

Community Perspectives on Formation of Framework to Empower Mosque and Waqf land in Revitalizing Local Town

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Abstract

This study explores the level of community awareness and perspectives on empowering mosque and waqf land for local town development, aligned with the Madani City Concept, which aims to revitalize towns through mosque and waqf land empowerment. The objectives are threefold: to identify factors to empower mosque and waqf land, analyze its potential in driving local economic growth, and develop a strategic framework in revitalizing local town. A total of 118 respondents were involved in a structured questionnaire survey designed to gauge public views on the significance, potential, and socio-economic implications of mosque and waqf land development. Using a quantitative approach, data analysis was conducted through descriptive statistics using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and cross-tabulation to uncover patterns and correlations between demographic variables and awareness levels. The findings demonstrate widespread acknowledgment of the importance of mosque and waqf land in economic and social development. However, awareness levels vary across age and income groups. Crosstab analysis indicates that younger individuals (aged 18–29) show lower awareness compared to older groups, who demonstrate higher understanding and stronger support for development initiatives. Likewise, individuals with middle to high income exhibit greater awareness compared to those in lower income. Education level also played a critical role, as respondents with tertiary education were more likely to acknowledge the broader functions of waqf assets beyond religious purposes. These insights underscore the importance of targeted community engagement and educational initiatives to promote waqf development, especially among younger, lower-income, and less-educated groups. The findings offer valuable input for policymakers and stakeholders implementing inclusive urban development strategies rooted in community values and Islamic principles.

Keywords: Community awareness, Madani City Concept, mosque and waqf land empowerment, revitalize local town.

1. Introduction

Urban revitalization in small towns within Malaysia demands innovative, community-centered approaches that integrate spiritual, social, and economic values. The Madani City Concept—anchored in Islamic principles and sustainable urban development—has emerged as a promising strategy for rejuvenating towns like Pekan Sungkai. Central to this concept is the empowerment of waqf land and mosque institutions, which serve not only as spiritual centers but also as potential catalysts for inclusive urban regeneration. This study explores the level of community awareness and perspectives on empowering mosque and waqf land for local town development, aligned with the Madani City Concept, which aims to revitalize towns through mosque and waqf land empowerment.

2. Literature Review

Previous research highlights the significant roles as to build a mosque that is solid elegant and exquisite if the development serves to benefit the

neighbourhood as well as the mosque administration [1]. Instead of only serving as a place of prayer, a place for ceremonies, or a social and political component of the Muslim community, the masjid served as a symbol of identity and belonging [2].

The addition of social, educational, and occasionally medical and commercial activities in the mosque space programme elevated the mosque from a place of prayer to a vital community hub and public area that serves the community more broadly and more effectively [3]. It is a lived value system, as reflected in early Islamic cities like Madinah, where the mosque and waqf properties played vital roles in urban cohesion and growth [4]

The Madani City framework draws from classical Islamic economic thought, notably Ibn Khaldun's theory of human capital, linking urban prosperity with balanced relationships among individuals, society, and the environment [5]. Development of waqf can be an income-generating economy if the

waqf assets can be managed by experts in the field systematically. However, a clear empirical framework grounded in localized data is still lacking to support policy implementation in small-town settings.

Current studies either focus on mosque empowerment or waqf land development but rarely explore their combined potential [6]. Waqf (endowment) land, historically significant in supporting social welfare, remains underutilized in Malaysia due to administrative and financial challenges [7]

This study addresses that gap by employing a quantitative survey method to assess community perceptions and expectations regarding mosque and waqf land development in Pekan Sungkai. The objectives are threefold: to identify factors to empower mosque and waqf land, analyze its potential in driving local economic growth, and develop a strategic framework in revitalizing local town. The rationale for using this approach lies in its ability to produce measurable insights on public attitudes and identify priority areas for intervention. The survey also to assess about how many local people are willing to take part to make donation and participation in order to make their own local town develop in the future. The focus on one town allows for an in-depth, context-specific analysis that can inform scalable strategies.

The contribution of this study lies in merging Islamic urbanism with empirical planning tools, using localized community feedback to craft an actionable framework. While previous studies have examined waqf-based housing or spiritual urban planning in isolation, this research provides an integrated, data-driven approach that aligns with both religious and national development goals.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach to assess community perceptions regarding the empowerment of mosques and waqf land within the framework of the Madani City Concept. The primary data collection method was a structured questionnaire distributed to residents of Pekan Sungkai. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure that participants had sufficient contextual relevance to the research objectives.

The formula for sample size followed by Cochran and Krejcie to determine sample size for this research respondents. Making the right decision is crucial. A large sample size wastes resources, while a small sample reduces the usefulness of results. The choice is not always satisfactory; frequently,

we lack sufficient information to be certain that the sample size we have chosen is the ideal one. [8]

A total of 94.67 valid responses were collected from a demographically representative sample based on the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2020). 87 population data for Pekan Sungkai. Respondents were selected based on their relevance and availability to provide informed input on the urban revitalization objectives of the study.

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel, focusing primarily on frequency and percentage analyses. The structured questionnaire was divided into three main sections: (A) Respondent Demographics, (B) Perceptions of Madani City Concept, and (C) Open-ended Recommendations.

Findings were visualized through graphs and charts and accompanied by descriptive summaries. These results served as the basis for policy recommendations and strategic planning towards mosque- and waqf-based urban development.

Sample size calculation is shown below:

N = Population size

Z = Critical value of the normal distribution at the required confidence level
p = Sample proportion

e = Margin of error given,

N = 6,894 residents of Pekan Sungkai
Z = 1.96 (95% confidence level)

p = 0.5

e = 0.10 (10%)

$$\text{Sample size, } n = N * \frac{\frac{Z^2 * p * (1-p)}{e^2}}{[N - 1 + \frac{Z^2 * p * (1-p)}{e^2}]}$$

$$n = \frac{N \times [Z^2 \times p \times (1-p) / e^2]}{N - 1 + [Z^2 \times p \times (1-p) / e^2]}$$

$$n = \frac{6894 \times [1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5) / 0.10^2]}{6894 - 1 + [1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5) / 0.10^2]}$$

Calculating the numerator:

$$\begin{aligned} &= N \times [Z^2 \times p \times (1-p) / e^2] \\ &= 6894 \times [1.962 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5) / 0.102] \\ &= 6894 \times [3.8416 \times 0.25 / 0.102] \\ &= 6894 \times [0.9604 / 0.102] \\ &= 6894 \times 96.04 \\ &= 661\,409.76 \end{aligned}$$

Calculating the denominator:

$$\begin{aligned} &= N - 1 + [Z^2 \times p \times (1-p) / e^2] \\ &= 6894 - 1 + [1.962 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5) / 0.102] \\ &= 6894 - 1 + [96.04] \\ &= 6893 + 96.04 \\ &= 6989.04 \end{aligned}$$

$$n = \frac{661,409.76}{6989.04} \approx 94.67$$

4. Results and Discussions

This section presents the quantitative findings of the study according to the PEACE framework elements—Physical, Economy, Administrative, Community, and Environment—as they relate to the implementation of the Madani City Concept in Pekan Sungkai. Data is presented through descriptive statistics and key percentages to reflect community support. Results for PEACE elements are as stated below:

4.1. Physical

A majority of respondents acknowledged the role of mosque and waqf land in improving physical infrastructure. However, awareness was significantly lower among the younger demographic (aged 18–29), who exhibited limited understanding of spatial planning and infrastructure opportunities enabled through waqf development. The survey findings reveal significant public endorsement for physical development initiatives. Specifically, 72.9% of respondents supported air protection initiatives under the Low Carbon Cities framework, while 71.2% favored affordable housing and basic service provision. A high level of support was also shown for using waqf land for affordable housing (70.3%) and for community infrastructure (69.5%). Additionally, 66.9% agreed on utilizing mosques for health monitoring. Infrastructure modernization was also supported: 72.9% backed telecommunications upgrades, and an equal percentage supported revitalizing abandoned waqf land. Mosques were further endorsed as community landmarks (76.3%) and multifunctional centers such as the “Sungkai Stopover Hub” (78.0%) and the “Sustainable Hub” (72.0%). Other initiatives such as inclusive housing (68.6%), mosque-centric development (70.3%), smart city technologies (61.9%), and the repurposing of abandoned spaces (68.6%) received notable backing.

4.2. Economy

Economic empowerment through waqf land received high recognition, particularly among middle and high-income respondents. This group demonstrated a greater awareness of waqf land’s potential for local entrepreneurship, employment generation, and income sustainability. Conversely, lower-income individuals showed limited understanding of economic applications, indicating a gap in outreach. Economic strategies aligned with the Madani City Concept also garnered substantial public support. Collective funding through financial incentives was endorsed by 62.71% of respondents. The integration of recycling programs and the gig

economy received 58.47% support. Establishing economic clusters near mosques and waqf land was backed by 55.08%, and 59.32% supported digital marketplaces to reduce the urban-rural economic divide. Creative economy strategies (57.63%) and mobile-based microfinance entrepreneurship (56.78%) were also favored. Economic equality adjustments for various social segments received 55.93% support. Notably, 63.56% supported mosque and waqf-based entrepreneurship, and 64.41% endorsed the creation of emergency funds. Charitable financial institutions received 62.71% support, with 55.93% willing to contribute to cash waqf and 59.32% calling for better waqf fund management. Additionally, 67.80% supported transforming mosques into income-generating spaces such as markets and homestays.

4.3. Administrative

Respondents with tertiary education displayed higher confidence in administrative mechanisms for waqf governance and development. The data suggests a positive correlation between education level and perceived transparency and efficiency of waqf-related administration. Those with less education were less familiar with the governance structures in place. Administrative support for the Madani City Concept was also evident. The development of mosque-based websites was supported by 88.1% of respondents, while 89.8% favored inclusive mosque programs involving multiple generations. Transparent governance in mosque and waqf development received strong agreement from 66.9% and agreement from 22.0% of respondents. Basic infrastructure maintenance covering water, electricity, and sanitation was supported by 91.5%, and 90.7% endorsed cooperation between State Islamic Religious Councils and Local Authorities in urban planning.

4.4. Community

Support for mosque and waqf-based community development initiatives was strong among older respondents (aged 30 and above). These individuals perceived the mosque as a central institution for fostering social unity and resilience. Younger respondents, while supportive, lacked comprehensive understanding of community-based functions of waqf initiatives. The community aspect of the framework received strong backing. Mosques as educational centers were endorsed by 69.49% of respondents. Civic culture rooted in respect and mutual responsibility was supported by 73.73%. Public involvement in mosque-based programs received 75.42% support. Awareness of waqf practices was backed by 73.73%, while volunteerism was supported by 71.19% in general and 73.73% in the context of civic empowerment.

4.5. Environment

Awareness of the environmental impact of mosque and waqf land utilization was generally low. Most respondents did not associate waqf development with green initiatives, waste management, or sustainable practices, highlighting the need for increased environmental education within future Madani City planning. Environmental sustainability was a key priority among respondents. Both air protection efforts and the adoption of green technologies such as solar panels were supported by 88.9% of the community. Environmentally conscious urban planning received 85.5% support, and 85.6% agreed with initiatives to enhance the city's cultural and tourism image. Recognition of the Jamek Sungkai Mosque as a symbolic landmark was supported by 89.8%. Waste management efforts were reinforced by strong support for a recycling center (90.7%) and tree-planting activities on mosque and waqf land (90.6%).

As for the discussion from the above results, The findings highlight strong community support across all PEACE elements, indicating a favorable environment for implementing the Madani City Concept in Pekan Sungkai.

In the physical dimension, the high approval for air protection, housing, and telecommunications shows readiness for sustainable infrastructure upgrades. Support for mosque-based health services and waqf land redevelopment affirms the mosque's role beyond religious use, supporting its integration into multifunctional urban spaces.

For the economic aspect, respondents favored combining Islamic finance tools with modern strategies such as digital markets and the gig economy. This suggests potential for mosque and waqf land to become drivers of local economic inclusion and resilience.

In the administrative domain, strong endorsement for transparent governance, inter-agency collaboration, and mosque digitalization reflects public demand for accountable, inclusive planning. It also indicates a shift toward recognizing mosques as civic institutions.

The community dimension shows mosques are seen as hubs for education, civic engagement, and volunteerism. High waqf awareness and participation rates signal strong grassroots potential to support the framework's social goals.

Finally, the environmental results reflect a high level of ecological awareness. Community support for solar energy, green planning, and recycling—alongside mosque landmark recognition—indicates strong alignment between faith-based values and environmental stewardship.

5. Conclusion

This study has successfully identified key community perceptions and readiness factors for empowering mosque and waqf land through the Madani City Concept in Pekan Sungkai, using the PEACE framework (Physical, Economy, Administrative, Community, Environment). The findings reveal strong support across all dimensions such as community involvement, economic potential, administrative support, and environmental sustainability that significantly influence the success of mosque and waqf land development.

The results sufficiently answer the research objectives by confirming that the public endorses initiatives such as affordable housing, mosque-based entrepreneurship, sustainable infrastructure, inclusive governance, and environmental programs. These findings suggest that mosque and waqf land can serve not only as religious and spiritual centers but also as catalysts for economic development, social empowerment, and ecological transformation.

Potential applications of this framework include localized smart city planning, waqf-based economic clusters, and civic participation models centered around mosques. Its implementation could significantly contribute to urban revitalization, especially in semi-urban or rural settings with existing waqf assets.

Future research should explore implementation mechanisms, policy integration with State Islamic Religion Councils and local authorities, and comparative studies across different regions to validate and refine the framework. Quantitative impact assessments and pilot projects may further strengthen the model's applicability on a broader scale.

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