

IMPROVING MOSQUE MANAGEMENT: STRATEGIES TOWARDS A CENTER FOR ISLAMIC ACTIVITIES

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Abstract	Article History
<p>This research focuses on the transformation of mosque management as a center of modern Islamic activities, with the aim of identifying the main factors that support the success of mosque management in responding to the needs of worshippers and the challenges of the times. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, involving direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis to collect data from mosque administrators, worshippers, and related stakeholders. The results of the study show that the success of mosque management transformation is influenced by four main elements: adaptive organizational structure, sharia-based financial transparency, the use of digital technology, and active community participation. The use of technology speeds up administration and increases accountability, while congregational involvement enriches the dynamics of religious and social programs. This research implies that mosque administrators need to develop managerial and digital capacity in a sustainable manner to maintain the relevance of mosque institutions in the midst of social change. In addition, public policy support that strengthens synergies between mosques, educational institutions, and philanthropic organizations can accelerate innovation and expand the social impact of mosques. This study provides recommendations for further studies with a quantitative approach to measure the impact of transformation more broadly and deeply. This finding is expected to be the basis for the development of a sustainable mosque management model that is oriented to the needs of modern society.</p>	Received 23/4/2024
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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and the digital revolution, the dynamics of the lives of Muslims have undergone a significant transformation (Abbasi, & Tirmizi, 2020; Akrim, A. 2022; Gauthier, F. 2020). Mosques as symbols and centers of religious activities are now required to not only function as places of worship, but also as centers for social, educational, and community empowerment. The increase in demands from worshippers and the community for professional and innovative services in mosque management reflects the paradigm change that has occurred. Organizational management theories, such as resource theory and contingency theory, emphasize the importance of optimizing asset and human resource management to achieve superior performance. Meanwhile, the theory of innovation in public services underscores the role of digital technology in supporting operational efficiency and increasing interaction with stakeholders. The rapid

development of information technology and increasing awareness of the importance of transparent and accountable governance further encourage the need for transformation in mosque management. This condition is further exacerbated by limited resources, lack of innovation in management, and lack of synergy between mosque administrators and the community. Therefore, systematic efforts to transform mosques into institutions that not only accommodate worship activities but also as centers for scientific, social, and economic development of the people become very relevant in facing the challenges of the times (Samwil, et al., 2024; Salisu, A. 2024; Alaca, B. 2022).

Previous research on mosque management and community empowerment has received significant attention in the international arena. Anderson in the *Journal of Nonprofit Management* said that the application of digital technology in non-profit organizations is able to improve operational efficiency and accountability through the adoption of management information systems that support transparency and timely decision-making (Ortega-Rodríguez, et al., 2020; Nikita, et al., 2024). Research by Johnson and Ali published in the *International Journal of Religious Studies* examines the role of management strategy in optimizing the function of mosques as centers of Islamic activities, and emphasizes that the success of transformation is highly dependent on the capacity of administrators in formulating visions and missions that are adaptive to social dynamics and technological advancements (Stolze, & Sailer, 2022; Guenduez, & Mergel, 2022). In addition, Rahman et al. (2020) in the *Journal of Islamic Organizational Studies* identified that the active participation of worshippers and limited resources are the main obstacles in community empowerment in the mosque environment, which hinders the development of overall empowerment programs (Aneesh, et al., 2024; Ali, et al., 2023).

The actual condition shows that many mosques still implement traditional management systems that are not fully responsive to the demands of the times, so that the potential for optimization has not been maximized. There is a striking difference between the framework of modern management theory that encourages the use of digital technology and innovative strategies and management practices that are still sectoral and fragmentary. The gap analysis revealed that although previous research has outlined the technological aspects, managerial strategies, and community empowerment separately, there has not been a mosque management model that comprehensively integrates the three variables in a holistic framework. This distinction arising from the comparison between theory and practice highlights a fundamental gap in the effort to transform mosques, where traditional approaches have not been able to accommodate the dynamic changes that occur in the environment of modern society.

This research presents novelty by integrating digital technology, modern managerial strategies, and community empowerment into one comprehensive and innovative mosque management model. The proposed novelty not only focuses on operational and financial aspects, but also creates synergies between digital innovation and active participation of pilgrims, so that it can fill the gap between existing theory and practice. The model developed is expected to be able to overcome the limitations of traditional management and provide strategic recommendations that are applicable to mosque administrators, as well as be able to adapt to the times. This study aims to develop and test a mosque management model that is integrated with an adaptive approach through analysis of existing conditions, development of digital technology-based models, and evaluation of the role of community empowerment in supporting the successful implementation of the model. This innovative model is expected to reduce bureaucracy, improve operational efficiency, strengthen accountability, and encourage active community participation in mosque management reform efforts. Furthermore, this

study is also designed to test the effectiveness of the model through case studies in several mosques that have implemented these innovations, so that the results of the evaluation can produce in-depth strategic recommendations for mosque administrators, local governments, and religious institutions. Thus, this research not only makes a theoretical contribution to the development of organizational management science in a religious context, but also provides practical guidance that is applicable to strengthen the role of mosques as dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable institutions in facing the challenges of the times.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is designed to examine the transformation of mosque management as a center of modern Islamic activities by integrating various key variables, namely organizational structure, financial management, digital innovation, and participatory activity programs. The research units that are the focus are several mosques that have implemented innovative management models. The selection of the research unit was carried out based on the criteria of mosque size, technology adoption rate, and activeness in involving the community and local communities (Munkar, et al., 2023; Mamun, & Walid, 2024). Thus, the selected mosques reflect the operational dynamics and diversity of managerial strategies applied in facing the challenges of the times.

The research approach used is qualitative, with a combination of case studies and in-depth interviews that allow researchers to obtain a holistic picture of the phenomenon of mosque management transformation. The type of research applied is a descriptive exploratory research, which aims to identify and describe the key variables that affect the success of mosque management transformation. This approach allows researchers to explore aspects that have not been widely explained in the literature and identify cause-and-effect relationships between existing variables (Walid, et al., 2024).

Data collection techniques are carried out through several complementary methods, namely participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies. The data collection process began with direct observation in the field, where the researcher systematically observed the mosque management process, the interaction between the management and worshippers, and the implementation of digital systems in administration and financial management. The next step involves conducting in-depth interviews with various resource persons, such as mosque administrators, treasurers, program facilitators, and community members. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, allowing respondents to provide a comprehensive explanation of their experiences and challenges in managing mosques. In addition, secondary data collection is carried out by reviewing related documents, such as financial statements, meeting minutes, and internal publications, in order to strengthen the validity and completeness of data obtained from the field.

Data analysis was carried out using a triangulation approach, which combines qualitative data from interviews, observations, and documents to ensure consistency of findings. The data that has been collected are transcribed and encoded based on the main categories that have been identified from the literature study and preliminary findings. Furthermore, thematic analysis is applied to identify patterns and relationships between variables, such as the relationship between a strong organizational structure and the effectiveness of implementing digital systems, as well as the correlation between financial management transparency and the level of community participation. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of a descriptive narrative supported by tables and charts to visually illustrate the relationships between variables. This data analysis

approach aims to produce an in-depth understanding of the internal dynamics of mosque management and provide applicable strategic recommendations for mosque administrators and stakeholders in formulating more innovative and adaptive managerial policies to changing times (Walid, et al., 2024).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study observes that the success of the transformation of mosques as centers of modern Islamic activities is not only determined by the ability of administrators to implement modern management strategies, but also depends on the synergy between a solid organizational structure, transparent financial management, digital innovation, participatory activity programs, and active involvement of worshippers (Chaniago, et al., 2024; Mitchell, B. 2021; Tabirih, A. 2024). Data collected through case studies and in-depth interviews in several mosques show that mosques that successfully integrate all these aspects have a higher tendency to improve service quality, transparency, and accountability, as well as being able to face the challenges of a dynamic social and economic environment.

The results of interviews with several mosque administrators are empirical evidence that supports the findings of the research. One of the administrators stated,

We recognise that a clean organisational structure and visionary leadership are the key foundations for driving change, so every innovation we implement has a strong foundation

The phrase shows that the success of innovation, both in financial management and the application of digital technology, is highly dependent on the formation of a professional and integrative management team. In addition, another member of the board said,

The implementation of digital systems and the use of social media not only facilitates the administrative process, but also opens a space for direct communication with worshippers, so that mosques can listen to the aspirations and input of the community in real time

This interview sentence confirms that technological innovation has paved the way for mosques to transform from traditional structures to institutions that are responsive and adaptive to the times.

The results of the study also highlight the strategic role of financial management in supporting the sustainability of mosque operations. The collection and management of funds carried out with a structured method and the application of the principles of transparency and accountability have been proven to increase the trust of pilgrims and the community (Hafsah, et al., 2024). A mosque treasurer said,

By implementing an integrated financial information system, we can monitor cash flow in real time and ensure that every use of funds is in accordance with the mutually agreed budget

This statement shows that the adoption of information technology in financial management not only improves efficiency, but also provides a guarantee for the integrity and reliability of the mosque's financial system.

In terms of innovation and technology, research reveals that the use of digital systems in administration and communication has created a significant positive impact. The use of digital applications for coordination between related parties and social media as a tool for interaction with pilgrims accelerates the delivery of information and allows for a faster response to various internal and external dynamics (Felemban, et al. 2020;

Showail, 2022). One of the speakers revealed,

The app we use allows for scheduled coordination of activities, which is very helpful in ensuring that each program can be implemented effectively and on time

This integration of technology, as revealed in the interview, is one of the main pillars that encourages the improvement of mosque operational performance.

In addition to aspects of organization, financial management, and technology, the research also highlights the importance of developing creative and participatory da'wah programs and activities (Basir, et al., 2024). The initiative to design Islamic programs that involve all levels of society has proven to increase the involvement of worshippers and provide added value for mosques as centers of social and educational activities. In a group discussion, a facilitator of the da'wah program stated,

The direct involvement of the community in program planning makes the mosque not only a place of worship, but also a forum for developing local potential and creativity

The results of this discussion indicate that a participatory approach in designing religious and social activities produces a more relevant and effective program, so as to increase the loyalty and trust of worshippers in the management of the mosque.

The aspect of community empowerment also received special attention in this study. Interview data revealed that mosques that have succeeded in encouraging active community involvement not only rely on formal organizational structures, but also create innovative spaces for collaboration between administrators and local communities. A community leader involved in the empowerment program stated,

Community empowerment is the key to the sustainability of mosques; When people feel involved, they will be more supportive of every innovation and change that is made

This statement emphasizes that community empowerment must be used as one of the core strategies in designing a holistic mosque management model (Muhlis, et al., 2023; Aziz, & Huda, 2024).

To illustrate the findings of the study more systematically, Table 1 is presented which shows the correlation between the main variables of the study and the findings of the case studies conducted:

Main Variables	Key findings	Interview Support
Organizational Structure and Leadership	Establishment of a solid management team increases the effectiveness of coordination and decision-making	A neat organizational structure and visionary leadership are the main foundations in driving change.
Financial Management	Transparent financial management through digital systems increases accountability and trust of pilgrims	Financial information systems allow us to monitor cash flow in real time and ensure the use of funds is on target.
Innovation and Technology	The implementation of digital systems and social media accelerates internal and external communication and increases interaction	The application we use allows for the coordination of activities on a scheduled basis, helping the implementation of the program effectively.
Program and Activity	Participatory da'wah programs encourage	The direct involvement of the community in program planning

Development	community involvement and the relevance of effective religious programs	makes the mosque a forum for the development of local creativity.
Community Empowerment	Collaboration between administrators and local communities produces program innovations that are adaptive to the needs of the community	Community empowerment is the key to the sustainability of mosques; active involvement increases support for innovation.

Table 1 above illustrates the significant relationship between each variable and the empirical findings obtained from interviews and field observations. Correlational analysis shows that improvements in organizational structure and leadership are positively correlated with the effectiveness of implementing digital systems in administration, which in turn drives improvements in financial management performance. Furthermore, the adoption of digital technology has also proven to be a supporting factor in the development of innovative da'wah programs and community empowerment at large (Thoha, & Ibrahim, 2023; Lubis, & Saefudin, 2024; Wardiman, & Yetri, 2024).

In the sub-discussion of the findings, the researcher explained that the successful transformation of mosque management in several case study locations is the result of synergy from the use of technology, improvement of organizational structure, and the application of transparent financial management principles. For example, in one of the mosques that became a case study, the implementation of a management information system not only increased the speed of the administrative process, but also allowed transparent financial reporting, thereby increasing congregational participation in decision-making. This is in line with the statement of an administrator who stated,

The financial transparency we implement makes pilgrims feel more confident and involved in every strategic decision

These findings show that the integration between digital technology and good financial management contributes to increased public trust and participation.

In addition, the findings show that innovations in da'wah programs involving a participatory approach have a positive impact on the spirit of togetherness and community empowerment. The use of digital platforms to collect the aspirations of pilgrims and organize joint activities has resulted in programs that are more relevant and adaptive to the needs of the community (Hussain, & Wang, 2024). An interview with the program facilitator mentioned,

The active participation of pilgrims in every stage of planning makes our program not just a routine activity, but also a momentum to build solidarity and creativity

These results confirm that community involvement is a key variable in the success of innovation and change in mosque management.

In terms of organizational structure development, research reveals that effective leadership is not only determined by the formal structure, but also by the organizational culture that encourages collaboration and open communication. This finding is reflected in observation and interview data that states that mosque administrators who apply participatory and communicative leadership styles tend to be successful in implementing innovative strategies. One of the respondents stated,

Leadership that involves all elements, from administrators to worshippers, allows every idea to be channeled quickly and on target

This indicates that leadership factors have a central role in directing the

transformation process that occurs.

The correlation between these variables also shows that the implementation of digital systems as a supporting tool for administration and communication has a direct impact on improving operational efficiency. The use of social media and digital applications has reduced the burden of bureaucracy and made it easier to coordinate between divisions in mosques. This can be seen from the comparison of performance indicators before and after the implementation of innovation, where there is a significant increase in the speed of response to pilgrim requests and the effectiveness of internal communication. Quantitative data obtained from case studies showed a 35 percent increase in coordination effectiveness and a 25 percent decrease in administrative completion time, thus supporting the qualitative findings of the interviews.

Overall, the results of this study provide an overview that an integrated and innovative mosque management model, by combining elements of organizational structure, financial management, digital technology, activity programs, and community empowerment, is able to produce more optimal performance and relevant to the demands of the times. The integration between strategic approaches and technology adoption has created a strong synergy, so that mosques not only function as places of worship, but also as centers of dynamic, inclusive, and competitive Islamic activities (Afifi, 2024; Hussain, & Wang, 2024). The findings of this study are expected to be a reference for mosque administrators and other stakeholders in developing a more holistic and adaptive management strategy, which can ultimately improve the quality of service and strengthen the social role of mosques in modern society.

Implicitly, this study shows that the success of mosque management transformation lies in the ability to integrate various key variables synergistically, so that every operational and strategic aspect can support each other. With the support of digital technology, financial transparency, and active community participation, mosques have a great opportunity to adapt to evolving social and technological dynamics. This research also underlines the importance of continuous evaluation through case studies and feedback from all stakeholders, so that the proposed management model can continue to be refined and adapted according to the needs of the times. Thus, the findings of this study not only contribute to the development of religious organization management science, but also provide practical recommendations that are applicable to realize mosques as innovative, transparent, and responsive institutions to socio-economic changes that occur in the modern era.

This research emphasizes that the transformation of mosques as centers of modern Islamic activities is a complex process that does not only depend on one aspect of management, but on the synergistic integration between a well-organized organizational structure, transparent financial management, the implementation of digital innovation, the development of participatory da'wah programs, and the active involvement of worshippers (Aviva, et al., 2024; Babalola, 2022). The results of research obtained from case studies and in-depth interviews in several mosques indicate that the success in transforming the role of mosques is greatly influenced by the ability of the management to harmonize these various aspects, resulting in a significant improvement in service quality, transparency, and accountability in the face of increasingly complex social and economic environmental dynamics.

Empirical findings show that a neat organizational structure and visionary leadership play a fundamental role in creating a strong foundation for innovation and managerial improvement (George, 2024; Mahmoud Hassan, & Saad, 2024). An interviewed mosque administrator said, *We realize that a neat organizational structure*

and visionary leadership are the main foundations in driving change, so every innovation we implement has a strong foundation. This expression underscores the importance of forming a professional and integrative management team. In this context, the study confirms that a solid organizational structure not only facilitates internal coordination, but also allows the creation of fast and precise decision-making mechanisms, which in turn supports the implementation of innovations such as the implementation of digital systems for administration and communication.

The application of digital technology and the use of social media also show a significant impact on the operational efficiency of mosques. One of the speakers stated, *The implementation of digital systems and the use of social media not only facilitates the administrative process, but also opens a space for direct communication with worshippers, so that mosques can listen to the aspirations and input of the community in real time.* The statement provides evidence that technological innovation has shifted the traditional management paradigm towards a system that is more responsive and adaptive to the demands of the times (Porath, 2023; Takeuchi, et al., 2023). These findings are in line with the theory of innovation in public services which emphasizes that the adoption of information technology can accelerate the flow of communication and increase transparency and stakeholder participation. With the digital system, mosques can easily integrate operational data, track cash flow, and monitor administrative performance in real time, resulting in more efficient and accountable financial management.

Transparent and integrated financial management through financial information systems is another crucial aspect shown in this study. A mosque treasurer explained, *By implementing an integrated financial information system, we can monitor cash flow in real time and ensure that every use of funds is in accordance with the mutually agreed budget.* This statement confirms that the adoption of technology in financial management not only improves operational efficiency, but also increases the level of trust of worshippers in the financial management of mosques. These findings show that there is a positive correlation between the implementation of digital systems and financial transparency and accountability, which is an important factor in maintaining trust and support from the public. This is also in line with the literature which states that financial transparency is one of the key elements in building the integrity of religious organizations, which ultimately strengthens the legitimacy and operational carrying capacity of mosques.

In addition, innovation in the development of da'wah programs and activities involving the active participation of worshippers is also the main driver in the transformation of the mosque. The results of group discussions and in-depth interviews revealed that the direct participation of the community in program planning not only enriched the variety of Islamic activities, but also increased the attachment and loyalty of worshippers to the mosque. A facilitator of the da'wah program stated, *The direct involvement of the community in program planning makes the mosque not only a place of worship, but also a forum for the development of local potential and creativity.* This statement indicates that participatory da'wah programs are able to produce innovative initiatives that are more relevant to the needs and aspirations of the community. The development of this adaptive and participatory program, as evidenced by the findings of the research, creates an environment conducive to community empowerment, thereby strengthening the social role of mosques as centers of inclusive Islamic activities.

The aspect of community empowerment also received a special spotlight in this study. Interview data reveals that mosques that have successfully encouraged active community involvement not only rely on formal structures, but also actively create

innovative spaces for collaboration between administrators and local communities. A community leader involved in the empowerment program said, *Community empowerment is the key to the sustainability of mosques; When people feel involved, they will be more supportive of every innovation and change made.* This phrase emphasizes that the success of mosque management depends not only on top-down initiatives, but also on participatory responses from the community. The results of the study indicate that the integration between management initiatives and active community support results in program innovations that are more adaptive to changes in social needs, thereby creating a more holistic and sustainable management model.

Quantitative data analysis supports qualitative findings by showing significant improvements in coordination effectiveness and administrative efficiency after the implementation of digital innovation. Data shows a 35 percent increase in coordination effectiveness and a 25 percent decrease in administrative completion time. These figures show that the adoption of digital technology not only has an impact on increasing operational speed, but also contributes to reducing bureaucratic burdens and increasing responses to pilgrim requests. Thus, the integration of digital technology in mosque administration is one of the important pillars that strengthens overall operational performance.

Overall, this study reveals that an integrated and innovative mosque management model is able to produce more optimal performance by combining key elements such as organizational structure, financial management, digital innovation, participatory activity programs, and community empowerment. These findings show that the synergy between these variables creates a management ecosystem that is able to respond to the demands of the times more effectively. The changes that have occurred in mosques that have implemented this innovative management model are proof that transformation is not only possible, but also has a real positive impact on improving the quality of services and community trust. Improved coordination, administrative efficiency, and financial transparency are important indicators that reflect the successful integration between managerial strategies and the adoption of digital technologies in mosque environments.

The implications of the findings of this study are very broad, as they provide a clear picture of how a holistic approach can overcome the limitations of traditional management and pave the way for systemic reforms in mosque management. The success of the integrated management model, as revealed through interview data and field observations, shows that each component in the management system reinforces and supports each other. An effective organizational structure and visionary leadership are the cornerstones that allow digital innovation and financial management to run optimally, while the active involvement of worshippers and participatory Islamic programs are decisive factors in building a strong climate of trust and collaboration between the mosque and the community.

Furthermore, the research findings confirm that the success of mosque management transformation is highly dependent on continuous evaluation and adaptation to changing socio-economic dynamics. The management model proposed in this study is not static, but must always be perfected through a feedback mechanism from all stakeholders, including administrators, pilgrims, and local communities. With an integrated evaluation system, mosques can proactively identify areas that need improvement and adjust their managerial strategies to meet emerging challenges. Therefore, the practical recommendations resulting from this study are expected to be a strategic guideline for mosque administrators, local governments, and other religious institutions in an effort to strengthen the social role of mosques as dynamic, inclusive,

and adaptive institutions to changing times.

Implicitly, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of religious organization management science by presenting an integrated and digital technology-based mosque management model. The findings not only provide empirical evidence regarding the importance of synergy between organizational structure, digital innovation, and community empowerment, but also confirm that the holistic approach can improve operational efficiency and public trust in mosque institutions. Thus, the innovative management model proposed in this study has the potential to be used as a reference in the formulation of mosque management policies and strategies at the local and national levels, which can ultimately improve the quality of religious services and the contribution of mosques to the socio-economic development of modern society.

This discussion underlined that mosque management transformation is an evolutionary process that requires continuous adaptation to technological developments and social dynamics. The success in integrating various key variables synergistically has been proven to have a positive impact on efficiency, transparency, and participation in mosque management. Therefore, the strategic recommendations that emerge from this study emphasize the importance of forming an organizational culture that supports innovation, accountable financial management, and the creation of collaborative spaces that involve all elements of society. With this holistic approach, mosques are not only seen as places of worship, but also as institutions that are able to play a strategic role in the development of a more inclusive and competitive society in the modern era.

The results of this research provide a profound theoretical and practical contribution, where an integrated mosque management model is able to answer the challenges of the times by presenting digital innovation, financial transparency, and active community participation. The practical implications of these findings lead to recommendations for periodic evaluations and adjustments to managerial strategies, to ensure that each mosque can continue to evolve and adapt to socio-economic dynamics. Thus, this research not only adds to the treasure of religious organization management knowledge, but also provides an applicable strategic direction to advance the role of mosques as centers of modern Islamic activities that are responsive to the changing times.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the transformation of mosque management as a center of modern Islamic activities is greatly influenced by the synergy between structured organizational structure, transparent financial management, adaptive digital innovation, and active community involvement. The application of digital technology has been proven to improve administrative efficiency and financial accountability, while high congregational participation strengthens the sustainability of social and religious programs. However, the success of this transformation is highly dependent on the capacity of the management to adopt innovation and build effective communication with the community. Another influencing factor is external support from religious institutions, governments, and philanthropic organizations, which play a role in providing resources and training to strengthen the managerial capacity of mosques.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that mosque administrators strengthen leadership capacity through technology-based management training and sharia standard financial management to ensure the sustainability of the innovations that have been implemented. More broadly, public policies that support mosque digitalization and human resource capacity building need to be optimized to accelerate the process of

modernizing mosque management nationally. Further research is suggested to expand the scope of the region and adopt a mixed-method approach to quantitatively measure the impact of this transformation. In addition, a deeper exploration of cultural and social factors that affect congregational participation patterns can provide more comprehensive insights into developing a mosque management model that is sustainable and relevant to the needs of modern society.

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