Empowerment and Assistance of Mosque Functions through the SMART Mosque Model for Mosque Management Boards in Mandailing Natal Regency

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Abstract
This community service activity aims to increase the understanding and capacity of the management of the Mosque Conservation Agency (BKM) in Mandailing Natal Regency regarding the optimization of mosque functions through the Smart Mosque concept. This program was carried out in the form of providing materials and assistance to 30 participants who were BKM administrators from several local mosques. The material presented focused on strengthening the role of mosques as a center of worship, education, social, and empowerment of the people with the support of digital technology. The method of implementing the activity includes the delivery of materials, interactive discussions, and question and answer sessions to explore the understanding and needs of participants related to the application of the Smart Mosque concept. The results of the activity showed that the participants gained increased knowledge about the function and strategic role of mosques in the digital era. In addition, participants showed high enthusiasm in planning the application of simple technologies, such as the use of social media and digital-based information systems, to support religious activities and mosque administration. This activity has a positive impact in strengthening the institutional capacity of mosques towards more modern, transparent, and service-oriented management.

Keywords: Function of the Mosque;SMART Masjid;PKM

INTRODUCTION

The mosque is the house of Allah (Baitullah), serving as a sacred place where Muslims perform acts of worship and seek spiritual closeness to Him. It symbolizes the central locus of devotion to Allah SWT, where the ummah gathers in well-organized and orderly rows (shaf), reflecting discipline and obedience in collective worship (Ahmad 2018) Beyond its ritual function, the mosque embodies the values of equality, as all worshippers stand side by side regardless of social status, background, or economic differences.

Furthermore, the mosque nurtures a strong sense of togetherness and Islamic ukhuwah by serving as a communal space where Muslims from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds interact and engage with one another on a regular basis. This interaction fosters mutual respect, empathy, compassion, and a spirit of solidarity, as worshippers learn to recognize one another as equal members of the ummah. Through regular congregational prayers, religious gatherings, educational programs, and various social and humanitarian activities, the bonds of brotherhood among Muslims are continuously strengthened and sustained.

In addition to its spiritual role, the mosque functions as a center for social cohesion, where values such as cooperation, mutual assistance, and collective responsibility are practiced in daily life. Activities such as charity distribution, community discussions, youth development programs, and social services further reinforce a culture of care and affection among fellow believers. These shared experiences create a harmonious environment that promotes unity, reduces social barriers, and encourages active participation in addressing communal needs.

In this way, the mosque transcends its role as merely a physical place of worship and emerges as a dynamic institution that embodies the spirit of Islam in both spiritual and social dimensions. It becomes a tangible manifestation of Islamic values, unity, and collective responsibility, contributing significantly to the moral development, social harmony, and resilience of the Muslim community as a whole.

It reflects an egalitarian attitude, a spirit of togetherness, and a strong Islamic ukhuwah. The sense of mutual respect and affection between fellow Muslims grew well, making the mosque a tangible manifestation of the spirit of Islam and the unity of the congregation (Tamuri 2021). However, in practice, many mosques at the local level still focus on the function of worship alone, while its social function and empowerment have not been optimally managed.

The mosque not only functions as a place of worship, but also as a center for social activities, education, and empowerment of the people. However, in the era of modernization and digitalization, many mosques still carry out their functions conventionally without utilizing technology to increase the effectiveness of services to worshippers (Ramadhan et al. 2025). Based on these conditions, the modern-based mosque function assistance (SMART Masjid) activity was carried out to assist the Mosque Prosperity Agency (BKM) in Mandailing Natal Regency in optimizing the role and function of mosques in accordance with the needs of today's society.

The concept of SMART Mosque (Smart, Modern, Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent) carries the idea that mosque management must be based on information technology and modern governance (Putra, Madona, and Sutabri 2024). Through digitalization, financial activities can be carried out transparently, da'wah information can be widely disseminated through social media, and communication between congregations becomes faster and more effective. More than that, the SMART Mosque approach also strengthens the aspects of accountability and congregational participation, which is in line with Islamic values of openness, togetherness, and social responsibility.

SMART Mosque refers to the management of mosques that utilize information technology in administrative activities, finance, congregational communication, and the dissemination of da'wah (Handayani and Jama 2024). This assistance includes training on the use of digital systems such as mosque financial management applications, the creation of digital-based da'wah media (posters, short da'wah videos, and social media), as well as the use of congregational data for social and religious activities. Through this approach, mosques not only function as ritual places, but also as centers for religious digital literacy.

In the context of the BKM of Mandailing Natal Regency, the implementation of the SMART Mosque model is still relatively new and requires intensive assistance. Many mosque administrators have great enthusiasm to advance mosques, but are constrained in terms of digital literacy, technology access, and data-based management. Through modern-based mosque function assistance activities, it is hoped that mosque administrators will be able to increase managerial capacity, understand the importance of financial transparency, and optimize digital media as a means of da'wah and community service.

RESEARCH METHODS

This service activity was carried out at the Office of the Ministry of Religion of Mandailing Natal Regency by inviting BKM from various mosques in Mandailing Natal Regency. This activity was carried out for three days, starting from a meeting to equalize

perceptions with cooperation partners, namely the Ministry of Religion of Mandailing Natal Regency with the aim of finding out the problems and solutions faced by BKM. Then a preparatory meeting was held for the implementation of PKM from the administration to the technical implementation of PKM. Finally, the implementation of PKM began with the presentation of material by resource persons to questions and answers with PKM participants.

This community service activity uses a participatory approach with a qualitative descriptive method (Istanti, Nuroini, and Negoro 2025). This approach was selected to ensure that the implementation of the activities was truly aligned with the needs of the partners, namely mosque administrators under the Mosque Prosperity Agency (BKM). Through the active involvement of partners at every stage of the activity, from problem identification to solution formulation, the outcomes of the community service are expected to be not only conceptual but also practical and applicable.

The application of the Smart Mosque concept—Systematic, Measurable, Accountable, Responsive, and Technological—integrates Islamic values with the utilization of information technology to enhance mosque governance, service quality, and the empowerment of worshippers. This concept emphasizes structured management, transparent and accountable administration, responsive services to community needs, and the effective use of digital technology in supporting religious and social activities.

This mentoring program is specifically focused on strengthening the capacity of the Mosque Prosperity Agency (BKM) in Mandailing Natal Regency, enabling mosque administrators to manage religious, social, and community-based programs in a modern, professional, and information technology–based manner. Through this approach, mosques are expected to function not only as places of worship but also as centers for education, social services, and community empowerment that are adaptive to contemporary developments.

To support the implementation of this community service activity, several data collection techniques are used that aim to obtain comprehensive and accurate information about the condition of mosque management and the needs of administrators in the implementation of the Smart Mosque concept. The techniques used include observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and documentation.

Observations were carried out directly in the field to see the actual condition of mosque management, including administration, infrastructure, and the level of digital literacy of mosque administrators (Wijaya and Zaki 2025). Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted with mosque administrators, worshippers, and community leaders to find out information about their needs, challenges, and expectations for the implementation of the Smart Mosque system. This activity was complemented by a directed group discussion (FGD) involving elements of mosque management, mosque youth, and the community as an effort to design joint solutions and ensure the results of activities in accordance with the needs of partners. In addition, documentation is carried out to collect secondary data in the form of activity photos, administrative reports, and other supporting documents that can strengthen the results of analysis and activity reports.

The data in this service activity was analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis with reference to the Miles and Huberman model which includes three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Thalib 2022). In the data reduction stage, the information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation is selected and focused on aspects relevant to the objectives of the activity. Furthermore, at the data presentation stage, the findings are compiled in the form of tables, narratives, and descriptions that describe changes in the partner's condition after mentoring. The last stage is drawing

conclusions, namely interpreting the results of activities to see the extent of improving the managerial ability of mosque administrators, the use of technology in administration, and the effectiveness of communication and service of worshippers after the implementation of the Smart Mosque concept.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service activity with the theme "Smart Mosque-Based Mosque Function Assistance" was carried out in Mandailing Natal Regency as an effort to increase the insight of mosque administrators into the use of digital technology in mosque management. The activity lasted for one day with a total duration of three hours, consisting of material delivery sessions, interactive discussions, and questions and answers.

The participants of the activity amounted to 30 people, all of whom were administrators of the Mosque Kenaziran Agency (BKM) from several mosques in the Mandailing Natal Regency area. Based on the attendance list, the participation rate reached 100%. The atmosphere of the activity took place actively and participatory, shown by the involvement of participants in discussion sessions related to mosque digital management and examples of the application of the Smart Mosque concept in various regions.

The material presented includes four main functions of mosques of worship, education, social, and economy that can be optimized through digital-based systems such as congregational information management, online activity publications, and financial transparency through digital media. Based on the results of the post-activity questionnaire, as many as 27 out of 30 participants (90%) stated that they gained a new understanding of the concept of Smart Mosque and its relevance to the needs of modern mosque management (Figure a). A total of 28 participants (93.3%) also admitted that they re-understand the comprehensive function of mosques as a center of people's activities, not just a place of worship. In addition, 25 participants (83.3%) expressed interest in implementing the Smart Mosque concept gradually in their respective environments, especially in terms of financial

management and publication of activities through social media. Participant participation in activities is relatively high.

During the discussion session, participants actively asked questions about practical ways to digitize mosque management, such as the use of simple administrative applications and the publication of da'wah activities through digital platforms. This enthusiasm shows the openness of the BKM management to technological innovation in strengthening the function of the mosque. Field observation data showed that 26 participants (86.7%) responded directly in the question and answer session, while the other 4 participants participated passively by participating in discussions without verbal intervention. The average question and answer time reached 45 minutes, indicating active involvement in the learning process (Figure b).

The results of the participant satisfaction evaluation showed a very positive response to the activity. A total of 28 participants (93%) stated that the delivery of material was easy to understand, 26 participants (87%) assessed that the content of the activity was relevant to the needs of today's mosque administrators, and 25 participants (83%) felt that the activity provided real inspiration to develop a mosque that is adaptive to technological advances. Most of the participants (90%) also expressed their hope that similar activities could be continued with technical training sessions on the implementation of the mosque digital system, such as creating online mosque profiles, digital cash management, and publishing social media-based activities.

The results of the activity showed that the majority of participants understood the importance of the role of information technology in improving the function of mosques as a center of worship, education, social, and economic for the people. This increase in understanding is a positive indicator that mosque administrators are beginning to realize the need for more effective, transparent, and service-oriented mosque management. In the local context of Mandailing Natal, where most of the people are still oriented to traditional management patterns, this activity is the first step towards a paradigm shift in mosque management. The positive response of the participants to the material and delivery method showed that conceptual education was an effective initial approach to introduce the idea of Smart Mosques.

The participants not only demonstrated a clear understanding of the concept, but also showed a growing interest in applying it to their routine activities. This was reflected in their willingness to adopt practical innovations, such as publishing mosque activities through digital media, implementing simple application-based financial recording systems, and utilizing social

media platforms as effective tools for da'wah and community outreach. These practices indicate a shift toward more transparent, organized, and communicative mosque management.

The enthusiasm shown by the participants underscores the fact that the successful implementation of the Smart Mosque concept does not rely solely on the availability of technological facilities or infrastructure. More importantly, it depends on the readiness, commitment, and capacity of the human resources who manage and operate these technologies. When mosque administrators possess adequate understanding, skills, and motivation, technology can be optimally utilized to support governance, enhance services, and strengthen the role of the mosque in responding to the needs of the community.

Interactive discussions during the activity indicated that mosque administrators have a strong desire to improve their capacity in the field of technology, but still face limitations in technical capabilities and infrastructure support. Therefore, these results lead to the importance of follow-up assistance in the form of practical training, such as the use of mosque management applications, the creation of congregational databases, or simple digital financial systems. A gradual approach like this will help BKM administrators adapt more realistically to the digitalization of mosque management.

In addition to increasing individual knowledge, this activity also has a social effect in the form of the formation of communication networks between BKM in the Mandailing Natal area. This network has the potential to be a forum for collaboration and sharing experiences in developing technology-based mosque functions, as well as strengthening relationships between mosques at the sub-district level. This is in line with the spirit of Islamic ukhuwah and socio-religious collaboration which is the main characteristic of the empowerment of the people. In terms of usefulness, this activity shows that education about Smart Mosque has a strategic impact in strengthening the role of mosques as the center of progress of the people in the digital era. Mosques are no longer just places of worship, but can function as information centers, public education media, and means of socio-economic transparency that support the principles of accountability and trust in Islam.

Thus, the results and response of this activity confirm that mosque administrators in Mandailing Natal Regency already have strong social and spiritual capital to develop the Smart Mosque concept. The next challenge lies in the consistency of coaching and institutional support so that mosque digitalization initiatives can be implemented sustainably and have a wide impact on the benefit of the people. Community service activities (PKM) were followed by a group photo with the resource person and the participants of the activity (Figure c).

CONCLUSION

The community service activity entitled *"Pendampingan Fungsi Masjid Berbasis Smart Masjid"* in Mandailing Natal Regency successfully enhanced the knowledge, understanding, and awareness of mosque administrators under the Mosque Prosperity Agency (BKM) regarding the strategic importance of integrating information technology into mosque management. This activity provided participants with new insights into how digital tools can be utilized to support more systematic, transparent, and accountable governance of mosque activities.

The evaluation results indicated that approximately 90% of participants demonstrated a clear understanding of the Smart Mosque concept, while 83% expressed strong interest in applying this concept within their respective mosques. This level of comprehension and

enthusiasm reflects the relevance of the program to the real needs of mosque administrators, particularly in responding to the challenges of managing religious and social activities in the digital era. Participants began to recognize that the Smart Mosque concept is not merely a technological innovation, but a holistic management approach that integrates Islamic values with modern administrative practices.

Moreover, the activity effectively introduced a broader perspective on the function of the mosque, emphasizing that it is not only a place of ritual worship but also a center for education, social empowerment, and community development. Through the support of digital systems, mosques are expected to play a more active role in disseminating religious knowledge, facilitating social services, strengthening community participation, and responding efficiently to societal needs. This paradigm shift was well received by the participants, as evidenced by their active involvement in discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and practical reflections during the activity.

The participants' positive responses and high level of engagement indicate that conceptual education on Smart Mosque management is both relevant and impactful for local mosque administrators in Mandailing Natal. Many participants showed motivation to begin adopting simple digital practices, such as using social media for da'wah and information dissemination, implementing basic digital financial recording systems, and improving communication among mosque stakeholders through online platforms.

The outcomes of this program include increased digital literacy among BKM members, the emergence of initial plans for digital-based mosque management, and the establishment of collaborative communication networks among mosque administrators. These developments reflect a growing readiness among mosque leaders in Mandailing Natal to modernize mosque administration while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic principles. By upholding values of transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and community service, the Smart Mosque initiative demonstrates strong potential to strengthen the role of mosques as dynamic institutions that are responsive to contemporary challenges and capable of contributing to sustainable community development.

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