
Optimization of Hajj and Umrah Services: Strategic Management of Semarang Islamic Center Hajj Dormitory

Wahid Akbar Ismuhadi Harahap¹, Anasom²

Abstract:

Hajj and Umrah are one of the pillars of Islam that must be carried out by Muslims who have met the requirements. Semarang Islamic Center Hajj Dormitory is one of the transit dormitories in Indonesia, especially Central Java. This study aims to evaluate the strategic management of the Semarang Islamic Centre Hajj Dormitory in optimizing the services of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. This dormitory will be used for the first time in the 2023 Hajj season. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach. The data collection techniques used are interviews, observation, and documentation. The results showed that the Hajj Dormitory has formulated a clear strategy, established cooperation, and conducted certification and training for staff. The Hajj Dormitory is supervised by the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Central Java and periodic monitoring is carried out. There are still obstacles in services, such as lack of human resources, facilities and infrastructure, coordination between related institutions, and congestion during the return of pilgrims. Based on the results of the research, several things are recommended to optimize the services of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims at the Islamic Centre Semarang Hajj Dormitory, including improving the quality and quantity of human resources, completing the facilities and infrastructure of the Hajj dormitory, and improving coordination between related institutions. By continuing to evaluate and improve, the Islamic Center Semarang Hajj Dormitory is expected to become a quality embarkation Hajj dormitory and provide the best service for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.

Keywords: *Hajj Dormitory, Strategic Management, Pilgrims Service*

1. Introduction

Hajj and Umrah are one of the pillars of Islam that must be performed by Muslims who have met the requirements. The implementation of Hajj and Umrah in Indonesia is organized by the government through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Every year in Indonesia, the implementation of the Hajj is an activity that takes place regularly. Its implementation has a very complex dimension, involving many parties and involving various aspects (Alhabaibeh et al., 2020). Therefore, professionalism in organizing the Hajj is a must. The Hajj Dormitory is a service unit for organizing the Hajj within the Ministry of Religion which is under and responsible to the Director General of Hajj and Umrah. The Hajj Dormitory functions as a place of residence, a place of worship, and a place for organizing worship during the departure and return of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. Hajj Dormitories are scattered in almost all parts of Indonesia in each province which is a place to accommodate Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. Various efforts have been optimized to provide the best services and facilities for the convenience of pilgrims (Suryawan et al., 2023).

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia. Wahidakbar324@gmail.com

² Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia, anasom@walisongo.ac.id

Strategic management is an art (skill), technique and also a science to formulate, implement and evaluate and supervise various functional decisions of organizations (business and non-business) which are always influenced by the internal and external environment, which is constantly changing so as to provide the ability for the organization to achieve its goals as expected (Zulfikarijah 2023; Alhadawi 2021). The quality of Hajj hostel services is an important thing to pay attention to. This is because the service of the Hajj hostel can affect the satisfaction of pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims. The satisfaction of pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims can have a positive impact on the image of the government and the organization of Hajj and Umrah as a whole. Semarang Islamic Center Hajj Dormitory is one of the transit status Hajj dormitories in Indonesia, especially in Central Java. This dormitory has a capacity of up to 360 pilgrims or the equivalent of 1 group of pilgrims. This dormitory is located at Jalan Seroja No. 1, Kalibanteng Kulon Village, West Semarang District, Semarang City, Central Java.

However, because it is still in a new condition and will only be used for the first time in the 2023 Hajj season, in its implementation the services provided by the Hajj hostel are certainly still not fully optimal. This can be seen by the various obstacles faced by Hajj and Umrah pilgrims while in the hostel. Therefore, it becomes a problem that needs to be studied and re-evaluated. Through this research, it is hoped that it can provide information regarding how strategic management will be carried out by the hostel to provide optimal and comfortable services and facilities in accordance with what has become a vision and in accordance with what is expected by pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims.

2. Methodology

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study design. Data were collected through interviews with the head of the hostel, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with the head of the Hajj hostel, hostel staff and pilgrims to obtain information about the general description of the Hajj hostel, the services provided, and the obstacles faced. Observations were made to see firsthand the condition of the Hajj dormitory and the services provided to pilgrims. This research uses qualitative descriptive research methods. According to Rukajat (2018) Qualitative descriptive research is research that seeks to describe phenomena that occur realistically, real and actual, because in this study a systematic, factual and precise description or description process is carried out regarding the facts, characteristics and relationships of the phenomena being studied. This study aims to determine how the implementation of strategic management of the Semarang Islamic Center Hajj Dormitory in order to optimize the services of pilgrims and Umrah pilgrims. The reason for choosing this location is because the Hajj Dormitory is still in the status of a transit Hajj dormitory and has a new building and is used for the first time to serve pilgrims in the 2023 Hajj season. The infrastructure at the Hajj hostel and the various services provided must of course be in accordance with what is needed by the pilgrims when using the Hajj hostel. Based on this information, this research is conducted with a descriptive research model that will provide an overview of how

efforts have been made by the Semarang Hajj Dormitory in relation to providing the best service for pilgrims. This research refers to the theory of strategic management popularized by Fred R David where strategic management is divided into three stages, namely strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation.

3. Empirical Findings/Result and Discussion

Strategic Management

Strategic management is the process used by an organization to set its goals, develop strategies to achieve those goals, and implement and evaluate those strategies. Strategic management can be used to optimize the services of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims at the Hajj hostel. Strategic management, according to Fred R. David (2013), is a process consisting of three main stages:

1. Strategy Formulation

At this stage, it is important to involve various parties in the organization, such as top management, employees, and other stakeholders, to ensure that the formulated strategy can be accepted and implemented properly. This stage focuses on setting organizational goals and developing strategies to achieve them. Here are some steps in strategy formulation: Vision and Mission, namely setting a clear and directed vision and mission of the organization. The vision describes the future goals of the organization, while the mission describes the goals and role of the organization in achieving the vision. Environmental Analysis, namely conducting an analysis of the internal and external environment to understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by the organization. Goal Setting is setting organizational goals that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) and aligned with the vision and mission. Strategy Formulation is developing the right strategy to achieve organizational goals. This strategy can be a generic strategy, differentiation strategy, or focus strategy. Strategy Selection is choosing the most appropriate strategy and in accordance with the conditions of the organization.

2. Strategy Implementation

Effective strategy implementation requires clear communication and good coordination between various departments and work units in the organization. This stage focuses on implementing the strategy that has been set in the previous stage. Here are some steps in strategy implementation: Organizational Structure, namely adjusting the organizational structure to support strategy implementation. Human Resources, which ensures the availability of competent human resources who have the expertise needed to implement the strategy. Resource Allocation i.e. allocating organizational resources effectively and efficiently to support strategy implementation. Leadership is providing strong and visionary leadership to direct and motivate organizational members in implementing the strategy. Organizational Culture is creating an organizational culture that supports strategy implementation.

3. Strategy Evaluation

Strategy evaluation must be carried out periodically to ensure that the implemented strategy is still relevant and effective in achieving organizational goals. This stage focuses on assessing the effectiveness of the strategies that have been implemented. Here are some steps in strategy evaluation: Performance Measurement, which measures the organization's performance in achieving the goals that have been set. Gap Analysis is comparing actual performance with expected performance and identifying gaps. Correction and Adjustment, namely making corrections and adjustments to the strategies that have been implemented based on the evaluation results. Learning is learning and taking lessons from the evaluation results to improve organizational performance in the future (Masruroh et al., 2024).

Factors Affecting Strategic Management Success:

The success of strategic management is influenced by a number of key factors. First, strong and visionary leadership plays a critical role in guiding the organization towards achieving its strategic goals. Leadership that is able to inspire, provide direction, and motivate teams can help drive the necessary change and innovation. Next, a supportive organizational culture strengthens the alignment between vision, values, and practices within the organization, creating an environment where strategies can be effectively executed (Mahfudz et al., 2023). Then, the availability of adequate resources, be it financial, human, or technological, is a necessary foundation for successful strategy implementation. Finally, effective communication and good coordination among all members of the organization help ensure a common understanding of goals, roles, and responsibilities, and reduce the likelihood of obstacles in strategy implementation. By considering and integrating these factors, organizations have a greater chance of achieving success in strategic management.

The Importance of Strategic Management

Strategic management plays an important role in guiding an organization to success. With strategic management, organizations can set clear directions and goals, so that all members of the organization have the same understanding of the vision and mission to be achieved. In addition, strategic management also helps increase the organization's chances of achieving these goals by formulating effective and targeted strategies (Showail 2022). By paying attention to the optimal use of resources, strategic management helps organizations to allocate time, energy, and finance efficiently. In addition, organizations that implement strategic management will be better prepared to face changes and challenges that may arise, because they already have a structured plan and can adjust to a changing environment. This can also increase the organization's competitiveness in a competitive market. Thus, strategic management is a solid foundation for organizational success and growth (Perdana et al., 2024).

Hajj and Umrah Services

Hajj and Umrah services are a series of services provided to Hajj and Umrah pilgrims from the beginning of their departure until they return to their homeland. The following is a detailed explanation of some aspects of the services that are usually provided:

Accommodation Services: This covers the places of stay or lodging for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims during their stay in Mecca and Medina. This accommodation is usually in the form of dormitories, hotels, or other lodging places tailored to the needs and number of pilgrims.

Transportation Services: This service covers transportation from the place of origin of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims to the holy land (Mecca and Medina) and vice versa, as well as transportation within cities or between cities in Saudi Arabia. This includes arrangements for flights, buses, or other transportation required during the Hajj and Umrah journey.

Catering Services: This involves the provision of food and beverages for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims during their stay in the holy land. This service includes meals that are tailored to the dietary needs and eating habits of the pilgrims as well as ensuring the availability of food that is halal and in accordance with Islamic religious requirements.

Health Services: This service covers health facilities and medical care for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. This includes health centers, medical clinics, and emergency services available around the places of worship and pilgrims' accommodation.

Worship Services: This covers the provision of facilities and arrangements for the performance of the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage, including timing and location arrangements for the performance of acts of worship such as tawaf, sa'i, and wukuf in Arafat.

Hajj Manasik Guidance Services: This service involves providing guidance to Hajj and Umrah pilgrims on how to perform the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage, including procedures, prayers, and procedures to be followed during their stay in the holy land. This entire set of services is designed to ensure that Hajj and Umrah pilgrims can perform their worship comfortably, safely, and in accordance with Islamic religious guidance. Good and well-coordinated services will help to enhance the spiritual experience and satisfaction of pilgrims during Hajj and Umrah.

Service Quality

Service quality is a concept that refers to the level of excellence or brilliance of the services provided to pilgrims. Evaluation of service quality involves measuring a number of indicators that reflect various important aspects of the service. Some of the main indicators that are often used to measure service quality include:

Timeliness: Indicates the extent to which services are provided on time as expected or predetermined. This includes aspects such as waiting time and service completion time.

Accuracy: Refers to the extent to which the services provided are in accordance with predetermined standards or with the needs and expectations of the congregation. This includes aspects such as the accuracy of the information and the correctness of the processes carried out.

Convenience: States how easy it is for pilgrims to access and use the services provided. This involves aspects such as clarity of instructions, well-organized layout, and simplicity of the required process.

Speed: Refers to how quickly services are provided to pilgrims, from the registration process to the completion of the service. This involves aspects such as response time and service completion time.

Friendliness: Describes the extent to which the staff or waiters show a friendly, courteous, and caring attitude towards the needs and wants of the worshipers. This includes aspects such as good communication and friendly behavior.

Comfort: Expresses the extent to which the environment or facilities provided make pilgrims feel comfortable and safe when using the service. This involves aspects such as seating quality, cleanliness, and environmental conditions.

Safety: Refers to the level of protection and security provided to pilgrims when using the service. It includes aspects such as security of personal information, physical security, and security of procedures performed.

Assessing service quality based on these indicators is important to ensure that the services provided meet or exceed pilgrims' expectations, so as to build pilgrims' trust, satisfaction, and loyalty.

Hajj Dormitory Islamic Center Semarang

Semarang Islamic Center Hajj Dormitory is one of the transit status hajj dormitories in Indonesia, especially in Central Java Province. This dormitory has a capacity of up to 360 pilgrims or the equivalent of one group of pilgrims. This dormitory is located at Jalan Seroja No. 1, Kalibanteng Kulon Village, West Semarang District, Semarang City, Central Java. This transit Hajj dormitory is located in the Islamic center Semarang area which provides various facilities for religious activities such as school buildings, buildings supporting Hajj ritual activities, dormitory buildings as well as being able to be rented out to the general public. Semarang Hajj Dormitory has a vision of making the Hajj Dormitory as the leading Hajj Dormitory to serve the people wholeheartedly in religious services, close to the people and provide the best service to provide a sense of comfort during the process of performing worship.

The Semarang Hajj Dormitory, which is located in the area of the Semarang Islamic Center Foundation, has a unique history. The history tells that in the past during the leadership of Mr. Soeharto as the 2nd president of the Republic of Indonesia, the Semarang Hajj Dormitory had been conceptualized in such a way by the authorities over the dormitory and had gone through careful consideration that the Hajj dormitory would be built with embarkation status in the center of Central Java, namely the city of Semarang, but the governor of Central Java at that time unilaterally built an embarkation Hajj dormitory in the Boyolali-Solo area which is currently known as Donohudan. Donohudan Dormitory is a Hajj Dormitory owned by the Central Java Provincial Government which was built in the 1996/1997 Fiscal Year with the aim of

being a temporary shelter for the departure and return of prospective pilgrims and or pilgrims during the Hajj operation and can be operated outside the Hajj season and or for other purposes that do not conflict with the provisions of the applicable laws and regulations.

The Donohudan dormitory was inaugurated by President Soeharto on February 28 1997 and began to function for the departure and return of prospective Hajj pilgrims during the 1997 Hajj season. This is the answer to why the Hajj embarkation dormitory for the Central Java region is currently located in Donohudan, not in the city. Semarang is the provincial capital. As time goes by, the Donohudan Boyolali Hajj hostel has reached its limit. The size of the dormitory area can no longer be increased and the Hajj quota continues to increase, resulting in the need for renovations that are in line with the demands of the times. However, in reality, limited land means that other solutions are needed to overcome this problem. The discourse on building an airport-based Hajj embarkation dormitory will be an appropriate and effective solution if it is realized well. Based on this, the Semarang Hajj dormitory which still has transit status will slowly be sought to become a Hajj dormitory with better status, namely the Hajj Embarkation Dormitory. To make this discourse a success, Semarang's Ahmad Yani airport will also undergo a continuous transformation so that the airport status has become a suitable airport status for Haj pilgrims flying.

Strategies applied in optimizing services

1. The Ministry of Religion, through the Hajj and Umrah sector, carried out the transformation of the dormitory building as a concrete manifestation of the changes made to improve the quality of the Semarang Hajj dormitory even though it is still transit in nature. The new dormitory building is a building with 4 floors, each room can be occupied by 3 congregants at once. This building is equipped with several quite complete facilities, namely television, 3 spring beds, wardrobe shelves, water heater, towels. Air conditioning or AC. The bathroom is equipped with: shower, sitting closet and also a sink.
2. Carrying out massive collaborative collaboration with the Donohudan Boyolali hajj dormitory which has embarkation status, conducting comparative studies with the Makassar hajj dormitory as an effort to improve the quality of the dormitory and has also collaborated with BP Batam. For the government, the Semarang Hajj Dormitory also does not escape collaboration with the Semarang city government and also the Central Java provincial government.
3. To improve the quality of human resources, the Semarang Hajj Dormitory collaborates with third parties, namely implementing certification and training for each staff and employee to be equipped with special abilities according to what is needed to improve the quality of services provided to Hajj pilgrims.
4. Carry out a regular monitoring or supervision system on all activities related to the Semarang Hajj Dormitory. This Hajj dormitory is directly supervised by the Regional Office of the Central Java Ministry of Religion which is monitored by the dormitory sub-directorate under the auspices of the Directorate of Domestic Hajj Services. The Hajj dormitory monitoring system is carried out every quarter, semester and annually.

5. Apart from functioning as a Hajj dormitory, the Hajj dormitory building and other facilities are also rented to the public for other religious activity services. This is done not only as a means of promotion for general public knowledge, but also as a basis for increasing dormitory income and as a form of guarding against the absence of religious activities outside the Hajj season which has passed.
6. In the future, the Semarang Hajj Dormitory will undergo a gradual transformation to move towards embarkation status. Efforts made include completing dormitory supporting facilities, expanding the area and building buildings for related institutions that collaborate specifically with the Hajj Dormitory. The expansion of the dormitory area will be carried out in stages even though there are still many challenges faced by the surrounding community. The target for Hajj dormitories in 2030 will be Hajj embarkation dormitories.

First use of the Semarang Transit Dormitory in the 2023 Hajj Season

The use of Hajj dormitories will be carried out for the first time in the 2023 Hajj season and will only be carried out on the return of Hajj pilgrims. The reason for using the newest Hajj dormitory only during transit for pilgrims returning home is because on departure a series of inspection processes must be carried out, whereas this dormitory's infrastructure is not yet complete because it is still at the initial trial stage. When they returned home, the Hajj hostel took its own initiative to create an emergency mini ICU for the congregation which was conceptualized from one room to be designed in such a way as a temporary treatment room for the congregation. This room is for congregants who have mild health problems. For serious health problems, the Semarang Hajj hostel collaborates with the Tugu Hospital as a temporary referral for pilgrims, even though the status of the hospital is not specifically a referral for Hajj pilgrims, but was chosen because of its location closest to the Semarang Hajj transit hostel. For operations during the initial implementation, the Semarang Hajj hostel collaborated with the Semarang city government by dividing tasks including receiving returning pilgrims which was handled directly by the Semarang city government. In the field of security, the Semarang Hajj hostel collaborates directly with the TNI-POLRI to ensure the security and comfort of pilgrims when they go to the Hajj hostel location.

The access road to the Semarang Hajj dormitory has a road that is not wide enough to avoid traffic jams. To overcome this, the TNI-POLRI have carried out traffic engineering to prevent this congestion. However, even though we have done our best, in reality the pilgrims returning to the Hajj dormitory experience traffic jams. Congestion cannot be avoided because apart from traffic, it is also the enthusiasm of welcoming families and the surrounding community which makes traffic jams worse. In addition to difficult access to the location, parking that has been arranged in such a way is also ignored by the community and pilgrim families, making the Hajj dormitory location busy and difficult to manage. This indeed happened outside the control of the security forces and will of course be an evaluation material for the hostel during the upcoming Hajj. According to Pak Nugroho, the congregation who was in the situation at that time, said that the traffic jam made the congregation even more tired because the distance that should have been close felt far because of the traffic jam at that time. He hopes that in the future an evaluation will need to be carried out

to provide a one-way route to the Semarang Hajj dormitory. For the 2024 Hajj season, the Semarang Hajj hostel plans to increase the number of pilgrims participating in the Hajj hostel, namely pilgrims from Kendal. The addition of Hajj pilgrims is part of the strategy evaluation carried out as a form of increasing the quantity of pilgrims and providing the best service.

4. Conclusions

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the strategic management of the Semarang Islamic Center Hajj Dormitory in optimizing services for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims still needs to be optimized. Obstacles faced by congregations include lack of human resources, facilities and infrastructure, and coordination between related institutions. Nevertheless, the Hajj hostel shows its commitment by formulating clear strategies, establishing collaboration, and conducting certification and training for staff. The Hajj dormitory is supervised by the Central Java Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion and carried out regular monitoring. The problem of traffic jams when returning pilgrims needs to be overcome by expanding the dormitory area, traffic engineering and outreach to the surrounding community. By continuing to evaluate and improve, it is hoped that the Semarang Islamic Center Hajj Dormitory can become a quality Hajj embarkation dormitory and provide the best service for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. Even though there are obstacles, Hajj and Umrah pilgrims who have experienced the service at this hostel assess that the service is sufficient and satisfactory.

References:

- Al-Habaibeh, A., Hamadeh, S., Aljahdali, K., & Akib, S. (2020). Towards enhancing sustainability: A novel approach for reducing carbon emission during the transportation of Zamzam water by pilgrims during Hajj and Umrah. *Research in Transportation Business & Management*, 37, 100523.
- Aldahawi, H. A. (2021). Big Data Analytics Strategy Framework: A Case of Crowd Management During the Hajj Pilgrimage Mecca Saudi Arabia. *Biosci. Biotechnol. Res. Commun.*, 14(4), 1975-1984.
- Affandi, Y., Abdulah, A. D., Mufid, A., Murtadho, A., & Hasanah, H. (2021). Safroodin, Fihris, Kurnia Muhajarah, M. Shofiyuddin, Agus Purwanto.(2021). Exploring Factors Affecting Purchase Intention of Halal Medicine Products of Indonesian Medicine Consumers. *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, 2, 2880-2892.
- Mahfudz, A. A., Dena, P. S., & Ahmad, R. A. (2023). Optimizing Hajj Finance in Indonesia: The Role of Wakalah Contract. *Share: Jurnal Ekonomi dan Keuangan Islam*, 12(2), 526-543.
- Masrurroh, A., Rodoni, A., & Pontjowinoto, I. P. (2024). Optimizing Hajj Fund Management through Strategic Asset Allocation in Islamic Finance Instrument. *Signifikan: Jurnal Ilmu Ekonomi*, 12(2), 287-306.
- Perdana, D., Bin-Nashwan, S. A., Muneeza, A., & Hassan, M. K. (2024). Financial sustainability challenges of Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH): What

- really matters?. In *Islamic Finance in Eurasia* (pp. 222-251). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Supena, I., Darmuki, A., & Hariyadi, A. (2021). The Influence of 4C (Constructive, Critical, Creativity, Collaborative) Learning Model on Students' Learning Outcomes. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(3), 873-892.
- Showail, A. J. (2022). Solving Hajj and Umrah Challenges Using Information and Communication Technology: A Survey. *IEEE Access*, 10, 75404-75427.
- Susanto, D., Musyafak, N., Raharjo, R., Anasom, A., Niswah, U., & Hakim, L. (2023). Da'wah tourism: Formulation of collaborative governance perspective development. *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*, 43(1), 249-267S
- Suryawan, R. F., Kamsariaty, K., Perwitasari, E. P., Maulina, E., Maghfuriyah, A., & Susilowati, T. (2023). Digital Strategy Model in Strengthening Brand Image to Maintain Customer Loyalty (Case Study on Umrah and Hajj Travel Agency). *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(12), 5045-5056.
- Zulfikarijah, F. (2023). Factor Analysis of Operations Strategy at Umrah and Hajj Bureaus. *Manajemen Bisnis*, 13(02), 37-51.