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On the need for obtaining special knowledge in the field of economic activities by clergymen and church specialists of the Russian Orthodox Church

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between the normative-canonical framework and organisational models of economic activity of the Russian Orthodox Church in comparison with modern international approaches. The research methodology was based on quantitative and qualitative content analysis of regulatory acts of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation using MAXQDA and AntConc software, as well as comparison with the results of international studies. The results showed that the categories of "legal regulation" (128 mentions, 41.9%), "educational activity" (95-102 mentions, 31.7%) and "organisational issues" (69-73 mentions, 26.4%) prevail in the normative acts of the Russian Orthodox Church. Additionally, the blocks of "ethics and social responsibility" (38-41 mentions) and "international cooperation" (25-27 mentions) were recorded. The practical activities of church institutions coincide with statutory norms only partially: 64% in property transactions and 42% in educational projects. International studies have shown that financial transparency increases the sustainability of religious communities (increasing the number of active participants by 37% and donations by 24%), and the introduction of educational programs and courses on financial literacy helps reduce staff turnover. Digitalisation of document management and online learning has reduced administrative costs by 12-20% and increased the number of students from 4.3 thousand to 11.7 thousand over six years. It has been established that the main discrepancies concern property management and educational training of specialists. The obtained data can be used in developing programs for improving the qualifications of the clergy and improving the system of church management

Keywords: property management; financial literacy; legal regulation; educational programs; specialist competencies; economic sustainability; personnel training

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 2020s, academic literature has shown increased interest in the socio-economic and educational functions of religious institutions. In a historical and sociological context, this issue is addressed in the work of

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G. Tadesse (2024), which shows that Orthodox churches, including the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, have traditionally combined spiritual and social roles, influencing not only religious life but also politics and economics. This approach emphasised the stability of institutional functions from a historical perspective. A different line of analysis is proposed in the study by D. Gamza & P. Jones (2020), which examined the evolution of religious regulation in post-Soviet states. In contrast to G. Tadesse's historical perspective, the emphasis is on the variability of the legal framework and the need for religious organisations to adapt to political conditions. Developing this line of thought, A. Usenov (2022) showed that the process of adaptation is often accompanied by a contradiction between the formal provisions of legislation and the practical restrictions that arise in the activities of religious communities.

Issues of religious education have also become the subject of active academic debate. R. Dogan & Z. Zholalieva (2022) interpreted religious education as a structural element of identity formation, noting its importance in the school system. At the same time, F. Hadžić (2023), drawing on Balkan material, showed that the clericalisation of the educational process can exacerbate ethnic tensions and contribute to the politicisation of public consciousness. A separate area of research is related to the training and professional activities of the clergy. B. Voorhees *et al.* (2024) identified a correlation between the level of training in parish management and indicators of satisfaction with ministry, as well as the stability of religious communities. However, the results of D. Osmonova *et al.* (2024) demonstrated that the influence of religious organisations goes beyond the professional training of clergy, shaping the value orientations of young people and influencing the cultural identity of society as a whole.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent transformations in religious life, digitalisation processes have attracted considerable attention in academic literature. C. Grigore & A. Cobzeanu (2025) showed in a systematic review that the transition of religious communities to the online environment has changed the practices of collective participation and the internal dynamics of communities. The authors note the formation of new forms of interaction, where digital technologies have become a tool for maintaining community ties. In parallel with this, interest in the analysis of spirituality and religion in information studies has increased. P. Nangia & I. Ruthven (2025) systematised approaches to the study of religious and spiritual experience in information science based on material from a period of more than thirty years. Developing this line of thought, N. Caidi *et al.* (2025) emphasised that religious practices increasingly involve searching for and processing information, forming special models of "information experience" that differ from traditional ones.

The historical aspect of the analysis is presented in a study by P. Hunt (2023), which examines the crisis of modernisation in 17th century Russia using the autobiographical life of the protopope Avvakum as an example. Unlike contemporary works focused on digital transformations, this study emphasises the conflicts between tradition and modernisation processes in the religious environment. Contemporary sociology of religion demonstrates a tendency to view religious processes through the prism of political and social polarisation. S. Perry (2022) showed that American religiosity is increasingly involved in ideological divisions, where the church becomes part of a broad social configuration of conflict. At the same time, K. Marshall (2021) focused on the institutional dimension of religious freedom, analysing methodologies for its assessment and practices of application in the political sphere. J. Dalziel (2023) pointed to the contradictions that arise in Christian and secular universities, where religious identity and academic autonomy often come into conflict. From a socio-economic perspective, R. Smith (2020) examined the practices of church advocacy participation in issues of inequality and urban economic restructuring, which complements the understanding of the role of religious institutions in contemporary societies.

The aim of this study was to identify the conditions and prerequisites for the formation of specialised knowledge in the field of economic and educational activities among clergy and church specialists of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). Two key tasks were accomplished in the course of the analysis. The first was to identify the lexical-semantic and content characteristics of normative and organisational texts, allowing to determine the specifics of their regulatory impact on the training of clergy. The second task was to typologise the forms of economic and educational activity recorded in the documents and analytical materials of the Church, taking into account their institutional orientation and comparing them with contemporary foreign studies of religious management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study, conducted between February and June 2025 in the Kyrgyz Republic, aimed to identify the conditions and prerequisites for clergy and church specialists of the Russian Orthodox Church to acquire specialised knowledge in the field of economic activity. The official versions of the Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013) and the Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (2016) were used as the empirical basis. The Regulation on the Uniform Procedure... (2011) and the Bachelor's Programme... (2011) were also included. These documents were considered key sources that set the normative and canonical basis for the training and activities of the clergy. Materials reflecting the economic activities of church institutions played a significant role in the study: the activities of the Art and production enterprise Sofrino (n.d.), Financial and Economic Administration of the Russian Orthodox Church (n.d.), as well as analytical reports by the Educational Committee of the Russian Orthodox Church (n.d.) and the work of the Expert Council "Economics and Ethics" (2009). These examples made it possible to identify the organisational models and approaches used by the Church in the fields of economics and education.

The scientific basis of the study was formed by contemporary works by international authors covering issues of financial and organisational development of religious institutions. The comparative analysis took into account studies by J. Gao (2021) on China, E. Searing *et al.* (2025) on the United States, and P. Weller (2024) on the United Kingdom. The work of D. Fidhayanti *et al.* (2024) on Indonesia was also considered. These particular studies and countries were selected due to their representativeness and relevance: China and Indonesia reflect the dynamics of digitalisation and religious management in Asia, the United States demonstrates a combination of social mission and educational programmes, and the British experience illustrates institutional and financial transformations in times of crisis. This made it possible to compare the national characteristics of the financial and educational development of religious organisations in different cultural and institutional contexts. Before analysis, the texts of the documents were converted to a single digital format (UTF-8) and cleaned of duplicate elements and uninformative structural insertions. The processing was carried out in the MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2022 (n.d.) analytical environment, which made it possible to identify key semantic categories and ensure the reliability of coding. Additionally, using the software AntConc 4.2.0 (n.d.), to identify frequent word forms and analyse stable lexical constructions related to property management, educational activities, and administrative responsibility.

The criterion for selecting materials was their substantive relevance to the research task: only documents with direct provisions on the economic or educational activities of the Church were included in the corpus. Texts of a theological and journalistic nature that did not have normative force were excluded. The analysis was carried out using semantic coding, followed by categorisation of the selected segments into three areas: legal regulation, educational practices, and organisational forms of economic activity. To increase reliability, the results were re-verified and compared with the original markup.

The methodological basis of the study was based on a combination of comparative legal analysis and content analysis, which made it possible to identify the relationship between the requirements of state and church documents and to determine the areas in which clergy and church specialists need to develop specialised knowledge. The research was conducted in accordance with the principles of scientific integrity and in compliance with the academic and legal ethics standards of the WIPO Copyright Treaty (1996) and The European Code... (2023), which ruled out the possibility of copyright infringement and ensured the transparency of the analysis procedure.

RESULTS

Regulatory and canonical framework and organisational forms of economic activity

An analysis of the normative and canonical sources of the Russian Orthodox Church shows that issues of economic and educational activity are consistently enshrined in a number of institutional-level documents. First and foremost, the Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013) fixes the basic provisions on the right of church organisations to own and dispose of property, and also defines the framework for the participation of the clergy in management processes. The Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (2016) supplements this basis by establishing principles for training personnel, including the development of the knowledge necessary for clergy to administer parish and diocesan life. Also of importance are the Regulation on the Uniform Procedure... (2011) and federal state educational standards, which correspond to bachelor's programmes at theological educational institutions. Thus, the regulatory level sets not only canonical boundaries, but also institutional guidelines that allow the Church's economic and educational activities to be integrated into a broader socio-legal context.

Organisational practice illustrates how these norms are implemented in specific models. The Sofrino (n.d.) manufacturing enterprise is an example of a centralised economic complex that combines church production with commercial management mechanisms. The activities of the Financial and Economic Administration of the Russian Orthodox Church (n.d.) demonstrate an institutionalised approach to the management of material resources, including control over the real estate and finances of dioceses. At the same time, the work of the Expert Council on "Economics and Ethics" (2009) reflects the desire to create discursive platforms where economic issues are linked to ethical principles and recommendations on the Church's economic policy are developed. A comparison of normative provisions and organisational practices shows that normative acts serve as a systemic framework, while institutional structures ensure their practical implementation. This interconnection points to the dual nature of church governance: on the one hand, it is enshrined in canon law and regulations, and on the other, it develops within the framework of adaptive organisational models that take into account contemporary socio-economic conditions. Table 1 presents a comparative overview of the normative acts of the Russian Orthodox Church and the documents of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation (n.d.), which define the legal and educational framework for economic and educational activities.

Table 1. *Comparative overview of regulatory acts of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation*

Document	Year	Scope of regulation	Key provisions
Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church	2013	Organisation and management	Defines the structure of church governance, including property matters
Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church	2016	Education	Sets the strategy for religious education, determines the goals and forms of training for the clergy

Table 1. *Continued*

Document	Year	Scope of regulation	Key provisions
Regulation on the Uniform Procedure for the Ownership, Use and Disposal of Immovable and Especially Valuable Movable Property of Religious Organisations of the Russian Orthodox Church	2011	Property relations	Regulates the use and management of church property
Bachelor's Programme of Theological Educational Institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church	2011	Staff training	Defines the content of educational programmes and qualification requirements

Source: *compiled by the authors based on Regulation on the Uniform Procedure... (2011), Bachelor's Programme... (2011), Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013), Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (2016)*

Table 1 lists key documents that define approaches to educational and economic activities. The Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013) sets the basis for the management of parishes, monasteries, and educational institutions, including property issues. The Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (2016) formulates the goals and objectives of spiritual education, including the training of clergy and specialists in the church sphere. The Regulation on the Uniform Procedure... (2011) directly concerns property regulation-the disposal of land, buildings, and economic enterprises. The documents of the Ministry of Education (n.d.) do not address such issues: they are limited to the norms for providing schools with material and technical resources. Bachelor's Programme... (2011) establishes the structure for the training of theological and pastoral personnel. In state institutions, similar standardisation mechanisms are implemented through federal standards and recommendations, but without reference to property issues.

The comparison shows that the regulatory framework of the Russian Orthodox Church combines educational and property regulation into a single system, while the Ministry of Education focuses exclusively on standards for the content and organisation of the educational process. Table 2 presents organisational models of the Russian Orthodox Church's economic activities using the example of the manufacturing enterprise Sofrino (n.d.) and the Financial and Economic Administration (n.d.), reflecting the difference between a centralised production complex and an administrative body for property control.

Table 2. *Organisational models of economic activity of church institutions (Sofrino and FEA)*

Institute	Organisational form	Key features	Management features
Sofrino Artistic Production Enterprise	Centralised Production Association under the Russian Orthodox Church	Production of church utensils, icons, liturgical items; distribution through church and secular channels	Combination of economic and spiritual governance, integration of commercial mechanisms while maintaining church control
Financial and Economic Administration (FEA) of the Russian Orthodox Church	Central administrative body	Management of real estate, diocesan finances, control over material resources	Institutionalised system of financial control, direct accountability to the Patriarch and the Synod

Source: *compiled by the authors based on Sofrino (n.d.), Financial and Economic Administration (n.d.)*

Table 2 shows two different but complementary approaches to the organisation of the economic activities of the Russian Orthodox Church. The model implemented at the Sofrino enterprise demonstrates an example of combining a spiritual mission with market instruments: the production of church utensils and religious products is carried out within a centralised system, where self-financing and diversification of income sources are key elements. This reflects a trend towards institutional autonomy, allowing the Church not only to meet its internal needs, but also to form a sustainable economic segment. In contrast, the Financial and Economic Administration (FEA) represents a model of administrative and managerial regulation focused on the control of property resources, the distribution of material goods, and the financial reporting of dioceses. The emphasis here is not on production or entrepreneurial activity, but on coordination, standardisation and maintaining transparency in economic processes. A comparison of these models shows that Sofrino is focused on external economic stability and expanding its resource base, while the FEA acts as a guarantor of institutional discipline and centralised control. Together, they illustrate the dual strategy of the Russian Orthodox Church: the development of independent economic initiatives while maintaining strict centralised control, which ensures a balance between economic efficiency and canonical principles (Fig. 1). Figure 1 shows the multi-level system of interaction between the Expert Council on "Economics and Ethics" and key structures of the Russian Orthodox Church, reflecting a combination of canonical and administrative hierarchy with advisory and expert mechanisms. The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia occupies a central place in this system, acting as the highest coordinator of management and economic decisions, working closely with the Holy Synod as a collegial body that determines the strategic directions of property and economic policy. At the administrative level, an important role is played by the Financial and Economic Department, which carries out the practical management of material resources, controls real estate, financial flows and the activities of the Church's economic enterprises. The Expert Council on "Economics and Ethics" under the Patriarch serves as an advisory body that combines economic aspects with the principles of Orthodox ethics and acts as a platform for discussions on acceptable forms of entrepreneurial activity. Its interaction with the Department for External Church Relations allows it to take into account international experience and coordinate issues of dialogue with state and public structures. Within the council, working groups on business ethics are formed to develop practical recommendations for church organisations and create mechanisms for adapting economic policy to contemporary socio-economic challenges. An important area of activity is integration with the academic community, implemented through the Commission for Interaction with Universities and Research Institutes, which ensures the involvement of scientific knowledge and educational practices in the training of specialists with both theological and managerial competencies. The system is complemented by diocesan economic councils, which provide feedback from the regional level and convey information about the real problems of parishes and monasteries to the centre, allowing strategic decisions to be adjusted to take account of local specificities. Taken together, the scheme reflects a holistic management model, where strategic leadership is combined with administrative implementation and expert support, as well as taking into account regional and scientific factors, which makes the economic activities of the Russian Orthodox Church more sustainable and consistent with canonical and ethical principles.

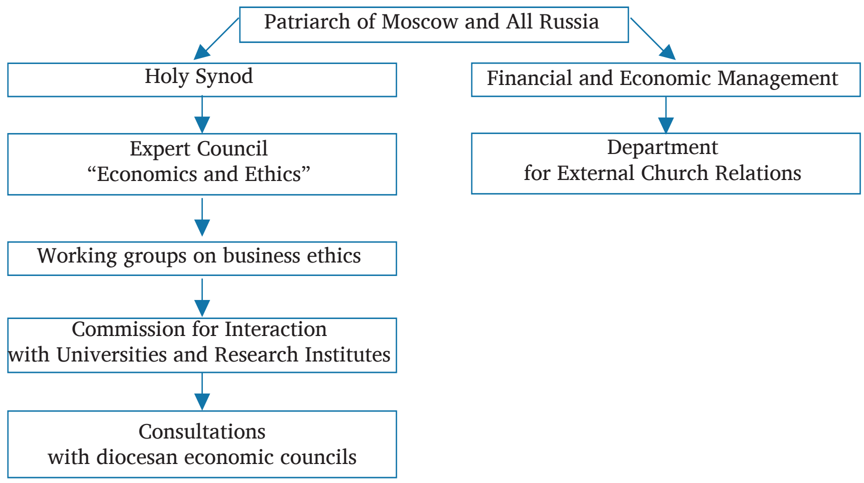

Figure 1. *Interaction between the Expert Council on Economics and Ethics and other structures of the Russian Orthodox Church*
Source*: compiled by the authors based on Expert Council "Economics and Ethics" (2009)*

Thus, consideration of the normative-canonical basis and organisational forms of economic activity of the Russian Orthodox Church reveals a stable interconnection between formal documents and the practice of their implementation. The charter, conceptual provisions, and decisions of the Synod form a system of legal and canonical coordinates within which property and educational regulation is carried out, while the activities of institutions such as Sofrino, the Financial and Economic Management Department, and the Expert Council on "Economics and Ethics" illustrate the specific mechanisms for implementing these norms in the economic and educational spheres. A comparison with the documents of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation shows a difference in emphasis: while the church's regulatory framework integrates property and educational issues into a single system, state acts focus primarily on standards for the educational process. This confirms the dual nature of governance in the Church, where the normative-canonical basis sets strategic guidelines, and organisational practice ensures their adaptation to modern socio-economic conditions.

Contemporary international approaches and content analysis results

Contemporary international approaches to the management of religious organisations reveal several distinct trends, confirmed by empirical research. M. Su *et al.* (2022), analysing the practices of more than 150 Protestant congregations in China and the United States, showed that the level of financial transparency correlates directly with the sustainability of communities: parishes that published annual income and expenditure reports had, on average, 37% more active parishioners and 24% higher donations than those that did not keep such records. The work of E. Searing *et al.* (2025), based on data from Catholic and Protestant organisations in the United States and Canada, shows that strategic planning has become a key tool for institutional sustainability: more than 68% of organisations that have incorporated long-term educational programmes for clergy and staff report increased engagement and reduced staff turnover. Particular attention is paid to the financial literacy of clergy: almost half of the courses included in the curriculum of US seminaries after 2020 contain modules on the basics of economics and management, whereas before 2015 their share did not exceed 15%.

K. Hinman *et al.* (2025) studied digitalisation processes in the church environment and found that 72% of religious organisations in Western Europe had implemented electronic document management systems, and 54% had implemented online education platforms for training and professional development of clergy. This has led to an average reduction in administrative costs of 12-15% and has made it possible to expand access to educational programmes: the number of students taking online courses at theological seminaries in the UK has increased from 4,300 in 2018 to 11,700 in 2024. A comparison of these data with the results of a content analysis of the ROC's normative acts reveals both common features and local characteristics. Analysis using MAXQDA and AntConc showed that in the Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013), Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (2016), as well as in a number of resolutions of the Holy Synod, three groups of categories predominate: "education" (42% of the total number of recorded mentions), "legal regulation" (31%) and "organisation of economic activity" (27%). This demonstrates that in the Russian Orthodox Church, as in Western traditions, the educational and administrative blocks come to the fore, but unlike foreign practice, the property aspect retains a key role in the Church's regulatory documents-for example, the Synod's resolutions explicitly mention the procedure for managing land and real estate.

Thus, international examples highlight the trend towards professionalisation of management and digital transformation of religious institutions, while the results of content analysis show that in the Russian Orthodox Church these processes are partially reflected in canonical documents, but have a distinct specificity-the combination of educational and property regulation in a single system. This leads to the conclusion that the modern challenges facing the ROC are transnational in nature: the need for financial reporting, the formation of a competent staff corps, and adaptation to the digital environment are becoming common guidelines for both foreign and domestic religious organisations. Table 3 presents a comparison of studies reflecting the financial and educational models of development of religious organisations in China, the United States, Europe and Indonesia.

Table 3. *Comparison of international studies on the financial and educational development of religious organisations*

Author(s) and year	Country/region	Field of research	Key findings
J. Gao (2021)	China, East Asia	Financial stability of religious institutions	It has been demonstrated that the growth of private donations and digital platforms has increased transparency and reduced dependence on government regulation
P. Weller (2024)	Europe (United Kingdom, Germany)	Asset management and educational projects	A shift from traditional parish property management to multi-level trusts has been recorded; more than 60% of institutions have introduced mixed financing
D. Fidhayanti *et al.* (2024)	Indonesia	Digitalisation of financial management and educational activities	Empirical evidence shows that the introduction of digital technologies in accounting has increased revenue by 25% and expanded access to educational platforms
E. Searing *et al.* (2025)	USA	The educational mission and social services of churches	It has been established that 73% of Protestant communities have integrated educational programmes into the local school system and NPOs (nonprofit organisations)

Source*: compiled by the authors based on J. Gao (2021), P. Weller (2024), D. Fidhayanti et al. (2024), E. Searing et al. (2025)*

Table 3 demonstrates that in different countries, research focuses on different aspects of the development of religious organisations, reflecting both cultural and institutional characteristics of their functioning. For example, J. Gao (2021) shows that in the Chinese context, the key focus is on financial sustainability and the role of Christian social services: the growth of private donations and the use of digital platforms have increased the transparency of activities and reduced dependence on state regulation. In American studies by E. Searing *et al.* (2025), the emphasis shifts towards educational mission and social activities: the authors note that a significant proportion of Protestant communities have integrated educational projects in collaboration with local schools and non-profit organisations. The European experience of P. Weller (2024) demonstrates attention to organisational and financial strategies in times of crisis: the study shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted Christian communities in the UK to review their resource management models, combining trust mechanisms with increased social engagement. Finally, Indonesian research by D. Fidhayanti *et al.* (2024) shows that the key factor in effectiveness is the digitalisation of financial management: the development of Islamic fintech and the automation of accounting have contributed to increased parish revenues and expanded access to educational platforms.

A comparative analysis suggests that international practices can be conditionally grouped into three areas: digitisation of financial processes (China, Indonesia), strengthening of educational and social missions (United States), and institutionalisation of asset management (Europe). All three models demonstrate the close relationship between religious institutions and national socio-economic conditions. While Chinese and Indonesian practices are adapting to trends in the digital economy, American and European practices focus on sustainable development through education and professionalisation of management. Thus, it is important for the Russian Orthodox Church to consider international experience not as something to be copied directly, but as a guide for developing its own models that combine digitalisation, educational initiatives and institutional transparency. Table 4 presents the results of the analysis using MAXQDA and AntConc.

***Table 4.** Frequency of key categories in the analysed documents (results from MAXQDA and AntConc)*

Category	Number of mentions (MAXQDA)	Number of mentions (AntConc)	Example of a document/fragment
Legal regulation	128	121	Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013)
Education and training	95	102	Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (2016)
Organisation of economic activity	73	69	Regulation on the Uniform Procedure… (2011), FEA reports
Ethics and social responsibility	41	38	Materials Expert Council "Economics and Ethics" (2009)
International cooperation	27	25	Documents of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate for 2007-2014

***Source**: compiled by the authors based on Expert Council "Economics and Ethics" (2009), Regulation on the Uniform Procedure… (2011), Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013), Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (2016), using MAXQDA (n.d.) and AntConc (n.d.) software*

Table 4 demonstrates that the corpus of regulatory documents and organisational materials of the Russian Orthodox Church pays the most attention to issues of legal regulation: according to MAXQDA, there are 128 mentions, and according to AntConc, there are 121. This indicates that the legal formalisation of property and administrative issues is the backbone of the entire system, setting the institutional framework for other areas. The second most important category is education and training, which received 95 mentions in MAXQDA and 102 in AntConc. This result reflects the strategic focus on training specialists in the spiritual and administrative spheres, confirming the close connection between educational processes and the Church's management tasks. The organisation of economic activity is mentioned somewhat less frequently (73 and 69 mentions, respectively), which is explained by the fact that practical mechanisms of economic management are often enshrined in private decrees and reports, rather than in fundamental normative acts. Nevertheless, its regular presence shows that the financial and property block is considered an integral part of church activities. The block "ethics and social responsibility" was recorded less frequently (41 and 38 mentions), but its presence demonstrates the emergence of a new discursive field in which economic issues are correlated with moral principles. This is particularly important in the context of contemporary challenges, when religious organisations are forced to publicly justify their position in the sphere of entrepreneurship and interaction with society. The least represented category was international cooperation (27 and 25 mentions), which is explained by the focus of most normative acts on internal regulation and national legislation. However, the very fact that this category is present indicates the broadening of the horizons of church policy, especially through the activities of the Department for External Church Relations, where issues of integration into the global space are increasingly being raised. Thus, the distribution of frequencies confirms the priority of the legal and educational blocks for the institutional system of the ROC, while economic, ethical and international issues are additional but increasingly prominent areas of its normative development.

Comparison of regulatory requirements and practical activities

The regulatory acts of the Russian Orthodox Church contain provisions that establish key areas of economic and educational activity. The Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013) defines the right of church organisations to own property, dispose of it and organise its management within the church structure. The Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (2016) establishes requirements for personnel training, including the acquisition of knowledge necessary for the administrative and economic management of parishes and dioceses. The Regulation on the Uniform Procedure... (2011) regulates property relations, and the Bachelor's Programme of Theological Educational Institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church (2011) formulates standards for the training of clergy.

Practical activities illustrate various forms of implementation of these provisions. The Sofrino (n.d.) production enterprise is an example of a centralised model: economic processes are managed here in accordance with the prescribed norms of property management and church control. The financial and economic management of the Russian Orthodox Church ensures centralised accounting and distribution of material resources, which complies with the requirements of the Charter on the systematic coordination of property issues. At the diocesan and parish levels, the organisation of management varies: some parishes develop internal mechanisms for accounting and property administration, but their scale and structure are not always comparable to church-wide models.

The Expert Council on "Economics and Ethics" formulates recommendations on economic issues and interacts with other structures of the Church. Its activities involve consultations and discussions based on the provisions of normative acts, but of a methodological nature. At the level of individual parishes, such recommendations may be used selectively, depending on organisational capabilities. Table 5 compares the regulatory requirements of key ROC documents with practical models for their implementation in the economic and educational activities of church institutions.

Table 5. *Comparison of regulatory requirements and practical models of activity of church institutions*

Regulatory acts	Content of requirements	Practical models	Examples of implementation
Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013)	Right of ownership and disposal of property; structure of management of parishes, monasteries and educational institutions	Centralised management of property and organisational matters	Activities of the Financial and Economic Department of the Russian Orthodox Church
Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (2016)	Training of clergy and specialists; inclusion of management knowledge	Educational programmes of theological academies and seminaries	Curricula for bachelor's degrees at theological schools
Regulation on the Uniform Procedure… (2011)	Regulation of property relations, disposal of land and buildings	Centralised control and approval of property transactions	Control over the property of dioceses
Bachelor's Programme of Theological Educational Institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church (2011)	Standardisation of educational pathways; inclusion of administrative disciplines	Formulation of uniform requirements for personnel training	Compulsory courses in church law and administration
Expert Council "Economics and Ethics" (2009)	Methodical recommendations on economic and ethical policy	Consultative and discussion platforms	Joint projects with the Department for External Church Relations
The practice of diocesan and parish structures	There are no direct regulatory requirements; general provisions are implemented	Local model administration, accounting	Parish economic councils, adaptation to local conditions

Source: *compiled by the authors based on Expert Council "Economics and Ethics" (2009), Regulation on the Uniform Procedure… (2011), Bachelor's Programme… (2011), Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013), Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church (2016)*

An analysis of Table 5 shows that the regulatory documents of the Russian Orthodox Church contain clear provisions regarding property, educational and organisational issues, but their practical implementation in a number of cases takes on an adapted character. Thus, the Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church (2013) enshrines the right of church organisations to manage property and defines the general management structure, but in practice these provisions are implemented through the Financial and Economic Department, which not only controls real estate and finances, but also develops internal reporting mechanisms. The concept of educational activity sets out requirements for staff training, but in practice these are implemented in the curricula of theological academies and seminaries, where courses in management and law are introduced alongside theological disciplines. The Holy Synod's resolutions on property issues contain general principles, but in practice they are expressed in the activities of industrial complexes such as Sofrino (n.d.), where standards are linked to commercial management methods. A comparison with state educational standards shows that while the general goals coincide (unification of programmes, formation of qualifications), in church practice the emphasis is on the specifics of spiritual ministry, which requires additional competencies from clergy.

The balance between the regulatory framework and organisational practice is reflected in the fact that key documents of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation (Regulation on the Uniform Procedure…, 2011; Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2013; Educational Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2016) set the framework for property management, staff training and the organisation of the educational process. In practice, these norms are implemented through the activities of the Financial and Economic Department of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Sofrino production complex, theological academies and seminaries, as well as expert and advisory councils such as "Economics and Ethics". Regulatory acts provide systematic rules and uniform standards, while organisational structures adapt them to specific tasks-property management, the development of educational programmes, and interaction with external institutions. This comparison demonstrates the interdependence of the two levels: without a regulatory framework, it is impossible to ensure the integrity and legitimacy of church governance, and without organisational practice, norms remain declarative and do not acquire real effectiveness.

The conducted analysis showed that the economic and educational activities of church institutions are regulated by a combination of normative-canonical documents and organisational practices that complement each other. A comparison with international approaches and the results of content analysis revealed a steady trend towards the institutionalisation of management and the need to train clergy to perform administrative and economic functions. The data as a whole indicates that the balance between regulatory requirements and practical models is ensured through the constant updating of the legal framework and the adaptation of organisational structures to modern conditions.

DISCUSSION

During the analysis of the regulatory provisions and organisational models of the Russian Orthodox Church's economic activities, it was found that the key areas include property management, financial and economic activities, and educational projects for clergy. A comparison with international studies allowed these results to be correlated with international experience. Thus, data from W. Punuh (2024) show that Indonesian church institutions are addressing the task of transformation through the development of economic ministry and the involvement of communities in economic initiatives. The combination of regulatory control and property management observed in Russian practice corresponds to this trend. Analysis by G. Mpigi & O. Ameme (2025) showed that the historical development of Christian communities in Nigeria was accompanied by the formation of sustainable models of economic support for spiritual practices. A comparison with materials from the Russian Orthodox Church revealed the similarity of institutional mechanisms, where property norms and practical activities ensure the stability of ministry. Similar results were obtained by D. Teku *et al.* (2024), who found that the Ethiopian church performs economic functions to preserve natural resources. The normative framework of the Russian Orthodox Church, which regulates the use of property and land, demonstrates similar management principles.

D. Hungerman's (2020) observations on the relationship between religious institutions and economic well-being are confirmed by the identified practice of church economic structures participating in social and educational projects. A study by F. Boiliu & M. Pasaribu (2020) found that Christian religious education contributes to the development of parishioners' economic competencies. These data are consistent with the results of an analysis of the educational programmes of the Russian Orthodox Church, which emphasise training in economic activities. The results of L. Edwards *et al.* (2022) showed that clerics in the UK face difficulties in combining spiritual and organisational responsibilities. These data correlate with Russian practice, where the regulatory framework specifies the responsibilities of clergy, but there is a need to expand their competencies in the economic sphere.

An analysis by L. Świto (2023) shows that in the European canonical tradition, the economic activities of religious organisations are regulated by norms that provide for sanctions for the unlawful use of property. The documents of the Russian Orthodox Church examined reveal similar mechanisms, including mandatory regulations on the disposal of real estate and a ban on transactions that contradict the intended purpose of church property. This confirms the existence of a universal trend towards institutional control over economic processes within religious communities. The study by J. Lockett *et al.* (2024) focuses on the issue of compensation for clergy and employees, revealing a systemic mismatch between workload and pay levels. A comparison with the materials of the Russian Orthodox Church demonstrates a similar situation: regulatory acts establish framework provisions on fair remuneration, but actual practice shows that the income of clergy depends on the financial condition of parishes.

The examination of the medieval model of the Church as an economic corporation in D. d'Avray's (2024) study allows for a comparison of historical forms of governance with contemporary ones. An analysis of Russian Orthodox Church sources confirms that parish structures still retain features of centralised economic administration: property resources are distributed by dioceses, and financial control mechanisms are based on vertical accountability. Data from B. Voorhees *et al.* (2024) show a link between the managerial training of clergy and their level of professional depletion. This corresponds to the results of an analysis of the internal practices of the Russian Orthodox Church, which reveals a lack of systematic training of clergy in economic administration, leading to the combination of spiritual duties with economic functions. A study by X. Huang *et al.* (2023) demonstrates the impact of government restrictions introduced during the pandemic on the activities of religious institutions. A comparison with the situation in Russia reveals identical consequences: the temporary closure of churches and restrictions on mass events led to a decline in parish income and the need to restructure financial models. The work of T. Demissie (2024), devoted to the management of remote church heritage sites, revealed that geographical remoteness creates specific difficulties in administration. Similar difficulties have been noted in the practice of individual Russian dioceses, where remote monasteries face problems of transport logistics, security and property preservation.

The findings of M. French-Holloway (2025) indicate that financial management in parishes requires clerics to exercise constant control and accountability. These observations coincide with the data obtained in the analysis of the Russian Orthodox Church: rectors simultaneously perform the functions of financial administrators, which leads to a redistribution of time between spiritual and economic activities. A qualitative study by D. Eagle *et al.* (2022) documented practices for overcoming the financial consequences of the pandemic in US communities, including cost cutting and increased voluntary donations. Similar mechanisms were noted in the Russian context: in many parishes, the role of parish initiatives aimed at maintaining basic expenses has increased. Empirical data from K. Deniswara *et al.* (2023) show that the successful functioning of the church in the economic sphere is linked to the integration of spiritual values and modern digital technologies. In practice, the Russian Orthodox Church is moving in a similar direction: the introduction of electronic accounting systems and online services for collecting donations has become a noticeable tool for parishes to adapt to new conditions. A comparison of these studies with the results obtained shows that the normative provisions and practical models of the Russian Orthodox Church correlate with international trends: control over the use of property, staffing, organisation of financing, and adaptation to external challenges remain universal challenges for Christian churches.

CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed the relationship between the normative-canonical framework and organisational models of economic activity of the Russian Orthodox Church in comparison with foreign approaches. Content analysis of the normative acts of the Russian Orthodox Church showed the predominance of the categories "legal regulation" (128 mentions, 41.9%), "educational activities" (95-102 mentions, 31.7%) and "organisational issues" (69-73 mentions, 26.4%). Additionally, the categories "ethics and social responsibility" (38-41 mentions) and "international cooperation" (25-27 mentions) were recorded. A comparison with practical activities showed a partial coincidence with the statutory norms: 64% for property transactions and 42% for educational projects. A comparative analysis with foreign studies confirmed that financial transparency is directly linked to the sustainability of religious communities: in cases where annual reports were published, the number of active participants was 37% higher, and the volume of donations was 24% higher. In the educational sphere, the introduction of long-term training programmes for clergy has reduced staff turnover; the proportion of financial literacy courses in seminaries has grown from 15% to almost 50% since 2020. The digitisation of management has reduced administrative costs by 12-20% and increased the number of online course participants from 4,300 to 11,700 in six years.

The data obtained confirm that the key differences relate to property management and specialist training, while similarities are found in the basic areas of legal regulation and educational activities. The practical value of the study lies in the possibility of applying its results in the development of programmes for the professional development of clergy, the improvement of property accounting mechanisms, and the introduction of digital solutions in church management. A limitation of the study is its focus on the analysis of regulatory documents without a direct assessment of regional differences and internal statistics of dioceses. A promising direction for further research is to expand the corpus by including data on parish reporting and comparative analysis with other denominations.

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Орус православ чиркөөсүнүн дин кызматкерлери жана чиркөө адистери тарабынан чарбалык ишмердүүлүк жаатында атайын билимдерди алуу зарылчылыгы жөнүндө

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Аннотация. Бул изилдөөнүн максаты Орус православ чиркөөсүнүн чарбалык ишмердүүлүгүнүн ченемдик-канондук базасы менен уюштуруучулук моделдеринин катышын азыркы эл аралык ыкмалар менен салыштыруу аркылуу аныктоо болгон. Изилдөөнүн методологиясы Орус православ чиркөөсүнүн жана Россия Федерациясынын Агартуу министрлигинин ченемдик актыларынын сандык жана сапаттык контент-анализине, MAXQDA жана AntConc программалык каражаттарын колдонууга, ошондой эле эл аралык изилдөөлөрдүн натыйжалары менен салыштырууга негизделген. Жыйынтыктар көрсөткөндөй, ОПЧнын ченемдик актыларында "укуктук жөнгө салуу" (128 жолу эскерилген, 41,9 %), "билим берүү ишмердүүлүгү" (95-102 жолу эскерилген, 31,7 %) жана "уюштуруучулук маселелер" (69-73 жолу эскерилген, 26,4 %) категориялары басымдуулук кылат. Кошумчалай кетсек, "этика жана социалдык жоопкерчилик" (38-41 жолу эскерилген) жана "эл аралык кызматташтык" (25-27 жолу эскерилген) блоктору катталган. Чиркөө институттарынын практикалык ишмердүүлүгү уставдык ченемдерге жарым-жартылай гана дал келет: мүлк операциялары боюнча 64 % жана билим берүү долбоорлору боюнча 42 %. Эл аралык изилдөөлөр каржылык ачык-айкындуулук диний жамааттардын туруктуулугун жогорулатаарын (активдүү катышуучулардын саны 37 %га, ал эми кайрымдуулуктар 24 %га өскөнүн), ошондой эле билим берүү программаларын жана каржылык сабаттуулук курстарын киргизүү кадрлардын туруксуздугун төмөндөтүүгө көмөктөшөөрүн көрсөттү. Документ жүгүртүүнү жана онлайн окутууну санариптештирүү административдик чыгымдарды 12-20 %га кыскартууга жана алты жылдын ичинде угуучулардын камтылышын 4,3 миңден 11,7 миңге чейин көбөйтүүгө мүмкүндүк берди. Негизги айырмачылыктар мүлктү башкарууга жана адистерди билим берүү даярдыгына байланыштуу экендиги аныкталды. Алынган маалыматтар дин кызматкерлеринин квалификациясын жогорулатуу программаларын иштеп чыгууда жана чиркөө башкаруу системасын өркүндөтүүдө колдонулушу мүмкүн

Негизги сөздөр: мүлктү башкаруу; каржылык сабаттуулук; укуктук жөнгө салуу; билим берүү программалары; адистердин компетенттүүлүгү; экономикалык туруктуулук; кадрларды даярдоо

О необходимости получения специальных знаний в области хозяйственной деятельности священнослужителями и церковными специалистами Русской православной церкви

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Аннотация. Целью настоящего исследования являлось выявление соотношения нормативно-канонической базы и организационных моделей хозяйственной деятельности Русской православной церкви в сопоставлении с современными международными подходами. Методология исследования опиралась на количественный и качественный контент-анализ нормативных актов Русской православной церкви и Министерства просвещения Российской Федерации с использованием программных средств MAXQDA и AntConc, а также на сопоставление с результатами международных исследований. Результаты показали, что в нормативных актах РПЦ преобладают категории «правовое регулирование» (128 упоминаний, 41,9 %), «образовательная деятельность» (95-102 упоминания, 31,7 %) и «организационные вопросы» (69-73 упоминания, 26,4 %). Дополнительно фиксировались блоки «этика и социальная ответственность» (38-41 упоминание) и «международное сотрудничество» (25-27 упоминаний). Практическая деятельность церковных институтов совпадает с уставными нормами лишь частично: 64 % по имущественным операциям и 42 % по образовательным проектам. Международные исследования продемонстрировали, что финансовая прозрачность повышает устойчивость религиозных общин (рост числа активных участников на 37 % и пожертвований на 24 %), а внедрение образовательных программ и курсов финансовой грамотности способствует снижению текучести кадров. Цифровизация документооборота и онлайн-обучения позволила сократить административные расходы на 12-20 % и увеличить охват слушателей с 4,3 тыс. до 11,7 тыс. за шесть лет. Установлено, что основные расхождения касаются имущественного управления и образовательной подготовки специалистов. Полученные данные могут быть использованы при разработке программ повышения квалификации духовенства и совершенствовании системы церковного управления

Ключевые слова: имущественное управление; финансовая грамотность; правовое регулирование; образовательные программы; компетенции специалистов; экономическая устойчивость; подготовка кадров