

THE CONTRIBUTIONS *of* WOMEN in ISLAMIC STUDIES and EDUCATION

Malay Archipelago

This book is the result of a group of scholars' writings sponsored by Yayasan Bukhari who want to recognize the important role that women have played in Islamic education across the Malay archipelago. The book acknowledged that the pre- and post-colonial systems had an impact on popular perceptions and beliefs on Islamic studies, highlighting the diverse educational backgrounds of each individual. The purpose of this book is to explain and comprehend the ways in which women, particularly in the area of Islamic studies, contribute to the educational system. It uncovers how women's empowerment has been attained through the system, and how the system influences women's duties and responsibilities in all spheres of life. Justice in gender equality has been achieved as a result of the major works and writings in this book, which extensively discussed the importance of education as a game-changer that raises the bar for women's empowerment. The goal of the empirical facts and scientific research is to raise awareness, aid in understanding the importance of women's roles in Islamic studies and society, as well as encourage women everywhere to make positive contributions to their own well-being as well as the Islamic education of those around them.

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Edited by

RAUDLOTUL FIRDAUS FATAH YASIN
MEK WOK MAHMUD

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Foreword

Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak
Former Rector of International Islamic University Malaysia

Editors

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CHAPTER 6

Contributions of the KBIUA's Graduates in Education in Malaysia

WAHIBAH TWAHIR @ H.TAHIR,
RAUDLOTUL FIRDAUS FATAH YASIN

6.1 Introduction

Malaysian female students started their *rihlah 'ilmiyyah* at the KBIUA after its third session in 1964. The factors that drove the *rihlah 'ilmiyyah* of Malaysian women to the KBIUA were the development of a higher educational system, the influence of the *Islah* and *Tajdid* movements, the establishment of higher learning institutions for Islamic studies, the network of Islamic higher education for women, the influence of Azhariyyah Malay male students, as well as the rise of Islam and the Islamic movement. In reference to that matter, women managed to break through from domestic seclusion, and more participation of women could be seen in the public domain, whether in the aspect of education, politics, or the economy.

Malaysian women could qualify themselves to get a place in the KBIUA through four underpinning ways. The first way was using the result of *syahadah thanawi* received from any recognised *madrasah* by the al-Azhar University to continue studies there. Among the *madrasahs* that received recognition from the Al-Azhar University were *Madrasah Alawiyyah*, Arau, Maahad Mahmud, Maahad Johor Baharu, *Madrasah al-Irsyad*, and *Kulliyah Sultan Abu Bakar Pekan Pahang*. As for the second method, it could be applied through the *mu'adalah*

system which was an approval and recognition programme given by the Al-Azhar University to any educational institution in the Islamic country to get the opportunity to continue studies in the KBIUA at various levels of studies. In Malaysia, the role was taken by the Kelantan Islamic Higher Education Foundation (YPTIK) when it signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Al-Azhar University. This system allows students to attend a bachelor's degree equivalent to the 'Aliyah degree of al-Azhar University at YPTIK and continue to complete their remaining years of studies at KBIUA.

The third way to get enrolled on the KBIUA was to apply for a master's degree at Al-Azhar University after receiving first degree qualifications at YPTIK and KIM. For students who continued studies in YPTIK and Malaya College Islam (KIM), their bachelor's degree was equivalent to the 'Aliyah degree in Al-Azhar University, resulted from the agreement and recognition given by Al-Azhar to these two institutions. The final method to get enrolled on the KBIUA was through the *syahadah thanawiyah* programme in al-Azhar itself. As an Islamic education centre in Egypt, al-Azhar is responsible for providing education from primary, secondary, and tertiary levels to Muslims in Egypt and accepting Muslim students worldwide, including Malaysia. Those interested in this method would register first as secondary students to get the qualification of *syahadah thanawiyah* before it qualified them to study at the bachelor's degree level. However, it is noteworthy to mention that the aforementioned methods would be meaningless if there were no triggering factors to the *rihlah 'ilmiyyah* to the KBIUA.

As a consequence of the *rihlah 'ilmiyyah* and formal education of Malaysian women in the KBIUA, they received educational attainment and increased literacy rates among females. Through this educational attainment, women not only started to adjust their role in society, but they also brought changes in the social scene, which could provide an opportunity for women to fight for their rights. Nevertheless, the mainstream effects from this *rihlah 'ilmiyyah* were the contributions of the KBIUA's female students in improving

and developing the programme of Islamic studies in the Malaysian education system. The contributions of the KBIUA's females in Islamic education could be evaluated from secondary, higher, and community education levels (Wahibah, 2014). The previous chapter has discussed the establishment of KBIUA which fuelled a network for Islamic higher education, which led to the *rihlah 'ilmiyyah* of Malaysian women at KBIUA. Not only did they manage to break strict traditions within the Malay society, but they also became a catalyst in developing ideas for women's education at Al-Azhar University. As a result of the *rihlah 'ilmiyyah* at the KBIUA, Malaysian female graduates remarkably contributed to its foundation on Islamic studies in higher education in its 30-year history. The data information was extracted through the interview method as the primary source in retrieving information regarding the contributions of the KBIUA's female graduates to the Malaysian education system. The respondents consisted of KBIUA and Al-Azhar University graduates and staff from the Department of Religious Affairs, Islamic Education Division, and MOHE. The final findings classified these groups into two major groups, namely RIPT and RGPI, to observe their contributions to the Malaysian education system. The three contributions of the KBIUA's female graduates in various levels of education shall be discussed in this chapter: contributions in secondary school, higher learning institutions, and community education.

6.2. Contribution of the Al-Azhar Graduates to the Malaysian Education System

6.2.1 The Excellence of Women in Education

The following part will analyse the contribution of the KBIUA's graduates, mainly in Islamic studies, to the Malaysian education system. There are three main contributions, as addressed by Wahibah in her PhD thesis (2014): contributions to public higher learning institutions,

secondary schools, and community education through non-formal education.

2.1.1 The Kulliyah Al-Banat Al-Islamiyyah University Al-Azhar in Public Higher Learning Institutions (IPTA)

Most lecturers in higher learning institutions around the world are more or less subjected to three roles: to convey knowledge (teaching), conduct research, develop knowledge, or be involved in community service (Abd. Shukor, 2000). Meanwhile, other scholars address five main tasks that are commonly done by a lecturer: teaching, research, publication, supervision, and professional services (Nurhasni & Mohd Razaai, 2008 p. 53; Abu Daud et al., 1987, pp. 19-20). Thus, the five primary duties of the lecturer are set as indicators in discussing the contribution of the KBIUA's graduates working as lecturers in IPTA, i.e., teaching and supervision, research, publication, consultation, and services community. Among the notable figures highlighted in this field were Balkis Abu Bakar, Faizal Ismail, Leha @ Zaleha Muhamat, Rosenani Hasan, Siti Rugayah Tibek, and Maznah Daud (Wahibah, 2014, pp. 285-303).

Twenty-seven respondents have been gathered and agreed to be participants in this case study. Unfortunately, only 20 respondents managed to be interviewed, while the rest did not make it as they passed away and had other constraints. The age of participants ranged above 50 years old. Out of 27 respondents, 18 respondents were PhD graduates from various universities around the world. Only two of them received a doctorate from Al-Azhar University. Meanwhile, the rest of the participants were master's students who originally graduated from the KBIUA. After finishing their studies, they were qualified and appointed as permanent lecturers in various higher learning institutions in Malaysia based on their distinguished qualifications. For example, they were experts in various courses in Islamic studies, such as Arabic language, *aqidah* and philosophy, *da'wah*,

tafsir, Ḥadīth, munakahat, muamalat, ibadah, jinayah, Islamic civilisation, and counselling.

In general, the most fundamental contribution of the KBIUA's graduates in IPTA is teaching and supervision. Teaching and supervision are the main tasks for all lecturers in higher learning institutions. It has been marked as the first indicator in discussing the KBIUA's contribution to IPTA. According to Robiah Sidin (2001), teaching is the main objective of every educational institution, including universities. As a centre of knowledge, educational activities such as research, writing, and producing new knowledge discoveries often occur in the university. The main educational activities of teaching and learning are among the ways to spread and develop unlimited knowledge towards the new horizon. At the same time, these educational activities improve their way of thinking and develop creativity that targets fellow lecturers and students as well as the public. Knowing that the students would rely on lecturers' readings, observations, and research to become intellectually fit in their respective subjects, the lecturer would guide and provide the direction of related studies. Hence, it was not exaggerating to say that education at the tertiary level starts with the lecturer and their teachings. The profession of a lecturer is not limited only to giving lectures and lessons. However, they also need to evaluate coursework for students and supervise the conducted scientific training in their respective fields. Due to this noble work, lecturers are bound to set role models where they should demonstrate exemplary skills because every lecturer's conduct is constantly observed by the students (Shiqah, 2009).

Besides teaching duties, lecturers are also involved in giving consultation and counselling to their students outside of teaching hours. A consultation session is part of the teaching process outside the lecture room that involves advising students related to academic problems and assignments. However, the study found that the high number of students and large hours of lectures become a significant impediment for respondents to conduct a consultation session for more than 10 hours (Wahibah, 2014, p. 215). Other

than that, lecturers are also required to supervise research, theses, or project papers as another area of the lecturer's duties. This task is also no less important to every lecturer. All lecturers will be given the task of supervising their respective departments based on their respective expertise and knowledge. The respondent's overall workload of teaching tasks experienced by the respondent showed the time density and carried the heavy-duty load. It is even more intensified for those who teach Islamic studies. They must constantly improve their capabilities to deliver Islamic teachings that need to be in line with current circumstances. The burden of duty in teaching requires efficiency and patience to handle many students from time to time. However, it also applied to them to master the knowledge and its constant development in their respective fields.

The second indicator, the contribution of KBIUA's graduates in education, was reflected in its writing and publication (Wahibah, 2014, p. 250). The systematic writing of an academician is one of the most effective mediums in conveying his thoughts to be read and to be further evaluated, discussed, and analysed. The innovative thoughts could be expressed either in the form of technological machines or in the form of abstract thought, which could touch many people's hearts and lives. It also could be extended to be used as a legitimate reference that could affect a country's decision. Therefore, it could be summarised that writing and publishing are crucial aspects commonly used to assess the credibility of expertise and as a way to develop professionalism among lecturers in the academic world. Table 6.1 shows the distribution of respondents in the various forms of writing and publication throughout the academic journey. It has involved a book, module, monograph, journal, and proceeding. All respondents have targeted various audiences and readers through these publications, including professional groups, students from higher learning institutions, school students, and the general public. Newspaper as a medium to disseminate the obtained knowledge. All respondents have targeted professional groups, higher learning institutions' students, school students, and the public as their audience and

readers through these publications. Compared to the past, the current publication process is much easier since every university has its own book publisher, such as the Publisher University of Malaya, the UKM Publisher, the UTM Publisher, and the University Publishing Centre UiTM (UPENA) as well as IIUM Press. Not only that, but they also have other options to publish their works by submitting them to an outside publisher to be published. Many publishing companies provide this service, for example, *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*, Al-Hidayah Publisher, PTS Publication and Distributor, Utusan Publication Distributors Sdn Bhd, and many more.

Table 6.1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Forms of Writing and Publication

Forms of writing and publications	Number of respondents	Percentage
Book	10/20	50
Module	8/20	40
Monograph	7/20	35
Journal	7/20	35
Proceeding	14/20	70
Magazine	4/20	20
Newspaper	6/20	30
Others	6/20	30
No information	3/20	10

Source: Wahibah (2014, p. 251)

The third indicator of the contributions of the KBIUA's graduates in IPTA could be assessed through their research area (Wahibah, 2014, p. 252). A research process is essential to retrieving a solution for a problem. In an educational context, research is an intellectual effort to seek answers to attempted questions using systematic methods that are reliable and valid, based on logical or empirical evidence, a rational argument, or to create a synthesis of existing information (Rosnani, 2010, p. 2). The research aims to create new knowledge and advance the existing knowledge (Abu

Daud, 1987, p. 20). The result from the conducted interview found that a total of 11 respondents were involved in individual research, and ten respondents were involved in group research, where seven respondents led research projects. However, three respondents had never been involved in any research project. Despite the average number of participants involved in the research area, this still indicates that women still participated adequately in this area. It is worth mentioning that the respondents did not abandon women's issues while conducting their research. Among the conducted research related to women issues are *Kes-kes Jenayah Syariah Yang Melibatkan Wanita di Malaysia (1998-1999)*, *Peranan Wanita Islam Menurut Fiqh Syafie dan Perlaksanaanya dalam Undang-Undang Negeri Johor*, and *Features of the Feminist Discourse in Modern Malay Narration: June-September 2007* (Wahibah, 2014, p. 254). On top of that, lecturers are allowed and encouraged to conduct research throughout their service, where they could contribute significantly to their specialisation area. This could be achieved through specific provisions provided by the Ministry of Higher Education, government bodies, statutory bodies, and private sectors according to the suitability of fields and requirements to conduct the intended research.

The final indicator of the contribution of the KBIUA's female graduates in IPTA could be seen through consultation (Wahibah, 2014, p. 256). This consultation was different from the consultation session provided by the respective lecturer to their students. This consultation session involved lecturers who are experts in one field of knowledge to share their thoughts and analysis on specific issues or policies. They are usually exposed to opportunities to develop their professionalism in the academic world, yet valuable for society and institutions. An expert lecturer plays a significant role in directing the development of their institutions where they are involved by being a consultant either at the internal or external level. Most of the respondents have been appointed to become consultants and advisors in distinguished statutory bodies, especially in religious institutions such as YADIM, ILIM, IKIM, RTM, and PERKIM. For

example, their expertise was needed to establish educational programmes and institutions and review the curriculum syllabus in Darul Qur'an JAKIM. A total of 16 respondents were involved as project consultants, while seven respondents were involved as trainers and course consultants. Four respondents were involved as experts at the national level. One respondent, Balkis Abu Bakar, was involved as a working expert at the international level. Faizah Ismail became another respondent who occupied an important position at the national level and served as a member of the National Fatwa Council. Both respondents are very well known in *Usul Fiqh* and *Fiqh Ibadah*. Siti Rugayah, who is an expert in *Da'wah* and arts, has contributed her knowledge to the development of *haji* and received recognition for her contribution (Wahibah, 2014). This undoubtedly showed that the willingness of the respective respondents to position themselves as mentors in their field could be seen as a great effort coming from them. Therefore, it was not exaggerated to label them as a national treasure for their contribution. With that qualification, they could be more vocal in disseminating useful knowledge so that it could be utilised for the advancement of religion and society. This is in line with Allah's command in the Qur'an for those who are deep in knowledge to play the role and contribute to his people when they return from one place for study.

6.2.1.2 The Kulliyah Al-Banat Al-Islamiyyah University Al-Azhar in School

According to the Ministry of Education in Malaysia, the duties of the teacher were composed of eight general areas, namely teaching and learning, co-curricular management, student affairs management, administration management, staff development, physical development, community services, and other tasks from time to time in the schools. However, there were three main tasks of teachers in the school: professional tasks that consisted of teaching and learning, humane tasks involving the management of human resources and physical

schools, and community services. Wahibah (2014, p. 268) connects all three underlying tasks to analyse the contribution of the KBIUA's graduates as teachers through four aspects: learning and teaching, co-curriculum management, school management and administration, as well as community service. It could be illustrated that among the graduates of KBIUA who had contributed significantly to improving Islamic education in secondary school were Aminah Zakaria, Fauziah Sani, Aisyah Hasan, Salbiah Omar, Khadijah Awang, Rahmah Dearman, Khairah Haris, and many more (Wahibah, 2014, pp. 304-337).

For this section, 172 respondents that ranged from 35 to 60 years old were involved in the interview. They received various academic qualifications, such as diplomas (108 respondents), bachelor's degrees (172 respondents), and master's degrees (18 respondents). After finishing their studies, they were positioned in various types of schools, such as secondary schools (91 respondents), Islamic religious secondary schools (75 respondents), state government religious schools (4 respondents), and people's Islamic religious schools (7 respondents) (Saifuddin, 2009).

As the role of lecturer in the university, the teacher is the most crucial figure in school. In reference to that, teaching and learning are addressed as the first contribution of the KBIUA's graduates in Islamic education in various schools in Malaysia. As a teacher, the teaching and learning aspects are the most crucial tasks other than any other side tasks. In Islamic education, teachers play a significant role throughout their teaching and learning to get more effective results on students' performance (Kamarul Azmi & Ab. Halim, 2007, p. 73). Teachers would carry out their duties in teaching and learning according to academic qualifications and agreed by the principal's accord. Normally, teachers with academic qualifications in Islamic studies such as *Usuluddin*, *Shariah*, Islamic education, Qur'anic education, *Ḥadīth*, and Arabic language would be given the task of teaching Islamic education in schools. These aforementioned courses are core religious subjects in all levels from Form One until Form Five. Meanwhile, *Usuluddin*, *Shariah*, and Islamic history are the

elective subjects for Form Six students. However, these three subjects are only available and offered in religious schools with the Form Six's programme.

Table 6.2: Distribution of respondents based on subjects ever taught

Subject	Frequency	Percentage
Pendidikan Islam	137	79.1
Arabic Language	134	77.9
Pendidikan Al-Qur'an and Sunnah	44	25.6
Tasawur Islam	56	32.6
Tamadun Islam/History of Islam	22	12.8
Syariah	45	26.8
Usuluddin	27	15.
Pendidikan Jawi	22	12.8
Others	35	20.3

Source: Wahibah (2014, p. 270)

Table 6.2 shows that the highest number of respondents (137 respondents) have participated in teaching Pendidikan Islam. It is considered a general subject that a Muslim student is required to take in school. Meanwhile, 134 respondents, or 77.9%, reported having taught Arabic subjects after completing their Islamic education. This is because it is mandatory in religious schools and becomes an elective subject in secondary school. Most of the time, teachers with a background in Islamic studies are often asked to teach the subject even if they are not from a background in Arabic studies due to the lack of Arabic teachers in school. There is also a situation where respondents, despite not having a degree in Arabic studies, have been teaching Arabic subjects from the start of their service until retirement (Wahibah, 2014, p. 269). It could be summarised that the willingness of respondents to teach subjects even if they are not related to their field shows the attitude of not being choosy in the task

entrusted to them and assuming it would add more experience and knowledge.

The second contribution of the KBIUA's graduates in Islamic education in school could be assessed on its co-curriculum management (Wahibah, 2014, p. 271). Besides carrying out teaching and learning duties, teachers are also responsible for guiding students in developing skills and building a good personality outside the classroom. This is an outdoor task that involves advising and supervising the student's co-curricular activities. Co-curricular activities are essential in all schools as additional educational activities that help students develop themselves in the realisation concept of knowledge outside the classroom and the universalisation of knowledge, experience, and skills. The planned activities could offer students the chance to improve their knowledge and skills while also gaining first-hand experience through self-education, which aligns with the principles of authentic learning. It might be seen that it could only benefit students. However, the curriculum activities also help the teacher stay fit and creative while getting out of the stress zone. The finding showed that most respondents, 163 people (94.8%), were advisors in co-curricular management. Meanwhile, only four respondents (2.3%) were not involved in co-curricular management as an advisor to any association which was lower than those who were directly involved in the association as an advisor. There were also five respondents (2.9%) who were not given a definite answer (Wahibah, 2014, p. 272). All in all, most respondents were actively involved in managing co-curriculum, where it has been portrayed that the role of a teacher is not limited only to the classroom. It has been said that their experience in engaging with student associations and activities in KBIUA has been applied when they have become teachers. Indirectly, it could connect and establish a good relationship between students and teachers.

Table 6.3: Involvement of respondents in the association as an advisor

Answer	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	163	94.8
No	4	2.3
No answer	5	2.9

Source: Wahibah (2014, p. 272)

The final contribution of the KBIUA's graduates in Islamic education could be observed in the area of school management (Wahibah, 2014, p. 273). Besides teaching, a teacher is also responsible for carrying out tasks in the form of school management to achieve the objectives of the institutions that have been formulated (Omar & Khuan, 2005, p. 151). The results of interviews and questionnaires found that not many respondents were involved in higher education management and off-field course teaching. Many factors could explain such a scenario. For instance, extensive service experience did not equip respondents with the necessary skills to handle and navigate more complex tasks. Besides that, the limited exposure of female students during their studies in KBIUA could also be seen as one of the factors that influenced their attitudes and openness to be involved in different aspects besides teaching during their studies. The lack of engagement in association also contributed to making them not confident to carry out the management duties.

In the educational world, attending courses or training either provided by the school or participating in various forms of continuous learning is essential to enhance the excellence of professionalism among teachers. The key to one teacher's success and sustainability depends on the teacher's willingness to continue developing professionalism through various educational activities and programmes, whether formally or non-formally. In fact, school teachers require special training to improve skills and knowledge in specific fields from time to time. According to Table 6.4, respondents

demonstrated adequate participation in various courses and training throughout their tenure as teachers (Wahibah, 2014, p. 276). It could be concluded that almost all respondents are occupied with duties as teachers and involved in other activities in schools. Additionally, it could be understood that the heavy load of teachers somehow becomes the sole reason that preventing themselves from carrying out management duties.

Table 6.4: Distribution of respondents based on course/training throughout the service

Course/training	Frequency	Percentage
Courses related to teaching and learning	105/172	98.1
Courses related to school management	61/172	57.0
Leadership courses	75/172	70.1
Courses related to <i>da'wah</i>	65/172	60.7
Organisational courses	40/172	37.4
Business-related courses	27/172	25.2
ICT courses	63/172	58.9

Source: Wahibah (2014, p. 276)

6.2.1.3 The Kulliyah Al-Banat Al-Islamiyyah University Al-Azhar in Community Education

The role of educators is not limited to educational institutions alone. Nevertheless, it is extended to outside classroom and lecture hall. Consequently, it typically manifests as non-formal education (Wahibah, 2014, p. 277). Non-formal education was usually organised by various bodies and organisations, such as labour unions, political parties, and even individuals. It has been realised that seeking knowledge is needed by society to improve their lives and enhance their general knowledge,

especially about Islam. The KBIUA's graduates were regarded as icons among local society to disseminate knowledge by the traditional role that religious groups should play. However, only half of all respondents actively participated in community education.

In light of this, the educators who graduated from the KBIUA collectively made appropriate contributions related to their expertise, such as establishing a religious class for the local community, typically held in the mosque. An example of remarkable contributors who actively participated in community services was Faizah Ismail, Siti Balkis, Fatimah Ali, Seripah Zain, Russanani @ Asiah Hassan, Habibah Awang, Selemah Ahmad, Faridah Ahmad, and many more (Wahibah, 2014, p. 277). In this case, the KBIUA graduates were categorised into two groups, namely, 20 respondents of higher education (RIPTA) and 172 respondents represented Teachers of Islamic Education (RGPI). These two categorised groups were divided based on the methods of knowledge studies being disseminated and offered to society. It was summarised that four dissemination methods of knowledge were used to educate and convey knowledge to society such as religious class, Qur'anic class, religious talk, and motivational talk.

Based on the findings, Table 6.5 indicates that many graduates from KBIUA preferred to use the religious class as a medium to disseminate knowledge to society. Both RIPTA (50%) and RGPI (52.3%) demonstrated the highest percentage of graduates who preferred to use religious classes as a form of knowledge dissemination compared to other methods used by educators. Qur'anic classes and religious talks emerged as the second and third most popular methods of knowledge dissemination after religious classes. Motivational talks have become the least preferred method among educators to contribute knowledge to the local community. These non-formal classes became the second avenue for the KBIUA's graduates to contribute to society in Malaysia. Most of these classes were organised with the aim of abolishing illiteracy and ignorance in Islamic education.

Table 6.5: Contribution of RIPTA and RGPI in disseminating knowledge among the local society

Methods of Knowledge Studies	No. of RIPTA	Percentage	No. of RGPI	Percentage
Religious class	10/20	50	90/172	52.3
Qur'anic class	5/20	19	80/172	46.5
Religious talk	8/20	30	68/172	39.5
Motivational talk	3/20	11	38/172	22.1

Source: Wahibah (2014, p. 279)

Besides that, the KBIUA's graduates could establish a relationship with the community through their involvement in any organisation outside of school, specifically in community service. The involvement of respondents as members of organisations outside the school could be found in organisations like mosques or *surau*, *da'wah* bodies, welfare bodies, political bodies, and private educational institutions. The involvement of educators in various community services enables them to approach the community efficiently and contribute service to them diligently. According to Kamarul and Ab. Halim (2007), educators are better known by the community and become role models (p. 80). Hence, active involvement in community service could indirectly teach society fundamental moral values and boost their characteristic building accordingly. Society often puts teachers in a high position as a sign of appreciation for educating students like their own children. Limitless trust and respect are given to teachers even if the teacher has retired or moved elsewhere. The position of Islamic education teachers, in particular, is highly regarded because they become experts in religion and contribute well to developing one student's conviction. Hence, the involvement of teachers in community

services will bring communities closer to teachers and the school as they could propagate good words on the benefits of the school and the advantage of seeking knowledge.

Undeniably, a good percentage of respondents were involved in the organisation outside of school, as depicted in Table 6.6. They were involved in various organisations such as mosques, *surau*, welfare bodies, *da'wah* bodies, political bodies, advisory bodies, and private educational institutions. Unfortunately, there were also cases of a lack of involvement among educators in community associations and services. It could be explained and understood through interviews with several respondents that the reasons for not contributing to community services outside of school are time constraints, burden duties as a teacher and school administration, and duties that should not be ignored, such as being a son and parent. The phenomenon of not engaging in any community services after retirement among respondents is relatively high, as more than 94 respondents (54.7%) intend to focus on their families. This might be the role that educators themselves have contributed unconditionally to society at large; therefore, this is the time that the educators should focus on their families only.

Table 6.6: Involvement of RGPI an organisation outside of school

Organisation outside of school	Number of RGPI	Percentage
Mosque and surau	93/172	54.1
Welfare bodies	44/172	25.6
<i>Da'wah</i> bodies	42/172	24.4
Political bodies	9/172	5.2
Private educational institutions	9/172	5.2
Advisory bodies	2/172	1.2

Source: Wahibah (2014, p. 280)

6.3 Conclusion

The establishment of KBIUA proves that Al-Azhar University remains relevant and significant as a leading university in providing education for women in line with current needs. The development of Islamic studies and experiences of the KBIUA's Malay female graduates have contributed to the remarkable history of the Malaysian education system during the 60s to 90s. It has provided an overview of the historical development of Islamic studies, which was initially created by male graduates in the early 19th century. They deserve recognitions for successfully influencing the perspective of Malay parents about sending their daughters abroad to pursue studies. As a result, Malaysian women enjoyed their *rihlah 'ilmiyyah* to the KBIUA without any more restrictions. It could be concluded that six contributing factors influenced the *rihlah 'ilmiyyah* of Malaysian women to the KBIUA. These were the development of a higher educational system, the influence of the and *Tajdid* movements, the establishment of higher learning institutions for Islamic studies, the network of Islamic higher education for women, the influence of Azhariyyah Malay male students, as well as the rise of Islam and the Islamic movement. Pertaining to the *rihlah 'ilmiyyah* of Malaysian women to the KBIUA in seeking Islamic studies, they successfully overcame the challenges, dealing with various opinions whether it came from scholars or the local community regarding the needs of women to travel in accordance with time and Islamic guidelines. They were also able to break the social dictation of the Malay community that ideally saw women as housewives and entitled to sit at home and manage the household.

However, the presence of a better education system for women has relatively changed the role of women. Women started to leave domestic seclusion and participate in the public domain, especially in education. Due to that reason, the presence of these women in this aspect over the past three decades has successfully formed a network of Islamic studies for women between Malaysia and Egypt. Besides that, it also

became the starting point for forming a network of Islamic studies for women in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Western countries. The high participation of women studying in Islamic studies was no longer seen as an alien practice. The most important contributions of the KBIUA's graduates were in the development of Islamic studies at various levels through formal and non-formal education. They become the role model for the future generation aside from being a lasting charity in this world and the hereafter. As a summary of the chapter, the contributions of the KBIUA's graduates could be seen in the form of teaching, learning, writing, publication, school management, and involvement in community service through social organisations. They have proven the ability to work on the knowledge that has to be poured out in the form of guidance, results from study and experience in the KBIUA, as well as the development of professionalism as a group of scholars.

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