Integrated Management of Private Tahfiz Centers in Malaysia: Challenges and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenges of managing private tahfiz centers in Malaysia and suggests solutions to overcome them. The increasing demand for education based on Tahfiz al-Quran is driving the growth of private Tahfiz centers. However, these institutions often face a lack of funds, infrastructure, and quality teaching staff. This study employs a qualitative methodology based on a literature review and semi-structured interviews with five managers of private tahfiz centers. The study's findings reveal the main challenges in human resources, finance, and facilities management. We propose integrated management principles such as transparency, independence, accountability, responsibility, and justice to overcome this challenge. Transparency ensures openness in financial and facility management, while independence enables an inclusive perspective from staff. Accountability ensures commitment and discipline in management, while responsibility encourages dedication in performing tasks. Justice guarantees equitable treatment for all parties, thereby boosting motivation and job satisfaction. With this approach, private tahfiz centers can provide a conducive and effective learning environment, ensuring continuity and higher quality education for students and staff. This study provides practical guidance to improve the management of private Tahfiz centers in Malaysia. We recommend conducting further research on the influence of integrated management on education quality, the use of technology in tahfiz management, and the involvement of cultural mediators to address management challenges. Case studies of successful tahfiz centers can also aid in highlighting best practices that other tahfiz centers can implement.

Keywords: Integrated Management, Tahfiz Center, Private, Challenge, Solution.

INTRODUCTION

Current developments show that tahfiz institutions are getting special attention from parents. Government-run Tahfiz institutions cannot cope with this growing demand, opening up opportunities for the private sector to establish private Tahfiz centers. Government tahfiz institutions generally have efficient management, complete infrastructure, and sufficient financial resources compared to private tahfiz centers, which frequently lack in various aspects and require strong support from all parties. There is increasing community interest in tahfiz schools (Noor Hisham Md Nawi et al., 2014), which continues to grow rapidly due to the high demand for education based on tahfiz al-Quran (Mohamad Marzuqi Abdul Rahim et al., 2021). Society's deepening awareness of religious teachings (Noor Hisham Md Nawi et al., 2014), the importance of memorizing the

Qur'an (Abd Rahman Abd Ghani & Azmil Hashim, 2017), and efforts to cultivate the next generation of al-Quran (Siti Nur Fatin Jaafar & Mohd Isa, 2020) are driving this factor.

Al-Quran tahfiz education is getting a positive response among the community in Malaysia. Parents who primarily choose the Tahfiz Center for their children's Tahfiz al-Quran education clearly demonstrate this phenomenon. As a result, many parties began to offer private tahfiz education centers as an alternative for parents who aspire to make their children heirs to the Quran (Muhammad Zulazizi, Muhammad Rashidi, & Muhammad Amirul, 2021). This growth encouraged more parties to open private tahfiz centers to accommodate the growing demand. People tend to choose private tahfiz centers that offer tahfiz education from preschool to higher education. In 2017, estimates place the number of tahfiz centers in Malaysia at around 1,000, yet only 704 have received registration, with 106 of these centers located at Darul Quran JAKIM (Solahuddin Ismail, 2018).

Malaysia divides the Tahfiz center model into two types: the modern Tahfiz model and the traditional Tahfiz model. The federal or state governments manage the modern tahfiz model, typically possessing robust financial resources, well-organized organizational structures, and comprehensive facilities. Private parties, in contrast, run the traditional Tahfiz model. To ensure that operations run smoothly, private tahfiz centers need to register and obtain approval from the State Department of Islamic Religion. However, due to various challenges and constraints in obtaining approval from the authorities, some private tahfiz centers remain unregistered (Solahuddin Ismail, 2018).

The governance of private tahfiz centers is one of the main issues that requires attention (Solahuddin Ismail, 2018). The variety of governance methods causes private tahfiz centers' management to be non-uniform (Ridza et al., 2017). Furthermore, tahfiz centers have the freedom to determine their own direction by using a distinct curriculum and management method (Solahuddin Ismail, 2018). This is since tahfiz centers in Malaysia are built based on different manhajs or models (Ridza et al., 2017). To ensure efficient management in private tahfiz centers, the development of an integrated management model that includes human resource, financial, and facility management is very necessary (Rabichund S & Sten Gym, 2014). Private tahfiz centers require a high-quality and well-planned governance model.

We need to implement transformation and empowerment in the areas of establishment and registration, premises security, teaching staff quality, student marketability, tahfiz curriculum (Azman Ab Rahman et al., 2020), human resource development, infrastructure facilities, and other aspects (Zetty Nurzuliana Rashed et al., 2021). However, infrastructure facilities are very important to ensure that students can study in a comfortable and suitable place, because this factor greatly affects a student's learning and teaching process (PdP) (Abd Rahman Abd Ghani & Azmil Hashim, 2017).

Integrated management is a method of achieving goals by using all available resources to start work in an efficient system (Ian Dalling, 2007). In addition, integrated management is the merging of processes in an organization so that it is more efficient to achieve goals and policies compared to other methods (Kadir Arifin et al., 2015). This management is comprehensive, involving all organizational units or staff, easy to understand when carrying out work, and open to hearing opinions (Welford & Gouldson, 1993).

According to Juha Ketunnen (2015), integrated management can improve effective communication, orderly financial management, robust management structure, and organizational training as a direct result of the application of integrated management in educational centers. Chkheidze (2022) further elucidates that integrated management in educational centers prioritizes customer satisfaction through the utilization of all available human resources and facilities, treating students as customers and the management as trustees who determine the success of students through efficient management practices.

Integrated management in the tahfiz center allows decision-making power to no longer rest entirely with managers or administrators. On the other hand, every decision involves all parties, causing the results achieved to be a shared responsibility (Syaiful Segala, 2015). Imam Makruf (2017) asserted that integrated management, in contrast to the previous method, renders private tahfiz centers more formal and organized, as board members reach decisions through discussions and consensus.This study aims to develop and test a good

governance model for integrated management in private Tahfiz centers. The model consists of transparency, freedom, accountability, responsibility, and justice (Agus Iskandar & May Roni, 2021). Therefore, this study will discuss the challenges encountered in managing private tahfiz centers in Malaysia and propose potential solutions to address these challenges.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative methodology to achieve the set objectives. The qualitative approach in this study utilizes literature review and interview methods, which involve collecting data from various primary and secondary sources.

Data collection methods

We collected data through semi-structured interviews with managers of private tahfiz centers who have experience in managing tahfiz centers. These interviews give the researcher the flexibility to gain in-depth and detailed insights, as well as the ability to collect additional relevant information. Meanwhile, the study sample consists of managers of private tahfiz centers in Malaysia. We purposefully selected the sample to interview only individuals with experience and direct involvement in tahfiz center management.

Data collection process

The data collection process begins with interview preparation. We arranged the interview questions based on the study's objectives and the highlights of previously conducted literature. Depending on the suitability and availability of respondents, we conduct interviews face-to-face and through online platforms. Next, we conducted the interview in a comfortable and distraction-free environment to facilitate honest and open feedback from the respondents. We recorded the interviews with the respondents' consent to ensure accuracy in data analysis.

Data Analysis

We analyze the data gathered from interviews in several main steps, starting with the transcription process. This step involves transcribing the interview recordings into a comprehensive and detailed text. Second, we analyzed the codification process, or the transcribed text, to identify the main themes related to integrated management and the challenges faced by private Tahfiz centers. Third, we categorize and analyze the theme extraction process, or the main themes, to comprehend their interrelationships and their influence on the management of the tahfiz center. Fourth, we interpret the thematic analysis's result in the context of integrated management in a private Tahfiz center, drawing on pertinent theories and concepts from the literature highlights.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, several steps are taken: first, triangulation, which is to use various data sources and data collection methods to ensure the accuracy and validity of the information obtained. Second, we conduct member checking, which involves sharing the results of interviews and analysis with respondents to obtain feedback and confirmation regarding the accuracy of data interpretation. Third, the audit trail records every step in the data collection and analysis process to ensure the research process's transparency and accuracy.

Informant Selection Procedure

In this phase, the researcher used a qualitative method with in-depth interviews. To avoid overlapping information, the selection of informants did not require a large sample size, with three participants selected for the study. This is in line with the view of Creswell (2012), who states that the number of participants in a qualitative study is usually between 3 and 10 people, depending on the depth of the study. This approach

ensures that the data obtained is not saturated and remains inclusive. Therefore, the researcher has interviewed five tahfiz center managers who manage private tahfiz centers as informants for this study.

CHALLENGES OF MANAGEMENT OF PRIVATE TAHFIZ CENTERS

Private tahfiz centers face a range of management challenges. Interviews with several informants categorize these challenges into three main aspects: human resource management, financial management, and facilities.

Challenges in human resource management

Informant 1 emphasized that the lack of manpower is the main challenge in human resource management in private tahfiz centers. Informant 2 asserts that this shortage forces the existing teaching staff to shoulder a heavy workload, involving not only teaching but also administrative matters. Informant 3 asserted that this shortage also compels management staff to undertake additional responsibilities, such as warden duties, a role better suited for staff with specialized training. According to informant 4, when teachers must bear the burden of administrative work, their time and focus on teaching will decrease, which can affect the quality of education given to students. According to informant 5, excessive workload can cause job satisfaction among teaching staff to decrease, further increasing the risk of them quitting their jobs.All informants concurred that fostering a harmonious atmosphere among the staff is crucial for the smooth operation of the tahfiz center. A common issue arises when the staff at the Tahfiz center feels underappreciated or overburdened with additional responsibilities. The management has never held team-building activities or self-development training. Staff only meet during working hours, and there are no activities that promote friendly relations or cooperation between them. All informants also stated that the decision-making process, which requires the approval of board members, takes a long time and can hinder the smooth operation of the tahfiz center. A delay in the implementation of a decision can cause a delay in the implementation of the program, which can ultimately affect the effectiveness of the operation of the tahfiz center. Delaying decisions can lead to inefficient handling of immediate problems, potentially worsening them.

Financial Resource Management Challenge

Informant 1 stated that one of the main problems is insufficient funds to cover the tahfiz center's operating costs. Informant 2 stated that factors that contribute to this problem include the increase in the price of goods and utility bills. Funds received through student fees and local community donations are sometimes insufficient to cover daily operating costs. Informant 3 emphasized the effect that the lack of funds can cause tahfiz centers to face difficulties in providing sufficient facilities, quality teaching materials, and maintaining experienced teaching staff. This can affect the quality of education provided to students. According to Informant 4, the annual expenditure planning follows the established calendar. Even with careful financial planning, unexpected cost increases can still pose challenges. Unexpected costs can disrupt financial planning and lead to a shortage of funds for planned programs. Informant 4 stated that this could also cause tahfiz centers to postpone or cancel certain programs that are important for student development.

Not only that, but all the informants also stated that preparing financial reports was another challenge. We must internally report every expense detail and prepare monthly financial reports for the board of directors. The preparation of incomplete or inaccurate financial reports can cause confusion in financial management and reduce the trust of the board of directors in the management of the Tahfiz Center. This can also prevent the Tahfiz Center from making accurate and effective financial decisions. To overcome the challenges faced in private tahfiz centers, financial management requires careful and creative planning. By diversifying funding sources, making flexible financial plans, providing accurate financial reports, and finding alternatives to generate additional funds, tahfiz centers can ensure the continuity of their operations and continue to provide quality education to students.

Facility Management Challenges

Informant 1 stated that although the number of students is still small, basic facilities such as teachers' rooms, toilets, dining halls, and classes are sufficient. However, according to informant 2, if the number of students

increases, tahfiz centers need to add more facilities, such as recreation areas, bathrooms, and more teachers' rooms. Lack of facilities can cause congestion and discomfort for students and teaching staff. This can affect the quality of life and learning in tahfiz centers. Informant 3 emphasized the importance of providing suitable facilities for teaching staff and support staff. Although some teaching staff may already have their own accommodation, there is a need for break rooms and temporary accommodation for support staff who need to work overtime. Lack of rest and accommodation facilities can cause staff to feel uncomfortable and stressed, which can affect their work performance. This deficiency can also reduce staff motivation and loyalty to the tahfiz center.

Furthermore, it is important to treat technological facilities with seriousness. Informant 4 stated that technological facilities, such as LCD and digital learning equipment, are not yet available in their tahfiz center. The lack of technological facilities can limit a more interactive and intriguing way of teaching. This can cause students to be less interested and find it difficult to follow learning well. Furthermore, the challenge of providing utilities must be considered. Informant 5 emphasized that utility facilities, such as clean water, are a challenge in the village area. The use of well water may be insufficient or of poor quality. Lack of clean water can affect the health and hygiene of students and staff. This can also interfere with the daily operations of the tahfiz center, especially in food preparation and toilet hygiene. Facility management at private tahfiz centers requires careful planning and adaptation to changes in the number of students and the needs of teaching staff and support staff. By overcoming these challenges, tahfiz centers can provide a comfortable and effective learning environment, which will greatly benefit students and staff.

SOLUTIONS FOR FACING THE CHALLENGES OF MANAGEMENT OF PRIVATE TAHFIZ CENTERS IN MALAYSIA

Overcoming the challenges of managing private Tahfiz centers in Malaysia requires a holistic and integrated approach. A solution that includes the principles of transparency, freedom, accountability, responsibility, and justice is important to ensure the continuity and quality of education in these centers. We expect this approach to assist private tahfiz centers in Malaysia in achieving higher standards in education and management, while also ensuring the quality of students.

Transparency

Transparency is the basis of effective management. Transparency in the tahfiz center refers to the open and transparent execution of every decision, expenditure, and planning process. All interview informants agreed that transparency of all parties is necessary in the discussion and decision-making of the tahfiz center management. Financial management transparency guarantees meticulous recording of all fund expenditures and receipts, thereby mitigating the risk of misappropriation and fostering trust among staff and donors. This is in line with studies that show that transparency increases trust and cooperation in organizations (Shahril Marzuki, 2005). Transparency in facility management helps in the implementation of improvements by providing information on the condition of facilities in private tahfiz centers. This allows management to make better decisions about facility maintenance and repair (Edy Siswanto & Dian Hidayati, 2020).

Freedom

All interview informants agreed that there is a need for freedom in the management of tahfiz centers to allow staff and teaching staff to voice their views openly. This is important for making more inclusive decisions and reducing internal conflicts. In human resource management, freedom allows employees to voice their views openly, which helps in making more inclusive decisions, reduces internal conflicts, and increases cooperation between employees (Maya Sari et al., 2020). Meanwhile, freedom in financial management enables staff to express their financial needs, thereby preventing the neglect of important needs and ensuring efficient use of funds (Mohd Richard Neles Abdullah, 2013). In facility management, freedom allows staff and students to provide feedback on the condition of the facility and the need for improvement. Maintaining well-managed facilities and meeting maintenance requirements is crucial for creating a conducive learning environment (Karlyn B. Rico, 2021).

Accountability

Accountability in management is also an important thing to note. All interview informants agreed that accountability ensures everyone in the organization takes responsibility for their actions and decisions. It is crucial to generate commitment and discipline in work when managing the Tahfiz Center. In human resource management, accountability helps create a committed and disciplined work culture where everyone is aware of their role and strives to achieve set standards (Maya Sari et al., 2020). Accountability in financial management carefully controls every expenditure and use of funds, thereby reducing the risk of misappropriation and enhancing the trust of contributors and other stakeholders (Nwosu & Ozioko, 2020). Accountability, in addition to facility management, can ensure that all facilities are well maintained. This involves reporting any damage or repair needs, ensuring the facility is always in excellent condition and safe to use (Aniagboso, 2019).

Responsibilities

All interview informants agreed that management responsibility can ensure that every staff member and teaching staff carries out their duties with dedication and earnestness. In human resource management, the element of responsibility ensures that each employee performs their duties with dedication and seriousness, creating a professional and harmonious work environment. In financial management, the duty lies in ensuring the careful and efficient use of funds, adhering to the budget, and obtaining and utilizing funds for their intended purpose (Agus Iskandar & May Roni, 2021). While in facility management, the responsibility is to ensure that the facilities and equipment at the tahfiz center are always in excellent condition and working. This involves reporting any damage or repair needs immediately, ensuring a safe and conducive learning environment (Marinah Awang & Norhazwani Suyanto, 2017).

Fairness

All interview informants concurred that fairness in management guarantees equitable treatment for all staff members and teaching staff. In human resource management, fairness helps create a positive work atmosphere where each individual feels valued and respected, increasing motivation and job satisfaction, which in turn increases productivity and staff commitment to the organization. Justice in financial management guarantees the allocation of salaries and remuneration based on work performance and academic qualifications, rather than favoritism. This ensures a wiser and more responsible use of funds, building trust and confidence among staff and contributors (Agus Iskandar & May Roni, 2021). While in facility management, Justice ensures that all staff and students have equal access to the facilities and equipment provided. This fosters an inclusive and conducive learning environment by ensuring objective decisions about facility use and maintenance, based on real needs, rather than the interests of certain individuals (Khan & Iqbal, 2012).

CONCLUSION

In Malaysia, the management of private tahfiz centers faces a variety of challenges that necessitate a holistic and integrated management approach. By practicing the principles of transparency, freedom, accountability, responsibility, and justice, tahfiz centers can ensure the continuity and improvement of the quality of their education. Transparency ensures openness in management and strengthens trust among staff and contributors. Freedom allows for an inclusive outlook and more democratic management. Accountability ensures commitment and discipline, while responsibility encourages dedication in performing tasks. Justice guarantees equitable treatment for all parties, thereby boosting motivation and job satisfaction. With this approach, private tahfiz centers can provide a conducive and effective learning environment, which will provide many benefits to students and staff and ensure that tahfiz centers are able to continue to grow and meet the needs of the community.

Additionally, we can suggest the involvement of mediators or cultural advisors as a solution to management problems in private tahfiz centers. This cultural mediator can play an important role in bridging the communication gap between management, teaching staff, and the surrounding community, ensuring that each party understands and respects the cultural values and sensitivities involved. Cultural advisors can also assist in

integrating local and traditional elements into the management of tahfiz centers, which can increase community acceptance and facilitate conflict resolution or management challenges. With the involvement of mediators or cultural advisers, Tahfiz centers can strengthen relationships with stakeholders, further increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations.

Based on the results of this study, more research is needed. This could include case studies of private tahfiz centers that have managed to deal with management problems, how integrated management affects the quality of education, how technology is used in management, how registered and unregistered tahfiz centers are managed, and a long-term study of how well integrated management principles work. We expect these studies to offer a more comprehensive and in-depth perspective on best practices, management strategies, and effective technological approaches aimed at enhancing the sustainability and management quality of private tahfiz centers in Malaysia.

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