

Mosque-Based Community Empowerment in Improving the Economy of the Muhammadiyah Taqwa Mosque Dolok Masihul, Serdang Bedagai Regency

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Abstract

In the context of community development, mosques can be used to improve worshippers' welfare through various forms of empowerment. This study aims to analyze the economic empowerment strategy of the congregation implemented by the Muhammadiyah Taqwa Mosque located in Dolok Masihul District, Serdang Bedagai Regency. The method was qualitative descriptive, with data collection carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The study's findings indicate that mosques play a role not only as a place of worship but also as a center for economic empowerment of the ummah through various programs such as Sharia-based cooperatives, skills training, and management of ummah funds. This empowerment positively impacts the economic welfare of pilgrims, building independence and strengthening social solidarity. The active role of mosque administrators, collaboration with community leaders, and congregational participation are key factors for the success of the implementation of these programs.

Keywords

Community Empowerment, Congregational Economy, Mosque, Welfare, Participation.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Mosques play an important role in the lives of Muslims, serving as places of worship and as centers of the community's social, educational, and economic activities. In the context of community development, mosques can be used to improve worshippers' welfare through various forms of empowerment. Amid various social and economic challenges, mosque-based empowerment is a relevant and contextual solution (Villafuerte & Mosquera, 2020).

The main focus of most mosque worshippers today tends to be on the physical construction of a magnificent and aesthetic mosque. This phenomenon is strengthened by data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which reveals that around 89.9% of approximately 800 thousand mosques throughout Indonesia are rarely used for religious activities (Haniah et al., 2020). In addition, the survey results estimate that the number of mosques in Indonesia reaches around 800,000 units; basic problems such as poverty experienced by worshippers often go unnoticed. This generally happens because there is still a limited understanding of the role and function of mosques in the community's social life (Hamdi et al., 2022).

Mosques have an important role in the economic aspect, especially through the use and management of funds sourced from zakat, infaq, alms, and waqf (ZISWAF), with zakat fitrah as an annual routine activity ahead of Eid al-Fitr. Around 92% of mosque administrators have managed this (Meilan & Mariani, 2023). Mosque activities such as youth study groups, adult taklim assemblies, and various religious activities support mosque-based economic empowerment. In addition, mosques also have the potential to develop microfinance, which directly impacts social welfare, especially for the underprivileged. A study in Bangladesh showed that microcredit can help people experiencing poverty, increase consumption, and strengthen their asset ownership (Reggina & Indriani, 2023). Based on this, this study chose the Muhammadiyah Taqwa Mosque Dolok Masihul as the object of study, considering that this mosque is one of the large mosques in the Serdang Bedagai area with many worshippers.

On the other hand, improving the community's economy is part of efforts to implement the Islamic economic system, which aims to enable Muslims to live more independently and raise the status and dignity of community groups still trapped in poverty and backwardness. This effort is needed to improve their economic conditions (Pujiono et al., 2023).

Based on these backgrounds and problems, this study aims to explore the potential of the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque in supporting programs to improve the economic welfare of its worshippers. This study aims to

analyze the economic empowerment strategy of the congregation implemented by the Muhammadiyah Taqwa Mosque located in Dolok Masihul District, Serdang Bedagai Regency. It is hoped that this article can be a basis for playing an active role as mosque administrators, cooperation with community leaders, and the congregation's participation as key factors in the success of implementing the program.

2. METHODS

The study adopts a qualitative approach and includes a descriptive type of research. (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2007) explained that qualitative research is a method used to investigate issues related to humans and society. Researchers are required to convey their research findings based on observations and information obtained in the field; all information is analyzed and compiled systematically in the form of research reports. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975), the qualitative approach is a method that produces data in descriptive form, which is a detailed description conveyed through words. In this study, the researcher uses as the main source, primary data refers to information that is directly obtained from respondents during the data collection process. In a qualitative approach, the data is collected through observation, interviews, and documentation and then analyzed comprehensively. The data is collected and developed to explore the meaning and dynamics that occur in the field. Therefore, primary data is the main foundation in studying and expanding understanding of the practice of economic empowerment of the congregation at the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque.

This study has four informants: Muhammadiyah branch leaders, empowerment program implementers, community leaders, and surrounding congregations. This method of selecting informants uses purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a method in which researchers selectively determine participants who are considered to have specific traits or experiences that are appropriate to the research objectives. The following is a table of the initials of informants from various parties.

Table 1. The initials of informants from various parties.

| Initials | Information |
|-----------------|--|
| MDS | Muhammadiyah Branch Leader of Taqwa Dolok Masihul Mosque |
| HN | Empowerment Program Implementer |
| NH | Community Leaders |
| A and R | Congregations Around |

The data analysis method in this study consists of three stages. The first stage is to compress the data by selecting, focusing, summarizing, and converting the raw data

into a more concise form. This stage is also often referred to as data reduction. The second stage is to present the data condensed in a form that makes it easier to conclude. The last stage is to draw and verify the conclusions, which is the process of making conclusions from the research results while ensuring that the conclusions are supported by the data that has been collected and analyzed. In this study, the method to ensure the validity of the data was carried out using triangulation. It involves the use of various sources of information to verify data. According to Sugiyono, triangulation can be done by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documents to increase the reliability of the information obtained. This helps ensure that the data collected is consistent and trustworthy.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 *Mosque-Based Community Empowerment Program*

The Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque implements a mosque-based Economic Empowerment program. This initiative was held because the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque functions like a mosque in the time of the Prophet PBUH, especially in terms of economy. Therefore, this mosque plays a role in empowering and improving the economic welfare of the surrounding community through various activities, including providing business capital assistance for people in need, both for business and daily needs. According to the Director of the Taqwa Mosque of Muhammadiyah, the purpose of this mosque-based economic empowerment program is so that MSME actors who receive assistance from mosques can become individuals who are also able to support people in need (Rosari et al., 2024). This is in line with the words of Allah in Q. S. An-Nahl Verse 125:

Meaning: *"Invite people to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel, and engage in dialogue with them politely and gently. Indeed, only your Lord knows best who is lost and who is guided"* (Q.S. An-Nahl Verse 125).

In this regard, in observing the impact of researching the strategy of the mosque-based economic empowerment program run by the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque to the surrounding community, the researcher uses a number of indicators as a reference, including (Ap. Moreira & Wanda Rutkoskwi, 2021):

1. The existence of an institution or organization that focuses on empowerment,
2. Individual involvement in empowerment groups,
3. Financing facilities or the provision of business capital,
4. The process of mentoring program participants,
5. Education and training activities.



Figure 1. Interviewing Mrs. HN as the implementer of the empowerment program.

The impact felt by the surrounding community on the implementation of mosque-based empowerment programs in encouraging the improvement of the congregation's economy includes (Irawan et al., 2023): First, the existence of economic empowerment institutions managed by the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque makes a real contribution to improving the economic condition of the congregation. Second, the high participation of pilgrims in empowerment groups has a significant positive impact on their welfare. Third, access to business financing makes it easier for pilgrims who need capital to start or develop their businesses. Fourth, through mentoring, the surrounding community benefits in terms of knowledge and the establishment of friendship between congregations.

3.2 Management in the economic, social, spiritual, and educational fields

Based on (Nasution et al., 2021), in every community-strengthening activity, the community's position is placed as the main actor in economic, social, cultural, and development aspects. This process prioritizes the potential and resources owned by the community to achieve fair and equitable development, especially in rural areas. This approach is known as *people-centered development*, a development concept that views creativity and community initiative as the main source of development and places welfare materially and spiritually as its main goal (Kohne, 2019). Therefore, empowerment is understood as a process that emphasizes the program's implementation without neglecting the results and cannot be separated from the function of accompanying the target group.

In line with this concept, the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque participates in empowerment and development through various programs related to community aspects. To support these activities, this mosque also provides a number

of supporting facilities, including (Kuwawenaruwa et al., 2020): Separate prayer rooms for male and female worshippers; Special ablution places for men and women; Secretariat building; mosque towers; Funeral equipment, including coffins and equipment for bathing the body.

The mosque is an effort to optimize the implementation of mosque functions appropriately and optimally. Based on the principles in management science (Sarah), a mosque manager or manager generally performs the following functions (Tyagi, 2023):

- Planning

Planning in the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque This is very crucial to set the focus and as a roadmap that will be used so that all resources run according to plan in achieving the predetermined goals. Without planning, a project will lose its direction and focus, so it can waste existing resources, something that Allah SWT does not want. With planning, implementing activities at the Taqwa Muhammadiyah Mosque can be carried out more regularly and planned. Through good planning about the things that must be done and how to implement them, we can set the priorities of activities that must be prioritized. With this approach, activities in mosques can be carried out gradually and well organized to achieve the goals that have been set. This planning process includes a series of decisions, starting from determining objectives, policies, program preparation, setting methods, and procedures to scheduling time for implementation.

- Organizing

Organizing is an activity that groups various actions into certain units to carry out the tasks or plans made and establish the working methods between leaders and members in each unit. To achieve a goal, individuals with expertise in the organization's field are required. Thus, an organization can be understood as a collection of two or more people who have the same goal. In order for these goals to be achieved, it is important to design supportive measures and activities. These steps are generally compiled as a work list that is then analyzed and divided into various activity centers as a form of structured cooperation in an organization. The Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque also applies this by forming a mosque management structure, such as the Mosque Prosperity Council (DKM) and other supporting staff.

3.3 Strengthening in the economic, social, spiritual, and educational fields

The strengthening of the mosque-based economy in preaching the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Medina is more directed at three main aspects. First, the cultivation of Islamic business ethics values must be applied in trade activities in the market and other places. This includes prohibiting fraudulent practices, cheating, usury, and other non-halal acts and strengthening the brotherhood bond between the Muhajirin and the Ansar as the foundation of social and economic solidarity (Tatara et al., 2022). Assistance from the Ansar to the Muhajirin experiencing economic difficulties gradually helps them build the economy. With capital support, some started businesses or traded in the market, as Abdurrahman bin Auf did. With the provision of land, some of them also started farming and others. As time went on, the Muhajirin began to be able to meet their own needs and were no longer completely dependent on aid, although there were still a small number who needed help (Stephenson, 2023).

On the other hand, the Ansar, motivated by obedience to Allah and His Messenger, willingly share a portion of their wealth with brothers and sisters in need, which in turn brings inner peace, increases work motivation, and impacts their increased sustenance. The third aspect of economic strengthening is to build a market around the Prophet's Mosque. Currently, the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque also has several initiatives for the community's economic empowerment, such as the establishment of Baitul Maal and zakat houses (Muliati et al., 2018). However, implementing these programs still cannot be realized optimally due to limited facilities and funds.



Figure 2. Planting chili peppers on the top floor of the mosque

Some of the steps taken by the Prophet in shaping the social attitude of the Islamic community include Undergoing religious experiences in mosques, such as when

participating in prayers together, Through the teaching at the Prophet's Mosque, and the example that continues to be given by the Prophet. For example, the teaching of verses of the Qur'an and hadith that emphasizes equality between all people in Islam, as explained in QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13 is about the significance of brotherhood. The obligation of collaboration between men and women in promoting goodness. The moral education taught by the Prophet is comprehensive, not only in the form of verbal advice but also through his noble examples of actions and behaviors that align with the Qur'an's teachings (Salik, 2019). The Prophet also strengthened the bonds of brotherhood between the Muhajirin and Ansar communities by establishing fraternal relations. This had a profound spiritual impact on the people of Medina at that time. On many occasions, the Prophet treated all Muslims fairly and equally, both from the Ansar and the Muhajirin. For example, he gave Bilal, an enslaved Black person, the opportunity to call the azan. In each meeting, the Prophet asked for opinions from each group of Ansar and Muhajirin. Similarly, in the order of jihad, those who raised the flag of Islam and the fighters who were ordered to fight against the enemies of the Quraysh came from both groups (Desrianita, 2018).

Seeing from this phenomenon, the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque provides services to the community, especially in terms of Holding Mass Circumcision events and assisting orphans, providing funeral care services for residents who have died, Carrying out the slaughter and distribution of sacrificial animals, Receiving zakat, infaq, and alms payments.

During his stay in Medina, education for Muslims was centered in the Prophet's Mosque. Men and women have equal access to learning activities. The lessons taught include the values of the Qur'an, which are conveyed through public lectures and in halaqah sessions, namely gathering in a circle around the Prophet during the obligatory prayer break (Connolly et al., 2019). The learning process also occurs in every meeting and journey with the Prophet. Several Muslim women directly asked the Prophet questions, while others conveyed them through the Prophet's wives. Abu Hurairah, one of the companions who accompanied the Prophet the most, once narrated that when the Prophet was lecturing at an assembly, a villager asked when the apocalypse would occur (Hidayat & Jafar, 2021). Although the Prophet continued to speak, some people responded to the question. Anas bin Malik, another companion, also narrated that when they gathered in the mosque with the Prophet, a man came to meet the Prophet and asked him something. Um Salamah, who was the wife of the Prophet, narrated that on one occasion, Um Sulaim, the wife of Abu Talhah, came to the Prophet to inquire about the obligation to purify after intercourse (Shahihal-

Bukhari, Babilmu). Although the way of education used by the Prophet at that time was simpler compared to later ones, the foundation he created had a significant influence on the life of humanity in this world (Ilhan & Gülersoy, 2019).

In addition to empowering in the social field, the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque also organizes various religious education programs by the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad Saw, including Building a Qur'an learning garden for children To hold routine studies of the Ta'lim Council every Tuesday night; To conduct special studies for teenagers; Organizing studies for mothers (aisyah); Hold recitations for gentlemen (Malik, 2017).

The empowerment of the spiritual dimension began while in Makkah, where the Prophet succeeded in creating a small community of Muslims who subsequently played a pioneering role in disseminating teachings in Medina with the Prophet (saw). When the pressure from the Quraysh was increasing, and the situation of the Muslims was very difficult in carrying out worship, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) decided to migrate to Medina (Purwanti et al., 2023). The process of the Prophet's migration to Medina began with the companions. Some companions had departed before Ba'iat kubra, but most departed only after the second Ba'iat 'Aqabah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) followed them about two months after the Bai'at event. On the night of 27, Shafar, in the 14th year of the Prophethood, left his house accompanied by Abu Bakr. By choosing an unusual route, the Prophet succeeded in deceiving the Quraysh, who had surrounded his residence all day. He then hid in the Tsaur Mountain Cave for three nights.

Furthermore, with the help of Abdullah bin Uraiqith, who acted as a guide, the Prophet continued his journey to Yathrib. About seven months after his arrival, the Prophet stayed at the house of a member of the Banu an-Najjar named Abu Ayub. At that location, right in front of Abu Ayub's house, the Prophet bought a plot of land belonging to two orphans, Sahl and Suhail, which was later built to become the Prophet's Mosque (Rijal, 2020). After the mosque's construction was completed, next to the mosque was also built a very simple residence of the Prophet.

As previously explained, the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque functions as a place and center of worship for Muslims, where people can carry out worship without being limited by time. In carrying out the strategy, the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque sets and develops weekly, monthly, and annual activity goals. This mosque also regulates work plans for the future by paying attention to and setting policies, providing encouragement, and dividing tasks to the mosque takmir management according to the strategy planned and

implemented in real action. Implementing this strategy requires good performance and high discipline so that the results are maximum and the activities can occur as planned.

The evaluation by the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque is carried out through weekly meetings, where various problems that arise are discussed, solutions are sought, and a program of activities for the following month is determined (Susilo et al., 2021). This evaluation activity provides experience and learning for mosque takmir administrators, with the aim that the implementation of future work programs can run more effectively and optimally.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussions discussed previously, conclusions can be drawn as follows: Mosque-based community empowerment in improving the economy of the congregation carried out by the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque includes several steps. First, conduct environmental analysis by mapping the surrounding community based on census data. Second, the Muhammadiyah Taqwa Mosque Dolok Masihul sets and designs weekly, monthly, and yearly activity objectives. Third, strategies are evaluated in weekly meetings to discuss problems, find solutions, and plan programs for the coming month. This evaluation activity provides experience and lessons for mosque takmir administrators so that future programs can be implemented more efficiently. The impact of mosque-based community empowerment on the surrounding environment in terms of improving the economy of worshippers includes several aspects. First, the existence of an economic empowerment institution program implemented by the Muhammadiyah Dolok Masihul Taqwa Mosque contributes to improving the economic condition of the surrounding community. Second, the active involvement of the community in the empowerment group has a significant positive effect. Third, there is a funding program for business capital to help people in need, making it easier to start a business. Fourth, the assistance provided is useful in increasing knowledge and strengthening community relationships.

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