

INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL FACTORS PILGRIMAGE TOUR OPERATORS' MARKETING MIX STRATEGIES ON TOURIST SATISFACTION IN A RELIGIOUS TOURISM SETTING



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Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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September 2021

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Marketing mix strategies has received a great deal of attention in the past. However, less attention was given towards understanding Umrah tour packages. Additionally, research on tourism, personal factors, and marketing mix strategies of pilgrimage tour operators are still restricted in the current situation. Hence, the study proposed to determine the factors influencing satisfaction of pilgrimage tourists based on the Consumer Behaviour Model. Modifications were made to the model based on the fundamental premises linked to the current study.

Data collection was conducted through online social media platform groups to target the exact respondents. A total of 170 quantitative valid questionnaires were collected from the survey using convenient sampling. SPSS 25 was applied for data analysis where descriptive, regression analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and moderation analysis verified the hypothesis developed.

The study contributes to theoretical knowledge by contributing to the literature regarding the usefulness of profiling respondents, marketing mix strategy, motivation, and Umrah tourist satisfaction. The study also benefits practitioners, academicians, especially Umrah tour operators in understanding the needs and wants of Umrah pilgrims as well as ways to improve their marketing mix strategies

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

PENGARUH FAKTOR PERIBADI PENGUSAHA PELANCONG ZIARAH STRATEGI CAMPURAN PEMASARAN KEPUASAN PELANCONG DALAM PELANCONGAN KEAGAMAAN

Oleh

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September 2021

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Strategi campuran pemasaran telah menerima banyak perhatian pada masa lalu. Namun, kajian pelancongan, faktor peribadi dan strategi pemasaran pengusaha pelancongan Umrah dalam konteks terkini masih terhad. Justeru, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti faktor- faktor yang mempengaruhi kepuasan pelancong Umrah berdasarkan model yang telah ditetapkan. Model *Consumer Behavior* menjadi rangka kerja kajian ini.

Pengumpulan data telah dijalankan di kumpulan platform media sosial dalam talian untuk menyasarkan responden yang tepat. Sebanyak 170 soal selidik yang sah telah dikumpul daripada tinjauan dengan menggunakan persampelan mudah. SPSS telah digunakan untuk analisis data di mana analisis deskriptif, analisis kebolehpercayaan, ANOVA dan analisis moderator mengesahkan hipotesis yang dibentangkan

Kajian ini menyumbang kepada pengetahuan teori dengan memberikan sumbangan literatur mengenai kegunaan profiling responden, strategi campuran pemasaran, motivasi dan kepuasan jemaah umrah. Kajian itu turut memberi manfaat kepada pengamal, ahli akademik khususnya operator pelancongan umrah dalam memahami keperluan dan kehendak jemaah umrah serta cara menambah baik produk dan perkhidmatan mereka.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Dzul-hijjah	The month of Islamic calendar to perform Hajj	
Hajj	Hajj is Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia with the purpose of fulfilling the fifth pillars on Islam	
ihram	Male clothing during Islamic pilgrimage	
Jamarat	Small piece of stone	
Kaaba	Building in the center of Mecca	
Mahram	Mahram is a family member of one's Muslim. If he is an adult Muslim male, he needs to escort his spouse or his dependent during Islamic pilgrimage journey	
Mustahabb	Recommended actions	
mutawwif	A tour person that guides Muslims on their Islamic pilgrimage	
rihla	a journey and the written account of that journey, or travelogue.	
sa'ie	Ritual walking back and forth between safa and marwah	
safa and marwah	Is two different points to perform sa'ie	
Umrah	Umr <mark>ah is Islamic pilgrimage that can be done</mark> at any time in a year and by any Muslim to Mecca in Saudi Arabia	
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization	
ziyarat	A form of pilgrimage that is associated with Prophet Muhammad	

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 covers the entire research background. The chapter begins by introducing key concepts related to the study. The background of the study is provided at the beginning of the chapter, followed by the statement of the research problem. Based on the identified research gap, the chapter sets the current study's objectives that lead to a discussion of the research questions. The chapter continues to discuss on definition and concept of study. Afterwards, the significance of the study about academicians and practitioners was discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of chapter outlines.

1.1 Introduction

Tourism is a significant social phenomenon involving a temporary departure from one's typical routine to engage with experiences that contrast with everyday life. Tourism has been defined as activities such as pleasure, holidays, travel, and going or arriving somewhere (Pereira & Gosling, 2019). Prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the last two decades have seen an increase in tourist arrivals to all tourism destinations (UNWTO, 2019). According to UNTWO (2019), the international tourist arrivals reached 1.4 billion in 2019.

Tourism in Malaysia has contributed significantly to national income. It is the third biggest contributor to Malaysia's GDP (Hirschmann, 2020). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Malaysia's tourism industry has performed remarkably, which is reflected in tourism arrival and receipts. In 2019, the tourist arrival reached 26.10 million with RM86.1 billion receipts. Besides, Malaysian carriers enjoyed the growth of passenger traffic – 77.4 million passengers in 2019 compared to 74.8 million passengers (Aviation, 2019).

However, the COVID-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc on tourism's three pillars: economic, social, and environmental, causing all tourism sectors to shut down. Furthermore, religious activities and pilgrimage have completely stopped. However, pilgrimage sites worldwide have been attracting and promoting spiritual places of worship. Currently, pilgrimage tourism has a secular motivation that focuses not only on worship but also on site-seeing. Religious tourism is very vulnerable and will encounter numerous crises, of which one is COVID-19.

Meanwhile, pilgrimage tourism in Malaysia has grown consistently over the years (Hassan et al., 2015). Religious travel, also known as pilgrimage tourism, is described as a practice in which every individual interacts with religious life

(Bremer, 2006). Besides, Malaysia has one of the highest numbers of Muslims in Asia (UNWTO, 2015). According to the Economic Affairs Minister, Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, in the News Straits Times (2019), the Malaysian Umrah pilgrim grew from 196 072 people in 2014 to 250 809 people in 2017, with a total of 24% growth over four years. The receipt increased from RM1.5 billion in 2014 to RM2.67 in 2017, making Umrah pilgrimage the most profitable form of tourism.

Muslims may engage in religious travel when they perform pilgrimage, i.e., Hajj and Umrah. While Hajj is one of the pillars of Islam, Umrah is voluntary and can be performed at any time of the year. However, Muslims are encouraged to perform Umrah for good fortune. Performing Hajj must be based on a calendar of Islam during Dzul-Hijjah. Umrah can be performed at any time, but it is especially advantageous during Ramadhan, according to Allah الله. Also, Prophet Muhammad suggests that "Umrah in Ramadhan equals a Hajj with me," which motivates every Muslim to perform Umrah during Ramadhan (Hamed, 2017). Thus, visiting the place is the best way to reconnect with Allah and cleanse oneself from sin.

In Malaysia, Hajj is mainly managed through Tabung Haji and a few private packages, while the government endorses more Umrah travel operators. While there are 47 licensed Umrah travel operators presently, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC) has set the importance of tourism industry players to get their business registered and licensed to avoid travel agency fraud and scam. It also boosted confidence for local pilgrims to perform Umrah. Moreover, Umrah travel service providers offer several types of services that could fulfil market needs that could complement the Umrah tour (Othman et al., 2019). To attract more customers, Umrah tour operator service providers offer severals, nutrients, and tourism facilities. Also, to compete with other companies, Umrah tour operator companies compete with one another to survive in the industry and innovate further.

There seems to be an increasing interest in religious tourism both academically and in the tourism industry. However, Umrah tourism has received little attention in the research literature compared to other religious tourism such as Christian pilgrimage (Sarumi, 2018), although more than six million pilgrims perform every year (Hassan et al., 2015). Thus, this study aims to explore the relationship between tourists' personal factors and pilgrimage satisfaction, to measure how tour operator's marketing strategies influence pilgrimage satisfaction, and to identify how personal factors influence the tour operator's marketing strategies.



1.2 Research Background

Religious tourism category is a significant part of the tourism niche in the tourism market. It is considered the oldest form of tourism to date (Rinschede, 1992) and still one of the highly demanded types of travel in the world, especially in Malaysia. Pilgrimage tourism is an individual's concern towards pilgrims who are strongly motivated by religious reasons (Othman et al., 2020). Malaysia Muslims estimated to travel for Umrah approximately sixty thousand pilgrims to the Holy Land (Hassan et al., 2015). Unlike Hajj, Umrah will hold only once a year with a limited quota of 26,000 (Hassan et al., 2015), and will increase as people can afford it, the convenience of the Internet, and the attraction factors. This explains why the number of Umrah-licensed travel agencies in Malaysia 234 tour operators is, of which 65 are Muassasah (Umrah special licensed), while 169 is not Muassasah status (Abd Rahman & Ahamat, 2019). Also, it has been common to use tour operator service for pilgrimage purposes for years. Tour operators grow rapidly, which provide Umrah for Malaysians and contribute to the airline, hotel, tickets, transportation, and packages. The high spending of the locals within Malaysia's industry will positively impact Malaysia's economy. According to Abd Rahman and Ahamat (2019), Umrah is also considered as learning or Fardhu Ayn for those who can do so

In Malaysia, aside from Tabung Haji, 65 *Muassasah* travel agents with a permit to operate for *Umrah* travel include reasonable charter expenses for the pilgrims, coordinate a timely and reliable transportation arrangement, provide clean and comfortable accommodation, and provide knowledge and updated information to pilgrims.

Tour operators and marketing mix strategy

The focal point of marketing is that "it is a set of activities and events that help build a relationship with customers which benefit the organisation" (Othman et al., 2019, p 4). By incorporating marketing mix into business practices, a firm can boost its profitability. The marketing mix strategy can be accomplished through the use of the 4ps ("price, product, promotion, and place") (Othman et al., 2019). Thus, businesses and organisations can influence the existing customer to become loyal to carry business by implementing a marketing mix strategy. Umrah tour operators can also use marketing mix elements to attract customers to purchase and repurchase Umrah services or package from the specific tour operator and not from other competitors. Wahab et al. (2013) said that the most impactful marketing mix is place and promotion, directly affecting customer satisfaction. Marketing will deal directly and indirectly with customers among all departments in an organisation. Incorporating a marketing mix strategy into a business will help retain existing customers and deliver satisfaction. As supported by Muslim et al. (2020), the social media communication department must focus on the marketing mix strategy in order to deliver and boost consumer happiness. Nowadays, the landscape of the tour operator sector has shifted due to the opportunity to book everything online, price comparison, and the growing number of independent travellers, but tour operators' relevance remains

unquestionable. One of the priorities for a tour operator is to properly package and design marketing strategies to boost profit. Also, adapting new preferences according to tourist needs is one marketing strategy that marketers can use (Picazo and Moreno-Gil, 2018). Thus, tour operators have promoted their brands as profit Instead of highlighting the services they offer. Picazo & Moreno-Gil (2018) argue that tour operators should analyse the marketing strategy to better establish appropriate relationships between business-to-customer and gain profit

Like other service organisations, tour operators must develop a marketing mix to serve their customers, as they have strong control over the target market. Tour operators might not be relevant for the newer generation as the entrance of the Internet is widely available (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018). Besides, they influence existing customers given they are a large part of tourist experience during travelling. To remain relevant in today's world, it is vital to analyse and tap into new markets. Recent studies have placed a greater emphasis on tour operator marketing strategies (Muslim et al., 2020; Picazo and Moreno-Gil, 2018; Wahab et al., 2016). Although research has demonstrated that social media affects consumer loyalty, no study has examined the human factors that contribute to satisfaction.

Personal Factors

According to the consumer behaviour model by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell, the consumer can choose and decide whether they want to purchase a product or services. The model also identifies 'satisfaction' as one of the possible result of consumer choice (Joseph, 1985). Personal factors play a very important role in affecting the buying behaviour. Personal factors refer to consumer profile in terms of financial, gender, age and education background that directly impact their willingness to purchase a product or services. For this study, personal factors include socio-demographic background. Additionally, the study includes behavioural such as their frequency of Umrah trips, and ways to go to Umrah (Umrah DIY or tour operator). Tour operators offer a variety of Umrah packages that will be uncovered if the packages are suitable for certain types of sociodemographic groups. Specifically, in pilgrimage tourism (Umrah), tourists are most likely to use travel agents because it is much more convenient to apply for a visa. Personal factors is defined as socio-demographic variable that includes age, marital status, gender, education level and average monthly income that directly affect one's behaviour (Wong et al., 2014)

Motivation

Travel motivation to a particular place act as a driving factor that influences behaviour to the point of influencing people's travel decisions (Farmaki et al., 2019). Motivation explains why a tourist initiates, terminates, and persists in specific actions (Ying et al., 2020). Aware of people's decision-making to travel will enhance the picture of marketing by tourism business operator and consumption perspective, improving market strategies that link to the increase in tourism demand. According to the theory, people are initially motivated by intrinsic motivation and then by destination-related pull factors. Thus, researchers have agreed that

Motivation is the primary determinant of customer purchase decision-making behaviour and expectations (Rahman et al., 2017). Psychological and physiological will be satisfied when motivation is fulfilled. Additionally, a need is an individual's inner state that drives and directs human motivation and behaviour. Another factor that influences religious travel is travelling is their escape and personal rewards. Dann (1981) proposed that travel motivation is a need for appreciation status and wind down from daily life. Thus, tour operators can help tourists to make the final decision to purchase a tour package. However, little is known as to why people choose not totravel to a specific destination after a crisis. Moreover, investigation of why pilgrimage tourists motivate to travel remains an under-explored research area.

Umrah Pilgrim Satisfaction

Satisfaction has been seen as a 'comparison process between the expected and perceived experiences derived from participation in activities' (Bultena and Klessig, 1969). It is measured by positive (satisfied) or negative (dissatisfied) gaps. The satisfaction approach suggested it is a psychological outcome of a process in which tourists compare expectations to their experience. Satisfaction is defined as emotion after an experience. A positive tourist experience will identify as a good quality product and services offered by businesses (Wahab et al., 2013). Previous studies indicate that marketing mix strategy and satisfaction as a strong link Othman et al., (2019) and Hassan et al., (2015). Based on Bitner et al. (1997), the satisfaction of fulfilling pleasure in the consumption-related event is the after-consuming service itself. Satisfaction includes both cognitive and physical evaluations. Several past studies have reported that two constructs are related (Wahab et al., 2013).

Islamic religious travelling to Mecca is motivated by Islamic pillars such as the Hajj pilgrimage. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has shut most of the tourism sector and destinations, the Islamic religious pilgrimage of Hajj and Umrah will not stop a visitor from visiting. It is because the Islamic practice of pilgrimage is rooted in the heart of Muslims, as it shows that Mecca is the most sacred destination for over 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide. Besides, the COVID-19 will not stop religious visitors from visiting holy sites in Saudi Arabia, simply because Islamic religious belief and the origins of travel to Mecca dates to prophet

Ibrahim's (a.s) footsteps. This Islamic practice of pilgrimage is rooted in the hearts of Muslim visitors, and it is not surprising to see demand for travel to Mecca, as it is the most sacred destination for over 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide (UNWTO, 2019).

1.3 **Problem Statements**

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic rocked the world in 2019, there was a substantial increase in Umrah travel. As the market grows and the number of outbound tourists increases, Umrah tour operator firms face tough competition from other Umrah tour operator businesses (Othman et al., 2020). Tour operator companies are a veteran travel market existing many years ago (Dolnicar & Laesser, 2007). While the market for Umrah travel has been growing and the number of Umrah travel operators increasing, there has been an interesting development in the other sectors of the tourism industry. Besides, an argument such as "there is no need for a tour operator in the future" has been heard presently. Also, the Internet does play a significant role in driving people from purchasing tour products to direct contact with suppliers. Based on past literature, it is evident that new and advanced technology development has made tour operators feel the most pressure whereby they have been cut off and replaced (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018). In a later section, the conclusion will draw a marketing solution to keep the tour operator's business alive.

Motivation is usually accomplished to provide a nice Islamic pilgrimage experience to satisfied tourists, while those that are not met frequently result in an unpleasant pilgrimage experience and disappointment. Examples of motivations that lead to good experiences include quality products, prompt service delivery, and learning about Islamic pilgrimage (Kim et al., 2019). Contrastingly, the motivation that is not fulfilled, for example, low-quality services and products, often leads to bad or worst experiences (Othman et al., 2020). Further, motivation shapes the intent of pilgrimage tourists to travel (Liutikas, 2015). Ying et al. (2020) applied motivation as a moderator in elucidating the conditions under which (i.e., with motive) familiarity affects mindfulness. It was found that intrinsic motivation positively moderated the effect of cognitive familiarity on mindfulness, whereas extrinsic motivation negatively moderated the role of psychologically on mindfulness (Ying et al., 2020). Motivation in current study will apply motivation as moderator that affects the relationship between a dependent variable and independent variable. According to (Baron & Kenny, 1986), moderator variable affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent or predictor variable and a dependent variable. Relatively little research that relate the role of moderating variables of motivation towards satisfaction (Tevian et al., 2017) Applying motivation as a moderator in pilgrimage tourism, the study aims to answer fourth and fifth research questions

Travellers are served by travel operators through the Marketing mix strategies implemented by tour operators. Marketing mix strategies are guideline and four decisions that should be considered before launching a product. Without marketing mix strategies, issue such as negative feedback will jeopardize a company image and marketability. The latest News by The Star (2019) reported 48 complaints about Umrah and pilgrimage travel packages from January 2019 to October 2019. The complaints included dissatisfactory service, inexperienced workers, and an employee's slow response time.

Fernandes and Solimun (2018) discovered that marketing mix strategy has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. Besides, a high level of satisfaction indicated a positive impact of the marketing mix strategy. Theoretically, the marketing mix indicator for tourist satisfaction is supported by Ostrowski et al. (1993). However, contrary to Voss et al.'s (1998) research, marketing mix strategy is not an indicator for customer satisfaction. The inconsistencies found by previous studies will reveal if the study is either a marketing mix that does determine customer satisfaction or vice versa. Previous studies of tour operator marketing strategies towards tourist satisfaction have been limited to other types of tourism such as ecotourism (Su et al., 2014), heritage tourism (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019), adventure tourism (Belias, 2019), religious tourism is still limited especially when it comes to Islamic religion tourism (Haq, 2014).

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unexpected crisis in the travel industry. Although 2020 and beyond poses a huge challenge to the tourism industry, understanding what makes a customer satisfied with a religious travel operator is important to improve and prepare for the new norm. The marketing mix strategies of tour operator changes as new Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) implemented. Tourist personal factors also changed as they might not gain any income during the pandemic. Also, according to the government of Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia has banned Umrah and Hajj pilgrimage for seven months due to the pandemic. Thus, the current research will shed light on personal factors and marketing mix strategy and explore their relationship with pilgrim satisfaction.

No.	Practical consideration	Academic attention	Problem statements
1.	The latest News by The Star (2019) reported 48 complaints about Umrah and pilgrimage travel packages from January 2019 to October 2019. The Tourism Industry Act 1992 was used in seven of the 48 cases where	Dissatisfied tourists will cause a problem as they will spread negativity through word of mouth, which can influence other tourists (Othman et al., 2020).	There is a lack of empirical research about the quality of service provided by Umrah tour operators.
	the action was taken, totalling RM129,500.		
2.	Umrah app provided a competitive price, a booking system, and updated information similar to Umrah tour operators. Thus, tour operator companies compete with one another and with the latest technology to survive in the industry (Arab News, 2020).	businesses face stiff	strategy of travel operators has largely been studied; however, research on Umrah pilgrimage
3.	Motivations lead to good experiences, including service quality, prompt service delivery, and knowledge about Islamic pilgrimage (Kim et al., 2019). Motivation is not fulfilled when, for example, low-quality services and products are rendered, often leading to bad or worst experiences.	Motivation shapes the intent of pilgrimage tourists to travel (Liutikas, 2015).	The study of pilgrimage tourism has mostly focused on the motivations for travel. Beyond religious motivations for Umrah tourism, research on pilgrims is necessary, as new findings indicate that numerous factors influence pilgrimage tourism travel.

Table 1.1: Summary of problem statements

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Table 1.1: Continued

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No. Practical consideration	Academic attention	Problem statements
4. Alarabiya (2018) reported low quality produc standards of the accommodation n, distance from the hote to the mosque and failing to provide information during the booking process.	staff, cancellation activities in the itinerary, and late response time from the employee. The unsatisfactory service quality was supported by previous studies (Othman et al., 2019).	tourism sector has been facing increasing complaints regarding the tourism product, but less has been studied on

Table 1.1: Continued

No.	Practical consideration	Academic attention	Problem statements
5.	According to Koh (2020), the COVID-19 epidemic is the world's largest crisis, affecting every country on the planet. Despite the implementation of standard operating procedures, infection and fatality rates continue to grow. Umrah pilgrims are recommended to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as a precautionary measure, and preventive steps are being implemented to halt the spread of Covid-19 infection.	According to (Atique & Itumalla, 2020), religious mass gatherings, including Hajj and Umrah, may become disease super spreaders	COVID-19 has hard hit the Umrah travel sector as people were not allowed to visit the Holy places. This led to the downfall of almost all Umrah tour operator. The risk of travelling for Umrah is higher due to the Covid-19 situation, making people uncertain and demotivated to travel

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1.4 Research Question

- 1) Is there any significant relationship between personal factors, travel motivation, travel operator's marketing mix strategies, and pilgrim's satisfaction in Islamic pilgrimage tourism?
- 2) What are the personal factors that influence the satisfaction of pilgrimage tourists?
- 3) What is the level of experienced pilgrims as compared to newcomer pilgrims?
- 4) What is the relationship between a travel operator's marketing strategies andpilgrimage tourist satisfaction with a tour operator?
- 5) Does travel motivation moderate the relationship between personal factors andpilgrimage tourist satisfaction?
- 6) Does motivation moderate the relationship between marketing mix strategies andpilgrimage tourist satisfaction?

1.5 Research Objectives

- The general objective of this study is to to examine the relationship between personalfactors, travel motivation, travel operator's marketing mix strategies, and pilgrim's satisfaction in Islamic pilgrimage tourism. Specifically, the objectives are as follows;
- 2) To determine the personal factors influencing the satisfaction of pilgrimage tourists.
- 3) To identify the level of satisfaction between experienced pilgrims
- 4) To examine whether travel motivation moderates the relationship between personalfactors and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction
- 5) To examine whether travel motivation moderates the relationship between travel operator's marketing mix strategies and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction
- 6) To examine the role of travel motivation in the relationship between travel operator's marketing mix strategies and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction

Table 1.2: Table form of research question, research objective, hypothesisand the technique for data analysis

Research Question	Research Objectives	Hypotheses	Technique for Data Analysis
1. Is there any significant relationship between personal factors, travel motivation, travel operator's marketing mix strategies, and pilgrim tourist satisfaction in Islamic pilgrimage tourism?	1. To examine the relationship between personal factors, travel motivation, travel operator's marketing mix strategies, and pilgrim's tourist satisfaction in Islamic pilgrimage tourism	H1: There is a positive relationship between tourists' personal factors and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction.	Descriptive analysis
2) What personal factors influence the satisfaction of pilgrimage tourists?	2) To determine the personal factors influencing the satisfaction of pilgrimage tourists.		Reliability Analysis
3) What is the level of experienced pilgrims as compared to newcomer pilgrims?	3) To identify the level of experienced pilgrims as compared to newcomer pilgrims	H2: There is a positive relationship between tourists' personal factors and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction	Reliability Analysis Multiple Regression Analysis One-way ANOVA
4) What is the relationship between a travel operator's marketing strategies and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction with a tour operator?	4) What is the relationship between a travel operator's marketing strategies and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction with a tour operator?	H3: There is a positive moderating effect of motivation on marketing strategies and pilgrimage satisfaction.	Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 1.2: Continued

Research Question	Research Objectives	Hypotheses	Technique for Data Analysis
5) Does travel motivation moderate the relationship between personal factors and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction?	5) To examine whether travel motivation moderates the relationship between travel operator's marketing mix strategies and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction		Moderating Analysis
6) Does motivation moderate the relationship between marketing mix strategies and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction?	6) To examine the role of travel motivation in the relationship between travel operator's marketing mix strategies and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction		Moderating Analysis

1.6 Significant of the study

By analyzing the marketing mix techniques described in this research, a framework for the current understanding of pilgrimage motivation and pilgrimage tourist satisfaction will be established. This study presents a concise overview of marketing mix techniques used by Umrah tour operators, as well as insights about the utility of the 4ps for them

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study aims to extend the current literature by determining personal factors and marketing strategies influencing the pilgrimage tourist satisfaction. There has been limited discussion reported on the measurement of the constructs in the religious tourism sector. Thus, this research might provide a deeper understanding of tourist motivation and their needs and expectations for marketing.

The current study suggests that marketing mix strategies of 4ps that effect towards pilgrimage satisfaction and some unique tourist experience elements, such as Umrah experience, may have a significant impact on these intents. It is suggested that Umrah's unique activities could leave deeper emotions in the tourist memory that will affect their future revisit by using the same Umrah tour operator and referring the tour operator to other Muslims. Thus, the same motivation might moderate the relationship between personal factors and pilgrimage satisfaction.

The current study also proposes the relationship between personal sociodemographic factors that directly affect pilgrimage tourist satisfaction. This could contribute to a better understanding of the socio-demographic of Umrah pilgrims, which could be predicted as an antecedent to pilgrimage tourist satisfaction. Understanding their profile may help the academician in the marketing field formulate better marketing strategies for Umrah tour operators.

The current study builds on prior research that analyzed numerous models and introduces a new model for tourism literature, the Consumer Behavior Model, along with the Expectation Disconfirmation Theory and Kano mode. Thus, the research will extend the framework established in the tourist literature.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

The research will perform an empirical study on religious tourist marketing to substantiate the existing research conceptual model's application in the sector. The purpose of this study is to add to the existing body of knowledge regarding pilgrimage marketing mix strategy. Additionally, the study's findings can aid in identifying and evaluating the characteristics that influence a tourist's future decision to repurchase the same Umrah package from the same Umrah tour operator. This may help marketers focus their efforts on the aspects that have the most impact on a tourist's decision.



Saudi Arabia aims to achieve 30 mullion tourists by 2030 (Arab News, 2020). Tourism agencies and authorities need to understand their customer, which is Umrah tourists, to ensure success. Umrah tour operators should pay attention to defining and classifying religious tourists to communicate every pilgrimage criterion differently. The findings of the current study will provide managerial input for the city authorities and policymakers to move steps further towards improving pilgrimage tourist satisfaction level through motivation. This input is also valuable for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to enhance its positioning as a tourist destination by considering the needs of both the Umrah pilgrims and the strategies of tour operators serving the industry.

It is important to highlight that the current research was conducted while the world faced the COVID-19 pandemic. In spite of this, the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has announced that 10 million pilgrims have successfully performed Umrah since 4 October 2020 (Saudi Gazette, 2021). Saudi Arabia also launched "safe Umrah" procedures and a gradual return of pilgrims. Indeed, pilgrimage tourism in Saudi Arabia is expected to meet the 2030 vision as the Kingdom implements strict procedures and safety measures for pilgrims.

1.7 The scope of the study

The scope of this study includes Malaysian pilgrims who performed Umrah at least once. This study aims to examine the variables mainly from the same Umrah season when the pilgrims perform Umrah. In terms of chosen Malaysian Umrah pilgrims, this study has chosen them for many reasons. Firstly, the number of Malaysian Umrah pilgrims is quite high compared to other countries' pilgrims. According to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia is among the countries that can perform Umrah and Hajj after 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccination (CDC, 2021). It comes along with other nationalities such as Pakistan, Egypt, and others (The Malaysian Reserve, 2021). Significantly, a higher proportion of these performers are likely to be repeat visitors. Mecca hosted 274,066 Malaysian pilgrims in a single week, ranking seventh among nine countries (Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, 2019). Thus, it is critical to understand how their experiences in Mecca may influence their desire to return.

Mecca will be examined from a marketing perspective as the scope of the current study. This study will apply quantitative methods to elicit tourists' perceptions of this city. Individual Umrah performers who are only Malaysian citizens are used as the unit of study. The population for this study is based on the average number of members of active Umrah-related Facebook groups. The sample includes all Malaysian Muslims aged 18 and above, omitting non- Malaysian citizens, those who have never performed Umrah, and those who are younger than 18 years old. The data will collect within three months.

1.8 Definition of the key terms

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Table 1.3: Key Operational Definition

Contextual Definition	Operational Definition
Personal Factor According to Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2016), personal factors include age, occupation, life cycle, economic, lifestyle, personality, and self-concept. Armstrong and Kotler (2015) noted that personal factors are the marketer's strategy to establish market segmentation to determine buyers' characteristic behaviours.	This research adopted Armstrong and Kotler's (2015) definitions of gender, age, education, and income.
Motivation A push factor is related to the decision-making of a person. Push factors involve socio-psychological that concerns desires such as wanting to unwind. Push factors refer to specific forces in lives that lead to the decision to take a vacation (Dann, 1981).	The current study adopts the push and pull factors from the Umrah pilgrimage perspective. Push factors in research refer to Umrah pilgrims' decision- making, such as purchasing at a specific Umrah tour operator. Pull factors are the attractiveness of marketers (Umrah tour operators) to attract customers (Dann, 1981).
Pull factors present an external attribute, such as the attractiveness of business products or services. Some factors that contribute to pull factors include marketing mix strategy (Dann, 1981).	
Marketing Strategies Marketing Strategy is the marketing logic by which the business unit expects to achieve its marketing objectives (Philip Kotler & Kevin Lane Keller, 2016)	McCarthy (1975) categorises marketing strategies as 4ps: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. A marketing strategy is used to set a goal to reach certain marketing objectives. To study a specific group of customers, target segmentation will be among Umrah pilgrimage. The process has unique features and benefits in that marketers can maintain a positive relationship and maximise profitability based on Islamic law (Burak, 2015)

Table 1.3 : Continued

Contextual Definition	Operational Definition
Tourist satisfaction Satisfaction is defined as the fulfilment of needs that can create pleasant feelings. That is, consumers feel that consumption meets some needs, wants, goals, and that fulfilment is fun. Thus satisfaction is defined as the consumer's perception of consumption, yielding results that	The current study adapts pilgrimage tourist satisfaction from (Othman et al., 2020) of Umrah pilgrims, defining satisfaction as the post-effect of marketing strategies towards attracting customers, providin
meet the standard of pleasure. Satisfaction indicates one aspect of cognition (in comparing expectations and performance) and is also effective (feelings related to pleasure) (Rizki et al., 2018)	

(Source: author's own)

1.9 Organization of Chapters

Chapter 1 is the introduction of the research. The problem statement includes a brief description of the research that supports the concern. This chapter also includes a research objective and research questions. The contextual and operational terms are defined accordingly.

Chapter 2 is devoted to articles and document analysis. Prior research comparable to the current thesis will be used to do the literature review. The previous researcher defined variables succinctly to facilitate future understanding of the variable. Gaps in the literature will be analysed and identified for inclusion in the current research. The research framework will be illustrated with a supporting hypothesis.

Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology that is used in the research. Measurement of data collection will be discussed and presented. The pilot test will be carried out to identify the feasibility of the questionnaire's content. The research methodology will be summarized in the conclusion of the chapter

Chapter 4 will include data analysis and the presentation of results. To accomplish the study objectives, data analysis will be conducted using the

following procedure: preliminary analysis, descriptive analysis, and hypothesis testing.

Chapter 5 summarises the study's findings and conclusions, emphasising the academic and managerial implications of the study. Finally, it acknowledges the limitations and suggests potential directions for future research.

1.10 Summary of Chapter

This chapter provided an overview of the study. It introduced several key concepts that underpin this study, including 1) Malaysian Umrah tour operator; 2) problem statement; 3) its objectives and research questions. The study's organisation also provides the base for further exploration of the study, which will be dealt with in the following chapters.

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