



ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND SMES
(AIJBES)

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DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANTS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN MOSQUE-CENTRED SOCIO- ECONOMIC (MCS) INITIATIVES: A CASE STUDY OF AL- BUSYRA MOSQUE MERBOK, KEDAH

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 05.05.2026

Revised date: 22.05.2026

Accepted date: 28.06.2026

Published date: 30.06.2026

To cite this document:

Abdullah, M. A. Z., Ismail, M. S. I., & Adenan, F. (2026). Demographic Determinants of Community Engagement in Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS) Initiatives: A Case Study of Al-Busyra Mosque Merbok, Kedah. *Advanced International Journal of Business Entrepreneurship and SMEs*, 8 (28), 761-775.

Abstract:

The mosque is increasingly recognized as a multi-dimensional institution capable of addressing contemporary challenges beyond traditional ritual practices. Driven by challenges like limited funding, poor infrastructure, and weak communal ties (*Asabiyyah*), recent literature emphasizes assessing congregational satisfaction within mosque-based centre. This study examines whether demographic characteristics influence the Muslim community's decision to engage with Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS) initiatives at Al-Busyra Mosque, Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia. Using a quantitative case study approach, survey data were collected 420 respondents from Muslim residents within the Kuala Muda district. An Independent T-Test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed to evaluate differences in engagement across major demographic backgrounds. The Independent T-Test revealed no statistically significant difference in MCS engagement between male and female respondents, demonstrating that both genders participate in and accept mosque-based socio-economic activities equally. Conversely, the One-Way ANOVA indicated highly significant differences in community engagement based on age, and education level. These findings indicate that socio-demographic backgrounds heavily shape how individuals perceive and access mosque-based programs. This research contributes empirical evidence to the scarce quantitative literature on MCS engagement by highlighting the necessity of integrated demographic planning.

Pragmatically, the results assist mosque administrators and policymakers in moving past uniform designs toward inclusive, targeted interventions that satisfy diverse communal needs, ultimately strengthening the contemporary mosque's role as a sustainable catalyst for holistic socio-economic growth.

DOI: 10.35631/AIJBES.828048

Keywords:

Mosque-Centred Socio-Economic, Mosque, Muslim
Community, Independent T-Test, One-Way ANOVA,
Demographic Factors.



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1.0 Introduction

The mosque has traditionally been recognised as a sacred institution that functions primarily as a place of worship for Muslims. Literally, the term *masjid* is derived from the Arabic word referring to a place of prostration and devotion to Allah (Ibn Manzur, 1990). Historically, however, the role of the mosque extended far beyond ritual practices. During the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), mosques served as centres for education, governance, welfare distribution, conflict resolution, and economic activities that contributed to the well-being of society (Atharizadeh, 2021; Fernando, Hasanuddin, Ranga, & Utama, 2022). This multidimensional function positioned the mosque as the nucleus of Muslim community development, integrating religious, social, and economic dimensions within a single institution. In recent years, scholars have increasingly emphasised the need to revitalise the mosque's broader role in addressing contemporary socio-economic challenges faced by Muslim communities (Lamido & Haneef, 2021).

The concept of Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS) refers to the utilisation of mosques as community hubs that facilitate social welfare, economic empowerment, educational development, and communal support alongside religious activities (Yaacob, 2016; Khalli & Sharif, 2024). Through initiatives such as zakat and sadaqah distribution, entrepreneurship programmes, mosque-based bazaars, welfare assistance, and educational activities, mosques have the potential to contribute significantly to local socio-economic development (Isa & Muhammad, 2017; Khalid, 2020). In Malaysia, a growing number of mosques have begun to embrace these functions by introducing innovative programmes aimed at enhancing community well-being and promoting sustainable Islamic economic growth (Hasan, Ismail, & Omar, 2022). Despite this development, community engagement remains a critical determinant of the success of Mosque-Centred Socio-economic initiatives, as the effectiveness of these

programmes largely depends on the willingness of individuals to participate and support mosque activities.

Previous studies have predominantly examined mosque functions from the perspectives of architecture, religious tourism, management efficiency, and congregational satisfaction (Rasdi, 2007; Amer, Karban, Majid, Majrashi, & Saleh, 2021). There has been given to understanding whether demographic characteristics influence Muslim communities' decisions to select mosques as socio-economic centre (Sari, 2024; Giyanti & Asiah, 2024). Demographic factors such as gender, age, and educational level have been widely recognised as determinants of behavioural differences in community participation and destination selection (Gonzalez-Reverte, Gomis-Lopez, & Díaz-Luque, 2022; Struwig & Du Preez, 2024). However, empirical evidence regarding these factors within the context of Mosque-Centred Socio-economic engagement remains scarce, particularly through quantitative approaches. In addition, Zaidi, Yusof, Sahari, Shaik Hussain and Utaberta (2025) suggests investigating the level of mosque visitors' satisfaction must be within the scope of Socio-economic centre. It is due to several issues such as limited funding and poor infrastructure, lack engagement activities with community and social cohesion (Asobiah) between mosque congregants and the community (Yusoff, Zain & Seman, 2023; Cokrohadisumarto & Sari, 2024; Giyanti & Asiah, 2024).

Therefore, this study seeks to examine whether demographic characteristics significantly differentiate Muslim community engagement towards Mosque-Centred Socio-economic initiatives. Specifically, Independent T-Test is employed to investigate gender differences, while One-Way ANOVA is utilised to determine differences based on age, and educational level. Understanding these variations is important for mosque administrators and policymakers in designing inclusive and targeted socio-economic programmes that accommodate the diverse needs of Muslim communities. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing literature on mosque-centred development and provide empirical evidence for strengthening the mosque's role as a sustainable socio-economic institution in contemporary society.

Literature Review

In the past research, mosque has frequently related to religious tourism and the role of mosque management (Widodo, Helmi, Lubis & Lumbanraja, 2022). Past research often emphasizes mosque primarily as a place of worship, focusing on its ritual and spiritual functions rather than the scope of Socio-economic potential (Mustain, 2023 & Zainudin, Ismail, Hashim, Aminudin & Saidon, 2024).

A study by Shafaei and Mohamed (2020) and Hasan, Ismail and Omar (2022), the role of mosques as significant religious tourism attractions that combine spiritual, cultural, and economic functions. It emphasizes that mosques enhance Islamic tourism by offering both religious and heritage value, attracting local and international visitors. In addition, Chatterjee and Dsilva (2021) discovered that it is important to highlight religious place significantly influenced respondent's demographic engagement towards tourist centre. In Malaysia context, the iconic mosques such as Putra Mosque and Crystal Mosque have contributed to tourism development and community income (Hasan, Ismail & Omar, 2022).

The research by Ma, Chow, Cheung, Lee and Liu (2018) shows there are differences between age and travel motivation called sense of relaxation and nature exploration. Thalassinou, Cristea and Noja (2019) stated the Socio-economic centre has been greatly impacted on the

differences between age and Socio-economic centre. Age is a significant determinant of mosque participation, as younger congregants are more inclined toward economic empowerment activities, whereas older congregants emphasize social welfare and spiritual programs (Rahman & Ahmad, 2020).

Fernando Almeida (2020) found that respondents' age has significant impact on the weight they assign to pull factors in engaging socio-activities such as festivals and other cultural events, sports and religious motivation. The study by Kara and Mkwizu (2020) about demographic on previous studies and engaging with a Socio-economic centre motivation among leisure tourists to visit Tanzania. The finding explained there were significant differences between engaging with a tourist centre motivation and age.

Gonzalez-Reverte, Gomis-Lopez and Diaz-Luque (2022) stated that age was variable that generated significant behavioural differences among the respondents for travel. In other research, Linnes, Weinland, Ronzoni, Lema and Agrusa (2022) stated that the analysis's findings might help explain why visitors are drawn to the state's locally Socio-economic production. Participants between 45 and 60 years of age showed a significant difference. The age difference between the adult and elderly generation also plays a role in making a choice because the age difference has different desires.

Next is gender, which is very easy to study because it was divided into two, namely men and women. The two demographics on previous studies that are age and gender are very closely related because they were placed together in one conclusion such as the age group and gender which most choose the Mosque-Centred Socio-economic. Khan and Krishnamurthy (2016) found in a study about future proofing of Socio-economic centre entrepreneurship in Oman which there is significant relationship between the locals around Socio-economic centre and gender which it is positively demonstrated that the respondent's the local around Socio-economic centre affects their gender's efficiency in becoming Socio-economic students. Gender remains a significant factor influencing mosque participation, with men more involved in governance and economic activities, while women are increasingly engaged in educational and welfare programs within the mosque (Ismail & Hassan, 2019).

The finding by Kara and Mkwizu (2020) shows that there were significant differences between engaging with a Socio-economic centre motivation and gender. Besides, the finding by Yuan, Chan, Eichelberger, Ma and Pikkemaat (2021) and also Linnes, Weinland, Ronzoni, Lema and Agrusa (2022) also confirmed there is significance differences in gender and tourism centre. According to Begashe, Mgonja and Matotola (2024), there is a significant relationship between the desire of female return visitors for patterns that include engaging with a Socio-economic centre. Next subsection is education level.

In addition, another demographic factor is education level. Educational attainment strongly influences the level of participation in mosque-based programs, as individuals with higher education are more likely to engage in Socio-economic and intellectual activities organized by mosques (Hassan & Salleh, 2019). Ramírez and Portillo (2020) stated that in recent study supports this by highlighting the significance of education as a motivator in the context of religious tourism. Gomis-Lopez and Diaz-Luque (2022) found that education was variable that generated significant behavioural differences among the respondents and tourism centre. In addition, Begashe et al. (2024) found that there is significant correlation between college and university education and return to engage with a Socio-economic centre preference. It can be

summarized that the previous study showed most of the selected demographic on previous studies are significant and showed positive relationship in age, education level and education level respectively. On the other hand, some research showed a negative result and significantly proved those selected demographic influence in term of visiting Socio-economic centre.

Differences in making any decisions in visiting Socio-economic centres such as mosque are greatly influenced by demographic on previous studies such as age, gender and education level. This is important for the mosque management to ensure that the economic attraction in the mosque can attract individuals from various backgrounds to visit the mosque. The hypothesis has been developed as referred. Next section focused on independent variables which is factors in engaging with Mosque-Centred Socio-economic. Based on previous study, the present research developed research framework (refer Figure 1) and hypotheses as below.

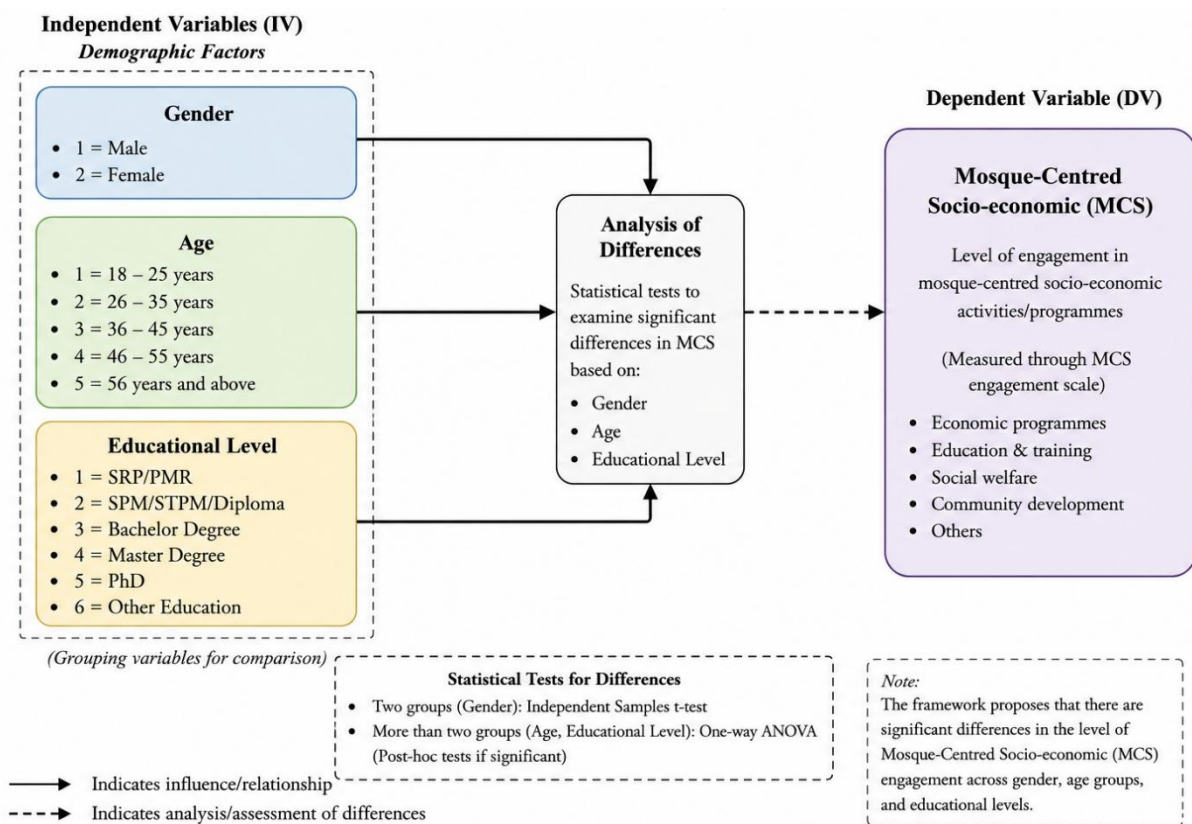


Figure 1: Research Framework for Analysis of Differences

Ha1: There is significant differences between age in engaging with Mosque-Centred Socio-economic among Muslim community in Masjid al-Busyra, Kedah.

Ha2: There is significant differences between gender in engaging with Mosque-Centred Socio-economic among Muslim community in Masjid al-Busyra, Kedah.

Ha3: There is significant differences between education level in engaging with Mosque-Centred Socio-economic among Muslim community in Masjid al-Busyra, Kedah.

Research Methodology

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2019), research methodology is “a systematic, organized, and objective procedure for generating reliable knowledge and information to solve problems and make decisions”. Meanwhile, Creswell (2014) defined “research methodology involves the philosophical assumptions, research designs, and specific methods used by researchers to collect, analyse, and interpret data”. Initially, research methodology is categorized in two methods (i.e. qualitative and quantitative method).

In this study, the present research employed quantitative method via data survey. The nature of study is based on case study. According to the Yin (2018), “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. Yin (2018) stated a case study is used to measure variables from a large number of respondents which resulting numerical result and generalizable data. Initially, the respondents were selected among Muslim community within the mosque's catchment area by employing purposive sampling. The community (18 years old and above) were chosen as they represent an active community group with regular social interaction and engagement in Mosque activities. Hence, an appropriate sampling technique to use is purposive sampling. This is supported by Creswell (2014) who emphasize that in case study, participants are often selected purposefully based on their experience to best inform the research questions and provide rich, relevant data. Based on data and statistics from the Department of Statistics Malaysia from 2024, the population of Kuala Muda district is 275,439 residents, which means that a minimum of 384 respondents will be needed (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

Initially, the data was collected within 2 month from Mac 2026 until May 2026. The data was collected 420 of respondents. The survey questionnaire has been administered through both physical distribution and online format via Google Form towards the attendees at Masjid Busyra. In order to protect the respondent's privacy, we gave the questionnaire to them if they consent and not hassle them to complete it. In the case that the responders are unable to grasp the question, we offer more clarification. The questionnaire took ten to fifteen minutes to complete. When the respondents have finished answering, the questionnaire are going to send back to us. After finished the questionnaire distribution, this study employed data analysis based on SPSS software to analysed via Independent T-Test and One-Way ANOVA in order to answer the research question and shows the result of the study. The next section explained the findings of study as below.

Research Findings

This section indicates demographic profile of the respondents. Table 5.1 explained the demographic information which is consisted personal respondents background which are gender, age, and educational level. Firstly, Table 5.1 demonstrates the percentage for descriptive analysis of the respondent's background which is consisting of the sex and marital status of the respondents. The result revealed that there are 38.3% male which is equivalent to 160 respondents while 61.5% of female which is equivalent to 257 respondents.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Information

Variables	Characteristics	Number of respondents N=417	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	160	38.3
	Female	257	61.5
Age	18 – 25 years	89	21.3
	26 – 35 years	100	24.0
	36 – 45 years	93	22.3
	46 – 55 years	75	18.0
	56 years and above	60	14.4
Educational Level	SRP/PMR	32	7.7
	SPM/STPM/Diploma	194	46.5
	Bachelor Degree	129	30.9
	Master Degree	1	0.2
	PhD	17	4.1
	Other Education	44	10.6

In terms of age, Table 1 showed that most of the respondents are in the age 18-25 years where the frequency is 89 which is equivalent to 21.3%. Meanwhile, the second highest of the respondents came from age range 26-35 years which is equivalent to 24% and the frequency is 100. Followed by the respondents came from 36-45 years where the frequency is 93 and the equivalent is 22.3%. The percentages of the respondents come from the age range 46-55 years where the frequency is 75 which is equivalent to 18% only. The lowest percentages of the respondents come from the age range above of 56 years where the frequency is 60 which is equivalent to 14.4% only.

Besides, the results also show that the respondents' level of education background. Table 5.1 indicated that 46.5% or 194 of the respondents hold at least SPM/STPM/Diploma. Meanwhile, the second highest is the respondent came from bachelor's degree background where the equivalent is 30.9% and the frequency is 129. Followed by 10.6% of the respondents possessed by other education and also SRP/PMR where the equivalent is 32 and only 7.7% of the respondent came from PhD where the equivalent is 17 (4.1%). The least percentages of the respondents come from master's degree where the frequency is 1 which is equivalent to 0.2% only.

Table 2: Finding T-Test for Gender

Dependent Variable	Gender	Mean	F	Sig.
Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS)	Male	4.1288	0.02	0.964
	Female	4.1253		

In this study, One-Way ANOVA and Independent T-test were used to analyse the differences in age, gender, education level, towards Muslim communities' decision in engaging towards Mosque-Centred Socio-economic. In this study, gender was analysed using T-test, while the rest were tested using One-Way ANOVA. Table 2 shows the data from independent T-test analysis for genders. As the result, t-value for male and female is 0.45 while mean value for male is 4.1288 and 4.1253 is value for female. For F-Value, the value for male and female is 0.02. The significant value is equal to 0.964 which is higher than 0.05. The findings indicated there are no differences between male and female towards Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS). Therefore, the hypothesis for Ha1 is rejected.

Table 3: Finding One-Way ANNOVA for Age

Dependent Variable	Age	Mean	F	Sig.
Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS)	Between Groups	3.406	6.103	0.01
	Within Groups	0.558		

Meanwhile the finding for One-Way ANOVA (Refers to Table 3) indicated age has significant differences. For age, the result showed value for F is 6.103 and the significant value is at <0.001 . Mean value between groups is 3.406 and within groups is 0.558. It shows that there are significant differences between age with factor of engaging towards Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS).

Table 4: Finding One-Way ANNOVA for Education Level

Dependent Variable	Educational Level	Mean	F	Sig.
Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS)	Between Groups	4.524	8.415	0.01
	Within Groups	0.538		

The finding for One-Way ANOVA (Refers to Table 4) indicated education level has significant differences. Similarly, education level demonstrates a significant difference in engagement ($F = 8.415$, $p < 0.001$). Mean value between groups is 4.524 and within groups is 0.538. It is shows that there are significant differences educational level with factor of engaging towards Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS). Therefore, the hypothesis for Ha2 and Ha3 is accepted.

Discussion

The findings for gender indicated there are no differences between male and female towards Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS). This finding supported by Cokgezen and Nyhagen (2025) found that there are no differences between male and female towards mosque attendance. According to both researchers, Mosques are traditionally open to all Muslims regardless of gender, and participation can be gender-neutral where mosque practices and facilities support inclusion.

Meanwhile, the other findings indicated there are significant differences between ages, and educational level with factor of engaging towards Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS). It has been supported by Gonzalez-Reverte, Gomis-Lopez and Diaz-Luque (2022) stated that age was variable that generated significant differences among the respondents for tourist site. Gomis-Lopez and Diaz-Luque (2022) also found that education was variable that generated significant differences among the respondents and tourism centre. Thus, the findings of this study are in line with prior empirical studies that reported similar results.

Analysing demographic differences is important because it enables researchers to identify whether engagement in Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS) activities varies across different segments of the Muslim community. Understanding these differences provides valuable insights for mosque management and policymakers in designing programmes that are more responsive to the needs and characteristics of specific groups.

In this study, no significant difference was found between male and female respondents, suggesting that participation in MCS activities is not influenced by gender. This indicates that the mosque provides an inclusive environment where both men and women have relatively equal opportunities to engage in socio-economic programmes. Therefore, gender-specific interventions may not be necessary.

However, significant differences were found across age, and educational level. These findings suggest that demographic characteristics influence the level of engagement in MCS activities. Different age groups may have varying interests, responsibilities, and availability to participate, while individuals with different educational backgrounds may differ in their awareness, knowledge, and perceptions of mosque-centred programmes.

Therefore, analysing demographic characteristics is essential for identifying which groups require greater attention and support. The findings provide practical implications for mosque administrators to develop targeted engagement strategies, improve programme accessibility, allocate resources more effectively, and strengthen community participation. Ultimately, understanding demographic differences contributes to enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of Mosque-Centred Socio-economic initiatives.

Conclusion

This study examined whether demographic characteristics influence Muslim communities' decisions to engage in Mosque-Centred Socio-economic (MCS) initiatives by employing Independent T-Test and One-Way ANOVA analyses. The findings revealed that gender does not significantly differentiate engagement towards MCS, indicating that both male and female respondents demonstrate similar levels of participation and acceptance of mosque-centred

socio-economic activities. This suggests that contemporary mosques have become inclusive institutions that provide opportunities and benefits equally to all members of the Muslim community regardless of gender.

However, the results of the One-Way ANOVA indicated significant differences in engagement based on age, and educational level. These findings imply that demographic backgrounds shape how individuals perceive, access, and participate in mosque-based socio-economic programmes. Differences in life experience, knowledge has influenced the extent to which community members engage with initiatives organised by the mosque. Both items i.e. age and education emerged as the demographic factor with the highest variation, highlighting the importance of considering work-related circumstances when planning mosque activities.

Overall, this study contributes empirical evidence that demographic characteristics should be carefully considered when developing Mosque-Centred Socio-economic strategies. While gender-inclusive approaches should be maintained, mosque administrators need to design programmes that address the diverse needs of different age groups, educational backgrounds categories. Such targeted initiatives may enhance community participation and strengthen the mosque's role as a sustainable socio-economic institution. The findings also provide practical implications for policymakers and mosque management in formulating more effective and inclusive programmes that promote holistic Muslim community development through Mosque-Centred Socio-economic engagement.

From a practical perspective, mosque administrators should adopt targeted engagement strategies that cater to the specific needs of different demographic groups. For example, youth-oriented programmes may incorporate entrepreneurship, digital skills, and volunteer activities, whereas programmes for older adults may focus on lifelong learning, health awareness, and community support. Educational workshops and awareness campaigns should be tailored to participants with different educational backgrounds, while programme schedules and delivery methods should be designed to accommodate individuals with varying occupational commitments. Financial assistance, skills development, and income-generating initiatives may also be prioritised for lower-income households to enhance their participation and socio-economic well-being.

From a policy perspective, the findings suggest that government agencies, Islamic religious authorities, and organisations responsible for mosque development should formulate policies that promote inclusive and evidence-based mosque-centred socio-economic programmes. Resource allocation and funding should be based on the demographic needs of the local Muslim community rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. Policymakers should also encourage collaboration between mosques, educational institutions, local authorities, non-governmental organisations, and private sector partners to expand the reach and effectiveness of socio-economic initiatives. Furthermore, national and state-level mosque development policies should incorporate demographic assessments as part of programme planning, implementation, and evaluation to ensure that MCS initiatives effectively address the diverse needs of Muslim communities and contribute to sustainable community development.

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- Acknowledgements:** The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universiti Teknologi Mara for providing the necessary resources and support throughout the course of this research. Special appreciation is extended to colleagues and peers who contributed valuable insights and constructive feedback, which greatly enhanced the quality of this paper.
- Funding Statement:** No Funding
- Conflict of Interest Statement:** The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All authors have contributed to this work and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission to the Advanced International Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship and Smes (AIJBES)
- Ethics Statement:** This study did not involve any human participants, animals, or sensitive data requiring ethical approval. The authors confirm that the research was conducted in accordance with accepted academic integrity and ethical publishing standards.
- Author Contribution Statement:** All authors contributed significantly to the development of this manuscript. Author 1 and 3 was responsible for the conceptualization, methodology, and overall supervision of the study. Author 2 contributed to the literature review, drafting, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript prior to submission.
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