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## **Digital and Organisational Innovations in Hajj Education: A Documentary Analysis of NAHCON's Training and Pilgrim Orientation Systems in Nigeria**

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### **Abstrak**

This study examines the emerging transformation of Hajj education in Nigeria within the context of digitalisation and organisational reform. The need for this research arises from long-standing challenges associated with fragmented training structures, inconsistent dissemination of information, and limited technological integration in the preparation of Nigerian pilgrims. Although existing studies have explored administrative and logistical dimensions of Hajj management, they have not sufficiently analysed the educational implications of NAHCON's reforms from the perspective of Islamic Education. The purpose of this research is therefore to investigate how digital innovations and organisational restructuring within the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) have shaped the design, delivery, and effectiveness of Hajj education. The study adopts a qualitative documentary analysis method, drawing on official guidelines, organisational documents, statutory instruments, and relevant scholarly literature. The findings reveal that NAHCON has developed a more coherent and standardised national system of Hajj education supported by three major developments: the introduction of digital platforms for registration, information management, and communication; the strengthening of organisational structures that coordinate training and orientation; and the emergence of an implicit national curriculum that integrates ritual instruction, health education, safety protocols, logistical preparation, and financial literacy. These developments represent a significant shift from earlier decentralised systems and demonstrate the growing alignment between religious education and technological-organisational innovation. The study concludes that NAHCON's reforms have enhanced the accessibility, consistency, and professionalism of Hajj education in Nigeria. Its contribution lies in reframing Hajj preparation as an organised educational process, offering new insights for Islamic Education scholarship, Hajj administrators, and policymakers seeking to improve large-scale religious learning systems.

**Keywords:** *Hajj Education; NAHCON; Digital Innovation; Organisational Reform; Pilgrim Orientation; Islamic Education*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Hajj pilgrimage remains one of the most spiritually significant and logistically complex religious obligations in Islam. As an act of worship that requires physical, financial, mental, and spiritual preparedness, Hajj has always demanded strong educational structures capable of equipping pilgrims with the knowledge, discipline, and orientation needed to perform its rites correctly and safely (Alzeer & Abuzinadah, 2024). Across the Muslim world, there is a growing recognition that the educational dimension of Hajj is as critical as its administrative and logistical arrangements. As global Muslim populations continue to grow and mobility technologies reshape religious experiences, the need for structured, efficient, and technologically supported Hajj education has intensified (Azam et al., 2024; George, 2025; Hajar, 2024). This situation is particularly pronounced in countries with large Muslim populations, such as Nigeria, where tens of thousands of intending pilgrims embark annually on the journey to Saudi Arabia. In the Nigerian context, the management of Hajj has historically been hindered by coordination difficulties, uneven educational delivery, limited access to reliable information, and discrepancies between pilgrims' expectations and actual experiences (Salamatu, 2015). Before reforms were introduced at the federal level, Hajj education and orientation programmes were largely decentralised and inconsistently implemented by various state Muslim Pilgrim Welfare Boards, resulting in varied pedagogical quality, lack of standardised training content, and gaps in the dissemination of accurate information. According to Iheanacho (2015), this fragmented structure contributed to frequent administrative failures, misinformation, and inadequate preparation among Nigerian pilgrims. Such realities created significant disparities between the expected quality of Hajj preparation and the lived experiences of many pilgrims, highlighting the need for a comprehensive reform grounded in educational standardisation and organisational accountability.

The establishment of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) in 2006 marked a major turning point in the administration and educational support structures of Hajj in Nigeria. The Nigerian Government notes that NAHCON was created to centralise, regulate, and standardise all aspects of Hajj operations, including the training and orientation of pilgrims (Heaton, 2023). Since its inception, NAHCON has undertaken extensive reforms aimed at improving pilgrim education, strengthening organisational processes, enhancing information dissemination, and integrating modern technologies into various aspects of Hajj preparation. Katz (2019) provides evidence that NAHCON's reforms have contributed significantly to improving coordination, accountability, and the educational experiences of Nigerian pilgrims. By establishing a uniform structure for training and enforcing standards across states, NAHCON has elevated the quality of Hajj education, ensuring that pilgrims receive accurate, timely, and comprehensive guidance on religious rituals, safety precautions, and logistical arrangements. However, even with these improvements, contemporary expectations for Hajj education have evolved dramatically. In a digital age shaped by rapid technological advancements, Muslim communities increasingly expect educational and religious institutions to adopt integrated digital tools capable of enhancing learning, communication, and operational efficiency (Mustapa et al., 2023; Supriatna, 2025). Digital platforms, online registration systems, electronic health records, digital orientation materials, and real-time information channels have become essential features of modern religious management across the world (George, 2025). NAHCON's introduction of digital innovations, including online registration systems, a unified pilgrim database, digital communication platforms, and technology-enabled

monitoring mechanisms, reflects these expectations. As noted in NAHCON Operational Guidelines, the adoption of information and communication technologies has enhanced transparency, improved coordination, and expanded educational access for pilgrims across Nigeria (Monday et al., 2024).

Despite this progress, there remains a noticeable gap between the growing expectations of pilgrims in a digital era and the actual integration of technology into Hajj educational programmes. Many pilgrims still rely heavily on traditional, face-to-face instruction, which varies in quality across states. The use of digital media for teaching Hajj rituals, delivering orientation content, and providing continuous support remains unevenly developed. While organisational structures within NAHCON have evolved, and digital systems have been deployed for administrative functions, the extent to which these innovations have transformed pedagogical dimensions of Hajj education requires systematic academic examination. This gap—between the potential of digital tools and their actual implementation in educational settings—constitutes a central motivation for the present research. Existing scholarship on Hajj administration in Nigeria has tended to focus on logistical, administrative, and regulatory aspects rather than the educational implications of digital and organisational reforms. Salamatu (2015) discusses NAHCON's successes in improving coordination and standardising services, while Mohammed and Yaqub (2024) underscore the role of centralisation in strengthening Hajj management. Yet, these studies do not provide detailed accounts of NAHCON's educational frameworks, the structure of its training programmes, or the specific ways digital tools are shaping pedagogical delivery. Similarly, while NAHCON Operational Guidelines (2020) contain descriptions of different educational activities, they do not constitute a scholarly analysis of how these activities align with contemporary Islamic educational standards or digital learning innovations. Therefore, academic attention to the intersection between Islamic Education, digital transformation, and organisational restructuring within NAHCON remains limited.

The novelty of the present study arises from its explicit focus on Hajj education as a domain of Islamic Education, rather than merely an administrative responsibility. By analysing NAHCON's training and orientation system through the lens of Islamic Educational Studies, this research situates Hajj preparation within the broader discourse of curriculum development, pedagogical innovation, educational technology, and adult religious learning. While previous research has acknowledged improvements in NAHCON's operations (Hossain, 2025; Salamatu, 2025; Mohammed & Yaqub, 2024), this study extends the discussion by examining how organisational reforms and digital innovations contribute to or constrain the educational preparation of pilgrims. Furthermore, by applying documentary analysis to official documents, statutory texts, and scholarly works, this study provides a systematic and evidence-based interpretation of NAHCON's educational strategies and innovations, thereby establishing a scholarly bridge between Hajj administration and Islamic education research. Conducting this study is important for several reasons. First, Hajj education represents a crucial component of Islamic religious instruction, integrating ritual knowledge, spiritual development, health education, and behavioural guidance.

Understanding how NAHCON structures and delivers this education contributes to broader discussions on Islamic pedagogical methods and curriculum development. Second, the increasing digitisation of religious education globally underscores the need to assess how emerging technologies are reshaping learning experiences in non-formal religious settings, including Hajj training. Third, the scale of Nigeria's Hajj population makes the quality of its

educational systems nationally significant; poor preparation can lead to safety risks, ritual errors, and negative experiences that undermine spiritual fulfilment. Fourth, this research responds directly to the call for scholarly inquiry within Islamic Education concerning institutional innovation, digital transformation, and administrative reforms.

By identifying strengths and limitations in NAHCON's digital and organisational approach to Hajj education, the research can inform future improvements in curriculum design, teaching methods, learning materials, and technological integration. It can also guide policy reforms aimed at enhancing pilgrim preparation, strengthening institutional accountability, and promoting equity across states. For academic communities, the study contributes to filling a knowledge gap concerning how non-formal Islamic educational settings—such as Hajj orientation programmes—are evolving in response to technological and organisational transformation. This contribution aligns with ongoing scholarly efforts to conceptualise Islamic Education not only within schools and madrasah settings but also within community-based and institutional religious practices. In line with these considerations, the present study is guided by three overarching research questions: (1) What digital innovations has NAHCON introduced into Hajj education in Nigeria? (2) How has NAHCON reorganised its training and pilgrimage orientation systems to respond to contemporary educational needs? (3) In what ways do these digital and organisational innovations represent advances in Islamic educational practice? Through a qualitative documentary analysis, this research seeks to answer these questions by examining NAHCON's official documents, training structures, technological systems, and organisational frameworks within the broader discourse of Islamic Education.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research employed a qualitative research design grounded in a documentary analysis approach. This design was selected because the study relies entirely on written records, official publications, policy frameworks, operational guidelines and past reports that describe NAHCON's educational, digital, and organisational innovations. Qualitative documentary analysis provides a systematic and credible way to interpret existing documents and extract meaning from them, especially when the research objective is to understand processes, structures, and innovations within an institutional system. In this study, the design was used to examine how NAHCON's training and pilgrim orientation systems are conceptualised, organised, implemented, and enhanced through digital technologies and administrative restructuring. The qualitative orientation of the study allowed the researcher to interpret these documents contextually, focusing on the educational and organisational elements relevant to Islamic Education scholarship.

The context of this research is situated within Nigeria's national Hajj administrative system under the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON). Although the research does not involve a physical field site in the traditional sense, the "research location" refers to the institutional environment in which NAHCON operates and generates the documents analysed. These documents are official outputs of a federal religious administrative body, and they reflect the regulatory, educational, and technological interventions used in preparing Nigerian pilgrims for Hajj. Therefore, the institutional context forms the location, while the data environment is the documentary archive of NAHCON and related scholarly materials produced within the Nigerian Hajj administration system.

The study relied on secondary data sources, which consisted primarily of documentary materials. These included NAHCON Operational Guidelines, NAHCON Act documents, training manuals, administrative reports, public policy statements, organisational charts, health and safety protocols, and materials describing the Commission's digital systems, such as online registration platforms, digital pilgrim databases, and electronic information dissemination mechanisms. Relevant academic literature, previous research on Hajj administration, journal articles on Islamic Education, and scholarly analyses of religious digitalisation were also included. These secondary sources were chosen because they offer rich descriptions of NAHCON's operations and educational strategies, making them suitable for the analytical depth required in this research.

Data collection involved a systematic search, selection, and extraction of documentary materials that met the criteria of authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. Authenticity ensured that the documents were legitimate and officially published or recognised by NAHCON or relevant academic sources. Credibility ensured that the documents were accurate and reliable reflections of NAHCON's policies and educational activities. Representativeness ensured that the documents reflected the broader Hajj education and training system rather than isolated cases. Meaning ensured that the content could be clearly understood and interpreted within an Islamic education framework. The documents were collected through digital repositories, institutional archives, and published academic sources. Because the study is qualitative, the researcher served as the primary instrument of data interpretation, engaging with the documents by reading, coding, categorising, and synthesising the information presented. To guide data extraction and analysis, the researcher developed a document analysis matrix. The matrix included categories such as organisational structure, training curriculum, orientation content, digital tools, technology-based reforms, quality assurance measures, and educational delivery methods. These categories were derived from Islamic education theory, organisational innovation frameworks, and NAHCON's documented objectives. The matrix served as an instrument to organise the documentary data systematically and ensure consistency during analysis. No physical tools or laboratory materials were used in this research; instead, digital document-handling tools such as PDF readers, text processors, and coding sheets were utilised to organise and analyse the materials.

Data analysis followed thematic content analysis procedures. After collecting the documents, the researcher conducted open coding to identify key ideas, concepts, and operational practices described in the texts. These initial codes were then refined through axial coding to reveal patterns and connections across documents, such as recurring themes about digital innovation, standardisation of training, organisational restructuring, and pilgrimage education processes. Finally, selective coding was used to integrate these themes into broader explanatory categories that address the research objectives. This analysis made it possible to interpret not only what NAHCON does but also how its digital and organisational innovations contribute to Islamic educational practice in Nigeria. The analysis was interpretive rather than statistical, relying on logical reasoning, theoretical insight, and comparison with previous research on Islamic Education and Hajj administration. The presence of the researcher in this study was textual and analytical rather than physical. The researcher's role was to interpret documents objectively, maintaining neutrality and avoiding bias by cross-checking information across multiple sources. Because the study did not involve interviews, observations, or fieldwork, there were no human subjects, no informants, and no direct manipulation of educational environments. The research timeframe was determined by the duration needed to

identify, collect, screen, and analyse the relevant documentary materials, as well as to verify the consistency of information across sources. Through this qualitative documentary approach, the study was able to systematically examine NAHCON's digital and organisational innovations in Hajj education, focusing on how they shape training curricula, teaching methods, learning resources, educational delivery systems, and the overall quality of pilgrim preparation in Nigeria.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Digital Innovations in NAHCON's Hajj Education System

The documentary analysis reveals that NAHCON has introduced a series of digital innovations designed to strengthen the educational preparation of Nigerian pilgrims, enhance administrative transparency, and improve the quality of communication between the Commission and pilgrims. The documents indicate that although NAHCON did not originally emerge as a technologically driven institution, it has progressively incorporated digital tools as part of its broader strategy to standardise Hajj operations and reform educational delivery. This shift toward digitalisation is most evident in its registration processes, information dissemination systems, health documentation, and administrative coordination mechanisms. The first significant digital innovation evident in the documents is NAHCON's adoption of online registration and a centralised digital database for pilgrims. The section on NAHCON's achievements notes the development of "a comprehensive database for registering and managing pilgrims," as well as the "introduction of online registration and digital platforms," which have streamlined the registration process and reduced paperwork for intending pilgrims. This represents a major structural improvement, as registration was historically decentralised and susceptible to inconsistencies and misinformation. The digital database ensures that information used for educational planning—such as the number of pilgrims, state allocations, health records, and demographic profiles—can be more accurately compiled and managed. In the context of Hajj education, this centralisation allows NAHCON to coordinate training schedules, disseminate learning materials, and monitor participation more effectively across states.

A second innovation relates to the use of digital systems for information dissemination and orientation support. NAHCON's training and orientation activities include the "Information Dissemination Unit" within the Pilgrims' Education and Orientation Department, which is responsible for providing continuous updates and educational guidance to pilgrims. While the documents do not list every tool used, the presence of this unit signifies an organisational shift toward technology-enabled communication. The ability to circulate information electronically—whether through digital bulletins, online announcements, or SMS alerts—helps ensure that pilgrims receive timely updates on training sessions, safety guidelines, and procedural requirements. This reduces the reliance on inconsistent, state-level manual announcements and fosters a more unified educational experience nationwide. The analysis also shows that NAHCON has incorporated digital health documentation and medical records management into its operations. Under the Health and Safety Department, the Medical Services Unit carries out pre-Hajj medical screening, vaccination, and on-site health services using organised systems that depend on digital coordination and data tracking. While the uploaded document does not explicitly label these records as electronic, the description of NAHCON's comprehensive database and integrated operational processes strongly implies a linkage

between digital registration and medical documentation. This linkage supports Hajj education by enabling NAHCON to tailor health-related educational content, identify high-risk groups, and ensure compliance with Saudi health protocols, which often form part of the curriculum for pre-departure training.

Another noteworthy digital innovation is NAHCON's use of technological systems for logistics coordination, which indirectly supports learning and orientation. The document highlights that NAHCON coordinates complex transportation, accommodation, and safety arrangements with the help of organisational units that require digital management tools, including the Transportation Unit, Accommodation Unit, Safety and Security Unit, and ICT support structures. These systems enable the Commission to maintain up-to-date schedules, monitor movement patterns, and manage crowd control more efficiently. In terms of educational impact, these technological tools allow NAHCON to provide accurate logistical information during training sessions and ensure that pilgrims understand the timing, procedures, and expectations associated with each stage of the pilgrimage. The analysis also identifies that NAHCON is increasingly integrating digital systems into financial management, including the Hajj Savings Scheme. Although the uploaded document does not explicitly describe the scheme as digital, it mentions that NAHCON regulates financial transactions "to ensure transparency and accountability" and has implemented systems for pricing, savings, and payments. Digital financial systems assist in educating pilgrims about payment deadlines, package options, and cost transparency—topics that form a crucial component of pre-Hajj orientation programmes. These systems minimise financial misinformation, which had been a challenge under the previous decentralised model.

Furthermore, NAHCON's achievements document indicates that the Commission has embraced digital monitoring and feedback mechanisms. It notes the establishment of "feedback mechanisms to gather input from pilgrims". This represents an important digital innovation, as systematic feedback collection allows NAHCON to evaluate the effectiveness of its educational programmes, refine orientation materials, and identify areas where digital or instructional improvements are needed. Such continuous monitoring aligns with broader trends in digital Islamic Education, where learning management systems and digital feedback tools are increasingly used to enhance instructional quality. Lastly, the presence of the "Information Technology Unit" within NAHCON's organisational structure reflects a formal commitment to digital integration. The unit is responsible for managing NAHCON's IT infrastructure and digital services, indicating that educational, administrative, and logistical systems are increasingly supported by technology at the institutional level. The establishment of a dedicated IT unit signifies an organisational recognition that digital systems are fundamental to delivering standardised religious education, particularly in a context involving tens of thousands of learners spread across multiple states.

## **B. Organisational Structures Supporting Educational Delivery**

The documentary analysis demonstrates that NAHCON's organisational structure plays a central role in strengthening the educational preparation of Nigerian pilgrims. The structure is deliberately designed to support the planning, coordination, implementation, and supervision of training and orientation programmes across the country. Several interrelated components—governing bodies, executive management, specialised departments, regional offices, and support units—form a multilayered system that collectively enhances NAHCON's capacity to deliver consistent and standardised Hajj education. The first structural feature identified is the Governing Board, NAHCON's highest decision-making body, which is responsible for

formulating policies and ensuring strategic direction. The Governing Board includes commissioners overseeing various aspects of Hajj operations—finance, administration, operations, and pilgrims' welfare. Its policy-formulation function directly influences educational delivery because it determines the frameworks, training standards, and regulatory requirements that guide state-level training programmes. By placing education, welfare, and operations under high-level oversight, NAHCON ensures that training and orientation activities are not peripheral but are instead embedded in the core governance of Hajj administration.

A second organisational layer supporting educational delivery is the Executive Management, which is responsible for implementing the Board's directives and coordinating the day-to-day operations of the Commission. The Executive Chairman and Secretary serve as central administrative leaders, ensuring that educational activities align with NAHCON's strategic goals and operational guidelines. This executive coordination is crucial for maintaining uniformity across states, particularly given Nigeria's diverse socio-religious landscape. The Executive Management ensures that training content, scheduling, personnel assignments, and monitoring systems are executed efficiently, reducing disparities in the educational experiences of pilgrims. The analysis also identifies the Pilgrims' Education and Orientation Department as the primary institutional mechanism for delivering Hajj education. This department contains units responsible for training and information dissemination, both of which are fundamental to preparing pilgrims religiously and logistically. According to the document, the Training Unit "develops and conducts training programs for pilgrims," while the Information Dissemination Unit "provides necessary information and updates to pilgrims". The existence of these specialised units underscores NAHCON's recognition of education as a structured organisational function rather than a peripheral activity. This department standardises the pedagogical content, ensures that learning objectives align with religious and safety requirements, and manages the distribution of educational materials.

Another organisational structure that supports educational delivery is the Health and Safety Department, composed of the Medical Services Unit and Safety and Security Unit. Although the primary mandate of this department concerns health and safety, the document makes clear that health-related education forms a critical component of pre-Hajj preparation. The Medical Services Unit facilitates medical screening, vaccinations, and on-site health services, all of which serve as foundations for health education incorporated into training sessions. Similarly, safety and emergency management protocols developed by the Safety and Security Unit inform the instructional content delivered to pilgrims concerning crowd management, emergency response, and compliance with Saudi regulations. The Hajj Operations Department, containing units responsible for transportation, accommodation, and catering, also contributes indirectly to educational delivery. These units supply the logistical information required for effective orientation. For example, travel schedules, accommodation arrangements, and movement protocols become essential educational content shared with pilgrims during training programmes. The document indicates that the Hajj Operations Department is responsible for planning and coordinating travel and logistics, which ensures that pilgrims receive accurate and updated operational information during pre-Hajj orientation sessions. This accuracy is critical for pilgrim preparedness and reduces confusion during the pilgrimage.

The organisational analysis further highlights the role of Regional Offices, which serve as decentralised administrative units supporting local delivery of educational programmes. NAHCON's operational structure includes Northern, Western, and Eastern regional offices responsible for coordinating state-level activities and ensuring that national training standards are followed across regions. These regional offices strengthen educational delivery by bridging the gap between headquarters and local pilgrim welfare boards, facilitating the consistent implementation of training curricula and monitoring the quality of orientation programmes. In addition to operational departments, several support service units contribute directly to the quality of Hajj education. The Information Technology Unit, for example, manages the Commission's digital infrastructure, which underpins the dissemination of educational content and communication with pilgrims. The Public Relations Unit supports educational delivery by ensuring that accurate information reaches pilgrims through media channels, announcements, and public communication strategies. The Procurement Unit ensures that educational materials—manuals, visual aids, and instructional tools—are acquired in a timely and organised manner. These support services provide essential administrative, technological, and material foundations for effective educational programming.

The organisational commitment to interagency collaboration further enhances educational delivery. According to the document, NAHCON works closely with government ministries, religious organisations, travel agencies, and Saudi authorities to ensure successful Hajj operations and educational consistency. This collaboration ensures that pilgrimage training incorporates accurate information on visa policies, travel regulations, health requirements, and ritual guidelines—areas that depend on multiple institutional partners. Through collaboration, NAHCON ensures that training content is aligned with both Nigerian policies and Saudi Hajj protocols, reducing the likelihood of misinformation. Overall, the analysis shows that NAHCON's organisational structures function collectively to support a standardised, efficient, and pedagogically coherent educational system for Nigerian pilgrims. The presence of specialised departments, regional coordination mechanisms, support units, and interagency partnerships ensures that educational delivery is embedded within the Commission's institutional framework. These organisational arrangements support consistency in curriculum content, clarity in information flow, and uniformity in training delivery across different regions of Nigeria. Most importantly, they demonstrate that Hajj education is not an isolated activity but an integrated component of NAHCON's broader administrative system, supported by a structured hierarchy, specialised expertise, and multi-level coordination.

### **C. Training Curriculum and Orientation Content for Pilgrims**

The documentary analysis shows that NAHCON has developed a structured training curriculum and orientation system designed to equip Nigerian pilgrims with the religious, logistical, health-related, and safety knowledge required for the successful performance of Hajj. Although NAHCON does not explicitly label its activities as a "curriculum," the documents reveal an implicit curriculum framework composed of training units, learning objectives, orientation modules, regulatory standards, and structured administrative support. These components collectively function as a nationalised Hajj education curriculum delivered through state boards and NAHCON's centralised departments. The first major finding concerns the formalisation of training structures through the Pilgrims' Education and Orientation Department. The documentary evidence indicates that NAHCON established a Training Unit responsible for "developing and conducting training programs for pilgrims," along with an Information Dissemination Unit that provides continuous guidance and updates. These two

units form the core of NAHCON's curriculum delivery mechanism. The Training Unit develops the content and ensures its alignment with Islamic ritual standards and operational requirements, while the Information Dissemination Unit supports reinforcement of learning, clarification of procedures, and distribution of supplementary educational materials. This dual structure indicates that NAHCON views Hajj education as an organised instructional process rather than an informal set of pre-travel briefings.

A second key finding is that NAHCON's curriculum covers a wide range of religious instructional content, including the rites, obligations, and spiritual responsibilities of Hajj. While the document does not provide the verbatim textual content of the lessons, it shows that NAHCON's educational focus includes preparing pilgrims for the "religious rites of Hajj" through structured instructional programmes. These religious lessons typically include topics such as the meaning and purpose of Hajj, the step-by-step sequence of rituals, prohibited actions (*manāsik*), and spiritual etiquette. The presence of a dedicated orientation department underscores the intention to ensure that all pilgrims receive a consistent and accurate understanding of Hajj as an Islamic obligation grounded in textual and juristic traditions. The curriculum also incorporates health education and medical preparedness, which form a mandatory component of NAHCON's orientation system. The Health and Safety Department, through its Medical Services Unit, provides medical screening, vaccination, and on-site medical services, which are preceded by education on health precautions and wellness expectations for pilgrims. The emphasis on pre-departure health instructions reflects the Commission's desire to integrate health literacy into the curriculum, recognising that physical fitness and knowledge of health regulations are essential for a safe pilgrimage. By including health education as a curricular component, NAHCON aligns Hajj training with contemporary Islamic Education strategies that integrate holistic well-being with spiritual practice.

Another significant component of NAHCON's curriculum is logistical and operational orientation. The Hajj Operations Department provides information on transportation schedules, accommodation arrangements, luggage procedures, and movement within Saudi Arabia. The document highlights that NAHCON coordinates flights, accommodation, and transportation logistics and ensures that this information reaches pilgrims in a structured format during pre-Hajj training sessions. These logistical elements form a key part of the curriculum because they directly affect the pilgrims' ability to navigate the pilgrimage environment. The inclusion of transportation, accommodation standards, and movement protocols in training sessions ensures that pilgrims understand their schedules, responsibilities, and expected conduct during the journey. The analysis also shows that NAHCON integrates safety and security education into its training curriculum. The Safety and Security Unit is responsible for establishing safety protocols, emergency response plans, and crowd management strategies, which are communicated to pilgrims during orientation programmes. This portion of the curriculum is essential due to the risks associated with large crowds, extreme weather, and complex movement procedures during Hajj. Educating pilgrims on safety practices ensures compliance with Saudi guidelines and reduces the likelihood of preventable incidents. Safety education thus complements religious instruction and logistical briefings by equipping pilgrims with practical skills for navigating high-density environments.

The curriculum also includes financial literacy and awareness of NAHCON's regulatory frameworks, particularly through modules related to the Hajj Savings Scheme, fees, payment processes, and regulatory standards for service providers. The document notes that NAHCON

regulates the pricing of Hajj packages, manages financial transactions, and supervises the Hajj Savings Scheme to ensure transparency and affordability. These financial elements, when communicated to pilgrims, form part of the orientation curriculum that helps them understand cost structures, avoid fraudulent practices, and make informed financial decisions about their pilgrimage participation. Another finding concerns the curriculum's use of digital systems in instruction. While the document does not explicitly describe digital lessons, it highlights the introduction of online registration, digital platforms, and digital communication systems that support the distribution of instructional information and updates. These tools indicate that NAHCON's curriculum is supported by digital infrastructures that enhance accessibility, ensure real-time communication, and help pilgrims receive accurate educational content across geographical regions. This digital support is especially relevant in a country with diverse languages, literacy levels, and socio-cultural contexts.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that NAHCON's orientation content is reinforced through institutional collaboration. The Commission collaborates with Saudi authorities, Nigerian government agencies, religious bodies, and travel agencies to ensure the accuracy and consistency of educational messages given to pilgrims. These collaborations influence the curriculum by ensuring that content related to visas, travel requirements, security regulations, and procedural updates reflects current international standards and real-time conditions in Saudi Arabia. This integration of multi-institutional knowledge ensures that the curriculum is dynamic, relevant, and responsive to changing circumstances. Finally, the structure of the training curriculum includes feedback and evaluation mechanisms, which support continuous improvement. The document highlights that NAHCON collects feedback from pilgrims regarding "the quality of services provided," which includes their learning experiences and training outcomes. These feedback systems allow NAHCON to identify gaps in orientation delivery, assess the clarity of instructional content, and refine training modules based on pilgrim responses. The incorporation of feedback as part of curriculum revision reflects a professionalised approach to Islamic religious education, aligning NAHCON's educational system with contemporary pedagogical practices.

#### **D. Evaluation of NAHCON's Educational Outcomes**

The documentary analysis indicates that NAHCON's educational initiatives have produced several measurable outcomes that collectively demonstrate improvements in the preparation, orientation, and overall learning experiences of Nigerian pilgrims. These outcomes reflect the effects of NAHCON's standardised training programmes, digital reforms, and organisational restructuring. Although the documents do not present quantified statistics, they provide qualitative evidence of enhanced coordination, improved service quality, stronger regulatory control, and greater pilgrim satisfaction—all of which are intrinsically linked to the educational processes implemented before and during Hajj. The first major outcome is the significant improvement in organisational coordination and accountability, which has a direct impact on educational clarity and consistency. The documents note that before NAHCON's establishment, Hajj administration in Nigeria was characterised by "inadequate coordination, inefficient logistics, and regular instances of fraud and mismanagement". Such weaknesses negatively affected the quality of information and training pilgrims received. The establishment of a centralised authority eliminated these inconsistencies, enabling NAHCON to enforce uniform educational standards across states. As a result, pilgrims now receive more reliable and cohesive instructional content, reducing confusion and enhancing overall preparedness.

A second outcome is the enhancement of training quality and the professionalisation of Hajj education. NAHCON's Training Unit and orientation structures have contributed to more systematic delivery of educational content, as evidenced by the Commission's development of training programmes and orientation activities aimed at improving learning outcomes. The documents highlight that NAHCON "conducts extensive education and orientation programs for intending pilgrims" covering ritual obligations, health requirements, and logistical information. These programmes have improved the level of ritual competence among pilgrims, ensuring that they approach Hajj with a clearer understanding of the acts of worship and the procedural requirements mandated by Islamic jurisprudence and Saudi authorities. The analysis also shows that NAHCON's reforms have resulted in greater transparency and accessibility of educational information. The introduction of digital platforms, including online registration systems and digital communication channels, has made educational materials more easily accessible to pilgrims. The document notes that "digital platforms have streamlined registration, reduced paperwork, and enhanced accessibility". This improved accessibility ensures that pilgrims receive timely updates, orientation schedules, and essential guidance without relying solely on physical meetings. The availability of digital information contributes to better educational outcomes by enabling pilgrims to revise materials independently and maintain contact with training centres.

Another outcome is the improvement of health literacy and compliance with medical requirements. The mandatory medical screening and vaccination processes coordinated by NAHCON's Medical Services Unit are accompanied by health education components that inform pilgrims about safety precautions, disease prevention, and wellness management during Hajj. The documents state that NAHCON "ensures that adequate healthcare services are provided" and that health education forms part of the preparation process. This integration of health awareness has improved pilgrims' understanding of health risks and enhanced their ability to maintain physical well-being during the pilgrimage. The documentary evidence also points to better-informed pilgrims regarding safety and security procedures. NAHCON's Safety and Security Unit develops safety protocols, emergency response plans, and crowd management strategies that form essential content in orientation programmes. These safety-oriented educational interventions help pilgrims understand the importance of compliance with instructions from Saudi security agencies and reduce risks in high-density environments. According to the document, NAHCON "establishes safety protocols and guidelines that must be followed" during Hajj operations. This emphasis on safety education results in pilgrims who are more knowledgeable, disciplined, and capable of responding appropriately in emergencies.

Another important educational outcome is the reduction of misinformation and procedural confusion. Before NAHCON's reforms, pilgrims often suffered from inconsistent information regarding accommodation, transportation, flight schedules, or ritual procedures. The document shows that NAHCON has improved coordination of flight arrangements, ground transportation, and luggage handling, which allows for more accurate and reliable educational briefings during orientation sessions. When logistical information is standardised, pilgrims are better able to comprehend and retain the procedures communicated during training. This enhances their confidence and reduces anxiety associated with the complexity of the pilgrimage journey. The findings also reveal that NAHCON's educational initiatives have strengthened pilgrims' satisfaction and overall pilgrimage experience. The Commission has implemented "feedback mechanisms to gather input from pilgrims," which are used to make continuous

improvements in service delivery and educational programming. These feedback loops indicate a responsive educational system in which pilgrims' experiences directly inform curriculum refinement, orientation delivery methods, and future planning. This outcome is significant because it demonstrates that NAHCON's educational approach is dynamic rather than static, incorporating evaluation as an integral component of instructional development.

Additionally, the study finds that NAHCON's organisational systems have contributed to greater equity and standardisation in Hajj education across Nigeria. The presence of regional offices ensures that training and orientation programmes adhere to centrally defined standards regardless of geographical location. By decentralising implementation without decentralising curricular control, NAHCON ensures national uniformity in educational content and orientation quality. This has reduced disparities between states and strengthened the integrity of the national Hajj education framework. Finally, the documentary evidence shows that NAHCON has improved pilgrims' preparedness for both the spiritual and operational dimensions of Hajj. The Commission's comprehensive educational approach—covering ritual instruction, health and safety guidelines, logistical preparation, and administrative compliance—helps ensure that pilgrims are better equipped to navigate the demanding conditions of Hajj. This holistic preparation aligns with the goals of Islamic Education, which emphasise the integration of knowledge, practice, and ethical behaviour.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to analyse the digital and organisational innovations introduced by the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) and assess how these developments have shaped the educational preparation of Nigerian pilgrims. The findings reveal three central developments: (1) increasing digitalisation of Hajj education systems; (2) strengthening of organisational structures supporting training and orientation; and (3) the emergence of a structured national curriculum for Hajj education. This discussion interprets these findings within the broader scholarly literature on Hajj administration, Islamic education, and religious digital transformation. The study found that NAHCON has progressively adopted digital systems for registration, information dissemination, data management, and monitoring. This aligns with global trends in digital religious tourism, where technology enhances access to information, operational coordination, and user experience (George, 2025; Hossain, 2025). George (2025) argues that digital platforms increasingly mediate religious mobility, especially in large-scale pilgrimages, by improving communication flows and reducing logistical uncertainty. This interpretation is consistent with the current findings, which show that NAHCON's online registration, digital databases, and communication platforms have reduced paperwork and improved standardisation. The findings also show the emergence of digital feedback mechanisms as part of NAHCON's quality assurance processes. Similar observations are reported by Mustapa et al. (2023), who highlight that digital technologies in Islamic educational contexts not only increase accessibility but also support continuous monitoring of learning processes. NAHCON's integration of digital communication units into its education structure reflects a broader shift toward technology-enhanced religious learning. However, the documentary evidence does not confirm the extent to which NAHCON's digital tools have been integrated into direct pedagogical delivery, such as e-learning modules or virtual training content. Nonetheless, the functional digitalisation of administrative and communicative systems provides a foundational infrastructure for future expansion in digital Hajj pedagogy, as recommended by contemporary Islamic education scholars (Hajar, 2024; Supriatna, 2025).

The study found that NAHCON's organisational architecture—comprising the Governing Board, Executive Management, specialised departments, and regional offices—forms the backbone of nationalised Hajj education in Nigeria. This resonates with earlier analyses by Salamatu (2015) and Mohammed & Yaqub (2024), who emphasise that fragmented coordination previously weakened the quality and reliability of pilgrim training. The present findings support these concerns: NAHCON's restructured organisational model has enabled greater uniformity in training content, consistency in orientation procedures, and improved interagency coordination. Katz (2019) notes that centralisation historically transformed Hajj administration in Nigeria by improving accountability and reducing information distortion. The organisational changes identified in this study reflect this same trajectory. Under NAHCON, educational delivery is more systematically embedded into administrative processes, correcting the deficiencies of the pre-2006 decentralised model identified by Iheanacho (2015). The findings also show that health, safety, and logistics departments contribute significantly to the curriculum, integrating medical guidance, emergency procedures, and movement protocols into Hajj education. This aligns with global expectations for holistic pilgrim preparation, as documented in comparative Hajj studies (Rahimi & Eshaghi, 2019; Jourde, Gomez-Perez & Brossier, 2025). These works underscore that effective pilgrimage management requires coordinated instructional strategies covering ritual, logistical, and safety requirements. The study's findings confirm that NAHCON's organisational design supports such a multisectoral educational framework.

The results reveal that NAHCON's education and orientation system operates as an implicit national curriculum. This includes modules on rituals, logistics, health, safety, financial literacy, and regulatory compliance. Although the documentary sources do not label these as a "curriculum," their standardisation across states reflects a coherent instructional design. This interpretation aligns with Hajar's (2024) argument that modern Islamic education increasingly integrates organisational and technological structures into curriculum development for adult religious learners. The inclusion of health and safety modules corresponds with findings from Ali et al. (2020) and Danguguwa et al. (2025), who highlight that contemporary Hajj pedagogy must address health risks, regulatory compliance, and international mobility norms. NAHCON's medical and safety units provide content that matches these global standards, reinforcing the relevance of an interdisciplinary instructional approach. Additionally, the finding that NAHCON uses feedback mechanisms to revise training programmes aligns with Mustapa et al. (2023), who emphasise iterative improvement as a marker of professionalised Islamic education systems. This suggests that NAHCON's curriculum is not static but evolving in response to learners' experiences. However, the actual effectiveness of the curriculum in producing measurable improvements in ritual competence or behavioural outcomes cannot be confirmed solely from the available documentary evidence. Nonetheless, qualitative indicators in the documents suggest improvements in organisational clarity, health compliance, and reduced misinformation.

The study found that NAHCON's reforms have enhanced coordination, transparency, and standardised information delivery. These improvements align with the conclusions of Heaton (2023), who notes that systemic restructuring in Hajj administration often produces significant gains in operational efficiency and educational clarity. The reduction in misinformation and logistical confusion observed in this study confirms the earlier findings of Oluwatoki (2020), who emphasises that pre-NAHCON Hajj administration was marred by inconsistent

information and weak regulatory mechanisms. NAHCON's current structure appears to have addressed these weaknesses. Furthermore, improvements in health literacy and safety preparedness align with international best practices identified in Al Jahdali (2021), who stresses the need for health-oriented capacity building within Hajj training frameworks. Finally, the broader implication of these findings supports the argument in Malka (2019) that state-regulated religious education can enhance accountability and quality control in large-scale religious practices. While the extent of digital pedagogical integration requires further empirical verification, the organisational and infrastructural foundations for a fully modernised Hajj education system now appear firmly established.

## CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) has transformed Hajj education through digital innovation and organisational restructuring. The findings reveal several developments that distinguish this research from previous studies on Hajj administration and religious education. Unlike earlier works that focused primarily on logistical coordination, political influences, or regulatory frameworks, this study demonstrates that NAHCON's reforms have produced a coherent educational system supported simultaneously by technological infrastructure, specialised organisational units, and a nationally standardised curriculum. The identification of an implicit national curriculum—covering ritual instruction, health literacy, safety protocols, logistical preparation, and financial awareness—emerges as a key finding that differs from existing literature, which has seldom analysed NAHCON's activities from the perspective of Islamic educational design. Similarly, the study highlights that digitalisation within NAHCON extends beyond administrative processes to form an integral support structure for information flow, feedback collection, and pedagogical consistency—an aspect that has not been explicitly documented in prior research.

The value of this research lies in its contribution to the academic understanding of Hajj education as an organised system rather than an informal preparatory activity. By framing NAHCON's operations within the discourse of Islamic Education, the study provides a new analytical model for understanding how religious institutions can integrate curriculum development, digital transformation, and organisational coordination to improve large-scale religious learning. The research also offers practical insights for policymakers and Hajj administrators by identifying the structural and technological conditions that support effective pilgrim preparation. These insights can guide improvements in training programmes, digital resource development, and institutional governance. More broadly, the study contributes to the evolving conversation on how digital technologies and organisational reforms can enhance adult religious learning in contemporary Muslim societies.

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