

OPTIMIZATION OF THE HAJJ AND UMRAH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PILGRIM SERVICES

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Abstract

The organization of Hajj and Umrah is one of the important responsibilities of the Indonesian government in serving Muslims. With the number of pilgrims increasing every year, optimizing the management system is key in ensuring excellent service quality. The research method used is literature. The results show that the implementation of integrated information technology, standardization of operational procedures, increased officer competence, and a pilgrim-focused service approach are key factors in optimizing the management system. Efficiency is achieved through automation of administrative processes, better data management, and more effective inter-agency coordination. Meanwhile, service effectiveness is improved through the provision of comprehensive information, quality ritual guidance, adequate health services, and a responsive complaint handling system. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of continuous evaluation and improvement in the Hajj and Umrah management system to face dynamic challenges. Recommendations for future research include comparative studies with other countries and analysis of the long-term impact of system optimization on pilgrim satisfaction and Indonesia's image internationally.

Keywords: Optimization, Hajj Management System, Umrah, Efficiency, Effectiveness of Jamaah Services.

INTRODUCTION

Hajj and Umrah are one of the pillars of Islam that have high spiritual value for Muslims around the world. Every year, millions of Muslims from various countries, including Indonesia, travel to the Holy Land to perform these acts of worship. However, with the increasing number of pilgrims from year to year, the organization of Hajj and Umrah faces various complex challenges, especially in terms of management and service. (Putri et al., 2020).

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Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, faces significant challenges in the management of Hajj and Umrah. According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, the number of Indonesian hajj pilgrims reaches around 200,000 people per year, not including umrah pilgrims, which can reach more than 1 million people per year. This figure shows the large scale of operations that must be managed efficiently and effectively. (Khan & AlGhamdi, 2024)..

Despite the government's efforts to improve the quality of Hajj and Umrah, there are still various problems that need to be addressed. Some of the issues that often arise include: The registration and administration system is complicated and time-consuming, the imbalance between the available Hajj quota and the number of applicants, causing long waiting times, services that are not yet optimal, both in the country and in Saudi Arabia, transportation and accommodation management that is sometimes less efficient, guidance and guidance of pilgrims that are not evenly distributed and comprehensive, and financial management that requires better transparency and accountability. (Ela, 2022).

In addition, the development of information and communication technology opens up new opportunities and challenges in the management of Hajj and Umrah. On the one hand, technology can simplify administrative processes and services. On the other hand, it requires adaptation and significant investment to implement a comprehensive technology-based system. (Binsawad & Albahar, 2022)..

The digital era brings significant challenges in the management of Hajj and Umrah. One of the main challenges is the need to integrate complex information systems, including online registration, pilgrim database management, as well as logistics and accommodation coordination. Data security is a crucial issue, given the sensitivity of pilgrims' personal and financial information. (Yuliansyah et al., 2024). In addition, the digital divide among prospective pilgrims, especially those from remote areas or the elderly, may pose barriers to access and use of digital services. Other challenges include the need for large investments in technological infrastructure and training of human resources to manage sophisticated digital systems. (Basiouni, 2020).

On the other hand, the digital era also opens up great opportunities to improve the efficiency and quality of Hajj and Umrah services. Digital technology enables automation of administrative processes, such as online registration and status updates, which can reduce waiting times and increase transparency. Integrated information management systems can facilitate faster and more accurate decision-making by organizers. Utilization of big data and analytics can assist in more efficient planning and resource allocation. (Anwar et al., 2023). Mobile technology and applications can provide real-time information to pilgrims, enhancing their experience during worship. Furthermore, digital platforms can be used to provide pre-departure guidance and education that is more interactive and accessible, improving pilgrims' readiness for worship. (Wardana et al., 2023)..

In a global context, the organization of Hajj and Umrah is also influenced by external factors such as the geopolitical situation, Saudi Arabia's policies as the host, and international health and safety standards, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. (Lutfi et al., 2020).

Given the complexity and importance of organizing Hajj and Umrah, a comprehensive study is needed to optimize the existing management system. This optimization is expected to increase operational efficiency while increasing the effectiveness of services to pilgrims. With an optimized management system, it is expected to provide a more meaningful and satisfying worship experience for pilgrims, as well as improve Indonesia's image in organizing Hajj and Umrah at the international level. (Maulid & Amirsyah, 2021).

Based on this background, this study aims to examine and formulate strategies for optimizing the Hajj and Umrah management system, with a focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of pilgrimage services.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses literature review. Literature research method, also known as literature study or literature review, is a research approach that focuses on collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing information from various written sources relevant to the research topic. (Hidayat, 2009); (Afiyanti, 2008).

Results and Discussion

Concept of Hajj and Umrah

Hajj and Umrah are two important rituals of worship in Islam that are performed in the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Both have deep spiritual significance for Muslims around the world. Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be performed once in a lifetime for Muslims who are physically and financially able. Meanwhile, Umrah is a sunnah act of worship and can be performed at any time of the year. (Taufikurrahman et al., 2024)..

Hajj is performed at a specific time, in the month of Dhul Hijjah in the Islamic calendar. The rituals of Hajj include a complex set of activities and take about five to six days. Some of the main rituals in Hajj include Tawaf (circumambulating the Kaaba), Sa'i (running between the hills of Safa and Marwah), Wukuf in Arafat, stoning the jumrah in Mina, and the slaughter of sacrificial animals. Each stage in the Hajj has deep spiritual and historical significance, reminding Muslims of the sacrifice and obedience of Prophet Ibrahim and his family. (Hassan et al., 2022)..

Umrah, on the other hand, is a simpler act of worship and can be performed in a shorter period of time, usually taking a few hours to a few days. The main rituals in Umrah include Tawaf and Sa'i, as well as Ihram (putting on special clothes and intending to perform the act of worship). Although not as obligatory as Hajj, Umrah is still

considered a highly rewarding act of worship and is often referred to as the "little Hajj". Many Muslims perform Umrah as spiritual preparation before performing Hajj, or as a way to deepen their faith and connection with Allah outside of the Hajj season. (Aldahawi, 2021).

Hajj and Umrah Management System

The Hajj and Umrah Management System is a complex and structured mechanism developed to manage and organize the pilgrimage of millions of Muslims to the holy land each year. (Firdos et al., 2023).. This system involves various aspects, ranging from registration of prospective pilgrims, quota management, health checks, provision of accommodation, transportation, to worship guidance. The main purpose of this system is to ensure the safety, comfort, and smooth implementation of Hajj and Umrah for all pilgrims. (Auliyaa et al., n.d.).

At the national level, the government of each Muslim country usually has a specialized agency or ministry responsible for managing Hajj and Umrah affairs. These agencies are tasked with coordinating various aspects of preparation, including the registration of prospective pilgrims, the provision of pre-departure guidance and training, and the processing of travel documents. They also work closely with the authorities in Saudi Arabia to organize the quota of pilgrims, provide accommodation, and ensure the availability of health services during the pilgrimage. (Abonomi, 2022).

Information technology plays an increasingly important role in modern Hajj and Umrah Management Systems. Various applications and digital platforms have been developed to ease the process of registration, scheduling, and monitoring of pilgrims. An integrated database system allows authorities to track and manage pilgrims' information in real-time, improving efficiency and security. In addition, the use of technologies such as electronic wristbands and mobile applications assist pilgrims in navigating the holy sites and facilitate communication with officials in case of emergencies. (Muneeza & Mustapha, 2021).

Another important aspect of the Hajj and Umrah Management System is international collaboration. As Hajj and Umrah involves pilgrims from various countries, close coordination is required between the government of Saudi Arabia and the pilgrims' home countries. This includes negotiating annual quotas, standardizing health and security procedures, and exchanging information on the latest policies and regulations. This international cooperation is also important in dealing with emergency situations or crises that may arise during the implementation of worship, as seen in the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the implementation of Hajj and Umrah globally.

Efficiency and Effectiveness of Hajj and Umrah Management Services

Efficiency and effectiveness in Hajj and Umrah management services are crucial aspects that continue to be the focus of improvement for the organizers. Efficiency refers to the optimal use of resources to achieve the desired results, while effectiveness relates to the extent to which service objectives can be achieved. In the context of Hajj and Umrah, this means providing services that meet the needs of pilgrims by using available resources wisely, both in terms of time, energy, and cost. (Ilias et al., 2022)..

One of the efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness is through the implementation of integrated information technology. The online registration system, for example, has significantly accelerated administrative processes and reduced long queues at service offices. The use of a centralized database allows quick access to pilgrims' information, facilitates coordination between related agencies, and speeds up decision-making. In addition, mobile applications for pilgrims can provide real-time information on schedules, locations, and worship guides, increasing the independence of pilgrims and reducing the workload of officials. (Lubis et al., 2021).

Improving the quality of human resources is also key in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of services. Intensive training for Hajj officers, both in the country and in Saudi Arabia, can improve their competence in handling various situations. Standardization of service procedures and implementation of quality management systems such as ISO 9001 can ensure consistency in service quality. Periodic evaluation and collection of feedback from pilgrims is also important to continuously improve aspects of the service that are still lacking. (Febriansyah et al., 2024).

Good coordination between the various parties involved in organizing Hajj and Umrah also contributes to increased efficiency and effectiveness. This includes cooperation between the ministry of religion, ministry of health, immigration, airlines, and authorities in Saudi Arabia. Synchronizing policies and procedures can eliminate overlapping tasks, speed up processes, and reduce confusion among pilgrims. (Felemban et al., 2020). In addition, the development of early warning systems to anticipate potential problems and careful contingency planning can improve service responsiveness, especially in the face of emergency situations or sudden changes. (MAJID et al., n.d.)..

Information Technology in Hajj and Umrah Management

Information technology (IT) has become an integral part of Hajj and Umrah management, transforming various aspects of organizing this holy worship to be more efficient and effective. IT implementation starts from the registration process to the return of pilgrims, encompassing various integrated systems and applications. One prime example is the online registration system that allows prospective pilgrims to register from anywhere, reducing long queues and speeding up the administrative

process. The system also facilitates data verification and payment, and assists in quota planning and grouping of pilgrims. (Zakiruddin, 2024).

A centralized database forms the backbone of pilgrim information management. This system stores and manages the personal, health, accommodation, and travel data of each pilgrim. With this database, coordination between related agencies becomes smoother, decision-making is faster, and tracking the status of pilgrims is easier. In addition, biometric technologies such as fingerprints and facial scans are starting to be applied for pilgrim identification, increasing security and speeding up the immigration process. (Aljohani et al., 2022)..

Mobile applications for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims have become a very useful tool. These apps provide real-time information on worship schedules, maps of important locations, ritual guidance, and important notifications. Some apps even come with location tracking features that help pilgrims not get lost in crowded places. For organizers, similar applications help in monitoring the movement of pilgrims, transportation management, and coordination of officers in the field. (Chulaivi et al., 2024)..

Information technology also plays an important role in the safety and health aspects of pilgrims. Electronic health monitoring systems allow real-time monitoring of pilgrims' health conditions, especially for those with special conditions. In emergency situations, mass notification systems can be used to quickly disseminate important information to all pilgrims. (Ahdari, 2021). In addition, the use of big data and analytics helps in the prediction and prevention of potential problems, such as overcrowding in certain locations or pilgrims' health trends. With the continuous development of technology, the future of Hajj and Umrah management will be increasingly underpinned by digital innovation, improving the quality of service and the spiritual experience of pilgrims. (Sabr et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the development of information technology in Hajj and Umrah management continues to experience innovation. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) began to be integrated into various aspects of organizing worship. For example, AI systems can be used to optimize the allocation of pilgrims' residences based on various factors such as age, health conditions, and preferences. Meanwhile, IoT sensors can be installed at various locations to monitor crowd density, ambient temperature, and air quality, assisting organizers in taking precautionary measures or quick countermeasures if needed. (Susdarwono, 2023).

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are also being utilized in pilgrim training and orientation. These technologies allow prospective pilgrims to simulate Hajj and Umrah rituals, as well as familiarize themselves with the environment in Makkah and Madinah before departure. This not only improves pilgrims' readiness, but can also reduce confusion and errors while performing the worship service. (Rizk, 2024).

Blockchain technology is beginning to be explored to improve transparency and security in various transactions related to Hajj and Umrah, including payment of travel expenses, management of pilgrims' funds, and document verification. This technology can help prevent fraud and increase trust between pilgrims, travel agencies, and organizing authorities. (Rouf et al., 2023).

In conclusion, information technology has brought significant changes in Hajj and Umrah management, improving efficiency, security, and convenience for both pilgrims and organizers. From online registration systems to mobile applications, from centralized databases to biometric technology, IT has become an important instrument in dealing with the logistical and administrative challenges of organizing this large-scale pilgrimage.

With the continuous development of innovations such as AI, IoT, VR/AR, and blockchain, the future of Hajj and Umrah management will be increasingly integrated with digital technology. This will not only improve operational efficiency, but will also enrich the pilgrims' spiritual experience. However, it is important to remember that technology is just a tool. The spiritual essence of Hajj and Umrah should still be the main focus, with technology acting as a facilitator to allow pilgrims to focus more on this aspect of their worship. A balance between the utilization of technology and the maintenance of spiritual values will be the key to successful Hajj and Umrah management in this digital era.

Regulations and Policies for Hajj and Umrah

Regulations and policies for organizing Hajj and Umrah are crucial aspects in ensuring the smoothness, safety, and comfort of worship for pilgrims. In Indonesia, the organization of Hajj and Umrah is regulated in Law Number 8 of 2019 concerning the Implementation of Hajj and Umrah. This law is a comprehensive legal basis, regulating various aspects ranging from registration, guidance, services, to the protection of pilgrims. This regulation also regulates the roles and responsibilities of various related parties, including the government, travel agencies, and the pilgrims themselves. (Mohammed & Yaqub, 2024).

One of the important policies in organizing Hajj is the quota system. The Indonesian government, like other Muslim countries, gets an annual quota from the Saudi Arabian government for the number of pilgrims who can perform the Hajj. This quota is then divided to the provincial and district/city levels based on the proportion of the Muslim population. A waiting list system is implemented to manage the queue of prospective pilgrims who exceed the quota, with the principle of first come first served. This policy aims to ensure fairness and transparency in the management of Hajj opportunities for citizens. (Taufikurrahman et al., 2024)..

For Umrah, the Indonesian government applies a more flexible policy considering that this worship can be performed throughout the year. However, there

are still strict regulations, especially related to Umrah travel organizers. Travel agencies that wish to organize Umrah must meet the requirements and obtain an official permit from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This aims to protect pilgrims from fraud and ensure adequate service standards. The government also sets reference fee standards to prevent practices that harm pilgrims. (Abonomi, 2022).

In recent years, the policy of organizing Hajj and Umrah has also paid more attention to the health and safety aspects of pilgrims. This has been further tightened after the COVID-19 pandemic, where the governments of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia implemented strict health protocols. This policy includes vaccination requirements, more comprehensive pre-departure health checks, as well as the implementation of physical distancing and the use of masks during worship. This kind of policy adaptation demonstrates regulatory flexibility in the face of global challenges, while still prioritizing the safety and health of pilgrims. (Hakeem, 2024).

In addition to the aspects mentioned, the regulations and policies for organizing Hajj and Umrah also include transparent and accountable financial management. The Indonesian government has implemented a deposit system for the cost of organizing the Hajj (BPIH) which is managed in the endowment fund (DAU). This system aims to optimize the management of pilgrims' funds and provide benefits not only for the implementation of Hajj but also for the benefit of Muslims more broadly. The policy also includes strict supervision of the management of these funds to prevent misuse and ensure transparency. (Abidin et al., 2023)..

Another aspect of concern in the regulation is improving the quality of guidance and guidance of pilgrims. The government requires prospective Hajj and Umrah pilgrims to follow manasik guidance and other preparations. This aims to ensure that pilgrims have sufficient understanding of the procedures of worship, conditions in the holy land, as well as other practical aspects. The policy also includes standardization of guidance materials and methods to ensure consistent quality throughout Indonesia. (Albahar et al., 2023)..

In its development, the regulations and policies for organizing Hajj and Umrah are also increasingly paying attention to aspects of information technology. The government has developed an integrated Hajj information and management system that enables more efficient management of pilgrims' data, from registration to repatriation. The use of this technology also facilitates better communication between pilgrims, families, and organizers, as well as increasing transparency in various aspects of the implementation of worship. (Alshaibi, 2024).

In conclusion, the regulations and policies for organizing Hajj and Umrah in Indonesia are a complex and dynamic system, which continues to evolve to respond to the challenges and needs of the times. The main focus is to ensure the organization of worship that is safe, comfortable, and in accordance with Islamic law, while still paying attention to aspects of justice, transparency, and accountability. Through various

policies covering legal, administrative, financial, health, and technological aspects, the government strives to continuously improve the quality of services to Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. However, as with other public policies, these regulations need to be continuously evaluated and refined to face new challenges and meet the evolving expectations of the community.

Conclusion

Optimizing the Hajj and Umrah management system is a crucial step in improving the quality of service to pilgrims. Through the implementation of an efficient and effective management system, the implementation of Hajj and Umrah can be carried out in a more organized, transparent manner, and meet high service standards. This will not only have an impact on pilgrims' satisfaction, but also on improving Indonesia's image as the largest Hajj and Umrah sending country in the world.

Efficiency in the Hajj and Umrah management system is achieved through the utilization of integrated information and communication technology. The use of an integrated information system allows for more accurate management of pilgrim data, faster administrative processes, and better coordination between the various parties involved in organizing the worship. This efficiency in turn results in time and resource savings, and reduces the potential for human error in the management process.

The effectiveness of pilgrimage services is enhanced through an approach that focuses on the needs and satisfaction of pilgrims. This includes the provision of comprehensive and easily accessible information, quality ritual guidance, adequate health services, and responsive complaint handling. In addition, improving the competence of Hajj officers and standardizing operational procedures also contribute significantly to service effectiveness, ensuring that every pilgrim has a meaningful and satisfying worship experience.

In conclusion, optimizing the Hajj and Umrah management system through improving the efficiency and effectiveness of pilgrimage services is a continuous effort that requires commitment and collaboration from all stakeholders. By continuing to evaluate, innovate, and improve in various aspects of implementation, it is hoped that the Hajj and Umrah management system in Indonesia can become the best model that not only meets international standards, but also reflects Islamic values in public services. This effort will ultimately make a positive contribution to the spiritual experience of pilgrims and increase the dignity of the Indonesian nation in the eyes of the world.

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