POTENTIAL OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT IN UPLIFTING MOSQUE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

Maimunah Sapri[1], Zafirah Ab Muin [2], Ibrahim Sipan [3], Anthony Adjei-Twum[4],Farahwahida Mohd Yusof[5], Rosadah Mahamud[6] and Mustafa Omar[7]

[1,2,3,4] Centre for Real Estate Studies (CRES)
[5] Centre of Research for Fiqh Science and Technology (CFiRST)
[6,7] Faculty of Geinformation and Real Estate
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai
Johor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT:

Historically, it is proven that mosque has played a huge role in the context of building and driving the development of Islamic community on various aspects. However, throughout the changes of times, it becomes a tremendous battle to sustain its role as a centre of Islamic community. Nowadays, an increasing number of mosques have also brought to the main challenges in terms of management aspect. This phenomenon has created a new challenge to mosque management which necessitate more effective system. Review of literature reveals that FM is the practice of integrating the management of people and the business process of an organisation within the physical infrastructure to enhance performance. Besides, it has become the focus for the important issues of best value and customer satisfaction within management of supporting services. Therefore, this paper seeks to understand and discuss the potential of facilities management (FM) approach to mosque management. The research adopts comprehensive literature reviews from numerous published sources such as journals, magazines, books, websites, and unpublished thesis. It focuses on the understanding of the concept of mosque, the concept of FM approach, the growing importance of mosque facilities and the significance of FM in supporting mosque's core business objective to be achieved. This paper contends that if FM approach can be well-implemented in mosque, it will help to enhance mosque current functions and uplift the mosque prospering environment as it was during the golden age of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

1.0   Introduction

A mosque is a sacred place of worship for Muslims. The word mosque is a conversion of the Arabic word 'masjid' (in plural - *masajid*). The word masjid is derived from the Arabic root 'sajada' which means to prostrate. As prostration is the most honourable act in prayer and because of the proximity of the worshiper to his Lord, it has been chosen to indicate the act of prayer itself. Therefore the mosque is literally the location of prostration (*sujud*).   From Islamic literature, The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is recorded in a hadith of Imam Bukhari to have stated that "The whole earth is made as a place of worship".   Thus, within the Islamic legal framework, a Muslim can pray almost anywhere. However,   main purpose of mosque

building is to facilitate collective ritual worship in the form of the daily congregational prayers. Without worship activities, mosque is become general building.

Mosque is an Islamic organisation which is classified as non-profit organisation. During the golden age of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), mosque was seen as the nucleus for community development in various aspects. Mosque is multi-faceted which are not only serving as a sacred and clean space for prayer, but also providing counselling, education and other services associated with the life of a community (Mokhtar, 1997;   Rasdi, 1998; 1999). The role of mosque is without doubt central and crucial to the well-being of the Muslim community (Mokhtar, 1997; Rasdi, 1998).

2.0   Lacking in Prospering Mosque with Regard to Management Issue

Historically, mosque has been one of the most important institutions in the Islamic community, and it plays a key role in the everyday lives of Muslims. During the period that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated from Mecca to Medina, one of the very first practices was to establish a mosque. Mosque was not built alone, but was also surrounded by great universities, hospitals, observatories; hostels and other institutions grew up around it. Through modern historians, these facilities and institutions have become the hallmarks of the great Islamic civilisation. Besides, the mosque has always been at the heart of the Muslim community, serving as a house of worship, an educational centre, a centre for dispensing valuable social services, a meeting place, and a place for solace and refuge (Rasdi, 1999; Shaukat and Kashaff, 2007).

However, mosque functions are slowly getting narrow due to change of time. Mosque nowadays is generally known only as the place of worship. Because of that, mosque has been built almost everywhere, but there is lack of people to prosper it. This phenomenon has been comprehended by many scholars (Mohamad et. al., 2011; Nur Athirah, 2011; Rasdi, 2003; Rosli, and has, thus, brought an inspiration to the mosque management to uplift and sustain mosque multi-functionality concept in today's modernisation era. Therefore, in order to strengthen the mosque institution, it requires suitable management practice.

According to Allia *et al.* (2013), the right management practices will contribute to improve the performance of a mosque. The research identified that management of mosque is becoming crucial as it contributes to mosque success in delivering quality services to the community. Therefore, mosque requires effective and efficient management of the facilities. In this regard, facilities management (FM) is seen to be the approach that mosque could consider. As mentioned by Amaratunga *et al.* (2000), FM is a subset of general management. As the subset of general management, it will help to improve processes by which organisation can be managed to support effectiveness and to make a positive contribution to organisation success. This picture of FM function has been highlighted by Becker (1990) through the definition of FM below:

> *"FM is responsible for co-ordinating all efforts related to planning, designing and managing buildings and their systems, equipment and furniture to enhance the organisation's ability to compete successfully in a rapidly changing world."*

This research is being carried out on the basis of Becker's definition of FM; it suggests that FM be put in place as it will improve the mosque management activities. FM will contribute to the performance of mosque and will enhance its functionality. In the end, it will result in a sustainable mosque. This argument has been supported by other researches which claimed that the implementation of good management should be in place in order to increase organisational

productivity and service quality (Amaratunga and Baldry, 2003; Atkin and Brooks, 2009; Koukiasa, 2011). In view of this, the paper seeks to understand and discuss the potential of FM approach to mosque management.

3.0   The Practice of Facilities Management Approach

According to Rondeau *et al.* (2006), FM has been practised for some decades since it was formally acknowledged in the United State and Canada in 1975. Amaratunga *et al.* (2000) claims that FM starts taking part in organisation's agenda, when focusing on increasing organisation's profit itself is no longer a priority to sustain the performance of the organisation. Most organisations, either profit or non-profit organisations, nowadays noticed that, providing quality working environment helps the organisations to sustain its performance for long. In order to provide quality working environment, organisations need to give attention to their facilities and ensure that the facilities are well-managed.

Review of literature reveals that FM approach has the potential to be applied in all kinds of organisation. It has the ability to enhance organisational performance. According to Amaratunga and Baldry (2003), FM approach is required in providing and sustaining an operational environment to meet the needs of an organisation that contribute to the organisation's success. Atkin and Brooks (2009), defines FM as the integration of processes within an organisation to operating, maintaining, improving and adapting the buildings and infrastructure of an organisation. This means that facilities management can be summarised as the management of the building and services of an organisation (Shaukat and Khasaff, 2007).

Koukiasa (2011) asserts that FM emerged as a vocation since the late 1980s and has been identified for its contribution to business performance of an organisation.   Providing that good practices are followed, FM has the ability to, especially in the current economic climate, reduce costs and improve flexibility which can sequentially lead to quality improvement and competitive advantage in favour of the organisation (Alexander, 2003). Therefore, FM is considered as the process which enables and enhances the capacity of organisation to become more sustainable, while simultaneously strategically improving their ability to achieve their main objective by optimising environmental, financial and social factors (Ure, 2010; Wilkinson *et al*., 2001).

Organisations have the best chance to add value to their businesses and customers through efficient management of their facilities that have significant influence in determining profitability, productivity, employee well-being and public perception of an organisation (Wilkinson *et al*., 2001). FM could be said as the process by which organisations provide and maintain a quality work environment and provide quality support services to achieve organizational objectives at the best cost (Alexander, 2003; Sapri *et al*., 2013; Sapri *et al*., 2005). Every organisation has objectives to achieve and therefore requires that all of its resources be organised towards meeting these objectives. Facilities as one of an organisation's resources must be planned, designed, delivered, monitored and maintained within context of the organisation's objectives (Sapri *et al*., 2013).

Pathirage *et al*. (2008) concluded that FM is an integrated approach to operating, maintaining, improving and adapting the buildings and infrastructure of an organisation in order to create an environment that strongly supports the primary objectives of the organisation. Therefore, one of the aims of FM is to raise the efficiency and suitability of the managed space and other related assets for the people and the process in order for the mission and goals of the organisation to be achieved at the best combination of efficiency, cost and quality (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2000). Rondeau

et al. (2006) mentioned that providing high quality services to customers is one of the ways through FM which supports the corporate business plan of an organisation.

In the context of this research, mosque building is the main aspect that should be considered in the management of mosque. As a place for worship, assemble and for carrying out other activities, mosque building should be well-maintained inside and outside to ensure smooth running of these activities. Ibrahim *et al*. (2009) as cited in Allia *et al*. (2013) stated that maintenance is defined as the preservation of a building so that it can serve its intended purposes. In FM, maintenance of building is part of support services that need to concern organisations (Chotipanich, 2004). This support services helps the building to fully function in order to meet the requirements of occupants. Hence, one of the important practices in mosque management is its maintenance. According to Mustari *et al*. (2010),   good infrastructure is one of the factors that attract people to come to the mosque. This shows that all infrastructure of mosque, including its building need to be maintained properly.   In order to sustain the mosque building as the pleasant place to invite people to prosper it, it is important to adopt effective FM practices.

3.1   Consideration of FM Best Practice Model

The adoption effective FM practices in management of mosque calls the understanding of the general practice of FM process. In conducting this research, FM best practice model that developed by Atkin and Bjork (2007) will be referred. The purpose of the research is to show how FM best practice should be implemented in an organisation in order to improve its current practice. The process of FM best practice as shown in Figure 1 involves five key-stages: formulating strategy, analysing requirements, developing solutions, implementing solutions and monitoring service provision. Besides, in order to understand in details of each step in FM process, the information is presented in Figure 2, 3, 4, and 5 as follows.
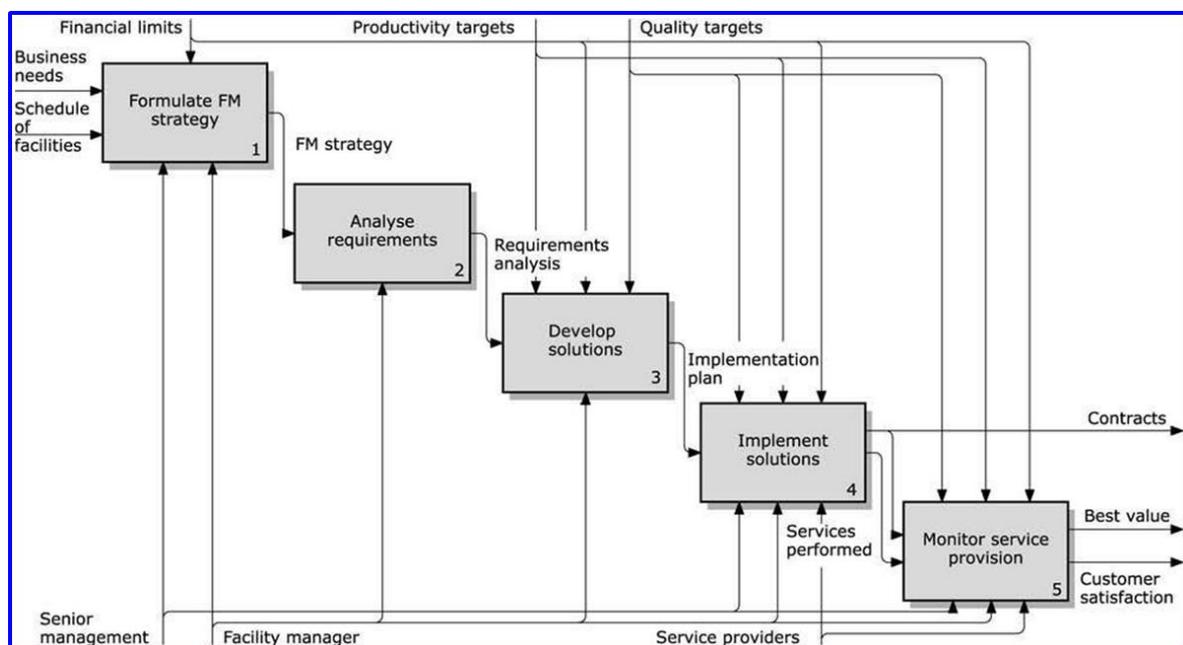

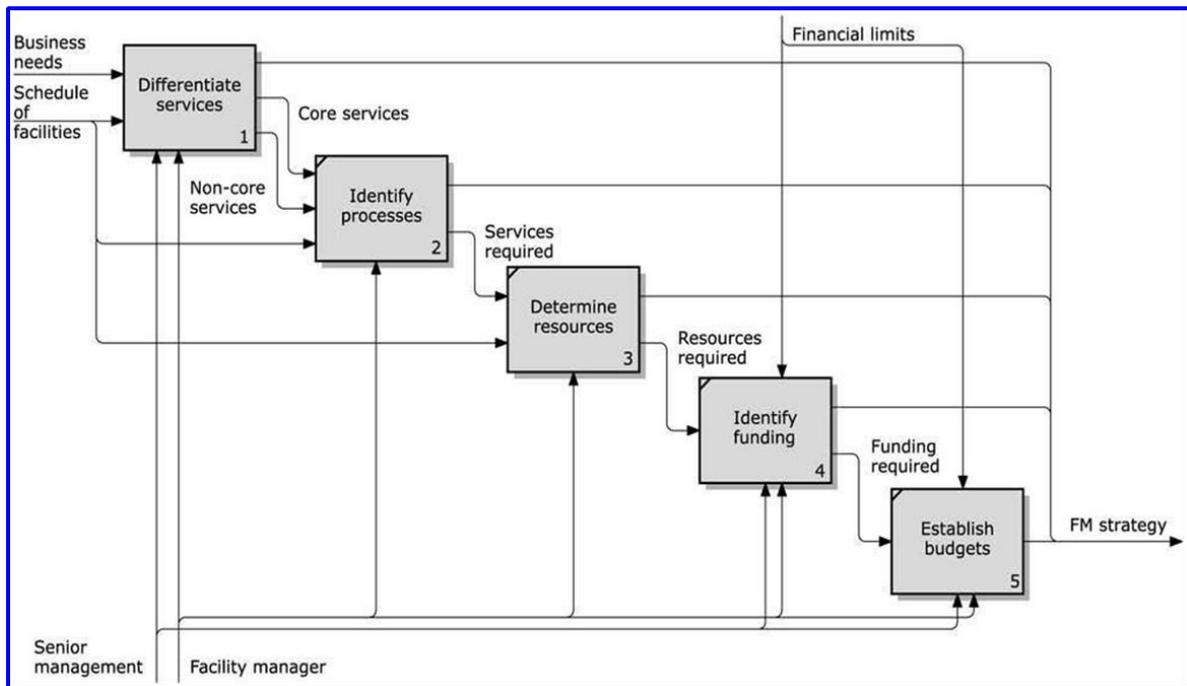**Figure 1**: Five Key Stages in the FM Process
Source: Atkin and Bjork (2007)

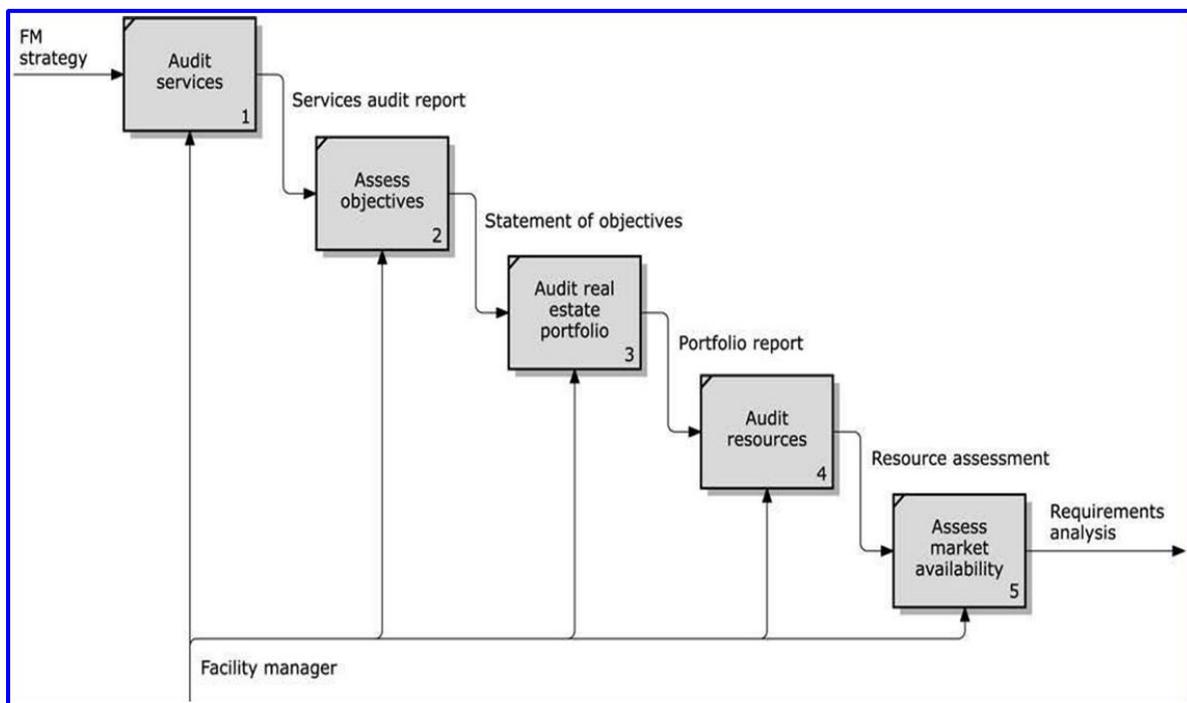**Figure 2**: Decomposition of FM strategy formulation
Source: Atkin and Bjork (2007)

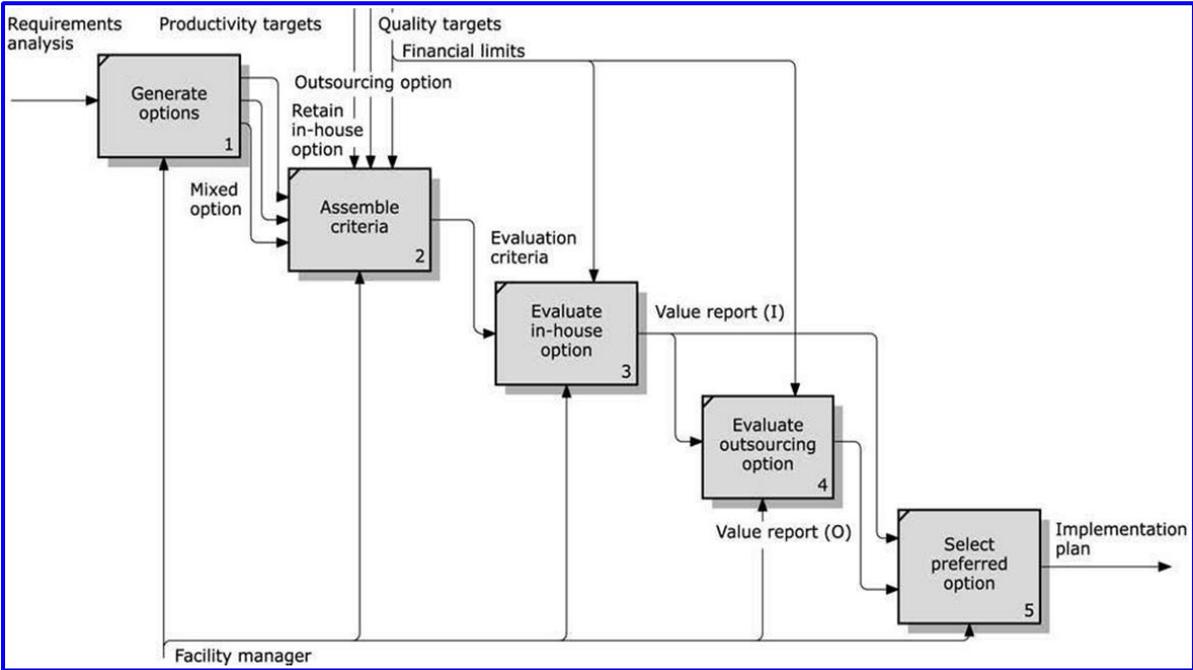**Figure 3**: Stepwise analysis of the client's requirements

Figure 4: Identifying and evaluating possible FM solutions
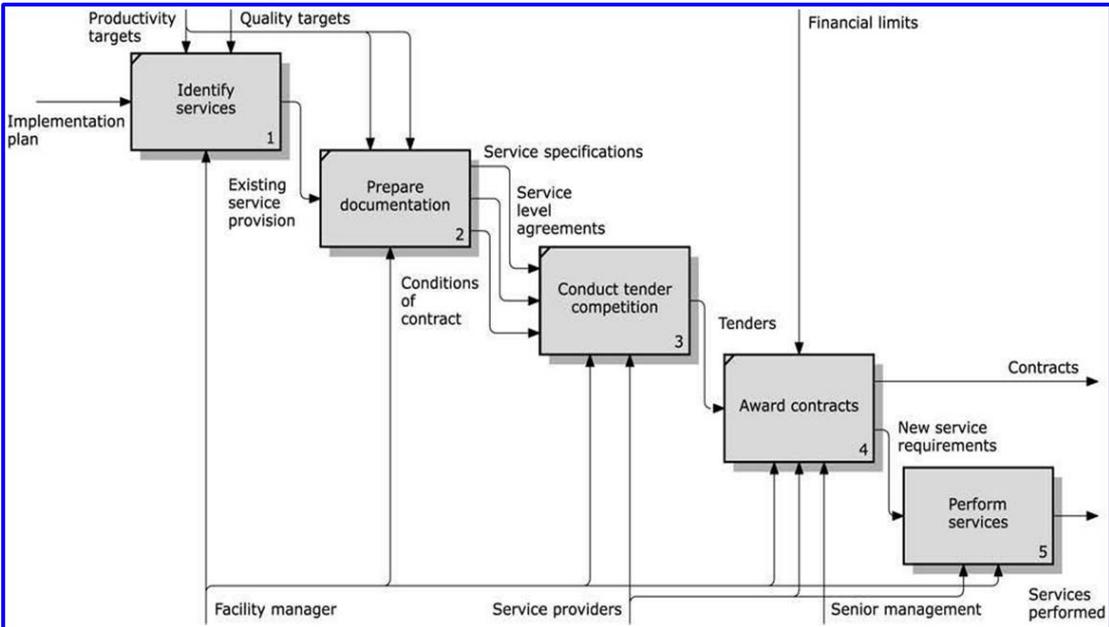**Source**: Atkin and Bjork (2007)

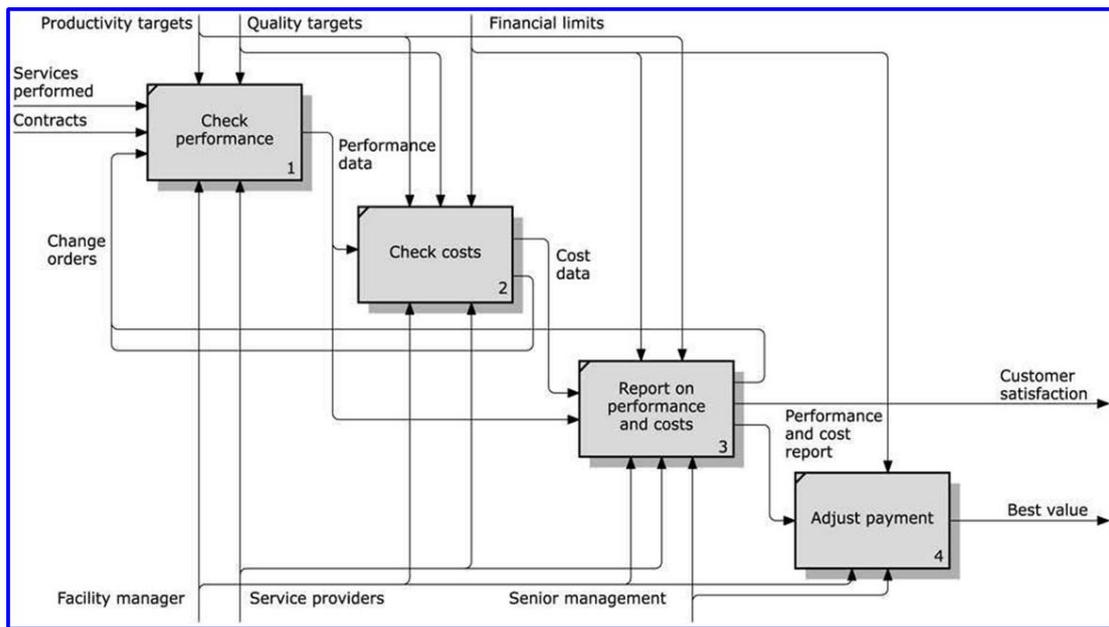**Figure 5**: Implementing solutions to FM needs

Figure 6: Performance management and reporting
Source: Atkin and Bjork (2007)

4.0   The Growing Importance of Facilities Management for Sustainable Mosque

In FM, buildings have a key role to play as being the main physical assets of most organisations. The building and its facilities create the first impression of every organisation and are means of marketing the organisation (Housley, 1997). Most people work and live within buildings. Hence, they may be considered as the backbone of the workplace. With the emergence of FM, buildings are being seen more as an enabler to the core business. Therefore, buildings are required as an enabling resource to support the creation of product and services within a facility   (Douglas, 1996). Expectation, standards and requirements of buildings' occupants have increased owing to advances in technology and changes in economic conditions (Muhammad, 2014). In addition, people are expecting and also demanding more from their buildings nowadays. Therefore, it is important for facility managers to identify the needs of occupants in order to meet their expectations. This would lead to more satisfied and productive workplace occupants.

Mosque is recognised as sacred building. It is purposely developed to facilitate the Muslims to devote themselves to Allah (The Al-Mighty). From Islamic studies, mosque is a unique and extraordinary building that requires high attention from all parties. The mosque building is most related to the blessing of Allah (The Al-Mighty) to fully function.   Although the mosque is classified as non-profit organisation, that is, not intended to generate income (non-monetary base), Allah (The Al-Mighty) has promised to give the reward that is declared as intangible. Its profit is

based on reward given by Allah S.W.T. Because of that reason, mosque building becomes the greatest place to be concerned. As narrated Uthman ibn Affan:

> *"I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) say: "Whoever builds a masjid (mosque) for the sake of Allah, Allah will build something similar for him in Paradise."*

(Sahih Muslim, No. 1189)

In the context of this research, sustainable is referring to the Arabic word called '*Imarah*'. *Imarah* means prospering (Rasdi, 2004). *Imarah* is also defined as the things that lead to the development, progress, improvement, etc. (Mohammad et al., 2011). The meaning of *imarah* has been derived in Al-Quran as below:

> *"The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practise regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance."*

(Surah At-Taubah: 18)

Based on the definition above, sustainable mosque, therefore, can be summarise as the importance of mosque to be prospered throughout the time and sustained to be functional through various religious activities. While currently the Western world's has been focusing on how to embark on sustainable buildings by taking care of economics, social and environment aspects, as Muslims, there is a concern on how to come out with sustainable mosque.   From Islamic studies, sustainable mosque interrelates with three aspects which are the relationship between human and the Creator (*habluminallah*), relationship between human and human (*habluminannas*) and relationship between human and environment (*habluminal'alam*). Hence, these aspects should be considered in prospering the mosque.
For that reason, FM is seen as the potential approach to be adopted in management of mosque in order to comprehend with core business of mosque in the delivery of the religious services.

According to Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (2005), critical factors that contribute in prospering the mosque is human factors. They stated that two groups of people who will determine whether a mosque will prosper or not are the mosque's managers and workers, and the *jamaah* (the mosque's congregation). This has shown that human factors play a vital role to ensure the mosque is sustained for long term. From business perspective, those two groups of people can be considered as the most important customers of mosque. According to Sapri *et. al*. (2009), it is important to provide services that fulfil customers' needs and expectations. For mosque to emerge with the inspiration to uplift and sustain the function of mosque as the community centre, the service that meets community needs and expectation should be taking into account.

According to Balachandran (2004), for business to be well-performed and be sustained in the competitive world, the customer's needs and expectation should not be avoided. When services offered by organisation meet the needs and expectation of their customer, then it will facilitate value creation to the customers (Barnes, 2001; Chan, 2005; Lowenstein, 1995). Balachandran (2004) argues that quality of service delivered to the customers is of utmost importance in order to gain customer satisfaction and retention. Quality refers to continuously anticipating and exceeding the requirements and expectations of customers   (Lowenstein, 1995). Measuring performance is also essential to the business of the organisation to ensure success (Sapri, 2008; Sapri *et al*., 2005), especially service organisation like mosque.

Sapri (2013) pointed out that customers have significant impact on the performance of a business. In Islamic literature, customers' retention can be seen through the concept of '*imarah*' where people keep coming to the mosque and engaging not only in worshipping, but also having their daily activities such as recreational, meeting, education, etc. (Rasdi, 1999). However, to deliver service in good modus, thus the management of mosque should have a framework in sequence to manage the facilities effectively and efficiently. Based on Khalit (2011) research findings, current mosque in Malaysia are still practicing relatively the same roles as it used to be during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), but in smaller scopes and target group due to inadequate facilities to supports its proper functions. From the findings, it shows that there is a gap to be fulfilled by FM approach in managing and prospering mosque.

In addition, religious place are some physical settings correlated to religious or sacred events that could cultivate fundamental human values and enrich human soul (Stokols, 1990). In this regard, religious place represent the physical space in which human attempts to bring themselves closer to the divine (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 1993; 2004). Thus, with respect to religious places within Islamic culture, mosque is considered as the house of Allah, so it is recognised as the most important building that needs to be given attention from various aspects (Najafi and Mustafa, 2012). The argument affirms that there is a room for FM approach to be considered in management of mosque in providing quality environment to the community. FM is suggested as one of the possible ways in uplifting mosque functions and performance in delivering religious services.

4.0   Conclusion

Mosque is referring to an action of devotion to Allah (The Al-Mighty). It does not refer to the building itself. Thus, mosque building should be efficient in functioning as well as the main purpose for which it was built. Mosque should be prospering through various religious activities. The process to implement those activities requires the support of facilities to make it operational. It highlights the need for FM approach to be considered. In other words, in order to reinforce the mosque as a robust and unified institution as the place for community centre, a comprehensive plan should be formulated with emphasis on the practice of sustainable FM. This will drive the best practice in managing mosque for the better indication in providing good facilities in future and guarantee that a long-term wait for benefits is worth.

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