

The Role of Baitus Shomad Grand Mosque in Tegalombo in Empowering the Community through the Management of Rest Areas and MSMEs

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ABSTRACT

Mosques have strategic potential as centers of community-based economic empowerment; however, their utilization in strengthening Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) remains largely limited to socio-religious functions. This condition indicates a gap between the existing potential and the actual practice of mosque-based economic management. This study aims to analyze the community empowerment model developed by the Baitus Shomad Grand Mosque in Tegalombo through the management of a rest area and MSMEs, as well as its impact on the economic independence of the local community. This research employs a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews with mosque administrators and MSME actors, and documentation. Data validity was tested through source and method triangulation. The findings reveal that the mosque-based rest area is managed by providing business facilities, organizing vendor stalls, and offering continuous guidance to MSME actors. This model has proven effective in increasing local economic activities, expanding employment opportunities, and strengthening the business independence of the surrounding community. The study concludes that the integration of religious and economic functions through the optimization of mosque physical assets in the form of a rest area represents an effective, inclusive, and sustainable model of community empowerment. This model has the potential to be replicated in other mosques with similar characteristics.

Keywords: Community Empowerment, Mosques, MSMEs, Rest Areas.

I. Introduction

Mosques have a strategic role not only as centers of worship but also as social institutions with the potential to promote community economic empowerment. From the perspective of community development, community-based institutions play an important role in increasing public participation, strengthening social capital, and fostering local economic independence (Ife & Tesoriero, 2008). In line with this, within the framework of Islamic economics, the mosque is positioned as a center of socio-economic activities for the Muslim community that functions not only as a place of worship but also as an instrument for the distribution of welfare and the strengthening of the real sector (Ascarya, 2017). However, various studies indicate that the optimization of the economic function of mosques has not yet been fully realized. Mosque activities tend to focus primarily on ritual and socio-religious dimensions, while their economic potential has

not been optimally utilized (Riwajanti & Asutay, 2019). This condition reflects a gap between the ideal role of mosques in Islamic economics and the empirical practices found in the field.

On the other hand, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) make a highly significant contribution to the national economy. Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises of the Republic of Indonesia indicate that MSMEs contribute more than 60% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorb approximately 97% of the national workforce. Nevertheless, MSMEs continue to face various structural challenges, including limited access to financing, low managerial capacity, and restricted access to markets and technology (Tambunan, 2019; OECD, 2021). Empirical research published in the *Journal of Small Business Management* also confirms that the success of MSMEs is strongly influenced by institutional support and a conducive social environment (Rauch et al., 2009). A number of studies have examined the role of mosques in community economic empowerment, particularly through Islamic social finance instruments such as zakat, infaq, and waqf (Hassan & Lewis, 2007; Karim, 2012). A study by Riwajanti and Asutay (2019) shows that mosques have the potential to become centers of financial inclusion and community-based economic empowerment. However, most of these studies focus primarily on financial approaches and have not extensively explored the optimization of mosque physical assets as facilities for productive economic empowerment.

Furthermore, studies on the utilization of mosque-based public facilities—such as rest areas—as economic spaces for MSMEs remain relatively limited. In fact, the integration of worship functions with the management of economic spaces has considerable potential to create a sustainable business ecosystem, expand market access, and generate new employment opportunities for local communities. This limitation in existing studies indicates a significant research gap, particularly in the context of managing mosque physical assets integrated with community economic activities. The Grand Mosque of Baitus Shomad in Tegalombo represents one example of an innovative practice in optimizing the multifunctional role of mosques. Through the management of a rest area integrated with MSME activities, the mosque seeks to create an inclusive community-based economic space. This model not only integrates religious and economic functions but also promotes the growth of local economic activities and strengthens community self-reliance. Nevertheless, to date there has been no comprehensive empirical study analyzing this model and its impact on community empowerment.

Based on this gap, this study aims to: (1) analyze the community empowerment model developed through the management of a mosque-based rest area; and (2) evaluate its impact on community economic independence, particularly among MSME actors. The novelty of this research lies in its analysis of the integration of worship and economic functions through the optimization of mosque physical assets in the form of a rest area as an applicable and sustainable community-based empowerment model. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of mosque-based empowerment studies, as well as practical contributions by offering a model that can be replicated in similar contexts.

II. Literature Review

Community empowerment has become an important approach in development studies, particularly in efforts to strengthen local economic capacity and improve social welfare. Within the framework of community development, empowerment refers to a process that enables individuals and communities to gain greater control over economic, social, and institutional resources that influence their lives. Ife and Tesoriero (2008) argue that community-based institutions play a central role in fostering participation, strengthening social capital, and promoting sustainable local development. Through collective participation and locally driven initiatives, communities can build economic resilience and reduce dependency on external support. In the context of Islamic economics, mosques hold a strategic position as centers of social and economic activities for the Muslim community. Historically, mosques functioned not only as places of worship but also as institutions for education, governance, and economic transactions. According to Ascarya (2017), the mosque can serve as a platform for strengthening the real sector economy by facilitating community

interaction, distributing social finance, and encouraging productive economic activities. This perspective aligns with the broader concept of Islamic socio-economic development, which emphasizes justice, welfare distribution, and collective prosperity.

Several studies have examined the role of mosques in supporting community economic empowerment. Many of these studies focus on the utilization of Islamic social finance instruments such as zakat, infaq, and waqf. Hassan and Lewis (2007) highlight that Islamic financial instruments can function as effective tools for poverty alleviation and community welfare when managed through trusted institutions such as mosques. Similarly, Karim (2012) explains that mosque-based financial management can contribute to social redistribution and economic inclusion, particularly among lower-income communities. Research by Riwayatanti and Asutay (2019) further emphasizes the potential of mosques as centers of financial inclusion and community empowerment. Their study shows that mosques can provide not only spiritual guidance but also economic support through programs such as microfinance services, entrepreneurship training, and community-based economic activities. However, the study also indicates that many mosques still focus primarily on charitable activities rather than developing sustainable economic programs that encourage productive entrepreneurship.

At the same time, the role of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in economic development has been widely recognized. MSMEs contribute significantly to employment creation, poverty reduction, and local economic growth. According to Tambunan (2019), MSMEs represent the backbone of many developing economies because they provide flexible employment opportunities and stimulate grassroots economic activities. Nevertheless, MSMEs often face structural challenges, including limited access to capital, inadequate managerial skills, and restricted market access. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) also highlights that institutional support and supportive ecosystems are crucial for improving the sustainability and competitiveness of MSMEs. Despite the growing body of literature on mosque-based empowerment and MSME development, relatively few studies have explored the optimization of mosque physical assets as spaces for economic activities. Public facilities associated with mosques—such as courtyards, commercial areas, or rest areas—can potentially function as economic hubs that support community businesses. The integration of religious spaces with economic activities may create a unique ecosystem where spiritual values, social interaction, and economic exchange coexist. Therefore, understanding how mosque facilities can be utilized to support MSME activities becomes an important area of study. Such integration not only strengthens the economic role of mosques but also contributes to sustainable community development by creating inclusive economic opportunities for local residents.

III. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study research design. This approach was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of mosque-based economic empowerment through the management of a rest area and the activities of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in a natural context. The case study method enables the researcher to comprehensively explore the empowerment model implemented as well as the socio-economic dynamics occurring within the mosque environment. The research was conducted at the Grand Mosque of Baitus Shomad Tegalombo, which was purposively selected due to its innovative practice in integrating religious and economic functions through the management of an MSME-based rest area. The research subjects include mosque administrators (takmir), MSME actors operating within the mosque area, and members of the surrounding community who are involved in or affected by these economic activities.

Data were collected through three primary methods: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was carried out to directly examine economic activities within the mosque area, including interactions between MSME actors and visitors. In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants to obtain detailed information regarding the management model, empowerment mechanisms,

and the perceived economic impacts. Meanwhile, documentation was used to complement the data through archives, activity reports, and other supporting materials relevant to the research. The selection of informants was conducted using purposive sampling, which involves deliberately choosing informants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The criteria for informants in this study include: (1) individuals involved in the management of the mosque and rest area; (2) MSME actors actively operating within the mosque environment; and (3) community members who benefit economically from the presence of these facilities.

Data analysis in this study employed the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The analysis process was conducted continuously from the data collection stage until valid and comprehensive findings were obtained. To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied triangulation techniques, including both source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants, while method triangulation involved comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. In addition, member checking was carried out to ensure the consistency between the collected data and the realities intended by the informants.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

a. Mosque Profile and Empowerment Programs

The Grand Mosque of Baitus Shomad Tegalombo is a mosque that serves not only as a place of worship but also as a center for social and economic activities within the community. Historically, the mosque developed from a local place of worship into a religious institution with a strong orientation toward community empowerment. The mosque's management structure consists of the *takmir* (mosque administrators) and several divisions responsible for religious affairs, social activities, and economic development. In the context of community empowerment, there is a specific division that manages the congregation's economic activities, including the operation of the rest area and the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The empowerment programs implemented by the mosque include providing business stalls for local residents, offering guidance and informal assistance for MSME development, strengthening mosque-based economic activities through trade, and utilizing mosque assets as productive economic resources. These initiatives indicate a transformation in the function of the mosque—from merely a place of worship to a center for community economic empowerment.

b. Rest Area Management

The rest area is managed in an organized manner under the coordination of the mosque administrators. The management system includes zoning arrangements for business areas, regulation of operational schedules, a rental or contribution system for business operators, and supervision of cleanliness and order within the area. Facilities available in the rest area include parking areas, resting spaces for visitors, MSME kiosks or stalls, sanitation facilities, and prayer facilities. Community involvement is evident through the active participation of local residents as MSME operators, management staff, and beneficiaries who directly gain economic benefits from the activities taking place in the rest area.

c. Mosque-Based MSME Development

The development of MSMEs is carried out through several approaches. These include providing access to strategically located business spaces, offering informal business mentoring, supporting location-based marketing through the rest area, and empowering the surrounding community as the primary economic actors. The types of businesses that have developed within this framework mainly include culinary

products, beverages, and local goods. Most of the MSME actors involved come from the communities surrounding the mosque, ensuring that the economic benefits generated are both direct and locally distributed.

d. Impact of the Empowerment Program

The findings of the study indicate several key impacts of the empowerment initiatives. First, there has been an increase in the income of local residents who participate in economic activities around the mosque. Second, the program has created community-based employment opportunities. Third, economic activities in the mosque environment have become more vibrant and sustainable. Finally, the empowerment initiatives have contributed to the development of economic self-reliance among members of the congregation. In addition, the mosque has strengthened its social role as a center for community interaction and collective activities, further reinforcing its position as both a religious and socio-economic institution within the local community.

4.2. Discussion

a. Transformation of the Mosque's Function in Economic Empowerment

The findings of this study indicate that the transformation of the mosque's function represents a significant shift from a purely ritual religious institution toward a socio-economic development center. The Baitus Shomad Grand Mosque has evolved beyond its traditional role as a place for worship into a productive space that integrates religious, social, and economic activities. This transformation reflects the broader concept of mosque revitalization, in which religious institutions are repositioned as community development agents capable of responding to contemporary socio-economic challenges. Historically, the mosque in Islamic civilization functioned as a multifunctional institution that accommodated religious, educational, social, and economic activities within the community. Contemporary studies suggest that reviving this integrative function is essential for strengthening the socio-economic resilience of Muslim communities (Rozi, 2025). The transformation observed in this study aligns with the growing discourse that mosques possess significant potential to serve as community-based development institutions capable of facilitating economic empowerment initiatives and strengthening social capital (Mulyandi et al., 2023).

The development of a rest area integrated with MSME activities illustrates how mosque-based institutions can utilize their social legitimacy and physical resources to stimulate local economic development. Such initiatives demonstrate that religious institutions can play an active role in creating new economic spaces for communities, particularly in rural or semi-urban contexts where access to formal economic infrastructure may be limited. Previous studies confirm that mosque-based economic programs—such as entrepreneurship training, cooperative development, and microfinance initiatives—can effectively increase community welfare and reduce economic vulnerability (Suarni et al., 2025). Furthermore, this transformation also reflects the broader paradigm of faith-based development, which recognizes religious institutions as strategic actors in community empowerment. Faith-based organizations possess strong social trust and moral authority, which can significantly enhance community engagement and collective action in development initiatives. Consequently, the transformation of the mosque's role in this study illustrates how religious institutions can adapt to contemporary socio-economic challenges while maintaining their spiritual and moral functions within society.

b. Mosque Asset-Based Empowerment Model

The empowerment model identified in this study emphasizes the strategic utilization of mosque assets as a foundation for community economic development. The development of the rest area on mosque land demonstrates how physical assets owned by religious institutions can be transformed into productive resources that generate economic value for the surrounding community. This approach is consistent with the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) framework, which emphasizes the mobilization of local assets

and community capacities rather than focusing solely on external assistance or community deficiencies. According to this perspective, sustainable development emerges when communities are able to recognize and mobilize their own internal resources, including physical infrastructure, social networks, and institutional capacities (Mathie & Cunningham, 2017).

The rest area developed by the Baitus Shomad Grand Mosque represents a practical application of this approach. Instead of relying exclusively on external funding or government programs, the mosque utilizes its strategic land asset to create economic opportunities for local MSME actors. Similar findings were reported in studies of mosque-based empowerment programs in Indonesia, where the optimization of mosque assets—such as land, zakat funds, and social networks has been shown to significantly contribute to improving community economic welfare (Wahab et al., 2021). Moreover, the empowerment model observed in this study demonstrates that mosque-based economic initiatives can simultaneously fulfill multiple objectives. The rest area not only generates institutional income for the mosque but also provides a marketplace for small-scale entrepreneurs and creates employment opportunities for local residents. Such a model illustrates how religious institutions can function as inclusive economic platforms that promote equitable economic participation within the community. This multidimensional role of mosque assets supports the argument that effective mosque governance should not only focus on religious activities but also incorporate productive economic management strategies. When mosque resources are managed professionally and strategically, they can become powerful instruments for strengthening community economic independence and resilience (Islani et al., 2023).

c. The Role of Institutional Structure and Mosque Management

The success of mosque-based economic empowerment initiatives is strongly influenced by the quality of institutional governance and managerial capacity within the mosque organization. The findings of this study indicate that the structured management system at the Baitus Shomad Grand Mosque plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the empowerment programs. Institutional theory suggests that organizational effectiveness largely depends on the presence of clear governance structures, defined roles and responsibilities, and transparent decision-making processes. In the context of mosque management, these elements are particularly important because many mosque institutions traditionally rely on voluntary administrators who may have limited managerial training (Wahid et al., 2025). The well-organized management structure observed in this study allows the mosque to coordinate various economic activities effectively, including the management of the rest area, collaboration with MSME actors, and the distribution of economic benefits among community members. Clear task division among mosque administrators also enhances accountability and operational efficiency, which are essential factors in sustaining community-based development initiatives.

Previous research on mosque-based economic empowerment programs highlights that weak managerial capacity often becomes a major obstacle to program sustainability. Many mosque initiatives fail to achieve long-term impact due to the absence of professional management systems and strategic planning mechanisms (Islani et al., 2023). In contrast, mosques with structured governance frameworks tend to demonstrate higher levels of organizational stability and program continuity. Therefore, strengthening mosque institutional capacity is essential for expanding the role of mosques in community economic development. Professional management training, transparent financial governance, and strategic planning mechanisms can significantly enhance the effectiveness of mosque-based empowerment programs and ensure their sustainability over time.

d. Community Participation as a Key Factor

Community participation emerges as a critical factor in determining the success of mosque-based empowerment initiatives. The findings of this study demonstrate that local residents are actively involved in the management and operation of the rest area, particularly through their participation as MSME actors and collaborators in economic activities. Participatory development theory emphasizes that sustainable

community development can only be achieved when community members are actively engaged in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development programs. Participation transforms community members from passive beneficiaries into active agents of change who possess a sense of ownership over development initiatives (Cornwall & Rivas, 2018). In the context of mosque-based empowerment, participation is particularly important because mosques function as community institutions that derive legitimacy from their congregations. When community members are actively involved in mosque programs, they are more likely to support and sustain those initiatives over the long term. Studies on mosque-based empowerment programs in Indonesia have similarly demonstrated that community participation significantly enhances program effectiveness and social impact (Busri et al., 2024). The participatory approach observed in this study also contributes to strengthening social cohesion within the community. Collaborative management of economic activities encourages cooperation among community members, fosters mutual trust, and strengthens collective responsibility for the sustainability of the program. Moreover, community participation in economic activities around the mosque creates opportunities for local entrepreneurship and income diversification. By providing a platform for MSME actors to develop their businesses, the mosque contributes to strengthening the local economic ecosystem and promoting inclusive economic growth.

e. Socio-Economic Impact and Sustainability

The socio-economic impacts generated by the rest area management at the Baitus Shomad Grand Mosque demonstrate that mosque-based economic initiatives can produce both economic and social benefits for local communities. Economically, the rest area creates new income opportunities for MSME actors and stimulates local economic circulation. Socially, it fosters increased interaction among community members and strengthens social solidarity within the neighborhood. These findings support the argument that mosque-based empowerment programs can contribute to sustainable community development when they focus on productive economic activities rather than purely charitable assistance. Productive empowerment approaches such as entrepreneurship support and microenterprise development are generally more effective in promoting long-term economic independence than short-term charity-based programs (Mustofa & Khotib, 2023).

Nevertheless, the sustainability of such programs depends on several critical factors. One of the main challenges identified in this study is the potential dependence on specific key individuals within the mosque management. Leadership-driven initiatives may face difficulties in maintaining continuity when leadership changes occur. Similar challenges have been reported in previous studies on mosque-based empowerment programs, where leadership transitions often disrupt program sustainability (Suarni et al., 2025). In addition, competition among MSME actors and limitations in managerial capacity may also pose challenges to the long-term sustainability of the program. Therefore, institutional strengthening, transparent governance mechanisms, and adaptive management strategies are essential to ensure that the empowerment program continues to operate effectively and equitably.

f. Contribution to Mosque-Based Empowerment Models

The empowerment model implemented by the Baitus Shomad Grand Mosque provides both conceptual and practical contributions to the development of mosque-based economic empowerment frameworks. The findings indicate that successful mosque-based empowerment initiatives require the integration of three key components: infrastructure utilization, institutional governance, and community economic participation. The rest area represents the infrastructure component that provides the physical space for economic activities. The mosque management structure represents the institutional component that ensures effective coordination and governance. Meanwhile, the involvement of MSME actors represents the community participation component that drives the local economic ecosystem. The synergy among these three elements forms an integrated empowerment ecosystem that is both adaptive and sustainable. Such an ecosystem demonstrates that mosques can function as local microeconomic centers while still maintaining their primary role as religious institutions. This model reinforces the argument that faith-based institutions

possess significant potential to contribute to inclusive and community-driven economic development (Rozi, 2025).

Furthermore, the model identified in this study offers a contextual example of how mosque-based economic empowerment can be implemented in practice. By integrating infrastructure development, participatory governance, and local economic strengthening, the Baitus Shomad Grand Mosque demonstrates a best-practice model that can potentially be replicated in other communities with similar socio-economic contexts. Therefore, the findings of this study not only contribute to the academic discourse on community empowerment and religious institutions but also provide practical insights for policymakers, mosque administrators, and community organizations seeking to develop sustainable mosque-based economic initiatives.

V. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Baitus Shomad Grand Mosque in Tegalombo has successfully developed a mosque-based community empowerment model through the optimization of its physical assets in the form of a rest area integrated with MSME activities. The transformation of the mosque's function from merely a place of worship into a center of socio-economic activity represents a key finding, highlighting the strategic capacity of mosques as community empowerment agents. The empowerment model implemented is integrative, combining three main elements: (1) the utilization of mosque infrastructure as a productive economic space, (2) institutional strengthening through organized mosque management, and (3) local economic empowerment through the active involvement of MSME actors. This approach has proven effective in creating an inclusive and sustainable community-based economic ecosystem. In terms of impact, mosque-based rest area management provides tangible contributions to increasing community income, generating employment opportunities, and strengthening the economic independence of the congregation. Additionally, the program promotes greater social interaction and strengthens community cohesion, enabling the mosque to function more comprehensively as a center of community life. However, the sustainability of this model requires strengthening institutional capacity, improving management professionalism, and developing adaptive internal regulations to anticipate various challenges, such as limited resources and potential conflicts among business actors. Overall, this study confirms that integrating religious and economic functions through the utilization of mosque assets represents an effective and applicable empowerment model. This model has strong potential to be replicated in other mosques with similar characteristics and contributes significantly, both theoretically and practically, to the development of community empowerment studies based on religious institutions.

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