

Malaysian Muslim Knowledge and Compliance with the Rule of Distancing Prayers by One Meter During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Irwan Mohd Subri^{1*}; Hamza Abed Al-Karim Hammad²; Hasanah Abd Khafidz³; Mohd Hapiz Mahaiyadin⁴; Muhamad Firdaus Ab Rahman⁵; Arieff Salleh Rosman⁶; Aqeel Khan⁷
^{1*}International Institute of Fatwa and Halal (iFFAH) & Professor, Faculty Syariah and Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Malaysia.

^{1*}irwan@usim.edu.my

²Department of Sharia and Islamic Studies, College of Law, United Arab Emirates University.

³Research Centre for Dakwah and Leadership, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Malaysia.

⁴Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia.
⁴mohdhapiz659@uitm.edu.my

⁵Faculty Syariah and Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Malaysia.

⁶Center of Research for Fiqh Science & Technology (CFIRST), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Malaysia.

⁷School of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Malaysia.

Abstract

During the Covid-19 pandemic, this study examined the level of knowledge and compliance of Malaysian Muslims with the legal decision to distance each prayer by one meter. It is well known in Islam that praying near a congregation (jemaah) is encouraged, but Malaysia's muftis have decided to add a distance of one meter between the prayers to prevent Covid-19 from being transmitted. A questionnaire survey of 560 online respondents was conducted. The data were descriptively analysed to determine the level of knowledge and compliance with the decision. The results show that Malaysian Muslims' level of knowledge and compliance on this issue is very satisfactory.

Key-words: Knowledge, Compliance, Distance, Covid-19, Pandemic, Fatwa, Malaysia.

1. Introduction

In late December 2019, a previous unidentified coronavirus emerged from Wuhan, Republic of China, resulting in a formidable outbreak in many cities in China and expanding globally.¹ The World Health Organization (WHO) first learned of this new virus following a report of a cluster of cases of 'viral pneumonia' in Wuhan, China. The WHO later named this novel coronavirus disease COVID-19. Asita Elengoe said the new severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) epidemic outbreak posed a significant threat to public health in 2020.² Until 10th January 2021, 87,589,206 confirmed cases³, 1,906,606 confirmed deaths, and 222 countries, areas, or territories with cases were reported by the WHO.⁴

This abnormal situation has led to precautionary measures taken by all countries' governments, including Malaysia, to control the pandemic's spread. The Prime Minister of Malaysia has enforced the Movement Control Order (MCO) as a preventive measure starting on 18th March 2020 to prevent this deadly disease from spreading. The government has imposed several restrictions, such as prohibition from attending mass gatherings, including religious, social, sports, and cultural events. The government also ordered all places of worship, businesses, and institutions to stop their operations temporarily.⁵

In religious activities such as spacing 1-meter prayers in mosques or *suraus* (Islamic assembly building), the Malaysian government has also introduced several Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) through religious authorities either at the national or state level. Therefore, this article examines the level of the Malaysian Muslim community's knowledge and compliance with this SOP's decision.

¹Wu, Yi-Chi, Chen, Ching-Sung & Chan, Yu-Jiun. The Outbreak Of COVID-19: An Overview, *Journal Of The Chinese Medical Association*, Volume 83, Issue 3, (March 2020), 217.

²Asita Elengoe. COVID-19 Outbreak in Malaysia, *Osong Public Health Res Perspect*, Volume 11(3), 2020, 93.

³World Health Organization(a). What is COVID-19? <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>, 2020.

⁴World Health Organization(b). Numbers At A Glance. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>, 2020.

⁵Ain Umaira, M.S., Syafiqah, N.A.S., Thevadas, R., Noordin, N.K., Rahman, A.A., Sekawi, Z., Sultan, M.T.H, COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia: Actions taken by the Malaysian government, *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, Volume 97, 2020, 108–116. Doi: 10.1016/j.ijid.2020.05.093

2. Problem Statement

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 3rd Special *Muzakarah* Committee of the Malaysian National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs (MKI) has decided on several matters relating to worship:

- i. Islamic decision on the patient screening test for COVID-19 and treatment procedures during Ramadan;
- ii. Safe *saf* (row) position of *jemaah* (congregational) prayer during the Movement Control Order (MCO);
- iii. Directives for Eid celebration during MCO;
- iv. Muslim marriage standards in the periods of MCO and post-MCO; and
- v. Guideline on the worship during the MCO period in the month of Ramadan.⁶

This resolution was followed and explained in detail by the 14 Muftis State Department in Malaysia. The Penang State Fatwa Committee, which convened on 22nd April 2020, for example, decided as follows:

- i. At the time of the epidemic, it is permissible for congregational prayers at a distance for the *ma'mum* (followers) with the neighboring *ma'mum* if the congregational prayers are still protected from the spread of the plague.
- ii. This Islamic view is also linked to the distance of congregational prayers carried out by *imams* (the person who leads the prayer in a congregation), *bilal* (the person appointed to lead and recite the call to prayer in a mosque), and *siak* (the mosque guard) for the performance of congregational prayers in mosques, *suraus*, hospitals, and places permitted by the Malaysian Ministry of Health.
- iii. The *Saf* (rows) order is as follows:
 - a. As in the regular congregational prayers, the Imam is in front.
 - b. There is one (1) meter distance between the imam and the *makmum*, and one (1) meter distance between the *ma'mum*.⁷

⁶Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia. Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Muzakarah Khas Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Ugama Islam Malaysia (MKI) Edisi Khas Pandemik COVID-19. <http://www.islam.gov.my/berita-semasa/29-bahagian-penyelidikan/2397-mesyuarat-jawatankuasa-muzakarah-khas-majlis-kebangsaan-bagi-hal-ehwal-ugama-islam-malaysia-mki-edisi-khas-pandemik-covid-19>, 2020.

⁷Jabatan Mufti Negeri Pulau Pinang. Kenyataan Rasmi Mufti Negeri Pulau Pinang Kedudukan Saf Solat Jemaah Ketika Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP Covid-19). <http://mufti.penang.gov.my/index.php/2014-11-12-02-48-39/dasar-dan-polisi/garis-panduan/465-kedudukan-saf-solat-jemaah-ketika-perintah-kawalan-pergerakan/file>, 2020.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic tests in Malaysia, the government has taken different measures to curb this contagious disease. To date, there have been number of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) set up to make an effort a success. Taking the same responsibility and steps, the Office of the Minister in the Department of the Prime Minister (Religious Affairs) has held regular discussions with state religious authorities since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic to formulate and establish guidelines and SOPs for Mosques and Suraus for the duration of the Movement Control Order. One of these SOPs: physical distance during congregational prayers at a rate of 1 meter.

In the category of *fiqh al-nawazil*, namely new problems that occur, implementing 'social distancing' for congregational prayers to curb the spread of this infectious disease is included. Therefore, during congregational prayers in mosques and *suraus*, the stipulation of instructions to maintain physical, social distance limits the spread of infectious diseases.⁸

Mat Noor Mat Zain stated that the question arises as to whether congregational prayer is one meter between the queue with another congregation if it is legally permissible or vice versa?. For most Muslims, especially the public, this is a new normal.⁹ Therefore, it is not surprising that a few Muslims are reluctant to perform SOP congregational prayers either in the mosque or *surau*, at a distance of 1 meter between the congregation.

3. Methodology

This study is a quantitative survey. According to Denzin & Lincoln, in qualitative research design, the researcher adopts qualitative research as a qualitative inquiry process to understand a social or human problem from multiple perspectives.¹⁰ Eboh added that it also creates concepts, insights, and understanding of data patterns.¹¹ Furthermore, Lay and Khoo, and Zainudin Awang define quantitative research is an inquiry or scientific investigation to discover numerical data. Moreover, to discover, interpret, or review facts, events, behaviors, or theories, research is also defined as an active and systematic investigation process. Therefore, this qualitative research design

⁸al-Bayan Siri 6. Isu Penjarakan Fizikal Semasa Solat Berjemaah di Masjid dan Surau. Pejabat Menteri Di Jabatan Perdana Menteri (Hal Ehwal Agama). https://mira.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Al-Bayan_SIRI-6_FINAL-4_compressed.pdf, (November 2020), 5-6.

⁹Mat Noor Mat Zain. Hukum dan Kedudukan Solat Berjemaah semasa Penularan Wabak dan Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP). In Mohd Izhar Ariff Mohd Kashim, Mohd Al Adib Samuri & Nurul Ilyana Muhd Adnan. *Covid-19 Dan Islam*. Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2020.

¹⁰Denzin N. & Lincoln Y. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage Publication Inc, 2000, 1-30.

¹¹Eboh, W. Qualitative and quantitative research methods. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 88, Issue 1, (1997) 9–10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03543069>.

helps the researcher collect and analyse his data. This study uses primary and secondary data sources: survey research, documentation, and observation.

In survey research, the semi-structured approach through open-ended questioning has been widely used because it allows respondents to write their views and experiences. Online methods were used to distribute the primary sources obtained from the survey research to the knowledge and compliance with the rule of distancing prayers by one meter during the Covid-19 pandemic. This survey began on 14th December 2020 until 20th December 2020, within one week (7 days) of distribution. A total of 560 respondents answered this questionnaire. The survey is also made up of three sections. First, demographic data on the respondents' background. Secondly, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Malaysian Muslim knowledge of the law of distancing prayers by one meter. Finally, compliance during the Covid-19 pandemic with the rule of distancing prayers by one meter.

Other sources also collected the data collection method to obtain necessary information and fulfilled the research finding. Collecting the data uses documentation and observation to obtain secondary data. Following the study's objective, the documentation's data was analysed using content or document analysis from various textual documents such as articles, journals, proceedings, and books. Simultaneously, the researchers used the observation method to measure the study variables. This observation method was an alternative to gathering data and managing the method. It is also about understanding a situation or condition, obtaining direct information, and seeing physical evidence or results that can be measured by sight.

4. Literature Review

With the spread of Covid-19, there have been increasing calls for solutions to prevent their spread among human congregations, and among such congregations are the groups of worshippers in mosques, whether during the five prescribed prayers or Friday prayer, where the solution proposed is: 'prayer performance with a distance between worshippers.' To prevent communication between the viruses' worshippers, a distance of about one meter between each worshipper, thus avoiding the formation of rows, shoulder to shoulder, and contravening the recognised form of prayer. Therefore, the question arises, what is the Islamic rule of distancing the rows of worshippers from each other?

The Muslim jurists (fuqaha) agreed on the lawfulness of straightening the prayer rows,¹² where Ibn 'Abd al-Barr said: "As for straightening rows in prayer, the evidence is conveyed in

¹²Ibn al-Qattan, 'Ali bin Muhammad, *Al-Iqna' Fi Masa'il Al-Ijma'*, Cairo: Al-Faruq al-Hadithah Li al-Tiba'ah Wa al-Nahr, 2004.

multiple transmission chains, all of which are sound and anchored in the order of the Messenger of Allah to straighten the rows and the actions of the Rightly Guided Caliph." However, the Fuqaha disagreed on the legality¹³ as to whether straightening the rows is mandatory?

First opinion: the exponents of this opinion stated that it is praiseworthy to straighten the rows, but not compulsory, and the following fuqaha chose this view: Hanafis,¹⁴ Malikis,¹⁵ Shafi'is,¹⁶ and Hanbalis¹⁷. They based their views on several proofs, including: [Establish rows in prayer, one of the merits of prayer for making a row (straight)]¹⁸; and Anas reported: [Straighten your rows. A component of the perfection of prayer for the straightening of a row].¹⁹

These two prophetic traditions (hadiths) indicate that the straightening of rows is a praiseworthy Sunnah and is not compulsory; because if it were compulsory, the Prophet would not have said: [to make a row (straight) is one of the merits of prayer] because the beauty of a thing is extra to its completion, where the prayer is complete and the straightening of a row is extra beauty. The hadith did not mention that the straightening of the row is one of the pillars of prayer or one of its duties, but he said: "the merits of prayer" and that a thing's completeness is additional to its actuality.

20

As for the second view, it holds that the straightening of rows is compulsory and that distancing between the worshippers in the rows of prayer is impermissible, and that view was endorsed by some scholars of fuqaha and hadith (*muhaddithin*), namely, Ibn Hazm,²¹ Ibn Taymiyyah,²² and Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani.²³ Their views based on several proofs, including [Straighten your rows (during Salat) or Allah would create dissension among you]²⁴; where the hadith admonishes the avoidance of straightening rows "leads to Allah causing a difference between you" whereby the hearts would diverge, which is undoubtedly a warning to avoid straightening rows, and the command of the Prophet peace be upon him.²⁵

¹³Ibn 'Abd Al-Barr, Yusuf bin 'Abdullah, Al-Istidhkar, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000.

¹⁴Al-Tahtawi, Ahmad bin Muhammad. Hashiyat al-Tahtawi 'Ala Mara'iq al-Falah Sharh Nur al-Idah, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1997.

¹⁵Al-Tanukhi, Ibrahim bin 'Abd Al Samad. al-Tanbih 'Ala Mabadi' al-Tawjih, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2007.

¹⁶Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, Ahmad bin Muhammad. al-Minhaj al-Qawim, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000.

¹⁷Al-Bahuti, Mansur bin Yunus. Kashshaf al-Qina' 'An Matn al-Iqna', Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah.

¹⁸Al-Bukhari, Muhammad bin Isma'il. Sahih al-Bukhari, Damascus, Dar Ibn Kathir, 2002.

¹⁹Muslim, Muslim bin al-Hajjaj. Sahih Muslim, Riyadh, Dar Taybah, 2006.

²⁰Al-'Iraqi, 'Abd al-Rahim bin al-Husayn. Tarh Al-Tathrib Fi Sharh Al-Taqrif, Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, N.d.

²¹Ibn Hazm, 'Ali bin Ahmad. al-Muhalla Bi al-Athar, Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, N.d.

²²Al-Mirdawi, 'Ali Bin Suleyman. Al-Insaf Fi Ma'rifat al-Rajih Min al-Khilaf, Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi.

²³Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Ahmad bin 'Ali. Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1379H.

²⁴Muslim, Muslim bin al-Hajjaj. Sahih Muslim, Riyadh, Dar Taybah, 2006.

²⁵Al-'Uthaymin, Muhammad bin Salih, al-Sharh al-Mumti' 'Ala Zad al-Mustaqni', Riyadh, Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 1428H.

Besides, their views are also based on several prophetic traditions, including Anas bin Malik, who reported: [Straighten your rows. A component of the perfection of prayer for the straightening of a row].²⁶ According to Anas: [When he stood up to pray, the Messenger of Allah turned to face us before he said to Takbir, and said: 'Make your rows straight and fill the gaps']²⁷. He added: [When the Iqamah was announced, Allah's Messenger turned his face towards us and said: "Make your rows straight and stand close together, for I can see you from behind my back].²⁸ It can be extrapolated from the Hadiths that the matter involves commandment, which implies a duty.²⁹

5. Discussion of the Scholars

The evidence on which the group relied to state that it is compulsory was that the Hadiths indicate duty, a warning for contravening the order, and admonition and warning evidence of duty. However, this admonition is to encourage the action by strictness because if the action is obligatory, it would not have been described as the consummation of prayer by the Prophet peace be upon him.³⁰

As for the evidence-based on the Prophet is saying: [Straighten your rows; otherwise, Allah will create disagreement among you], it can be argued that the warning was metaphorical, that is, disrupting the rows could generate animosity, hatred, and heart divergence.³¹ Furthermore, even if we say that the straightening of rows is compulsory, a good prayer will be performed prayer with a distance between him and other worshippers; therefore, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, who is among those who argue that straightening of rows is compulsory, said, "while stating that the straightening of rows is compulsory, I say that the contravener's prayer is correct."³²

Therefore, under normal circumstances, what is praiseworthy is to straighten the rows and not to have distance, and if the opposite happens, the prayer is correct while also being an abominable act; al-Khatib al-Shirbini stated: "It is a Sunnah to fill the gaps in the rows of worshippers, .. all of which is religiously commendable rather than being a condition, and so if they contravene, their prayer is correct while being an abominable act".³³

²⁶Al-Bukhari, Muhammad bin Isma'il. Sahih al-Bukhari, Damascus, Dar Ibn Kathir, 2002.

²⁷Ibn Hanbal, Ahmad. Musnad al-Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal, Beirut, Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 2001.

²⁸Al-Bukhari, Muhammad bin Isma'il. Sahih al-Bukhari, Damascus, Dar Ibn Kathir, 2002.

²⁹Al-San'ani, Muhammad bin Isma'il. Subul al-Salam, Riyadh, Maktabat al-Ma'arif, 2006.

³⁰Ibn Daqiq al-'Ayd, Muhammad bin 'Ali. Ihkam al-Ihkam Sharh 'Umdat al-Ahkam, Beirut, Dar 'Alam al-Kutub, 1987.

³¹Al-Nawawi, Yahya bin Sharaf. al-Minhaj Sharh Sahih Muslim bin al-Hajjaj, Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1392H.

³²Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Ahmad bin 'Ali. Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1379H.

³³Al-Shirbini, Muhammad bin Ahmad, Mughni al-Muhtaj Ila Ma'rifat Ma'ani Alfadh al-Minhaj, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1994.

The *fuqaha* have addressed distancing between the worshippers due to an excuse and permitted it. Al-Ramli said: "Yes, if they are delayed in filling the gap due to an excuse such as a time when it is hot in the Sacred Sanctuary, it is not abominable given that there is no dereliction."³⁴ In this view, medical practitioners claimed this act helps to flatten the pandemics' curve.

On the other hand, even in terms of the group's view, standing in rows is compulsory. The rule does not differ because it is compulsory to stand in straightened rows according to Ibn Taymiyyah, and the prayer is not valid without it; nevertheless, Ibn Taymiyyah considered the prayer of an individual behind the row of worshippers to be permissible if he did not find a place in it. Our problem, therefore, is analogically related.

Ibn Taymiyyah says: "It is forbidden to pray behind the row individually, but if he does not find someone to pray within a row and could not lead someone to pray with him, he may pray behind the row alone, and he will not have left the group in such a case."³⁵ Therefore, it can also be said that straightening rows are analogically applicable to all prayer obligations, conditions, and pillars that are inapplicable in the event of incapacity to perform them, such as ritual purity, facing the direction of *qiblah* (Mecca) prayer, and covering one's private parts.³⁶

The rule of distancing the ranks of worshippers to preserve human life and to prevent the spread of pandemics and diseases is anchored in consideration of the aims of the Islamic law (Shari'ah), as far as the preservation of human life is concerned, and rests on the following Islamic jurisprudential rules. In the case of two elements of the conflict of corruption, the lesser corruption is committed as a form. Besides, the rule exists: the lesser damage eliminates the more extreme damage; therefore, the closure of the mosques is severe damage, and the distance between the worshippers is light damage, so it can be argued in support of the distance to avoid the more significant damage caused by the closure of the mosque.

6. Results

The findings of this survey are as follows:

³⁴Al-Ramli, Muhammad bin Ahmad. *Nihayat al-Muhtaj Ila Sharh al-Minhaj*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1984.

³⁵Ibn Taymiyyah, Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Halim, *al-Fatawa al-Kubra*, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1987.

³⁶*Ibid.*

1. Gender

Table 1 - Gender

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Male	448	80
Female	112	20
Total	560	100

There were 448 respondents (80%) consisting of men and 112 respondents (20%) consisting of women in the gender division that answered this questionnaire.

2. State of Residence

Table 2 - State of Residence

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Perlis	3	0.5
Kedah	39	7
Penang	68	12.1
Perak	26	4.6
Selangor	230	41.1
Wilayah Persekutuan	39	7
Negeri Sembilan	40	7.1
Melaka	11	2
Johor	16	2.9
Terengganu	14	2.5
Kelantan	48	8.6
Pahang	15	2.7
Sabah	6	1.1
Sarawak	5	0.9
Total	560	100

State of Selangor respondents were the largest respondents to this questionnaire, 230 respondents (41.1%), while Perlis State respondents were the least respondents to this questionnaire, 3 respondents (0.5%). 68 respondents were reported from Penang (12.1%), as many as 48 respondents from Kelantan (8.6%), as many as 40 respondents from Negeri Sembilan (7.1%), as many as 39 respondents from Federal Territories and Kedah (7%), as many as 26 respondents from Perak (4.6%), Johor with 16 respondents (2.9%), Pahang with 15 respondents (2.7%), Terengganu with 14 respondents (2.5%), Melaka with 11 respondents (2%), Sabah with 6 respondents (1.1%), and Sarawak with 5 respondents (0.9%).

3. Residential Area

Table 3 - Residential Area

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Urban	401	71.6
Rural	150	26.8
Other	9	1.6
Total	560	100

401 respondents live in urban areas (71.6%) and 150 respondents (26.8%) live in rural areas. While 9 respondents (1.6%) live in other areas, such as suburbs, towns, and villages, the remaining respondents.

4. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, I know there is an Islamic Ruling on Prayer One-meter Away

Table 4 - During the Covid-19 Pandemic, I know there is an Islamic Ruling on Prayer One-meter Away

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Agree	479	85.5
Not sure	34	6.1
Disagree	47	8.4
Total	560	100

For the statement "During the Covid-19 pandemic, I know there is an Islamic ruling on prayer one-meter", 479 respondents (85.5%) agreed, and 47 respondents (8.4%) disagreed with this statement. In contrast, 34 respondents (6.1%) were uncertain about this statement.

5. I know the Argument behind the Islamic Ruling Regarding the 1-meter Distance Prayer during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Table 5 - I know the Argument behind the Islamic Ruling Regarding the 1-meter distance Prayer during the COVID-19 Pandemic

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Agree	463	82.7
Not sure	58	10.4
Disagree	39	7
Total	560	100

A total of 463 respondents (82.7%) agreed, and 39 respondents (7%) disagreed with this statement for the statement "I know the argument behind the Islamic ruling regarding the 1-meter distance prayer during the COVID-19 pandemic. While 58 respondents were unsure of this statement (10.4 %).

6. I Understand the Reason for the Islamic Ruling Released on the 1-meter Distance prayer during COVID-19 Pandemics

Table 6 - I Understand the Reason for the Islamic Ruling Released on the 1-meter Distance Prayer during COVID-19 Pandemics

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Agree	480	85.7
Not sure	36	6.4
Disagree	44	7.9
Total	560	100

A total of 480 respondents (85.7%) agreed with this statement, and 44 respondents (7.9%) disagreed with this statement for the statement "I understand the reason for the Islamic ruling released on the 1-meter distance prayer during COVID-19 pandemics". However, 36 participants (6.4%) are not sure of this statement.

7. I Respect this Islamic Ruling because an Authoritative Legal Body Decided it

Table 7 - I Respect this Islamic Ruling because an Authoritative Legal Body Decided it

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Agree	484	86.4
Not sure	38	6.8
Disagree	38	6.8
Total	560	100

A total of 484 respondents (86.4%) agreed to the statement "I respect this Islamic ruling because it was decided by an authoritative legal body," while each of the 38 respondents (6.8%) disagreed and were unsure of this statement.

8. I Complied with the Islamic Ruling Regarding the 1-meter Distance Prayer during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Table 8 - I Complied with the Islamic Ruling Regarding the 1-meter Distance Prayer during the COVID-19 Pandemic

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Agree	489	87.3
Not sure	20	3.6
Disagree	51	9.1
Total	560	100

A total of 489 respondents (87.3%) agreed, and 51 respondents (9.1%) disagreed with this statement for the statement "I complied with the Islamic ruling regarding the 1-meter distance prayer during the COVID-19 pandemic. In comparison, 20 respondents (3.6%) were uncertain about this statement.

9. I do not Mind Performing a Distance of 1 Meter during Prayers

Table 9 - I do not Mind Performing a Distance of 1 Meter during Prayers

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Agree	462	82.5
Not sure	20	3.6
Disagree	78	13.9
Total	560	100

A total of 462 respondents (82.5%) agreed with the statement 'I do not mind performing a distance of 1 meter during prayers,' and 78 individuals (13.9%) disagreed with this statement. At the same time, 20 respondents (3.6%) were uncertain about this statement.

10. I Believe that this Decision helps to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

Table 10 - I Believe that this Decision Helps to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Agree	419	74.8
Not sure	70	12.5
Disagree	71	12.7
Total	560	100

A total of 419 respondents (74.8%) agreed with the statement, "I believe that this decision helps to reduce the spread of COVID-19," and 71 respondents (12.7%) disagreed with this statement. While 70 respondents were unsure of this statement (12.5%).

11. The State Fatwa Committee Considered the Opinions of Health Experts before Deciding on the 1-meter Distance Prayer during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Table 11 - The State Fatwa Committee Considered the Opinions of Health Experts before Deciding on the 1-meter Distance Prayer during the COVID-19 Pandemic

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Agree	479	85.5
Not sure	40	7.1
Disagree	41	7.3
Total	560	100

A total of 479 respondents (85.5%) agreed, and 41 people (7.3%) disagreed with this statement for the statement "the state fatwa committee considered the opinions of health experts before deciding on the 1-meter distance prayer during the COVID-19 pandemics. While 40 respondents were unsure of this statement (7.1%).

12. I think the Islamic Ruling Decision on the 1-meter Distance Prayer during the COVID-19 Pandemics is not a Western Conspiracy to Weaken Muslims

Table 12 - I Think the Islamic Ruling Decision on the 1-meter Distance Prayer during the COVID-19 Pandemics is not a Western Conspiracy to Weaken Muslims

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Agree	392	70
Not sure	102	18.2
Disagree	66	11.8
Total	560	100

A total of 392 respondents (70%) agreed, and 66 people (11.8%) disagreed with this statement "I think the Islamic ruling on the 1-meter distance prayer during the COVID-19 pandemics is not a Western conspiracy to weaken Muslims." While 102 respondents were unsure of this statement (18.2%).

13. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Prayers at a Distance of 1 Meter may Continue as long as this Pandemic is not Over

Table 13 - Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Prayers at a Distance of 1 Meter may Continue as Long as this Pandemic is not over

	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Agree	372	66.4
Not sure	71	12.7
Disagree	117	20.9
Total	560	100

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, prayers at a distance of 1 meter may continue as long as this pandemic is not over. A total of 372 respondents (66.4%) agreed, and 117 respondents (20.9%) disagreed with this statement. While 71 respondents were unsure of this statement (12.7%).

7. Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn from the debate in which there is no doubt in this paper that the pandemic of covid-19 has a significant impact on people's lives in Malaysia, but the same situation occurs worldwide. The control measures to curb the spread of these dangerous pandemics have led to some new norms in worship performance, such as mosque prayers and prayer rooms. The decision for physical distance in prayer with 1 meter for the outbreak of Covid-19 is therefore not contrary to the *Maqasid Shariah*, which emphasises the security of the Muslim's life and the worsening pandemic be addressed.

Most Muslims are well received by all decisions issued by religious authorities, such as the mufti department and the local Islamic religious department, relating to the SOP to implement congregational prayers during the MCO. Even if a minority group does not agree with their arguments, they still obey the official decision without any activity contrary to the law.

In the same situation, Shariah with its moderate and flexible characteristics, virtually ensures that all worship acts are performed correctly, whether in standard or unusual situations. The convenience given does not mean that all mass demands are always subject to Shariah. Islamic law, is always firm in strengthening the law's basics, such as the obligation of prayer that cannot be abandoned. This dynamic is proof that Shariah's greatness always faces challenges.

References

- Ain Umaira, M.S., Syafiqah, N.A.S., Thevadas, R., Noordin, N.K., Rahman, A.A., Sekawi, Z., Sultan, M.T.H. "COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia: Actions taken by the Malaysian government." *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 97, 2020, 108–116.
Doi: 10.1016/j.ijid.2020.05.093
- Al 'Iraqi, *Forever the Merciful between Al-Hussein*. Presenting Al-Tathrib fi Sharh Al-Taqreeb, Beirut: Dar Ihya' Revival of the Arabic Heritage, N.D.
- Al-'Uthaymin, Muhammad bin Salih, al-Sharh al-Mumtī 'Ala Zad al-Mustaqni', Riyadh, Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 1428H.
- Al-Bahuti, Mansur bin Yunus. *Kashshaf al-Qina' 'An Matn al-Iqna'*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah.
- al-Bayan Siri 6. *The Issue of Physical Imprisonment During Congregational Prayers in Mosques and Suraus. Minister's Office in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs)*. https://mira.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Al-Bayan_SIRI-6_FINAL-4_compressed.pdf, (November 2020).
- Al-Bukhari, Muhammad bin Isma'il. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Damascus, Dar Ibn Kathir, 2002.
- Denzin N. & Lincoln Y. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage Publication Inc, 2000, 1-30.
- Eboh, W. Qualitative and quantitative research methods. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 88, Issue 1, (1997) 9–10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03543069>.
- Al-Mirdawi, 'Ali Bin Suleyman. *Al-Insaf Fi Ma'rifat al-Rajih Min al-Khilaf*, Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi.
- Al-Nawawi, Yahya bin Sharaf. *al-Minhaj Sharh Sahih Muslim bin al-Hajjaj*, Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1392H.
- Al-Ramli, Muhammad bin Ahmad. *Nihayat al-Muhtaj Ila Sharh al-Minhaj*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1984.
- Al-San'ani, Muhammad bin Isma'il. *Subul al-Salam*, Riyadh, Maktabat al-Ma'arif, 2006.
- Al-Shirbini, Muhammad bin Ahmad, Mughni al-Muhtaj Ila Ma'rifat Ma'ani Alfadh al-Minhaj, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1994.
- Al-Tahtawi, Ahmad bin Muhammad. *Hashiyat al-Tahtawi 'Ala Maraqi al-Falah Sharh Nur al-Idah*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1997.
- Al-Tanukhi, Ibrahim bin 'Abd Al Samad. *al-Tanbih 'Ala Mabadi' al-Tawjih*, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2007.
- Asita Elengoe. "COVID-19 Outbreak in Malaysia". *Osong Public Health Res Perspect*, 11(3), 2020. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.24171/j.phrp.2020.11.3.08>
- Denzin N. & Lincoln Y. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London, Sage Publication Inc, 2000.
- Eboh, W. "Qualitative and quantitative research methods". *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 88(1), 9–10 (1997). Doi: 10.1007/BF03543069.
- Ibn 'Abd Al-Barr, Yusuf bin 'Abdullah, *Al-Istidhkar*, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000.

- Ibn al-Qattan, 'Ali bin Muhammad, Al-Iqna' 'Fi Masa'il Masa'il Al-Ijma', 'Cairo: Al-Faruq al-Hadithah Li al-Tiba'ah Wa al-Nahr, 2004.
- Ibn Daqiq al-'Ayd, Muhammad bin 'Ali. Ihkam al-Ihkam Sharh 'Umdat al-Ahkam, Beirut, Dar 'Alam al-Kutub, 1987.
- Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Ahmad bin 'Ali. Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari, Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1379H.
- Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, Ahmed Bin Mohamed. *The Right Approach, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Mayah*, 2000.
- Ibn Hanbal, Ahmad. Musnad al-Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal, Beirut, Mu'assassat al-Risalah, 2001.
- Ibn Hazm, 'Ali bin Ahmad. *al-Muhalla Bi al-Athar*, Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, N.d.
- Ibn Taymiyyah, Ahmed Bin 'Abd al-Halim, *The Great Fatwas*, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Wayah, 1987.
- Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia. *Special Muzakarah Committee Meeting of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia (MKI) Pandemic Special Edition COVID-19*. <http://www.islam.gov.my/berita-semasa/29-bahagian-penyelidikan/2397-mesyuarat-jawatankuasa-muzakarah-khas-majlis-kebangsaan-bagi-hal-ehwal-ugama-islam-malaysia-mki-edisi-khas-pandemik-covid-19>, 2020.
- Jabatan Mufti Negeri Pulau Pinang. *Official Statement of the State Mufti of Penang on the Position of the Congregational Prayer Row During the Movement Control Order (PKP Covid-19)*. <http://mufti.penang.gov.my/index.php/2014-11-12-02-48-39/dasar-dan-polisi/garis-panduan/465-kedudukan-saf-solat-jemaah-ketika-perintah-kawalan-pergerakan/file>, 2020.
- Lay Yoon Fah & Khoo Chwee Hoon. *Introduction to Quantitative Approach in Educational Research*. Kota Kinabalu: Penerbit UMS, 2016.
- Mat Noor Mat Zain. *Law and Position of Congregational Prayer during the Outbreak of Epidemics and Movement Control Order (PKP)*. In Mohd Izhar Ariff Mohd Kashim, Mohd Al Adib Samuri & Nurul Ilyana Muhd Adnan. *Covid-19 Dan Islam*. Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2020.
- Muslim, Muslim bin al-Hajjaj. *Sahih Muslim*, Riyadh, Dar Taybah, 2006.
- World Health Organization(a). *What is COVID-19?* <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>, 2020.
- World Health Organization(b). *Numbers at a Glance*. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>, 2020.
- Wu, Yi-Chi, Chen, Ching-Sung & Chan, Yu-Jiun. "The Outbreak Of COVID-19: An Overview". *Journal of the Chinese Medical Association*, 83(3), 217-220. 2020.
Doi: 10.1097/JCMA.0000000000000270
- Zainudin Awang. *Research Methodology for Business & Social Sciences*. Shah Alam: Universiti Teknologi MARA, 2011.