
**OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY
AND QUALITY OF UMRAH SERVICES AT PT. GRAND SHAFI NAULI**

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Abstract

The increasing number of Umrah pilgrims in Indonesia encourages travel organizers to ensure effective and efficient operational management to achieve optimal service quality. The existence of well-organized operational management plays a central role in ensuring smooth administrative affairs, punctuality of departure, and fulfillment of pilgrim comfort throughout the pilgrimage. This study applies a descriptive qualitative approach by collecting data through in-depth interviews. Based on the research results, it is known that operational management at PT. Grand Shafi Nauli is carried out through three main stages: planning, implementation, and supervision. From the perspective of the ideal operational management theory requires a comprehensive integration between resource planning, service delivery, and control mechanisms that run continuously. However, the reality in the field reveals a gap in the discipline of pilgrims in fulfilling payment obligations that has the potential to hinder the smooth operation of the operational chain, especially in the process of paying tickets and accommodation costs. This situation suggests that even though the planning framework has been thoroughly prepared, the implementation stage still faces risks originating from external factors, namely customer behavior patterns that are not fully under the company's control. In terms of service quality, pilgrims assess it based on three main aspects: staff friendliness, comfortable facilities, and punctuality in departure schedules. The presence of tour leaders and muthawifs as travel companions also contributes positively to the pilgrims' sense of security and satisfaction.

Keywords: Operational Management, Efficiency, Service Quality, Umrah

INTRODUCTION

The Umrah pilgrimage travel industry in Indonesia has shown significant growth, along with the increasing public desire to perform the Umrah pilgrimage. This situation demands that Umrah travel companies provide quality services through effective and efficient operational management. In the service sector, a company's success depends not only on the products or packages offered but also on the quality of the service process directly experienced by customers or pilgrims. Good operational management is a crucial factor in managing resources, organizing service processes, and ensuring smooth operational activities to achieve sustainable customer satisfaction. (Sri Puspita Sari, 2024) Effective operational management also requires a structured support system, including efficient document and information management. Previous research has shown that implementing web-based digital archiving in operational management can significantly improve document management efficiency, information accessibility, and data security compared to manual methods that are prone to loss and limited access. (Anggraini & Nurbaiti, 2023).

In practice, the management of the Umrah pilgrimage is quite complex, encompassing a wide range of activities, from managing pilgrim data and processing travel documents, booking tickets and accommodations, arranging departure schedules, and providing services throughout the pilgrimage. This level of complexity requires strong coordination between departments to avoid delays, administrative errors, and schedule inconsistencies, which can ultimately impact the quality of service provided. Previous research has shown that the effectiveness of Hajj and Umrah management is significantly influenced by service quality, logistics management, and the use of technology to improve service efficiency and pilgrim satisfaction. (Chulaivi et al., 2024).

In practice, Umrah travel agencies often face various operational challenges, such as changes to departure schedules, suboptimal coordination between departments, and pilgrims' high expectations for fast and accurate service. This situation underscores the crucial role of operational management in maintaining and improving service quality. (Sayudin et al., 2023) Research in the tourism and travel sector shows that good service quality has a significant influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty, so companies must be able to manage service processes efficiently and in a standardized manner. (Andriani et al., 2025) Furthermore, operational efficiency is also a crucial factor in improving service quality. Inefficient operational management can lead to cost overruns, delays in service delivery, and a decline in customer satisfaction. This is supported by research in the transportation sector, which shows that service quality and operational costs simultaneously have a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction, with both variables contributing 66.6% to customer satisfaction. (Tahfizah et al., 2024).

Previous research has discussed more operational management from the aspects of service, technology, and strategies for improving service quality. (Kalsum & Nurani, 2023) However, there has not been much research specifically examining the operational efficiency issues caused by the dependence of cash flow on pilgrim payments. Based on these conditions, PT. Grand Shafa Nauli faces obstacles in the form of late payments for pilgrims which impact the smoothness of operations, especially in ticket and accommodation payments. As one of the organizers of Umrah pilgrimage trips, it faces demands to continuously improve operational efficiency as well as the quality of service to pilgrims. The results of field interviews indicate that there are still several operational aspects that need to be managed more optimally, such as the arrangement of pilgrim administration flow, coordination of departure schedules, and service management that requires integration between departments. This condition indicates that an analysis of the operational management implemented by the company is necessary to determine the extent to which the ongoing operational processes are able to support the improvement of service quality for pilgrims.

Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the implementation of operational management in an effort to improve the efficiency and quality of Umrah services at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli. This study focuses on identifying ongoing operational processes, obstacles that arise in service implementation, and corrective measures taken by the company to improve the quality of service to pilgrims. Therefore, this study aims to determine and analyze the role of operational management in improving the efficiency and quality of Umrah services, which is expected to contribute to the development of operational management in service companies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will present various theories, concepts, and previous research findings relevant to the research topic. This literature review aims to provide a theoretical foundation to support the research being conducted.

1. Operational Management

Operational management is the process of managing organizational resources, encompassing planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring operational activities to produce products or services effectively and efficiently. In service companies, operational management focuses not only on the end result but also on the service process that takes place directly with customers. (Heizer, J., 2015) Operational management plays a role in managing the process of transforming input into valuable output through quality control, time management, and efficient use of resources. (Slack, N., Brandon-Jones, A., & Johnston, 2013) In Operations Management, there are five benchmarks that can be used to evaluate an organization's operational performance: quality, speed, reliability, flexibility, and cost. Overall, these five benchmarks determine the extent to which a service organization successfully meets its customers' expectations. Specifically, in organizing Umrah pilgrimages, reliability and flexibility are crucial due to the tight departure schedule and the ever-changing demands for service adjustments.

Furthermore, operational management in Umrah travel agencies also relates to the company's ability to anticipate and manage service risks. The complexity of organizing the pilgrimage, which encompasses international travel, the health of pilgrims, and coordination between countries, requires a well-developed operational system that is executed under strong oversight. (Maya et al., 2024) This is in line with research which states that improving services and risk management are important parts of maintaining smooth operations and the comfort of pilgrims. (Ramadhan Ayyasy et al., 2024) Thus, operational management theory is the basis of analysis in this study to see how the operational processes implemented by the company are able to support work efficiency and improve the quality of Umrah services.

2. Operational Efficiency

Operational efficiency can be defined as an organization's ability to achieve its goals by utilizing resources appropriately and optimally without compromising the quality of the desired results. In service companies, efficiency relates to how time, costs, and service processes are managed appropriately to ensure smooth operational activities. Operational efficiency is a crucial indicator because it directly impacts service delivery and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the development of digital technology plays a crucial role in improving operational efficiency in service organizations. The use of technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been proven to accelerate workflows, reduce operational costs, and improve the quality of customer service. In the Islamic banking sector, the application of AI can boost operational efficiency through process automation, improve data quality, and optimize human resource performance. Furthermore, this technology also contributes to reducing managerial risk and increasing customer satisfaction through faster service. (Raihan et al., 2024).

According to (Robbins, S.P., & Coulter, 2018) In the book Management, efficiency is defined as an organization's ability to do things right, namely producing optimal output from every input it has. This concept of operational efficiency is also in line with research on zakat management institutions which confirms that an organization is said to be successful in efficiency if it is able to obtain greater output using smaller inputs, so that the operational costs incurred are truly appropriate and there is no waste. (Maha & Aisyah, 2022) In the context of organizing an Umrah pilgrimage, this principle is realized through several concrete steps, including booking tickets and hotels well in advance of the departure date, setting a deadline for paying the final costs for pilgrims, and selecting a muthawif who resides directly in Saudi Arabia to avoid the need for additional travel and accommodation costs.

In the implementation of Umrah, operational efficiency can be seen from the accuracy of departure schedules, the smooth processing of pilgrim administration, and the readiness of pre-planned travel services. If operations are not running efficiently, this can lead to service delays, increased operational costs, and a decline in the quality of service experienced by pilgrims. Meanwhile, efforts to continuously improve operations can also be carried out through the Kaizen approach, which has been proven to increase production efficiency by up to 30% through restructuring workflows, standardizing procedures, and habituating evaluations involving the entire team. (Trafera Meshah et al., 2025) Therefore, operational efficiency is used as one of the theoretical foundations in this study to analyze the extent to which the company's operational management is able to support improvements in overall service quality.

3. Quality of Service

Service quality can be defined as the degree of correspondence between customer expectations and the service they actually receive. This concept is widely explained through the SERVQUAL model introduced by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which encompasses five main dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This model explains that service quality is greatly influenced by a company's ability to consistently and sustainably meet customer needs.

In the implementation of the Umrah pilgrimage, the quality of service is not only seen from the travel facilities provided but also from direct service to the pilgrims, such as assistance during the pilgrimage, clear service communication, and the ability of staff to handle various obstacles that arise during the trip. Research shows that service quality has a significant influence on the satisfaction of Umrah pilgrims, because good service provides a sense of security, comfort, and enhances the pilgrims' worship experience. (Yuli Setiawan, 2024) This finding is also supported by research results in the field of service administration, which show that optimal service quality is a strategic factor in building customer trust and ensuring the fulfillment of their rights appropriately and accurately. (Sari et al., 2025). In addition, the dimensions of responsiveness and ease of access to services for all users, including individuals with limitations in utilizing technology, are important aspects that must be considered in assessing the overall quality of service. (Willie, 2023) Therefore, the theory of service quality is used in this study as a basis for analysis to see how the services provided by the company affect congregation satisfaction.

Based on this theoretical review, this study uses an operational management approach as the basis for analysis to determine how operational planning, service implementation, and service supervision at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli can contribute to improving operational efficiency and the quality of Umrah services. Therefore, this literature review serves as a theoretical basis for analyzing the research findings obtained through interviews and field observations.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because the study aims to deeply understand the operational management processes implemented in the provision of Umrah services and to describe the actual conditions occurring in the field. Descriptive qualitative research focuses on uncovering facts, phenomena, and meanings derived from interviews, observations, and documentation without conducting statistical hypothesis testing.

Qualitative research is used to examine the natural conditions of objects, where the researcher acts as a key instrument in data collection, and analysis is conducted inductively to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. This approach is relevant to research on the operational management of Umrah services because operational processes and service quality are more appropriately analyzed through the experiences and direct information of parties involved in the company's operational activities. (Sugiyono, 2022)

This research was conducted at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli, an Umrah travel agency. The research location was selected based on the consideration that the company's operational activities are directly related to the management of Umrah pilgrim services, thus aligning with the research focus on operational management analysis to improve service efficiency and quality. The informants interviewed included Commissioners, Equipment Administration, Operational Administration, and Umrah pilgrims or service users. The selection of informants was based on considerations of direct involvement and in-depth knowledge of the company's operational processes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews, operational management at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli is conducted through four main stages: planning, implementation, and operational oversight. Furthermore, the findings are reviewed in depth using relevant theoretical frameworks to identify gaps and gaps between actual conditions in the field and the theoretically stated standards.

1. Operational Management: Operational Workflow Narrative

To facilitate understanding of the operational processes running at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli, the following is a description of the Umrah service workflow based on a prepared flowchart.

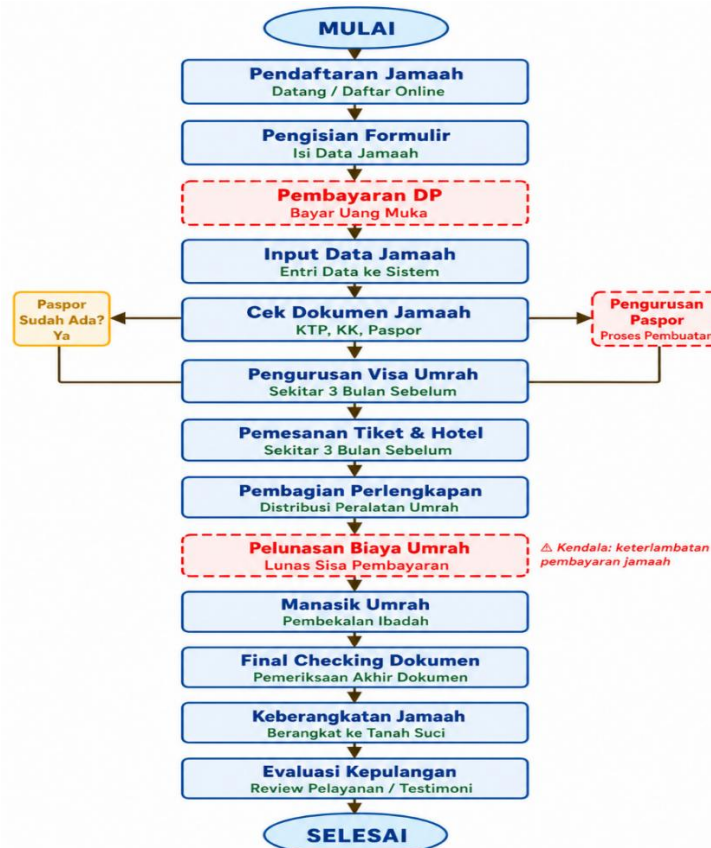


Figure 1.
Operational Workflow Chart for Umrah Services
PT. Grand Shafa Nauli

Caption:

-  Solid Line Box (Blue): Operational activities are normal / running smoothly
-  Line BoxDotted (Red): Stages that experience obstacles/barriers
-  Yellow Box: Decision condition / flow branch
-  Blue Oval: Start/finish point

The operational flow of Umrah services at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli begins with the pilgrim registration stage, which can be done in person (coming to the office) or online through available communication channels. At this stage, prospective pilgrims fill out a registration form containing complete personal data as the basis for the company's administrative management. The next step is to pay a down payment (DP) as a form of official commitment to the pilgrim's participation in the selected Umrah package. An operational staff member stated that: "The first step is registration. Registration is included with the down payment. After pilgrims pay the down payment, we provide equipment and passport processing 40 days before departure or one month before departure."

The down payment stage is one of the first critical points in the operational flow because the initial payment commitment determines the certainty of departure slot allocation. Delays or uncertainty at this stage will result in delays to all subsequent administrative processes, including document processing and ticket reservations. Once the down payment is received, staff input the

pilgrim's data into the company's management system, including identity data, health information, and travel package preferences.

The next step is to verify the completeness of the pilgrims' documents, including their ID cards (KTP), Family Cards (KK), and passports. At this stage, the process is split: pilgrims with active passports proceed directly to the Umrah visa application process, while those without passports are assisted by the company in obtaining a passport. Passport processing is a variable that can create time constraints if the immigration office encounters delays beyond the company's control.

Once all the documents are complete, the company proceeds to the Umrah visa process, which takes place approximately three months before departure. Simultaneously, flight and hotel reservations are made in one integrated service package. This is as stated by a commissioner at PT. GRAND SHAFANAULI: "Regarding the departure schedule, we usually book airline seats a year in advance. We agree on the departure date with the travel agency management. For example, in one Umrah season, there are usually 6-7 departures." Next, the company distributes Umrah equipment to all pilgrims as part of the physical preparation for departure. The Umrah payment period is set at a minimum of 30 to 40 days before departure, and this is the second most challenging stage, based on field interviews.

After payment is confirmed, pilgrims participate in Umrah rituals to familiarize themselves with the knowledge and procedures of the pilgrimage. A final document check is then conducted to ensure all administrative requirements are met before departure to the Holy Land. During their stay, pilgrims are accompanied by a tour leader and a muthawif (guide). The operational process concludes with a return evaluation stage, which involves collecting pilgrim testimonials, which are used to improve services for the next departure period.

2. Analysis of the Gap between Theory and Operational Practice

During the planning stage, the company sets a schedule of six to seven departures per year. These schedules are booked a year in advance to ensure flight and hotel availability. Ticket and hotel reservations are made simultaneously approximately three months before departure, as both are part of a single service package. Furthermore, the company appoints a religious leader (muthawif) domiciled in Saudi Arabia to ensure optimal worship guidance.

Theoretically (Heizer, J., 2015) states that effective operational planning includes determining service capacity, scheduling resources, and integrated supply chain management. PT. Grand Shafa Nauli's practice of placing orders well in advance of departure and appointing local muthawifs in Saudi Arabia aligns with these supply chain efficiency principles. In this regard, no significant gaps were found between theory and practice in the macro-planning aspect.

However, disparities are starting to be identified in the micro-level planning aspect, particularly regarding operational cash flow management. (Ross, S.A., Westerfield, R.W., & Jordan, 2019) The Fundamentals of Corporate Finance emphasizes that operational liquidity must be maintained through rigorous cash flow planning and not rely entirely on uncertain customer payments. In practice, the primary source of operational funding, including ticket and hotel payments, relies on pilgrim payments. This creates structural vulnerability if a number of pilgrims request payment extensions simultaneously, which could disrupt the company's ability to meet its financial obligations to airlines and hotels.

3. Operational Efficiency

From an efficiency perspective, long-term schedule planning and early booking of packages are key strategies for controlling costs and minimizing the risk of schedule changes. Efficiency is also evident in the policy of requiring payment of all items up to 30 days prior to departure, as pilgrim funds are the primary source of operational costs, such as tickets and accommodation. This demonstrates that operational efficiency is not solely influenced by internal

factors but also involves coordination with external parties within the service chain. This is reinforced by an interview, which stated: "Coordination is usually done through LA, or what is often called Land Arrangement. We work with them for bookings; we cannot go directly to the airline because there are hotel and airline brokers in the travel process."

However, efficiency constraints arise when some pilgrims request payment extensions. This is as stated in an interview with operational staff who stated: "What often happens is usually cost constraints... In our travel industry, it's based on family, so even though we've established a 30-day-before-departure rule, there will definitely be someone who asks for help two weeks before departure. Well, we'll discuss that again." This condition has the potential to disrupt operational stability because it can affect the payment process to airlines and hotels. This condition shows that the implementation of structured risk management in the operations of service companies is very important. In line with risk management studies, a company's ability to identify, measure, and control risks arising from business activities is a primary requirement in maintaining stable company performance.(Aidil Fitri et al., 2025)In this context, cash flow dependence on pilgrim payments can be categorized as an operational risk that needs to be managed more systematically, for example by establishing an installment scheme from the registration stage and implementing a consistent payment policy.

To anticipate this, the company is providing an additional two weeks' grace period before departure and implementing a 10% refund policy for cancellations. These findings align with research.(Sri Puspita Sari, 2024)which states that planned operational management can improve company performance through optimal cost and time control. Thus, operational efficiency at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli has been achieved through a structured planning system, although challenges remain in the discipline of pilgrim payments.

Meanwhile, research(Judge, 2025)found different results in large-scale Umrah travel agencies, where late payments were not the dominant obstacle to efficiency, but rather changes in Saudi Arabian Government regulations and visa agent coordination that more frequently caused operational disruptions. These differences in findings indicate that factors inhibiting efficiency are contextual and differ based on the company's scale. PT. Grand Shafa Nauli, as a medium-scale agency, is more vulnerable to cash flow issues than large-scale agencies that already have stronger operational capital reserves. Thus, operational efficiency at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli has been attempted through a structured planning system, although there are still challenges in the discipline of pilgrim payments that require systematic handling. Efforts to maintain efficiency through a structured planning system and operational cost control are in line with the findings.(Khairani et al., 2024)which concludes that companies need to analyze deviations between budgets and actual operational costs periodically in order to avoid losses and increase operational profitability.

4. Quality of Service

Based on the results of interviews with pilgrims, the quality of service at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli is assessed from three main aspects, namely: (1) friendliness of staff, both in the office and during travel assistance; (2) comfort of facilities, including hotels, transportation, and Umrah equipment, and (3) punctuality, especially in departure and return schedules. As the results of the pilgrim interview said: "Usually we see the actions and attitudes of the staff and assess the mutawif when we arrive there. Is the mutawif welcoming to us or not. Even if he is welcoming, Alhamdulillah so far what we have experienced, God willing, we are all satisfied with the mutawif and the staff."

These findings can be analyzed using the SERVQUAL theory proposed by(Parasuraman et al., 1988)which includes five dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Staff friendliness reflects the empathy and responsiveness dimensions, facility comfort relates to tangibles, while timeliness indicates reliability in service. Thus, of the five

SERVQUAL dimensions, three have been identified as fulfilled based on the perceptions of the interviewed congregation.

However, there are several things that need to be considered to continuously improve service quality. First, companies need to maintain a consistent, friendly and responsive attitude from all staff, both in the office and during the trip. Second, more detailed monitoring of hotel quality, transportation, and meals is necessary to ensure the comfort of pilgrims. Third, punctuality must be a top priority, as even the slightest delay can affect pilgrims' perception of the company's professionalism. Furthermore, handling pilgrims' health complaints during their stay in the Holy Land requires swift and precise coordination between tour leaders and muthawifs (guides) to ensure they feel safe and cared for. Furthermore, assistance from tour leaders and muthawifs also strengthens the assurance aspect, as pilgrims feel safer and more guided during their pilgrimage. Evaluation through pilgrim testimonials is an important indicator for measuring satisfaction and continuously improving service quality. Empirically, service quality has been shown to be the most dominant factor in determining customer satisfaction levels in the service sector. Studies in the Islamic financial services industry show that service quality has a significant influence on customer satisfaction, while other factors such as product quality and price have no significant impact. (Sani et al., 2022) Therefore, maintaining consistency and improving the quality of service at every stage of the interaction—from the registration process to the return of pilgrims—is an important strategy that directly impacts pilgrims' satisfaction and loyalty to PT. Grand Shafa Nauli.

Thus, service quality is determined not only by the facilities available but also by the quality of interactions, speed of response, and consistency of service provided to pilgrims from registration to departure. Continuous improvement through evaluating pilgrim testimonials is key to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Umrah services at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that operational management at PT. Grand Shafa Nauli has been implemented through three structured stages, including planning, implementation, and monitoring. In general, the long-term planning system implemented by the company includes advance ticket and hotel reservations and annual departure scheduling. However, this study identified two major gaps between theory and practice. First, in terms of operational efficiency, the dependence of cash flow on pilgrim payments creates financial vulnerability that is inconsistent with the principles of sound liquidity management. This finding is consistent with empirical evidence showing that inefficient operational cost management can negatively impact the sustainability and overall performance of the business. (Tanjung et al., 2023), thus requiring a more systematic and planned cost control system. Second, in terms of service quality, the responsiveness dimension and structured complaint handling mechanisms have not been optimally implemented, thus not fully meeting comprehensive standards.

As a recommendation, to improve pilgrims' payment discipline, companies are encouraged to implement a more systematic payment mechanism supported by technology. Using an automatic reminder system via SMS or digital communication applications can minimize the possibility of delays caused by negligence. Furthermore, establishing a scheduled installment plan from the registration stage will help ensure cash inflow is gradual and planned. Companies can also provide incentives to pilgrims who pay their fees early as a form of appreciation and an effort to accelerate cash flow. A payment policy that is implemented firmly while still prioritizing a humanistic approach will create a balance between the company's interests and the comfort of pilgrims. With a more orderly and transparent system, operational efficiency can be improved without compromising the quality of service to pilgrims.

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