



The Relationship between Philanthropic Attitude and Economic Jihad in the Muslim Community

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ABSTRACT - Philanthropic behavior refers to the act of being generous, kind, and helpful to fellow human beings. Due to the increasingly challenging economic development in today's technological era, people have to find ways to improve the strategy of empowering the economic jihad in society, especially the Muslim society. This study aims to examine the relationship between philanthropic attitude towards economic jihad and the strategy of empowering economic jihad in the context of the development of the Muslim community. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the society's philanthropic attitude, in particular the Muslim society, and their knowledge in enhancing the economic strategy in Malaysia. The respondents of this study consist of 500 working people (216 males and 284 females) in Klang valley while the research instrument used is a questionnaire that consists of 37 question items. The period of the study was within 6 to 12 months. The results of this study were presented as a descriptive data analysis. The findings as a whole show that respondents' perceptions regarding philanthropic phenomena in Malaysia are at a high level. Philanthropic attitude is closely related to the Islamic economy, and with this attitude, the Muslim community can compete with other races in enhancing the economy and advance along with other Asian countries. At the end of the study, several suggestions have been forwarded to enhance the level of knowledge and understanding amongst students and communities regarding philanthropy. This noble attitude needs to be instilled and nurtured in every human being, and hence, should be fostered from an early age so that the concept can be fully understood by future generations.

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INTRODUCTION

Economic jihad demands that entrepreneurs and businessmen to be courageous and persistent in order to overcome all obstacles and barriers, including failure and loss in business, with the highest morale possible. Economic jihad also requires all business ventures to be treated as *ibadah*; enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong as well as avoiding greedy practices (Hashim, 2016). Islamic philanthropy is also known as the desire to help others due to love and religious obligations (Hasbani et al., 2017). In Islam, there are five aspects of Islamic philanthropy namely *zakat*, *charity*, *infaq*, *waqf*, and gifts (Hasbani, 2019).

The definition of Jihad in business should be viewed in the concept of '*Jihad Alakbar*' which demand Muslim entrepreneur to contain and control their desire especially the desire in pursuing personal gain and wealth which cause them to be greedy; among the negative influences. In support of the above contestation, the concept of Jihad has been gradually adopted to convey positive virtues such as self-control and participation in charity and philanthropy in the field of business (Kedah et al., 2015).

The five aspects are included in the Islamic philanthropy whereby the concern for the welfare and progress of the human beings is usually expressed through the contribution of money, property, or work done for the needy, as well as institutional and hospital endowments contribution, and other deeds for social welfare. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the impact of philanthropic attitude on economic *jihad* and the strategy of empowering economic *jihad* in the context of Islamic community development.

The conceptual framework of this study focuses on the role of philanthropy according to Islam in the Muslim community especially in the Klang Valley. The conceptual framework of this study provides an overview of the relationship between these variables as well as the demographic factors that influence the relationship. The primary sources for this study are the Quran and Hadith. While secondary sources are journals, theses, dissertations, books and conference papers.

Definition of Philanthropy and Economic Jihad

In general, the word philanthropy is derived from the two Greek syllables. First, *Philos* which means love or affection. Second, *Anthropos* which means humanity. The combined two syllables bring the meaning of love or compassion to mankind. In other words, philanthropy is a concept that is closely linked to the elements of kindness, love, compassion, generosity, and love for humanity. It is this feeling of love and compassion that motivates a person to contribute his or her property, be it in the form of money, time, energy, and so on to help others. However, this idea has evolved over time, and today's philanthropic practices do not have to be associated with a love for the philanthropic activities' beneficiaries (Muhtada, 2014). In everyday practice, this philanthropy can be interpreted as a sense of generosity. Whereas people who are involved in the philanthropic practice or those who do good by helping others are called 'philanthropists' (Abdul Hasbi, 2018).

Islamic philanthropy is deeply rooted in Islam. It is a duty and obligation of every Muslim to help fellow believers that need financial support (Almarri & Meewella, 2015). Perhaps one might argue that today's concept and understanding of philanthropy is western-oriented, but that does not mean Islam does not have its own "philanthropic" concept. Othman (2017) defines philanthropy according to Islam as generosity. Doing good deeds to the environment such as feeding the animals and watering the crops are also considered as being generous in the context of Islamic philanthropy. Likewise, every good practice such as working, visiting the sick, the relationship between husband and wife, and enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, if done for the sake of Allah are all within the scope of Islamic charity (Zabudin et al., 2018).

Philanthropy can be characterized as the voluntary efforts of improving the well being of people. In other words, philanthropy is a personal act done for the benefit of the public (Payton, 1988); more precisely, it is referred to as contributions, in any form, that are voluntarily given to benefit the public (Schuyt et al., 2013). There are two types of Islamic philanthropic measuring

instruments, obligatory and voluntary. Obligatory philanthropy is comprised of *zakat* while voluntary generosity is inclusive of all things contributed by an individual that can benefit other people such as charity and others. In addition, in the Holy Qur'an Allah has revealed some terms that refer to philanthropic behavior. It is expressed in various terms. The terms used are *infaq*, charity, welfare, sacrifice, mercy, *takaful*, *jihad*, and *taawun* (Hasan, 2013).

As mentioned in surah of the Qur'an that indicate the order of being philanthropic as in *Surah al-Taubah* verse 103, which means:

"Take (O Muhammad) from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase (zakat), and invoke (Allah's blessings) upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing."

The concept of philanthropy refers specifically to the generosity and willingness to help those in distress. This attitude must be in the heart of every human being. Being generous can be attributed to philanthropy or other forms of generosity that are emanated from the feelings or hearts of man himself. A philanthropic attitude is an exemplary act during the era of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W where many friends were categorized as philanthropists as they were willing to devote their wealth and property to uphold Islam. Even the Westerners emphasize generosity and consider it as a noble act to be practiced (Radin, 2019).

According to Abdullah (2005), the word *jihad* comes from the Arabic word '*jihadun*'. The basic word is '*jahada*' which means to work hard or earnestly. From this word *jihad*, arises several other words namely '*ajhada*' which means to burden more than one's strength and *ijtihad* which means to work diligently. In general, the law of economic *jihad* is the same as the law of *jihad* itself. It is an obligation determined by the Islamic law and is a requirement demanded by faith (*aqidah*).

The definition of economic *jihad* means mobilizing all energy and strength to achieve a desired goal; whether good or bad; in protecting injustice and in achieving the ultimate goal that is all human activities from an economic perspective is to achieve success in this world and the hereafter (Johari et al., 2008). In this study it can be concluded that this economic *jihad* is *jihad* in providing goods and necessities of life based on halal resources.

Indeed, Islam is a very fair religion and emphasizes the prosperity and well-being of the Ummah. These noble values should be instilled in every person from childhood through education in families and schools. One of the efforts in inculcating Islamic philanthropic value at school is to add the subject of Islamic philanthropy into one of the curricula taught. If every individual succeeds to embed the value contained and applies it in everyday life, it will result in a peaceful, secure, and prosperous society. Many pearls of wisdom can be taken from the concept of philanthropy or Islamic philanthropy, among which are the key to increasing the faith in God, cultivating a high sense of humanitarianism, eliminating greed and materialism, and developing the property owned. For recipients, Islamic philanthropy works to help them build a better and more prosperous life that can better fulfill their needs, avoid the dangers of disbelief, and thus eliminate disbelief and envy.

The true understanding of philanthropic and economic *jihad* would not only empower the community, but it would also be an empowerment of industry and Islamic banking institution at large.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Philanthropy can be defined as the noble work of individuals or groups of people regardless of the contribution it makes to others or the community. Other words that can also be associated with philanthropy are good, fun, helpful, charitable, voluntary, and helpful. Philanthropy can also be illustrated as the contribution made by individuals or groups of people in terms of time, money, labor, ideas, and other matters with sincerity, without expecting any rewards from the recipient (Abdul Hasbi, 2018).

A study done by Cogswell (2002) concluded that philanthropy in Malaysia is oriented to ethnicity aiming at religious or cultural preservation funds and social challenges symptoms and victims. Philanthropy, it seems, was supported by political and economic power and it was proposed that transparency be heightened to increase the level of contribution (Cogswell, 2002).

Moreover, the situation today has led to the establishment of an Islamic charitable organization. Hasan et al. (2018) explain that in the form of donations and financial contributions held by organizations, such as Islamic Relief, Aman Palestine, I Reach Humanitarian, were known as voluntary contributions in kind. The purpose of this donation is to improve the welfare of the community, where no corresponding reward is given to the donor. Also, organizations are solely responsible for the money used for donations. Therefore, understanding donors' attitudes and perceptions is important for organizations to improve philanthropic behavior exhibited by the public.

Besides, the challenge facing Malaysia is that it has a rapidly growing economy but coupled with a visible gap between the rich and the poor. The rich get richer while the poor become poorer. They become destitute because of the pressure and the higher cost of living. Based on the research done by economic experts, the economic system is not fair, whereby the system provides an easy path for the children of the rich to get richer, and this will further suppress the poor. For all this to happen the western capitalist system is to be blamed (Abdul Hasbi, 2018).

Social entrepreneurship is generally defined as an entrepreneurial activity with a social purpose and has become an important economic phenomenon globally (Santos, 2012). Social entrepreneurship is also a step towards integrating commercial success with social success from industries that use their economic benefits, for social or community development. Entrepreneurship is one of the factors for economic development (Martínez-Fierro et al., 2016). Social entrepreneurship is one of the economic branches that can help to reduce poverty and improve the country's economic status. Entrepreneurship has become a global phenomenon that affects society by adopting innovative approaches to solving social problems. Given the current economic conditions, social entrepreneurship activities are crucial to reducing social problems especially in developing countries such as Malaysia (Abd Muin et al., 2015). The nature of social entrepreneurship is a collaborative activity such as philanthropic activities, for example, almsgiving, charity, welfare, and having a sense of responsibility to the problems facing the low and middle-class society (Salarzahi et al., 2010). The different forms of Islamic Philanthropy can be expected to have connection to the social entrepreneurship. The study by Almarri and Meewella (2015) focused on the socio-economic institutions, and Zakat, in the Gulf Cooperative civil (GCC) countries, namely the United Arab Emirates, Qatar n Kuwait and aims to contrast its historical n modern role, where the former is the form of Philanthropy but the latter has potential linkage to social entrepreneurship.

The entire economic scheme develops under the guiding principles of Shariah (Islamic Law), in which it envisages an internally balanced system of economy that neither accept capitalism nor communalism in totality. Nevertheless, the economic structure adopted by the contemporary Muslim society in general are incoherent with Islamic philosophy of Islam. They are practically disconnected from the mechanic and efficiency of Islam's equity instrument and philanthropic institutions. Factors such as non-inclusive economy, exploitation as a market principle, and concentration of wealth in few pockets have completely transformed Muslim economic setting into "capitalist" ones. After conducting critical research vis-a-vis this paradigm shift in the Muslim world, highbrow Muslim intellectuals have reached to this point alongside with the interest -based means of financial intermediation. Non-functionality of philanthropic institution such as *Zakat* and *Baitumal* has practically divided the society into privileged and deprived classes.

Therefore, it cannot be denied that in economic development the issue of human welfare should be of great concern. The conventional economists view that education, health, and poverty eradication as investments towards the provision of human capital for economic development is equally supported by Islamic economists (Iqbal, 1991). Moreover, Islamic economists think that

economic development requires a balance in materials and non-materials and should consider the aspects of achieving worldly as well as heavenly (*ukhrawi*) development. Therefore, Islam does not forbid human beings to seek economic development in the form of material but at the same time, they need to take into account the development to achieve the great objective of Shariah (*maqasid al-syariah*) (Chapra, 1993).

Therefore, the government and communities, including non-governmental organizations, (NGOs) should also play their roles to ensure that the planning will produce a fruitful outcome. In carrying out economic activities, we must always ensure that the implementation is following the scope outlined by the Shariah. When an implementation of the economic *jihad* is pledged for the sake of Allah S.W.T. and His Messenger solely, there is no doubt that the implementation of economic *jihad* is made with wisdom and has good moral value so that it is not misinterpreted by certain parties.

Inequality is a vital issue in poverty, and it seems that the capitalistic economic system is incapable of becoming a solution. Islamic economics, on the other hand, has an advantage over the capitalistic system. While still maintaining the basic economic concepts, the system is perfected with these two features, the elimination of usury and promoting almsgiving (philanthropy) through *zakat*. The result is undoubtedly a more equitable distribution of income and wealth. This is the strength of the Islamic economic system (Setiyowati, 2019).

According to al-Qardhawi (2004), poverty, due to a weak source of income, is one of the causes of the emergence of economic problems. In defining poverty, the economists categorize it into two major aspects, namely the primary and secondary aspects. The primary aspect comprises apparent poverty due to poor assets, socio-political organizations, and education and skills. While poverty of social networks, sources of finance and information are considered as the secondary aspect of poverty (Suleri & Cavagnaro 2016).

Nevertheless, assuring others about the advantage of the Islamic-based system is no easy task and to be knowledgeable in both the western and Islamic economic systems becomes a great challenge to Muslim entrepreneurs (Azimi & Yaacob, 2012). A study conducted by Zulkarnain et al. (2017) revealed that entrepreneurship is regarded as a religious responsibility (*Fardhu Kifayah*) and not just a way to enrich oneself. Through entrepreneurship, business *jihad* is implemented whereby the business is established and run based on Islamic principles, generating a business network among the entrepreneurs and creating job opportunities for the society.

Economic *jihad* requires brave and diligent entrepreneurs and businessmen to work hard to overcome all obstacles, including failures and failures in business with the highest fighting spirit without recognizing defeat. Economic *jihad* also requires all business endeavors to be conducted by fulfilling the worship of the fund of pious deeds, *amar makruf nahi mungkar*, in addition to avoid greed and greedy practices (Hashim, 2018).

Although Malaysia is an advanced Islamic state, the Malay and Muslim communities, in general, are still lagging in terms of economy (Hashim, 2018). Economic progress in the field of business, industry, and trade is essentially controlled by non-Malays, especially the Chinese, as well as non-Malaysians (Hashim, 2016). Supporting the statement from Hashim (2013), Boulven et al. (2018) stressed that this is the time for Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia to implement the social Islamic Entrepreneurship in the current practice of the correct concept of economic *jihad* through Islamic social entrepreneurship and Islamic business entrepreneurship. To ensure a better life and further foster a philanthropic community in Malaysia, the philanthropic idea or love of this wealth should be discussed. Malaysians with compassionate attitudes should be good at judging the assistance provided and should not expect financial remuneration for their philanthropy (Zahrin et al., 2020).

This study is crucial, and it is part of a major study on the economic *jihad* in a case study in the Klang Valley that investigates the context and development of the Malaysian Islamic Society and its relationship with philanthropy (philanthropic nature) according to Islam. This study also

provides data and information as well as knowledge of the impact of philanthropy on economic *jihad* and the strategy of empowering economic *jihad*.

METHODOLOGY

Concept and Research Methods

This study is to identify the extent to which the Islamic community understands the economic *jihad* in Malaysia. The focus of the study involves identifying the understanding and application of economic *jihad* among the Muslim community, especially in the Klang Valley. Respondents of this study consist of residents around the Klang Valley, Selangor. The sampling method for this study was using a survey form that was used to measure the feedback from the aspect of society's understanding of the practice of Islamic economic *jihad*. This method involves the survey method, one of the best methods to answer the research questions.

The research was conducted around the Klang Valley area. This location was chosen based on the fact that it is a rapidly developing area. Klang Valley is one of the highest populated areas in Malaysia where in terms of racial composition, Malays are the majority (50.59%). Klang Valley has more than 6 million inhabitants and is an industrial and trading center in Malaysia.

Data Collection

The data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires, answered by respondents while being supervised by two enumerators. The enumerators were given briefings and explanations on the procedures to ensure that valid information was obtained properly. The questionnaire is in Malay language and the enumerators were instructed to provide clarification on the confidentiality of the respondents' answers to make them feel relaxed as well as increase their confidence in answering the questions. A pilot study session prior to this data collection has resulted in changes and improvements to the items whereby the level of reliability of the items was also identified.

Cronbach's alpha values for all variables recorded values ranging from 0.724 to 0.924. The view from the aspect of understanding the concept of economic jihad shows a value of 0.804, the general view on economic jihad and the relevance to philanthropy is 0.881, the relevance to the application aspect of economic jihad is 0.732, the special view related to the philanthropic aspect is 0.724, the attitude from the philanthropic aspect is 0.755 and the expectation of understanding the concept of economic jihad against philanthropy is 0.885. For the whole variable shows the value is 0.924. This reliability index is high and acceptable (Konting, 1990). Moreover, the value shown exceeds 0.6 (Sekaran, 2003), therefore this show a satisfactory reliability for each variable used in this study.

Research Instrument

This study adopted a questionnaire developed by Haron et al. (2017), entitled *Economic Jihad* in relation to philanthropy in Islam. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts, firstly part A – demography of the respondents, secondly part B – understanding on the concept of economic *jihad* dan lastly part C - Attitudes of *jihad* towards economic *jihad* and philanthropy (generosity). In this study, the aspect of understanding was strongly emphasized in measuring and evaluating respondents' responses to the questionnaires. Likert scale was used to facilitate respondents to answer the questionnaires. The researcher used the scale from one to five where 1 is for Strongly Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Not sure, 4 for Agree, and 5 for Strongly Agree. Respondents were asked to choose an answer from several choices regarding their understanding of economic *jihad*.

Authenticity and Reliability

The questions asked to the respondents have been tested to ensure that the respondents are able to understand the questions and therefore can respond well. Also, the tests conducted on the questionnaire were to ensure that the questions had a high level of authenticity and reliability, which is indicated by the high-reliability index (Konting, 2004), and hence, the data obtained were undisputable. Validity and reliability play an important role not only in the measurement but in data collection methods as well (Yahaya, 2007). Since the questionnaire instrument has been modified from the original questionnaire, a pilot test was administered to test the understandability of the itemized questions to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument. Conducting the pilot study is necessary because, through it, researchers can detect and overcome the weakness of the questions and improve them to ascertain that the objective of the study is achieved (Mohd Najib, 2003).

Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using the SPSS version 20 software. In analyzing the findings of the study, descriptive statistical techniques were used to calculate the standard deviation, frequency, percentage, and mean to illustrate the data distribution obtained more clearly.

RESULTS

Respondents of the study were the public in the Klang Valley vicinity. There were 500 respondents, 56.8 percent were females, and 43.2 percent males. Majority of the respondents were between 25 to 60 years old were 6.4 percent of them belong to the 25 years old age group while 0.2 percent are 60 years old. The majority of them are married (72.6 percent) and have children (33.6 percent). Most of them have a degree (43.6 percent) and the minimum education level is either SRP (*Sijil Rendah Pelajaran*-Lower Education Certificate) or PMR (*Penilaian Menengah Rendah* – Lower Secondary Examination) (0.4 percent). Refer Table 1 below.

Table 1: Attitudes of Jihad Towards Economic Jihad and Philanthropy (Generosity)

Num	Items	Min
1	I feel peaceful after giving charity.	4.59
2	Voluntary is one of the aspects of philanthropy.	4.36
9	If I find a school that needs help, I allocate a certain amount of property, based on my ability, to help.	4.24
10	I like to give something to anyone I know, even though the price is not expensive.	3.95
11	I always engage in cooperative activities held in my housing area or village.	3.84
12	I normally give charity every day	3.28
Overall		4.18

Based on Table 1 above, the findings show that the item "I feel peaceful after giving charity" receives the highest mean (mean = 4.59) while the item "I normally give charity every day" gets the lowest mean (mean = 3.28). The overall findings show that charity is less practiced by the Islamic community involved in the study. This is because of the lack of understanding among Muslims regarding the advantages of giving charity. As a matter of fact, Allah Almighty has

promised a great reward to those who give charity, especially if it is done out of sincerity and not merely hoping for something in return (A-Baqarah: verse 245)

Table 2 show the strategy to empower economic jihad among the Muslims. The overall findings show that the strategy of empowering economic jihad is high (mean = 4.38). The mean for question item "Seminars on the importance of economic jihad and philanthropy should be held for the public and school students" is the highest (mean = 4.42). Thus, it can be deduced that the government and government agencies should be concerned and take necessary steps regarding the need to conduct seminars on economic *jihad* and how to improve the Malays economy. This matter should be given serious consideration and implemented to give exposure to the public, especially entrepreneurs and business owners, on the importance of economic *jihad*.

Table 2: Strategy to Empower Economic Jihad

Num	Item	Min
1	The mosque institution should be empowered to become the foundation of philanthropy.	4.39
2	The <i>waqf</i> institution should be empowered to become the foundation of philanthropy.	4.40
3	Welfare agencies should be promoted in order to facilitate and accelerate the acquisition of aids.	4.35
4	Seminars on the importance of economic jihad and philanthropy should be held for the public and school students.	4.42
5	Welfare agencies should be promoted in order to facilitate and accelerate the acquisition of aids.	4.35
Average responses		4.38

Meanwhile, for the item "Welfare agencies should be promoted in order to facilitate and accelerate the acquisition of aids" the mean is the lowest (mean = 4.35). This shows the lack of awareness of most respondents and the Muslim community regarding the existence of welfare bodies and volunteers in the Klang Valley.

Table 3 show that there is a significant relationship between philanthropic attitudes towards economic *jihad* and philanthropy in relation to the strategy of empowering economic *jihad*. The statistical formula obtained was $r = 0.617$ and $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). The relationship that is formed is a strong positive. The significant value shown is 0.00 which is much smaller than the specified significant level of 0.05. This means, there is a significant relationship between philanthropic attitudes towards economic *jihad* and philanthropy with regard to the strategy of empowering economic *jihad*.

Table 3: Correlations between Philanthropy and Empowering Strategy

Variable		Philanthropy	Empowering strategy
Philanthropy	Pearson Correlation	1	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
Empowering strategy	Pearson Correlation	.617**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

DISCUSSION

There are organizational bodies or associations which are established to monitor the countries that are capable of giving financial help and as well as poor countries that need help. For instance, Foundation Center, which is based in New York, was established in 1956 and today it is supported by nearly 550 foundations. Carrying the mission 'to strengthen the social sector by advancing knowledge about philanthropy', the center makes it a priority to build a global data platform for philanthropy. The data collected is analyzed and shared worldwide to empower people to understand and increase philanthropy's ability around the world. Other than that, the Foundation Center also empowers donors with the knowledge they need to be more strategic and connects them to the resources they need to thrive. Thousands of people visit the center's website every day, served by five libraries/learning centers at more than 470 locations of funds information network nationwide and around the world (Foundation Center, 2019).

To ensure consistent philanthropic efforts, these two considerations must be established: experience with organizational bodies and access to extensive cash (Johari et al., 2018). These organizations or *mutawallis* need to be attentive to potential donors and it is critical for them to create a viable strategy for a continuous and coordinated attempt to persuade Muslims to offer donations (Osman & Muhammed, 2017). One will never be able to donate extensively as philanthropists, unless they have strong economic background or at least strong economic support from the community. Thus, economic jihad is crucial.

Indeed, the attempt to strengthen this economy is a *jihad* demanded in Islam. The image and status of a nation and country are reflected through their economic level. At the same time, we need to be ready and equip ourselves by mastering various disciplines and expertise such as the field of medicine, engineering, finance, law, and so on. This effort is also part of the economic *jihad* element because it complies with the requirements of the *Maqasid Syariah* principles in the context of maintaining religion in the field of economy as well as the formation of the soul and mind of the people (Hashim, 2018).

Islam is not merely about worship such as *salat*, fasting, *dhiker*, *zakat*, and pilgrimage but also includes *Umumiah* or general aspects such as building infrastructure, facilities, and development for the welfare of the people. As Muslims, we must believe that economic development is the command of Allah S.W.T. that must be implemented.

Philanthropy can stimulate an individual to feel and experience the meaning of giving to the needy while satisfying the recipients at the same time. With such an attitude they are more conscious about being thrifty and prevent wasting. Generosity, either by force or voluntarily, seems to be a redistribution approach not only to the poor but also to the society at large. As an example, a charity in education system to help build infrastructure can make real improvements and benefit the country's development (Asuhaimi et al., 2017). Through the act of giving, the wealth gap within and among the community can be reduced or even eliminated. (Zakaria et al., 2013). Love, which is indeed the natural feeling embracing the instinct of every human being, is highly regarded in Islam. However, love in Islam should go through various distinctive levels of priority such as love to Allah S.W.T., love to the Messenger SAW, and the prophets and love among the believers. This is because in the word of Allah in surah Ar-Rum verse 21:

"And of His signs is that it created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you, affection and mercy. Indeed, in that Verily in that are signs for people who give thought."

From the Islamic perspective, Jihad, in its broader sense bears the meaning of self-discipline and endurance; aspiring for enhancement and acquisition of knowledge continuously. Thus, as noted by Seriki (2005), one who strives physically and mentally to perform certain tasks or fulfill his responsibility or spends his wealth for Allah's sake is engaged in Jihad.

In Islam, doing one's best in searching for admissible sustenance is a duty highly demanded (Azimi & Yaacob, 2012). As such, engaging in business is in fact considered as *Ibadah*, an act of devotion to Allah S.W.T. Therefore, in order to gain the pleasure of Allah Almighty, businessmen are obliged to perform their very best and spare no effort to be successful (Zulkarnain et al., 2017). Muslims are able to compete and dominate the economy in a more global form if we rise and strive to solidify our energy and minds to realize the demand to raise the dignity of the Muslim economy to a higher level. The concept of *jihad* in this economy must always be embedded in and sustained by Muslims so that the Muslim society can be on par with other races.

CONCLUSION

In relation to the pandemic COVID-19, the Muslim should rise in the economic activities together with their philanthropic attitude. More studies should be done in the philanthropic activities and economic *jihad* within the Muslim in Malaysia, and throughout the world. Ultimately, philanthropic attitudes among Malaysian society, especially the Muslim community, need to be polished so that economic development in Malaysia can be further developed and hence poverty can be eradicated. Malaysians are known for their generosity, but they need to be made aware of the existence of the welfare bodies which can help to channel their donations properly. Therefore, these agencies should be re-introduced and re-promoted more broadly so the community can easily channel their donations without any feeling of doubt. Thereupon, as a society of Malaysia, we should have a commendable philanthropic attitude, sincerely helping those who are really in need and not doing it for the sake of getting recognition, and consequently reinforcing the strategy of empowering economic *jihad* in Malaysia.

The total development of the economy cannot be separated from social development whereby the latter is considered as the catalyst to develop the economy continuously over a long period. The absence of comprehensive social development will weaken economic development. Therefore, these two dimensions of development should be managed effectively.

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