

DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION MODEL IN HAJJ AND UMRAH TRAVEL USING QUALITATIVE METHODS

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Abstract: Digital transformation involves reshaping business operations through digital technologies, fostering flexibility and responsiveness to market demands. For Hajj and Umrah travel companies, adopting digital transformation can drive productivity, innovate value creation, and improve customer interactions. However, challenges arise due to limited consideration of leadership and consumer preferences, which are critical in directing and tailoring digital initiatives. Previous studies have focused predominantly on technological factors, often neglecting these human-centered elements crucial for competitiveness. This paper addresses this gap by developing a digital transformation model that emphasizes the roles of leadership and consumer preferences. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis with key stakeholders and customers in selected Hajj and Umrah travel companies. By using a qualitative case study approach, the research explores how leadership and consumer insights shape digital strategies and business processes, ultimately enhancing competitiveness. The findings highlight the significant impact of leadership and consumer preferences on competitive advantage and introduce new indicators for implementing digital strategies effectively. This paper contributes to digital transformation theory by integrating leadership and consumer preference factors, offering Hajj and Umrah companies practical guidance for designing impactful digital strategies and fostering customer engagement.

Keywords: *Digital Transformation, Leadership, Consumer Preference, Hajj and Umrah Travel*

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1. Introduction

Digital transformation is increasingly critical for organizations, enhancing adaptability, productivity, and customer engagement. Companies, particularly in service industries like Hajj and Umrah travel, face complex challenges, including evolving customer demands, operational efficiency, and global competition. Effective digital integration provides a competitive advantage by streamlining operations, offering personalized services, and adapting swiftly to market changes (Shirish, 2023). Within the Hajj and Umrah sector, digital transformation has the potential to improve management efficiency and deliver more responsive services to pilgrims' needs. Recent studies highlight the importance of digital transformation in boosting competitiveness. Haziq (2024) demonstrates that it fosters business innovation through

technological integration in operations and customer interactions. Visionary leadership, as emphasized by Porfírio (2021), plays a vital role in guiding successful digital transformation, especially in addressing cultural challenges. Similarly, Oktavenus (2019) stresses that understanding consumer preferences enhances digital transformation outcomes, fostering customer loyalty and technology adoption. Despite these insights, existing studies often overlook niche service contexts, like Hajj and Umrah travel, which face unique challenges. Additionally, most consumer preference studies do not account for the rapid evolution of preferences influenced by technological advancements. This paper aims to fill these gaps by exploring how Hajj and Umrah travel companies can integrate digital technologies to address these unique challenges, with a focus on the roles of leadership and consumer preference in shaping competitive strategies.

The digital transformation process in Hajj and Umrah travel companies often encounters obstacles, particularly regarding insufficient understanding of the roles of leadership and consumer preference. While previous research has largely focused on technology, there has been limited attention to the role of leadership in steering strategic change and consumer preferences that shape market needs. These challenges hinder the effectiveness of digital transformation, making it difficult for companies to enhance competitiveness in an increasingly competitive industry. Therefore, This paper aims to identify and thoroughly understand how leadership and consumer preference factors can be integrated into digital transformation strategies to achieve greater success in boosting the competitiveness of Hajj and Umrah travel companies.

This paper focuses on the implementation of digital transformation in two Hajj and Umrah travel companies, Amina tour and mina travel, both facing challenges in adapting to digital changes, particularly in efficiently managing operations and meeting increasingly dynamic customer preferences.

Amina tour has begun adopting some digital technologies, such as an online booking management system and social media for marketing. However, this implementation is not yet fully integrated with all existing business processes. A primary obstacle is the limited understanding of how leadership at the management level can effectively guide the digital transformation process, as well as how to accommodate rapidly evolving consumer preferences.

On the other hand, mina travel still relies on a conventional booking system, where customers must visit the office in person or contact via phone to book Hajj and Umrah packages. Administrative processes, such as form completion, payment, and departure confirmation, are conducted manually without the support of digital platforms. This approach makes booking services slower and less flexible, as customers cannot access or manage their travel information in real-time through digital devices. In an increasingly digital world, this conventional approach is starting to cause inconvenience for consumers who seek easy access and efficiency in the booking process. mina travel's delay in adopting a digital booking system has resulted in missed opportunities to provide a faster, more efficient customer experience that aligns with the preferences of modern consumers, who increasingly rely on technology.

Thus, this case study not only observes the application of technology but also explores non-technical factors, such as leadership style and consumer preferences, in the success of digital transformation at Amina tour and mina travel.

Previous research by Fischera (2020) suggests that digital transformation in the service sector is often hindered by a lack of integration between technology and strategic leadership. Furthermore, evolving consumer preferences require companies to be more flexible in offering

personalized and innovative services. This paper, focusing on Amina tour and mina travel as case studies, aims to identify the key factors that determine the success of digital transformation in the Hajj and Umrah travel sector and to provide practical insights that may help similar companies enhance their competitiveness in the digital era. A qualitative method was chosen as it is well-suited for an in-depth exploration of the processes, behaviors, and subjective understandings involving human factors within the Hajj and Umrah travel sector. This approach enables the researcher to understand how company leaders and consumers perceive and respond to technological changes.

In This paper, informants were selected based on their strategic roles in the digital transformation process. For instance, company leaders involved in decision-making related to digital technology, operational managers, and IT staff responsible for system implementation were chosen. These informants have direct experience with using or implementing digital technology in Hajj and Umrah travel, ensuring that they have relevant insights into the challenges and benefits of technology adoption. The interviews also involved consumers, selected based on their active use of the company's digital platforms, allowing the researcher to capture changes in customer preferences and expectations regarding tech-based services in Hajj and Umrah travel.

Observations were also conducted to directly observe the dynamics and daily practices within the organization, providing context to real-world behavior. Observation allows for monitoring how digital technology is used in daily operations, how leaders guide this process, and how consumers interact with available digital systems. Through observation, the researcher can validate statements made during interviews by directly monitoring the behaviors or processes described by the informants.

This paper aims to design a comprehensive digital transformation model for Hajj and Umrah travel companies that integrates competitiveness-enhancing factors such as leadership and consumer preference. Specifically, it seeks to explore how effective leadership and a robust understanding of consumer preferences can support digital transformation strategies and how integrating these two factors can strengthen companies competitiveness.

Framework Development for Conceptual Model

The framework development below builds on the model previously developed by Marcus Fischer (2020), with the addition of leadership and consumer preference as critical factors in the digital transformation of business processes within the Hajj and Umrah travel sector. These enhancements address the unique challenges faced by this sector and are aimed at providing a more comprehensive understanding of successful digital integration.

This model is supported by Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which emphasizes that leadership and consumer preference can play a pivotal role in enhancing a company's competitiveness. Dynamic capabilities help organizations adapt to rapidly changing environments, where leadership is essential for strategic direction and effective decision-making in digital initiatives. Additionally, an understanding of consumer preferences allows companies to tailor digital services that meet evolving customer needs, thereby boosting customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In the context of This paper, the integration of leadership and consumer preference factors not only contributes to the theoretical framework but also provides practical insights into how travel companies like Amina tour and mina travel can navigate digital transformation more effectively. By employing this model, the study aims to highlight how adaptive leadership and

an alignment with consumer expectations drive the adoption of digital technologies, ultimately reinforcing competitive advantage in the Hajj and Umrah travel industry.

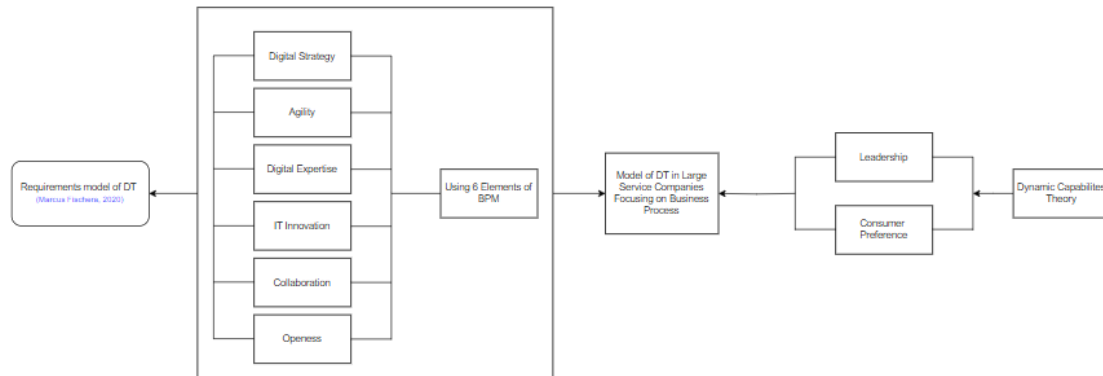


Figure 1. Framework Development for Conceptual Model

2. Literature Review

Leadership

In an increasingly volatile business environment, leadership is crucial in conveying the organization's vision and mission and achieving success. Leaders at the top management level, who possess a clear vision and mission for their organizations, are responsible for understanding the organization's internal conditions and communicating effectively with external parties. They can transform threats or weaknesses into strengths and capabilities, acting as multifunctional leaders who can engage with various stakeholders (Kartika, 2023). According to Simsek (2015), strategic leadership is a critical factor in organizational success, as strategic leaders can create a future-oriented environment and understand dynamics both within and outside the organization.

Leadership is highly relevant within the framework of dynamic capabilities theory. In this theory, effective leadership is vital in the processes of sensing (identifying opportunities and threats), seizing (responding to opportunities), and reconfiguring (realigning resources) to adapt to environmental changes. Thus, visionary strategic leaders not only help organizations face external challenges but also manage internal dynamic capabilities, enabling the organization to maintain a competitive advantage in a constantly changing market.

Consumer Preference

The role of consumer preferences in dynamic capabilities and digital transformation is supported by numerous studies highlighting a solid link between understanding consumer needs and a company's ability to adapt in the digital era. Consumer perception variables significantly simultaneously and partially affect product purchase decisions. Understanding consumer preferences also enables companies to enhance their dynamic capabilities, which involve innovative adjusting, reconfiguring, and leveraging resources. Teece et al. (2007) emphasize that dynamic capabilities heavily depend on how healthy companies can identify and anticipate consumer needs within the digital context (Warner & Wäger, 2019).

Moreover, consumer preference influences decision-making processes in product innovation and marketing strategy. Consumer perception significantly impacts company strategies in launching new products and how those products are received in the digital market. Both simultaneously and partially, consumer perception has a proven significant effect on purchasing decisions. A deep understanding of consumer behaviour allows companies to tailor

marketing strategies more accurately, thereby increasing the adoption rate of digital products and strengthening their competitive position in the market (Lindgreen et al., 2021).

Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory by Teece (2007) explains how organizations sustain competitive advantage in evolving environments by flexibly adapting and reconfiguring internal resources and capabilities. This theory emphasizes that long-term success depends on an organization's ability to learn, adapt, and innovate in response to new challenges and opportunities.

Three key components of dynamic capabilities essential for managing change and innovation are:

- **Sensing (Identifying Opportunities and Threats):** The ability to detect and understand external changes, including market trends, technology, and consumer preferences. In Hajj and Umrah travel, companies like Amina Tour or MinaTravel must identify digital trends, such as app-based services and online booking, to adapt and stay competitive.
- **Seizing (Responding to Opportunities):** The capacity to act strategically on identified opportunities through product development, marketing, and technology investments. Leaders play a key role in investing in tools like CRM systems to enhance the pilgrimage experience and meet evolving consumer needs.
- **Reconfiguring (Reconfiguring Resources):** The ability to restructure internal resources to align with changing demands. This may involve reducing reliance on manual processes, increasing digital literacy among employees, and enhancing agility to meet consumer expectations for efficiency.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory argues that sustainable competitive advantage lies not in static resources but in the capacity for continuous adaptation and innovation, enabling organizations to maintain relevance in dynamic markets.

3. Research Method

Data collection in this article follows several stages, including interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews will be conducted with selected informants based on Dynamic Capabilities Theory criteria, including Hajj and Umrah travel company owners, employees, and customers who have used these services. These interviews aim to identify how these companies can strengthen their competitiveness through digital transformation, emphasizing key elements such as sensing (identifying opportunities and threats), seizing (capitalizing on opportunities), and reconfiguring (adjusting structures and processes), along with questions on leadership and consumer preferences.

This article employs a qualitative methodology using a case study approach, focusing on an in-depth analysis of two Hajj and Umrah travel companies. This approach is chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of how factors such as leadership, consumer preference, and business processes relate to digital transformation. This article uses data collection techniques like in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis to capture relevant perspectives and experiences in digital transformation. This approach identifies patterns and dynamics that influence successful digital transformation strategies and provides practical insights for enhancing competitiveness in an increasingly competitive industry.

Interview Instrument

This interview instrument is designed to collect in-depth research data, allowing informants to share their experiences and perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the

research topic under investigation. The choice of a qualitative approach aligns with the aim of this study, which is to deeply understand the interactions and subjective views of each user category. Through in-depth interviews and observations, the qualitative methodology allows the research to explore nuances and contexts that may be challenging to measure quantitatively. This justification is based on the desire to present more contextualized and detailed findings on user factors influencing digital transformation.

The first step in qualitative research is to develop data collection instruments. Questions are developed by Dynamic Capabilities Theory as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Instrument

User Demographics		
Category	Code	Questions
User Demographics	DP1	Name
	DP2	Gender
	DP3	Age
	DP4	Educational Background
	DP5	Position
Leadership Factor		
Category	Code	Questions
Sensing (Identifying Opportunities and Threats)	S1	How do you learn about new technologies that can help the company serve Hajj and Umrah pilgrims?
	S2	What role does company leadership play in identifying digital trends or innovations suitable for the travel business?
	S3	How does the company understand customer needs related to technology-based services?
	S4	How does leadership ensure the company stays up-to-date with technological developments?
	S5	What does leadership do to encourage the team to seek new opportunities in the digital field constantly?
Seizing (Capitalizing on Opportunities)	Z1	How does leadership decide to use new technology in this company?
	Z2	What concrete actions does leadership take to leverage digital technology to enhance Hajj and Umrah services?
	Z3	How does leadership evaluate the benefits and risks when adopting new technology?
	Z4	How does leadership ensure that all teams and company resources are aligned to capitalize on digital opportunities?
	Z5	What challenges are faced in implementing new technology, and how does leadership assist in overcoming these challenges?
Reconfiguring (Reorganizing Resources)	R1	How does leadership adjust the organizational structure to support digital technology better?
	R2	What steps does leadership take to enhance the digital skills of the staff in this company?
	R3	How does leadership adapt the company's workflow to make it more efficient with the help of technology?

	R4	If there is resistance to technological change, how does leadership handle it?
	R5	How does leadership adjust the company's strategy to stay competitive in the digital world?
Consumer Preference Factor		
Category	Code	Questions
Sensing (Identifying Opportunities and Threats)	S6	Does the Hajj and Umrah travel company understand your needs for digital services?
	S7	What issues or challenges have you encountered when using digital Hajj or Umrah travel services?
	S8	What recent advancements in the Hajj and Umrah travel company's digital services have you found beneficial?
	S9	How do you learn about new technologies or digital services introduced by the Hajj and Umrah travel company?
Seizing (Capitalizing on Opportunities)	Z6	Does the Hajj and Umrah travel company provide appropriate solutions to simplify your booking and travel process through digitalization?
	Z7	What features in the company's app or digital system are most helpful for booking Hajj and Umrah's travel process?
	Z8	How often do you use the company's app or digital services when planning your Hajj or Umrah journey?
	Z9	How does the Hajj and Umrah travel company educate you on using their digital services?
Reconfiguring (Reorganizing Resources)	R6	Have you noticed any changes in the quality or processes of the company's digital services over time?
	R7	Do you feel that the Hajj and Umrah travel company listens to your feedback regarding digital services and implements necessary changes?
	R8	Do you find using the company's digital services easier or more convenient after multiple uses?
	R9	Are there any additional features or services the company should introduce to improve your experience with their digital services?

Semi-structured interviews with informants—field workers engaged in operations—were used to obtain data directly in the field. The selection of informants was unrestricted by expertise level, years of experience, or position. To gather detailed information, researchers employed open-ended questions. The informants in this study are compiled in Table 3. In order to provide a thorough and organized overview, data analysis used a qualitative method and presented findings descriptively.

Open coding approaches were used to examine the interview data. The first stage of qualitative analysis is called "open coding," in which the researcher finds, examines, and labels ideas or themes that surface from qualitative data without being constrained by an existing theoretical or conceptual framework. This method aims to develop a thorough and open

knowledge of the occurrences that have been seen. An illustration of the researcher's open coding procedure is shown in Table 2.

Several validation techniques were used to guarantee the authenticity and dependability of the results. First, this study used direct observation as an extra technique to provide first-hand insight into user interactions with the system during the deployment process in order to increase data diversity. Interviews were not the only source of information used in this study. A chain of evidence was also built to increase the credibility of the data. Structured interview responses were coded, transcribed, and recorded. This method improves the clarity of the analysis process by enabling accurate data tracing from the point of origin to the end product. This approach makes it possible to examine and trace study findings more efficiently, giving confidence in the result produced

Table 2. Coding Process

Informant Code	Transcript	Code	Category	Theme
N1	"I am personally actively involved in seeking new trends . I always emphasize to the team to stay open to innovative ideas , and we also collaborate with technology consultants to understand digital trends relevant to the hajj and umrah travel industry."	Innovative in technological development	Opportunity	<i>Sensing</i>
	"I always weigh the expected benefits against technological failure's costs and potential risks . We also consider the risk of customer data security. To minimize risks, we always start with small-scale pilot projects before launching the technology on a larger scale."	Willing to take risks	Threat	<i>Seizing</i>
	"I try to ensure that each team collaborates on digital projects, but challenges arise due to differences in skill levels across departments. Not all staff have sufficient understanding of technology, and there is sometimes resistance from teams who feel their roles are threatened by automation ."	Responsive to threats	Threat	<i>Seizing</i>

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The open coding technique used for the data analysis stage included data comprehension, data coding, theme identification, theme evaluation, theme definition and naming, and analysis result generation. During the open coding procedure, the researcher categorized several codes into topics and categories derived from informant interviews.

Table 4. Interview Informant

Informant Code	Gender	Age	Educational Background	Position
Travel A				
N1	Male	33	Bachelor of Accounting	Head of Administration
N2	Female	25	Senior High School	Administration
N3	Female	26	Senior High School	Administration
N4	Male	43	Bachelor of Chemical Engineering	Customer
Travel B				
N5	Female	31	Bachelor of Physiology	Head of Administration
N6	Female	32	Bachelor of Law	Customer

Data analysis from six informants revealed a clear picture of the importance of leadership roles and consumer preferences in the context of digital transformation to enhance competitiveness. One individual identified as an innovator quickly responded to and adopted these changes, highlighting the potential for early success in the initial stages of transformation. Additionally, four other informants played key roles in accelerating the transformation process, creating a foundation to spread innovation within the user community.

Open coding analysis showed that leadership and consumer preference factors significantly impact a company's competitiveness in the context of digital transformation. Visionary and adaptive leadership is crucial in guiding the digital transformation process, as company leaders are responsible for creating a clear vision and directing teams to implement new technology effectively. Leaders who can manage change and motivate teams toward innovation can accelerate technology adoption, enabling companies to adjust more rapidly to evolving market demands.

Meanwhile, consumer preference factors also play an equally vital role. In the digital era, consumers increasingly expect faster, more efficient, and personalized services. By understanding shifting consumer preferences, companies can tailor their products and services to meet these needs. Integrating the right technology, such as online booking systems or mobile apps, can enhance consumer access and improve user experience. Therefore, companies that can quickly and accurately respond to consumer preference dynamics can strengthen their position in a highly competitive market.

According to the informants, leadership and consumer preference factors are crucial for enhancing company competitiveness in successful digital transformation.

"I believe that **strong leadership is essential for successful digital transformation**. We must have a clear vision and be able to motivate our teams to adapt to changes. Additionally, understanding consumer preferences is key. We must always listen to customer feedback to ensure that the technology we implement truly meets their needs." [N1]

"In my opinion, **leadership in this company plays a significant role in supporting digital change**. Our leader encourages us to be bold in trying new technologies and adapt quickly. Additionally, we're always informed about changing consumer preferences, which helps us align our services with their expectations." [N2]

"**I feel very valued when the company introduces digital applications that simplify the booking process**. However, I think the company should better understand my needs and

preferences as a consumer. For example, features that allow me to access real-time travel information are extremely helpful, and that's thanks to the company's decisions that understand what consumers like me want." [N4]

Recommendation

Table 4. Recommendation

Factor	Recommendation	Description
Leadership	Strengthening Leadership Roles to Drive Digital Transformation	Strong and visionary leadership is a crucial factor in guiding digital transformation. Leaders in Hajj and Umrah travel companies need to develop a deep understanding of digital technology and how it can be integrated with company operations. Leaders must be able to provide strategic direction, empower teams to adapt to change, and foster innovation that supports both company and consumer needs. Additionally, leaders must actively support a culture that embraces new technology and build effective communication to unify the digital transformation vision across the company.
Preference Consumer	In-depth Understanding of Consumer Preferences in Digital Services	Understanding consumer preferences is essential for companies to develop services that align with customer needs and expectations. Companies are encouraged to regularly conduct surveys and analyze consumer preferences, especially regarding technology usage and travel patterns. By tailoring digital features and services to consumer preferences, companies can enhance customer satisfaction, create a more personalized user experience, and increase customer loyalty. Responsiveness to consumer feedback should also be improved, enabling companies to continually adapt to shifting market needs.

4.2. Discussion

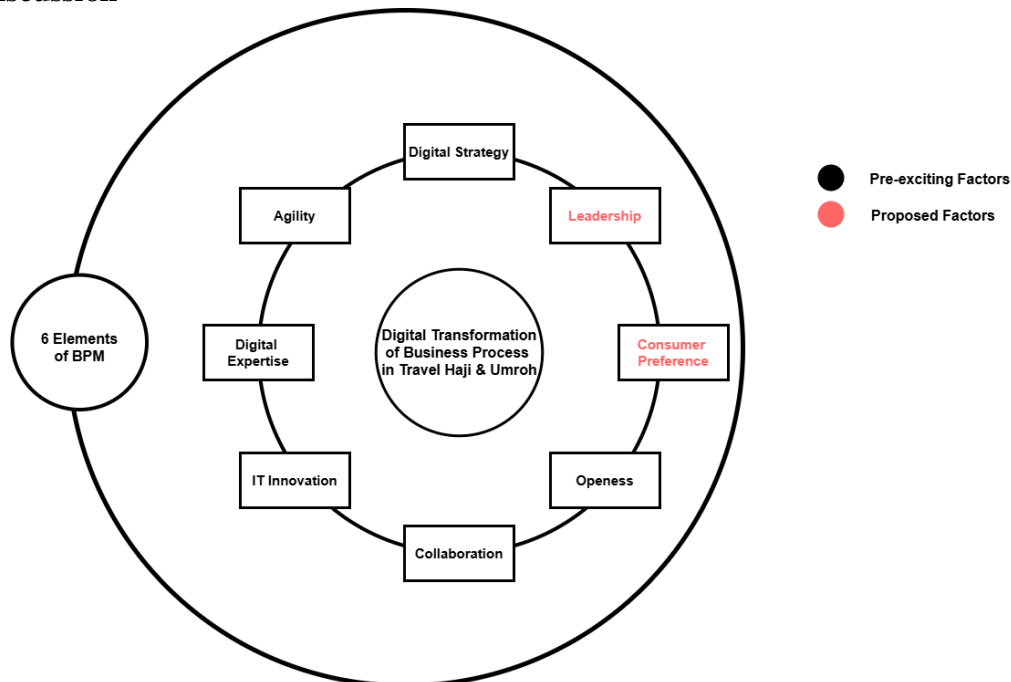


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Digital Transformation in Hajj and Umrah Travel

Figure 2 represents a model that integrates eight key factors to support the implementation of digital transformation aimed at enhancing company competitiveness, particularly in the Hajj and Umrah travel sector. These factors include digital strategy, agility, digital experience, IT innovation, collaboration, openness, consumer preference, and leadership. The figure above provides a visual representation of the overall factors for digital transformation implementation.

The role of six BPM (Business Process Management) elements in this model serves as a structured analytical guide for each targeted company. The red color in the figure indicates that leadership and consumer preference factors were added to the digital transformation factors previously excluded from earlier studies. This model is the final result of an existing model development to address gaps in the literature on the application of digital transformation within business processes in the Hajj and Umrah travel industry.

The inclusion of leadership and consumer preference as pivotal factors in the model is not merely an addition but a critical enhancement that reflects the evolving nature of digital transformation in the context of the Hajj and Umrah travel sector. Leadership serves as the cornerstone in driving digital initiatives, setting a clear vision, and fostering a culture that embraces change. Effective leadership enables companies to overcome resistance, align organizational goals with digital strategies, and ensure the sustainability of transformation efforts. On the other hand, consumer preference emphasizes the importance of understanding and adapting to the needs, expectations, and behaviors of pilgrims, which have become increasingly sophisticated due to the widespread adoption of digital technology. By integrating consumer preferences, companies can design personalized services, leverage data analytics for insights, and build stronger customer relationships, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. The model further highlights how these factors interact dynamically with the six BPM elements—strategy, governance, people, processes, technology, and performance. BPM

provides a comprehensive framework for aligning digital transformation initiatives with the operational and strategic goals of companies. For instance, the "strategy" element ensures that digital initiatives are coherent with the organization's long-term objectives, while "governance" establishes policies and mechanisms to manage risks and compliance effectively. The "people" element underscores the importance of developing digital competencies within the workforce, fostering innovation, and enhancing collaboration across teams.

Incorporating "processes" ensures that digital tools and systems are integrated seamlessly into the operational workflow, leading to improved efficiency and agility. The "technology" element focuses on adopting cutting-edge IT innovations and scalable solutions to enable seamless service delivery. Finally, "performance" ties everything together by establishing metrics and KPIs to measure the success of digital transformation efforts and drive continuous improvement.

By bridging the gap between theoretical constructs and practical applications, this model provides a holistic approach to digital transformation tailored to the unique characteristics of the Hajj and Umrah travel industry. It recognizes the sector's reliance on trust, seamless service delivery, and the ability to adapt to diverse consumer demographics. Additionally, the integration of leadership and consumer preference highlights a forward-thinking perspective that prepares companies to respond to rapid technological advancements and shifts in market demand. This comprehensive model not only serves as an analytical guide but also as a practical roadmap for companies aiming to achieve competitive advantage through digital transformation.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that digital transformation in Hajj and Umrah travel companies can significantly enhance competitiveness when integrated with strong leadership and a deep understanding of consumer preferences. Visionary leadership plays a crucial role in guiding companies through the change process, enabling quick adaptation to challenges and opportunities arising from technological advancements. Effective leaders not only oversee technology implementation but also foster a culture of innovation and collaboration across the organization, strengthening the acceptance and use of technology by the entire team.

Additionally, consumer preference has proven to be an essential factor to consider in digital transformation strategies. Understanding consumer needs and expectations enables companies to design services that are more personalized, efficient, and aligned with the desires of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims who are increasingly familiar with digital technology. By focusing on these two factors, Hajj and Umrah travel companies can achieve digital transformation that not only enhances operational efficiency but also adds value for customers, ultimately strengthening the company's competitive position in an ever-evolving market. This research is expected to serve as a foundation for companies in formulating digital transformation strategies focused on leadership and consumer preferences to achieve long-term success.

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