

The Experience and Religiosity toward Tourist Satisfaction: The Case of Umrah Pilgrimage

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ABSTRACT

The study of tourism and pilgrimage is still less prominent in Indonesia amid the large potential market segment in this business. The main purpose of this study to explore the effect of experience and religiosity on the satisfaction of pilgrims in religious tourism since the impact of religious tourism can vary based on level of religious experience of adherents. The quantitative approach conducted through distributing questionnaires to 125 people who are Umrah pilgrims. The study findings show a significant role of experience and religiosity to increase pilgrim satisfaction on the journey of Umrah. This study also highlights the implications in the context of religious tourism that the role of personal values and tourist behavior is very substantial. Motivation that is spiritually has a bigger impact than emotional experiences in fulfilling the expectations of pilgrims on religious sites. The results study indicates necessary matters in creating satisfaction in religious tourism while still combining profane and spiritual aspects.

ABSTRAK

Studi pariwisata dan ziarah masih kurang menonjol di Indonesia ditengah besarnya segmen pasar potensial dalam bisnis ini. Tujuan utama studi ini untuk mengeksplorasi efek pengalaman dan religiusitas pada kepuasan peziarah wisata religi karena dampak wisata religi dapat bervariasi berdasarkan pengalaman religiusitas pemeluknya. Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan melalui penyebaran kuesioner pada 125 jamaah umroh. Temuan studi menunjukkan peran signifikan dari pengalaman dan religiusitas untuk meningkatkan kepuasan peziarah dalam perjalanan ibadah umroh. Studi ini juga menyiratkan implikasi pada konteks wisata religi bahwa peran *personal values* dan *tourist behavior* sangat substansial. Motivasi yang bersifat spritual berdampak lebih besar dibanding pengalaman emosional dalam memenuhi harapan yang diinginkan peziarah pada situs religi. Hasil penelitian mengindikasikan hal-hal yang diperlukan dalam menciptakan kepuasan pada wisata religi dengan tetap memadukan aspek profan dan spiritual.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism has developed into an industry that is able to provide a high contribution to the country's economic growth. On the other hand, Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world as well as culture and religious that affected the way of life (Andrianto, 2019). Along with the development of the people's economic level, the awareness and ability of the Muslim community in Indonesia to perform the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages has also increased. According to the Muslim Association for Hajj and Umrah Organizers of the Republic of Indonesia (AMPHURI) there has been a nearly doubled increase in the number of participants for Umrah pilgrims from Indonesia in the last five years before the pandemic. This illustrates the trend of increasing public demand for Hajj and Umrah.

Umrah is also known as the minor Hajj. This worship includes a series of rituals such as *ihram* (wear clothes without seams and recite the intention), *tawaf* (Circumnavigate the Kaaba seven times), *sa'i* (Trod from the hills of Safa and Marwah), and *tahalul* (shaving or cutting hair). In the literature, the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages are included in the category of religious tourism because they contain Islamic sharia values in their implementation. Islamic tourism is firmly rooted in Islamic law where every Muslim is required to visit the holy city of Mecca (Saudi Arabia) to perform Hajj (the fifth Pillar of Islam) if he is able to finance it financially and physically (Eid, 2013). According to (Abullah et al., 2020) Islamic tourism is basically an interpretation of pilgrimage that combines religious and recreational tourism. Pilgrimage has expanded to become one of the largest forms of human mobility in the world today, and it is recognized that pilgrimage tourism is the largest gathering

of tourists in the world (Kim et al, 2020). Unfortunately, tourism based on religion or belief is perhaps the least prominent (Kasim, 2011). Meanwhile, religious tourism activities such as hajj and umrah are developing in Indonesia, thereby attracting attention from both the commercial and research sides.

One aspect of fundamental behavior that is often discussed in tourism studies regarding is satisfaction. However, in general, the concept of satisfaction is explored more in studies of mass and non-religious tourism destinations which are characterized by hedonism, permissiveness, and luxury. In fact, pilgrims also have desires related to respect for the sanctity of pilgrimage sites and satisfying religious observance practices. Due to the importance of a religious ritual, it is considered a unique experience that people want to enjoy in a safe and enjoyable way (Eid, 2012). There is still little research done on the perceptions and experiences of pilgrims (Muslims performing Hajj and Umrah) as "consumers" in comparing their expectations and what they witness during Hajj or Umrah (Subhan, 2023). Furthermore, latest research only focuses on the safety aspect and ignores the pleasure and comfort aspects of the Umrah pilgrimage.

A critical aspect of religious tourism such as Hajj and Umrah is the authenticity of the pilgrimage experience. The religious experience experienced by Umrah pilgrims is the basis for understanding the search for meaning by tourists for an authentic religious tourism destination (Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019). The experience of oneself in a sacred place is considered a key element that religious tourists look for during their visit to a religious tourism destination (B. Kim & Kim, 2019). Several kinds of experience at religious sites when Umrah pilgrimage such as visiting many sites of religious

heritage and Islamic architecture (ziarah at Hira Cave, Jabal Rahmah, Prophet's Mosque), witnessing the splendor of the Kaaba, an emotional connection arises from a sense of being closer to God, feeling a holy atmosphere, seeking comfort and spiritual peace.

However, the relation of this concept to other phenomena, such as ritual, tradition, is less explored. Religious tourism is mostly an experiential product; however, only a small proportion of research in this area has empirically examined what visitors actually experience at religious sites or the subsequent benefits that visitors attribute to their experiences (Zulvianti et al., 2023). Certain types of experiences related to religion tend to influence people's emotions and spirituality, however the emotional aspect has been neglected in the religious tourism literature when investigating religious tourism experiences. (B. Kim & Kim, 2019).

In the last decade, the study of religiosity and tourism has attracted the attention of researchers (Battour, Ismail, Battor, & Awais, 2017; Preko, Mohammed, Edem, & Ameyibor, 2020). Religiosity is considered to be a strong motivating factor in encouraging one's behavior on religious tourism trips and having an impact on happiness or life satisfaction (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; B. Kim & Kim, 2019). Religiosity influences and directs Muslims to travel to certain sites and influences their attitudes and behavior, perceptions and emotions on those sites (Abdullah, 2020).

Tourism orientation concerns the comfort and happiness of the tourists. However, at some moments of pilgrimage tours to the Holy Land such as Umrah, there are unique and interesting phenomena. The question of what benefits and satisfactions do pilgrims get in the midst of a harsh environment and at the expense of physical suffering? This is still

not explored in religious tourism research on sacred pilgrimage destinations (Wang, Luo, Huang, & Yang, 2020). Therefore, the relationship among religiosity, religious tourism experience and satisfaction really allows for a better understanding and offers meaningful insights. This study will contribute to exposing the valence of experience that occur at religious sites by combining religious and non-religious aspects in providing tourist satisfaction. The results of religious tourism can vary between adherents based on experience and level of belief. Thus, it is worthwhile to conduct a study to investigate the impact of experience and religiosity on the satisfaction of Umrah pilgrims. Benefit of this topic that the importance of satisfying religious needs to enhance the customer satisfaction. The provision of religious aspects in the tourism and hospitality product could prove an integral part of the customer's orientation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism Experience

In the study of tourism, a tourist experience is viewed as an event involving the emotional, physical, spiritual, or intellectual level of a destination. In the study of religious tourism, certain types of experiences associated with religion are based on individual's emotions and spirituality (B. Kim & Kim, 2019). According to Bernaki and Marso (2023) the composition of the tourism experience includes individual, interaction, physical and situational characteristics. In general, the travel experience is the result of social and cultural products, which are viewed from the aspects of behavior, perception, cognition and emotion, both expressed and implied in explaining tourism experience.

As the type of tourism expands, experiences develop in the context of religious and pilgrimage tourism. The

experience of spiritual tourists is in the form of seeking knowledge and personal discovery through religious or spiritual practices as an alternative to their troubled daily lives (Piramanayagam & Seal, 2021).

The dimensions of religious experience in tourism studies are quite diverse. For instance research of Rageh, Melewar, and Woodside, (2013) reveal dimensions that include comfort, education, hedonic, novelty, recognition, relational, safety and beauty. Meanwhile, Piramanayagam and Seal, (2021) suggests that the dimensions of education, esthetics, escapist, authenticity are very important in the tourist experience. In another pilgrimage experience study, Moufahim and Lichrou, (2019) emphasizes authenticity which involves two aspects of intrapersonal and interpersonal.

The impression of a positive experience from a tourist visit will have an impact on satisfaction. Study of Preko et al. (2020) also indicate that affective factors such as emotions play an important role in the experience of religious pilgrimage activities that have implications for pilgrim satisfaction.

Religiosity

Religiosity has been considered as a determining factor human behavior. Some researchers view religiosity comprise dimensions of belief and practice in religion (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Taheri, 2016). Furthermore, the aspect of religious belief concerns personal beliefs, and religious perspectives while religious practice includes outwardly visible expressions of faith such as prayers, traditions, and rituals (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). Meanwhile, Agarwala et al, (2019) expanding the framework of the dimensions of religiosity includes belief, ritual, values, and community. In the context of tourism, religiosity is represented by the availability of Islamic

norms and practices at a destination (Battour et al., 2017).

Transcendent experiences in spiritual and religious settings can be triggered by physical characteristics, social interactions, spiritual experiences, and aspects of the religious community (Taheri, 2016). Aspects of place and community also play a central role in religious experience and encourage an emotional connection with religious sites. Studi (Preko et al., 2020) also reveals the perception of tourists' Islamic values about religious practices including significant physical attributes on their satisfaction. Therefore, the availability of several religious attributes that meet the needs of Muslim tourists can play an important role in Islamic tourism (Battour et al., 2017).

Table 1. The difference between Hajj and Umrah

	<i>Hajj</i>	<i>Umrah</i>
<i>Time</i>	8-12 Dzulhijjah	Anytime of the Year
<i>Pillar</i>	Ihram, Wukuf, Tawaf, Sa'I, Tahalul,	Ihram, Tawaf, Sa'I, Tahalul,
<i>Islamic Law</i>	Obligatory	Voluntary
<i>Duration</i>	4 – 5 day	2-3 Hours
<i>Location</i>	Makkah, Arafat, Muzdalifah and Mina	Makkah

Source: Data of researchers

Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a notable matter in the tourism industry. Satisfaction is a psychological circumstance resulting from an individual's evaluation of the experience of consuming or buying (Maunier & Camelis, 2013). Affective elements (emotions and social recognition) play a fundamental role and contribute to customer satisfaction (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). Furthermore, Muslim tourists not only evaluate the traditional values (cognitive and affective) but also consider the religious identity contributes to value creation (Eid, 2013). A study by Mohamed, Taheri, Farmaki, Olya, and Gannon (2020) also shows that religious

beliefs and the value of new experiences increase the satisfaction of Muslim consumers.

In the context of tourism, experiences are characterized by human interactions with the environment, it is appreciated by tourists and leads to satisfaction. Considerations related to the location of the destination and the environment are essential in tourism. In addition, [Maunier and Camelis, \(2013\)](#) also developed elements of travel satisfaction related to a) destinations, b) local service, and c) human beings. Visitors or tourists who increase their participation in various tourist destination activities tend to feel an increase in their life satisfaction ([Oliveira et al., 2018](#))

The hypotheses proposed in the study are:

H1: Travel experience has a positive and significant effect on increasing tourist satisfaction

H2: Religiosity has a positive and significant effect on increasing tourist satisfaction

RESEARCH METHOD

This research design is explanatory, also called verification research, which aims to test a phenomenon through testing hypotheses about causality between the variables studied. The number of respondents who successfully filled out the questionnaire was 125 respondents from the Gorontalo Umrah congregation departing from 2018 to 2020. This study was conducted in Gorontalo because it is known as the City of Veranda of Medina, in that most of the people of Gorontalo embrace Islam and Islamic values are also a part of community life and local culture.

The indicators in this study refer to previous research. The tourist experience indicator adopts the dimensions of by ([Nanggong & Mohammad, 2020](#); [Rageh et al., 2013](#)) and adjust the dimensions of the

tourism experience including novelty, social interaction, meaningful, and learn local destinations. Measurement of religiosity, refers to research ([Wang et al., 2020](#)) which is categorized on intrinsic and extrinsic aspects in measuring tourist religiosity. Meanwhile, the satisfaction indicator from ([Maunier & Camelis, 2013](#)) is related to the destination, local services, and human beings.

All research instruments use a Likert scale of 1 to 5 with points from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Testing the instrument measurement with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with cut-off > 0.4 loading factor to determine the validity and checking reliability with the criteria of Cronbach alpha > 0.6 . Data analysis with multiple regression to test the relationship between variables in the developed model.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results study, the profile demographic of the respondents was 52.8% female and 47.2%, male. Furthermore, in [Table 2](#) also, the age of the respondents is quite evenly distributed but the groups of 26-35 and 36-45 years old are larger, approximately 26.4%. Most educational background of respondents is high school as much as 39.2% followed by junior high school 28.8%.

Table 2. Profil of Demographics

Category	Item	N	%
Gender	Male	59	47.2
	Female	66	52.8
Age	15 – 25	29	23.2
	26 – 35	33	26.4
	36 - 45	33	26.4
	> 46	30	24
Education	Elementary	17	13.6
	Junior	36	28.8
	Senior	49	39.2
	Graduate	23	18.4
Profession	Entrepreneur	35	28.0
	Student	20	16.0
	Civil Servant	19	15.2
	Private	9	7.2
	Housewife	21	16.8
	Sailor	1	0.8
	Farmer	20	16.0

Number of	First time	119	95.2
Visit	2 times	6	4.8
Total		125	100 %

Source: Processed Data (2021)

Meanwhile, the profession of respondents was dominated by entrepreneurs 28%, then adhered by civil servants, Students, Farmers, and households each ranging from 15% - 16%. The majority of respondents (95%) are performing Umrah for the first time.

Table 3. Results of Validity and Reliability

Variable	Range Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Remark
Experience	0.531 – 0.911	0.795	Valid & Reliable
Religiosity	0.424 – 0.819	0.762	Valid & Reliable
Satisfaction	0.644 – 0.887	0.854	Valid & Reliable

Source: Processed Data (2021)

The measurement of research instruments (Table 3) is based on validity, it shows the loading factor value of all variable measurement items in the range of 0.424 to 0.911. Meanwhile, based on the reliability test of the research instrument, the Cronbach alpha value in the research variable ranges from 0.762 to 0.853 which indicates that it meets the criteria of Cronbach alpha > 0.6. Based on these results, it can be concluded that all research instruments were categorized as valid and reliable.

Table 4. Result of Hypothesis Testing

Variable	Beta	t	Sig	Result
Experience	0.202	0.762	0.014	Supported
Religiosity	0.467	0.854	0.000	Supported
R Square		0.338		
F		31.198		

Source: Processed Data (2021)

Based on Table 4, shows the results of hypothesis testing between variables. The effect of the umrah tourism experience was significant ($\beta = 0.202$; $p < 0.05$) on the satisfaction of pilgrims. In other words, there is a 20.2% coefficient of tourist satisfaction influenced by the pilgrim's experience. Meanwhile, the

impact of religiosity also had a significant effect ($\beta = 0.467$; $p < 0.01$) on pilgrim satisfaction. This result also shows that the magnitude effect of the religiosity is 46,7% greater than 20,2% coefficient of experience on satisfaction. The R square value is 0.338 and suggests that about 33.8% of the variance of tourist satisfaction was explained by experience and religiosity.

The findings of this study reveal the substantial role of experience and religiosity in increasing tourist satisfaction. The experience of pilgrims when traveling for Umrah has an impact on the satisfaction of these tourists. Experience during an Umrah trip can be composed of comfort and novelty, social interaction, meaningfulness, and new knowledge on the religious site. That is evidence that the journey of Umrah worship tends to be more hybrid that involves personal emotional, social, and cognitive experiences. Religious tourism destinations are an attraction for visitors because it is connected to the belief and authenticity of the religious sites that manifest in personal experiences (Zulvianti et al., 2023). The results of this study are also in line with Kim and Kim, (2019) that religious experiences generated through religious tourism have an impact on personal values such as happiness and satisfaction.

Findings of the study also provide an understanding of the role of religiosity in the journey of Umrah. In the literature, religiosity has been considered to be an important construct in consumer decision making through individual cognitive and behavioral. Hajj or Umrah travel is described as a set of products and services, and pilgrims or spiritual tourists can be seen as consumers (Subhan, 2023). Purchase decisions of the product when made by buyers who have high religiosity can lead them to satisfaction with the products offered. The findings of this

study also show that the effect of religiosity is very large in creating satisfaction for Umrah pilgrims. The results of this study corroborate the findings of previous studies which showed a positive relationship between religiosity and tourist satisfaction (Kusumawati, Listyorini, Suharyono, & Yulianto, 2020; Mohamed et al., 2020). Tourists with high religious values and beliefs are able to enjoy the adjustment of activities and facilities, accessibility, services, and cultural atmosphere of the destination were most likely to be satisfied.

This study contributes to explaining the motives that underlie the emergence of tourist satisfaction in pilgrimage trips, whether they are solely religious motives or whether they are influenced by secular reasons such as pleasure experiences. Both motives are considered to contain contradictory values because consumers with higher religiosity are considered less materialistic in expressing their consumption experiences (Taheri, 2016). The findings of this study reveal that satisfaction in the context of religious tourism can accommodate both profane and spiritual aspects. The combination of these aspects expands the literature on satisfaction in religious tourism. Studies confirm the suggestion Weidenfeld (2006); Weidenfeld and Ron, (2008) that there are relationships between tourism and religiosity, which could be characterized by mutual influence, complementarity, and even habit. Religious tourism has developed into an integral part of mass tourism because people seek to enjoy the satisfaction of their travels even though their primary travel is spirituality (Kasim, 2011). The results of this study also deepened the understanding of the interaction between perceived experience, religiosity, and satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study support the research model developed. Based on the results study revealed the role or impact of experience and religiosity on increasing the satisfaction of Umrah pilgrims. The emotional, cognitive, and social sensations in the pilgrimage journey felt by pilgrims stimulate their satisfaction. In addition, the level of religious beliefs and norms are adhered to by tourists significantly shapes the behavior and attitudes of tourists that lead to satisfaction in the Umrah trip.

This study also highlights the implications in the context of religious tourism that the role of personal values and tourist behavior is very substantial. Personal motivation based emotionally and spiritually can fulfill the expectations of pilgrims on religious sites. The results of this study indicate an important matter in the creation of satisfaction on religious tourism able to combine profane and spiritual aspects. This clearly shows that not only religiosity is significant but also antecedents of non-religion play a crucial role in tourist satisfaction.

However, the study provides limitations, *First*, as segmentation is too specific to a particular sample or region so in the future it is necessary to study by enlarging the sample in several locations. Furthermore, *Second*, the antecedent variable elements conducted are unidimensional while some literature interprets multidimensional of experience and religiosity variables. Therefore, to understand in more detail the antecedent impact of these two variables, which substantially create religious tourist satisfaction. Then, future studies need to explore the multidimensional effects of the predictor variables.

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