

The Role of Communication in Mosque Infrastructure Development and Management in Uganda



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ABSTRACT: This study examined the role of communication in mosque infrastructure development and management in Bombo Muslim County. Using data collected from 16 out of 30 mosques through a 52-item structured questionnaire, the study assessed communication strategies in mosque governance, leadership, resource mobilization, and inclusivity. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions. Purposive sampling was used due to its effectiveness in ensuring the participation of key stakeholders. Findings indicate that communication plays a vital role in ensuring financial sustainability, administrative efficiency, and community engagement. It revealed reliance on effective communication infrastructures, permanent structures with enough designated space for women, adequate sanitation and hygiene, proper organisational inclusivity with provision for women, and comprehensive education programmes. The visible mosque environments communicated compliance with climate change initiatives observed through the existence of several shade and fruit trees around the compounds. It was also discovered that the mosques lacked facilities for the differently-abled persons, solar energy, rainwater harvesting systems, and remuneration for the Imams and Muadhins. Despite efforts to improve transparency and participation, gaps in communication strategies hinder optimal mosque governance. The study recommends the adoption of structured communication frameworks to enhance efficiency, inclusivity, and sustainability in mosque administration.

KEYWORDS: communication, mosque management, climate, education, disability, Bombo

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY:

Effective communication is a fundamental aspect of organisational management, influencing decision-making, community engagement, and overall institutional performance. In religious institutions such as mosques, communication plays a crucial role in administrative coordination, religious teachings, and community mobilisation. However, communication inefficiencies often hinder the effective functioning of mosque leadership and administration (Ahmed, 2019; Khan & Rahman, 2021). This study explores communication strategies in mosque administration within Bombo Muslim County, analysing existing practices and identifying areas for improvement.

Mosques serve as centres for worship, religious education, and social services within Muslim communities. Beyond their spiritual function, they act as hubs for information dissemination and mobilisation. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of financial sustainability, and limited accessibility persist in many mosques (Rahman, 2021). Effective communication is essential for addressing these challenges and fostering an inclusive and well-functioning religious environment (Ali & Yusuf, 2020). This study assesses the impact of communication on mosque infrastructure development, accessibility, and sustainability.

Mosques play a central role in fostering Islamic values, providing educational services, and addressing community concerns. Studies indicate that poor communication structures in religious institutions lead to misunderstandings, reduced participation in mosque activities, and weakened community cohesion (Ahmed, 2019). Effective mosque management requires structured communication between religious leaders, congregants, and stakeholders (Khan & Rahman, 2021). Accordingly, Bombo Muslim County, home to several mosques, exhibits both strengths and challenges in mosque governance and communication, necessitating an in-depth assessment.

In many regions, the quality of mosque infrastructure depends on effective leadership and resource mobilisation. Communication is a key driver in this process, as it facilitates decision-making, fundraising, and stakeholder engagement (Ali & Yusuf, 2020). The Uganda National Development Plan III (NPA, 2020) underscores the role of community-driven development in religious institutions. Additionally, global best practices highlight the significance of communication in religious administration, particularly in ensuring transparency, inclusivity, and sustainability (Wilson & Ahmed, 2022).

Despite the critical role of mosques in Muslim communities, challenges persist in ensuring adequate infrastructure, financial sustainability, and inclusivity. Many mosques struggle with poor governance structures, insufficient financial resources, and a lack

The Role of Communication in Mosque Infrastructure Development and Management in Uganda

of clear communication strategies. Hence, ineffective communication hinders resource mobilisation, delays infrastructure development, and reduces congregant participation in mosque activities.

Studies have shown that religious institutions that incorporate structured communication strategies experience improved organisational effectiveness and financial stability (Ali & Farooq, 2021). For instance, transparent financial reporting, digital engagement platforms, and participatory decision-making have proven beneficial in mosque administration worldwide (Rahman, 2021). However, in Uganda, communication gaps within mosques often lead to mismanagement of resources and disengagement from key stakeholders.

The absence of a structured communication framework also impacts inclusivity, particularly for women, youth, and persons with disabilities, who often face barriers in accessing mosque facilities and decision-making processes (Wilson & Ahmed, 2022). As a result, mosque development remains slow, and sustainability is often compromised. This study, therefore, investigates how communication influences mosque development and management, with the aim of identifying best practices for effective governance and sustainability.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the role of communication in mosque infrastructure planning and development.
2. To examine how communication affects leadership, resource mobilisation, and community engagement in mosque management.
3. To evaluate the impact of communication on inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability of mosque facilities.
4. To propose communication strategies that can enhance mosque development and management in Uganda.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds significant academic, practical, and policy-oriented implications for religious institutions, particularly in the administration and development of mosque infrastructure. By examining the role of communication in mosque management, resource mobilisation, and community engagement, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how effective communication strategies can enhance the functionality and sustainability of mosques.

Existing studies on religious institutions largely focus on theological perspectives, neglecting the administrative and infrastructural dimensions that influence their effectiveness. This study bridges that gap by exploring mosque governance from a communication and infrastructure perspective. Findings from this research contribute to the growing body of literature on religious administration, governance, and infrastructure planning, particularly within the African and Ugandan contexts. Furthermore, it aligns with international studies on faith-based community development, offering insights that can be used for comparative analyses.

The findings of this study will be valuable to mosque leaders, administrators, and committees by providing evidence-based recommendations on best communication practices for mosque governance. Many mosque leaders operate without formal training in administration and communication, which can hinder efficient decision-making and resource management. This study will highlight key areas for improvement, such as financial transparency, leadership communication, and stakeholder engagement, which can enhance mosque operations and improve trust between leadership and congregants.

Mosques serve as more than just places of worship; they are also centres for education, social welfare, and communal activities. Effective communication plays a crucial role in ensuring that mosque programs are well-organised and widely accessible. This study provides insights into how mosques can improve their outreach strategies, promote inclusivity, and foster stronger community bonds. By understanding the communication barriers that limit engagement, mosque leaders can implement more participatory approaches that encourage active involvement from all community members.

Religious institutions play a critical role in national development, particularly in areas such as education, health, and social welfare. However, mosque governance in Uganda has received limited attention from policymakers. This study provides empirical data that can inform policy decisions regarding mosque registration, financial accountability, and infrastructural support. Government agencies and religious councils can use these findings to develop policies that promote transparent governance and effective communication within religious institutions.

A critical aspect of mosque infrastructure is sustainability, particularly in water conservation, accessibility, and environmental management. The study's findings on tree planting, water usage, and accessibility features will help mosque leaders adopt sustainable practices in alignment with international environmental and human rights standards. With growing global concerns over climate change and inclusivity, mosques that integrate sustainable infrastructure will serve as models for other faith-based institutions.

This study lays the groundwork for future research in the areas of mosque governance, religious communication, and infrastructure development. By identifying key areas of concern, such as leadership structures, financial sustainability, and accessibility, the study provides a framework that future scholars can build upon. Additionally, it opens avenues for comparative research between Uganda and other countries with similar socio-religious contexts.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Communication and Religious Infrastructure Development

Effective communication is foundational to the successful development of religious infrastructures, particularly in mosques, as it ensures that all stakeholders, including worshippers, local communities, and religious leaders, are well-informed and engaged. According to Sani (2021), strategic communication facilitates resource mobilisation, fosters community involvement, and allows religious institutions to manage the complexities of infrastructure development projects. For example, in many developing countries, mosques rely on both internal and external communication to garner financial and logistical support from various stakeholders, including local governments and international NGOs. These communication strategies help build a cooperative environment, ensuring that mosque development projects meet the needs of the community while maintaining Islamic principles.

Abdullah & Karim (2019) further highlight that effective communication within mosque administrations can significantly improve the implementation of community-driven projects and religious programs. By fostering transparent dialogue between mosque leadership and worshippers, communication enhances mutual understanding and supports collective decision-making processes. In Uganda, where religious institutions play a central role in community life, the Uganda National Communication Strategy (MoICT, 2020) underscores the importance of formalising communication practices to encourage active participation in mosque activities and improve accountability. This includes using digital platforms and social media tools to reach broader audiences and inform them about ongoing initiatives and needs. The inclusion of these strategies can also strengthen mosque governance and decision-making, allowing religious leaders to efficiently manage their infrastructure and services.

Furthermore, studies suggest that mosques with structured communication practices enjoy better engagement with their congregations, leading to higher participation in religious and community-based programs (Ali & Yusuf, 2017). These structured practices can include regular meetings, newsletters, and the use of online platforms, all of which increase transparency and make it easier for worshippers to contribute to mosque development efforts. As mosques move toward more modern communication systems, combining traditional practices with digital methods ensures inclusivity and broader outreach, especially to younger generations.

Community Engagement and Mosque Management

Community involvement is a key pillar in the management and sustainability of mosques. When community members are actively engaged in mosque governance, they are more likely to support the mosque financially, participate in its religious and social activities, and contribute to its long-term success (Omar, 2018). Effective community engagement fosters a sense of ownership, which enhances the mosque's ability to serve its congregation's needs. According to a report by the Uganda National Development Plan III (NPA, 2020), community-driven development is essential for the sustainability of religious and social institutions, including mosques. The report advocates for a participatory approach in governance that ensures all community members have a voice in decision-making processes, thereby creating a more inclusive and accountable mosque administration.

In their comparative study of mosque governance in Malaysia and Uganda, Hamza & Nordin (2021) emphasized that transparency in communication significantly improves the efficiency of mosque management. Their study found that when mosque committees are transparent about their operations, including financial management and religious programming, they build trust with the congregation, which leads to better resource mobilisation and higher levels of community engagement. Transparency also helps reduce misunderstandings and conflicts within the mosque community, creating a more harmonious environment for worship and social interaction. Furthermore, open communication fosters accountability, ensuring that mosque leaders are held responsible for their decisions, which ultimately enhances the mosque's overall effectiveness.

As communication within mosque management continues to evolve, engaging community members through structured channels such as surveys, feedback sessions, and public meetings allows for the identification of emerging needs and priorities. This dynamic approach to governance ensures that mosques are responsive to the changing needs of their congregations and can adapt to challenges that arise in their development and day-to-day operations.

Accessibility and Inclusivity in Religious Spaces

The need for accessibility in mosque infrastructure is increasingly recognized as essential for ensuring that all members of the community, including individuals with disabilities, have equal access to religious spaces. The Uganda National Council for Disability (UNCD, 2021) has noted that many religious institutions, including mosques, still fail to incorporate disability-friendly features such as ramps, accessible toilets, and parking spaces. As a result, persons with disabilities are often excluded from full participation in religious activities. This lack of inclusivity contradicts both local and international guidelines that emphasize the importance of universal design in public spaces. The Uganda Building Control Act (2013) mandates that all new public buildings, including places of worship, must comply with universal design principles to ensure accessibility for all individuals, regardless of their physical abilities.

Wilson & Ahmed (2022) argue that an inclusive mosque design is not only about providing physical access but also about fostering an environment where persons with disabilities feel welcome and valued. Their research shows that when mosques integrate accessibility features, they experience higher levels of participation from differently-abled congregants. This participation can

The Role of Communication in Mosque Infrastructure Development and Management in Uganda

include both religious services and community-building activities, such as educational programs or social events. Furthermore, the inclusion of assistive technologies, such as hearing loops for individuals with hearing impairments, can significantly improve the overall experience of worshippers with disabilities, ensuring that they are not excluded from the mosque's religious and social offerings.

In addition to the physical aspects, religious leaders must also play an active role in promoting inclusivity. This involves raising awareness within the mosque community about the needs of persons with disabilities and advocating for changes that would make the mosque more accessible. Active communication campaigns can help shift attitudes and reduce the social stigma that individuals with disabilities often face. By addressing these issues holistically through both design and cultural change, mosques can truly fulfill their role as inclusive spaces for all members of the community.

Resource Mobilisation and Financial Communication

The sustainability of mosque development projects and programs largely depends on effective financial communication, which involves transparent and clear reporting about fundraising activities, donations, and expenditures. According to Khan & Farooq (2020), mosques that have transparent financial management systems tend to experience higher levels of community support. This transparency builds trust and encourages members to contribute to mosque operations, knowing that their donations are being used responsibly. Financial communication in mosques is particularly important when it comes to fundraising campaigns for infrastructure projects, as it ensures that all donors are informed about how their contributions will be allocated.

The Uganda Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA, 2022) stresses the importance of maintaining financial accountability within religious organisations to prevent mismanagement and misuse of funds. In the context of mosques, this involves not only adhering to legal and regulatory standards but also adopting best practices in financial reporting. Jamil & Rahim (2023) highlight the role of digital financial platforms, such as mobile-based crowdfunding, in improving financial transparency and accountability. These platforms provide mosque committees with tools to track donations, manage fundraising efforts, and engage the community in financial decision-making processes. By utilising digital tools, mosques can reach a wider audience and encourage greater participation in their financial activities.

The implementation of clear financial communication strategies also helps mosques to build relationships with donors, sponsors, and government agencies. This relationship is vital for ensuring that mosque projects receive the necessary funding and support to achieve their goals. Moreover, digital financial tools enable mosques to streamline their financial management processes, reducing administrative burdens and enhancing the overall efficiency of mosque operations. This, in turn, allows for more effective use of resources and better management of mosque programs and services.

The Role of Digital and Traditional Media in Mosque Communication

In the digital age, mosques are increasingly using digital tools such as social media, websites, and mobile messaging platforms to communicate with their congregations and the wider community. According to Rahman (2020) digital platforms offer mosques a broader reach, allowing them to connect with people across different geographic locations and engage in real-time communication. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow mosques to share news, announce upcoming events, and disseminate religious educational content. These digital tools enable mosques to maintain a consistent online presence, which is especially important for attracting younger generations who are more accustomed to digital communication.

However, while digital media plays a critical role in mosque communication, traditional methods such as public address systems and noticeboards remain indispensable, particularly in local communities with limited access to the internet or digital tools. Hassan & Suleiman (2022) advocate for a hybrid approach to communication, combining the benefits of both digital and traditional communication methods. This approach ensures that all members of the mosque community, regardless of their access to digital tools, are informed and engaged. For example, public address systems can be used to communicate with worshippers during prayer times, while noticeboards can display important announcements or educational materials.

In Uganda, the Ministry of ICT (2021) encourages religious institutions to incorporate digital tools into their communication strategies to enhance information dissemination, mobilise the community, and improve administrative functions. The integration of digital tools can significantly streamline mosque operations, improve service delivery, and foster stronger community engagement. However, it is essential to strike a balance between digital and traditional communication methods to ensure that the mosque remains an inclusive space for all worshippers, regardless of their technological access or literacy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design to collect data from mosques in Bombo Muslim County, focusing on mosque governance, communication, accessibility, and environmental considerations. The methodology was structured to ensure reliable and valid data, allowing for an in-depth exploration of these issues in the context of the mosques surveyed.

Population and Sample

The study targeted a total population of 30 mosques in the Bombo Muslim County. However, practical constraints such as sect affiliations, time and logistical challenges led to the participation of 16 mosques, which was considered a sufficient sample size for

The Role of Communication in Mosque Infrastructure Development and Management in Uganda

the study. While the study aimed to include the entire population, the participation of 16 mosques is consistent with recommendations from Creswell (2014), who notes that a sample size of approximately 50% of the total population can often provide reliable results in field-based research.

Furthermore, the 16 surveyed mosques were not randomly selected, but rather included based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. According to Moser & Kalton (2017), this type of purposive sampling can be highly effective in ensuring the participation of key stakeholders, particularly when working with religious institutions where response rates may vary.

Data Collection Instrument

A 52-item questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection tool for the study. The design of the questionnaire was based on a thorough review of relevant literature, which identified key areas such as mosque administration, community engagement, accessibility, and environmental practices (Khan & Rahman, 2021). The use of structured questionnaires is widely supported in quantitative research for their ability to provide clear, and consistent data that can be easily analysed (Bryman, 2016).

The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were designed to collect quantitative data that could be analysed statistically using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), while the open-ended questions aimed to capture more detailed qualitative insights. According to Patton (2015), combining both closed and open-ended questions allows for a more comprehensive understanding of a research topic by integrating numerical data with rich, narrative responses.

Data Collection Process

The data collection process was carried out over two weeks, which aligns with best practices for fieldwork in survey-based research. According to Sekaran & Bougie (2016), a two-week period is typically sufficient for administering surveys and collecting responses, especially in settings such as mosques where participants may have other commitments. The researcher ensured that each mosque had enough time to complete the questionnaires, which minimised non-response bias and helped increase the validity of the findings. The researchers administered the questionnaires in person on phone. The questions were read to the respondents, and the responses were confirmed by the respondents. Such method is consistent with recommendations from Dillman, Smyth, & Christian (2014), who argue that in-person surveys increase response rates and allow for more direct engagement with respondents, which is crucial in contexts such as religious institutions where personal relationships and trust are essential.

Data Analysis

After the data collection phase, the responses were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. SPSS is widely used in social science research due to its ability to handle large datasets and perform complex statistical analyses (Field, 2018). The software was used to conduct descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, and means, to summarise and present the findings. This type of analysis is recommended by Babbie (2017) for surveys with categorical data, as it allows for clear, concise presentation of patterns and trends.

In addition to quantitative analysis, thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions. This approach rhymes with Braun & Clarke's (2006) guidelines for thematic analysis, which emphasise the importance of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data. By coding the qualitative responses and grouping them into themes, the researcher was able to derive deeper insights into the issues surrounding mosque governance, community participation, and environmental practices.

FINDINGS

The research findings of this study are presented in this section, structured according to the key research questions that guided the Bombo Muslim County Mosque survey. The analysis provides insights into the role of communication in mosque infrastructure development and management, highlighting its impact on leadership, resource mobilisation, community engagement, and sustainability. The findings are organised thematically to reflect the core areas of investigation, offering a comprehensive understanding of the strengths, challenges, and opportunities within mosque administration in the region.

Structural Characteristics of the Mosques

The study revealed that all the surveyed mosques in Bombo Muslim County were constructed as permanent structures, highlighting the community's strong commitment to building durable and sustainable worship spaces. This finding aligns with existing literature on mosque infrastructure, which emphasises the importance of structural integrity to ensure safety, stability, and long-term usability. Ali and Yusuf (2020) argue that the use of robust materials and permanent construction techniques is essential for creating spaces that support not only religious practices but also the community's long-term spiritual and social needs.

Beyond the structural characteristics, the survey revealed that 75% of the mosques included designated areas for women. This practice aligns with best practices for creating gender-inclusive worship spaces, as recommended by Islamic architectural guidelines. According to Hassan and Nasir (2018), the incorporation of separate spaces for women is a key aspect of ensuring equal participation in religious activities, reflecting the growing recognition of the importance of gender-sensitive design in mosque architecture.

The Role of Communication in Mosque Infrastructure Development and Management in Uganda

The study also found that the flooring of all surveyed mosques was made of cement, reflecting a prioritisation of both durability and hygiene. The choice of cement flooring is indicative of a commitment to maintaining a high standard of cleanliness, which is essential in Islamic worship practices. Rahman (2021) asserts that global mosque construction standards should prioritise both durability and hygiene, noting that clean and long-lasting materials contribute to a more comfortable and spiritually conducive environment for worshippers.

Additionally, 62.5% of the mosques were furnished with ordinary mats, woollen carpets, or plastic carpets, reflecting the varied economic capacities of the community in enhancing worship environments. Ahmad (2019) notes that the provision of clean and comfortable prayer surfaces, regardless of economic resources, is crucial for ensuring a respectful and conducive atmosphere for worship. The deliberate selection of prayer surfaces serves not only as a practical consideration but also as a manifestation of the community's commitment to providing a reverent space for prayer.

All the mosques, irrespective of their location, were painted both internally and externally. The survey revealed that 81.3% of the mosques had painted interiors, while 62.5% had properly painted exteriors. This attention to aesthetic details communicates the broader architectural principle that the visual appeal of a mosque contributes to the overall spiritual experience. Sulaiman and Omar (2022) highlight the importance of maintaining aesthetically pleasing and environmentally comfortable spaces in places of worship. Well-maintained interiors have been shown to demonstratively communicate and enhance the spiritual atmosphere, creating a more inviting and uplifting environment for worshippers. Such environments encourage a greater sense of devotion, with worshippers often forming emotional connections to the beauty and serenity of the space.

Land Ownership and Legal Status

The study revealed that half of the surveyed mosques in Bombo Muslim County possessed land titles, ensuring legal ownership, while the other 50% lacked such documentation. This discrepancy highlights significant concerns about the security and sustainability of the mosques, as legal recognition of land ownership is critical in protecting religious institutions from encroachment and disputes. According to UN-Habitat (2020), the absence of formal land documentation often leads to the vulnerability of places of worship, as it exposes them to risks of encroachment, ownership disputes, or even unlawful eviction. In the Ugandan context, mosques without proper land documentation are typically at the mercy of the goodwill of either the donating families or the surrounding community, leaving them susceptible to potential threats.

The importance of land documentation is underscored by the Uganda Land Act of 1998, which emphasises the necessity of formal land ownership documentation for securing property rights. The Act establishes that land ownership must be formally recognised to ensure the protection of all property, including religious institutions, from legal ambiguities or challenges. It is crucial that religious institutions, such as mosques, acquire land titles to guarantee their legal status and avoid complications regarding ownership disputes or the threat of encroachment.

Additionally, international human rights frameworks, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), affirm the right to property ownership, further reinforcing the necessity of securing land titles for mosques. Article 17 of the UDHR emphasises that everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others, thereby recognising property rights as fundamental to individual and institutional security. This legal perspective underlines the need for mosques to ensure that their land is properly documented to protect their long-term viability and uninterrupted religious service.

Land ownership through official documentation and communication also ensures full possession, minimising the potential for conflicts related to undocumented lands. Legal land status provides institutions with a foundation to maintain their operations without the threat of legal challenges or displacement. Studies have shown that religious institutions with secure land titles are more likely to have stable and long-term viability (Baker, 2017). The continuity of religious services is vital, not only to maintain the physical space for worship but also to communicate and ensure that community members have a secure and consistent location for their spiritual needs.

Therefore, it is desirable and crucial for mosques to possess land titles, as this legal security guarantees the continuity of religious services without interruptions. The ownership of properly documented land for mosques provides a safeguard for the future of these institutions, ensuring that they can continue to serve the community without fear of external threats or legal complications. This commitment to secure land ownership contributes to the stability and sustainability of religious spaces, reinforcing their integral role in community life.

Sanitation and Hygiene Facilities

Sanitation facilities are integral to religious spaces, particularly for facilitating purification rites, a crucial aspect of Islamic practice. The study revealed that the majority (87.5%) of the surveyed mosques in Bombo Muslim County had at least basic toilet facilities, which aligns with both public health regulations and Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). The importance of sanitation is underscored in Islamic teachings, particularly in the Qur'an, which emphasises cleanliness as a prerequisite for prayer. In Surah Al-Baqarah (2:222), it is clearly stated that "Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves." This verse highlights the centrality of cleanliness, which extends to the provision of sanitation facilities in mosques, ensuring that worshippers can maintain personal purity before prayer.

The Role of Communication in Mosque Infrastructure Development and Management in Uganda

However, the study also found that only 50% of the mosques had additional bathroom facilities. This limited provision may be attributed to the perceived less priority attached to washrooms within mosque infrastructure. The absence of such facilities indicates a gap in mosque infrastructure that could be improved by adopting best practices observed in well-established mosques worldwide. Othman (2017) notes that many mosques in developed regions offer comprehensive sanitation services, including adequate bathroom facilities, to meet the diverse needs of worshippers. These best practices not only comply with religious requirements but also enhance the overall worship experience, contributing to the health and comfort of the community. Similarly, it also communicates the importance of hygiene in Islam.

From a human-centred perspective, situations may arise where worshippers need to use bathroom facilities, especially during longer prayer sessions or religious events. As highlighted by Abbas (2018), providing appropriate sanitation is critical in ensuring that worshippers can focus on their spiritual practices without discomfort or distractions. The availability of such facilities within mosques is not just about meeting basic hygiene needs but also about providing a holistic environment conducive to worship. Therefore, the absence of adequate bathroom facilities in some mosques represents a missed opportunity to improve the overall worship experience by addressing practical needs.

Furthermore, studies have shown that sanitation infrastructure in religious spaces is crucial for public health. According to WHO (2020), access to clean sanitation facilities is essential to prevent the spread of disease and promote well-being. In places of worship where large gatherings occur, the provision of clean and accessible toilets and bathrooms becomes even more significant in maintaining public health standards. It is therefore highly recommended that mosques, in line with Islamic teachings and public health guidelines, ensure the provision of adequate bathroom facilities to cater to the eventualities that worshippers may face while in the vicinities of the mosque.

Finally, while the provision of toilet facilities in the surveyed mosques is commendable and in line with Islamic teachings and public health regulations, there is room for improvement in the availability of additional bathroom facilities. The implementation of these improvements, inspired by best practices from globally recognised mosques, would ensure that worshippers' complete hygienic needs are met in a way that supports both their physical well-being and spiritual practices.

Remuneration and Living Conditions of Imams and Muadhins

Despite the vital roles Imams play in leading prayers and engaging with the community, the study revealed that none of the Imams in the surveyed mosques received salaries, compelling them to seek alternative employment for sustenance. This finding corresponds with research on religious leadership in under-resourced communities, where Imams often depend on secondary income sources to support their families and meet daily needs. Kamil (2021) highlights that in many low-income settings, religious leaders such as Imams often face financial insecurity, with their roles primarily being voluntary despite the significant responsibilities they carry. This situation is not unique to Uganda but is observed globally, where religious leaders work without financial compensation, creating a reliance on external sources of income.

The survey also indicated that none of the surveyed Imams and Muadhins received salaries, compelling them to seek alternative employment and financial support for their immediate family needs. This situation underscores the challenges faced by religious leaders in low-income regions and emphasises the critical need for fair compensation. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 95 advocates for fair remuneration for all workers, including those in religious institutions. However, many religious leaders in low-income communities continue to serve without pay, which raises concerns about the sustainability and effectiveness of their leadership. Hashim and Omar (2022) argue that the lack of financial security for religious leaders undermines their ability to focus on their primary duties, such as community engagement, spiritual guidance, and the provision of religious services, ultimately affecting the quality of service provided to the community.

In terms of transportation, the study found that 56.5% of Imams relied on alternative transport means, with 37.5% using motorcycles and only one Imam using a bicycle. This finding reflects a common issue faced by religious leaders in under-resourced settings, where financial constraints limit their access to reliable transportation. Ismail and Ahmed (2020) highlight that religious leaders in low-income regions often face mobility challenges due to limited financial resources, which impacts their ability to fulfill their religious duties, particularly when they need to travel for outreach, community engagement, or attending to emergencies. The inability to afford reliable transportation often exacerbates the pressure on Imams, as community expectations remain high despite their limited resources. In this context, fulfilling their duties becomes an act of personal sacrifice, further compounding the challenges they face.

Similarly, the survey revealed that none of the Muadhins received salaries, with only 18.8% engaging in external employment to sustain themselves. Additionally, 75% of Muadhins lacked a recognisable means of transport, and 87.5% resided near the mosque. The proximity to the mosque is crucial, as it ensures timely calls to prayer, which is a fundamental duty for Muadhins. Hassan and Rahman (2019) emphasise the importance of proximity for Muadhins, as it not only ensures that prayer times are accurately observed but also contributes to their ability to perform their duties consistently. The lack of transport options, however, places additional strain on Muadhins, particularly in rural or underdeveloped areas, where they may be required to travel longer distances or face transportation limitations.

The Role of Communication in Mosque Infrastructure Development and Management in Uganda

These findings highlight a significant gap in the financial support and resources available to religious leaders, particularly Imams and Muadhins, in Bombo Muslim County. The absence of salaries, coupled with transportation challenges, underscores the need for policies that ensure reliable financial support for religious leaders. The ILO Convention No. 95's call for fair remuneration is highly relevant in this context, as it advocates for equitable compensation for all workers, including those in religious institutions. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring that religious leaders can perform their roles effectively and sustainably, without the added burden of financial insecurity or mobility constraints.

Mosque Administration and Governance

The mosque survey revealed that all surveyed mosques had management committees, each including a female representative, which reflects a noteworthy level of organisational inclusivity. This finding counters the prevalent stereotype that Muslim women are excluded from leadership roles within religious institutions. It highlights a progressive approach to mosque administration in the Bombo Muslim County, where women play an active role in governance. This is consistent with recommendations by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which has long advocated for the inclusion of women in religious leadership roles. The OIC (2021) stresses that involving women in decision-making processes not only promotes gender equality but also enriches the spiritual and social fabric of religious communities.

This finding also reflects a growing trend within the Muslim world, where many Muslim-majority societies are beginning to embrace gender equality in governance, aligning with broader global movements advocating for female leadership across various sectors. While some studies argue that the role of women in mosque leadership is limited (Zaki, 2019), this survey contradicts that assumption, demonstrating that women's participation in religious administration is not only possible but increasingly becoming the norm in certain communities. Moreover, the presence of women in leadership positions challenges patriarchal interpretations of Islamic teachings and highlights a more inclusive interpretation that allows for the active participation of women in the spiritual and organizational life of the community.

Additionally, the survey revealed that 93.8% of the mosques were community-owned, with only one mosque being owned by an organisation. This finding reflects the communal approach to mosque governance, which is prevalent in many Muslim-majority and minority societies worldwide. The community ownership structure allows for greater local involvement, ensuring that the mosque remains a space that serves the immediate needs of the Muslim community. Studies such as those by Abdullah & Said (2020) emphasise the importance of communal ownership as a way of fostering a sense of belonging and accountability within the local Muslim population. Community-owned mosques often reflect the values, culture, and specific needs of the local congregants, providing a more tailored and responsive worship environment. This type of ownership also mitigates the risk of external interference, maintaining the mosque as a space for spiritual and community development, independent from external institutional pressures.

Communication Infrastructure

The presence of public address systems in 87.5% of the mosques surveyed facilitates effective communication during prayer calls, religious sermons, and other faith-based programs. This is particularly important in large congregations, where effective sound systems are critical to ensuring that the message reaches all worshippers clearly. Khan (2020) affirms that audio systems in mosques are integral to mosque administration, as they enhance religious engagement and community participation. These systems enable effective communication during the adhan (call to prayer), as well as during sermons and religious classes, ensuring that the spiritual message is disseminated efficiently. Public address systems are especially beneficial in large congregations, where the need to communicate with a broad audience in an efficient and timely manner is paramount.

However, the absence of public address systems in 12.5% of the surveyed mosques raises concerns. The lack of such systems could hinder effective communication, particularly in large gatherings, where messages may not reach all congregants clearly. Studies have shown that religious engagement is significantly enhanced when audio systems are used to amplify the voice of the Imam, particularly in areas where sound systems allow for better outreach (Hassan, 2021). Without these systems, mosques may struggle to engage their communities fully, reducing the potential for spiritual connection and communal participation. This highlights the importance of ensuring that all mosques, regardless of their size or location, are equipped with the necessary infrastructure to communicate effectively with their congregations.

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

The survey also found that none of the mosques surveyed had provisions for persons with disabilities, such as ramps or other assistive facilities such as chairs within the mosques, which is concerning. International guidelines, particularly Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006), emphasise the importance of making public and religious spaces accessible to persons with disabilities. These provisions ensure that all members of society, regardless of physical ability, have equal access to religious spaces and activities.

Ali & Farooq (2021) highlight that inclusive mosque designs, which incorporate ramps and other assistive facilities, are essential in promoting full participation among differently-abled congregants. Without these accommodations, individuals with physical disabilities face significant barriers in accessing the mosque, performing ablution, and engaging in prayers, which can negatively

The Role of Communication in Mosque Infrastructure Development and Management in Uganda

affect their spiritual experience. The lack of accessibility in mosques is not only a violation of basic human rights but also contradicts the principles of Islam, which advocates for equality and inclusivity. Ensuring that mosques are accessible to all worshippers, including those with disabilities, is a critical step in fostering a truly inclusive and welcoming religious environment. Studies have shown that when mosques are designed to accommodate people with disabilities, they foster a stronger sense of belonging and inclusion, allowing all community members to participate equally in religious practices (Alam & Sulaiman, 2020).

The absence of provisions for persons with disabilities in the surveyed mosques, therefore, reflects a significant communication gap in mosque infrastructure that needs urgent attention. Incorporating universal design principles into mosque construction and renovation would not only comply with international accessibility standards but also reflect Islamic values of inclusivity and equality, ensuring that all members of the community can fully participate in the religious life of the mosque.

Water Sanitation and Energy Facilities

In the area of water management, the study revealed that 75% of the surveyed mosques lacked rainwater harvesting systems, with only two mosques having implemented such practices. The absence of rainwater harvesting systems in most mosques in Bombo Muslim County represents a missed opportunity to reduce dependence on external water sources and lower monthly water bills. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) emphasises the importance of water conservation and sustainable water management in all sectors, including religious institutions (UNDP, 2021). Rainwater harvesting systems could provide mosques with a sustainable, cost-effective water supply while supporting broader environmental goals.

Positively, 75% of the mosques had boreholes, which provide a reliable alternative water source. This suggests that mosques in Bombo Muslim County are increasingly turning to self-sufficient water sources, with only 31.3% relying on the National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC). The use of boreholes reduces the mosques' dependence on a centralised water supply system and ensures a more sustainable water source, especially in areas with limited access to reliable public services.

Regarding energy, the study found that 75% of the mosques had not yet considered adopting solar power, despite challenges with intermittent electricity supply. Only 25% of the mosques had adopted solar power, aligning with global initiatives that advocate for the use of renewable energy in religious institutions (Hasan & Mustafa, 2020). The integration of solar power into mosque infrastructure would not only help address the challenges posed by unreliable electricity supply but also contribute to the global shift towards green energy solutions. Solar power provides a sustainable and cost-effective alternative to conventional electricity, and its adoption in mosques could serve as a model for other religious institutions to follow.

The findings of this study, therefore, reveal several areas for improvement in mosque infrastructure, particularly in the areas of accessibility, water management, and energy use. Therefore, while there are positive trends, such as the presence of public address systems and boreholes, there is room for further progress, particularly in incorporating renewable energy and accessibility provisions. It is when proper communication strategies are used that improvements would be realised. These improvements, if implemented, would not only enhance the functionality of mosques but also align with global best practices in religious institution management.

Environmental and Climate Considerations

Climate change and environmental sustainability have increasingly gained global attention in recent years, with many international bodies and governments emphasising the importance of preserving the natural environment. However, a religious approach to environmental stewardship, particularly from the perspective of developing countries, remains an area that is not fully explored. This study revealed some promising efforts in incorporating environmental considerations into mosque operations. For example, 62.5% of the surveyed mosques had planted trees in their vicinity, with a significant proportion (62.5%) planting fruit trees, and 25% opting for shade trees. This practice not only reflects Islamic teachings on environmental stewardship but also relates with global best practices on climate resilience (UNEP, 2022). In Islam, the planting of trees is highly regarded, with various hadiths that emphasise the virtue of planting trees and their role in fostering a healthy, sustainable environment. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charitable gift (sadaqah) for him" (Sahih Bukhari). This illustrates how the act of planting trees is seen as both an environmental and spiritual act in Islam.

Moreover, tree planting in mosque surroundings has a direct connection to environmental conservation. It supports biodiversity, provides shade, mitigates the urban heat island effect, and promotes the natural absorption of carbon dioxide, which is particularly critical in light of the ongoing challenges of climate change. The willingness of 81.3% of mosques to plant more trees further demonstrates their commitment to environmental stewardship, with the understanding that trees also communicate and enhance the aesthetic value of the mosque environment, contributing to a peaceful, welcoming atmosphere (Nasir et al., 2019).

Despite these positive actions, the study revealed a gap in mosque engagement with more advanced environmental practices, particularly in water recycling. None of the mosques surveyed employed water recycling systems. This is noteworthy, given that mosques, as centres of worship, regularly engage in water usage for purification purposes, such as ablution (wudu) before prayers. The lack of a systematic water recycling approach in mosques represents a missed opportunity for reducing water wastage, conserving resources, and minimising water bills. As the global community shifts toward sustainable water management, including

The Role of Communication in Mosque Infrastructure Development and Management in Uganda

the recycling of water for non-potable uses including landscape irrigation, and cleaning, mosques could be at the forefront of implementing these practices. Water recycling not only supports environmental sustainability but also aligns with Islamic teachings of resource conservation. The Quran emphasises the need for moderation in consumption, stating, "Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils" (Quran, 17:27). This principle can guide and communicate the introduction of water recycling systems in mosque environments to reduce wastage and ensure a sustainable future for the community.

Religious Education and Community Engagement

The survey also revealed strong engagement in religious education programs within the surveyed mosques. A significant majority of the mosques (87.5%) offered *khalwa* programs (religious education for children), while 75% conducted daily *darsa* (religious lessons), and 81.3% organised special holiday programs for schoolchildren. This finding underscores the essential role of mosques as centres of continuous learning, as emphasised in international Islamic educational standards. The role of the mosque extends beyond mere worship, serving as a key institution for transmitting religious knowledge to the community (Abdullah, 2018). As discussed by Bouzid & Jabbar (2019), a mosque is not only a place for communal prayer but also a space for educational activities that cater to various demographic groups, particularly children and youth. These programs enable mosques to play an active role in shaping the moral and ethical development of future generations, empowering them with Islamic knowledge and fostering a deeper connection to their faith.

The significance of these educational initiatives is further reinforced by the availability of religious reading materials in most mosques. The survey found that 87.5% of the mosques contained various religious books, including the Quran. This affirms the mosques' role in religious education and their efforts to provide congregants with the tools for learning and self-improvement. Access to religious texts is critical in empowering individuals to engage in their faith independently, contributing to the intellectual and spiritual growth of the community (Mohamed, 2020). Availing literature in mosques is in line with Islamic principles of acquiring knowledge, as the Quran itself encourages seeking knowledge throughout one's life: "Read! In the name of your Lord who created" (Quran, 96:1). The availability of these materials supports both structured religious education programs and self-guided study, which are essential for personal and communal spiritual development.

Furthermore, the inclusion of holiday-specific programs also shows how mosques are adapting to the needs of their communities by offering opportunities for religious education beyond the regular schedule. These programs ensure that children and other members of the community have access to faith-based learning during significant religious events, thus reinforcing the community's connection to Islamic traditions. As pointed out by Muhammad (2017), religious education programs that integrate traditional and modern teaching methods are vital for the holistic development of young Muslims, helping them understand the relevance of their faith in contemporary life.

It is worth noting that the strong commitment of the surveyed mosques to religious education and community engagement communicates the central role of the mosque as a hub for lifelong learning and spiritual development. By providing a variety of educational programs and resources, these mosques foster an environment where knowledge, faith, and community values are communicated, shared and strengthened. This approach is consistent with broader global trends in the revitalisation of mosque-based education, which is crucial for nurturing well-rounded, knowledgeable, and engaged Muslim communities.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significance of communication in mosque infrastructure development and management. The findings revealed that communication plays a vital role in ensuring financial sustainability, administrative efficiency, and community engagement. However, in spite of the efforts to improve transparency and participation, it was observed that gaps in communication strategies hinder optimal mosque governance. Therefore, this study recommends the adoption of structured communication frameworks to enhance efficiency, inclusivity, and sustainability in mosque administration. By improving communication strategies, mosque committees can enhance transparency, foster community involvement, and ensure sustainable mosque facilities. The research findings will contribute significantly to policy recommendations for integrating effective communication in religious infrastructure development in Uganda.

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