

Mosque-Based Community Empowerment: A Case Study of Muhammadiyah Mosques in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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The mosque is the largest place of worship among the five religions practiced by the Indonesian people, especially in South Sulawesi. The mosque is one of the most important institutions in the Islamic community and plays a significant role in daily life. Data from the SIMAS of the Ministry of Religious Affairs recorded 12,867 mosques in South Sulawesi. The type of research used is a Qualitative Approach. Therefore, the research results show that based on the information provided, the economic empowerment programs for the community conducted or planned in several mosques include the collection and distribution of zakat given to those in need, especially during the fasting month, and the mosques provide small loans to the community to assist them in economic activities. The mosque also strives to have a greater positive impact on the welfare of the community and the overall progress of the mosque.

1. Introduction

The mosque is a place of worship for Muslims. Besides being a place of worship, mosques are also often used for religious activities and other social activities such as TPA (Islamic education for children), breaking the fast together, Eid al-Adha sacrifices, board meetings, and religious study circles. (Yeni et al., 2021). Mosques are also used as places to hold activities related to religion and other social activities. (Haerdy & Kusuma, 2022). Along with the increasing number of mosque constructions and ethics in Indonesia, the opportunities to maximize the function of mosques in relation to community empowerment also grow. The purpose of the welfare mosque is explained in detail both in the Qur'an and in the Sunnah, and because this Sunnah has a very positive impact on the wider community. To achieve a specific goal, thereby benefiting many people. (Pradesyah et al., 2021).

Mosques established under the auspices of Muhammadiyah are not only places of worship but also centers of education, social welfare, and economic empowerment for the community. Through the establishment of these mosques, Muhammadiyah has spread moderate and inclusive Islamic teachings and provided broader access to quality religious education. In addition, Muhammadiyah mosques also serve as centers for social and cultural activities, strengthening the network of Muslim communities in various regions of Indonesia.

There are several mosques in South Sulawesi, here is the data about the mosques in South Sulawesi:

Table 1.1 Mosque Data in South Sulawesi

No	Mosque Data	Amount
1.	National Mosque	
2.	Grand Mosque	
3.	Grand Mosque	4
4.	Great Mosque	75
5.	Jami Mosque	647
6.	Historic Mosque	9
7.	Mosques in Public Places	851
TOTAL		2.867

Source: simas.kemenag.go.id 2024

1.1 Background

In Indonesia, mosques are the largest places of worship among the five religions practiced by the Indonesian people, especially in South Sulawesi. Mosques are one of the most important institutions in the Islamic community and play a significant role in daily life. The Simas Kemenag mosque information data in South Sulawesi recorded 12,867.

Mosques in South Sulawesi play a very important role in the social, cultural, and religious life of the local community. South Sulawesi is one of the provinces in Indonesia with a majority Muslim population, possessing many historical mosques with high spiritual value. The mosque first appeared in South Sulawesi during the spread of Islam in the region, which occurred around the 16th century. Since then, Islam has rapidly developed in South Sulawesi, particularly in the Bugis, Makassar, and Toraja kingdoms, which played a significant role in the Islamic process in this region. Mosques became symbols of the social and religious changes that occurred at that time.

Community empowerment based on Muhammadiyah mosques is closely related to "self-sufficiency" and various community-based empowerment programs. The planning encompasses various aspects ranging from spiritual (religious), economic, socio-cultural, artistic, and others that are self-sustaining. In the context of mosques, a mosque that empowers its community is one that advances and strengthens its community towards more ideal and creative mosques.

1.2 Problem Statement

The problems faced in the community empowerment based on Muhammadiyah mosques in South Sulawesi include a lack of understanding regarding the function of mosques as centers for socio-economic empowerment and low levels of community participation in empowerment activities.

1.3 Objectives and Scope

This research aims to identify the obstacles that make it difficult to implement or run empowerment programs, and to understand the role of mosques in community empowerment.

2. Literature Review

Etymologically, empowerment comes from the root word "daya," which means strength or ability. Therefore, empowerment can be understood as a process towards becoming empowered or a process to acquire power or capability. The process of empowerment from those who have power to those who lack or do not yet have it.

The process will refer to a concrete action carried out gradually to transform the condition of the weak community in terms of knowledge, attitude, and practice towards mastery of knowledge, conscious behavioral attitudes, and good skill competencies.

Community empowerment based on Muhammadiyah mosques is a process to make the

community independent through various empowerment programs and by taking the mosque as the center of activities. In order for the mosque to function optimally both as a place of worship and as a center for empowerment, it is necessary for the administrators to meet certain requirements, namely, having a positive character, possessing faith, and having knowledge about the functions of the mosque according to Islamic teachings, as well as a heart that loves the mosque.

3. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach to examine the preferences and perceptions of mosque managers regarding community empowerment. As part of the data collection process, interviews were conducted with the managers of 35 mosques located in various areas. The table below lists the names of the mosques, the positions of the managers, and the interview dates, which took place between November 8 and 10, 2024. The data is presented in the table below. This data provides deeper insights into Community Empowerment.

Tabel 3.1 interview data

Nama Masjid	Position	Date of interview
Masjid Nurul Muhammad Boka	President	08-Nov-24
Masjid Jami Nurul Jihad Panciro	President	08-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Nurul Iman Panciro	President	08-Nov-24
Masjid babussalam	President	08-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Nurussalam Pattiro	President	08-Nov-24
Masjid Al-Mujahidin Tonrokombang	President	08-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Ni'matullah Bangkeng Ta'bing	President	08-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Darul Agsa Baddo-Baddo	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid Baitush-sholihin Diklat Unismuh	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Nurul Ilmu Panciro	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah hidayatullah batumenteng	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Nurul yaqin tonrokombang	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid muhammadiyah al-munawwarah teammate	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid muhammadiyah Al-amin romanglompoa	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Nurul Haq Romanglompoa	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Nurul Iman Tamajannang	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Nurul Iman Tanabangka	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid baitul makmur Bontomaero	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid nurul iradah pattolosang	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid jami nurul hidayah panyangkalang	President	09-Nov-24

Masjid muhammadiyah barembeng	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid hayatul iman muhammadiyah Kampong Daeng	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Rahmatul Ummah Pandang-pandang	President	09-Nov-24
Masjid muhammadiyah Al-Amin Panciro	President	10-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Al-Ikhwah Paranga	President	10-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Al-Mujahidin Malino	President	10-Nov-24
Masjid muhammadiyah Nurul Hasanah Ritaya	President	10-Nov-24
Masjid muhammadiyah Nurul Jihad Likuboddong	President	10-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Babul Firdaus Datarang	President	10-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Babussalam Pabarrung	President	10-Nov-24
Masjid muhammadiyah Nurul iman Silanggaya	President	10-Nov-24
Masjid muhammadiyah Baiturrahman Benga	President	10-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Babul Jannah Bongki	President	10-Nov-24
Masjid Muhammadiyah Fastabiqul Khairat Bontobiraeng		
Masjid Muhammadiyah Babul Haq Bontotangnga		

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Key Findings

This study uses a qualitative approach to examine the preferences and perceptions of mosque managers regarding community empowerment. As part of the data collection process, interviews were conducted with the managers of 35 mosques located in various areas. The table below lists the names of the mosques, the positions of the managers, and the interview dates, which took place between November 8 and 10, 2024. The data is presented in the table below. This data provides deeper insights into Community Empowerment.

Table 1. Age of Interview

No	Age	Interview	Presentase %
1.	< 25	2	5%
2.	26-35	2	5%
3.	46-55	17	50%
4.	>56	14	40%
	TOTAL	35	100%

According to the research results, out of a total of 35 informants, the highest percentage of 50% (17) is in the age group 46-55 years, followed by 40% (14) in the age group >56 years, followed by 5% (2) in the age group <25 years, and 5% (2) in the age group 26-35 years.

Table 2. Gender of interview

Gender	Interview	Presentase (%)
Female	0	0
male	35	100%
Total	35	100%

The result based on the gender distribution table shows that all the Informant were males totaling 35 representing 100% of the total number of Informant and no female Informant participated in this study. This shows that the study focused specifically on male Informant only.

Table 3. Education of interview

No	Last Education	Interview	Presentase (%)
1.	elementary school	0	0%
2.	junior high school	0	0%
3.	senior high school	11	32%
4.	S1	20	58%
5.	S2	4	10%
	Total	35	100%

The results of the latest educational achievement research on the Informants show that out of a total of 35 Informants, the majority have a bachelor's degree (S1), with 20 (58%). Followed by 11 (32%), followed by strata 2 (S2) 4 (10%). Elementary and middle school graduates, each with 0 (0%). This data shows that the majority of the informants have a Bachelor's degree (S1).

Table 4. Employment of interview

No.	Job background	Interview	Presentase (%)
1.	Mahasiswa	1	2%
2.	Imam	1	2%
3.	Wiraswasta	2	6%
4.	Petani	13	38%
5.	Pegawai Negeri Sipil (PNS)	10	29%
6.	Pensiunan	8	23%
	Total	35	100%

The research results on the informants' work backgrounds show that 35 informants have different work backgrounds. The largest group is farmers with 13 (38%), followed by civil servants with 10 (29%), and then retirees with 8 (23%). Meanwhile, other occupations such as students and imams each have one (2%). This data shows that the majority of the informants are farmers.

Table 6. Congregation capacity interview in mosque

Capacity of the congregation	Presentase (%)
<100 worshippers	0%
100-200 worshippers	0%
<500 worshippers	82%
500-1000 worshippers	18%
Total	100%

The majority of mosques (82%) have a capacity of less than 500 people, followed by mosques with a capacity of 500-1000 people at 18%, and mosques with a capacity of less than 100 people

and 100-200 people at 0% each. This shows that mosques with a capacity of <500 people dominate according to the needs of the community.

5. Discussion

This research explores the role of Muhammadiyah mosques in South Sulawesi as centers for community empowerment. The analysis results show that mosques do not only function as places of worship but also as social institutions with great potential in improving the economic welfare of the community. Data shows that the majority of mosques have a capacity of less than 500 worshippers, creating a more intimate environment and allowing the management to better understand the specific needs of the community. With a majority of the educational background being at the bachelor's degree (S1) level, the mosque administrators possess the knowledge and skills necessary to design and implement effective empowerment programs. Based on the interview results, the empowerment program conducted by the mosque includes the organization of Quran teaching and regular study sessions to enhance the understanding and knowledge of the congregation.

One of the informants explained, *"We regularly hold study sessions every week, including training in funeral management and social services such as providing chairs for public use, so that the congregation feels more connected to the mosque."* In addition, youth development programs are also conducted to strengthen their spirituality and Islam. There are also study sessions and regular meetings that play a role in strengthening the unity of the mosque community. However, the main challenge faced is the lack of public understanding regarding the function of the mosque as a center for socio-economic empowerment. One of the mosque administrators conveyed, *"Many congregants still see the mosque only as a place of worship without realizing its great potential for economic empowerment."* This research found that there is a need for more intensive and structured educational programs to raise public awareness about the role of mosques in empowerment.

In the economic aspect, although some mosques have started initiatives such as collecting and distributing zakat, as well as providing humanitarian aid and small loans to the community, the economic empowerment programs for the community are still limited. One of the administrators noted, *"We have indeed collected zakat, especially during Ramadan, but we have not yet optimally developed long-term economic empowerment programs."* From the perspective of financial management, the research results show that most mosque funds are kept in conventional banks, although some also choose Islamic banks. This indicates the need for mosque managers to better understand and utilize financial services that comply with Sharia principles, which can support halal and sustainable economic activities.

6. Conclusion

Overall, this research emphasizes that Muhammadiyah mosques in South Sulawesi have great potential in community empowerment. Although there are challenges such as the lack of public understanding about the function of mosques, experienced and educated mosque managers can be the key to overcoming this issue. It is important for mosques to not only function as places of worship but also as centers for social and economic empowerment. By raising public awareness and utilizing appropriate financial services, mosques can significantly contribute to improving community welfare. Recommendations for further research include the development of more structured educational programs and collaboration between mosque administrators and other institutions to maximize the mosque's function as a center for empowerment. One of the administrators added, *"Collaboration with external organizations can strengthen the empowerment programs we design."* With the right steps, mosques can become engines of positive social and economic change in their communities, in line with broader community empowerment

goals. Thus, this research not only provides insights into the role of mosques in community empowerment but also paves the way for further studies that can explore strategies and best practices in managing mosques as centers of socio-economic empowerment.

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