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Designing a Mixed-method Research on Sustainable Waqf Benefits Distribution for Higher Learning Institutions of Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses important aspects in designing a mixed-method research on sustainable Waqf benefits distribution (Tawzi') for higher learning institutions of Malaysia. Researchers are familiar with qualitative and quantitative methods studies. At the same time, interests on another approach known as mixed-method are also growing. A number of journal articles that adopt mixed-method are available for references. Yet, opportunity still exists to add more inputs related to mixed-method research especially on issues associated to higher education Waqf in Malaysia. The primary objective of this paper is to share steps taken to design a mixed-method research on sustainable Waqf benefits distribution (*Tawzi'*) for higher learning institutions of Malaysia. Besides, this paper aims to elicit constructive comments and suggestions from relevant academic and industrial experts to further improve the study. Inputs from published mixed-method journal articles are also critical in completing this paper. Advantages and disadvantages of mixed-method research in view of higher education Waqf are discussed. Proper data collection and analysis that suit mixed-method approach are also shared in this paper.

Keyword: Research Design, Mixed-Method, Higher Education Waqf, Data Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Researchers are well aware about the three types of designs, specifically qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Newman and Benz (1998) had explained that research design is a continuum with qualitative and quantitative methods reside at the two ends and mixed method at the middle of the interactive continuum. Mixed method design has both qualitative and quantitative elements reflected in philosophical assumptions, methods and procedures of a study or inquiry (Creswell, 2015). This paper explain the processes taken to design a mixed-method research on Waqf, specifically related to higher education institutions of Malaysia.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Waqf is fast becoming one of the most sought-after financial instruments to support higher learning institutions' operational and development expenditures. It is done through the Waqf benefits that are generated by Waqf properties or known in Arabic as *Mawquf*. The Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia has proposed endowment and Waqf as viable approach to sustain public universities operation, besides the typical public funds provided by the government of Malaysia via its annual budget (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2016).

A number of research have been done in Malaysia pertaining to Waqf. Salehuddin and Nor Asiah (2017) reported that there are 810 literatures on Waqf in Malaysia from 1957 to 2017. Areas of interest among the Waqf researchers included, but not limited to, management and development of Waqf, cash Waqf, socio economic roles of Waqf, legal and fiqh of Waqf, education Waqf, comparative studies, corporate Waqf, financing through Waqf, country cases and history of Waqf, healthcare Waqf and investment (Salehuddin & Nor Asiah, 2017).

However, an opportunity to improve the number of research and literature on higher education Waqf is widely open. Out of the 810 research papers, only 53 papers or 6.5% represent literature on education Waqf (Salehuddin & Nor Asiah, 2017). Among them were papers by W. K. Mujani, et.al. (2018), Ahmad, A. Rahman et.al. (2016), Ab. Rashid and Hussin (2014), Ahmad Zaki, et.al. (2008) and Abdul Halim Sunny (2007).

BRIEF NOTES ON WAQF

Literally, Waqf is an Arabic word in singular form (plural is *Awqaf*), translated as 'to hold'. In practice, Waqf implies retaining and preserving physical assets so that any benefit flowing from the assets can be enjoyed by other people in the long run (International Shari'ah Research Academy for Islamic Finance/ ISRA, 2018). Waqf can be defined as a voluntary act or initiative taken by individual Muslim or collectively by a group of Muslims to provide valuable and meaningful inputs in perpetuity to create outputs for the benefits of the intended people or society.

Murat Cizakca (2000) explained Waqf is a privately-owned assets being endowed according to Islamic laws for charitable purpose eternally. The tradition of Waqf in Muslim society started when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him/ SAW) encouraged his companion i.e. Umar al-Khattab to endow a piece of palm date orchard land in a place known as *Khaybar* for the benefits of the *Ummah* (Sahih al-Bukhari, hadith no.2532) This event occurred after the Battle of *Khaybar* in year 7 AH.

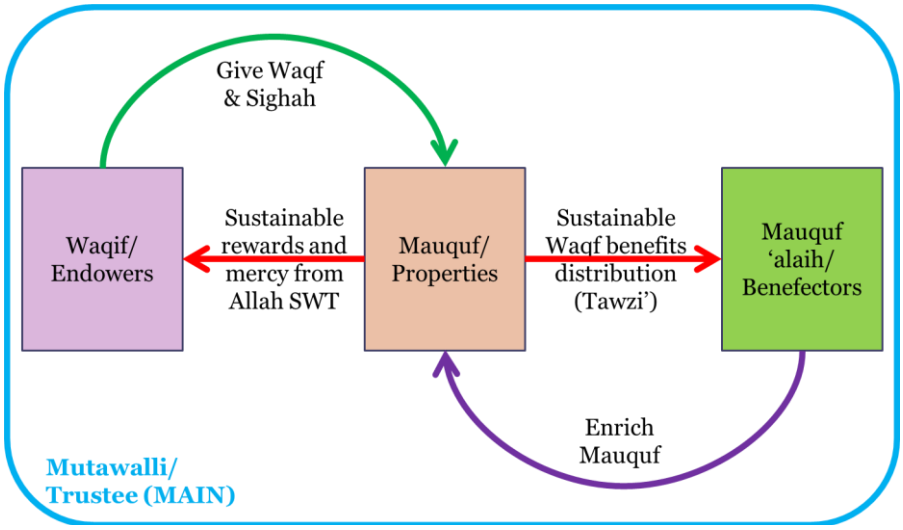
Al-Khatib al-Shirbini (2015) and many other Waqf scholars have discussed the pillars of Waqf or endowment. The pillars are; (i) the endower (*waqif*), (ii) the beneficiary of the Waqf (*mauquf 'alaih*), (iii) the dedicated article or asset (*mauquf*), and (iv) the form or Waqf declaration (*sighah*). Figure 1 represents the relationship between all pillars of Waqf. *Waqif* give Waqf by making clear *sighah* to donate specific assets for the benefits of predetermined *Mauquf 'alaih*. One of the motivations of such act is to gain sustainable rewards and mercy from the God. The Prophet (SAW) said a person deeds are cut off after his death except for three i.e. continuing charity (such as Waqf), knowledge that others benefitted from, and a righteous child who supplicates for him (al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 1378).

Another motivation or inspiration is to ensure sustainable Waqf benefits distribution or *Tawzi* for the benefactors' welfare. Righteously, those *Mauquf 'alaih* could further enrich the Waqf foundation by playing their part in contributing to the Waqf as well. In other words, it is great to have a person who is benefitted from somebody's Waqf to return the generosity by becoming a *Waqif* as well.

In Malaysian context, *Mutawalli* or Waqf trustee must be included into the picture. All *Majlis Agama Islam Negeri* or State Religious Councils (SRCs) are the sole Waqf trustee recognized by the respective states' law. For example, all Waqf assets (*Mauquf*), such as land, buildings or any other properties (movable or not) are registered under the authority of SRCs. However, in term of daily administrating the *Mauquf*, SRCs may appoint a special committee that will manage them (Baharuddin, 1998; Mohd. Afendi & Asmah, 2010).

From Islamic economics point of view, Waqf is categorized under Islamic social finance (ISRA, 2018). This implicates that, Waqf is initiated by the society for the society, complementing other economic development initiatives and processes undertaken by the government sector (public finance) and corporate sector (private finance).

FIGURE 1: Relationship between Waqif, Mauquf, Mauquf 'alaih and Mutawalli



OVERVIEWS ON MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH

In principal, mixed-method research has three unique designs to be selected by researchers. The designs are (i) convergent design; (ii) explanatory sequential design; and (iii) exploratory sequential design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The first design requires quantitative data collection and analysis to be conducted concurrently with qualitative data collection and analysis. The main purpose is to compare results from the two approaches.

The explanatory sequential design begins with quantitative data collection (similar to the first design) to identify specific empirical results, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis to interpret the results obtained during quantitative part. In this design, qualitative findings are used to explain and verify quantitative findings. This design is suitable for explanatory-type of research in which related theories and variables are available for study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Whereas, the exploratory sequential design starts with qualitative data collection and analysis to identify certain features that can be used for empirical testing in the following stages. Then, the specific features are empirically tested to further improve the findings. This design is suitable for exploratory-type of research where it helps the researchers to explore potential constructs, variables or model to explain the subject matter under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Exploratory sequential design is the chosen one for the authors' current research entitled "Developing Sustainable Waqf Benefits Distribution (Tawzi') Model for Higher Learning Institutions of Malaysia". Mixed-method design is selected for this study because its' major focus is to explore potential constructs and/ or variables to be included in a model. It is suitable when little is known about a particular population or subject, in this case – the distribution of Waqf benefits in higher education institutions of Malaysia. Qualitative inputs will be used to explore and define the Waqf benefits distribution, followed by creating survey questionnaires to gather quantitative data from a larger sample. Finally the data will be tested empirically to understand its' patterns and attributes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since the study is exploratory in nature, it is good to have both qualitative and quantitative approaches to get optimum results.

DESIGNING A MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH ON SUSTAINABLE WAQF BENEFITS DISTRIBUTION

For the qualitative part, the authors have adopted *basic qualitative study*, a label introduced by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), besides the many types of qualitative study available, as seen in Figure 2. The reason is because this study focus towards understanding concepts and current practices of Waqf benefits distribution in Malaysia's HLIs. In addition, data collection is primarily a triangulation involving interviews (primary data source) and observations plus documents (secondary data sources).

FIGURE 2: Types of Qualitative Research

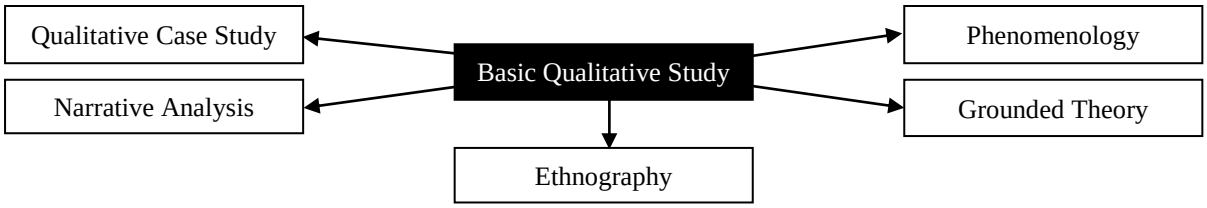


Figure adapted from Merriam and Tisdell (2016), p.42

The study is divided into four stages. The first two stages fully utilise qualitative approaches to achieve the objectives. Whereas, the last two stages utilises qualitative and quantitative approaches to accomplished the predetermined goals.

a). Stage One

In the first stage of this study, inputs from all types of references will be carefully explored. Relevant qualitative inputs in terms of constructs, variables and etcetera which related to model design and development will be used to complete a research proposal.

b). Stage Two

Next, in the second stage, the research focuses on identifying latest information on the current concept and practices of Waqf benefits distribution or *Tawzi'* in higher learning institutions of Malaysia. The data collection strategy in this stage is triangulation, involving semi-structured interviews with relevant respondents among Waqf stakeholders to obtain primary data. It will be supported by observations and documents as the secondary data.

c). Stage Three

Then, in the third stage, the strategy is to engage design and development research (DDR) method. According to Richey and Klein (2007), DDR is a systematic study of design, development and evaluation processes aiming to create either a product, tool or model. DDR is largely used to accomplish two categories of research project i.e. product and tool research and model research. DDR has three phases. The first DDR phase is done to appraise Waqf stakeholders' need for a 'sustainable Waqf benefits distribution' model. A model need analysis will be conducted to achieve this objective. This phase's data collection strategy involves semi-structured interviews and survey questionnaires. Data will be analysed using content analysis and SPSS accordingly.

Second DDR phase aims to design and develop a 'Sustainable Waqf Benefits Distribution' prototype model. Waqf experts will be identified and their cooperation are to be obtained to answer a set of experts' questionnaires. Fuzzy Delphi Method or FDM will be used to analyse all data to see whether those experts' opinions on the model reach consensus. FDM was introduced by Murry, Pappino and Gisch in 1995. It combined classical or traditional Delphi method with fuzzy logic (Ramlan & Ghazali, 2018). FDM uses experts' appraisal to identify constructs or factor relevant to the study.

Third DDR phase objectives are to test the prototype model empirically and finalize the model. Empirical data will be collected from Waqf stakeholders and analysed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique. It is an improvement to the 'traditional' or first-generation multivariate data analysis techniques such as multiple regression. One of the advantages of SEM is the outputs of path analysis can be explained graphically, making it fairly easy to understand.

d). Stage Four

This is the final stage of the study. The objective of this stage is to assess feedbacks from Waqf stakeholders on the final "Sustainable Waqf Benefits Distribution *(Tawzi')*" model. The final model will be presented and explained to relevant Waqf stakeholders. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews and survey questionnaires, whenever appropriate. Data analysis will utilize content analysis techniques and SPSS.

Qualitative data from interview transcripts will be extracted, coded and categorize according to relevant labels. Similarly, quantitative data from survey questionnaires will be analysed statistically using SPSS software. Waqf stakeholders' commentaries in semi-structured interviews and responses in survey questionnaires will help the researchers to verify and confirm whether the final model is applicable in Higher Learning Institutions' set up. At the end of the process, a final report will be prepared and submitted to relevant authorities. Hopefully, the final "Sustainable Waqf Benefits Distribution *(Tawzi')*" model will become

one of the dynamic point of references among Waqf stakeholders in HLIs to step up the sustainability of Waqf benefits distributions. Table 1 summarize the designing processes discussed above. Table 1 presents the overall design of this study.

Table 1: Designing Mixed-method Research to Develop a Sustainable Waqf Benefits Distribution (Tawzi') Model for Higher Learning Institutions of Malaysia

Study stages	Types of approaches	Purposes	Methods	Intended Outcomes
Stage 1	Qualitative	Explore inputs from various sources such as journals, reports, books etc.	Literature reviews	Research proposal
Stage 2	Qualitative	Extract relevant data and information related to the concept and current practices of Waqf benefits distribution *(Tawzi')* in Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) from relevant Waqf stakeholders	Triangulation strategy using semi-structured interviews as primary data source and observations and documents as secondary data sources	Establish the concept and current practices of Waqf benefits distribution in HLIs
Stage 3	Qualitative & Quantitative	Design and develop HLIs' sustainable Waqf benefits distribution *(Tawzi')* model using Design and development research (DDR) method	DDR Phase 1: Model need analysis through semi-structured interviews and survey questionnaires to understand and verify stakeholders' requirement for a model	Establish stakeholders' requirement for a model
			DDR Phase 2: Develop a prototype model by incorporating Waqf experts' viewpoints/ data and analysing them using Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM)	Prototype model
			DDR Phase 3: Testing the prototype model's data using PLS-SEM	Final model, empirically verified
Stage 4	Qualitative & Quantitative	Assessing feedbacks from Waqf stakeholders on the final model's applicability	Semi-structured interviews and survey questionnaires	Final report on the study

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, mixed-method research is a very interesting process. It combines qualitative and quantitative approaches in one single research. Researchers could use the advantages of both approaches to obtain good results for their research. Furthermore, in view of exploratory sequential design, the qualitative approach can be used to explore relevant inputs as preparations for quantitative part. This paper has outlined relevant processes in a mixed-method study. It involved four stages of activities with specific approaches and methods. Design and development research (DDR) is integrated into the processes, besides the Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM).

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