

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**UNLOCKING THE MOTIVATIONAL
FACTORS AND PSYCHOGRAPHIC
PROFILES IN UMRAH DO IT
YOURSELF (DIY) TRAVEL**

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ABSTRACT

This present study examines the emergence of a new category religious travellers; namely Umrah Do-It-Yourself (DIY) travellers. Pilgrims, normally, hire specially licensed travel agents to make all the necessary arrangements for their Umrah, from booking the flights to arranging the trip's itinerary. However, a small segment of these pilgrims prefers to forgo hiring these agents and making their own travel arrangements. Furthermore, the Tourist e-Visa programme that the Saudi Arabian government launched in September 2019 has created a legal way of conducting a DIY Umrah. Extant studies on DIY travel have primarily examined backpackers, whose travel motivations are leisure or adventure, while those on religious tourism examined religious obligations. Furthermore, although there is increasing interest in Umrah DIY, the reasons for its increasing popularity among Umrah travellers remains elusive. Therefore, this present study aims to (i) explore the motivational factors that influence Umrah DIY travel satisfaction, (ii) examine the motivational factors that influence Umrah DIY travel satisfaction, (iii) identify the most dominant factors influencing the choice of Umrah DIY travel satisfaction, and (iv) define the psychographic profile of Umrah DIY based on the activities, interests, and opinions (AIO) approach. An exploratory sequential mixed method research (MMR) design and the theory of customer-dominant logic (CDL) was used as a guide to interview 20 respondents and purposively select 144 Umrah DIY travellers from a 10000 member Facebook forum to participate in questionnaire-based survey. Respondent participation was voluntary and each respondent was provided with a consent form and assured anonymity to ensure that the research was ethical. NVivo was used to analyse the interview data, IBM® SPSS® was used to conduct the preliminary and descriptive analyses of the survey data, and SmartPLS was used to develop a model. The interview findings indicate that Umrah travellers are most satisfied with the flexibility, budget travel, information sources, spirituality, familiarity, and companionship attributes of Umrah DIY travel. However, the survey findings do not indicate a significant correlation between Umrah DIY travel with budget travel, spirituality, and familiarity. Therefore, although the interviewees were satisfied by all of the aforementioned attributes, the survey findings indicate that Umrah DIY travellers are most satisfied by the budget travel, information sources, and, primarily, flexibility attributes of Umrah DIY travel. The quantitative survey data not only clarified the qualitative interview findings but highlighted that Umrah DIY travellers prefer Umrah DIY travel as it is flexible, which the respondents valued as it enabled them to construct their own itineraries according to their own individual preferences.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Over recent decades, the contribution from the hospitality and tourism industry, towards economic and social development, has grown significantly. Medlik (2012) describes tourism, as the activities of individuals, traveling to, and staying in areas, beyond their normal environment, for a period not exceeding one year, for recreation, business, and other purposes. Henderson (2011) further highlights the intersection of tourism and religion through the concept of pilgrimage. A pilgrim is described as an individual, travelling away from home, for a specific period, for a religious purpose. Expanding on this link Kim et al. (2019) define a religious pilgrimage as the relationship between religion and tourism. Travellers motivated by religion, have a clear tendency to embark on a journey, with a religious site as the destination.

In Islam, religious and spiritual journeys can be divided into three types: the Hajj, the Rihla, and the Ziyara (Hassan et al., 2015; Haq & Wong, 2010; Timothy & Olsen, 2006). The Hajj, which is the pilgrimage to Mecca, is obligatory for Muslims. As mentioned by Hassan et al. (2015), the Umrah may be performed more than once, depending on a person's physical and financial situation. Hassan et al. (2015) noted that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia issued about four million Umrah visas, to visitors from 70 countries in 2013, and the number of visitors is increasing every year.

The annual Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages generated a total of \$12 billion in revenue for Saudi Arabia every year. As religious tourism is an important source of non-oil revenue, much of the development planned for the coming years in and around Makkah and Madinah, is directly related to the goals of Vision 2030 which include a significant increase in the number of pilgrims, and making the country more attractive as a tourist destination (Bashir et al., 2017). The most important factor to consider, during the effort to promote pilgrimages, is travel arrangements. The positive effects of globalisation in terms of travel costs and convenience, have contributed towards a significant increase in the number of religious and spiritually inspired travellers. Alsumairi et al. (2017) reported that Gulf countries (including Saudi Arabia) have taken measures to overhaul