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THE CONCEPT OF UMRAH DIY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to define Umrah DIY. This paper is a systematic review on the concept of Umrah DIY whereby the paper will discuss a newly coined concept for religious travel of a literature study on travel and co-creation value. This research explored a niche segment of travellers who choose not to use travel agents and make their own arrangements to perform Umrah, and with the Saudi Arabia Government's decision that had launched Tourist e-Visa in September 2019, a window of opportunity has opened to perform Umrah DIY trips. The paper provides new insights into the definition of DIY traveller that focuses on religious travel by combining with co-creation value. The findings are not able to be generalized to other DIY conventional travel/tourism markets. Opportunities for future empirical research in the area can be broadened as a basis of developing related religious tourism products and services in Malaysia as well to extend the current literature on religious travel.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the hospitality and the tourism industry in many countries has increased its position, contributing to economic and social development, by providing tourist gaze or in other words travel experience (Perkins & Thorns, 2001). Based on Saudi Hospitality Sector Report (2015), GCC countries which include all the Arab states of the Persian Gulf had 458,045 rooms, of which 63.6 % comes from Saudi Arabia, with the largest share. This is because more than three million visitors from around the world and various regions throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are accommodated in numerous hotels in the capital (especially the nearest holy places).

Traditionally, Malaysian visas for Umrah can only be applied through travel agencies with special Umrah licenses but in September 2019 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia has launched

Tourist e-Visa for citizens of over 50 countries which include Malaysia according to (saudiarabiavisa.com, 2019). This Tourist e-Visa allows travellers to enter the country for leisure purposes and it enables them to stay in Saudi Arabia for up to 90 days and Muslim's pilgrims may travel for Umrah on a tourist e-Visa outside of Hajj season. Along with this, the Tourist e-Visa application process is very simple, and it is 100% online. With this new approach by Saudi Arabia, it will provide an opportunity to perform Umrah DIY .

DIY is a term widely recognized in the manufacturing fields where Wolf and McQuitty (2011) described as involving consumers who design and build their product and decide whether the project has achieved the desired value. Kotler (1986) predicted that a new consumer, a prosumer from a modern society practices 'prosumption,' a 'value co-creation' phenomenon that engage customers in the product development (Lusch & Vanco, 2014). This phenomenon is tied to the concept of DIY which requires the full involvement of the consumer. Meanwhile, looking at the context of travel, this DIY concept, profoundly rooted in modern technology, which promotes the decentralisation of knowledge, and enables amateurs, without experts, to "do it themselves." These advantages has lead to the growth of DIY travellers, who schedule their trips based on personal preferences or data obtained from internet sources (Ryoko, 2012).

The concept of DIY in tourism can be seen in the style of backpacker's travel in the sense that backpackers design their own travel itinerary and make their own travel arrangements without the aid of any travel agent (Guerreiro et al., 2019). However, Umrah travellers are not backpackers as they do not necessarily travel on a shoestring budget, or hitch rides to get to their destinations and the Umrah travellers are looking for a deeper religious experience (Siti'Atikah, Tan, Trupp, Chong, Arni & Arumugam 2022). According to Noy (2004) backpacker travellers emphasise on experiencing exciting destinations, unlike religious travel, where the goal is for religious purposes, that is, to visit holy and sacred places and, to reflect and experience spiritual peace. Maoz and Bekerman (2010) mentioned that none of backpacker's studies used the word "religious visitors" or "pilgrims," perhaps because researchers did not find backpackers who were drawn or influenced by religion. While there is a lack of supporting literature on DIY religious tourism, a few studies such as Umrah backpackers among young Indonesian travellers (Lailatul and Melinda, 2018; Fakhruddin and Ubaidillah, 2021)and Umrah DIY (Siti'Atikah, Tan, Trupp, Chong, Arni & Arumugam 2022) have been done. Hence it can be seen that more studies are required to better understand the tourism phenomenon that is DIY Umrah. As such, this new segment of travellers needs to be recognised.

2. Literature Review

Religious Travellers and Pilgrimage Tourism

Pinter (2014) has illustrated that a pilgrim is a religious traveller who moves for religious purposes where he will visit holy and sacred places, such as churches, temples, or monasteries, to perform pilgrimage or attend festive events and festivals that have religious significance. A pilgrimage is generally defined as a journey to a sacred site motivated by religious reasons. It is divided into two parts: the external journey to the sacred site and the internal journey as a transformative spiritual experience. Jackowski (2000), mentioned that religious tourism became popular in the Middle Ages when people began to travel to holy places to seek salvation. In ancient times, pilgrims have travelled to places seen as having special powers. Today, religious, and sacred cities of Makkah and Madinah in Saudi Arabia, Jerusalem in Israel, Vatican in Rome, and more are frequently visited for pilgrimage tourism. Wall and Mathieson (2006) acknowledge that: "Religion has long been a force that has led people to travel to religious centres in many parts of the world".

The Hajj and the Umrah are the most important drivers of spiritual and religious tourism in Islamic religious tourism. On an annual basis, 12 million spiritual and religious tourists visit the two holy cities of "Mecca" and "Medina." This figure is expected to rise to 17 million by 2025 as the Muslim population grows (Othman, Harun, De Almeida, & Sadq 2021).

Umrah

There are several compelling reasons to think about performing Umrah. One important reason is that pilgrims are expected to fulfil their religious obligations (Bashir et al., 2017). In terms of the extent of Allah's rewards, performing Umrah during Ramadan is more advantageous than at any other time of the year. But what have we discovered today? A quick search for Umrah information on the internet yields a plethora of Umrah package advertisements for luxury accommodation, food, and amenities for travelers both on the way to and at well-known sacred sites. It is not rare to come across facilities that are described as luxurious. This is in contrast to the history of difficulty associated with completing Umrah, where early records suggest that Umrah pilgrims would travel by ship from Malaysia to Mecca. Pilgrims used to arrive in Mecca on camels and donkeys or by sea within months and even years long. Since the advancement of air travel, majority of international pilgrims and a sizable minority of domestic pilgrims have travelled by air; the convenience and speed of travel has resulted in Hajj and Umrah becoming a mass gathering (Alqahtani, Alshahrani & Rashid 2021). Thus, an important reason to explore Umrah travel is that it is one of the largest examples of religious pilgrimage today as Muslims are called to perform their religious obligations. Religious tourism and pilgrimages have become increasingly popular and the demand for Umrah among Malaysians is on the rise (Othman et al., 2019). According to Othman, Harun, De Almeida, and Sadq (2021) in Malaysia, the demand for Umrah services is increasing as more Muslims choose Umrah which can be conducted at any time over "Hajj" which can only be completed once a year and depending on the Hajj quota.

General studies on Do-It-Yourself (DIY)

Do -It-Yourself (DIY), is an activity in which an individual creates, changes, or produces something. DIY projects typically require a great deal of innovation, design, knowledge, skills, and time beyond any other form of 'creation'. With the aid of technology, DIY travellers can acquire the skills needed to learn cultures, places, and people, online without the help of professionals (Ryoko, 2012). Similarly, Wang et al. (2014) suggest that the advent of technology offers DIY travellers, who have long been opposed to traditional modes of organised group travel, a platform that offers travellers to participate in the sharing of travel journeys, and continues to give them instant access to the experience. If travellers have questions about the schedule or the journey itself, they can directly communicate with the group community using this website. Umrah DIY now has over 10,000 members on Facebook and Telegram, including those who have performed and those who are interested in performing Umrah DIY.

Kireienko (2009) book on tourism believed that Do-It-Yourself (DIY) is related to Free Independent Travelers (FITs) but for the purpose of this study it is suitable to use Do It Yourself (DIY) as based on Tianhong, (2018) FITs do little or no preparation for the trip which could not be possible for pilgrims who will be performing Umrah. Umrah pilgrims are expected to complete rituals in specific order while performing the Umrah which include performing ablutions, tawaf, Sa'iy, and taqdir. Ahmad et al. (2014). Umrah pilgrims intending to make Sa'iy must make their way out of the Al Masjid Al Haram towards the Masa'a. Clearly, this proves ofed that knowledge on the location and rituals must be well understood by the pilgrims to ensure that their worship is accepted. Traditionally, Umrah pilgrims perform their Umrah with the guidance from Mutawwif (professional guides) provided in travel packages. Mutawwif may be of important guidance, since umrah requires the fulfilment of a series of rituals, including travelling from one location to another.

However, the emergence of the DIY traveller, who can be characterised as prosumers, define their travel from a very individualised perspective and design their travel arrangements based on their personalised expectations and experienced. Based on Table. 1 below which are related to past studies, there is no attempt to relate all the possible pattern of Umrah Do-It-Yourself (DIY). It can therefore reasonably be inferred that this group has experienced an ongoing evolution since it first emerged. This may be due to the changes of advancement of information technology on the travel behaviour.

Predominant Patterns of Umrah DIY Travel

When travellers trust their family, friends, and other reviews more than media advertising, virtual travel communities (VTC) gradually became extremely influential in tourism. Virtual travel communities are defined as groups of people who exchange information and ideas through internet boards and networks (Banyai & Glover, 2012).

Despite the significant potential effect of VTCs on the tourism industry, Buhalis and Law (2008) explained that customers should now have a much greater opportunity to search and then purchase for themselves online. There, communities have been shown to provide value through supporting mutual learning among the community. In addition, the emergence of technology, significant improvements can be seen in terms of experiences. Today, Neuhofer et al. (2013) argued that travellers would co-create better, more personalized and meaningful online interactions made possible by information and communication technologies (ICTs). The potential for digital technology to support co-creation has reached a new level due to the increase in mobile devices and social media. The process of social co-creation takes place outside the realm of the company, where travellers connect, engage, and share with their social circles through technology.

Miljas (2019) has explored DIY traveller for leisure tourism where the author identifies customization as one of the factors of DIY travel. DIY travellers tend to rely more on their own technical skills and as a result, they are more independent in unpredictable situations. The increase in customer complaints within the Malaysian Umrah service does not show that Umrah providers have a responsible approach in dealing with business transactions. Suib, (2018), interviewed officials of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture of Malaysia (MOTAC) and found that compounds worth RM 362,000 were issued by the Ministry from 2012 to 2016 due to complaints from former customers of Umrah in Malaysia. On the other hand, this has led to DIY travel, the transitions from massive to more customised travel where travellers have control over their travel plans. This is due to the fact that modern travellers feel tired, stressed out and therefore seek privacy while traveling; prefer individual trips over organized tour packages that fulfil their needs and wishes (Polukhina et al., 2020). This suggests that the trend can better be explained by the fact that travellers are becoming more skilled, experienced, and more ambitious

3. Methodology

The purpose of this section is to introduce the research methodology that has been used in selecting the papers for this study. The methodology includes identifying, screening and eligibility. The methodology was based on the systematic literature review (SLR) for non-health researchers written by Mohamed Shaffril, Samsuddin & Abu Samah (2021).

Identifying

Identification is a method to check for any synonym, similar terms, and variance for the study's keywords of do it yourself and umrah. This aims to include more ways to search for more relevant review articles for selected site. The identification process relied on online thesaurus, keywords used by previous research, keywords suggested by Scopus, and keywords suggested by experts (refer Table 1). Based on the main and enriched keywords, the searching process was run on selected leading and supporting databases either by using advanced searching techniques which is by using Boolean operator, phrase searching, truncation, wild card, and field code functions separately or by combining these searching techniques into full search string. Manual search strategies were also used such as handpicking and snowballing. Three databases, namely Scopus, Web of Science and Science Direct, were chosen as the leading databases to scan the relevant articles and documents for the study, in line with the recommendation of Gusenbauer and Haddaway (2019) who verified the searching capacity of these three sources. The selected databases offer many advantages such as availability of advanced searching features, extensive (indexing more than 5000 publishers), quality control of the papers and multidisciplinary focus. A total of eight sources as supporting databases were used. The references were Google Scholar, Dimensions.ai, DOAJ, MY Journal, Research Window, Mendeley, and library / agencies (for printed document). These databases are especially required to obtain additional sources from leading databases such as non-indexing journals and any missing papers. Supporting database is needed as Xiao and Watson (2017) stated that no database is perfect while Bates et al. (2017) concluded that database sensitivity on keywords established for searching relevant articles are not up to 100%. The supported repositories listed have their own advantages, for example, Google Scholar has the potential to generate massive results. In analysis, Gusenbauer (2019) verified that 389 million documents are available in Google Scholar database. The search in the leading and supporting databases have resulted in a total of 15.

Table 1
Results of identification process

Section	Main keywords	Enriched keyword
Emergence of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Umrah traveller	Emergence Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Umrah traveller	Emergence = Development, evolution, issues. Do-It-Yourself (DIY) = Handcrafted, Homemade, Free Independent Travelers (FITs), Off - track tourist, independent traveller. Umrah traveller = Pilgrims, religious traveller, tourist, adventurer.

Screening

This study reviewed all 15 chosen articles by choosing the collection criteria, which are automatically done based on the sorting method of the selected databases. As all current written papers cannot be reviewed by researchers, Okoli (2015) proposed that the researchers should decide the spectrum that they should study which focused on Umrah backpackers and independent Umrah. In the meantime, the scope was restricted to 2022 because of the study phase which started in March 2021 and the year has not yet ended. Therefore, the timeline was used as one of the inclusion criteria between 2010 and 2021. In fact, only papers with analytical evidence and written in a journal, book or chapter are used to guarantee the accuracy of the reviews. However, to prevent inconsistency of interpretation, only papers written in English are

included in the analysis (refer Table 2). The process omitted 93 articles as they did not meet with the conditions for incorporation and the other 15 articles were included for the eligibility process.

Table 2
Results of screening process

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	2010 to 2021	Before 2010
Publication type	Article journals, books, chapters in book	Conference proceeding, newspaper, review paper
Language	English	Non-English

Eligibility

Eligibility is the third process by which author actively check the papers collected to ensure that the other publications are in compliance with the requirements (after the screening process). This method was carried out by reading the title and description of the publications and the contents of the document is examined. This procedure omitted 93 papers as the aim of the selected publications was to do not concentrate on travellers and written in Chinese, Thai and Indonesian. Overall, 15 papers were chosen for analysis.

Table 3
Systematic Review on the past usage on the concept of DIY and Religious travel

Areas of study	Authors	Definition	Issues addressed	Findings
Do-It-Yourself (DIY) traveller				
Young traveler	(Tugulea et al., 2014)	-Use internet when deciding to plan a trip. -Refer photos or from reviews trips posted online.	1) Behaviour when planning a trip 2) Information seeking 3) Customization	-Human factor improves credibility -Review of individuals, are informative. -Popular sources of knowledge are mass media (internet sites, flyers, catalogues, magazines, television, radio) advice from family, friends, and colleagues.
Backpacker	(Sørensen , 2003)	-Self-organized - Flexible itinerary.	1) Travel culture 2) Internet usage	-Internet and email allow individual backpacker to invoke a personal virtual group. -Allow selective partner choice.
Free Independent Traveler	(Sartorelli, 2019)	-Spend very short time at one destination. -Independent -Prefer travelling alone or in small groups	1) Travel demand 2) Traveller's characteristic 3) Information seeking	-Among middle-class citizens, 70 per cent of the market are independent or semi-independent travellers. -Modern Chinese tourists vary from traditional ones. -Explore new sights, -Individual

		-Self organizing using the Internet.		travel
Independent Traveler	(Weaver et al., 2007)	-Better understanding of the culture and diversity.	1) Trip characteristic 2) Destination evaluation	-Encourage repeat purchase, ensure that tourist services are easily located, and individual help is readily available. -Consider previous travel experience and trip-related variables.
Free Independent Traveler	(Li et al., 2019)	-Less predictable and diversified travel route -Aid of smart services. -Plan own travel itinerary -Prefer flexibility	1) Tourist destination movement 2) Information seeking	-Improve communication with customers -Encourage, mobile applications with AI technologies and advanced algorithms.
Chinese Free Independent Traveler	(Xiaofan & Saeheaw, 2020)	-Prefer to stay in guesthouses than hotels. -Travel for fun and entertainment and experiencing new cultures. -Chinese FIT makes reservations from the website or mobile applications.	1) Customer knowledge management 2) Traveler's characteristic	-Better local experience in Chiang Mai -Improvement in the information service should be tackle. -FITs are pleased with the basic services offered by the guest house.
Do it yourself (DIY) travel	(Peng & Zhang, 2013)	-Tourists decide destinations and schedule -No interest on travelling agency -Make own decisions about eating, lodging, transportation, shopping, entertainment and so on.	1) Travel route programming in	Intelligent route programming has been used to solve the issue of an optimal timetable for travel.

Do it yourself (DIY) traveller	(Ryoko, 2012)	-Acquired all necessary skills without any help from professional	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Information sharing 2) Information seeking 3) Internet usage 	-Internet a medium for travellers to share the adventure and gain information -Like to share experiences with others online
Independent traveller	(Lu & Ho, 2018)	-Travelling is a spiritual activity and independent travelling represents a special way of travelling which can achieve personal achievements and self-creation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Behaviour of traveller using traditional map 2) Information seeking 	-Traditional maps are difficult for independent travellers to navigate. - Traditional maps are gradually being replaced by electronic maps that are loaded with functionalities that provide information about the location, saving time spent searching for food establishments, lodging, and so on.
Independent traveller	(Polukhina et al., 2020)	-Individual or in a small group (no more than 10 people) -Planned own route -All essential services are booked and purchased independently. - Do not purchase packaged tourist product.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Personalized travel 2) High quality experienced 3) Information seeking 	-Young people opt for independent tourism. -Demand for tour operators is still not declining. -Growth of independent tourism is related to advancement of information technologies
Religious travel				
Postmodern traveller	(Maoz & Bekerman, 2010)	-A way to experience a reversed experience and a new sense of the self. -Pilgrims are different from tourists, particularly in terms of the direction of the journey undertaken	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Religious Travel 2) Traveller's characteristic 	-Expect broad and holistic understandings of the world and of themselves. --The words "pilgrims," "religious tourists," or "existential tourists" do not suit the backpackers.

Muslim traveller	(Hassan et al., 2016)	-Motivated by a sense of duty and obligation rather than the pursuit of pleasure and leisure	1) Religious travel 2) Customer satisfaction	-Umrah travellers are loyal to the tour package providers although they may not be satisfied with the quality of the services. -It may be because of the monopoly held by tourist services -Muslims may not have many options to switch.
Religious tourism in Mecca	(Pinter, 2014)	People travel for the purpose of religion to visit sacred and holy sights	1) Pilgrimage 2) Modernization 3) Noise pollution 4) Traffic	-Pilgrims spend on travel packages or purchase separate accommodation, airfare, and transportation -As the number of pilgrims is increasing, they need personalized services.
Spiritual tourism	(Almuhr zi & Alsawafi , 2017)	People of a particular faith travel to visit places of religious significance in their faith.	1) Seeking knowledge 2) High frequency of Umrah travel 3) Spiritual growth	-Largest group of the sample travelled via ground transport in a full package arrangement (37.7%), followed by self-arrangement via air transport (29.9%), ground transport self-arrangement (26%), while a few respondents travelled by air transport with a full package arrangement. -No clear pattern on travel companion.
Religious tourism	(Rashid, 2018)	A journey undertaken for spiritual reasons	1) Internet deployment 2) Knowledge seeking 3) Technology advancement	-Religious rituals foster community-based tourism initiatives. -Muslim religious pilgrims can “overcome the tourist gaze and become a native-visitor” by acquiring knowledge and training to perform rituals in the prescribed manner.

4. Discussion

Do -It-Yourself (DIY) travelers are those who travel independently (Li et al., 2019; Polukhina et al., 2020; Sartorelli, 2019; Sørensen, 2003) or travelling with companions in small groups of less than 10 people. Based on the findings in Table 3, DIY travelers would use the internet and search information online by reading reviews, tips and knowledge shared by experienced travellers. Then, these travellers will create their own itinerary through tips and experiences shared by others and use them according to their own preferences. In addition, religious travellers would acquire all the necessary information and skills from peers online and according to Rashid (2018) Muslim pilgrims can “overcome the tourist gaze and become a native-visitor” by gaining knowledge and training to perform rituals in the prescribed manner. This shows that religious travellers do not only search for information, but they want to acquire knowledge to help perform Umrah accurately.

Interested DIY travellers can get ideas of transportation, helpful applications and responded to other people's experiences for potential guidance via social media. However, Hassan et al. (2016) found that Umrah travellers still favour to continue using tour package providers although the quality of services may not satisfy them, as there are not many alternatives to perform Umrah. Since there are not many options for Muslims, Umrah DIY could provide a possibility for travellers to perform their Umrah, have their own itinerary and service options for a more meaningful journey. According to Bandara and Silva (2016), the emerging information technology has developed new tourism segmentation which is e-tourism and it has created opportunities for tourists in making plans for their travel experience either by self-preparation or through travel agencies. Pinter (2014) discusses that pilgrims spend on travel packages or purchase separate services such as accommodation, airfare, and transportation. Pinter addressed the need for customized services for the growing number of pilgrims to invest on. Despite the challenge of technology acceptance and the rise of the DIY culture, it is a significant step forward for industry professionals to understand the needs of DIY in Umrah.

5. Conclusion

A better knowledge of what enables this emerging DIY groups of travellers to value their journey can lead to a more detailed understanding of the inadequacies as well as the advantages of current tourism activities. There is still much to be known in terms of the extent of Umrah DIY travellers' participation in tourism, such as the process of planning and associated risk. Jauhari and Sanjeev (2010) argued that there would be significant implications for the marketing of religious tourism if reasons for visiting religious sites could be established. This will show that the motives for DIY travelling may not necessarily be related to economic constraints or to having issues with an agency. In addition, understanding the desire of travellers is a key aspect of tourism studies, and this is also crucial to the development of tourism destination.

This paper has concentrated on reviewing the tourism literature on Do It Yourself travel. Research gaps and directions for future empirical research can include (a) the dimensions of Umrah DIY and their relation in co-creation experiences, including expectations, perceptions, involvement, and emotions; and (b) segmentation profiles based on Umrah DIY participation and interaction as indicators of traveller' willingness to adhere to co-creation experiences. Key findings from the study may provide awareness and opportunities for travellers to participate in umrah DIY. Those interested in participating in umrah DIY could gain first - hand knowledge by engaging in a virtual traveller network. Achieving a more comprehensive view is therefore required to create and test a framework as the discussion has primarily been based on past studies without substantial empirical data. Hopefully, the findings from this research will be able to provide awareness and opportunities for travellers to participate in umrah DIY. Umrah DIY traveller data whose profile information such as demographic profile, behavioural characteristics and reservation information can be of advantage to allow The Council for Umrah Regulation (MKSU) by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia and travel agencies to capture this market.

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Authors Contributions

All authors collaborated and contributed equally to this publication.

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