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## The Fate of Mosque in Post-pandemic Period: Youth's Perspective

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### Abstract

This paper offers valuable insights to complement efforts to improve youth engagement in mosque in the post-pandemic period. Given the paucity of research on recent changes in mosque activities, this paper sought to examine youths' understanding of mosque function and their engagement in mosque after the mosque reopened during the Movement Control Order (MCO). This study also aims to identify the factors that hinder youth engagement in the mosque and possible initiatives that could attract them to the mosque. A self-administered online survey was distributed exclusively through a nationwide online platform and targeted young respondents between the ages of 15 and 30 in Malaysia. A total of 594 usable responses were received and analysed using descriptive analysis and a chi-square test for independence. Both male and female youth showed a strong understanding of the role of the mosque, but results showed a significant decrease in youth engagement when the mosque reopened during the MCO. In addition to the perception that the mosque only needs to be attended during Friday prayers and Muslim festival days, lack of activities to suit youth tastes was cited as one of the main reasons for low youth participation in the mosque. Basic religious classes, outdoor and community activities were cited as favorable initiatives that could attract young people to the mosque. This is the first large-scale study of Muslim youth engagement in mosque after the global collapse of Covid-19, and further research could focus on developing an effective online communication model that could enhance the influence and role of the mosque in a community.

**Keywords:** Post-pandemic, Youth Engagement, Mosque, Community

### Introduction

The deadly Covid-19 pandemic with human-to-human transmission hits the globe in record time with death statistics demonstrating highest number in history compared to MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV, and Influenza (Liu et al., 2020; Peeri et al., 2020; Timeline of WHO's Response to COVID-19, 2020). As of August 2022, about 600 million people worldwide had been tested positive for the COVID-19 and more than 6.4 million deaths had been reported. Various

drastic measures have been taken by the world to contain the spread of the virus and this unprecedented situation lead to the Malaysian government's decision in imposing the Movement Control Order (MCO) beginning March 18th, 2020 and its strict orders are gradually lifted with close observations from the relevant authorities. Prior to the MCO, social activities were still allowed in the open with very minimal restrictions and without any Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) being imposed which include activities at the mosque.

However, fate took the better of the situation when the Covid-19 virus affected the mosque congregation at Masjid Sri Petaling during a mass gathering. To date, one of the largest clusters reported by the Ministry of Health is from the Masjid Sri Petaling mass gathering involving 40,000 individuals being screened with 3,375 tested positive for the virus and 34 fatalities (Tee, 2020). At the beginning of the MCO, daily congregation and Friday prayers were postponed following the highly strict MCO ruling (Roslan, 2020). Although the restrictions were gradually lifted after five months of strict orders, observations of the SOP were still being practiced at all places. While the virus was still at large, the MCO rulings were constantly being reviewed as cases of infections are closely observed and updated. Hence, any activities for the mosque involving its congregation and the public would have to adhere to the SOP which is generally termed by the Malaysian government as the 'new norm'. As of April 1, 2022, in line with the Malaysian government's move toward endemicity, enforcement has been relaxed, particularly under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 (Act 342), although the Ministry of Health has not ruled out the possibility of re-enforcing the law against those guilty of a violation (Salleh, 2022).

### **Literature Review**

The masjid or the mosque is a significant institution for Muslims. Almost all scholars agree that the mosque was the central institution for the ummah (Muslim community) in the post-Hijra period, after the emigration of the Meccan Muslims to Medina, and the emblem of the rise of Islamic civilization in the past (Khalid et al., 2020; Mustari et al., 2017; Rozaini et al., 2014). For example, Sabri & Toton (2017) emphasise that the establishment of Masjid Quba' and Masjid an-Nabawi upon arrival in the city of Medina from Mecca were among the first strategic steps taken by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the first phase of Hijrah. The mosque was not only the place where Muslims performed their communal prayer, but its function is much broader, encompassing every aspect of community life, including as a centre for information, education, and dispute resolution (Khan Afridi, 2011; Mansor et al., 2011; Remly et al., 2022). The institution has also been used as a place of gathering, discussion and planning that are not limited to the field of preaching and worshipping but also trade-related, legislation and state governance (Rozaini et al., 2014; Wan et al., 2021). In essence, the mosque was not only a place of worship, but also a place of unity and strength for the new Muslim community in Medina. Nevertheless, the mosques were not only an institution for socialization but its functions in transmitting religious values and traditions could sustain its significance, survival, and ascendancy of Islam and the ummah (Abdul Karim & Salleh, 2016; Ajmain, 2019; Haron et al., 2008). Hence, Islam is found to be the second largest religion globally (Kettani, 2019) while migration and conversion have motivated the establishment of the mosques. In Malaysia, more than six thousand eight hundred mosques have been set up nationwide until September 2022 (Portal Masjid v1.0, 2022).

Regardless of the increasing numbers of mosques being built nationwide in Malaysia, its significance as an institution for the sustainability and development of the ummah and Islam, may not be as regal in the post-Hijra period or during the reign of Islamic civilization.

Although the number of mosques is increasing, their role seems to be limited to certain acts of worship, such as for Islamic lecturers, prayer, dhikr, and Quran reading (Hamid et al., 2019; Putung@Abd.Mutalib & Ag.Basir, 2012; Suhardi et al., 2022), which are mainly attended by veterans (Ashaari & Firdaus, 2018; Darus et al., 2017; Mansor et al., 2011; Yussoff & Shaharuddin, 2020), and the younger generation seems to be turning away from the mosque (Fazaqa, 2009; Ibrahim et al., 2020; Kapinga & Van Hoven, 2021). The absence of young generations from the mosque is not only observed in Malaysia, but also in other parts of the world (Fazaqa, 2009; Kapinga & Van Hoven, 2021). As published in the Journal of Youth Studies, in an effort to show how young people make sense of religion on their journey to adulthood, Kapinga & Van Hoven (2021) found that almost all respondents in Metro Vancouver agreed that young people largely stay away from the mosque, even though the place serves some of their important functions. Earlier, Fazaqa (2009) reported an alarming fact about young people's involvement in the masjid during the 6th AMJA/NAIF Workshop for Imams in Houston TX. Despite the growing proportion within the Muslim community throughout the world, youth attendance at mosque and participation in other Islamic activities is rather minimal: only 41% of mosques in America are regularly attended by youth. While today's Muslim youths are waning away from engaging themselves with the mosque, this situation has affected the role of the mosque as a pillar of the Islamic community, especially as a central place for youth self-development, socialization, and networking. This situation has become a more concerning matter with the unprecedented spread of the Covid-19 virus that has hit worldwide. With activities involving private and social venue being constricted to Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), the mosque is likely to experience the impingement on the restrictions. Consequently, this may further demonstrate the decline of youths' engagement with the institution.

Various reasons had been identified as the factors that could disengage youth with the mosque, despite of its significance as the effective centre for the development of muslim community (Suhardi et al., 2022). One of the contributing factors is the absent of professional management and leadership quality among mosque committee members which lead to the decline of the mosque's functionality (Salamun & Rashid, 2016). In their study among 470 mosque committee leaders in the state of Terengganu, it was found that mosque leaderships are still lacking in view of professional knowledge and effective activity management. The functionality of the mosque probably does not meet the needs of young people either. In a study examining how young Muslims network and socialise in the mosque environment in Brisbane, Australia, it was found that while the mosque plays an important role in meeting their social and emotional needs, it lacks the availability and accessibility of desirable activities for youth (Karimshah et al., 2014). On the other hand, the mosques' inability of effectively promote its program to its targetting audience, particularly in taking the advantage of technology, is another reason for the lacking of public response (Suhardi et al., 2022). The use of social media platforms such as twitter, instgram and facebook has become an important element in the effort to attract the interest of various layers of the Muslim community to get closer to the mosque, especially the young generation (Wan et al., 2021).

The purpose of this study is to analyse young Muslims' engagement with the mosque in Malaysia. Youth are potrayed as indispensable assets for the sustainability of Islamic traditions that can break the "chain of Islamic struggle" for a thriving future, but they seem to be disconnected from most mosque activities. On average, youth in Malaysia make up just under 30% of the total population, with more than 60% being Muslim. Although the number of mosques in Malaysia is substantial, there is little institutional involvement in the

development of Muslim youth. (Hamid et al., 2019; Salleh & Ismail, 2018). Thus, the main objectives of this study are to (1) determine Muslim youths' engagement with the mosque after the institution was allowed to reopen during the MCO, (2) explore Muslim youths' understanding of the role of the mosque, (3) solicit respondents' opinions on the possible factors that hinder the younger generation's engagement with the mosque, and (4) identify activities that could promote youth engagement with the mosque. For data collection, an online survey was designed to obtain a nationwide opinion from Muslim youth in Malaysia. The research methodology is presented in the following section.

### Methodology

A self-administered survey was designed to collect the data. The Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability of the research instrument. The results confirmed that the instruments used in this study is valid and reliable. The survey was distributed exclusively through an online platform and targeted young respondents in line with the recent change to the Youth Societies and Youth Development Act (Amendment) 2019 (Act 668), which redefines youth as a person between the ages of 15 and 30 (Yunus & Landau, n.d.). The questionnaire was divided into four parts. Section A gathers the respondents' demographic information which include assessing the frequency to mosque before and after the institution was allowed to be reopened during the MCO. Section B seeks to evaluate the respondents' understanding on the function of the mosque. In this section, respondents are required to select each of the statement in the Likert-Scale format ranging from 1 to 3 where 1 is 'Disagree' and 3 is 'Agree'. Section C solicits respondents' opinion on possible factors that hinder the engagement of youth with the mosque and Section D solicits respondents' desire on activities that could attract youth to the mosque. Data gathered from 594 respondents were analysed using descriptive analysis and chi-square test of independence.

### Results and Discussions

#### *Demographic profile*

Table 1

*Demographic profile of the respondents (n=594).*

States	Frequency	Percent (%)
Northern State (Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang)	26	4.4
East Coast State (Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang)	54	9.1
West Coast State (Perak, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Melaka)	251	42.3
Southern State (Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor)	245	41.2
East Malaysia (Sarawak, Sabah, Labuan)	18	3.0
Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	159	26.8
Female	435	73.2
Total	594	100.0



As per demographic profile of the respondents in Table 1, majority of the respondents (42.3%) came from the West Coast State (Perak, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, and Putrajaya) and (41.2%) Southern States (Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, and Johor). Most of the respondents are female respondents with 73.2%.

#### *Engagement of Muslim youths with the mosque after its reopening during the MCO*

To determine the engagement of Muslims' youth with the mosque after its reopening during the MCO, the researchers examined the differences in frequency of Muslims' youth who attended to the mosque before the pandemic and after the institution was allowed to reopen during the MCO. At an individual basis, 72.7% shows no changes (frequency before and after MCO is still the same), followed by 23.6% shows decreasing pattern. The remaining 3.7% shows increasing pattern. This declining pattern suggests that the frequency of Muslims' youths who went to the mosque after it was reopened is markedly lower than they did prior to the pandemic.

Table 2

*Differences in frequency to mosque based on individual basis.*

Frequency to Masjid	Frequency	Percent (%)
Decrease	140	23.6
No changes	432	72.7
Increase	22	3.7
Total	594	100.0

#### *Muslim youths' understanding on the role of the mosque*

Table 3 indicates the mean scores for items regarding Muslims' youth understanding on the roles of the mosque. Item B1 which states "Masjid has a role to develop the right understanding about Islam within its community" represents the highest mean score with  $M = 2.9428$ ,  $SD = 0.29628$ . The second highest mean scores represent Item B4, "Masjid has a role to develop the spiritual, physical and intellectual aspect of its Muslim community" with  $M = 2.9158$ ,  $SD = 0.34306$ . This result is followed by item B3 which represents "Masjid is a suitable place to be the centre of development and expansion of economic activities within its Muslim community" with  $M = 2.8771$ ,  $SD = 0.38529$ , the lowest mean score is  $M = 2.8098$ ,  $SD = 0.46370$  which represents Item B2, "Masjid has a role to offer appropriate social services to its community such as counselling, financial or other basic needs assistance". Overall, it can be summarized that Muslims' youth in Malaysia have sufficient understanding on the roles of the mosque with  $M = 2.8864$ ,  $SD = 0.28622$ .

Table 3

*Muslims' youth understanding on the roles of the mosque.*

Muslim Youth's Understanding on Masjid	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Masjid has a role to develop the right understanding about Islam within its community.	B1	2.9428	0.29628
Masjid has a role to offer appropriate social services to its community such as counselling, financial or other basic needs assistance.	B2	2.8098	0.46370
Masjid is a suitable place to be the centre of development and expansion of economic activities within its Muslim community.	B3	2.8771	0.38529
Masjid has a role to develop spiritual, physical and intellectual aspect of Muslim community.	B4	2.9158	0.34306
Overall		2.8864	0.28622
Cronbach's Alpha=0.755			

A chi-square test of independence was also performed in order to examine the relation between Muslims' youth understanding on the roles of the mosque and frequency to mosque after MCO was lifted. However, the relationship between these two variables appeared to be not significant,  $X^2(3) = 3.673$ ,  $p = .299$ . Muslims' youth understanding on the roles of the mosque has no effect to the frequency of mosque attendance after the MCO was lifted.

Table 4

*Chi Square test of independence*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.673	3	.299
Likelihood Ratio	6.767	3	.080
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.861	1	.091
N of Valid Cases	594		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.58.

*Factors that hinder youth engagement with mosque*

Table 5 shows the ranking of possible reasons contributing to low mosque attendance among youth. The highest rank shows that the majority of respondents (76.2%) believe that the mosque only needs to be attended at certain times, such as Friday prayers and Hari Raya prayers. The second reason why young people do not go to the mosque is the organized activities that do not suit the tastes of young people (59.5%). Almost half of the respondents also admit that it is inconvenient to go to the mosque because not many other young people go there (48.2%). All other reasons score lower percentage including no encouragement from family members (36.8%), the feeling that the mosque does not play an important role in the life of a young person (34.1%) and the presence of young people is not welcomed by other community members (22.8%).

Table 5  
*Factors of low youth attendees to mosque*

Factors	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
Assuming that the mosque only needs to be visited at certain times, such as Friday prayers and Hari Raya prayers.	512	76.2	1
The activities that are organized do not correspond to the tastes of young people.	400	59.5	2
Inconvenient, because not many young people go to the mosque.	324	48.2	3
Not receiving encouragement from family members, especially parents/guardians.	247	36.8	4
The feeling that the mosque does not play an important role in the life of a young person.	229	34.1	5
Disagreements with older members of the congregation in the mosque, e.g., regarding dress and appearance.	222	33.0	6
Concerned about being ridiculed by peers	170	25.3	7
The presence of young people is not welcomed by other community members	153	22.8	8
Avoiding appointment to become part of the mosque authority.	103	15.3	9

*Initiatives to attract youth to mosque*

Based on Table 6, the organization of religious lectures on Al Quran study/memorization classes, prayer/worship motivation & funeral management are selected as the most favourable initiatives that could attract youngsters to mosque with scores of 62.5%. Outdoor sports activities as well as community and voluntary activities were almost equal to be ranked as second as the most preferable activities that would increase the engagement of youth with the mosque. Ranked as the 4<sup>th</sup> favourable initiatives for youth is the organization of motivational talks at 49.6%. The study also shows life skills development activities such as cooking, repairing motorbikes and financial management as well as information technology based program such as online business and e-sport are also among the favourable appeals that would increase the level of youth engagement with the mosque.



Table 6

*Possible initiatives to attract youth to mosque*

Initiatives	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
Lectures and tazkirah such as Al Quran study/memorization classes, prayer/worship motivation & funeral management.	420	62.5	1
Outdoor sports activities such as futsal, cycling & jungle trekking.	361	53.7	2
Social and voluntary activities such as security control & communal work.	356	53.0	3
Motivational talks.	333	49.6	4
Life skills development activities such as cooking, motor repairs & financial skills.	315	46.9	5
Information technology based program such as online business & e-sports.	311	46.3	6
Indoor sports activities such as table tennis, chess & carom.	270	40.2	7
Study tours and visit.	283	42.1	8
Academic & career development program.	246	36.6	9
Leadership and management program.	228	33.9	10

**Discussion**

This study reveals positive findings of Muslim youths' understanding on the roles of the mosque within its community. Most respondents recognised the various roles of the mosque beyond its fundamental function as a designated place for performing prayer or other worshipping activities. The study also established that there is no significant difference in the level of understanding between male and female respondents. However, it needs to be emphasized that this finding might have been greatly influenced by the fact that all of them are Muslims and 80% of the respondents are tertiary learners with the Islamic studies being a compulsory course for them. Inference may be made that highly educated youth group has greater expectations on the roles of the mosques. The finding may be the foundation in suggesting that youth should be given the opportunity to play significant roles in the management of the mosques, too. It has been suggested by Qari, (2011) that youths are eager to be recognised and be given the opportunity of more active roles at the mosque. For instance, the committee of the mosque could include a certain percentage of qualified youth as its members. This way, it may encourage and enhance youths' engagement at the mosque.

While the majority of respondents noted no change in the frequency of mosque attendance before and after the reopening, the fact that the number of young people attending the mosque during the post-reopening MCO decreased significantly raises some concern, particularly among mosque committee members and relevant religious authorities. On a positive note, however, the individual frequency of mosque attendance among youth increased slightly by 3.7% (See Table 2). Despite the restrictions imposed by the standard operating procedures (SOP) applicable to places of worship, this small percentage of youth have successfully maintained their mosque attendance routine. It may imply the presence of reinforced steadfastness and virtue in practice of faith as encouraged in the Holy Quran that, "The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last

Day, establish regular prayers, and practise regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance”, (At-Taubah 9:18). Though the positive result produced a nominal figure, it provides a distinct indication that this group of youths deserve due attention by the mosque authorities in maintaining and to further strengthen youths’ engagement in other mosque activities. By refining current practices and approaches, the youths may find the mosque as central in their social space.

It is very interesting to go through the feedback on possible initiatives that could be introduced by the mosque to attract young people. Although the highest preference in activities is considered traditional, i.e. lectures on basic Islamic practices, there was a significant percentage of preference for organizing physical activities, such as outdoor sports activities, as well as social and community activities. Other non-traditional initiatives such as motivational talks, life skills development activities, and programs based on IT were also preferred by the youth. In an open-ended section of the survey, many respondents emphasized the urgent need for mosque administrators to make efforts to introduce attractive programs for youth in the community. This includes engaging young people in developing fresh, creative, and energetic ideas for programs that meet the needs of young people in the community. This feedback is consistent with recent calls for a more inclusive strategy to attract youth to the mosque and create a youth-friendly mosque (Ashley, 2021; Samana, 2022). It is hoped that this progressive approach will improve youth engagement at the mosque in the near future.

The analysis of factors leading to low mosque attendance among young people indicates low motivation and interest among the younger generation to associate with this institution. Although the earlier findings show that they have a good understanding of the dynamic function of the mosque as a center of the Muslim community that goes beyond mere worship, young people come to the mosque only for the weekly routine of Friday prayers and the twice-yearly Hari Raya prayers. This phenomenon is in line with the second most important reason given by the respondents, which is that the activities organized by the mosque do not suit the taste of the young people. Apart from this, peer influence is also considered as an important explanation for the absence of young people, as the absence of other young people attending the mosque is also considered as an important reason for the absence of peers in the mosque. Also worth highlighting is the lack of encouragement to attend mosque by family members, especially parents/guardians, which is also cited as a popular reason for not attending mosque. This finding is somewhat consistent with Ashaari & Firdaus (2018) who emphasise that the failure to diversify the function of the mosque to meet the needs of the community, as well as early childhood education that does not emphasise the relationship with the mosque, has a direct impact on mosque attendance.

### **Recommendation**

Specific and valuable initiatives need to be formulated that could promote youth engagement in the mosque. This is consistent with Ajmain & Mohamad (2020) comments about the need to provide the necessary incentives to encourage Muslim youth to engage in mosque activities, such as creating special spaces for youth in the mosque or organising specific programmes not only for regular mosque attendees but also for Muslim youth in the community. Rather than just using the mosque as a place for routine activities, diversifying the mosque's function would provide more reasons for young people to come to the mosque. Hence, the mosque committee members need to be pragmatically ingenious, creative and innovative with their approaches in tackling the younger generations’ expectations of the

establishment which would have certain long-standing traditions. Engaging youths in dialogue sessions with the mosque administrators in a particular kariah or congregation may produce constructive insights to strategically plan and implement more sustainable initiatives for enriched youths' participations. In addition, further research needs to be conducted to determine the exact causes of the unfavourable trend in mosque attendance among youth, which could be due to a number of other possible factors, such as a non-youth-friendly atmosphere in the mosque, lack of promotion of mosque activities, lackadaisical and an indifferent attitude among Muslim youth.

The role of the media is considered very important in generating public interest in the mosque. Apart from the need for the mosque to maintain communication with Muslim youth, the fissures in the exchange may need to be appropriately fused. Bridging the communication gap is crucial to encourage more people to participate in the activities organised by the mosque (Remly et al., 2022; Yaacob, 2008). Through the use of various applications and modern digital platforms, these contemporary young Muslim prefer to spend their time in cyberspace rather than in the real world. According to the IMD World Digital Competitiveness Ranking 2021, Malaysia ranks second after Singapore among Southeast Asian countries in terms of digital competitiveness (Bris & Cabolis, 2021). Therefore, the use of social media in Malaysia should take this opportunity to make the most of it. Similarly, a suitable platform must be found that has good prospects and the potential to be used on a larger scale and more frequently. According to Wan et al (2021), the younger generation is more interested in using the Instagram platform than Facebook, which is used more by the over-40 generation. Nevertheless, further investigation is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of online platforms in trawling for Muslim youths with the mosque. Making the best use of various social media channels and applying the right and effective promotional strategy can further improve engagement and participation in mosque activities, especially among the younger generation. With cutting edge technology, it would be advantageous for the mosque authorities to keep updated with the trend for improved communication especially with the youths in dispersing relevant initiatives at the mosque. Even if youth engagement does not improve over time, creating a youth-friendly virtual environment could improve communication between the masjid and its community (Yaacob, 2008).

Similarly, the leadership and management ecosystem of the mosque must always be in the best position. Not only must it be in accordance with the Shariah, but it must also always meet the needs of the times. Mosque leaders must strive to overcome the narrow perception of the actual function of the mosque in today's society, especially among the youth. Apart from this, young people should be given space and opportunity to play a role in the mosque under the supervision and with the advice of the mosque administration. The implementation of mosque activities needs should also to be comprehensively evaluated so that the elements of their effectiveness can be continuously improved. Weaknesses in the implementation of activities must be duly noted and addressed, as it may lead to the community's lack of interest in attending the mosque (Yussoff & Shaharuddin, 2020). Suhardi et al (2022) highlighted several elements for an effective mosque program, including professional management, visitor data profiling, networking, and the use of information technology. On the other hand, Rahim et al (2014) found that the lack of emphasis by mosque administrators on four concepts, namely taqwa, prayer and prostration, hope, and mujahadah, contributed to the breakdown in the quality of leadership and performance of mosques in Malaysia. Meanwhile, effective management know-how combined with an effective management system creates an appropriate setting for achieving management goals in an organization (Johari et al., 2021).

Efforts to upgrade the skills and knowledge of administrators and mosque officials are also seen as an important strategy to face the current challenges and needs of the young community. For example, Rahim et al (2014) emphasised that imams must have psychological skills so that the mosque is seen as a place to complain, solve problems, and improve the lives of community members.

Table 7

*Example of creative initiatives for youth & mosque engagement*

Mosque Name (Location) Initiative Name: <i>Program Description</i>	References
Masjid Nur As-Sa'adah (Pengkalan Batu, Melaka) Subuh Istiqamah 40 Hari : <i>Bicycle gift for youth aged 12 to 23 who pray Suboh in the Masjid for 40 days continuously, worth RM20,000, donated by Qariah members and the public.</i>	<i>Meor Ahmad, (2022)</i>
Masjid An-Nur (Admiralty, Singapore) Belajar Jap! : <i>Special program on youth topics and fiqh issues.</i> ONZXONZ : <i>Daily &amp; flexible lessons on the Quran, physical and with Zoom.</i> Silat & Solat : <i>Martial art lesson.</i>	<i>Ali (2022)</i>
Masjid Ar-Raudhah (Bukit Batok, Singapore) The Sacred Path : <i>Discuss the story of the Prophet with reference to As-Syama'il Al-Muhammadiyah.</i> Masjid Al-Falah (Orchard Road, Singapore) Claim the Night : <i>Held online, with activities using tools like Kahoot!, Padlet, and Zoom.</i>	
Masjid Ar-Rahman (Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur) Smart Solat : <i>The goal is to improve understanding and implementation of the fundamentals of Islam and focus on aspects of faith in worship.</i> Seminar Motivasi Skor A & Ar-Rahman Smart Camp : <i>Program for the intellectual development of adolescents and the strengthening of personality and identity.</i>	<i>Mansor et al. (2011)</i>
Masjid Toh Puan Hatijah (Batu Gajah, Perak) Street Dakwah : <i>Care for the homeless and the asnaf group by giving donations, including personal equipment and food.</i> Masjid Sultan Azlan Shah (Ipoh, Perak) Fun Run, Fit Masjid : <i>Congregational prayers Maghrib, Isyak, Qiamulail, Subuh, Tazkirah, jogging around the mosque in prayer clothes.</i> Masjid Muhibbuddin Shah (Ipoh, Perak) Skuad Anak Angkat : <i>Youth outreach program to make the mosque a youth-friendly center.</i> Sejadah Boys : <i>Helping to pack the prayer rugs at each Friday prayer, preparing for the Hari Raya celebration program organized by the mosque, and participating in the Qurban program.</i> Team Hammam : <i>A dedicated young team that takes care of the cleanliness of the mosque.</i>	<i>Ibrahim et al.(2020)</i>

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Masjid Sultan Idris Shah II (Ipoh, Perak)

Tahfiz Junior : *Al-Quran memorization course on Juz 30 for young people between 7 and 15 years four days a week.*

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## Conclusion

The mosque is the landmark for Muslims in Malaysia and an influential institution in relation to Islamic traditions. The mosque should return to its basic task of polishing and promoting the potential of the youth as a link in the chain of struggle for the dignity of Islam. Full attention must be paid to them so that the young Muslim generation does not continue to be neglected and engage in unproductive activities that are detrimental to their future. Their presence in the mosque can serve as a gauge of the religious strength of the young people and must be observed accordingly. The assumption that mosques and mosque buildings are places for elderly and retired people is wrong. Even the presence of young people in the mosque can at least create an awareness of goodness that makes it easier for a person to avoid prohibitions or evil (Mohamed, 2022). The reopening of Hagia Sophia in Turkey for its first Friday prayer as a working mosque nearly nine decades later (Gall, 2020) sets a new manifestation to the roles of the mosque worldwide especially to countries with Muslim majority such as Malaysia. It is necessary to expand and enhance the roles of the mosque in the community as a significant institution for value added services. The organization of various programs and activities initiated by mosques today should also be in line with the aspirations and image of the contemporary community not only to Muslims but also the non-Muslims. This may further strengthen social relations in Malaysia that is made up of multicultural society. Such efforts of extending help to the community that include Muslims and non-Muslims were visible during the lockdown in certain parts of Malaysia during the first wave of the spread of Covid-19 which gained much applaud nationwide (Faiz, 2020). Even Muslim youths in the west are taking proactive roles in reaching out and provide assistance to the elders as demonstrated by a group of youth from a mosque congregation in Morton Grove, Illinois (Johnson, 2020).

In efforts to accomplish UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), mosque and religious authorities in Malaysia may need to make a paradigm shift towards the SDG's sixteenth goal for peace, justice and strong institution. Consequently, the mosque can be the place for further achieving the other goals in the SDG which include the tenth SDG that is to reduce inequalities. Finally, applying some suggestions as illustrated by Japan's Society 5.0 in utilizing technology for improved social mobility could provide a platform for youths who are largely tech savvy to encourage their engagement in the mosque initiatives for enhanced roles and services. This study also suggests that further research should be undertaken on various topics, including a preliminary model for effective online communication for the mosque to revitalise the institution as a landmark for the Muslim community and expand its role in multicultural Malaysia. Importantly, efforts to improve the engagement of Muslim youth, who are the bridge that will connect the traditions of the past to the present, must be duly accelerated. It should not be considered a lost cause, nor should it be deliberately ignored, as it is one of the most important efforts for a better future for Muslims. Perhaps this issue needs a little flexibility to give more space to youth participation in mosques. It should not be seen simply as an old problem, but as a perennial challenge that requires new approaches and bold responses.



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