



Mosque-Based Integrated Community Empowerment Model

Widiyanto bin Mislan Cokrohadisumarto¹, Yuli Indah Sari²

¹Faculty of Economics Unissula, Indonesia

²Faculty of Education and Social Sciences Unindra, Indonesia

This study aims to develop Indonesia's mosque-based integrated community empowerment model. The model collaboration defined the mosque as a place of productive empowerment to overcome poverty in Indonesia. This study used a qualitative approach that began with a literature study to get research direction and then continued with FGD activities with (1) takmir or administrator of the mosque from the Indonesian Mosque Council or Dewan Masjid Indonesia (DMI), (2) managers of the Amil Zakat Infaq and Sadaqah Insititute or Lembaga Amal, Zakat, Infaq, dan Sedekah (LAZIS), (3) religious leaders or ulama, and (4) academicians (who have expertise in Islamic economics and finance, management, and information technology). Based on the study, a model that optimally empowers mosque-based communities (to help solve poverty problems in society around the mosque), it is necessary to have integrated the mosque involvement from many parties such as government, DMI, Aghniya, LAZIS, religious leaders, universities, and mosque. This research makes a valuable contribution by employing a holistic and integrated approach to address poverty-related issues while simultaneously strengthening the role of mosques as productive empowerment centres. It combines elements of Islamic economics, management, and information technology.

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*Correspondence:

Widiyanto bin Mislan
Cokrohadisumarto

familiar@unissula.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains a significant issue in numerous countries, Indonesia included. According to [BPS \(2023\)](#), the percentage of individuals living in poverty in Indonesia was 9.57% as of September 2022. This statistic indicates a persistently high poverty rate of 26.36 million people, albeit showing a slight decrease of 0.14% since 2021. The government has implemented various measures to address these challenges, such as the Family Hope Program, educational support through the Smart Indonesia Program, food assistance, and contributions to the National Health Insurance Program. In addition to governmental efforts, external entities playing a role in tackling poverty include the Islamic Microfinance Institution (IMF), responsible for fund distribution, and the Amil Zakat Institution, involved in distributing zakat to those in need. Despite these initiatives, the amount of zakat funds collected and distributed falls short of expectations, and the program management has not been executed optimally. This underscores that the issue of poverty persists without complete resolution, particularly affecting the most vulnerable individuals who should be given top priority for assistance.

Hence, the persistent issue of poverty necessitates a comprehensive solution that involves multiple components. Despite facing numerous challenges, a prudent approach involves introducing a voluntary financial sector, utilizing Sadaqah as a relatively more accessible and flexible instrument. The general generosity prevalent among the Indonesian population makes this approach viable. However, effective implementation demands meticulous planning. Indonesia, recognized as the country with the largest Muslim population, boasts over 741 thousand mosques and prayer rooms across its expanse ([Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021](#)). The substantial number of mosques, with their inherent potential to gather people, presents an opportunity for economic development ([Riwajanti & Fadloli, 2019b](#)). [Al-Krenawi \(2016\)](#) emphasizes that mosques are established wherever Muslims are engaged in global affairs, either as individuals or communities. Consequently, the potential of mosques can be harnessed by managing Shadaqah funds for community empowerment through productive activities. In the context of Sadaqah, [Rais \(1998\)](#) asserts that funding constraints pose a challenge for Muslims striving to build a better future, with Sadaqah emerging as a solution. Islamic teachings encourage the allocation of

wealth in the path of Allah through Sadaqah (Surah: 2; 254 and Q.S: 2; 261). [Albadri, Aziz and Amaliah \(2019\)](#) have demonstrated that effective Sadaqah management can significantly promote community economic empowerment. Given that mosques play a role in distributing Sadaqah ([Movahed, 2014](#)), the integration of mosque potential and Sadaqah funds offers a promising avenue to address the poverty issue and enhance people's economic well-being. This integration prioritizes empowerment solutions that are free from usury, aiming to provide balanced welfare in both material and spiritual aspects, encompassing life in this world and the hereafter.

Another significant challenge faced by Muslims is the prevalent misconception among community members that Islamic teachings are confined to ritual worship. Contrary to this belief, Islamic teachings encompass a broader spectrum, including matters related to economic transactions (muamalah) and cooperative activities (takaful) among Muslims ([Riwajanti & Fadloli, 2019b](#)). To address this, there is a recommendation for a da'wah initiative grounded in Islamic economic principles to cultivate public awareness regarding sadaqah. Consequently, the pivotal role of religious leaders in undertaking this task becomes imperative. [Torabi and Noori \(2019\)](#) assert that religious leaders bear a significant responsibility, namely, educating and influencing individuals' awareness about sharing and charitable acts. Consequently, to bolster the burgeoning role of mosques as managers of sadaqah funds, the involvement of religious leaders is essential. Moreover, the role of universities emerges as a crucial factor in this context. According to [Paletta et al., \(2019\)](#), partnerships with universities can facilitate responsible entrepreneurship and enhance organizational capacity to confront emerging challenges. Specifically, [Riwajanti and Fadloli \(2019\)](#) highlight that mosque-based empowerment is largely driven by non-governmental organizations and higher education institutions or universities. Additionally, emphasize the pivotal role of entrepreneurship-focused universities as agents of change for sustainable local community development. However, it is regrettable that universities are presently limited as providers of science, technology, and human resources, with weaknesses persisting in areas related to public services. As underscored by [Supriyadi \(2012\)](#), the harmonization, empowerment, and partnership networks among various actors (local governments, businesses, communities, and universities) are crucial

principles and steps in fostering local economic development.

The aforementioned discussion underscores that poverty remains an unresolved issue necessitating a comprehensive solution. An integrated approach involving the mosque's function, sadaqah funds (from the affluent), the role of religious leaders, and the engagement of universities presents a potential solution. The challenge lies in how the integration of these components can effectively empower the impoverished residents around the mosque, enabling them to break free from poverty and enhance their quality of life. The term "empowerment" in this context refers to efforts aimed at improving both economic aspects (income) and Islamic quality (religious knowledge, faith, morals, and worship), with active participation from mosque managers, affluent individuals contributing sadaqah (Aghniya'), religious leaders, and universities.

This study seeks to formulate a model for community empowerment by integrating the functions of mosques and sadaqah funds. The objective is to develop a model that can be implemented to address and alleviate poverty. To yield comprehensive research findings, a qualitative approach will be employed in conducting this study.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Empowerment Theory: Value Orientation

Empowerment, in general, aims at addressing economic, social, health, and policy issues to enhance the community's quality of life. In a more specific context, Zimmerman (2000) explains that empowerment involves specific professional groups and communities to create value. The value in question is to rectify the assumption of a one-way relationship between professionals and the community, where professionals act as service providers and the community is seen as the party to be served. The Empowerment Theory directs attention to creating a two-way relationship between professionals and the community. Professionals contribute by providing the necessary resources for the empowerment process, and the community becomes aware of enhancing skills and knowledge through productive empowerment activities.

In the context of mosque empowerment, this value is created through the involvement of affluent community members in channelling charitable funds, the participation of the less privileged in mosque

empowerment programs, and professionals providing resources. As a result, empowerment is not just an action to address problems but targets the creation of deeper value.

Community Empowerment

According to Trommlerová, Klasen and Leßmann (2015), empowerment is more about having the ability to influence changes in an individual's life and society. Ismail (2014) further explains that community empowerment involves assisting individuals, particularly those in poverty, in gaining the strength to make decisions and take actions to enhance their lives. This includes minimizing personal barriers by transferring power from the environment. Empowerment is seen as a process of strengthening the poor by providing motivation, raising awareness of their potential, and striving to develop it. Saleh (2017) specifically defines empowerment as an endeavor to generate resources, opportunities, knowledge, and skills to enhance community capacity in shaping its own future. In summary, community empowerment revolves around motivating individuals, creating awareness of their potential, and fostering development to enhance future quality of life.

Lailatussufiani, Burhan and Multifiah (2016) conducted a study assessing community empowerment in the domains of education, economy, and health. In education, empowerment aims to enhance the quality of community life in the future. Economically, empowerment involves providing business capital to the community. In the health sector, empowerment is achieved through offering free health services for those in need. Saleh (2017) complements this discussion by outlining three main levels to evaluate empowerment processes in the Muslim community: (i) Individual scope, focused on enhancing spiritual and intellectual intelligence to improve individual quality; (ii) Family scope, involving the formation of a harmonious family through unity among members and the aspiration to excel in attaining the grace of God Almighty; and (iii) Community scope, emphasizing the actualization of knowledge and charity. Knowledge, as a process of awareness leading to strengthened faith, becomes a continuous charitable act guiding social life. Therefore, a significant gauge of community empowerment includes the improvement of spiritual and intellectual intelligence, quality of life, familial harmony, and the increase in knowledge and faith.

The Role of the Mosque

In general, the mosque serves various functions, as highlighted in the study's findings. According to [Mohamed et al. \(2014\)](#), the mosque is not merely a place of worship but also serves as a knowledge hub. [Malik \(2013\)](#) emphasizes the mosque's role as a religious institution that acts as a foundation for the development of da'wah and education, contributing to the shaping of Islamic culture. Additionally, [Mohamed et al. \(2014\)](#) assert that mosques function as gathering spaces for Muslims and host various religious ceremonies, including weddings. To comprehend the contemporary role and function of mosques, it is essential to examine their historical significance during the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW. [Javed and Ali \(2019\)](#) elaborate on their study's results, revealing that in the past, mosques played a pivotal role not only in religious and spiritual education but also in fostering cultural, ethical, social, and political awareness among the masses. They also served as platforms for social reforms. In the present context, [Karamoy \(2019\)](#) outlines the diverse roles of mosques, such as places for worship, meetings, deliberation, social activities, healthcare, and Islamic da'wah. Notably, he categorizes mosques as Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) responsible for managing public funds received from the government, corporate and public donations. The control over financial activities becomes an intriguing area for research, particularly in handling donated funds (shadaqah) for various beneficial activities. To enhance mosque management, [Karamoy \(2019\)](#) suggests that mosque leaders, specifically the Imam, undergo training in effective management methods and modern communication technology. The discussion suggests that through mosques, issues of poverty and economic inequality within Muslim communities can be addressed through empowerment activities managed by these institutions.

Examining the role of mosques in community development, [Amnah and Shihabuddin \(2016\)](#) find that mosques play a significant dual role in improving one's relationship with Allah and addressing worldly affairs. [Movahed \(2014\)](#) findings indicate that implementing mosque theories significantly enhances Muslim communities, offering benefits such as fostering brotherly relations, facilitating learning, generating knowledge, promoting adherence to faith, and anticipating divine love. In conclusion, the mosque emerges as a versatile center for Muslim community empowerment, addressing various dimensions of life,

from spiritual well-being to economic strengthening through effective management of ZIS funds, as suggested by [Saleh \(2017\)](#).

Sadaqah Instruments for Empowerment

In the Islamic perspective, Sadaqah (voluntary almsgiving) holds significant virtue (Surah 3: 92) and is considered an expression of piety (QS: 2: 2-3). The term "Sadaqah" is derived from the Arabic word "sadaqah," which signifies "true or honest." As per this concept, Sadaqah denotes the act of voluntary giving, encompassing contributions in the form of money, goods, services, kindness, or other benevolent gestures ([Mulazid & Mufliha, 2019](#)). Sadaqah is bestowed upon those deserving without a specified amount, given spontaneously and anywhere with the intention of pleasing Allah SWT. [Mulazid and Mufliha \(2019\)](#) elaborate that "sadaqah" holds two meanings: the recommended "Sadaqah" based on the sunnah, and the obligatory "Sadaqah" (zakat). It represents a gift, whether movable or immovable property, given to individuals or legal entities, such as foundations, without expectations of compensation or conditions, solely with the intention of pleasing Allah and anticipating divine reward in the future ([Lailatussufiani et al., 2016](#)).

In the Qur'an, Sadaqah is metaphorically depicted as a seed that multiplies seven stalks, each bearing a hundred seeds, when spent in the way of Allah (Qur'an 2:261). [Hamka \(1996\)](#) further explains in Tafsir Al-Azhar that spending wealth for the sake of Allah results in numerous benefits for many people, and accordingly, Allah will magnify the rewards for whom He wills. In Islam, Sadaqah is strongly recommended as a means of social welfare and fostering a sense of unity among Muslims, especially in the economic realm. The Prophet Muhammad, in a saying, emphasized the encouragement for every Muslim to engage in charitable acts. When questioned about those who have nothing to share, the Prophet responded, "Let him do good and refrain from evil because that is his Sadaqah" (Narrated by Ahmad bin Hanbal). This hadith underscores the high regard for Sadaqah in Islam as a commendable and accessible form of benevolence.

The value of infaq (sadaqah) is very high in Islam, in addition to eliminating stingy, miserly and selfish nature, sadaqah will also foster deep social awareness, to help each other because humans need each other, and one cannot live alone. [Chaudhry \(2012\)](#) explained that in addition to being done to achieve the

pleasure of Allah, sadaqah can also flow wealth from the rich to the poor and those in need. With good management of sadaqah funds, it will be able to help empower the community's economy for the better (Albadri et al., 2019). Zaenal, Astuti and Sadariyah (2018) show that the use of ZIS funds for urban community empowerment can reduce the poverty index. From the discussion above, it can be concluded that giving alms will be very useful for empowerment programs for the poor.

The Role of Religious Leaders (Ulama)

In Arabic ulama is the plural form of the word "alim" (people who know); and called alim if he has knowledge and any field of knowledge. People who are knowledgeable or scientists are called scholars (Nasution, 2014). Prophet Muhammad mentioned that scholars are heirs who inherit the prophets (HR. Tirmidhi in his Sunan no. 2681 or Musnad Imam Ahmad Juz 5 p. 169). Ulama are religious leaders who become role models and references for solving various problems, both religious and social life, even the Muslim community often refers to ijma' (the agreement of the ulama in establishing the law).

In the contemporary era, religious leaders face the challenge of adapting to provide optimal solutions and justifications while addressing various questions posed by the information revolution, the internet age, and globalization (Torabi & Noori, 2019). Nasution (2014) highlights that the swift progress in Islamic economics has left some scholars unable to keep pace, resulting in a less-than-adequate response to its development. Overcoming this challenge involves expanding perspectives on muamalah (economic relations among Muslims) and ta'awun (mutual assistance), extending beyond mere worship, thereby addressing community empowerment concerns (Lailatussufiani et al., 2016). Additionally, religious leaders possess the capability to raise awareness and influence the attitudes, behaviors, and practices of their followers, shaping social values in alignment with religious teachings. This necessitates a strong and continually cultivated commitment between the ulama and religious institutions to actively contribute to the development of the sharia economy and the well-being of the people and the nation (Nasution, 2014). Mustafa et al. (2017) study reveals the significant role and effectiveness of Muslim religious leaders and mosques in promoting health empowerment in Western societies.

Beyond health empowerment, religious leaders play a pivotal role in disseminating broader religious knowledge and devising solutions to contemporary challenges, including environmental empowerment (Torabi & Noori, 2019). The collective findings underscore the expansive role of religious leaders in community empowerment, highlighting the plausible involvement in economic empowerment initiatives.

The Role of the University

Universities can assume a significant yet indirect economic role in various aspects of society, culture, and local intellectual spheres (Hatakenaka, 2007). As outlined by Sevinc (2014), universities are capable of fostering technological innovation, generating employment, fostering collaborations between universities and industries, and facilitating diverse socio-cultural activities. Additionally, they can contribute to local and regional economic development, highlighting their broader role in community engagement beyond the confines of the campus through initiatives like community service. Education, as emphasized by Ozturk (2001), has the potential to enhance productivity, stimulate creativity, and foster entrepreneurship and technological advancement. Furthermore, education is integral to ensuring economic and social progress while improving income distribution.

Lailatussufiani, Burhan and Multifiah (2016) research findings indicate that urban communities with an educated and open mindset are generally more receptive to usury-free empowerment programs. Conversely, rural communities with limited knowledge exhibit a greater inclination toward conventional programs. This underscores the importance of the academic community within universities in supporting mosque-based community empowerment programs through collaboration with religious leaders and affluent individuals. Recognizing universities as catalysts for change and development that accelerate economic growth (Supriyadi, 2012), it becomes evident that entrepreneurship-based universities play a crucial role as agents of change for sustainable regional development within local communities (Wakkee et al., 2019). In summary, the discourse above underscores the significant potential of universities to actively contribute to integrated community empowerment programs aligned with mosques and religious leaders.

The Role of the Amil Zakat Infaq and Sadaqah Institution or LAZIS

One of the institutions dealing with ZIS issues in Indonesia is the Zakat Infaq Sadaqah Charity Institute or LAZIS. LAZIS has a mission to empower the community by optimizing the collection of ZISWAF funds, then channelling them through ZIS fund utilization programs, which in turn makes the congregation more independent. In the case of Indonesia, many LAZIS institutions were born or founded by big mosques in Indonesia. Several studies have found that LAZIS as a means of channelling ZIS funds using various programs such as religious, educational, social, health, and economic empowerment aimed at channelling these funds to certain mustahik who have been determined to meet biological needs and improve mustahik economic welfare (Dulkiah, 2016; Hasan & Sulaeman, 2019; Hayati & Caniogo, 2012; Kahfi & Imsar, 2022). Therefore, LAZIS, which has good development, can transmit training to small-scale mosques on how to manage ZISWAF funds and distribute them to effective community-productive activities.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research was designed using a qualitative approach. This research implements two main methods, starting with a literature review as the first stage which is very useful as a direction and guide in data collection and then in the second stage followed by a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) process.

Data Sources

This study uses secondary data sources and primary data. The secondary data sources obtained are based on relevant previous literature/articles to examine the aspects studied, namely community empowerment, mosque functions, the role of LAZIS, the role of religious leaders, and the role of universities. Then the primary data source is obtained directly from the informants in the FGD process to develop an integrated mosque-based community empowerment model.

Research Sample

The sampling method in this study used non-random sampling, namely the purposive sampling method, technically the sample was taken based on certain

criteria. In carrying out this research, it was attended by four different parties, namely academics, religious leaders, mosque *takmir*, and Lazis managers. The stipulation of criteria for each party is as follows:

- (1) The sample selection criteria for academics include (1) active university lecturers, (2) willing to be a resource person, and (3) having specifications in the fields of Information Technology, Islamic Economics and Finance, and the field of Management. Based on these criteria, the number of academicians who became resource persons was 6 people consisting of 2 lecturers in management, 2 lecturers in Islamic Economics and Finance, and 2 lecturers in information technology.
- (2) The criteria for selecting a sample for religious leaders include (1) having a regular schedule of lectures, (2) being willing to be a resource person, and (3) being well-known by the public. Based on these criteria, the number of religious leaders who will be resource persons is 4 people.
- (3) The sample selection criteria for mosque *takmir* include (1) permanent *takmir* of the mosque, (2) willingness to be a resource person, and (3) the mosque managed is a member of DMI. Based on these criteria, the number of mosque *takmir* who became the resource person was 5 people.
- (4) The sample selection criteria for Lazis managers include (1) permanent Lazis management, (2) willingness to be a resource person, and (3) Lazis channelling productive funds. Based on these criteria, the number of mosque *takmir* who became the resource person was 3 people.

Data Collection Technique

This study uses two data collection techniques, namely literature review to obtain secondary data on the conceptual formation of an integrated mosque-based community empowerment model and FGD to obtain primary data on the development of a mosque-based community empowerment model. A literature review can be understood as an activity of searching, reading, and sorting out previous studies that are relevant to the research problem which are then analyzed and criticized to obtain credible information/models. Meanwhile, FGD can be identified as the process of collecting data on certain research topics through group discussions. Both literature review and FGD were used to produce a credible mosque-based integrated community empowerment model and analyze the roles of several

aspects and parties involved, namely community empowerment, mosque functions, the role of Lazis, the role of religious leaders, and the role of universities. The following are the provisions in the implementation of the FGD that be carried out:

(1) Number of Groups

The number of groups in this study was 4 groups consisting of academician groups (6 people), mosque takmir group (5 people), religious leaders (3 people), and the Lazis group (3 people). The group is determined by making one group for resource persons who have the same characteristics and fields.

(2) Discussion Material:

- a) Opinions on mosque-based community empowerment
- b) Opinions on community empowerment based on mosques for productive business activities.
- c) The important role of religious leaders in mosque-based community empowerment (reasons, what is their role) (question for mosque *takmir* groups and religious leaders)
- d) The important role of the mosque takmir in mosque-based community empowerment (what is the reason, and what is its role, especially in the aspect of mosque management) (question for mosque takmir groups and religious leaders)
- e) The important role LAZIS has in mosque-based community empowerment (what is the reason, and what is the role) (question for the LAZIS group)
- f) The important role of universities in mosque-based community empowerment (what is the reason, and what is the role in terms of technology, economy, and management) (question for academician groups)

- g) Opinions about the conceptual model of integrated community empowerment based on mosques found
- h) Obstacles that will be faced in implementing mosque-based community empowerment.

Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques

The qualitative data analysis technique used the method of Miles and Huberman (1994) which consisted of 3 stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. First, the data reduction stage relates to activities to sort, simplify, and transform the results of the FGD raw data into field research notes. Second, the data presentation stage is described as the activity of collecting field data and presenting it in the form of models, graphs, and images. Third, the stage of concluding, namely activities to find the meaning of the data that has been collected, can be done by comparing the results of the study with the basic concepts in the study. After going through the analysis stage, this research validated the resulting model by using the member check method to verify and clarify the results of the research model to the informants involved. If the informants agree with the results of the research model, the model is declared “valid”.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of FGD Implementation

As mentioned in the previous section, the resource persons for the FGD in this study consisted of mosque managers (*takmir*), religious leaders, LAZIS managers and academics in the fields of Islamic economics and finance, management and information technology in Semarang City. The implementation of the FGD is illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Implementation of FGD

No	Group	Participants
1	Academician	Consist of 6 experts in the field of: Information Technology (2 experts), Islamic Economics and Finance (2 experts), Management (2 experts).
2	Mosque Takmir	Represented by 5 mosque takmir from Baitussalam Mosque, Pedurungan; At-Taqwa Mosque, Candi, Jangli Mosque, and Abu Bakar Assegaf Mosque, Kaligawe; Semarang City Mosque Council Manager.
3	Religious Leader	Three religious leaders from the city of Semarang
4	Manager of Zakat Institution	Three LAZIS Managers from LAZISMu, LAZIS DT Peduli, LAZIS-Sultan Agung

Sources: qualitative data processed, 2023

The Role of Government

The results of the FGD from all the participants highlight the role of the government in mosque empowerment. Legal limitations regarding permits, taxes, and religious activities pose challenges to mosque empowerment. This aligns with several previous studies on mosque empowerment for community welfare, stating that the government plays a vital role in establishing regulations related to the legality of mosques as aggregator units for ZISWAF funds (Cholil, 2016; Hikmah, 2019; Sofii & Pertiwi, 2019). In addition to regulations related to legal constraints, the government is also expected to provide support in the form of productive programs such as training, mentoring, financing, and partnerships.

The Role of the Indonesian Mosque Council or Dewan Masjid Indonesia (DMI)

The mosque plays a central role in various aspects of social life, encompassing education, religion, society, and economics. Effective management of the mosque's responsibilities is crucial, with the Indonesian Mosque Council (DMI) serving as the designated institutional body. The national establishment of DMI took place on June 22, 1972, coinciding with the 10th of Jumadil Ula 1392 H. Its primary objective is to enhance the faith, piety, noble character, and intellectual capacities of the people. Additionally, DMI strives to contribute to the establishment of a just and prosperous society, in accordance with the divine approval of Allah Almighty within the Republic of Indonesia's jurisdiction (Zoni et al., 2023).

As a strong national-level organization, DMI realizes the function of the mosque as a centre of worship, community development, and the unity of the people. In the mosque-based empowerment program, DMI is tasked with facilitating regulations in fund management and various empowerment activities, including providing training for mosque administrators. Riwijanti and Fadloli (2019), based on the results of their research on cooperative-based mosques for empowerment, also suggest that DMI should intensify coordination and cooperation with the takmir of all mosques, both in cities and villages, to build mosque-based economic movements.

Aghniya as Sadaqah Fund Distributor

The results of the FGD reveal the role of "Aghniya." In Islam, 'Aghniya' refers to the concept of "wealthy individuals." In the context of mosque empowerment, 'Aghniya' refers to the affluent individuals surrounding the mosque who have the opportunity to become distributors of charitable funds. This finding is consistent with several studies that mention that 'Aghniya' has a social obligation in Islam to pay zakat (Atabik, 2015), and plays a role as a donor of funds for mosques (Supriyadi, 2023).

LAZIS Role

The results of discussions with the Managers of Zakat Institutions related to the role of LAZIS for mosque-based community empowerment are as follows; First, LAZIS can dispense its funds for community empowerment as long as it fulfills sharia provisions and the agreement resulted from deliberation. Lazis has an empowerment program as an effort to make the mosque a center for the independence of the people to escape poverty through the role of mentoring, coaching, providing capital (qard al-hasan), training, fulfilling facilities and infrastructure, as well as marketing functions. However, Lazis still has obstacles, namely, there is still a need for equalization of perception and awareness, accountability, HR and management capabilities. Secondly, zakat institutions cooperate with mosques, namely through channeling funds for business development and fostering communities to carry out productive businesses, although still on a very limited scale. Thirdly, LAZIS in principle can channel funds to mosques if the mosque has a clear program, and has adequate human resources, and the mosque has fulfilled its legal aspects. This is based on the consideration that the distribution of funds must be accountable because these funds come from the people. Finally, LAZIS can also play a role in training programs, such as mosque management training which is implemented in collaboration with other parties.

The above findings indicate that LAZIS can have a wider role than just providing funds to empower mosque-based communities, but can also help organize training such as mosque management training and provide the necessary facilities and infrastructure for mosques.

The Role of Religious Leaders

The results of the study on the role of religious leaders in community empowerment revealed; that religious leaders can play a role in carrying out religious education and enlightenment (in aspects of *aqidah*, morality, worship, and *muamalah*) for the community around the mosque through various activities in mosques such as through Friday sermons and regular recitations. However, currently, religious leaders still have limited competence and insight related to community empowerment and in managing mosques. This finding still describes conditions that are not much different as stated by Nasution (2014), that some *ulama* (religious leaders) have not been able to keep up with the current rapid development of Sharia economics. This means that this condition is still a challenge to help the problem of community empowerment as stated by Lailatussufiani et al., (2016).

The Role of the University

The following are the results of discussions with academics (fields of Islamic Economics and Finance, management and information technology) and the expectations of mosque managers to obtain an overview of the role of universities in mosque-based community empowerment. Universities have an important role both for the short term and for the long term. About the role of universities in the short term, it is revealed that; universities can contribute from various sides.

The first role is the role in contributing to capacity building in information technology. Universities can play a role in helping prepare an information system that can integrate various data such as congregational data, *muzaki* data (*zakat* payers), *mustahik* (*zakat* recipients) and can integrate various information with other mosques. This will greatly assist in the efficiency of mosque management. The second role is related to research. Research on effective mosque-based empowerment models is still very much needed to provide new avenues for mosque management to be able to play a better role in empowering the community. This research requires the involvement of lecturers and students on an ongoing basis.

Furthermore, the third role is the role of universities to carry out community service which in this case also needs to involve lecturers and students. Lecturers from various expertise backgrounds can be involved in this activity to contribute to improving the quality of mosque management, the quality of mosque

management human resources and the quality of the congregation in terms of improving the quality of Islam (*aqidah*, worship, morality) and *muamalah* related to economic development and those related to economic development. Other. For this activity, universities are deemed necessary to have units that can play a role in the development of mosques. Students also need to be involved in mentoring efforts both for mosque development activities and congregations.

Furthermore, related to the role of universities in the long term is through education. Universities need to prepare their graduates to have the attention and ability to be involved in the management and development of mosques. For this, universities need to prepare a curriculum so that the contents of the material taught in the lecture process also touch on the management of mosque development. The existence of a curriculum that explicitly mentions mosque development management can ensure that the college teaches and prepares students and graduates who can engage in mosque management.

Mosque as Empowerment Centre

The results of the discussion with the Mosque Takmir showed that; Firstly, the mosque should be a centre for community empowerment and therefore the mosque needed to empower the community by making excellent programs to be implemented. However, the implementation of the mosque empowerment program still has some limitations (such as limited human resources (HR), organizational structure, congregational map data and legal aspects). Secondly, mosques need campus involvement, especially from students to help identify/collect data on congregations/surrounding communities, and escort (accompaniment) the implementation of empowerment programs (assisting congregations in developing businesses). Students are needed to assist in the management of mosque management, to accompany the use of technology for micro-enterprises.

Thirdly, the mosque wants the involvement of Islamic Universities to join in helping the mosque in the empowerment program. Fourthly, to be able to optimize its programs, mosques need support from DMI to strengthen management and government support related to regulations. Fifth, to empower the economy of the community around the mosque in a productive way through economic activities such as providing productive capital and business development

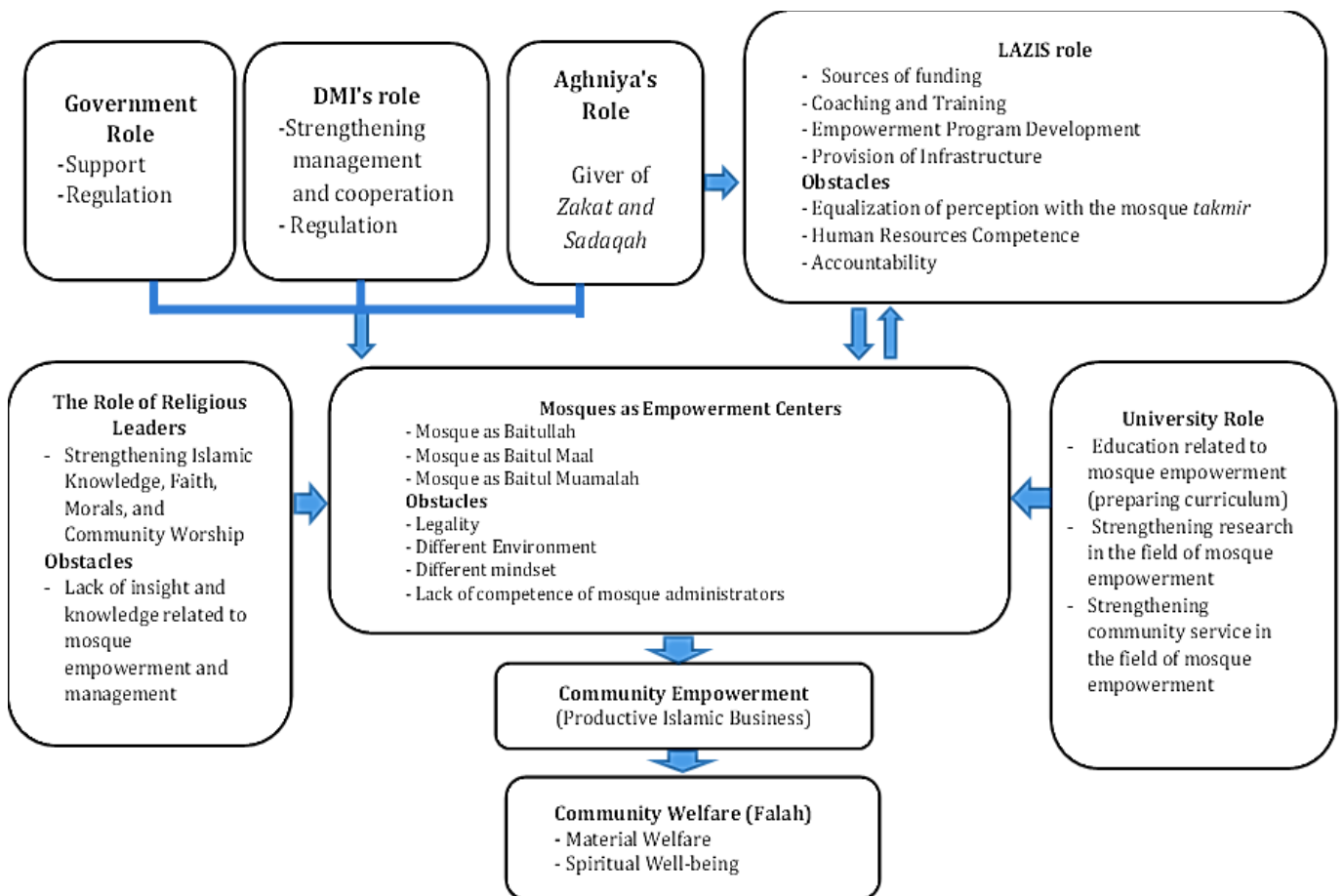
for employees who have income from the community around the mosque, is in collaboration with LAZIS. Sixth, apart from being a place of worship (Baitullah) and as a centre of da'wah, mosques can play a role as Baitul Mal, namely as the initiator, giving birth and developing Zakat, Infaq, Sadaqah, and Waqf Institutions, and mosques as Baitul Muamalah which contribute to improving the quality of life. It is conducted based on the funds that have been collected through the mosque. It requires the strengthening of mosque management and improving the quality of human resources, especially the strengthening of rukhiyah (Islamic values), as well as leadership and management factors.

From the findings of the study above about the function of mosques, it seems that it is in line with Saleh (2017), that mosques can be used as a centre for empowering effective ZIS fund management to strengthen the economic dimension, as well as the

findings of Amnah and Shihabbuddin (2016) which show that mosques have a significant role in the development of society where mosques can play a dual role in improving one's relationship with Allah and carrying out human worldly affairs. This finding shows the clarity of the mosque's potential to become a centre for community development and Ummah empowerment.

Mosque-Based Community Empowerment Model

Based on the results of the study through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) activities with the mosque takmir, LAZIS managers, religious leaders and academics, a mosque-based integrated community empowerment model can be formulated as follows (Figure 1):



Sources: qualitative data processed, 2023

Figure 1. Mosque-Based Integrated Empowerment Model

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the mosque is still expected to return to its function other than as a place of worship to Allah such as congregational prayers, the mosque is also a centre for social activities and a centre for community activities. The current reality shows that the function of the mosque has decreased, which is more likely only as a place of worship. To be able to carry out other functions - such as a centre for economic empowerment of the people - seems to require various efforts involving several parties. This is because there are still some weaknesses in mosque management and the resources of mosque managers both in terms of quality and quantity.

To be able to carry out the function of the mosque as a centre for the economic empowerment of the people, by making the mosque *Baitullah*, *baitul mal* and *baitul muamalah*, mosques still need several parties involved:

- (1) Universities in the short term can contribute to the development of technology, research and community service involving lecturers and students. Meanwhile, in the long term, universities can prepare human resources through education through curriculum development to prepare graduates who can contribute to the development of mosques;
- (2) Religious leaders can play a role in carrying out religious education (*aqidah*, morality, worship, *muamalah*) for the community around the mosque. However, currently, religious leaders still have limited insight related to community empowerment and in managing mosques;
- (3) The aghniya are willing to channel their funds to empower the community around the mosque;
- (4) The *Amil Zakat* institution (LAZIS) can function to supply the funds needed for the community's economic empowerment program, carry out various necessary coaching and training, such as mosque management, program development, and empowerment, as well as provide the necessary facilities and infrastructure for empowerment;
- (5) Involvement of the mosque council at the sub-district or municipal level. The mosque council can strengthen programs to improve the function of the mosque as ideally;
- (6) The role of the government is to provide regulation and support for the mosque's enrichment programs;
- (7) Mosque-based community empowerment will be realized properly by integrating power between

mosques, religious leaders, universities, aghniya and LAZIS, mosque councils and government support.

Based on the conclusions above, the managerial aspects that can be taken are: (1) Strengthening mosque collaboration with religious leaders, universities, *aghniya*, and LAZIS; (2) Universities can play a big role in developing useful technology to maximize the function of mosques for community development, conducting in-depth studies for mosque management development, and paying attention to community service by involving lecturers and students; (3) LAZIS with the funds under its control (successfully collected) can develop training programs for religious leaders to strengthen mosque management and empower the surrounding community.

This research is still limited to the scope of mosques in the city of Semarang which in its management still requires further development. To obtain a more comprehensive picture in the management of mosques as centres for community empowerment, future research is recommended to take a wider research area and take samples from mosques that have shown progress and management.

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