

THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY OF THE YOUTH MOVEMENT TO LOVE MOSQUES IN PROSPERING THE MOSQUE IN SAMPALI VILLAGE

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Abstract : *This study examines the community-based strategy developed by the Youth Movement for Mosque Love, known locally as Gerakan Pemuda Cinta Masjid (GPCM), in revitalizing the prosperity of mosques in Sampali Village, Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation involving GPCM administrators, mosque officials, and congregation members as key informants (Abdussamad, 2021; Sugiyono, 2016). The findings show that GPCM strengthens mosque functions through four interrelated efforts: sustaining routine religious study circles, engaging youth directly in mosque programs, organizing religious and social welfare activities, and utilizing social media for da'wah dissemination (Nudin & Fakhruroji, 2023). Despite constraints such as limited funding and coordination gaps, the community's enthusiasm and its collaborative relationship with mosque administrators have revived congregational participation and social cohesion, positioning the mosque once again as the center of communal religious life.*

Keywords: Youth Movement, Mosque Prosperity, Strategy

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Introduction

The term strategy originates from the ancient Greek word *strategos*, referring to the art and knowledge of military leadership, and has since evolved into a broader concept describing a deliberate, long-term plan of action aimed at achieving a specific goal (Sedarmayanti, 2021). Afnan and Muthowah (2022) similarly describe strategy as a structured effort that combines vision and action to secure a desired outcome, whether in warfare, competition, or organizational life. In this sense, a strategy is never a single act but a coherent sequence of decisions made by leadership to direct an organization or community toward its intended objectives, together with the concrete steps required to realize them. When applied to community and religious organizations, strategy becomes the bridge between an ideal vision of what an institution should be and the practical, everyday actions that move it closer to that vision.

Etymologically, the word mosque derives from the Arabic root *sajada*, meaning a place of prostration before Allah SWT, and it carries a meaning far broader than a mere location for ritual prayer. Mubarok (2022) emphasizes that mosques function as pivotal centers of communal religious life capable of strengthening the faith of the surrounding population. During the era of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the mosque was never confined to worship alone; it also served as a hub for education, governance, and social coordination among Muslims (Fauzizah, 2022). In the contemporary context, mosques remain the foremost symbol of Islamic devotion, with congregational prayer as their most visible function, yet their broader mandate extends to deliberation, education, and social service (Suriyono et al., 2022). This dual identity, spiritual and social, is precisely what gives the mosque its enduring relevance as an institution capable of shaping community life far beyond the hours of prayer.

Realizing this broader mandate, however, does not happen automatically. The prosperity of a mosque, in the sense of it being alive with activity and meaningful to its congregation, depends heavily on the presence of committed management and an engaged surrounding community. Nurfatmawati (2020) argues that sincerity and a strong sense of responsibility among caretakers are indispensable values in sustaining a mosque's vitality. It is not uncommon to find mosques that are physically well-built yet functionally dormant, used only for the obligatory Maghrib and Isha congregational prayers and otherwise left empty for the remainder of the day. This gap between physical existence and functional prosperity signals that a mosque's success cannot be measured by its architecture alone, but by the creativity, skill, and initiative of those entrusted with animating it, so that it can genuinely attract worshippers to participate in a wider range of religious and communal activities.

Youth, historically, have occupied a central place as agents of social change and community development. Anggara (2022) notes that society continues to place high expectations on young people to assume leadership roles, largely because of the breadth of their social networks and their capacity to mobilize collective action. Yet this expectation is accompanied by genuine concern, as youth participation in

communal and religious life has in many places declined, partly due to changing social conditions and partly due to a tendency among some young people to act independently of established institutions. Within this landscape, the presence of youth inside the mosque itself represents a strategic opportunity: when young people are drawn not only into recreational or social gatherings but also into religious study, da'wah activities, and mosque-based education, they become capable of revitalizing the very function of the mosque they inhabit (Marlinda, 2024).

Mosque youth communities, in this regard, are typically composed of young Muslim men and women residing near a given mosque, and they commonly serve as both a collaborative structure for mosque affairs and a developmental platform for the youth themselves (Gaffar, 2024). A well-designed strategy is essential if such communities are to translate their enthusiasm into sustained impact, since a mosque that is properly managed tends to generate positive outcomes not only for worship but for the wider social fabric of its neighborhood (Mubarok, 2022). Prospering a mosque today, therefore, requires more than goodwill; it demands knowledge of strategic management and the resilience to sustain programs over time (Ashshidqi & Muliono, 2021). In'am (2023) further underlines that youth involvement is indispensable precisely because young people are often best positioned to design and execute strategies that keep a mosque's function alive and relevant to contemporary needs.

It is against this backdrop that the present study seeks to analyze the strategies implemented by the Youth Movement for Mosque Love (GPCM) community and to identify the challenges the community faces in carrying out its programs. In Sampali Village, GPCM has emerged as a collective of young men and women who have taken on the responsibility of reviving mosque functions, particularly at the Amal Ikhlas Mosque and the Istiqamah Grand Mosque. The name itself, an abbreviation of Gerakan Pemuda Cinta Masjid, already signals its founding spirit: a group of youths united by genuine concern for their community, channeled through active engagement in mosque prosperity efforts.

Previous research offers a useful point of comparison. Fauzizah (2022) documented mosque revitalization efforts that, while reasonably successful, were hampered by uneven commitment among mosque administrators in fulfilling their duties. Other studies have similarly explored the strategies pursued by mosque management boards in general (Ashshidqi & Muliono, 2021; Nurfatmawati, 2020), yet research that centers specifically on youth-led communities operating at the village level, especially one examining GPCM's role in Sampali Village, remains scarce. This gap justifies the present inquiry, which aims to explore in depth the strategies GPCM has designed and executed, the forms these strategies take in practice, and the extent to which they succeed in drawing congregants back into active mosque life, thereby contributing empirical grounding for how youth-based religious communities can serve as a driving force in mosque management.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, chosen for its capacity to generate an in-depth account of phenomena as they occur naturally in the field (Abdussamad, 2021). Following Sugiyono (2016), descriptive qualitative research is conducted within its natural setting, with the researcher acting as the principal instrument of data collection, requiring broad theoretical grounding to formulate questions, analyze findings, and interpret social meaning accurately. The research was conducted in Sampali Village, Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, selected because of the active presence of the GPCM community in that locality. Informants were determined through purposive sampling, comprising individuals directly involved in or affected by GPCM's programs: the head and a member of the GPCM community, the heads of the Istiqamah Grand Mosque and Amal Ikhlas Mosque management boards, and congregation members who experienced the community's activities firsthand. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observation, and documentation (Sahir & S., 2022), while data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (2014), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

Results and Discussion

The Youth Movement for Mosque Love is fundamentally a youth-based community whose activities center on communal empowerment and the prosperity of mosques in the Sampali area. Established in 2017 and thus active for nearly eight years at the time of this research, the community is composed predominantly of Muslim youths who share a common concern for the condition of local mosques, both in terms of their religious functions and their role in social life. Its emergence was driven by young people's observation that the Amal Ikhlas Mosque and the Istiqamah Grand Mosque were, prior to GPCM's presence, comparatively quiet and underused for religious programming. This observation resonates with Rasyid et al. (2023), who note that many mosques today are utilized only when circumstances demand it, rather than functioning continuously as centers of Muslim communal life.

The Qur'an itself provides a normative foundation for understanding who is truly entitled to prosper the houses of Allah. Surah At-Taubah, verse 18, states:

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ

"Indeed, the only ones who maintain the mosques of Allah are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish prayer, give zakat, and fear none but Allah. It is expected that those will be among the guided" (Kementerian Agama RI, 2020).

Drawing on the Tahlili interpretation issued by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, this verse indicates that the right to prosper a mosque belongs to those who genuinely believe in Allah and the Last Day, perform prayer, pay zakat, and maintain taqwa in all circumstances, qualities that mark them as recipients of divine guidance. Az-Zuhaili (2015), in Tafsir al-Munir, adds a linguistic dimension to this discussion, explaining that "prospering a mosque" denotes occupying it, worshipping within it, and improving its physical structure. He distinguishes two dimensions of mosque prosperity: a physical dimension, encompassing the strengthening, maintenance, and equipping of the building itself, and a spiritual dimension, encompassing acts of worship such as prayer, dhikr, i'tikaf, and visitation for the sake of engaging in beneficial activity. These two dimensions together frame how GPCM's own strategies can be read: as an attempt to honor both the material upkeep and the spiritual vibrancy that true mosque prosperity demands.

Guided by this framework, GPCM channels youth energy into revitalizing the mosque as a place of worship, a venue for religious outreach, a platform for youth development, and a center of socio-religious activity for the wider community. Interviews with the community's leadership and members reveal that this revitalization rests on a set of mutually reinforcing efforts. The most consistently mentioned is the sustained practice of routine religious study, delivered through regular Friday-night sessions held after Maghrib until the arrival of Isha, larger and less predictably scheduled tabligh gatherings, and thematic studies addressing current issues such as the Palestinian cause, often featuring nationally recognized ustadz. According to Danil, GPCM's chairperson, one of the most effective ways to sustain attendance at these sessions has been the simple gesture of providing light meals to participants. Through this steady rhythm of study, the mosque comes to function not merely as a house of prayer but as a genuine center of Islamic education (Hermawan et al., 2024), a finding consistent with the broader literature emphasizing education as a core mosque function (Mubarak, 2022).

A second pillar of GPCM's approach is the deliberate inclusion of local youth in the day-to-day life of the mosque. Rather than treating youth as passive beneficiaries, GPCM opens space for them to take part directly in religious study and in efforts to enliven the mosque through both religious and social programming. Nudin and Fakhruroji (2023) argue that this kind of direct involvement cultivates a sense of ownership among young people, making them feel responsible for the continuity of mosque life rather than distant observers of it. This dynamic mirrors In'am's (2023) broader observation that youth participation is most transformative when it is structural rather than occasional, embedding young people within the ongoing operations of an institution rather than limiting their role to isolated events.

Complementing these religious efforts is a deliberate program of social activity intended to widen the mosque's appeal beyond ritual worship alone. GPCM organizes commemorations of major Islamic holidays, coordinates relief distribution for communities affected by disaster, provides weekly assistance to orphans and annual

assistance to those in economic hardship, holds an annual mass circumcision event, offers free health checks, and hosts communal meals shared with the congregation. These activities function as more than charitable gestures; they strengthen the social bonds that tie the congregation together, generating the kind of communal warmth that, over time, translates into greater enthusiasm for attending and enlivening the mosque. This finding aligns with Suriyono et al. (2022), who observe that mosque management strategies succeed most fully when religious and social dimensions are pursued in tandem rather than treated as separate agendas.

A fourth strategy responds directly to the demands of the digital era: the use of social media as a channel for da'wah and information dissemination. GPCM uses these platforms to publicize study schedules, to invite both the immediate community and the broader public to attend mosque programs, and to circulate da'wah content, flyers, and activity posters through members' personal accounts. This approach extends the reach of GPCM's message to individuals who, for whatever reason, are unable to attend the mosque in person, allowing information about mosque prosperity to travel well beyond the physical boundaries of Sampali Village (Strategi Komunikasi Pengurus Masjid Nurudzalam, n.d.). In an environment where nearly every piece of shared content invites public engagement and interpretation, this digital strategy positions GPCM as an active participant in shaping how the community perceives and relates to its mosques.

None of these efforts, however, proceed without friction. On the supportive side, Ricky, a GPCM member, observed that although the community's core membership remains small, the intensity of members' commitment to mosque prosperity compensates for their limited numbers, a dynamic reinforced by mosque administrators who provide facilities and physical space conducive to GPCM's programs, as affirmed by the chairpersons of the Amal Ikhlas and Istiqamah Grand Mosque management boards. On the constraining side, Adriansyah, representing the Amal Ikhlas board, pointed to chronic funding shortages that limit activities such as communal meals, compounded by the demanding personal schedules of GPCM's largely volunteer membership. Tjetjep similarly noted persistent communication gaps regarding planned activities, which reduce the flow of information to mosque administrators, while Danil observed that the unpaid, voluntary nature of participation itself discourages some members from contributing more fully. These constraints echo Rizal's (2022) finding that young people's interest in attending mosque-based religious programs tends to lag behind their enthusiasm for activities offering more immediate personal enjoyment. Even so, Ricky's account of GPCM's leadership, which consistently offers direction and encouragement during briefings and evaluations, resonates with established strategic management theory describing strategy as a comprehensive decision-making process, formulated by leadership and enacted collectively by members, in pursuit of a shared organizational outcome.

The cumulative impact of these strategies is most visible at the Amal Ikhlas Mosque and the Istiqamah Grand Mosque, both located in Sampali, where

congregational and social activity that was once minimal has grown substantially, with several programs having become sufficiently embedded that mosque administrators now sustain them independently of direct GPCM involvement. Charitable initiatives, including orphan assistance and mass circumcision, have been especially well received, evolving into annual events the community anticipates with genuine enthusiasm. Congregation members corroborate this trajectory. Sawindah Pohan, a member of the Istiqamah Grand Mosque congregation, recounted having witnessed firsthand, and even actively supported, GPCM's regular study sessions, Islamic holiday commemorations, and orphan-focused programs, describing herself as an engaged participant rather than a passive observer. She further characterized the community's overall impact as strongly positive, crediting it with instilling in congregants a renewed appreciation for religious knowledge and with rebuilding fellowship among congregation members otherwise absorbed in their daily occupations. A community member associated with the Amal Ikhlas Mosque offered a similar assessment, describing a mosque once quiet in terms of congregational presence that became considerably more active once GPCM began inviting respected ustadz from across the greater Medan area, and emphasizing that programs such as orphan care, circumcision services, and assistance to the poor have provided tangible relief to those in need while encouraging more capable congregants to share their resources. Other informants likewise reported that the mosque's atmosphere had shifted from infrequent use to sustained liveliness, with rising congregational numbers and a steady cadence of well-attended activities that, in their view, has deepened worshippers' understanding of and devotion to Allah SWT.

Taken together, these accounts indicate that GPCM's strategy has largely fulfilled its founding aspirations, not only elevating the quality of worship and congregational participation but also reinforcing social cohesion and heightening the mosque's appeal as a space the community actively wishes to inhabit. This pattern supports Sudiantini's (2022) contention that effective strategy formation begins from what a community already possesses rather than waiting upon ideal conditions that may never fully materialize. It likewise affirms Pahlevi et al.'s (2023) observation that a strategy's success rests less on the elegance of its initial design than on the discipline of its implementation and the rigor of its ongoing evaluation. For GPCM, this means that continued attentiveness to funding constraints, internal coordination, and member availability will remain essential if the momentum generated over the past eight years is to be sustained, allowing the community to keep adapting its strategic direction to the evolving needs of Sampali Village.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Youth Movement for Mosque Love (GPCM) plays a substantial role in advancing mosque prosperity in Sampali Village through a coherent set of strategies grounded in religious values and community empowerment. These include sustaining routine religious study, actively involving youth in mosque

programming, organizing religious and social welfare activities, and disseminating da'wah content through social media. Together, these efforts have measurably increased congregational participation, particularly at the Amal Ikhlas and Istiqamah Grand Mosques, where programs such as orphan assistance, mass circumcision, and communal meals have become anticipated fixtures of communal life, strengthening ties between the mosque and its surrounding population. GPCM's implementation is bolstered by the enthusiasm of its members and the cooperation of mosque administrators, yet it remains constrained by limited funding, members' competing personal obligations, and gaps in internal communication, challenges that call for stronger coordination, more resilient community management, and broader collaboration with local stakeholders. Overall, the case of GPCM demonstrates that youth-driven strategies, when sustained through sound planning, consistent execution, and continuous evaluation, can transform mosques into genuine centers of religious and social life, offering a replicable model for other youth communities seeking to revitalize mosque management in their own localities.

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