

The Development of a Competency System for Excellent Mosque Management Based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Elements

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ABSTRACT

The excellence of the mosque institution depends entirely on the management that steers the leadership of the mosque institution. Charismatic leadership and its structured organizational system are able to have a great impact in reviving the image of the mosque institution as well as the entire congregation and community. In this regard, there is a need to develop a profiling system and the competence of excellent mosque management based on elements of artificial intelligence (AI) to identify the list of knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as the level of mastery of each competence that must be possessed by mosque management members to consistently drive the excellence of mosque institutions. This study employs a qualitative case study method and a Design and Development Research (DDR) approach. The DDR approach is used to test the practical usability of a model, namely the artificial intelligence (AI) element in the development of this system, and it involves four phases of study, namely the needs analysis, design, development, and usability assessment phases of the model in this system. The research data for the development of this system were collected from four outstanding mosques that have received recognition from the Department of Islamic Affairs in Malaysia. With the development of this competency system, the characteristics and traits of a manager

of an excellent mosque institution can be effectively identified and evaluated using elements of artificial intelligence (AI), creating a dynamic, high-caliber work committee for managing, administering, and planning mosque activities with excellence in this country. The findings indicate that the developed AI-based competency system enables mosques to conduct automated self-audits, with the generated self-audit data serving as additional input for the SPMM assessment team, thereby enhancing the effectiveness, transparency, and sustainability of the official mosque evaluation process.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), Profiling, Competencies, Mosque Performance*

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1. Introduction

The mosque institution is not merely a place of worship, but also a center for spiritual, social, economic, and educational development for the Muslim community (Ab. Halim Tamuri, 2021; Muhamad Azfar Suhaimi et. al., 2025). The success of a mosque in fulfilling its role is highly dependent on effective leadership and management (Remly, M.R, et. al, 2019). Chairmen and members of mosque committees who are charismatic, visionary, and have a systematic management system are able to make a great impact in shaping a knowledgeable, moral, and united society (Abu Bakar, S., 2021).

However, the reality of mosque management in Malaysia shows the existence of a competency gap between outstanding mosque managers and those who are less outstanding. There are various factors that contribute to this situation, among them due to the difficulty of making references and self-audits to the data-based competency assessment system to identify the levels of skills, knowledge, and abilities of the members of the mosque management committee.

Technological advancements, particularly in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI), can be utilized in managing mosques in the digital era (M. Firdaus & Indra Bakti, 2025). This opportunity can be utilized to develop an Excellent Mosque Management Competency System using AI technology that is capable of automatically and continuously profiling the competency levels of mosque managers. Through this system, the characteristics of effective

mosque managers can be identified, measured, and developed quickly to ensure that the excellence of mosque institutions can be achieved systematically.

In this regard, it is only appropriate that this AI-based competency system be developed to utilize ICT support and digital technology more quickly in order to improve the efficiency of mosque management as one of the strategic measures to empower the role of the mosque as a center for the development of established communities in this digital era (Mat Jusoh et. al., 2022)

2. Problem Statement

The Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) has formulated the Malaysian Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM) as a comprehensive grading methodology for assessing the performance of mosques nationwide. This standard has become the main reference for the assessment team in ensuring that the assessment of mosques is carried out in a structured manner. Among the four main components assessed, Mosque Management is a major component, equally important to the Mosque Administration component, with a respective weighting of 35% of the overall assessment (Malaysian Mosque Rating Standard, 2021).

The assessment method of the Mosque Management component is carried out through a review of official documents such as the strategic planning of the mosque, the list of committee members, financial reports, certificates of recognition, interaction with the mosque management, namely the *Nazir*, Secretary, and Treasurer; as well as observation of the dissemination mechanism, such as the statement board and electronic media. This component includes 32 items and 180 characteristics covering seven main aspects as follows:

- a. Organizational Management (17 items; 118 characteristics)
- b. Financial Management (10 items; 34 characteristics)
- c. Program Planning with Strategic Partners (1 item; 6 characteristics)
- d. Planning of Da'wah Programs Outside Kariah (1 item; 4 characteristics)
- e. Optimization of Kariah Expert Resources (1 item; 6 characteristics)
- f. Innovation in Management (1 item; 6 characteristics)
- g. Waqf Land Management (1 item; 6 characteristics)

This structured assessment approach has proven to have a positive impact. For example, in Kelantan, the number of mosques achieving a five-

star rating increased from 4 in 2023 to 29 in 2025 (MAIK Official Portal, 2025). This increase indicates that the SPMM has successfully established a clear, practical, and achievable standard for mosques.

However, although SPMM provides a comprehensive assessment instrument for the assessor's reference, the main challenge faced by the mosque is the constraint of conducting a self-assessment (self-audit) before being formally assessed by the assessment team. Preparation for existing assessments still requires manual effort, relying on printed documentation that the assessor fills in by hand into the digital system and on physical observation, thus slowing down the internal improvement process for the mosque management. The use of digital systems for self-audits can help organizations ensure they have met the standards and minimized risks before the field audit is conducted by assessors. This also supports better governance and readiness to face formal audits.

In the item involving the management of the mosque organization, the list of knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as the level of mastery of each competency that must be possessed by the mosque management members to consistently drive the excellence of the mosque institution, is not clearly stated.

In line with the aspiration to make the mosque a driving force for the community, there is a need to develop a mosque management competency system based on Artificial Intelligence (AI). (Mohd Suhardi et al, 2025) This system is expected to enable the mosque to assess competence levels automatically and continuously, provide self-audit reports that can be compared with official standards, and provide targeted guidance on the capacity development of mosque committee members before the field assessment is carried out.

Therefore, the main question to be answered in this study is how to develop an AI-based mosque management competency system to facilitate the mosque in conducting a competency self-audit before the official assessment process.

3. Literature Review

The management of mosques has long been recognized as a central factor in sustaining their role as religious, educational, and community institutions. Previous studies have highlighted that the effectiveness of mosque leadership, committee members, management systems, and institutional frameworks is all interrelated in determining the excellence of mosque governance. These works collectively provide important insights into the elements required for developing a systematic, competency-based framework. In the context of emerging technologies, such findings provide a foundation for designing an

Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven competency system to enhance mosque performance, ensure sustainability, and revitalize the mosque's role as a community focal point.

3.1 Leadership and Human Capital in Mosque Management

Leadership quality and the competency of mosque committee members are repeatedly emphasized as central to mosque performance. Mariam M.A et.al (2021) in their study, *The Strategic Plan for Empowering the Role of the Mosque Institute as a Community Focal Point* appointed that leadership backgrounds—particularly education and professional experience—directly influence mosque development strategies, echoing Mohd Ridhwan et al. (2019), who argue that mosque management is only as strong as its leadership. Similarly, a study on *Leadership, Mosque Achievement and Community Development According to the Qur'an and Hadith* (Mohd Rahim, M. R., 2014) concludes that weak leadership undermines both institutional performance and community development.

More recently, the study on *Leadership Challenges in the Improvement of Mosque Institutions: A Case Study in Excellent Mosques* (Remly, M.R., 2024) highlights practical obstacles faced by mosque leaders, including limited managerial skills, resistance to change, and the complexity of balancing traditional expectations with modern governance demands. Taken together, these studies underscore that human capital is indispensable to mosque governance, suggesting that any competency system must account not only for qualifications and professional expertise but also for the ethical orientation and adaptability of leaders.

3.2 Management Systems and Institutional Excellence

Beyond leadership, structured management processes have been shown to be decisive for institutional success. *Transformation of Mosque Development Management as an Islamic Institution: The Experience of the Best Mosques* (Solahuddin Abd. Hamid Et al., 2018) identifies key benchmarks for excellence, including congregational participation, feedback mechanisms, financial stability, and efficient use of time.

These indicators align with *Comparison of Mosque Quality Management Against Mosques Given Star Recognition* (Muhammad Firdaus & Haliyana, 2017), which demonstrates that systematic governance is more likely when administrators come from professional or corporate backgrounds and when committees comply with state-issued codes and ethics. When read together, these studies reveal that mosque excellence cannot be reduced to spiritual or ritual functions alone; it also requires adopting professional

management standards, with performance measurable through clear indicators.

3.3 Educational Programs and Community Engagement

Education and community integration are also integral to mosque functions. Muhammad Ayman al-Akiti., et. al. (2021) in *The Role of Mosque Committee Members in Improving the Mosque Education Program* highlights how creative strategies from mosque committees can make educational initiatives more engaging, thus increasing community participation. This finding resonates with Solahuddin Abdul Hamid et. al., (2019) in *Understanding the Concept of Mosque as an Islamic Institution: Experiences of Selected Mosques in Peninsular Malaysia*, which stresses the importance of *imarah* (empowerment) through continuous programming, mosque beautification, and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

Taken together, these studies suggest that strong mosque management not only ensures administrative efficiency but also drives the vitality of educational and community programs, reinforcing the mosque as a holistic center for Islamic life.

3.4 Towards Digital Transformation and Competency Systems

A recurring theme across the literature is the interplay between competent leadership and systematic management structures. While digital systems and formal benchmarks provide a framework for accountability, their effectiveness ultimately depends on human capital. Several studies, particularly the *Strategic Plan for Empowering the Role of the Mosque Institute* (Majid, M. A., et al., 2021) and *The Role of Mosque Committee Members in Improving the Mosque Education Program* (Muhammad Ayman al-Akiti, et.al., 2021), directly propose integrating digital profiling and performance systems to strengthen governance.

These complement the broader findings of studies on institutional excellence (2017, 2018, 2019), which establish the criteria that can serve as reference points for such systems. Building on these insights, the present study takes the next step by introducing Artificial Intelligence (AI) elements to design a competency-based system for mosque management. AI integration promises not only to measure leadership and management performance more accurately but also to provide predictive insights and tailored recommendations, thereby enhancing sustainability and adaptability in mosque governance.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that excellence in mosques is shaped by the interdependence among leadership, systematic management,

educational initiatives, and community engagement. Across different studies, a consistent theme emerges: successful mosque management requires both competent human capital and structured systems. These works collectively highlight the importance of moving beyond traditional frameworks towards professionalized, data-driven approaches. Importantly, they also reveal that while digital systems can provide structure and accountability, they are only effective when paired with strong leadership and committed committees (Azfahanee Zakaria & Kamaruddin Ngah, 2020).

Building on these foundations, the current study advances the field by proposing the development of a competency system for mosque management embedded with Artificial Intelligence (AI) elements. Such a system has the potential to unify the strengths identified in previous research, ensuring that mosques continue to thrive as dynamic religious, educational, and community institutions in the contemporary era.

4. Objectives

In general, this study aims to develop an Artificial Intelligence (AI) -based Excellence Mosque Management Competency System that can help the mosque to carry out self-assessment (self-audit) in a more systematic, efficient, and targeted manner. In particular, the objectives of this study are to:

- a. Identify the main competency domains required in the management of excellent mosques based on the Malaysian Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM).
- b. Analyze the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities that mosque managers need to possess to meet the SPMM standards.
- c. Design a mosque management competency model that integrates the needs of SPMM with AI technology.
- d. Develop a prototype of an AI-based competency system that functions as a self-audit instrument for mosque management.
- e. Evaluate the usability of this AI system in profiling the competencies of mosque managers and its suitability as a support tool for the official SPMM assessment process.

5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study combines the Malaysian Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM) as the basis of assessment with the elements of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to develop an excellent mosque management competency system. This standard uses the Management Component as the main domain with a score of 35%. This component contains 32 items and 180 features.

5.1 Mosque Management Competency Domain

This study will focus on only one aspect contained in the SPMM Mosque Management Component, namely Organizational Management. The proposed mosque management competency domain from the characteristics contained in the items involving Mosque Organizational Management includes:

- a. Knowledge: Understanding of rules, policies, Islamic financial management, and da'wah strategy.
- b. Skills: Leadership, communication, project management, innovation, conflict management, and the use of technology.
- c. Abilities: Ability to make strategic decisions, build collaborative networks, and optimize human resources.

5.2 Integration of AI Technology

AI elements are used to strengthen the competency system through:

- a. Machine Learning (ML): Analyzing mosque management data and building competency performance forecasting models.
- b. Natural Language Processing (NLP): Processing official documents, reports, and feedback.
- c. Expert System: Providing appropriate competency development and training recommendations.
- d. Self-Audit Dashboard: Automatically generates competency performance reports.

5.3 Assessment Process (DDR – Design and Development Research)

The system is developed through four phases:

- a. Needs Analysis - Identifying competency gaps based on SPMM.
- b. Model Design – Structuring the domain of competence & AI integration.
- c. System Development – Developing a prototype of an AI-based competency system.
- d. Usability Assessment – Testing the effectiveness of the system through data from outstanding mosques.

5.4 Final Results

- a. An AI-based competency system that allows the mosque to perform self-audits automatically.
- b. This self-audit data serves as an additional input to the SPMM assessment team, thereby increasing the effectiveness, transparency, and continuity of the official assessment.

6. Research Methodology

This study used the Design and Development Research (DDR) approach with qualitative case study methods. The DDR methodology is suitable for this study because it includes the phases of needs analysis, design, development, and evaluation, using qualitative data to produce practical and effective models or products for the management of excellent mosques (Norliyana Md. Aris et al., 2024).

The study sample consisted of four outstanding mosques recognized by the Kelantan Islamic Religious Council and Malay Customs (MAIK). The selection of these mosques is deliberate because recognition serves as a benchmark for the efficiency and effectiveness of management practices. These mosques received a five-star award in the SPMM audit conducted by MAIK in 2025. In this regard, these mosques are expected to provide extensive, in-depth empirical data, as they have consistently met the criteria set by the authorities. Therefore, the findings from this sample are believed to represent the characteristics of excellent mosque management and to serve as a solid foundation for the development of the proposed artificial intelligence (AI) model.

The data collection process involves two main methods, namely in-depth interviews and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with members of the mosque management, including the chairman, secretary, treasurer, and related officers, to obtain detailed information about the experiences, strategies, best practices, and challenges faced in managing the mosque. This method is chosen because it can produce rich narrative data and reveal dimensions that are difficult to obtain through quantitative methods. Meanwhile, document analysis involved research on annual reports, meeting minutes, guidelines, financial records, and mosque management policy documents. The combination of these two methods enables data triangulation, improving the trustworthiness and validity of the study's findings.

For data analysis, thematic analysis is used to identify the main competency domains required for mosque management. This process involves systematic data coding, theme grouping, and the identification of patterns emerging from interview results and documents. This thematic analysis aims not only to identify existing competencies but also to uncover competency gaps in mosque management. The data obtained is then used as the basis for developing the AI model. This model is designed to map competencies in a more objective, measurable, and systematic manner, taking into account the strengths, weaknesses, and capacity-development needs of mosque management.

The results of this approach are expected to produce an AI model that can function as a support instrument to the Malaysian Mosque Rating Standard

(SPMM), in addition to being a practical guide for the implementation of targeted training among mosque managers. In other words, the DDR methodology not only allows researchers to understand the reality of the field in depth, but also produces an innovation that is applicable and has a direct impact on mosque management in Malaysia.

7. Contributions of the Research

This research is anticipated to provide meaningful contributions to multiple stakeholders, particularly in efforts to strengthen mosque management in Malaysia. The key contributions are outlined as follows:

7.1 Contribution to Mosque Management

The study offers a structured, data-driven self-audit system based on the Malaysian Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM). This system enables mosque committees to identify competency gaps, set clear priorities, and enhance the capacity of their members. Moreover, it enables continuous monitoring of management performance without relying solely on formal assessments by religious authorities.

7.2 Contribution to Religious Authorities (JAKIM & MAIN)

The findings provide instruments that complement JAKIM's implementation of SPMM and the State Islamic Religious Councils' (MAIN) implementation. By integrating AI-generated preliminary data, these instruments can improve the accuracy and efficiency of field evaluations. In addition, they serve as a foundation for designing targeted training programs for mosque administrators, focusing on competencies that require further strengthening.

7.3 Contribution to Academics and Researchers

This study enriches the body of knowledge on the application of AI in managing Islamic institutions, particularly mosques. It also opens new avenues for research in digital technology, Islamic management, and competency development using the DDR model. Furthermore, it has potential to serve as a vital reference for interdisciplinary studies that bridge technology, management, and contemporary Islamic scholarship.

7.4 Contribution to the Community

Mosques managed with higher levels of competency will be better equipped to deliver da'wah, education, welfare, and community development initiatives. This will strengthen public trust in mosques as inclusive and authoritative institutions at the heart of ummah development. Ultimately, it reinforces the role of mosques as dynamic centers for mobilizing the Muslim community in line with their status as the focal point of the ummah.

8. Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that the development of an AI-based competency system enables mosques to perform automated self-audits while generating systematic assessment data that can serve as additional input for the SPMM evaluation team, thereby enhancing the effectiveness, transparency, reliability, and sustainability of the official mosque assessment process as well as contributing to the continuous improvement of mosque management excellence. With the DDR approach and AI integration, this system has the potential to become a new benchmark in mosque management in Malaysia.

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