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# Exploring Factors Affecting the Sustainability of Islamic Affairs in Malaysia: An **Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) Approach**



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## ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, Islamic affairs institutions play an essential role in ensuring the development and progress of Islamic affairs. However, in most cases, the institutions in charge of Islamic affairs face many challenges in maintaining the purity of the Islamic faith and teachings in this country. In response to this, it is imperative to understand the factors that can enhance the sustainability of Islamic affairs. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to explore the factors affecting the sustainability of Islamic affairs in Malaysia. By integrating Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) and Matrix of Cross-Impact Multiplications Applied to Classification (MICMAC), this study developed a novel model to ensure the sustainability of Islamic affairs. The findings of the model indicated that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is the most influential factor in creating the sustainability of Islamic affairs. On the other hand, Society Well-Being (SWB) is the most dependent factor influenced by all other factors considered in this study. Accordingly, it is postulated that the identification of significant factors and the utilization of the proposed model could guide various stakeholder groups, such as policymakers, policy executors, and Islamic affairs practitioners, to achieve long-term sustainability. This model could also be adapted by Islamic institutions in other countries to formulate appropriate efforts to strengthen the development of Islamic affairs based on the critical factors of relationships.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The influence of Islam was widespread in the Malay Archipelago in the 15th century before the arrival of Western imperial powers involving the Portuguese, Dutch, and British. Since the time of the Sultanate of Malacca, Islam has been intimately linked to the affairs of the Malaysian government, and its modern roots date back to the beginning of British decolonisation [1]. Even though this country was colonised by several foreign powers, especially the British, it failed to separate Islam from the majority of the region's population, which is the Malay nation [2]. As such, Islam has been indirectly recognised as an important characteristic of the Malaysian identity, especially within Malay society, since independence in 1957. As a comprehensive religion, Islam emerged as a belief system and brought significant change and positive order in all aspects, including political, economic, and social [2].

The integration of Islamic values into Malaysian society has a profound impact on policies and legal considerations. Among them, Malaysia has a dual legal system in which the constitution divides the jurisdiction between civil and Shariah courts [3, 4]. Shariah courts have jurisdiction over matters governed by Islamic law, including personal matters, family law, and inheritance, but their jurisdiction is limited to Muslims [5]. In other words, the civil court has the authority to handle cases involving non-Islamic matters, while the Shariah court has limited jurisdiction solely over cases involving Muslims and matters related to Islamic laws. Besides that, in terms of education, Islamic education has been an integral part of the Malaysian national curriculum. When the National Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced in 1971 after the interracial riots of May 1969, the government realised the importance of Islamic education to reflect the beliefs and identity of the Malays [6]. Under the Ministry of Education, the Islamic Education Division is established to address issues related to Islamic education with the primary aim of facilitating the integration of religious schools into the national education system [7]. As a result, Muslim students are obliged to study Islamic subjects when they are offered in national schools such as national secondary schools, science secondary schools, and vocational secondary schools [6].

According to Article 3 (1) of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Islam is the official religion of the Federation and allows followers of other religions to peacefully practice their respective faiths in any part of the country. As the official religion, Islam plays a central role in the daily lives of Muslims in Malaysia, including political and legal matters [8]. The establishment of Islamic affairs institutions is based on the legal framework guided by the Federal Constitution and the administrative powers of the states in matters of Islamic affairs [9]. Islamic affairs institutions are established to manage Islamic religious matters and safeguard the welfare of Muslims. Nevertheless, the Federal Constitution provides for a clear division of powers between the federal and state governments in the management of Islamic affairs. Article 74 (2) and Article 1, List of States, Ninth Schedule of the Federal Constitution, explain that all matters related to Islam and Islamic law are within the jurisdiction of the states [10]. Constitutionally, the administration of Islamic affairs is firmly under the authority of the Sultan and the State Islamic Religious Council in each state in Malaysia [11]. At the federal level, Islamic affairs are administered by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), founded by the government on 1 January 1997 [8]. JAKIM is established to formulate policies and coordinate the development and progress of Islamic affairs, including the coordination of Halal certification. As an institution that manages Islamic affairs at the federal level, JAKIM has three main functions, namely the drafting and standardisation of Islamic law, the coordination and development of Islamic education, and the coordination of Islamic administration [12, 13]. Meanwhile, at the state level, the roles of the State Islamic Religious Council (MAIN) are to promulgate policies and certify policy decisions related to Islamic matters decided by the Islamic institution at the federal level, as well as to monitor and coordinate the implementation of Islamic policies. In addition, MAIN is also responsible for investigating and making allegations of Shariah violations to ensure that the welfare society complies with the principles of Islam [14].

The management of Islamic affairs has undergone significant evolution in response to contemporary challenges which reflect a dynamic approach aimed at meeting the needs of the Muslim society. However, the responsibility of managing Islamic affairs poses significant challenges, as religious issues underlying Muslim society must be carefully addressed, while the rights of non-Muslims must be granted in accordance with constitutional provisions. In the efforts to empower the Shariah Judiciary Institution, the implementation of information technology has been incorporated in Shariah Courts through the application of the e-Syariah system [15]. E-Syariah is a "Government to Citizen" (G2C) application, which refers to a government-to-society service that aims to empower and improve the administrative efficiency of the Shariah court in Malaysia [16]. The E-Syariah application can connect the Shariah courts in the management of cases through the State Shariah Justice Department (JKSN) and the State Shariah Court (MSN) with the Department of Syariah Judiciary Malaysia (JKSM) for coordination and sharing information related to the Shariah justice institutions [15]. Furthermore, in terms of Islamic education, the integration of digital learning media is not only effective but also enriches the relevance of religious education among Muslims. Digital learning media such as internet-connected animated videos, Google Classroom as an online learning platform, Quizziz as an online game, and WhatsApp as a social media application [17] make Islamic education more accessible to a wider audience. This digital learning media can ensure that individuals from various locations can easily engage in religious teachings. For example, an empirical study conducted by Yahaya et al. [18] found that there was a positive paradigm shift in the teaching of Al-Quran and Fardu Ain (KAFA) through an online program broadcast on Al-Hijrah TV Show with the cooperation of JAKIM. This effort witnessed the integration of technology and contemporary teaching methods to prepare Muslims, especially the younger generation, to understand the basic principles of Islam.

Nevertheless, there are various issues related to Islamic affairs have arisen within the Muslim community. Previous studies have shown that Islamic affairs issues encompassed many aspects such as mosque management, Islamic education, family institutions, and zakat management. For instance, Rusli and Kadir [19] studied the reasons that caused new converts to return to their former religion due to lack of faith in Islam. insufficient knowledge of Islam, lack of religious commitment, marital issues, and conflict with their family. Additionally, Jusoh et al. [20] identified seven main factors causing the low attendance of Muslims in the mosque, which are a limited function of the mosque, individual problems, inadequate basic facilities, non-strategic location, poor administrative and financial management as well as the personality of the mosque administrators. Suleiman and Farid [21] also investigated the factors contributing to the divorce rate among Muslim couples in Malaysia due to neglect of responsibility, infidelity, domestic violence, lack of understanding between spouses, financial problems, and third-party interventions.

Hence, the emergence of Islamic affairs issues should be addressed accordingly, as they could tarnish the position of Islam and the Muslim community. As such, appropriate and continuous measures need to be taken to safeguard the purity of Islam and the development of Islamic affairs. Thus, the objective of this paper is to explore factors affecting the sustainability of Islamic affairs in Malaysia, which ultimately contribute to the development of the Islamic affairs sustainability model. In this study, the hierarchical structure of the model is divided into two phases, namely the Strategic Management Pillar Phase and the Strategic Management Framework Phase. The division phase of the model will further be helpful to policymakers and relevant stakeholders to identify the most critical factor and enable them to make an informed decision. The findings of this study also highlighted the critical factors on which relevant stakeholders could design strategic planning to enhance the development of Islamic affairs in Malaysia. The inclusive nature of the model will facilitate the resolution of implicit issues related to Islamic affairs within the Muslim community.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 describes the method adopted for this study. Section 3 explains the results of the study. Section 4 presents a discussion of the results obtained. Finally, Section 5 draws the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

#### 2. METHOD

This current study adopted Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) to explore factors affecting the sustainability of Islamic affairs, based on the collective opinions of expert panels. Since its inception, ISM has been widely used in numerous studies across various fields such as engineering, management, and social sciences. ISM, introduced by Warfield [22], is a wellestablished technique designed to determine interrelationships between factors in a particular domain through expert opinions of contextual factors [23, 24]. In addition, it is a computer-aided modeling technique that integrates three modeling languages, namely words, mathematics, and graphics [25]. ISM is a pairwise analysis to solve complex problems using experts' opinions by generating a structure of relationships between factors in the form of graphical models. It also determines the driving and dependent factors and ranks the factors according to their importance to the system [25]. Since the factors of Islamic affairs are interrelated, ISM is considered an effective method for creating a hierarchical structure that incorporates the relationships between various factors in a complex way as a system [26, 27]. This hierarchical structure helps in understanding the arrangement of factors and their relative importance in contributing to the sustainability of Islamic affairs.

### 2.1 Sampling and data collection

The participants constitute a group of experts who act as key informants in the development of the model. In this study, a total of twelve (12) expert panels were selected as participants through a purposive sampling approach. According to Janes [28], it is considered appropriate to have the participation of 8 to 15 experts when applying the ISM technique. The selection criteria for the experts were based on a rigorous process that takes into account their extensive knowledge, academic qualifications, research contributions, and practical experience in Islamic affairs management. However, in this study, the selection of experts should be prioritised based on the representativeness of the perspectives relevant to the subject of the study in order to obtain quality over quantity input [29]. The experts were selected from diverse backgrounds to represent a wide range of expertise, such as policymakers, executors, academics, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This is to ensure that the proposed factors will be reviewed by a diverse group of experts. The selection is based on their ability to provide valuable information and perspectives that align with the objective of the study. Hence, the selection of experts for this study is based on several criteria as follows:

- 1-The experts must have at least a bachelor's degree, while academics must have a PhD.
- 2-The experts must have knowledge related to the management of Islamic affairs.
- 3-The experts must have at least five years of working experience.
  - 4-The experts must have excellent communication skills.
  - 5-The experts must commit to the study period.

The list of the participants (experts) in this study is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. List of expert panels

Category of Expert	No. of Expert	Range of Expertise (Years)
Policy Makers	2	
Policy Executors	5	
Academics	3	10-20 and above
Non-Governmental	2	
Organizations (NGOs)	۷	

## 2.2 Procedure and data analysis

The model was developed based on Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) using Concept Star software. The ISM result presents the map showing the relationship between factors in the form of a hierarchical structural model. Thus, the different steps involved in the ISM technique are as follows:

(1) Identification of the factors (elements)

ISM begins with the identification of factors through group discussion among experts. In this study, the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was applied to identify factors relevant to

the sustainability of Islamic affairs. NGT is a structured meeting intended to provide an orderly procedure for obtaining qualitative information from the participants most closely related to the research [30]. The generation of a large number of new ideas can be identified through the NGT application [31]. The NGT process begins by presenting the background and desired outcome of the study to the experts. The second step is called silent generation in which the experts were asked to write down their ideas silently and individually in the form of short statements [32]. The third step is round robin sharing in which each participant was allowed to share their ideas at a time. The fourth step is a group discussion among experts. The experts were invited to engage in a discussion to ensure their understanding of the proposed ideas, thereby enabling them to make informed decisions in the next step of selecting and ranking [33]. The last step is to select and rank the ideas (factors) from the generated list. The experts were asked to vote for the ideas most relevant to the study based on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = extremely unimportant to 7 = extremely important.

# (2) Determination of the contextual and relation phrase

This step establishes the relationship between the factors of the model. Contextual relations are defined as a goal that must be achieved by fulfilling any boundary conditions and constraints [34]. The context helps focus on how factors should be connected when developing an ISM model. In the context of this study, the contextual and relation phrases were determined based on experts' opinions on how the factors should be related.

(3) Construction of the Structural Self-Interaction Matrix (SSIM)

The construction of SSIM demonstrates the relationship between various factors that affect the sustainability of Islamic affairs. This step was carried out using ISM software, namely Concept Star. The software will present a pair of factors to a panel of experts who will make a decision by voting on the relationship before moving on to the next pair of factors [35]. This process will be repeated until all the factors are paired, and their relationship is created [36].

(4) Generation of the ISM model

The ISM model was created using the software after the factors' pairing process was successfully completed. This software generates the model based on pairwise comparison and transitive logic. According to Zulkefli et al. [36], transitive logic states that any of the three elements (A, B, C) are related when:

- $\bullet$  A has the relation to B (written A  $\rightarrow$  B),
- •And B has the relation to C (written  $B \rightarrow C$ ),
- Then, A has the relation to C (written  $A \to C$  or  $A \to B \to C$ ).
  - (5) Conceptual review of the model

Once the ISM model was developed, it is then presented to a panel of experts to review and verify conceptual inconsistencies and make modifications if necessary.

(6) Final model

The model was finalised and re-presented to a panel of experts after incorporating the necessary modifications.

## 3. RESULTS

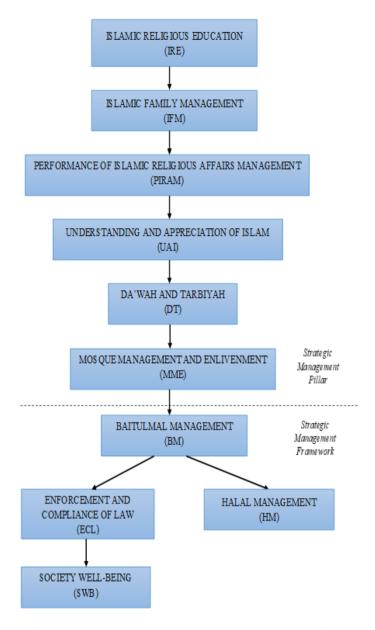
### 3.1 Findings from Interpretive Structural Modeling

As illustrated in Figure 1, the model was developed based on the collective opinion of the expert panels during the ISM

session. This model demonstrated the network or relationship between the factors of the sustainability of Islamic affairs, which could be a guiding mechanism on how Islamic affairs should be empowered in Malaysia. Referring to the ISM model (Figure 1), the arrows indicated the sequence or flow from one element to another as a set of factors to build a structure or map into a comprehensive system model. In other words, the model depicted the factors that should be addressed first in the sequence before executing other factors.

After the model was presented to the experts, they proposed an improvement to include in it. The experts suggested that the model could be divided into two main phases, namely the Strategic Management Pillar Phase and the Strategic Management Framework Phase, as portrayed in Figure 1. The Strategic Management Pillar included all factors that influence the sustainability of Islamic affairs. The experts agreed that Religious Education (IRE), Islamic Family Management (IFM), Performance of Islamic Religious Affairs Management (PIRAM), Understanding and Appreciation of Islam (UAI), Da'wah and Tarbiyah (DT), as well as Mosque Management and Enlivenment (MME) are critical factors in affecting the foundation development of sustainable Islamic affairs. Meanwhile, the Strategic Management Framework comprised the remaining factors including Baitulmal Management (BM), Enforcement and Compliance of Law (ECL), Halal Management (HM), and Society Well-Being (SWB). Based on the model, IRE located at the highest level of the ISM diagram implies that this factor has been proposed as the main factor that should be addressed first. These findings are consistent with the previous findings of Tayeb [37] that JAKIM, as the federal institution for Islamic affairs, regularly revises and streamlines the curriculum and textbooks for Islamic religious education and expects full compliance from teachers and students. This is to ensure that Islamic religious education remains relevant and can guide Muslims in facing contemporary issues while maintaining their adherence to the fundamental principles of Islam. Subsequently, when the IRE was addressed appropriately, it would help to manage other factors in order.

Table 2 provides a description of each factor contributing to the sustainability of Islamic affairs.



**Figure 1.** ISM model for the sustainability of Islamic affairs in Malaysia

Table 2. Description of sustainability of Islamic affairs factors

Factors	Description	References
Islamic Religious		
Education (IRE)		
Islamic Family	IFM aims to promote the development and education of children as well as to ensure their	
Management (IFM)	intellectual and physical growth. This includes governance and organisation of family life with an	[39, 40]
Wanagement (II WI)	emphasis on compliance with Islamic guidelines.	
Performance of Islamic	PIRAM refers to a management system that involves planning, implementing, directing, and	
Religious Affairs	monitoring organisations related to Islamic affairs to achieve the goals of al-falah (victory,	[9]
Management (PIRAM)	success, security, and lasting goodness).	
	UAI means understanding, appreciating, practicing, and implementing Islamic teachings in all	
Understanding and	aspects of life. The basic foundation of Islamic appreciation covers three main principles: Islamic	
Appreciation of Islam	belief (aqidah) as the core of the Islamic religion and way of life of Muslims, Shariah law related	[41, 42]
(UAI)	to the practices and behaviour of Muslims, and morality (akhlaq) as ethics of life which is a	
	manifestation of a clear belief and established principles of Shariah.	
Da'wah and Tarbiyah	Da'wah is a process of spreading or disseminating religious knowledge, and information, and	
(DT)	teaching good things to others, while tarbiyah is a process of preparing people with comprehensive	[43, 44]
(D1)	preparation that touches all aspects of human life, including spiritual, physical, and mental.	
Mosque Management	MME involves a structured, organised, and directed process that maximises the various functions	
and Enlivenment	of the mosque. This includes managing religious activities, and community events as well as	[45, 46]
(MME)	ensuring that mosques serve as centres for worship, education, and welfare.	

Baitulmal Management (BM)	BM is responsible for managing finances and assets entrusted by Muslims, such as zakat, waqf and other sources permitted by Islamic law to alleviate poverty and promote socio-economic development. It also ensures the distribution of funds to individuals and society in need, in accordance with Islamic principles.	[47]
Enforcement and Compliance of Law (ECL)	ECL refers to the implementation of the rules and regulations provided in any applicable Islamic law. This ensures that Islamic laws are implemented and followed by Muslims	[48]
Halal Management (HM)	HM involves the management and regulation of the supply, transportation, storage, and handling of materials, including livestock, stocks, and food, to ensure compliance with Shariah principles.	[49]
Society Well-Being (SWB)	SWB is the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It involves solving social problems by providing support such as education, health care, and welfare based on Islamic values.	[50]

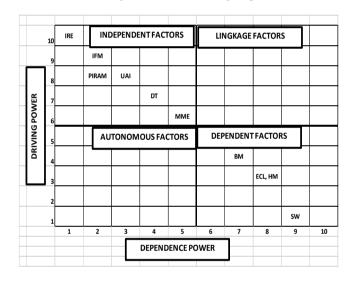
As illustrated in Figure 1, by taking into account the different dimensions of Islamic affairs, the ISM model provides a framework to guide and improve management within Islamic affairs institutions. The model highlights that the implementation of the strategic management pillar and framework is significant in guiding Islamic affairs institutions in constructing strategic planning to ensure the development and progress of Islamic affairs based on the identified factors. Islamic affairs institutions could address issues related to Islamic religious matters based on the results of the model of which a systematic approach could be adopted so that strategic planning is more dynamic, comprehensive, and integrated across different departments. Furthermore, as highlighted in the model, Islamic religious education should be a priority of institutions in the development of Islamic affairs by providing comprehensive religious education to society. Education in Islam aims to produce balanced human beings who produce balanced growth of the whole human personality through the formation of intellect, reason, personal rationality, human feelings, and physical senses [51]. Hence, the development of the educational program must take into account the needs of contemporary, incorporating technology, and integrating traditional and modern teachings.

### 3.2 Findings from MICMAC analysis

The Matrix of Cross-Impact Multiplications Applied to Classification (MICMAC) technique was employed to classify and analyse the different factors used in ISM according to their driving and dependence power. The dependence power factor is plotted on the x-axis and the driving power factor is on the y-axis [52]. For the categorisation of the factors, these driving and dependence powers were applied to classify them into four identified groups, namely (i) independent, (ii) linkage, (iii) autonomous, and (iv) dependent. First, the factors with strong driving power but weak dependence power are called independent factors (group 1). Second, the factors with strong driving power and strong dependence power are called linkage factors (group 2). Third, the factors with weak driving power and weak dependence power are called autonomous factors (group 3). Lastly, the factors with weak driving power but strong dependence power are called dependent factors (group 4). In this study, MICMAC analysis was used to explore and sort out the degree of interrelationships between the factors affecting the sustainability of Islamic affairs. The results of the driving and dependence power will help the researchers and relevant stakeholders in determining which factors should be prioritised [53].

As shown in Figure 2, the positions of ten (10) factors based on their driving and dependence power were presented. Based on the results of the MICMAC analysis, Islamic Religious Education (IRE), Islamic Family Management (IFM),

Performance of Islamic Religious Affairs Management (PIRAM), Understanding and Appreciation of Islam (UAI), Da'wah and Tarbiyah (DT), and Mosque Management and Enlivenment (MME) were located in the independent group, which explains that they have a strong influence on other factors to achieve the sustainability of Islamic affairs. On the other hand, Baitulmal Management (BM), Enforcement and Compliance of Law (ECL), Halal Management (HM), and Society Well-Being (SWB), all of which were placed in the lower four levels of the ISM diagram, were in the dependent group, which indicates that they receive influence from other significant factors. Nevertheless, there is the absence of factors classified into linkage and autonomous groups.



**Figure 2.** Categories of factors affecting the sustainability of Islamic affairs based on MICMAC analysis

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to explore the factors that affect the sustainability of Islamic affairs in Malaysia. As illustrated in Figure 1, the model presented the relationships and sequence among factors affecting the sustainability of Islamic affairs. The factors were classified into nine (9) levels in a hierarchical structure. The factors which are at the higher level of the hierarchy drive the factors to the lower levels. Based on the ISM model, the findings indicated that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is the most critical factor that facilitates the sustainability of Islamic affairs in the context examined. This finding was also in line with the findings of the MICMAC diagram (Figure 2), which showed that IRE was ranked as the highest factor in the independent group, with remarkably high driving power in influencing the subsequent factors. Accordingly, IRE is considered a key factor that must

be addressed first at the initial stage of constructing the sustainability of Islamic affairs. In this study, IRE can be defined as education that focuses on the teaching and learning of religion, particularly Islamic teachings [38]. IRE not only conveys theoretical knowledge but also offers practical guidance for daily life, encompassing various aspects such as worship, family, and law. This is to ensure that Muslims live in accordance with Islamic principles, which helps them maintain a balance between their religious obligations and worldly responsibilities. Briefly, Islamic education provides a comprehensive understanding of the family institution, the purpose of da'wah, and the enforcement of the law. It is important to note that IRE provides guidance to Muslims to understand religious knowledge and build an excellent religious character, as well as believe in worshipping God and staying away from all His prohibitions [38]. In other words, IRE is recognised as an important education to achieve a better future for individuals and society [54].

Additionally, Islamic Family Management (IFM), Performance of Islamic Religious Affairs Management (PIRAM), Understanding and Appreciation of Islam (UAI), Da'wah and Tarbiyah (DT), and Mosque Management and Enlivenment (MME) were also categorised in the independent group by the MICMAC analysis. The ISM model portrayed that Islamic Family Management (IFM) is directly linked to Islamic Religious Education (IRE). The family is generally considered to be an essential social institution in all societies. In Islam, the family institution is the foundation of the sociocultural structure and a self-sustaining mechanism to uphold moral values, support children's education, and strengthen family connections that preserve social, ideological, and cultural stability [55]. It will be difficult to ensure the sustainability of Islamic affairs if family institutions are damaged, as this can have long-term negative consequences on the development of children who will represent future generations. Moreover, this factor is intricately connected to IRE within the framework of the ISM model and MICMAC Islamic religious education analysis. provides comprehensive understanding of religious teachings, including parenting techniques and child-rearing. Manea [56] also added that religious education is not only important in shaping moral behaviour but can also influence intellectual, aesthetic, physical, and cultural education. It is considered important for the well-being of individuals and families as well as the sustainability of Islamic affairs.

The third level can be justified as another extension of the previous level. The performance of Islamic Religious Affairs Management (PIRAM) is positioned at different levels in the ISM model but in the same group of the MICMAC diagram. PIRAM has a significant impact on the sustainability of Islamic affairs. This finding implies that management plays a crucial role in achieving organisational goals by providing guidance and coordinating resources on all matters. In Islam, management can be defined as an important process to guide individuals and organisations toward achieving work goals based on the Quran and Sunnah [57]. According to Awang and Basir [58], Islamic affairs management is classified under the category of social services which encompasses religious matters and community welfare. For instance, JAKIM is an institution responsible for Islamic affairs that plays an important role in the life of the Muslim community in Malaysia [59]. As a government agency in charge of managing Islamic affairs, a good performance of Islamic affairs management is important to ensure the development and progress of Islamic affairs.

The next factor in the fourth level is Understanding and Appreciation of Islam (UAI). An understanding of Islamic teachings provides guidance to individuals and society in all aspects of life. Islam is not only a religion that is practiced in certain ceremonies, but it is a way of life. Every aspect of Muslim life must be aligned with Islamic principles. The lack of understanding and appreciation of Islam can lead to various problems arising in today's society. Past studies such as Hadigunawan and Azahari [42] highlighted that children who do not practice religious teachings are more likely to engage in social problems such as drug addiction and alcohol consumption, compared to children who adhere to religious teachings. In context human development, religious understanding and appreciation is one of the fundamental elements that affect the behaviour of an individual. As such, having a clear understanding of Islamic principles can influence the actions and choices of Muslims. This understanding will guide their behaviour according to Islamic values and further contribute to the sustainability of Islamic affairs.

At the fifth level, the ISM model indicates that Da'wah and Tarbiyah (DT) are directly influenced by the Understanding and Practice of Islam (UPI). A thorough understanding of Islamic teachings helps individuals convey the clear and correct messages of Islam to others. The implementation of the da'wah aims to increase Muslims' beliefs regarding obligations to Allah S.W.T and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H [60] and to invite followers of other religions to Islam. In practice, the da'wah encompasses more than the deepening of the teachings of Islam from a purely theological aspect, it includes the explanation of the laws of Islam that must be observed in daily life covering issues such as politics, economics, and society [61]. As such, effective da'wah efforts should be empowered to spread the teachings of Islam and enlighten non-Muslims about Islam. These continuous da'wah efforts can ensure the sustainability of Islamic affairs. In essence, the mosque fulfills its function and encourages the development of Islam in the Muslim community and its relations with society.

The last factor in the independent group is Mosque Management and Enlivenment (MME), which is positioned at level six. In Islam, mosques are of considerable importance as they serve as places of worship, Islamic education, spiritual development, and community gathering. Programs and activities carried out in mosques are aimed at inculcating and strengthening Islamic values within Muslim society [62]. As an important institution, every mosque should have professional or qualified administrators with sufficient knowledge and skills to perform their duties [63]. Lack of attention to professional mosque administrators can disrupt the continuity of mosque management. Furthermore, the model clearly shows the links between Mosque Management and Enlivenment (MME) and Da'wah and Tarbiyah (DT). This connection is key to understanding that the mosque can actively engage in outreach efforts to share the message of Islam with non-Muslims. For example, organizing open houses, educational seminars, and interfaith dialogues. These efforts help to build understanding and tolerance and create peaceful coexistence between different ethnicities.

Moving on to the dependent groups, this group consists of the interrelationship of the factors that constitute the Strategic Management Framework phase. The factors of this phase are the subsequent factors that are proposed to be addressed as a step towards creating sustainability in Islamic affairs. Factors placed in this phase include Baitulmal Management (BM), Enforcement and Compliance of Law (ECL), Halal Management (HM) and Society Well-Being (SWB). For this phase, the most essential factor in affecting the sustainability of Islamic affairs is Baitulmal Management (BM), which is at the seventh level. In Islam, baitulmal is one of the important financial institutions founded to manage funds, provide social welfare, and facilitate the socio-economic development of the Muslim society. In order to maintain the sustainability of Islamic affairs, baitulmal funds could be utilised for the benefit of the Muslim community and for various purposes such as education, health care, asnaf welfare, and the development of facilities and infrastructures [64]. Currently, the baitulmal does not function as a national treasure as in early Islam. However, in the context of practice in Malaysia, it can be regarded as a unit or department of the administration of the State Islamic Religious Council [65]. In a Muslim-majority country like Malaysia, baitulmal is important in the management of Muslim wealth and in providing social services to the Muslim community.

As shown in Figure 2, the ISM model revealed that Baitulmal Management (BM) will trigger the Enforcement and Compliance of Law (ECL) and Halal Management (HM) which is located at the eighth level. This implies that the baitulmal is a centre for collecting and distributing funds, especially zakat and wagf, which are important components of Islamic wealth. According to Razak [66], zakat and waqf play a crucial role within the Muslim community as they can support the poor, orphans, and the elderly by providing education, training, and business activities. As such, ensuring the proper distribution of funds to eligible recipients can encourage the Muslim community to comply with laws and prevent them from engaging in criminal activities. In other words, when laws and regulations are enforced and adhered to, they contribute to the continuity and positive development of various aspects of Islamic affairs. Additionally, in order to strengthen halal markets, baitulmal can support businesses and industries that adhere to Islamic principles by providing financial assistance. With this support, it can increase business growth in accordance with Shariah, especially in Halal industries, and ultimately can contribute to the sustainability of Islamic affairs. In the context of Malaysia, halal food is extremely serious for Muslim consumers, thus there is a need for strict monitoring of each halal product and regular inspections to ensure halal compliance [67].

The final level of the ISM model is represented by a factor which is Society Well-Being (SWB). SWB in the MICMAC diagram has low driving power but high dependence power, which places it in the dependent group and at the bottom of the ISM model. Numerous studies found that well-being is not just about being happy or satisfied, but also about being actively engaged in life and with others [68]. According to Ariffin et al. [69], the role of Islamic elements is one of the factors that can have an impact on the well-being of individuals, communities, and countries. Islam is a religion often emphasises virtues such as justice, compassion, and empathy to be practiced within society. In other words, a society that upholds these values is more likely to live in an environment of peace and harmony, which can increase the spread of Islamic teachings. Based on the ISM model, Enforcement and Compliance of Law (ECL) significantly affected Society Well-Being (SWB). This reveals that law enforcement and compliance an important aspects in which they can play a major role in controlling crime and creating a peaceful environment in this country. According to Aldyan and Negi [70], law enforcement is not only a matter of justice but, more importantly, it can bring benefits to the people, create social order and serve as an instrument to protect society. Subsequently, law enforcement can create a sense of security within the community, which has a positive impact on its well-being

However, implementing the model to ensure the sustainability of Islamic affairs poses some challenges. The most common challenge faced by Islamic affairs institutions is the lack of human resources. For instance, in halal management, only six officers in total, divided into three groups, are involved in the monitoring and enforcement process throughout Malaysia [71]. This means that the number of existing staff is insufficient to carry out effective monitoring and enforcement, given that there is a lack of appointed officers. Insufficient staffing could compromise the quality of services provided, thereby affecting the delivery of educational programs and community outreach. In addition, the lack of skills among staff poses a significant challenge to the sustainability of Islamic affairs. According to Basir and Mohamed [59], there are some staff lack the knowledge and skills to address issues related to Islamic affairs. As such, unqualified staff could lead to poor decision-making and ineffective governance in the implementation of community development programs and the appreciation of Islam. Finally, it can have a negative impact on the overall functioning of the institution and its ability to effectively serve the community.

Furthermore, while ensuring the development of Islamic affairs, it is important to balance Islamic principles and the rights of non-Muslims in order to maintain social harmony. The application of Islamic affairs only applies to Muslims. Meanwhile, non-Muslims enjoy fair treatment as citizens, including freedoms and protections related to life, religion, education, law, expression, and movement [72]. From a religious freedom perspective, Article 11(1) of the Federal Constitution states that "everyone has the right to profess and practice their religion" [8]. This provision appears broad enough to guarantee religious freedom in a plural Malaysian society [73]. The freedom to practice religion among non-Muslims also includes being allowed to build houses of worship, such as churches, temples, and gurdwaras, to perform their religious ceremonies. Therefore, the development of Islamic affairs would not undermine the rights of non-Muslims, particularly in the practice of their beliefs and teachings.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

This paper presents a structured framework for identifying, classifying, and comprehending the factors affecting the development of sustainable Islamic affairs in Malaysia. Based on discussion among the experts' panel, ten significant factors for sustainable Islamic affairs were identified at the outset, including Islamic Religious Education (IRE), Islamic Family Management (IFM), Performance of Islamic Religious Affairs Management (PIRAM), Understanding and Appreciation of Islam (UAI), Da'wah and Tarbiyah (DT), Mosque Enlivenment Management and (MME), Baitulmal Management (BM), Enforcement and Compliance of Law (ECL), Halal Management (HM), and Society Well-Being (SWB). Later, all these significant factors were compared in pairs to generate the data for structural analysis through Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) and MICMAC analysis techniques.

Since the development of Islamic affairs is a complex problem and comprises numerous factors, the application of ISM technique allows an accurate way to select significant factors that influence the sustainability of Islamic affairs. The model (Figure 1) depicted that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) located at the highest level of the ISM diagram was identified as the most notable factor for the sustainability of Islamic affairs. Furthermore, the results of the MICMAC analysis (Figure 2) indicated that Islamic Religious Education (IRE), Islamic Family Management (IFM), Performance of Religious Affairs Management (PIRAM), Understanding and Appreciation of Islam (UAI), Da'wah and Tarbiyah (DT), Mosque Management and Enlivenment (MME) are positioned in the independent group which has a strong driving power, but a weak dependence power can affect significantly other factors. These factors should be given higher priority to successfully develop a sustainable Islamic affair in Malaysia.

Furthermore, the findings of the ISM model have significant benefits to Islamic affairs institutions such as the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), the State Islamic Religious Council (MAIN), and the State Islamic Religious Department (JAIN). This model provides a strategic guide to associated stakeholders such as policymakers and policy enforcers to build a comprehensive strategy to enhance Islamic affairs development. Indeed, the model provides a structured framework for understanding the relationships and interdependence between the different factors that affect the sustainability of Islamic affairs. For instance, policymakers could focus more on the factors with strong driving power (located in an independent group) for their main initiatives toward the sustainability of Islamic affairs. Later factors in the model could follow. In this way, it will help Islamic affairs institutions to make informed and strategic decisions.

Reflecting on the model, an effort to strengthen the development of Islamic affairs must begin with the empowerment of Islamic religious education among Muslims. This must be reinforced by good governance of Islamic affairs institutions to ensure that the Islamic education curriculum is constantly updated and revised to be comprehensive and relevant to contemporary issues. As such, the Islamic education curriculum should integrate traditional teachings with contemporary teachings. Contemporary teachings will help Muslims understand how Islamic principles can address and provide solutions to current problems. As the new generation adapts to technological advancements, the teaching of Islamic education should rely on digital platforms. Thus, online learning could play a crucial role in ensuring that Islamic education remains relevant and engaging.

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