

ISSN: 1985-482X eISSN: 2672-7390

LJMS

LABUAN E-JOURNAL OF MUAMALAT AND SOCIETY



Published by:
Penerbit UMS
Labuan Faculty of International Finance



UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1, 2026

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LJMS LABUAN E-JOURNAL OF MUAMALAT AND SOCIETY

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Editor-in-Chief

Professor Dr Hanudin Amin, SPDM, COFSA, CIB



PREFACE

It is with great pleasure that we present **Volume 20, Number 1 (2026)**, *Labuan E-Journal of Muamalat and Society (LJMS)*. This issue continues its mission to disseminate rigorous and impactful scholarly works that contribute to the advancement of knowledge in *muamalat*, Islamic economics and finance, management, public policy, and societal development.

This volume comprises ten scholarly articles authored by researchers from Malaysia and abroad. The issue opens with a study by Hadenan Towpek and Mohamad Mahadhir Mohamad Azri examining the impact of *zakat* distribution among *asnafs* in Kuching, Sarawak. This is followed by an important discussion on the administration of *waqf* assets by Hydzulki Hashim, Nashirah Abu Bakar, Noraini Yussuf, Solahuddin Ab. Hamid, Mohd Fauzwadi Mat Ali, and Assyahmona Ghani. The third article by Nur Azlina Mohamad Zahari and Farah Wahida Zolkifly provides a comparative analysis of public sector employment policies for persons with disabilities in Malaysia and Sweden. Further enriching this issue, Shariff Abu Bakar, Shariff Abd Kadir, Stephen Laison Sondoh Jr, Faerozh Madli, Shariff Umar Shariff, and Abd Kadir Salleh Willie investigate millennials' adoption of risk in Sabah from an Islamic perspective. Rafikul Islam, Md Siddique E. Azam, and Dzuljastri Abdul Razak explore the key dimensions of mosque contributions to Muslim society and ummah development. The sixth article by Anwar Allah Pitchay, Masyitah Abdul Rahman, Zubir Azhar, Mohamad Isa Abd Jalil, and Nur Nazihah Sulaiman highlights the role of *zakat* in reducing the burden of higher education costs among university students.

The issue also features an international contribution by Anggie Dwiantiningrum, Galumbang Hutagalung, Sauh Hewe Teng, and Enda Noviyanti Simorangkir, who examine the effect of managerial ownership and audit committees on earnings management in Indonesian private banks. Another article by Nike Larasati, Geoffrey Harvey Tanakinjal, Noor Hasanah Husin, and Salumah Nain investigates the relationship between internal capabilities and organisational performance among traditional weaving micro, small, and medium enterprises in Indonesia. Subsequently, Areta Nur Fatimah Azala and Indra Rasati discuss how digitalisation and urban density can transform population pressure into productivity gains in ASEAN countries. In all, Mohammed Yaw Broni, Jarita Duasa, Sakinah Abdul Samad, and Zakaria Lacheheb offer a conceptual discussion on benevolence from an Islamic perspective.

The editorial board expresses its sincere gratitude to all authors for their valuable contributions and to the reviewers whose expertise and commitment have ensured the quality and academic integrity of the published articles. We also extend our appreciation to the editorial and administrative teams for their dedication and professionalism throughout the publication process. On behalf of the Editorial Board, I thank our readers, contributors, and stakeholders for their continuous support of the Journal. We look forward to receiving more high-quality submissions and to continuing our role as a platform for scholarly excellence and intellectual engagement.

Professor Dr Hanudin Amin, SPDM, COFSA, CIB
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ANALISIS PROFIL RESPONDEN BAGI KAJIAN IMPAK AGIHAN ZAKAT DI KUCHING, SARAWAK

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Received 6 May 2024: Revised 24 June 2024: Accepted 28 June 2024

ABSTRACT

The article investigates the demographic profile of *zakat* recipients in the Kuching District, Sarawak, and analyses the impact of *zakat* distribution on their lives. Based on various demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, occupation type, and housing type, the study successfully identifies key aspects influencing the impact of *zakat* distribution among the *asnaf*. The findings indicate that *zakat* implementation in Sarawak has generally had a positive impact on poverty alleviation and improving the welfare of the *asnaf*. However, the study also identifies several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure *zakat* distribution achieves its goals more comprehensively and effectively. Among these are the needs to enhance the efficiency of data collection on the *asnaf*, improve *zakat* distribution mechanisms, and ensure that *zakat* aid truly reaches the neediest. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of skill development and education programs for the *asnaf*. Such programs are crucial in helping the *asnaf* break free from the cycle of poverty and achieve a more stable and prosperous life. By enhancing their skills and education, the *asnaf* can increase their capacity to generate their own income, thereby reducing long-term dependence on *zakat* assistance. Furthermore, the findings of this study provide valuable insights for *zakat* authorities in Sarawak in formulating more effective *zakat* distribution strategies in the future. It is hoped that *zakat* authorities will strengthen the *zakat* system in Sarawak, ensuring that it continues to function as an effective tool in eradicating poverty and enhancing the welfare of the *asnaf*.

KEYWORDS: ZAKAT DISTRIBUTION, ASNAF WELFARE, DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE, POVERTY ALLEVIATION, DATA COLLECTION EFFICIENCY

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji profil demografi penerima *zakat* di Daerah Kuching, Sarawak, dan menganalisis kesan agihan *zakat* memberi kesan kepada kehidupan mereka. Berpandukan pelbagai faktor demografi seperti umur, jantina, status perkahwinan, jenis pekerjaan, dan jenis kediaman, kajian ini berjaya mengenal pasti aspek-aspek yang mempengaruhi kesan agihan *zakat* di kalangan *asnaf*. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelaksanaan *zakat* di Sarawak secara umumnya telah memberi impak positif dalam usaha membasmi kemiskinan dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan hidup *asnaf*. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian ini turut mengenal pasti beberapa cabaran yang perlu diatasi untuk memastikan agihan *zakat* mencapai matlamatnya dengan lebih menyeluruh dan berkesan. Antaranya ialah

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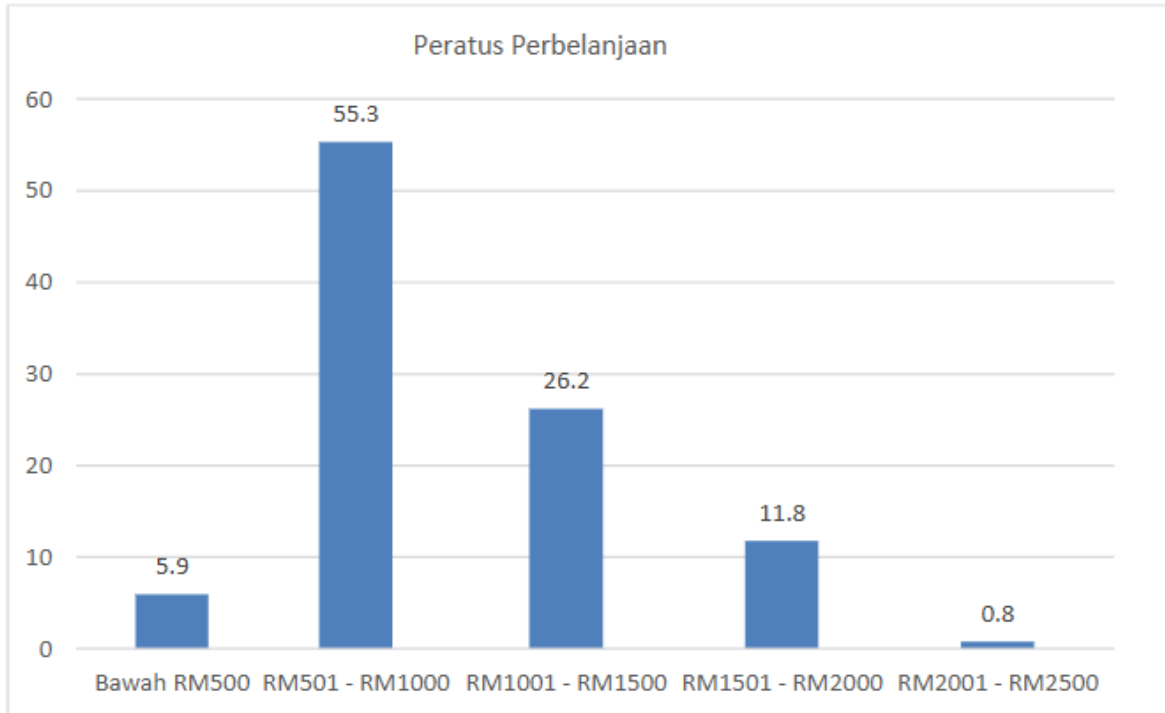
keperluan untuk meningkatkan kecekapan dalam pengumpulan data mengenai asnaf, memperbaiki mekanisme pengagihan *zakat*, serta memastikan bantuan *zakat* benar-benar sampai kepada golongan yang paling memerlukan. Selain itu, kajian ini juga menekankan kepentingan program-program peningkatan kemahiran dan pendidikan bagi asnaf. Program-program sebegini adalah penting untuk membantu asnaf keluar dari kitaran kemiskinan dan mencapai kehidupan yang lebih stabil dan sejahtera. Melalui peningkatan kemahiran dan pendidikan, asnaf dapat meningkatkan keupayaan mereka untuk menjana pendapatan sendiri, sekali gus mengurangkan kebergantungan kepada bantuan *zakat* dalam jangka panjang. Di samping itu, hasil kajian ini juga memberikan pandangan yang berguna bagi pihak berkuasa *zakat* di Sarawak dalam merangka strategi pengagihan *zakat* yang lebih berkesan pada masa hadapan. Dengan itu, diharapkan pihak berkuasa *zakat* dapat memperkukuhkan lagi sistem *zakat* di Sarawak, memastikan ianya terus berfungsi sebagai alat yang efektif dalam membasmi kemiskinan dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan hidup golongan asnaf.

KATA KUNCI: PENGAGIHAN ZAKAT, KEBAJIKAN ASNAF, PROFIL DEMOGRAFI, PENGURANGAN KEMISKINAN, KECEKAPAN PENGUMPULAN DATA

1. PENGENALAN

Dalam rukun Islam yang lima, rukun *zakat* sangat signifikan dengan rukun solat, bahkan hubungan keduanya tidak dapat dipisahkan, sebagaimana dibuktikan penggunaan perkataan *zakat* yang begitu kerap diulang-guna dalam al-Quran seiring dengan perkataan solat sebanyak 28 kali. Hal ini secara tidak langsung menunjukkan keakraban dan hubungan yang signifikan dua perkataan ini khususnya dari sudut kefarduannya (Badarulzaman & Azhar, 2016). Lantaran itu, amalan ber*zakat* bukan sahaja meningkatkan syiar amalan wajib tetapi juga memberikan pemahaman dan falsafah yang penting dalam pembangunan dan peningkatan kualiti hidup masyarakat. *Zakat* dikatakan mempunyai nilai sosioekonomi yang tinggi, selaras dengan fungsinya dalam merapatkan jurang kemiskinan dan membantu mengurangkan kos transaksi kehidupan asas, terutamanya bagi mereka yang mengalami kesulitan hidup yang meruncing (Al-Qardawi, 1981; Badarulzaman & Azhar, 2016). Justeru itu, *zakat* membantu menyerderhanakan kehidupan mereka yang terikat dengan jerat kemiskinan dengan pengisian keperluan asas yang sewajarnya untuk kelangsungan hidup yang ampuh.

Ironinya, dalam konteks Malaysia, terdapat penyelidik seperti Johari (2023) menyatakan bahawa walaupun terdapat peningkatan dalam kutipan dan pengagihan *zakat* di semua negeri, data menunjukkan bahawa ia masih belum digunakan sepenuhnya sebagaimana dilaporkan dalam Laporan *Zakat* 2008 (PPZ, 2009) dan Statistik Agihan *Zakat* Mengikut Negeri (JAWHAR, 2023). Bahkan Ibrahim (2006) yang mengkaji peranan *zakat* bagi memartabatkan kecemerlangan ummah juga menyimpulkan bahawa pengagihan pembayaran *zakat* kurang berkesan. Manakala Wahid and Abdul Kader (2009) dan Raja Ahmad *et al.* (2015) pula menimbulkan persoalan berkaitan masyarakat Islam di Malaysia yang tidak berpuas hati terhadap aspek pengagihan *zakat* oleh institusi *zakat*. Sentimen ini memomokkan fungsi institusi *zakat* yang kurang berkesan dalam pengurusan dana *zakat*. Sementara dalam konteks negeri Sarawak pula, realiti keperluan asnaf fakir dan miskin menjadi tumpuan kajian oleh Abdul Latif *et al.* (2021), dengan menyimpulkan bahawa terdapat golongan asnaf yang masih terbelenggu dengan masalah kemiskinan walaupun telah sekian lama menerima bantuan *zakat*. Dalam konteks ini, kumpulan penyelidik ini, sebagaimana ditunjukkan dalam Graf 1, merumuskan bahawa trend perbelanjaan bagi keperluan asas (daruriyyat) menunjukkan secara keseluruhannya seramai 61.2% responden daripada masyarakat Islam di Sarawak membelanjakan kurang daripada RM1000 sebulan, manakala 38.8% lagi membelanja antara RM1001 hingga RM2500 sebulan bagi keperluan asas tersebut.



GRAF 1: TABURAN PERBELANJAAN MINIMUM KEPERLUAN ASAS (DARURIYYAT)
 Sumber: Dipetik dari Abdul Latif *et al.*(2021)

Justeru itu, sekiranya isu-isu ini dibiarkan, ianya boleh menyebabkan matlamat *zakat* tidak tercapai, mungkin akan berlaku penurunan dalam keyakinan orang ramai dan penyertaan yang lebih sedikit.

Penelitian awal mendapati terdapat beberapa isu negatif yang dilontarkan oleh masyarakat berkaitan dengan aspek agihan *zakat*. Ironinya, meskipun *zakat* seharusnya menjadi alat pembebasan daripada kemiskinan, sebahagian masyarakat masih menyuarakan ketidakpuasan hati terhadap pengurusan agihan *zakat* yang dianggap tidak berkesan. Ini menimbulkan persoalan bagaimana *zakat*, yang diiktiraf sebagai instrumen penting dalam mengurangkan jurang ekonomi, boleh meninggalkan asnaf dalam keadaan kemiskinan yang sama. Kritikan terhadap pengurusan *zakat* termasuklah isu penggunaan dana yang dilihat tidak optimum, tidak strategik, serta kurang menyentuh sasaran sebenar.

Justeru, artikel ini cuba merungkaikan secara lebih mendalam aspek pengagihan *zakat*, khususnya di Kuching, Sarawak, untuk memahami realiti dan punca isu-isu ini timbul berdasarkan perspektif *mustahiq* iaitu golongan asnaf khususnya fakir dan miskin. Dalam konteks Sarawak, istilah fakir berbeza dengan miskin, yakni fakir adalah individu yang tidak memiliki harta atau sumber pendapatan yang mencukupi untuk menampung separuh daripada keperluan hariannya. Pendapatannya kurang daripada 50% keperluan hidup. Manakala, miskin pula adalah individu yang pendapatannya melebihi 50% daripada keperluan harian, tetapi masih tidak cukup untuk menampung semua keperluan asasnya (Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak, 2024).

Apatah lagi penyelidik berpendapat bahawa dalam konteks selepas pandemik Covid-19, kemiskinan masih boleh dianggap sebagai masalah berulang di Sarawak, khususnya dalam kalangan golongan berpendapatan rendah, pekerja tidak formal, nelayan, petani kecil dan peniaga mikro. Walaupun fasa pemulihan ekonomi telah bermula, kesan kehilangan pekerjaan, penurunan pendapatan dan peningkatan kos sara hidup masih dirasai sehingga kini. Keadaan ini lebih ketara di kawasan luar bandar dan separa bandar yang bergantung kepada sektor tradisional. Fenomena ini berlaku secara merata tanpa mengira lokasi dengan kepadatan penduduk Muslim yang tinggi mahupun rendah.

Sehubungan itu, artikel ini menonjolkan perspektif asnaf fakir dan miskin dalam menimbangkan penerimaan mereka terhadap agihan agihan *zakat* yang diperolehi. Untuk itu, perspektif asnaf fakir dan miskin diteliti dari sudut profil mereka yang merangkumi sembilan elemen iaitu umur, jantina, status perkahwinan, jenis pekerjaan, jenis kediaman, jenis kawasan kediaman, jenis sumber air kediaman, jenis sumber elektrik, dan jenis tempat yang dirujuk ketika sakit.

Artikel ini secara amnya adalah merupakan suatu kajian ilmiah yang cuba meneliti dan menganalisis persoalan mengenai hubungan profil responden asnaf fakir miskin terhadap kesan agihan *zakat* di Sarawak. Oleh itu, artikel ini distruktur berdasarkan objektif untuk mengkaji hubungan responden asnaf *zakat* fakir dan miskin terhadap kesan agihan *zakat* di Sarawak khususnya di bahagian Kuching.

2. SOROTAN KAJIAN LEPAS

Teori agihan *zakat* merujuk kepada rangka prinsip syariah yang membimbing proses pengagihan harta *zakat* agar sampai kepada golongan yang benar-benar berhak berdasarkan lapan asnaf seperti yang ditetapkan dalam al-Quran (al-Taubah, 9:60). Ianya berasaskan konsep kecukupan (*had al-kifayah*), keadilan sosial dan keutamaan (*fiqh al-awlawiyyat*) bagi memastikan bantuan yang diberikan bukan sekadar bersifat sementara, tetapi mampu menjamin kelangsungan hidup asnaf dari aspek makanan, tempat tinggal, pendidikan, kesihatan dan keselamatan (al-Qaradawi, 1999; al-Zuhayli, 2002). Melalui pendekatan ini, *zakat* berfungsi sebagai instrumen penting untuk mengurangkan jurang kemiskinan serta menstabilkan sosioekonomi masyarakat Islam.

Dalam masa yang sama, teori agihan *zakat* turut menekankan pendekatan pembangunan dan pemerikasaan ummah, khususnya melalui agihan *zakat* secara produktif seperti pemberian modal perniagaan, latihan kemahiran dan sokongan keusahawanan, dengan matlamat mengubah kedudukan asnaf menjadi individu yang berdikari dan keluar daripada kitaran kemiskinan (Chapra, 2000; Hassan, 2010). Keseluruhan pendekatan ini bergerak seiring dengan objektif utama maqasid al-Syariah yang menekankan pemeliharaan agama, nyawa, akal, keturunan dan harta sebagai asas kesejahteraan sosial dalam Islam (al-Ghazali; al-Shatibi).

Selanjutnya, agihan *zakat* sangat perlu dibuat penilaian impak sebagai aras pengukuran kepada kemajuan pengagihan *zakat* institusi *zakat* di Malaysia dalam melaksanakan program-program pembangunan asnaf dan masyarakat umum (Johari, 2023). Salah satu komponen dalam penilaian impak adalah berkaitan penerima *zakat*. Oleh itu, analisis profil penerima *zakat* dalam kajian kesan agihan *zakat* ini adalah penting kerana ianya memberikan gambaran yang lebih mendalam tentang latar belakang dan keperluan golongan asnaf yang menerima bantuan *zakat*. Dengan menganalisis profil responden, pihak berautoriti *zakat* dapat mengenalpasti dan menetapkan penyesuaian agihan *zakat* berdasarkan keperluan spesifik. Umpamanya, dengan mengetahui profil demografi responden seperti umur, status perkahwinan, tahap pendidikan, dan jenis pekerjaan membolehkan agihan *zakat* disesuaikan dengan keperluan khusus setiap kelompok asnaf. Sebagai contoh, asnaf yang lebih tua mungkin memerlukan bantuan dalam bentuk kesihatan, manakala yang lebih muda mungkin memerlukan bantuan untuk pendidikan atau latihan kemahiran. Dalam hal ini, Abu Bakar and Abd. Ghani (2011) mengesyorkan kepentingan mekanisme pengagihan *zakat* yang lebih berdaya tahan dapat menjadi alat yang paling berkesan untuk menjamin kualiti hidup yang lebih baik bagi penerima manfaat.

Dari satu sisi lain, Nawai and Ruzaiman (2022) memperjelaskan bahawa pengagihan *zakat* memberi kesan positif terhadap peningkatan pendapatan penerima. Selain itu, dana *zakat* juga meningkatkan simpanan penerima, yang merupakan salah satu alat berkesan dalam mengurangkan kemiskinan. Tambahan lagi, dapatan menunjukkan bahawa dana *zakat* boleh dianggap sebagai strategi dalam pembangunan ekonomi. Sehubungan itu, artikel ini juga mengetengahkan perbincangan berkaitan profil responden ini sebagai usaha untuk identifikasi cabaran sosioekonomi. Ia menjurus perbincangan dan analisis profil responden yang membantu mengenal pasti cabaran-cabaran sosioekonomi yang dihadapi oleh golongan asnaf. Ini termasuk memahami keadaan kehidupan mereka, seperti akses

kepada perkhidmatan asas, kesihatan, dan peluang ekonomi. Memahami cabaran ini penting untuk merancang program *zakat* yang lebih berkesan dan menyeluruh.

Dalam masa yang sama, kajian profil ini juga merupakan aktiviti berupa pengukuran impak agihan *zakat*. Lantaran itu, profil responden ini berjaya membantu dalam menilai sejauhmana agihan *zakat* telah memberi kesan kepada kehidupan penerima. Sebagai contoh, ianya boleh mengukur sama ada *zakat* telah membantu dalam meningkatkan taraf hidup mereka atau mengurangkan tahap kemiskinan dalam jangka panjang. Kajian Ibrahim (2008) dan Jehle (1994) dengan jelas membuktikan kesan positif agihan *zakat* dalam memperbaiki ketidakseimbangan agihan pendapatan dalam kalangan asnaf fakir dan miskin.

Tanpa dinafikan juga kajian profil responden asnaf ini dapat meningkatkan tahap kecekapan pengagihan *zakat*. Dengan memahami profil penerima *zakat*, pihak pengurusan *zakat* dapat meningkatkan kecekapan dalam proses pengagihan. Ini termasuk memastikan bahawa bantuan sampai kepada mereka yang paling memerlukan dan bahawa sumber *zakat* digunakan dengan cara yang paling efektif. Dalam hal ini, Wahid *et al.* (2017) menjelaskan bahawa timbul isu ketidakcekapan agihan institusi *zakat* yang merosakkan imej badan pengagih *zakat*. Ia juga merupakan antara salah satu punca yang telah menjejaskan tahap keyakinan masyarakat Islam untuk menjalankan kewajipan membayar *zakat* kepada institusi *zakat*. Ketidakcekapan agihan tersebut boleh dilihat melalui lebihan *zakat* yang tidak diagihkan dan kegagalan institusi *zakat* mengagihkan *zakat* kepada kelapan-lapan golongan asnaf dan tidak mengikut keutamaan asnaf.

Manakala satu segi yang lain, kajian profil ini juga merupakan berfungsi sebagai asas untuk usaha penambahbaikan polisi dan strategi *zakat*. Hasil analisis profil responden dapat digunakan sebagai asas untuk mencadangkan penambahbaikan kepada polisi dan strategi pengagihan *zakat*. Ini termasuk merangka program intervensi yang lebih efektif untuk golongan asnaf dan memastikan bantuan *zakat* benar-benar membawa perubahan positif dalam kehidupan mereka. Perkara ini boleh dikaitkan dengan rumusan Mansor *et al.* (2014) dalam membincangkan isu berkaitan pemerkasaan agihan *zakat* sebagai medium pembangunan masyarakat Islam. Kumpulan penyelidik ini menegaskan bahawa dengan menggunakan pengurusan pengagihan *zakat* yang berkesan, ia akan memberi kesan besar kepada golongan asnaf sehingga mereka boleh menjadi pembayar *zakat*, bukannya hanya penerima. Oleh itu, mereka akan berubah menjadi tenaga kerja produktif yang diperlukan oleh pembangunan ekonomi. Bagi pentadbir, pengagihan *zakat* perlu dilakukan dengan integriti, ketelusan, dan tanggungjawab untuk memastikan kejayaan dalam pengagihan serta menjadikan institusi tersebut terus berwibawa.

Secara keseluruhannya, analisis profil responden adalah langkah kritikal dalam memastikan bahawa agihan *zakat* di Kuching, Sarawak dilaksanakan dengan lebih adil, berkesan, dan memenuhi matlamat pembasmian kemiskinan serta meningkatkan kesejahteraan hidup golongan asnaf.

Kajian zakat di Sarawak

Sungguhpun tidak banyak kajian akademik yang dihasilkan berkaitan dengan *zakat* di Sarawak, namun terdapat beberapa penyelidik yang meneliti dan memperincikan skop kajian ini. Umpamanya kajian sekitar agensi yang mengurus *zakat* di Sarawak iaitu Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak (TBS) boleh dirujuk dalam kajian tulisan Mosbi (2013) yakni kajian ini menerangkan peranan dan kedudukan *zakat* yang ditadbir oleh Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak (TBS). Sementara kajian Abdul Kadir (2013) pula meneliti secara historis peranan Majlis Islam Sarawak dalam pembangunan pendidikan Islam melalui *zakat* bagi tempoh 1955 hingga 1990. Fokus kajian meliputi aspek kutipan, agihan dan pengoptimuman dana *zakat* dalam tempoh 35 tahun.

Dari sudut agihan *zakat*, kajian Abdul Latif (2019) membincangkan mengenai konsep agihan *zakat* yang memisahkan dua golongan fakir miskin yang mempunyai keupayaan dan tiada keupayaan. Konsep ini dilihat jelas meletakkan penentuan kadar agihan kepada skop yang lebih luas dan fleksibel. Kajian susulan boleh dirujuk dalam Abdul Latif *et. al* (2021) yang meneliti realiti keperluan asnaf

fakir dan miskin di Sarawak, menerangkan bahawa kejayaan Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak (TBS) dalam meningkatkan perolehan kutipan *zakat*nya menunjukkan pencapaian yang membanggakan dari tahun 1999 hingga 2011.

Sementara Ag Omar (2019) pula menjelaskan analisis prestasi kecekapan agihan *zakat*: kajian di Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak menerangkan bahawa corak agihan TBS terbahagi kepada dua kategori iaitu agihan bentuk kewangan (jumlah lebihan *zakat*) dan agihan bukan kewangan (mengikut keutamaan asnaf). Perkara ini turut bertepatan dengan Garis Panduan Kadar Agihan Bantuan yang menyatakan bahawa terdapat 42 jenis bantuan yang diberi kepada asnaf di Sarawak.

Manakala Abdul Arrahmanna *et al.* (2022) meneliti mengenai kadar agihan *zakat* dan program pembangunan pendidikan asnaf di Sarawak bagi tahun 2016 hingga 2020 menerangkan bahawa Program Memantapkan Kebajikan Ummah khususnya memberikan bantuan *zakat* secara bulanan kepada asnaf fakir dan miskin. Bagi Mohamad and Wahid (2017) pula mengkaji persepsi dan pandangan terkini masyarakat Islam di Bintulu, Sarawak terhadap TBS. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa masih lagi wujud persepsi yang tinggi dalam masyarakat Islam di Bintulu terhadap TBS namun terdapat tanggapan negatif terhadap pungutan *zakat* di Sarawak yang wujud hasil daripada viral negatif media sosial. Kajian ini mencadangkan agar pihak TBS perlu giat mempromosikan segala maklumat berkenaan gerak kerja yang dilakukan oleh TBS secara lebih teratur. Kajian beliau juga dapat menemukan penemuan baru berdasarkan kesimpulan yang dibuat.

Seterusnya kajian Md Radzi (2020) ini menilai kualiti hidup penerima bantuan *zakat* dalam kalangan asnaf fakir dan miskin di Kuching, Sarawak. Statistik Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak menunjukkan peningkatan jumlah penerima *zakat* dari tahun 2015 hingga 2018, sejajar dengan kedudukan Sarawak sebagai negeri ketiga tertinggi kadar kemiskinan di Malaysia pada tahun 2016. Dapatan menunjukkan bantuan *zakat* berjaya meningkatkan taraf hidup asnaf. Penilaian dibuat berdasarkan konsep masalah Islam dan teori keperluan Maslow sebagai ukuran kualiti hidup.

Selanjutnya kajian Johar and Wah (2024) pula meninjau aspek *zakat* emas dan perak mempunyai peranan penting terhadap kesejahteraan sosial masyarakat. Namun, tahap pengetahuan dan pematuhan terhadap *zakat* ini masih rendah, khususnya dalam kalangan muzakki di Sarawak. Dapatan menunjukkan faktor sikap, sosial dan persepsi merupakan penentu utama pematuhan *zakat*, sekali gus menekankan keperluan pendidikan, penglibatan komuniti dan dasar sokongan.

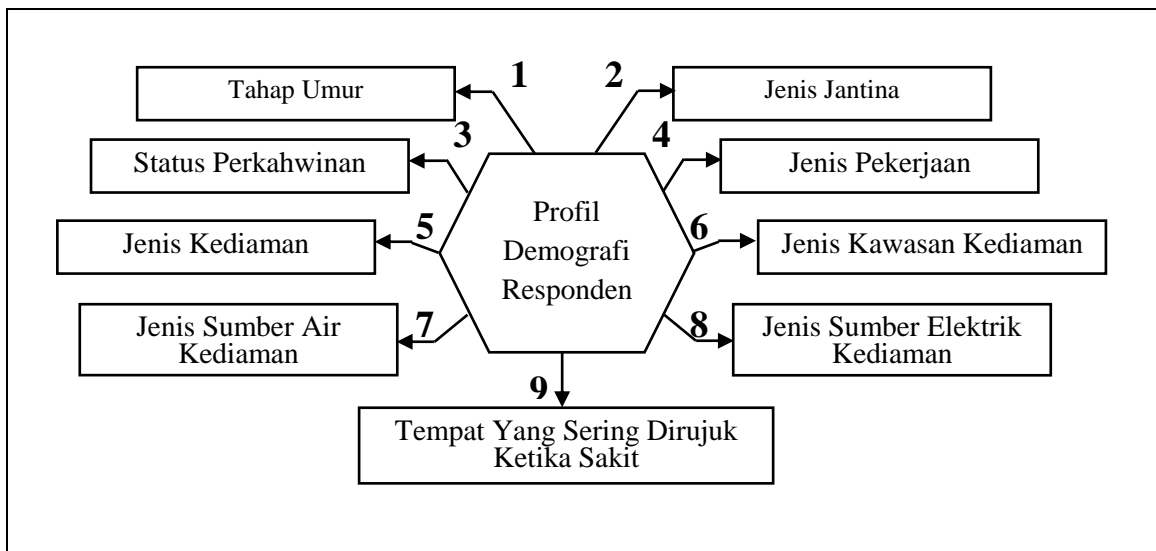
Selain itu, kajian Mohamad and Wahid (2017) pula meninjau persepsi masyarakat Islam terhadap agihan *zakat* oleh TBS dan peranan medium promosi. Kajian ini berobjektifkan untuk mengkaji persepsi masyarakat Islam terhadap institusi *zakat* di Bintulu dalam mengagihkan *zakat* dan perkaitannya dengan peranan medium promosi yang telah digunakan oleh institusi tersebut. Hasil kajian mendapati majoriti masyarakat Islam di Bintulu amat bersetuju TBS telah memainkan peranan yang penting dalam mengagihkan *zakat* dan medium utama yang mereka kerap mendapat maklumat *zakat* adalah melalui *website* dan ceramah.

Kajian Abang Abai *et al.* (2013) pula menilai kesejahteraan hidup golongan mualaf di Kuching, Sarawak dari aspek ekonomi, pendidikan dan sosial hasil pelaksanaan agihan *zakat* oleh Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak. Seramai sepuluh orang mualaf dan dua pegawai TBS ditemu bual melalui kaedah kualitatif berbentuk kajian kes. Dapatan menunjukkan mualaf menerima pelbagai bentuk bantuan kewangan dan pendidikan. Tahap kesejahteraan ekonomi berada pada tahap sederhana, pendidikan masih rendah, manakala aspek sosial memuaskan. Kajian turut menekankan keperluan penambahbaikan promosi dan pengurusan bantuan secara berterusan.

Rumusannya, kajian-kajian lepas menumpu tadbir urus, agihan, persepsi, kesejahteraan asnaf dan mualaf, serta pematuhan *zakat* emas, menunjukkan peranan penting Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak dan keperluan penambahbaikan berterusan dalam pembangunan sosial negeri. Lantaran itu, artikel ini pula memperincikan aspek profil responden dalam agihan *zakat* khususnya di Daerah Kuching Sarawak.

3. METODOLOGI KAJIAN

Dalam konteks artikel ini, penyelidik menggunakan tiga kaedah utama dalam proses pengumpulan dan pemerolehan data. Ianya terdiri daripada kajian perpustakaan (*library research*), kaedah temubual dan kaedah tinjauan. Kaedah temubual dilaksanakan bersama dua orang pegawai yakni *Encik A*, Ketua Bahagian Kebajikan TBS, dan *Encik B*, Bahagian Penyelidikan TBS, dan dibuat pada 24 Ogos 2023, jam 10.30 pagi, di Ibu Pejabat Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak, Lot 3293, Blok 217, North Land District, Jalan Batu Kawa, 93250 Kuching, Sarawak. Selanjutnya artikel ini mengaplikasikan prosedur analisis data, iaitu dengan menjelaskan bahawa penganalisan data perlu dibuat berdasarkan jenis data. Semua data kualitatif dianalisis secara naratif. Proses analisis data kualitatif yang diperolehi melalui dokumen, dan data kuantitatif menggunakan aplikasi SPSS bagi mendapatkan analisis deskriptif terhadap profil responden, yang diperolehi dari data survei. Penentuan saiz minimum sampel berdasarkan Krejcie dan Morgan (1970) yakni jumlah populasi fakir miskin yang menetap di Daerah Kuching adalah (N=800) (Temubual 1, 2023), manakala saiz minimum responden (S=260). Namun, penyelidik telah mengagihkan dan mengumpulkan jumlah tinjauan soal selidik berdasarkan jumlah sebenar populasi iaitu sebanyak 265 responden. Hal ini dilakukan bagi mengambil kira faktor tinjauan soal selidik yang tidak dikembalikan, tidak dijawab dengan lengkap dan *outliers*. Ini bermakna penyelidik membuat kutipan jumlah sampel yang melebihi daripada jumlah taburan tinjauan soal selidik. Sementara elemen-elemen yang diteliti daripada profil responden survei terdiri daripada 9 perkara sebagaimana ditunjukkan dalam rajah di bawah.



RAJAH 1: ELEMEN-ELEMEN PENELITIAN DALAM PROFIL DEMOGRAFI RESPONDEN KAJIAN

Sumber: Olahan penulis

4. PERBNCANGAN DAN DAPATAN

Analisis demografi responden adalah penting dalam kajian kerana ia menyediakan maklumat asas tentang ciri-ciri populasi yang dikaji. Dalam kajian ini, analisis berkaitan demografi responden merangkumi data-data seperti umur, jantina, status perkahwinan, jenis pekerjaan, jenis kediaman, jenis kawasan kediaman, jenis sumber air kediaman, jenis sumber elektrik, dan jenis tempat yang dirujuk ketika sakit. Butiran data-data seperti di atas penting bagi memahami dan mengenalpasti profil responden. Ini membantu penyelidik memahami latar belakang responden, yang boleh mempengaruhi pandangan, sikap, dan tingkah laku mereka terhadap topik kajian. Ini penting untuk menilai sama ada sampel kajian adalah representatif bagi populasi yang lebih besar. Selain itu, butiran data profil responden juga dapat memandu penyelidik untuk mengenalpasti corak dan trend tertentu dalam kumpulan responden. Sebagai contoh, mungkin terdapat perbezaan dalam sikap atau pendapat berdasarkan umur atau jantina, yang boleh memberikan wawasan penting untuk kajian tersebut.

Secara keseluruhannya, analisis demografi adalah elemen penting dalam memastikan kajian dijalankan secara holistik, adil, dan tepat, serta memberikan pandangan yang lebih mendalam mengenai hasil kajian.

Taburan Responden Mengikut Umur

Taburan responden mengikut umur dalam kajian ini adalah sangat penting berdasarkan keperluan dan kepentingan tertentu. Umpamanya, data taburan responden ini menyediakan maklumat mendalam mengenai bagaimana umur boleh mempengaruhi hasil kajian. Ia juga membantu penyelidik memahami komposisi umur dalam sampel kajian. Ini penting untuk memastikan bahawa semua kumpulan umur yang relevan diwakili, terutamanya jika kajian melibatkan populasi yang luas atau mempunyai variasi umur yang besar. Dengan mengetahui dengan jelas profil responden juga penyelidik boleh melakukan analisis perbandingan antara kumpulan umur yang berbeza. Ini membolehkan kajian yang lebih mendalam mengenai bagaimana umur mempengaruhi perspektif, tingkah laku, atau hasil yang dikaji. Dalam kajian ini, taburan responden mengikut tahap umur boleh ditunjukkan dalam Jadual 1 sebagaimana dipaparkan bawah.

JADUAL 1: TABURAN RESPONDEN MENGIKUT TAHAP UMUR

Tahap Umur	Kekerapan	Peratusan
20 tahun dan ke bawah	74	27.9
21 tahun hingga 40 tahun	80	30.2
41 tahun hingga 60 tahun	56	21.1
61 tahun dan ke atas	55	20.8
Jumlah	265	100.0

Sumber: Data soal selidik (2024)

Jadual 1 di atas menggambarkan taburan umur responden dalam kajian ini, yang merangkumi pelbagai kumpulan umur. Daripada 265 orang responden yang terlibat, kumpulan umur yang paling ramai diwakili adalah dari lingkungan 21 hingga 40 tahun, dengan 80 orang atau 30.2% daripada keseluruhan responden. Ini menunjukkan bahawa golongan dewasa muda hingga pertengahan merupakan kumpulan yang paling dominan dalam kajian ini, yang mungkin mencerminkan keberkaitan isu yang dikaji dengan golongan ini atau keterbukaan mereka untuk terlibat dalam soal selidik. Manakala kumpulan umur kedua terbesar ialah 20 tahun ke bawah, yang merangkumi 74 orang atau 27.9% daripada responden. Ini menunjukkan bahawa kajian juga mendapat penyertaan yang signifikan daripada golongan remaja dan belia, yang mungkin mempunyai pandangan atau pengalaman yang berbeza berbanding golongan dewasa. Majoriti golongan ini adalah penghuni rumah kebajikan Islam seperti Lembaga Kebajikan Anak-anak Yatim Sarawak (Peryatim Sarawak).

Seterusnya kumpulan umur 41 hingga 60 tahun menyumbang 21.1% daripada responden, dengan 56 orang dalam lingkungan umur ini. Ini mencerminkan penyertaan yang sederhana daripada golongan yang lebih matang, yang mungkin membawa perspektif yang lebih berpengalaman dalam kajian ini. Akhir sekali, kumpulan umur 61 tahun dan ke atas merangkumi 55 orang atau 20.8% daripada responden. Walaupun merupakan kumpulan yang paling kecil, kehadiran golongan warga emas ini tetap penting kerana mereka mungkin menawarkan pandangan yang berbeza berdasarkan pengalaman hidup yang lebih panjang.

Secara keseluruhannya, taburan responden mengikut umur dalam kajian ini menunjukkan penyertaan yang baik merentasi semua kumpulan umur, dengan kehadiran yang paling tinggi dari golongan dewasa muda. Ini memberi gambaran yang seimbang tentang pandangan dari pelbagai peringkat umur, yang boleh menyumbang kepada dapatan kajian yang lebih menyeluruh dan mewakili populasi yang lebih luas.

Taburan Responden Mengikut Jantina

Seterusnya analisis demografi responden kajian ini dilanjutkan dengan mengkhususkan kepada jenis jantina responden. Data ini adalah penting kerana ia memberikan pemahaman yang mendalam tentang perbezaan atau persamaan pandangan, sikap, dan pengalaman antara lelaki dan wanita. Umpamanya, dengan menganalisis taburan responden mengikut jantina membantu memastikan bahawa kajian ini mengambilkira pandangan dari kedua-dua jantina, yang menjadi faktor mempengaruhi pandangan atau tingkah laku responden terhadap topik kajian. Taburan mengikut jantina membolehkan penyelidik mengenal pasti perbezaan yang signifikan antara lelaki dan wanita, yang mungkin penting dalam memahami fenomena yang dikaji. Secara keseluruhannya, taburan responden mengikut jantina adalah kritikal untuk memastikan kajian yang dijalankan adalah relevan, dan tepat, serta menyediakan data yang boleh membantu dalam memahami dan menangani isu-isu yang berkaitan dengan jantina dalam konteks kajian.

Sehubungann dengan itu, dapatan daripada tinjauan survei menunjukkan taburan yang signifikan terhadap jenis jantina responden. Ia boleh ditunjukkan dalam Jadual 2 di bawah.

JADUAL 2: TABURAN RESPONDEN MENGIKUT JANTINA

Jantina	Kekerapan	Peratusan
Lelaki	102	38.5
Perempuan	163	61.5
Jumlah	265	100.0

Sumber: Data soal selidik (2024)

Jadual 2 menunjukkan taburan responden mengikut jantina dalam kajian ini. Berdasarkan data yang diperoleh daripada tinjauan survei, terdapat perbezaan yang ketara dalam perwakilan jantina di kalangan responden. Dari keseluruhan 265 responden, 163 orang (61.5%) adalah perempuan, manakala 102 orang (38.5%) adalah lelaki. Ini menunjukkan bahawa jumlah responden perempuan adalah lebih tinggi berbanding lelaki, dengan perbezaan sebanyak 23%. Perbezaan ini mungkin mencerminkan minat yang lebih tinggi dalam kalangan perempuan untuk menyertai kajian ini, atau mungkin juga disebabkan oleh faktor lain seperti ketersediaan responden atau relevansi topik kajian kepada mereka.

Taburan ini penting untuk difahami kerana jantina boleh mempengaruhi pandangan, pengalaman, dan sikap terhadap isu yang dikaji. Dengan majoriti responden terdiri daripada perempuan, dapatan kajian ini mungkin lebih mencerminkan pandangan atau pengalaman golongan wanita. Namun, peratusan lelaki yang juga signifikan memberikan dimensi yang penting untuk analisis perbandingan antara kedua-dua jantina.

Secara keseluruhannya, taburan ini menunjukkan bahawa kajian ini telah melibatkan penyertaan yang lebih besar dari kalangan perempuan, yang perlu diambil kira dalam menilai dan menafsirkan hasil kajian. Ini juga memberi peluang kepada penyelidik untuk meneliti perbezaan pandangan atau sikap antara lelaki dan perempuan dalam konteks kajian ini.

Taburan Responden Mengikut Status Perkahwinan

Taburan responden mengikut status perkahwinan dalam tinjauan survei kajian ini adalah penting kerana ia memberikan wawasan yang lebih mendalam mengenai bagaimana status perkahwinan mempengaruhi pandangan, sikap, dan tingkah laku individu. Status perkahwinan adalah salah satu dimensi demografi yang penting kerana ia boleh mempengaruhi banyak aspek kehidupan individu, termasuk ekonomi, sosial, dan psikologi. Dengan mengetahui taburan responden mengikut status perkahwinan, penyelidik dapat memahami kepelbagaian dalam tingkah laku dan sikap antara individu yang berkahwin, bujang, atau duda/janda.

Selain itu, status perkahwinan boleh memberi wawasan penting tentang dinamika keluarga dan sosial dalam populasi yang dikaji. Sebagai contoh, individu yang berkahwin mungkin mempunyai tanggungjawab keluarga yang berbeza berbanding dengan individu yang bujang, yang boleh mempengaruhi pilihan hidup dan pandangan mereka terhadap isu tertentu. Butiran lanjut taburan responden mengikut status perkahwinan dalam kajian ini dipaparkan dalam Jadual 3 di bawah.

JADUAL 3: TABURAN RESPONDEN MENGIKUT STATUS PERKAHWINAN

Status Perkahwinan	Kekerapan	Peratusan
Berkahwin	65	24.5
Bujang	141	53.2
Duda/ Janda	59	22.3
Jumlah	265	100.0

Sumber: Data soal selidik (2024)

Jadual 3 menunjukkan taburan responden mengikut status perkahwinan dalam kajian ini, yang dibahagikan kepada tiga kategori: berkahwin, bujang, dan duda/janda. Data ini memberikan gambaran tentang status perkahwinan responden yang telah menjawab soalan kajian. Daripada 265 orang responden, majoriti terdiri daripada individu yang belum berkahwin (bujang), dengan 141 orang atau 53.2% daripada keseluruhan responden. Ini menunjukkan bahawa lebih daripada separuh responden dalam kajian ini adalah golongan bujang, yang mungkin mencerminkan demografi utama kumpulan sasaran kajian ini.

Manakala sebanyak 65 orang responden atau 24.5% adalah mereka yang sudah berkahwin. Walaupun kumpulan ini tidak sebesar golongan bujang, ianya masih mewakili hampir satu perempat daripada keseluruhan responden, menunjukkan keterlibatan yang signifikan dari kalangan individu yang telah berkeluarga. Sementara kategori ketiga, iaitu duda atau janda, diwakili oleh 59 orang atau 22.3% daripada responden. Walaupun ini adalah kumpulan yang terkecil dalam kajian ini, peratusannya masih cukup besar untuk memberikan pandangan yang bermakna tentang pengalaman dan pandangan golongan ini.

Secara keseluruhannya, taburan ini menunjukkan bahawa kajian ini melibatkan penyertaan yang pelbagai dari segi status perkahwinan, dengan penyertaan terbesar dari golongan bujang. Ini penting kerana status perkahwinan boleh mempengaruhi pandangan dan tingkah laku responden, yang perlu diambil kira dalam analisis dan penafsiran dapatan kajian. Taburan yang seimbang antara kategori-kategori ini juga membolehkan kajian ini memberikan gambaran yang lebih menyeluruh dan tepat tentang populasi yang dikaji.

Taburan Responden Mengikut Jenis Pekerjaan

Selanjutnya huraian demografi kajian mengkhusus kepada taburan responden mengikut jenis pekerjaan. Data-data ini adalah penting kerana ia membantu memahami hubungan antara pekerjaan dan pandangan atau tingkah laku responden. Jenis pekerjaan boleh mempengaruhi tahap pendapatan, akses kepada sumber, dan pengalaman hidup, yang semuanya boleh mempengaruhi respons terhadap soalan kajian. Dengan menganalisis data ini, penyelidik dapat mengenal pasti perbezaan pandangan atau keperluan berdasarkan pekerjaan, yang penting untuk menghasilkan dapatan yang lebih tepat dan relevan. Selain itu, ia membolehkan perbandingan antara kumpulan pekerjaan dan membantu dalam merancang langkah-langkah intervensi atau polisi yang lebih disesuaikan. Butiran lanjut taburan responden mengikut jenis pekerjaan dalam kajian ini dipaparkan dalam Jadual 4 di bawah.

JADUAL 4: TABURAN RESPONDEN MENGIKUT JENIS PEKERJAAN

Jenis Pekerjaan	Kekerapan	Peratusan
Bekerja Sendiri	34	12.8
Penjawat Awam	8	3.0
Swasta	2	0.8

NGO	6	2.3
Tidak Bekerja	215	81.1
Jumlah	265	100.0

Sumber: Data soal selidik (2024)

Jadual 4 menyajikan taburan responden mengikut jenis pekerjaan, menunjukkan dinamika pekerjaan yang beragam di kalangan mereka. Menurut data survei, sebahagian besar responden, iaitu 215 orang atau 81.1%, tidak bekerja. Ini menandakan bahawa survei ini distruktur untuk mendapatkan data dari kalangan asnaf fakir miskin.

Manakala responden yang bekerja sendiri merupakan kumpulan terbesar kedua, dengan 34 orang atau 12.8% dari jumlah responden, mencerminkan keterwakilan dari kalangan usahawan atau individu yang menjalankan bisnis mereka sendiri. Penjawat awam hanya terdiri dari 8 orang atau 3.0% dari responden, menunjukkan penglibatan yang relatif rendah dari sektor ini dalam survei. Sementara itu, pekerjaan di sektor swasta dan NGO masing-masing hanya diwakili oleh 2 orang (0.8%) dan 6 orang (2.3%), yang mengindikasikan penglibatan yang sangat terbatas dari kedua sektor ini. Secara keseluruhan, data menunjukkan bahawa tinjauan survei ini lebih banyak melibatkan individu yang tidak bekerja, yang dapat memberikan pandangan berbeza tentang isu-isu berkaitan agihan *zakat*, dibandingkan dengan mereka yang aktif bekerja. Keberagaman ini penting untuk dipertimbangkan ketika menganalisis hasil survei untuk memahami bagaimana latar belakang pekerjaan mempengaruhi maklum balas dan pandangan responden terhadap isu dan jenis agihan.

Taburan Responden Mengikut Jenis Kediaman

Data taburan responden mengikut jenis kediaman dalam survei kajian ini penting kerana memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana konteks kediaman mempengaruhi pandangan, pengalaman, dan tingkah laku responden. Jenis kediaman seringkali berkorelasi dengan status sosioekonomi. Responden dari rumah berkeluarga mungkin memiliki latar belakang ekonomi yang berbeza dibandingkan dengan mereka yang tinggal di rumah sewa, yang dapat mempengaruhi pendapat mereka tentang isu tertentu. Secara keseluruhan, informasi tentang jenis kediaman memainkan peranan penting dalam membantu penyelidik menginterpretasi dan memanfaatkan data survei dengan lebih efektif, memastikan bahawa keputusan dan rekomendasi yang dibuat berdasarkan hasil survei adalah relevan dan tepat sasaran. Untuk itu, Jadual 5 menunjukkan taburan responden yang menjawab pernyataan kajian mengikut kategori jenis kediaman.

JADUAL 5: TABURAN RESPONDEN MENGIKUT JENIS KEDIAMAN

Jenis Kediaman	Kekerapan	Peratusan
Rumah Keluarga	161	60.8
Rumah Sendiri	56	21.1
Rumah Sewa	26	9.8
Tidak memiliki kediaman tetap	22	8.3
Jumlah	265	100.0

Sumber: Data soal selidik (2024)

Paparan data dalam Jadual 5 di atas menunjukkan informasi mengenai taburan responden berdasarkan jenis kediaman dalam survei ini, yang memberikan gambaran tentang konteks tempat tinggal mereka. Data ini menunjukkan bahawa majoriti responden, iaitu 161 orang atau 60.8%, tinggal di rumah keluarga. Ini mengindikasikan bahawa sebahagian besar responden berada dalam situasi di mana mereka tinggal bersama dengan keluarga inti atau *extended family*. Perkara ini lazim berlaku dalam lingkungan penerima *zakat* terutama dalam dinamika keluarga, dukungan sosial, atau masalah ekonomi.

Selain itu, sejumlah 56 orang atau 21.1% dari responden memiliki rumah sendiri, menandakan sebuah segmen populasi yang mungkin lebih stabil secara kewangan dan memiliki kemandirian tinggi dalam

hal tempat tinggal. Kategori ini penting kerana menunjukkan kelompok dengan tingkat keamanan perumahan yang lebih tinggi, yang juga dapat mempengaruhi aspek lain dari kehidupan mereka seperti tahap kesejahteraan mental dan akses ke prasarana awam. Terdapat juga responden yang tinggal di rumah sewa berjumlah 26 orang atau 9.8%, sebuah kategori yang seringkali mencerminkan tahap mobiliti yang lebih tinggi atau mungkin berhadapan masalah ekonomi tertentu yang menghalangi kepemilikan rumah.

Responden yang tidak memiliki kediaman tetap berjumlah 22 orang atau 8.3%, menunjukkan sekelompok kecil dalam populasi survei yang mungkin menghadapi masalah ekonomi yang berat dalam memiliki rumah sendiri mahupun menyewa rumah. Boleh jadi responden ini hidup dengan menumpang di rumah saudara mara atau rumah kebajikan di bawah seliaan badan bukan kerajaan.

Secara keseluruhan, data ini menyoroti pentingnya memahami konteks kediaman responden dalam menganalisis hasil survei, kerana jenis kediaman mereka dapat memiliki dampak yang signifikan terhadap berbagai aspek kehidupan. Ini memberikan wawasan penting bagi para penyelidik atau pembuat polisi dalam menginterpretasi data dan merancang intervensi yang tepat.

Taburan Responden Mengikut Jenis Kawasan Kediaman

Seterusnya adalah paparan taburan data responden kajian berdasarkan jenis kawasan kediaman, sebagaimana ditunjukkan dalam Jadual 6 di bawah.

JADUAL 6: TABURAN RESPONDEN MENGIKUT JENIS KAWASAN KEDIAMAN

Jenis Kawasan Kediaman	Kekerapan	Peratusan
Bandar	199	75.1
Luar Bandar	48	18.1
Pinggiran Bandar	18	6.8
Jumlah	265	100.0

Sumber: Data soal selidik (2024)

Jadual 6 memberikan gambaran tentang taburan responden berdasarkan jenis kawasan kediaman mereka, yang terbahagi kepada bandar, luar bandar, dan pinggiran bandar. Data ini penting untuk memahami bagaimana konteks geografis dan lingkungan tempat tinggal mempengaruhi pandangan hidup responden dalam survei. Daripada jumlah keseluruhan 265 responden, majoriti besar, iaitu 199 orang atau 75.1%, tinggal di kawasan bandar. Ini menunjukkan bahawa survei ini lebih banyak melibatkan penduduk bandar, yang mungkin memiliki akses yang lebih baik ke berbagai perkhidmatan dan infrastruktur, serta mungkin memiliki pandangan yang berbeza dengan isu-isu seperti pengangkutan, kesihatan, dan pekerjaan, berbanding dengan mereka yang tinggal di luar bandar atau pinggiran bandar.

Manakala sebanyak 48 orang atau 18.1% dari responden tinggal di kawasan luar bandar. Responden dari kawasan ini mungkin menghadapi cabaran yang berbeza termasuk akses terbatas ke beberapa perkhidmatan dan fasiliti awam, yang dapat mempengaruhi pandangan dan jawapan mereka dalam survei. Kategori terakhir, pinggiran bandar, diwakili oleh 18 orang atau 6.8% dari jumlah keseluruhan responden. Kawasan pinggiran bandar sering kali dianggap sebagai zon transisi antara bandar dan luar bandar dan mungkin menggabungkan karakteristik dari kedua jenis kawasan tersebut.

Secara keseluruhan, kebanyakan responden yang terlibat dalam survei ini berasal dari kawasan bandar, yang boleh mencerminkan kecenderungan tertentu dalam pengambilan sampel. Ia penting untuk mempertimbangkan bagaimana perbezaan kawasan kediaman ini dapat mempengaruhi hasil survei, terutama dalam hal akses ke perkhidmatan awam, pola kehidupan, dan masalah sosial yang mungkin berbeza secara signifikan antara kawasan bandar, luar bandar, dan pinggiran bandar. Informasi ini bermanfaat dalam menginterpretasi data dan merencanakan intervensi atau polisi yang sesuai dengan keperluan khusus dari masing-masing kawasan.

Taburan Responden Mengikut Jenis Sumber Air Kediaman

Jadual 7 menunjukkan taburan responden yang menjawab pernyataan kajian mengikut kategori sumber air kediaman, sebagaimana dipaparkan di bawah.

JADUAL 7: TABURAN RESPONDEN MENGIKUT SUMBER AIR KEDIAMAN

Jenis Sumber Air Kediaman	Kekerapan	Peratusan
Air Paip	261	98.5
Tangki Air/ Air Hujan	4	1.5
Jumlah	265	100.0

Sumber: Data soal selidik (2024)

Jadual 7 yang menggambarkan taburan responden mengikut sumber air kediaman memberikan wawasan penting tentang infrastruktur penyediaan air dalam komuniti yang diwakili oleh responden. Dengan 98.5% responden (261 orang) mendapatkan air dari sumber air paip, data ini menunjukkan akses yang luas dan stabil ke sistem air bersih yang terpusat, yang mencerminkan baiknya infrastruktur dan ketersediaan sumber air bersih dalam wilayah tempat tinggal majoriti responden.

Sebaliknya, hanya 1.5% responden (4 orang) yang menggunakan tangki air atau air hujan sebagai sumber air utama. Ini menunjukkan bahawa hanya sebagian kecil dari populasi dalam survei yang mungkin mengalami keterbatasan akses ke sistem penyediaan air yang terpusat atau lebih memilih menggunakan metode alternatif untuk pengumpulan dan penyimpanan air. Lokality kumpulan ini mungkin berkaitan dengan isu-isu seperti kedudukan lokasi geografi yang lebih terpencil, atau keupayaan untuk mendapatkan kemudahan bekalan air bersih.

Penggunaan air paip sebagai sumber air utama dalam survei ini juga mengindikasikan bahawa isu-isu terkait dengan kualiti atau ketersediaan air mungkin kurang menjadi perhatian utama bagi sebahagian besar responden, tetapi 1.5% yang bergantung pada sumber alternatif mungkin menghadapi masalah yang berbeza, termasuk masalah kualiti air, bekalan air yang berterusan, dan keperluan untuk mendapatkan bekalan air yang lebih mandiri.

Secara keseluruhan, data ini penting untuk menunjukkan kepentingan terhadap pihak berkuasa tempatan, dan pembuat polisi infrastruktur dalam menilai keberkesanan perkhidmatan bekalan air dalam merancang intervensi yang dapat meningkatkan akses ke air bersih untuk semua warga.

Taburan Responden Mengikut Jenis Sumber Elektrik Kediaman

Jadual 8 menunjukkan taburan responden yang menjawab soalan kajian mengikut kategori sumber elektrik kediaman. Penyelidik membahagikan jenis sumber elektrik kediaman kepada 2 jenis.

JADUAL 8: TABURAN RESPONDEN MENGIKUT SUMBER ELEKTRIK KEDIAMAN

Jenis Sumber Elektrik Kediaman	Kekerapan	Peratusan
Sambungan dari rumah jiran	2	0.8
SESCO	263	99.2
Jumlah	265	100.0

Sumber: Data soal selidik (2024)

Jadual 8 memberikan wawasan yang jelas mengenai pengagihan sumber elektrik di kediaman responden survei ini, yang mana menunjukkan perbezaan signifikan dalam cara mendapatkan sumber elektrik antara responden. Sebahagian besar responden, iaitu 263 orang atau 99.2%, mendapatkan sumber elektrik mereka langsung dari SESCO (*Sarawak Electricity Supply Company Limited*), yang merupakan penyedia utama sumber elektrik di Sarawak. Ini menunjukkan bahawa hampir semua responden memiliki akses langsung ke infrastruktur elektrik yang stabil dan rasmi.

Di sisi lain, hanya 2 responden atau 0.8% yang mendapatkan sumber elektrik dari sambungan rumah jiran. Ini menunjukkan keberadaan sekelompok sangat kecil dalam sampel yang mungkin menghadapi masalah dalam akses langsung ke sumber elektrik, mungkin kerana masalah infrastruktur atau masalah ekonomi.

Ketergantungan yang sangat besar pada SESCO sebagai penyedia sumber elektrik mencerminkan infrastruktur yang relatif baik dan aksesibiliti perkhidmatan elektrik di kawasan kajian. Namun, keberadaan sejumlah kecil individu yang menggantungkan diri pada sambungan rumah jiran menyoroti perlunya peningkatan infrastruktur atau program bantuan untuk memastikan bahawa setiap individu memiliki akses yang layak dan stabil ke fasiliti elektrik. Data ini penting untuk pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang keadaan sosial dan ekonomi responden serta dapat membantu dalam perencanaan dan pelaksanaan kebajikan awam yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan akses ke utiliti penting seperti elektrik.

Taburan Responden Mengikut Tempat Yang Sering Dirujuk Ketika Sakit

Jadual 9 menunjukkan taburan responden yang menjawab pernyataan kajian mengikut kategori tempat yang sering dirujuk ketika sakit. Penyelidik membahagikan jenis tempat kepada 4.

JADUAL 9: TABURAN RESPONDEN MENGIKUT TEMPAT YANG SERING DIRUJUK KETIKA SAKIT

Jenis Tempat Perubatan	Kekerapan	Peratusan
Farmasi	17	6.4
Perubatan Tradisional	1	.4
Pusat Perubatan Awam	241	90.9
Pusat Perubatan Swasta	6	2.3
Jumlah	265	100.0

Sumber: Data soal selidik (2024)

Jadual 9 menunjukkan keutamaan responden terhadap tempat yang sering dirujuk ketika sakit, memberikan wawasan penting tentang akses dan pilihan fasiliti kesihatan yang tersedia bagi mereka. Paling menonjol, sebanyak 90.9% responden (241 orang) memilih pusat perubatan awam sebagai tempat rujukan utama mereka ketika sakit. Kecenderungan ini menunjukkan tingginya kepercayaan dan ketergantungan pada sistem perubatan kesihatan awam, yang mungkin disebabkan oleh caj perkhidmatan yang mampu bayar, atau boleh jadi diberi secara percuma.

Di sisi lain, hanya 6.4% (17 orang) yang menggunakan sumber farmasi sebagai tempat pertama untuk mencari pertolongan ketika sakit, yang mungkin menunjukkan penggunaan farmasi untuk keadaan yang lebih ringan atau sebagai sarana mendapatkan rawatan cepat tanpa perlu berkonsultasi dengan pegawai perubatan.

Perubatan tradisional sangat jarang digunakan, dengan hanya 0.4% responden (1 orang) yang memilih pilihan ini. Ini menunjukkan bahawa, dalam sampel ini, sangat sedikit orang yang bergantung atau mempercayai metode pengobatan tradisional untuk mengatasi penyakit.

Selain itu, 2.3% responden (6 orang) memilih pusat perubatan swasta, yang mungkin mencerminkan keutamaan untuk perkhidmatan yang mungkin dianggap lebih eksklusif atau persepsi bahawa rawatan di sektor swasta memberikan keuntungan tertentu, seperti waktu tunggu yang lebih pendek atau kualiti perkhidmatan yang lebih baik.

Rumusan dalam bahagian demografi responden kajian ini mengesahkan analisis status sosioekonomi dalam kajian survei adalah komponen penting yang memberikan wawasan mendalam tentang bagaimana faktor ekonomi dan sosial mempengaruhi kehidupan individu dan pandangan mereka. Status sosioekonomi merangkumi aspek seperti pendapatan, pendidikan, pekerjaan, dan tempat tinggal yang semuanya memainkan peranan penting dalam menentukan akses kepada fasiliti awam,

fasiliti kesihatan, pendidikan, dan fasiliti yang lain. Analisis ini membantu penyelidik memahami perbezaan perilaku dan keutamaan di antara kelompok yang berbeza dalam masyarakat, yang mungkin dipengaruhi oleh status sosioekonomi mereka.

5. KESIMPULAN

Kajian ini memberikan pandangan yang mendalam mengenai demografi penerima *zakat* di Daerah Kuching, Sarawak, serta impak agihan *zakat* terhadap kehidupan mereka. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelaksanaan *zakat* di Sarawak telah memberi kesan positif dalam usaha membasmi kemiskinan dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan hidup asnaf. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat beberapa cabaran yang perlu diberi perhatian untuk memastikan agihan *zakat* mencapai matlamatnya dengan lebih berkesan dan menyeluruh.

Pertama, kajian ini mendapati bahawa latar belakang demografi asnaf di Sarawak memainkan peranan penting dalam menentukan keperluan dan impak *zakat* terhadap mereka. Faktor seperti umur, status perkahwinan, jenis pekerjaan, dan jenis kediaman mempengaruhi corak agihan dan penggunaan *zakat*. Oleh itu, pihak yang bertanggungjawab dalam pengagihan *zakat* perlu mengambil kira faktor-faktor ini untuk memastikan agihan *zakat* yang lebih adil dan berkesan.

Kedua, kajian ini turut menekankan kepentingan pengurusan *zakat* yang lebih proaktif dan fokus. Terdapat keperluan untuk meningkatkan kecekapan dalam pengumpulan data mengenai asnaf serta memperbaiki mekanisme pengagihan *zakat* supaya bantuan ini benar-benar sampai kepada golongan yang memerlukan. Ini termasuk memperbaiki sistem rujukan perubatan dan perkhidmatan asas seperti bekalan air dan elektrik, terutama bagi asnaf yang tinggal di kawasan pedalaman.

Ketiga, kajian ini mencadangkan agar pihak berkuasa *zakat* di Sarawak memberi tumpuan kepada program-program peningkatan kemahiran dan pendidikan bagi asnaf. Ini penting untuk memastikan bahawa bantuan *zakat* bukan hanya memenuhi keperluan asas tetapi juga membantu asnaf keluar dari kitaran kemiskinan. Melalui program-program ini, asnaf dapat meningkatkan keupayaan mereka untuk menjana pendapatan sendiri dan mencapai kehidupan yang lebih stabil dan sejahtera.

Secara keseluruhan, kajian ini menekankan kepentingan penambahbaikan berterusan dalam pengurusan dan pengagihan *zakat*. Dengan mempertimbangkan hasil kajian ini, pihak berkuasa *zakat* di Sarawak dapat memperkukuhkan sistem *zakat* mereka, memastikan ia berfungsi sebagai alat yang efektif dalam membasmi kemiskinan dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan hidup asnaf. Cadangan-cadangan yang dikemukakan dalam artikel ini juga diharapkan dapat dijadikan panduan dalam merangka strategi pengagihan *zakat* pada masa hadapan, agar manfaat *zakat* dapat dirasai dengan lebih meluas dan berkesan oleh golongan yang memerlukan.

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Temubual 1:

Shukri bin Samor, Ketua Bahagian Kebajikan, dan Encik Azrul bin Nen, Bahagian Penyelidikan. Sesi temubual pada 24 Ogos 2023, jam 10.30 pagi, di Ibu Pejabat Tabung Baitulmal Sarawak, Lot 3293, Blok 217, North Land District, Jalan Batu Kawa, 93250 Kuching, Sarawak.

**PENEROKAAN KONSEP KADAR SEWAAN SEMASA KE ATAS
HARTA WAKAF MENURUT PANDANGAN FUQAHA**

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Received 21 November 2025: Revised 24 December 2025: Accepted 28 December 2025

ABSTRACT

The State Islamic Religious Councils (MAIN) functions as the sole trustees responsible for the administration of *waqf* assets in Malaysia. Statistics issued by JAWHAR indicate that a wide range of *waqf* lands have been developed, including religious properties such as mosques, cemeteries and *tahfiz* centers, as well as commercial assets such as commercial buildings, rental houses, agricultural land and parking lots. Nevertheless, the rental income generated from these *waqf* properties often falls short of the expenses required for administrative obligations, including assessment tax, land tax and other operational costs. In certain cases, occupants reside on *waqf* land without paying any rent, based on the misconception that *waqf* property should not be subject to rental charges. This conceptual study aims to examine the juristic views (*fuqaha'*) regarding appropriate rental rates and rental durations for *waqf* properties. Adopting qualitative research design, the study employs library-based methods supported by inductive, deductive and comparative analyses. The findings reveal that the *fuqaha'* generally agrees with the imposition of rental rates that align with prevailing market conditions. However, several jurists permit flexibility in determining such rates under specific circumstances. With respect to rental duration, when no specific term has been stipulated by the *waqf* donor (*waqif*), the *fuqaha'* propose a standard rental period of one year while recognising certain concessions (*rukhsah*) that may apply based on contextual considerations.

KEYWORDS: ISLAMIC SOCIAL FINANCE, DEVELOPMENT OF WAQF ASSETS, INVESTMENT OF WAQF ASSETS, RENTAL OF WAQF ASSETS, DURATION OF WAQF LEASE AGREEMENTS.

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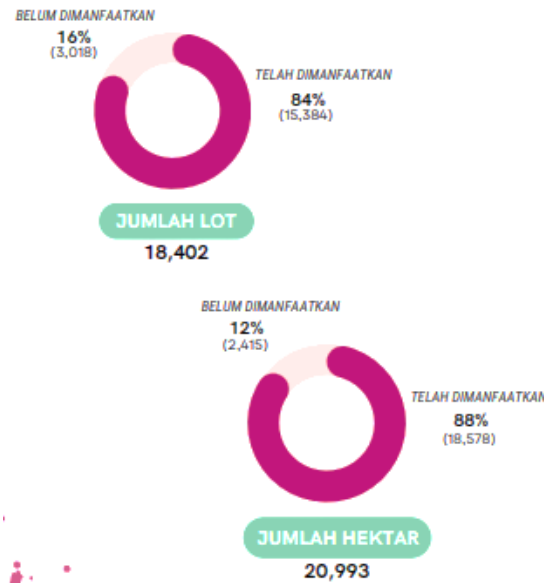
ABSTRAK

Majlis Agama Islam Negeri atau dikenali sebagai 'MAIN' merupakan pemegang amanah tunggal dalam mentadbir harta wakaf yang terdapat di Malaysia. Melalui statistik yang dikeluarkan oleh JAWHAR terdapat banyak tanah wakaf yang telah diusahakan di Malaysia samada berbentuk ibadah seperti masjid, tanah perkuburan dan pusat tahfiz dan juga tanah wakaf yang berbentuk komersial seperti bangunan komersial, rumah sewa, tanah kebun dan lot parking. Akan tetapi hasil sewaan yang diperolehi oleh pemegang amanah wakaf untuk sewaan harta wakaf dilihat tidak memadai dengan hasil yang perlu dibayar untuk urusan pentadbiran seperti cukai pintu, cukai tanah dan sebagainya. Terdapat juga penghuni yang tinggal diatas tanah wakaf secara percuma kerana tidak mahu membayar hasil sewaan kepada pemegang amanah wakaf dengan beranggapan bahawa tanah itu merupakan tanah wakaf dan seharusnya tiada pembayaran sewaan dikenakan terhadap mereka. Kajian konseptual ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui pandangan fuqaha terhadap kadar sewaan semasa serta tempoh sewaan terhadap penyewa keatas harta wakaf mengikut pandangan fuqaha. Kajian ini berbentuk kualitatif dengan menggunakan kaedah kepustakaan untuk melihat pandangan fuqaha tentang isu tersebut. Penggunaan kaedah analisa data secara induktif, deduktif serta komparatif telah diutarakan dalam kajian ini. Secara umumnya fuqaha telah bersetuju menetapkan kadar sewaan semasa terhadap harta wakaf yang disewakan akan tetapi terdapat kelonggaran terhadap kadar sewaan semasa telah diutarakan oleh fuqaha. Begitu juga tentang tempoh had waktu untuk penyewaan harta wakaf sekiranya pewakaf tidak menghadkan satu tempoh yang tertentu. Fuqaha telah menyatakan garis panduan bahawa tempoh yang harus adalah selama setahun akan tetapi terdapat juga rukshah (kelonggaran) yang dibahaskan oleh fuqaha tentang hal berikut.

KATA KUNCI: KEWANGAN SOSIAL ISLAM, PEMBANGUNAN HARTA WAKAF, PELABURAN HARTA WAKAF, SEWAAN HARTA WAKAF, TEMPOH SEWAAN HARTA WAKAF.

1. PENGENALAN

Menurut statistik JAWHAR (2025), sehingga 2023 keseluruhan tanah wakaf yang berjaya direkodkan di Malaysia seluas 20,993 hektar. Gambar rajah 1 menunjukkan sebanyak 12% iaitu hampir 2415 hektar belum dimanfaatkan manakala sejumlah 88% iaitu 18578 hektar telah dimanfaatkan. Tanah yang telah dimanfaatkan di sini menurut JAWHAR adalah tanah wakaf sama ada wakaf am atau wakaf khas yang telah diambil manfaat daripadanya, termasuk yang telah dibangunkan dengan projek pembinaan seperti masjid, surau, sekolah dan lain-lain. Terdapat juga tanah wakaf yang telah digunakan sebagai tanah perkuburan dan yang telah digunakan untuk lain-lain tujuan seperti pertanian, sewaan dan sebagainya. Justeru terdapat pandangan yang mengatakan bahawa aset wakaf seharusnya diberikan secara percuma untuk digunakan tanpa mengenakan sebarang jenis sewaan. Tidak kurang juga mengatakan bahawa ianya harus diberikan sewaan dengan kadar yang lebih murah dari harga semasa memandangkan ianya berupa tanah yang diwakafkan oleh pewakaf. Justeru satu kajian dilakukan dengan melihat pandangan fuqaha dalam menyatakan kadar sewaan yang sewajarnya dikenakan terhadap harta wakaf.



GAMBAR RAJAH 1: STATISTIK TANAH WAKAF SELURUH MALAYSIA

Sumber: Jabatan Wakaf, Zakat dan Haji, 2023

Menurut Muhammad Abu Zahrah (terj. 2007), tugas utama pemegang amanah wakaf (*nazir*) ialah menjaga, membangunkan dan juga memperbaiki kerosakan (sekiranya terdapat pada harta wakaf tersebut) serta memanfaatkannya dengan pelbagai cara yang dibenarkan oleh syarak serta membuat agihan manfaat yang diperolehi dari hasrat wakaf tersebut kepada masyarakat. Pembangunan dalam aspek Islam adalah sesuatu yang bersifat menyeluruh. Ianya merujuk kepada satu proses untuk menyusun (bersifat proaktif) terhadap sesebuah masyarakat atau negara ke arah meningkatkan kualiti hidup manusia. Matlamat asas ibadah wakaf adalah untuk menjadikan aset wakaf tersebut bermanfaat (produktif) *tasbilu al-thamarat* dan hal ini menunjuk kepada aktiviti pelaburan (*istithmar*) dan pembangunan yang mampan terhadap aset wakaf untuk mendapatkan pulangan (*manfaat*). Hasil pulangan tersebut pula akan digunakan sebagai agihan kepada penerima manfaat (*mauquf 'alayh*). Menurut Muhammad al-Tijani (2020), terdapat pelbagai kegunaan konsep pelaburan, antaranya:

1. Membuat pelaburan dengan menggunakan wang untuk sebarang projek.
2. Menggunakan wang untuk satu jangka masa yang panjang.
3. Melabur wang dalam mana mana sekuriti (selain dari kewangan berasaskan riba).
4. Menggunakan wang untuk menubuhkan satu projek yang baharu, atau membangunkan projek yang sedia ada, atau menggantikan dan menaiktarafkan aset yang telah usang.

2. SOROTAN KAJIAN

Menurut Muhammad Uthman Sabir (t.t), pelaburan bermaksud penambahan hasil dan manfaat harta atau berlakunya pembangunan terhadap harta asal dengan tujuan memberikan hasil dan manfaat harta. Dalam aspek fiqh pula ianya membawa maksud satu usaha membangunkan harta yang dimiliki secara syarak dengan menggunakan instrumen-instrumen muamalat Islam seperti konsep *Mudharabah*, *Murabahah*, *Syirkah* dan sebagainya (Mustafa Sanu Qutub, 2000). Menurut Syauqi Abduh Sahi (1985), konsep pelaburan adalah penggunaan harta untuk penghasilan keuntungan sama ada suatu pembentukan modal tambahan yang baharu dengan menggunakan instrumen pelaburan yang dibenarkan oleh syarak sehingga mampu memberi kesan yang positif terhadap masyarakat.

Kaedah pelaburan merangkumi beberapa unsur pengolahan harta asal sama ada penggunaan aset atau penggunaan dana sebagai modal untuk mencipta keuntungan serta mendapat pulangan di kemudian hari. Terdapat juga unsur penambahan dan pembangunan yang berpunca daripada harta asal untuk penghasilan harta yang baharu. Akan tetapi pelaburan yang dibuat hendaklah menepati prinsip-prinsip yang telah digariskan oleh syarak serta mengetepikan unsur-unsur yang dilarang oleh syarak seperti

riba, *gharar* dan *maisyir*. Sebagai contoh, sebuah tanah wakaf yang kurang produktif dibangun dengan sebuah pusat perniagaan komersial untuk tujuan penyewaan kepada penyewa. Tanah wakaf tersebut secara tidak langsung akan mendapat peningkatan nilai dari asalnya sebuah tanah kepada bangunan komersial yang terbina di atasnya. Akan Tetapi bangunan tersebut hendaklah dikawal penggunaannya agar tidak dijadikan tempat yang tidak patuh syariah seperti kelab malam atau tempat perjudian.

Terdapat dalil-dalil yang mengharuskan pelaburan harta dalam Islam. Justeru, Islam menegah sebarang kegiatan penyembunyian harta. Konsep pelaburan dalam Islam bertujuan untuk menjaga serta mengawal agar harta tersebut itu berkembang dan yang lebih penting ianya memberi manfaat kepada umum. Antara dalil-dalil daripada al-Quran yang menyeru kepada pelaburan adalah:

‘Wahai orang-orang yang beriman, sesungguhnya sebahagian besar dari orang-orang alim Yahudi dan rahib-rahib Nasrani benar-benar-benar memakan harta orang dengan jalan yang batil dan mereka menghalang (manusia) dari jalan ALLAH. Dan orang-orang yang menyimpan emas dan perak dan tidak menafkahnnya pada jalan ALLAH, maka beritahukanlah kepada mereka (bahawa mereka akan mendapat) siksa yang pedih. Pada hari dipanaskan emas dan perak itu dalam nereka jahanam, lalu dibakar dengannya di dahi mereka, lambung dan punggung mereka (lalu dikatakan) kepada mereka ‘ Inilah harta bendamu yang kamu simpan untuk dirimu sendiri, maka rasakan sekarang (akibat dari) apa yang kamu simpan’

Surah At-Taubah 10: 34 & 35

Terjemahan ayat berikut jelas menerangkan bahawa Allah telah menegaskan tentang perihal pembekuan harta serta pembalasan yang amat perit terhadap mereka yang melakukan transaksi tersebut. Justeru, timbul satu persoalan adakah harta yang tidak produktif tergolong dalam perihal pembekuan harta?. Menurut Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Ansari (1949), pembekuan harta ini tidak terhad kepada emas dan perak sahaja bahkan ianya meliputi kesemua ketegori harta dan tidak terkecuali terhadap harta wakaf. Justeru, tanah wakaf juga tergolong dalam ketegori harta, sekiranya tanah wakaf ini terbiar tanpa apa-apa manfaat adakah ianya termasuk dalam ketagori pembaziran juga?. Oleh yang demikian dapat kita simpulkan usaha pelaburan terhadap harta wakaf hendaklah dilaksanakan dengan kadar segera agar ianya tidak termasuk dalam ketegori pembekuan harta seperti yang diterangkan diatas.

Firman Allah Taala dalam surah al-Hud yang bermaksud:

Dan kepada (kaum) Tsamud (Kami utuskan) saudara mereka Soleh. Soleh telah berkata kepada : ‘ Wahai kaumku, sembahlah ALLAH, sekali-kali tidak ada bagimu TUHAN selain DIA. DIA (ALLAH) telah menciptakan kamu dari tanah (bumi) dan menjadikan kamu sebagai pemakmurnya.....

Surah Hud 11: 61

Ayat di atas menyatakan perihal memakmurkan bumi Allah dan dalam masa yang sama manusia dijadikan sebagai khalifah Allah di muka bumi serta mempunyai tanggung jawab untuk memakmurkan bumi ini. Wahbah Zuhayli (1991), telah mentafsirkan kalimah *‘wasta’marakum fiha’* sebagai Allah menjadikan manusia sebagai khalifah untuk memanfaatkan bumi (harta) dengan pertanian, perkilangan, pembangunan dan juga perlombongan. Menurut beliau, tanah tersebut (harta) hendaklah diusahakan dan dibangun. Turut memberi tafsir adalah Alusi al-Baghdadi (1985), bahawa usaha memakmurkan bumi dan mengerjakan sebarang kegiatan berbentuk ekonomi merupakan satu pelaburan, ianya meliputi sektor pembuatan, pembinaan, perlombongan dan lain-lain.

Selain dalil dari al-Quran, terdapat juga dalil dari hadis nabi yang turut menjelaskan tentang perihal kepentingan pelaburan harta di dalam Islam. Terdapat Hadith yang telah diriwayatkan oleh al-Tirmizi (t.t) seperti berikut:

'Barang sesiapa yang menjadi wali (penjaga harta) kepada anak yatim, dan pada anak yatim tersebut mempunyai harta, maka hendaklah dia meniadakan (melaburkan) dengannya, dan tidak meninggalkannya sampai termakan oleh sedekah.

Hadis riwayat al-Tirmizi (641)

Satu ketetapan yang telah disarankan oleh hadis di atas terhadap melaksanakan perniagaan atau pelaburan terdapat harta anak yatim yang telah diamanahkan kepada wali (penjaga) harta tersebut agar ianya tidak menjadi terbiar sehingga terhabis disebabkan kewajipan untuk pembayaran zakat. Justeru Ibn Taymiyyah (t.t) dalam *Majmu' Fatawa Ibn Taymiyyah* menerangkan bersandarkan kepada hadis diatas bahawa membiarkan harta tanpa diusahakan (tidak produktif) tanpa alasan yang dibenarkan akan mendatangkan satu kerugian kepada pemiliknya dan juga kesan pembangunan ekonomi secara amnya.

Para fuqaha telah bersepakat menyatakan bahawa pembangunan terhadap harta wakaf adalah wajib samada pewakaf mensyaratkan atau tidak mensyaratkan. Pembangunan ini bertujuan untuk mendapat pahala berterusan dan perkara ini tidak akan terjadi kecuali dengan berlangsungnya *i'marah*. al-Mawsuah (t.t) menerangkan maksud *i'marah* adalah apa yang dibina atau dibangunkan dengannya tempat. Dari segi istilah pula bermaksud membangunkan dengan apa yang berupa bangunan, seperti menghidupkan atau membangunkan semula tanah (yang tidak produktif), mengubahsuai bangunan (yang sedia ada), dan lain-lain yang membaikinya mengikut adat. Menurut al-Zayla'i al-Hanafi (t.t) syarat untuk melaksanakan pembangunan adalah terbukti (*thabit*). Fuqaha al-Hanafiyah telah mewajibkan pembangunan terhadap harta wakaf dilaksanakan oleh pemegang amanah harta wakaf. Mereka bersandarkan kepada hadis *الْخَرَجُ بِالضَّمَانِ* yang bermaksud hasil adalah dengan jaminan. Menurut Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (1990) apa yang dimaksudkan disini adalah hasil wakaf adalah untuk pihak yang diwakafkan, justeru pembangunan juga adalah dibawah tanggungjawab mereka juga (pemegang amanah harta wakaf). Fuqaha al-Malikiyyah pula berhujah dalam Syarah Mukhtasar Khalil seperti berikut, sesiapa yang yang mewakafkan rumah atau seumpamanya kepada seseorang untuk didiami kemudian rumah tersebut mengalami kerosakan dan memerlukan kepada pembaikan, maka pihak pemegang amanah hendaklah memberi pilihan kepada penyewa rumah tersebut untuk membuat pembaikan (terhadap rumah yang telah rosak) atau mengeluarkan penyewa dari rumah tersebut untuk diperbaiki. Ini dilakukan agar dapat dibuat pembaikan oleh pemegang amanah wakaf daripada berlakunya kemusnahan terhadap harta tersebut (Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, 2010). Menurut Wizarah al-Awqaf (2005) pula, menjadi kewajipan keatas nazir untuk membaiki harta wakaf yang rosak samada dari sumber yang disyaratkan oleh pewakaf atau sebaliknya.

Pembangunan terhadap harta wakaf telah diperjelaskan oleh 'Akramah Saed Sobri (2008), menurut beliau tuntutan yang pertama sekali perlu dibuat oleh pemegang amanah wakaf (nazir) adalah membangun serta memelihara, sekiranya harta wakaf ini diabaikan dan tidak dibaikki ianya akan menyebabkan kerosakan dan kemusnahan dan yang lebih ketara kehilangan manfaatnya. Oleh itu, para fuqaha telah bersepakat tentang perihal kepentingan pembangunan wakaf dan menganggapnya sebagai perkara yang amat penting samada pewakaf mensyaratkan demikian atau tidak.

Pada hakikatnya amalan wakaf merupakan satu pelaburan, ini dapat dilihat apabila pewakaf mewakafkan harta beliau dijalan Allah bermakna beliau ingin mendekati diri kepada Allah. Pewakaf juga mengharapkan agar mendapat keredhaan dan juga balasan pahala daripada Allah. Oleh yang demikian, konsep menahan harta asal (modal) merupakan salah satu konsep kaedah pelaburan. Justeru, dapat dilihat harta asal merupakan aset yang harus dipelihara agar berkekalan dan berkembang serta mendatangkan hasil manfaat untuk diagihkan kepada masyarakat. Perkara ini tidak mungkin berlaku sekiranya harta asal tersebut tidak produktif. Oleh yang demikian boleh kita huraikan bahawa amalan berwakaf dan penjagaan harta asal (modal) merupakan satu kegiatan pelaburan di mana seseorang pewakaf akan mendapat pahala amal jariyah di hari akhirat dari Allah.

Konsep untuk melaburkan harta wakaf ini perlu dilaksanakan agar matlamat pewakaf akan terhasil. Sekiranya harta wakaf tersebut tidak dilaburkan maka ianya akan terbiar serta menjadi tidak produktif, dan secara tidak langsung ianya akan mendatangkan satu kerugian dalam melestarikan hasrat pewakaf. Kaedah penyewaan terhadap harta wakaf juga turut dikategorikan sebagai salah satu pelaburan terhadap harta wakaf dan hasil sewaan tersebut dapat memberi manfaat kepada masyarakat Islam khususnya. Tanpa penetapan kadar sewaan semasa untuk harta wakaf tersebut ianya akan membantutkan pendapatan dari harta wakaf dan secara tidak langsung penerimaan manfaat wakaf akan tercicir.

3. METHODOLOGI KAJIAN

Menurut Denscombe (2003) dan Merriam (1988), kebiasaannya dalam mana-mana penyelidikan sains sosial, dua kaedah utama digunakan iaitu kaedah kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif. Secara rasionalnya Siti Hawa and Santhiram Raman (2000) menegaskan bahawa penyelidikan kualitatif menitikberatkan kepada proses dan tiada hipotesis yang akan dibentuk atau diuji. Justeru, kajian ini mampu membentuk suasana yang lebih kondusif dimana kajian boleh dilaksanakan dengan lebih semula jadi. Kajian kualitatif ini lebih cenderung menggunakan kaedah kepustakaan. Menurut Maykut and Morehouse (1994), berbagai cara pengumpulan data dilakukan untuk meraih standard pemahaman informan yang bagus serta menambahkan kredibiliti hasil penyelidikan. Dapat dilihat dalam kajian ini, ianya lebih memfokuskan kepada pandangan fuqaha mazhab yang berhubungkait dengan kadar sewaan semasa terhadap harta wakaf serta tempoh yang sepatutnya dikenakan terhadap penyewa yang menyewa harta wakaf. Selain itu juga, kajian ini turut mengumpulkan bahan-bahan bercetak dan dokumentasi. Dalam kajian ini, beberapa jenis maklumat daripada perspektif yang berbeza mengenai kadar sewaan semasa terhadap harta wakaf dikumpulkan serta dihubungkan agar lebih menjerumus kepada kajian tentang penentuan kadar sewaan semasa terhadap tanah wakaf. Penggunaan kaedah induktif, deduktif serta komparatif data untuk tujuan analisis telah digunakan untuk menjelaskan serta membuat huraian terhadap kajian. Secara tidak langsung nilai sewaan untuk tanah wakaf tersebut dapat ditingkatkan dari semasa ke semasa.

4. DAPATAN KAJIAN

Dalam menentukan kadar semasa bayaran sewaan terhadap aset wakaf, Ibn nujaym dan Imam al-Nawawi telah menyarankan bahawa kadar sewaan terhadap aset wakaf tidak boleh kurang daripada kadar sewaan semasa, atau kadar sewaannya melebihi sedikit daripada kadar sewaan semasa (Zainudin Abu Ishaq, 970H; Abu Barakat Ahmad, 1974; Abu Zakariya Yahya, 1277; Mansur, 1901). Terdapat juga pandangan yang memberikan kelonggaran dalam membahaskan kadar sewaan semasa aset wakaf. Menurut Iman al-Nawawi, kadar sewaan aset wakaf boleh dikurangkan daripada harga sewaan semasa sekiranya pengurangan tersebut diberikan bertujuan untuk menolong golongan usahawan Muslim yang ingin memulakan perniagaan mereka (Abu Zakariya Yahya, 1277).

Ibn Nujaym dan Ibn Abidin pula mempunyai pandangan yang sama tentang kadar sewaan aset wakaf. Mereka berpandangan, kadar pengurangan sewaan aset wakaf boleh dilakukan sekiranya dalam keadaan darurat (Muhammad Amin al-Syamir, 1966). Menurut Ibn Nujaym, terdapat dua situasi darurat yang boleh dibuat pengurangan kadar sewaan aset wakaf. Situasi pertama, apabila aset tersebut akan mendatangkan kerugian sekiranya diberikan sewa dengan harga semasa. Dengan berlakunya kerugian, ianya akan menyebabkan berlakunya pertambahan hutang. Situasi yang kedua, apabila sesebuah aset wakaf tersebut kurang mendapat sambutan kecuali dengan cara merendahkan kadar sewaannya daripada kadar sewaan semasa (Zainudin Abu Ishaq, 970 H).

Selain isu kadar sewaan semasa harta wakaf timbul pula persoalan kedua tentang had tempoh penyewaan terhadap aset wakaf. Adakah aset wakaf boleh disewakan dengan tempoh yang terhad atau pemegang amanah tidak boleh menghadkan tempoh waktu sewaan terhadap aset wakaf. Fuqaha telah bersepakat bahawa diharuskan aset wakaf tersebut dibuat suatu tempoh had masa sewaan yang tertentu (Zainudin Abu Ishaq, 970H; Abu Barakat Ahmad, 1974; Mansur, 1901). Sememangnya tidak

dapat dinafikan apabila pewakaf telah mewakafkan aset beliau kepada nazir, maka akan terputuslah hak pemilikan beliau terhadap harta beliau bertukar menjadi harta wakaf. Akan tetapi, sekiranya pewakaf telah menetapkan syarat khusus terlebih dahulu kepada nazir tentang tempoh penggunaan atau tempoh penyewaan aset wakaf kepada suatu tempoh yang telah dihadkan, pada ketika ini nazir haruslah meraikan syarat pewakaf selagi aset wakaf tersebut tidak berada dalam keadaan darurat. Contohnya, pewakaf telah mengenakan had tempoh bagi individu untuk menyewa aset wakaf selama 2 tahun sahaja. Justeru, sebagai nazir hendaklah meraikan amanah yang telah dikenakan oleh pewakaf.

Sekiranya aset wakaf tersebut berada dalam keadaan darurat, di sini nazir hendaklah memainkan peranan yang sewajarnya dengan memuktamadkan satu keputusan. Keputusan untuk melanjutkan atau mengurangkan tempoh penyewaan aset wakaf akan dibuat oleh nazir sendiri (Abu Barakat Ahmad, 1974; Al-Buhuti, Mansur, 1901; Abu Zakariya Yahya, 1277). Sekiranya pewakaf tidak meletakkan syarat tempoh sewaan aset yang diwakafkannya, di sini terdapat perselisihan pandangan fuqaha. Imam Syarbini menerangkan bahawa tidak sah sewaan terhadap sesebuah aset wakaf melebihi setahun sama ada berupa tanah atau bangunan atau peralatan. Pada pandangan beliau penyewaan aset wakaf yang melebihi setahun dikhuatiri dapat menyebabkan aset tersebut hilang (Syams al-Din Muhamad, t.t.).

Menurut Ibrahim Musa Abi Bakr al-Tarabilusi al-Hanafi (2006), sekiranya nazir melihat terdapat kemaslahatan harta tersebut serta mendapat persetujuan pemerintah, waktu sewaan boleh dilanjutkan melebihi setahun dengan syarat kontrak sewaan tersebut perlulah diperbaharui pada setiap tahun setelah tamat had waktu sewaan. Beliau juga menyatakan bahawa kesemua transaksi tersebut hendaklah dicatat di atas *sakk* dan tempoh sewaan tersebut boleh menjangkau sehingga 20 tahun. Ini bermaksud tempoh sewaan sesebuah aset wakaf boleh dibuat sehingga 20 tahun dengan menggunakan 20 kontrak perjanjian sewaan (*sakk*). Al-Buhuti and Mansur (1901) pula berpandangan, sekiranya pewakaf tidak mengenakan apa-apa syarat kepada nazir tentang tempoh sewaan yang sepatutnya, kesemua urusan tempoh sewaan tersebut diserahkan kepada nazir dan penyewa untuk melihat serta menilai suatu tempoh yang dianggap sesuai untuk proses penyewaan aset wakaf.

5. PERBINCANGAN

Dalam menentukan kadar sewaan terhadap harta wakaf samada berupa tanah wakaf atau bangunan wakaf, jumhur fuqaha telah bersetuju bahawa pengenaan kadar semasa untuk harta wakaf tersebut adalah perlu. Terdapat kelonggaran dalam kadar sewaan semasa ini, yang mana fuqaha al-Hanafiyah melihat ianya perlu dibuat sekiranya harta tersebut berada dalam 2 keadaan darurat. Mereka berpandangan bahawa darurat pertama sekiranya harta wakaf tersebut akan mendatangkan kerugian dengan perlaksanaan sewaan semasa seperti ketiadaan penyewa untuk menggunakan harta wakaf tersebut secara tidak langsung ianya akan menjadi aset yang tidak produktif. Kebarangkalian aset wakaf tersebut akan dieksploitasikan oleh mereka yang tidak bertanggungjawab untuk menggunakannya secara percuma. Situasi darurat kedua pula, harta wakaf tersebut kurang mendapat sambutan sekiranya pemegang amanah wakaf mengenakan harga sewaan semasa. Sekiranya ini berlaku harta wakaf tersebut akan menjadi rosak dan yang lebih parah ianya akan mencalarakan reputasi pemegang amanah terhadap harta wakaf tersebut. Menurut fuqaha al-Syafieyah pula, pengurangan harga sewaan dari harga semasa boleh diberikan kepada usahawan yang baru menceburi dalam bidang perniagaan. Disini jelas kita dapat lihat walaupun jumhur fuqaha bersetuju tentang kadar sewaan harta wakaf hendaklah mengikut harga semasa akan tetapi terdapat *rukshah* (kelonggaran) dalam urusan sewaan terhadap harta wakaf tersebut. Dua aspek yang utama dapat dirungkaikan disini adalah ketika mana darurat yang mungkin akan menjadikan harta wakaf tersebut hilang nilainya dan juga akan menyebabkan harta tersebut akan binasa. Aspek kedua pula diberikan terhadap usahawan yang baru menyewa harta wakaf tersebut atau baru memulakan perniagaan untuk keberlangsungan ekonomi.

Kadar tempoh sewaan terhadap harta wakaf juga telah diperbincangkan oleh fuqaha. Juhur bersetuju untuk mengadakan had tempoh sewaan terhadap harta wakaf tersebut sekiranya tidak dinyatakan oleh pewakaf tentang tempoh sewaan. Sekiranya terdapat tempoh yang telah digariskan oleh pewakaf tentang perihal sewaan, sebagai contoh 2 tahun diperuntukan untuk sewaan harta wakaf tersebut. Maka, pemegang amanah wakaf hendaklah menghormati keputusan pewakaf untuk direalisasikan. Persoalan timbul apabila tiada syarat tempoh sewaan yang dibuat oleh pewakaf asal yang membawa kepada perbincangan dalam hal tersebut. Menurut fuqaha al-Syafieyah, tempoh sewaan terhadap aset wakaf tersebut tidak boleh melebihi setahun. Setelah setahun pemegang amanah wakaf hendaklah membuat pemeriksaan terhadap aset wakaf yang disewakan dan kebarangkalian akan berlaku kenaikan sewaan berdasarkan nilai sewaan semasa sekiranya perlu. Fuqaha al-Hanafiyyah pula agak linear dalam hal ini, mereka berpandangan bahawa tempoh sewaan boleh dilakukan sehingga menjangkau sehingga 20 tahun akan tetapi pembaharuan kontrak sewaan hendaklah dilaksanakan pada setiap tahun. Menurut fuqaha al-Hanabilah, kadar tempoh sewaan terhadap harta wakaf wajar diberikan autoriti penuh kepada dua pihak yang berakad iaitu penyewa dan juga pemegang amanah wakaf. Mereka berpandangan bahawa, kedua-dua yang bertransaksi ini lebih memahami situasi dan juga kaedah untuk kadar tempoh sewaan yang sesuai.

Pengkaji bersetuju dengan pandangan al-Buhuti kerana ianya sesuai untuk diaplikasikan dalam sistem wakaf yang moden sekarang ini kerana hanya penyewa sahaja yang mengetahui had waktu sesuai untuk mereka membuat penyewaan terhadap aset wakaf. Sekiranya berlaku kerosakan terhadap aset wakaf disebabkan oleh kecuaiannya dari belah pihak penyewa, penyewa bertanggungjawab membayar kesemua kos pembaikan setelah dinilai oleh pemegang amanah wakaf. Pada kebiasaan, akad sewaan terhadap aset wakaf tersebut akan terbatal dengan sendirinya apabila berakhir tempoh sewaan terhadap aset wakaf. Setelah tamatnya kontrak sewaan, nazir mestilah menilai sama ada untuk menyambung kembali kontrak tersebut dengan mengekalkan kontrak harga sewaan yang asal ataupun membuat kontrak harga sewaan yang baharu.

Dalam senario ekonomi sekarang beberapa kaedah penyewaan harta wakaf untuk tempoh yang panjang boleh diadaptasikan seperti mana yang telah diamalkan pada zaman *al-Uthmani al-Atrak* seperti penggunaan kaedah *al-hukri*, *al-khuluw* dan juga kaedah *al-Ijaratayn*. Pertama, penggunaan kaedah *akad al-hukri* merupakan suatu akad sewaan untuk mengekalkan status tanah wakaf yang diberi sewa kepada penyewa bagi tempoh waktu yang panjang. Pembayaran sewaan pertama secara penuh akan dibuat oleh pengusaha kepada pemegang amanah wakaf. Jumlah pembayaran sewaan ini hampir menyamai nilai tanah yang sebenar. Pembayaran bakinya pula akan dibuat secara tahunan dalam kadar yang sedikit bagi melengkapkan nilai harga tanah wakaf tersebut. Pembayaran pada peringkat yang kedua ini juga dikenali sebagai *al-mablagh al-ramzi*. Pengusaha akan diberikan hak untuk memanfaatkan kegunaan tanah wakaf tersebut samada beliau ingin membuat binaan ataupun melakukan aktiviti pertanian di atas tanah wakaf. Dengan adanya projek yang dijalankan di atas tanah wakaf, akan membolehkan institusi wakaf mendapat imbuhan sewaan daripada pengusaha. Pembayaran wang kepada pemegang amanah wakaf dibuat setelah mendapat persetujuan kadar sewaan bersama di antara dua pihak yang bertransaksi. Tempoh waktu untuk sewaan sesebuah tanah wakaf secara *al-hukri* boleh menjangkau sehingga tempoh maksimum 99 tahun. Pembatalan akad *al-Hukri* ini boleh berlaku sekiranya terdapat kemusnahan pada tanah wakaf ataupun berlaku kemusnahan terhadap bangunan yang dibina di atas tanah wakaf tersebut.

Kaedah kedua pula, penggunaan kaedah *al-Khuluw* terhadap harta wakaf yang bertujuan untuk membaiki kedai (aset wakaf) dengan menggunakan modal penyewa. Pemegang amanah wakaf tidak akan mengeluarkan wang modal mereka sendiri untuk membaiki aset wakaf yang rosak seperti bangunan komersial. Kaedah ini merupakan suatu kaedah pembiayaan umum yang dilakukan sendiri oleh penyewa bangunan wakaf. Penyewa akan menggunakan wang mereka terlebih dahulu untuk tujuan pembaikan bangunan wakaf, oleh yang demikian penyewa mempunyai hak penggunaan manfaat terhadap bangunan yang telah dibaikinya. Penyewa juga boleh mewakafkan bangunan wakaf yang dibaikinya ataupun mendiaminya sendiri. Penyewa juga berhak menyewakan kembali bangunan wakaf yang dibaikinya kepada penyewa lain (pihak ketiga). Pembayaran kadar sewaan terhadap kedai

wakaf tersebut boleh dilakukan dengan mengikut nilai sewaan semasa atau kurang sedikit daripada nilai semasa (selagi mana tidak terdapat penyewa yang lain yang ingin menyewa kedai tersebut).

Manakala kaedah ketiga pula merupakan kaedah *al-Ijaratayni* yang telah diperkenalkan kepada penyewa yang ingin membaik pulih bangunan-bangunan wakaf rosak disebabkan oleh berlakunya kebakaran pada zaman tersebut di Sepanyol. Ianya dinamakan *al-Ijaratayni* kerana transaksi tersebut merangkumi dua bahagian pembayaran sewa. Pembayaran sewaan yang pertama dibuat secara pembayaran penuh yang digunakan untuk memulakan projek pembangunan dengan nilai kurang daripada harga tanah. Pembayaran sewaan yang kedua pula dilakukan secara berperingkat untuk setiap tahun bagi tempoh masa sewaan tanah itu berlangsung. Pembayaran pendahuluan ini dikenali sebagai *key money* atau *furnishings and fixtures money*.

Ketiga-tiga kaedah diatas lebih mirip kepada kaedah pajakan tanah wakaf kepada pengusaha dan kaedah ini telah dilaksanakan terhadap pembangunan tanah wakaf yang melibatkan pembiayaan daripada pihak swasta terhadap dengan Majlis Agama Islam Pulau Pinang (MAINPP) yang melibatkan tanah wakaf Majoodsaw di negeri Pulau Pinang. Tanah wakaf Majoodsaw (seksyen 16) terletak di jalan Macalister, Georgetown mempunyai keluasan 21,290 kaki persegi adalah milik pewakaf daripada keluarga Majoodsaw (Fatteh Mahomed, Chandra Meah & Mahomed Ibrahim Khan). Keadaan asal tanah wakaf keluarga Majoodsaw (sebelum dibangunkan) berupa sebuah rumah UMNO negeri Pulau Pinang dan terdapat beberapa buah kubur dipersekitarannya. Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Pulau Pinang (MAINPP) telah melihat pembinaan kompleks pejabat merupakan bangunan yang paling sesuai dibina di atas tanah tersebut, memandangkan tanah tersebut terletak di Geogretown (ibu negeri Pulau Pinang). Pihak MAINPP sebagai tuan tanah telah meminta kerjasama daripada pihak syarikat swasta untuk tujuan pembinaan kompleks pejabat 21 tingkat di atas tanah wakaf Majoodsaw. Pembangunan ini telah melibatkan kerjasama dari syarikat swasta iaitu Amanah Capital Partners Berhad. Syarikat Amanah Capital Berhad akan mengeluarkan kos projek pembangunan sebanyak RM 33 juta untuk membiayai keseluruhan pembinaan tersebut. Pembangunan ini dibuat menggunakan konsep *build, operate & transfer* (B.O.T). Sebagai balasan kepada Amanah Capital Berhad (pemodal), bangunan yang telah siap dibina akan diberikan tempoh konsesi selama tempoh 99 tahun. MAINPP pula akan mendapat pulangan berupa 2 tingkat bangunan tersebut secara percuma yang menempatkan pejabat pentadbiran MAINPP. Keseluruhan bangunan yang siap dibina kelak akan menjadi milik MAINPP selepas tamat tempoh pajakan (99 tahun).

Perkara yang sama juga telah dilaksanakan oleh Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur (MAIWPKL) terhadap pembangunan tanah wakaf secara komersil telah dirancang oleh MAIWPKL terhadap tanah wakaf yang terletak di lot 168 & lot 169 di Jalan Perak, Kuala Lumpur memandangkan tanah tersebut sangat berpotensi memberikan pulangan yang tinggi kepada MAIWPKL. Tanah wakaf tersebut merupakan milik seorang saudagar kain dari India iaitu Allahyarham Dawjee Dadabhoy. Harta beliau telah diserahkan kepada MAIWPKL melalui '*vesting order*' yang telah dikeluarkan oleh Mahkamah Tinggi Kuala Lumpur pada 18 September 1991.

Keputusan ini dibuat setelah mahkamah melihat tiada terdapat pewaris bagi tujuan mewarisi tanah tersebut. Tanah wakaf di lot 168 & lot 169 merupakan sumber hasil yang terbesar yang diperolehi oleh MAIWPKL dengan hasil sewaan tahunan sebanyak RM 180,000.00 setahun (sebelum dibangunkan). Tanah wakaf tersebut bernilai RM 34 juta yang terletak berhampiran dengan menara berkembar Petronas telah dibangunkan untuk dijadikan sebuah bangunan komersil. Projek pembinaan bangunan menara setinggi 34 tingkat yang dikategorikan sebagai bangunan gred (A) telah mula dibina pada Oktober 2007 dan siap pada Feb 2011 dengan menggunakan kaedah *istisnā'*. Hasil usaha sama ini melibatkan Lembaga Urusan Tabung Haji (LUTH) bersama MAIWPKL juga menggunakan kaedah B.O.T (*build-operate-transfer*). Pihak LUTH telah melantik anak syarikatnya TH Technologies Sdn. Bhd. sebagai kontraktor untuk tujuan pembangunan di atas tanah wakaf tersebut. Pihak MAIWPKL pula menerima pembayaran wang pajakan tanah wakaf yang berjumlah RM 56.6 juta daripada LUTH secara berperingkat untuk tempoh 25 tahun.

Setelah bangunan menara tersebut siap, TH Technologies Sdn. Bhd. akan menyerahkan bangunan menara kepada LUTH untuk urusan penyewaan. Memandangkan LUTH telah diberikan hak konsesi terhadap bangunan tersebut untuk tempoh 25 tahun, pihak LUTH berhak ke atas semua hasil sewaan yang dihasilkan oleh bangunan wakaf untuk tempoh konsesi tersebut. BIMP telah menjadi penyewa utama bangunan tersebut dengan menggunakan 30 tingkat daripada keseluruhan bangunan. Bangunan tersebut bakal diserahkan keseluruhannya kepada pihak MAIWPKL setelah tamat tempoh 25 tahun. Bermula tahun yang ke-26 MAIWPKL akan mengambil alih keseluruhan pentadbiran menara 34 tingkat. Segala pembayaran sewa setiap lot bangunan itu akan menjadi milik MAIWPKL. Melalui inovasi penggunaan kaedah sewaan yang lama ini (pajakan) akan membolehkan tanah wakaf yang dibuat pembinaan di atasnya memperolehi pendapatan yang aktif.

6. KESIMPULAN

Kaedah sewaan harta wakaf merupakan salah satu kaedah pelaburan yang mampu memberi pendapatan yang pasif kepada pemegang amanah wakaf khususnya di Malaysia. Pemegang amanah wakaf akan mendapat hasil sewaan secara bulanan dan berpotensi mendapat keuntungan modal jangka panjang apabila berlaku peningkatan terhadap aset wakaf tersebut. Justeru pemegang amanah wakaf perlulah aktif dalam mengenalpasti aset-aset wakaf yang mampu menjana ekonomi dan bersikap proaktif dalam memajukan nilai sesebuah harta wakaf. Kebanyakan harta wakaf yang dikawal selia oleh pemegang amanah wakaf berupa tanah atau bangunan yang diwakafkan. Sekiranya bangunan tersebut berada dalam keadaan yang daif adalah menjadi tanggungjawab pemegang amanah wakaf untuk membuat penambahbaikan agar bangunan tersebut dapat disewakan dengan nilai sewaan sesama. Pemegang amanah wakaf juga hendaklah merekodkan dengan jelas tanah-tanah wakaf yang berpotensi untuk dibuat sewaan seperti sawah, kebun dan ladang atau untuk tujuan membuat bangunan dengan menggunakan dana wakaf tunai. Kadar sewaan semasa aset wakaf hendaklah dikenakan terhadap harta wakaf yang disewakan kepada penyewa. Bukan setakat itu sahaja, pemegang amanah wakaf hendaklah memastikan penyewa membuat pembayaran sewaan seperti yang telah dimetrai mereka. Sekiranya berlaku keingkaran terhadap pembayaran sewaan tindakan yang tegas hendaklah diambil terhadap penyewa, ini kerana harta wakaf merupakan harta milik Allah dan hasil dari sewaan tersebut kelak boleh disalurkan untuk membantu ummah Islam dalam dan luar negara. Limitasi kajian ini agak terbatas kerana kebanyakan Majlis Agama Islam Negeri tidak mempunyai data yang komprehensif terhadap lokasi tanah-tanah wakaf yang mereka selia. Justeru pemegang amanah wakaf hendaklah membuat penambahbaikan terhadap sistem pendaftaran tanah wakaf di negeri masing-masing. Dengan wujudnya satu sistem pendaftaran tanah wakaf yang komprehensif seperti pengenalan *system profiling*, ia dapat membantu Majlis Agama Islam Negeri menguruskan tanah-tanah wakaf ini dengan lebih terancang, sistematik dan baik.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This manuscript is part of a study on Pengurusan Pembangunan Tanah Yang Terbiar Dengan Menggunakan Kaedah Pelaburan Patuh Syariah (Sukuk) by Lembaga Zakat Negeri Kedah (LZNK) (SO Code 21863). We would like to thank IPIZ, LZNK, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Research Management Centre of UUM and all parties that contributed to making this research project feasible.

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**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT
POLICIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN MALAYSIA AND
SWEDEN**

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Received 17 September 2025: Revised 11 November 2025: Accepted 27 January 2026

ABSTRACT

This article presents a comparative analysis of public sector employment policies for persons with disabilities in Malaysia and Sweden, with the objective of identifying key differences, challenges and best practices that influence inclusive employment outcomes. Using a qualitative comparative methodology, the article examines policy documents, legislation and statistical reports from both countries to assess how legal frameworks and implementation strategies impact the inclusion of persons with disabilities in public employment. The findings reveal that while Malaysia has established legal provisions such as employment quotas and accessibility standards, significant barriers remain due to limited enforcement, negative societal attitudes and insufficient support services. In contrast, Sweden demonstrates a more comprehensive and proactive approach, supported by strong anti-discrimination laws, accessibility measures and employer incentives, resulting in higher employment rates for persons with disabilities. The analysis highlights the role of cultural perceptions, legal structures and social support systems in shaping policy effectiveness. The article concludes that Malaysia can enhance its public sector inclusion by adopting stronger enforcement mechanisms, fostering attitudinal change and drawing on Sweden's integrated policy approach. Promoting meaningful employment for persons with disabilities is essential for achieving equitable societies and strengthening public sector diversity.

KEYWORDS: *DISABILITY, PUBLIC SECTOR, INCLUSIVITY, EMPLOYMENT, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES*

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membentangkan analisis perbandingan dasar pekerjaan sektor awam bagi orang kurang upaya di Malaysia dan Sweden, dengan objektif mengenal pasti perbezaan utama, cabaran serta amalan terbaik yang mempengaruhi hasil pekerjaan terangkum. Melalui penggunaan metodologi perbandingan kualitatif, artikel ini meneliti dokumen dasar, perundangan dan laporan statistik dari kedua-dua negara untuk menilai bagaimana kerangka undang-undang dan strategi pelaksanaan memberi kesan terhadap penyertaan orang kurang upaya dalam pekerjaan sektor awam. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa walaupun Malaysia telah mewujudkan peruntukan undang-undang

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seperti kuota pekerjaan dan piawai kebolehcapaian, halangan ketara masih wujud akibat penguatkuasaan yang terhad, sikap negatif masyarakat dan kekurangan perkhidmatan sokongan. Sebaliknya, Sweden menunjukkan pendekatan yang lebih komprehensif dan proaktif, disokong oleh undang-undang anti-diskriminasi yang kukuh, langkah kebolehcapaian dan insentif kepada majikan, yang menghasilkan kadar pekerjaan lebih tinggi bagi orang kurang upaya. Analisis ini menekankan peranan persepsi budaya, struktur undang-undang dan sistem sokongan sosial dalam membentuk keberkesanan dasar. Artikel ini merumuskan bahawa Malaysia boleh meningkatkan inklusiviti sektor awam dengan memperkukuh mekanisme penguatkuasaan, memupuk perubahan sikap dan mencontohi pendekatan dasar bersepadu Sweden. Pemerkasaan peluang pekerjaan adalah sangat bermakna untuk orang kurang upaya adalah penting bagi mencapai masyarakat yang adil serta memperkukuh kepelbagaian sektor awam.

KATA KUNCI: *KETIDAKUPAYAAN, SEKTOR AWAM, KETERANGKUMAN, PEKERJAAN, ORANG KURANG UPAYA*

1. INTRODUCTION

The imperative of ensuring equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities within the public sector constitutes a cornerstone of modern social justice and inclusive governance (Kamarudin *et al.*, 2014). The employment of person with disabilities displays an integral part of our country's commitment to equality and social inclusion as well in economic participation for this community. The commitment to disability rights is underscored by international frameworks, most notably the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which explicitly mandates the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities across all facets of life (Naicker *et al.*, 2019). While Malaysia became a signatory to the CRPD on 8 April 2008 and has demonstrated significant domestic efforts through the introduction of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 to protect this minority group, (Md Tah, 2013) the discussion on the Act enforceability remains debatable. Sweden formally ratified the CRPD on December 2008 and the Convention was ratified by the European Union which Sweden is a member to the Union (Janhager, 2019). Public sector employment is particularly significant for persons with disabilities due to its potential to offer stable, well-regulated and socially impactful career paths, thereby fostering economic independence and social inclusion (Khoo *et al.*, 2013). The dynamic in public sector employment for person with disabilities may differs considerably when compared to the private sector as the employers is driven to the incentives that may influence the inclusivity of its employment practices for this minority group (Rosli & Rizal, 2024). Apart from the incentives mechanism, the Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR) has operated an online job-matching and placement platform known as SPOKU (Jamil, 2018). The system facilitates employment access by enabling registered persons with disabilities to search for available positions while allowing employers to post suitable vacancies targeted to this group. Even though with the incentives and the establishment of enacted act, the employment of person with disabilities in the private sector remains comparatively low despite the positive attributes demonstrated by this group (Noor, 2018).

Where both states are parties to the Convention, the obligations under its articles must be clearly observed, despite persistent criticisms regarding the enforcement of domestic legislation concerning the employment of this minority group, particularly in Malaysia (Saidi, 2018). Article 27 of the CRPD, focusing on work and employment, emphasises the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others, including the right to opportunities to gain a livelihood by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities (Khoo *et al.*, 2013). Article 5 of the CRPD reinforces the principles of equality and non-discrimination, requiring state parties to prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee to persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds. Inclusive public sector policies are not merely a matter of legal compliance but are intrinsically linked to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 8, which advocates for decent work and economic growth for all. Thus, the integration of persons with

disabilities into the workforce is critical for fostering diverse, innovative and representative public services that effectively address the needs of all citizens (Dewi *et al.*, 2020).

The public sector, as a major employer and a symbol of national values, plays a crucial role in setting standards for disability inclusion (Manaf *et al.*, 2019). By actively recruiting, retaining and promoting individuals with disabilities, governments can demonstrate a commitment to equality and inspire similar actions in the private sector (Leslie, 2024). Moreover, the employment of persons with disabilities in public service enriches the workforce by bringing diverse perspectives, experiences and skills that can enhance problem-solving and decision-making processes (Buyl *et al.*, 2022). This commitment extends beyond mere compliance with legal mandates; it embodies a proactive approach to fostering a society where every individual, regardless of their abilities, has the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress (World Health Organisation, 2015). The principles enshrined in Article 3 of CRPD, such as respect for inherent dignity, equality of opportunity and accessibility, guide the development and implementation of policies aimed at removing barriers and promoting the full participation of persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2006). It also creates a new rights discourse and makes human rights more obtainable for persons with disabilities (Harpur, 2011). The implementation of these policies necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, as well as the development of targeted strategies that address specific barriers to employment.

Under the legal framework of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008, specifically section 29 of the act where person with disabilities are guaranteed the right to equal access to employment. This protection applies not only to the private sector but also to the public sector, ensuring that persons with disabilities are afforded equal opportunities across all employment settings. In Malaysia, a total of 674,548 persons with disabilities (PWDs) were registered with the Department of Social Welfare as of 2022. This cumulative numbers representing approximately 2.0% of the national population and among the different categories, physical disabilities accounted for the highest number of registrations, with 245,015 individuals, followed by learning disabilities (236,972 individuals) and visual impairments (59,143 individuals) while speech impairments had the lowest registration rate, with a total of 3,509 individuals (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). As of 2022, a total of 3,724 persons with disabilities were employed in the public sector, comprising 2,195 male and 1,529 female workers. This figure represents less than 1% of the total Malaysian workforce, highlighting the limited participation of this group in public service employment.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF CIVIL SERVANTS WITH DISABILITIES BY SERVICE GROUP, CATEGORY OF DISABILITIES AND SEX, MALAYSIA, 2020-2022

	Year	Total	Visually Impaired	Hearing	Physical	Learning Disabilities	Speech	Mental	Multiple
Total Sum	2020	3,675	775	319	2,579	72	35	24	54
	2021	3,694	785	322	2,554	88	37	26	59
	2022	3,724	795	331	2,551	99	34	34	56
Top management	2020	5	1	1	3	-	-	-	-
	2021	4	1	1	2	-	-	-	-
	2022	4	-	3	1	-	-	-	-
Management & Professional	2020	1,187	354	119	680	34	8	9	20
	2021	1,233	374	121	694	38	10	10	24
	2022	1,258	384	128	698	39	10	12	23
Support	2020	2,483	420	199	1,896	38	27	15	34
	2021	2,457	410	200	1,858	50	27	16	35
	2022	2,462	411	200	1,852	60	24	22	33
Male / Total	2020	2,189	437	186	1,602	20	17	15	26
	2021	2,183	428	183	1,590	29	19	14	26
	2022	2,195	430	184	1,589	36	19	17	25
Top Management	2020	4	1	1	2	-	-	-	-
	2021	3	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
	2022	3	-	2	1	-	-	-	-
Management & Professional	2020	601	191	50	354	5	4	6	7
	2021	612	193	49	360	9	5	5	7
	2022	643	202	51	375	10	7	6	7
Support	2020	1,584	245	135	1,246	15	13	9	19

	2021	1,568	234	133	1,229	20	14	9	19
	2022	1,549	228	131	1,213	26	12	11	18
Female / Total	2020	1,486	338	133	977	52	18	9	28
	2021	1,511	357	139	964	59	18	12	33
	2022	1,529	365	147	962	63	15	17	31
Top Management	2020	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	2021	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	2022	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Management & Professional	2020	586	163	69	326	29	4	3	13
	2021	621	181	72	334	29	5	5	17
	2022	615	182	77	323	29	3	6	16
Support	2020	899	175	64	650	23	14	6	15
	2021	889	176	67	629	30	13	7	16
	2022	913	183	69	639	34	12	11	15

Notes:

1. Status of appointment as per Warrant
2. Data exclude Police and Military
3. An officer can have more than one category of disability

Source: Department of Public Services (Year: 2020-2022)

Within this context, the objective of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis of public sector employment policies for persons with disabilities in Malaysia and Sweden. Recognising both countries are parties to the CRPD with different socio-economic and legal systems, the contrast allows for a clearer identification to highlight the gaps in the legislative and best measures for the implementation of employment policies for person with disabilities in Malaysia. As a developed European country, Sweden is subject to dual monitoring both by the United Nation and the European Union (S. L. Ashalatha, 2024). These dual-layered enforcement highlights best potential practices that could be adapted to strengthen Malaysia's public sector inclusion of person with disabilities. By examining the legal frameworks, policy instruments and implementation mechanisms in both countries, this study seeks to identify key differences, challenges and best practices that shape inclusive employment outcomes. The analysis aims to provide critical insights into how Malaysia can strengthen its public sector inclusivity by learning from Sweden's integrated and proactive approach, thereby ensuring that persons with disabilities are afforded meaningful opportunities to participate fully in the workforce.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing research on disability-inclusive employment policies presents a multifaceted landscape, highlighting both progress and persistent challenges in Malaysia and Sweden. Malaysia, despite having enacted the Persons with Disabilities Act in 2008 and establishing a 1% employment quota for persons with disabilities in the public sector via Public Service Circular No. 3/2008, still faces considerable hurdles in effective implementation and enforcement (Zahari *et al.*, 2020). Academic studies and government reports indicate that negative perceptions among employers, accessibility issues and a lack of adequate training and support systems continue to impede the employment prospects of persons with disabilities in Malaysia (Manaf *et al.*, 2019). In addition, studies suggest that the application of the acts and legislation should be comprehensive covering all types of public buildings in Malaysia (Kamarudin *et al.*, 2014). Further, despite various awareness initiatives, many employers remain hesitant to hire this group due to inability to provide appropriate system and facilities at workplace for person with disabilities (Maideen, 2023).

The United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific have consistently advocated for intensified efforts in Malaysia, emphasizing the criticality of comprehensive awareness campaigns to combat societal stigma and misconceptions surrounding disability (Jaafar *et al.*, 2020) (Zahari *et al.*, 2020). Research reveals a significant gap between policy formulation and practical application, with many public sector organisations struggling to meet the mandated quota (Wickenden, 2023). The country signed the Convention of Rights of Person with Disabilities and put oath to promote, protect and ensure the full

and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities (Zahari *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, Sweden, recognised as a leader in disability rights and social welfare, has implemented a range of progressive policies aimed at promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce (Ombati, 2022). The Swedish Discrimination Act (2008:567) serves as a cornerstone of this framework, explicitly prohibiting discrimination based on disability across various domains, including employment, education and access to goods and services (Bjørnshagen *et al.*, 2023). The Swedish Agency for Government Employers plays a pivotal role in guiding and supporting public sector entities in their efforts to create inclusive workplaces (Bjørnshagen *et al.*, 2023). Academic literature and reports from organisations such as the European Disability Forum highlight Sweden's proactive recruitment practices, accessibility audits and comprehensive support services as key factors contributing to its relatively high employment rates among persons with disabilities (Sharma & Mehra, 2020). Sweden has published a set of buildings and urban rules and regulations that make the whole physical environment accessible to all (Shahraki, 2020). The theoretical framework underpinning these policies often draws upon the social model of disability, which emphasises societal barriers and attitudes as primary factors contributing to the exclusion of persons with disabilities.

Comparing the approaches of Malaysia and Sweden reveals distinct contrasts in policy implementation and outcomes. While Malaysia has made legislative strides, challenges persist in translating these policies into tangible improvements in the employment rates and experiences of persons with disabilities (Hussein & Yaacob, 2012) (Kamarudin *et al.*, 2014). However, Sweden demonstrates a more robust and integrated approach, characterised by comprehensive legal frameworks, proactive employer engagement and a commitment to accessibility and support services (Tøssebro, 2016). The existing literature underscores the importance of addressing both attitudinal and systemic barriers to employment.

Based on the reviewed literature, it is evident that while substantial research exists on disability inclusion in both Malaysia and Sweden, comparative studies focusing specifically on public sector employment policies remain limited. Previous studies have often concentrated either on general disability rights or on accessibility issues, without fully addressing how legal frameworks, implementation mechanisms and cultural perceptions interact to influence employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. For example, Hao and Li (2020) argue that the anti-discrimination legal framework is undermined by vague definitions of disability and discrimination, while the quota system remains ineffective because enforcement is weak and employers sometimes prefer to pay fines rather than hire people with disabilities. Saleh and Bruyère (2018) highlight that demand-side policies must leverage employer interests, such as recruitment, retention and meaningful workplace inclusion, to improve employment for people with disabilities. In addition, Rezai *et al.* (2023) find that negative organisational climates and employer biases are among the most persistent obstacles to inclusive work. Meanwhile, Xue and Chen (2025) demonstrate that despite legal mandates, stable recruitment norms persist, leading to what they term “quarantined enforcement,” where courts avoid challenging discriminatory hiring practices by government-linked entities. Together, these studies suggest that legal frameworks, implementation mechanisms, and cultural perceptions must be understood as deeply interconnected in shaping real employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Therefore, this article seeks to address this gap by providing a comparative analysis of Malaysia and Sweden, with the aim of identifying challenges, best practices and lessons that can inform more effective disability-inclusive employment policies in the Malaysian public sector.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative comparative analysis approach to examine and contrast employment policies for persons with disabilities in the public sector in Malaysia and Sweden. Qualitative comparative analysis is a systematic and rigorous method used to identify causal relationships and patterns across different cases based on the comparison of qualitative data (Dewi *et al.*, 2020). In this

context, it allows for a nuanced understanding of how different policy configurations and contextual factors contribute to varying levels of inclusion and employment outcomes for persons with disabilities in the two countries. The methodology focuses on in-depth analysis of policy documents, legislation and statistical reports from both countries (Johannesson & Schmid, 1980). Official government websites, policy papers, legal documents and international reports constitute the primary sources of information (Iravani *et al.*, 2021). For Malaysia, key documents include the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008, Public Service Circular No. 3/2008, guidelines from Public Service Department (JPA) and statistical data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia and JPA Annual Reports. For Sweden, relevant materials encompass the Discrimination Act, policies of the Swedish Agency for Government Employers and Arbetsförmedlingen, statistical data from Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Agency for Participation and reports from the European Disability Forum. Arbetsförmedlingen is the Swedish Public Employment Service and function as a government agency for facilitating employment, providing vocational guidance, and supporting both job seekers and employers in Sweden.

The selection of Malaysia and Sweden as case studies is purposeful and strategic. Malaysia, as a developing country, provides insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing disability-inclusive employment policies in a context marked by resource constraints, cultural norms and evolving legal frameworks. Sweden, on the other hand, represents a developed welfare state with a long-standing commitment to social inclusion and disability rights, offering a benchmark for progressive policy approaches and outcomes. The comparison between these two countries allows for the identification of best practices, policy gaps and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of employment policies for persons with disabilities.

Data collection involves gathering relevant policy documents, legislation, statistical reports and scholarly articles from both Malaysia and Sweden. For Malaysia, key sources include the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008, Public Service Circular No. 3/2008, guidelines from Public Service Department (JPA) and statistical data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia. For Sweden, relevant sources include the Discrimination Act (2008:567), policy documents from the Swedish Agency for Government Employers and statistical data from Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Agency for Participation.

The cumulative number of persons with disabilities registered under the Malaysian Department of Welfare has increased to 8.6% from 621,248 in 2021 to 674,548 in 2022 and from this figure, the physical disability category recorded the highest registration of 245,015 persons, followed by learning disability category (236,972 persons) and the visually impaired (59,143 persons) while speech recorded the lowest registration of 3,509 persons (Department of Social Welfare, 2022).

TABLE 2: CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF REGISTERED PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWD) BY CATEGORY OF DISABILITIES AND STATE, MALAYSIA, 2020-2022

State	Year	Total	Visually Impaired	Hearing	Physical	Learning Disabilities	Speech	Mental	Multiple
Malaysia	2020	586,558	52,111	40,319	213,716	201,355	2,996	48,644	27,417
	2021	621,248	55,112	41,819	227,032	213,592	3,204	51,599	28,890
	2022	674,548	59,143	43,962	245,015	236,972	3,509	55,064	30,883
Johor	2020	68,685	5,504	4,417	25,357	23,294	364	6,467	3,282
	2021	72,368	5,840	4,567	26,737	24,580	383	6,855	3,406
	2022	77,850	6,280	4,767	28,479	27,022	422	7,269	3,611
Kedah	2020	51,260	5,461	3,401	20,185	15,220	323	4,254	2,416
	2021	54,216	5,756	3,551	21,471	16,036	347	4,485	2,570
	2022	58,661	6,185	3,713	23,086	17,833	374	4,740	2,730
Kelantan	2020	41,545	3,779	2,569	12,777	15,491	273	4,533	2,123
	2021	44,167	3,976	2,712	13,742	16,477	289	4,741	2,230
	2022	48,136	4,276	2,853	14,876	18,437	310	5,017	2,367
Melaka	2020	27,054	1,996	2,363	10,644	8,983	125	2,060	883
	2021	28,450	2,112	2,469	11,238	9,455	135	2,131	910
	2022	30,467	2,259	2,593	11,976	10,366	141	2,198	934
Negeri Sembilan	2020	26,758	2,062	1,892	10,742	8,494	90	2,165	1,313
	2021	28,275	2,186	1,970	11,378	8,938	100	2,310	1,393

	2022	30,434	2,358	2,066	12,165	9,811	111	2,446	1,477
Pahang	2020	34,163	3,073	2,018	12,696	12,323	202	2,179	1,672
	2021	36,257	3,302	2,080	13,556	12,969	220	2,354	1,776
	2022	39,511	3,572	2,193	14,563	14,463	243	2,578	1,899
Pulau Pinang	2020	34,003	3,421	2,633	14,278	10,136	117	2,135	1,283
	2021	35,884	3,580	2,732	15,139	10,695	122	2,282	1,334
	2022	38,467	3,805	2,870	16,169	11,685	125	2,408	1,405
Perak	2020	51,458	4,500	3,393	18,757	16,941	191	5,227	2,449
	2021	54,485	4,788	3,517	20,111	17,776	211	5,559	2,523
	2022	58,920	5,145	3,716	21,903	19,329	238	5,934	2,655
Perlis	2020	7,464	796	384	2,576	2,486	74	859	289
	2021	7,984	832	404	2,746	2,710	80	907	305
	2022	8,799	891	441	2,963	3,100	88	981	335
Selangor	2020	95,101	7,084	6,272	38,213	31,852	388	6,324	4,968
	2021	100,835	7,535	6,466	40,342	34,153	407	6,691	5,241
	2022	111,095	8,200	6,890	44,333	38,289	450	7,228	5,705
Terengganu	2020	28,961	2,575	2,330	8,768	11,696	144	2,083	1,365
	2021	30,753	2,733	2,420	9,309	12,424	155	2,249	1,463
	2022	32,975	2,883	2,493	9,838	13,667	173	2,370	1,551
Sabah	2020	37,623	3,232	2,746	10,350	15,858	316	2,875	2,246
	2021	39,751	3,392	2,845	10,985	16,755	340	3,029	2,405
	2022	43,210	3,597	3,007	11,682	18,686	371	3,267	2,600
Sarawak	2020	39,246	4,542	2,665	11,320	14,291	231	4,556	1,641
	2021	41,731	4,780	2,744	12,120	15,258	241	4,839	1,749
	2022	45,349	5,084	2,861	13,236	16,848	264	5,190	1,866
WP Kuala Lumpur*	2020	41,421	3,950	3,151	16,571	13,380	133	2,831	1,405
	2021	44,199	4,163	3,252	17,657	14,412	151	3,067	1,497
	2022	48,596	4,462	3,407	19,219	16,346	175	3,333	1,654
WP Labuan	2020	1,816	136	85	482	910	25	96	82
	2021	1,893	137	90	501	954	23	100	88
	2022	2,078	146	92	527	1,090	24	105	94

* Includes WP Putrajaya

Sources: Department of Social Welfare (Year: 2020-2022)

Meanwhile, in Sweden, according to Section 5 of the Sweden Discrimination Act 2008 defined disability as permanent physical, mental or intellectual limitation of a person's functional capacity that as a consequence of injury or illness existed at birth, has arisen since then or can be expected to arise. Additionally, any temporary limitations of a person's functional capacity are not a disability within the meaning of this section. Thus, from the definition, the three categories of disability recognised under the legal framework of this Sweden Discrimination Act 2008 are permanent physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities and other permanent mental or psychological disabilities. Besides the Sweden Discrimination Act, a reform act known as Act Concerning Support and Service to Persons with Certain Functional Disabilities (LSS) was introduced in 1994. The three categories of groups entitled for personal assistance are; (1) Persons with intellectual disability, autism or autism-like conditions; (2) Persons having a significant and permanent intellectual disability because of brain injury in one's adult life due to external violence or body illness; (3) Persons with other permanent physical or intellectual disabilities that are not due to normal ageing (Askheim, 2025).

The analysis involves a detailed examination of the content, scope and implementation mechanisms of the policies. The collected data will be analysed using a combination of content analysis and comparative analysis techniques. Content analysis will be used to identify key themes, provisions and approaches within the policy documents and legislation. Comparative analysis will involve comparing and contrasting the policies and implementation strategies of Malaysia and Sweden.

4. FINDINGS

Malaysia: Policies and Outcomes

Malaysia's commitment to promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities is reflected in its policy landscape, which includes the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 and Public Service Circular No. 3/2008 (Khou et al., 2020). The Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 serves as the primary legislation aimed at protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and promoting their participation in society (Rahmat et al., 2021). The Public Service Circular No. 3/2008 mandates a 1% employment quota for persons with disabilities in the public sector (Zahari et al., 2020). The Malaysian government has reinforced the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 with the MS 1184:2014 Universal Design and Accessibility in the Built Environment, which determines the accessibility standards for public and commercial buildings (Jaafar et al., 2020).

Despite these policy measures, challenges persist in achieving meaningful employment outcomes for persons with disabilities in the public sector. Statistics from the Department of Statistics Malaysia and JPA Reports reveal that the employment rate of persons with disabilities in the public sector remains below the mandated quota. This indicates a gap between policy intent and actual implementation (Dewi et al., 2020). Several factors contribute to this gap, including attitudinal barriers among employers, lack of awareness about the capabilities of persons with disabilities and inadequate support services for both employers and employees (Maulana et al., 2020).

Various agencies play a role in supporting the employment of persons with disabilities in Malaysia. Department of Social Welfare Malaysia is responsible for providing support services and vocational training to persons with disabilities (Amin et al., 2024). Social Security Organisation (SOCSSO) offers employment incentives and rehabilitation programs to encourage the hiring of persons with disabilities (Arshad et al., 2022). TalentCorp promotes diversity and inclusion in the workforce, including initiatives to attract and retain persons with disabilities (Anal et al., 2021). Despite these efforts, coordination challenges and resource constraints limit the effectiveness of these agencies in achieving significant improvements in employment outcomes for persons with disabilities (Kim et al., 2025).

While the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 and MS 1184:2014 establish accessibility standards for buildings, many Malaysian landlords view ramps and braille signage as optional rather than essential features (Yusoff et al., 2025). Many HR managers are hesitant to hire people with disabilities because they are worried about workplace disruption and additional management burden (Krishnasamy et al., 2025). Developers view accessibility features as cost centers rather than value-added components (Ismail & Zulkurnain, 2019). The implementation of Civil Servant recruitment for people with disabilities in 2018 carried out some problems such as they cannot apply to general formations and the special formations provided do not match their educational background (Mughtar et al., 2020).

Sweden: Policies and Outcomes

Sweden has made significant strides in promoting the employment of persons with disabilities through a comprehensive legal and policy framework. The Discrimination Act (2008:567) prohibits discrimination based on disability in various areas, including employment (Parchomiuk et al., 2024). The Swedish Agency for Government Employers plays a crucial role in promoting diversity and inclusion in the public sector, providing guidance and support to government agencies in implementing disability-inclusive employment practices (Ruželé et al., 2024). Arbetsförmedlingen, the Public Employment Service, offers specialised services to assist persons with disabilities in finding and maintaining employment (Bates et al., 2023). Sweden has taken the most prominent steps to adapt its cities to the needs of the disabled and its standards can be a good example (Shahraki, 2020).

Sweden's proactive recruitment practices and accessibility audits demonstrate a commitment to creating an inclusive work environment for persons with disabilities (Baroudi & Haidar, 2025). Statistics from Statistics Sweden, the Swedish Agency for Participation and the European Disability

Forum indicate relatively high employment rates for persons with disabilities in the Swedish public sector compared to other countries (Carlsson *et al.*, 2021). However, challenges remain, including addressing attitudinal barriers, promoting career advancement opportunities and ensuring reasonable accommodations in the workplace (Ruželė *et al.*, 2024). Sweden has been working to harmonise the definition of disability for data collection purposes, to accurately reflect the lived experiences of persons with disabilities (Perez & Crowe, 2021).

Sweden provides state support to employers that hire people with disabilities through wage subsidies (Boman *et al.*, 2020). The wage subsidies cover a part of the employer’s costs for salary, social security contributions and other costs (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2017). The wage subsidies for people with disabilities can last up to 4 years (Jacobsen *et al.*, 2024).

The comparison of disability-related employment policies, implementation practices, and outcomes between Malaysia and Sweden is illustrated in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3: COMPARISON SUMMARY BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND SWEDEN

Component	Malaysia	Sweden
CRPD Status	Ratified in 2010; Optional Protocol not ratified.	Ratified CRPD and Optional Protocol; integrated into domestic law.
Primary Legislation on PWD Rights	Persons with Disabilities Act 2008; non-punitive and no legal remedies.	Discrimination Act 2008 – enforceable; prohibits discrimination; includes duty to accommodate.
Public Sector Employment Framework	Public Service Circular No. 3/2008. The circulars and guidelines; not legally binding.	The Swedish Agency for Government Employers regulations legally require equality measures and accessibility.
Quota System	1% quota (policy only); no penalties; low achievement.	No quota; inclusion driven by enforceable rights.
Reasonable Accommodation	Encouraged in policy; not a legal duty.	Legal obligation under Discrimination Act.
Accessibility Requirements	MS 1184:2014 Universal Design and Accessibility in the Built Environment, but not uniformly mandated; varies by ministry.	Mandatory universal design for buildings, digital services, and recruitment.
Support for PWD Employees	SOCSSO with employment incentives and TalentCorp promote inclusion but with limited resources.	State-funded wage subsidies, workplace adaptations, job coaches.
Representation in Public Sector	Generally below 1% target.	Higher representation; public sector as model employer.
Approach to Inclusion	Quota-based, soft enforcement.	Rights-based from Act and enforcement agency, legally enforceable.
Overall Effectiveness	Moderate progress; hindered by non-binding rules.	High effectiveness due to strong legal framework.

Source: Table by Authors

In summary, the employment of persons with disabilities in Malaysia is predominantly promoted by enacted act and through policy incentives and quota-based system particularly in public sector. Efforts have centered on promotional and supportive measures, such as the implementation of

accessibility guidelines for buildings, which provide a framework to facilitate this minority group participation in the workforce. Despite these initiatives, enforcement mechanisms remain relatively weak, limiting the practical impact of these policies. In Sweden, a robust legal framework exists to guarantee the rights of person with disabilities in employment. However, challenges persist in addressing attitudinal barriers and other factors that affect the effective implementation of employability measures, particularly within the public sector.

5. DISCUSSION

Malaysia and Sweden represent distinct approaches to promoting the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector, shaped by their socio-economic contexts, legal frameworks and cultural norms. Sweden's comprehensive welfare state model emphasises universal access to employment opportunities and social support services, underpinned by a strong legal framework and proactive policies (Lewin, 2004). Malaysia's approach is characterised by a combination of legislative measures, policy initiatives and agency-led programs, but faces challenges in implementation and enforcement (Azmi *et al.*, 2021). While Sweden has seen considerable success with its labor market policies, other European countries have not had the same results (Delsen & Veen, 1992).

Sweden's anti-discrimination law can be used to protect people with disability from discrimination in employment (Raache & Ataouat, 2024). This anti-discrimination law covers all aspect of employment including support at the workplace in assertive technologies or physical adaptation through the government or municipalities (Bratan T, 2020). In contrast, Malaysia relies on policies like the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 to protect PWDs (Rai, 2016). The social model of disability, which is very important to Sweden, views disability as a social construct that is made worse by barriers in society (Jemon *et al.*, 2021), while the charity model, which is still common in Malaysia, views disability as a personal problem (Yusoff *et al.*, 2025).

Malaysia's approach to disability inclusion in the public sector reflects a developing country context, characterised by resource constraints, capacity limitations and attitudinal barriers (Zahari *et al.*, 2020). Sweden's approach reflects a developed welfare state context, characterised by robust legal frameworks, comprehensive social support services and a strong commitment to equality and inclusion (Österholm *et al.*, 2025). The comparison of employment policies in Malaysia and Sweden reveals important lessons for promoting disability-inclusive employment practices in different contexts.

6. IMPLICATIONS/CONTRIBUTIONS

The study underscores the importance of comprehensive legal frameworks, proactive policies and multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving meaningful progress towards the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector. Malaysia and Sweden have different ways of handling employment policies for people with disabilities in the public sector. Sweden's approach is based on a strong welfare state model and a dedication to equality, which is shown in its anti-discrimination laws and proactive initiatives (Östlund & Johansson, 2018). Malaysia, on the other hand, deals with difficulties such as a lack of resources, gaps in execution and deeply ingrained prejudices, even though it has legislation and policies in place (Lan *et al.*, 2019).

The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2008 and the Public Service Circular No. 3/2008, which mandates a 1% employment quota, show Malaysia's dedication to addressing disability inclusion (Zawawi *et al.*, 2023). However, problems such as a lack of suitable accommodations, insufficient enforcement procedures and persistent societal prejudices impede the program's efficiency (Dewi *et al.*, 2020). Sweden's Discrimination Act and the Swedish Agency for Government Employers, on the other hand, show the country's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Sweden's Arbetsförmedlingen provides specialised services to help people with disabilities find and keep jobs and its proactive hiring practices and accessibility audits show that it is dedicated to creating an inclusive workplace (Östlund & Johansson, 2018).

Sweden's strong legal framework, comprehensive social support services and strong commitment to equality and inclusion are reflected in its approach, which is consistent with a developed welfare state context (Giraldo, 2024). The employment rate of people with disabilities in the public sector is higher in Sweden than in Malaysia, according to data from Statistics Sweden, the Swedish Agency for Participation and the European Disability Forum (Johar *et al.*, 2022). To improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the public sector, Malaysia can draw lessons from Sweden's experiences and implement targeted reforms.

First, Malaysia should harmonise the different definitions of disability used by various government agencies and adopt a social constructive framework to address discriminatory practices in the education and employment sectors. Secondly, Malaysia should increase monitoring and enforcement of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 to ensure compliance by public sector organisations. Thirdly, Malaysia should develop targeted training and awareness programs to address misconceptions and biases among employers and co-workers. Fourthly, Malaysia should enhance collaboration between government agencies, employers and disability organisations to promote effective implementation of inclusive employment policies.

Moreover, Malaysia can establish partnerships with organisations like TalentCorp and SOCSO to offer people with disabilities job-specific training, internships and job placement services. Malaysia should enhance accessibility audits in public buildings, drawing inspiration from studies on universal design implementation (Kadir & Jamaludin, 2018). Also, Malaysia should make sure that people with disabilities are involved in the design and execution of accessibility projects in order to meet their unique requirements. In addition to structural improvements, Malaysia's public sector needs to tackle deeply ingrained cultural prejudices. This requires promoting diversity and inclusion programs that change attitudes and encourage a more accepting workplace culture.

7. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should focus on assessing the long-term impact of employment policies on the career advancement and overall well-being of persons with disabilities in both Malaysia and Sweden. Longitudinal studies could examine the factors that contribute to successful employment outcomes and identify best practices for promoting disability-inclusive workplaces (Hau & Rashid, 2023). Additional research could explore the experiences of individuals with different types of disabilities in the public sector, as well as the intersection of disability with other social identities such as gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

Furthermore, comparative studies could examine the effectiveness of different approaches to disability inclusion in other countries with diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts. More research is needed to determine how well Malaysia's commercial complexes are accessible, particularly in light of flaws like subpar solutions, subpar materials, unclear standards and lax enforcement (Hashim *et al.*, 2012). A greater comprehension of these obstacles will facilitate the creation of focused treatments and the prioritisation of resources for accessibility enhancements.

However, this study is subject to several limitations. First, the analysis relied primarily on secondary sources such as policy documents, legislation and statistical reports, which may not fully capture the lived experiences of persons with disabilities in the public sector. The absence of primary data, such as interviews or surveys with stakeholders, limits the depth of insights into the practical realities of policy implementation. Second, the comparative scope was confined to Malaysia and Sweden, which, while offering valuable contrasts, may not reflect the full diversity of approaches to disability-inclusive employment in other socio-economic and cultural contexts. Finally, differences in data availability and reporting standards between the two countries may affect the comparability of findings.

In conclusion, this comparative analysis has highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of employment policies in the public sector for persons with disabilities in Malaysia and Sweden. While both countries have made progress in promoting disability inclusion, significant challenges remain in terms of policy implementation, enforcement and societal attitudes. By learning from each other's experiences and implementing targeted reforms, both Malaysia and Sweden can create more inclusive and equitable public sectors that provide meaningful employment opportunities for all persons with disabilities (Marsin *et al.*, 2014).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Sustainable Development Goal 8 serve as essential frameworks for guiding national policies and international collaboration in this area. It is imperative that we continue striving toward a society where every person, irrespective of their abilities, can fully participate in and contribute to the workforce (Wickenden *et al.*, 2020). The public sector must lead the way in establishing inclusive workplaces, serving as an example for the commercial sector and society at large. In the end, an inclusive society benefits everyone by encouraging innovation, economic growth and social cohesion (Fardan & Morris, 2019). Malaysia's cultural environment, which is rooted in community-based support and family ties, can either help or hinder the incorporation of persons with disabilities into the workforce.

By embracing its cultural strengths while actively addressing systemic barriers, Malaysia can draw valuable lessons from Sweden's inclusive public sector model and move toward a future where inclusion is not merely a policy goal but a lived reality, reaffirming every citizen's universal right to work with dignity and purpose.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors acknowledge Law Unit, Centre for Foundation Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA and Kolej Poly-Tech MARA Alor Setar, Kedah. Special thanks to those who contributed to this project directly or indirectly.

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EXPLORING RISK IN BNPL ADOPTION AMONG MILLENNIALS IN
SABAH, MALAYSIA: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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Received 20 January 2026: Revised 13 February 2026: Accepted 23 February 2026

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of perceived risk in the adoption of Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services by conceptualising perceived risk as a hierarchical construct composed of multiple dimensions. Despite the rapid growth of BNPL usage in Malaysia, particularly following accelerated digitalisation during the COVID-19 pandemic, the influence of perceived risk on adoption remains underexplored, largely because prior studies have treated perceived risk as a single-dimensional concept and focused primarily on users in Peninsular Malaysia, leaving millennials in Sabah understudied. Guided by perceived risk theory, this study proposes a multidimensional framework comprising financial, performance, psychological, privacy, security, time, social, and delivery risks as first-order constructs that together form a second-order perceived risk construct. The framework highlights the relative importance of different risk dimensions and offers theoretical insights into hierarchical risk perceptions. By focusing on millennials in Sabah, the study contributes to theory and provides practical guidance for BNPL providers and policymakers in designing strategies to mitigate risk and support a well-being-oriented digital financial ecosystem in emerging markets.

KEYWORDS: *PERCEIVED RISK, BNPL, SECOND-ORDER CONSTRUCT, FIRST-ORDER CONSTRUCT, MILLENNIAL, SABAH*

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti peranan risiko anggapan dalam penerimaan perkhidmatan Beli Sekarang Bayar Kemudian (BNPL) dengan merangka risiko anggapan sebagai satu konstruk hierarki yang terdiri daripada pelbagai dimensi. Walaupun penggunaan Beli Sekarang Bayar Kemudian (BNPL) di Malaysia berkembang pesat, terutamanya selepas digitalisasi dipercepatkan semasa pandemik COVID-19, pengaruh risiko anggapan terhadap penerimaan masih kurang diterokai. Ini sebahagian

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besarnya kerana kajian terdahulu lebih menumpukan risiko anggapan sebagai konsep satu dimensi dan memfokuskan kepada pengguna di Semenanjung Malaysia, menjadikan pengalaman milenial di Sabah kurang diberi perhatian. Berdasarkan teori risiko anggapan, kajian ini mencadangkan rangka kerja multidimensi yang merangkumi dimensi kewangan, prestasi, psikologi, privasi, keselamatan, masa, sosial, dan penghantaran sebagai kontrak aras pertama yang membentuk kontrak risiko anggapan aras kedua. Rangka kerja ini menekankan kepentingan relatif setiap dimensi risiko dan menawarkan pandangan teori mengenai risiko anggapan secara hierarki. Dengan menumpukan perhatian kepada milenial di Sabah, kajian ini menyumbang kepada pembangunan teori dan memberikan panduan praktikal kepada penyedia perkhidmatan Beli Sekarang Bayar Kemudian (BNPL) dan penggubal dasar dalam merangka strategi untuk mengurangkan risiko serta menyokong ekosistem kewangan digital yang berorientasikan kesejahteraan di pasaran membangun.

KATA KUNCI: RISIKO ANGGAPAN, BNPL, KONSTRUK PERINGKAT KEDUA, KONSTRUK PERINGKAT PERTAMA, MILENIAL, SABAH

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital financial technologies has fundamentally transformed consumer payment behaviour across the globe. Innovations such as mobile wallets, embedded credit and alternative financing mechanisms have increased access to short-term credit, particularly among younger consumers who prioritise convenience and immediacy. Within this evolving digital finance landscape, Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services have emerged as a prominent payment solution, enabling consumers to defer payments with minimal upfront costs. Despite their growing popularity, BNPL services have also generated increasing concern regarding users' exposure to various forms of risk, including financial vulnerability, privacy breaches and behavioural consequences.

Perceived risk has long been recognised as a critical determinant of technology adoption, particularly in digital environments characterised by uncertainty and information asymmetry (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003). In financial technology contexts, users' adoption decisions are shaped not only by perceived benefits but also by concerns over potential losses and negative outcomes. Prior studies in Malaysia further affirm that perceived risk plays a significant role in shaping digital service adoption, especially when financial transactions and personal data are involved (Alomran, 2018). This theoretical perspective is especially relevant for BNPL services, which combine elements of consumer credit, e-commerce and financial technology, thereby exposing users to multiple and overlapping sources of perceived risk. As BNPL connects instalment credit with online purchase and delivery, perceived risk extends beyond financial, privacy and security concerns to include delivery, time and performance risks that arise within fulfilment processes.

In Malaysia, the relevance of BNPL adoption has intensified alongside rapid digitalisation, a trend that was accelerated by behavioural changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. National statistics show substantial increases in digital engagement and online commerce: government data indicate widespread ICT use and growing e-commerce expenditure across business sectors (DOSM, 2025). More recently, BNPL services have gained widespread acceptance, with an estimated 5.1 million Malaysians reported to be using BNPL platforms, positioning Malaysia among the leading adopters in Southeast Asia (Statista, 2024). While this growth reflects the increasing normalisation of digital credit, it also raises concerns regarding consumer protection and financial discipline, particularly among millennials who constitute a major segment of BNPL users.

Existing empirical studies on BNPL adoption consistently demonstrate that perceived risk significantly influences behavioural intention. International evidence highlights the importance of financial and privacy risks in shaping users' willingness to adopt BNPL services (Wijaya *et al.*, 2022; Raj *et al.*, 2025). Similarly, behavioural intention studies indicate that heightened perceptions of risk can weaken users' trust and reduce adoption likelihood, even when BNPL is perceived as convenient (Aprianto & Hadibrata, 2023). However, much of this literature conceptualises perceived risk as a

unidimensional construct, capturing its overall effect without distinguishing between specific risk components.

This limitation is also evident within the Malaysian BNPL literature. Although recent studies confirm the significance of perceived risk in influencing BNPL adoption, some Malaysian studies, such as Osman *et al.* (2024), focus primarily on behavioural predictors like attitude and subjective norms, rather than examining perceived risk as a multidimensional construct. As a result, these studies provide limited insight into which types of risk matter most to users (Soong *et al.*, 2024). Such an approach constrains both theoretical development and practical relevance, leaving policymakers and service providers unclear about which specific risks require targeted intervention.

Moreover, BNPL research in Malaysia remains geographically concentrated in Peninsular Malaysia, leaving East Malaysian states such as Sabah relatively underexplored (Halim *et al.*, 2024; Soong *et al.*, 2024). This omission is noteworthy, given Sabah's distinct socioeconomic conditions, infrastructural limitations and logistical challenges, which may intensify certain forms of perceived risk, particularly delivery, time and performance risks. Recent studies that extend BNPL analysis beyond Peninsular Malaysia have been largely confined to Sarawak, indicating that empirical attention to East Malaysia is only beginning to emerge and remains geographically uneven (Tang *et al.*, 2025). Ignoring these regional differences risks producing overly generalised conclusions that may not adequately reflect the lived experiences of BNPL users outside major urban centres, a concern also echoed in broader reviews of the BNPL literature that highlight gaps in regional and contextual coverage (Ishak *et al.*, 2025).

To address these gaps, the present study conceptualises perceived risk as a second-order construct comprising multiple first-order dimensions, including financial, performance, psychological, privacy, security, time, social and delivery risks. The study aims to examine the hierarchical influence of these risk dimensions on behavioural intention towards BNPL adoption among millennials in Sabah. By adopting a multidimensional risk framework within an underexplored regional context, this conceptual study extends perceived risk theory in digital finance and contributes context-specific insights to the Malaysian BNPL literature. The findings are expected to inform BNPL providers and policymakers in designing more targeted risk mitigation and consumer protection strategies in emerging digital economies.

In this study, millennials are understood as adults born between 1981 and 1996, a definition commonly used in Malaysian FinTech research and one that provides a consistent analytical boundary for examining this cohort's financial behaviours (Rahim *et al.*, 2023). This generation differs meaningfully from Gen Z, particularly in their patterns of digital financial engagement. Evidence indicates that Malaysian millennials show a higher level of FinTech readiness and adoption compared with younger cohorts, making them an especially relevant group for understanding BNPL usage (Rahim *et al.*, 2023).

Their position in the life course, often characterised by stable employment, household responsibilities, and ongoing credit management, places them at the intersection of everyday financial obligations and the appeal of short term, app-based credit such as BNPL. As a result, concerns relating to financial, privacy and security, and delivery or performance risks are likely to be more salient for this group. This is consistent with findings from payment and credit studies which demonstrate that multidimensional perceived risk meaningfully shapes consumer decision making (Mahbob *et al.*, 2023; Trinh *et al.*, 2020).

Recent BNPL research further shows that younger adults' use of these services is also influenced by psychological factors such as impulse control, emotional coping, and financial stress, highlighting that perceived risk extends beyond the purely functional or economic domains (Schomburgk & Hoffmann, 2023; Nguyen & Pham, 2024). Taken together, these insights indicate that millennials constitute a theoretically coherent and empirically justified population for examining a multidimensional

perceived risk framework in the context of BNPL adoption in Sabah (Mahbob *et al.*, 2023; Trinh *et al.*, 2020).

Theoretically, this study advances perceived risk research by tailoring an established hierarchical specification to the BNPL setting, where short term instalment credit is embedded in online purchase and fulfilment processes. It formalises a second order construct composed of eight first order dimensions, namely financial, performance, psychological, privacy, security, time, social and delivery risks, and argues that the relative salience of these dimensions may vary under Sabah's conditions. In doing so, the study extends second order, multidimensional risk models established for digital services and payment credit to the BNPL context, clarifying how these eight risks are combined within a single hierarchical structure in this specific setting (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003; Trinh *et al.*, 2020).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Foundations of Perceived Risk

The concept of perceived risk originates from Bauer's (1960) seminal view of consumer behaviour as a decision-making process undertaken under uncertainty, where outcomes may entail adverse consequences. Early conceptualisations treated risk as a general sense of unease associated with purchase decisions. Subsequent theoretical developments have refined this view by recognising that consumers do not perceive risk as a single homogeneous construct, but rather as a bundle of distinct concerns. Jacoby and Kaplan (1972) and Peter and Ryan (1976) were among the first to formalise this multidimensional perspective, identifying specific categories of loss that consumers seek to avoid.

This theoretical shift marked an important advance, as it acknowledged that different risk components may exert varying degrees of influence depending on context. Building on this foundation, Featherman and Pavlou (2003) extended the multidimensional risk framework to digital environments, demonstrating that perceived risk plays a decisive role in shaping adoption behaviour for electronic services. Their work represents a methodological strength in the literature, as it empirically validates perceived risk as a second-order construct formed by multiple first-order dimensions. Importantly, they show that aggregate measures of risk obscure the relative salience of individual risk types, thereby limiting explanatory power.

Perceived Risk in Digital and Online Service Adoption

Empirical evidence across a wide range of digital contexts consistently supports the relevance of perceived risk in influencing behavioural intention. Studies on electronic bill payment systems (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003), online hotel booking platforms (Alomran, 2018), and online shopping environments (Mahbob *et al.*, 2023) reveal that higher levels of perceived risk are associated with lower adoption intention. Mahbob *et al.* (2023), for instance, found that financial, product, and non-delivery risks significantly affect online purchase intentions among Malaysian millennials, with non-delivery risk having the strongest impact. A key strength of this stream of research lies in its application of structured adoption models, often integrating perceived risk with established frameworks such as TAM or TPB.

Despite acknowledging the multidimensional nature of risk conceptually, many empirical studies operationalise perceived risk in a simplified manner. For example, some focus narrowly on isolated facets of risk rather than examining distinct components comprehensively. Siu and Ismail (2022) demonstrate that perceived risk negatively affects online purchase intention in the Klang Valley, yet their model treats risk as a composite construct rather than unpacking the relative influence of individual risk dimensions, which constrains deeper insight into which specific risks most deter consumers, a limitation with implications for managerial strategy and policy design in Malaysian e-commerce contexts. Recent meta-analyses and reviews also argue that overlooking the multidimensional nature of perceived risk leads to inconsistent findings and limits theoretical development as well as practical insights across digital adoption studies (e.g. Amirtha *et al.*, 2021).

This simplification raises concerns about construct validity, particularly in digital finance contexts where users face multiple, overlapping technological, financial, and behavioural risks, and where the importance of specific risk dimensions can differ across users and situations.

Perceived Risk in BNPL Adoption: Empirical Insights and Limitations

More recent studies on Buy Now Pay Later adoption generally align with findings from the broader digital finance literature, confirming that perceived risk negatively influences behavioural intention. International evidence shows that concerns related to financial loss, data privacy and repayment obligations discourage BNPL usage, even when the service is viewed as convenient (Wijaya *et al.*, 2022; Raj *et al.*, 2025). These studies offer useful initial insights into BNPL related risk perceptions and benefit from relatively large samples and robust analytical methods.

Nonetheless, a key limitation persists perceived risk is still predominantly modelled as a unidimensional construct. Although studies such as Raj *et al.* (2025) demonstrate a significant overall relationship between perceived risk and BNPL adoption, they do not clarify which specific types of risk are most influential. Consequently, it remains unclear whether users are more concerned about financial overextension, data misuse, service reliability or social judgement. This lack of detail constrains theoretical progress and limits the practical value of existing findings for BNPL providers and regulators seeking targeted interventions.

In addition, several risk dimensions commonly examined in the wider technology adoption literature, such as performance risk, time risk, social risk and delivery risk, are mostly absent from BNPL focused studies, especially in emerging market contexts. This gap is notable because BNPL operates at the intersection of financial commitment and online purchase processes, where concerns about delivery, reliability and timing can be as salient as concerns about financial exposure.

Existing BNPL studies therefore tend to treat risk as a general construct or emphasise broad attitudinal drivers, without specifying how different types of risk matter within the BNPL environment. This leaves insufficient theoretical attention to how BNPL relevant risks, including financial, psychological, privacy, security, time, social, performance and delivery risks, may operate collectively within a hierarchical structure. Furthermore, while evidence suggests that younger users often experience higher stress, repayment pressure and concerns linked to service reliability (Schomburgk & Hoffmann, 2023), current BNPL studies do not incorporate these distinct risk dimensions into a single, multidimensional perceived risk framework. By contrast, multidimensional and second order risk models have been validated in related but non BNPL settings such as digital services and credit card usage (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003; Trinh *et al.*, 2020), yet these models do not capture key BNPL specific dimensions, particularly delivery, performance and time risks, that are integral to BNPL transactions.

Malaysian Context and Regional Research Gaps

Within Malaysia, empirical research on BNPL adoption remains limited and geographically concentrated. Existing studies tend to focus on users in Peninsular Malaysia, often in urban settings where digital infrastructure and logistics are relatively developed. While these studies confirm the relevance of perceived risk, they rarely move beyond general measures or explore contextual variation across regions (Soong *et al.*, 2024; Osman *et al.*, 2024). This narrow focus risks overgeneralisation, particularly in a country characterised by significant regional diversity.

Sabah, in particular, presents a distinct context where infrastructural constraints, delivery delays and limited access to financial services may amplify certain risk perceptions. Yet empirical evidence capturing these dynamics remains scarce. The absence of region-specific analysis represents a substantive gap in the Malaysian FinTech literature, limiting understanding of how perceived risk operates outside major urban centres.

Theoretical discussions of perceived risk rarely consider how infrastructure and logistics influence the structure of risk perceptions. In the case of BNPL, which depends on reliable delivery and effective mechanisms for resolving disputes, the dimensions of delivery, performance and time risk are likely to become particularly salient in contexts where delays, inconsistent service quality or difficulties returning goods are more common, as is often the case outside major urban centres. This perspective broadens perceived risk theory by suggesting that the importance of different risk dimensions is shaped not only by individual judgements but also by the logistical and institutional conditions in which consumers make their decisions (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003).

Implications for the Present Study

The reviewed literature reveals two interrelated gaps. First, although perceived risk is widely acknowledged as a determinant of BNPL adoption, its multidimensional and hierarchical nature remains underexplored. Second, there is a lack of context sensitive research that accounts for regional variation within Malaysia, particularly in Sabah. These gaps underscore the need for a more refined conceptual approach that captures the relative importance of distinct risk dimensions.

In response, the present study conceptualises perceived risk as a second order construct, composed of eight first order dimensions, namely financial, performance, psychological, privacy, security, time, social and delivery risks. The refinement is to tailor this established hierarchical specification to the BNPL context, where short term instalment credit is embedded within online purchase and fulfilment, by treating all eight dimensions as constitutive of perceived risk and by proposing that their relative salience is sensitive to the Sabah context. By adopting this approach, the study seeks to extend existing BNPL adoption models and provide a more nuanced understanding of risk perceptions among millennials in Sabah. This conceptual refinement not only advances theory but also enhances the relevance of findings for practitioners and policymakers operating in emerging digital finance environments.

Drawing on the multidimensional perceived risk literature, this study identifies eight key risk dimensions that underpin BNPL adoption among millennials in Sabah, Malaysia. Table 1 summarises these dimensions, outlining their conceptual definitions and supporting references, and provides the foundation for the conceptual propositions developed in the following section.

TABLE 1: THE DEFINITION OF RISK DIMENSION

No	Risk dimension	Definition	Key references
1	Financial Risk	Concerns about potential loss of money or financial detriment in transactions, including fraud and unsatisfactory services.	Stone & Grønhaug (1993); Featherman & Pavlou (2003); Hanafizadeh & Khedmatgozar (2012)
2	Performance Risk	Possibility that a product may be defective, fail to function as intended, or not deliver expected benefits.	Stone & Grønhaug (1993); Featherman & Pavlou (2003)
3	Psychological Risk	The potential negative impact on an individual's self-image, ego, or peace of mind resulting from using a product or service.	Stone & Grønhaug (1993); Featherman & Pavlou (2003)
4	Privacy Risk	Potential loss of control over personal information or risk of misuse/identity spoofing.	Featherman & Pavlou (2003); Hanafizadeh & Khedmatgozar (2012)
5	Security Risk	Potential loss from system vulnerabilities, network attacks, or data breaches.	Pennington <i>et al.</i> (2003); Featherman & Pavlou (2003); Hanafizadeh & Khedmatgozar (2012)
6	Time Risk	Possibility of wasting time due to poorly designed technology-based services.	Stone & Grønhaug (1993); Featherman & Pavlou (2003)

7	Social Risk	Potential loss of social status, causing an individual to appear foolish or outdated.	Stone & Grønhaug (1993); Featherman & Pavlou (2003)
8	Delivery Risk	Potential failures/issues in delivery of online orders, including delays, wrong addresses, or difficulties in returns.	Stone & Grønhaug (1993); Featherman & Pavlou (2003); Hanafizadeh & Khedmatgozar (2012)

Source: Table by Authors

Empirical Evidence on BNPL and Related Technology Adoption

Building on the conceptual risk dimensions presented in Table 1, it is important to examine how these dimensions have been operationalised in prior empirical studies. A synthesis of the literature not only highlights which risk components have been considered but also identifies methodological limitations and gaps relevant to the present study.

BNPL-Specific Studies

Table 2 summarises recent BNPL studies that explore the influence of perceived risk on behavioural intention across different national contexts. While these studies consistently recognise the role of risk, several limitations emerge. For example, Soong *et al.* (2024), Raj *et al.* (2025), and Wijaya *et al.* (2022) report that perceived risk negatively influences adoption, while Aprianto and Hadibrata (2023) find a positive but statistically insignificant relationship. However, most focus on Gen Z populations and do not distinguish between specific risk dimensions. This single-dimensional treatment of perceived risk limits understanding of which types of risk are most salient. Moreover, because these studies focus mainly on India, Indonesia, and Peninsular Malaysia, the experiences of millennials in Sabah remain unexplored.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF BNPL STUDIES

No	Author & year	Context/Service & Location	Risk Dimension Examined	Key Finding	Limitation / Gap Identified
1	Soong <i>et al.</i> (2024)	BNPL & Malaysia	Perceived Risk	Perceived risk was not a significant predictor of behavioural intention to use BNPL when other factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, and social influence were considered	<p>Limitation - Gen Z; risk types not separated</p> <p>Gap Identified Millennials; focus on Sabah; specific BNPL risks</p>
2	Raj <i>et al.</i> (2025)	BNPL & India	Perceived Risk	Perceived risk had a significant negative effect on consumers' behavioural intention.	<p>Limitation - Gen Z in India; risk types not separated</p> <p>Gap Identified - Millennials; Sabah context; specific BNPL</p>

				risks
3	Aprianto & Hadibrata (2023)	BNPL & Jakarta, Indonesia	Perceived risk	<p>Perceived risk had a positive effect on purchase decisions; however, the effect was not statistically significant.</p> <p><u>Limitation</u> - Gen Z; Jakarta Indonesia; risk types not separated</p> <p><u>Gap Identified</u> - Millennials; Sabah context; specific BNPL risks</p>
4	Wijaya <i>et al.</i> (2022)	BNPL & Indonesia	Perceived risk	<p>Perceived risk had a significant effect on behavioural intention.</p> <p><u>Limitation</u> Gen Z in Indonesia; risk types not separated</p> <p><u>Gap Identified</u> Millennials; BNPL risks</p>

Source: Table by Authors

Overall, while these studies establish a foundational relationship between perceived risk and BNPL adoption, they offer limited guidance on which specific risk dimensions are most influential, particularly for millennials in the Sabah context.

Related Technology and Traditional Adoption Studies

Table 3 extends the review to research on other digital and traditional technology adoption contexts. These studies are relevant because they operationalise perceived risk as a multidimensional or second-order construct, providing methodological and theoretical insights that can inform BNPL research. For example, Featherman and Pavlou (2003) examined multiple risk dimensions in electronic bill payment systems in the United States, finding that financial, privacy, time, and performance risks significantly influenced adoption, while social and psychological risks were less salient. Alomran (2018) and Trinh *et al.* (2020) further demonstrated the utility of modelling perceived risk as a second-order construct, showing that different risk dimensions exert varying degrees of influence across services and contexts.

Importantly, this hierarchical conceptualisation has also been empirically validated in the Malaysian context. Siu and Ismail (2022) modelled perceived risk as a second-order construct comprising financial, product, psychological, information security, and delivery risks, and found that aggregated perceived risk had a significant negative effect on online purchase intention. Their findings provide strong local empirical support for treating perceived risk as a multidimensional construct, reinforcing the suitability of adopting a similar higher-order modelling approach in BNPL research.

**TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF STUDIES ON TECHNOLOGY AND TRADITIONAL ADOPTION
(NON-BNPL)**

No	Author & year	Context/service & location	Risk dimension examined	Key finding	Limitation / gap identified
1	Featherman & Pavlou (2003)	e-billPay & United States	Performance risk, financial risk, time risk, psychological risk, social risk, privacy risk and overall risk	- Performance, privacy, financial, time, and overall risk were significant predictors of e-billPay adoption, while social and psychological risks were not significant for behavioural intention. * Predictor of overall risk have failed to capture a specific type of risk.	<u>Limitation</u> - US students; overall risk not specific <u>Gap Identified</u> - BNPL risk dimensions in Sabah
2	Alomran (2018)	e-hotel booking & Saudi Arabia	Perceived Risk treated as a second-order construct and financial, performance risk, psychological, privacy, service, security, time and social risk as dimension of risk which is first-order construct.	- Financial, privacy, time, and psychological risks significantly influenced e-hotel booking, with financial risk being the most prominent, followed by privacy, time, and psychological risks. - Social and service risk were not significant. *Performance risk was weak in explaining the variance due to $R^2 = 0.169$.	<u>Limitation</u> - E-hotel in Saudi Arabia; not applicable to BNPL <u>Gap Identified</u> - Second-order construct for BNPL; psychological risk
3	Trinh <i>et al.</i> (2020)	credit card usage & Vietnam	Perceived risk treated as a second-order construct and psychological, finance, performance, privacy, time, social and security risk as dimension of risk which is first-order construct.	All risk dimensions significantly influenced credit card usage, with psychological risk being the most prominent, followed by financial, performance, privacy, time, social, and security risks.	<u>Limitation</u> - Credit card users in Vietnam; not directly BNPL <u>Gap Identified</u> - Second-order construct for BNPL; key risks

4	Siu & Ismail (2022)	Online Shopping & Malaysia	Perceived risk, emphasized on delivery risk such as product, convenience, financial and non-delivery risk.	Perceived risk had a negative and significant effect on online purchase intention; trust mediated the effect of perceived risk on intention, and subjective norms moderated this relationship.	<u>Limitation-</u> Online shoppers in Malaysia; not directly BNPL <u>Gap Identified-</u> Delivery risk for BNPL in Sabah
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Source: Table by Authors

These studies collectively demonstrate that a second-order conceptualisation of perceived risk allows for a more nuanced understanding of adoption behaviour. However, none directly examines BNPL adoption among millennials in Sabah, leaving a critical empirical and contextual gap. They also underscore the relevance of including psychological, financial, and delivery risks, which are consistently influential across different service contexts.

3. PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL PROPOSITIONS

Building on the literature review and prior theoretical insights, Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual framework for this study. Here, perceived risk is conceptualised as a hierarchical construct comprising eight dimensions: financial, performance, psychological, privacy, security, time, social, and delivery risks. The framework proposes that these dimensions collectively influence behavioural intention to adopt Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services among millennials in Sabah. This visualisation integrates the theoretical insights from Table 1 with empirical evidence from Tables 2 and 3, providing a coherent foundation for the formulation of propositions. Based on this framework, the following conceptual propositions are proposed.

Financial Risk (P1)

Financial risk refers to the possibility of monetary loss or financial detriment, including fraud or unsatisfactory transactions (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003). Prior research indicates that concerns over repayment obligations or unexpected fees may discourage the adoption of BNPL services (Raj *et al.*, 2025; Wijaya *et al.*, 2022). Among Malaysian millennials, financial uncertainty may be particularly pronounced due to limited disposable income.

P₁: Financial risk is likely to reduce behavioural intention to adopt Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services among millennials in Sabah.

Performance Risk (P2)

Performance risk captures the potential for the BNPL service to fail in delivering expected benefits or functioning as intended (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003). While BNPL-specific studies on this dimension are limited, broader research on digital services shows that platform reliability and functionality are critical factors in adoption decisions (Alomran, 2018).

P₂: Performance risk is likely to reduce behavioural intention to adopt Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services among millennials in Sabah.

Psychological Risk (P3)

Psychological risk refers to the potential negative impact on a consumer's self-image, emotional well-being, or stress levels that may arise from using a service (Stone & Grønhaug, 1993). In the context of BNPL, these risks can emerge from over-indebtedness, social pressures to maintain certain consumption standards, or impulsive spending behaviour. Empirical studies indicate that psychological and attitudinal factors contribute to risky BNPL behaviour among younger consumers

(Nguyen & Pham, 2024). Moreover, higher BNPL usage has been linked with increased financial stress and reduced overall well-being, illustrating the emotional burden these services can impose (Schomburgk & Hoffmann, 2023). Large-scale health research further suggests that BNPL use is associated with higher odds of depression and anxiety symptoms, reinforcing the notion that such financial tools may exacerbate psychological strain among vulnerable users (Shah *et al.*, 2025).

P₃: Psychological risk is likely to reduce behavioural intention to adopt Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services among millennials in Sabah.

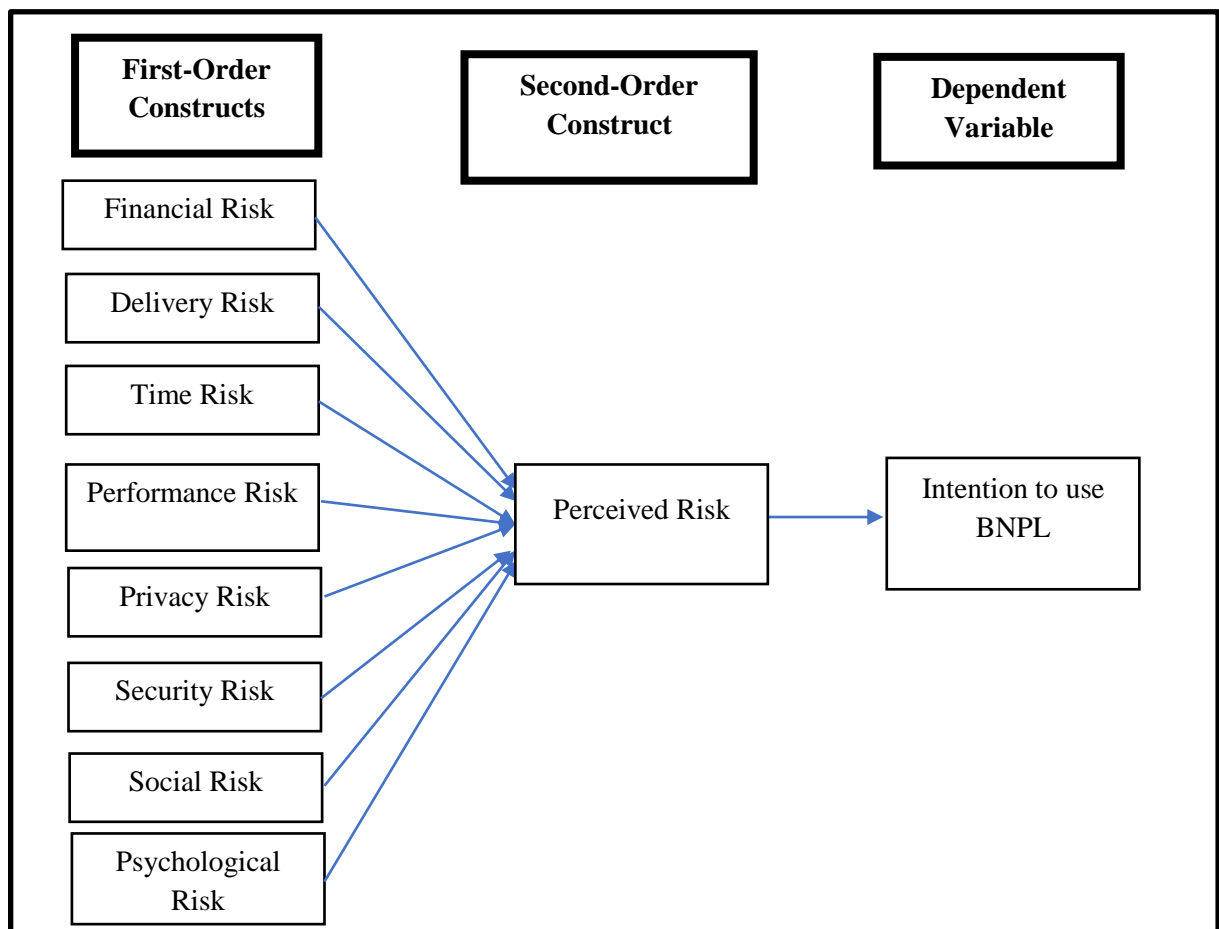


FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Source: Figure by Authors

Privacy Risk (P4)

Privacy risk refers to the potential loss of control over personal information or the misuse of sensitive data (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003). Since BNPL adoption requires sharing financial and personal information, users may exercise caution, particularly in digital finance contexts where trust is paramount (Aprianto & Hadibrata, 2023).

P₄: Privacy risk is likely to reduce behavioural intention to adopt Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services among millennials in Sabah.

Security Risk (P5)

Security risk relates to potential losses arising from system vulnerabilities, cyberattacks, or data breaches (Pennington *et al.*, 2003; Hanafizadeh & Khedmatgozar, 2012). Studies on digital finance adoption show that perceptions of inadequate cybersecurity can discourage service adoption (Alomran, 2018; Trinh *et al.*, 2020).

P₅: Security risk is likely to reduce behavioural intention to adopt Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services among millennials in Sabah.

Time Risk (P6)

Time risk reflects potential loss of time due to inefficient or poorly designed services (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003). Delays in application processing or problem resolution may reduce usage, particularly in BNPL contexts where timely transactions are expected.

P₆: Time risk is likely to reduce behavioural intention to adopt Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services among millennials in Sabah.

Social Risk (P7)

Social risk encompasses the potential loss of social status or fear of negative evaluation by others (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003). Millennials may be particularly influenced by peer perceptions when adopting innovative financial services such as BNPL.

P₇: Social risk is likely to reduce behavioural intention to adopt Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services among millennials in Sabah.

Delivery Risk (P8)

Delivery risk involves failures in order fulfilment, such as delayed delivery, receiving incorrect items, or difficulties with returns, and has been shown to negatively influence consumers' online purchase intentions (Masoud, 2013; Mahbob *et al.*, 2023). Since BNPL is closely linked to online commerce, inefficient delivery systems may increase adoption hesitancy, especially in regions such as Sabah with logistical challenges.

P₈: Delivery risk is likely to reduce behavioural intention to adopt Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services among millennials in Sabah.

Collectively, these propositions conceptualise perceived risk as a hierarchical construct made up of eight dimensions, each potentially influencing the adoption of Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL). Figure 1 illustrates these relationships and provides a theoretical basis for future empirical studies. By examining each dimension individually, this framework offers a nuanced understanding of risk perceptions and their relative impact on behavioural intention, addressing both theoretical and contextual gaps in the existing literature.

4. CONCEPTUAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Perceived risk has been widely recognised as a critical determinant of technology adoption behaviour (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003; Alomran, 2018; Trinh *et al.*, 2020; Soong *et al.*, 2024; Raj *et al.*, 2025; Aprianto & Hadibrata, 2023; Wijaya *et al.*, 2022). Prior research highlights that technology adoption is influenced by multiple dimensions of perceived risk, which are context-dependent and may vary across technologies and user populations (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003; Alomran, 2018; Trinh *et al.*, 2020). For example, social and psychological risks have been reported as either significant or insignificant in affecting behavioural intention in different studies, reflecting contextual and demographic variations (Trinh *et al.*, 2020). Such inconsistencies may be explained by differences in cultural, socioeconomic, and demographic factors, with rural–urban variations highlighted by Tambotuh *et al.* (2015) and Setiawan *et al.* (2025).

Most existing studies on BNPL adoption have focused on Gen Z users in Malaysia, India, and Indonesia (Raj *et al.*, 2025; Wijaya *et al.*, 2022; Soong *et al.*, 2024), with limited attention to millennials despite their prominent role in driving BNPL growth. Millennials represent a substantial portion of the global population, accounting for roughly 1.8 billion people, or about 23 % of the

world's population (World Economic Forum, 2021). Industry forecasts further indicate that broad consumer adoption of BNPL, including among younger users, is a key factor in the projected expansion of the market through 2032 (Fortune Business Insights, 2025).

Millennials and Gen Z also exhibit distinct behavioural patterns and higher financial exposure in digital transactions compared to older cohorts; in particular, younger users show greater interest in and willingness to engage with FinTech products and services than older adults (Krupa & Buszko, 2023; Leang *et al.*, 2023). Typically employed with stable incomes, millennials actively adopt innovations that offer flexibility and convenience, and they frequently engage in digital financial services, including FinTech solutions that facilitate credit and payment options (Azhar *et al.*, 2023; Rahim *et al.*, 2023). These patterns highlight that millennials are not only early adopters of digital financial innovations but also key drivers of emerging credit-based digital services in Malaysia and beyond.

In the context of Sabah, millennials may perceive BNPL-related risks differently from those in Peninsular Malaysia due to regional variations in digital infrastructure and socioeconomic conditions (MCMC, 2023; DOSM, 2024), as well as differences in digital literacy. Evidence suggests that native communities in Sabah experience a significant digital divide, characterised by lower digital skills, limited access, and reduced ICT usage, which may influence how young consumers perceive and respond to credit-based digital services (Fang *et al.*, 2022). Building on Tambotoh *et al.* (2015), who emphasised rural–urban differences in technology adoption and supported by empirical evidence from credit-based and online services (Setiawan *et al.*, 2025; Trinh *et al.*, 2020; Mahbob *et al.*, 2023), this study identifies financial, delivery, time, performance, privacy, security, social, and psychological risks as likely salient for millennials in Sabah. Delivery risk is particularly critical, as BNPL adoption is closely tied to e-commerce, where delays, product errors, or difficulties in returns can significantly affect user experience and adoption intentions (Mahbob *et al.*, 2023).

Theoretical Contribution

By integrating generational and regional considerations into a framework of second-order and first-order constructs, this study extends the literature on BNPL adoption and perceived risk. It highlights the hierarchical nature of risk perceptions and provides a comprehensive model that captures the multidimensional aspects of perceived risk in emerging markets. The framework addresses gaps in existing research by focusing on millennials, a generation that has been underexplored in BNPL adoption studies, and by examining how contextual factors in Sabah influence risk perceptions.

More specifically, the study adapts an established hierarchical specification of perceived risk to the BNPL setting, where short-term instalment credit is embedded in online purchase and fulfilment processes. It formalises a second order construct composed of eight first order dimensions (financial, performance, psychological, privacy, security, time, social and delivery risks) and argues that the relative salience of these dimensions may vary under Sabah's conditions. Taken together, the framework extends second-order, multidimensional risk models from digital services and credit-card contexts to BNPL and provides a clear basis for understanding how these eight dimensions combine within a single hierarchical structure in this specific context (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003; Trinh *et al.*, 2020).

Practical Contribution

The proposed framework offers actionable insights for BNPL service providers and policymakers. Understanding the relative salience of different risk dimensions allows providers to design risk mitigation strategies, enhance service delivery, improve security measures, and implement privacy safeguards. Policymakers can also develop financial education and consumer protection initiatives tailored to millennials in Sabah, helping to increase responsible adoption and reduce exposure to financial risks.

Future Research Directions

This conceptual framework provides a foundation for empirical testing of BNPL adoption among millennials in Sabah. Future research could quantitatively validate the proposed hierarchical model using surveys and structural equation modelling (SEM), examine cross-generational differences in BNPL risk perceptions by comparing millennials and Gen Z, and explore regional variations in risk perceptions within Malaysia as well as in other emerging markets. Additionally, longitudinal studies could investigate the dynamic relationships between risk perceptions and actual BNPL usage behaviours over time. By focusing on hierarchical risk perceptions, generational nuances, and regional context, such studies would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of digital financial service adoption in emerging markets and offer a robust model for examining BNPL and other credit-based technologies.

5. CONCLUSION

This conceptual study explored the multidimensional nature of perceived risk in the adoption of BNPL services among millennials in Sabah, Malaysia. By proposing a second-order construct comprising eight risk dimensions, including financial, performance, psychological, privacy, security, time, social, and delivery, this study builds on established conceptualisations of perceived risk as a hierarchical, multidimensional construct in technology adoption research (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003; Alomran, 2018; Trinh *et al.*, 2020).

The study makes several contributions. Theoretically, it advances the BNPL adoption literature by adapting a second-order perceived-risk model to a setting where short-term instalment credit is embedded within online purchase and fulfilment, and by arguing that the relative salience of risk dimensions may vary under Sabah's conditions. This responds to calls for context-specific investigations of perceived risk and FinTech adoption in emerging markets (Raj *et al.*, 2025; Wijaya *et al.*, 2022; Soong *et al.*, 2024). Practically, the analysis offers guidance for BNPL service providers and policymakers to design targeted risk-mitigation strategies, enhance service delivery, improve cybersecurity and privacy safeguards, and tailor financial education initiatives for millennials, consistent with prior FinTech adoption and consumer-protection studies (Aprianto & Hadibrata, 2023; Krupa & Buszko, 2023).

Finally, this study identifies avenues for future research, including quantitative testing of the proposed hierarchical model using SEM, cross-generational comparisons, regional analyses, and longitudinal studies, as suggested in prior perceived risk and digital finance research (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003; Trinh *et al.*, 2020; Mahbob *et al.*, 2023). By integrating generational differences, regional context, and multidimensional risk perceptions, this study enriches the theoretical understanding of technology adoption in emerging markets and serves as a foundation for both research and practice in the rapidly evolving BNPL landscape.

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IDENTIFYING KEY DIMENSIONS IN THE MOSQUE'S CONTRIBUTION
TO MUSLIM SOCIETY AND UMMAH DEVELOPMENT: A
QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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Received 30 August 2025: Revised 4 September 2025: Accepted 23 February 2026

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the major dimensions of a mosque's roles that can be used as benchmark in promoting Muslim society and Ummah growth, particularly their responsibilities at the level beyond the traditional worship function. A qualitative methodology was employed, involving experts' interviews and thematic analysis using VOSviewer. Purposive sampling technique selected ten experts that represented a variety of nationalities, educational backgrounds, positions, and experiences. Seven critical dimensions have been identified for this study: Spiritual Excellence, Community Engagement, Design and Facilities, Social Welfare and Support, Education and Knowledge Dissemination, Management and Transparency, and Economic Aspect. The identified dimensions reflect multifaceted roles of mosque that have potential scope of making spiritual, social, educational, and economic contributions significantly. A limitation of the study is dependency on qualitative data from a limited number of regions, resulting in a possibility that not all regional or cultural aspects are captured. Future research can adopt the dimensions backed by quantitative methodology to develop an excellence model. The findings offer important guidance to mosque administrators, policymakers, and scholars regarding the areas to improve the functions of mosques. The study is unique to provide comprehensive framework for the multi-dimensional roles of mosques and handling the gaps in the literature related to their engagement in community and Ummah development. Theoretical and practical implications arise for increasing the mosque's utilisation to contribute to Muslim society and mankind.

KEYWORDS: *MOSQUE, UMMATIC DEVELOPMENT, SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT, ROLE OF PLACES OF WORSHIP*

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti dimensi utama peranan masjid yang boleh dijadikan penanda aras dalam menggalakkan pertumbuhan masyarakat Islam dan Ummah, khususnya tanggungjawab mereka pada tahap di luar fungsi ibadah tradisional. Metodologi kualitatif telah digunakan, melibatkan temu bual pakar dan analisis tematik menggunakan VOSviewer. Teknik persampelan bertujuan memilih sepuluh pakar yang mewakili pelbagai bangsa, latar belakang pendidikan, jawatan dan pengalaman. Tujuh dimensi kritikal telah dikenal pasti untuk kajian ini:

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Kecemerlangan Rohani, Penglibatan Komuniti, Reka Bentuk dan Kemudahan, Kebajikan dan Sokongan Sosial, Pendidikan dan Penyebaran Pengetahuan, Pengurusan dan Ketelusan, dan Aspek Ekonomi. Dimensi yang dikenal pasti mencerminkan pelbagai peranan masjid yang berpotensi untuk memberi sumbangan rohani, sosial, pendidikan dan ekonomi dengan ketara. Batasan kajian adalah pergantungan pada data kualitatif daripada bilangan wilayah yang terhad, menyebabkan kemungkinan tidak semua aspek wilayah atau budaya ditangkap. Penyelidikan masa depan boleh menggunakan dimensi yang disokong oleh metodologi kuantitatif untuk membangunkan model kecemerlangan. Penemuan ini menawarkan panduan penting kepada pentadbir masjid, penggubal dasar, dan ulama berkenaan bidang-bidang untuk meningkatkan fungsi masjid. Kajian ini unik untuk menyediakan rangka kerja komprehensif untuk peranan pelbagai dimensi masjid dan menangani jurang dalam literatur yang berkaitan dengan penglibatan mereka dalam pembangunan masyarakat dan Ummah. Implikasi teori dan praktikal timbul untuk meningkatkan penggunaan masjid untuk menyumbang kepada masyarakat Islam dan umat manusia.

KATA KUNCI: MASJID, PEMBANGUNAN UMAT, PEMBANGUNAN MASYARAKAT, PERANAN TEMPAT IBADAH

1. INTRODUCTION

A mosque plays an extremely important role in Islam. History has shown that mosques have played great role in the Muslim society in the early period of Islam including the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and then the Caliphs Ar-Rashidun (May Allah be pleased with all of them). Mosques were the place not only for daily congregational prayers, but also the place where the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) and the Caliphs used to discuss societal issues including state governance. However, over the years, in many Muslim countries, mosques are regarded as only for prayers and discussion other than so-called religious issues is considered as unacceptable. Therefore, in these countries, mosques are not playing their comprehensive role for societal development. Therefore, it is necessary to revisit the pristine role of a mosque in the Muslim society. Our premise is that if we, the Muslims, use our mosques as guided by the Prophet (pbuh), then it can contribute significantly for spiritual, social, educational, and economic development in the Muslim society. The purpose of the present research is to develop a mosque excellence model which will incorporate variables that highlight essential role of a mosque, and the model can be used to measure performance of mosque as well.

While mosques play an important role in the lives of Muslim people, misconceptions about their role persist. As per the definition, Mosque provides a place for Muslims to worship and learn their religion, and they can be a source of social support, community engagement, a court of law, business agreements, homeless shelters, school of education, and many other aspects of lives. Such multifaceted roles continue in modern contexts. For instance, in Indonesia, mosques like Masjid Az-Zikra serve as eco-friendly hubs for environmental education, community gatherings, and sustainable development programs (Hidayat *et al.*, 2018). In Bangladesh, the Amber Denim Mosque integrates open, climate-responsive design to support factory workers' spiritual and social needs beyond prayer (Snyder, 2019). In Malaysia, conceptual and award-winning designs reimagine mosques as social catalysts with community kitchens, bazaars, safe play areas, and economic empowerment spaces (Sarif *et al.*, 2024). These examples illustrate how mosques extend their functions to include education, welfare, shelter, and economic activities, addressing contemporary community needs while rooted in Islamic tradition. Such definition has been observed to be practiced by the Muslims when we look back to the history of Islam. In fact, 20 different roles of mosque have been explored by Mohammad (1996) in his book "The Role of the Mosque" that are further supported by Darsh *et al.* (1996) in their book "The Role of the Mosque in Islam". All these roles are backed up by both the primary sources (*Quran* and *Hadith*) and secondary sources (*Ijma*, *Qiyas*, *Maslaha*, *Istishab*) of *Shariah*. Simultaneously, the recommended (*mandub*) and forbidden (*haram*) roles of mosques have also been identified by the scholars. By putting all these roles of mosque together, a mosque is supposed to be a centre of making all the decisions that will bring only benefit for a particular society where the mosque is located.

Mosques serve various purposes globally. In Saudi Arabia, mosques are being transformed into multifunctional public spaces to enhance urban quality of life and community engagement (Alnaim & Noaime, 2023). Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore utilise mosques for historical and cultural tourism, promoting cultural diversity and understanding (Adriani *et al.*, 2022). In Europe, mosques are central in political debates despite the presence of Muslim communities, reflecting societal tensions (Öcal, 2022). In rural Pakistan, mosques are vital social spaces where religious beliefs shape sociospatial relationships and community activities (Mughal, 2015). Moreover, mosques worldwide historically functioned as hubs for administrative, educational, and social activities, with potential for disaster management centres in Muslim communities (Asif *et al.*, 2016).

In reality, Muslims in many societies (e.g., India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, etc.) have limited their relationship with the mosque within praying and charity donation only. Any discussion other than *Quran* and *Hadith* inside the mosque is simply forbidden and/or punishable in many places. As a result, a significant percentage of the Muslim community do not have the opportunity to develop a relationship with the mosque. Most of the millennials look at the mosque as a place of worship only. Such failure of being unable to utilise the roles of mosque and having a positive impact on the society is, perhaps, due to the lack of having a standard mosque excellence model. Although there are few models of mosque, those are limited to one or few activities (e.g., architectural management) and not reflecting the broader role of a mosque (Ch, 2016). The Muslim community around the world is lacking a unified mosque excellence model that can ensure the efficiency of a mosque by optimising its roles in a particular society. This is even more crucial to alleviate the islamophobias around the world and to eliminate the negative attitude and aversion, that has been increased significantly since the 9/11 attack, against mosques and Islamic institutions (Atom, 2014).

Hence the objectives of the present study are the following:

1. To identify the dimensions regarding various roles of a mosque in the Muslim society; and
2. To analyse on how a mosque can contribute for the development of *ummah* (mankind).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews literature from a variety of sources that include research papers, books, web articles, journals, and reports. The objective is to explore different roles of a mosque that can be practiced by the Muslim societies globally. For instance, MaktabaIslamia Publications (2016) portray the mosque as a multifaceted centre for prayer, counselling, education, ethical guidance, healthcare, shelters, feeding the needy, and social welfare to address spiritual and communal needs. Similarly, Alnaim and Noaime (2023) explore mosques as multi-functional public spaces in dense urban settings like Hail City, advocating integration of safety, aesthetics, green spaces, and versatility to meet diverse community needs.

Haraty *et al.* (2019) examine hygienic design considerations for ablution spaces in Malaysian mosques, contributing to community engagement and societal cohesion through improved functionality. Likewise, Mokhtar and Ph (2009) establish design standards for Muslim prayer facilities in public buildings, focusing on architectural functionality and inclusivity to support spiritual experiences and broader community involvement. Muin *et al.* (2016) identify top management support, teamwork, training, financial stability, and policy as key drivers for sustainable facilities management in Malaysian mosques, ensuring inclusive and technologically advanced spaces.

Mosque as the place of worship and religious activities

The spiritual function of a mosque has been mentioned by several verses in the *Quran*. For example, Allah (SWT) says:

[Such niches are] in houses [i.e., mosques] which Allāh has ordered to be raised and that His name be mentioned [i.e., praised] therein; exalting Him within them in the morning and the

evenings [Are] men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allāh and performance of prayer and giving of zakāh. They fear a Day in which the hearts and eyes will [fearfully] turn about. (Al-Quran 24: 36-37)

Mosques should be exalted, due respect given to them, and there should be no quarrelling, shouting or fighting inside. Mosques are also the most appropriate places to offer prayers. At the mosque, a sense of holiness and reverence replaces the cares and troubles of everyday life. As per the saying of the Prophet (pbuh), the only places on earth where the angels are most frequent are the mosques (Ad-Darsh, n.d.; Darsh *et al.*, 1996; Mohammad, 1996). Recent studies reinforce this foundational role while highlighting expansions beyond it. For instance, in the U.S. context, Bagby (2020) documents the growth of mosques primarily as worship centres, with 2,769 counted in 2020, driven by population increases and serving as spiritual anchors. Similarly, in sustainable development discussions, mosques are positioned as places of worship that integrate environmental and community functions (Hamidi *et al.*, 2025).

Mosque as the centre of social support and community engagement

The mosque, in its history, had served as the centre of social support and community engagement. From the life of our Prophet (pbuh), it has been observed that mosque has been used to be the place of meeting or discussion, resolving problems and making decisions regarding community and running trade and business. Simultaneously, mosques had functioned as centres for receiving all kinds of charities that contributed to social and community development (Omar *et al.*, 2019). Karim *et al.* (2017) propose an e-commerce platform to position mosques as integrated centres offering moral guidance, ethical resources, and comprehensive services beyond rituals to enhance Muslim community wellbeing. Likewise, Omar *et al.* (2019) outline frameworks for empowering mosques historically and presently as agents for community development through charities, social welfare, and societal transformation in line with Islamic principles. Additionally, mosque plays a significant and efficient role to enhance community engagement by calling the community five times a day to come and pray together. Such frequent congregation enhances the bonding among the people in the community through greetings, sharing of sorrows and happiness, helping, and many other ways. More evidence shows that the Prophet (pbuh) advocated for marriage ceremonies and agreements to take place in the mosque. A'ishah (ra) was leaning on the shoulder of Prophet (pbuh) and watching the Abyssinians perform a traditional dance inside the mosque (Ad-Darsh, n.d.).

Recent studies affirm this role in modern contexts. For example, mosques in the U.S. provide social support through community programs, strengthening family bonds and advocating for rights (Hasnat, 2025). In urban Islamic communities, mosques act as hubs for social innovation, addressing welfare and community needs (Rahmawati *et al.*, 2024). During the COVID-19 pandemic, mosques adapted to provide health support and engagement, reinforcing their social role. In this regard, Ab Rahman *et al.* (2019) propose a mosque-based model for zakat governance with dedicated units for management and distribution, supporting social welfare, poverty alleviation, and global peace. Similarly, Muslim (2017) introduces a mosque-centered model for economic empowerment of the urban poor, fostering entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and trustworthy business development in adherence to Islamic equity.

Mosque as the source for court of law

Judges used to hold court sessions in the mosque to resolve conflicts and investigate complaints. There is much evidence for this, and there is agreement among the major schools of thought on this (Darsh *et al.*, 1996; Mohammad, 1996; Spahic, 2010). In mosque, decisions on justice, conflict resolution, punishment of criminals, including their imprisonment and chastisement, were determined (Farahati, 2011). Recent studies on mosques as sources for courts of law are limited, as this role is primarily historical and less common in modern secular states. However, discussions of Sharia arbitration in community settings persist; for instance, in Pakistan, mosques occasionally intersect with legal debates, but not as formal courts (Hamdani, 2025).

Mosque as the school of education

The first revealed verse of *Quran* (96:1) is about reading which implies the aspect of learning and education. There are many references in which the importance of the mosque as a place of learning is emphasized. Imam Bukhari and Muslim reported a story when the Prophet (pbuh) was sitting in learning circle inside the mosque and three men showed up. One of those three men took an empty sit at front, the second one sat behind others, and third one left. Then the Prophet (pbuh) said: “The first person came forward, then Allah came forward towards him. The second was shy, so Allah was shy towards him. The third turned away, so Allah turned away from him”. Such an incident is the most moving moral and spiritual motivation to study and learn in the mosque.

At that time, the Medina Mosque and other mosques were organised as places for learning the Holy *Quran*, conversing about, and resolving religious concerns. Muslims attended the sessions on scientific topics organized by the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) in order to understand the *Quran* and Islamic law. Such sessions used to be led by the companions like Imam Ali (ra), Ziad Ibn Sabit (ra), Maadh Ibn Jabal (ra), and Abi Ibn Ka’ab (ra) gladly after performing the prayers or on other occasions in the mosque. When necessary, the Prophet (pbuh) himself attended these meetings to uplift the outstanding followers and further the transmission of knowledge (Farahati, 2011). Rahman *et al.* (2015) develop a performance measurement model for mosques in Malaysia, emphasizing congregational prayers as key to spiritual promotion, alongside educational programs and transparent management to foster informed and ethical communities. Recent studies confirm mosques function as educational centres. In urban areas, they integrate education with social programs (Hadi, 2025). Globally, mosques serve as centres for religious and civic education (Karimullah, 2023).

Mosque as the place of homeless shelters

Perhaps most importantly, mosques should be seen as places of refuge and solace for those who are homeless or displaced. At the time of migration, the mosque served as the home for many unmarried, homeless, and poor Muslims who travelled with the Messenger (pbuh). These people were referred to as the *Suffah* like Abu Hurairah (ra), Abdullah ibn Umar (ra) and many others. One of the companions, Rufaydah (ra), used to care for ailing people at the Mosque of the Prophet. She cared after Sa’d ibn Mu’adh (ra) in her tent inside the Mosque till he passed away. Furthermore, mosques also serve as the main places for foreign guests (formal and informal) to visit when they come to an Islamic country. Recent studies in the USA show mosques functioning as homeless shelters. In NYC, mosques have become de facto shelters for migrants since 2020, providing housing and food (Associated Press, 2024). A Bronx mosque repurposed as an overnight shelter since 2020 (Iqbal, 2023).

Mosque as the political centre for Muslim societies

After establishing the new Islamic order in Medina, the Prophet (pbuh) established the mosque as a public gathering place for Muslims to congregate and perform their religious obligations. People were given such power by the mosque that they could influence important choices made by the government. He prepared most battles’ social and mental aspects in the mosque. He sent Muslims to the front lines of warfare by inspiring them to fight with his persuasive speech delivered in the mosque. History tells us that the Prophet (pbuh) used to consult his companions and take decisions regarding multiple battles (battle of Badr and Ohud) in the mosque (Farahati, 2011). Mosque attendance in the U.S. boosts political engagement when social activities are involved, a trend that leaders increasingly support (Westfall, 2018). Visibility of mosques influences far-right politics (Valli *et al.*, 2025).

Functions of mosque in Medina after the migration

Most of Medina’s residents were non-Muslims when the Prophet (pbuh) moved there from Mecca. Before building his own home in Medina, the Prophet (pbuh) constructed a mosque to emphasize the significant importance of mosque. Belteshazzar (2017) in his article has identified a number of functions of mosque that have been performed after Islam has been flourished in Medina. The reviewed functions of the mosque are listed below:

- a) It was the first Islamic school where Muhammad (pbuh) nurtured and educated the companions and taught them about Islamic ideology;
- b) From the podium of the mosque, spiritual discourses, and exhortations to defend in opposition to non-Islamic influence were delivered;
- c) In this mosque, the companions received appreciations and honour for their accomplishments in the battles and other matter of religion as well as social aspects;
- d) Official Islamic assignments were forwarded from the mosque by both Prophet (pbuh) and his successors;
- e) It is the mosque where the tribes of Arab used to take oaths of commitment to Prophet (pbuh) and Islam; and
- f) It served as the administrative centre for the Islamic state’s operation. The agreements, pacts, and treaties were commissioned in the mosque.

The *Shariah* (Law of Islam) has been established in the mosque where the *halal* and *haram* have also been declared.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study primarily employed qualitative methods essential for identifying the dimensions of the various roles of a mosque within Muslim society. This methodology was considered suitable for the exploratory research (Creswell, 2014; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011) of this study and for investigating the underutilised functions of mosques. Experts were consulted to obtain insights on mosque management concerning the roles they deemed underutilised and essential. The dimensions were derived by consulting ten respondents. The respondents were meticulously chosen via purposive sampling and represented a variety of nationalities, educational backgrounds, positions, and experiences. Interviews with experts were conducted to identify and elucidate various perspectives on the dimensions of the roles of an ideal mosque. The varied background of the experts enhanced the interpretations of the study's results. As shown in Figure 1, the respondents comprised experts from Malaysia (40%), Bangladesh (20%), Pakistan (20%), Afghanistan (10%), and Sudan (10%).

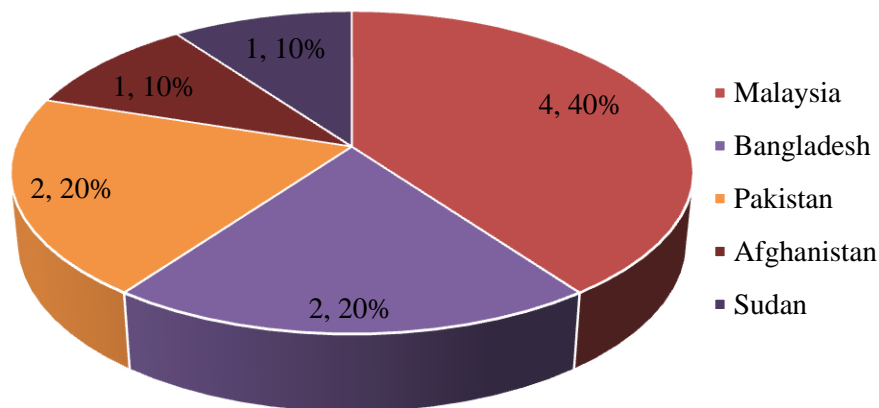


FIGURE 1: NATIONALITY OF THE RESPONDENTS

Source: Figure by Authors

This study’s respondents comprised different positions of their gender and academic qualification, age, and experience (refer to Table 1). Two experts associated directly to Mosque playing dual roles as Mufti and Imam who were able to contribute significant notions from their leadership and religious experiences. Six respondents were academics comprising five Assistant Professors and one Associate Professor. One participant was a President and Principal Research Fellow; another was a Director of an Islamic institution (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement, ABIM).

Seven (70%) of the respondents were male and holding a PhD level of education. Simultaneously, 30 percent of the sample was female (3 respondents) and held a master’s degree. In terms of age, the respondents fell into three groups: On average, 30 percent of the sample was made up of younger professionals (ages 33–36), 50 percent of mid-career participants (ages 41–45), and 20 percent of senior participants (ages 55–75). Regarding experience, three categories emerged: between the voices of early-career professionals with less than 10 years of experience (20%), mid-level professionals with 10–20 years of experience (50%), and highly experienced individuals with over 30 years of experience (30%). Taking into account the differences in positions, genders, qualifications, age groups, and level of experience filled by this diverse bunch of respondents, a broad spectrum of perspectives were received that enriched the data of the study.

TABLE 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

Position	Gender	Age	Education	Experience (Years)	Analysis code
1. Mufti, Imam, and Principal	Male	36	Master	22	E1
2. President and Principal Research Fellow	Male	55	PhD	30	E2
3. Director, Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM)	Female	75	Master	35	E3
4. Assistant Professor	Male	41	PhD	6	E4
5. Assistant Professor	Male	44	PhD	10	E5
6. Mufti, Imam, and Trainer	Male	33	PhD	20	E6
7. Associate Professor	Male	45	PhD	15	E7
8. Assistant Professor	Female	44	PhD	10	E8
9. Assistant Professor	Male	36	Master	10	E9
10. Assistant professor	Female	42	PhD	8	E10

Source: Table by Authors

An in-depth semi-structured interview was used to get the answers from the participants. Each interview session typically lasted around 35 minutes on average. There was an audio recording of every interview with the exception of three participants who gave written responses. The following questions were asked to participants during the interview sessions:

- Q1. Kindly explain the roles of a mosque in the Muslim society.
- Q1. In your opinion, do you think that the mosques are performing their role fully? If yes, please explain in detail. If not, then what could be the reasons behind non-performance?
- Q3. If not, then in which areas, improvements are needed?

Each interview session was followed up with the transcription of the participant’s comments. The next step was to analyse the transcripts. The co-occurrence maps that emerge from utilising VOSviewer for text analysis have the ability to offer valuable data insights, as stated by Bukar *et al.* (2023). The current study employed VOSviewer for data analysis to identify and standardise the dimensions and sub-dimensions of the roles of a mosque. VOSviewer, a widely recognised tool for visualising bibliometric and text data, facilitated the clustering and mapping of themes derived from the qualitative dataset. Similar to the six stages of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006), the analysis started with data preparation and familiarisation, where qualitative data from expert interviews were pre-processed and structured for input into VOSviewer. However, the manual coding and thematic grouping stages are automated by the software. Identifying the key terms (codes) were determined by their occurrence frequency which was set to minimum 4 times.

The analysis initially identified 48 key terms through co-occurrence mapping. However, for greater focus and relevancy of the analysis, four terms were excluded as irrelevant, thereby cutting the final list of key terms to 44. Simultaneously, VOSviewer’s default resolution settings led to the production of 2 clusters, initially. However, the resolution parameter was readjusted for several times in order to

increase its granularity and identify more specific thematic clusters. As a result, we found seven clusters, which provided a finer tuning of the dimensions and sub dimensions (refer to Table 2).

TABLE 2: KEY TERMS AND CLUSTERS

Key terms	Occurrences	Cluster	Key terms	Occurrences	Cluster
counselling	9	1	community	8	2
guidance	9		cultural center	9	
imams	6		event	5	
Islam	4		interfaith dialogue	6	
mosque	10		Muslim community	4	
prayer	10		Muslim society	7	
prophet	4		Muslim ummah	4	
religion	5		Non-Muslim	4	
role	10		society	6	
worship	8		shelter	7	
live stream	7	3	masjid	5	4
online	4		charity	5	
technology	9		<i>sadaqah</i>	6	
knowledge	6	5	<i>zakat</i>	4	6
dawah	4		transparency	4	
education	9		governance	9	
youth	5		management	4	
program	8		finance	9	
communication	5		Economic		
training	4		Income		
design	7	7	Market	8	
facilities	4		Hall		

Source: Table by Authors

The number of clusters and identified key terms are also visualised in Figure 2. The resulting visualisation includes a total of 44 terms (items), organized into eight distinct clusters, connected by 782 links, with an overall link strength of 3452. The nodes in the map represent key terms from the transcripts, with the size of each node indicating the frequency of the term's occurrence. Larger nodes such as "prayer," "community," "governance, economic, " and "technology" suggest that these terms are highly recurrent in the dataset, reflecting central roles of a mosque. The edges, or links, between nodes represent the occurrence of terms within the same transcript, with thicker edges indicating stronger relationships.

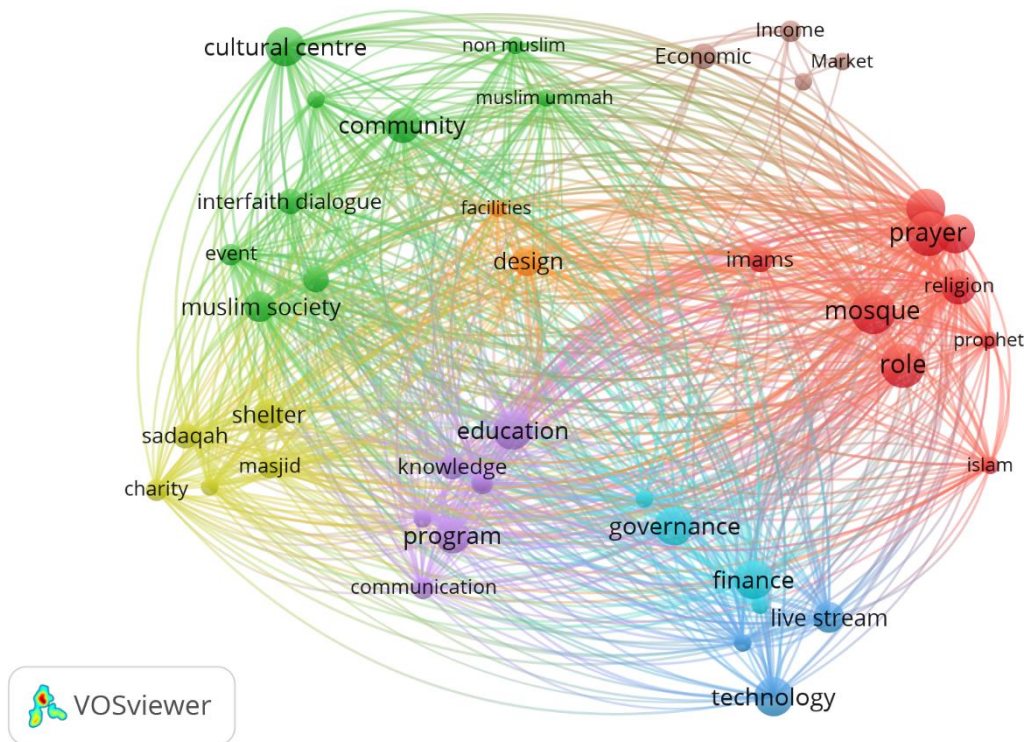


FIGURE 2: NETWORK CHART SHOWING THE KEY TERMS AND CLUSTERS

Source: Figure by Authors generated using VOSviewer

Following the clustering process, the identified dimensions were iteratively reviewed and refined to ensure alignment with the research objectives and to enhance their interpretive clarity. The purpose was to obtain meaningful dimensions and sub-dimensions which accurately describes the data set. Hence, cluster 7 and 3 were combined as one cluster due to their relevancy. Finally, each cluster's most popular terms and phrases were used as the basis for labelling the dimensions and sub-dimensions. Table 3 shows the seven identified dimensions and sub-dimensions of a mosque excellence model.

TABLE 3: DIMENSIONS AND SUB-DIMENSIONS

Dimensions	Sub-dimensions
1. Spiritual excellence	Worship and prayer practices Guidance and counselling services Other religious activities
2. Community Engagement	Cultural center Interfaith dialogue Youth empowerment and engagement Social unity and inclusivity
3. Design and facilities	Islamic architecture Functional and accessible design Technology integration Digital outreach and online presence
4. Social welfare and support	Charity and donation Temporary shelter Healthcare support
5. Education and knowledge dissemination	Education Training Dawah (preaching)

	Research
6. Management and transparency	Well defined Management committee Transparent financial management Transparent decisions Ethical conduct Communication with public
7. Economic Aspect	Income-generating entity Training Programs

Source: Table by Authors

4. FINDINGS

Based on the data analysis in the preceding section, seven dimensions (see Table 4) have been identified that are: *Spiritual excellence, Community Engagement, Design and facilities, Social welfare and support, Education and knowledge dissemination, Management and transparency, and Economic Aspect.*

TABLE 4: DIMENSIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Dimensions	Definitions
1. Spiritual excellence	Enhancing religious devotion and personal growth through worship, counselling, guidance, and other spiritual activities.
2. Community Engagement	Fostering social connections, cultural exchange, and interfaith understanding within and beyond the community.
3. Design and facilities	Incorporating Islamic architectural principles and modern technology to ensure accessibility, functionality, and digital presence.
4. Social welfare and support	Addressing community needs through charity (<i>zakat, sadaqah</i> , and other donations), shelter, and healthcare initiatives.
5. Education and knowledge dissemination	Promoting learning, skill development, preaching, and research to enhance religious education and knowledge.
6. Management and transparency	Ensuring ethical, transparent, and effective governance in decision-making and financial operations.
7. Economic Aspect	Generating and managing financial resources through businesses, training programs, and rentals for sustainability.

Source: Table by Authors

Spiritual excellence

The dimension of "Spiritual Excellence" was identified as the core role of a mosque. All experts agreed on the fact that the primary function of a mosque is as the centre of worship for spiritual enhancement. Relevant statements from the experts were as follows:

".....the mosque is a place of worship and da'wah...." (E2)

"Primary function includes prayer and worship." (E6)

However, religion is beyond prayers and worship. So is the role of a mosque. Imams are responsible to convey this message as stated by expert-1

"We should not limit our religion to prayers, imams should not limit their sermons only about prayer and fasting." (E1)

Such role has a deeper and inseparable connection to Islam that involves various activities central to the spiritual well-being of the Muslim community. Some common activities are daily congregational prayers, Jumma prayer, and *tarawi* prayers during Ramadan. Additionally, sense of spirituality is enhanced through proper guidance and counselling that can be provided in the mosque. According to expert 4:

“...it is a centre to help and cultivate the spirituality...it also functions as a place where Imam and scholars in the mosque will provide the guidance on religious practices” (E4)

Other activities related to worship may include *i'tikaf* (an act of worship to focus on Allah avoiding worldly affairs), *Qiyamul Layl* (optional prayers performed after midnight), and others. By prioritising spiritual excellence, mosques can continue to inspire devotion and provide a sense of purpose and belonging among worshippers, reinforcing their pivotal role in fostering a cohesive and spiritually enriched society.

Community engagement

The "Community Engagement" role emphasises how the mosque is an important place for people to come together, share their culture, encourage religious dialogue, and learn about each other's backgrounds. According to experts, mosques are vital for maintaining cultural traditions and fostering social relationships since they serve as community hubs. Experts said:

“A mosque-based community centre is important for Muslims to have social gatherings, celebrate social events such as marriage, Eid, iftar, and others” (E1).

“We encourage people to arrange their nikah or marriage in the mosque, which is also the Sunnah, to encourage community engagement.” (E6)

“The mosque also is an identity for social unity i.e., congregational prayers, fostering brotherhood.” (E5)

Another expert also noted that mosques may help bring people of different faiths together:

“I see the masjid as the cultural bridge between the Muslims and non-Muslims” (E3).

From this vantage point, it is clear that the mosque plays an important role in encouraging social peace and inclusion via discourse and engagement. Mosques may be even more dynamic and influential via community outreach programs. The mosque has the ability to empower young people, according to one expert:

“From the viewpoint of societal necessity, the mosque serves as a community centre. ...improve more and more community related activities such as certain programs where it would be focusing for engaging and empowering the youth” (E4)

Additionally, Inclusion is crucial as stated by the experts:

“Mosques serve as hubs for fostering community cohesion by hosting social gatherings, facilitating psychological guidance, resolving conflicts within the community, promoting inclusivity, diversity, and unity among members, engaging in outreach programs to connect with the broader community.” (E8)

“.... fostering a sense of unity and community among Muslims, and it gather all Muslims from different race and colures in a house without any discrimination and superiority.” (E9)

“Strengthening community outreach initiatives to build stronger connections within and beyond the Muslim community is equally critical to ensuring the mosque remains a vibrant and impactful institution.” (E7)

According to an expert, it is crucial to promote understanding on mosque's roles among different generations and distinct groups by engaging them in different activities in the mosque.

“Engagement of the younger and older generation are needed to be able understand the need of the mosque audiences.” (E10)

Design and facilities

This dimension crucial emphasising mosque's infrastructure and technological innovations in enhancing the spiritual and practical functionality. It is targeted as Islamic architecture, text and epigraphic design, functional and accessible design, technology integration and digital outreach. Mosque architectural design is more than an architectural patterns with spiritual beauty, it is also an historical and culture heritage pattern. One expert stated that:

"...strategic architectural considerations is important to exemplify holistic service to society" (E10).

Moreover, mosque infrastructure's accessibility for different groups including women, children, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities depends highly on its functional and inclusive characteristics. One interviewee put it like this:

Mosques should ensure their infrastructure and services are accessible and welcoming to all segments of the community, including women, children, senior citizens and disabled people." (E7)

With the incorporation of modern technologies mosques are enabled to engage with wider audiences through digital outreach programs. For instance, one interviewee said,

"Every mosque should have the facility to video record the sermons and activities. I believe that the mosques need to be updated with modern technology. But that's not to say that we want technology to be so much that, through technology, our way of worship violates Shariah" (E1).

One stressed the need to reach out more online and further emphasised important work for example through online sermons, educational content and a social media presence for outreach to a broader population (E5). Mosques also function as cultural and spiritual landmarks that attract tourists and promote interfaith understanding. One expert explained,

".... tourists come to take photograph and to see the architecture. Masjids should have rooms for travellers who want to know about the spiritual perspective of mosques" (E3).

Together, all of these insights are critical to the architectural design, technological integration, and accessibility of mosques for the community.

Social welfare and support

"Mosques deliver a role in social welfare, offering support to the needy...", stated by the ninth respondent (E9). Such supports are provided in a number of forms. Firstly, financial support that comes in the forms of charity such as *zakat*, *sadaqah*, and other forms of donations. This was also supported by another expert (E5) emphasising the role of mosque in fulfilling societal needs through charity distribution. In fact, mosques can become the centre of *zakat* and other charity management for a community as stated by one of the interviewees:

"If someone wants to run a charity or welfare program, the mosque can function to collect sadaqah or Zakhat-related activities, donations, and possibly distribute the resources to the needy." (E4)

Mosques also play a crucial role during natural calamities such as flood and cyclone by providing a place of temporary shelter to the displaced people and take part in the support programs by the government.

“...in disaster management, in the various developmental works or programs that the government takes for social development, or when an accident occurs in society, mosque can play a significant role in such case.” (E2)

Such practice is often observed in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The second respondent further emphasised the role of a mosque to provide health care support during crisis period of a community or nation. As stated by the expert:

“... programs for medical aid or mental health related services can be introduced” (E4)

Simultaneously, mosques should provide shelter for the travellers who travel from one place to another (sometimes from one country to another) to spread the message of Islam (*dawah*) and for tourists who want to know about Islam.

Masjids should have rooms for travellers who want to know about Islam. (E3)

Mosques have historically functioned as centres for social support, addressing the needs of the underprivileged and fostering communal solidarity. In this regard, one of the concerns raised by the experts was about addressing the needs of the broader socioeconomic, educational, and psychological needs of the diverse communities such as the minority groups, often the non-Muslims in a Muslim majority nation (E7). Similar concern was raised by another expert as follows:

Since the mosque is the main centre of society, mosque management should pay special attention to the minority people of the society. (E1)

Overall, with its several sub-dimensions, including charity and donations, temporary shelter, and healthcare support, the "Social-welfare and Support" dimension exemplifies the mosque's function as a hub for community assistance and humanitarian relief.

Education and knowledge dissemination

Historically, mosques have been pivotal in nurturing intellectual and spiritual growth, serving as the first university in the world (Hardaker & Sabki, 2012). Starting from the time of the Prophet (pbuh) till today, we can see the practice of learning *Quran* inside the mosque. Hence mosques are also centre of education as stated by the experts:

“Beyond these spiritual activities, mosques are also educational centres, providing teachings on Islamic principles, ethics, and values.” (E8)

As a Muslim child, he should get as much religious knowledge from the mosque as he needs to lead his social life or worldly life. (E1)

In many cases, there are *madhrasas* (Islamic schools) for education for the children as well as for the youth. The mosques can also be a place for public lecture to create awareness on any issue and educate people to realise the roles of a mosque, said by the experts:

“Mosque also function as a place for a religious education by setting a madrasah, and a mosque could also serve as a place for a public lecture and so on.” (E4)

“The continuous effort on the awareness about the role of mosque in the community will attract more people to be close to the mosque.” (E10)

However, the education and teachings provided in these mosques and *madhrasas* should not be limited to religious education only. Islam is a religion for the mankind for all time. Hence the education should be adapted to all civilisation, stated by another expert:

“Muslim education or Islamic education is not just religious education; it is the education of civilization of which a significant part can be organised in mosque.” (E2)

This was further emphasised by another expert by stating the importance of incorporating conventional subjects alongside religious teachings in the curriculum, as stated by another expert:

“Historically, mosques have been pivotal in fostering unity within the community, offering a platform for religious learning, disseminating Islamic values, and addressing socio-economic issues. mosques must enhance their educational initiatives by incorporating contemporary subjects alongside Islamic teachings.” (E7)

For this, people from all over the world should have the same understanding and similar perspective of Islamic education and knowledge dissemination. In this regard, the personnel (*imams, muadhdhins*, and leaders) should be trained, appropriate educational and skill development programs should be introduced, other experts added:

“So, we want the all the mosques across the whole world will have the same understanding of the knowledge of Islam and how to interact with non-Muslims.” (E3)

“Create awareness for the people to use the mosque properly and identify the roles of it.” (E9)

“Mosque also is a centre for Dawah spreading Islamic teachings and values throughout the world. Emphasize both spiritual and worldly welfare; train imams, muadhdhin and administrators in management, education, and counselling skills; initiate programs addressing youth challenges, sports activities, and skill development” (E5)

Overall, "Education and Knowledge Dissemination" is a crucial aspect that highlights the mosque's function as a hub for education, training, and the side spreading of Islamic teachings. Several sub-dimensions have been identified under this role that are: education, training, *dawah* (preaching), and research initiatives.

Management and transparency

The "Management and transparency" dimension underscores the critical importance of human resources to ensure structured management and responsible operations in the mosque. First of all, there should be a well-defined management roles and transparent governance for the mosque, stated by one expert:

“I think they should come up with the infrastructure in terms of financial and then what actually the mosque should be turned into as a role model.” (E3)

Then, selection of personnel for these management roles, including *imams* and *muadhdhins*, should be done wisely and carefully. Because they will be responsible for not only in the management and operations but also for representing Islam. This concern was emphasised by the expert saying:

“...the management of the mosque or the care of the mosque will be done by those who have clean image, transparent and free from all forms of socialism, politics, capitalism and all others.” (E1)

Experts emphasised the significance of an appropriate management body when queried about the mosque's inefficacy in fulfilling its roles. Several factors were identified, including insufficient strategic planning, absence of visionary leadership and trained personnel, lack of knowledgeable *imams* and educators, and inadequate community involvement in decision-making processes. These factors underscore the imperative for competent management and operational staff within the mosque.

“Lack of strategic planning and community participation in decision-making also some of the reasons of inefficient roles of mosques.” (E5)

“Lack of visionary leadership or trained personnel capable of addressing contemporary challenges is one of the reasons behind the inability of certain mosques to perform their roles.” (E7)

“Several factors can contribute to the non-performance of mosques including lack of qualified human resources such as knowledgeable Imams and teachers, insufficient commitment from mosque management.” (E8)

“Lack of expert and knowledgeable officials, lack of resourceful and capable preachers and imams are responsible for the the inability of certain mosques to perform their roles.” (E9)

Hence, it is crucial to provide them appropriate training and prepare them to serve the ummah (mankind) effectively and efficiently. By investing in the development of leadership skills, right knowledge, and delivering impactful sermons, transparent financial management, and identifying and solving problems in the community, mosques can better fulfil their roles. The essence of trained management and operational body is reflected in the following statements by the experts.

“...leadership matters in terms of adequate skills... good leadership and governance are needed to have certain vision and goals for long term sustainability of the mosque itself. ...there should be a transparent management in terms of financial management.” (E4)

“We should train the imams, the leaders, and management on identifying problems in the society, solving the problems, delivering impactful sermons.” (E6)

“Successfully performing the roles depend on the leadership in managing the mosque. They must equip themselves with the right knowledge and understanding about their role and function of the mosque, key knowledge and skills in management and a supportive team.” (E10)

Finally, one expert highlighted the importance of coordinating the management of the mosque with social power, such as the local government, that can lead to greater impact and positive change within the community.

“What you need to do is to coordinate the management of the mosque with social power, state power, patronage power, and the internal power of managing the mosque.” (E2)

Overall, mosques, as community institutions, must have a well-defined management structure and skilful and knowledgeable personnel to ensure transparency and integrity in resource utilisation and decision-making processes. Sub-dimensions deduced under this role are well-defined management committee, transparent financial practices, ethical conduct, and effective communication with the public.

Economic aspect

The last identified dimension signifies the economic role of a mosque to maintain financial stability. There are operational and maintenance costs for a mosque to play its roles efficiently. Inadequate financial capacity is one of the major obstacles faced by the mosques for becoming inefficient in playing their role and contributing to the society. Experts were agreed to this concern saying:

“One of the reasons behind mosque’ inefficient role is very low budget for the masjid management for which they cannot start any program.” (E6)

“The inability of certain mosques to perform their roles attributed to a combination of factors, including inadequate financial resources.” (E7)

In this regard, a mosque should diversify its sources of funds instead of relying solely on donations. One of the sources can be establishing a business entity in the forms of a business shop of mosque market. Such shops or market are often common in many mosques around the world. A mosque should be built as a complex building where a multipurpose hall can be another source of finance. As stated by one expert:

“Masjids can generate income by having a multipurpose hall that can be rented out to hold social events and programmes such as marriage ceremony, various days such as Victory Day, Language Day, conference, business expo, etc.” (E1)

Additionally, as a centre of education, mosques can offer certain training and skill development programs by charging a fair amount of fees for the participants. Public programs may include training on Muslim-friendly tour guide, *zakat* management, *Quran* learning programs, *dawah* training, *halal* entrepreneurship training, and others as suggested by some experts:

“Multidimensional programs need to be taken on the mosque by the state that can also be income-generating for the mosque.” (E2)

“Certain skills training such as awareness of how to manage zakat effectively, dawah training, and entrepreneurship programs can generate income for the mosque.” (E4)

Another suggestion was given by one of the experts was to introduce mosque-stay service for the tourists. This service is quite popular in South-Korea where Muslim tourists can rent designated rooms of a mosque for their stay (2-3 days) and explore religious tourism. This can be another source of generating income for the mosque.

“...masjids play a very important role as a one stop centre for the social interaction, the education and the economy.....So, these knowledge seeking travellers can stay in the mosques, and in fact, the mosques can even generate income from here.” (E3)

Raising revenues in the form of rents of strategic spaces, rooms, various business entities, educational, and skill building programs shows that Mosques have the potential to be financially sustainable and simultaneously, enhance community engagement. Sub-dimensions including income generating entities, and training programs show possibility of mosques to have sources other than donation to sustain themselves.

5. DISCUSSION

Combined with prayer and devotion, especially the congregation's worship, the mosque is drawn back to the thought of its mission of bringing people together by faith and practice. Rahman *et al.* (2015) take note of the mosque's congregational prayers as an important component to spirituality promotion. Counselling is offered at the mosque through Muslim imams and other religious authorities assist members to deal with personal or communal problems, as well as address their needs for spirituality and services. As Karim *et al.* (2017) pointed out, apart from the mere religious rituals, the mosque offers spiritual-ethical resource in the form of moral guidance and encouragement. The protection of religious values in modern society is one way in which a spiritual component affects the community's morality and spirit. Through counselling, mosques help people solve modern problems in compliance with the Islamic guidelines and rules. According to MaktabaIslamia Publications (2016), the mosque act as a centre of prayer. One of the important aspects of Islamic activities, the mosque encourages its people to pray, and offer counselling, education, ethical guidance, and a never-ending array of services to help its members remain relevant and engaged as it fulfils their overall needs.

As places of worship, mosques also serve as meeting places for people of different faiths and backgrounds, where they may learn about one another's traditions and customs and socialise. They not just help keep up social bonds amongst Muslim community, at the same time develop bridges with the people from other religions, creating admiration and union in multicultural societies. Mooslem *et al.* (2019), Haraty *et al.* (2019) and MaktabaIslamia Publications (2016) in their studies emphasised the role of mosques as playing community engagement regarding societal cohesion and mutual understanding. Additionally, mosques serve as paradigms for tourism, the exhibition of Islamic heritage and architects as responsible for the absorption of the cultural appreciation and global understanding as they stand. Community engagement helps in growing mosques to be dynamic

institutions that could answer spiritual or social needs, making them key stones for the development of community life and culture. As reported by Haraty *et al.* (2019) in the context of Malaysia and Singapore where mosques serve as hybrid spaces, combining worship with tourism to showcase cultural understanding, tolerance, and Islamic history.

Design and facility dimension assert the architectural functionality and inclusivity of mosques that should be reflected through physical appearance, arts, and technological advancement as found in this study and exemplified by Mokhtar and Ph (2009) and Muin *et al.* (2016). A mosque which is thoughtfully designed is one that creates a space which is welcoming not only for spiritual experiences but also for broader community involvement. This findings also align with the recent study by Alnaim and Noaime (2023) that urges mosques to integrate safety measures, aesthetic aspects, and green spaces to enhance versatile public attractions. Features like accessible infrastructure, multipurpose spaces, make mosques accommodate all need, including the needs of women, children, and the disabled. It also brings integration of modern technology such as live stream sermons and digital platforms for the announcements to update the mosques' interaction with both the local and global population in the fast digital world. Mosques can still play an important role as places of worship and community hub, whilst meeting current needs, by incorporating such traditional architectural elements with contemporary sensibility.

These functions under social welfare and support underscore the role of a mosque beyond its spiritual functions encompassing broader societal responsibility. Mosques are an important part of community health improvement because they help providing fundamental needs such as sheltering homeless and people in crisis, medical care for the sick, as well as financial aid for the poor. These correspond to the functions that MaktabaIslamia Publications (2016) suggest that the mosque is best suited for healthcare, shelters, relaxation and siesta, feeding the hungry and needy, and for other social welfare and community services. Integrating social welfare services help to bind the mosque closer with the local community, developing trust and dependency between the populations. Mosques were historically centres that received all sorts of charities to contribute to the development of society and the community (Omar *et al.*, 2019; Ab Rahman *et al.*, 2019). These efforts also encourage social cohesion; communities coming together, raising funds for charitable causes conducted in mosques. By recognising that mosques can serve a social welfare services, mosques will be able to sustain in their roles as a comprehensive part of society as understood by Islamic teachings and to respond to ongoing problems of social inequality and exclusion.

In the current times, with increasing challenges towards the preservation of the communities' religious and cultural identity, education and dissemination of knowledge of Islam are of paramount importance. According to Rahman *et al.* (2015), mosques satisfy the need for both spiritual enrichment and practical skills development through their provision of structurally educated program and resources. Imams and leaders who should possess right knowledge and training for effective spread of Islamic teachings worldwide. Also, the mosque activities should be integrated with research and training which generates a culture of lifelong learning and adaptive education. This is in line with Islamic principles of obligation on all believers to search for knowledge. On one hand it recognises the important educational role mosques have always played, on the other hand, it recognises them in a vital role in building such informed, ethical, socially responsible, and modern communities.

It is the management committee and leaders of a mosque who make all of its roles alive by ensuring that all activities and services are in action. The ability of a mosque to attract retain its congregation and external stakeholders' support largely depends on the extent of this dimension of a mosque. Conflicts are eliminated and fair resource allocation is ensured through clear and ethical practices of management. Religious institutions that embrace perception of fairness and transparency strengthen community bonds and create a feeling that every one person is harbouring responsibility. Putting emphasis on management and transparency, the leaders can do more effectively what is to their religious and social obligation and become exemplary models of ethical stewardship and effective leadership. Past studies (Rahman *et al.*, 2015; Ab Rahman *et al.*, 2019; Mokhtar & Ph, 2009; Muin *et*

al., 2016; Muslim, 2017; Karim *et al.*, 2017) have also emphasised all these aspects of management and operations of a mosque to be practiced.

Of economic importance, mosques play the role of ensuring the institutional sustainability and empowering the local community. In fact, mosques can play an important role in economic empowerment by facilitating, among other things, skill development seminars, bazaars, and microfinance programs. Past research backs up this idea by demonstrating that economic programs are often the foundation on which mosques create improved community wellbeing: promoting entrepreneurship and financial literacy. Muslim (2017) inducts the conducive environment for economic empowerment, development of honest and trustworthy entrepreneurs. The mosque as a multipurpose functional unit was also stressed by Mokhtar and Ph (2009) and Muin *et al.* (2016). Economic integration in mosques is never about financial returns but is about financial gains complemented with adherence to the Islamic principles of collective benefit and social equity; this is a crucial aspect beyond their contemporary roles.

6. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research contributes theoretically to Islamic studies and institutional theory by clarifying mosque as dynamic institution that adapts to the needs of its community. More practically, these findings allow mosque administrators, policymakers, and mosque stakeholders to better leverage mosques to drive community development. Furthermore, this study achieves its objective by identifying seven key dimensions that define the mosque's contributions to Muslim society and Ummah development. These dimensions are Spiritual excellence, Community Engagement, Design & Facilities, Social Welfare and Support, Education and Knowledge Dissemination, Management and Transparency, and Economic Aspect. Different facets of the role of mosques are represented through these dimensions and their sub dimensions as they stretch beyond the traditional functions of mosques as places of worship. In addition to promoting ethical leadership and educational programs within Muslim communities, the results highlight the role of mosques as hubs for spiritual direction, social integration, and economic development. The findings of these dimensions are significant to develop a framework for better understanding the untapped roles of mosque in addressing societal needs and misunderstanding regarding Islamic teachings.

Limitations of the study are its qualitative data from experts and subjective interpretation of themes. Future studies should use mixed-methods techniques and investigate regional differences in the functions of mosques to confirm and expand upon these results. Future study can be furthered applying quantitative methodology such as Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to prioritise the dimensions and develop a mosque excellence hierarchy model.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to acknowledge the financial assistance obtained from Department of Business Administration grant. The Grant number is IIUM/504/G/14/3/1/1/DEBA23-020-0026.

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PERANAN ZAKAT DALAM MENGURANGKAN HUTANG PENDIDIKAN
KEWANGAN DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR PENGAJIAN TINGGI

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Received 18 December 2025: Revised 27 February 2026: Accepted 10 March 2026

ABSTRACT

This paper introduces an alternative model perspective for the National Higher Education Fund (NEFC) financing system. The main objective of this alternative model, known as the Zakat model, is to alleviate and exempt NEFC loan repayments for Asnaf students through the use of Zakat funds, in line with the broader goal of poverty eradication. A large proportion of borrowers, over half a million, have yet to repay any portion of their student loans, with nearly 97 per cent belonging to the B40 student demographic. Given the potential impact of debt on individuals and their families, it is important to explore avenues for debt relief. This paper focuses on conceptual development of a Zakat model, using a qualitative content analysis methodology. This study draws on existing research on the effectiveness of Zakat as an important form of assistance in the education sector, thereby establishing the Zakat model as an innovative financing paradigm. The proposed approach is highly relevant to addressing the issue of rising student debt, especially among B40 students who are heavily reliant on loans to finance their education. The Zakat model proposes a mechanism whereby Zakat funds contribute by deducting tuition and accommodation fees financed by NEFC loans. This intervention aims to ease the financial burden on students and their families, allowing them to focus on academic pursuits and achieve their educational aspirations. In essence, this new approach to zakat distribution has the potential to create a more sustainable and impactful form of charitable giving. In doing so, it can effectively contribute to addressing critical social challenges, including poverty, inequality, and access to education.

KEYWORDS: ZAKAT, MAQASID SYARIAH, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, HYBRID INSTRUMENT

ABSTRAK

Kertas kerja ini memperkenalkan model alternatif perspektif untuk sistem pembiayaan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional (NEFC). Objektif utama model alternatif ini, yang dikenali sebagai model Zakat, adalah untuk meringankan dan mengecualikan pembayaran balik pinjaman NEFC bagi pelajar Asnaf melalui penggunaan dana Zakat, selaras dengan matlamat yang lebih luas iaitu pembasmian kemiskinan. Sebahagian besar peminjam, melebihi setengah juta, masih belum membayar balik mana-mana bahagian pinjaman pelajar mereka, dengan hampir 97 peratus tergolong

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dalam demografi pelajar B40. Memandangkan potensi kesan hutang terhadap individu dan keluarga mereka, adalah penting untuk meneroka jalan bagi pelepasan hutang. Kertas kerja ini menumpukan pada pembangunan konsep model Zakat, menggunakan metodologi analisis kandungan kualitatif. Kajian ini mendalami penyelidikan sedia ada mengenai keberkesanan Zakat sebagai bentuk bantuan penting dalam sektor pendidikan, dengan itu membina model Zakat sebagai paradigma pembiayaan yang inovatif. Pendekatan yang dicadangkan amat relevan untuk menangani isu hutang pelajar yang semakin meningkat, terutamanya dalam kalangan pelajar B40 yang sangat bergantung pada pinjaman untuk membiayai pendidikan mereka. Model Zakat mencadangkan mekanisme di mana dana Zakat menyumbang dengan memotong yuran pengajian dan penginapan yang dibiayai oleh pinjaman NEFC. Intervensi ini bertujuan untuk meringankan beban kewangan yang ditanggung oleh pelajar dan keluarga mereka, membolehkan mereka menumpukan perhatian pada usaha akademik dan mencapai aspirasi pendidikan. Pada dasarnya, pendekatan baharu terhadap pengagihan zakat ini mempunyai potensi untuk mewujudkan bentuk pemberian amal yang lebih mampan dan berimpak. Dengan berbuat demikian, ia dapat menyumbang secara berkesan dalam menangani cabaran sosial yang kritikal, termasuk kemiskinan, ketidaksamaan, dan akses kepada pendidikan.

KATA KUNCI: ZAKAT, MAQASID SYARIAH, BANTUAN KEWANGAN, INSTRUMEN HIBRID

1. PENGENALAN

Pinjaman pelajar telah menjadi bahagian penting dalam landskap pendidikan tinggi global seiring dengan peningkatan permintaan untuk pendidikan tertiar. Pinjaman pelajar menjadikan pendidikan tinggi lebih mudah diakses oleh pelajar daripada keluarga berpendapatan rendah dengan membolehkan mereka membayar pendidikan universiti/kolej. Pembayaran balik pinjaman biasanya ditangguhkan sehingga pelajar berkemampuan secara kewangan (iaitu, apabila mereka tamat pengajian dan memasuki alam pekerjaan). Sehingga tahun 2008, dianggarkan lebih 70 negara telah melaksanakan program pinjaman pelajar tajaan kerajaan sebagai mekanisme pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi, mencerminkan trend global ke arah perkongsian kos pendidikan antara kerajaan dan individu (Knight, 2009). Malaysia merupakan antara negara yang menonjol dalam kumpulan ini, namun sering dikaitkan dengan kadar pembayaran balik pinjaman yang rendah berbanding beberapa negara lain (Fadzim *et al.*, 2025). Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional (PTPTN) telah memainkan peranan penting dalam pendemokrasian pendidikan di Malaysia sejak lebih dua dekad lalu dengan menyediakan pembiayaan kos rendah dalam bentuk pinjaman bagi menyokong akses pendidikan tertiar, khususnya kepada pelajar daripada isi rumah B40. Sejak penubuhannya, lebih tiga juta pelajar telah menerima manfaat daripada skim pinjaman ini, menjadikannya antara instrumen pembiayaan pendidikan terbesar di negara ini (Wan Jan, 2020).

Penerima manfaat terbesar pinjaman NEFC terdiri daripada peminjam dalam segmen isi rumah berpendapatan rendah, menunjukkan bahawa skim ini berfungsi sebagai instrumen utama mobiliti sosial bagi kumpulan B40. Dari sudut demografi, dianggarkan sekitar dua pertiga peminjam adalah etnik Melayu, mencerminkan kebergantungan tinggi komuniti ini terhadap pembiayaan pendidikan awam (Wan Jan, 2020). Tanpa kewujudan skim pinjaman NEFC, sebahagian besar pelajar daripada latar belakang sosioekonomi rendah berkemungkinan menghadapi halangan serius untuk membiayai pengajian tinggi mereka. Biasiswa yang ditawarkan oleh syarikat berkaitan kerajaan (GLC) dan syarikat multinasional (MNC) lazimnya berasaskan merit akademik dan disertai kontrak perkhidmatan, menjadikannya kurang mudah diakses oleh pelajar yang mempunyai kekangan akademik dan kewangan serentak. Pada masa yang sama, akses kepada pinjaman bank komersial adalah terhad bagi golongan ini disebabkan syarat kelayakan yang ketat, kadar kos pembiayaan yang lebih tinggi, serta keperluan jaminan kewangan yang sukar dipenuhi oleh isi rumah berpendapatan rendah (Sabri *et al.*, 2021).

Walau bagaimanapun, dua masalah yang tidak disengajakan dan utama telah menjadi semakin jelas sejak penubuhan NEFC. Masalah pertama adalah hutang pelajar yang tinggi, yang nampaknya telah membebankan isi rumah B40. Data mendedahkan bahawa hampir 97% peminjam yang gagal membayar balik adalah daripada isi rumah B40 yang menghadapi masalah kewangan, dengan ramai di

antara mereka berpendapatan di bawah RM 2,000 selepas tamat pengajian (Wan Jan, 2020). Isu lain ialah kadar pembayaran balik yang rendah; jika ini tidak ditangani, NEFC mungkin gagal. Kerajaan Malaysia nampaknya telah menjamin hutang besar NEFC sebanyak RM 40 bilion secara prinsip ditambah RM 13 bilion faedah. Jika trend semasa berterusan, jumlah yang terhutang kepada pihak ketiga akan meningkat daripada RM 40 bilion kepada RM 76 bilion dalam tempoh 20 tahun akan datang. Pada masa ini, 180,000 pelajar memerlukan pinjaman NEFC. Menurut unjuran pertumbuhan enrolmen Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia, dianggarkan 250,000 pelajar akan memohon pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi menjelang tahun 2040.

Kewajipan kewangan yang semakin meningkat dan sejarah pembayaran balik yang tidak memuaskan mungkin menghalang generasi akan datang daripada mendapatkan pinjaman pelajar yang berpatutan. Jelas daripada perbincangan di atas bahawa jaminan mobiliti sosial menaik melalui pendidikan tinggi semakin berkurangan. Memandangkan individu yang telah menamatkan pendidikan tertiar terus memperoleh gaji median, peminjam B40 nampaknya terkesan secara tidak seimbang oleh gabungan potensi pendapatan tinggi yang tidak direalisasikan dan beban hutang pelajar, yang mungkin mengakibatkan kebangkrutan dan kesusahan kewangan. Bayangkan hutang yang akan ditanggung oleh individu yang memperoleh ijazah dari IPTA atau IPTS kepada NEFC. Mereka akan berhutang pinjaman NEFC antara RM 24,000 dan RM 60,000. Mereka tidak dapat menjamin pekerjaan selepas tamat pengajian dan dibebani hutang. Selain itu, peminjam yang memilih tempoh pembayaran balik yang lebih lama atau membuat pembayaran bulanan yang lebih kecil akan mengumpul jumlah faedah yang lebih besar berbanding mereka yang membayar balik pinjaman dalam tempoh yang lebih singkat.

Gangguan ekonomi, kehilangan pekerjaan, dan tekanan gaji rendah akibat pandemik COVID-19 telah memburukkan lagi beban kewangan yang ditanggung oleh keluarga berpendapatan rendah dan graduan baharu, sekali gus meningkatkan risiko ketidakupayaan membayar balik pinjaman pendidikan. Bagi menangani kebimbangan ini, Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional (PTPTN) telah melancarkan Pelan Strategik 2021–2025 secara dalam talian pada 29 Julai 2021, yang merangkumi tempoh lima tahun dan menumpukan kepada pengukuhan pengurusan pinjaman serta transformasi organisasi (Bernama, 2021). Strategi tersebut merangkumi peningkatan kutipan pembayaran balik pinjaman, meletakkan semula NEFC sebagai platform terulung untuk bantuan kewangan pelajar, dan melaksanakan pelan pembiayaan dan pelaburan. Keperluan untuk reformasi adalah jelas memandangkan kesan buruk hutang pinjaman pelajar terhadap kestabilan kewangan graduan, kapasiti mereka untuk membuat sumbangan konstruktif kepada ekonomi, dan kemungkinan kerentanan terhadap kebangkrutan.

Kerangka semasa pembiayaan pendidikan tertiar yang sepenuhnya berhutang melibatkan beberapa kesukaran, seperti risiko kegagalan membayar, kesan buruk terhadap kesihatan dan kesejahteraan, tekanan kewangan, halangan kepada kemajuan kerjaya, implikasi terhadap hutang negara dan institusi, dan keraguan mengenai nilai pendidikan. Sebahagian besar responden B40, menurut penyelidikan Allah Pitchay *et al.* (2025), berpandangan bahawa hutang pelajar yang mereka kumpul tidak setimpal dengan kualiti pendidikan yang mereka peroleh. Situasi ini menimbulkan kebimbangan mengenai keberkesanan rangka kerja bantuan kewangan sedia ada dan mutu pulangan pendidikan tinggi. Selain itu, penyelidikan mencadangkan bahawa pinjaman pelajar menghalang pencapaian hidup yang penting, termasuk pemilikan rumah, dan merupakan sumber tekanan kewangan; penemuan ini menonjolkan akibat berpanjangan hutang terhadap keselamatan kewangan individu. Dengan mengintegrasikan dana zakat ke dalam NEFC (*asnaf fi sabillah*), kajian ini mencadangkan pendekatan baharu untuk meringankan beban pinjaman peminjam yang layak dan menjelaskan kerumitan model bantuan kewangan pelajar sedia ada. Model ZAKAT memberikan banyak faedah apabila zakat dimasukkan ke dalam rangka kerja NEFC. Integrasi Zakat ke dalam sistem bantuan kewangan pelajar berpotensi meringankan beban kewangan peminjam yang layak yang mengalami kesusahan, seterusnya menggalakkan mereka membuat pembayaran balik pinjaman tepat pada masanya.

Bahagian berikut membincangkan beberapa struktur penyelidikan penting, iaitu tinjauan literatur kajian lepas, metodologi, keputusan, dan kesimpulan kajian.

2. MODEL PEMBIAYAAN PENDIDIKAN DI NEGARA TERPILIH

Indonesia

Pendidikan di Indonesia dilaksanakan mengikut dasar pendidikan yang mengawal selia sistem pendidikan negara, termasuk mandat peruntukan sekurang-kurangnya 20% daripada bajet negara (APBN) dan bajet serantau (APBD) untuk sektor pendidikan seperti dinyatakan dalam undang-undang pendidikan nasional (Law No. 20/2003) dan laporan analisis bajet pendidikan negara (Saputra *et al.*, 2018). Analisis ini menunjukkan bahawa alokasi 20 % ini merujuk kepada sebahagian daripada APBN, APBD provinsi dan APBD daerah sebagai pembiayaan pendidikan asas. Walau bagaimanapun, pelaksanaan jadual peruntukan tersebut tidak konsisten, yakni beberapa pihak melaporkan bahawa sebahagian besar kerajaan tempatan masih gagal mencapai sasaran 20 % dalam APBD mereka (Sabilah *et al.*, 2023). Dalam konteks perbelanjaan pendidikan terhadap ekonomi, beberapa kajian merujuk bahawa perbelanjaan pendidikan di Indonesia sebagai peratusan KDNK meningkat dari kira-kira 2.4 % pada 2001 kepada 3.8 % pada 2007, namun nilai ini kekal lebih rendah berbanding negara lain di rantau ini berdasarkan data pendidikan ASEAN (Posso, 2011).

Untuk perbandingan serantau, kajian yang membincangkan strategi pembiayaan pendidikan ASEAN menyatakan bahawa beberapa negara seperti Malaysia dan Thailand mempunyai peratusan perbelanjaan pendidikan yang lebih tinggi daripada Indonesia, walaupun data khusus berbeza mengikut indikator masa dan jenis perbelanjaan (Ngoy *et al.*, 2019). Selain itu, sistem pembiayaan pendidikan dapat dipetakan kepada dua model utama: (a) Model Geran Rata (Flat Grant Model) di mana semua wilayah atau sekolah menerima peruntukan yang sama tanpa mengambil kira keupayaan fiskal setempat, dan (b) Model Penyamarataan (Equalization Model) di mana peruntukan diubah berdasarkan keperluan dan kapasiti ekonomi wilayah agar golongan kurang berkemampuan menerima sokongan yang lebih besar (Saputra, 2018).

China

China telah membentuk antara sistem pendidikan tinggi terbesar di dunia, yang merangkumi institusi awam dan swasta. Sejak pertengahan 1990-an, kerajaan pusat melaksanakan strategi berskala besar untuk meningkatkan daya saing global universiti melalui Project 211 dan Project 985, yang menyasarkan kumpulan kecil universiti elit untuk dibangunkan sebagai institusi bertaraf dunia (Schwaag Serger *et al.*, 2015). Inisiatif ini menumpukan pembiayaan penyelidikan secara intensif kepada universiti terpilih, sekali gus mewujudkan kepekatan sumber dalam kalangan institusi elit.

Dari sudut pembiayaan, universiti awam di China masih bergantung secara dominan kepada dana kerajaan, manakala yuran pengajian menjadi sumber kedua terbesar, dengan sumbangan swasta yang terhad (Schwaag Serger *et al.*, 2015). Bagi mengekalkan akses, skim bantuan kewangan berasaskan kemampuan dan pinjaman pelajar diperluas selari dengan peralihan kos kepada isi rumah (Johnstone & Experton, 1998). Walau bagaimanapun, literatur menunjukkan bahawa skim pinjaman pelajar sering berdepan isu kadar ingkar dan kekangan pentadbiran sekiranya mekanisme kutipan pendapatan tidak kukuh (Johnstone, 2004). Cadangan seperti cukai graduan turut dibahaskan dalam literatur pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi, namun pelaksanaannya kekal terhad akibat cabaran struktur sistem percukaian (Barr, 2004).

Thailand

Sektor pendidikan tinggi Thailand berkembang pesat sepanjang dekad lalu, beralih daripada sistem elitis kepada sistem massa. Pengembangan ini sering dikaitkan dengan penubuhan Dana Pinjaman Pelajar (Student Loan Fund, SLF) pada tahun 1996. Dalam tempoh sepuluh tahun pertama pelaksanaannya, SLF telah menyalurkan pinjaman kepada lebih 2.6 juta pelajar dengan jumlah keseluruhan mencecah USD5.7 bilion (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool, 2010). Walaupun kerajaan turut menyediakan biasiswa, saiznya jauh lebih kecil berbanding pembiayaan melalui pinjaman.

Skim SLF beroperasi di bawah model sasaran sosial yang secara jelas menyasarkan pelajar kurang berkemampuan di peringkat pendidikan tertiar serta sekolah menengah atas umum dan vokasional

(Tilak, 2015). Skim ini menawarkan syarat pembayaran balik yang dianggap menguntungkan, di mana peminjam perlu memulakan bayaran dalam tempoh dua tahun selepas tamat pengajian tanpa mengambil kira tahap pendapatan. Kegagalan membayar balik akan dikenakan penalti antara 12 hingga 18 peratus daripada ansuran pinjaman. Namun begitu, penilaian sistematik terhadap keberkesanan skim ini masih terhad. Tangkitvanich dan Manasboonphempool (2010) mendapati SLF menghadapi kelemahan ketara, termasuk isu penyaringan penerima pinjaman, kelewatan pengagihan dana serta kadar pembayaran balik yang rendah.

Selain skim pinjaman, pendekatan pembiayaan formula turut diperkenalkan bagi menangani ketidakseimbangan dalam agihan sumber pendidikan. Gauthier and Punyasavatsut (2019) menilai keupayaan formula pembiayaan di bawah “Program Pendidikan Percuma 15 Tahun” (FEP) untuk mengurangkan ketidakseimbangan sumber antara sekolah rendah dan menengah. Kajian tersebut menggunakan data tinjauan 2015–2016 yang melibatkan 240 sekolah awam, 2,463 guru dan 2,500 isi rumah. Program FEP, yang pada asalnya menyediakan pendidikan percuma selama 12 tahun melalui subsidi kerajaan pusat, telah diperluas pada tahun 2009 kepada 15 tahun meliputi pra-sekolah hingga menengah atas. Subsidi ini merangkumi kos operasi berkaitan pengajaran dan pembelajaran seperti buku teks, bahan pembelajaran dan pakaian seragam. Walaupun bertujuan mempromosikan kesaksamaan mendatar dan mewakili komponen terbesar bajet sekolah, dapatan kajian menunjukkan formula pembiayaan tersebut masih tidak mencukupi dan kurang bersasar untuk mengimbangi kekurangan sumber sekolah (Gauthier & Punyasavatsut, 2019).

Dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi pula, Schiller and Liefner (2007) meneliti model pembiayaan yang menekankan hubungan universiti–industri di Thailand. Rancangan ini bertujuan memanfaatkan sumber kewangan baharu melalui kerjasama dengan sektor perniagaan dan membentuk sistem pendidikan tinggi yang lebih berorientasikan pasaran. Secara teori, pendekatan ini memberi manfaat kepada kedua-dua universiti dan industri. Namun, pelaksanaannya berdepan kekangan struktur, termasuk pertindihan kapasiti antara universiti dan syarikat, serta kekurangan kepercayaan dan komunikasi dalam kalangan sektor swasta. Malah, sekitar 60 peratus syarikat swasta dilaporkan enggan terlibat dalam kerjasama tersebut (Schiller & Liefner, 2007).

Secara keseluruhannya, pengalaman Thailand menunjukkan bahawa peluasan akses pendidikan melalui pinjaman, subsidi dan reformasi pembiayaan memerlukan reka bentuk dasar yang teliti serta mekanisme pemantauan yang berkesan bagi memastikan matlamat kesaksamaan dan kecekapan benar-benar tercapai.

Singapura

Perkembangan sistem pendidikan tinggi Singapura sejak awal 1990-an sering dikaitkan dengan peralihan daripada model pembiayaan yang sangat bergantung kepada kerajaan kepada model yang lebih terdiversifikasi dan berorientasikan autonomi institusi. Pada peringkat awal, universiti awam dibiayai secara besar-besaran melalui geran kerajaan, selaras dengan pendekatan negara pembangunan yang menekankan pelaburan strategik dalam modal insan (Mok, 2003). Namun, kebergantungan yang tinggi terhadap dana awam mendorong kerajaan memperkenalkan mekanisme pembiayaan alternatif, termasuk pengukuhan dana endowmen dan galakan pengumpulan sumbangan swasta bagi meningkatkan kemampuan kewangan universiti.

Transformasi ini diperkukuh melalui dasar korporatisasi universiti pada pertengahan 2000-an, apabila National University of Singapore (NUS) dan Nanyang Technological University (NTU) diberi status universiti autonomi. Langkah ini bertujuan meningkatkan fleksibiliti pengurusan, memperluas sumber pendapatan bukan kerajaan, serta memperkukuh daya saing global institusi (Ng, 2013). Walaupun autonomi institusi diperluas, kerajaan tetap mengekalkan peranan dominan dalam pembiayaan asas serta dalam kerangka akauntabiliti dan penilaian prestasi universiti.

Kajian Tee Ng and Tan (2010) menunjukkan bahawa strategi “global schoolhouse” Singapura bukan sekadar usaha antarabangsa-isasi, tetapi turut melibatkan penstrukturan semula tadbir urus dan sistem pembiayaan pendidikan tertiar. Kerajaan menggalakkan universiti menjana pendapatan melalui

kerjasama industri, penyelidikan kontrak, yuran pelajar antarabangsa dan dana endowmen, namun pada masa yang sama mengekalkan kawalan pusat melalui mekanisme penilaian kualiti dan pembiayaan berasaskan prestasi. Model ini mencerminkan keseimbangan antara autonomi institusi dan kawalan negara yang berterusan.

Secara keseluruhannya, pengalaman Singapura menunjukkan bahawa diversifikasi sumber kewangan tidak semestinya bermaksud pengunduran kerajaan daripada pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi. Sebaliknya, ia melibatkan peralihan kepada model hibrid di mana universiti digalakkan bersifat lebih keusahawanan, tetapi masih bergantung pada subsidi awam yang signifikan serta sistem penilaian berpusat untuk menjamin kualiti dan keselarasan dengan agenda pembangunan nasional (Mok, 2003; Ng, 2013).

Denmark

Denmark sering dirujuk sebagai antara sistem pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi paling komprehensif di rantau Nordik, khususnya dari segi tahap geran pelajar yang tinggi dan ketiadaan yuran pengajian untuk warganegara serta pelajar EU/EEA di institusi awam. Pendidikan tinggi di Denmark secara tradisinya dianggap sebagai barang awam, dan akses kepada pengajian tertiar disokong melalui skim bantuan kewangan yang meluas di bawah Statens Uddannelsesstøtte (SU). Sejarah perkembangan skim ini menunjukkan peralihan daripada bantuan terhad berasaskan ujian kemampuan kepada model bantuan sejagat berasaskan hak (Breen *et al.*, 2009).

Breen *et al.* (2009), dalam analisis sejarah sistem geran dan pinjaman pendidikan Denmark antara 1950 hingga 2000, menunjukkan bahawa skim bantuan awal pada mulanya bersifat terdesentralisasi dan disasarkan kepada pelajar daripada latar belakang sosioekonomi paling lemah. Pada peringkat awal, mekanisme pembiayaan dikendalikan melalui lembaga pemegang amanah dan jawatankuasa stipend tempatan. Namun, evolusi dasar membawa kepada pemusatan yang lebih ketara apabila geran dan pinjaman pendidikan disatukan di bawah sistem SU yang diurus secara berpusat oleh agensi kerajaan berkaitan pendidikan tinggi. Digitalisasi proses pengiraan dan pembayaran turut mengukuhkan sifat SU sebagai manfaat kebajikan sejagat berasaskan hak. Perkembangan ini mencerminkan transformasi daripada model kebajikan selektif kepada model universal dalam pembiayaan pelajar (Breen *et al.*, 2009).

Selain skim bantuan pelajar, Denmark turut melaksanakan mekanisme pembiayaan institusi berasaskan prestasi melalui apa yang dikenali sebagai “sistem taksimeter” (taximeter system). Di bawah sistem ini, sebahagian pembiayaan kerajaan kepada universiti dan institusi pendidikan tinggi ditentukan berdasarkan output pelajar, khususnya bilangan peperiksaan yang berjaya diselesaikan. Setiap peperiksaan atau kredit diberikan nilai kewangan tertentu, manakala pelajar yang gagal atau tidak menduduki peperiksaan tidak menyumbang kepada peruntukan kewangan institusi. Mekanisme ini bertujuan meningkatkan kecekapan, kadar penyempurnaan pengajian dan akauntabiliti institusi.

Kajian perbandingan oleh Frølich *et al.* (2013) yang meneliti Denmark, Norway dan Portugal menunjukkan bahawa ketiga-tiga negara telah bergerak ke arah model pembiayaan campuran yang menggabungkan komponen asas (block grant) dan komponen berasaskan prestasi. Dalam konteks Denmark, sistem taksimeter dilihat sebagai instrumen penting dalam memacu kecekapan dan meningkatkan orientasi hasil (output orientation) dalam pendidikan tinggi. Walau bagaimanapun, penulis turut menegaskan bahawa peralihan ke arah pembiayaan berasaskan prestasi memerlukanimbangan yang teliti antara autonomi institusi dan kawalan kerajaan bagi memastikan kualiti akademik tidak terjejas oleh tekanan kuantitatif (Frølich *et al.*, 2010).

Secara keseluruhannya, pengalaman Denmark menunjukkan bahawa pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi boleh digabungkan antara prinsip kebajikan sejagat—melalui bantuan pelajar yang komprehensif—dan mekanisme berasaskan prestasi di peringkat institusi. Walaupun bantuan pelajar bersifat universal dan berpusat, pembiayaan institusi semakin dikaitkan dengan output dan pencapaian, mencerminkan trend global ke arah akauntabiliti dan kecekapan dalam sektor pendidikan tinggi (Breen *et al.*, 2009; Frølich *et al.*, 2013).

Jerman

Di Jerman, pelajar daripada keluarga berpendapatan rendah layak menerima bantuan kewangan di bawah skim persekutuan Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz (BAföG), iaitu bantuan berasaskan kemampuan (means-tested) yang mengambil kira pendapatan ibu bapa, pasangan serta aset pemohon. Reka bentuk BAföG telah menjadi subjek analisis empirikal, khususnya dalam menilai kesannya terhadap penyertaan pendidikan tinggi. Baumgartner and Steiner (2006) menunjukkan bahawa reformasi BAföG berpotensi mempengaruhi keputusan kemasukan ke universiti dalam kalangan pelajar daripada latar belakang sosioekonomi rendah ([Sila rujuk](#), Steiner & Wrohlich, (2012)).

Steiner dan Wrohlich (2012), menggunakan model mikrosimulasi cukai-faedah berasaskan data German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), mendapati bahawa peningkatan tahap bantuan BAföG meningkatkan kebarangkalian enrolmen dalam pendidikan tinggi secara signifikan. Kajian ini mengesahkan bahawa bantuan kewangan berasaskan keperluan boleh mengurangkan kekangan kewangan dan memperluas akses kepada universiti.

Selain kesan terhadap akses, Glocker (2011) menunjukkan bahawa penerima BAföG cenderung menamatkan pengajian dalam tempoh yang lebih singkat berbanding pelajar yang tidak menerima bantuan tersebut, menandakan bahawa bantuan kewangan bukan sahaja mempengaruhi kadar kemasukan tetapi juga tempoh pengajian. Sejarah BAföG memperlihatkan perubahan daripada subsidi penuh kerajaan persekutuan kepada model pinjaman tanpa faedah pada awal 1980-an, sebelum diperbaharui pada 1991 kepada model campuran 50% geran dan 50% pinjaman yang perlu dibayar balik selepas tamat pengajian. Reka bentuk pembayaran balik yang progresif dan had maksimum pembayaran balik bertujuan mengekalkan keadilan sosial dalam sistem tersebut (Steiner & Wrohlich, 2012).

Dari perspektif reka bentuk pinjaman, Jerman turut membincangkan alternatif kepada model pinjaman konvensional, termasuk pendekatan pinjaman kontingen pendapatan (income-contingent loans, ICL). Chapman and Sinning (2014) menilai potensi pelaksanaan skim ICL dalam konteks Jerman dan berhujah bahawa mekanisme kontingen pendapatan boleh meningkatkan kecekapan serta perlindungan risiko berbanding pinjaman gaya gadai janji tradisional.

Berkenaan dasar yuran, Jerman secara berperingkat memansuhkan yuran pengajian sarjana muda di semua universiti awam menjelang 2014. (Tomlinson, 2017), dalam kajian perbandingan antara Jerman dan England, menunjukkan bahawa wacana dasar di Jerman berasaskan prinsip pendidikan sebagai hak sosial, berbeza dengan pendekatan pasaran di England yang menyaksikan kenaikan yuran secara ketara sejak awal 2000-an.

Amerika Syarikat

Di Amerika Syarikat, bantuan kewangan pelajar bertujuan membantu menampung kos pendidikan seperti tuisyen, yuran, penginapan, buku dan keperluan akademik lain di institusi awam dan swasta. Kerajaan persekutuan dan negeri menyediakan pelbagai bentuk bantuan termasuk geran, biasiswa, program kerja-sambil-belajar dan pinjaman. Bantuan tersebut terbahagi kepada dua kategori utama, iaitu berasaskan merit dan berasaskan keperluan. Biasiswa berasaskan merit diberikan berdasarkan pencapaian akademik, manakala bantuan berasaskan keperluan ditentukan melalui penilaian keadaan kewangan pelajar dan keluarga mereka.

Bagi memohon bantuan kewangan persekutuan, pelajar perlu melengkapkan Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), iaitu borang yang menentukan kelayakan untuk program seperti Geran Pell dan pinjaman persekutuan. Walau bagaimanapun, proses ini sering menimbulkan cabaran. Ramai pelajar gagal melengkapkan FAFSA atau terlepas tarikh akhir, menyebabkan sebahagian besar mereka kehilangan peluang menerima bantuan kewangan. King (2004) melaporkan bahawa berjuta-juta pelajar yang berpotensi layak tidak memfailkan FAFSA, termasuk sejumlah besar pelajar berpendapatan rendah dan sederhana yang mungkin layak menerima Geran Pell.

Daku (2017) menjelaskan bahawa faktor seperti salah maklumat mengenai kos pengajian dan ketersediaan bantuan kewangan, serta kerumitan proses permohonan, meningkatkan kemungkinan pelajar terlepas tarikh akhir FAFSA. Kajian tersebut juga mendapati bahawa pelajar daripada keluarga besar dengan lebih daripada seorang anak yang belajar serentak cenderung memfailkan lewat. Isu ini memberi kesan lebih besar kepada pelajar berpendapatan rendah kerana kegagalan mendapatkan geran meningkatkan pergantungan kepada pembiayaan berasaskan hutang. Dalam konteks ini, Geran Pell Persekutuan menjadi komponen utama landskap pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi Amerika sebagai sumber sokongan kepada pelajar berpendapatan rendah. Namun, peluasan program ini sering berhadapan dengan kekangan fiskal, terutamanya dalam era pengetatan bajet.

Cadangan “kolej komuniti percuma” yang diketengahkan semasa pentadbiran Obama bertujuan meningkatkan akses pendidikan dengan memaksimumkan penggunaan Geran Pell bagi menampung purata tuisyen dan yuran di institusi awam (Huelsman, 2015). Selain itu, pada tahun 2015, pentadbiran tersebut turut memperkenalkan inisiatif Geran Pell untuk Peluang Kedua bagi banduan, membolehkan individu yang dipenjarakan memperoleh akses kepada pendidikan pasca-menengah. Oakford *et al.* (2019) menegaskan bahawa pemulihan akses Geran Pell kepada individu yang dipenjarakan berpotensi memberi manfaat kepada pasaran buruh, majikan dan kerajaan negeri. Penyelidikan menunjukkan bahawa ramai individu dalam penjara layak secara akademik untuk pengajian pasca-menengah, tetapi kekurangan pembiayaan menjadi halangan utama.

Dari sudut ideologi, perubahan dalam budaya dan politik Amerika turut mempengaruhi dasar pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi. Mintz (2021) berhujah bahawa peralihan ke arah ideologi neoliberal telah mengutamakan kebebasan memilih dan logik pasaran berbanding prinsip kesaksamaan akses, selari dengan peralihan daripada subsidi persekutuan kepada mekanisme pembiayaan yang lebih dipacu pasaran. Institusi pendidikan tinggi semakin dilihat sebagai entiti yang bersaing dalam pasaran dan menghasilkan pulangan ekonomi.

Dalam konteks pembiayaan berasaskan prestasi (performance-based funding, PBF), Price-Williams *et al.* (2020) membincangkan evolusi dua model utama di Amerika Syarikat. Model awal (PBF 1.0), yang diperkenalkan di Tennessee pada 1979, menawarkan bonus sekitar 2% berdasarkan metrik prestasi. Walau bagaimanapun, banyak negeri yang melaksanakannya antara 1979 dan 2007 gagal mengekalkan sistem tersebut disebabkan kelemahan reka bentuk dan kekurangan sokongan institusi. Versi yang lebih baharu (PBF 2.0) diperkenalkan dengan penekanan kepada ketelusan dan peruntukan yang lebih besar berdasarkan hasil pelajar. Pada tahun 2010, Tennessee menjadi negeri pertama yang melaksanakan model PBF yang merangkumi sebahagian besar peruntukan negeri dalam kerangka perundangan. Menjelang 2013, kira-kira 33 negeri telah mengguna pakai pendekatan ini, dan hari ini lebih separuh negeri di Amerika Syarikat menggunakan pembiayaan berasaskan prestasi sebagai sebahagian daripada sistem pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi mereka.

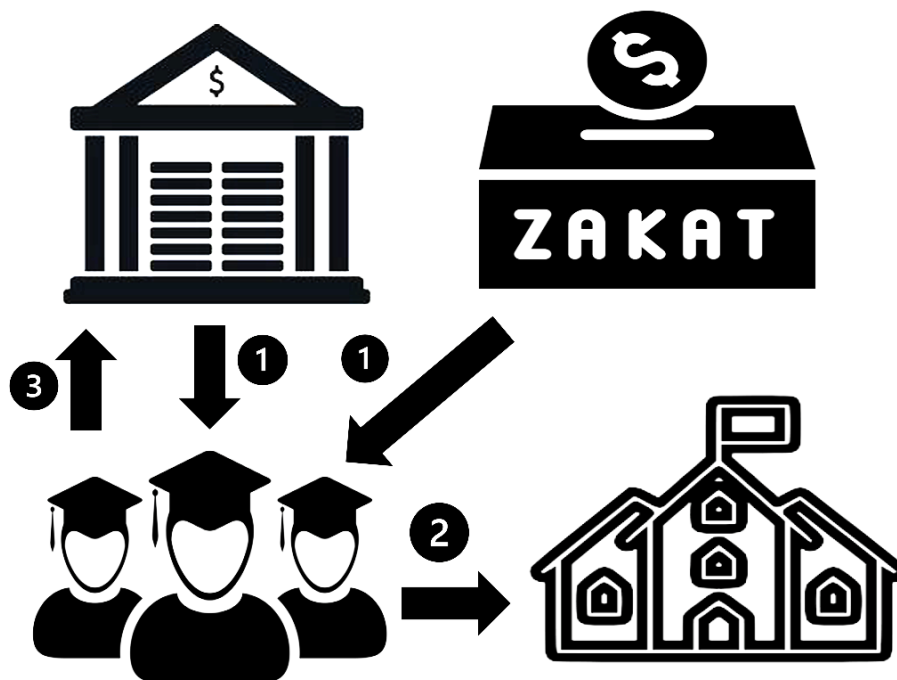
Secara keseluruhannya, sistem pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi Amerika Syarikat mencerminkan gabungan bantuan berasaskan keperluan, orientasi pasaran dan mekanisme prestasi, dengan perdebatan berterusan mengenai keseimbangan antara akses, keadilan sosial dan akauntabiliti institusi.

Afrika

Dalam semakan pembiayaan di Afrika selama 15 tahun, Bank Dunia 2010 melaporkan bahawa bilangan pelajar pendidikan tinggi meningkat secara purata 16 peratus setahun, meningkat daripada 2.7 juta pada 1991 kepada 9.3 juta pada 2006. Pertambahan populasi negara, ditambah dengan peningkatan permintaan untuk pendidikan tinggi, didorong oleh beberapa reformasi kewangan yang sedang berjalan. Sebagai contoh, di bahagian utara Afrika, Pendidikan Tinggi Ghana mewujudkan Dana Amanah Pendidikan Ghana (GETFund). Dana ini menyediakan sokongan kewangan tambahan untuk infrastruktur institusi, penyelidikan dan pembangunan fakulti; pengembangan program pendidikan jarak jauh; pengubahsuaian skim pinjaman pelajar; dan persekitaran kawal selia yang kondusif yang menggalakkan penyertaan sektor swasta dalam penyediaan pendidikan tinggi. Pada tahun 2008 data menunjukkan GETFund adalah 12.2% sehingga Dana Amanah Pendidikan Ghana

(GETFund) diwujudkan, di mana kadar cukai 2.5% ditambah untuk menyokong pendidikan di semua peringkat. Hasilnya, peningkatan dana peruntukan GETFund telah menyumbang kira-kira GH¢61 juta kepada Sekretariat Biasiswa untuk menyokong pelajar yang memerlukan. Manakala pada 2011, sejumlah GH¢ 53,405,000 telah diperuntukkan kepada sektor pendidikan tertiar untuk menyokong pembangunan infrastruktur (Bingab *et al.*, 2018). Memandangkan, sokongan kewangan yang semakin meningkat, perkongsian kos pendidikan tinggi adalah kaedah pembiayaan yang paling disukai, mengurangkan beban satu pihak dengan mengalihkannya kepada pelbagai pihak. Negara-negara berbeza di Afrika menggunakan bentuk perkongsian kos yang berbeza, sama ada tuisyen atau jenis yuran lain (contohnya, yuran peperiksaan, yuran pendaftaran, yuran kad pengenalan atau yuran perpustakaan). Sebagai contoh, dasar tuisyen dwi-landasan Uganda di universiti memerlukan pelajar di satu landasan membayar yuran manakala mereka di landasan lain disubsidi oleh kerajaan (Seddoh, 2003). Pelajar akan ditaja berdasarkan pendapatan keluarga, latar belakang, dan prestasi akademik. Manakala dari segi pinjaman pelajar, Ghana GETFund telah mewujudkan agensi subsidiari, yang dikenali sebagai Dana Amanah Pinjaman Pelajar (SLTF), yang secara autonomi menjalankan skim pinjaman pelajar dengan dana yang diambil daripada GETFund. GETFund telah menyuntik kira-kira US\$16,605,024.00 untuk menyokong pelajar melalui pinjaman. Sejak penubuhan SLTF, pembayaran balik pinjaman sebanyak 43.4% melebihi sasaran 40.

3. CADANGAN MODEL ZAKAT



RAJAH 1: MODEL ZAKAT NEFC

Sumber: Olahan penulis

Rajah 1 menggambarkan model pembiayaan hibrid yang mengintegrasikan pinjaman pendidikan dan dana zakat sebagai mekanisme sokongan kepada pelajar berpendapatan rendah. Model ini berfungsi melalui perkongsian institusi antara Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional (NEFC) dan institusi zakat bagi mengurangkan beban hutang pelajar tanpa menjejaskan kelestarian kewangan skim pinjaman.

Langkah 1: Penawaran pembiayaan hybrid

NEFC dan institusi zakat bersama-sama menilai kelayakan pelajar berdasarkan kriteria sosioekonomi, khususnya status B40 dan kategori asnaf. Pembiayaan yang ditawarkan terdiri daripada dua komponen: pinjaman pendidikan daripada NEFC dan sumbangan zakat yang disasarkan untuk menampung sebahagian kos pengajian dan penginapan. Pendekatan ini memastikan akses pendidikan tinggi tidak bergantung sepenuhnya kepada hutang.

Langkah 2: Penyaluran dana kepada institusi pendidikan

Dana pinjaman dan bantuan zakat disalurkan terus kepada universiti bagi menampung yuran pengajian serta perbelanjaan asas pelajar. Mekanisme pembayaran terus ini mengurangkan risiko penyalahgunaan dana dan memastikan bantuan digunakan secara khusus untuk tujuan pendidikan.

Langkah 3: Mekanisme pembayaran balik bersasar

Selepas tamat pengajian, pelajar hanya membayar balik komponen pinjaman NEFC yang berbaki selepas penolakan bantuan zakat. Struktur ini mengurangkan jumlah hutang efektif yang ditanggung pelajar, meningkatkan kebolehan pembayaran balik, dan menurunkan kadar keingkar. Pada masa yang sama, institusi zakat berfungsi sebagai instrumen pengurangan hutang sosial yang menyokong mobiliti ekonomi jangka panjang.

Model ini mewujudkan keseimbangan antara tanggungjawab individu dan solidariti sosial. Integrasi zakat bukan sekadar bantuan kebajikan, tetapi mekanisme pelaburan sosial yang meningkatkan kadar tamat pengajian, kestabilan kewangan graduan, dan pulangan ekonomi kepada masyarakat.

4. KEPENTINGAN MODEL YANG DICADANGKAN

Model Zakat ini benar-benar merupakan model yang lengkap, sosio-ekonomi, dan aman yang bertujuan untuk menyatukan kumpulan orang yang berbeza daripada latar belakang yang berbeza dengan matlamat yang sama: untuk memberikan semua pelajar, terutamanya mereka daripada keluarga berpendapatan rendah, pendidikan yang baik. Model ini memahami betapa pentingnya bagi semua yang terlibat termasuk institusi zakat, kerajaan, institusi berkaitan, dan pelajar itu sendiri untuk bekerjasama dan membentuk perkongsian bagi membuat perbezaan yang berkekalan dalam sektor pendidikan.

Impak institusi zakat

Model Zakat yang dicadangkan bersedia untuk memberi impak yang ketara kepada produktiviti dana Zakat. Kajian terkini dalam konteks negara Islam moden, seperti Malaysia, telah menonjolkan beberapa kelemahan dalam institusi Zakat, terutamanya mengenai pengagihan dan cabaran birokrasi. Pelbagai penyelidik, termasuk Ahmad & Ma'in (2014), Mohd Jaapar & Kamarulzaman, (2020) dan Wahab and Rahim Abdul Rahman (2011), telah mengulas mengenai ketidakcekapan dalam pengagihan zakat. Ketidakcekapan ini, ditambah dengan kekurangan usaha terfokus dalam organisasi zakat, boleh mengakibatkan ketidakkonsistenan atau penyalahgunaan dana, yang membawa kepada pengurangan kepercayaan di kalangan pembayar zakat. Pada masa yang sama, halangan birokrasi memperlambatkan proses permohonan. Pelajar mesti memohon semula setiap tahun, walaupun permohonan mereka telah diluluskan sebelum ini semasa tahun pertama mereka. Proses dokumentasi berlebihan ini dan tempoh menunggu yang panjang untuk pengagihan dana menyumbang kepada ketidakpuasan hati di kalangan pemohon. Tanpa pelaksanaan yang produktif, Zakat gagal mencapai matlamat pembasmian kemiskinan. Oleh itu, model Zakat yang dicadangkan bertujuan untuk menggunakan dana zakat bagi membantu menampung yuran pengajian dan penginapan yang dibiayai oleh pinjaman Zakat. Pengagihan akan melibatkan pemotongan dana secara langsung daripada akaun pinjaman peminjam, mengurangkan beban hutang mereka. Pendekatan inovatif ini menawarkan kelegaan kewangan penting kepada pelajar berpendapatan rendah, memastikan akses berterusan mereka kepada peluang pendidikan tinggi. Yang penting, penggunaan dana Zakat ini selaras dengan

prinsip Islam yang menekankan sokongan kepada mereka yang memerlukan. Model Zakat mempunyai potensi untuk menjadi cara pengagihan dana zakat yang berkesan di Malaysia. Dengan menangani hutang pinjaman pelajar, ia boleh menyumbang kepada mobiliti sosial yang lebih besar dan pengurangan kemiskinan di kalangan individu dan keluarga berpendapatan rendah.

Impak model pembiayaan pendidikan tinggi nasional (NEFC)

Pemerbadanan zakat ke dalam sistem pembiayaan mewakili inisiatif terpuji yang bertujuan untuk meringankan isu keberhutangan dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia muda. Zakat, satu bentuk sedekah wajib dalam Islam bagi Muslim yang layak, direka terutamanya untuk membantu golongan miskin dan memerlukan, menyokong pelbagai usaha kebajikan sosial. Memilih model hibrid yang menggabungkan instrumen hutang dan sumbangan, berbanding model berasaskan hutang sepenuhnya, mempamerkan pemikiran strategik oleh NEFC. Pendekatan ini membantu meringankan beban kewangan pelajar yang mencari pendidikan tinggi sambil masih menyediakan bantuan kewangan yang diperlukan. Dengan mengintegrasikan zakat ke dalam model ini, NEFC bukan sahaja meringankan beban hutang pelajar tetapi juga memanfaatkan sumber pembiayaan baharu untuk menyokong mereka yang memerlukan. Selain itu, model ZAKAT yang dicadangkan memupuk rasa komuniti dan tanggungjawab sosial dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia. Individu dan organisasi yang menyumbang zakat kepada Institusi Pembiayaan Nasional mengambil bahagian secara aktif dalam membentuk landskap pendidikan untuk generasi akan datang, serentak mengurangkan tekanan hutang ke atas rakyat Malaysia muda.

Impak ekonomi

Model yang dicadangkan ini mempunyai banyak kelebihan untuk masyarakat, ekonomi, dan alam sekitar. Ia dijangka mengurangkan jumlah hutang NEFC yang dijamin oleh kerajaan sebanyak kira-kira 40 bilion pada kadar faedah 13 bilion. Hasilnya, amalan baharu ini mencadangkan pemerbadanan zakat ke dalam NEFC sebagai sumber alternatif untuk membantu pelajar yang memerlukan dalam mengurangkan beban pinjaman mereka dan memperkasakan kesejahteraan sosioekonomi pelajar B40. Ini bukan sahaja akan memberi manfaat kepada pelajar, tetapi juga akan menyediakan NEFC dengan sumber pembiayaan baharu selain daripada kutipan pembayaran balik. Bayangkan bahawa sebaik sahaja model Zakat yang dicadangkan dilaksanakan, pelajar B40 hanya perlu membayar separuh daripada pinjaman mereka, dengan separuh lagi ditampung oleh penajaan zakat. Pendekatan baharu ini mungkin memujuk penderma untuk membayar zakat di institusi zakat selepas melihat pelajar kurang bernasib baik mendapat manfaat daripada sumbangan mereka. Ia juga akan memberi manfaat kepada pendidikan dengan menggalakkan lebih ramai pelajar melanjutkan pendidikan tinggi bagi membangunkan modal insan berkualiti tinggi.

5. KESIMPULAN

Model zakat yang dicadangkan menunjukkan inisiatif berani dengan potensi untuk meringankan tekanan kewangan yang berkaitan dengan pinjaman pelajar, terutamanya bagi individu yang berasal daripada isi rumah berpendapatan rendah. Model ini mewakili strategi inovatif yang bertujuan untuk mengurangkan beban kewangan, memupuk empati, dan memperkemas pentadbiran pinjaman pelajar. Aspek penting model ini melibatkan integrasi zakat ke dalam sistem bantuan kewangan untuk NEFC. Integrasi ini mempunyai dua tujuan: pertama, untuk meringankan beban NEFC menguruskan sejumlah besar peminjam ingkar, dan kedua, untuk membantu pelajar B40 yang menghadapi kemungkinan lebih tinggi untuk gagal membayar pinjaman. Model yang dicadangkan menggariskan pendekatan subsidi langsung untuk perbelanjaan pengajian dan penginapan yang ditanggung oleh individu Asnaf yang telah memperoleh pinjaman NEFC melalui dana Zakat. Ini boleh dicapai dengan memulakan debit langsung daripada akaun peminjam, dengan dana Zakat menampung bahagian baki jumlah yang dibiayai oleh NEFC. Kaedah sedemikian mempunyai potensi untuk meringankan tekanan kewangan ke atas pelajar B40, dengan itu meningkatkan kebolehcapaian dan kemampuan pendidikan. Tambahan pula, dijangkakan bahawa pendekatan ini akan menghasilkan impak yang lebih besar berbanding pembayaran tunai langsung atau sumbangan sekali beri kepada pengagihan Zakat. Integrasi pengetahuan khusus dan keupayaan NEFC serta institusi Zakat menjanjikan pelbagai faedah komuniti, termasuk pembaikan kemiskinan dan peningkatan kualiti hidup secara keseluruhan.

Walau bagaimanapun, adalah penting untuk menekankan bahawa pelaksanaan rangka kerja sedemikian memerlukan pertimbangan teliti terhadap pelbagai faktor, termasuk kriteria kelayakan untuk Asnaf dan pengawasan ketat terhadap dana Zakat untuk memastikan penggunaannya optimumnya. Kolaborasi dan kerjasama antara pelbagai pihak berkepentingan, termasuk kerajaan, institusi zakat, dan NEFC, dianggap penting untuk pelaksanaan yang berjaya. Kelebihan sosio-ekonomi yang dijangkakan bagi semua pihak yang terlibat menekankan model Zakat sebagai langkah penting ke arah meningkatkan keadilan, kemampanan, dan keberkesanan bantuan kewangan untuk pendidikan.

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THE EFFECT OF MANAGERIAL OWNERSHIP AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ON EARNINGS MANAGEMENT WITH FIRM SIZE AS A MODERATING VARIABLE IN PRIVATE BANKS LISTED ON THE INDONESIA STOCK EXCHANGE

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Received 21 September 2024: Revised 2 December 2025: Accepted 9 May 2026

ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at testing and analysing the influence of managerial ownership and the audit committee on earnings management with firm size as a moderation variable in private banks listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange during the 2018-2022 period. Sample selection was carried out using the purposive sampling method. The data used is secondary data obtained from www.idx.co.id website. Data analysis was carried out by calculating the PLS Algorithm using SmartPLS and then hypothesis testing was carried out. The results show that company size is able to moderate the influence of managerial ownership on profit management, while managerial ownership and the audit committee have no effect on profit management, and company size is not able to moderate the influence of the audit committee on profit management. This study contributes to the corporate governance literature by providing empirical evidence regarding the role of firm size as a significant moderating variable, specifically strengthening the influence of managerial ownership on earnings management—a finding that challenges the conventional view in agency theory.

KEYWORDS: EARNINGS MANAGEMENT, MANAGERIAL OWNERSHIP, AUDIT COMMITTEE, FIRM SIZE

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menguji dan menganalisis pengaruh kepemilikan pengurusan dan jawatankuasa audit terhadap pengurusan pendapatan dengan saiz firma sebagai pembolehubah moderasi dalam bank swasta yang disenaraikan di Bursa Saham Indonesia sepanjang tempoh 2018-2022. Pemilihan sampel dijalankan menggunakan kaedah persampelan bertujuan. Data yang digunakan adalah data sekunder yang diperolehi daripada laman web www.idx.co.id. Analisis data dijalankan dengan mengira Algoritma PLS menggunakan SmartPLS dan kemudian pengujian hipotesis dijalankan. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa saiz syarikat mampu menyederhanakan pengaruh kepemilikan pengurusan terhadap pengurusan keuntungan, manakala kepemilikan pengurusan dan jawatankuasa audit tidak mempunyai kesan terhadap pengurusan keuntungan, dan saiz syarikat tidak mampu menyederhanakan pengaruh jawatankuasa audit terhadap pengurusan keuntungan. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada literatur tadbir urus korporat dengan menyediakan bukti empirikal mengenai peranan saiz firma sebagai pembolehubah moderasi yang signifikan, khususnya

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mengukuhkan pengaruh pemilikan pengurusan terhadap pengurusan pendapatan—satu penemuan yang mencabar pandangan konvensional dalam teori agensi.

KATA KUNCI: MANAJEMEN LABA, KEPEMILIKAN MANAJERIAL, KOMITE AUDIT, UKURAN PERUSAHAAN

1. INTRODUCTION

Earnings management research is essential to determine whether companies still practice manipulating profits (Wiyadi *et al.*, 2017). The number of cases related to earnings management in financial reports has led to a decrease in public confidence in the quality of auditors (Maulidah & Santoso, 2020). Management activities hurt investors and creditors and impact company owners (Jao & Pagalung, 2011). Earnings management is likely due to the lack of good company management. Further, several cases related to earnings management always occurs in Indonesian banking companies. The case that hit Bank Century involved management engineering financial reports so that the company showed appropriate capital. In addition, this was done to obtain rescue funds from the Minister of Finance, Sri Mulyani (Ariesanti, 2015). As of January 28, 2008, it turned out that Bank Century's capital was allegedly 132.5%. Bank Indonesia (BI) does not allow eliminating 100% related to securities (Oktariani & Africano, 2017).

Earnings management practices carried out by management are not included in the category of fraud if the manager's behavior is still within the scope of selecting accounting methods and principles in line with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Earnings management practices have 2 (two) different views, namely negative views and optimistic views. However, earnings management more often prioritizes situations or conditions where managers compile profit figures in financial reports for personal and company interests. Company managers use a profit management system to estimate company profits in management practices by applicable accounting standards (Fandriani & Tanjung, 2019). Phenomena related to earnings management tend to occur directly or indirectly due to errors or negligence on the part of financial management and are influenced by internal and external factors (Astari & Suputra, 2019).

Companies engaged in the banking subsector are the objects of this study. Banking companies are one of the subsectors that play an active role in the Indonesian capital market. Banking subsector companies have different characteristics than other companies; these companies have strict regulations, especially in determining whether a bank is healthy. Bank Indonesia: A bank must meet the minimum Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) when presenting financial reports. Thus, management has the initiative to implement profit management practices so that the company meets the standards required by Bank Indonesia. One of the factors that can influence earnings management actions is managerial Ownership. Gideon (Pramesti & Budiasih, 2017) stated that managerial ownership is the number of shares owned by company management. The motivation of company management to carry out earnings management practices will vary, such as management as shareholders and management that is not a shareholder. The greater the amount of managerial ownership, the more earnings management practices can be minimised so that supervision in the company can be improved (Astari & Suryanawa, 2017). Research conducted by Febria (2020) stated that managerial ownership positively affects earnings management. Managerial ownership has a positive value which indicates that for every one unit increase in managerial ownership, earnings management will increase or it can be interpreted that the higher the managerial ownership, the higher the earnings management actions will be or vice versa. This result needs to be consistent with research by Gunarti (2015), Utari and Sari (2016), and Aryanti *et al.* (2017), which show that managerial ownership hurts earnings management. On the other hand, according to research by Almalita (2018), Pradipta (2019), Sebastian, and Handojo (2019), managerial ownership does not affect earnings management practices.

According to (Perdana, 2019), the audit committee is established by the board of commissioners. It has the task of objectively presenting financial reports, examining internal controls and corporate risk management, and determining the adequacy of independent and internal audits. An audit committee in

a company is expected to detect practices contrary to the principle of information transparency and minimize the occurrence of earnings management actions. The existence of an audit committee that plays a role in overseeing financial reports can help avoid fraudulent actions that the company may plan. The audit committee is also tasked with overseeing the accounting rules implemented by the company and ensuring that all reports comply with accounting standards. The existence of an audit committee is considered an essential element because it can monitor the actions of company management. With a large number of audit committees, the supervision of management is increasingly stringent (Yuliani & Prastiwi, 2021). Research by Palestine (2006) and Sanjaya (2008) proves that the audit committee does not affect earnings management.

Another factor that is considered to influence earnings management practices is firm size. According to (AA *et al.*, 2017), firm size is a classification of the form of a company into a company that has a large size and a small size. Two views were obtained regarding firm size towards earnings management. The first view is that small companies carry out more earnings management actions than large companies. This happens because small companies want to show the company's condition, which is always good, with the aim that investors will invest their capital. The second view is that large companies will be more careful in submitting financial reports because the public will notice them more, so companies will be more careful in reporting their conditions.

Several studies related to managerial ownership, audit committees, and firm sizes were conducted using various models and different research methods (Putri & Sofian, 2013; Gunarti, 2015; Panjaitan, 2019). Explained selectively, a work by Putri and Sofian (2013) stated that managerial ownership and firm size have a significant positive effect on earnings management, while the audit committee has a significant negative relationship with earnings management.

This study differs from previous studies by using Firm Size as a moderating variable on earnings management as a dependent variable. The second thing distinguishing this study from other studies is the data analysis method, where researchers use regression analysis with the PLS approach, while most previous studies use multiple linear regression analysis. This study is expected to provide new contributions in terms of adding insight and knowledge using methods that have never been used before. Therefore, this study aims to formulate the problem of how managerial ownership and audit committee influence earnings management with firm size as a moderating variable with the aim of the study to determine the influence of managerial ownership, audit committee on earnings management with firm size as a moderating variable. The benefits of the study are that it provides benefits and contributes to the development of the theory of earnings management practices.

Despite numerous previous studies, the results of studies on the influence of managerial ownership and audit committees on earnings management remain inconsistent. Previous studies often focused on the non-financial industry or state-owned banks (Gunarti, 2015; Panjaitan, 2019). This study attempts to fill this gap by focusing on private banks in Indonesia, which have unique regulatory characteristics and ownership structures, to confirm the validity of existing theories. Academically, this study aims to develop an understanding of Agency Theory by examining the role of firm size as a moderating variable. This approach is necessary to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the contextual conditions (i.e., the bank's scale of operations) that make GCG mechanisms effective in mitigating the risk of earnings management.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Earnings Management

Earnings management is a management action that chooses an accounting policy from a certain standard to influence the profit that will occur as they wish through the management of internal factors owned or used by the company (Ekasiwi, 2012). According to Healy and Wahlen (1999), earnings management occurs when managers use judgment in financial reporting and transaction structures to change financial statements to mislead shareholders about the company's economic performance or influence the consequences of agreements related to the figures reported in the

financial statements. Earnings management actions carried out by managers cause low-profit quality because they do not correspond to the existing facts. This earnings management provides false economic benefits to the company so that in the long term, it will be very disruptive and even dangerous to the company (Merchant & Rockness, 1994).

Managerial Ownership

Managerial ownership is the proportion of shareholders from management who actively participate in corporate decision-making, such as directors and commissioners (Pujiati & Widanar, 2007). Fuerst and Kang (in Wahyudi and Pawestri, 2006) found a positive relationship between insider ownership and market value after controlling for corporate performance. According to Cho (in Ruan *et al.*, 2009), managerial ownership affects investment and firm value, and according to Denis and Mc, managerial and institutional ownership support agency explanations (Cheng & King, 2009). Connell (in Ruan *et al.*, 2009), the influence of managerial ownership on firm value has attracted particular research in corporate finance literature. Increasing managerial ownership from the lower level helps to connect the interests of insiders and shareholders and leads to better decision-making, resulting in higher firm value (Ruan *et al.*, 2009).

Audit Committee

In carrying out its supervisory function, the board of commissioners is assisted by several committees, one of which is the audit committee. With an audit committee that runs effectively, commissioners can improve the quality of financial reporting. The duties of the audit committee, as stated in Bank Indonesia regulation number 8/4/PBI/2006 concerning the implementation of good corporate governance for commercial banks, are to monitor and evaluate the planning and implementation of audits and monitor the follow-up of audit results in order to assess the adequacy of internal control including the adequacy of the financial reporting process. The audit committee oversees the accounting rules implemented by the company and ensures that all reports are by accounting standards.

Firm Size

Firm size is a comparison of the smallness or size of a company, so it can describe the company's performance (Siti & Zulaikha, 2019). There are various ways to group company size, including total assets, log size, total sales, stock market value, etc. The size of a company can affect its ability to bear any risks that may occur from various situations that the company will face. Large companies bear lower risks than small companies. This is because large companies have better control over market conditions to increase their ability to compete in the market. Not only that, large companies have more resources than small companies to maximize the company's value and gain good access to external information (Zakia *et al.*, 2019).

Hypotheses

The Influence of Managerial Ownership on Earnings Management

Ownership is a form of commitment from shareholders to delegate control at a certain level to managers. One factor that can influence earnings management actions is managerial ownership. The greater the amount of managerial ownership, the more earnings management practices can be minimized so that supervision in the company can be improved. These results are inconsistent with research by Gunarti (2015), Utari and Sari (2016), and Aryanti *et al.* (2017), which showed that managerial ownership negatively impacts earnings management. Conversely, research by Almalita (2018), Pradipta (2019), and Sebastian and Handojo (2019) found that managerial ownership does not affect earnings management practices.

H₁: Managerial ownership positively affects profit management in private banks listed on the Indonesia stock exchange for the 2018-2022 periods.

The Influence of the Audit Committee on Earnings Management

An audit committee in a company is expected to detect practices contrary to the principle of information transparency and minimize the occurrence of earnings management actions. The existence of an audit committee that plays a role in overseeing financial reports can help avoid fraudulent actions that the company may plan. The audit committee is also tasked with overseeing the accounting rules implemented by the company and ensuring that all reports are by accounting standards. If the quality and characteristics of the audit committee can be achieved, then the transparency of the company's management accountability can be trusted, thereby increasing the trust of capital market players. In addition, the audit committee's responsibility to protect the interests of minority shareholders can convince investors to entrust their investments to the company. This is supported by research conducted by Agustia (2013), which found that audit committees have no significant effect on earnings management. Research conducted by Palestine (2006) and Sanjaya (2008) also demonstrated that audit committees have no effect on earnings management.

H₂: The audit committee positively affected profit management in private banks listed on the Indonesia stock exchange from 2018 to 2022 periods.

The Effect of Managerial Ownership on Earnings Management with Firm Size as a Moderating Variable

Managerial investors responsible for the company's operations are considered incapable of changing the company's size and increasing the company's assets. Managerial ownership has a positive value, indicating that every increase in one unit of managerial ownership will increase earnings management. It can be interpreted that the higher the managerial ownership, the higher the earnings management action will be, or vice versa. Firm size is a classification of a company's form into a large size and a small size. In large companies, tighter internal control mechanisms and external monitoring (such as independent auditors) can reduce the incentive to engage in earnings management, even though managerial ownership is high. Therefore, firm size can moderate the effect of managerial ownership on earnings management. This is supported by research conducted by Anggraeni & Hadiprajitno (2013), which found that company size negatively impacts earnings management, meaning that larger companies tend to engage in less earnings management due to tighter oversight. Research conducted by Carolin, Rahman & Susilo (2022) shows that both variables (managerial ownership and company size) jointly impact earnings management. Saputri & Buwana (2024) found that company size significantly impacts earnings management, with larger companies facing greater pressure from investors and market analysts.

H₃: Firm size can moderate the influence of managerial ownership on profit management in private banks listed on the Indonesia stock exchange for the 2018-2022 periods.

The Influence of Audit Committee on Earnings Management with Firm Size as a Moderating Variable

Firm size determines the size of the total assets owned by the company. Larger total assets of the company will increase the company's productivity. The existence of an audit committee is an important factor in maintaining the integrity of financial statements, both for large and small companies. This shows that the role of the audit committee in preventing earnings management is consistent across various firm sizes. An influential audit committee is expected to reduce management's incentives to manipulate earnings in large and small companies. Therefore, firm size can moderate the influence of the audit committee on earnings management. This is supported by research conducted by Putri and Pohan (2023). The results of the study showed that company size had no effect on earnings management, but the audit committee strengthened the influence of profitability and leverage on earnings management. The results of research conducted by Annabella and Susanto (2022) showed that company size as a moderating variable was proven to weaken or strengthen the relationship depending on the scale and complexity of the company. This is very relevant as a basis for your research hypothesis. Clara *et al.* (2022) showed that the audit committee was able to moderate the effect of leverage on earnings management, indicating that the existence of an effective audit committee can control opportunistic management behavior, especially in companies with high debt.

H₄: Firm size can moderate the influence of the audit committee on profit management in private banks listed on the Indonesia stock exchange for 2018-2022 periods.

3. METHODOLOGY

The data used in this study are secondary data from the annual financial reports of private bank sub-sector companies listed on the Indonesia stock exchange (IDX) in 2018-2022. The data collection method in this study is quantitative. Quantitative research methods examine specific populations or samples, use research instruments to obtain data and analyze data statistically/quantitatively to test the established hypothesis (Sugiyono, 2018). The sampling used purposive sampling, which is deliberate sampling according to the requirements or criteria of the required sample. The sampling criteria in this study are as follows: 1) Companies that provide financial reports audited by independent auditors on the Indonesia stock exchange (IDX) during the 2018-2022 period. 2) Banking companies that are listed as private banks during the 2018-2022 periods. 3) Banking companies with managerial ownership during the 2018-2022 periods. This requirement is determined because to determine the value of managerial ownership, company management must own company shares. Data were obtained from published data from the Indonesia stock exchange (IDX). The operationalisation of the variables used is the independent variable (free) and the dependent variable (bound). The sample companies are 47 private bank companies, and those that meet the criteria are 12 companies with 60 research data.

Operational Definition

Operational definitions are used to avoid differences in interpretation and misunderstandings related to the variables studied. The following variables are employed in this study:

a. Managerial Ownership (X1)

Managerial stock investment is one of the determinants of a company's capital structure. Managerial ownership is the proportion of management shareholders who actively participate in company decision-making, such as directors and commissioners (Pujiati and Widanar, 2007).

b. Audit Committee (X2)

In carrying out its supervisory function, the board of commissioners is assisted by several committees, one of which is the audit committee. With an effective audit committee, the board of commissioners can improve the quality of financial reporting. The audit committee's duties, as outlined in Bank Indonesia Regulation Number 8/4/PBI/2006 concerning the Implementation of Good Corporate Governance for Commercial Banks, include monitoring and evaluating audit planning and implementation, as well as monitoring follow-up actions on audit results to assess the adequacy of internal controls, including the adequacy of the financial reporting process.

c. Earnings Management (Y)

Earnings management is a management action to select accounting policies based on certain standards to influence the resulting earnings to be as desired by managing internal factors owned or used by the company.

d. Company size (Z)

Company size is the size of a company, as measured by its total assets, which in turn influences the company's social performance in achieving its goals.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis method used was a two-stage approach using the SmartPLS application. The two-stage approach is a method used to test moderation effects using formative constructs. There are two stages of testing using the two-stage approach, namely (Ghozali, 2021):

a. Stage 1: Testing the main effects of the PLS model to obtain latent variable scores. These latent variable scores are then calculated and stored for further analysis.

b. Stage 2: Creating an interaction term by multiplying the scores of the exogenous and moderator latent variables and then regressing them as an interaction term against the endogenous variable.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis is a descriptive technique that provides information about the data owned and does not intend to test the hypothesis. The measurements used in this Study are mean, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum. Mean is used to find the average of the data concerned. Standard deviation determines how much the data concerned varies from the average. Maximum is used to find the most significant amount of data concerned. Minimum is used to find the smallest amount of data concerned.

PLS Model Evaluation

This study considers outer model evaluation, also called measurement model evaluation, is carried out to assess the validity and reliability of the model. For formative constructs, there is no need to conduct validity and reliability testing, so structural model estimation is carried out directly (Ghozali, 2021). Furthermore, inner model testing is considered as follows:

R-Square

The inner model's R-squared value is examined. This is a goodness-fit test of the model, with the basis for decision-making as follows (Ghozali, 2021). The R-squared result of 0.33 - 0.67 is included in the moderate category, and if the result is 0.19 - 0.33, it is included in the weak category (Ghozali, 2014).

Hypothesis Testing

The inner model also has a significance test (Path Coefficients). There are provisions in the significance test that can be seen from the parameter coefficient value (original sample) and the significance value of the *t*-value or *p*-value. To see the direction of positive or negative influence between variables, see the original sample column. The basis for decision-making for the significance test is (Ghozali, 2021): a) If *p*-value < 0.05, it has a significant effect. b) If *p*-value > 0.05, it has no significant effect.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Private banks are banks owned and managed by private parties, not the government. Private banks generally offer more flexibility in decision-making and innovation in banking products and services. Fierce competition among private banks encourages them to continuously innovate and improve service quality. Good corporate governance is crucial for private banks. Aspects such as ownership structure, the role and direction of the board of commissioners, and the existence of an audit committee influence earnings management practices. This study uses data from public companies listed on the Indonesia stock exchange. The research object used is the annual report of private banks from 2018 to 2022. There were 47 companies in the banking sector listed on the IDX from 2018 to 2022. After sampling using the purposive sampling technique, 12 companies were obtained that were eligible to be research objects. Consequently, the total annual reports of companies sampled in this study were 60 annual reports of banking companies for 5 years from 2018 to 2022.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Indicators	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Managerial ownership (X1)	60	0.000	26,535	3,708	6,522
Audit committee (X2)	60	0.25	1,667	0.573	0.225
Company size (Z)	60	28,945	34,812	31,677	1.51
Earnings management (Y)	60	-0.743	0.382	-0.049	0.23

Source: Table by Authors

1. The minimum value of managerial ownership is 0.000, with a maximum value of 26.535. The average managerial ownership is 3.708, with a standard deviation of 6.522, indicating high variation in managerial ownership across firms.

2. The audit committee's minimum value is 0.25, with a maximum value of 1.667. The average is 0.573, with a standard deviation of 0.225, indicating that most companies have similar audit committee compositions. This may reflect regulatory compliance or common corporate governance practices.
3. The minimum firm size value is 28.945, with a maximum value of 34.812. The average firm size is 31.677, with a standard deviation of 1.51. The standard deviation value of 1.51, which is lower than the average value of the variable, illustrates that the data in the research sample for the firm size variable is quite varied.
4. The minimum value of earnings management is -0.743, with a maximum value of 0.382. The average is -0.049, with a standard deviation of 0.23, indicating considerable variation in earnings management practices across firms.

The R-Square value for this study's earnings management variable (Y) is 0.165. This value explains that the percentage of earnings management can be explained by the independent research variable of 16.5%, while the remaining 83.5% is influenced by other variables that are not the focus of this Study. The R² result of 0.165 for the endogenous latent variable in the structural model indicates that the influence of exogenous variables (which influence) on endogenous variables (which are influenced) is included in the weak category.

TABLE 2: HYPOTHESES TESTING

Pathway	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	t-value	p-value
Managerial ownership(X1) ==> Earnings management (Y)	- 0.436	-0.384	0.356	1.222	0.222
Audit committee (X2) ==> Earnings management (Y)	0.025	0.022	0.212	0.118	0.906
Firm size (Z) x managerial ownership(X1) ==> Earnings management (Y)	- 1,064	- 0.97	0.487	2.183	0.029*
Firm size (Z) x audit committee (X2) ==> Earnings management (Y)	0.022	0.033	0.17	0.129	0.898

Source: Table by Authors

When Table 2 is examined, it can be seen that firm size in moderating the influence of managerial ownership on earnings management has a p -value < 0.05 and t -statistics > 1.96 , which means it has a positive relationship. While the influence of managerial ownership on earnings management, audit committee on earnings management, and firm size in moderating the influence of audit committee on earnings management has a p -value > 0.05 , t -statistics < 1.96 means it has no effect.

5. DISCUSSION

The Influence of Managerial Ownership on Earnings Management

Ownership represents a commitment from shareholders to delegate a certain level of control to managers. One factor that can influence earnings management is managerial ownership. The greater the amount of managerial ownership, the more likely earnings management practices can be minimized, thereby improving oversight within the company. This study results show that managerial ownership's influence on profit management has a significant value 0.222 greater than 0.05, thus indicating that managerial ownership has no effect on earnings management in private banks listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange for 2018-2022. This means that in this study, although the results of this Study indicate that the managerial ownership variable has no effect on earnings management, this can be interpreted as the more significant the managerial Ownership in the company, the lower the earnings management actions taken by the company's management. The results of this study are

based on research conducted by Agustia (2013) and Anggraeni and Hadiprajitno (2013), which concluded that managerial ownership has no significant effect on earnings management.

The Influence of the Audit Committee on Earnings Management

The existence of an audit committee within a company is expected to detect practices that violate the principle of transparency and minimize the occurrence of earnings management. Having an audit committee responsible for overseeing financial reporting can prevent fraudulent activities that might be planned by the company. The results of this study indicate that the influence of the audit committee on earnings management has a significance value of 0.906, which is greater than 0.05, thus indicating that the audit committee has no effect on earnings management in private banks listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange for the 2018-2022 period. This means that the number of audit committees does not affect earnings management. An audit committee is considered an essential element because it monitors the accounting rules applied in the company and ensures that each report is by accounting standards. [This result obtained](#) is consistent with research conducted by Mughini and Cahyonowati (2015), Sunandar *et al.* (2014), and Prastiti and Meiranto (2013), whose research results show that there is no relationship between the size of the audit committee and earnings management, which means that simply increasing the size of the audit committee may not automatically reduce earnings management practices.

Firm Size in Moderating the Effect of Managerial Ownership on Earnings Management

Managerial ownership has a positive value, indicating that every one-unit increase in managerial ownership leads to increased earnings management. This means that higher managerial ownership leads to higher earnings management, or vice versa. Company size classifies a company's structure into large and small companies. The results of the Study indicate that Firm Size in moderating the effect of managerial ownership on earnings management has a significance value of 0.029, which is smaller than 0.05, thus indicating that firm size can moderate the effect of managerial ownership on earnings management in private banks listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange for the period 2018-2022. This means that the effect of managerial ownership on earnings management will differ depending on the company's size. In large companies, stricter internal control mechanisms and supervision from external parties (such as independent auditors) can reduce the incentive to manage earnings, even though managerial ownership is high. Results of research studies by Panjaitan and Muslih (2019) found that partially company size had a significant negative effect on earnings management in BEI manufacturing companies 2014-2017, indicating the strong relevance of company size in the context of earnings management.

Firm Size in Moderating the Influence of Audit Committee on Earnings Management

The existence of an audit committee is considered crucial because it can monitor the actions of company management. Therefore, a larger audit committee leads to tighter oversight of management (Yuliani & Prastiwi, 2021). Company size is used to determine the size of a company's total assets. Higher total assets will increase company productivity. The existence of an audit committee is a crucial factor in maintaining the integrity of financial statements, for both large and small companies. This finding suggests that the audit committee's role in preventing earnings management tends to be consistent across various company sizes. The results of this study indicate that Firm Size in moderating the influence of the audit committee on earnings management has a significance value of 0.898, more significant than 0.05, thus indicating that Firm Size is unable to moderate the influence of the audit committee on earnings management in private banks listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange for the period 2018-2022. This means that the existence of firm size cannot strengthen or weaken the influence of the audit committee on earnings management. This indicates that the existence of the audit committee is an essential factor in maintaining the integrity of financial statements, both for large and small companies.

6. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the test results and discussion, it can be concluded that managerial ownership had no effect on profit management in private banks listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange from 2018 to 2022. Similarly, the audit committee has no influence on profit management in private banks listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange for the same period. However, firm size was found to moderate the influence of managerial ownership on profit management in private banks listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange from 2018 to 2022. In contrast, however, firm size cannot moderate the influence of the audit committee on profit management in private banks listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange for the 2018 to 2022 period.

Implication and Contribution

This research provides significant contributions, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the finding that firm size is able to moderate the relationship between managerial ownership and earnings management enriches the agency theory literature, confirming that the effectiveness of good corporate governance (GCG) mechanisms is conditional and strongly influenced by the entity's scale of operations. Practically, these results have important implications for regulators (OJK) to consider bank size factors when formulating supervisory policies, as well as providing a warning to bank management and investors that the focus should not only be on fulfilling formal requirements for managerial ownership and audit committees, but should also be on the quality of GCG and the adjustment of supervisory strategies based on the complexity of company size.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that must be considered. First, this study has limitations in the use of internal GCG variables, namely focusing only on managerial ownership and the audit committee. This model does not include other external or internal GCG variables that have the potential to significantly influence earnings management, such as institutional ownership, the proportion of independent commissioners, or external auditor quality. Second, the sample is limited to private banks and the period 2018–2022, which includes the pandemic era, meaning the research results cannot be generalized to other banking sectors or normal market conditions.

Future Research

Based on the conclusions above, the researcher provides several suggestions. In terms of managerial implications, management should consider these findings when making decisions to prevent the occurrence of earnings management practices. The company's management is expected to be able to implement and run good corporate governance better and consistently, in accordance with existing regulations, so that transparency, fairness, and responsibility to shareholders can be maintained. Regarding directions for future research, it is recommended that future researchers conduct further studies on other variables that can influence earnings management, such as institutional ownership, profitability, and other relevant factors. Additionally, future researchers are also encouraged to expand the scope of their research by using financial reports from companies not only in the banking sector but also from other companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange, so that a broader comparison of research results across different types of companies can be made.

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INTERNAL CAPABILITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF TRADITIONAL WEAVING MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs): EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIA

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Received 24 January 2026: Revised 25 February 2026: Accepted 10 March 2026

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of internal organisational capabilities on organisational performance among traditional Lurik weaving micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia, drawing on the dynamic capabilities perspective. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed using survey data collected from 30 owners or managers of Lurik weaving MSMEs in Klaten, Central Java. Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is suitable for exploratory research with relatively small sample sizes. The findings reveal that financial literacy has a positive and statistically significant effect on organisational performance, indicating that effective financial management plays a crucial role in improving business outcomes. In contrast, however, human resource readiness and innovation capability do not show significant direct effects on organisational performance, suggesting that these capabilities may not immediately translate into measurable performance improvements in traditional cultural MSMEs. From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the application of dynamic capabilities theory to a culturally embedded MSMEs context and demonstrates that internal capabilities do not uniformly influence performance outcomes across different organisational settings. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of prioritising financial management capabilities to enhance performance in micro-scale traditional enterprises. This study is limited by its cross-sectional design, small sample size, and reliance on perceptual performance measures within a single regional context. Despite these limitations, the study offers original insights by focusing on traditional weaving MSMEs and identifying financial literacy as a dominant driver of organisational performance.

KEYWORDS: TRADITIONAL LURIK WEAVING MSMEs; ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE; HUMAN RESOURCE READINESS; INNOVATION CAPABILITY; FINANCIAL LITERACY.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti pengaruh keupayaan organisasi dalaman terhadap prestasi organisasi dalam kalangan perusahaan mikro, kecil, dan sederhana (MSMEs) tenunan tradisional Lurik di Indonesia dengan menggunakan perspektif keupayaan dinamik. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kuantitatif keratan rentas melalui data tinjauan yang dikumpulkan daripada 30 pemilik atau pengurus MSMEs

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tenunan Lurik di Klaten, Jawa Tengah. Analisis data dijalankan menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), yang sesuai untuk kajian penerokaan dengan saiz sampel yang kecil. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa literasi kewangan mempunyai pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap prestasi organisasi, yang menandakan bahawa pengurusan kewangan yang berkesan memainkan peranan penting dalam meningkatkan prestasi perniagaan. Sebaliknya, kesiapsiagaan sumber manusia dan keupayaan inovasi tidak menunjukkan kesan langsung yang signifikan terhadap prestasi organisasi, yang menunjukkan bahawa keupayaan tersebut tidak semestinya menghasilkan peningkatan prestasi dalam jangka pendek bagi MSMEs berasaskan budaya tradisional. Dari sudut teori, kajian ini memperluas aplikasi teori keupayaan dinamik dalam konteks MSMEs berteraskan budaya dan menunjukkan bahawa kesan keupayaan dalaman terhadap prestasi adalah bergantung kepada konteks organisasi. Dari sudut praktikal, dapatan kajian menekankan kepentingan memperkukuh literasi kewangan sebagai keutamaan bagi meningkatkan prestasi perusahaan mikro tradisional. Kajian ini terhad kepada reka bentuk keratan rentas, saiz sampel yang kecil, serta penggunaan ukuran prestasi berasaskan persepsi dalam satu konteks geografi tertentu. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian ini menawarkan sumbangan asli dengan memfokuskan kepada MSMEs tenunan tradisional yang masih kurang dikaji.

KATA KUNCI: *MSMES TENUNAN TRADISIONAL; PRESTASI ORGANISASI; KESIAPSIAGAAN SUMBER MANUSIA; KEUPAYAAN INOVASI; LITERASI KEWANGAN*

1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in economic development, employment creation, and social resilience, particularly in emerging economies. Beyond their economic contributions, many MSMEs also function as custodians of local culture and heritage. In Indonesia, traditional weaving MSMEs such as Lurik enterprises represent not only productive economic units but also important carriers of cultural identity and indigenous knowledge (Mulyanto *et al.*, 2018; Setyaning & Nugroho, 2017). Despite their significance, traditional cultural MSMEs continue to face persistent challenges, including limited resources, weak managerial capabilities, and declining competitiveness in increasingly modernized markets (Setyaningsih *et al.*, 2024).

Organisational performance has therefore become a central concern for MSMEs operating in highly competitive and rapidly changing environments. Prior research consistently emphasizes that internal organisational capabilities are critical determinants of performance, particularly for small firms with limited access to external resources and institutional support (Sutanto *et al.*, 2023; Tjahjadi *et al.*, 2024). From a dynamic capabilities perspective, firms that are able to effectively develop, integrate, and reconfigure internal resources are more likely to achieve superior performance outcomes and maintain competitiveness over time (Teece, 2007; Teece *et al.*, 2009; Teece, 2022).

Among the internal capabilities frequently highlighted in the literature are human resource readiness, innovation capability, and financial literacy. Human resource readiness enhances firms' adaptive capacity and productivity, innovation capability enables continuous value creation through incremental and process-based improvements, and financial literacy supports sound financial decision-making and efficient resource allocation (Mendoza-Silva, 2020; Masdupi *et al.*, 2024). Empirical evidence generally confirms the positive role of these capabilities in improving firm performance; however, such evidence is largely derived from studies focusing on modern, manufacturing-based, or technology-oriented MSMEs (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018; Kim & Jin, 2022).

Despite the growing body of research on MSMEs performance, traditional cultural MSMEs remain under-represented in empirical investigations. Existing studies that address cultural or craft-based enterprises tend to prioritise sustainability, heritage preservation, or social outcomes, rather than organisational performance as an immediate strategic concern (Mulyanto *et al.*, 2018; Setyaningsih *et al.*, 2024). Moreover, the operational characteristics of traditional weaving MSMEs, such as family-based management, aging workforces, limited formal training, and incremental innovation practices,

differ substantially from those of contemporary MSMEs. As a result, there is limited empirical understanding of how internal organisational capabilities translate into performance outcomes within culturally embedded enterprises in emerging economies.

This gap constrains the applicability of dominant theoretical frameworks, particularly dynamic capabilities theory, to traditional MSMEs contexts and calls for empirical studies that explicitly examine capability, performance relationships beyond modern business settings. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by providing early empirical evidence on the relationship between human resource readiness, innovation capability, and financial literacy and organisational performance among traditional weaving MSMEs in Indonesia. By focusing on Lurik weaving enterprises in Klaten, Central Java, this research offers a contextual contribution that extends existing theories of internal capabilities and organisational performance to culturally embedded MSMEs setting.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dynamic Capabilities Perspective and Organisational Performance

Dynamic capabilities theory explains how firms sustain performance in changing environments. Teece, (2007) defines dynamic capabilities as the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources in response to environmental shifts. Unlike the traditional resource-based view, this perspective emphasizes adaptation, learning, and strategic renewal as drivers of performance (Teece *et al.*, 2009; Teece, 2022).

For MSMEs operating under resource constraints, internal capabilities become critical sources of advantage. Limited access to capital, technology, and institutional support increases reliance on internally developed competencies (Miles, 2012). Empirical studies show that stronger internal capabilities are associated with higher productivity, efficiency, and performance outcomes (Sutanto *et al.*, 2023; Tjahjadi *et al.*, 2024).

In traditional weaving enterprises, the need for adaptation is coupled with the preservation of cultural authenticity. These firms must respond to market changes while maintaining heritage-based production systems. However, empirical applications of dynamic capabilities theory in such contexts remain limited. This study, therefore, examines three internal capabilities, human resource readiness, innovation capability, and financial literacy, as potential drivers of organisational performance.

Human Resource Readiness and Organisational Performance

Human resource readiness refers to the extent to which employees possess the skills, knowledge, and adaptability required to perform effectively. In MSMEs, where organisational structures tend to be informal and employees often perform multiple roles, workforce readiness becomes particularly important for maintaining operational efficiency (Miles, 2012). Previous empirical studies show that human resource readiness contributes positively to firm performance. Sutanto *et al.* (2023) found that human capital readiness enhances business performance in MSMEs by strengthening innovation capability and improving firms' ability to adapt to market changes. Similarly, Tjahjadi *et al.* (2024) reported that human capital readiness significantly supports business performance and sustainability by improving employees' skills, knowledge, and adaptability in responding to organisational challenges. In traditional weaving MSMEs, workforce characteristics often involve inherited skills and limited formal training. While these characteristics support cultural continuity, improving human resource readiness may strengthen operational capabilities and enhance organisational performance. In this case, human resource readiness is expected to positively influence organisational performance. Hence, H₁ was postulated as:

H₁: Human resource readiness has a positive effect on organisational performance.

Innovation Capability and Organisational Performance

Innovation capability is a company's ability to generate and implement new ideas related to products, processes, or markets. In MSMEs, innovation generally takes the form of incremental improvements rather than radical technological change (Mendoza-Silva, 2020). Companies with stronger innovation capabilities are generally better able to adapt to market changes, improve operational processes, and maintain competitiveness. Previous research has shown that innovation capability plays a positive role in improving company performance. Rajapathirana & Hui (2018) found that innovation capability significantly impacts company performance through new product development, production process improvements, and the company's ability to respond effectively to market changes. This research indicates that companies with stronger innovation capabilities tend to achieve higher productivity, market performance, and competitive advantage. Similarly, Sahoo (2019) also demonstrated that innovation capability plays a crucial role in improving company performance, particularly through process improvements, the implementation of quality management practices, and sustainable operational development in small and medium enterprises. In the context of traditional weaving MSMEs, innovation is often manifested through design modifications, color combinations, and refinements in production techniques, or adjustments to marketing strategies. Although innovation is generally incremental, these changes can increase product appeal and strengthen market competitiveness without diminishing cultural authenticity. In view of this assertion, innovation capacity is thought to have a positive impact on organisational performance. Therefore, H₂ was hypothesised as:

H₂: Innovation capability has a positive effect on organisational performance.

Financial Literacy and Organisational Performance

Financial literacy refers to the ability of business owners or managers to understand and apply financial knowledge in business decision-making. In MSMEs, where financial management is generally centralized in the owner or manager, financial literacy plays an important role in budgeting, investment decisions, and financial risk management (Masdupi *et al.*, 2024). Previous studies highlight the importance of financial literacy in improving MSME performance. Kurniasari *et al.*, (2025) found that financial literacy significantly enhances MSME performance by improving financial decision-making, encouraging the adoption of financial technology, and facilitating better access to finance. Similarly, Kyeyune and Ntayi (2024) reported that financial literacy strengthens business performance and sustainability by improving financial management practices, cost control, and long-term financial planning. In the context of traditional weaving MSMEs, financial management practices are often informal and rely more on the owner's personal experience rather than formal financial knowledge. Therefore, strengthening financial literacy may help business owners manage cash flows more effectively, allocate resources efficiently, and make strategic financial decisions that support business growth. Accordingly, financial literacy is expected to positively influence organisational performance. Henceforward, H₃ was suggested as:

H₃: Financial literacy has a positive effect on organisational performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between internal organisational capabilities and organisational performance among traditional Lurik weaving micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia. The initial data used in this study were 30 respondents. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered directly to MSMEs owners or managers, who served as the unit of analysis due to their direct involvement in operational and strategic decision-making. The sampling technique used was purposive non-probability sampling.

Measurement Scales Development

All constructs in this study were measured using multi-item scales adapted from previous studies and contextualized to the setting of traditional weaving micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The details are given as follows:

- The human resource readiness variable was adapted from Tjahjadi *et al.* (2024) and measured using seven questionnaire items, such as “Our employees understand how to carry out weaving or production activities according to proper and safe procedures” and “Our employees try to understand customers’ needs and preferences, even when they are not yet familiar with using digital media.” The innovation capability variable was adapted from Sutanto *et al.* (2023) and measured using seven questionnaire items, such as “Our Lurik weaving business has developed new products over the past three years” and “Our Lurik weaving business continuously changes or improves existing products.”;
- The financial literacy variable was adapted from Aripin and Zuhriyah (2025) and measured using six questionnaire items, such as “Our Lurik weaving business has a strong understanding of fundamental financial concepts, including interest rates, inflation, and potential investment risks” and “Our Lurik weaving business is capable of creating and managing business financial plans effectively.”; and
- Finally, the organisational performance variable was adapted from Tjahjadi *et al.* (2024) and measured using nine questionnaire items, such as “The quality of products produced by our Lurik weaving business meets the established standards” and “Our Lurik weaving products dominate the market.”

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is suitable for exploratory research, relatively small sample sizes, and non-normal data distributions (Kock and Hadaya, 2018). The analysis followed a two-stage procedure consisting of measurement model evaluation and structural model assessment (Hair *et al.*, 2021). In the first stage, the measurement model was assessed by examining indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability using Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability (CR), and convergent validity using factor loading and the average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion to ensure that each construct was empirically distinct from other constructs in the model. In the second stage, the structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships among constructs. Path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values were obtained through a bootstrapping procedure.

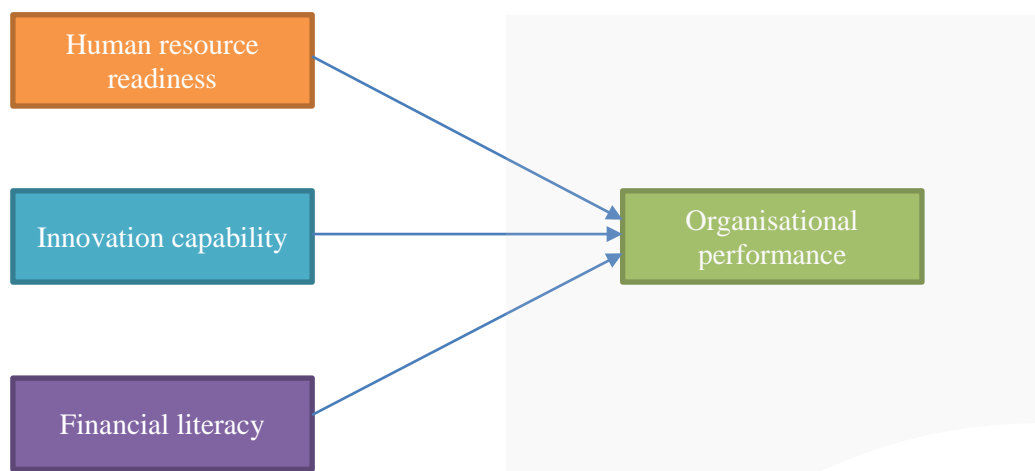


FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Source: Figure by Authors

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

This preliminary study reveals findings obtained from initial data from 30 respondents of Lurik Weaving MSMEs in Klaten. The findings based on table 1, show that the respondent profile indicates that traditional Lurik weaving MSMEs are predominantly managed by women, with female respondents accounting for 80% of the sample, while male respondents represent 20%. In terms of educational background, most respondents have relatively low levels of formal education, with 53.3% completing elementary school, 40% junior high school, and only 6.7% senior high school. The length of business operation shows that these enterprises are generally well-established, as the majority have been operating for more than ten years, with business experience ranging from 10 to 35 years. Regarding firm size, most MSMEs operate on a micro scale, as 90% of respondents manage their businesses with only one employee and only a small proportion employ two workers. Overall, this profile reflects the characteristics of traditional weaving MSMEs as long-standing, micro-scale enterprises that rely heavily on female labour, family-based management, and limited formal organisational structures.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Profile	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	24	80
	Male	6	20
Educational	Elementary school	16	53.3
	Junior High School	12	40
	Senior High School	2	6.7
Length Of Business	10 - 15 years	7	23.3
	16 - 20 years	6	20
	21 - 25 years	6	20
	26 - 30 years	5	16.7
	31 - 35 years	6	20
Employee	1 employee	27	90
	2 employees	3	30

Source: Table by Authors

Validity and Reliability

Table 2 shows that all constructs exhibit satisfactory reliability and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.906 to 0.967, and composite reliability values range from 0.926 to 0.972, exceeding the recommended thresholds and indicating strong internal consistency.

TABLE 2: CONVERGENT VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY TESTING RESULTS

Construct	N	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Human Resources Readiness	7	0.926	0.705 – 0.910	0.940	0.694
Financial Literacy	6	0.906	0.781 – 0.892	0.926	0.677
Innovation Capability	7	0.948	0.803 – 0.911	0.957	0.761
Organisational Performance	9	0.967	0.825 – 0.932	0.972	0.794

Source: Table by Authors

Convergent validity is further supported by factor loading values above 0.70 for all indicators, with loadings ranging from 0.705 to 0.932 across constructs. In addition, all average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed the minimum cutoff of 0.50, ranging from 0.677 to 0.794, confirming that each construct explains a substantial proportion of variance in its indicators. Overall, the measurement

model meets the required criteria for reliability and convergent validity and is suitable for structural model analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2021).

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, where the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct should be greater than its correlation with other constructs. As shown in Table 3, the diagonal values representing the square root of the AVE for human resource readiness (0.833), financial literacy (0.823), innovation capability (0.872), and organisational performance (0.891) were generally higher than the corresponding inter-construct correlations, indicating adequate discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2021).

TABLE 3: DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY USING FORNELL AND LACKER CRITERION

Construct	Organisational Performance	Financial Literacy	Human Resource Readiness	Innovation Capability
Organisational performance	0.891			
Financial literacy	0.871	0.823		
Human resource readiness	0.778	0.802	0.833	
Innovation capability	0.624	0.744	0.448	0.872

Source: Table by Authors

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the hypothesis testing reveal differing effects of internal organisational capabilities on organisational performance among traditional Lurik weaving MSMEs. Human resource readiness shows a positive but statistically non-significant relationship with organisational performance ($\beta = 0.235$, $t = 1.241$, $p = 0.215$), indicating that workforce readiness alone does not directly translate into improved performance outcomes. This finding suggests that, in traditional weaving enterprises characterized by family-based labor and inherited skills, human resource readiness may function as a foundational capability that supports operational continuity rather than as a direct driver of performance (Teece, 2007; Sutanto *et al.*, 2023). Similarly, innovation capability does not exhibit a significant direct effect on organisational performance ($\beta = 0.026$, $t = 0.182$, $p = 0.856$), implying that innovation activities within these MSMEs are largely incremental and culturally oriented, and therefore insufficient to generate immediate performance gains (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018; Mendoza-Silva, 2020). In contrast, financial literacy demonstrates a strong and statistically significant positive effect on organisational performance ($\beta = 0.663$, $t = 3.014$, $p = 0.003$), highlighting its critical role in enhancing business outcomes. This result indicates that the ability of MSMEs owners to manage cash flows, control costs, and make informed financial decisions has a direct and substantial impact on performance, particularly in micro-scale enterprises with limited access to external resources (Masdupi *et al.*, 2024; Kyeyune & Ntayi, 2024). Overall, these findings suggest that, within traditional cultural MSMEs, managerial and financial capabilities play a more immediate role in driving organisational performance than human resource readiness or innovation capability, which may exert their influence through indirect or longer-term mechanisms (Teece, 2023).

TABLE 4: HYPHOTESIS TESTING

Hypothesis	β (O)	β (M)	t -value	p -value
H1: Human resource readiness -> Organisational Performance	0.235	0.268	1.241	0.215
H2: Innovation capability -> Organisational Performance	0.026	0.061	0.182	0.856
H3: Financial literacy -> Organisational Performance	0.663	0.609	3.014	0.003

Source: Table by Authors

5. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study examines the influence of internal organisational capabilities on organisational performance among traditional Lurik weaving micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Klaten, Central Java, using the dynamic capabilities perspective. Based on the analysis of preliminary survey data from 30 MSMEs owners or managers, the findings provide early empirical evidence that internal capabilities do not contribute equally to performance outcomes in culturally embedded and micro-scale enterprises. The results indicate that financial literacy has a significant and positive effect on organisational performance, highlighting the critical role of financial management skills in enhancing business outcomes. In contrast, human resource readiness and innovation capability do not show significant direct effects on organisational performance, suggesting that these capabilities may not immediately translate into measurable performance improvements in traditional weaving MSMEs. These findings reflect the unique characteristics of traditional Lurik weaving enterprises, which are predominantly micro-scale, family-based, and reliant on inherited skills and incremental innovation practices. In such contexts, financial literacy appears to function as a key operational capability that directly supports performance through better cash flow management, cost control, and financial decision-making. Overall, this study contributes to the MSMEs and dynamic capabilities literature by extending empirical evidence to traditional cultural enterprises and by demonstrating that performance drivers in these contexts differ from those commonly identified in modern or technology-oriented MSMEs.

This study offers a more nuanced understanding of dynamic capabilities theory in micro-scale, culturally embedded enterprises. The findings suggest that, in traditional MSMEs, managerial micro foundations, particularly financial literacy, may serve as more immediate drivers of performance than innovation or workforce-based capabilities. This refines Teece's framework by indicating that, under conditions of extreme resource constraints and cultural embeddedness, the reconfiguration of financial and managerial routines may precede sensing- and innovation-based capabilities in shaping short-term organisational performance.

Despite its contributions, as a preliminary study, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research employs a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to capture changes in organisational capabilities and performance over time. Second, the sample size is relatively small and confined to traditional Lurik weaving MSMEs in a single geographical area, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other types of MSMEs or cultural industries. Third, organisational performance is measured using perceptual indicators reported by owners or managers, which may be subject to response bias despite their widespread use in MSMEs research. Finally, this study focuses solely on direct relationships between internal capabilities and organisational performance, without examining potential mediating or moderating variables that could further explain these relationships.

Future research may consider repositioning organisational performance as a mediating variable rather than a final outcome. Given that human resource readiness and innovation capability do not exhibit significant direct effects on organisational performance in this study, it is plausible that these capabilities influence broader outcomes, such as sustainability, competitiveness, or long-term resilience, through intermediate performance mechanisms. Adopting organisational performance as a mediator may provide deeper insights into the indirect pathways through which internal capabilities contribute to long-term outcomes in traditional cultural MSMEs, consistent with the dynamic capabilities perspective. Finally, future studies may expand the research model by including sustainability outcomes or external support mechanisms, such as government assistance, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of performance and resilience among traditional cultural MSMEs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors extend their sincere gratitude to the supervisors and reviewers for their guidance and constructive input and to all respondents and sources who contributed valuable information to this study.

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LJMS LABUAN E-JOURNAL OF MUAMALAT AND SOCIETY

TURNING POPULATION PRESSURE INTO PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH DIGITALISATION AND URBAN DENSITY IN ASEAN

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Received 22 February 2026: Revised 7 March 2026: Accepted 4 April 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of digitalisation on the economic performance of ASEAN countries from 2015 to 2024, focusing on GNI per capita as a measure of welfare and income. It highlights the growing role of digital platforms, online labor markets, and demographic changes in shaping ASEAN's economy. Using panel data and Two-Stage Least Squares (TSLS), the study addresses endogeneity by instrumenting variables like urban population, growth rates, and youth unemployment for population density, while controlling for demographic and labor factors. Findings indicate that higher population density and increased service-sector employment significantly boost GNI per capita. Internet access further raises income levels, emphasizing the importance of digital infrastructure. In contrast, mobile phone penetration correlates negatively with income, potentially because basic access supports low-wage gig work and informal competition. Inflation reduces welfare, whereas HDI has a positive impact. Overall, digitalisation plays a vital role in increasing income across ASEAN.

KEYWORDS: ECONOMY, DENSITY, POPULATION, DIGITALISATION, ASEAN

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mengkaji kesan pendigitalan terhadap prestasi ekonomi negara-negara ASEAN dari tahun 2015 hingga 2024, dengan memberi tumpuan kepada PNK per kapita sebagai ukuran kebajikan dan pendapatan. Ia mengetengahkan peranan platform digital, pasaran buruh dalam talian dan perubahan demografi yang semakin meningkat dalam membentuk ekonomi ASEAN. Menggunakan data panel dan Dua Tahap Kuadrat Terkecil (TSLS), kajian ini menangani endogeniti dengan menginstrumentasikan pembolehubah seperti populasi bandar, kadar pertumbuhan dan pengangguran belia untuk kepadatan penduduk, sambil mengawal faktor demografi dan buruh. Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa kepadatan penduduk yang lebih tinggi dan peningkatan pekerjaan sektor perkhidmatan meningkatkan PNK per kapita dengan ketara. Akses internet meningkatkan lagi tahap pendapatan, menekankan kepentingan infrastruktur digital. Sebaliknya, penembusan telefon bimbit berkorelasi negatif dengan pendapatan, berpotensi kerana akses asas menyokong kerja gig bergaji rendah dan persaingan tidak formal. Inflasi mengurangkan kebajikan, manakala HDI mempunyai kesan positif. Secara keseluruhan, pendigitalan memainkan peranan penting dalam meningkatkan pendapatan di seluruh ASEAN.

KATA KUNCI: EKONOMI, KEPATUTAN, POPULASI, PENDIGITALAN, ASEAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

Digitalisation, defined by flexible work arrangements and driven by technological advancements, has undergone significant changes in the global employment landscape. This project-based, short-term, task-focused work model has become more prevalent due to advances in digital technology and increasing urban population density. Technology plays a crucial role in supporting economic growth by better matching supply and demand, reducing job search costs, and enhancing organisational efficiency (Brawley, 2017; Ma, 2024). Meanwhile, urban density creates ideal conditions for the growth of the platform economy, providing a large labor force and consumer base (Ghosh & Ramachandran, 2023). The synergy between digital technology and urban density has reshaped the labor market, presenting both new opportunities and challenges related to well-being and job stability (Talukder *et al.*, 2024).

Furthermore, innovations like Shopee, Grab, Gojek, Uber, and Amazon Mechanical Turk have transformed gig work by directly and instantly connecting workers and employers. This expands opportunities for participation and enhances labor efficiency and simplicity (Brawley, 2017). The rise of internet technology has also reduced geographical and informational barriers, enabling more precise matching of workers' skills to user needs (Ma, 2024). Additionally, the deployment of advanced technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and 5G, in urban areas has enhanced flexible work options through real-time monitoring and decentralised transactions (Malik *et al.*, 2024). Hence, technology serves not only as a means of production but also as an essential infrastructure within the economic ecosystem.

Regarding population density, dense urban areas offer a strong market for the platform economy, driven by high interaction and transaction volumes. Population concentration increases demand for gig services, such as transportation, food delivery, and other digital offerings (Ghosh & Ramachandran, 2023). Therefore, population density is a significant driver of economic growth, as it facilitates market interactions and expands digital economic networks. Besides that, the temporary nature of gig work, heavily influenced by market demand, creates a dynamic economic environment for gig workers (Duggan *et al.*, 2021; Singh, 2024). This reflects an economy that adapts to technological changes and market needs, emphasising the importance of responsive work management systems. As a result, technology and urban density are key factors shaping economic development and creating new socio-economic frameworks, which require policy adaptations to support sustainable and inclusive growth within the digital work ecosystem (Kumar & Verma, 2025).

As urbanisation and digital transformation continue to accelerate rapidly across the ASEAN region, it becomes increasingly important to gain a comprehensive understanding of how various factors—such as technology adoption, population density, and overall well-being—are intricately interconnected within the broader economic landscape. Analyzing these relationships in depth can yield valuable empirical insights that not only enhance our comprehension of current trends but also support the development of innovative digital work models. These models are crucial for promoting sustainable economic growth, fostering inclusivity among diverse communities, and ensuring equitable opportunities for all. In doing so, they contribute to the overarching goal of advancing sustainable development in ASEAN's rapidly evolving digital economy, paving the way for a more resilient and equitable future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research draws on Thomas Robert Malthus's foundational ideas, which view population as a central factor in economic dynamics. In his influential 1798 work, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, Malthus argued that population increases geometrically while economic output, particularly food and resources, grows only arithmetically (Ramya *et al.*, 2020). He warned that this imbalance would strain societal welfare, especially if population growth exceeds the economy's capacity to provide enough sustenance. His analysis emphasised that without technological advances or increased productivity, higher population density would lead to increased resource competition,

rising living costs, income instability, and decreased overall welfare (Montano & García-López, 2020). Although these ideas were conceived in an agrarian and pre-industrial context, their core principles remain relevant today for understanding the link between population growth and economic well-being. Currently, Malthus's theory serves as a foundation for examining how densely populated societies encounter structural challenges in meeting economic needs, particularly when production and distribution are not yet fully optimised.

Over time, as industrialisation and urbanisation advanced, modern economists reinterpreted Malthus's ideas through the lens of urban economics and agglomeration theory. Unlike Malthus's focus on the risks of population density, agglomeration theory, developed by Alfred Marshall and refined by Glaeser (Duranton & Puga, 2020). Posits that population clustering in specific areas can enhance productivity by enabling the concentration of economic activities, encouraging physical proximity, and increasing market interactions. Higher population densities facilitate quicker information exchange, foster innovation, support improved infrastructure, and generate more jobs in the service sector. Modern urban economics indicates that densely populated regions nurture large, flexible labor markets, expand production networks, provide substantial consumer bases, and create optimal conditions for growth in service industries (Lehmann, 2019). Thus, urban and agglomeration theories offer a new perspective: population density can act as a catalyst for economic growth, adding a new dimension to Malthus's original theory. The key distinction between Malthus and this modern view is that productivity depends not only on resource availability but also on social interactions and the density of economic activities (Brunt & García-Peñalosa, 2022).

Endogenous growth theory revolutionised our understanding of the factors that influence economic growth. It highlights technological progress, innovation, and improvements in human capital as key drivers of sustained growth (Schilirò, 2019). Unlike the Solow model, which treats technology as an external factor, this theory views technology as arising from investments in knowledge, education, and research. It shows that technology can bypass Malthusian resource limits by significantly increasing productivity and efficiency. Innovations such as the internet, cellular networks, digital systems, the Internet of Things (IoT), and 5G exemplify how innovation enables faster information exchange, quicker labor matching, and greater economic efficiency. Even in densely populated regions, technology can raise productivity without additional physical resources. Thus, endogenous growth theory suggests that a country's prosperity depends not just on population or resources but also on its ability to adopt, learn, and apply new technologies.

The shift to the digital era and platform economy offers a new perspective that reinterprets Malthus's ideas. In this digital economy, population density and technology no longer oppose each other; instead, they complement and reinforce one another through platform mechanisms (Tan, 2024). Examples such as Grab, Gojek, Shopee, Uber, and Amazon Mechanical Turk demonstrate that densely populated areas are ideal markets for flexible, app-based work models. Population density results in higher transaction volumes, enhances the efficiency of matching supply with demand, and promotes innovation (Nawawi *et al.*, 2023).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative, econometric approach to investigate the impact of population density and digital technology on economic well-being in the ASEAN region within the digitalisation framework. The chosen method focuses on empirically establishing causal links between variables, rather than merely observing correlations (Wooldridge, 2016; Greene, 2018). As the economy grows alongside urbanisation and digitalisation, understanding how demographic and technological factors influence macro-level economic well-being has become increasingly important (ILO, 2021).

The research model was developed to address potential endogeneity in several variables, notably population density. Higher economic well-being can drive urbanisation and population growth in cities, subsequently raising population density. To address this potential simultaneity bias, the Two-Stage Least Squares (TSLS) method was employed (Staiger & Stock, 1997). This approach provides

a more precise analysis of the relationships among demographic factors, digital technology use, and economic well-being, using relevant external variables as instruments for the endogenous variables. This model is estimated using the Two-Stage Least Squares (TSLS) method to address simultaneity bias and ensure instrument validity (Gujarati & Porter, 2020). This study's fundamental model is defined as follows:

$$lgni_pc_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 density_{it} + \beta_2 employ_services_{it} + \beta_3 cellular_{it} + \beta_4 individu_internet_{it} + \gamma Z_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Because density is believed to be endogenous to GNI per capita, the following instrument is employed:

$$density_{it} = \pi_0 + \pi_1 urban_pop_{it} + \pi_2 pop_growth_{it} + \pi_3 youth_unemp_{it} + v_{it}$$

This study utilises secondary cross-country panel data from ten ASEAN nations: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam. ASEAN was selected due to its rapid digital transformation in recent years and its demographic diversity, ranging from Indonesia's high population density to Singapore's high income. This variation offers valuable insights into the relationships between population density, digital technology, and economic status (OECD, 2021). Data was gathered from reputable official sources. The primary source is the World Development Indicators (World Bank), which includes data on GNI per capita, population density, population growth, mobile phone usage, and internet usage. Additionally, information on the Human Development Index (HDI) was collected from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The study spans the period from 2015 to 2024, chosen to capture the rapid adoption of digital technologies in the ASEAN region (Baltagi, 2021).

TABLE 1: RESEARCH VARIABLES

No	Variables	Symbol	Operational Definition
Dependent Variable			
1	Gross National Income per Capita (log)	lgni_pc	A measure of a society's economic health, expressed by the natural logarithm of GNI per capita (US\$).
Interest Variables			
1	Population Density	density	The number of residents per square kilometer of land area is used as a measure of economic agglomeration.
2	Employment in Services	employ_service	Proportion of the workforce employed in the service sector relative to the total workforce.
3	Individuals using the Internet	individu_internet	Proportion of Individuals who use the internet
4	Mobile Cellular Subscriptions	cellular	Number of mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 people
Endogenous Variables			

No	Variables	Symbol	Operational Definition
1	Urban Population	urban_pop	The proportion of the population living in urban areas to the total population of a country
2	Population Growth	pop_growth	The annual population growth rate (in percent) is calculated based on the change in total population from the previous year.
3	Youth Unemployment	youth_unemp	The percentage of the young population (15–24 years) who are in the workforce but are not currently working.
Control Variables			
1	Inflation	inf	Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)
2	GDP Growth	gdp_growth	GDP per capita growth (annual %)
3	Dependency Ratio	dependency	Age dependency ratio (% of working-age population)
4	Human Development Index	hdi	Human development index as a proxy for human resource quality

Source: Table by Authors

4. FINDINGS

This study employs the Two-Stage Least Squares (TSLS) method to examine how population density, the service sector (employment_services), and digital technology factors (cellular and individual_internet) influence economic welfare in the ASEAN region, using Gross National Income per capita (GNI per capita) as a measure. To ensure the validity of the TSLS model, tests were performed to evaluate endogeneity, the robustness of instruments, and the consistency of model identification. The key tests included the Durbin-Wu-Hausman test, the First-stage regression test, and the Overidentification test.

Result of Endogeneity Test

TABLE 2: ENDOGENEITY TEST

Information	Result	<i>p</i> -value
Durbin (score) chi2(1)	3.6527	0.0560*
Wu-Hausman F(1,90)	3.4121	0.0680*

Standard errors in parentheses

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Source: Table by Authors

This test aimed to determine whether the density variable is endogenous with respect to the dependent variable, log GNI per capita. The null hypothesis (H_0) states that the variable is exogenous, indicating no correlation with the error term. The test results show p-values of 0.0560 in the Durbin test and 0.0680 in the Wu-Hausman test, both just below the 10% significance level ($\alpha = 0.1$). This suggests that the density variable is significantly endogenous, although the endogeneity remains strong. Therefore, using the Two-Stage Least Squares (TSLS) method is appropriate, as it provides more consistent parameter estimates and avoids simultaneity bias, unlike ordinary least squares (OLS) regression.

Result of First-Stage Regression Summary Statistics

TABLE 3: FIRST-STAGE REGRESSION

Variable	R-sq.	Adjusted R-sq.	Partial R-sq.	F(3,89)	p-value
density	0.7482	0.7199	0.5073	30.5498	0.000***

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
 Source: Table by Authors

The initial testing phase assessed the instrument's ability to estimate the endogenous density variable. Results showed an F-statistic of 30.55, well above the recommended minimum of 10 by Staiger and Stock (1997), indicating the instrument's strong explanatory ability for density changes. The Partial R² of 0.5073 implies that about 50.7% of the variation in density is explained by the instruments: urban_pop, pop_growth, and youth_unemp. The Prob > F value of 0.0000 confirms the relationship's statistical significance. Consequently, the model is free from weak instruments, and these three variables are suitable for the first stage of Two-Stage Least Squares (TSLS) estimation.

Result of Overidentifying Test

TABLE 4: OVERIDENTIFICATION TEST

Information	Result	p-value
Sargan (score) chi2(2)	.536167	0.7648
Basmann chi2(2)	.479761	0.7867

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
 Source: Table by Authors

The Sargan and Basmann tests evaluated the validity of the instruments, mainly to confirm they are genuinely exogenous or uncorrelated with the error term in the main equation. The results showed p-values of 0.7648 for the Sargan test and 0.7867 for the Basmann test—both well above 1%, 5%, and 10% significance levels. This indicates there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that all instruments are valid and uncorrelated with the error term. Therefore, the three instruments (urban population, population growth, and youth unemployment) are considered valid and exogenous. These findings support the proper identification of the Two-Stage Least Squares (TSLS) model, and the estimated results are reliable and interpretable with high confidence.

Result of Two-Stage Regression

TABLE 5: TWO-STAGES REGRESSION

Variables	(1) lgni_pc
density	0.000113***

Variables	(1) lgni_pc
employ_services	(2.96e-05) 0.0208*** (0.00380)
cellular	-0.00901*** (0.00162)
individu_internet	0.0100** (0.00390)
inf	-0.0160** (0.00812)
gdp_growth	0.00127 (0.00752)
dependency	-0.00697 (0.0103)
hdi	4.914*** (1.099)
Constant	4.733*** (1.047)
R-squared	0.955

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Source: Table by Authors

The results from the Two-Stage Least Squares (TSLS) model indicate that both population density and digital technology development play significant roles in enhancing economic welfare in the ASEAN region within the digitalisation framework. The dependent variable, log GNI per capita (lgni_pc), serves as an indicator of economic well-being. The analysis shows that population density, service-sector employment, and internet usage each have a significant positive effect on GNI per capita, whereas mobile phone usage has a significant negative effect. This suggests that the impact of the digital economy is largely influenced by the quality of technology use and the socio-demographic characteristics of each ASEAN country (ILO, 2021; World Bank, 2023).

Research Discussion

In Table 5, population density has been shown to significantly and positively influence GNI per capita. These results support Krugman's (1991) theory of economic agglomeration, which suggests that clustering economic activities in densely populated areas improves efficiency, expands markets, and accelerates the exchange of information and innovation. In the gig economy, higher population density enhances the potential of the digital labor market and strengthens platform networks such as Gojek, Grab, and Shopee. Densely populated regions often become hubs for digital activity due to the high demand for and supply of tech-based services (Ghosh & Ramachandran, 2023). Additionally, factors such as urbanisation, population growth, and youth unemployment—used as proxies for density—fuel the growth of the gig economy, particularly among working-age populations (Ma, 2024). Additionally, the variable employment_services (employ_services) shows a strong positive impact on economic well-being. This supports the idea that the gig economy mainly exists within the service sector, including ride-hailing, delivery, and digital creative services (Brawley, 2017; ILO, 2021). The growing share of the workforce in services drives economic growth because this sector is quicker to adopt technological innovations (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2018). Overall, these results indicate that the digital transformation of the economy in ASEAN economy is broadening the service sector's role in generating flexible employment and boosting productivity.

Then, variable individual internet users (individu_internet) significantly boost GNI per capita. Internet access is a crucial pillar of digital economic growth, enabling people to participate in

platform-based activities such as freelancing, remote work, and e-commerce (Manyika *et al.*, 2016; Malik *et al.*, 2024). It not only creates new economic opportunities but also broadens employment prospects, especially for youth and workers with medium- to high-skills (OECD, 2021). This highlights the need to invest in expanding digital infrastructure and enhancing technological literacy to promote digital economic inclusion across ASEAN. Unlike other variables, mobile phone usage (cellular) shows a significant negative effect on economic well-being. Although mobile phone ownership is high in ASEAN, this suggests that the devices are not yet fully leveraged for productive uses. This aligns with the digital divide concept, in which owning technology does not necessarily mean it is used effectively to achieve economic gains (van Dijk, 2020). In digitalisation, this also indicates an oversupply of informal digital labor, often earning low wages and facing intense competition (ILO, 2021; Duggan *et al.*, 2021). Thus, technological access without the development of relevant skills can pose income challenges for gig workers.

From a macroeconomic standpoint, inflation (*inf*) significantly harms GNI per capita, aligning with the purchasing power theory, which states that inflation diminishes the real value of incomes. For gig workers, inflation increases operational expenses, such as fuel and transportation, leading to lower net income (Rani & Furrer, 2021). In contrast, the Human Development Index (HDI) has a strong, positive, and significant impact on GNI per capita, underscoring the importance of human resources for leveraging digital economic opportunities. These findings support human capital theory (Becker, 1964), which emphasises that higher education and skills underpin sustainable economic growth. Countries with high HDI scores tend to have more adaptable and efficient digital workers, enabling them to better capitalise on the gig economy to enhance well-being (OECD, 2021).

6. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

This research suggests that population density and advancements in digital technology are key drivers of economic prosperity in the ASEAN region, particularly in the gig economy. The TSLS analysis shows that areas with higher population density and improved internet connectivity tend to have greater per capita incomes. It emphasises the need for policymakers to focus on urban development and expand digital infrastructure to boost economic well-being, especially in gig-related sectors. Investing in internet access and digital skills training can raise income levels and support platform-based employment. Moreover, strengthening human resources through education and development, as indicated by the Human Development Index (HDI), is essential for effective technology use. Policies aimed at inclusive growth, such as enhancing workforce skills, ensuring fair access to digital resources, and maintaining macroeconomic stability, will help the digital economy foster sustainable development. This study adds to the existing literature in several ways. First, it offers instrumental variable (IV) evidence to address potential endogeneity in the link between digitalisation, urban density, and income. Second, it utilises a panel dataset of ASEAN countries, providing region-specific insights that are often lacking in research on digital transformation and economic growth in developing areas. Third, it explicitly explores the interaction between urban density and digitalisation, showing how spatial concentration influences the effectiveness of digital infrastructure in boosting productivity and income. Finally, the results indicate a negative relationship between cellular subscriptions and Gross National Income (GNI), suggesting that the growth of basic mobile connectivity may reflect consumption-driven digital access rather than actual productivity improvements.

Nevertheless, the study has limitations. First, the data, aggregated across countries and limited to 2015–2024, does not fully capture individual dynamics or long-term structural changes in the digitalisation. Second, the variables primarily address broad demographic and technological factors, lacking detail on institutional and social factors such as digital labor regulations and social protections for workers. Future research should expand the analysis by using longitudinal microdata, examining regional differences within countries, and incorporating institutional and policy factors to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the digitalisation economy's sustainability in the digital age.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors sincerely thank their co-authors for collaboration, insightful discussions, and valuable contributions during the research. We also appreciate all institutions, organisations, and individuals who supplied the data and information crucial for completing the study. Their support has greatly enhanced the quality and success of this research.

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CONCEPTUALISING STATE BENEVOLENCE FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Received 14 March 2025: Revised 5 April 2026: Accepted 12 April 2026

ABSTRACT

The advent of COVID-19 pandemic brought in its wake, the need for the state to show benevolence towards the vulnerable during crises. However, the term 'state benevolence' appears ambiguous in literature, and could either be referring to activities of the welfare state, or foreign aid donations by governments. This paper intends to resolve the ambiguity by propounding a state benevolence concept from an Islamic perspective. Based on content analysis of extant literature, the findings indicate the Islamic worldview considers government environmental protection endeavours, together with the activities of the welfare state and foreign aid donations by the government, as three main ways in which the state can exhibit benevolence to all creations of Allah. The inadequacy of literature on state benevolence, the lack of clarity from the Islamic worldview about the role of the state in providing benevolence, and the lack of information on the type of rewards expected to accrue to a benevolent state, are three main limitations of this study. By providing a holistic description of state benevolence using both conventional and Islamic economics literature, this paper is novel in the political economy literature. If adopted, the Islamic state benevolence concept will avail a country's government in reducing poverty among its citizenry, contribute to reducing income inequality existing between rich and poor countries, and enhance the sustainable management of the environment.

KEYWORDS: STATE BENEVOLENCE, ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW, WELFARE STATE, FOREIGN AID DONATIONS, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

ABSTRAK

Kemunculan pandemik COVID-19 membawa bersamanya keperluan bagi negara untuk menunjukkan kemurahan hati terhadap golongan yang terdedah semasa krisis. Namun, istilah 'benevolensi negara' kelihatan samar dalam kesusasteraan, dan boleh merujuk sama ada kepada aktiviti negara kesejahteraan atau sumbangan bantuan asing oleh kerajaan. Kertas kerja ini bertujuan untuk menyelesaikan kekaburan tersebut dengan mengemukakan konsep benevolensi negara dari perspektif Islam. Berdasarkan analisis kandungan kesusasteraan sedia ada, dapatan menunjukkan pandangan dunia Islam menganggap usaha perlindungan alam sekitar kerajaan, bersama-sama dengan aktiviti negara kesejahteraan dan sumbangan bantuan asing oleh kerajaan, sebagai tiga cara utama di mana negara dapat menunjukkan kemurahan hati kepada semua ciptaan Allah. Kekurangan kajian mengenai

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benevolensi negara, ketidakjelasan dari pandangan dunia Islam mengenai peranan negara dalam menyediakan kebajikan, dan kekurangan maklumat mengenai jenis ganjaran yang dijangka diperoleh oleh negara yang melakukan kebajikan, adalah tiga kekangan utama dalam kajian ini. Dengan menyediakan gambaran holistik tentang kebaikan negara melalui literatur ekonomi konvensional dan ekonomi Islam, kajian ini membawa pendekatan baharu dalam wacana ekonomi politik. Sekiranya konsep kebaikan negara Islam ini diterimapakai, ia dapat membantu kerajaan sesebuah negara dalam mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan dalam kalangan rakyatnya, menyumbang kepada pengurangan jurang pendapatan antara negara kaya dan miskin, serta memperkukuh pengurusan alam sekitar secara mampan.

KATA KUNCI: KEBAIKAN NEGARA, PANDANGAN DUNIA ISLAM, NEGARA KEBAJIKAN, SUMBANGAN BANTUAN ASING, PERLINDUNGAN ALAM SEKITAR

1. INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the advent of COVID-19 which pushed about 71 million people globally into extreme poverty (Chikwira *et al.*, 2022), resulted in the need for more state benevolent interventions in salvaging the vulnerable against risks. According to the Montevideo Convention, an entity is recognized as a state if it possesses a permanent population, a defined territory, a government and has capacity to enter into relations with other states (Eggers, 2007). Indeed, any globally recognized country acceptable to the United Nations (UN) is a state. Benevolence on the other hand, refers to acts of charity, philanthropy, beneficence, almsgiving, goodwill, perfection and excellence (Wahab & Ismail, 2019). Further, state benevolence is said to occur when a country's government exhibits acts of charity, philanthropy, beneficence, almsgiving, and compassion towards others in the latter's vulnerability. Rare as it is, examples of state benevolence can be found in Turkey. In a paper titled, "Making the Indebted Citizen: An Inquiry into State Benevolence in Turkey," the author indicates the government of Turkey employs state benevolence to provide free cash transfers, microcredit, food, clothing, and healthcare benefits to the poor, as a welfare policy (Yoltar, 2020). Similarly, Turkey employs the concept of state benevolence to provide foreign aid to many poor and deprived countries (Korkmaz & Zengin, 2020).

Based on the above, the Nordic countries including Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, mostly noted for exhibiting generous welfare state systems, implement a certain form of the state benevolence concept. Likewise, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, whose main objective is to contribute resources for providing foreign aid to deprived nations (Tawiah *et al.*, 2019), should be seen as implementing another variety of the state benevolence concept. These examples notwithstanding, a deliberate policy that considers the Islamic perspective of state benevolence, is yet to be implemented by any country.

Despite its simplicity, state benevolence has been described in different ways in the body of knowledge. In mainly the conventional economics literature, state benevolence has commonly been associated with activities of the welfare state (Yoltar, 2020). Another group of literature, specifically in development economics, sees foreign aid donations by governments, as acts of state benevolence (Korkmaz & Zengin, 2020). This discrepancy served as a motivation for authoring the current paper. To the best of the current authors' knowledge, only two studies have specifically highlighted the concept of state benevolence. First, in the paper by Yoltar (2020), the author described the concept as embedded in the Turkish social welfare system. Yoltar's (2020) description of state benevolence in that regard, restricts the concept to a government's care for the welfare of its citizens only. Second, in the study by Korkmaz and Zengin (2020) titled "The political economy of Turkish foreign aid," the authors described state benevolence as a measure of the quantity of foreign aid donations provided by the country. On this basis, the description by Korkmaz and Zengin (2020) restricts state benevolence to a country's foreign aid donations only. The main objective of this paper therefore, is to develop a

comprehensive representation of the state benevolence concept from an Islamic perspective. As a universal religion, Islam provides complete and true information on all aspects of human endeavour, as represented in the *Quran* and *Sunnah* (sayings and ways of the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him (PBUH))), and other sources of the faith. The *Quran* affirms this in the verse below;

‘Say, O Prophet, ‘Should I seek a judge other than Allah while He is the One Who has revealed for you the Book ‘with the truth’ perfectly explained?’ Those who were given the Scripture know that it has been revealed ‘to you’ from your Lord in truth. So do not be one of those who doubt. Quran 6:114).

Based on content analysis of extant literature, the current paper unearthed three different forms of state benevolence to include government environmental protection engagements, in addition to activities of the welfare state and foreign aid donations by the government. Then, the paper suggests the concept of state benevolence from the Islamic perspective.

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper employs content analysis of relevant literature in the body of knowledge. As a result, searches for articles, books and other relevant documents containing information on state benevolence were conducted. Google Scholar database was the primary source employed for the search as it contains huge amounts of scholarly works, especially for topics on Islamic economics. However, other databases including ScienceDirect and Emeralds Insight were used to search for literature.

Content analysis method is used for analysing written, verbal or visual communication messages (Cole, 1988; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The method can be employed to formulate a conceptual model to represent a certain phenomenon, the process of which could be either an inductive or a deductive. Irrespective of the process adopted, the three main phases involved in content analysis are the preparation, organizing and reporting phases (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Through content analysis, words and phrases can be classified into the same groups, allowing them to share the same meaning (Cavanagh 1997; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). One important attribute of content analysis is its concern for meanings, intentions, consequences and context associated with data being analysed (Downe-Wamboldt 1992; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

In situations where extant literature on the phenomenon to be studied is scarce or fragmented, the inductive approach of content analysis is most useful for application. As such, data from inductive content analysis are relied upon in formulating conceptual models (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Under the inductive approach, there is a movement from specific to general, implying that the specific instances observed are combined to obtain a general statement (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Given that the literature on state benevolence is scarce, the current paper employed the inductive approach of content analysis method for arriving at the findings.

In the preparation phase, the unit of analysis is selected which could be either a word or a theme (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). In the current study, the unit of analysis consists of words, phrases or sentences that carry the meaning of a benevolent activity being undertaken. A unit of meaning may consist of more than one sentence and have several meanings (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), as in the case of benevolence which could also mean kindness, charitable, goodwill and beneficence.

In the organising phase, the researcher tries to make sense of the data, understand the direction of information flow, and gain a sense of the whole (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Organising the data requires thorough reading of the unit being analysed culminating into asking the main five questions of; who is telling? - Where is this happening? - When did it happen? - What is happening? - Why? (Dey, 2003; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Once the data are sufficiently organised and there is an obvious sense of direction, an inductive or deductive process is undertaken (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), and the findings are accordingly provided in the reporting phase.

The inductive content analysis method involves the use of open coding, creating categories and abstraction. Codes are created from the materials being read and analysed, and the former are put into different categories. In the abstraction stage, the categories are further grouped into higher order headings (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Consequently, abstraction allows for a general description of the research topic through categorization (Burnard 1996; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

To efficiently retrieve the relevant articles, keywords were relied upon. The primary keywords employed were ‘state benevolence’, ‘benevolence’ and ‘benevolence in Islam’. Secondary keywords including ‘Islamic state’, ‘Islamic welfare state’, ‘foreign aid donation in Islam’ and ‘environmental protection in Islam’ were also utilised. Together, the keywords provided adequate scholarly documents for undertaking the current study. In the final phase of the methodology, detailed reading of the documents were undertaken, and the contents analysed to gain a comprehensive understanding of opinions and findings of the scholars in relation to state benevolence, especially from the perspective of Islam. Some of the keywords, for instance ‘state benevolence’, generated conventional economics literature, and these were also analysed for obtaining the concept of state benevolence from the perspective of the Western world.

3. CONTENT ANALYSIS

Analysing the literature unearthed the thoughts of scholars regarding the nature of benevolence, the state and its responsibilities, and the various ways in which benevolence can be manifested, all from the Islamic perspective. Understanding the various ways for showing benevolence is vital for conceptualizing state benevolence holistically. In this regard, this section discusses the positions of the scholars on the subject matter, from which the current authors designed the concept of state benevolence from the Islamic worldview.

Benevolence in Islam

In building the concept of state benevolence, it is imperative to appreciate what benevolence stands for in Islam. From the literature reviewed, the Arabic definition of benevolence (*ihsan*, in Arabic) implies engaging in acts of charity, philanthropy, beneficence, almsgiving, engaging in good works, perfection and excellence (Wahab & Ismail, 2019). This show of goodwill and kindness towards others should be undertaken without expecting any benefits in return (Hajli, 2015). Several verses in the *Quran* including *Al-Nahl* (16:90), *Al-Baqarah* (2:112) and *Al-Ankabut* (29:69) mention *Ihsan*, indicating the importance attached to the act by Allah (God) (Wahab & Ismail, 2019). Despite having a slightly different meaning in Islam, the universal usage of the term benevolence agrees with the common description of *ihsan*. Such commonalities include values of kindness, goodness, charity, and social responsibility. Acts of benevolence can be exhibited through the donation of material support including financial aid, or by providing non-material support such as actions that are capable of comforting the hearts of the vulnerable (Mohseni & Bighash, 2020).

Islam aims at achieving the objective of establishing *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy to all beings). This calls on all Muslims to exhibit good deeds in their *hablu minallah* (relationship with God), *hablu minnas* (relationship with humans), and *hablu minal'alam* (relationship with nature), if they are to attain perfection of religion and obedience to Allah. In particular, humans are expected to be protective of the environment as the latter provides habitation for nature. This is because the three forms of relationships must be manifested through good deeds (Alam & Cipto, 2022). Thus, inappropriate behaviour towards the environment can cause damage to Allah’s creatures (Wani, 2022). Charity or doing-good, is accomplished when individuals or groups provide spiritual and material support, and care to others (Alam & Cipto, 2022), only for gaining Allah’s pleasure (Yi, 2018). In addition, Islam advocates compassion and generosity, which are realised through the Islamic institution of almsgiving (Alam & Cipto, 2022).

From the Islamic worldview, benevolence is regarded as an instrument of social justice (Ciftci, 2019), through which fairness for all Muslims and non-Muslims, is established by leaders and institutions of state. Accordingly, in matters of wealth redistribution, the institutions of *sadaqah*, *infaq*, and *zakat*,

play important roles in alleviating the sufferings of the poor in communities. In Iran for example, benevolent savings have been utilised allowing households to make available their surplus incomes for onward lending without interest, to poor individuals through the Islamic banking system (Tohidinia *et al.*, 2021). The use of Islamic banking for show of benevolence is especially important, given that funding from charities and the public may not be sufficient for meeting the demands of the poor for such benevolence (Asbeig, 2019).

There are some advantages to be derived from being benevolent. These include the acquisition of better human values, mental health status, and social relationships (Mohseni & Bighash, 2020). Mohseni and Bighash (2020) identify two effects accruing to benevolent individuals namely; the worldly and the hereafter effects. According to the authors, the worldly effects lead to increased lifespan, livelihood and receipt of divine mercies among others. The hereafter effects for those who are benevolent include protection against hell, attainment of heaven, and receipt of eternal rewards. Empirically, Shalihin and Sholihin (2022) find that benevolence mediates a positive impact of mechanical solidarity on social cohesion. On that basis Shalihin and Sholihin (2022) opined that charity through *sadaqah* and *infaq* strengthens solidarity which in turn impacts positively on social cohesion. Ciftci (2019) findings show that because Muslim communities prefer benevolence, they support democratic governance while showing dislike for authoritarianism. In the opinion of Ciftci (2019), pious Muslims trust democratic institutions to provide redistributive and social justice in their communities. Both empirical studies indicate the importance Muslims attach to the need for show of benevolence.

In summary, extant literature has shown the importance of benevolence both at the micro and macroeconomic levels. Under microeconomic perspective, it addresses the contribution of individuals towards helping the poor, and exhibiting good deeds or benevolence in their relationship with other humans and nature (Alam & Cipto, 2022). This means that benevolence is to be exhibited towards both humans and nature (or the environment). On the macroeconomic front, the role of the state in providing and establishing benevolence through politics (Ciftci, 2019), and public financial and economic management (Asbeig, 2019), cannot pass unnoticed.

Humans' good relationship with Allah is for the former, to follow the dictates of, and revere Allah ardently. Humans' good relationship with other humans, is for them to be benevolent towards vulnerable people without regards to geographical boundaries. Having a good relationship with nature, would require humans to show benevolence to all creatures of Allah inhabiting the environment, including living and non-living things. If the state were to follow the dictates of Allah, as spelt out by Islamic tenets, and undertake to have good relationships with humans and nature, such acts could be deemed as benevolence exhibited by the state.

The Islamic State

Analysis of the literature provided also, an understanding of the researchers' intuition with regards to the nature of a state, and its responsibilities in line with Islamic teachings. Especially important, is the role of the Islamic state in the show of benevolence to all beings. Gaining a deep understanding of the nature of an Islamic state, and its responsibilities are important for this study, in the attempt to design the concept of state benevolence. Abu Hamid Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ghazali, an Arab-Islamic philosopher, described a state as a vital institution for ensuring proper guidance and functioning of society, and for the fulfilment of societal *Shari'ah*-mandated obligations (*furud kifayah*). In al-Ghazali's view, there exists a link between the state and religion where the former becomes the necessary foundation required for the promotion and protection of religion. Also, al-Ghazali finds the state useful for controlling undesirable conflicts stemming from jealousy, competition, and selfishness in society, thereby undertaking the important function of managing society's affairs to achieve cooperation and reconciliation (Islahi & Ghazanfar, 1998).

Imam al-Ghazali's notion of the function of the state has some commonalities with classical economists such as Adam Smith and his contemporaries. For al-Ghazali, the state should be responsible for establishing justice, peace and security, in order to promote economic prosperity. Al-

Ghazali's views the Prophet's (PBUH) mission as not only for transforming unbelievers, but also, bringing development and prosperity to the world through just and equitable rule (Islahi & Ghazanfar, 1998). Moreover, he places the responsibility for attaining economic progress, through the achievement of justice, peace, prosperity, and stability at the doorstep of the state and its leader (Irijanto *et al*, 2015). Al-Ghazali draws similarities between the state and its leader (sultan) and sometimes, using them interchangeably. This aligns with the thinking of Abd Ar Rahman bin Muhammed ibn Khaldun, the renowned Islamic Philosopher, who states that politics requires the function of control, to be placed in the hands of only one person, so as to avoid its destruction (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). On this note, actions taken by the sultan stand in the name of the state, and the former would be called upon on the Day of Judgment to account for how royal or state authority was exacted. Ibn Khaldun (1958) provides evidence with the following verse:

"If there were other gods except God in the two (heaven and earth), they (heaven and earth) would have been destroyed." (Quran 21.22).

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldun (1958) notes that the institution of caliphate headed by the caliph, is a substitution for the Prophet (PBUH), and must be seen to perform the dual roles of safeguarding the religion, and providing political leadership for the world. In this respect, the head of an Islamic state would be required to function as a *khalifah* for the country's citizens, and for Muslims worldwide (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). According to al-Ghazali, the kings of old were cognisant of the importance of societal prosperity to their continuous reign in authority, and how religion depends on authority which also depends on the strength of the army. The strength of the army hinges on supplies which in turn depend on prosperity. Establishing justice is a prerequisite for prosperity to be realised. For this reason, al-Ghazali stresses the importance of establishing justice and peace by the state without which citizens would lack a foothold, abandoning cities, territories, and cultivated lands. This would eventually lead to reduced state revenues, and unhappiness amongst the people (Islahi & Ghazanfar, 1998).

Among others, al-Ghazali mentions some important functions of the state to include establishment of an army, judiciary, and jurisprudence for ensuring security, justice, peace and stability necessary for securing economic prosperity and development. The establishment of the institution of *al-hisbah* (the market inspectorate) that functions to check and eliminate malpractices in the marketplace, also gained the approval of al-Ghazali. On his part, Ibn Khaldun (1958) lists the functions of the caliphate to include preservation of religion and political leadership of the world, enhancing civilization, securing public interest, and the exercise of royal authority through the creation of religious institutions for steering state affairs. Worth to mention, the religious functions of prayer, the office of judge, the office of mufti, the office of holy war, and market supervision, are directly supervised by the "great imamate" (the caliphate) (Ibn Khaldun, 1958).

In recent times however, the nature of an Islamic state seems ambiguous. Dean and Khan (1997) suggest the only "true" Islamic state known in human history, existed during the period of the Prophet (PBUH), and the first four of his companions who succeeded him after his demise. Dean and Khan (1997) assert that an Islamic state should be considered in the contexts of religion and ideology. To Dean and Khan (1997), the *Quran* considers Muslims as belonging to a community (*Ummah*), without giving attention to the idea of an Islamic state. Though some countries have arrogated to themselves the status of an Islamic state, the conception of a Muslim community broadens the boundaries of an Islamic state, extending beyond national borders.

In terms of national affairs, an Islamic state is expected to establish universal brotherhood among Muslims, and promote social and economic justice (Abdullah Kuyateh, 2022). Additionally, it has the responsibility of providing security and protection to all citizens, without regards to individuals' religious affiliations. With regards to the role of the state in providing safety and security, Begum *et al*. (2022) provide an indication that the state or ruler is expected to act as "the guardian of anyone who has no other guardian," based on the following *Hadiths*:

"Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "I am closer to the believers than their selves in this world and in the Hereafter, and if you like, you can read Allah's Statement: "The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves." (33.6) So, if a true believer dies and leaves behind some property, it will be for his inheritors (from the father's side), and if he leaves behind some debt to be paid or needy offspring, then they should come to me as I am the guardian of the deceased." (Sahih al-Bukhari Volume 3, Book 41, Number 584).

The function of promoting socio-economic justice among the *ummah* could be realised if the state ensures the protection of peoples' rights and redistribution of wealth. The state could also facilitate the collection and distribution of *zakat* by establishing a treasury (*Bait al-Mal*) at vital locations (Dean & Khan, 1997), and ensure that proceeds of *zakat*, *sadaqah*, *infaq* and other state revenues, are efficiently managed to benefit the vulnerable.

Through its leader, sultan or caliph, the Islamic state undertakes several activities on the basis of which, the leader's relationships with Allah, humans and nature shall be evaluated. If the state chooses to be benevolent to humans and nature, the leader (sultan) would be seen as fulfilling the tenets of Islam, and as having a good relationship with Allah. Any adverse treatment of the same by the state, would portray the leader as negligent of obeying Allah's commands expected of persons vested with the power of the state, and would be called to account on the Day of Judgment.

Meanwhile, the state can show benevolence to humans in two ways based on structures of nation states in the contemporary era. The state could show benevolence to its citizens as spelt out in the functions of the welfare state. If the state chooses to help humans in foreign countries, such a benevolent act is captured under the concept of foreign aid donation by governments. Goodness towards nature by the state, would entail the use of public resources for securing the protection of the environment. Begum *et al* (2022) indicate that protection of the environment is important for promoting the welfare of all creatures.

Welfare state as an Activity of State Benevolence

In the conventional economics literature, welfare state denotes the purposeful action of a country's government to seek the welfare of its citizens, especially the vulnerable (Larasati *et al*, 2023). In an Islamic setting however, the notion of welfare state is different given that Islam provides much prominence to spiritual and mental aspects of wellbeing of the vulnerable, in addition to their material needs (Abdullah Kuyateh, 2022). Achievement of materiality and spirituality is connected to the concept of goodness (*falah*), which is vital for the realization of balanced welfare of this world and the hereafter (Syafuruddin & Mukhlisin, 2022). According to Akhtar *et al* (2022), the Prophet's (PBUH) administration established a culture of ensuring socioeconomic welfare for all.

Seeking goodwill for all humans is necessary in establishing an Islamic welfare state. Such a state was realised in Medina because prior to the migration (*hijrah*), the Prophet (PBUH) admonished his companions to seek peoples' goodwill, and be steadfast against any hardships (Akhtar *et al*, 2022). An Islamic state must be seen to provide material assistance for poor and needy citizens economically (Begum *et al.*, 2022). According to Begum *et al.* (2022), the Islamic welfare state should be seen to promote goodwill, help the needy, show tolerance, educate the poor, ensure economic growth and establish peace. Other functions of the Islamic welfare state should include equal rights of citizens, provision of food, freedom of worship, creating avenues for employment, health and shelter, care for the elderly, provision of disability and unemployment benefits, and the provision of security (Begum *et al.*, 2022).

The Prophet (PBUH), in his capacity as the leader and head of state, is known to have dedicated himself to helping the poor and needy (Begum *et al.*, 2022), which falls under the function of the welfare state. In the exercise of state authority, it has become necessary in understanding how state revenues are to be deployed in achieving state benevolence. Sources of revenue for the Islamic state according to al-Ghazali, include property and assets without heirs, and *awqaf* (charitable endowments) without caretakers. In addition *zakah*, *sadaqah*, *fai*' (possessions acquired without

actual warfare), *ghanimah* (spoils of war), *jizyah* (poll tax), and *amwal al-masalih* (tributes) (Islahi & Ghazanfar, 1998) are other recognised revenue sources. Again, *kharaj* (land tax), *usyur* (import tax) and mineral tax also serve as sources of revenue for the Islamic state (Sarkun & Hasan, 2015). Despite his criticism about the imposition of additional taxes on the citizenry, al-Ghazali endorses actions of the state to establish extra-*Shariah* taxes aimed only for purposes of undertaking the public welfare function, in case the public treasury is depleted of the necessary funds to deal with the urgency. His conditions for allowing the imposition of additional taxes by the state are; (1), for the defense of the Islamic state, and (2), as the guardian and protector of the society, the state may impose new taxes to enhance the society's overall wellbeing (Islahi & Ghazanfar, 1998). The second condition is also a function of the welfare state.

Al-Ghazali also provides indications of how the Islamic state should undertake public financing activities. He mentioned the three broad categories of public finance to include catering for the establishment of justice, state security, and development of societal prosperity. Al-Ghazali called specifically for public expenditure to be earmarked for the achievement of distributive justice, encouraging the use of state resources for eradicating poverty and vulnerability from the citizenry (Islahi & Ghazanfar, 1998). Besides, al-Ghazali signposts four broad classification of public expenditure requiring the attention of the Islamic state namely; *asnaf zakat*, social security (to cater for the poor and vulnerable elderly, healthcare, unemployed, and natural disaster victims), development (infrastructure, schools, hospitals, place of worship) and administration (salary, construction, and maintenance cost) (Sarkun & Hasan, 2015). Further, he emphasised on the deployment of resources for entrenching socio-economic infrastructure that directly benefit the people (Irijanto *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, al-Ghazali called upon the state to deploy state resources in providing assistance to the people during crises such as in drought or unusual price escalations. In addition, he advocates for the provision of food and financial assistance procured with state resources, for the vulnerable. All these are indications of al-Ghazali's calls on the Islamic state to show benevolence to its citizens facing vulnerabilities. Meanwhile, al-Ghazali recognizes that the recipients of *waqf*, *zakah* and *ghanimah* have already been spelt out in the *Quran* and *Sunnah*, but in the case of the other revenues, they should be employed for community projects and for assisting the needy (Islahi & Ghazanfar, 1998). Furthermore, al-Ghazali asserts that the wealthy Muslims are not entitled to receiving any benefits from the public treasury.

Similarly, Ibn Khaldun (1958) notes that rulership (*malakah*) is important in determining the type of relationship that exists between the ruler and his subjects. According to Ibn Khaldun, a good and beneficial rulership serves the interests of the subjects, while a bad and unfair rulership is harmful. He observed that mildness requires the ruler to show kindness and beneficence to his subjects, and take interest in their wellbeing. When the ruler is mild towards his subjects, the latter trust and love the former, and are willing to sacrifice their lives for him. On the contrary, Ibn Khaldun (1958) suggests that a harsh ruler employs force and punishes his subjects at the slightest provocation, and this would make the subjects protective of themselves against him, and not willing to fight for the protection of their leader, or could conspire to kill the leader. Ibn Khaldun (1958) notes that a smarter and alert leader, fails to exhibit mildness towards his subjects and imposes on them excessive taxes putting them in difficulties (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). Accordingly, Ibn Khaldun (1958) draws attention to the condition by the Prophet (PBUH), requiring the ruler not to be too smart, which the former backed with the story about Ziyad b. Abi Sufyan: When Umar deposed him (as governor) of Iraq, Abi Sufyan asked Umar why he had been deposed, whether it was because of his inability or his treachery. Umar said, the reason for deposing him is because he disliked having people become the victim of Abi Sufyan's superior intelligence (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). Thus, the arguments put forth by Ibn Khaldun (1958) supports the need for the state to show benevolence towards its citizens as practiced in the welfare state setting.

Most importantly, Ibn Khaldun (1958) shares his opinion on how political leadership shapes the nature of human civilization, and contains vital characteristics of the Islamic welfare state. In Ibn Khaldun's (1958) view, people are better off being ruled under divinely revealed religious law, because of the benefits that accrue to them in this world and in the hereafter. In this regard, Ibn

Khaldun (1958) shares the contents of a letter by Tahir b. al-Husayn, a general to al-Ma'mun, to his son Abdallah b. Tahir, who had been appointed to the position of governor of ar-Raqqah, Egypt and the intervening territories. In the letter, al-Husayn's advice to his son was; "God has been benevolent to you. He has made it obligatory for you to show kindness to those of His servants whom He has made your subjects" (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). The advice contains a clear indication for the state to show benevolence to its citizens and subjects in general. Another important advice contained in the letter which relates closely to activities of the welfare state is found in al-Husayn admonishing his son to; "Be friendly to the weak" (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). "Friendliness" in the Islamic welfare state context, represents show of state benevolence in a non-material form of benefit to the weak and vulnerable. Other non-material forms of state benevolence in the form of welfare state in catering for citizens' welfare are indicated, when he implores his son to allow frequent visits for the people to him, and show them humility. Al-Husayn wrote; "Show them your smiling countenance, and be lenient towards them." Another advice worth mentioning from the letter is; "Be just in governing your subjects. Treat them honestly and with kindness through which you will reach the path of right guidance." (Ibn Khaldun, 1958).

In other parts of the letter, al-Husayn advised his son to eschew greed, be just, improve his subjects and supervise their affairs, protect his subjects and invest in their welfare, protect them from need, and support the unfortunates (Ibn Khaldun, 2019). All these activities are functions of the welfare state. It is said that when the letter got to the notice of al-Ma'mun, he found it very comprehensive for dealing with matters of the world, religion, administration, the formation of opinion, politics, the improvement of the realm and the subjects, the preservation of the government, obedience to the caliphs, and maintenance of the caliphate. As a result, al-Ma'mun ordered the letter's circulation to all officials in the various territories, for it to be employed as a model for political governance (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). Thus, Islamic tenets encourage the state to act benevolently towards its citizens as in the practices of the conventional welfare state system.

Foreign Aid Donation as an Activity of State Benevolence

Similarly, analyses of the extant literature employed, indicate foreign aid-giving from an Islamic perspective is an obligation, and this provides the motivation and justification for Islamic countries to engage in international cooperation and philanthropy (Al-Mezaini, 2012). Charitable-giving in Islam, is a tradition dating back to the beginning of the Islamic faith, as the faith seeks to secure the establishment of a social order of justice and proper ethics based on humanitarianism. Extending assistance to the needy, defines individuals' connections with their Maker, an indication of their social responsibility function, and a measure of the level of their religious faith. Concern for the welfare of the poor is considered to be moral law and a divine command, which if lacking in individuals, render their worship insincere and hypocritical. Islamic teachings indicate a neglect of the needy is displeasing to Allah (Tittensor *et al*, 2018).

The researchers are of the opinion that the call for charity towards the needy in Islam, is granted the level of importance equivalent to those attached to prayer and the declaration of faith by Muslims (Tittensor *et al*, 2018). Though not specifically mentioned in any Islamic text, the concept of foreign aid-giving can be found in the term "*ta'awun*" (help each other) in the *Quran* as indicated in the verse below (Alam & Cipto, 2022);

"And help one another in (doing) virtue and piety, and do not help one another in committing sins and transgressions. And keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is severe in punishment." (*Quran* 5:2).

This positions foreign aid, from the Islamic perspective, as an embodiment of good deeds or charity (Alam & Cipto, 2022), and portrays Islamic countries as being benevolent. Islamic traditions of generosity have been recognized as having an important impact on foreign aid donation practices of Islamic countries (Al-Mezaini, 2017). Yi (2018) agrees with this position by asserting that Islam's commitment towards the achievement of goodness, worship of Allah, and benevolence, form the foundations for Arab countries' aid motives. Further, Yi (2018) describes foreign aid from Arab donors as being guided by the concept of charity espoused in Islam. The altruistic nature of Islamic

aid donations embodies acts of selflessness through being charitable to others, while pleasing Allah concurrently (Ali & Tayeb, 2021). Indeed, the neglect of the poor by the wealthy results in misfortunes experienced among the former, for which the *Quran* draws attention to in the following verses (Tittensor *et al*, 2018);

“As for man, when his Lord tests him by exalting him and bestowing His bounties upon him, he says: “My Lord has exalted me.” But when He tests him by straitening his sustenance, he says: “My Lord has humiliated me. But no; you do not treat the orphan honorably, and do not urge one another to feed the poor, and greedily devour the entire inheritance, and love the riches, loving them ardently.” (Quran 89:15-20).

The scholars also addressed questions of whether the state is under obligation to extend benevolence to vulnerable foreign counterparts. Firstly, Chapra’s (1979) suggestion indicates if resources are available, the state should consider extending assistance to neighbouring countries facing hardships of poverty and economic challenges. Secondly, the concept of the Muslim *ummah* (Dean & Khan, 1997) suggests the need for an Islamic state to undertake cross-border welfare activities, especially if Muslims in other countries are under the threat of crises. Thirdly, Begum *et al.* (2022) indicate that Allah’s name ‘*Rahman*’, which implies the Provider of welfare, and beneficent to all living things, requires the state to provide assistance to the vulnerable no matter their geographical location. These arguments support the need for Islamic countries to participate in the international aid efforts, since all individuals have welfare rights regardless of their current country of residence.

Meanwhile, the scholars position *zakat* and *sadaqah* as constituting Islamic characteristics of aid. Infact, *Sadaqah*, a voluntary almsgiving in Islam, bears close resemblance to the current conventional foreign aid-giving by Western donor countries (Al-Mezaini, 2017). This comparison further strengthens the notion that foreign aid donation is an act of benevolence. Similarly, Yi (2018) likens the need for philanthropy as institutionalized in Islam, to conventional understanding of the institution of foreign aid in recent times. Islam promotes the treatment of one another with benevolence, which according to Yi (2018), implies showing of sympathy and mercy, and to help and love one another. Yi (2018) provides evidence from the *Quran*:

“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbour, the neighbour farther away, the companion at your side, the traveller, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.” (Quran 4:36).

The above verse is just one among several, which Allah has employed to call on Muslims to strive towards providing support for alleviating the worsening conditions of the poor and needy (Tittensor *et al*, 2018). The reference in the verse to “...*the neighbour farther away*...” could easily be referring to people in foreign countries. Consequently, countries are expected to show benevolence towards their foreign counterparts in need. The need to help one another, especially being charitable to the poor, constitutes the theoretical basis of Islamic humanism, and guidance for Arab foreign aid donations (Yi, 2018). A clear testimony that foreign aid-giving falls within the ambit of state benevolence, comes from Turkish International Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) which declared Turkey as the most generous country in the world, based on the magnitude of the country’s foreign aid donations (Korkmaz & Zengin, 2020). According to Korkmaz and Zengin (2020), foreign aid-giving is an undeniable and indispensable foreign policy tool, through which Turkey gains international recognition, benevolent status, and access to new markets. Thus, the scholars generally agree that foreign aid donation by governments, is an act of state benevolence.

Environmental Protection as an Activity of State Benevolence

The literature reviewed indicates that in Islam, undertaking environmental protection activities is regarded as both an act of worship, and a show of benevolence. The environment contains Allah’s (God’s) creatures including plants, animals, humans, land and several other bodies, all of which, from the Islamic worldview, are to be treated with reverence (Llewellyn, 2003). The foundation of *tawhid*

(oneness of Allah) calls for service to the Lord of all beings, thus, the treatment of all creatures with greatest good is cardinal for identifying man's level of reverence to Allah (Islam, 2016). Begum *et al.* (2022) indicate that Allah's name "*Rahman*" means provider of welfare and benefits to all living things; animals and plants of all kinds found in the environment included. One of the reasons advanced for the need to protect all creations of Allah, whether plants, animals or any creature in the environment, is because each creature has value and purpose (Mohamad & Ismail, 2023), and this point is well articulated in the following verses:

"Not for sport have We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. We have not created them but for truth" (Quran 44:38–39). "The seven heavens and the earth and all that dwell therein proclaim His glory: There is not a thing that does not celebrate His praise, but you cannot understand their praises..." (Quran 17:44).

Also, the need for Muslims to undertake environmental protection activities as a form of worship is found in the concept of *Ubuddiya* (servitude to One God) which implies all creations are submissive to Allah. In this regard, humans shall be called upon on the Day of Judgment, to account for their stewardship responsibilities towards the environment. The *Quran* clarifies this point in the following verses (Raj & Subin, 2022):

"To Him belongs whatever is in the Heavens and the Earth. All are obedient to Him." (Quran 30:26). Environmental protection as an act of benevolence towards all creatures of Allah is supported by the following *Hadith* (Raj & Subin, 2022);

"The merciful are shown mercy by the All-Merciful. Show mercy to those on Earth, and He Who is above the Heavens will show mercy unto you." (Abu Dawud 4941; Al-Tirmidhi 1924).

Animals who largely depend on the environment for their sustenance are expected to be treated with benevolence. Compassion towards animals attracts rewards from Allah. However, any ill treatment of the same contravenes Islamic teachings and attracts punishment (Raj & Subin, 2022). Begum *et al.* (2022) indicate Islam promotes providing welfare for all beings, and that ensuring favourable climatic and environmental conditions are necessary for achieving welfare for all creatures. Begum *et al.* (2022) add that the Prophet's nature (PBUH) was to always engage in helping the poor and needy, treated animals with kindness, prohibited water wastage and contamination, and was stern against indiscriminate cutting of trees. All these acts may seem to fall in the domain of state benevolence.

Further, the sustenance of all creatures are contained in the environment for which the latter needs protection. As guardians, humans are required to assume their responsibility of protecting the wellbeing of other creatures who also worship Allah, and are dependent on the earth or environment for sustenance (Islam, 2016). Again, Allah has made humans the only trustees for safeguarding nature (Mohamad & Ismail, 2023). Humans bear social coexistence with the environment due to the fact that all creatures are brought into being by, and worship the same one God (Deen, 1997). This interdependence and coexistence between humans and other creatures needs to be protected for the sustenance of life on earth, and for securing justice through man's kindness to other creatures of Allah (Islam, 2016):

"And the earth We have spread out, set therein mountains firm and immovable and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance. And We have provided therein means of sustenance for you and for those whose sustenance you are not responsible" (Quran, 15:19-20)

Lastly, Munib *et al.* (2022) provide the following *Hadith* that indicates environmental protection activities are regarded as show of benevolence in Islam;

"Hadith from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him (r.a)), he said: Rasulullah (PBUH) said: A Muslim does not grow a tree or sow seeds on the ground, and then a bird or a human or an animal consumes some of it; what is eaten is charity." (Narrated by Imam Bukhari)

Protection of the environment is undoubtedly necessary for the survival and welfare of all forms of Allah's creation. Environmental protection may directly benefit non-human creatures' wellbeing. Conversely, any form of disturbance or corruption in the natural environmental ecosystem, is detrimental to human welfare (Islam, 2016) as well as those of non-humans. As *khalifa* of Allah, humans hold the *amannah* (trusteeship) to be kind towards other creatures, for which accountability of stewardship, as managers of the earth, are expected to be exacted by Allah (Raj & Subin, 2022). The *Quran* and *Sunnah* have evidence to this effect (Raj & Subin, 2022):

"...it is He Who appointed you Khalifs on this Earth." (*Quran* 6:167).

"The world is beautiful and verdant, and verily God, be He exalted, has made you His stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves." (*Shahih Muslim*).

Philosophically, humans as *khalifah* on earth, are entrusted with the sustainable management of all natural resources within the planet so as to prevent any harm to human lives (Munib *et al.*, 2022). The cardinal objective of *Shariah* is intended for the attainment of the welfare for God's creatures (*masālih al-khalq* or *masālih al-'ibād*), both in the present world, and ultimately in the hereafter (Llewellyn, 2003). Protection of the environment allows humans to maintain their relationships with other created beings of Allah while upholding the concept of justice (*adl*) and kindness (*ihsan*) (Islam, 2016). It is evident, Islamic tenets place an obligation on humans to seek the welfare of all beings including humans, plants and animals. By protecting the environment, humans are able to fulfill this obligation, and in the process exhibit benevolence to all creatures of Allah. In good or bad times, environmental protection activities must be carried out to care for natural resources, animals and plants, and to improve and develop the environment. By so doing, humans (or the state) as vicegerents of God would be performing their religious duty of transmitting Allah's mercy to all within our reach (Wani, 2022).

The Concept of Islamic State Benevolence

Following the results of the content analysis of extant literature presented above, there is a realization that the conventional understanding of the term 'state benevolence' does not fully represent the true state of affairs. Though still in its rudimentary stage, state benevolence, in conventional economics literature, has been restricted to only two activities of governments namely; welfare state services (Yoltar, 2020), and foreign aid donations (Korkmaz & Zengin, 2020). This description falls short of the true nature of state benevolence under the Islamic worldview. Based on the findings in the current paper, the Islamic worldview identifies government environmental protection activities as a third form of state benevolence in addition to the activities of the welfare state and foreign aid donations. Thus, the Islamic worldview's description of the term is more comprehensive, the basis of which is principled under Islamic tenets stipulating that all creatures and creation worship Allah, and as a result, are required to be treated with compassion.

On the basis of the above, state benevolence under the Islamic worldview, refers to a country's government interventions, aimed at seeking the protection of the vulnerable among the citizens of the country, to provide aid to its needy foreign counterparts, and to protect biodiversity from environmental pollution and degradation. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the Islamic state benevolence concept. The figure shows that the level of government involvement in the activities of the welfare state, foreign aid donations and environmental protection, would depend on how benevolent the state is. Specifically, the magnitude of public expenditures earmarked for providing social protection services, foreign aid donations and for undertaking environmental protection, would depend on the level of state benevolence of the respective country.

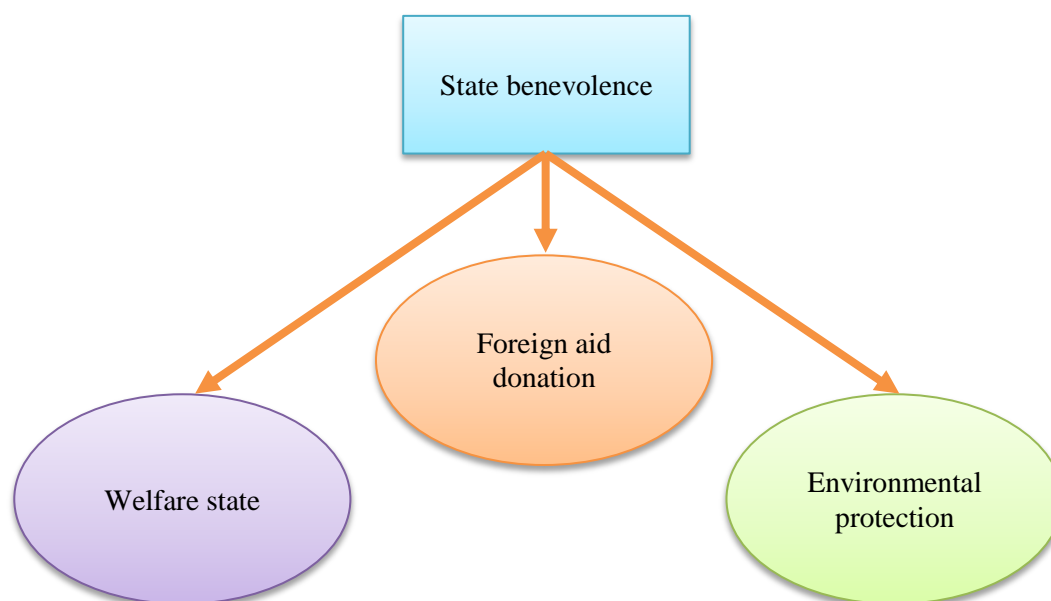


FIGURE 1: GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE ISLAMIC STATE BENEVOLENCE CONCEPT

Source: Figure by Authors

While we are on the subject, all the three forms of state benevolence align with major aspects of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), and if undertaken by various governments, could lead to a major breakthrough in the achievement of sustainable development for many countries. Specifically, activities of the welfare state align with SDG-1 (End poverty everywhere), SDG-2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture), and SDG-3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all). Foreign aid donation is in line with SDG-10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries), while environmental protection activities fall within SDG-6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation), SDG-13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts), SDG-14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development), and SDG-15 (Promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, land degradation and biodiversity loss).

TABLE 1: FORMS OF ISLAMIC STATE BENEVOLENCE AND THEIR EXPECTED EFFECTS

Component of State Benevolence	Main Beneficiaries	Targeted SDGs	Main Effects
Welfare State Activities	Citizens of the benevolent state	SDG-1, SDG-2 and SDG-3	Reduce poverty and deprivation suffered by citizens of the benevolent state
Foreign Aid Donations by the Government	Recipient countries of the foreign aid	SDG-10	Reduce income and other inequalities existing between wealthy and poor countries
Environmental Protection by the Government	The environment and biodiversity within the jurisdiction of the benevolent state	SDG-6, SDG-13, SDG-14 and SDG-15	Ensure a healthy environment for humans, animals and biodiversity, and to achieve

Source: Table by Authors

Table 1 provides a summary description of the Islamic state benevolence concept. It shows the three different forms of state benevolence and their respective beneficiaries, and the latter description is important for obtaining clarity about the different forms of state benevolence. In addition, the immediate SDGs targeted by each component of state benevolence have been made available in the table, and most importantly, their main net expected effects have been spelt out clearly. If adopted, the Islamic state benevolence concept is expected to engender the benevolent state to contribute towards alleviating suffering and vulnerability faced by its citizens, support the fight against global poverty and inequality existing between nations, and contribute its quota towards the attainment of a sound environment and environmental sustainability.

4. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper employed content analysis of relevant literature, with the objective of developing the concept of state benevolence from an Islamic perspective. The findings from the content analysis undertaken indicates that the Islamic worldview provides three ways in which the state can show benevolence. These ways include the activities of the welfare state, government foreign aid donations, and government environmental protection activities. If adopted, the Islamic state benevolence concept has the potential to serve as a pivotal policy instrument for the eradication of global poverty, and for tackling environmental degradation currently being confronted by the world. The paper provides guidance to nation states, especially Islamic countries, to implement the Islamic concept of benevolence for resolving the numerous hardships faced by man and biodiversity in today's world. By looking at state benevolence from the Islamic perspective, the current paper extends the body of knowledge through the provision of a holistic view of the subject matter.

Because these three identified forms of state benevolence are dictates of Allah, Islamic countries and Muslim heads of states, would be under obligation to ensure their fulfilment. In this regard, the Islamic state benevolence concept developed in this paper, should act as a guide for adoption and implementation by Islamic countries. The mandate of the state and government institutions, is based on the principle of Islamic jurisprudence which asserts that "The management of subjects' affairs by the ruler shall accord with their welfare" (Mohamad & Ismail, 2023). In following the Islamic principle that Allah loves those who show compassion to other created beings, the Islamic state benevolence concept, serves as a guide for governments to be benevolent not only to their citizens, but to vulnerable foreign countries and the environment as well. This would draw countries, their leaders and citizens, closer to Allah's favours.

The fact that this paper could have excluded or missed relevant articles on the subject matter during the selection process, constitutes a limitation in the study. Utmost care however, was taken to ensure that many articles of importance were reviewed for arriving at the findings. Future research may look into the impacts of the three components of state benevolence, on macroeconomic performances of Islamic countries.

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