Managing the Dual Functions of Mosques as Places of Worship and Tourist Destinations in Malaysia: A Conceptual Perspective

Noor Fiteri Abdullah*, Wan Mohd Adzim Wan Mohd Zain

Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Terengganu, Malaysia

***Corresponding Author**

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.101100129

Received: 24 October 2026; Accepted: 29 October 2026; Published: 22 November 2026

ABSTRACT

The rise of religious tourism in Malaysia has converted established mosques from regular congregational prayer venues into attractive cultural and educational destinations. But the presence of visitors amid daily prayers poses new challenges to upholding sanctity and complying with Islamic regulations. The existing research addresses religious devotion and tourism independently, leaving a gap in understanding how to develop an adequate approach to managing both aspects within a unified institutional setting. Therefore, to address this gap, the paper proposes implementing a straightforward, integrated management framework encompassing policies and daily practices. Guided by Stakeholder Theory and governance approaches, the suggested framework proposes introducing a screening process to select appropriate tourist mosques and establishing a hierarchy of priorities: worship activities should be prioritised as the primary function, and tourism as a secondary purpose. There are five main elements within two layers: Institutional Policy and Governance, and Ground-Level Operations and Controls. The practical tools to be used include standardised training for volunteers and employees, physical zoning within the facility, daily incident logs, and the Quality Assurance System, which extends JAKIM's Malaysia Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM) through joint audits with various stakeholders. The paper provides two suggestions for further validation. In terms of practical implementation, it offers an adequate solution for mosque committees, religious administration, tourism organisations, and guides.

Keywords: Balanced mosque management, Dual functions, mosque tourism, Sanctity, Shariah-compliant.

INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism has developed as an important component of the global tourism industry, reflecting the growing interest in spiritual, cultural, and heritage experiences (Olsen & Timothy, 2022). Although conventionally associated with pilgrimage and pious obligation, religious tourism has gradually expanded to include visits motivated by cultural curiosity, historical appreciation, and educational interests (Choe, 2024; Kim et al., 2019). Thus, many places of worship in major religions are now visited not only by believers but also by local and international tourists seeking meaningful cultural experiences. This evolution has transformed sacred sites into significant tourist destinations, creating new opportunities for heritage preservation and local economic development while simultaneously introducing new management challenges in maintaining their religious significance (Budovich, 2023; Shinde, 2012). Therefore, places of worship are increasingly expected to accommodate both religious and tourism functions, a trend that is particularly evident in the development of mosque tourism in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, mosques serve primarily as active places for congregational prayers and vital social hubs for the community. Tourism, on the other hand, functions as an additional value-added activity rather than a core institutional mandate. Current literature has yet to fully address how tourism activities integrate with daily religious duties within a unified institutional setting. Instead, previous studies remain narrowly restricted to isolated topics such as cultural mosque heritage, visitor satisfaction, and facilities management (Ab. Muin et al., 2024; Azizan et al., 2023; Azmi & Ismail, 2016; Sutrisno et al., 2024).

To bridge this operational gap, this paper introduces a conceptual framework that integrates multi-level stakeholders, connecting institutional policymakers directly with ground-level operations. Grounded in structured governance and stakeholder collaboration (Awa et al., 2024; Freeman, 1984), this study offers a balanced approach to mosque management. In practice, this approach allows administrators to safeguard religious sanctity while facilitating structured, sustainable visitor access.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist Mosque Development within Religious Tourism

Existing scholarship on sacred space administration and religious tourism predominantly bifurcates into two isolated domains: devotional space management and heritage destination marketing. To establish a theoretical foundation for an integrated operational model, this section critically synthesizes four thematic dimensions: the traditional devotional mandate of mosques, their contemporary emergence as tourist destinations, the operational friction arising from dual functionality, and the governing stakeholder perspectives.

Mosques as Places of Worship

Studies broadly agree that the mosque's foundational identity is rooted in its sacred and communal responsibilities. Historically, since the prophetic era, the mosque has served as an active institution for spiritual devotion, religious education, and community development (Omer, 2014). Contemporary literature consistently reinforces worship as the non-negotiable core function, providing dedicated space for daily congregational prayers, Friday sermons, and spiritual retreats (Kamaruddin et al., 2026). Beyond ritual worship, the institution functions as a centre for *dakwah* (preaching), moral guidance, and lifelong learning through structured classes (Islami, 2023; Utaberta et al., 2021), alongside providing social welfare mechanisms through zakat and charitable distribution (Ayyubi & Saputri, 2018; Kurniawati et al., 2025).

Despite the multi-function roles of the mosques being explored, existing studies often treat these sacred obligations as static boundaries, assuming that spiritual tranquillity will automatically persist without formal operational safeguards. In reality, increased visitor turnout introduces physical and authority disruptions, which may lead to friction with local worshippers (Oktapiansyah & Masruroh, 2026; Yusoff, 2026). Managing this situation requires clear functional hierarchies and structured visitor protocols, especially for scheduling times and controlling entry during congregational prayers.

Mosques as Tourist Destinations

Together with their primary religious identity, prominent mosques are increasingly integrated into national and international tourism itineraries. Kessler (2016) identifies three primary drivers behind this expansion: architectural and heritage appreciation, spiritual and cultural curiosity, and digital destination marketing. Both local and international visitors are often motivated by the opportunity to observe Islamic aesthetics, historical roots, and authentic cultural practices (Ahmed & Mary, 2016; Moghavvemi et al., 2021).

Destination marketing studies tend to focus heavily on visitor satisfaction and heritage promotion, often overlooking the physical infrastructure needed to manage diverse crowds (Bilim et al., 2019). Unregulated visitor movement often leads to unintentional violations of religious respect *(adab),* such as dress code breaches or inappropriate conduct in sacred zones. Consequently, successfully accommodating cultural visitors requires more than just marketing; it relies heavily on physical facilities and interpretive assets (Ab. Muin et al., 2024). Dedicated infrastructure, like a robe-wearing corner, multilingual signage, and self-guided digital galleries, is essential to manage these operational realities.

International Perspectives on Managing Dual-Function Religious Sites

Managing tourism within active places of worship presents similar challenges globally. At the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in the United Arab Emirates, administrators use a dedicated management structure to handle

guide training and cultural services without disrupting daily prayers (AbulQaraya, 2015; Sheikh Zayed Grande Mosque Centre, 2025). In Türkiye, heritage sites such as the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and the Süleymaniye Mosque balance these dual roles through strong community support and strict adherence to religious etiquette (Çıkı & Tanriverdi, 2023; Egresi & Kara, 2018). The ongoing management of Hagia Sophia further highlights the practical tensions of coordinating tourist footfall, daily worship, and heritage conservation (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2025). Comparing these international experiences with the Malaysian context reveals a shared baseline: while Malaysian mosques are uniquely governed by specific Shariah compliance parameters and state religious departments, the fundamental operational mechanisms of dedicated visitor management, trained cultural guidance, and structured respect for sacred spaces remain universally necessary to sustain dual-function religious sites.

Management Challenges of Dual Mosque Functions

Integrating sacred worship with secular tourism creates administrative complexities that require generic commercial models to be modified or altered. In contrast to museums or art galleries, mosques are active places of worship where devotional obligations must take precedence over visitor access. The literature identifies two major points of operational friction in this context: spatial-temporal overlaps and administrative goal divergence. Spatial-temporal conflicts arise when tourist visits coincide with congregational prayers or major events such as Ramadan or royal events, causing overcrowding and compromising the spiritual sanctity (Adriani et al., 2022).

Institutional friction also stems from differing stakeholder objectives. Local mosque committees naturally prioritise spiritual order, state religious departments enforce Shariah boundaries, while tourism agencies tend to focus on arrival metrics (Yusoff, 2026). Without unified operational guidelines, site administrators often resort to ad hoc, reactive decision-making, leading to sudden entry bans or inconsistent enforcement of etiquette. Addressing these recurring issues requires formalised Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) governing dress codes, noise levels, and spatial zoning.

Governance and Stakeholder Perspectives

Mitigating operational tensions in dual-function sacred spaces relies heavily on formal governance and active stakeholder collaboration. Familiarising from the perspective of Stakeholder Theory (Awa et al., 2024; Freeman, 1984), sustainable outcomes depend on structurally aligning the interests of religious authorities, mosque committees, tourism bodies, tour operators, and local communities. A clear governance framework establishes the administrative mandates and Shariah parameters necessary to keep tourism activities subordinate to religious priorities (Tengku Mansur et al., 2024; Umar & Ashaari, 2019).

A closer review of current governance literature, however, reveals a structural disconnect. Macro-level institutional policies are often analysed separately from ground-level implementation. Policy development originates with the federal government, while authority at the state level rests with the state religious department. Although state religious departments issue high-level directives, frontline personnel, such as mosque committees and volunteer Mosque Tour Guides (MTG), rarely receive standardised operational tools, formal training modules, or structured feedback channels. Top-down institutional policy alone is insufficient. Bridging this gap requires an integrated framework that links macro-level governance and stakeholder collaboration directly to daily floor operations and to a proactive Quality Assurance System.

Research Gap and Study Purpose

Current State of Knowledge and Institutional Context

Institutionally, mosque governance in Malaysia is decentralised under the respective State Islamic Religious Councils and State Islamic Religious Departments, while the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) provides coordination and policy support at the federal level. Within this governance structure, existing studies have predominantly focused on governance, professional administration, community empowerment, and

the role of mosques as centres of Islamic education and social development rather than as tourism destinations. (Omar et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, academic literature on mosque tourism has developed primarily across three thematic areas: cultural, historical and architectural documentation (Azmi & Ismail, 2016; Yap et al., 2015), tourist motivation and visitor satisfaction (Azizan et al., 2023; Moghavvemi et al., 2021), and digital destination marketing (Md Sawari et al., 2024; Sutrisno et al., 2022).

However, these two streams of literature remain largely disconnected. Existing scholarship and institutional mechanisms continue to examine religious functions, mosque governance, and tourism development as separate domains, with limited attention given to their integration within a unified governance framework. While the Malaysia Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM) (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, 2021), evaluates internal governance, facility management, cleanliness, and community engagement (*pengimarahan*), it does not include explicit indicators for assessing a mosque's operational readiness to accommodate organised non-Muslim or international cultural visitors. Consequently, academic discourse provides limited insight into how active places of worship can systematically balance their dual roles as sacred religious institutions and tourism destinations without compromising Shariah principles, congregational sanctity, or governance effectiveness.

The Core Research Gap: Why Existing Approaches Fail

Major heritage mosques in Malaysia operate within a highly specific institutional reality. Congregational worship remains an absolute mandate, whereas tourist reception functions strictly as an educational outreach activity. In practice, this secondary role is carried out through volunteer Mosque Tour Guides (MTGs), multilingual literature distribution, and cross-cultural dialogues (Azarudin et al., 2019; Mohd Rozali & Idris, 2021). Even with this clear dual-function dynamic, current scholarship continues to analyse macro-level policy, stakeholder relations, and daily floor operations in complete isolation from one another (Abd Rahman et al., 2021).

This theoretical fragmentation reflects a genuine operational challenge on the ground. State religious authorities consistently issue comprehensive Shariah compliance policies, yet these high-level directives rarely provide actionable tools for daily execution. Deprived of mechanisms to translate policy into floor-level routines, site administrators naturally resort to reactive management. The outcome is recurring operational friction: interrupted prayer sessions, dress code violations, and sudden bans on entry enforced during prayer windows (Hamid et al., 2023; Pahlevi et al., 2025). The fundamental research gap, then, concerns the absence of an integrated framework that directly bridges macro-level governance mandates and micro-level daily floor execution.

Statement of Novelty and Purpose of the Study

Addressing this operational divide, the present study introduces the Integrated Mosque Governance Framework (IMGF). Shifting the focus away from traditional metrics of tourist satisfaction and destination marketing, the inquiry approaches mosque tourism through an institutional management lens. This perspective is firmly grounded in Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and contemporary non-profit governance principles (Awa et al., 2024).

Situating itself within the Malaysian administrative context, the proposed model offers three distinct conceptual advancements. Firstly, rather than treating all places of worship as homogenous tourism assets, the model advocates for an upfront 'Applicability Screening Filter'. Such a mechanism is vital for insulating community-centric mosques from external commercial pressures, ensuring that only heritage sites with established administrative capacity attract international tourist footfall. Secondly, the framework bridges the persistent disconnect between top-down state religious decrees and daily floor-level execution by introducing a two-tiered operational architecture that links governance directly to spatial zoning and visitor controls. Finally, the conceptualisation reimagines JAKIM's Malaysian Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM). Moving beyond its traditional application as a static internal audit, the SPMM is repositioned as a dynamic, multi-stakeholder quality assurance tool equipped to evaluate spatial decorum and Shariah-compliant tourism readiness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a conceptual research design, drawing on a critical synthesis of academic literature and institutional guidelines to construct the Integrated Mosque Governance Framework (IMGF). Relevant literature was gathered from major databases, including Scopus and Google Scholar, using keywords such as "sacred space management," "mosque tourism," and "religious tourism governance." The review prioritised peer-reviewed articles from the past decade that examine the operational tensions between devotional duties and visitor management. Alongside academic sources, institutional frameworks JAKIM's Malaysia Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM) were evaluated to pinpoint current administrative gaps (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, 2021).

To identify the core dimensions of the proposed model, thematic analysis was applied to map recurring operational bottlenecks and stakeholder responsibilities across the literature. Grounded in Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), the study evaluates the persistent disconnect between macro-level religious policies and frontline floor execution (Adriani et al., 2022; Yusoff, 2026). This structural evaluation directly informs the framework's practical mechanisms, specifically the applicability screening filter and the proposed multi-stakeholder expansion of the SPMM.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Proposed Conceptual Framework

Applicability Screening: Targeting Eligible Mosques via Uniqueness

A fundamental premise of the proposed model is that not all of the approximately 6,000 mosques in Malaysia are operationally suited for tourism. To operationalise this distinction, an initial screening matrix (Figure 1) is necessary. The selection of eligible sites is predicated on four interlinked parameters. The foremost consideration is the site's distinctiveness, which may range from gazetted historical architecture to vibrant socio-religious campaigns, such as the widely observed *"Subuh Macam Jumaat"* gatherings. This is naturally followed by strategic geographical placement along established heritage or urban travel trails. From a governance perspective, a prospective mosque must secure formal endorsement from state religious authorities and demonstrate concrete administrative readiness on the ground, particularly through active collaboration with trained volunteer guide networks.

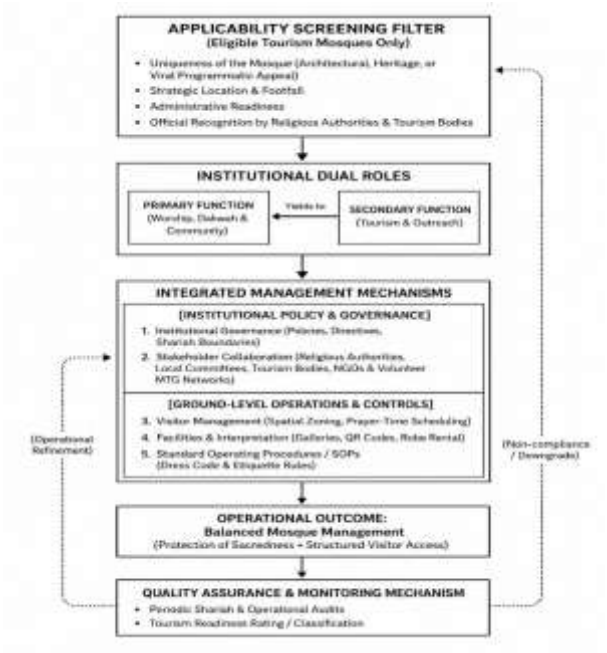


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework for Managing the Dual Functions of Mosques

Source: Developed for this study

Hierarchy of Roles: Primary vs. Secondary

Preventing operational confusion on the ground requires establishing a clear, unambiguous functional hierarchy between institutional roles. The primary function encompasses non-negotiable devotional obligations, including daily congregational prayers, Friday assemblies, religious lectures, and support for community welfare (Kamaruddin et al., 2026). This mandate defines the institution's core identity. Tourist reception, encompassing guided tours and intercultural education, functions strictly as a secondary role. Rather than viewing tourism as an unpredictable disruption to daily worship, this hierarchical design intentionally positions visitor activities as auxiliary outreach. Enforcing this prioritisation ensures that spatial and temporal conflicts are resolved systematically by defaulting to religious duties, bypassing the need for arbitrary floor decisions.

Five Integrated Management Mechanisms

Translating this functional hierarchy into practice relies on five management mechanisms distributed across two administrative tiers. The upper tier, Institutional Policy and Governance, functions strictly at the strategic level. It establishes formal regulatory directives, legal mandates, and Shariah boundaries issued by state Islamic departments to define acceptable operational limits (Hartarto & Azizurrohman, 2022; Shinde, 2012). Simultaneously, drawing on Stakeholder Theory and non-profit governance principles (Awa et al., 2024; Freeman, 1984), this tier facilitates formal alignment among state religious bodies, local mosque committees, government tourism boards, commercial operators, and volunteer networks like the Mosque Tour Guide (MTG) program (Tengku Mansur et al., 2024). Bridging top-down policy with volunteer execution inherently addresses a major gap in sacred space literature.

At the operational end, the Ground-Level Operations and Controls tier converts these strategic policies into daily routines at the mosque site. Execution depends on visitor management, facilities and interpretation infrastructure, and standard operating procedures. Visitor management regulates movement through temporal scheduling, such as locking entrance points during congregational prayer times, alongside spatial zoning that separates visitor pathways from active worship spaces. Supporting these physical controls, interpretation assets supply necessary infrastructure, including reception desks, robe distribution stations, multilingual signage, and self-guided digital displays. Operational SOPs further enforce immediate site rules regarding modest attire, photography limits, noise control, and general behavioural decorum (Abd Rahman et al., 2021; Yap et al., 2015).

Connecting Policy to Daily Ground Operations

Policy directives hold little value without practical implementation tools. Standardised training programs serve as the primary mechanism to convert abstract Shariah directives into practical instruction modules for staff and volunteers. Completing these modules leads to recognised guide accreditation, aligning with national frameworks like the Islamic Tourism Centre's Mosque Visit Guide (MosVi) scheme (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2026). Physical zoning controls further protect devotional zones on the floor using movable partitions, clear floor markers, directional signage, and robe-wearing stations. To ensure continuous improvement, daily incident logs and periodic review meetings capture recurring operational challenges, such as attire non-compliance or overcrowding during prayer times. Recorded by frontline personnel, these empirical logs provide actionable data during joint stakeholder meetings, allowing administrators to adjust access schedules based on real floor realities

Operational Outcome and Quality Assurance

The coordination of these structural mechanisms culminates in Balanced Mosque Management, an operational state that protects sacred space while providing structured public access. Maintaining these standards over time relies heavily on an integrated Quality Assurance System. Objective assessments are guaranteed through joint audit teams comprising state religious officers, tourism officials, and independent academic reviewers. Crucially, the proposed model expands JAKIM's Malaysian Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM) by embedding dedicated tourism readiness metrics. These specialised indicators assess the quality of intercultural interpretation, spatial

zoning enforcement, crowd movement controls, and Shariah decorum standards. High-scoring institutions earn official recognition and marketing support, whereas non-compliant sites face rating downgrades or temporary suspension of visitor privileges. Moving past reactive management triggered by public complaints, this proactive evaluation system establishes an ongoing monitoring loop that maintains institutional standards and continuously validates site eligibility.

Conceptual Propositions

Analysing the institutional relationships within this model yields two core propositions to guide future empirical validation.

Proposition 1: The operational alignment between state-level policy directives and frontline floor controls positively influences the management equilibrium of dual-function heritage mosques.

Proposition 2: The utilisation of joint multi-stakeholder audits, specifically an expanded SPMM, positively moderates the relationship between high tourism volume and the preservation of Shariah-compliant spatial decorum.

DISCUSSION

The Integrated Mosque Governance Framework (IMGF) demonstrates how dual organizational identities can coexist within sacred institutions without causing operational dysfunction or identity dilution. Current scholarship tends to focus heavily on visitor satisfaction analytics (Azizan et al., 2023) or approaches Islamic governance structures in functional isolation (Abd Rahman et al., 2021; Mohamed et al., 2023). Moving beyond these isolated analyses, the present study details the systemic mechanics necessary to align macro-level policy directives directly with micro-level floor management.

Theoretical Significance: Beyond the Dual-Role Dichotomy

Sacred space administration literature routinely treats public outreach as a competing internal disruption that threatens core organisational focus (Adriani et al., 2022; Shinde, 2012). The IMGF directly resolves this role ambiguity. By establishing an explicit functional hierarchy, congregational worship is secured as the non-negotiable primary mandate, forcing secondary tourism activities to adapt to religious schedules.

Operating without such a structured hierarchy typically leaves mosque administrators heavily dependent on ad-hoc compromises. This operational ambiguity triggers two common management failures: arbitrary visitor bans that cut off cultural preaching potential, or unregulated tourist entry that disrupts prayer tranquillity and alienates local congregants (Oktapiansyah & Masruroh, 2026; Yusoff, 2026). The introduction of an upfront applicability screening filter prevents these extremes. It systematically insulates standard community mosques from external commercial pressures, allowing only high-traffic heritage mosques to operate within a legitimate, regulated tourism framework.

Operational Mechanics: Bridging the Macro-Micro Execution Gap

High-level governance directives issued by state religious authorities, such as JHEAT, frequently fail at the operational level due to a lack of concrete execution tools for floor personnel. Policy mandates cannot secure Shariah compliance or spatial decorum during high-volume visitation without practical floor-level translation. The IMGF bridges this policy-execution gap by integrating specific ground instruments: real-time incident tracking, physical spatial zoning, accredited volunteer training (MosVi), and multi-stakeholder review sessions.

Equipping frontline personnel and volunteer Mosque Tour Guides (MTGs) with these standardized tools fundamentally changes daily floor dynamics. Staff can enforce modesty rules, manage decibel limits, and close entrance gates during prayer windows without unnecessary confrontation. Effective governance in active

religious institutions extends beyond top-down administrative authority; it demands practical operational routines capable of translating regulatory policies into smooth floor management.

Institutional Evolution: Extending SPMM into a Dynamic Governance Feedback Loop

Standard evaluation tools, including JAKIM's Malaysian Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM), assess mosques primarily on internal administrative performance, financial accounting, and local community programs. While effective for standard neighbourhood worship centres, these internal metrics cannot evaluate an institution's capacity to manage non-Muslim visitor flows. Expanding the SPMM into a joint Quality Assurance System addresses this institutional limitation.

Integrating specialised tourism metrics into the SPMM converts it into a comprehensive institutional evaluation tool. These metrics specifically measure spatial zoning compliance, visitor access control, cross-cultural interpretation quality, and modesty protocol enforcement. Establishing joint audit teams with representatives from state religious departments, government tourism boards, and independent scholars significantly reduces administrative bias. Under this proactive system, high-performing sites gain formal accreditation and marketing support, while non-compliant institutions receive targeted operational interventions or temporary access suspensions. This transforms site evaluation from a reactive, complaint-driven process into an active mechanism for protecting the integrity of Islamic tourism.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study moves theoretical discourse beyond the rigid administrative dichotomy that treats places of worship either as exclusive devotional environments or as commodified heritage assets. Integrating governance principles with Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) yields an operational architecture that bridges macro-level administrative policy and micro-level floor execution. This structural framework offers a robust theoretical foundation for future empirical testing in non-profit management and sacred space administration.

Practical Implications

Administratively, the framework delivers targeted operational mechanisms to resolve daily friction across key stakeholder levels:

Mosque Management Committees: Provide concrete parameters for setting floor protocols, defining spatial zoning barriers, and tightening daily coordination to insulate prayer hours from secular intrusion.

State Islamic Religious Authorities: Highlights an urgent administrative necessity for standardised operational guidelines, formal guide accreditation programs, and multi-agency oversight to harmonise practices across districts.

Government Tourism Agencies: Provides a policy foundation for developing ethical, culturally respectful marketing strategies that promote heritage sites without overwhelming their primary devotional functions.

Tour Guides and Frontline Staff: Establishes clear behavioural parameters, dress code standards, and cultural interpretation guidelines for handling international visitor groups professionally.

CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive governance framework designed to address the escalating administrative tensions facing dual-purpose heritage mosques in Malaysia. Moving past earlier research that treated religious practice and public visitation as separate operational fields, the proposed model structurally connects macro-level policy directly to floor-level execution. Enforcing a rigid functional hierarchy secures congregational worship as an absolute priority, ensuring that tourist reception is managed strictly as an auxiliary educational activity. This pre-emptive alignment resolves spatial and temporal scheduling conflicts before floor-level friction occurs.

Successful implementation relies on linking top-down directives to practical floor instruments, specifically standardised volunteer modules, spatial zoning barriers, and real-time incident tracking. Crucially, expanding the scope of JAKIM's Malaysian Mosque Rating Standard (SPMM) to function as a joint multi-stakeholder Quality Assurance System provides the necessary monitoring mechanism. This integrated approach demonstrates that active sacred spaces can robustly protect their religious sanctity while concurrently providing structured, culturally respectful access to the public.

Limitations and Future Research Agenda

When evaluating this model, certain boundary conditions apply. The framework is tailored to Malaysia's specific institutional landscape, where mosque administration is governed by state religious departments and evaluated through national standards like the SPMM. Replicating this model in Muslim-minority countries or areas with decentralised governance will naturally require legal and administrative adjustments.

Furthermore, because the IMGF is currently a conceptual blueprint, its core propositions require empirical testing. Future studies would benefit from a mixed-methods approach to validate the framework. On the quantitative side, structural equation modelling (SEM) could be used to measure how effectively state-level directives align with frontline controls (Proposition 1) across a large sample of SPMM-rated mosques. Complementing this, qualitative multi-site case studies and interviews at prominent Southeast Asian heritage mosques would help assess how the five operational mechanisms function in practice. Together, these steps will ground the framework in real-world data, refine the performance indicators, and adapt the tourism readiness metrics for international application.

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