

Exploration of Financial Reporting Mechanisms And Utilization of Accounting Software in Private Tahfiz Institutions Across Malaysia

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Abstract

Financial reporting in charitable organizations is important, it is not only to monitor their performance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public resources but also to provide information to all bettors with their economic resources and obligations. Public tahfiz institutions are seen to be unable to meet the requests of parents who want to send their children to this school. Thus, the private tahfiz institution (PTI) became an option and an alternative to the tahfiz curriculum. Therefore, PTI enrichment is seen as significant, and the PTI financial management system needs to be improved so that it is structured and systematic. The financing and management of tax institutions depends on student fees, community contributions, and state government provisions. So far, there are no specific financial reporting standards for charities including PTI. It also becomes difficult if the preparation of financial reports is still carried out manually. The rapid movement in the use of information technology (IT) by organizations helps acquire and carry out daily accounting operations using computerized accounting software. Basically, accounting software is used to facilitate the preparation of corporate financial statements. Since most PTIs still do not have

the appropriate and relevant accounting systems or software according to their needs, it becomes a shortcoming and weakness that needs to be addressed. Therefore, the objective of the study is to 1) identify the financial reporting practices used by Malaysian private tahfiz institutions (PTI) and 2) identify accounting software currently used by the Malaysian private tahfiz Institutions (PTI). The study used qualitative methods and the number of respondents was six respondents. The contribution of this study is to help PTI's financial reporting be more systematic and minimize the risk of misconduct in managing public funds to drive the success of the huffaz.

Keywords: Private Tahfiz Institutions, Reporting, Accounting Software, Tahfiz Management

Introduction

The private Tahfiz School (PTI) is an Islamic educational institution that focuses on the Quran and belongs to a group of non-profit organizations based on religion (Rohayu Yusop; Radziah Mahmud; Nurshamimi Sablic; Nurul Fatma Aziz Awang & Noorlaila Ghazalie 2020). Financial reporting in charitable organizations is important, it is not only to monitor their performance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public resources but also to provide information to all holders about their economic resources and obligations. The holders include legislators, donors, government auditors, and taxpayers. Data from the charitable organization is also important for potential donors in deciding whether to continue the charity donation. At the same time, one of the fast-growing charities in Malaysia is the Private Tahfiz Institution. (PTI).

Public Tahfiz Institution seems unable to accommodate the request of parents who wanted to send their children to this school. Then PTI becomes an option and an alternative to the tahfiz curriculum. Therefore, PTI enrichment is seen as significant, and the PTI financial management system needs to be improved so that it is structured and systematic. The private tahfiz institutes registered in Malaysia have grown rapidly to reach 1,400 school units (MAMPU 2021). The funding and management of the tahfiz school are dependent on student fees, donations, and state government allocations. So, the recording, reporting, and management of the PTI's finances should be given attention so that there is no discussion of anything else that involves public funds. So far, there are no financial reporting standards specific to charities including the PTI. Similarly, financial reporting formats vary as demand for information arises at different times. It is also a challenge if financial reporting is still implemented manually. Current professional accountants use a variety of computer applications to carry out their day-to-day operations (Do et al., 2020; Blankley et al., 2019; Boulianne, 2014).

Information Communication Technology (ICT) has been regarded as a key aspect of an effective and efficient accounting system that can drastically improve organizational performance. Information Communication Technology (ICT) has been used to improve organizational performance and reliability of accounting information (Ganyam & Ivungu, 2019; Ogundana et al., 2017; Sami, 2011). Accounting information systems include computer software and hardware that help record accounting information (Knapp, 2019; Taiwo, 2016; Wessels, 2005). The rapid movement in the use of information technology (IT) by organizations helps acquire and carry out daily accounting operations using computerized accounting software. The use of improved accounting software has transformed the accounting process, which involves transaction entry, data storage, the provision of financial statements as well as related information, and affects the decision of bettors who use the financial statement for a variety of purposes. It is also useful for the internal control system

used by the entity (Turner et al., 2020; Senft et al., 2016). This shows that accounting software is the primary instrument in accounting for delivering accurate information to the stakeholders.

Accounting refers to a method of keeping accounts that systematically records business transactions and is summarized and presented in the form of financial statements such as income statements, statement of financial position and cash flow statements. Accounting software is used to facilitate the preparation of company financial statements (Rushinek 1995). Therefore, accounting systems must be able to produce relevant, accurate, reliable, and timely information to users in the information age. Since most of the operating tahfiz schools still do not have an appropriate and relevant accounting system or software according to their needs, it becomes a shortcoming and weakness that needs to be addressed. This is to help the recording be systematic, minimizing the risk of collusion in subsequent financial transactions that helps the transmission of information more transparently and efficiently.

According to Ismail (2016), there are several challenges faced by the tahfiz institution to sustain itself, namely the challenges of modernization, technology, and certification. For example, the Ahmad Muaz & Norazmi (2018) study has outlined the weaknesses and strengths of PTI management and analyzed the evolutionary elements of its management in Malaysia. In contrast, the study by Ismail et al. (2014) looked at the challenges in implementing cash waqf management. Next, a study by Siti Rafizah & Mahanum (2018) also examined the effectiveness of waqf management from the perspective of human resources, documentation, and reporting by SIRC in Malaysia.

In addition, some studies have been carried out on accounting systems and information conveyed. For example, Nur Afifah & Norhidayah (2021) have seen the use of computerized accounting systems among entrepreneurs in Kelantan. While Hamsidah et al. (2018) outlined the challenges that arise in using accounting software in school cooperatives. Next, a study by Noor Azizi et al. (2003) tested computerized accounting systems among entrepreneurs (PKS) of the Northern Territory of the Malaysian Peninsula. So far, no studies have been conducted concerning accounting practices and PTI's accounting software in Malaysia, so this study is attempting to bridge the gap.

Literature Review

The increase in the number of tahfiz schools throughout the country is closely linked to the increased awareness among Muslims of the effectiveness, goodness, and dignity of those who memorize the Quran. Thus, this encouraged parents to put their children in the school with tahfiz stream (Abdullah Nasih Ulwan 2015). They believed that the tahfiz system of education has a dual system, i.e., the academic system and the religious system or Quran is equivalent to non-tahfiz school and capable of meeting the demands of the global market.

Private tahfiz institution (PTI) is an institution explicitly established to educate students so that they can read the entire Qur'an (huffaz) (Hasbullah Hilmi 2015). There are two stages of Qur'an learning: the study of the Quran with heart, the conservation and perfection of the ability to write the entire Quran on paper without any error. (Taiwo 2014). Talaqqi is done face to face or directly with the teacher. While the technique of *Musyafah* is done from mouth to mouth with the teacher reading mouth movements, observing, and obtaining the correct tajwid reference for improving learning and memorizing Al-Quran (Nor Musliza Mustafa & Mokmin 2014).

PTI is usually managed by the federal government through Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia, the state government, or the private sector. More than 91% of the PTI in Malaysia are private tahfiz schools which are owned by foundations, non-governmental organizations, or individuals. (Haz 2007). However, there are also PTI registered under the Companies Commission Malaysian (CCM), the state government, and the Ministry of Education. While in terms of PTI funding, it comes from various sources, such as founders and family members, donors, zakat centers, *BaitulMal*, people, and government agencies. PTI is responsible to various stakeholders: parents, students, and donors.

According to Dalila Daud et al. (2019), reporting from an Islamic perspective means revealing information that can help an organization make economic and religious decisions. Such information must be of relevant and objective quality. This is in line with Quran:

“Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a share in the reward, and whoever intercedes for an evil cause will have a share in the burden. And Allah is Watchful over all things”. (Surah Hud: 85)

According to the Quran above, justice is among the most important values to be observed in the assessment and measurement of reporting from the Islamic perspective. Surah Al-Baqarah verse 282 also describes the function of recording financial transactions, measurements, and interest to be followed. It explains that measures must be fair and accurate. This verse indicates that judgment must reflect justice and equality. In another verse in the Quran, in the Surah Asy-Syu'ara, verses 181-183:

“Give full measure, and cause no loss to others”. (Asy-Syu'ara 181)

“and do not defraud people of their property. Nor go about spreading corruption in the land”. (Asy-Syu'ara 183)

These verses envisage that every measure and valuation should reveal the true value and the current that reflects the meaning of the actual value. It means that the market value is a perfect valuation because it shows the current value of an asset. Full disclosure does not mean an organization must disclose all information, even if it is irrelevant. Instead, it intends to disclose information deemed relevant that should be to the public to facilitate their economic and religious decision making. The implication of this is that an organization needs to report information related to its activities, whether in a positive form or otherwise, to gain public support and confidence about the organization's ability to manage the money and donations received.

Rosnia Masruki & Zurina Shafii (2013) insist that investment activities should be disclosed annually and information should be made available to the people involved. Reporting is a tool for carrying out accountability. The supervisory body must be composed of scholars (professional experts in Islamic law), and they perform all or part of the following tasks, namely to establish the rules of Syariah, to examine all or some of the transactions carried out to ascertain whether there were any violations (Rosnia Masruki & Zurina Shafii 2013).

Therefore, there are Islamic principles that should be followed by the PTI, who have obligations and duties to the community. They have been entrusted with keeping the waqif property and using this fund well, and they should not abuse this trust by making a report (Dalila Daud et al. 2019). As stated in the Qur'an, At-Taubah: 34:

O believers! Indeed, many rabbis and monks consume people's wealth wrongfully and hinder 'others' from the Way of Allah. Give good news of a painful torment to those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's cause.

The discussion continues with the significance of accounting software which plays a significant role in the financial reporting of PTI institutions, as it does for any other organization. Like any other organization, accounting software is essential for the financial reporting of PTI. PTI which focuses on Quranic education must have efficient financial management to ensure their sustainability and compliance with financial regulations. There are several reasons why accounting software is important for PTI financial reporting:

1. Maintaining accurate financial records - Accounting software assists in keeping accurate and up-to-date financial records (Ghasemi et al. 2011). It is critical for PTI to document their income, expenses, and assets precisely in order to ensure openness and accountability.
2. Time management - Manual accounting operations can be time-consuming and error-prone. Accounting software automates many financial tasks, lowering the time required to compile financial reports. This frees up staff time to focus on other critical parts of running the school.
3. Financial Reporting Compliance – PTI is frequently required to submit financial reports, especially if they are registered as non-profit organizations or charities. Accounting software can provide the necessary financial reports to meet regulatory authorities' and contributors' requirements, such as income statements and balance sheets.
4. Budgeting and Forecasting - Accounting software allows for effective budgeting and forecasting. PTI institutions can plan their finances, set realistic goals, and monitor their progress toward financial objectives.

In summary, accounting software is essential for PTI to maintain accurate financial records, comply with regulations, manage finances efficiently, and demonstrate transparency to donors and stakeholders. It helps ensure the institution's financial sustainability and allows it to focus on its primary mission of providing Quranic education.

Thus, based on the literature discussion above, this paper comes with two objectives such as:

1. to identify financial reporting practices used by Malaysian private tahfiz institutions (PTI)
2. to identify accounting software currently used by the Malaysian private tahfiz institution (PTI).

Methodology

Qualitative Approach



Figure 1: Methodology of the research

The study was conducted using qualitative methods. Figure 1 depicts the data collection using two methods such as document analysis through literature review and face-to-face interview session. Documentation analysis is obtaining data through a library study that refers to primary and secondary sources with reference to journals, papers, scientific workshops, and websites to study issues related to the financial reporting and accounting system at PTI. The second method is an interview. A semi-structural conversation is a two-way conversation aimed at gathering research information. Which involves a face-to-face interaction between the interlocutor and the respondent. According to Goode & Hatt (1952), a semi-structured interview is a social process in which the interviewer must pay attention to the process so that there are no problems in terms of reliability that may affect the results of the study. The study uses a semi-structured interview method. The method is conducted through conversation and questioning activities that focus on the exploration of ideas or feelings more than obtaining certain facts. Open-ended questions are submitted and a variety of answers can be obtained and participants or respondents. Often this technique is used to quote qualitative data that can be analysed into permanent quantitative data. Respondents are given time and space to give their opinion on a topic or focus of research that has been chosen by the community.

This study used a qualitative approach through the implementation of semi-structured interviews. The interview was held between 30-45 minutes to a maximum of 60 minutes. The conversation was recorded with the consent of the study participants. Respondents include six individuals representing PTI selected which consists of principal and finance officer.

The first task in the analysis is to identify the appropriate category. Then, the categories are linked together to create a theme from a comprehensive source. This theme includes all the key information used when conducting case studies. Information is then edited, redundancies compiled, and merged to obtain discovery.

Patton (1990) explains that there is no exact point where data collection ends and analysis begins. Although in practice, analysis and interpretation will be neatly separated. While collecting data, ideas about analysis and interpretation occur. Those ideas are the

beginning of the analysis. Emerging themes are supported by transcripts collected during the interviews.

Table 1

List of respondents

Number of private tahfiz institution (PTI)	Respondent	State
PTI (A), PTI (B)	Principal Finance officer	Terengganu
PTI (C), PTI (D)	Principal Finance officer	Johor
PTI (E), PTI (F)	Principal Finance officer	Melaka

Findings

This study used six samples of PTS located in the southern eastern coastal zones. For the initial findings, the findings of the study and discussion started with a concise background for the 6 PTI.

No	Private tahfiz institution	Background
1.	PTI A	It was established in 2014 in Kuala Terengganu. The study of the Qur'an and of the Sunnah and the academic is their mission in producing the skilled Huffaz. It used to operate in a bungalow, but in line with the increase in the number of students and the need for a more comfortable learning environment, they took the initiative to build a new building with financial contributions from the public. It started operating in this new building in 2019 with classroom facilities, prayer room, dorms, canteens and so on. So far, this PTS has 55 students.
2.	PTI B	It was built on 2017 on waqf land. The objective is combining on the academic and tahfiz curricular. This PTS registered under JAKIM and MAIDAM. Upon taking STAM, the qualified students will further their study to university at Mesir.
3.	PTI C	It was built on the principal's land during 1981. It began "diniyyah" class system on 2008. ITS C combine the academic and tahfiz curricular as it aware on the significance of SPM to the students.
4.	PTI D	It was built on waqf land during 2010 in order to fulfill a need of integration tahfiz in one continent at Johor. It has been registered under Islamic school enactment in Johor. The development of the academic building, hostel and other

		infrastructure in ITS D derives from waqf collected from various parties. It is committed to enhance the education quality and a conducive institution for the students.
5.	PTI E	It was built in 2017. Its open admission on 2018 with 18 male students. During 2020, it accepts female students. Currently, total number of students is 50.
6.	PTI F	PTI F was built on 2008. The programs offered consists of tahfiz curricular and also 'Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia'. PTI F registered under Jabatan Agama Islam Melaka and Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia. Apart from that, PTI F also listed under Melaka Madrasah Tahfiz Society.

Table 2

Analysis of financial reporting practices in PTI

	PTI A	PTI B	PTI C	PTI D	PTI E	PTI F
Source of income	Student's fees, donation, waqf	Student's fees, donation, waqf	Student's fees, donation, waqf	Student's fees, donation, waqf	Student's fees, donation, waqf, bankers, NGO.	Student's fees, donation, waqf
Recording financial transactions in Ms Excel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, based on internal format	Yes	Yes
List of assets	No	Yes, just quantity under cooperatives.	Yes, manually	Yes, manually	Yes, manually	No
Financial statement format used	Statement of income and expenditure based on common understanding	Statement of receipt and payment	Statement of receipt and payment	Statement of receipt and payment	Statement of receipt and payment	Statement of receipt and payment
The purpose of the money has been approved by the	It's in the management meeting every two or three months.	In management meeting	In management meeting	In management meeting	In management meeting	In management meeting

Board of Directors						
Presentation of financial statements	Yes during management meeting	Yes during management meeting	Yes during management meeting	Yes during management meeting	Yes during management meeting	No
Frequency of preparation of financial statements	Monthly and annually	Monthly and annually	Monthly and annually	Monthly and annually	Monthly and annually	Monthly and annually
Submission of financial reports to the State Religious Council	No need	No need	No need	No need	No need	No need
Auditing	Audited by the Board of Directors	In the process of conducting internal audits	Audited by the Board of Directors	Audited by the Board of Directors	Audited by the Board of Directors	Audited by the Board of Directors
The officer who is in charge of the financial affairs is a qualified officer.	Qualified and extensive experience	He/she has a qualification in accounting	He/she has a qualification in accounting	He/she has a qualification in accounting	He/she has a qualification in accounting	He/she does not have a qualification in accounting
Software used in students' fees, staffing	Manual only	Manual only	Yes, Awfatech.	Manual but structured filing and format	Manual only	Yes, Awfatech.
Accounting software used	Manual only	Manual only	Partial awfatech	No	No	No
Preparedness to use accounting software	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Facility availability if the current accounting software in use	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Budget availability for accounting software subscriptions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

"We only provide a basic account statement... there is a salary... there's a maintenance part... every month the receipt report and the payment will be made...." PK-PTI A (9.2.2023/intw 1).

"For the use of money, if the amount is small, approval is by principal... but if the large amount.... it has to be presented to the management meeting with approval of two-thirds of the members..." PK-PTI A (9.2.2023/intw 1).

"We've got a record of the inflow and outflow of the cash in the book... this will be presented in the ALP meeting as a report on receipts and payments..." PK-ITS B (9.2.2023/intw 1).

"So far... no record of assets has been documented...." PK-ITS B (9.2.2023/intw 1)

"We have prepared financial reports... monthly... annually... yes we have..." PK-ITS B (9.2.2023/intw 1)

"For accounts, we record in Excel haa.... but we have this software...we just want to try againto facilitate the output of the receipts..." PK-PTI F (20.3.2023/intw 1)

"If it's better to have accounting software, it'll be better, isn't it? So if there's a better system, and we're going to use it... make it more efficient..." PK-PTI E (23.3.2023/intw 1)

Based on preliminary findings obtained, most PTI used basic preparation of financial statement which focused on income and expenditure items. They were aware of the importance of recording transactions, which affects the financial of the PTI. However, it is still lacking in most of the PTI in terms of inventories and assets listing. They defended that some of the assets fall under the waqf category and do not need to be accounted for.

In terms of qualified staff to handle financial matters, most of PTI's do have a staff with an accounting background whether a Diploma or Degree. They practiced manual recording in MS Excel for daily transactions. None of the PTI skipped the recording as they were entrusted with the cash waqf and crowdfunding. They totally understand that the sustainability of PTI depends on the financial position, which begins with recording as a first process in accounting.

In addition, the board of directors in PTI consists of the expertise and possess a high academic qualification. They aware the crucial part of financial aspects and request the financial statements to be present during their management meeting. As monitoring, PTI conducted an internal audit as part of their internal control. This also assist in monitoring the flow and correct treatment of the financial aspects.

In the context of software usage, a few PTI already used it for the students' fees and records to ease the maintenance of each student's transaction. There are 2 PTI's that already use Awfatech software for students' fees, waqf, and donations from public. The reason is due to automation receipts generated towards donor. This assists in maintaining the records of funds received from various donors. PTI's need support from the software as it can segregate the types of receipts, whether a donation, waqf, or others. Other than that, there is one PTI who used Awfatech partially for recording the transactions and not to the extent on producing the financial statements.

Therefore, all respondents from PTI's agreed to use accounting software that could assist in preparing regular and systematic financial statements and reduce the risk of misunderstanding and fraud in PTI financial matters. Figure 2 explained the workflow of financial reporting in most of the PTI in Malaysia.

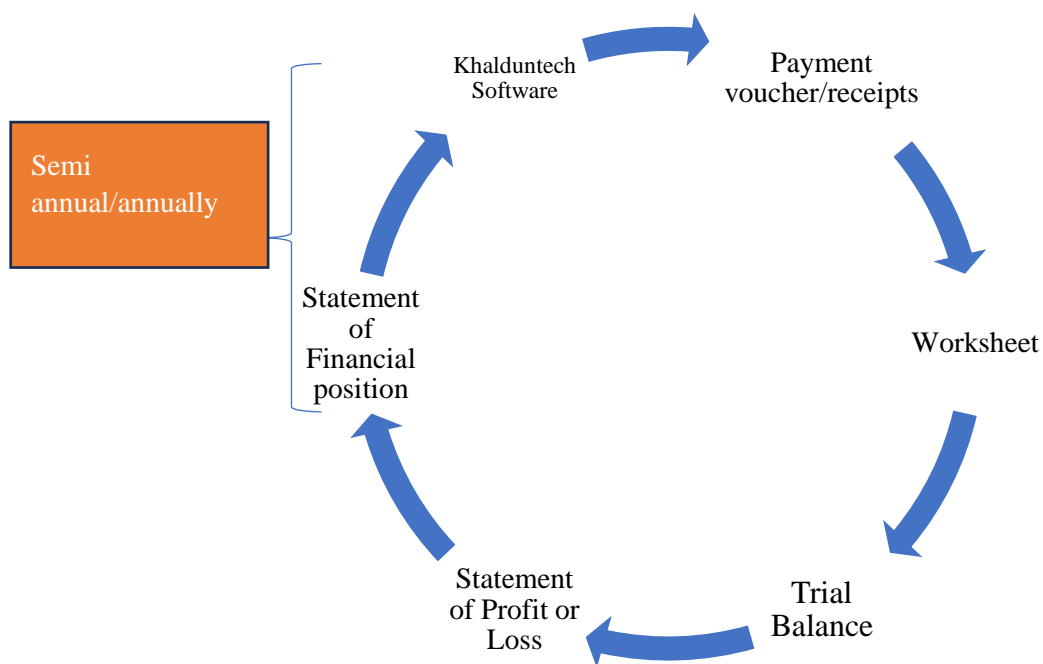


Figure 2: Workflow of financial reporting in tahfiz institution. (Sri Wahyu, Zainab & NurSuriana 2023).

Stakeholder Theory Discussion

In terms of the theory which describe the accountability of PTI administrators in the preparation of financial statements is the stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984). This theory explains how managers in organizations should be accountable to stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, and shareholders. According to this theory, stakeholders are individuals or groups that will be affected by the achievement of an organization and can influence the objectives of an organisation. Organizational objectives are only achieved when the interests of these stakeholders are met. Therefore, according to this theory, the manager of an

organization must carry out activities to meet the wishes of the stakeholders. (Buthayna Mahadeen, Rand Hani Al-Dmour, Bader Yousef Obeidat & Ali Tarhini 2016).

This theory emphasizes that, an organization relies on donors to obtain funds while donors rely on organizations to improve their reputation and for tax deduction purposes and an organization is accountable to various stakeholders. Likewise, as a tahfiz institution, PTI also needs to fulfill its objective of educating students who can safeguard the Quran with a praiseworthy attitude and have accountability to the various stakeholders involved, such as students, parents, employees, and donors. The stakeholders will be affected if something happens that could affect PTI's independence in the future.

According to the theory of stakeholders, the continuous existence and success of an organization or company requires continuous support from the stakeholders because they hold power over the company's resources. Therefore, continuous support and trust from the stakeholders is essential for the sustainability of an organization for the long term (Daud 2011). The role of a stakeholder in a company is just as important as an institution such as PTI in achieving its objectives.

Similarly, the preparation of financial statements either manually or by accounting software indicates that the PTI is carrying out its accountability in financial management, the majority of which comes from waqf, infaq, and community contributions. Through financial statements, financial flows can be seen transparently, and the risk of financial management complications can be minimized.

Conclusion

To conclude, PTI in Malaysia practiced the preparation of financial statements manually. Thus, introducing special accounting software for PTI can help in terms of systematic reporting and reduce financial imbalances. Based on the findings, PTI is prepared to use this software accounting so that each applicable transaction can be accurately recorded according to the appropriate category and then consolidated into the provision of financial statements. It is also for meeting the needs of the shareholders involved with the PTI.

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