

Management Analysis of Religious Tourism at the Sunan Katong Tomb, Jabal Kaliwungu, Kendal

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study aims to analyze the management of religious tourism at the Tomb of Sunan Katong in Jabal Kaliwungu, Kendal Regency, Central Java. Specifically, it examines the implementation of the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling) management functions and identifies the challenges and opportunities in developing sustainable community-based religious tourism.

Method – This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation involving tourism managers, community leaders, local government representatives, and visitors. The collected data were analyzed using the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling) management framework to evaluate the existing religious tourism management system.

Findings – The findings indicate that the management of the Sunan Katong religious tourism destination remains predominantly community-based and relies on mutual cooperation, while the implementation of the POAC management functions has not yet been fully optimized. The local government mainly acts as a facilitator, whereas the local community serves as the primary actor in managing religious tourism activities. The main challenges include limited human resources, inadequate tourism infrastructure, and insufficient digital promotion. Nevertheless, strong religious values, local cultural traditions, and active community participation constitute significant social capital for sustainable tourism development. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity, improving tourism management competencies, enhancing supporting infrastructure, and optimizing digital promotion are recommended to achieve sustainable religious tourism management in Central Java.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is no longer understood merely as a travel activity for leisure, but has also become an integral part of social, cultural, economic, and community development processes. One specific form of tourism with unique characteristics is religious tourism, which involves travel activities undertaken to visit sites possessing spiritual, religious, historical, and cultural values. Within the context of religious tourism, the success of a destination is determined not only by the appeal of its religious sites, but also by the management's ability to preserve sacred values, provide services to pilgrims, and manage the social and economic activities that develop around them. Issues arise when the increase in pilgrim activities and visits is not consistently accompanied by a planned, organized, and sustainable management system. Such conditions can lead to problems such as suboptimal services, limited facilities, weak stakeholder coordination, and the unrealized economic potential of the local community. Therefore, the management of religious tourism becomes a critical subject of study, particularly to understand how management functions are applied to maintain a balance between religious values, visitor services, community participation, and destination sustainability.

In the context of this study, these issues become relevant to the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb religious tourism site in Jabal Kaliwungu, Kendal Regency, Central Java. This destination possesses religious and historical potential and involves the community in various management activities and pilgrim services. However, this potential needs to be balanced with more systematic management, particularly in aspects of planning, division of roles and responsibilities, activity implementation, and supervision of tourism activities. Thus, the main problem of this study is not merely the existence of the Sunan Katong Tomb as a religious tourism destination, but rather how the destination management system is implemented and to what extent management functions can be effectively applied to address service needs, community involvement, and sustainable destination development. These issues form an important basis for analyzing the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb religious tourism through the framework of management functions: Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC).

From the perspective of tourism development, the management of religious tourism needs to be framed within sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is measured not solely by an increase in visitor numbers, but also by the destination's ability to maintain a balance among economic benefits, social sustainability, cultural preservation, and environmental quality. Consequently, the success of a religious tourism destination is determined not only by the appeal of its sites, but also by how tourism activities are managed to avoid eroding the spiritual and cultural values that form the identity of the destination. Research on sustainable tourism development in Indonesia indicates that stakeholder engagement, institutional strengthening, and the utilization of local potential are crucial elements in building destinations capable of providing long-term benefits. The importance of government and local community involvement in sustainability-oriented destination development is thus emphasized. Accordingly, the sustainability of religious tourism must be understood as a management process that connects visitor interests with community interests and the preservation of destination values. (Sari et al., 2022).

One relevant approach to achieving this condition is community-based tourism (CBT). In this study, community-based religious tourism is understood as the management of religious tourism that provides real space for the local community to be involved in planning, decision-making, activity implementation, supervision, and reaping the benefits of tourism activities. This definition is important because community participation cannot simply be manifested in the form of involvement as traders or operational staff, but also needs to encompass participation in the destination management process. Research (Ardy et al., 2025) regarding the community-based tourism approach to the development of the Asta Tinggi religious tourism in Sumenep demonstrates the importance of community participation from the early stages of destination

development. These findings indicate that CBT can be a relevant approach for religious tourism when the community is not merely positioned as a recipient of tourism impacts, but rather as one of the primary actors in destination management.

The application of CBT in religious tourism is also closely related to destination governance. Destination governance refers to the process of coordinating various stakeholders who have interests in the destination, including managers, communities, government authorities, business operators, religious groups, and other parties. Within the context of religious tourism, such coordination becomes increasingly vital because the destination serves a dual function as a spiritual space, social space, and economic space. An imbalance among these interests can give rise to problems, such as excessive commercialization that diminishes the sacredness of the site or, conversely, overly informal management that prevents visitor services from developing optimally. Research on the management of religious tourism at the Makam Dalem Santri Kutaliman in Banyumas demonstrates that community-based religious tourism management can face challenges when the interests, perceptions, and management forms among actors do not completely align. (Chakim et al., 2021). These findings indicate that community participation must be accompanied by clear coordination and management mechanisms.

The governance aspect is also increasingly important because technological developments have transformed how tourism destinations communicate with prospective visitors. Digital promotion, social media, the provision of online information, and the use of technology in services can broaden the reach of a destination while enhancing information access for visitors. However, digitalization should not be viewed merely as promotional activity, but rather as part of destination management transformation. (Jamilati et al., 2023) show that the utilization of digital technology can support the performance of sustainable tourism managers. In the context of religious tourism, the use of technology needs to be tailored to the characteristics of the destination so that promotion does not erode spiritual values, religious norms, or local culture. Consequently, digital development and the preservation of religious character are not two objectives that must be contrasted, but rather need to be managed in a balanced manner.

This framework becomes increasingly relevant in the context of Indonesia as a country with a long history of Islamic development and diverse religious sites that have evolved into pilgrimage and religious tourism destinations. The existence of religious figures' tombs, historical mosques, and Islamic sites functions not only as spiritual spaces but is also linked to social activities, trade, services, and the preservation of the surrounding community's culture. Such conditions indicate that the management of religious tourism must integrate spiritual values, pilgrim service needs, cultural sustainability, and the economic interests of the local community. One region possessing these characteristics is Central Java, which holds various historical Islamic heritage sites and serves as a pilgrimage destination for people from diverse regions. In this context, the Sunan Katong Tomb in Jabal Kaliwungu, Kendal Regency, is one such area that possesses historical and religious value while interacting directly with the social life of the surrounding community. Pilgrimage activities in this area establish the Sunan Katong Tomb not only as a place of worship and reverence for an Islamic propagation figure, but also as a space for services, religious activities, trade, and interaction between pilgrims and the local community. Therefore, the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb area needs to be understood more comprehensively as an integral part of religious tourism destination management that interconnects religious values, the community, and socio-economic activities.

In the context of the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb, there are indications that community involvement is an essential part of the destination's operational activities. However, the level of this participation needs to be distinguished between involvement in operational tasks and engagement in managerial processes. While the community may play a role in cleanliness, security, pilgrim services, religious activities, and economic ventures, they do not necessarily hold an equivalent position in planning, organizing, supervision, and strategic decision-making.

This issue is significant because community-based management is not merely demonstrated by the sheer number of participating residents, but rather by the extent to which the community has a voice in determining the direction of destination development. Consequently, this study does not start from the assumption that the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb has succeeded or failed, but instead seeks to empirically identify how the management system actually operates.

Several previous studies provide an important foundation for understanding these issues. Aziz (2023) research on the Sunan Gunung Jati religious tourism emphasizes the importance of community collaboration in destination management. Darmawan & Putri, (2021) position community-based management as an approach to maintaining the social and spiritual dimensions of destinations. Suprpto & Mulyani (2021) highlight local cultural values as a crucial component of the religious tourism management model. Meanwhile, (Hidayat & Rahman, (2022) place greater emphasis on the aspects of governance and managerial professionalism. (Hasanah & Nugroho, (2022) broaden the perspective by demonstrating the significance of digital promotion in Islamic tourism development. Furthermore, Lestari and Kurniawan (Lestari & Kurniawan, 2024) emphasize the importance of collaborative governance through the engagement of various stakeholders. Research by Nuraeni et al. (Nuraeni et al., 2023) also demonstrates the necessity of stakeholder collaboration in linking religious tourism development with sustainability goals.

In comparison, these studies share similarities in positioning the community and stakeholders as essential elements of destination management. Another commonality is the attention given to sustainability, whether in the form of cultural preservation, enhancement of community economic benefits, institutional strengthening, or service development. However, there are clear differences in focus. Some studies emphasize community participation, while others focus on digital promotion, governance, destination appeal, or facility development. Wibowo et al. (2023), for instance, focus more on destination appeal and management, whereas Yuliani and Rahmadani (2023) examine the relationship among attraction, accessibility, and amenities with tourist satisfaction. These differences in focus demonstrate that destination management can be analyzed from various perspectives, yet not all of them explain the relationship between internal management functions and the characteristics of community-based management in religious tourism.

This synthesis reveals several research gaps. First, while studies on religious tourism have extensively discussed community participation, local culture, governance, promotion, and destination quality, research specifically integrating all these aspects through the Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) framework remains relatively limited. Second, studies on community-based tourism (CBT) in religious tourism tend to emphasize community participation as a general concept, whereas how this participation operates within each management function has not been thoroughly explained. Third, few studies simultaneously examine the relationship among management functions, community involvement, the government's role, religious values, and the need for digital adaptation within a single local religious tourism destination. Fourth, the context of the Sunan Katong Tomb in Kaliwungu, Kendal, has not been extensively studied from this specific perspective. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap through an empirical investigation of the management process at the destination level.

Based on these research gaps, this study views POAC not as a concept separate from CBT, but as a framework to examine how community-based management operates in practice. Planning is used to observe how the direction and programs of destination development are planned; Organizing is utilized to identify the structure, division of tasks, and relationships among actors; Actuating is applied to understand how plans are translated into activities covering services, maintenance, religious events, and community empowerment; whereas Controlling is used to examine the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of management. This framework

enables the study to identify not only the presence of community participation, but also the position of such participation within the overall management process.

Based on these points, this study formulates several primary research questions: (1) how are the functions of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling implemented in the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb religious tourism; (2) what are the roles of the community and the government in destination management; (3) what factors support and hinder the management of this religious tourism; and (4) what strategies can be developed to strengthen a professional, participatory, and sustainable religious tourism management. These formulations are directed toward obtaining an empirical overview of the relationship between the management system and the characteristics of community-based management in religious tourism destinations.

In line with these research questions, this study aims to analyze the implementation of POAC functions in the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb religious tourism, identify the roles of the community and the government, analyze the supporting and inhibiting factors of management, and formulate destination development directions that integrate spiritual, social, cultural, economic, and sustainability interests. A qualitative approach is employed to enable the study to understand the management process from the perspective of the actors directly involved. Data were obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation, ensuring that the analysis is not solely based on the managers' perceptions but also accounts for the empirical conditions of the destination.

The novelty of this study lies in its effort to connect POAC management functions with a community-based religious tourism approach within a single analytical framework in the context of the Sunan Katong Tomb. This study does not merely observe whether the community is involved in management, but analyzes which management functions such involvement occurs in, how the community relates to managers and the government, and how religious values and local culture influence management practices. Furthermore, this study incorporates the issues of digital transformation and sustainability as part of destination development challenges. Through this approach, the study is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of how modern management can be applied without losing the character of community-based management.

This study provides both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the research expands the study of religious tourism management by integrating the concepts of POAC, community-based tourism, destination governance, and sustainable tourism within the context of religious-value-based destinations. Practically, the research findings can serve as an evaluation tool for the managers of the Sunan Katong Tomb to strengthen planning, task distribution, program implementation, and evaluation mechanisms. For local government, the study can provide input in designing more participatory and sustainable religious tourism development policies. For the community, the research can offer a foundation to strengthen their position as both active participants and beneficiaries of destination development. Consequently, the development of the Sunan Katong Tomb is directed not merely at increasing visitor numbers, but at building a religious tourism governance system capable of preserving spiritual and cultural values while delivering socio-economic benefits to the local community.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) management functions in the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb religious tourism. A case study approach was selected because the research aims not only to describe general management conditions but also to thoroughly understand a phenomenon within its real-life context, including management processes, actor interactions, decision-making patterns, and factors influencing destination management. A case study enables the researcher to obtain a contextual

and comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon bounded within a specific system (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The selection of a qualitative case study design, rather than a mere descriptive qualitative study, is based on the research focus directed toward a specific phenomenon within a particular context, namely the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb religious tourism. A qualitative approach is utilized to understand the experiences, perspectives, actions, and meanings constructed by the actors, whereas a case study is employed to bound and analyze the phenomenon as a singular case. Consequently, the orientation of this research is to thoroughly understand the implementation process of POAC functions within the social, institutional, religious, and cultural contexts surrounding the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb (Yin, 2018).

In this study, the Sunan Katong Tomb is positioned as a bounded case. The boundaries of the case are determined based on geographical, activity, actor, and temporal aspects. Geographically, the research is limited to the religious tourism area of the Sunan Katong Tomb located in Kutoharjo Village, Kaliwungu Subdistrict, Kendal Regency, Central Java. Substantively, the case examined is the religious tourism management system operating within that area. This boundary is important to distinguish case study research from qualitative research that has a broader scope of phenomena and is not necessarily tied to a single specific case system. (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The scope of the case includes activities related to area management planning, the division of tasks and responsibilities, the delivery of services to pilgrims, activity supervision, facility maintenance, religious activities associated with pilgrimage visits, as well as community and government involvement in destination management. Community economic activities, such as trade and services directly related to the presence of pilgrims, are positioned as part of the case context due to their linkage to the continuity of religious tourism. Conversely, community social and economic activities that have no direct connection to the management or activities of religious tourism fall outside the boundaries of the research.

This research was conducted at the Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism Area, located in Jabal, Kaliwungu Subdistrict, Kendal Regency, Central Java Province. The Sunan Katong Tomb is a site possessing historical, religious, and cultural value associated with the expansion of Islamic da'wah in the Kendal region Fitriyana (2022). The tomb complex functions not only as a pilgrimage site but also as an evolving religious tourism destination that integrates religious activities, historical preservation, and the community's economic pursuits. The management of the area involves tomb caretakers, religious figures, the local community, business actors, and the local government through an approach that continues to emphasize community participation and the value of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*). The selection of this research location is based on the potential of the Sunan Katong Tomb as a community-based religious tourism destination alongside various management challenges, such as human resources, administration, supporting facilities, and digital promotion. Consequently, this location is highly relevant for examining the application of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) management functions in religious tourism management.

The research was conducted over a four-month period, from February to May 2026. The research stages included preparation and instrument formulation, preliminary observation, primary data collection, in-depth interviews, documentation, data analysis, triangulation, and verification of research findings. Throughout the research period, the researcher conducted eight field visits at various times. These field visits were carried out in stages to gain an understanding of religious tourism management conditions across different situations and to allow the researcher to cross-verify the information obtained during the research process.

Informan penelitian dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling, yaitu pemilihan informan berdasarkan pertimbangan bahwa individu tersebut memiliki pengalaman, pengetahuan, dan keterlibatan langsung dengan fenomena yang diteliti (Patton, 2015). Teknik

ini digunakan karena penelitian kualitatif tidak berorientasi pada representasi statistik, melainkan pada pemilihan sumber informasi yang mampu memberikan data secara mendalam dan relevan terhadap pertanyaan penelitian.

This research involved six key informants: the Head of the Sunan Katong Tomb Management, the Tomb Caretaker (*Juru Kunci*), a Religious Figure, a Community Leader, a Representative of the Village Government, and a local merchant who has long operated within the religious tourism area. These six informants were selected because they represent diverse perspectives within the religious tourism management ecosystem. The head of management provides information regarding operational and institutional aspects; the caretaker offers perspectives on religious activities and traditions; religious and community figures provide insights into the social and cultural dimensions; the village government representative contributes perspectives on policy and governmental support; and the merchant illustrates community involvement and economic activities surrounding the area.

The selection of informants was based on several criteria: (1) direct involvement in the management or activities of religious tourism; (2) understanding of the history and development of the Sunan Katong Tomb; (3) relevant experience regarding activities within the area; and (4) willingness to provide information voluntarily. The diversity of the informants' positions enables the researcher to cross-examine perspectives concerning the implementation of POAC functions, the roles of the community and the government, and the supporting and inhibiting factors of religious tourism management.

The number of informants was not predetermined solely by a fixed count from the outset, but rather through the principles of informational adequacy and data saturation. The data collection process was conducted in stages by evaluating interview outcomes after each data gathering session. Informant recruitment ceased when additional interviews no longer yielded new substantive categories or relevant information concerning the research focus. Saturation was determined based on the emergence of repetitive information patterns regarding planning, organizing, actuating, controlling, actor involvement, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors of religious tourism management. In qualitative research, data adequacy is determined not merely by the number of informants, but by the depth of information and the capability of the data to explain the phenomenon under investigation (Guest et al., 2020; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Data collection was conducted using three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, moderate participant observation, and documentation. These three techniques were used interchangeably to complement one another in obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the studied case. Combining multiple data collection techniques allows the researcher to cross-check information from various sources and reduce reliance on a single data type (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using an interview guide developed based on the research focus. This technique provides a consistent framework of questions while allowing the researcher to explore the informants' experiences and views in greater depth (Patton, 2015). Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted after initial observations, enabling the researcher to develop questions based on field context. With the informants' consent, interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed to support the data analysis process.

Interview questions were directed at the implementation of the four POAC management functions. The Planning aspect was used to explore the planning process and program establishment, Organizing was used to understand the structure and division of tasks, Actuating was used to analyze the execution of activities and services provided to pilgrims, while Controlling was used to identify mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and improvement. Additionally, the interviews were also aimed at exploring the role of the community and government, as well as the factors influencing the management of religious tourism.

In addition to interviews, the researcher conducted moderate participant observation across eight field visits. The researcher was directly present at the research site without participating in the management decision-making process. Observations focused on the physical condition of the area, supporting facilities, pilgrim service activities, interactions between managers and the community, surrounding economic activities, religious events, and management practices relevant to POAC functions. Observations were carried out at different times to obtain a more complete picture of field activities and management dynamics (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The documentation technique was used to reinforce the data obtained from interviews and observations. The analyzed documents included manager profiles, institutional information, activity archives, religious event documentation, site photographs, visitor count data if available, and government policy documents related to tourism site management. Document analysis was conducted as a supporting and comparative source to ensure that the gathered information did not rely solely on informants' explanations (Yin, 2018).

Data analysis was carried out continuously from the onset of data collection. The analysis was guided by the interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2014). Interview data were first transcribed, then read iteratively to grasp the overall context prior to coding.

During the coding phase, the researcher identified themes, categories, and patterns emerging from the field data. This process allowed the researcher to organize complex data into more systematic analytical categories (Saldaña, 2021). The emerging themes were then analyzed thematically to identify relationships between categories, similarities and differences in informants' perspectives, and management patterns developing in the studied case (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

The Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) framework served as the primary analytical framework to understand management implementation in the religious tourism management of the Sunan Katong Tomb. However, the analysis was not applied rigidly by forcing all data into these four categories. The data were first read openly and coded based on empirical findings, then linked to the POAC framework where relevant to management functions. This strategy allowed the theoretical framework to serve as an analytical guide without ignoring new themes emerging from the field data (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Terry & Rue, 2019).

Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from the management head, custodian (*juru kunci*), religious leaders, community figures, village government officials, and local vendors. Comparing these various perspectives was carried out to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the religious tourism management phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing interview results, observations, and documentation. Information obtained from interviews was not directly accepted as the sole basis of interpretation, but was cross-checked against empirical conditions observed in the field and available documents. Furthermore, time triangulation was implemented through data collection and verification at different points in time throughout the research process. The use of these multiple forms of triangulation helps enhance the credibility and consistency of the research findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of qualitative research. Prior to the interviews, each informant was provided with an explanation regarding the purpose, procedures, benefits, and intended use of the research data. Informants were given the freedom to participate voluntarily, decline to answer specific questions, or terminate their involvement at any point. Informed consent was obtained from all informants before the interviews were conducted.

Informant identities were anonymized in the presentation of research results whenever the provided information had the potential to disclose personal identities or cause specific consequences for the informants. Research data were used exclusively for academic purposes and kept strictly confidential. Throughout the research process, the researcher also respected religious norms, local cultural values, and the customary etiquette observed in the Sunan Katong Tomb area. Principles of respect for participants, privacy protection, data confidentiality, and scientific integrity remained vital components across the entire research process (Israel & Hay, 2006).

Thus, the entire research process was structured as an interconnected methodological series. The selection of a qualitative case study as the research design served as the foundation for defining the case boundaries, selecting the location, and identifying relevant actors. These case boundaries then determined the strategy for selecting informants and collecting data. The data gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed thematically using the POAC framework as an analytical tool. Furthermore, the research findings were verified through triangulation and executed while adhering to research ethics principles. This comprehensive series is expected to yield a deep, contextual, and accountable understanding of management implementation in the religious tourism management of the Sunan Katong Tomb.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Management System and Governance Structure of Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism

The research findings show that the management of Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism is carried out by the Tomb Management Board (TMB) in collaboration with custodians (*juru kunci*), religious leaders, village government, and the local community. An organizational structure has been formed; however, the division of tasks is still based on mutual agreement and is not entirely documented in Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Site management places greater emphasis on mutual assistance (*gotong royong*) and community participation rather than a formal bureaucratic system.

The Chairman of the Tomb Management Board (Informant I-01) explained that:
"We do not yet have a strictly standardized organizational structure, but everyone already knows their respective duties. When there are major events like Syawalan or Maulid Nabi, the community immediately comes together in mutual assistance without needing to be commanded." (I-01)

This statement was reinforced by a community leader (Informant I-02), who stated:
"The management of the tomb is carried out collectively. The government provides assistance when there are specific programs, but daily activities are mostly run by the community and the tomb managers." (I-02)

Field observations show that the community actively maintains the cleanliness of the tomb area, directs visitor flow, manages parking areas, and assists in conducting religious events. The researcher also found a simple organizational chart displayed in the management secretariat, although it lacks written job descriptions for each board member.

In addition to field observations, organizational documents in the form of the Decree of the Tomb Management Board show that the board was formed through community consensus (*musyawarah*) involving village government officials and religious leaders. However, these documents do not yet contain performance evaluation mechanisms or detailed job descriptions.

No.	Governance Element	Role
1	Tomb Management Board	Conducting coordination and activity management across the tomb area.
2	Custodian	Providing services and guidance to pilgrims.
3	Religious Leaders	Carrying out guidance and strengthening of religious activities.
4	Village Government	Providing facilitation and support for site development programs.
5	Local Community	Participating in maintaining cleanliness and providing services within the religious tourism site.

Table 1. Governance Structure of Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism

These findings demonstrate that the management system prioritizes a community-based management approach, relying heavily on the active participation of the local community. From a management theory perspective, this condition indicates that organizational success is determined not only by formal structures, but also by social capital—specifically trust, mutual assistance (*gotong royong*), and a sense of ownership toward the tourism destination.

These findings align with research by Darmawan & Putri (2021) which asserts that the success of community-based religious tourism is strongly influenced by high levels of public participation in the management process. Similarly, results from a study by Azis (2023) demonstrate that the management of the Sunan Gunung Jati Religious Tourism site has flourished due to effective collaboration between the local community and site administrators.

However, this study identifies a key distinction compared to prior research. While the division of organizational responsibilities at the Sunan Gunung Jati Tomb is more systematically structured, task allocation at the Sunan Katong Tomb remains largely informal, operating primarily through community consensus (*musyawarah*).

Thus, the novel contribution of this study demonstrates that the success of religious tourism management is driven not only by formal organizational structures, but also by the strength of community social capital, which sustains the destination despite its rudimentary institutional framework.

Implementasi POAC dalam Pengelolaan Wisata Religi Makam Sunan Katong.

a. *Planning*

Based on interviews, field observations, and documentation, the planning function in the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism Area is executed through a process of consensus (*musyawarah*) and coordination. This involves various key stakeholders, including the Tomb Management Board, custodians (*juru kunci*), religious leaders, the village government, and the surrounding community. Planning is typically conducted through routine meetings or deliberative assemblies convened prior to major religious events, anticipated surges in pilgrim arrivals, and the implementation of facility improvement programs. The active involvement of these diverse actors indicates that the planning process extends beyond mere administrative task execution by site managers, actively incorporating community needs and responding to real-time conditions within the religious tourism area.

The Chairman of the Management Board (I-01) explained:

"We usually hold a consensus assembly (musyawarah) prior to major events. All community proposals are discussed collectively to ensure the execution runs smoothly."

This statement highlights that community consensus (*musyawarah*) serves as a core mechanism within the planning process. Through this deliberative forum, the management board identifies high-priority needs, addresses emerging issues across the tomb site, and

determines actionable steps prior to executing events. Community input forms an essential part of the planning considerations, particularly regarding pilgrim services, site cleanliness, security, and the condition of supporting facilities.

Observational data reveals that the planning agenda encompasses several key operational domains across the site. First, sanitation planning is conducted to maintain environmental cleanliness throughout the tomb area, particularly during peak visitor periods. Second, parking management is strategized to mitigate vehicular congestion and preserve clear access routes leading to the site. Third, management organizes designated vendor areas to ensure local economic activities can proceed without compromising pilgrim comfort or mobility. Additionally, security protocols are established through strategic staff placement and coordination with relevant local authorities during major religious events or high-density visitation periods.

Planning also encompasses the organization of religious activities, which constitute a vital dimension of the character of the Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism Area. Preparation for these activities takes into account schedules, spatial requirements, facility readiness, pilgrim flow management, and task allocation among participating stakeholders. Consequently, the planning function is directed not only toward the physical management of the area, but also toward overseeing religious activities and pilgrim services as core functions of the religious tourism destination.

Documentation in the form of meeting minutes retrieved by the researcher further indicates discussions regarding the development of sanitation facilities and road access improvements. These two aspects receive particular attention as they directly impact pilgrim comfort and accessibility. Discussions on sanitation facilities reflect responsiveness to basic visitor needs, while road access improvements aim to enhance mobility to and around the religious tourism area. However, findings reveal that the execution of these plans is carried out in phases, constrained by available operational capabilities and resources.

Overall, the planning process in the Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism Area demonstrates the execution of the planning function through needs identification, consensus building (*musyawarah*), priority setting, and cross-stakeholder coordination. Although this process operates in a highly participatory manner, planning mechanisms still require strengthening through more targeted and sustainable program development. Establishing clear priorities, execution timelines, designated accountability, and systematic evaluations of program implementation will serve as crucial elements to enhance planning effectiveness. Consequently, a robust planning function can lay a strong foundation for executing subsequent managerial functions—namely organizing, leading, and controlling—thereby supporting a more directed and sustainable management model for the Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism Area.

No.	Program	Execution Status
1	Cleanliness	Routine
2	Security	Routine
3	Road repairs	Phased
4	Digital promotion	Not yet optimal

Table 2. Planning Results for Site Management

In accordance with the POAC framework outlined by Handoko (2018), planning serves as a foundational management function that defines organizational objectives and determines the actionable steps required to achieve them. The findings of this study

demonstrate that while the planning function is actively operationalized through consensus-building (*musyawarah*) mechanisms, it has not yet been supported by structured strategic planning documentation.

This finding aligns with Hidayat & Rahman (2022) who observed that religious tourism management predominantly relies on simplified planning frameworks. In contrast, however, the present study demonstrates that community consensus (*musyawarah*) acts as a primary institutional strength in driving the planning process. The contribution of this research illustrates that local deliberative values can serve as an integral component of a community-based religious tourism planning model.

b. *Organizing*

The study results indicate that the organizing function in the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism Area is operationalized through the distribution of tasks and responsibilities based on mutual agreement among involved actors. Role allocation encompasses the tomb management board, custodians (*juru kunci*), religious leaders, and local community members supporting pilgrim services. Informant I-02 explained, "Everyone already knows their duty. Some manage parking, some clean the tomb, and others receive visitors." This statement demonstrates that the division of labor has evolved through daily management practices tailored to specific needs and roles. Through this division of tasks, pilgrim services, environmental cleanliness, parking control, and other operational activities remain coordinated.

Observational findings reveal that cross-stakeholder coordination functions effectively through direct communication and informal collaboration. During major religious events or periods of elevated pilgrim traffic, task allocation dynamically adapts to field conditions and operational demands. However, documentation indicates that despite the presence of a formal organizational structure, specific duties and responsibilities are not comprehensively detailed in written form. Furthermore, several operational activities lack standardized operating procedures (SOPs). This condition demonstrates that organizational execution continues to rely heavily on mutual agreement, experiential knowledge, informal communication, and established social bonds between site management and the local community.

From the perspective of the organizing function, this pattern demonstrates that the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism Area derives its primary strength from community involvement and the culture of mutual assistance (*gotong royong*). The prevailing informal coordination facilitates flexible and responsive operational execution tailored to real-time local needs. However, to foster long-term management sustainability, this collaborative framework must be reinforced with clearer task delegation, defined lines of authority, and explicit SOPs. In doing so, the core strengths of community participation and *gotong royong* values can be preserved while being balanced by a more structured and professional organizational system.

c. *Actuating*

The research findings indicate that the actuating function (*actuating*) in managing the Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism Area is operationalized through various operational activities, such as pilgrim services, religious events, environmental sanitation maintenance, site security, and community engagement in economic activities. These activities proceed on an ongoing basis, involving the management board, community leaders, and local residents according to site requirements. Informant I-03 explained, "We serve pilgrims every day. When there is a major event, all residents help out." This statement illustrates that management relies not solely on formal administrators, but is

significantly supported by community participation. During periods of heightened visitation, particularly during the months of Ramadan and Syawalan, community involvement becomes increasingly critical to maintaining smooth service delivery and operational flow across the religious tourism area.

Observational evidence indicates that local community members participate directly in maintaining sanitation, supporting security, directing parking, offering visitor information, and conducting commercial activities around the tomb site. The execution of these operational tasks reveals that the actuating function extends beyond carrying out pre-planned programs; it represents a dynamic process of mobilizing human resources to collaborate toward shared management goals. Within the POAC framework, actuating serves to translate planning and task allocation into tangible action through direction, coordination, communication, and active stakeholder participation. Furthermore, findings indicate that seasonal surges in pilgrim numbers prompt both management and community members to heighten operational readiness across visitor services, environmental cleanliness, site security, and local economic regulation.

Visitation Period	Number of Visitors
Weekdays	±200–300 pilgrims/day
Weekends	±600–800 pilgrims/day
Syawalan	>3,000 pilgrims/day

Table 3. Pilgrim Visitation Trends (Site Management Data)

- d. Overall, these findings demonstrate that the execution of site management in the Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism Area is characterized not merely by economic orientation, but is profoundly shaped by the spiritual, social, and cultural values of the local community. Religious motivation serves as a key driving factor encouraging residents to participate in service delivery and site operations, particularly during major religious events or high-density visitation periods. While tourism activities provide opportunities for local trade and micro-enterprises to thrive, empirical findings indicate that community involvement is equally driven by a commitment to preserving religious values and maintaining reverence for the sacred tomb area. Consequently, the actuating function in managing the Sunan Katong Tomb religious tourism site can be understood as a resource-mobilization process that integrates service delivery needs, social participation, religious devotion, and local economic activities into a unified site management system.
- e. *Controlling*

The research findings demonstrate that the controlling function (*controlling*) in the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb Religious Tourism Area is primarily executed through post-event evaluations following major religious functions or specific site activities. Evaluations are conducted collaboratively by the management board and involved stakeholders to identify operational constraints and deficiencies encountered during execution. Informant I-01 stated, "Once an event concludes, we usually hold a joint evaluation immediately to examine our shortcomings." This statement illustrates that the controlling process is actively applied as a mechanism to assess operational success and determine necessary corrective measures. In practice, these evaluation sessions serve as a medium for administrators to review visitor service delivery,

environmental sanitation, site security, traffic and parking management, and religious event execution to ensure improved performance in subsequent cycles.

Observational findings reveal that the evaluation process continues to be conducted verbally through *musyawarah* and direct cross-stakeholder communication. Documentation further indicates that management lacks measurable evaluation metrics as well as written standardized operating procedures (SOPs) for oversight. Within the POAC framework, controlling represents a systematic process of monitoring and evaluating operational performance by measuring achieved outcomes against predetermined plans or baseline objectives. Consequently, while the oversight process at the Sunan Katong Tomb operates through joint evaluations, the existing mechanism exhibits inherent limitations due to the absence of standardized assessment criteria and systematic documentation. This structural constraint impairs management's ability to measure service improvements consistently or conduct comparative performance analyses across successive operational cycles.

The research findings indicate that deliberative evaluation patterns based on *musyawarah* retain a crucial role in maintaining management quality, as they offer an open forum for community members and administrators to provide direct feedback and share operational experiences. The intrinsic strength of this approach lies in cross-stakeholder communication, shared engagement, and consensus-building values deeply embedded within the community's social fabric. However, to enhance oversight effectiveness, this deliberative evaluation system requires structural reinforcement through standardized service indicators, formal evaluation records, and explicit controlling SOPs. Accordingly, this study highlights the necessity of integrating modern, measurable oversight mechanisms with *musyawarah* principles and community participation. Such an integration ensures that the controlling function preserves the localized character of religious tourism management while simultaneously driving systematic service quality enhancements and long-term site sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that the management of the Sunan Katong Tomb religious tourism site in Jabal Kaliwungu, Kendal Regency, remains predominantly governed by a community-based management (CBM) approach grounded in mutual assistance (*gotong royong*), social participation, and local wisdom. Based on an analysis applying the Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) framework, the findings reveal that planning and operational execution are effectively carried out through coordination among the Tomb Management Board, religious leaders, local community members, and the regional government. However, the organizing and controlling functions have not yet been fully optimized, as they lack well-documented organizational structures, clearly defined task allocations, measurable evaluation metrics, and a professional administrative system.

This research further reveals that the management success of the Sunan Katong Tomb religious tourism site is not solely determined by the application of standard managerial functions, but is significantly driven by high community participation, strong religious values, and a culture of mutual assistance (*gotong royong*), which collectively serve as the primary social capital sustaining the destination. Conversely, site management continues to face several constraints, including a shortage of human resources trained in tourism management, inadequate supporting infrastructure, sub-optimal digital promotion, and institutional coordination that requires further strengthening. Nevertheless, the rich historical, spiritual, and cultural heritage of the Sunan Katong Tomb presents substantial potential for development into a sustainable religious tourism destination through strategic synergy among the local community, government, academia, and the private sector.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the literature on religious tourism management by demonstrating that the implementation of the POAC framework in community-based destinations must be understood not merely as a set of administrative procedures, but as a dynamic social process shaped by religious values, local culture, and civic participation. Furthermore, this research enriches scholarly discourse on community-based religious tourism by illustrating how modern management principles can be integrated with local wisdom within the operational context of sacred heritage sites.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study offer valuable considerations for local governments, site administrators, and the local community in formulating strategies for more professional and sustainable religious tourism development. These efforts can be achieved through strengthening managerial institutions, building human resource capacity, providing adequate infrastructure, establishing performance indicator-based evaluation systems, and optimizing digital promotion—all while safeguarding the fundamental religious and cultural values that define the core identity of the Sunan Katong Tomb.

This study has limitations, as it was conducted at a single religious tourism site—the Sunan Katong Tomb in Kendal Regency—and its findings cannot be generalized across all religious tourism destinations in Indonesia. Additionally, because this research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, the findings emphasize an in-depth understanding of social phenomena rather than a quantitative assessment of management effectiveness.

Consequently, future research is advised to undertake comparative studies across multiple religious tourism destinations in various regions using a mixed-methods approach or a multi-case study design. Such approaches would yield a more comprehensive understanding of POAC management functions, the operational efficacy of community-based governance models, and the impact of digitalization on sustainable religious tourism development. Subsequent studies could also construct a collaborative governance framework involving local government, community members, commercial enterprises, and religious institutions to enhance the competitive advantage of religious tourism destinations in Indonesia.

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Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare that there are no financial, professional, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest related to this research. The study was conducted independently without any influence from sponsors, organizations, or other parties that could affect the research process or interpretation of the findings. The authors affirm that all conclusions presented in this manuscript are based solely on the research evidence obtained during the study.

Declaration of Generative AI Use

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used solely to assist with language editing, grammar improvement, formatting, and manuscript organization during the preparation of this article. AI technologies were not used to generate research data, conduct data analysis, interpret research findings, or formulate the scientific conclusions presented in this manuscript. All analyses, interpretations, arguments, and final decisions remain entirely the responsibility of the authors, who carefully reviewed and verified all AI-assisted outputs prior to submission.

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