



## Architectural Style of *Da'wah* Mosque in Malaysia: from Vernacular to Modern Structures

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### ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is to document the development phases of *da'wah* mosque architectural style in Malaysia from pre to post-independence era. Throughout Islamic history in many Muslim and non-Muslim countries, mosque not only function as a place to perform prayers but also serves as multifunctional space to conduct various activities involving individual and communal needs like *da'wah*. Similar scenario also occurs in the context of Malaysia's mosque development in which the mosque act as a sign to convey message of Islam and as symbol of *da'wah*. These *da'wah* mosque architectural style however undergo various changes due to many influencing factors like the role of mosque patron, continuous transformation of designer tastes as well as social, economic and political influence. Nonetheless, the most empowering influence is from the role of patron or client whom has the major tendency to shape the *da'wah* mosque based on their individual ideology that they hold onto. To analyze the mosque design and its evolution in Malaysia, *interpretivism* as research paradigm will be adopted. This is vital to establish set of practices in order to sort out the role and function of *da'wah* mosque throughout the Malaysian history. Hermeneutic on the other hand will be used as methodological approach to extract the meaning of the *da'wah* mosque as a 'sign' as well as to understand the documentation relating to the *da'wah* mosque as subject of research. The findings then will be analyzed using coding method. This paper, therefore, offers clear knowledge on the *da'wah* mosque study by widening and strengthening the understanding of Islamic architecture in Malaysia.

## 1. Introduction

Mosque is an important religious structure that symbolizes the Islamic faith as well as to serve the multi needs of Islamic community. In relation to this mosque built form involving its design morphology including its articulation of form and style had undergone many phases of changes since the emergence of Islam in Malaysia till present (Abd. Halim N 2004; Ken Yeang 1992; David M. 1998; Abd Ghafar 1999; Tajuddin 2007; Ismail, A.S., 2008 ; Megat et.al., 2014). Since mosque is utilized for multi- purpose function like as the center of Muslim community, a place for prayer, meditation, religious instruction, political discussion, places of learning, teaching as well as for conducting *da'wah*, it is widely constructed throughout the country. Nevertheless, according to many scholars mosque in Malaysia namely function as center of *da'wah* to actively encourage fellow Muslims in the pursuance of learning and practice Islam in mosque. To understand why and how mosque is utilized as center for *da'wah* in Malaysia, it is beneficial to firstly understand the meaning and importance of *da'wah* in Islam in the next section.

### 1.1 The importance of *da'wah* in Islam

The term *da'wah* in Islam derives from the Arabic word *da'a*, *yad'u*, *da'watun*, *da'wan* dan *du'aan* meaning to invite and to propagate (Shaharuddin, 2006). Al-Quran however define the purpose of *da'wah* in Islam are for two reasons which are the worship of Allah S.W.T and an invitation towards Islam (Racius, 2009). Since the term *da'wah* had often been mentioned 211 times in Al-Quran it clearly indicates the important role of *da'wah* for every Muslim to practice in achieving the right path in life (Nurhidayat, 2012). In this sense, *da'wah* is an important act as part of worshipping Allah S.W.T as well as to directly invite or to show the good behavior and character of Islam as had been outline in Quran and Sunnah (Abdurrahman, 2010; Said, 2012). In other words, *da'wah* is an important form of communication tool to convey message of Islam to society. According to scholar, *da'wah* can be conducted using informal or formal kind of approach through various medium such as ritual, event, displays and artistic representation like architectural built form (Ismail, 2008). Hence for the benefit of this study, the focus of *da'wah* is through mosque architectural form as a medium to convey the message of Islam to the

masses. This is because, architecture is a kind of social product or 'sign' which is well known by many scholars as a medium of communication that able to convey messages involving the social, political and cultural ideology, as well as one's religious belief through the design elements of built form and space (Moustafa, 1988; Gottdiener, 2003; Gawlikowska, 2013). Since this paper focuses on mosque as a place for *da'wah* next section will elucidate this matter in depth followed by the historical documentation on mosque development as *da'wah* center in Malaysia during pre and post-independence era including factors of design influence as well as the representation of architectural style and design form.

## 1.2 The role and function of mosque as a 'sign' and place for *da'wah*

Mosque as architectural built form potentially acts as a symbol which can communicate with its surroundings and users. Study on mosque as form of 'sign' to symbolize Islamic faith and as message of *da'wah* had been widely conducted by many past scholars (Ardalan, 1980; Joseph, 1981; Grabar, 1983; Cook, 1985; Moustafa, 1988; Koehler, 2002; Goodarzi, 2014; Ismail, 2008; Creswell, 1960; Burckhardt, 1976; Holod & Khan, 1997; Abdul Halim, 2004). According to these scholars, each element of the mosque like the minarets, dome, *minbar* (the direction of Mecca), *mihrab*, *Sahn*, *Sakka*, the *wudu'*, and the use of geometric elements can act as a code when translated and provide message of Islam to society in various ways. This is because mosque provides specific dual message for the benefit of society (Moustafa, 1988). Firstly, it may portray current values and identity of Islam and Muslims status in society. Secondly, may become a symbol of Islamic faith and religion. In other words, mosque may become a sign of Islamic iconography and theology (Cook, 1985; Tajuddin, 2008; Longhurst, 2012; Murray, 2014). In this regard, mosque is commonly utilized as a place or center for *da'wah* and this prevails since the days of the prophet Muhamad till present context.

The concept of *da'wah* was firstly introduced by the prophet Muhamad whom spread the message of Islam in his house which later becomes a mosque or known as the prophet mosque to conduct the *da'wah* activity. The functional existence of this prophet mosque then becomes a model to all mosque throughout the centuries till the present context to apply the same concept (Longhurst, 2012). In relation to this, the element of mosque are designed in various style and form of representation to symbolically convey the message of Islam and as landmark to its follower (Ismail, A.S., 2010). Such example, is seen from the placement of the *qiblat* wall which symbolizes the concept of tawhid or means to make or to conceive as or hold to be one towards Allah. Hence, it is an obligatory for all mosque design to be located facing to the *Qaabah* in Mecca. By performing prayer to the only one direction it promotes the feel of brotherhood among all Muslims.

As supported by Spahic (2012) 'Islam with its unique *tawhidic*' (the unity of God) worldview champions - that Muslims are brothers to each other and their similitude is like a wall whose bricks enforce and rely on each other. They are like a solid cemented structure held together in unity and strength, each part contributing strength in its own way, and the whole held together not like a mass, but like a living organism.' Similar situation also occurs in the Malaysian context in which the values of *da'wah* are embedded in mosque design to symbolically teach Muslims on the importance of Islamic religion. To understand this matter, the next section will explain the methodology used to analyze the *da'wah* mosque as case study followed by the discussion on the findings. The findings will describe in depth the evolution of mosque in Malaysia as

symbol of *da'wah* in which the mosque design built form convey the message of Islamic faith to the locals from past till present context.

## 2. Methodology

In conducting this study, *interpretivism* as research paradigm is adopted since this study requires hermeneutic method to analyze the architecture of *da'wah* mosque to reveal the possible factors that influence its design form and space. Hermeneutic is chosen because it holds beliefs that view of reality can account for all the phenomena of life. This approach is vital as it will provide a deeper understanding of the study. Hermeneutic is the theory of text interpretation that includes written, verbal, and nonverbal communication. The meaning of text in this context refers to material built form.

To analyze the factors that influence the design of material built form, hermeneutics is used to reveal the meaning embedded in the mosque built form in Malaysia as well as written documentation like historical and archival text that relates to the mosque background. Nonetheless, for this study, philosophical hermeneutics phenomenology which refers primarily to the theory of knowledge initiated by Heidegger is adapted (Sebastian & Cecez, 2010). This is because Heidegger Hermeneutic circle theory proposed that to understand the meaning of the text in depth the researcher must involve and see for oneself to reveal the hidden meaning in detail. In this sense, interpretation of knowledge from written text is conducted in a cyclic manner which involves a series of phases (McAuley, 2006). Firstly, from basic naive understanding on the subject matter from textual reading is done. Then move on to the second phase of understanding which is coding the process and finally subdivide the subject matter into themes also sub-themes before re-summarizing it in a holistic manner.

This theory is beneficial for this study because it will help the researcher to understand the ideology and the intention of the patron and contextual factors like social and political culture during the design process of the mosque as documented in design reports as well as reveal the final design of the mosque (Ismail, 2008). Findings from this textual documentation will reveal the hidden reason behind the mosque design in portraying the message of Islam through the principles of *da'wah*. To achieve this, the paper utilized multiple case study as research strategy to gain information for the study (Yin, 2003). The multiple mosques as case studies were chosen based on prominent eras as segregated by changing regimes and political climate in Malaysia dating back from the 15th century till present era. In order to find out the influence of *da'wah* movement and the design of mosque in Malaysia, the mosque development will be divided into era before independence and after independence.

These case studies are analyzed based on the indicators that could determine the architectural style and its influence. To conduct the data collection method, direct observation and documentation referencing will be adopted. To analyze the gathered information, the data will be analyzed using the open coding technique which involves the open reading of the documents. This is important to understand and identify the general ideas, thoughts and meanings contained within the documents. The second step involves the axial coding process, where detailed line-by-line analysis for each paragraph of the document is conducted. Through this process, questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data. This process is vital because it will help to generate a variety of concepts and sub-concepts in terms of their properties (characteristics or attributes of a concept) and dimensions (location of a property along a continuum or range). This process is

done by breaking down the data into separate parts, examining and comparing for similarities and differences and the findings then are gathered according to the different eras of development. Using the above methods, the finding of the mosque as centre of da'wah in Malaysia will be discussed in the following section according to different phases of evolution.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The emergence of Islam in Malaysia begins as early as in the 12th century introduced by traders arriving from Arabia, China and India (Van Luer, 1955; Fatimi, 1983). The religion was then adopted peacefully by the coastal trading ports people of Malaysia, absorbing rather than conquering existing beliefs. By the 15th and 16th centuries Islam becomes the majority faith of the Malay people. The Islamic faith was then later upheld in the Malaysian constitution in which it becomes the "religion of the Federation" to symbolize its importance to Malaysian society during the post-independence period. The Islamic religion hence becomes well ingrained in the Malay life and that Islamic rituals are also practiced as Malay culture. Muslim and Malays are also interchangeable in many daily contexts. In conjunction with the spread of Islamic belief in the country, mosques were also constructed as a place for prayer, meditation, religious instruction, political discussion, and a school. And anywhere Islam took hold in the country, mosques were established, and basic religious and educational instruction began. Once established, mosques in Malaysia were developed into well-known places of learning, teaching and for conducting da'wah.

#### 3.1 Mosque development during the pre and post-independence era as symbol and center for da'wah

Mosque development in Malaysia during the pre-independence era can be divided into two main phases which are during the Malacca Sultanate era, followed by the period of colonialization involving the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. The development of da'wah mosque then evolve further during the post-independence era. Holistically all of these eras showcases the evolution of the mosque as da'wah and religious learning center serving the needs of the local community.

#### 3.2 Era of the Malay sultanate, Portuguese and Dutch subjugation (12th to 17th century)

According to scholars, the wide spread of Islamic faith in the Malay Peninsula occurred due to the role of the Malay aristocrats whom converted to Islam and then promote the Islamic religion to the masses. It was well accepted by many historian that Sultan Mudzafar Shah I (12th century) of Kedah (Hindu name Phra Ong Mahawangsa), was the first ruler to be known to convert to Islam after being introduced to it by Indian traders who themselves were recent converts. Nevertheless, many historians agreed that Islam became widespread in the region due to the conversion of Parameswara to Islamic faith after marrying a princess from Pasai, of present-day Indonesia (Abd Aziz, 2007). This Hindu prince whom is the first Sultan of Melaka had established the Sultanate of Melaka in the 15th century CE. During its heyday in the 15th century CE, Melaka became a renowned hub of Islamic studies. Islam continued to flourish in the peninsula during the 15th and the 16th century CE, which greatly influenced the Malay lifestyle and culture as can be seen until today. Nevertheless, the earliest evidence of the arrival of Islam in Malaysia was discovered in Terengganu, in the form of an ancient inscribed stone locally referred to as 'Batu Bersurat'. Dated 1303 CE, the stone tablet with Jawi (Romanised Arabic) script on it stands as proof that Islam had arrived in the east coast region of the

peninsula long before Parameswara embraced Islam (Abd Halim, 2004). During the reign of Malay sultanates, mosques were built mainly in the vicinity of the palaces to teach Islam to the populace and at times too, the sultanate palaces become center of Islamic teaching and learning (Taib & A. Aziz, 2000; Syaimak et al., 2014). Apart from this, there are also mosques built within the communal settings. Mosques built in the early days were modest in scale without dominant aesthetic character (Surat et. al., 2011; Shukri et. al., 2014). During the early arrival of Islam in Malaysia, the mosque architecture within the community context are simple, does not have a clear features as what can be seen in the mosques of Middle Eastern. Many mosques of the traditional architectural style were built to hold prayers and other activities associated with the teachings and dissemination of Islam. This include conducting da'wah activities to preach Islam to the populace.

The architectural style and building materials of the mosques built during the 12th to 17th centuries were similar to that of the traditional Malay houses. According to Ahmad (1999), there are two types of architectural styles under the vernacular mosques category, namely the traditional and regional influences, differentiate by the design of the roof. The traditional mosques usually reflect the strong influences of the Malay houses, way of life and environment. The roof generally a long shape gable roof. Conversely seen in vernacular mosques with regional influence which can be distinguished by their two or three-tiered roofs with decorative roof ridges and clay tiles. The regional influence mosques in Malaysia are similar with the old mosques built in many parts of Indonesia. The architectural style of traditional mosque reflects most to the environment which can be seen through the building construction (Ahmad, 1999). Some of building features which were built in response to the warm and humid climatic conditions are pitched roofs to enable rain water to run off quickly and many openings including louvered windows, fanlights and carving panels to allow natural cross ventilation of air. Another design features is built on stilts to raise the mosques above ground level to avoid floods and consequently a purpose for ventilation comfort and safety precaution are in response to the environment (Nasir and Tea, 1997; Rasdi, 2004). Although there are many mosques built during the 12th to 17th century, nevertheless there is little prominent mosque structures standing due to natural dilapidation as well as torn down during the Portuguese and Dutch occupation to be replaced by stone walled church and fortresses. This is because the basic politics brought by the Portuguese and Dutch restrict other religions except Christian to be



Figure 1: Kampung Laut Mosque (Source: Nakula, 1985)

openly professed (Pintado, 1976). Thus, there is no evidence of additional mosques being built during the Portuguese and Dutch occupation, as they seemed to be hostile towards the Muslims and Malay inhabitants. However, the arrival of the migration of foreign traders and merchants to Malacca under the Dutch rule also changed the local architectural scene in the Peninsula during this period. The Dutch also imported vast numbers of Chinese workers to Malacca from Batavia (now known as Jakarta) through the Dutch East India Company in Indonesia (Hoyt, 1996). The conversion of these rich merchants and immigrant workers to Islam sponsored the building of mosques located in rural Muslim communities. The Chinese and Indian Muslims patron introduced their native crafts skills to the dominant architectural features of the mosques (Kohl, 1984).

However, many historians agreed that the most prominent mosque that can be associated as the famous center of Islamic teaching and proselytization or *da'wah* in the Malay Archipelago is the Kampung Laut mosque built in the 16th century (Figure 1). According to Tajuddin (1999), there are three theories relating to the origin and function of this mosque. The first theory associated to Raja Iman whose intention was to build a mosque in form of *wakaf* as a center to teach locals about Islam. The second theory however was owed to the Islamic missionaries from Champa whom intended to establish a renowned Muslim center within the Malay Archipelago. The third theory related to the contribution of the two *Wali Songo* whom is *Sunang Bonang* and *Sunan Giri* whom build the mosque under the instruction of Sheikh Mohamad Saman to have a center for Islamic teaching focusing under the subject of Sufism. In brief, it is understood that, Kampung Laut mosque can be claimed as a center of learning and teaching Islam as well as a place for conducting *da'wah*.

The masjid Kampung Laut also may know as a sign to convey message of Islam to user through its design elements or in other words act as form of *da'wah*. For instance, the built form of masjid Kampung Laut is distinguished by several layers of pyramidal arrangement for its roof design, and it is understood that in some areas in Indonesia called the roof design as 'joglo roof' as reflects to its original roof design from traditional Javanese house (Nasir, 1995; Budi, 2004). The roof arranged by stacking one above the other and an ornamental features are installed on top of it, which called 'mahkota atap' (Nasir, 1995). According to scholars such design of tiered roof form in different levels are not constructed arbitrarily, but have the philosophy of science and spirituality of Islam in itself. The first roof level is denoted by the first law of worship known as 'syariat' which symbolizes the need of performing prayer whilst the second, third and fourth level of worship known as the 'hakikat', 'tarikah' and 'marifat' is distinguished by the upper tiered roof as a sign of one's level of worship in achieving divinity (Nakula, 1985). In brief, mosque in the early days functioned and portrayed the values of *da'wah* in which it is well embedded in mosque design to symbolically teach Muslims on the importance of Islamic religion.

### 3.3 Era of the British Colonialization (18th to 19th century)

The first British colony was established in the Malay Peninsula after the lease of Penang Island by the Sultan of Kedah to the British East India Company in 1786. Following the Anglo-Dutch Treaty in 1824, the British not only took control of Malacca but also helped to divide the Malay Archipelago between the British and the Dutch. Malaya, however, was designated as colonial territory (Ismail, A.S., 2008; 2010). In 1826, the British formally established the crown colony of the Straits Settlements which were comprised of Penang Island, Malacca

and Singapore (Andaya, 2001). The Straits Settlements were placed under the control of the East India Company in Calcutta, however, by 1867, the seat of administration transferred to the Colonial Office in London. The British influence and intervention over the Malay states began to accelerate further after the signing of Pangkor Treaty in 1874. By the turn of the 20th century, the colonial administrative apparatus was quickly established in the states of Pahang, Selangor, Perak, and Negeri Sembilan, to form a Federated Malay state. British residents were appointed to advise the Malay rulers in these states. For the unfederated states like Johore, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Terengganu the acceptance of British advisors came at a much later period. Even though the colonials showed different period of influence in various Malay states, in the long run the outcomes of their administration were much similar and consistent (Andaya, 2001). The colonial phase presented a gradual transformation in the local scene and traditional Malay society from the aspect of social culture, politics and religious institutions (Parkinson, 1960). These significant changes were brought upon by an increased contact with foreign cultures made possible by Muslims from other lands like the Middle East and India, and due to the intensive indoctrination of colonial ideology and administrative policy (Yegar, 1979).



Figure 2: Sultan Abu Bakar mosque (Source: Ismail, 2008)



Figure 3: Jamek Muar Mosque (Source: Ismail, 2008)

On this account, mosques were widely constructed throughout the country not only by the colonials but also by influential individuals in society and private *da'wah* groups (Ahmad 1999; Nasir, 1984). The British at first took little interest in the affairs of the Malay states and no development or construction of buildings took place. However, towards the close of the 20th century when tin mining and rubber became the main exports of the country they began to show their commitments and characterized their authority and power by constructing infrastructures and buildings. With increasing wealth at hand, the British were able to get rid of the timber buildings, as replacements, materials such as bricks, stone, cast iron and steel became the common choice in design and construction techniques (Raallah 2002; Ismail, 2010), see for examples Figures 2 and 3.

Thus, the royal mosque built by the colonials portrayed a new architectural vocabulary and distinctive aesthetics. It is architecturally different from the traditional mosques in terms of scale and proportion, form, features and building materials. According to Omer (2000:197), “the British for geo-political reasons helped building mosques that looked monumental and more like palaces than places of worship, to keep up with their reputation as colonial masters but also for the satisfaction of a local sultan”. As a result, it makes the role of the mosque as an object to portray Islam as a symbol which separated from the true Islamic way of life (M. Tajuddin R., 2005). The primary architectural features of these mosques are focused on the external façade in which many mosque built by the British using imported architecture style like the mainly reflects the Western design assimilated with regional taste designed by the British architects and engineers who were mostly transferred from outside to Malaya Public Works Department (Ismail, 2010). Such example are North Indian, European classical and European art deco architecture style. The British introduced many new building materials and technology usage like bricks, iron and cast iron (Raallah, 2002). The architecture showed the use of many decorative features, poles 'capital', 'key arches' and 'pediment' (Black Mizan & Talib Maher 2005). The plan of the mosque is also symmetrical in rectangular or square shape (Black Mizan & Talib Maher 2005). During this era function of mosque as place for *da'wah* or preaching and disseminating the Islamic knowledge lessened as many royal mosque were constructed in strategic, central locations within the proximity of royal palaces and even named after the respective sultans by the colonials (Ahmad, 1999).



Figure 4: Paloh Mosque (Source: Abdul Halim Nasir, 2004)



Figure 5: India Mosque, Kuala Lumpur. (Source: Rahman, 1998)

On this account, mosques were widely constructed throughout the country not only by the colonials but also by influential individuals in society and private *da'wah* groups using available capacity (Ahmad 1999; Nasir 1984). Nevertheless, the individual funded mosques are very basic in shape using wood and concrete (Ismail, A.S., 2008). These type of mosque are located in rural areas to cater for locals and villagers. The type of mosque they produced typically portrayed the traditional typology outlook and is smaller in scale compared to the royal mosque (Rahman, 1998).

It is vernacular in design using natural existing material. The planning of mosque is functional which emphasis on maximizing the praying area with separate wudhu' for hygiene purposes. The mosque also has large verandah area surrounding the main prayer hall to hold any extended activities. An example is the Paloh Mosque in Ipoh (Figure 4) which was patronized by 'orang besar Perak' – Datuk Seri Adika, Muhammad bin Mohd Taib and Tuan Haji Kasim Banjar in 1912 (Rahman 1998; Ismail, A.S., 2010). The surge of wealthy Indian and Chinese Muslim traders along with the mass migration of laborers and coolies from China and southern India brought in by the British also introduced their architectural and cultural identity into the local scene. Hence, in order to exhibit their position and to gain recognition among the local inhabitants these Chinese and Indian–Muslims also constructed mosques during this period (Ismail, 2010). For instance, the Indian Muslims constructed a mosque in Muslim settlements made of brick resembling the Northern Indian design style (Figure 5). Therefore, this kind of mosque design was widespread throughout the country in major cities like Penang, Taiping and Kuala Lumpur. An example is the Indian Mosque located in Kuala Lumpur (Yeang 1992; Ismail, 2010). The mosque built by influential locals and migrated patrons however differ from the royal mosque in which most of the mosques actively become center of Islamic teaching and learning as well as a place for the propagation of Islamic faith or *da'wah* due to its strategic location and placement within the proximity of the local communal residential areas (Ismail, 2010).

### 3.4 Era of post-independence period (1957-till present)

After achieving independence from the British on the 31st of August 1957, the new government under Tunku Abdul Rahman wasted no time in planning to develop and promote Malaysia as a newly independent country. To achieve this, local architects were asked to design public

buildings including state mosques that portray national identity which can characterize the local culture and show that Islam is the religion of the state (Vlatseas, 1990; Yeang, 1992; Ismail, 2010). Many mosque during this era which are funded by the government showed great change since they are built to symbolize the nation and state. State mosques were built throughout the country during this post-independence period. These state mosques express modern technology and outstanding features, such as large scale dome and tall size minarets, to ensure that it can become a landmark, able to symbolize and project the signature of Islamic religion to the population (Ismail, 2008). Most of the government funded state mosques displayed significant design characteristic that featured modern design principles, structural expression, and the touch of Malayan traditional architectural characteristics with the mix of Islamic elements (Ismail, 2010), see Figure 6. Ahmad (1999) claims that this was not only due to the interest of local architects who became influenced in this theme, but also because of the ruling government who showed increased interest towards modernization, ‘malaynization’ and the need to propagate the kind of progressive Islamic religion in the country. In relation to this, the function of state mosque changes with less *emphasization* towards the role of *da’wah*. Many state mosques preferred to function as place of prayer and to conduct ritual activities -in which only treated as house of god. In other words, mosque does not much prefer to stress on functionality and practicality, but portrays much preferences towards significant decorative embellishments and elements using latest modern technology to symbolize nation’s identity as an established Islamic state. Such example is the Putra mosque. The way of Islam propagated by the country leader’s whom secularist modernizers of the nation state are however, create opposing view on Islam in the country’s scene. This divergence in Islamic ideology and belief is presented by the opposition Islamic group involving clerical revivalists and fundamentalists on how Islam is positioned in the Malaysian society (Ismail, A.S., 2010). These differences of Islamic views thus resulted in ongoing ideological clashes since independence until the present-day context as each party deemed to uphold their own practice of universalistic Islamic values as the perfect reference and belief system for the local society particularly for the Malay Muslims.

As a result, the post-independence era saw the rise of many Islamic movement throughout the country dominated by political base Islamic group like PAS as well as religious base Islamic group such as



Figure 6: Putrajaya Mosque (Source: Ismail, 2009)



Figure 7: Rusila Mosque (Source: Meor, 2000)



Figure 8: Seri Petaling Mosque (Source: Nurul, 2014)

*Tabligh, Ikram and Darul Arqam*. Unlike the leaders of the ruling government, who choose to utilize Islam for legitimizing the country’s development, the opposition Islamic group preferred to restructure the more mundane, that is, aspects of everyday life and behavior as part of their Islamic practice (Ismail, 2010). They spread their ideas of Islam through the *da’wah* movement and public lectures conducted throughout the nation in modestly designed mosques (Ismail, 2010). Prominent examples are the *Rusila Mosque* in Terengganu (Figure 7), *Nik Aziz Mosque* located in Kelantan and the *Tabligh Mosque* in Seri Petaling, Kuala Lumpur (Figure 8). The mosques built by this opposition Islamic group are not treated as monumental structures adorned with elaborate aesthetics designed to be admired from far but portray a mosque design that adopts quintessential Muslim symbols such as a dome on top of simple gable roof made of clay tiles and minaret for the purpose of offering an ‘Islamic’ image. These mosques portray an open planning concept, with multiple access and no boundary walls. These places of worship are sited in the vicinity of housing areas equipped with dormitories for travelers, library and shops in their compound (Ismail, A.S., 2010). From this, it can be viewed that this Islamic group did not attempt to monumentalize the place of prayer or to utilize the mosque as an object to symbolize the degree of their legitimacy and authority in society, but instead, consider the mosque as a place for fulfilling the eternal needs of Muslim individual and community (Sulaiman, 2001; Rasdi, 2003). In this case, the building design as a ‘sign’ reflects their



Figure 9: Chinese Mosque, Ipoh, Perak (Source: Tee, 2014)



Figure 10: Chinese Mosque, Melaka: (Source: masjid.melaka.gov.my/)

Islamic philosophy that emphasis on mundane devotional experience that emphasis on the concept of da'wah rather than material development (Ismail, A.S., 2010).

In addition to that there are also mosque built by individual and influential patron in society like the Chinese Muslim converts known as MACMA (Malaysian Chinese Muslim association). Their mosque also has specific purpose as a place to teach and learn the Islamic religion as well as *da'wah* center to attract non-Muslim to profess the Islamic religion. The mosque is also design with elements to convey the message of Islam to user namely the Chinese race. For instance, the mosque portray mixture of middle eastern style with taste of Chinese architectural elements like the usage of pagoda roof tipped with geometrical Chinese decoration and bright Coors as symbol of prosperity (Figures 9 and 10). It aims to bring together the Malaysian Chinese people to profess Islam since there is always misconception that Islam was only for Arabs and Malays in the local context (Tee, 2013). The period of post-independence Malaysia hence portray that the role of *da'wah* is prominently practiced in many of the local mosque. All in all the post-independence era showcases various approach of mosque design as a 'sign' influenced by social and political atmosphere that reflects each individual group Islamic philosophy which showed emphasis and non *emphasization* on mundane devotional experience involving the accentuation on the concept of *da'wah* rather than material development or the reversionary (Ismail, 2010), Diagram 1.

#### 4. Conclusion

The findings above demonstrate that the evolution of *da'wah* mosque in Malaysia have been utilized by its patron as an ideological space for the propagation of Islamist belief to convey the message of Islam to society. Although the construction of the *da'wah* mosque may be seen as an extension of the patron's manipulation in which the mosque's physical attributes (scale, setting, access, spatial organization, façade treatment and structural arrangement) provide a way of viewing the representation of the patron Islamic belief and ideologies, nonetheless many of the *da'wah* mosque are designed based on the concept of community in which these mosques are situated in high density areas and integrated into the communities they were intended to serve. They are also portrayed in moderate scale with unlavish treatment of built form, both in the exterior and interior. Both of these mosques also present unrestricted flow of movement within its spatial organization due to the existence of multiple entry points, nodes and connections of space segments which allows high social interaction to occur within its spatial

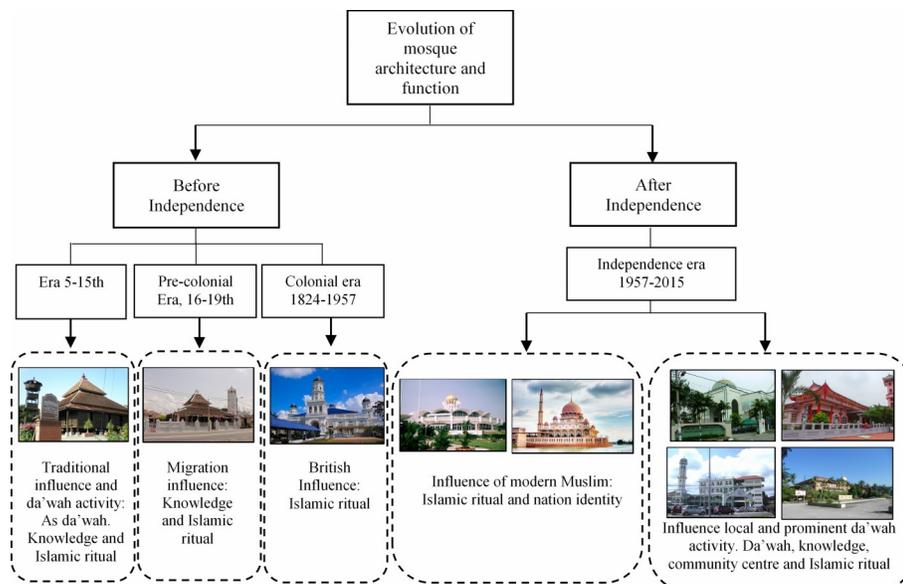


Diagram 1: Evolution of main function of mosque from pre-independence up to post-modern.

layout. As a result, these *da'wah* mosques form a part of community center which caters for most of the social and Muslim family needs – as a place of worship, space for religious education, as well as a venue for other Muslim activities in the Malaysian context.

Therefore it can be concluded, mosques after independence chipped by category and ownership of the mosque. It is registered under the state government to control the activities of the mosque to be fixed on the basis of religion and avoid the heretical beliefs and distortions. The result of a significant change for the sake of change, especially after the occupation of the functions and role of the mosque narrowed. As stated by Ozaloglu & Gurel (2011) changes in space and architecture of the mosque due to changes in the social and political atmosphere. Because of the major mosques obtain special funds of the government, the effect of making it a model of the mosque as the identity of Malaysia as an Islamic state looks significantly as a study conducted by Ismail (2008). However, there are still a small number of mosques built mainly by a missionary organization that seeks to enliven the role of the mosque as the mosque at the time of the prophet. Model of the mosque that the emergence of the missionary organization as a precursor to the emergence of a new model of the mosque. It was designated as a mosque *da'wah* center. *Da'wah* mosque serves as a mosque which is used not only for prayers but encompasses any missionary activity and its construction as a missionary movement.

Mosques that is built for general purposes and has a specific purpose and fulfilled religious and management activities at the mosque itself shows the successful inauguration in boosting their activity. The function and use of this mosque is seen in line with the demands of the use of the mosque as in the days of the Prophet Muhammad and the Caliph Al-Rasyidin. It is not concerned with the architecture but the architecture style established itself by developing its space.

Finally, the *da'wah* mosque came under growing due to social factors in society that looked like to propagate Islam. They want to make the mosque as a center for the dissemination and Islamic Studies and that's is why the mosque also became a symbol of the ideology of Islam to educate people about Islam

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