

TOWARDS A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE LEVEL: A NEED ASSESSMENT OF THE HAJJ AND UMRAH'S PILGRIMS IN KBIHU AL-FALAH MALANG

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Abstract: The spiritual experience that pilgrims have before Hajj and Umrah pray is an important role of the implementation of ritual. Spiritual experience has not been a commonly researched topic at this time. A preliminary study in the form of a needs analysis is a crucial first step in identifying and knowing the level of spiritual experience. This study aims to describe the level of experience of Hajj and Umrah's pilgrims at KBIHU Al-Falah. The method used in this research is quantitative survey with instruments that have been assessed as valid through adaptation of a previous instrument. Data from the analysis of spiritual experience needs for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims at KBIHU Al-Falah Malang (n = 30 participants) showed 33,33% have high spiritual experience, 56,67% have moderate spiritual experience, and 10% have low spiritual experience. This study provides preliminary evidence that pilgrims need a qualified spiritual experience before Hajj and Umrah.

Keywords: Hajj, Need Assessment, Spiritual Experience Level, Survey, Umrah

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Introduction

Hajj and Umrah are still in demand by Moslems until now. This is evidenced by the rapid development of official travel for Hajj and Umrah in Indonesia, which has amounted to 2659 pieces offices (Kemenag, 2024). In addition, the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah from Saudi Arabia explained that the number of Hajj and Umrah's Pilgrims in Mecca reaches an average of 2.5 million people and 7 million people each year (BPKH, 2021). Hajj and Umrah have a high position in Islam, because they are the fifth pillar of Islam that must be performed by every Moslem who is financially and physically able (*istitho'ah*). If one performs it, then he will get a great virtue (Muhammad & Akmal, 2023). Therefore, Moslems are competing to be able to practice it.

Every Pilgrims who performs Hajj and Umrah will have a spiritual experience, which is an individual's feelings or experiences while performing Hajj and Umrah related to divine aspects and then stored in memory (Muflikhatin, 2021). During the rituals of Hajj and Umrah, there are various bonds of relationship in it. Among them are the bonds of self-relationship with oneself, oneself with others, and oneself with Allah SWT (James, 2015). The spiritual experience felt and experienced by each individual can have differences and special characteristics (James & Admiranto, 2004). This depends on the quality of each congregation and different environmental factors. Thus, careful preparation is needed before carrying out the Hajj and Umrah rituals in order to achieve *mabrur* and maximum results, one of which is through Hajj and Umrah guidance.

Hajj and Umrah guidance are needed before the actual implementation of Hajj and Umrah. The guidance is in the form of preparation for everything from physical, material, mental, and knowledge aspects of Hajj and Umrah activities (Darmawan, 2019). Generally, the guidance is called Hajj and Umrah "manasik". The different backgrounds of each Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, causes the preparation to be more mature. Hajj and Umrah not only travel physically, but also spiritually which affects the smoothness of ritual (Sari & Mahendra, 2024). Therefore, each pilgrim must also have spiritual preparations to gain sufficient spiritual experience before traveling for Hajj and Umrah.

The quality of Hajj and Umrah rituals is an important consideration for the success of pilgrims in understanding Hajj and Umrah material (Darwan, 2021; Aisah, 2014). However, in its implementation, there are often obstacles that result in prospective pilgrims still not maximizing their understanding of the manasik material directly (Muawanah, 2022). The government through the Ministry of Religious Affairs cooperates with various Hajj and Umrah guidance services to continuously improve the quality of services for the convenience and achievement of learning standards for Hajj and Umrah guidance. In fact, Hajj and Umrah material is also one of the materials taught in Islamic Religious Education subjects at various levels of education ranging from kindergarten to university (Muslim et al., 2023; Nisa, 2023). However, the ever-increasing human needs and the ever-evolving times bring up challenges that cannot be avoided and have not been maximally resolved by Hajj and Umrah guidance institutions and educational institutions. One of these challenges is technological advancement (Kominfo, 2023). Among the Hajj and Umrah guidance services that experience this challenge is the Hajj and Umrah Guidance Group (KBIHU) Al-Falah Malang City.

Hajj and Umrah Guidance Group (KBIHU) Al-Falah Malang City is an institution that provides business services for Hajj and Umrah guidance located on Semarang St., 5, Sumbersari, Lowokwaru Sub-district, Malang City. KBIHU Al-Falah Malang City is one of the business entities under the auspices of the State University of Malang. This institution has about 58 guidance participants in 2020. Until now, the KBIHU Al-Falah Malang City institution is still actively conducting Hajj and Umrah ritual guidance. In fact, according to Dr. Nur Faizin as the Chairperson of KBIHU Al-Falah Malang City through an interview on the Edoostory news page, in 2024, KBIHU Al-Falah Malang City for the first time carried out direct practice and previously only theoretical (Marsadi & Shobirin, 2024). Based on observations that have been made at KBIHU Al-Falah, some service improvements are still needed to improve the quality of Hajj ritual guidance. Therefore, the researcher conducted a needs analysis through the following research to KBIHU Al-Falah Malang City pilgrims who have carried out Hajj and Umrah manasik to provide their responses about the spiritual experiences they get after participating in Hajj and Umrah manasik activities. Thus, it is hoped that researchers can contribute to finding a solution to help KBIHU

Al-Falah Malang City in improving the quality of Hajj and Umrah manasik services, especially to provide maximum guidance for Hajj and Umrah.

Methods

This research used a quantitative method of research in the form of surveys (Schwarz et al., 1998). Surveys refer to the systematic collection of data about samples obtained and taken from a larger population, where the final results of the survey are statistics in the form of percentages up to the level of the variable to be measured. Research instrument in the form of a questionnaire consisting of 15 items based on a Likert scale. The study is based on a questionnaire distributed to candidate pilgrims who conduct Hajj ritual guidance in KBIHU Al-Falah, Malang, Indonesia. A total of 30 respondents volunteered to fill in the questionnaire ($n = 30$). In the questionnaires, respondents were asked to answer questions based on the Likert scale with a range of one to five. Thirty respondents came from six cities with different backgrounds.

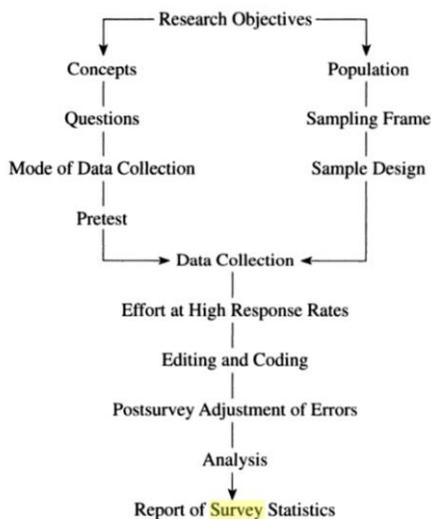


Figure 1. Survey Process

Details of the number of respondents in each city are given in Table 1. This quantitative survey uses instruments that have been evaluated valid through the adaptation of previous instruments. Furthermore, the results of the survey will be analyzed to find out the

level of spiritual experience of pilgrims Haji and Umrah as well as the media needs required in KBIHU Al-Falah City Malang.

Table 1. List of Cities by Participants (n = 30)

City	Number of Participants
Kediri	10
Lamongan	1
Tuban	3
Ponorogo	1
Malang	15

The main part of the questionnaire deals with the views of the candidate pilgrims Haji and umrah on the spiritual abilities and experiences they acquired during the guidance activities of Haji and Umrah at KBIHU Al-Falah. To provide a comprehensive definition of what is meant by spiritual experience, the questionnaires provide descriptions and indicators based on instruments developed and adapted by previous research (Sharma et al., 2012). Spiritual experience is defined as the digestion of something experienced. In this case, the spiritual experience of Hajj and Umrah directs how the involvement of each activity of ritual in daily spiritual life.

Results and Discussion

A. Survey Results of The Spiritual Experience Level of Pilgrims Hajj and Umrah

The following are the results of data analysis from questionnaires that have been filled in by 30 respondents as prospective Hajj and Umrah Pilgrims who have attended the Hajj and Umrah guidance rituals at KBIHU Al-Falah Malang City.

Table 2. Survey Results of The Spiritual Experience Level of Pilgrims Hajj and Umrah

No	Question	Response
Aspects of Spiritual Experience		
1	Ability to communicate with others Hajj and Umrah Pilgrims	Very smoothly (13.3%), smoothly (43.3%), fairly smoothly (30%), not smoothly (10%), very not smoothly (3.3%).
2	Ability to manage stress	Very good (10%), good (60%), fair (13.3%), not good (10%), very poor (6.7%)

3	Ability to share thoughts and feelings with others (either to fellow pilgrims or family)	Very good (20%), good (43.3%), quite good (26.7%), not good (6.7%), very bad (3.3%).
4	Experiencing worry or anxiety about family	Always (10%), often (16.7%), sometimes (50%), rarely (16.7%), never (6.7%)
5	Knowing the meaning and purpose of the Hajj	Very well (23.3%), know (40%), know enough (20%), don't know (16.7%), don't know very well (0%)
6	Understanding the terms involved in Hajj and Umrah	Very familiar (6.7%), familiar (46.7%), fairly familiar (33.3%), less familiar (10%), not familiar (3.3%)
7	Curiosity about the implementation of Hajj and Umrah	Very high (40%), high (23.3%), quite high (30%), low (6.7%), very low (0%)
8	Level of consistency in ritual in daily life	Very high (10%), high (46.7%), quite high (30%), low (6.7%), very low (6.7%)
9	The level of peace of mind when performing the ritual	Very high (6.7%), high (30%), quite high (50%), low (13.3%), very low (0%)
10	Ability to recite Arabic prayers	Very fluent (3.3%), fluent (46.7%), fairly fluent (43.3%), not fluent (6.7%), very not fluent (0%)
Aspects of Media Needs		
11	The use of <i>virtual reality</i> technology-based media in Hajj ritual activities	Always (6.7%), often (23.3%), sometimes (20%), rarely (10%), never (40%).
12	The need for technology as a supporting facility in Hajj ritual	Very necessary (40%), necessary (40%), quite necessary (10%), not necessary (10%), very unnecessary (0%).

	activities	
13	Level of ability to operate a smartphone	Very fluent (46.7%), fluent (40%), fairly fluent (6.7%), not fluent (0%), very not fluent (6.7%)
14	Can the explanation from the trainer or teacher be understood in the process of implementing the Hajj rituals?	Very understandable (10%), understandable (43.3%), quite understandable (40%), not understandable (6.7%), very not understandable (0%).
15	Do you agree if <i>virtual reality</i> media is developed to help the process of performing the Hajj rituals?	Strongly agree (53.3%), agree (30.3%), moderately agree (16.7%), disagree (0%), strongly disagree (0%).

Based on the table above, it can be seen that researchers categorized the components of the needs analysis questionnaire into 2 aspects, namely aspects of spiritual experience and aspects of media needs. The questionnaire regarding the aspect of spiritual experience asks the responses of prospective pilgrims as students of the Hajj and Umrah manasik guidance at KBIHU Al-Falah Malang City, while the media needs aspect questionnaire asks about the urgency of the level of media needs in the implementation of Hajj and Umrah manasik guidance at KBIHU Al-Falah Malang City. The results of the questionnaire above are then converted into a diagram as below.

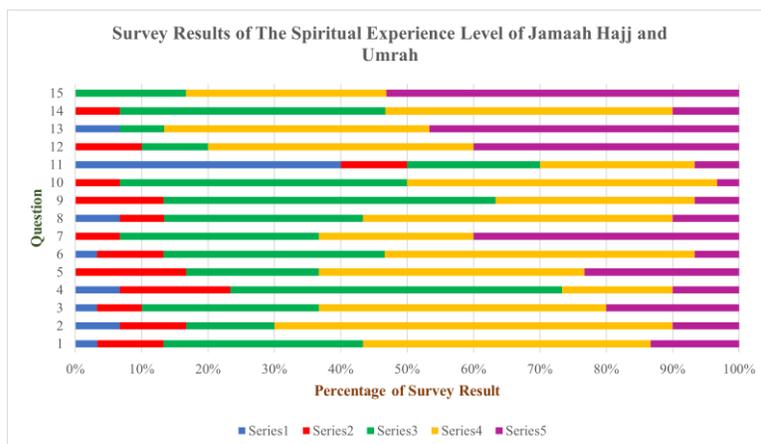


Figure 2. Diagram of Survey Result about Spiritual Experience Level by Pilgrims Hajj and Umrah in KBIHU Al-Falah Malang City

Questions regarding the aspect of spiritual experience consist of 10 questions from number 1 to 10. Indicators of questions on this aspect include the level of the ability to communicate between prospective Hajj and Umrah's pilgrims; the level of stress management; the level of ability to share thoughts and feelings with fellow prospective Hajj and Umrah's pilgrims; the level of duration when experiencing anxiety; how much understanding of the meaning, purpose, and terms in Hajj and Umrah activities; the level of curiosity about the implementation of the Hajj ritual; the level of consistency of ritual; the level of peace of ritual in everyday life; and the level of ability to recite Arabic prayers. While the questions regarding the media needs aspect consist of 5 questions, starting from number 11 to 15. The question indicators in this aspect consist of the experience of using virtual reality technology, the level of technology needs in the implementation of Hajj and Umrah rituals, the level of ability to operate a smartphone, the level of understanding of the explanation of the Hajj and Umrah ritual guidance mentor, and the level of approval for media development for Hajj and Umrah ritual guidance. The results of the answers to these questions will be accumulated to find a solution that can solve the obstacles that occur at KBIHU Al-Falah Malang City appropriately and effectively.

B. Analysis and Profile of the Spiritual Experience Level of Pilgrims Hajj and Umrah

Results from the analysis of survey data that has been obtained show that the questionnaires that have been completed by the participants are dominated by a Likert scale score with a level of spiritual experience of medium to low levels. From some statements, most participants obtained low scores on the aspects of often experiencing concerns or anxiety to the family. About 50% of the participants stated that they often feel anxiety about their families when they are going to perform Hajj for 40 days. This is because the new participants first leave their families in a sufficiently long period of time so that they find it difficult to manage their feelings of anguish. Besides, the lack of familiarity of the participants who will perform Hajj and Umrah also causes them to feel unprepared and anxious (Setyanigsih et al., 2021). Despite often feeling anxious, the candidate Pilgrims at KBIHU Al-Falah Malang is quite good at managing stress, it is characterized by their indicators of consistency in ritual that are also quite high.

Although spiritual experience plays an important role in performing Hajj, spiritual experience is not a capacity that can stand alone in the human body, but spiritual experience covers all things that have ever been experienced so it also affects the mental and emotional intelligence of the candidate Pilgrims Hajj and Umrah (Razak et al., 2024). Moreover, spiritual experience relates to the digestion of something experienced. Spiritual experience involves extraordinary events in the process of thinking, feeling, and doing something. In addition, Maslow, et al (1982) explaining the spiritual experience is *peak experience, plateau the farthest reaches of human nature*. Where spiritual experience is the highest peak that can be reached by man and is the consolidation of his existence as a spiritual being and has passed the hierarchy of human needs, *"going beyond humanness, identity, self-actualization, and the like"* (Bouzenita & Boulanouar, 2016).

Furthermore, another aspect of the spiritual experience that needs improvement is related to the tranquility of mind during ritual. Survey data shows that 50% of respondents are at a moderate level. Given that the understanding of the significance of performing Hajj and Umrah is already quite good, the spiritual experience obtained needs enhancement. This impacts the spiritual experience of prospective Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, which is predominantly at a moderate level,

with 33.33% having a high spiritual experience, 56.67% having a moderate spiritual experience, and 10% having a low spiritual experience. Based on the analysis of the scores obtained, the profile of the spiritual experience of prospective Hajj and Umrah pilgrims at KBIHU Al-Falah in Malang City is at a moderate to low level. This indicates that the level of spiritual experience of prospective pilgrims before performing ritual in Mecca needs improvement.

In addition to score data from surveys distributed through questionnaires, researchers also conducted surveys related to the media needs for Hajj and Umrah at KBIHU Al-Falah in Malang City. From the guidance process carried out, only 53.3% of prospective Hajj pilgrims were able to understand the explanations well. Besides age factors, the media used by trainers also hindered understanding of the Hajj rituals being performed. As many as 90% of prospective Hajj pilgrims revealed that they needed more adequate facilities and resources, such as technology-based solutions, to facilitate Hajj ritual activities. Currently, technology that is quite in demand includes virtual technology such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and even the metaverse. Therefore, it is important for Hajj and Umrah organizers to provide comprehensive education and information to pilgrims, both before departure and during their time in the holy land. This education can be conducted through various media or by providing support services for pilgrims, especially for those performing Hajj or Umrah for the first time. Through proper education and support, prospective pilgrims can feel more prepared and comfortable in performing Hajj and Umrah, thereby enhancing their spiritual experience.

Conclusion

Each prospective Hajj and Umrah pilgrims who undertakes ritual in the holy land has a different spiritual experience. This also depends on the quality of understanding of ritual by each pilgrims and the environmental factors they perceive. A survey study conducted revealed that the level of spiritual experience among prospective Hajj and Umrah pilgrims at KBIHU Al-Falah in Malang City is predominantly at a moderate level, with 33.33% having a high spiritual experience, 56.67% having a moderate spiritual experience, and 10% having a low spiritual experience. The need for more comprehensive media, such as technology-based solutions, is also an

indicator that needs to be addressed. Based on the survey results, recommendations for future research include studies aimed at enhancing the spiritual experience of prospective Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, whether through the development of media or specific experimental studies.

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