

ICONSPADU 2021**International Conference on Sustainable Practices, Development and Urbanisation****UNIVERSITY HOSTEL WAQF: DEVELOPING A NEW
SUSTAINABILITY MODEL**

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Abstract

Waqf is an Islamic financial instrument that has the potential to solve various financial issues related to education in Malaysia. Waqf education institutions are well-known for their importance in the development of knowledge among Muslim communities. Globalisation, COVID-19 pandemic, and economic pressures on governments, including Malaysia's, have led to universities becoming self-sufficient in terms of funding for development, operation, and research. However, private higher education (PHEI) has resulted in difficulties in providing enough conducive and better accommodation. The cost of higher education has inevitably increased due to current changes in the global economy, despite various forms of government grants and loans. In general, both parents and students alike face the burden of ever-increasing fees to enrol in higher education learning institutions. At the same time, the education institutions themselves also face increasing costs to operate and provide quality education. Hence, this paper aims to identify the needs of hostel development in PHEI due to the impact of high cost living and pandemic covid19. A profound literature review on the topics is explored in developing a conceptual framework for this research field. Further, it explores specific features of sustainability university hostel waqf as well as limitations of present research; but it helps to stimulate further study. The development of the hostel waqf framework in private higher education institutions (PHEIs) will give an idea to the community in helping the students, especially during the COVID-19 endemic period, especially for those whose income is affected.

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1. Introduction

Malaysia's rapid progress has been aided by education. It has endowed Malaysian folks with the knowledge, skills, and abilities that have fueled progress and prosperity. Besides that, the Higher Education Ministry received a total of RM14.4 billion for higher education in the Malaysian budget for 2021. Prior to the development of Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2015-2025, Malaysian government subsidies cover more than 90% of public university expenses, which is significant (Ministry of Education, 2015). Hence, the government has continually pushed to lower these payments by allowing universities to obtain funds independently to enable them to generate 30% of the funds. This initiative aligns with the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2015-2025 for higher education, which aims to reduce HEI reliance on the government. Additionally, the MEB plan's fifth agenda, which emphasises financial sustainability, pushes Malaysian HEIs to pursue alternate revenue streams to become more flexible, reliable, and sustainable in terms of institutional finances (Hasbullah & Ab Rahman, 2021).

The word waqf in the Arabic language is taken from the Arabic word وقف which means standing, standing, still silent, and non-moving (Al-Marbawiy, 2008). The plural form is called فقاو or فقاو instead of فقاو with the addition of hamza at the beginning of the word prohibited by al-Asma'iy (Al-Syarbiniy & Shams, 1994). According to the terminological definition, waqf is the possession of property or things that can be utilised in their original physical form in the event of necessity (Al-Syarbiniy & Shams, 1994). An even more definition of waqf is waqf is similar to the words al-habs, which means detention, "al-man," which implies prohibition, and "al-tasbil", which means channelling in the way of Allah SWT. Muslim scholars defined waqf as a property's contribution to refrain from any vesting of ownership. Its benefits are directed for charitable purposes to get closer to Allah SWT (Ab Rahman et al., 2020). According to Md Nawari and Ismai (2018), waqf and higher education have such a connection strength of a relationship and impact each other. Waqf has been practised since the time of Rasulullah s.a.w. and Khulafa 'Ar-Rasyidin.

Waqf is an Islamic financial instrument that can be utilised in solving various financial issues in Malaysia. Waqf education institutions are well-known for their contribution to the development of knowledge among Muslim communities. Waqf education is practised in various ways. The nature of properties endowed by waqif includes students' hostels, scholarships, allowances, buildings, and learning materials such as books, tables, and others (Azha et al., 2013). The history of the development of Waqf Educational Institutions is closely related to the construction of mosques. Rasulullah s.a.w founded the Quba and Nabawi Mosques with waqf funds and land. They became two important centers of knowledge and da'wah at that time, and this practice continued until the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Ottoman dynasties. Caliph al-Ma'mun was the first individual to develop the idea of establishing a waqf body to finance education. For instance, the Caliph has established Bayt al-Hikmah, one of the significant intellectual centers and public libraries that offered many materials on a wide range of subjects. The Bayt al-Hikmah, also known as The House of Wisdom, was funded by the waqf fund. Similarly, the development of educational institutions in the Islamic world such as the Madrasah Nizamiyah in Iraq, Madrasah al Nuriyah in Damascus, Al Azhar University in Egypt, and many more are based on the support of the endowment of Muslims. These waqf-funded educational institutions have been operating for hundreds of

years, evidencing the significance of waqf for educational purposes, according to a study by Ismail et al. (2015).

As a matter of fact, the educational endowment will provide good opportunities to those in need. However, based on the focus of the study by Mustaffa and Muda (2014), the cost of education is expected to increase day by day in line with rising prices of goods and services in Malaysia. Private educational institutions will compete to offer educational opportunities to students who perform poorly on exams but impose relatively higher tuition fees. These will inevitably burden the students, or in many instances, parents who are anxious to grab the higher education opportunities

The concept of higher education sponsored by waqf has been regarded as a crucial instrument for educational advancement. A coordinated effort between community members and education management to develop educational institutions may result in establishing a robust financial support system for impoverished communities. In addition, it may help ease the government's financial burden and assist students who face financial hardship during their study at a higher education institution in institutions of higher learning, particularly in Malaysia (Ghani & Sulaiman, 2021).

According to Ab Rahman et al. (2020), the COVID-19 epidemic has caused widespread concern and frustration, as well as having a significant impact on health, economic, and social aspects. Almost every country, including Malaysia, is affected by this pandemic. To meet these challenges, the waqf approach is very suitable for addressing this problem. The role of waqf should be utilized and used as much as possible in developing the ummah. It can be planned and applied especially to develop the education sector in Malaysia either in educational development or welfare. For example, PHEI successfully raised sufficient funds from waqf contributions to build student hostels, and once completed, the hostels can be rented to students at a reasonable rate (Ismail et al., 2015). Hence, the proceeds of the waqf rental can be used for the maintenance of the waqf hostel building. This funding covers the operating and development expenses of the institution, such as building, repairing buildings, paying the salaries of employees such as teachers, imams, muazzins, and so on (Mustaffa & Muda, 2014). It is appropriate for the authorities to identify which waqf management model is most suitable to be applied from time to time to reduce the burden of students.

2. Problem Statement

Businesses of all sizes and industries have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The sector of higher education is not excluded. Like any other business, colleges and universities will be put under financial strain as a result of COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, the higher education sector's economic growth had already displayed alarming symptoms. In early April, the Asia Sentinel stated that a study conducted by Professor Geoffrey Williams, former deputy vice-chancellor at University Tun Razak, revealed that 55 percent of Malaysia's private higher education institutions were losing money, and 44 percent were bankrupt. The bulk of private universities and colleges have only been allowed to operate because of new funding and/or stock injections from shareholders.

To put it another way, the COVID-19 situation could be terrible for private universities and colleges in Malaysia because they rely heavily on student tuition to stay in business. Student deferrals and delays are possible as a result of the financial crisis. There is a real possibility that some parents will face

financial difficulties as a result of the impending economic downturn, in addition to the pandemic anxiety. Some parents may not be able to pay the cost of their children's college education. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) supports numerous programmes, although some PHEIs struggle to provide suitable facilities. Alternative financing, such as waqf (endowment), should be used to provide facilities and support to higher education institutions in the areas of research, educational facilities, the construction of hostels for needy students, salary payment, scholarship to students from low-income families, and a variety of other things (Adewale & Zubaedy, 2019). When it comes to funding universities, the endowment has long been viewed as a viable alternative option (Abdul Hamid et al., 2018).

According to Dzuljastri et al. (2016), the waqf system has been shown to be vital to boosting a country's economy. For those in need, Waqf's educational system has provided a springboard from which they can pursue a lifelong pursuit of knowledge and education. In addition, the rising cost of higher education has made it more difficult for those with lower and intermediate incomes to continue their education. As a result, people who are self-reliant and do not receive a scholarship were also affected. Family members who have already been hit hard by the recession will bear the brunt of the debt (increases in inflation rate, price, and living costs).

Malaysian government investment in education is substantial, and so constraining the mobility and expansion of the education system in certain aspects, due to economic constraints, may result in an extended time frame for achieving specific goals (Harun et al., 2016). Furthermore, students are a critical component of an HEI. From this aspect, PHEI is also forced to compete for the quality of students. Tuition fees, housing, and food costs are among the most pressing issues faced by the students (Mohd Rusli & Adeyemi, 2017). Providing enough facilities, especially accommodation, will create a harmonious environment. Accommodation for students is often overlooked (Flux, 2022). Without the assurance of a safe and healthy living environment, one is unable to focus on important tasks, such as coursework and research, which are critical to one's success. Prior to focusing on other aspects of college life, students and their caregivers must first address the issue of accommodation. As a result, student housing aids in the development of emotional independence as well as the ability to support oneself on one's own.

Based on the literature, the university and the community still lack in providing and sustaining hostel waqf at the PHEI in Malaysia. Hence, to fill this research gap, the present study calls for "a paradigm shift" emphasising the university hostel waqf sustainability towards building a student's future.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions arise due to the above problem statement related to the university hostel waqf sustainability.

- i. What are the problems faced by the private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in providing accommodation to the students?
- ii. How can private higher education institutions (PHEIs) assist the students' accommodation needs in pursuing their studies?

4. Purpose of the Study

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, PHEI is one of the hardest-hit industries in Malaysia. So, it impacts the universities and the students. However, there are important lessons to be learned from this crisis about the resiliency of the education industry. According to the findings in some literature, the COVID-19 pandemic has a significant impact on the education industry. Furthermore, there has been a surge in online education due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. As a result of the pandemic, students who do not have access to the internet cannot participate in online classes. For example, rural Sabah, Kelantan, and Pahang areas, in particular, have low broadband penetration rates, which affects a large number of households. Thus, this study focuses on the problems faced by the PHEIs in providing accommodation to the students with a convenient facility. Besides that, the study will emphasise how university hostel waqf can be sustained in fulfilling the needs of the students.

5. Research Methods

This study uses a literature research approach to gain a better grasp of the available literature. Information is gathered from a variety of publications and government websites. The study also used content analysis to evaluate the material gathered from scholarly, newspaper, and website sources. In certain cases, according to Wolski et al. (2017), exploring a novel issue that will likely benefit from theoretical exposure necessitates a literature review. The author's contribution would be in the form of a conceptual model built on new theoretical grounds.

6. Findings

To fully grasp the compatibility of PHEI with sustainable university hostel waqf, it is necessary first to examine the problem faced by the PHEIs in providing accommodation to the students. There will be no sustainable university hostel waqf if HEIs and the relevant authorities do not take appropriate action to ensure the need of the students are fulfilled. Hostel management, sources of funds, students' necessities, and students' criteria should be refined in developing the university hostel waqf. Besides that, students cannot hope to succeed or devote much attention to their academics if they are constantly concerned about their stay. Hence, Malaysian private higher education institutions must strategize and seize chances in the middle of the crisis. The following are the problems that PHEIs are facing in providing accommodation to the students and how to solve them.

6.1. Hostel Management

PHEI has to provide a good place for students to live, such as a comfortable hostel. There is a need to have good hostel management to maintain the service, ensure all the students gain the benefits, and help them reduce their burden of finding a place during their study. In this case, a waqf hostel is a good initiative, especially for students from the B40 and M40 families. According to Mahamood and Ab Rahman (2015), a waqf hostel should set its own rules or rules to govern the entire boarding system. It

must be regulated, managed, monitored, and supervised to maintain the value of eternity from the waqf hostel.

6.2. Sources of Fundings

There are many ways for PHEI to acquire the sources of waqf hostel fundings, such as approaching the potential donor or waqif, executing the waqf project, and enlightening the advantages of waqf activities to the Muslim community. For example, one of the oldest universities in the world, Al-Qarawiyyin University in Morocco founded by the richest Tunisian Fatima al-Fihri. Besides, Koç University in Turkey was established by Koç Holdings endowment to develop this higher education institution. In addition, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) under Islamic Endowment Fund (IEF) has received huge amounts of charities from various kind-hearted donors individually and organizationally (Mohd Rusli & Adeyemi, 2017).

6.3. Student Necessities

Preparing oneself for university requires a bucket list and spending some money. It is a typical situation if there are students who choose to do a part-time job while waiting for the offer letter of acceptance or during their study in university because of the financial difficulties if they would not receive any scholarships or education loans. In this case, finding a university that can provide reasonable hostel fees and other university costs is also considered. International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) generates the waqf fund by renting both waqf hostels in Mahallah HH Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi and Mahallah Lembaga Tabung Angkatan Tentera (LTAT). As a return, the rental will be used for Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi's Scholarship and Yayasan LTAT – IIUM Ummatic Scholarship. By doing this, at least, it would reduce the burden and motivate the students to fulfil their dreams.

6.4. Student's Criteria

The global economic crisis has impacted HEI student housing in numerous ways. For example, budget cuts caused HEIs to raise tuition costs, forcing low-income families to remove their children. Higher tuition rates may drive many students, particularly those from low-income families, to study at home and commute to HEI, increasing the number of part-time students. This will diminish demand. Withdrawal from schools will eventually lead to lower HEI enrolment, affecting student housing demand (Ghani & Sulaiman, 2021).

The conception of the waqf hostel is intended to assist students who are less capable and currently affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the B40 and M40 groups will be aided in reducing the burden on students to pay the hostel fees. Selecting the students in need is compulsory. Therefore, the hostel management must consider who will be given the opportunity and meet the vision of the waqf hostel project. The students also have to be sincere and provide full cooperation to the hostel management by appreciating all the aid given to them and pledging to take care of the facilities. If the student does not meet the criteria, the assistance can be cut and given to another student.

6.5. Waqf Hostel

The waqf hostel building construction should be based on the contract of al-istisna' (manufacturing sale) (Billah, 2019). An agent must be appointed to deal with the contractor to build the building as prescribed in the wakalah and waqf contract. There is no third-party financing needed if the waqf fund is sufficient. In the case of the non-sufficiency of the fund, a more detailed structure is necessary. It could be leased to the university, students, or users at a reasonable rate. Exemption or rebate on the rentals could be given to qualified and deserving parties (e.g., poor and needy students). The rentals acquired could be used for two main purposes: maintenance, which involves the cost of managing (managerial salaries, security, etc.), upgrading, renovating, fixing, repairing, and cleaning the assets. Secondly, the charity's purpose is based on the contributors' intention to make a general or specific endowment (Pitchay et al., 2018).

According to Musari (2016), a combination of Sukuk and waqf may be a low-cost strategy of supporting higher education institutions' long-term financial stability. Waqf has proven useful throughout history, as seen by mosques, colleges, Islamic schools and centres, libraries, and hostels, among others, all of which are still active now, according to Mahamood and Ab Rahman (2015). In addition, numerous waqf-based institutions have established and maintained academic and professional programmes, in addition to a diverse array of other activities, most notably their social services.

7. Conclusion

Derived from the earlier discussion, there are the needs for hostel development in PHEI by establishing the University Hostel Waqf for the sustainability of education among PHEI students. If this simple idea turns out to be true, it is hoped that this waqf student house's concepts and principles will follow the campus community. A Muslim's virtue is demonstrated when he provides some of his most prized possessions, one of which is Waqf. Unfortunately, the concept and principle of this waqf student hostel are still relatively straightforward, and there's very little literature. Future empirical studies require more literature and have a more complex and comprehensive concept and the principle of the waqf student hostel.

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