

ARABIC CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE HAJJ AND UMRAAH

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Abstract :

This study aims to examine the influence of Arab culture on the pilgrimage (Hajj) and Umrah experiences of Indonesian pilgrims from spiritual, social, and behavioral perspectives. Hajj and Umrah, as major forms of worship in Islam, require not only physical and financial readiness but also the ability to adapt to the local culture, which has its own distinctive characteristics. The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving pilgrims who have performed Hajj or Umrah in the past five years. The findings indicate that Arab culture significantly affects pilgrims' experiences, particularly in aspects of food, dress norms, language, and social interactions. The Arab dietary pattern, rich in spices and meat, the discipline in prayer times, and the assertive communication style pose both challenges and valuable lessons for pilgrims. Moreover, technological advancements in Saudi Arabia enrich the worship experience through modern and efficient service systems. Overall, adaptation to Arab culture enables pilgrims to gain a deeper spiritual understanding of Hajj and Umrah, strengthen Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah), and foster awareness of tolerance and unity within the diversity of the Muslim community.

Keywords : *Arab culture, Hajj, Umrah, pilgrims' experiences, cultural adaptation, spiritual values, socio-religious*

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh budaya Arab terhadap pengalaman jamaah haji dan umrah, khususnya jamaah asal Indonesia, dari perspektif spiritual, sosial, dan perilaku. Ibadah Haji dan Umrah sebagai ibadah utama dalam Islam tidak hanya menuntut kesiapan fisik dan finansial, tetapi juga kemampuan beradaptasi terhadap budaya setempat yang memiliki karakteristik tersendiri. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif, dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi terhadap jamaah yang telah menunaikan ibadah dalam lima tahun terakhir. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya Arab memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap pengalaman jamaah, baik dalam aspek makanan, norma berpakaian, bahasa, maupun interaksi sosial. Pola konsumsi masyarakat Arab yang kaya rempah, disiplin dalam waktu shalat, serta gaya komunikasi yang tegas memberikan tantangan sekaligus pembelajaran bagi jamaah. Selain itu, kemajuan teknologi di Arab Saudi turut memperkaya pengalaman ibadah melalui sistem pelayanan yang modern dan efisien. Secara keseluruhan, adaptasi terhadap budaya Arab membantu jamaah memahami makna spiritual haji dan umrah secara lebih mendalam, memperkuat nilai ukhuwah Islamiyah, serta menumbuhkan kesadaran akan pentingnya toleransi dan kebersamaan dalam keberagaman umat Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Budaya Arab, Ibadah Haji, Ibadah Umrah, Pengalaman Jamaah, Adaptasi Budaya, Nilai Spiritual, Sosial Keagamaan*

INTRODUCTION

The Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages are two forms of worship in Islam that have a significant impact on Muslims in spiritual, social, and economic aspects. Both occupy a special position in Islamic law, with the Hajj being one of the five pillars of Islam that must be performed by every Muslim who has the physical, financial, and economic means to do so. Therefore, understanding the local culture is very important so that pilgrims can perform their worship comfortably, solemnly, and with respect for the applicable norms.

(indra, 2024)

Recognizing the importance of Hajj and Umrah, the Indonesian government plays an active role in their implementation through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which is tasked with supervising the journey and services for pilgrims. In addition, the government continues to improve and strengthen regulations related to the implementation of these rituals so that pilgrims can perform them safely, comfortably, and smoothly. (Indra, 2024)

From a social and cultural perspective, the Hajj pilgrimage, which brings together Muslims from all over the world, can serve as a means of exchanging information about the conditions of Muslims in various countries. (Kisworo, 2017)

The development of Islamic preaching today is influenced by various social changes that require every Muslim to be able to adapt in various ways so that the messages of preaching can be conveyed effectively. One of the social factors that has a major influence on the success of a preacher in this era is the rapid advancement of modern technology. (Syahdaniya, DECEMBER 2021)

Hajj in a cultural context is part of human nature, if culture is understood deeply and genuinely, not only in a sociological sense. The Hajj pilgrimage is a fundamental spiritual need for humans because, philosophically, the highest goal of Hajj is to reach the pinnacle of wisdom. This level of wisdom is part of the basic needs of humans in their nature. Therefore, someone who has reached the pinnacle of wisdom can be categorized as a cultured person. Conversely, for those who view Hajj only as the performance of Islamic rituals, their Hajj cannot be called a cultured Hajj, because they do not understand the true meaning of wisdom but only interpret it as a cultural journey that is physical and full of worldly pleasures. (Abdullah, 2019)

Understanding the values contained in the Hajj pilgrimage and all the rituals involved requires an exploration of the history of the Hajj itself. It is important to examine how the Hajj is mentioned in the Qur'an, as this helps to ensure the authenticity and validity of the commandment of the Hajj for Muslims based on the primary source of their teachings. Similarly, the Sunnah (hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad needs to be studied in depth to find out how to perform the ideal Hajj according to his example. By understanding the Hajj as performed by the Prophet Muhammad, one will gain a complete and comprehensive picture of the meaning of the Hajj according to the Qur'an and hadith. This study seeks to explore the spiritual and moral values contained in the pilgrimage based on the Qur'an, hadith, and the experiences of Muslims in performing it, in order to provide benefits for those who have performed the pilgrimage and those who will perform it. (Ningtias, 2025)

Worship is a form of religious ritual that has important meaning for every believer. In the context of Islam, worship can be understood as a process of uniting the human soul and mind in an effort to draw closer to the Creator. The concept of worship encompasses its meaning, aspects, and functions in Islam, which has a very broad scope. However, the main purpose of worship remains the same, namely to obtain the pleasure of Allah SWT. As a universal religion, Islam provides comprehensive guidelines in all aspects of human life, including in the practice of worship such as prayer. (Arif, August 2021)

Social media acts as an effective means of communication between Hajj and Umrah organizers and pilgrims. Through the use of social media, organizers can convey various important information related to the stages of preparation, implementation, and the

pilgrims' return in real-time. In addition, social media enables two-way interaction, where organizers can respond to pilgrims' questions and complaints quickly and efficiently, as well as convey updates on the current conditions in the Holy Land. Thus, the use of social media contributes to improving service quality and risk management in the organization of Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. (hafiz, July 2024)

However, various problems are still often encountered in the implementation of Hajj and Umrah, such as delays in departure, inadequate facilities, and service quality that does not meet the expectations of pilgrims. Therefore, studies on the effectiveness of Hajj and Umrah management are very important to identify factors that affect pilgrims' satisfaction levels, as well as to formulate strategic solutions in an effort to improve service quality. (Ikram, 2024)

This pilgrimage involves significant physical, mental, and material sacrifices, which teach Muslims about the importance of sincerity, patience, and complete devotion to the Creator. By performing rituals such as thawaf, sa'i, wukuf, and throwing jumrah, a Muslim is reminded of the oneness of Allah, equality among fellow human beings, and sincerity in worship. (Iskandar, 2024)

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between Arab culture and the experience of Hajj and Umrah from various perspectives. Al-Khalifa (2018) explains in his research that Arab cultural values, such as hospitality and respect for guests, greatly influence the services received by Hajj pilgrims. He emphasized that local Arab culture shapes pilgrims' perceptions of service quality and comfort during worship in the holy land. Meanwhile, Nurhayati and Rahman (2019) found in their research that differences in language and social customs between international pilgrims and Arab communities often lead to misunderstandings. However, they also found that good cultural adaptation can enhance pilgrims' spiritual experiences during Hajj and Umrah. Al-Qahtani's (2020) research highlights the influence of Arab society's consumer culture on the behavior of foreign pilgrims. According to him, the consumption patterns and eating habits of Arab society, which tend to be rich in spices and meat, also influence the consumption patterns of pilgrims, especially those from Southeast Asian countries. This factor has implications for the health adaptation and eating habits of pilgrims during worship. Furthermore, Hidayat (2021) emphasizes the importance of cross-cultural understanding in his research. He states that the success of pilgrims in performing the Hajj depends not only on spiritual readiness but also on the ability to adapt to the norms, traditions, and ethics of Arab society, such as how to dress, interact, and transact. Finally, Ahmad & Hassan (2022) found that Arab technology and media, such as television broadcasts and Arabic-language information boards, have a significant influence on pilgrims' understanding of worship procedures. They suggest the need to improve cultural and Arabic language literacy among pilgrims so that their worship experience becomes more meaningful.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of describing in depth how Arab culture influences the experiences of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, in terms of spirituality, social aspects, and behavior. The research subjects consisted of Indonesian Hajj and Umrah pilgrims who had performed their pilgrimage within the last five years. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, taking into account variations in age,

gender, and region of origin in order to obtain diverse data. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews to explore the pilgrims' direct experiences related to their interactions with Arab culture, observations of the pilgrims' behavior during the rituals and in the Holy Land, as well as a documentation study covering secondary data such as Hajj reports, academic literature, and government policies. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. Data reduction was carried out by selecting important information relevant to the research focus, then presented in the form of descriptive narratives to find patterns and main themes that describe the influence of Arab culture on the pilgrims' worship experiences. Data validity was tested using source and technique triangulation techniques, namely comparing interview data with observations and supporting documents to ensure consistency and credibility of information. With this method, the research results are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how Arab culture influences the Hajj and Umrah worship experiences of Indonesian pilgrims, both in terms of social adaptation and spiritual appreciation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Experience Of Hajj And Umrah Pilgrims In Performing Their Worship

The Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages are the highest form of spiritual devotion for Muslims, carrying profound religious, social, and cultural significance. Each pilgrim has a unique experience while performing worship in the Holy Land, both in terms of ritual and non-ritual worship. These experiences often become spiritual turning points, strengthening faith and providing valuable lessons about patience, brotherhood, and self-control.

Spiritual Experience, Most pilgrims say that performing Hajj and Umrah provides a profound spiritual experience. When performing tawaf at the Kaaba, for example, many pilgrims feel an extraordinary spiritual vibration—a feeling of emotion, awe, and submission in the presence of Allah SWT's greatness. The moment of wukuf in Arafah is the most touching spiritual peak, because it is there that pilgrims offer prayers and ask for forgiveness with sincerity. The sense of togetherness with millions of Muslims from all over the world also fosters an awareness of the universality of Islam and the brotherhood of mankind.

Physical and Emotional Experiences, In addition to spiritual experiences, pilgrims also face various physical and emotional challenges. The extreme weather in Saudi Arabia, fatigue from walking long distances, and the large crowds often test their patience and determination. However, these experiences teach the meaning of sincerity in worship and sincerity in facing trials. Many pilgrims feel that these experiences strengthen their endurance, discipline, and empathy for others.

Social and Cultural Aspects, Encounters with pilgrims from various countries open new insights into the diversity of Islamic cultures. Pilgrims learn to respect differences in language, customs, and habits, while remaining focused on the main purpose of worship. These interactions reflect the values of Islamic brotherhood and solidarity among Muslims. In addition, the discipline of time, cleanliness, and orderliness practiced while in the Holy Land become positive examples that pilgrims often bring home to apply in their daily lives.

Influence After Returning Home, After returning from the Holy Land, many pilgrims admit to experiencing changes in their attitudes and behavior. They become more

patient, humble, and disciplined in worship. The Hajj and Umrah are not only physical journeys to Mecca and Medina, but also spiritual journeys towards self-purification. The title “Haji” or “Hajjah” often becomes a moral motivation to maintain behavior that reflects Islamic morals.

Culture Of The Community According To Pilgrims

Every Hajj and Umrah pilgrim who departs for the Holy Land not only undergoes spiritual worship but also interacts with the culture of the local community. This experience provides new insights into how Arab culture, especially in Mecca and Medina, influences daily life and the practice of worship. Through direct experience, pilgrims can see how the social values, customs, and habits of the local community reflect a religious life that is different from that in their home countries.

Religious Culture and Daily Life, Hajj and Umrah pilgrims generally assess that Arab society is deeply rooted in Islamic values. Daily activities are strictly regulated by prayer times, and almost all economic activity stops when the call to prayer sounds. This gives pilgrims a strong impression of the discipline and priority given to worship in the lives of the local community. In addition, the use of Arabic in daily communication, including in prayers and public announcements, is part of the religious atmosphere that shapes the pilgrims' spiritual awareness.

Social Culture and Inter-Pilgrim Interaction, Arab society is known for its assertive and expressive communication style. For some pilgrims from Asia, this initially feels stiff or harsh. However, after understanding the cultural context, pilgrims realize that this communication style is a form of honesty and openness that is highly valued in Arab culture. In addition, the local community is also known for its generosity, especially in providing free food or drinks to pilgrims at the mosque, which demonstrates strong values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and social concern.

Culture of Discipline and Order, According to the pilgrims' experiences, the people of Mecca and Medina also demonstrate a highly disciplined culture in terms of time management and cleanliness. The management of pilgrim traffic, restrictions on worship areas, and orderly public services are clear examples of how a culture of discipline is applied in a religious context. Pilgrims often feel that this needs to be emulated in their home countries, especially in maintaining order during congregational worship and managing public facilities.

Economic Culture and Service, For pilgrims, the economic culture of the local community is also an interesting experience. Trade around the Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque is very dynamic, but still maintains ethical standards.

Impact on Pilgrims, After returning to their homeland, many pilgrims brought back positive cultural values from Arab society, such as discipline in prayer times, concern for mosque cleanliness, and a spirit of giving. These cultural experiences broadened their understanding of an Islamic way of life that is integrated into all aspects of life. However, pilgrims also learn that Islam can be practiced in various cultural forms, as long as its basic values are upheld.

The Hajj and Umrah are two major Islamic rituals that not only have spiritual significance, but also have a social and cultural impact on pilgrims from all over the world. These two rituals take place in the Holy Land of Mecca and Medina, regions with strong Arab cultural characteristics. Therefore, understanding the local culture is important so that

pilgrims can adapt and perform their worship solemnly, orderly, and with full respect for the applicable norms.

Food Culture and Consumption Patterns, One aspect of Arab culture that is most felt by pilgrims is food. The consumption patterns of Arab society tend to differ from the eating habits of pilgrims from other countries, including Indonesia. Typical Arab foods such as kebuli rice, bread, goat meat, and strong spices such as herbs and curry are the main dishes. For pilgrims who are not accustomed to this, these differences can be a challenge in maintaining their health and stamina during worship. Therefore, understanding and adapting to the local food culture is important so that pilgrims remain comfortable while performing their worship.

Dress Code and Social Etiquette, The dress code in Arabia is heavily influenced by Islamic values and the hot and dry geographical conditions. Loose and covered clothing is characteristic of Arab society. For Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, these dress codes are in line with Sharia law, such as wearing ihram for men and modest clothing for women. However, outside of worship, pilgrims still need to understand the norms of modest dress according to local culture so as not to be considered in violation of local customs. This also reflects respect for the community and Islamic values in the Holy Land.

Language and Communication, Arabic is the primary language of daily interaction in the Holy Land. For foreign pilgrims who do not understand this language, communication can often be challenging, especially when shopping, asking for directions, or interacting with local officials. However, many pilgrims see this experience as an opportunity to learn and broaden their understanding of global Islamic culture. In addition, the increasing use of technology, such as translation apps, helps to reduce language barriers.

Technology and Media in Worship Services, Modern Arab culture has also been influenced by significant technological advances. The Saudi Arabian government utilizes information technology to improve services for pilgrims, such as electronic registration systems, navigation applications in the Grand Mosque, and the use of smart cards for pilgrim identification. These changes show that Arab culture is not only rooted in tradition but is also transforming in line with global developments. For pilgrims, this enriches their worship experience while demonstrating the integration of spiritual values and modern progress.

Social Interaction and Values of Togetherness, The Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages are also a meeting place for Muslims from all over the world. In this multicultural atmosphere, Arab culture becomes the backdrop that brings together various Islamic traditions from other countries. Arab society is known for its culture of hospitality, solidarity, and respect for guests. Social interaction between pilgrims and the local community creates a strong atmosphere of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), although sometimes differences in language and customs can cause minor misunderstandings.

CONCLUSION

Arab culture has a significant influence on the experience of pilgrims performing the Hajj and Umrah. From eating habits, dress codes, communication, to the use of technology, all these aspects shape a unique spiritual and social experience for pilgrims. Understanding the local culture not only helps pilgrims adapt, but also enriches the meaning of worship as a form of respect for diversity in Islam. Thus, Hajj and Umrah are

not only spiritual journeys to Allah SWT, but also a means of cultural learning and strengthening the brotherhood among Muslims around the world.

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