid* during the Prophet SAW played a crucial role in shaping Islamic society and the country's integrity, which the caliphs would further develop after His Majesty SAW.

4.2 The phase of Rashidun caliphate (632-661 AD)

During the Rashidun Caliphate, or knowingly as rightly guided (*Khulafa al-Rasyidin*), the *masjid* played an important role in Islamic society and country, symbolizing the strength and sovereignty of Islamic teachings. It was a place to address current national issues and develop Islamic preaching throughout the conquered countries. The *masjid's* function in forming an Islamic government expanded after the Prophet SAW's death, with the appointment of the first caliph, Abu Bakar RA, and other caliphs taking place in the *masjid's* Saqifah Bani Sadiyah.

During the Companions' time, the *masjids'* development became more noticeable due to the growth of the Muslim population, both Arabs and non-Arabs, beyond the Arabian Peninsula. During the *Khulafa al-Rasyidin* era, significant changes were made to the *masjids'* size by improving the construction of old *masjids* built with Prophet SAW. Improvements were made to Masjid al-Haram during the administration of Umar RA and Uthman RA around the years 17 Hijrah and 26 Hijrah, Masjid An-Nabawi, and Masjid Quba, improving walls, pillars, and floor for the use and comfort of many pilgrims.

Besides, the *masjid* remained primarily focused on worshipping Allah SWT through prayer, dhikr, and staying. It also served as a social center for community knowledge, administration, consultation, problem-solving, social welfare, military headquarters, peace and conflict, and state guest places. Other functions included sleeping, socializing between Muslim and non-Muslim communities, buying and selling, reading poetry, worshipping,

treating the sick, and sentencing offenders' practices (Makhmud, 2016).

Thus, the development of the *masjid* during the *Khulafa al-Rasyidin* period was primarily driven by improving the construction of buildings for the growing Muslim community. The expansion of power outside the Arabian Peninsula brought challenges due to the way of life and culture of new Muslims who were not among the Arabs. Despite these challenges, the *masjid* continued its function as a place of worship, education, school, state administration, court, and meetings (Abd Allah, 1988, 36). As the Islamic religion expanded and came under the control of the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, the *masjid's* role became more dynamic.

4.3 The phase of Umayyad (661-750 AD) and Abbasid (750-1517 AD) caliphate

Despite differences in government structure and policies between the two Islamic eras, Islam achieved success despite the weaknesses of some rulers, particularly the Bani Umayyad rulers like Yazid I, Yazid II, and al-Walid bin Yazid (Mahayudin, 1991, 113). In addition, almost all caliphs in this era were knowledgeable, had noble character, and obeyed the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet SAW, such as Muawiya I and Umar ibn Abd. Al-Aziz, Muawiya ibn Yazid (Muawiya II), and Hisham. Their government's policy was a continuation of the policy of Khulafa' al-Rasyidin, which was to spread Islam by expanding colonies or territories. In this era, the expansion of colonies and conquests was carried out by Muslim commanders both in the East and in the West. The conquered states included the regions of Sind, Bukhara, and Samarkand to the border of China and Andalusia (Ahmad, 1978, 390).

During this period, the term *jami'* (gathering) also appeared officially, which carried out functions like a *masjid* but with a larger capacity and various facilities. According to Sibai (1987), *jami'* is derived from the plural Arabic verb, which means 'to gather' or from the Arabic word *jum'a*, which means Friday. Whether the term *jami'* originally referred to a physical place where people gathered or obligatory Friday prayers were offered, the *masjid* became a space for congregational prayer and a true center of social interaction. *Jami'* generally meets the community's social, political, educational and Islamic religious needs. Under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, *masjids* served various social functions, including hosting dignitaries and delivering moral stories and poetry. Aside from being a place to pray, they also served as refugees during times of great need, offering drinking water and food for the poor, outsiders, and travelers. Some *masjids* also opened opportunities by providing health services to the community needing treatment and medicine (Sibai, 1987).

In addition, the *masjid* played a significant role in education during the Umayyads and Abbasids, expanding Islamic teachings to include subjects like history, geography, economics, political science, philosophy, chemistry, physics, arithmetic, algebra and geometry, medicine, engineering, and astronomy, aside from religious teachings and Arabic language as core subjects. The students were excited to find a leading teaching force, even if they had to walk a long way. Some were even proud of their certificates of completion (Sibai, 1987). The first libraries were built in *masjids*, first in Andalusia (Spain), and gradually spread to other Islamic regions.

The gradual spread of Islam in the Middle East, northern Africa, southern Europe, and eastern parts of Asia led to a unifying influence on native populations, integrating religion into the state system, society, law, thought, and art. This development has made great strides to tackle poverty, low-quality education, health crises, environmental issues, and economic growth. Consequently, researchers and academic experts have paid close attention to promoting sustainable cities and communities, leading to the establishment of the MDGs and later SDGs. The SDGs aim for a good-quality life for all, highlighting the effectiveness of *masjids* as vehicles for long-term development. Hence, empowering *masjid* functions boosts society's development for a sustainable future.

5.0 THE POTENTIAL OF MASJID IN IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS: MALAYSIA EXPERIENCE

Masjids are essential Islamic institutions for implementing SDGs and serving as centers for human development, education, economy, politics, and social life apart from places of prayer. They provide protection, empowerment, and unity within the community, offering high-quality, modern, and tolerant empowerment. *Masjids* are hubs for various social, economic, educational, and socio-cultural activities, as demonstrated by the Prophet SAW's construction of Masjid An-Nabawi in Medina after the Hijrah from Mecca (Khan, 1981). During Prophet SAW's reign, the *masjid* also functioned as an administrative center (Sulaiman et al., 2008); providing services for judicial and military purposes, drafting laws, and self-defense training (Collins, 2011). It was a fundamental element of

Islamic life, focusing on Muslims' spiritual, educational, and social needs (Rahman et al., 2010). Accordingly, *masjids* have historically and currently shaped the civilization of Muslims and humans, with themes identified to explain the match between their role and the SDGs.

5.1 SDG 1: End of poverty

Masjids play a role in helping the less fortunate by providing food, clothing, shelter, and financial assistance. Many *masjids* run welfare programs such as food donations to the poor, as well as initiatives to help those marginalized in society. This directly contributes to efforts to reduce poverty in society. *Masjids* in the contemporary era are increasingly expanding to serve the community's wishes, not only through prayers, business activities, and knowledge seeking but also by translating Islamic, social, and political culture through charities, services, and health activities (Mahfud, 2014). In Malaysia, many *masjids* are actively developing welfare infrastructure, providing financial assistance such as zakat, basic kitchen items, and emergency equipment to the community (Muhammad & Haliyana, 2017). This proves that the *masjids* in Malaysia play a crucial role in meeting the spiritual and physical needs of the community.

According to the experiences of *masjid* informants, recipients from the *asnaf* group receive assistance either monthly or seasonally. Monthly assistance is a continuous donation implemented by the *masjid* (Inf01-M, Penang; Inf04-M, Kuala Lumpur; Inf05-M, Selangor; Inf07-M, Kelantan; Inf09-M, Pahang; Inf12-M, Perlis; Inf13-M, Kedah). Seasonal assistance is subject to a specific time, either through the *masjid* itself or external assistance that makes the *masjid* an intermediary to deliver it (Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan; Inf09-M, Pahang).

Regarding assistance, it also depends on the method of implementation of the *masjid*, whether in the form of money or food. There is also other assistance such as health equipment (Inf01-M, Penang; Inf02-M, Perak; Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan; Inf07-M, Kelantan; Inf12-M, Perlis), education financing (Inf03-M, Melaka; Inf04-M, Kuala Lumpur; Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan; Inf09-M, Pahang; Inf13-M, Kedah), or management services such as funerals (Inf03-M, Melaka; Inf07-M, Kelantan; Inf10-M, Johor; Inf11-M, Sabah; Inf12-M, Perlis; Inf13-M, Kedah) and others. Meanwhile, some informants distribute assistance in the form of coupons to be used at certain supermarkets (Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan). However, most of the informant *masjids* assist the *asnaf* in the form of money because it is easier and according to their personal needs.

5.2 SDG 3: Health and well-being

Masjids in community health initiatives can be observed through the collaborative relationship between *masjid* administrators and health centers. This can be observed since Prophet Muhammad SAW ordered soldiers to set up unique tents in Masjid al-Nabawi for soldiers injured during the Battle of Khandak (al-Bukhari, no. hadith 463). In fact, according to Omer (2014), Masjid al-Nabawi also provided health services to the community for minor illnesses such as fever and the like, which were handled by doctors skilled in herbal medicine. There is also a record stating that a woman named Rufaydah was famous among those who treated the sick and injured (al-Kattani, 1980).

In this case, examining the relationship between *masjids* and health centers is indeed a practice that aims to ensure that the welfare of the community continues to be guaranteed. Taking the example of the situation in Malaysia, *masjids* and hospitals are active in several related matters such as health talks, funeral management, blood donations, and many more. Typically, *masjids* are used as places for these activities to be carried out as an effort for the community to get closer to the *masjid* through the programs that are carried out (Remly et al., 2020). Activities like this are also one of the activities of the *masjid's* administration, which carries out its function in community health. In addition, some *masjids* provide health waqf for contributions from the public, whether in the form of funds, health equipment, or services (Norizah & Noorfazreen, 2021). All of these are provided for those who cannot afford the cost of hospital treatment.

According to informants' experiences, *masjids* have several experiences in providing health needs for the community. For example, medical assistance, namely the *masjid*, provides health equipment for minor illnesses or special medicines to certain patients that the hospital gives for the *masjid* to handle (Inf07-M, Kelantan). This means that the *masjid* has obtained permission from the hospital to provide special medicines to specific patients, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and so on. Patients only come and deal with the *masjid* to get their medicines. Meanwhile, medicines for minor illnesses such as headaches are also provided in emergency kits for use when

necessary (Inf02-M, Perak; Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan).

In addition, there are also *masjid* informants who provide health equipment such as wheelchairs, beds, and patient canes (Inf01-M, Penang; Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan; Inf07-M, Kelantan; Inf12-M, Perlis). For the *masjid* informants who provide the equipment, the community can use it while at the *masjid* or borrow it and take it home until they recover (Inf12-M, Perlis). Then, the *masjid* informants also provide various health needs through the actions of the committee. For example, during the COVID-19 MCO, *masjids* implemented physical distancing during prayers to avoid risks to the *masjid* informants (All *masjid* informants)—similarly, the provision of safety items from infection, such as face masks and hand sanitizers.

Meanwhile, during floods, the situation of *masjids* saved the lives of the community by temporarily placing them in the *masjid* or sending them to specific shelter centers (Inf05-M, Selangor; Inf07-M, Kelantan; Inf08-M, Terengganu). Therefore, the health initiatives implemented by the *masjid* informants took the form of energy and goods. Energy involved the services of the masjid committee, while goods included medical aid and health equipment.

5.3 SDG 4: Quality education

Masjids are indeed known as places where Muslims receive education, especially religious knowledge. By emphasizing educational and moral values, *masjids* help enrich knowledge and provide opportunities for education to the less fortunate, especially in underserved areas. Therefore, *masjids* are crucial for spreading education in the Islamic world, with unity between them and educational institutions being a key characteristic (Tibawi, 1972). Even schools have become a necessary addition to a *masjid* (Scott, 1904).

Since the early days of Islam, *masjids* have been the center of the Muslim community, providing prayer, meditation, religious instruction, political discussion, and school. They have played a vital role in forming Muslim individuals and communities (Abd Allah, 1988). Islamic education in *masjids* is closely linked to its development, as they are primary broadcasters of Islamic knowledge and culture (Ahmad, 1978). Regardless of Islamic rule, *masjids* were established, and primary religious teaching began. These *masjids* became famous learning centers, often with hundreds or thousands of students, and a library (Waardenberg, 2000).

The glory of the *masjid* institution as a center of higher and lower education in the Islamic world has been proven by many great *masjids* in the world, such as the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, the Masjid an-Nabawi in Medina, the Masjid al-Azhar, the Masjid ‘Amru ibn al-‘As in Egypt, the Masjid Basrah, the Masjid Kuffah, and others that can be considered as schools or universities in the present era. The ability of these *masjids* has produced many prominent and famous scholars and intellectuals in the Islamic world in various fields of science. Among the prominent figures are Imam Malik, Abu Hanifah, Syafie, ibn Hanbal, al-Ghazali, and others, who have succeeded in making the world’s foremost educational center. For example, in Medina, there is a figure and jurisprudence expert named Rabiah al-Rakyi (Waardenberg, 2000). He is a teacher at the Masjid Medina. Among his students are Malik ibn Anas, al-Lais ibn Sa‘ad, and Yahya ibn Sa‘id al-Qasan.

According to the informant’s experience, the recipients of educational assistance are students in the *fi sabilillah* category based on the zakat recipient group. Taking the views of Azman and Ahmad, the group of students deserves assistance in pursuing knowledge (Azman & Ahmad, 2013). According to the experience of the informant’s *masjid*, aid to students is either in the form of money or gifts (Inf03-M, Melaka; Inf04-M, Kuala Lumpur; Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan; Inf09-M, Pahang; Inf13-M, Kedah). The experience of the informant’s *masjid*, which provides financial assistance, includes paying tuition or registration fees for less able families. In addition, financial aid is channeled to *tahfiz* centers, students among orphans, and even a few excellent students who are poor. Meanwhile, gifts are usually given by the *masjid* to outstanding students or similar as a reward for their diligence in studying. The purpose is to boost the spirits of students who aspire to pursue knowledge and provide encouragement and support for them to achieve their goals.

5.4 SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

The eighth SDG aims to foster inclusive and sustainable economic growth, presenting employment opportunities and decent work for all. This growth is a prerequisite for sustainable development, improving livelihoods, creating

new and better job opportunities, and reducing the wage and wealth gap. If we trace back to the time of the Prophet SAW, we can see how the Prophet SAW managed the *masjid* so that the *masjid* could contribute to the welfare of the people (Tamuri, 2021). Prophet SAW taught that the *masjid* not only functions as a center of worship, but also as a place of education and teaching, as a center of Islamic information, an economic center, a center of social and political activities, and a center of *da'wah* activities for Muslims. Thus, the *masjid* plays a significant role in changing the value of life in religion and community development through social and economic piety programmes.

The *masjid* plays a crucial role in community welfare through economic empowerment, focusing on financial management and creating guidelines that include collecting, distributing, and storing funds (Radzi et al., 2023). Fundraising methods include zakat, endowment, charity, inheritance, waqf, and grants, with attention given to how funds are received, whether through a bank account, at the *masjid*, or those in need (Mufraini, 2006). Regarding the distribution of funds, attention should be paid to those entitled to receive the funds and their purpose, whether they are used for consumptive or productive activities. In disbursing funds, one should also pay attention to the users of the funds; the purpose of disbursing funds is to empower the community to realize their welfare. That is why Muslims are encouraged to contribute part of their property to draw closer to Allah SWT and achieve the nature of piety (Al-Baqarah, 2: 271).

In this study, the finances of the informant *masjids* usually come from three main sources: fund collections, external sponsorship, and business or rental. The first source widely practiced by most informant *masjids* is through fund collections channeled by the community, either the Friday fund or a special welfare fund such as flood relief, orphans, etc. (all informant *masjids*). According to the informant *masjids*, not all receive continuous allocations from the religious department or external sponsorship. Therefore, they need to obtain private sources by implementing fund collections, specifically or generally. Specific is a fund for certain collections such as flood relief, orphans, etc. A general fund is a fund that is opened daily and weekly for various purposes, such as the Friday fund.

The second source is through external sponsorship, whether from the government, NGOs, volunteers or benefactors among the public. According to the experience of the *masjid* informants, external sponsorship is closely related to the collaborative relationship of various institutions (Inf02-M, Perak; Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan; Inf09-M, Pahang; Inf10-M, Johor; Inf11-M, Sabah; Inf12-M, Perlis). This is due to the planning of the *masjid* with external parties who want to implement a joint welfare program to take care of the fate of the less fortunate in various aspects. This external sponsorship is usually obtained by the *masjid* informants from certain parties for certain purposes. However, *masjid* informants also obtain it voluntarily from the donor without application.

The third source of finance is business and rental income. Business income is a source of income that is cultivated such as vegetable gardens, car wash services, and *masjid* kiosks (Inf01-M, Penang; Inf02-M, Perak; Inf04-M, Kuala Lumpur; Inf05-M, Selangor; Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan; Inf09-M, Pahang). For some informants, *masjids* with open and spacious land take advantage of it by cultivating crops managed by the *masjid* or hiring workers. For some others, they establish car wash services, build kiosks, and others. Meanwhile, rental income is when informant *masjids* provide equipment or infrastructure such as halls for the use of the community who want to carry out any social programs such as feasts and weddings (Inf01-M, Penang; Inf05-M, Selangor; Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan; Inf11-M, Sabah). Most informant *masjids* have infrastructure that is provided for the use of the community. However, the difference is that there are informant *masjids* that offer them for rent, and there are some others that can be used for free. This rental is subject to the needs of the *masjid* if it can benefit the community.

5.5 SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions

The 16th SDG is to strengthen inclusive and peaceful societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and develop effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. In addition, the 16th SDG also aims to create an inclusive and peaceful society based on respect for human rights, the rule of law, good governance at all levels, and transparent, effective, and accountable institutions. However, there are still many countries that face continuous violence and armed conflict, the existence of weak public institutions, a lack of access to information and justice, and a lack of guarantees of other freedoms. The challenge in monitoring this policy is the difficulty of obtaining data on violence against children and other vulnerable groups, access to justice, and public access to information.

A *masjid* is a religious institution that serves as a platform to attract the community to gather for

congregational prayers or social activities. According to Mohamad Tajuddin (2010), the *masjid* is a sacred place of worship that holds the Muslim community's physical, spiritual, and civilizational responsibility. Historically, in addition to functioning as a religious and spiritual institution for Muslims, the original idea and concept of the *masjid* are very close to the notion of community unification, learning, discussion, social interaction, recreation, community service, and other related activities (Omer, 2009).

In Malaysia, the *masjid* as a uniting community can be seen in several aspects of social relations. First, a celebration of Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, or Ramadan season (all informant *masjids*). The *masjid* becomes a gathering place that not only fulfils religious demands in Islamic celebrations but also allows the community to come to celebrate together and get to know each other. Second, some *masjids* organize activities for the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. For example, *masjids*' informants held a series of interfaith dialogues (Inf06-M, Negeri Sembilan; Inf12-M, Perlis). The purpose was for the community to recognize each other among their respective religions and strengthen community relations despite different religions. Furthermore, activities organized by *masjids* that involved various religions were usually done through collaboration networks with several agencies to enhance the relationship between the Muslim community and non-Muslims.

5.6 SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals

Masjids often collaborate with various organizations, including governments, NGOs, and the private sector, to achieve common goals that support social and economic development. Through this collaboration, *masjids* can strengthen efforts to improve the community's quality of life and develop a more just and competitive community. According to the experience of *masjid* informants, collaboration with various parties aims not only to expand the functions of the *masjid* but also to jointly ensure that the community's welfare continues to be maintained continuously. This also means that a program is organized jointly, whether led by the *masjid* itself or by an external party, which makes the *masjid* a suitable place to implement it. This collaboration's importance is attracting the community to participate in the organized program (Karim et al., 2017). In addition, it is also important in terms of sponsorship to the *masjid* for programs and aid contributions that will be implemented (Habiba et al., 2013).

In this study, institutional collaboration can be seen through the experiences of informant *masjids*, which have two main purposes. First, sponsorships should be obtained that are channeled to the community (all informant *masjids*). This is because, sometimes, *masjids* lack financial resources obtained through the *masjid* fund method. Therefore, it will affect the *masjid* or the community that receives assistance from the *masjid*. Therefore, most informant *masjids* expand their collaboration network to obtain various sponsorships, whether in the form of money, equipment or the construction of *masjid* infrastructure for the community's welfare.

Secondly, the purpose is to get a response from the community regarding all *masjid* activities or external parties that benefit the community. According to the experience of the informant *masjid*, among the collaborating parties involved are hospitals related to health, schools related to education, non-Muslim associations related to assistance or dialogue and others such as universities, religious departments and many more (all informant *masjids*). The benefits that the community can obtain through this collaboration are in several forms, such as knowledge, aid contributions and networking. Forms of knowledge include interfaith dialogue programs, Hajj and Umrah courses, funeral management, and many more. Forms of aid contributions are recipients of zakat, school assistance, health equipment, and others. Social networking is an indirect benefit because of the socializing process and meetings between the community members in the *masjid* program, where they can get to know each other.

Therefore, everything contained in the *masjid* administration system throughout the history of Islamic civilization is enough to prove its success to the Islamic world then and now. Through the role of the *masjid*, His Majesty SAW held meetings and hearings on problems of the ummah's interest, organized the ummah's socio-economic activities, and explained the laws related to them. Regarding international relations, His Majesty SAW used the *masjid* to receive guests from tribal leaders and representatives of foreign governments. In general, His Majesty SAW made the *masjid* the center of Islamic administration and government because the spirit of Islam and its development stemmed from the *masjid*. This situation can be seen clearly when the informant *masjid* implements the SDGs mission as well as possible. The purpose is not only to preserve the integrity of the *masjid* institution for a long period but also to help the community in need.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The SDGs are an agenda that brings a new brand to describe human interests in balance with the universe. Although the SDGs brand is new, the idea raised has become a necessity since the development of human civilization around the world. Thus, by raising Islam as a religion of peace and well-being for the world, the *masjid* becomes an institution manifesting it. It is so comprehensive that it fulfils the spiritual and physical aspects. The discussion above has made it clear that *masjids* are very compatible with the needs of the SDGs agenda. Although not directly fulfilling all its agenda, the main pillars of human needs, such as the end of poverty (SDG1); health and well-being (SDG3); quality education (SDG4); decent work and economic growth (SDG8); peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16); and partnerships for goals (SDG17) become the essential core of the survival of humanity on this earth. With that, the history of the *masjid* reveals its role in today's current world development, which moves in tandem for the benefit of humanity. Indeed, historical facts prove that the *masjid's* credibility in supporting the community since its establishment shows that Islamic civilization cares a lot about humanity. Therefore, the analysis of these findings can be the basis for interdisciplinary discussions about *masjids* and SDGs that are not separated from contemporary currents to protect people from the drift of this dynamic and complex world.

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