

SPECIAL ISSUE

JULY 2022

<https://doi.org/10.46722/hikmah.v5i4d>

# AL-HIKMAH

AL HIKMAH INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
ISLAMIC STUDIES AND HUMAN SCIENCES

THE ROLES OF MASJID IN ENHANCING  
NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES AMONG  
THE MUSLIMS IN THE ERA OF  
GLOBALIZATION

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E-ISSN : 2637-0581

 [alhikmah.my](http://alhikmah.my)



**SPECIAL ISSUE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL AND INTER-DISCIPLINARY STUDIES (FIDS), AHAS KIRKHS, IN COLLABORATION WITH AL-HIKMAH: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES AND HUMAN SCIENCE**

Selected Papers from annual symposium on Scholarship Advancement Programme (SAP) on the 5th of August 2021.

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**FOREWORD: A SPECIAL ISSUE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL AND INTER-DISCIPLINARY STUDIES (FIDS), AHAS KIRKHS, IN COLLABORATION WITH AL-HIKMAH: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES AND HUMAN SCIENCES**

Following the directive from the AHAS Kulliyah of IRKHS, the Department of Fundamental and Inter-Disciplinary Studies held its annual symposium on Scholarship Advancement Programme (SAP) on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2021. The one-day programme was an intervention to advance the development of scholarship among academics in AHAS KIRKHS. Its focus was to accelerate knowledge generation and dissemination by providing a conducive avenue for all academics to write, present, and publish their scholarly work in an academic journal. Since 2019, papers presented at the SAP symposiums have been published individually by staff at the FIDS. In 2022, FIDS has taken the initiative to publish selected papers as a special issue in collaboration with the Journal of Al-Hikmah.

This special issue contains eleven articles, nine in English and two in Arabic, which were presented at SAP 2021. This collection of SAP papers comes under the themes of Islam, Philosophy and Spiritual development. Most if not all articles selected for publication go in tandem with the scope and requirement of Al-Hikmah Journal. Among the areas touched by the authors are on Islamic religious teaching and learning activities, and Islamic movement in the region.

We hope this special issue would provide a kind of poignant magnetism that would touch the readers' interest as most of the papers highlighted the supremacy of knowledge and the significance of the role of spirituality. The concept of papers emerged from the thought that different scholars from diverse Asian countries would offer their respective experiences, historical facts and cultural heritage that would provide the highest level of satisfaction to the readers.



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## The Roles of Masjid in Enhancing Networking Opportunities among the Muslims in the Era of Globalization

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### Abstract

Masjid or otherwise known as mosque is meant for tahānuth among the Muslims. By tahānuḥ, it refers to Muslims “ devotion in showing servitude and servility of obedience to Allah, the supreme Creator”. Masjid Qubā’ was the first mosque which the Prophet peace upon him laid its foundation. Islam gives prominence to three mosques: masjid al-Haram, masjid al-Nabawī and masjid al-Aqṣā. With the establishment of the masjid during the prophetic era, masjid played various roles such as spiritual, social, political, economic and more importantly it fostered networking opportunities among the disciples of the Prophet peace be upon him. Muslims meet in the masjid five times daily and once in a year in masjid al-Harām. Masjid is undeniably has a tendency of promoting the integration of all spheres of human affairs in the era of globalization. Unfortunately, the roles of masjid have been restricted to the spirituality whereby its inclusive role of networking opportunities has been fervently neglected in the era of globalization. Therefore, the primary aim and objective of this paper is to investigate and expand the role of masjid through the view-lens of networking opportunities among the contemporary Muslims in the era of globalization. In so doing, Muslims will maximize the opportunities of meeting in the masjid towards the enhancement of peaceful co-existence, unity, harmony. It is thereby recommended that, the management of masjid should provide a platform for promoting networking opportunities among the Muslims.

**Keywords:** Masjid, tahānuḥ, networking opportunities, globalization.

### Article Progress

Received: 25 July 2022

Revised: 26 July 2022

Accepted: 29 July 2022

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### **Introduction**

Masjid or otherwise known as mosque is meant for *tahānuġh* among the Muslims. By *tahānuġh*, it refers to Muslims “ devotion in showing servitude and servility of obedience to Allah, the supreme Creator”. Masjid Qubā’ was the first mosque which the Prophet peace be upon him laid its foundation. Islam gives prominence to three mosques: Masjid al-Harām, Masjid al-Nabawī and Masjid al-Aqṣā’. With the establishment of the masjid institution during the prophetic era, masjid played various roles such as spiritual, social, political, economic and more importantly, it fostered networking opportunities among the disciples of the Prophet (peace be upon him, hereon pbuh). Muslims meet in the masjid five times daily and once in a year in masjid al-Harām. It is clearly stated in the Qur’ān thus:

“In houses (mosques) which Allah has ordered to be raised (to be cleaned, and to be honoured), in them His name is remembered (i.e. Adhān, Iqāmah, Salāt (prayers), invocations, recitation of the Qur’an etc.). Therein glorify Him (Allah) in the mornings and in the afternoons or the evenings. Men whom neither trade nor sale (business) diverts from the remembrance of Allah (with heart and tongue), nor from performing as-ṣalat (Iqāmat-as-Salāt), nor from giving Zakat. They fear a Day when hearts and eyes will be overturned (out of the horror of the torment of the Day of Resurrection) (An-Nur: 36-37).

Masjid has been acknowledged as a place where prostration is made by the worshippers. According to *az-Zarkashī* and *az-Zujāj* (proper names need not be italicized), every place that worship is being performed is masjid (*I’lāmu as-Sājid bi Ahkām Al-Masājid*). This position is justified in line with the hadith of the Prophet peace be upon him which states: “Earth surface is made for me as masjid and sanctity (*Sahih al-Bukhārī*)”. It has been interestingly asserted by al-Qādi ‘Ayād that: “This is one of the specialties of this Ummah because our predecessors did not pray in any place except where its cleanliness is ascertained but we have been given specialty to observe our prayer in all earth surface except where uncleanliness is ascertained” Additionally, in line with above explanation, al-Qurġubī posited that, this is a specialty for Allah’s Prophet peace be upon him (*Jādul Hāqq*, 1416).

Indeed, the spread and construction of masjid has been encouraged in several traditions of the Prophet peace be upon him. It is not only encouraged by the Prophet (pbuh), he also encouraged his disciples to strictly adhere to the etiquettes ('adāb) of masjid. It is noteworthy to mention that, one of the essential etiquette of masjid is the cleanliness, which will encourage love and care, and solace and harmony. The Prophet peace be upon him encouraged the construction of masjid among the Muslims. For instance, Ibn Hishām noted that, the total number of masājid during the time of the Prophet peace be upon him was eighteen (Sīrah ibn Hishām).

It is on record that, when the Prophet peace be upon him migrated from Makkah to Madinah, the first thing he did at Qubā' was the construction of masjid through which the Muslims would be able to congregate and pray. Additionally, he used to be in the company of his compatriots, engaging in consultations with his companions in the masjid. The masjid of the Prophet (pbuh) built in Madinah followed similar model with that of Qubā' masjid (Khayru-d-Dīn, 1980). Onwards, in the 16th century A.H. during the reign of 'Umar bin al-Khattāb, 'Utbah bin Ghazwān, the governor of Basra initiated the first masjid there. In the 17th century A.H., Sa'd bin Abi Waqās he began the construction of the first masjid in Kūfah, where he governed. It is interesting to note noteworthy that 'Abu 'Ubaydah bin al-Jarrah constructed a masjid in Damascus and 'Uqbah bin Nāfi' built a masjid in Qayrawān (Khayru-d-Dīn, 1980). The masājid during this period promoted quite an extensive networking opportunities among the Muslims.

It is unfortunate and ironic that the roles of masājid today have been restricted to the spirituality whereby its inclusive role of networking opportunities has been fervently neglected, in the face of globalization. Therefore, the main focus of this paper is to investigate and expand the role of masājid through the view-lens of networking opportunities among the contemporary Muslims in the era of globalization. Through the networking opportunities, Muslims will maximize the opportunities of meeting face to face in masājid towards the enhancement of peaceful co-existence, unity, harmony and all other spheres of human endeavours.

### **Masjid in Enhancing Networking Opportunities in the Era of Globalization**

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The primary aim of this paper is not at giving detailed explanations of globalization. However, it captures globalization in order to explicate the important roles of masājīd in fostering networking opportunities among the Muslims. Indeed, contemporary world is the world of globalization. There is no universal definition of globalization. Rather, there are various views held regarding the term. For instance, some scholars are of the opinion that, the origin of globalization is ascribed to modern period (Al-Rodhan, 2006) while some others are of the view that, globalization has been in existence prior to the European voyages and discoveries in the modern world (Robertson, 1992).

However, it is not arguable to say, that globalization expedites exchanges and integration of national and international resources for the interdependence of socio-economic advancement of the entire globe (Hopkins, 2004). Actually, the advancement of transportation, information and communication technologies, internet and many others are important indicators of globalization. Nonetheless, the role of religious institutions such as masjid as an agent of socialization in the era of globalization is taken with levity. Undoubtedly, religious institutions such as masjid play an essential role for the social and peaceful cooperation within the society.

It has been acknowledged that there are two main categories of masjid, which foster social and spiritual uprightness among Muslims. First, masjid designated for daily congregational prayers. Second, masjid designated for daily and Friday prayers, is known as masjid al-Jami'. Semantically, masjid al-Jami' means a mosque that accommodates many people. However, meeting of Muslims in the masjid has not been judiciously utilized towards the networking opportunities. This paper investigates the different networking opportunities among the Muslims, namely: educational or intellectual, spiritual and physical exercise or fitness. To demonstrate, the roles of the Islamic World League and the Training of Imams in Egypt in fostering networking among Muslims are explicitly explained. Conclusion and recommendations are drawn from the length and breadth of the paper.

**Masjid for the Purpose of Educational or Intellectual Networking**

Masājīd played an educational role among the Muslims for many centuries. Indeed, in the early periods of Islam, masājīd played the role of university (i.e. al-Jāmi'ah) which signifies that various intellectual discourses were held. For instance, it is noted that when masjid is referred to

as al-Jami‘, it involves learning, including the Halaqah system where many other Islamic religious subjects were taught and learnt (Mamduhu Sadafi, 2000). It is to be noted that, masjid has been particularly important for the children’s education in Islam (Abdullah, 1985).

Hence, masjid as a centre of learning need to constitute a library and a publication committee which is responsible for writing and publication of both religious and mundane issues. In addition, this committee shoulders the establishment of the masjid’s library by providing relevant books and bibliographies for the promotion of scholarship and erudition among the Muslims (Abdullah, 1985). The library is essentially paramount and an integral part of Islam because knowledge and Islam are inseparable. This has been manifested in the first five verses revealed unto the Prophet peace be upon him which states thus:

“Read! In the name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists). He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not (Sūrah al-‘Alaq:1-5).”

Apart from the above quoted verse, there are many other verses and prophetic traditions that stress on the vitality of knowledge in Islam. As a result of the emphasis on the pursuance of knowledge as stressed in Islam, the Prophet peace be upon him was committed to the teaching and learning among male and female companions. In other words, the prophet peace be upon him has allocated specific times for "ta‘līm" sessions for some men and some for women. However, he delegated his prominent wife, ‘Ó’ishah when he instructed that half of religion should be learnt from ‘Ó’ishah. Hence, ÑÓishah was seen among the companions as a renowned authority and she was recognized for her retentiveness (Elsadda, 2001). The masjid through the establishment of library has a very vital role to play towards the educational enhancement among the Muslims.

It is vitally important that masjid includes an educational committee who is responsible for teaching and learning activities. The scholars within the masjid have pertinent roles to play towards the accessibility of the education pursuance among the participants of the masjid. They are responsible for the supervision of different learning centers or schools as well as coordinating various subjects such as the memorization of the Qur’ān, Hadīth,

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Fiqh, Shari'ah, rulings and others which are under the auspices of the masjid. It is essentially significant that the committee should foster the teaching of foreign languages through which the Muslims will have better understanding of their religion and enabling them to reach out to others in different parts of the world.

Furthermore, It could be argued that, the establishment of Sulaymaniyah masjid in Istanbul during the Othman empire had almost eight madrasahs as institutions for teaching and learning of Islamic knowledge (Mansur, 19180). It has been acknowledged that masājid in Egypt fostered an educational enhancement, scholarship and intellectual erudition among the Muslims (Sa'id, 1978). It is noteworthy to mention that, in the eleventh century in Baghdad, there were only six recognizable masjid Jami', however, it is asserted that there were hundreds of masājid (Ishaq, 1983). According to A prominent Muslim scholar, al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, he noted that, Masjid al-Mansur was used for intellectual and juridical or jurisprudential discourses among the scholars and the students (Ishaq, 1983).

These were undeniable examples where madrasah played the role of worship as well as education. For instance, Masjid al-Azhar in Egypt constructed around 970 H? C.E.? It is a fact that the masjid served an educational purpose, and later became a renowned and second oldest university in the world after al-Karaouin (Rabbat, 1996). The masjid was known for its intellectual prominence for teaching of theology and Islamic law and for its intellectual dedication. The authority of the masjid invited thirty-five scholars that contributed to the expansion of the masjid's scholarship (Rabbat, 1996). This is why the word Jāmi' in Arabic, which refers to university is derived from Jamā'ah, which refers to a large congregational masjid that Muslims meet (Rabbat, 1996).

Undoubtedly, it could be said that, since the congregation of Muslims present in the mosque for the prayers and involved in teaching and learning process, there was an avenue to networking opportunities among the Muslims. In such a situation, most masjids became excellent centers of learning. And more importantly, it promoted lifelong learning through the internationalization of Islamic teachers and propagators. Additionally, it could be asserted that, the roles of masjid in the medieval Islamic civilization in promoting intellectual activities as well as scholarship networking among the scholars and students could not be underrated (Abdur-Rahman,

1992). Also, the contributions of masjid to the intellectual prowess of medieval Spain promoted networking opportunities among the then Muslims (Abdul Badi, 1984). Hence, it is vitally paramount that the spirit of intellectual and scholarship networking through the masjid is revived in order to foster educational development among contemporary Muslims.

Further still, it has been noted that, there used to be poetical seminars among the literalists and the poets. It is on record that, during the poetical seminars, Ibn Zhifir who was one of the literalists in Egypt in seventh Century of Hijrah used to involve in the presentation in the masjid of Amr bin Al-As in the city of Fostat where many intellectuals and scholars like Ibn Qalās, In Al-Munjim, Ibn Mu'min and many others used to be in attendance (Abdul Badi, 1984). Onwards, the educational and intellectual networking among Muslim scholars did not only involve male scholars but it also involved female scholars in the masjid of Amr bin Al-As through the establishment of Halaqah. For example, during the Fatimiyah rulership around 415 A.H., a female scholar in person of Ummul Khyr al-Hijāziyyah used to engage herself in preaching and admonition (Abdul Badi, 1984). Hence, educational networking is important in order for Muslims to improve the levels of piety and spirituality.

### **Masjid for the Purpose of Spiritual Networking Opportunities**

The positions on masjid, is important for the enhancement of worship (tahānuḥ) and spiritual uprightness of the Muslims. Specifically, it should be noted fervently that many Muslim scholars have shown the contributions of some prominent mosques in fostering social and spiritual networking opportunities among the Muslims (Abdul Badi, 1984). This networking was so powerful to the extent that majority of Muslims were united to achieve the common goal of inward and outward spirituality. However, contrary is today's experience where the Muslims have been linked to terroristic activities which are being considered to be networked. Instead, the mosque has a crucial role towards holistic networking opportunities among the contemporary Muslims. It has been clearly prohibited that, masjid should not be constructed for the harmful and disbelief networking. It is explicitly asserted in the Glorious Qur'an thus:

“And for those who put up a mosque by way of harm and disbelief and to disunite the believers and as an outpost for those who warred against Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad (S.A.W.)) aforetime, they will indeed

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swear that their intention is nothing but good. Allah bears witness that they are certainly liars (Taubah:108).”

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that, it is on record that, masjid unite and socialize Muslims together for both inward and outward spiritualities specific time. It has previously been noted that, Hisham bin Amar said that, when Umar bin Al-Khattāb may Allah be pleased with him conquered some towns, for instance, he sent a message to Abu Musa at Basra commanding him to take masjid as a congregation and social activities and when it is on Friday; you should converge in the masjid for congregational prayer. Likewise, he also sent to Sa’ad bin Abū Waqās at Kūfah, Amr bin Al-‘As at Egypt and also to the leaders of Sham to construct masjid for the spiritual and social responsibilities among the Muslims (As-Suyuti).

More so, it has been further posited that, spiritual role of masjid in Egypt has produced many pious Muslims which also encouraged the cooperation, collaboration and sharing of knowledge for spiritual uprightness among them (Sa’ad, 1971). The backbone of masjid in fostering piety and spirituality among the Muslims could not be underrated. It is clearly shown in the glorious Qur’an thus:

“...Verily, the mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety is more worthy that you stand therein (to pray). In it are men who love to clean and to purify themselves. And Allah loves those who make themselves clean and pure (i.e. who clean their private parts with dust (which has the properties of soap) and water from urine and stools, after answering the call of nature (At-Taubah:108).”

The above quoted verse indicated that, the essence of masjid is to enhance piety and purification of soul. Additionally, it is important to assert that, some Muslims are extreme regarding to the decoration of masjid which is considered as detestable. However, some Muslims involve in this with an assumption that it is an integral part of neatness act that could make them closer to Allah. However, it distracts the worshippers from proper humility and tranquility that require for spiritual development through Salat. Such an assumption is a mistake.

It is important to refer to the view of the jurists regarding the decoration of masjid. For instance, Hanbālī and Mālīkī jurists are of the view that, decorations of mosques among the Muslims should be unhesitatingly avoided

and uncompromised. However it noted that, in a situation where it could not be out rightly avoided, hence it should be reduced and no extravagance should be displayed in the masjid decoration.

Additionally, the afore-mentioned schools of thought posited further that, writing on the masjid wall in the direction of Qiblah should be disallowed. Nonetheless, there is concrete justification for this, but perhaps the reason that informs this might be due to its tendency of distraction of Muslims from tranquility and soft-heartedness in their prayer.

Contrary to the afore-mentioned stance of Maliki and Hanafī schools of thought, the pioneer of Hanafī jurisprudential school, Imam Abu Hanīfah asserted that it is highly important the masjid is beautified and decorated which is considered as exaltation of masjid as a social institution among the Muslims. However, it has been argued that, the money to be used must be true legitimate means.

The purpose of masjid is not to lavishly decorate it like the Jewish and Christian places of worship. Nonetheless, it is meant for the Prayer, teaching and learning, striving to the path of Allah (Jādul Hāqq, 1416). The implication of excessive decoration is that, it distracts the attention of the worshippers from proper concentration in Salat and whereby it needs proper focus, tranquility and humility. Proper concentration and humility in Salat is an integral part of the ways towards enhancing Muslims' spirituality (Jādul Hāqq, 1416).

However, it does not mean that, the argument here is totally refraining and forbidding Muslims from decorating the masjid, nonetheless, Islam is a religion of moderation, cleanliness and neatness because decoration is considered as an instrument of worship (Spahic Omer, 2009). The construction and decoration of masjid should be moderate without excessiveness in its adornment. Likewise, masjid needs to improve other aspects of Muslim lives such as physical strength and fitness.

### **Masjid for the Purpose of Enhancing Physical Exercise or Fitness among the Muslims**

It is not disputable that, Salat itself foster physical strength of the Muslims. It is integral essential that the management of masjid provides facilities and playing ground for different physical exercises or fitness. Indeed,

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Muslims have been motivated by the Prophet peace be upon him to providing training for the youth's physical strength such as: archery, swimming, horse riding etc. (Jādul Hāqq, 1416). It has been acknowledged that, all these physical exercises are important contemporary physical fitness in the late twenty century. Likewise, a place may be provided for the gymnasium such as carrying a heavy object which may not require a spacious place in the vicinity of masjid.

Additionally, it is noted that, the Prophet peace be upon him used to engage in physical exercise. It is attested by the wife of the Prophet peace be upon him; Aishah that, the Prophet peace be upon him called her while he was involving in physical fitness (Sheikh Aliy, 1975). It is surprising that the contemporary masjid pays less attention on the integration of physical fitness of Muslims into the programme and administration of masjid. Therefore, it is pertinent that, this spirit of physical fitness is revived by the masjid in order to create an avenue for Muslims to exchange ideas and foster their networking opportunities.

**Masjid for the Purpose of Enhancing Social Wellbeing among the Muslims**

It is pertinent to reiterate that, masjid is not only meant for spiritual enhancement, however, it is considered as an important agent of socialization. Onwards, it is argued that, masjid has a paramount role to play in the contemporary social wellbeing through the spiritual development (Sheikh Aliy, 1975). Inferably, it harmonizes between religious and mundane affairs (Jādul Hāqq, 1416). The Glorious Qur'an has explicitly stated that:

“Recite (O Muhammad) what has been revealed to you of the Book (the Qur'an), and perform As- Salah (Iqāmat as-Salāt). Verily, As-Salat (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahshā' (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse) and Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed) and the remembering (praising) of (you by) Allah (in front of the angels) is greater indeed (than your remembering (praising) of Allah in prayers. And Allah knows what you do (Surah Al-Ankabut:45).”

It could be inferred from the above quoted verse that, since the Salat forbids sinful acts, hence the social injustice, insecurity, vices and inimical behaviours in the society will be reduced. Hence, Salat should be fostered

towards the wellbeing of the Muslims through which masjid will undeniably contribute to the smooth activities within the society.

Fundamentally, the committee in charge of masjid in the contemporary time has paramount roles to play towards the administration of masjid in fostering social wellbeing networking opportunities among the Muslims. The actions of the masjid's administrators should portray positivity and inclusiveness of the manifestation of love, care and sincerity towards the peaceful co-existence among the Muslims.

It is noteworthy to mention that, it is essential that the administrators of different masjid need to collaborate for the betterment of the Muslims in all schemes of life. In order to actualize the roles of masjid administration, it is pertinent to mention that, there is need for the establishment of "masjid committee". The committee members in administering the masjid should comprise the committee on the treasury and management of Zakat institution and other financial issues of masjid. Likewise, social committee is responsible for arbitration and mediation which plays an essential role towards the settlement of dispute among the Muslims. The arbitration is done in the light of Shar'iah and the Sunnah. For instance, it is explicitly posited that:

"But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission (Soorah an-Nisa"i:65)."

In addition, an enlightenment committee is primarily responsible for organization of religious and civilizational seminars in the masjid in order to unite and encourage cooperation, collaboration and proper communication among the entire Muslims. In so doing, this will elevate their religious understanding, status position and religious exposure to some basic issues. Likewise, this committee is also responsible for the Da'wah activities by inviting experienced and knowledgeable scholars for delivering the lectures or admonition. In addition, this committee is responsible for at least, a weekly programme or seminar in every masjid by collaborating with other committees for the successful staging of various programmes within the masjid.

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The Roles of Islamic World League, Training of Imams and IIUM RISEAP in Fostering Networking Opportunities among Muslims

This part explicitly explicates the organization of various religious and civilizational programmes as well as the enhancement of the skills and competencies of the administrators of the masjid. It is pertinent to mention that, the contributions and collaborations of various organizations towards the enhancement of networking opportunities among the Muslims. It is noteworthy to posit that, Islamic World League (IWL) in collaboration with Mālik Abdul Azīz University and ministry of Hajj and Waqf established an institute for training the Imams and preachers in order to prepare them as callers unto Islam through which the Imams and preachers will get an inspiration and its fruits will be useful to the entire Muslim Ummah.

Corroboratively, it is mentioned that, there is an institute for the training of Imam under the auspices of Al-Azhar University which is mainly for the enhancement of knowledge and skills of the scholars and Islamic thinkers in order to foster their competencies and abilities for the betterment of the Muslims. In line with the above assertion, it has been argued that, for the administration of masjid, it is important to give priority to the graduates of colleges of Da'wah and Institute of Training of Imams (Aliy, 1402).

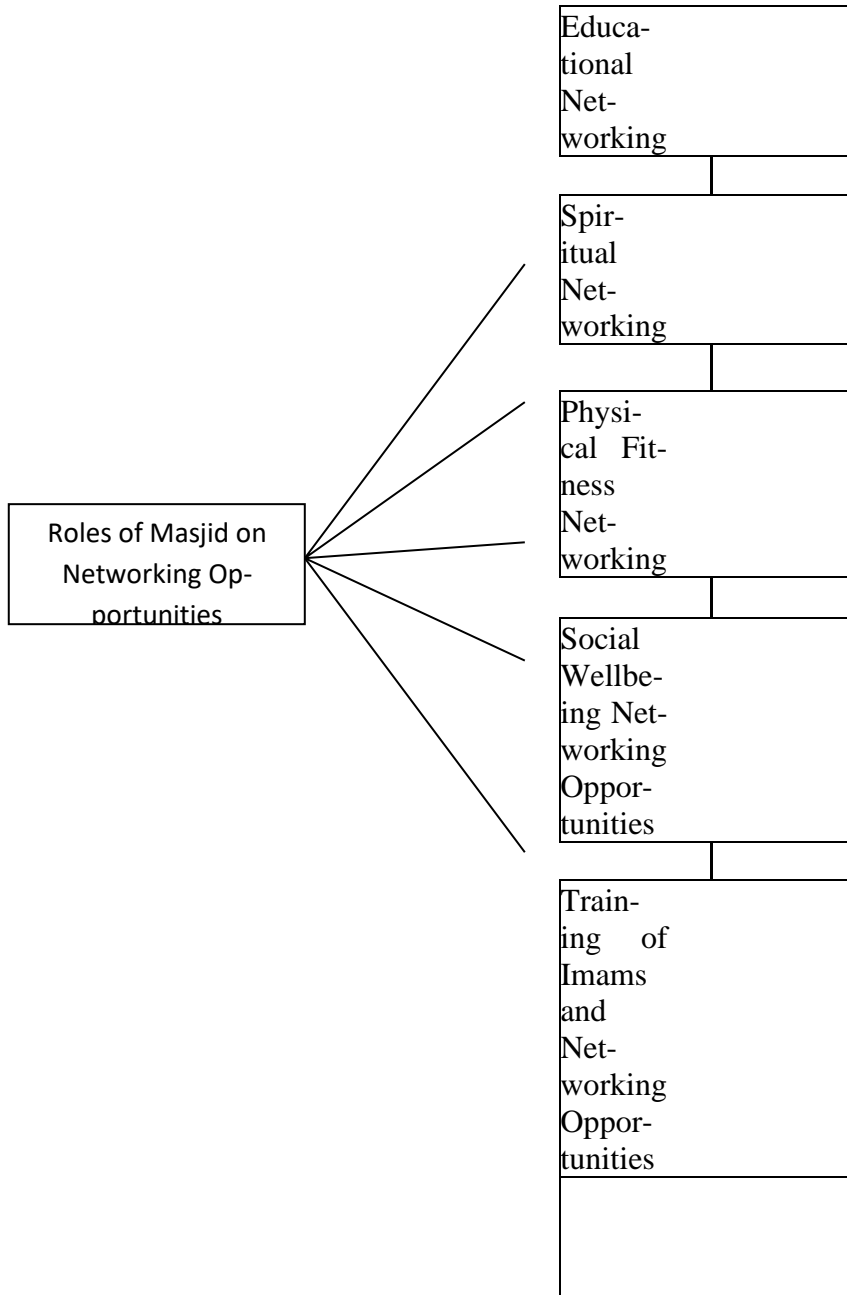
Likewise, it is gratifying to mention that, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) is a unique higher institution of learning in the Islamic world. The institution is unique with its various co-curricular activities. IIUM's mosque is creatively providing networking opportunities through Da'wah activities and collaborations with other organizations. For instance, it is worth mentioning the collaboration between IIUM masjid and Regional Islamic Da'wah council of Southeast Asian and Pacific (RISEAP) in Da'wah training for a number of selected Imams from regional countries each year. The same thing is the collaboration between IIUM masjid and Malaysian Chinese Muslim Association (MACMA) in annual educational program for selected number of Chinese Imams every year. The program includes Fiqh, Sirah, Arabic Language, Tafsīr and Da'wah. Both programs are held at IIUM for duration of two months. Selected IIUM lecturers participate in conducting these programs to grant its success.

Moreover, since knowledge is a prerequisite for worship (Ñibādah), masjid plays important role for spiritual enhancement among the Muslims

through which a common goal of being viceroy of Allah on earth surface would be unreservedly achieved. In order to achieve the spiritual networking among the Muslims, the paper has elucidated that when Umar bin Al-Khattāb may Allah be pleased with him conquered some towns, he sent message to companions governing the towns to build masjid for social and spiritual uprightness among the Muslims. It is also indicated that, masjid served a purpose of fostering physical fitness such as: Archery, swimming, horse riding etc. among the Muslims.

It has been explicated in the paper that, Islamic World League and training of Imams immensely contributed to the enhancement of the skills and competencies of Imams and more importantly it contributed to the networking opportunities among the Imams from different part of Muslim countries. It is noteworthy to assert that, various committees such as: education, Da'wah and spirituality, physical fitness, social wellbeing, training of Imams and Muslims are pertinently important for fostering networking opportunities among the Muslims. The below Figure 1 illustrates the multifarious interrelatedness of masjid's role on networking opportunities that the masjid could foster among the contemporary Muslims:

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## Conclusion

The paper has explicitly elaborated that the masjid is primarily meant for devotion and servility of obedience to Almighty God. The importance and prominence of masjid al-Harām, masjid al- Nabawī and masjid al-Aqsa have been explicated in the paper. Views of some Muslim scholars such as az-Zarkashī, az-Zujāj, al-Qādi Ayād and many others have been explained regarding the consideration of every place that Ibādah is carried out is considered as masjid. Likewise, it has been elucidated that there are many Qur'ānic verses and traditions of the Prophet peace be upon him that encourage Muslims to construct masjid for the purpose of remembrance not for the purpose of harming or causing disbelief or disunity and the Muslims. It has been argued that masjid during the Prophetic era fostered not only spiritual but also social, political, economic spheres of Muslims and specifically it enhanced the networking opportunities among them. Specifically, the paper has posited that masjid as the first educational institution in Islam promoted scholarship and erudition and the culture of learning during the medieval Islamic civilization encouraged an intellectual networking among the Muslim scholars through the exchange of scholarly books and many others. It is corroborated that study circle (Halaqah) in the many places like Baghdad, Egypt, Naysabur etc. fostered the networking opportunities among the scholars as well as students. It is thereby recommended that, the management of masjid should provide a platform for promoting educational, spiritual, social wellbeing networking opportunities among the contemporary Muslims.

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