

Historical Approach and Analysis of Roles and Functions of Indonesian Mosques

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ABSTRACT

Several studies show how mosques become a symbol of Islam, entities of Muslims and civilizations, and play important roles in society. Using historical approach and social welfare perspectives, the study aims to explore roles and functions of mosques in two periods of early Islam and modern era. The last provides description of mosques in some Muslim and non-Muslim countries such as in Indonesia, Turkey, Morocco and United States. The study also shows the need for revitalizing the role of mosques by applying short survey, in-depth interview and secondary data in collecting, analysis and explain solutions in the eyes of congregations of some Indonesia mosques in improving programs, activities and services particularly for special needs such as interfaith, youth and women groups.

Keywords: roles and functions of mosques, during and post covid-19 pandemic age, special needs of people

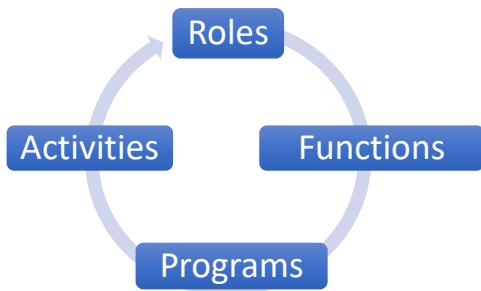
1. Introduction

Indonesia as a country with the largest Muslim population, mosques play an important role not only for the worship place, but also provide direct services for the community. Previous research shows that there is a need to increase mosque activities in the form of alternative activities outside the routine rituals of the mosque (Al-Krenawi, 2016; Bagby, 2011; Tandos, et all, 2020). This study found that mosque as a place of worship for Muslims not only provides ritual-religious services, but also social-community services responding issues and needs of congregations and communities.

The mosque has performed its role in various aspects of life, namely social, cultural, economic and political-government, and serves a variety of functions that are present in various programs and activities as described in figure 1 below:

The study specifically discusses the important roles and functions of mosque during and post covid 19 pandemic age in improving welfare. The perspectives of Islamic history and social welfare used to analyze data, discuss findings and develop further efforts to improve the role of mosques.

Figure 1: Mosques: Roles, Functions, Program and Activities



1.1. Mosques across the Ages

During the life of the Prophet Muhammad, mosque was used to meet envoys, sign agreement, rule his court, and served as hospital and a place for economic development (Al-Krenawi, 2016; Muhammad, 1996; Tandos, et all, 2020). Responding to the rules and functions of mosques, it is important to develop much more efforts across time, places and Muslim generations. In this study, the word mosque refers a place for Muslims to pray, reflecting their obedience to Almighty God, work for humanity and preserving lives.

1.2. Mosques' Roles in Early Islam

The Prophet Muhammad made the mosque as a center for teaching knowledge or revelations that had been obtained from God in the form of revelation. While the Prophet Muhammad migrated from one place to another, he built mosques. The first mosque was Quba Mosque before the Prophet Muhammad arrived in Medina in which the second mosque was established. The establishment of the two mosques in the early days of Islam gave an understanding that mosques were important for teaching Islam and also important for Muslims as a community.

Table 1: Roles and functions of Mosques

Roles	Functions	Activities
Center for religious activities	Improving the quality of faith and obedience Improving knowledge and Islamic insight	Praying together and performing <i>dzikir</i> and <i>du'a</i> Learning and teaching al-Qur'an and <i>Hadit</i>
Center for Education	Teaching sciences Having a Library	Running classes on sciences (philosophy, astronomy, arts, economics, etc.) Having Islamic book collections and other facilities
Center for Improving Economy	Establishing "Baitul Maal"	Collecting <i>zakat</i> , <i>infaq</i> and <i>shadaqah</i>
Center for social activities	Providing space for gatherings or <i>sillaturrahim</i>	Inviting the congregation to come and get involved in the activities

	Providing social services	Distributing social assistance Treating patients Providing “shelter” for people without homes
Center for Governance	Performing political activities	Welcoming delegations from other countries

Speaking about roles, functions, and activities at mosques in Islamic history can be illustrated in Table 1 shows that mosques played important roles not only as center for conducting religious activities, but also as centers for education, developing economy, social activities and governance. These roles apply for religious, social, economic, and political functions, activities, and outcomes. In short, the mosque as a faith-based organization and a place to improve social welfare are two interrelated things. In other words, a mosque can play its role as a place of worship and at the same time contribute to creating fundamental social change. At this point, the role and function of the mosque will be comprehensive and useful for both worshipers/Muslims and other members of the community.

1.3. Mosques in Global and Modern Era

Mosques are among identities of Muslim where they perform an extensive array of services of religiosity, social, education, health and economy. For its religious function, Muslim pray not only at a mosque, but also to the whole earth is pure having function as place for pray. However, it is mentioned in Islamic teaching that praying at mosque communally will be rewarded 27 degrees or rewards more and better than other places or praying individually. In several countries mosques have developed in a form of Islamic center to cultivate enduring practices, organize daily life, and accommodate social interactions among different socioeconomic groups.

Nowadays, mosques have developed into a form of Islamic center to cultivate enduring practices, organize daily life, and accommodate social interactions among different socioeconomic groups. The secure position of the mosque as the center of daily life has shifted in varying degrees in different settings as a consequence of transformations in everyday life. Ozaloglu & Gurel (2011) state that although men have used mosques in Turkey more extensively, mosques are open to everyone, regardless of religion, class, age, or ethnicity. Such phenomena are also shown in mosques in Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country in the world, with an additional point of acculturation of beliefs, culture, and modern architectural designs.

Mosque as a faith-based organization and a place to improve social welfare are two interrelated things. For big mosque such as state or national mosque, it has several programs and play as a place of worship and at the same time contribute for fundamental social change. At this point, the roles, functions, programs and activities of the mosque will be comprehensive and useful for both congregation and other members of the community and diverse along with unique contexts in different countries. For instance, for Arab Muslims mosques tend to encourage civic participation, political involvement, as well as group consciousness (Jamal, 2005). Conversely, for South Asian Muslims activities at mosques mainly just for enhancing civic participation, not for group consciousness and political involvement.

In the western countries, mosques also function as “safe” Islamic spaces or a kind of “paradise” for Muslim migrants who assume themselves to be in an environment hostile to their faith. That is why for some Muslim migrants, mosques provide a safe place in a religious-cultural manner due to feelings of alienation due to migration and social exposure due to racism or unemployment.

Furthermore, mosques play a multi-functional role, namely serving inspirational, communal, social, and educational needs. Mosques also connect Muslims with followers of other religions and local government institutions, as well as keeps them informed of new and important political developments, responding also to special needs in terms of age, class and gender (Bagby 2011; McLoughlin, 2005; Omidyar, 2019; Ozyurt, 2010).

For instance, mosques exist a place to study American history, culture and values of peace, tolerance and cooperation held in forms of art performances, training and inter-faith meetings. The religious activities and provide advocacy services to overcome anti-Muslim misunderstanding and discrimination. Therefore, it becomes a concern for policy makers to pay attention and emphasize the role of mosques and other faith-based organizations in strengthening society.

Mosques also respond to the expectation of young people (second generation and third generation) that want to represent not just ethnic origin of their parents, but also current situation and conditions in the American society, where young people are born, grow and developing. This millennial generation's condition really wants change respecting to their ages and gender (Bagby, 2011). Furthermore, mosques in the United States of America provides services such legal assistance for Muslim immigrants, services for pilgrims, providing health services, and other social assistances. For instance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) Program - like social assistance program in Indonesia - is also distributed through FBOs, such as mosques and churches in the United States (Tandos, et. all, 2020). Similarly, in Indonesia mosques or *musallah* (smaller than mosque) also help for government's programs, such as cancer screening, checking nutrition and weight of babies and maternal medical check-up.

1.4. Social Welfare Perspective on Roles and Functions of Mosque

Regarding the social welfare perspective, the discussion of mosques' roles and functions is more related to community development practices where houses of worship are considered important resources available in the communities with deep roots and a strong impact on people's lives. Such religious institutions can play their religious and social roles at the same time through their programs and activities.

Furthermore, the mosque is a place to foster the unity of the congregation and mutual cooperation in realizing shared prosperity, and to carry out social arrangements and related supervision. Considering the need for enhancing the roles and functions of mosques, this part discusses the findings of the study focusing on several points of opportunities for increasing the role and function of mosques through fund raising, mosque organization, and opportunities for increasing the mosques' programs and services to their congregations and communities.

The mosque as a place of worship (house of worship) is effective for sustainable community development. Chester states: "... religious institutions are generally more sustainable than most civil society organizations ..." (Chester, 2002, p.12). This is reasonable because religious organizations are founded on the basis of religious beliefs which implement religious values and teachings, and therefore have a large impact on individuals or groups. Furthermore, the aspects of community development have a broad scope that includes good economic development, health, and education. For instance, mosques at the time of the Prophet were also political and governmental institutions in which political deliberations, military training, and state administration were held.

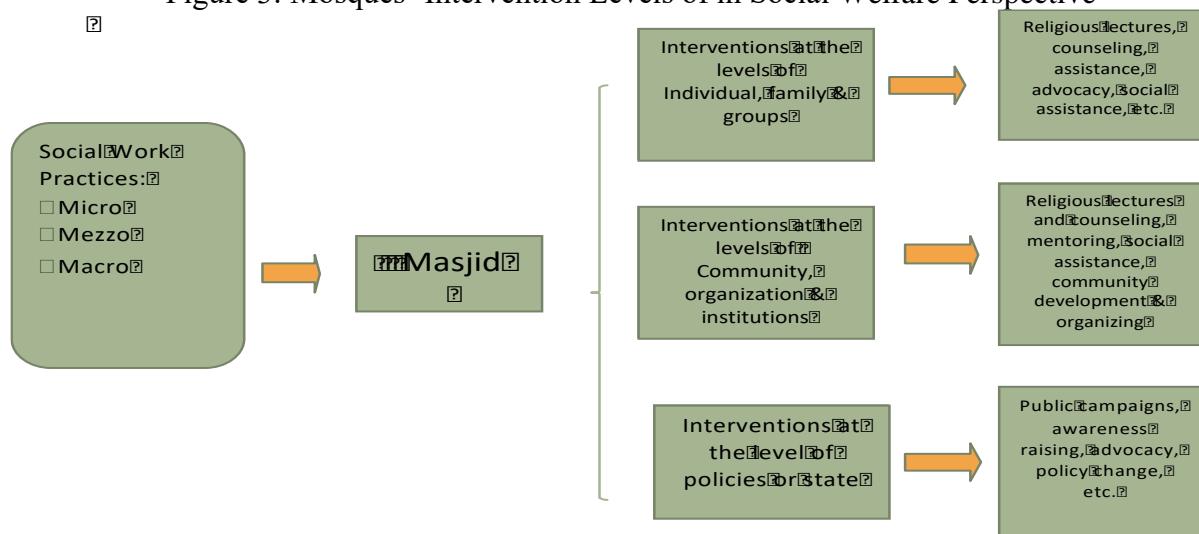
In applying a social welfare perspective related to community development practices, places of worship (houses of worship) are considered strategic resources available to the community with deep roots (Ife, 2002). Learning from the history of Indonesia, the mosque as a form of Faith Based-Organizations (FBOs) has played a strategic role in gaining independence from colonization, creating change from one regime to another, and in shaping the character of a nation (Clarke, 2012). Figure 2 shows the developed framework (from WHO during covid 19 pandemic age) in working with religious organizations.

Figure 2: Working with Faith-based Organizations



Furthermore, the concept of creating change and helping the community reflect the basic points of Islamic teachings, especially such as creating social justice and improving welfare and well-being. The theoretical framework in the perspective of social welfare related to the urgency of increasing the role and function of mosques is illustrated as follows:

Figure 3: Mosques' Intervention Levels of in Social Welfare Perspective



From Figure 3 above it can be understood that studying social work or social welfare scholarship about FBOs such as mosques is a powerful means to improve welfare in terms of religiosity, motivation to obey religious teachings, and to overcome problems in daily life. In addition, the role of FBOs is not only important for the religious aspects of each individual, family or group

(worshippers / Muslim community) that reflect the level of interventions of the social program carried out by the mosque, but also to create a better future that formed in all aspects of life, holistic and holistic (social, economic, educational, health, etc.).

Several studies on the role of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) have been carried out using many different theoretical or conceptual frameworks. This topic is of concern not only to academics or scholars, but also practitioners and activists. First, in his book entitled "Development, Civil Society, and Faith Based Organizations" (2012), Gerard Clarke explains that development studies have traditionally ignored the role of religion and beliefs and their role in the lives of poor people throughout the developing world. As in other social sciences, it is strongly influenced by 'secularization theory', the belief (in Wilson's classic formulation, 1992) that 'religious institutions, actions, and consciousness lose their social significance' over time as societies modernize.

This influence is evident in two key terms: 'secular reductionism' - the neglect of religious variables that support other sociological attributes such as class, ethnicity, and gender - and 'materialistic determinism' - nonmaterial neglect, especially religion, as motivation for explaining individual or institutional behavior. In this case, academics and policy makers consider poverty as a matter of material appropriation and the elimination of technical effort; they systematically ignore the role of faith as an analytical lens through which the poor experience and rationalize poverty and through which those who are able to empathize with their struggle provide practical support.

In general, the idea of the role of mosques in improving and maintaining social welfare is an interesting issue that has been widely discussed by scholars. Some believe that the existence of a mosque in the community plays a major role in improving social welfare and increasing both the economic and educational levels of the community. Krenawi (2016) has seen the important role of mosques and their relevance to social work. He stated that a mosque was not only a place for congregation or worship, but also a place where many different activities could be carried out. Mosques provide education services, political welfare, and conflict resolution during disputes between groups, couples, and individuals.

Moreover, Krenawi (2016) has shown that mosques and imams (religious leaders) contribute to social development, and in emergency situations, mosques are often used as an alternative place for disaster victims. Likewise, Muhammad Ramli points out that the mosque is one of the basic Islamic institutions that is assumed to play a major role in promoting justice, knowledge, and goodness in society. He went on to state that a mosque is like a university where education and learning processes take place (Rafi, 2007). In some cases, large mosques have libraries which in turn become centers of literacy and centers for sharing knowledge.

Furthermore, in social welfare studies, there are two articles about the role of FBOs in Malawi. One written by Nabila Saddiq, Capacity Building and Islamic FBOs: Insight from Malawi, and one by Rick James, Development of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) with Churches in Malawi. These works analyze faith-based organizations in Malawi, respectively Muslim and Christian, and the possibility to mobilize and work through local faith structures that represent this type of organization (Nabila, 2009).

Furthermore, in the context of Islamic and Christian organizations, the study aims to examine developments within the organizations. In studies of Islamic FBO, the focus is on capacity building, while in Christian FBOs, the focus is in organizational development (Nabila, 2009). First, Saddiq believes that Islamic FBOs make a significant contribution to development work in

Malawi. However, they still have a lot of work to do in terms of building organizational effectiveness. The key to good organizational development practices in Islamic FBOs tries to understand and show respect for their faith identity. Research shows that many Islamic FBOs and Muslim individuals feel that non-Muslims have limited knowledge and understanding of their faith. Showing sensitivity to dress codes, male / female interactions, and prayer times when arranging meetings is important. Therefore, capacity building with Islamic FBO needs to be done in a way that earns trust and respect. Additionally, the study of Christian FBOs in Malawi examines the challenges of general and specific organizations facing church-based organizations. James argues that organizational development in church-based organizations should be different than in secular NGOs, only because the structures in the two types of organization are different from each other. He recommended including time to pray, to use images or language from religious traditions, and to respect and act according to FBO norms (Nabilah, 2009). In the cases of both Islamic and Christian FBOs, religious influences were analyzed to be an extremely integrated part of the organization and this had consequences for collaboration with other development practitioners. In other words, the collaborative approach must respect and adapt to the religious context and trust structure of the FBO.

2. Method

As mentioned previously, the study examined mosques in Indonesia, taking samples of nine prominent Indonesian mosques. As mentioned earlier, the study aimed to explore the roles and functions of mosques towards improving welfare in Indonesia. The study has conducted from 2018 to 2023 (5 years) involved used mixed methods in collecting data and analysis (short survey and secondary data) on roles of mosques and how they respond current issues and develop programs, especially during covid 19 pandemic age and post the pandemic, particularly in responding the needs of youth and women groups. They were asked to fill in questionnaires using closed ended questions covering some points about roles and programs of the mosques and efforts to improve the roles. Then, twenty participants (n=20) voluntarily joined in-depth interviews. The qualitative data analysis is described in table 2 as follows:

Tabel 2: Steps of Qualitative Phases

Main Point	Research Question	Source of Data	Data Analysis
1. Roles of the mosques	- What roles are carried out by the mosque	Jama'ah/Congregation Mosque management	- Reflexive analysis (determine and reflect the perspective and position of the participants' own values)
2. Programs implemented by the mosques to play their roles	- What programs are provided for congregations	Jama'ah/Congregation Mosque management	- Literal analysis (reviewing references, reading memos and transcripts, and coding data)
	- What efforts need to be made to	Jama'ah/Congregation Mosque management	

3. Efforts to improve the roles of the mosques	improve mosque policies and programs	- Literal analysis and interpretive analysis (checking participants' words and behavior / expressions)
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Table 2 illustrates that the three main points that are the focus of this study, namely: The roles and functions of the mosques, the programs and activities the mosques have conducted to play their roles, and the efforts needed to improve their programs. Information or data related to these three points was obtained from respondents, or participants, of the congregation and mosque management. Furthermore, interview transcriptions, explanations, and expressions of the participants were carried out based on the categorization of reflective data with both a literal and interpretive analysis of documents. All of these methods were used in analyzing the findings and developing the discussions.

3. Findings and Analysis

As mentioned previously, the study used mixed methods in collecting data and analysis (short survey, in-depth interviews and secondary data) on roles and functions of mosques and how the participants respond current issues and develop programs, especially during covid 19 pandemic age and post the pandemic, particularly in responding the needs of interfaith, youth and women groups.

3.1. Solutions for Revitalizing Mosques' Roles

The study explains efforts to revitalize the roles of mosques to be implemented through various program as suggested by the participants. The following table describes six main areas that have to be improved: Islamic education, worship, facilities and services, youth and children's participation, organizational management, and social empowerment.

From table 2 it can be seen that the top three priorities for developing the roles and functions of mosques are in fields of religious education, worship, and facilities and services. The eight mosques that served as the samples for this study are located in the capital of Jakarta and satellite cities (Depok and East Tangerang), where they relatively have various programs, activities, and services. In addition, they have middle class people that regularly visit the mosques, receiving sufficient donations from the congregants from weekly religious activities, holy days, and months. Lastly, the other points that need improvement include youth and children's involvement, mosque management, and social empowerment. In other words, the mosques are supposed to develop their programs, activities, and services to assist specific groups (youth and children, management, congregations, and communities as a whole).

Table 3: The point of view of participants to improve mosque roles

No.	Area of Work	Effort to Improve	Programs / Activities
1.	Education	Improving <i>majelis taklim</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily and monthly programs - Short sermon after praying - Learning <i>tajwid</i> (reciting al-Qur'an)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content to counter intolerance, hate, and radicalism - Training and inviting moderate preachers - Promoting programs of mosques
2.	Worship	Improving quality of worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traininnd providing good quality Imam (for praying) - Participation of congregations in prayers, especially at dawn.
3.	Facilities and services	Increasing quality of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cleanness - Security - Facilities - Garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Places for praying, <i>wudhu</i>, and toilets - Lockers for bags and shoes - Clothes for praying, al-Qur'an - Clean water - Technology use (internet, solar energy, etc.) - Air conditioners and fans - Beautiful plants and flowers
4.	Youth and children participation	Involving youths and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building - Reciting al-Qur'an - Youth mosque organizations - Sport activities
5.	Organizational management	Improving mosque management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional and compatible staff - Promoting mosque programs - Transparent and accountable - Being a productive organization - Being a center for Islamic civilization
6.	Social empowerment	Developing as a center for community engagement Establishing an economic center Conducting formal education Other social activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having social activities (e.g. wedding ceremonies) - Competitions for reciting al-Qur'an, art, Islamic music, etc. - Fund raising (charity/philanthropy, donations, and <i>zakat</i>, etc.) - Mini-market - Bazaar events - Economic and entrepreneurship training - Education from elementary to university levels - Improving human resources - Taking care of orphans - Celebrating holy and national days - Working with interfaith groups

3.2. Worship Services Responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that corona virus has infected people all over the world. On the one hand, faith-based organizations, religious leaders, and faith communities can play a major role in saving lives and reducing illness related to Covid-19. They are a primary source of support, comfort, guidance, and direct health care and social services for the communities they serve. By sharing clear and accurate information with evidence-based steps to prevent Covid-19, religious-inspired institutions can promote helpful information, prevent and reduce fear and stigma, provide reassurance to people in their communities, and promote health-saving practices (WHO, 2020).

To respond to the pandemic, Indonesian governmental bodies have applied some policies to stop the chain of transmission of the corona virus such as lockdowns, quarantines, social distancing, physical distance, and self-isolation. In Indonesia, the government has also banned gatherings in schools and other public places such as mosques, malls, cinemas, parks, and airports. This makes some public places resist compliance with government recommendations.

Worship events during the covid-19 pandemic emphasize the principle of protecting human lives as one of the main obligations in Islamic law. Therefore, the government and Muslim leaders recommend worshiping from home as an effort towards a significant reduction in the cases. However, during the holy month of Ramadhan, keeping worship at home is more challenging as people usually pray at mosques together. The government's ban on worship in mosques or other places of worship during the Corona pandemic is to protect human lives, and yet protecting the soul is one of the main obligations in religion. This makes some public places less likely to comply with government recommendations.

Some studies show that mosques play important roles to support communities. A mosque has been used as a care facility for patients with Covid-19. For example, the e-Ghosia mosque in the industrial city of Bolton, England has been turned into a hospital with 55 beds for Covid-19 patients. In some other places, mosque parking lots are used to store corpses, because of the overcapacity of hospitals and morgues. Additionally, the study of Indonesian mosques found that strategic efforts have been initiated and developed, especially responding the Covid-19 pandemic. The great mosque of Istiqlal, located in central Jakarta, has conducted programs to support congregational and community lives. The mosque of Istiqlal is the biggest mosque in Southeast Asia and the third largest mosque in the world (after mosques in the holy cities of Mecca and Madinah, Saudi Arabia). The main program is to improve the roles of religious institutions to address social-religious problems and help those mostly affected by the pandemic. This program involves people across faith, gender, age, social class, and nationality. All of these groups work together in webinars, training, social services and assistance, which mainly aim to establish a comprehensive understanding of Islam and bring peace, harmony, and tolerance in society.

3.3. Challenges of Post Covid 19 Pandemic

The last two years of 2020 to 2022 shows how countries suffered from covid 19 pandemic hist mainly their social and economy lives. Some studies show that mosques play important roles to support communities. Indonesian government and Muslim leaders recommend worshiping from home as an effort towards a significant reduction in the cases, applying the principle of protecting human lives as one of the main obligations in Islamic law. However, during the holy month of Ramadhan, keeping worship at home is more challenging as people usually pray at mosques

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All of these groups work together in webinars, training, social services and assistance, which mainly aim to establish a comprehensive understanding of Islam and bring peace, harmony, and tolerance in society. The covid-19 vaccination program was a national program held in February 2021 at the Istiqlal mosque for religious leaders and the elderly.

Furthermore, special issues of interfaith dialogue, youths and women empowerment held hybrid invited famous millennial figures from different background, such as governmental officers, businessman and well-known artists. The main purposes were to increase the awareness of the people that living in the pandemic age should not make people isolated, frustrated and less motivated. The use of technology could ease and help facing the situation and condition. In addition, people could work in partnership and good understanding one another in social (religious, cultural, health and education), economy, politic and security at local, national and internationally. The programs have been conducted until the pandemic ends.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the history of Islam, mosque became a crucial institution facilitating religious teaching, social and economic activities, and governmental stuff. The prophet Muhammad pbh. with the first generation of Muslim established two mosques named Madinah and Quba. Masjid in Madinah became the center of all activities during the prophet Muhammad's life.

Nowadays, as one of faith based-organization Indonesian mosques have played important roles and functions, especially during pandemic covid 19 (2020-2022). The mosques became the center for religious and social activities aiming to reduce hardship of Muslim and non-Muslim. They even provide health services (covid 19 vaccination) and serve as hospital to cure the patients. After the pandemic age, mosques are expected to develop many more effective programs covering many more people with different backgrounds (age, class, gender and ethnicity) involving governmental and non-governmental organizations, private sectors, media and others institutions.

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