

## **The Importance of The Mosque As A Knowledge Study Centre in The Contemporary Era**

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### **Abstract**

A mosque is a dwelling where Muslims gather to pray. Nonetheless, the mosque's part is crucial since it was founded by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. One of its essential functions is a knowledge study centre. Throughout history, the mosque's position as a knowledge study centre has been upgraded so that some mosques have reached the level of universities. However, nowadays, the response among the youth to take the mosque as a knowledge study centre is dimming. Thus, the role of the mosque as a knowledge study centre today need to be investigate whether its functions is been obtained. This is because the actions of some mosques that do not organise studies because the public does not receive it well. Therefore, this study intended to examine the importance and relevance of taking mosques as knowledge

study centres regardless of time and place. This study was conducted using qualitative approach by literature review. This study found that the Muslims community nowadays claimed that the mosque is one of knowledge study centre particularly in spreading religious matter. The conclusions established that the mosque's importance as a knowledge study centre is paramount. Further, these study sessions in the mosque foster physical and spiritual relationships. Accordingly, studies in the mosque should be supported and intensified, emphasising each party responsible for managing the mosque. **Keywords:** Mosque, Study Centre, Muslims, Knowledge

### Introduction

The term mosque is derived from an Arabic word that means "a place to prostrate". In general, the term mosque is referred to the house of Allah in which congregational prayers are established (Ibn Manzur, 1993). Therefore, the most vital role of the mosque is as a gathering place for Muslims to pray, and the meaning of the gathering is parallel to another name for the mosque in Arabic, which is *Jami'*. In Malaysia, mosques have different naming according to the standards given by local religious administrators (Kashim et al., 2022). It depends on the role of the place of worship and its capacity. A mosque is a large worship centre, and one is allowed to offer Friday prayer in it. Meanwhile, there is also a centre called a *surau* which functions the same as a mosque, only its capacity is smaller than the mosque, and Friday prayers are not allowed to be offered here. However, there are a few *surau* named a Friday *surau*, which is a centre that has the same capacity as the specifications of a *surau* but is open for Friday prayers. Therefore, the terminology of the mosque in this study includes all the terms that have been mentioned.

The role of the mosque in the time of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH was not limited to prayer solely. The mosque has become a community centre that gathers Muslims to socialise. The mosque is also a welfare centre to channel help and needs to needy people. Nevertheless, one of the central positions of the mosque is also as a study centre that gathers teachers who impart knowledge to all levels of society (Adabi, 2007). Today, the role of the mosque has increased according to the needs and interests of the community living in the same parish as the mosque (Alwi, 2015).

The role of the mosque as a centre for the spread of Islam and the study related to it was practised since the reign of the Umayyad and Abbasid kingdoms. Among the famous mosques centres of knowledge are Al-Azhar As-Syariff Mosque, Ibn Tulun Mosque, Amru bin Al-As Mosque, Al-Qurawiyin in Fez and Zaituna Mosque in Tunisia. This empowerment has successfully upgraded the mosque's Islamic studies institution into a university. This phenomenon can be seen as what has been achieved by Al-Azhar As-Syarif, Zaituna University and Al-Qurawiyin University (Budin, 2016).

In Malaysia, routine study sessions in mosques are held almost every day. The study in mosques and *suraus* in Malaysia is often held at the end of prayers of Fajr, Zuhr and between Maghrib and Isha prayers. It can be attended by any Muslim community regardless of age and gender, or community background. The subjects taught are faith, worship, hadith, interpretation and various disciplines of Sharia science that are general and straightforward for everyone.

In this epoch of information technology, the studies delivered by instructors and preachers in mosques can be enjoyed anywhere, regardless of time (Kashim et al., 2021). The general public can choose their favourite speakers and subjects to focus on regardless of time

and place. In addition, some preachers open their study centres. The purpose of extending the study centres is to deliver more methodical and structured study classes according to the methods of the founder of the study centre.

In addition, access to knowledge studies is also effortless these days. The community can now choose studies that suit their needs or tastes. Fazil (2008) commented that the mass media impacts the community's attendance at the study of knowledge in the mosque. This is because many religious columns are broadcasted through the media.

Nonetheless, the need for mosques to focus on spending resources by planning studies in a more organised manner began to be questioned. They should address the issue of the number of congregations present at lecture time, the target of the lecture and the resources spent to cover the cost of the knowledge studies held. Therefore, the researcher intended to explore the relevance of studies focusing on mosques to continue to be held by looking at the gravity of concentrating on the location and not the studies themselves.

### **Literature Review**

Most of the deconstructions that past researchers have carried out are the effectiveness of studying in mosques, the empowerment of mosques as a knowledge study centre, the community's response to learning in mosques and the role of the mosque as a centre of knowledge. However, the researchers did not find an analysis that discussed the issue of the need for the study of knowledge to be held and concentrated in mosques, given the existence of other centres of knowledge.

Abdul Kadir (2007) investigated the effectiveness of religious classes in mosques in Hulu Selangor. This is a quantitative analysis by observing the effect of growing the understanding of the congregation present with knowledge related to faith and daily worship as well as changes in morals. The study's data proved that mosques boost the community's understanding of the fundamentals of belief and worship. The outcome also verified that it upgrades the knowledge related to morals as a Muslim. Furthermore, this research also reported that studying in the mosque can foster togetherness and maintain friendships among the congregation.

Budin's (2016) research examined the effectiveness of hadith study in takmir classes in a mosque in the Central Melaka district. It was conducted using a questionnaire method to obtain data. This quantitative study also attempted to find effectiveness with the hope of improvement. The study's results recorded that empowerment of the takmir class is vital to attract more community presence. The researcher stated that empowerment needs to be worked on because takmir classes, such as hadith studies, can help augment one's beliefs. In addition, the takmir class in the mosque can shape the generation towards better selves.

Furthermore, an analysis examining the community's response to studies in the mosque has been conducted by (Alwi, 2008). This study relies entirely on questionnaires and personal observations of the researcher to collect data in Terengganu. The researcher mentioned that studying in the mosque, which is a lifelong process, is a critical informal study. However, the study's results reported that the community's response could have been more encouraging. Some mosques and suraus do not hold study classes at all. Managing study classes in the mosque is the task of all parties to support comprehension of the faith in the community's soul.

Jaafar & Raus (2014), in their investigation, which concentrated on the methods and implications of the implementation of al-Quran and Hadith studies in several mosques around Nilai and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, found that this type of study received a satisfactory response. Factors that help stimulate community response are the uniqueness of the Quran and Hadith (Kashim et al., 2018). In addition, the mosque's position, delivery techniques and management also decide the community response. The researcher emphasises that analyses like this are essential to restore the glory of the mosque's function as a knowledge study centre.

Zubir and Alwi (2018) have reviewed the celebration of Akidah classes in several mosques in Kelantan. They used a questionnaire method to collect feedback from the public who attended the study and interviews among mosque officials, mosque coordinators, mosque management and takmir teachers. Their findings indicated a decrease in the response to the study of knowledge in mosques in Kelantan. This phenomenon can be seen especially among teenagers, and most people who attend the takmir class at the mosque are the elderly. One should take the issue of community response to studies in the mosque seriously by offering germane action by looking for pertinent factors and solutions over time (Kashim et al., 2021).

### Methodology

Nonetheless, this research was qualitative as the researcher completed a literature review. The researcher collected several reading materials, including books, and articles, that could be accessed in the library and online through a reliable search engine. The data sought was focused on the importance of the study of knowledge being done in the mosque. The collected data was then filtered and processed according to the purpose of the study - the relevance of the mosque's role as a knowledge study centre in the age of information technology.

### Research Objective

- This study aims to list and explain the importance of strengthening and empowering mosques as knowledge study centres.

### Results

Based on the researcher's study and evaluation, maintaining and strengthening the role of the mosque as a knowledge study centre is imperative. Besides, the purpose is still pertinent even though society now lives in an era of information technology that makes it effortless for everyone to acquire knowledge wherever they are. It is so as the mosque has privileges and importance that cannot be obtained by just watching the study of knowledge through the media. Among the mosque's significances found by the researcher are as follows

1. It works as a centre for strengthening faith

The mosque is called the house of Allah as found in Surah an-Nur verse 36:

يَفِي بُيُوتِ أَذْنِ اللّٰهِ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْأَعْدُوِّ وَالْأَصَالِ

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Translation: "That light shines through houses of worship which Allah has ordered to be raised, and where His Name is mentioned. He is glorified there morning and evening." By attending the mosque, one will be able to strengthen the relationship between the

individual present and the owner of the 'house', which is Allah. Therefore, improving the role of the mosque by empowering the study of the faith in it will further help the strengthening of the faith in the soul, especially for the converts. Besides, mosques play an influential role in strengthening their beliefs. Its neglection will deter one from embracing Islam as a way of life (Abdullah et al., 2017).

2. It maintains the intellectual safety of the public

A mosque is a public place and centre that people from various backgrounds often attend. Studies in such sites help the government ensure that the intellectual well-being of the public can be controlled with classes that constantly discuss issues of faith, worship and others (Boujum'ah & Bouhawiyah, 2021).

3. It fosters the relationship between teenagers and the mosque

Islamic studies subjects are also taught in schools in Malaysia. However, it does not eliminate the need to create an open and specific Islamic study class for teenagers and children in the mosque. This is because learning at school is exam-oriented, while classes in the mosque are a lifelong process. It is also a step to motivate the youth to attend the mosque regularly and establish congregational prayers on time (Hasanain & Baiq, 2021).

Quran and Fardu Ain Classes (KAFA) are from Standard 1 to 6. However, this class is registered with the Implementing Agency (State Religious Department) using the curriculum, textbooks, KAFA Class Assessment Examination (UPKK) and according to the schedule or teaching and learning time (PdP) set by the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM). This measure is exceptional, but the mosque can also submit its study class module specifically for its locality.

4. It supports the application of universal principles in learning

The mosque is a base that is open to all. Studies at the mosque are also offered to all, regardless of background, position and financial ability. It is also not limited to age as in school. When discussions in the mosque can be empowered and attended by all ages, it will inspire today's youth maturity. It will deliver a favourable impact on the level of selfconfidence, school performance and social skills of teenagers (Al-Refai, 2020).

5. It recognises the mosque as a place of social work

One fact that needs to be acknowledged is that the mosque is a consistent social institution in terms of its capacity to serve the community. It includes integration, location and time. Mosques can house thousands of people regardless of their background without charging any fees and then combine all of them to perform the same worship in an orderly manner, such as when praying in a congregation (Kashim & Husni 2017). The mosque also organises movements to nurture the relationship with Allah and humans in one place.

## Conclusion

The study's outcomes underlined the privilege of the mosque compared to any study centre that is not based on a mosque. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH prioritised the mosque as a knowledge study centre, and it works as the critical proof of the essence of the mosque itself. The poor response from the community should not be an excuse to stop the study of knowledge in mosques. Ergo, the accountable party should orchestra and compose a method to revive the glory of mosques as knowledge study centres.

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