

The Implementation of Cash Waqf People's Religious Schools (SAR)

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Abstract

Most People's Religious Schools (Sekolah Agama Rakyat-SAR) face financial constraints in managing and administering schools. Therefore, SAR administrators strive to obtain funds through instruments such as waqf, for example, cash waqf. However, until now, the implementation of cash waqf instruments in SAR has not received much attention among SAR administrators. Nevertheless, Sekolah Rendah Islam Tahfiz Integrasi Al-Fateh, Raub, Pahang (SRITI, Al-Fateh) is one of the SARs that has implemented cash waqf and has had a positive impact on the school's development. The objective of this study is to identify the method of implementing cash waqf and to analyze the

effectiveness of the implementation in sustaining the finances of Al-Fateh Integrated Tahfiz Islamic Primary School (SRITI), Raub, Pahang, Malaysia. This is a qualitative study. A face-to-face interview was carried out as a data collection method using semi-structured questions involving three respondents comprising the chairperson, a local officer, and a project manager of SRITI Al-Fateh. The study data was supported by secondary sources such as books, magazines, journals, articles, and others. The data obtained was analyzed using the content analysis method. The study outcome finds that SRITI Al-Fateh has collected waqf in the form of cash. The funds collected came from various groups of the society such as individuals and NGOs. From the funds, a two-story school

building was successfully constructed, and a mosque (still being constructed), and they serve as an activity center for teachers and students. This study hopes that the method of implementation of cash waqf by SRITI Al-Fateh can serve as guidance for SAR in Malaysia and other educational institutions in the effort to sustain the school finances. Future work can be done by making comparisons with one or more other SARs to show the effectiveness of cash waqf implementation.

Keywords: Sustainability; Financial sustainability; People's Religious Schools (SAR); Al-Fateh Integrated Tahfiz Islamic Primary School (SRITI); Cash waqf

Introduction

History has proven that years ago, most educational institutions received their funds from the waqf instrument. For example, in Jerusalem in the early 5th century, there were 70 waqf schools constructed, and 12 of them provided free education to the students. During the Islamic rule in the Sicily Islands, there were 300 primary schools developed based on waqf funds. Waqf Al-Azhar, built by the Fatimiyyah Dynasty in 970AD, still benefits the students to this very day. This waqf had also assisted Egypt's government in overcoming its economic crisis in the past (Mahamood, 2006). Famous educational institutions such as Al-Qurawiyin University in Fez, Morocco, Al-Muntasiriyyah University in Iraq, and Cordova University in Spain are all constructed through waqf. Apart from that, institutions such as King Abdul Aziz University in the United Arab Emirates and Vakif University in Turkey are also constructed through waqf sources. In Istanbul, for instance, the total number of waqf universities has exceeded 72, and this will continue to increase in the future (Mahamood & Ab Rahman, 2015).

The latest development in Malaysia demonstrates that Public Universities (UA) have now taken an active step in introducing waqf soon after the Minister of Higher Education, YB Dato' Seri Idris bin Jusoh (at the time), requested that every UA created a waqf fund in early 2016. Among the UAs involved were Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), and a few others. However, it cannot be denied that waqf, for the purpose of education, has long existed in Malaysia through the development of mosques, musollas, madrasahs, and huts by the locals and also those coming into the country, including state administrators and leaders, to develop Islamic educational institutions. Common contributions are in the form of general waqf, special waqf and *waqf irsada* (Mahamood et al., 2018). This includes private schools such as People's Religious Schools, or shortly termed in the Malay language as SAR.

People's Religious Schools (SAR) are religious and Arabic schools run by the people in terms of the administration, finance, teacher supply, and syllabus and they are registered under the Religious Schools Control Enactment and administered by the Board of School Governors (Siren et al., 2018). The Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) has categorised SAR based on the types of religious schools existing in Malaysia. Studies on the financial sustainability of SAR through the implementation of the waqf instrument which is cash waqf, raise a relevant and significant issue in the Malaysian context today. Cash waqf is one of the methods used to generate extra income to manage SAR better. This is because SAR plays a significant role in the continuity of Islamic education in Malaysia. Thus, SAR administrators need to give priority to the sustainability of the schools' finances to ensure that there is a

continuance of Islamic education.

In carrying out cash waqf, SAR administrators need to understand that the method is appropriate to be implemented in SAR encompassing the process of selecting the fund resources, the management of waqf assets, and the distribution of income from the waqf. Other than that, the things that need to be given attention in the implementation of cash waqf are the challenges faced in the implementation and the benefits obtained by SAR.

The implementation of cash waqf to increase the sustainability of finance in SAR is a positive step, but it also necessitates wise management and careful research. This is because there are various views on the implementation of cash waqf in Malaysia (Ibrahim & Abd Rahman, 2020). SAR administrators need to understand the impact of this implementation and get cooperation from all the stakeholders and the local authorities as key to the implementation success. SRITI Al-Fateh, Raub is one of the SARs that implements cash waqf as the fund source and it has contributed a positive impact on the school finance and educational development in the school itself.

This observation focuses on the sustainability of finance of SRITI Al-Fateh. This study is done by interviewing the governor, chairperson, and project manager of SRITI Al-Fateh. The sustainability in the implementation of cash waqf is pivotal to ensure that the fund benefits society in the

long term and it is not impermanent. By considering certain elements, cash waqf can be a strong tool to develop society and achieve a wider aim of sustainability. Thus, this study aims to identify the method of implementing cash waqf in SRITI Al-Fateh, and to analyse the impact of the implementation on the sustainability of the school finances.

Methodology

The qualitative research method is a research approach that seeks to understand and justify the social phenomenon or human phenomenon through in-depth observation, qualitative analysis and data interpretation. According to Bryant (2006) and Bruce (2007), it is important for the researcher to get the data from various sources, especially from the recalling process and from the experiences of the members of the organizations. If the qualitative approach is used, the researcher should use the method that enables them to get “in-depth” and comprehensive data (Bruce, 2007). To ensure that the result obtained is of high quality, it is important to gather data or information from various other sources. This is consistent with the opinion offered by Bruce (2007), explaining that there are requests from researchers, especially from those doing qualitative works to ensure that the data they gather is clear and can easily be understood. One of the methods employed in qualitative research is face-to-face interview. The main steps in carrying out this kind of interview are shown in Figure 1 below.

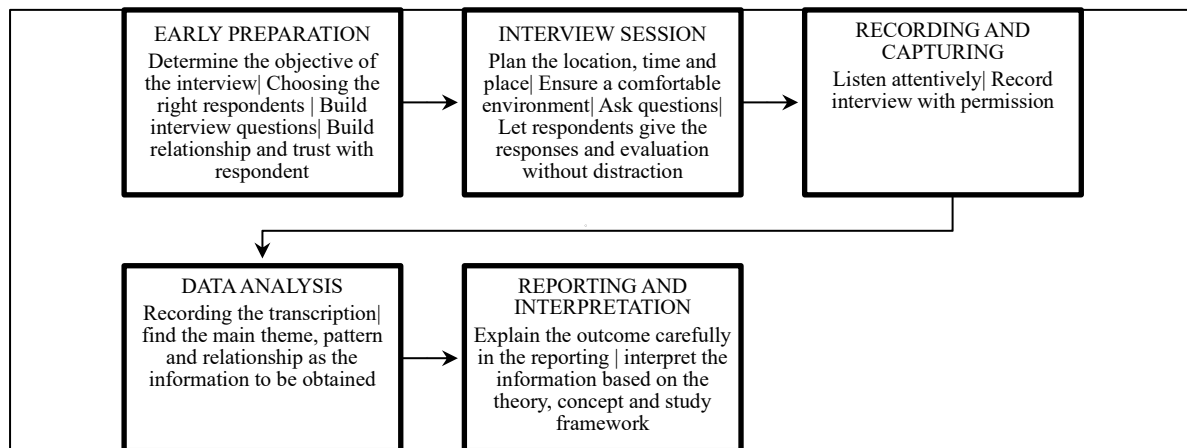


Figure 1: Research steps

Figure 1 shows the method applied by the researcher in this study. There are five phases namely early preparation; interview session; recording and capturing; data analysis; and reporting and interpretation. The face-to-face interview is a strong method in qualitative research as it allows the researchers to understand the perspectives, experiences and perceptions of the respondents in further detail. Yet, it also requires the skills to communicate and build relationships with the respondents ethically. The face-to-face interview is conducted in this study to obtain accurate and detailed information. This study involves 3 respondents namely the chairperson, governor and project manager of SRITI Al-Fateh. The study data is supported by secondary sources like books, magazines, journals, articles and so on. The data obtained is analysed using the content analysis method.

Results and Discussion

The Method of Cash waqf Implementation in SRITI Al-Fateh, Raub, Pahang

SRITI Al-Fateh is the only integrated Tahfiz school in the district of Raub, Pahang, Malaysia. This school is grouped under SAR as it is established by individuals with people's contributions, without involving government funding.

Based on the State Religious School Control Enactment, SAR is under the jurisdiction of the State Islamic Department (Siren et al., 2018). Thus, SRITI Al-Fateh is under the control and supervision of the Pahang Islamic Department (JAIP) and Raub Islamic Department (PAID).

The federal government plays its role in safeguarding the wellbeing of SAR for the empowerment of religious schools in Malaysia, but the management of SAR in Malaysia leans on the concept respectively translated by every country, since its position is confined within the state (Siren et al., 2018). SRITI Al-Fateh is managed by the school's chairperson, Ustaz Rosaidi bin Rameli who is the founder of SRITI Al-Fateh with the cooperation of the teachers and other committee members. They offer waqf in the form of money, without limiting the amount of money that is to be donated. It is open to all the layers of society without accounting for religions and races. Cash waqf receipts are issued for anyone wishing to contribute to the waqf. Permission to collect cash waqf requires approval from the Pahang Islamic Religious Council (MUIP). Therefore, the management of SRITI Al-Fateh has applied for and been granted permission with registration number for donation collection Ref. (16) in M.U.I PHG 100/116/1 VOL 20. The cash waqf collection started in 2019 when the

construction of the building began. The method of implementing cash waqf in

SRITI Al-Fateh is displayed in Figure 2.

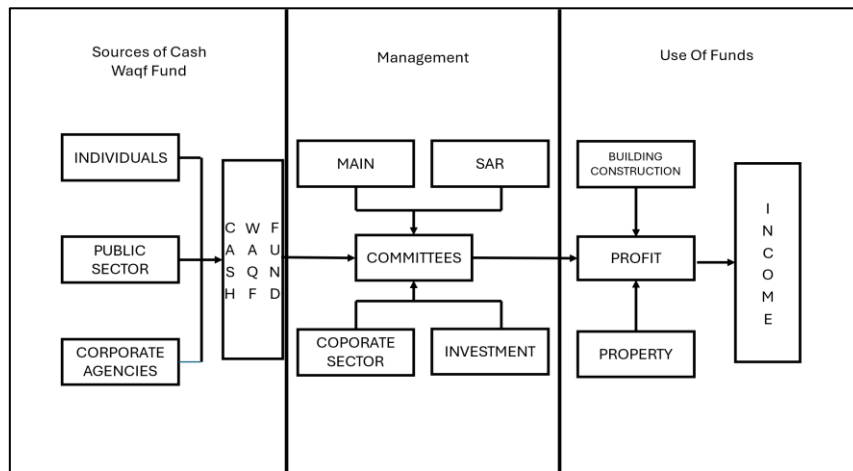


Figure 2: The method of cash waqf Implementation in SRITI Al-Fateh

Figure 2 shows the model of the implementation of cash waqf in SRITI Al-Fateh. Cash waqf implies the waqf using cash as the waqf asset. The first phase showcases the source of the cash waqf resource obtained by SRITI Al-Fateh. The source of cash waqf fund is obtained from the donors be it individuals, the public sector, corporate agencies, and also NGOs. The money received is kept in one fund called the Cash Waqf Fund. The fund is then handed over to *mutawalli* (school chairperson) to manage the fund. *Mutawalli* is normally the administrator of the SAR itself. However, in Malaysia, the *mutawalli* of the waqf asset is the State Islamic Council (MAIN). Thus, the administrator needs to obtain the cooperation and approval from MAIN to manage the cash waqf fund. The *mutawalli* will obtain the cooperation to construct the school buildings and mosque on the existing waqf land. As a measure to sustain the financial background, it is suggested that SRITI Al-Fateh build new buildings or rent out the existing buildings to the society, such as the hall or lecture rooms to serve as venues for workshops, seminar, tuition classes and so on to generate income.

With this model of fund generation, SAR administrators will be able to overcome any financial issues in running and managing SAR. Despite this, they need to act proactively and move forward to gain collaboration from external parties, especially MAIN, corporate bodies, and NGOs. Based on Diagram 2, SAR is able to generate income using the right method. The cash waqf instrument, like cash waqf, has the potential to be implemented in SAR. This is due to the fact that cash waqf has the potential to become the source of funding for the development of waqf in Malaysia.

The Sustainability of SRITI Al-Fateh through Cash Waqf

The implementation in SRITI Al-Fateh is a sample of the suitability of the implementation of cash waqf in SAR to guarantee the financial sustainability of SAR. One of the essential sustainability characteristics is the retainment of the asset waqf (money), which is productive and beneficial (Mat Hassan, 2018). Thus, this study is measured based on the main three elements, which are permanent, productive, and beneficial.

If we look into the financial sustainability of the cash waqf fund in SRITI Al-Fateh, the exchange of money is by using permanent assets (school buildings and mosques) proving that the waqf assets remain, or permanent. The productive element is shown based on the renting out of the rooms and hall to the community, which can generate income. This is similar to the establishment of the school cooperative, which helps generate funds productively. The element of 'beneficial' is identified based on the benefits obtained through the construction of the schools and mosques. Based on the information obtained, the school buildings can accommodate more than 200 students. This proves that the collection of the funds can benefit the students, in terms of the teaching of Islamic education provided to them. Teachers can also teach in a conducive environment compared to the previous place, where they had to teach in a rented shop lot.

This clearly shows that the proactive implementation of cash waqf will have a positive impact.

The donors of cash waqf are guaranteed continuous good deeds as the schools and mosques will be used continuously and more similar buildings will continue to be constructed in the future. The finance of SRITI al-Fateh will also remain strong, as the society will trust the school administrator's good governance.

Conclusion

Education is a basic human right that is acknowledged by mankind. Every human is entitled to gain access to quality education for self-development and to contribute to others. However, the cost of education is very high. The support fund other than government allocation is very important to be created, to cater for sustainable education management and development.

Cash waqf appears to be the best alternative based on its highly reputed record for a long time. This is evident through the implementation of cash waqf in SRITI Al-Fateh. However, the aim toward expanding the cash waqf in Malaysia by way of creating the waqf fund for all sectors and levels of education including for government schools, will tend to face several obstacles such as the issue of law in terms of the difference in the jurisdiction in education and waqf affairs. From another angle, there are still opportunities that can render success to this noble intention such as forming a strategic cooperation among the stakeholders in education and waqf in this country to expand the waqf to all the institutions, sectors and levels of education including the school level. The cash waqf instrument has the potential to serve as the education waqf instrument especially in SAR. The cash waqf fund can serve as the funding resource to develop the education waqf. It is anticipated that this suggestion can pave the way for the education waqf to excel as enjoyed by Muslims in the past. The planning, research, and integrated discussions among all relevant parties are important so that a comprehensive national education waqf can be formulated.

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