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Human Resource Management Strategies for Improving Work Effectiveness and Service Quality: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze human resource management strategies in improving work effectiveness and service quality at Mubarak Tour & Travel. The study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, documentation, and literature review. Informants were selected purposively and included the director, employees, marketing staff, mutawwif, and pilgrims who had used the services of Mubarak Tour & Travel more than twice. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings indicate that Mubarak Tour & Travel faces limitations in its human resource structure, resulting in overlapping responsibilities and increased workload dynamics, particularly during periods of high pilgrim numbers and departure schedules. These challenges are managed through the optimization of available human resources, flexible task allocation, coordination and collaboration among employees, and competency development through briefings, direct guidance, experience sharing, and work evaluation. These strategies contribute to improving productivity, timely task completion, and employees' ability to adapt to changing workloads. In addition, human resource management contributes to service quality through service reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and the provision of facilities that meet pilgrims' needs. The findings further show that service quality is achieved through the integrated roles of the director, employees, marketing staff, and mutawwif throughout the entire process of serving pilgrims.

Introduction

The Umrah travel industry is one of the service sectors that requires effective human resource management because service delivery involves a series of activities with direct interaction between service providers and pilgrims (Ande et al., 2024; Harahap et al., 2025; Ishak et al., 2025). The service process does not end with registration but continues through administrative management, information delivery, departure preparation, assistance during the journey, and the pilgrims' return. Each stage requires coordination among the parties involved to ensure that services are delivered in accordance with pilgrims' needs.

Strategic human resource management places planning, development, motivation, and performance management as important components in achieving organizational objectives (Armstrong, 2020; Dessler, 2020). In service organizations, human resources occupy a central position because the quality of interaction between employees and service users contributes to shaping the overall service experience. Therefore, human resource management is not merely

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concerned with the number of employees but also with how organizations utilize their workforce, distribute tasks, develop competencies, coordinate activities, and evaluate performance (Ummah et al., 2026; Siswanto et al., 2025; Nasir et al., 2026).

Umrah travel companies may face limitations in the number and structure of their human resources. Such conditions may lead to overlapping responsibilities and fluctuations in workload depending on the number of pilgrims and departure periods. The literature on workload indicates that increases in work volume and job demands can affect employees' ability to perform effectively when they are not properly managed (Badriyah & Trisyulianti, 2016; Fitra et al., 2024). Therefore, human resource management strategies become particularly important when organizations must maintain operational continuity despite limited resources.

Mubarak Tour & Travel is an Umrah travel company that, in its operational activities, faces limitations in its human resource structure and changing workload demands. Increased activity during certain periods requires employees to adjust the implementation of their tasks according to operational needs. Under these conditions, the company places greater emphasis on optimizing the available workforce and developing employee capabilities, as reflected in the findings of the field study.

The limitations of the human resource structure at Mubarak Tour & Travel cannot be understood merely as a matter of employee numbers. These limitations are also related to how work functions are distributed and how employees adapt when operational activities increase. When registration, preparation, and pilgrim departures occur within relatively close periods, administrative work, communication, preparation, and service delivery require more intensive coordination. Thus, workload dynamics represent an operational condition that needs to be managed appropriately.

Human resource management is also closely related to work effectiveness. In this study, effectiveness is viewed through employees' ability to complete work according to their duties and responsibilities, maintain timely task completion, and adapt to changes in workload. This perspective is consistent with the view that organizational effectiveness is related to the achievement of organizational goals through the appropriate use of resources (Gibson et al., 2012). In the context of Umrah travel services, effectiveness is particularly important because many tasks are closely connected to fixed departure schedules and pilgrims' service needs.

Service quality in this study is understood through the dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, and tangibles. These dimensions are used to assess the company's ability to provide dependable and responsive services, ensure a sense of security and personal attention, and provide adequate supporting facilities (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Tjiptono & Chandra, 2016). Service delivery in Umrah travel also involves several human resource components, indicating that service quality cannot be viewed as the outcome of the work of a single party.

Previous studies have examined human resource management strategies in Umrah services, human resource development, workload, and service quality. Studies by Asis (2021), Muhimmah (2024), and Zulfikar and Ansom (2023) provide insights into the importance of human resources in Umrah service delivery. However, the present study positions limitations in human resource structure and workload dynamics as conditions that are directly examined together with human resource management strategies, work effectiveness, and service quality within a single Umrah travel organization.

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The position of this study lies in its effort to understand how an Umrah travel organization manages limitations in its human resource structure through practices implemented in everyday work activities. The study is not intended to establish statistical relationships but rather to understand the processes and experiences of the informants. Therefore, the terms "plays a role," "supports," and "contributes" are used to describe the qualitative findings obtained from the field.

This study aims to analyze limitations in human resources and workload dynamics, the human resource management strategies implemented by Mubarak Tour & Travel, the role of these strategies in supporting work effectiveness, and their contribution to the quality of services provided to Umrah pilgrims. This focus is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of human resource management in Umrah travel companies operating under limitations in workforce structure.

Academically, this study is expected to enrich the literature on human resource management in Umrah travel service organizations. Practically, the findings may serve as an evaluation reference for Mubarak Tour & Travel in maintaining existing strategies while adjusting them to changes in the number of pilgrims and evolving operational needs.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using a single-case study design to explore human resource management strategies in addressing workforce limitations and fluctuating workloads and their contribution to work effectiveness and service quality at PT Mubarak Tour & Travel. The qualitative approach was selected to obtain an in-depth understanding of organizational practices, employee experiences, and service delivery processes within their actual operational context. The case study focused on one organizational unit, PT Mubarak Tour & Travel, located in Tanrutedong, Duapitue District, Sidenreng Rappang Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The company was selected because it operates with a relatively limited workforce while managing increasing pilgrim numbers and complex service responsibilities, particularly during departure preparation and pilgrimage activities.

Primary data were obtained from informants selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in or experience with the company's human resource management and service delivery activities. The participants represented five stakeholder categories: the company director, operational employees, marketing personnel, mutawwif (Umrah guides), and pilgrims. The director served as a key informant regarding workforce planning, organizational policies, employee development, and performance management. Three operational employees provided information about task allocation, administrative responsibilities, workload fluctuations, and workplace coordination. Marketing personnel contributed perspectives on communication, promotional activities, and pilgrim assistance, while mutawwif described coordination and service provision during the pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia. Pilgrims provided firsthand accounts of their experiences with administrative services, responsiveness, travel assistance, religious guidance, and physical facilities. The inclusion of different stakeholder perspectives enabled the study to examine internal management practices alongside the experiences of service recipients.

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, direct observation, documentation, and literature review. Interviews were guided by questions addressing four main research areas: human resource limitations and workload dynamics; human resource management strategies, including planning, competency development, motivation, and performance evaluation; work effectiveness, particularly productivity, timeliness,

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responsibility, and adaptability; and service quality, encompassing reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to describe their experiences while maintaining consistency with the research objectives. Direct observation focused on employee activities, task distribution, workplace interactions, and administrative and departure preparation processes. Documentary materials included relevant company information, operational records, and supporting documentation. Company and local travel agency data covering 2023–2025 were used to describe the operational context, particularly changes in pilgrim numbers and the local competitive environment. The literature review provided a theoretical foundation for interpreting the qualitative findings.

Data analysis followed the interactive framework of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data reduction, information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation was organized according to the research objectives. Relevant statements and observations were grouped into analytical categories, including workforce limitations, overlapping responsibilities, workload fluctuations, workforce optimization, task coordination, competency development, employee motivation, operational effectiveness, and service quality. The organized findings were subsequently presented through thematic narratives and summary tables to identify similarities, differences, and relationships across participants' experiences. The service quality findings were interpreted using the five SERVQUAL dimensions proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), while the organizational findings were examined through the perspectives of strategic human resource management and work effectiveness. Conclusions were developed by interpreting recurring patterns and comparing information across the available sources. The resulting conceptual framework was formulated as a contextual synthesis of the qualitative findings rather than a statistically tested causal model.

Data credibility was addressed through source, technique, and time triangulation, as specified in the research design. Source triangulation involved comparing information provided by the director, employees, marketing personnel, mutawwif, and pilgrims to examine the consistency of accounts concerning organizational practices and service experiences. Technique triangulation involved comparing interview findings with observations and relevant documentation. Time triangulation was intended to assess the consistency of information collected at different stages of the research. These procedures were intended to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings and reduce dependence on a single perspective. The interpretation remained focused on the experiences and organizational conditions documented within the case study, without attempting statistical generalization to the broader Umrah travel industry.

Result and Discussion

Human Resource Limitations and Workload Dynamics

The findings indicate that PT Mubarak Tour & Travel faces challenges in managing its limited human resources amid increasing demand for Umrah travel services. Company data presented in the original research show that the number of pilgrims increased from 926 in 2023 to 1,013 in 2024 and 1,117 in 2025, representing an overall increase of approximately 20.6%. During the same period, the reported number of Umrah travel agencies operating in Sidenreng Rappang Regency increased from 8 to 18. These developments illustrate the growing operational demands and competitive environment in which the company operates.

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Table 1. Development of Umrah Travel Agencies and Pilgrim Numbers, 2023–2025

Year	Number of Umrah Travel Agencies in Sidrap	Number of Mubarak Tour & Travel Pilgrims
2023	8	926
2024	12	1,013
2025	18	1,117

The increase in pilgrim numbers has created additional operational responsibilities, particularly in administrative processing, departure preparation, document management, and coordination. However, the company's human resource structure remains relatively limited, requiring employees to undertake multiple responsibilities beyond their primary assignments. H. Firmansyah, the company director, explained:

> *"Our human resources are still limited compared to the company's operational needs, especially during peak Umrah departure periods. Under these conditions, some employees must assist with tasks outside their main responsibilities."* (H. Firmansyah, Director)

This condition was confirmed by Syamsinar, an administrative employee, who described the increasing workload before scheduled departures:

> *"As departure dates approach, our workload becomes much heavier than usual. We must complete pilgrims' administrative requirements, ensure that all documents are ready, respond to inquiries, and coordinate with other departments."* (Syamsinar, Employee)

The workload is not distributed uniformly throughout the company's operational cycle. Instead, its intensity increases during particular periods, especially approximately one week before departure. Employees must simultaneously prepare passports, visas, vaccination documents, pilgrim equipment, transportation arrangements, and departure information. Jurana explained:

> *"Sometimes the workload is heavy, while at other times it is relatively light. It usually becomes busier about a week before departure because we must ensure that all pilgrims' documents, equipment, and travel arrangements are complete."* (Jurana, Employee)

Further evidence was provided by Majid, who described additional responsibilities involving luggage collection, baggage identification, airport transportation, and administrative assistance. These activities demonstrate that operational employees frequently perform multiple functions to ensure that the necessary preparations are completed before departure. Marketing personnel also participate in pilgrim assistance, including providing information, distributing identification cards, and coordinating departure arrangements.

These findings indicate that human resource limitations are experienced not only through the number of available employees but also through the complexity and simultaneous nature of operational responsibilities. The growing number of pilgrims increases the importance of coordination and flexible task allocation. Although the company responds through collaboration and workforce optimization, these practices also highlight the need to ensure that additional responsibilities do not exceed employees' operational capacity. The findings are consistent with the literature emphasizing the importance of workload management in maintaining employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Badriyah & Trisyulianti, 2016; Fitra et al., 2024).

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Human Resource Management Strategies

The findings identify four interconnected human resource management strategies implemented by PT Mubarak Tour & Travel: human resource planning, competency development, performance management, and employee motivation. These strategies are primarily implemented through practical operational arrangements, reflecting the company's need to maintain service continuity despite its limited workforce.

Human resource planning focuses on optimizing available employees rather than immediately recruiting additional personnel. Management considers pilgrim numbers, departure schedules, and operational requirements when allocating responsibilities. The director explained:

> *"In planning our human resources, we prioritize optimizing the existing workforce. Since the number of employees is still limited, we reorganize task distribution whenever the number of pilgrims increases so that all responsibilities can be completed properly."* (H. Firmansyah, Director)

This strategy is implemented through flexible task distribution and mutual assistance among employees. Majid confirmed that employees frequently assist colleagues whose workloads increase during busy operational periods:

> *"When the number of pilgrims increases, our workload also becomes heavier. In such situations, we help one another according to operational needs. For example, when the administrative department has many documents to process, I assist them so that everything can be completed on time."* (Majid, Employee)

Competency development is another important component of the company's human resource management strategy. Rather than relying primarily on formal training programs, the company emphasizes briefings, direct guidance, experience sharing, and continuous work evaluation. These activities are integrated into daily operational practices to improve employees' understanding of their responsibilities and ability to address emerging difficulties.

Performance management involves monitoring work completion, coordinating responsibilities, and ensuring continuity between administrative services in Indonesia and pilgrim assistance in Saudi Arabia. The company assigns operational employees to manage documentation and departure preparation, while mutawwif are responsible for religious guidance and direct assistance during the pilgrimage.

Employee motivation is supported through financial compensation, positive working relationships, and spiritual values associated with serving pilgrims. The director explained that employees are encouraged to understand their responsibilities not only as professional duties but also as meaningful services to pilgrims. Syamsinar similarly emphasized that workplace relationships, appreciation from pilgrims, and personal satisfaction contribute to her motivation.

> "*Salary is certainly one of my motivations for working. However, a comfortable working environment, a sense of family among colleagues, and the satisfaction of seeing pilgrims depart smoothly also motivate me to continue working."* (Syamsinar, Employee)

These findings demonstrate that human resource management at Mubarak Tour & Travel combines workforce optimization, informal competency development, collaborative performance management, and multidimensional employee motivation. The approach reflects the principles of strategic human resource management, particularly the alignment of

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workforce practices with organizational needs (Armstrong, 2020; Dessler, 2020). Nevertheless, the reliance on informal arrangements requires continuous evaluation to ensure that operational flexibility remains appropriate as service demands increase.

Task Allocation, Coordination, and Collaboration

Task allocation and internal coordination emerged as important mechanisms through which Mubarak Tour & Travel maintains its operational activities. Employees are assigned primary responsibilities according to their positions, but they are also encouraged to assist other personnel when operational demands increase. This arrangement enables the company to respond to workload fluctuations without completely restructuring its workforce.

Administrative employees are primarily responsible for documentation, pilgrim registration, and departure preparation. Marketing personnel manage promotional activities and communication with prospective pilgrims, while logistical personnel prepare equipment and support departure arrangements. However, these responsibilities frequently overlap during busy periods. For example, marketing representatives assist pilgrims during departure, and administrative employees participate in manasik activities and airport-related services.

Coordination is also maintained between office personnel and mutawwif responsible for assisting pilgrims in Saudi Arabia. Information concerning the number of pilgrims, travel arrangements, and individual assistance requirements is communicated before departure. Firdaus, a mutawwif, explained:

> *"Before departure, we usually receive information about the number of pilgrims and their assistance needs. We also conduct briefings with the operational team to identify elderly pilgrims, wheelchair users, or those with certain medical histories. This coordination helps us prepare in advance."* (Firdaus, Mutawwif)

This statement illustrates that coordination extends beyond administrative procedures and includes preparation for pilgrims requiring additional assistance. Such communication enables mutawwif to anticipate service needs and organize their responsibilities before receiving pilgrims in Saudi Arabia.

Collaboration also helps minimize operational interruptions when individual employees face heavier workloads. Employees who complete their primary responsibilities may assist colleagues with unfinished assignments. This practice supports the timely completion of interconnected activities, particularly when departure schedules create strict operational deadlines.

The findings suggest that effective coordination depends on employees' willingness to share information, understand operational priorities, and perform complementary responsibilities. Although flexibility provides an adaptive response to workforce limitations, clear communication remains essential to prevent overlapping responsibilities from creating confusion or unnecessary duplication of work.

Competency Development and Evaluation

Competency development at Mubarak Tour & Travel is characterized by informal and continuous workplace learning. The company implements employee development through briefings before operational activities, direct managerial guidance, experience sharing, and evaluations following service delivery. These practices are particularly relevant because employees are frequently required to perform responsibilities outside their main assignments.

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The director emphasized that employee development is integrated into daily operational practices:

> *"Although our workforce is relatively small, we continuously strive to improve employees' competencies. Competency development is mainly conducted through briefings before work activities, direct guidance, and sharing experiences among employees."* (H. Firmansyah, Director)

Syamsinar confirmed that managerial guidance and communication among employees help identify operational difficulties and areas requiring improvement:

> *"Our supervisor usually provides guidance regarding the tasks we must complete and the things we need to consider when serving pilgrims. We also remind one another about work progress so that we can identify weaknesses and make improvements."* (Syamsinar, Employee)

Competency development also extends to mutawwif, particularly through coordination before departure and evaluation after completing pilgrimage assistance. Ibnu Hamdun explained:

> *"Before assisting pilgrims, we usually coordinate and receive guidance concerning their conditions and the matters that require attention. After the activities are completed, we also provide evaluations to improve subsequent departures."* (Ibnu Hamdun, Mutawwif)

These findings indicate that workplace learning provides employees with opportunities to improve their understanding of operational responsibilities, communication procedures, and problem-solving practices. Learning occurs through practical experience and direct interaction rather than exclusively through structured training programs.

However, the evidence does not include standardized competency assessments or documented comparisons of employee performance before and after development activities. Therefore, the findings demonstrate the existence and perceived usefulness of workplace learning practices rather than quantitatively measured improvements in employee competency. This distinction is important because the effectiveness of informal development mechanisms must be interpreted within the company's operational context.

The Role of Human Resource Management Strategies in Supporting Work Effectiveness

Human resource management strategies support work effectiveness through three main aspects identified in the interviews: productivity, timely task completion, and adaptability to workload fluctuations. These aspects are closely related because the preparation and implementation of Umrah services involve interconnected activities that must be completed according to established schedules.

Employee productivity is supported through task distribution, work monitoring, and cooperation among personnel. The director emphasized that administrative processing, manasik preparation, and departure arrangements must be completed before scheduled departures:

> "*We cannot postpone our work because pilgrims' documents, briefings, and departure preparations must be completed according to schedule. We continuously remind one another and monitor work progress. When someone experiences difficulties, other employees immediately provide assistance."* (H. Firmansyah, Director)

Majid similarly explained that collaboration helps employees manage their responsibilities:

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> *"Clear task distribution and good communication make our work more organized. We are accustomed to helping colleagues who have heavier workloads. Employees who have completed their responsibilities usually assist others without waiting for further instructions."* (Majid, Employee)

Timeliness is particularly important because delays in administrative preparation may affect subsequent service arrangements. Employees are therefore required to ensure that passports, visas, travel documents, equipment, and other departure requirements are completed according to schedule. Jurana explained:

> *"With clear task distribution and good coordination, work can be completed within the specified time. If difficulties arise, we coordinate so that they do not interfere with other tasks."* (Jurana, Employee)

Adaptability represents another important aspect of work effectiveness. As pilgrim numbers increase, employees adjust their responsibilities and provide assistance across functional areas. Syamsinar described this arrangement as a routine practice that allows employees to respond to changing workloads:

> "*When the number of pilgrims increases, we have more work to complete than usual. However, we are accustomed to helping one another and maintaining coordination so that the work can still be completed properly."* (Syamsinar, Employee)

The findings suggest that work effectiveness is supported by shared responsibilities, communication, and employees' ability to adjust to changing operational conditions. However, the evidence is primarily based on qualitative accounts rather than documented productivity rates, task completion percentages, or comparative performance measurements. Therefore, the findings are interpreted as evidence of perceived operational effectiveness rather than statistically demonstrated improvements in employee performance.

Table 2. Qualitative Evidence of Work Effectiveness at Mubarak Tour & Travel

Dimension	Empirical Evidence	Supporting Informants
Productivity	Clear responsibilities, mutual assistance, and monitoring of work progress support task completion.	H. Firmansyah, Majid
Timeliness	Administrative and departure-related activities are coordinated according to established schedules.	H. Firmansyah, Jurana
Adaptability	Employees redistribute responsibilities and assist colleagues during periods of increased workload.	Syamsinar, H. Firmansyah
Operational continuity	Coordination between office personnel and mutawwif supports service delivery across different pilgrimage stages.	Ibnu Hamdun, Firdaus

Human Resource Management Strategies in Supporting Service Quality for Umrah Pilgrims

The findings indicate that human resource management strategies contribute to service quality through coordinated activities involving management, administrative employees, marketing personnel, and mutawwif. The experiences reported by pilgrims reflect the five SERVQUAL dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988). These dimensions are examined through the participants' accounts of services received before departure, during the pilgrimage, and upon returning to Indonesia.

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Reliability

Reliability is reflected in the consistency of administrative preparation, information delivery, departure arrangements, and facilities provided according to the selected Umrah package. The company emphasizes ensuring that services correspond to the information communicated to pilgrims before departure. Syamsinar explained:

> *"Before pilgrims depart, we always make sure that all their documents are complete. We also provide information about schedules, equipment, and departure procedures. Whenever there are changes, we immediately contact pilgrims individually or inform them through the Umrah WhatsApp group."* (Syamsinar, Employee)

The experience of Hj. Arini, a repeat pilgrim, supports the importance of consistent service delivery:

> *"My family and I have traveled with Mubarak Tour & Travel several times. The company has consistently provided good services, from registration until our return home. That is why we continue choosing Mubarak Tour & Travel whenever we plan another Umrah pilgrimage."* (Hj. Arini, Pilgrim)

Hj. Ani similarly described repeated positive experiences with the company, particularly regarding administrative preparation, information delivery, and assistance during the pilgrimage. These accounts indicate that service consistency contributes to perceived reliability and encourages some pilgrims to continue using the company's services.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness concerns the company's ability to respond to pilgrims' inquiries and provide assistance according to their needs. Employees maintain communication through direct interaction, telephone calls, and WhatsApp. Syamsinar explained:

> *"We always try to respond quickly to pilgrims' questions, whether they visit the office directly or contact us by telephone or WhatsApp. If they do not understand the requirements or departure procedures, we explain everything until they fully understand."* (Syamsinar, Employee)

This experience was confirmed by Isale', who described receiving detailed information during a first-time Umrah pilgrimage:

> *"This was my first Umrah pilgrimage, so I frequently asked about departure preparations and the things I needed to prepare. Whenever I contacted the travel agency, my questions were answered properly and explained in detail."* (Isale', Pilgrim)

Sitti Wahida also described receiving assistance with passport arrangements, meningitis vaccination, and the delivery of pilgrimage equipment despite living in Takalar Regency, outside the company's immediate operational area. Her experience illustrates the importance of accessible communication and administrative assistance for pilgrims residing in different locations.

These findings indicate that responsiveness involves more than providing immediate answers. It also requires employees to understand pilgrims' concerns, explain procedures clearly, and coordinate the necessary assistance. This dimension is particularly important for first-time pilgrims who may be unfamiliar with administrative and travel requirements.

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Assurance

Assurance is reflected in the company's efforts to provide a sense of security, confidence, and reliable assistance throughout the pilgrimage. The director explained that the company arranges travel insurance and emphasizes the importance of providing appropriate guidance during pilgrims' stay in Saudi Arabia:

> *"Besides providing assistance during the Umrah pilgrimage, we also provide travel insurance protection for pilgrims while they are in Saudi Arabia, which we register through SISKOPATUH. We want pilgrims to feel more secure."* (H. Firmansyah, Director)

Supriyadi Temba described how information concerning travel protection and continuous assistance from mutawwif contributed to his sense of security:

> *"During my stay in the Holy Land, I felt reassured because we had been informed beforehand that pilgrims would receive insurance protection during the journey. The mutawwif also continuously accompanied us, making us feel safe while performing our religious activities."* (Supriyadi Temba, Pilgrim)

These accounts suggest that assurance is experienced through a combination of administrative arrangements, travel protection information, and the availability of personnel responsible for assisting pilgrims. The findings reflect the informants' reported experiences and should not be interpreted as independent verification of insurance coverage or compliance arrangements.

Empathy

Empathy is reflected in the attention given to pilgrims' individual circumstances, particularly older pilgrims and those requiring additional assistance. Ibnu Hamdun explained that mutawwif are responsible not only for providing religious guidance but also for monitoring pilgrims' conditions and responding to their difficulties:

> *"We always try to ensure that pilgrims feel safe and comfortable during their pilgrimage. Besides guiding religious activities, we pay attention to their conditions, especially elderly pilgrims and those who are unwell. Whenever someone needs assistance, we immediately accompany them until the problem is resolved."* (Ibnu Hamdun, Mutawwif)

Nani emphasized the importance of equal treatment and personalized attention:

> *"What impressed me was not only the pilgrimage itself but also the attention given by the mutawwif to every pilgrim without discrimination. Everyone was treated equally, and whenever someone needed help, the mutawwif immediately provided assistance."* (Nani, Pilgrim)

The findings suggest that empathy is demonstrated through personal attention, respectful communication, and willingness to provide individualized assistance. This dimension is especially relevant in pilgrimage services because pilgrims may have different physical conditions, levels of religious knowledge, and assistance requirements. The role of mutawwif is therefore central to maintaining a supportive service experience during religious activities in Saudi Arabia.

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Tangibles

Tangibles refer to the accommodation, transportation, pilgrimage equipment, meals, and other physical facilities provided to pilgrims. The director explained that these facilities are arranged according to the selected Umrah package:

> *"We always provide facilities according to the package selected by each pilgrim. Hotels, transportation, Umrah equipment, and meals are arranged based on the agreed package. We also maintain the quality of these facilities so that pilgrims can perform their worship comfortably."* (H. Firmansyah, Director)

Darni described the consistency between the facilities promised before departure and those received during the pilgrimage:

> *"In my opinion, the facilities provided were very good. During our stay in Makkah and Madinah, we received comfortable hotel accommodation and transportation that made our pilgrimage easier. What had been explained before departure was consistent with what we actually experienced."* (Darni, Pilgrim)

These findings indicate that the physical dimension of service quality is experienced through the suitability of accommodation, transportation, and supporting facilities. Consistency between communicated service arrangements and actual experiences contributes to pilgrims' perceptions of reliable service delivery.

Table 3. Qualitative Evidence of Service Quality Based on SERVQUAL Dimensions

Dimension	Main Findings	Supporting Informants
Reliability	Consistent administrative preparation, departure information, and services across repeated pilgrimage experiences.	Syamsinar, Hj. Arini, Hj. Ani
Responsiveness	Timely communication and assistance with inquiries, passports, vaccination arrangements, and departure preparation.	Syamsinar, Isale', Sitti Wahida
Assurance	Reported travel protection arrangements and continued assistance from mutawwif during the pilgrimage.	H. Firmansyah, Supriyadi Temba
Empathy	Personalized assistance, equal treatment, and particular attention to elderly pilgrims and those experiencing difficulties.	Ibnu Hamdun, Nani
Tangibles	Accommodation, transportation, equipment, and supporting facilities corresponding to the selected Umrah package.	H. Firmansyah, Darni

These findings indicate that service quality at Mubarak Tour & Travel is experienced through a sequence of interconnected activities rather than isolated service interactions. Administrative employees contribute to reliability and responsiveness before departure, marketing personnel facilitate communication and assistance, while mutawwif play an important role in providing assurance and empathy during the pilgrimage. The provision of appropriate facilities further supports the overall service experience. Nevertheless, these findings are based on qualitative accounts and do not establish numerical service quality scores or represent the experiences of all pilgrims using the company's services.

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The findings provide a contextual understanding of how adaptive human resource management enables a resource-constrained Umrah travel agency to respond to increasing operational complexity while maintaining work effectiveness and service quality. From a strategic human resource management perspective, the significance of these findings lies not simply in workforce flexibility but in the alignment of staffing arrangements, employee capabilities, coordination mechanisms, and service responsibilities. Zhai et al. (2026), through a comprehensive synthesis of 3,503 publications on strategic human resource management and organizational performance, demonstrated that the relationship between human resource management and organizational outcomes involves interconnected practices operating across organizational levels. Their findings challenge the assumption that individual human resource practices independently generate improved performance. This perspective helps explain why workforce optimization at Mubarak Tour & Travel should be interpreted as a coordinated organizational system rather than a collection of separate management initiatives. Similarly, Wafy and Deka (2024), in their systematic literature review of human resource management and employee performance, emphasized the relevance of integrated human resource practices to employee outcomes. The present study extends this discussion by demonstrating how these practices operate within a small pilgrimage service organization where formal human resource structures are limited and operational coordination becomes essential to maintaining service continuity.

Workload management represents a critical dimension of the relationship between human resource practices and organizational sustainability. Bakker et al. (2023), in their development of Job Demands–Resources theory, explained that demanding working conditions do not necessarily produce negative outcomes when employees have access to sufficient organizational and interpersonal resources. Their theoretical analysis emphasizes the interaction between job demands, available resources, and employees' capacity to remain engaged while avoiding exhaustion. Applied to the present findings, flexible task allocation and collegial assistance can be understood as resources that help employees manage fluctuating operational demands. However, Hoare and Vandenberghe (2024) demonstrated that different job demands and resources contribute unequally to emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions, highlighting the importance of distinguishing organizational support from excessive role expectations. This introduces an important qualification to the present findings: although overlapping responsibilities may maintain short-term operational continuity, they should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of sustainable workforce management. The company's adaptive approach may therefore require more systematic workload assessment to prevent flexibility from developing into persistent role overload.

Employee well-being provides another important consideration when evaluating the sustainability of adaptive management practices. Bhoir and Sinha (2024), through a systematic review of employee well-being-oriented human resource management, identified the importance of integrating employee welfare into organizational human resource systems rather than prioritizing performance outcomes alone. Their review indicates that organizational practices should be assessed according to their contribution to employees' working conditions and long-term well-being. This perspective is particularly relevant to Mubarak Tour & Travel because the same operational flexibility that supports task completion may also increase employees' exposure to competing responsibilities. Michel et al. (2022), through a meta-analytic examination of burnout from a Job Demands–Resources perspective, further demonstrated the importance of understanding exhaustion within the relationship between occupational demands and available resources. The present findings do not establish that employees experience burnout, but these studies identify a potential organizational risk that

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should be considered when interpreting workforce optimization. Sustainable human resource management in pilgrimage services consequently requires attention to staffing adequacy, workload balance, employee recovery, and the availability of managerial support rather than relying exclusively on employees' willingness to assume additional responsibilities.

The effectiveness of adaptive human resource management also depends on whether employees perceive organizational practices as supportive and meaningful. Yan et al. (2024), in a meta-analysis of 81 studies involving 26,532 participants in hospitality and tourism, demonstrated that perceived organizational support is associated with multiple employee outcomes, including work attitudes, performance-related behaviors, workplace stress, and turnover intentions. Their findings suggest that managerial support influences organizational functioning through psychological and behavioral mechanisms rather than solely through formal procedures. Davras and Aktürk (2024) similarly found that human resource practices positively influence employee satisfaction and engagement in the hospitality sector, with employee satisfaction mediating the relationship between human resource practices and engagement. Their analysis also identified differences across employee groups and organizational settings, demonstrating that the effects of human resource practices depend partly on operational context. Together, these studies suggest that the collaborative working environment identified at Mubarak Tour & Travel may represent an important organizational resource. Nevertheless, the present qualitative evidence cannot establish whether employee satisfaction mediates the relationship between management practices and effectiveness. Its contribution is instead to illustrate how interpersonal support, practical guidance, and shared responsibilities form part of employees' everyday experiences in a pilgrimage service organization.

Informal competency development presents a particularly important organizational mechanism because pilgrimage service delivery involves administrative, logistical, interpersonal, and religious responsibilities. Ranto (2024), in a systematic literature review of employee performance improvement strategies, emphasized that organizational performance improvement requires identifying relevant performance determinants and developing appropriate managerial responses. This perspective suggests that employee development should be informed by operational needs rather than implemented as a generic training activity. The present study contributes to this discussion by illustrating how workplace learning is incorporated into routine coordination and evaluation practices in an organization with limited staffing capacity. However, the findings also reveal an important distinction between participation in developmental activities and demonstrated competency improvement. Briefings and direct guidance may provide opportunities for learning, but their effectiveness cannot be established without evidence of changes in employees' capabilities. Consequently, more structured competency documentation, periodic assessment, and clearer development objectives would strengthen the company's existing approach without necessarily replacing its informal learning culture.

The relationship between human resource adaptability and service delivery is particularly relevant in tourism organizations facing demand fluctuations. Cole (2024), through an extended qualitative investigation of frontline interactions and technology in an understaffed tourism organization, illustrated the operational challenges that arise when service demand increases while workforce resources remain constrained. The study highlights the complexity of frontline work and the limitations of relying on operational adjustments without sufficiently addressing underlying organizational pressures. These insights offer a critical comparison with Mubarak Tour & Travel, where flexibility and interpersonal coordination help sustain operations but may also conceal structural staffing limitations. Rather than treating adaptability as an

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inherently positive organizational characteristic, it should be evaluated in relation to the demands placed on employees and the quality of service outcomes. This interpretation extends the present study beyond the conventional assumption that employee flexibility necessarily improves performance. Adaptive management appears most valuable when supported by clearly defined responsibilities, manageable workloads, appropriate competencies, and organizational mechanisms for responding to changing service requirements.

The relationship between internal management practices and external service quality also requires a more nuanced interpretation. Yuliar et al. (2026), in their quantitative study of Umrah travel services, identified service quality and facilities as important predictors of customer satisfaction. Their findings support the relevance of both interpersonal service processes and physical arrangements in pilgrims' evaluations of travel providers. However, the present study differs by examining how these service components are supported through internal organizational practices rather than measuring their statistical effects on satisfaction. Nugraha and Ismail (2025) similarly demonstrated that customer experience and additional service benefits significantly contribute to pilgrim satisfaction, emphasizing that service evaluation extends across the overall pilgrimage journey. Their findings suggest that the value experienced by pilgrims is shaped by multiple service encounters and perceived benefits. In the present case, the significance of human resource management therefore lies in connecting administrative reliability, responsive communication, religious assistance, and facility coordination. The contribution is not the identification of new service quality dimensions but an explanation of the organizational mechanisms through which existing service dimensions are supported.

Trust represents another important consideration because Umrah services involve religious obligations, financial commitments, international travel arrangements, and substantial dependence on service providers. Fadilah and Solahudin (2025), examining pilgrims at an Umrah travel agency in Bandung, found that trust significantly influenced satisfaction, whereas the independent effect of service quality was not statistically significant. This finding challenges the assumption that positive service attributes necessarily translate directly into customer satisfaction and suggests that trust may be a particularly important consideration in pilgrimage services. Rosmiati and Hasan (2024), through their examination of Islamic service quality among Umrah travel businesses in Surabaya, emphasized the relevance of religiously grounded service principles to competitive positioning. Their research offers a useful contextual perspective because pilgrims may evaluate service providers not only through functional performance but also through perceived responsibility, sincerity, and religious appropriateness. Together, these studies suggest that the significance of service assurance at Mubarak Tour & Travel extends beyond the technical completion of travel arrangements. However, because the present study did not independently measure trust or religious values, these relationships remain interpretive possibilities rather than demonstrated explanatory mechanisms.

The relationship between service quality, satisfaction, and continued patronage also requires careful differentiation. Akmalulhadi et al. (2026), investigating Umrah pilgrims in Pekanbaru, found that Islamic service quality and price influenced customer satisfaction, while satisfaction subsequently influenced repurchase intention. Importantly, their analysis did not identify significant direct effects of Islamic service quality and price on repurchase intention, suggesting that continued patronage may depend on intermediate evaluative processes. This finding is relevant because repeat pilgrims in the present study reported positive experiences and willingness to continue using the company. Nevertheless, repeated service use cannot independently establish a causal relationship between human resource management and

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customer loyalty. The findings are better interpreted as qualitative evidence of favorable service experiences among the participating pilgrims. This distinction contributes to a more cautious understanding of customer retention in pilgrimage services, where satisfaction, trust, previous experience, religious considerations, and available alternatives may jointly shape subsequent decisions.

The management of service failures and unexpected operational disruptions represents an important extension of the company's existing coordination practices. Wei et al. (2024), using choice experiments across three countries, demonstrated that tourism service failures and recovery responses influence customers' intentions to engage in negative word-of-mouth communication. Their findings emphasize the importance of the type of service failure and the suitability of organizational responses rather than assuming that all recovery strategies are equally effective. Hwang (2024) similarly found that active service recovery actions generated more favorable customer responses than passive approaches in online travel agency settings, particularly when organizations communicated progress and demonstrated appropriate interactional responses. These studies indicate that responsiveness should not be understood only as the ability to answer routine inquiries but also as organizational preparedness to address service disruptions. Although the present study does not systematically examine actual service failure episodes, its findings regarding internal coordination provide a basis for considering how staff responsibilities and escalation procedures might support effective recovery when difficulties occur.

The temporal dimension of service recovery further strengthens the argument for systematic organizational learning. Zhi and Ha (2024), using a longitudinal approach to tourism service recovery, demonstrated that customer responses can change over time as recovery efforts develop, highlighting the limitations of evaluating service quality through a single interaction. Their findings suggest that service recovery should be understood as an evolving process requiring sustained organizational responses. Gani et al. (2024), examining service recovery in Indonesia's online travel agency industry, investigated the relationships among recovery practices, customer satisfaction, electronic word-of-mouth, and repurchase intention. Their study reinforces the need to examine service recovery as part of broader customer relationship management rather than an isolated corrective action. For Mubarak Tour & Travel, these insights suggest that operational evaluation after departure should consider not only whether assigned tasks were completed but also how service problems were identified, communicated, resolved, and incorporated into subsequent improvements. Such practices would strengthen the connection between employee learning and customer-oriented service management, although their effectiveness would require further empirical assessment.

The proposed adaptive human resource management framework contributes to the literature by positioning work effectiveness as an organizational process linking human resource practices and service experiences. This interpretation is compatible with the broader strategic human resource management literature but also highlights the importance of contextual conditions that may not be adequately captured by standardized performance models. Tankus et al. (2024), through a bibliometric systematic review of tourism service recovery, identified continuing research gaps concerning digital practices, organizational mechanisms, and the development of more comprehensive recovery strategies. Their findings suggest that future service management research should integrate organizational processes with customer-oriented outcomes. In the present study, workforce limitations, employee coordination, informal competency development, and service continuity constitute an integrated contextual explanation rather than independently tested causal relationships. The framework therefore

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offers a basis for further investigation of how internal organizational adaptation may influence the experiences of pilgrims across different travel agencies.

Overall, the theoretical contribution of this study is to connect adaptive human resource management with operational effectiveness and service quality within a resource-constrained religious tourism organization. The findings suggest that workforce flexibility operates through interdependent mechanisms involving task coordination, interpersonal support, workplace learning, and continuous managerial adjustment. However, its sustainability depends on recognizing the potential tension between organizational efficiency and employee well-being. From a practical perspective, the study emphasizes the importance of periodically reviewing staffing requirements, documenting employee competencies, formalizing critical coordination procedures, and integrating service feedback into organizational evaluation. These implications should be interpreted within the boundaries of a single qualitative case, where the evidence supports contextual explanation rather than statistical generalization or causal confirmation.

Conclusion

The findings show that Mubarak Tour & Travel faces limitations in its human resource structure, resulting in overlapping responsibilities and dynamic workloads, particularly when the number of pilgrims and departure-related activities increase. These conditions are managed through the optimization of available human resources, flexible task allocation, coordination, communication, and collaboration among employees.

The company's human resource management strategies include planning based on operational needs, competency development through briefings, direct guidance, experience sharing, and evaluation, as well as employee motivation and performance management. These strategies play an important role in supporting productivity, timeliness, responsibility, and employees' ability to adapt to changing work demands.

Human resource management strategies also contribute to service quality through reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, and tangibles. Service quality is therefore the result of the integrated roles of the director, employees, marketing staff, and mutawwif throughout the overall service process.

The conceptual finding of this study is the Adaptive Human Resource Management Model for Umrah Travel Companies with Limited Human Resource Structures. The model demonstrates that limitations in human resource structure and workload dynamics are addressed through workforce optimization, flexible task allocation, coordination and communication, competency development, and evaluation. These mechanisms support work effectiveness, which in turn contributes to the quality of services provided to pilgrims.

Practically, Mubarak Tour & Travel should maintain the optimization of its available workforce, continuous competency development, performance evaluation, and adjustment of task allocation according to the number of pilgrims and operational requirements in each departure period. Coordination among the director, employees, marketing staff, and mutawwif should also be maintained because service quality depends on the integration of all parties involved. If workload growth exceeds the capacity of the existing workforce, the company should reassess the need to adjust its human resource structure.

Implications

The academic implication of this study lies in demonstrating that human resource management in Umrah travel companies can be understood through the contextual relationship among human resource conditions, workload dynamics, adaptive strategies, work effectiveness, and

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service quality. This study emphasizes that human resource management strategies are not always manifested through formal policies but may also be reflected in everyday practices such as task allocation, coordination, briefings, direct guidance, and evaluation.

The practical implication for Mubarak Tour & Travel is the need to maintain the existing coordination and evaluation mechanisms while conducting periodic reviews of task allocation. Competency development through briefings and direct guidance can continue to be applied, while human resource requirements should be adjusted in accordance with changes in operational activities and the number of pilgrims.

For future research, the conceptual findings of this study may serve as a basis for further examining human resource management in Umrah travel companies with different organizational characteristics and varying numbers of pilgrims. Future studies may also employ a quantitative approach to statistically test the relationships among the identified variables.

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