

HEALTHCARE MOSQUE-BASED INFORMATION SYSTEM: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the importance attached to healthcare Service provision has had many organizations utilize collaborative information systems to share health related information. It is a common trend to find information systems which store and share health related information of patients, their diagnosis and general other health information.

In this paper we propose a framework for the implementation of a mosque-based healthcare Information System which attempts to enhance the function of a mosque beyond the religious border. Our aim is to develop this web-based collaborative system so as to integrate the traditional function of a mosque with professional involvement in an issue that is utmost important to any community, healthcare. Basing on the mosque's rich functions, this study intends to strengthen the collaboration between mosques and different health organizations in order to deliver indelible community healthcare services in Malaysia.

Keywords: *Collaboration, Mosque*

1. INTRODUCTION

The mosque has always been referred to as a uniting factor and is of great importance to Muslims and their environments. In many parts of the world, the mosque plays an informal role in economical, political, social, cultural and religious development, but mostly, dwells in religious issues. The restriction of the mosque to mostly religious affairs has segregated and distanced it from other community services which are also very paramount, like health. In Muslim majority countries like Malaysia, many mosques do exist but their roles are no longer so influential to the communities anymore. In the past, mosques played a nucleus role for all community activities.

In view of the above, mosques can contribute to healthcare in numerous ways so as to benefit the Nation. The contribution will be in form of providing services to the community and health care organizations as it is the quality of Muslims to assist others in times of need. Therefore this study proposes a framework for the implementation of a mosque-based healthcare Information System which attempts to enhance the function of a mosque beyond the religious border. In communities where the mosque is a convention for majority people, especially during congregational prayers, it is necessary it is utilized fully. Thus this utilization is in form of collaboration with health organizations in order to provide remedial health services to the community. This collaboration will enhance the functions of a mosque

beyond the religious border by contributing to an issue that is utmost important to any community, healthcare.

Role of Mosque

Since the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the mosque has been the pinnacle of different activities in society. According to Kuban (1974), Almansouri (1991) and Baer (1989), the mosque is viewed as the largest house of imam which is also used for social functions like performing marriages, judicial functions like settling disputes, education functions where people memorize the Qoran and learn other Islamic sciences, economic function for zakat payment and disbursement, political functions such as ombudsman and is used as lodges for strangers especially travelers. These functions are further emphasized by the Prophet's Mosque which acted as a place for religious activities, learning activities, charitable activities, detention and rehabilitation center, for medical treatment and nursing, for leisure activities and as a center of the Prophet's government. (Omar, 2005) the importance of the mosque is further emphasized as the first house (Masjid Al-Quba) ever built by Muhammad (SAW) when he entered Medina (Athar, 2008). According to Fatena (2010), a mosque is a place for Jama'ah prayer, for Islamic teaching purposes and for worshipping Allah. Indeed, it is an inspiration and guidance in all development building and planning where, the mosque is a focal point in the life of the Muslims. Thus, the mosque carries a great social and spiritual role in the community.

Although mosques were initially meant for religious purposes, their functions have evolved over time. For example, after Prophet Muhammad SAW established the Islamic state in Madinah, mosques role expanded to encompass other functions. Although they no longer function in such a capacity, Sulaiman, Siraj & Ibrahim (2006) are of the view that a mosque serves as a vehicle for transforming governmental policies within the society. In Malaysia for example, programs and activities with an Islamic input are carried out in mosques to instill and strengthen Islamic values among community members. Additionally, Khako (2008) emphasized that the role of the mosque is three-folds. The first and primary one relates to worship, secondly a social activity and thirdly a political role.

According to Othman and Hamdani (2010) mosques in Muslim majority countries are under utilized whereas in some Muslim minority countries like United States and China for example, the role of the mosque involves social activities which benefit the society. This is thus an opportunity for us take a lesson from the roles being played by these mosques.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a process of two or more people or organization to work together to achieve a common goal. Roschelle and Teasley (1995) stated that collaboration is the mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve the problem together. They further added that collaboration involves a coordinated, synchronous activity that results from a continued attempt to construct and maintain a shared conception of a problem.

According to Kagimu (1998), collaboration between organizations and religious leaders can be achieved and can contribute to the success of their communities through various activities such as home visits and religious gatherings. He also emphasized that the role of the imam

(mosque leader) is to serve as a teacher inculcating behaviour and ethical values as well as disseminating knowledge about good family upbringing.

The areas of collaboration among others include community service, education, health issues and welfare. Collaborative efforts in these areas could provide a valuable platform for the Muslim community to discuss healthcare issues, explore ideas as to how the socio-economic well being of the community could be enhanced.

2. MODEL PROPOSED

The role of the Information System in this kind of service is to promote the mosque as a center of excellence in the Muslim community so as to offer remedial health services to the community. The information System would specifically disseminate information required by the community regarding healthcare issues such as doctors' opinions, useful health updates and advice, first-aid methods, or information on minor sicknesses and cleanliness. It will especially be utilized during uncertainty such as any disaster, disease outbreak and others.

In a nutshell, the healthcare mosque based information system intends to build a data bank for Islamic and healthcare knowledge which will act as platform for collaboration between the mosque and healthcare organizations.

Four main entities will contribute to the nuclei of the information system

- 1- Ministry of Health
- 2- Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM)
- 3- The non-Government Organizations such as Darul Shifa
- 4- The Mosque
- 5- The Community or people

The collaborative role of the different entities is depicted in figure 1.

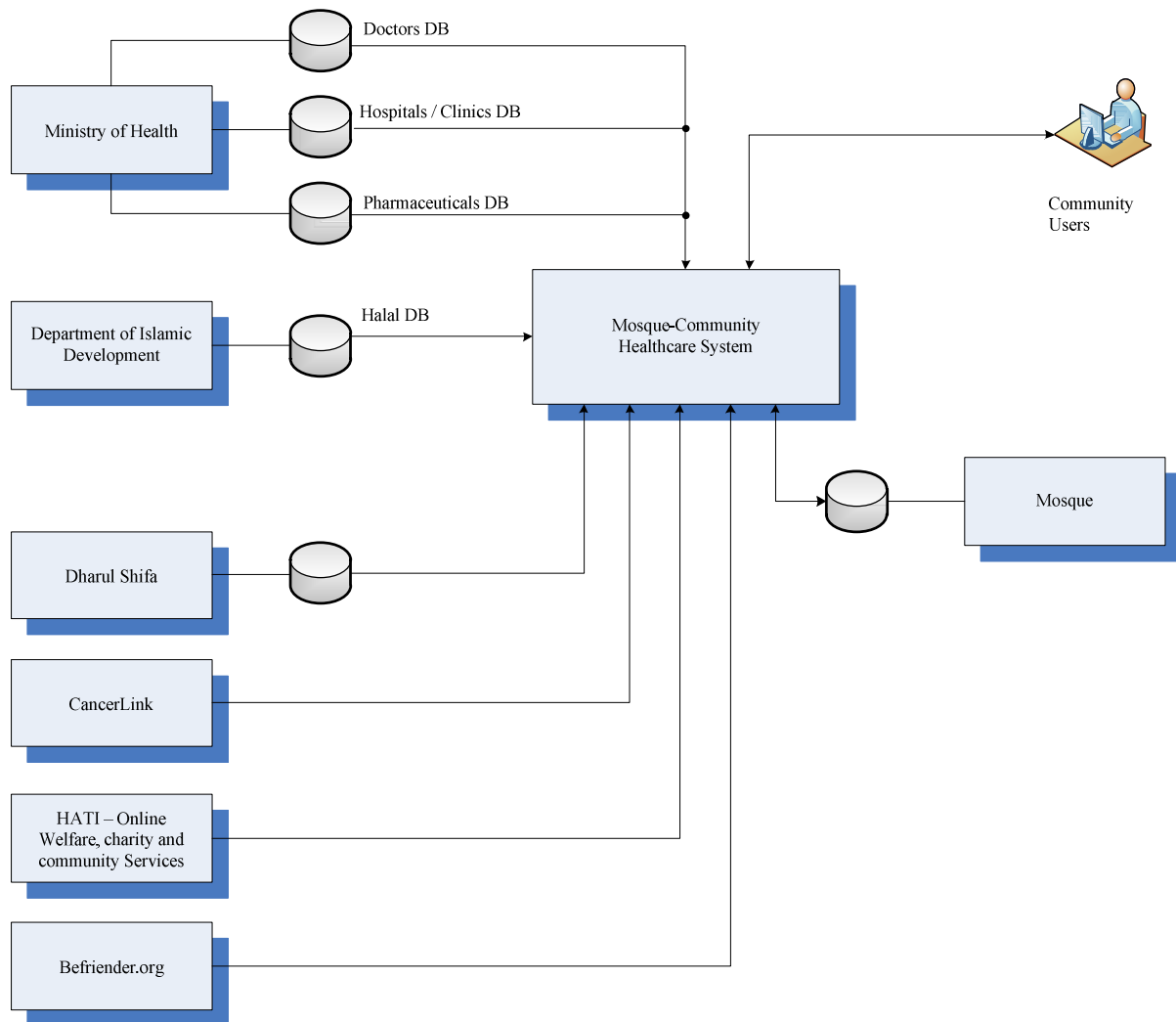


Figure 2: Collaborative representation of the Information System

Roles of Collaborators

Ministry of Health - There will be three major components shared by the Ministry of Health for this system. That is the selected data from the registered doctors or medical professionals' database, selected data from registered clinics or hospitals Database and selected data from registered or prescribed medicines database.

Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) will be sharing the Halal databases for the purpose of allowing users to know which medicines or prescriptions are Halal.

Dharul Shifa will be providing the permissible spiritual treatments such as halal incantations and supplications.

The Mosque is the pivot by which other collaborators in the Information system revolve around.

Community is the beneficiary of the Information System.

3. CONCLUSION

It is hoped that if this proposed Healthcare Mosque based Information System is fully put into practice, it will go a long way in disseminating remedial healthcare services to the community through the use of the mosque as a facilitating center. The proposed system is currently designed for a single mosque with hope that if fully developed within the context of time and space, it will gradually spread to other mosques and other collaborative interested organizations not mentioned in this proposal.

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