

PLANNING OF MUSLIM WORSHIP PLACE (MWP)
IN SABAH. CASE STUDY: DISTRICT OF
PENAMPANG, SABAH

BY

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ABSTRACT

Sabah is a state of diverse ethnics and religions. Despite the multiracial and religious life, it is not a barrier for people in the state to work together in building a strong social institution. This can be seen from the establishment of a religious institution that is built especially in the capital city of Kota Kinabalu, where *masjid*, churches and temples are built just next to each other. However, towards the improvements of technologies in Malaysia, people have become very intellectual and have resorted in demanding for religious equalities. Hence, this research attempts to examine the foremost leading factors behind the refusals in the applications for *masjid* development, through analysing the planning process of the *masjid* in Malaysia. The objectives of this paper are- to identify the provision process of a *masjid* in the research area, to obtain the factors towards the contestation of a freestanding building, i.e., a *masjid* in the research area, and to recommend approaches for the provision of a *masjid* in areas where the majority are non-Muslims. This research uses a qualitative approach as the guide and method to obtain the required data, as well as interviews conducted with officers from JPBW, JHEAINS, JKK Penampang, Penampang District Council, Penampang District Office, and JK Masjid Waqaf Penampang. Accordingly, a thematic analysis is the method that will be used to analyse the data that are obtained. The result from the interviews will describe the prime factors towards the objection of the *masjid* development. Through the analysis, this research concludes by developing comprehensive guidelines, and reduce the Islamic architectural form in the construction of the *masjid*.

خلاصة البحث

صباح هي ولاية فيها ديانات وأعراق مختلفة. على الرغم من الحياة المتعددة الأعراق والدينية، فإنه ليس عائقا للناس في هذه الولاية للعمل معا في بناء مؤسسة اجتماعية قوية. ويمكن رؤية ذلك من خلال بناء مؤسسة دينية بنيت خاصة في العاصمة كوتا كينابالو، حيث يتم بناء المسجد والكنائس والمعابد بجوار بعضها البعض. ومع ذلك، أثناء تحسين التكنولوجيات في ماليزيا، أصبح الناس يفكرون بعيدا وبدأوا الطلب على المساواة في الأديان. ومن ثم، فإن الصعوبات التي ترتبت على ذلك هي توفير مرافق دينية متساوية، ولا سيما في المناطق التي يكون فيها المسلمون أقلية. وقيل إن كراهية الإسلام والشكل المعماري والعنصرية هي أكثر العوامل التي تقف وراء رفض طلبات المسجد. من أهداف هذا البحث هي: تحديد عملية توفير المسجد في مجال البحث، الحصول على عوامل نحو الطعن في البناء القائم بذاته للمسجد في مجال البحث، والتوصية بنهج لتوفير المسجد في المنطقة التي تكون فيها الأغلبية غير مسلمة. ويوظف هذا البحث النهج النوعي كدليل وطريقة للحصول على البيانات المطلوبة وهو مقابلة مع ضباط من JPBW و JHEAINS و JKK Penampang ومجلس مقاطعة Penampang ومكتب مقاطعة Penampang والأعضاء التنفيذيين لمسجد Wakaf Penampang. وفي نفس الوقت، سيتم استخدام التحليل الموضوعي بوصفه طريقة لتحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها. وستصف نتيجة المقابلة العوامل الرئيسية تجاه الاعتراض على تطوير المسجد. ومن خلال التحليل، يخلص إلى وضع مبادئ توجيهية شاملة والحد من الشكل المعماري الإسلامي في بناء المسجد.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
DTCP	Department of Town and Country Planning
IPD	<i>Ibu Pejabat Polis Daerah</i>
JAKIM	<i>Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia</i>
JAWHAR	<i>Jabatan Wakaf, Zakat dan Haji</i>
JHEAINS	<i>Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Sabah</i>
JKK WAKAF	<i>Jawatankuasa Wakaf</i>
JPBW	<i>Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Wilayah</i>
KAFA	<i>Kelas Al-Quran dan Fardu Ain</i>
KDCA	Kadazandusun Cultural Association
MAIN	<i>Majlis Agama Islam Negeri</i>
MDP	<i>Majlis Daerah Penampang</i>
MUIS	<i>Majlis Ugama Islam Sabah</i>
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NLC	National Land Code
PBS	Pantai Barat Selatan
PBU	Pantai Barat Utara
PWD	People with Disabilities
RTM	Radio Televisyen Malaysia
UBBL	Uniform Building by Law
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
YWM	Yayasan Waqaf Malaysia

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Sabah is a Malaysian state which has diverse ethnic groups and religions. Majority of the population in this state are Muslims, while the non-Muslims comprise about 34.6% of the population. Despite being a multiracial and multi religious state, it is not a barrier for the people in Sabah to work together in building a robust social institution. This can be seen from the construction of religious institutions, especially in the capital city of Kota Kinabalu, in which mosques (*masjids*), churches, and temples are built next to each other. This shows that the people in Sabah have good social relationships despite the differences in religions and races.

One of the earliest communities in Sabah is in Penampang district. Its proximity to the city centre has made this area as one of the major centres in the state. The earliest occupants in Penampang are known as the Kadazan Dusun and Bajau ethnic groups. Thus, it makes this area as a non-Muslim majority. Nevertheless, the rapid transformation of education and economy in Sabah has increased the Muslim population in Penampang district. Before the existence of a *masjid* located in the Penampang District Police Headquarters, the nearest one that can be reached by the Muslim population in Penampang was located 15 km away from the district. Hence, by conducting this research, the factors that impede the construction of a *masjid* in a suitable site can be identified through proper methods.

This research used a qualitative approach as a guide. The method used to obtain the required data was interview with a group of experts officers from Jabatan Perancang Bandar dan Wilayah (JPBW), Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Sabah (JHEAINS), Jawatankuasa Wakaf Masjid Penampang (JKK Wakaf Masjid Penampang), Penampang District Office, Majlis Ugama Islam Sabah (MUIS), Majlis Daerah Penampang (MDP) and Penampang District Police Headquarters (IPD Penampang). The obtained data were then analyzed using a thematic analysis method.

This research is vital to meet the social needs of the Muslim community in Penampang district. In addition, the communities and stakeholders will be more sensitive to the needs of the minority groups regardless of races or religions. Thus, the primary purpose of this investigation was to find solutions in addressing the issue of barrier on the social needs of other religious communities.

1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The current study chose Penampang district in the state of Sabah as a case study. Sabah is the second-largest state with 3.49 million people and the second most populous state after Selangor (Gom, Jiony, Tanakinjal & Sigantul, 2015). Sabah is a state of multi ethnics, religions, cultures, and languages. Based on the statistics, the population of Muslims in Sabah is about 65.4% while the non-Muslim is about 34.6%. The numbers of Muslims are expected to grow year by year. Similar to the Peninsular of Malaysia, Islam is the religion of the state. However, other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the state.

Consequently, this research is vital in helping to increase the understanding of how the small group of Muslims such as in Penampang district live and face the challenges in terms of access to healthcare, employment, facilities, housing and more.

In addition, this research will contribute to identify the approach used by responsible parties and authorities to fulfil the needs of Muslim minorities in the areas dominated by non-Muslim community. Thus, this research employed a qualitative approach. The data were collected through in-depth interviews with expert groups. All of the data and information were analyzed using thematic analysis through Nvivo software. The outcome of the research is expected to show a main factor towards the objection of masjid application in Penampang district and to recommend an approach in dealing with the needs of Muslim minorities and non-Muslim communities at the same time. The findings will be useful for local authorities, town planners as well as policymakers to plan, monitor, and control not only the worship places for Muslims but also for non-Muslims.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Conflict over the building of a mosque in the area of non-Muslim majority community is not a new phenomenon. A few cases of demolishing the worship places either own by Muslim or non-Muslim happened in Malaysia as well as in other countries. The problems found in this study are derived from the current situation of the research area and from the previous studies. Thus, this study drew the problem statements as follows:

- i. Masjids are only built within the government compound and mostly are from upgraded *surau*

Masjid is an Islamic religious institution that should be built at an easy access location. In order to ease the Muslim communities to perform the congregational prayers, *masjid* should be friendly built and located near to Muslim residence houses. However, masjids in this research are from upgraded *surau* (a smaller structure of *masjid*) which most of them are

located within the government compounds. In other words, the access to these *masjids* is very limited. It is also complicated for the communities to conduct religious activities such as KAFAs (*fardhu 'ain* class), and *usrah* (religion discussion).

Based on the manual for planning standard guidelines for the state of Selangor by the Department Town and Country Planning (DTCP), the provision of local *masjid* should be provided for every 20,000 Muslim population. According to the Sabah Statistics Yearbook, it is estimated that there are about 21,269 of Muslim populations in Penampang district (Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia Negeri Sabah, 2015). Based on this record, at least one local *masjid* should be established as a facility for Muslim populations in Penampang. For an area with an intermediate density of population such as residential area, *masjid* should be provided with a minimum size of the site that should be 2.5 hectares with 2,500 numbers of Muslim populations. However, it was found that *masjids* are only built by upgrading the existing *surau*. This initiative is only able to accommodate the current needs of Muslim populations of the area. With the increasing numbers of Muslim populations in the future, new *masjids* need to be built to accommodate the increasing numbers of congregation (*jama'ah*). Hence, by conducting this research, the process of *masjid* provision in Sabah was identified.

- ii. The construction of a *masjid* invaded the identity of other religions and communities of the area

The existence of a *masjid* is believed to be a symbol of constancy to the greatness of Islam in a particular area. This is due to the fact that the

construction of a *masjid* usually comes together with a minaret, which is viewed as a tower with a sign of power and domination. A minaret is one of the most important elements of a *masjid* and Islamic architecture. It is " a place where the *muezzin* goes there to say *azan*" (Jalili, Arghandeh, Alipour & Sorkhdan, 2016). However, neither minaret nor other elements such as dome and half-moon are belong to the original history of Islam (Avcioglu, 2007).

- iii. The construction of a *masjid* leads to unequal treatment between Muslim and non-Muslim in term of the call for prayer

Non-Muslim community believes that a loudspeaker call for prayer (*azan*) is not suitable for their environment. However, the call for prayer is an Islamic context that is related to religious duty even though it does not make sense in a non-Islamic context, in which it has no practical significance. For that reason, the way in which *azan* is carried out, the permitted volume, and the number of times (it is not normally allowed for all five daily prayers) are pragmatically regulated by the local authority. In Amsterdam, for example, as in many other places, *azan* is only allowed on Friday, and in many cases with several decibels (Allievi, 2009). Besides, the call for prayer might be understood as a call against the Christianity. For some Christians, this remains a provocation since these utterances obviously deny the Holy Trinity of God and consequently the fundamental dogma of Christianity (Allievi, 2009).

- iv. The construction of a *masjid* disrupts the flow of traffic specifically after Friday prayer

Traffic congestion usually happens after the Friday prayer and might disrupt the flow of traffics in an area. Specifically, the area under study has already faced insufficient parking space, which might be getting worst after the construction of a new Muslim worship place. Some scholars mentioned that among the factors towards the objection of a mosque construction are because of parking and congestion issues. The objections and contested local debates that take place around the construction of mosques usually centered on either historical or aesthetic considerations, such as architectural heritage and urban conservation, or on more mundane or practical matters, such as parking facilities and traffic congestion in the surrounding streets (Allievi, 2009).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the above statements of problems, four research questions were raised for the current study. They are:

- Question 1** How is the provision process of building a *masjid* in Sabah?
- Question 2** What causes the *masjid* in Penampang upgraded from the *surau*?
- Question 3** Why *masjid* was only built within the government building compounds?
- Question 4** What is the main factor influencing the contestation of a free-standing building *masjid* in the research area?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The current research aimed to study the planning process of Muslim worship place or *masjid* in Sabah. Three objectives were designed to achieve the research aim as listed below:

- Objective 1** To identify the provision process of building a *masjid* in the research area.
- Objective 2** To know the factors towards the contestation of a free-standing building *masjid* in the research area.
- Objective 3** To recommend approaches for the provision of building a *masjid* in the area of non-Muslim majority.

1.6 SCOPES AND LIMITATIONS

This research was limited by several scopes that have been initially identified for the research purposes. They are described below:

- i. Type of development:
Muslim worship place (*Masjid*).
- ii. Location:
This research was conducted at Penampang, Sabah.
- iii. Duration:
The period of research study was started in January 2017 and expected to finish in early 2020, depending on the data collection process.
- iv. Target group involved in this study:
Expert groups from JPBW, JHEAINS, JKK Wakaf Masjid Penampang, Penampang District Office, MUIS, MDP, and IPD Penampang.

1.7 SIGNIFICANT OF THE RESEARCH

This research may bring benefits in term of the provisions of public facilities to satisfy and fulfil the needs of communities, hence improve the quality of their life. The expected outcomes that were identified during the study are:

- i. Determining the factors contributing to the contestation of a *masjid* in the area of non-Muslim majority.
- ii. Preparing a new approach for the construction of Muslim worship places to fulfil the needs of minority Muslims regardless of the objections of the majority group of the area.
- iii. Identifying the shortfalls in the planning process mechanisms in dealing with the provision of Muslim worship places in the area of non-Muslim majority.
- iv. Becoming a reference for the upcoming development related to the research under study.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter one is a preliminary stage of this research study. This chapter plays a role as the backbone to figure out the primary purpose of conducting this study. This chapter is started with the background of the research, which explained the reasons and how the study will be conducted. It is followed by the problem statement, research questions, and research objectives. Subsequently, the chapter is concluded with the scopes, limitations, and significant of the research.