DOI:https://doi.org/10.11113/ijibs.v19.150

International Journal of Innovation and Business Strategy (IJIBS)/ Vol. 19, No. 1, June 2024, 36-47

ELUCIDATING THE ROLE OF CONTRIBUTORS ENRICHING SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS INSPIRATIONS FOR THE MUSLIMS TO PERFORM HOLY UMRAH PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

Haamid Bashir[1*]

[1]Freelance Researcher (Umrah Pilgrimage) and Technologist Department of Biochemistry, Govt Medical College Srinagar, University of Kashmir, India.

[*] haamidb7@gmail.com

Received: 29.01.2024 Accepted: 25.05.2024 Published: 30.06.2024

Abstract: This study delves into the multifaceted aspects that contribute to the spiritual and religious inspirations motivating Muslims to embark on the sacred journey of Umrah pilgrimage to Mecca. The research aims to elucidate the key factors and contributors, latest technology, that enhance the spiritual experience of Umrah, examining their influence on the decision-making process of potential pilgrims. The study is based on observational prospective study carried on 400 pilgrims who volunteered for this research during Jan 2017 to December 2023. The investigation explores the impact of various contributors, including religious teachings, social networks, cultural influences, and the role of pilgrimage organizers, on shaping individuals' motivations to undertake the Umrah pilgrimage. Additionally, the study seeks to understand how these contributors intersect and synergize to enrich the overall spiritual experience for the pilgrims. The prospective nature of the research allows for the identification of emerging trends and evolving dynamics in the context of Umrah pilgrimage. Findings from this study provide valuable insights for religious scholars, policymakers, and organizers involved in facilitating the Umrah pilgrimage experience. It is expected that, this research will contribute to the development of strategies that can further enhance the spiritual and religious dimensions of the Umrah pilgrimage, fostering a more meaningful and enriching journey for Muslims undertaking this sacred obligation.

Keywords: Umrah, Kashmir, Pilgrimage, Holy Mecca, Ziyarat

Paper type: Empirical article

DOI:https://doi.org/10.11113/ijibs.v19.150

Introduction

Despite the Hajj, which has set dates based on the Islamic lunar calendar, the Umrah, is an Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah, Saudi Arabia, that Muslims can do at any time of the year (Bashir et al., 2017). Following the assumption of Ihram (a sacred state), Umrah is defined in the Sharia of Islam as performing Tawaf around the Ka'bah (Arabic: كَعْبَة, 'Cube') and Sa'I between Mount Safa and Marwah. When travelling by land and crossing a Miqat such as Zu 'l-Hulafa, Juhfa, Qarnu 'l-Manāzil, Yalamlam, Zāt-i-'Irq, Ibrahīm Mursīa, or a location in al-Hill, Ihram is required to be worn (Gannon et al., 2017). The pilgrimage to Makkah, particularly the performance of Umrah, holds profound significance in the lives of Muslims around the world. Saudi Arabia, as the custodian of two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina, round the year welcomes millions of pilgrims seeking spiritual enlightenment and divine blessings through the sacred act of Umrah. While the religious merit of Umrah is well-established, the underlying motivations and influences that drive individuals to undertake this spiritual journey are complex and multifaceted. This prospective study endeavors to unravel the intricate tapestry of contributors that enrich the spiritual and religious inspirations of Muslims, propelling them towards the performance of Umrah pilgrimage to the Holy Mecca. Particularly, in this study, I aim to study the role of contributors enriching spiritual and religious inspiration among pilgrims to perform pilgrimage.

By investigating the role of religious teachings, the influence of social networks, the impact of cultural factors, and the contributions of pilgrimage organizers, the research aims to elucidate how these elements converge to enhance the overall spiritual experience for those undertaking the sacred journey. Through a prospective lens, the study also seeks to identify emerging trends and evolving patterns in the motivations of potential Umrah pilgrims, contributing valuable insights to the discourse on religious tourism and pilgrimage dynamics. As the global Muslim population continues to grow and diversify, the findings of this research are poised to inform strategies and initiatives aimed at fostering a more meaningful and profound Umrah pilgrimage experience. By unraveling the layers of inspiration that guide Muslims on this spiritual endeavor, this study aspires to contribute to a deeper understanding of the spiritual dimensions of the Umrah pilgrimage, thereby enriching the lives of pilgrims and promoting a more profound connection with their faith.

Literature Review

Umrah, often referred to as the "lesser pilgrimage" in comparison to the Hajj, is not bound by specific dates and can be undertaken at any time of the year. This flexibility has led to an increasing number of Muslims undertaking the journey, seeking closeness to Allah and a transformative spiritual experience. Understanding the factors that contribute to this decision-making process is of paramount importance, not only for scholars and religious leaders but also for pilgrimage organizers and policymakers involved in ensuring a seamless and enriching pilgrimage experience. There are different routes for passengers travelling by air called Meeqat. When they enter at point of Miqat near Saudi Arabia, they have to wear Ihram and enter the state of Ihram. Once a pilgrim enters the state of Ihram and declares their intention, they must refrain from a number of crucial Acts (Niyah). He or she is prohibited from performing the following actions: signing marriage contracts; cutting or hunting animals; clipping nails; applying perfumes to the body after donning the ihram; having sex; shaving

any part of the body; and men are not allowed to wear pants, cover their heads or engage in conflict (Mohamed 1996). These restrictions are only meant to help pilgrims concentrate their bodies and minds on the Umrah pilgrimage. Every Umrah pilgrimage must adhere to Saudi Arabia's rules of law. Such as, drug smuggling can result in a death sentence.

According to Islamic tradition, the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his companions conducted the first Umrah in 629 AD or 7AH following the Hudaibiyah Treaty. It was referred to as the first Umrah. A sequence of ceremonial activities that are performed by Umrah pilgrims as a reflection of solidarity with Muslims around the world and as a tribute to the lives of Prophet Ibrahim, Ismail and his second wife, Hazrat Hajrah. Wearing traditional ihram clothing, pilgrims circumambulate the Ka'bah seven times in an anticlockwise route as part of the Tawaf ritual. Men are advised to perform these three times quickly, then four times, closer together, at a more moderate pace. Sa'I, means to walk quickly back and forth between the hills of Marwah and Safa seven times. This is a recreation of Hajra's desperate quest for water. Ismail the infant let out a cry and struck the ground with his foot, causing water to appear out of nowhere, referred to as the zam-zam well. After completion circumbulation of Kaba from Hijar Aswad and successful completion of seven rounds of Sa'I between safa and Marwah Hills, drinking zam-zam and offering two rakat Nimaz. Pilgrim went for Halq at nearest salon. Halq, a partial hair cut usually reserved for ladies who chop off at least one inch of hair, is a hairstyle. A halq, commonly done on men, is a full head shave. Both represent submitting one's will to God rather than elevating one's outward appearance. The head cutting or shaving is postponed until the conclusion of Umrah (Al-Qahtaanee 1997). After completing these rites, the pilgrim completes Umrah and has the option to remove their ihram.

The prospective study

The present study is based on observational prospective carried out on 400 pilgrims who volunteered for this research during Jan 2017 to December 2023. According to this study, the bulk of Umrah pilgrims who travel to Saudi Arabia on economic packages mostly from the Kashmir division of the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory. The pilgrims were Sunni Muslims who came from both rural and urban areas. Once the required travel documents—passport, health certificate, immunisation record, and passport-size photos with a white background—have been submitted to the Saudi embassy through a travel agency, an electronic visa is issued for at least 90 days for the Umrah pilgrimage. Piligrims departing from mountainous valley of Kashmir, pilgrims boarded different airlines like Air India or any other private airline. On reaching New Delhi, the Indian capital, one has fulfilled the immigration and emigration procedures are allowed to board international flight to Jeddah that would take five hours to reach. Upon arriving in Jeddah, again successful immigration and pilgrims picked up their luggage. The tour agency has already reserved an AC bus for Makkah. While arriving in Makkah for the Umrah. They proceeded to the hotels where they would be staying during pilgrimage, picked up their room keys, left their baggage, and had dinner. Following supper, they cleaned up performed ablution, and then went to the Kaaba and Masjid Haram to perform the Umrah rituals. As directed by the Prophet and Islamic sharia law, they should carry out the Umrah ritual. Already rituals discussed above. Once their umrah is over, they can live like regular guests and take advantage of all the amenities offered. The pilgrims can visit additional sacred locations in Makkah the following day, such as Mount Arafat, Jabal Al-Noor, the Cave of Hira, etc. Holy mosques are close to major tertiary

care hospitals and health centres, which offer round-the-clock patient care for the benefit of pilgrims who visit them. Additionally, pilgrims enjoy 24-hour electricity and warm water for showers and ablutions in their individual hotel bathrooms.

The days leading up to, during, and following the Hajj as well as during Ramadan are the busiest periods for umrah pilgrimages. Jeddah is a tourist attraction. Because Jeddah is located on the Red Sea coast, it experiences mildly humid summers. In the winter, the humidity decreases. Jeddah is home to the King Abdul Aziz International Airport. To do the Umrah, tourists from all over the world fly to Jeddah. Makkah is roughly 90 to 100 miles away from Jeddah and takes about two hours to get there.

Among the most well-known sources of potable water is the sacred well of Zam-Zam. Because of the minimal rainfall, there isn't much greenery in and around Makkah. Makkah is surrounded by the Great Arabian Desert. The weather is arid. Extremely high temperatures are experienced there, often reaching forty degrees Celsius and occasionally reaching fifty throughout the summer. The temperature stays below 30 degrees Celsius from December to February. Medina is located 150 km from the coast and 600 kilometres north of where it is now. Encircled by the Great Arabian Desert, it's a sizable oasis. The city's periphery is covered in date orchards due to the abundance of wells that supply high-quality water. Although it doesn't get as hot or dry as Makkah, the weather is still hot and dry. It can get chilly or even frigid in the winter, especially right before dawn prayers.

All pilgrims receive free medical care from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia near holy mosques. Outside need to pay. Health Insurance is important for travel. In Makkah, there are ten hospitals. Ajyad Hospital, King Faisal Hospital, King Abdul Aziz Hospital, King Abdullah Medical City, Maternity and Children Hospital, etc. For locals as well as pilgrims, Makkah and Medina offer a large number of walk-in clinics. Al-Ansar Tertiary Care Hospital is located in Medina (Abu Khalil, 2004; Sa'd, 1967). At money exchange kiosks in holy cities, Umrah pilgrims can simply swap their currencies. The food served in restaurants is affordable and clean. Cities are environmentally benign and pollution-free. The Umrah pilgrimage is a religious tourist destination as well as a source of revenue for locals and foreign workers doing business or having shop establishments inside haram area. The Umrah pilgrimage takes place all year long. Thus, it advances Saudi Arabia's economy concurrently with the 2030 Saudi Vision. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia already offers pilgrims the greatest amenities in terms of transportation, lodging, communication, and medical treatment. Every industry needs to do more. According to Saudi Vision 2030, the vast mosque will be expanded to accommodate millions of pilgrims in the future (Saudi Press Agency, 2022).

Numerous departments operating under the supervision of the custodian of holy mosques have constructed thousands of hygienic and well-maintained restrooms for pilgrims at the interest of the pilgrims' health, the municipalities surrounding holy mosques keep frequent vigils at hotels, eateries, food outlets, barbershops, etc. around the clock. The best traffic control is also seen near the large mosque. After 10 to fifteen days in Makkah, pilgrims boarded an air-conditioned bus to travel to Medina, another Saudi holy city. The bus ride to Medina from Mecca is around 450 miles, and it takes five hours. Six to eight lanes make up the highway, and numerous tunnels are built at different spots to save travel time. There are several mosques and food stands for pilgrims beside the road.

The pilgrims are greeted by date palm palms as soon as they arrive in Medina. This city is stunning, with every building having a milky colour. The Prophet's Mosque, also known as Masjid Nabawi, is located in the centre of Medina. It is the second-holiest mosque in Islam, the second-largest mosque globally after Mecca's Masjid Al Haram, and the final resting place of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Allah's last messenger. According to the package, pilgrims spent more than ten or twenty days there. Additionally, there were three- and five-star hotels. As pilgrims enter mosques and offer prayers five times to the blessed Prophet (pbuh), they also recite the Salwat/Duood Sharif (Salaam upon the Prophet {pbuh}) loudly until they arrive at the prophet's resting place. All Muslims are moving towards the blessed city of Madinah, al Munawarah. Muslims welcome Hazrat Abu Bakar al-Siddiq (RA) and Hazrat Umar ibn-al Khattab (RA) after greeting the Prophet (pbuh). They also visited a number of sacred places, including the Baki Graveyard, Khandaq region, Mount Uhad, Masjid Quba, Masjid Qiblateen, Masjid Juma, and Masjid Bilal (10–13 Hawting, 1980). In addition to enjoying shopping, pilgrims also take their families and friends on dates. The custodian of the holy mosque has greatly developed this region; thousands of pilgrims stay in hotels and in the mosque's environs. The facilities for communication and road connectivity are very excellent. The best facilities for pilgrims have often been made by the guardians of holy mosques. All pilgrims were satisfied by the facilities provided to them. Many visits the health centers near the holy mosques. All were satisfied with communication, infrastructure and transportation facilities available them. Environment was neat and clean, due to eco-friendly polices adopted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Methodology

As mentioned earlier, this study is built on the experience shared by Umrah pilgrims who visited holy cities of Makkah and Medina for Umrah pilgrimage from January 2017 to December 2023. A total of 400 participants was selected for the study after giving informed consent and willingness Questionnaire and observation technique were adopted in this study. This prospective study were employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. Surveys, interviews, google doc, and focus group discussions were conducted to gather data from Umrah pilgrims, religious scholars, group leaders, and other stakeholders. Cost of Umrah journey was borne by pilgrims themselves. Their participation in this research work was pivotal in interest of good cause and we pursued this research in interest of Muslim ummah and help travel agencies, Government of Saudi Arabia in further improvement of facilities as per Saudi vision 2030. After formulating questionnaire and permission to ask questions from pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia from Kashmir, India were interviewed (with private travel companies). All responses were documented and this survey was conducted for about six to eight weeks. Secondary data and literature review was collected from different sources and digital Islamic libraries.

Analysis and Findings

After collecting the data, coding of the responses of the questions was done for statistical processing and analysis. Every item of the questionnaire was coded and transformed into MS excel sheet. Data was further processed on computer using SPSS version 16.0(Chicago-IL). Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical tools, while qualitative data will be subjected to thematic analysis to extract key themes and insights. The data was analyzed by ANOVA, Chi-Square Test, Percentages.

DOI:https://doi.org/10.11113/ijibs.v19.150

Demographic Profile

Table 1 summarizes the socio-demographic pattern of umrah pilgrims of Kashmir valley who visited Holy Mecca for pilgrimage. 400 pilgrims participated in the study, among males were 280(70%) and females were 120 (30%), p value was significant (p=0.003). Pilgrims aged less than 40 were 160 (40%) and greater than 40 were 240 (60%). Similarly, pilgrims from urban dwelling were 190 (47.5%) and rural 210 (52.5%); p value was significant. Those who were first time visitors were 330 (82.5%) and second timers were 70 (17.5%). The data also reveals about the marital status, education and occupation, where married vs un-married (350 (87.5%); 50 (12.5%), literate vs illiterate (180 (45%); 220 (55%) and Govt employees (n=110, 27.5%), Business (n=240, 60%), Un-employed (n=50, 12.5%), p value were statistically significant. The analysis of data confirms that Umrah is a great event for pilgrims like Hajj as accordance to hadith of Prophet (pbuh) in his life. Majority of Umrah pilgrims were first time visitors and are both men and women in age group of 25 to 60 years. Maximum number of respondents were married and were accompanied by mehrams as per law of Islam and law of kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Table 1: Socio-demographic pattern of umrah pilgrims of Kashmir valley, India (n=400)

No	Parameters	Percentage N (%)
1	**Gender**	
	Male	280 (70.0)
	Female	120 (30.0)
2	**Age (in years)**	
	>40	160 (40.0)
	<40	240 (60.0)
3	**Residence**	
	Urban	190 (47.5)
	Rural	210 (52.5)
4	**Pilgrimage**	
	First Time visitor	330 (82.5)
	Second Time visitor	70 (17.5)
5	**Marital status**	
	Married	350 (87.5)
	Un-Married	50 (12.5)
6	**Education**	
	Literate	180 (45.0)
	Illiterate	220 (55.0)
7	**Traveler**	
	Yes	110 (27.5)
	No	290 (72.5)
8	**Occupation**	
	Govt service	110 (27.5)
	Business	240 (60.0)
	Un-employed	50 (12.5)

9.	**Language proficiency** English Arabic Urdu/Kashmiri	 80 (20) 05 (1.2) 315 (78.7)

Piligrimage Organizer's Impact/ Social Influence/Cultural Impacts/Services

Table 2 illustrates findings regarding the rating of travel company services the level of services offered by the agents during their pilgrimage journey. The information in the table clearly notes that pilgrims who have travelled from Kashmir, India are happy with their travel agents and the standard of package provided by the Umrah tour operator. The table indicates that 90% of pilgrims are happy with the overall services provided by the travel agency. Only 10% thought the services provided were below standards.

Table 2. Effect of services provided by umrah organizers to pilgrimage (n=400)

Services Available	**Excellent N (%)**	**Good N (%)**	**Bad N (%)/**	**P-value**
	x2	***x2***	***x2***	
Packages organized by travel companies	80 (20) [13.3]	280 (70) [14.0]	40 (10) [4.5]	P<0.001
Services provided by travel company at departure airport	160 (40) [13.3]	200 (50) [2.5]	40 (10) [4.5]	P<0.001
Services by travel company on arrival at Jeddah/Medina Airport	80 (20) [13.3]	280(70) [14.0]	40 (10) [4.5]	P<0.001
Hotel booked by travel companies at Makkah/Medina holy cities	40 (10) [53.3]	240 (60) [1.14]	120 (30) [73.14]	P<0.001
Transportation services by travel companies for ziyarat in both holy cities	240 (60) [120.0]	120 (30) [48.2]	40 (10) [4.5]	P<0.001
Religious and travel guidance/trainings given by agent during umrah pilgrimage	80 (20) [23.0]	200 (50) [0.31]	120 (30) [73.14]	P<0.001
Meals served in hotels	280 (70) [152.4]	80 (20) [78.7]	40 (10) [4.5]	P<0.001

Holy Kaabah in Makkah clench incredible worth. Close to it is the station of Abraham, which holds foot prints of Hazrat Abraham (As). Mountains of Safa and Marwa add to connotation of divine Makkah as pilgrims take seven rounds between them after carrying out circumambulation (Circle; Walk around) of holy Kaaba. Madinah's extra special relevance is linked with the mosque of Prophet where Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) tomb is based. Close to his resting place is Riyad- ul Jannah; which is a garden of heaven placed on the earth. During the Umrah the Pilgrims carryout the acts of reverence and they reaffirm their sense of impetus in world.

DOI:https://doi.org/10.11113/ijibs.v19.150

Figure 1 illustrates that the main motive for travel i.e 392 (98%) of pilgrims revealed that their motivation to travel Saudi Arabia was for religious / spiritual purity and 8(2%) pilgrims went for historical/ cultural/ tourism purpose. This emphasizes the importance of understanding the overall view of the individual traveller to Umrah and the Holy Places in Saudi Arabia. Muslims do not worship the Kaaba, but it is Islams most sacred site. Muslims link a unique sense of spirituality with the cities of Makkah and Madinah. An uncontrollable inner feeling bound a devotee upon entering these cities.

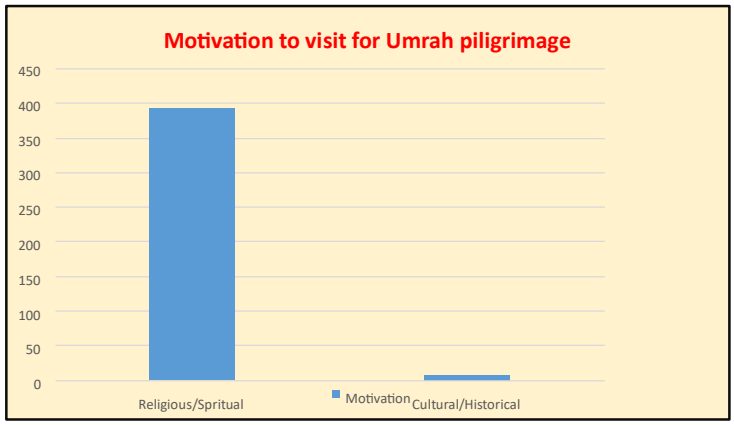


Figure 1: Histogram represents motivation for umrah pilgrimage to visit Saudi Arabia.

Facilities around the holy mosques and ziyarat places in Makkah/Medina/Jeddah/Taif-Saudi Arabia

Table 3 shows the issues faced by pilgrims during their journey to holy cities. The study reveals that most pilgrims are satisfied with the facilities and travel arrangement provided by the travel companies. The table highlights that pilgrims were unhappy with the service offered by the local shop keepers particularly Bangladeshi's whose behavior with pilgrims were not good. While 85% of respondents were happy to have visited the site, there is much room for improvement in many areas respondents are dissatisfied with nonavailability of branded show rooms of electronic gadgets. Also 95% pilgrims have urge to visit again due to spiritual reasons.

Table 3: Facilities around the holy mosques and ziyarat places in Makkah/Medina/Jeddah/Taif-Saudi Arabia

Pilgrim Statement	**Agree (Yes) N%**	**Disagree (No) N%**	**No Views N%**
Printed information in English and Urdu around holy mosques/ holy sites	320 80%	40 10%	40 10%
Display information easy to read	340 85%	40 10%	20 5%
Staff and police very helpful	360 90%	40 10%	0 0%
Barber shops for Umrah Pilgrims	360 90%	40 10%	0 0%

Restaurants offer good quality hygienic low expensive foods.	320 80%	40 10%	40 10%
Fruit market offer good quality.	280 70%	80 20%	40 10%
Date market best quality dates and good shelf life.	360 90%	0 0%	40 10%
Garment shops offer good quality material and economical	240 60%	120 30%	40 10%
Electronic shops and gadgets with brands.	120 30%	240 60%	40 10%
Cab service around holy mosques	320 80%	80 20%	0 0%
Religious place is too commercial	200 50%	160 40%	40 10%
Health centres around holy mosques	320 80%	80 20%	0 0%
This visit was worth.	360 90%	20 5%	20 5%
Glad to visit this place.	360 90%	20 5%	20 5%
Urge and aim to come again.	360 90%	40 10%	0 0%
Nusuk/Tawakalna App	360 90%	40 10%	0 O%

Experiences in holy cities of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by pilgrims

Table 4 provides clear experiential evidence of the Umrah journey to holy cities under custodian of holy mosques kingdom of Saudi Arabia, undertaken for one reason - to follow the footsteps of the beloved prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Therefore, one of the major reasons why a Muslim goes on pilgrimage is to pray in the holist mosques and the reward rises exponentially if the person offers Salat in Makkah (Masjide-haram), Medina (Masid-e-Nabawi). Majority of pilgrims avail facilities around holy mosques. Also, roads and communication facilities are also good. Food available in restaurants is hygienic and value to money due to constant vigil of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and strict laws. Theft cases are also low, it also gives sense of security to pilgrims. 90% pilgrims gave blessings to custodian of holy mosques for well management and facilities developed around the holy cities for pilgrims. Many people believe people of Saudi Arabia are good in hospitality and people around holy mosques are well mannered and helpful. This kind of positivity among people of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia boost Umrah tour and become best, long lasting, remembered till life and get urge to come again in their life time.

Table 4: Experiences in holy cities of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by pilgrims (N=400)

Pilgrim opinion	**Agree N%**	**Disagree N%**	**No Views N%**
Heaven on earth	380 95%	20 5%	0 0%
Holy cities are beautifully architected	320 80%	40 10%	40 10%
State of Art Hospitals / health care facilities	300 75%	60 15%	40 10%
Bloom of Hotel Industry	320 80%	40 10%	40 10%
Road infrastructure highly developed.	360 90%	40 10%	0

			0%
No Theft cases	320 80%	60 15%	20 5%
Best quality of food in Hotels and restaurants	340 85%	40 10%	20 5%
Pollution free holy cities	300 75%	80 20%	20 5%
Islamic architect in holy cities	280 70%	60 15%	60 15%
Zam-zam water is free and is available in Warm/cold	360 90%	20 5%	20 5%
I felt humbled while walking around.	320 80%	40 10%	40 10%
Guides in museum speaks in Urdu language.	360 90%	20 5%	20 5%
Technology is adopted in both holy mosques.	320 80%	40 10%	40 10%
People of Saudi Arabia are cooperative and hospitality	260 65%	100 25%	40 10%
I feel satisfied because of this visit and facilities by KSA.	340 85%	20 5%	40 10%
Blessings to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	320 80%	40 10%	40 10%
Practiced True Islam	300 75%	60 15%	40 10%

Discussion

The strong correlation between religious knowledge and motivations for Umrah underscores the central role of Islamic teachings in shaping individuals' spiritual aspirations. This finding highlights the importance of religious education and the need for strategies that promote a deeper understanding of Islamic principles to enhance the spiritual experience of Umrah. The positive correlation between participants' satisfaction with pilgrimage organizers and their overall spiritual experience highlights the pivotal role organizers play in shaping the Umrah pilgrimage. This emphasizes the importance of effective organizational strategies, communication, and infrastructure to create an environment conducive to a spiritually fulfilling journey. Regarding pilgrims' satisfaction with the services provided by travel agencies, 70% of them are pleased with the package provided by the Umrah trip operator. 60% of pilgrims are satisfied with the nice lodgings they received, 30% complained about the poor and far-flung accommodations they received, and 20% stated their tour operators gave them fantastic hotels. Seventy percent of pilgrims who responded said that the hotels and restaurants their tour operators had reserved for them offered them great cuisine. Just 2% of travellers indicated that the Umrah pilgrimage was motivated by a historical or cultural tie, while 98% of pilgrims cited spiritual reasons. Yezli et al. (2017) supports the idea that pilgrimages attract huge numbers of people. Overall, pilgrims found the kingdom of Saudi Arabia's amenities to be satisfactory in accordance with Saudi Vision 2030; nevertheless, further development in the areas of hotel infrastructure and healthcare is necessary (Yezli et al., 2017). Due to the large crowds in sacred mosques, all pilgrims need immunisations and health examinations upon arriving in holy cities. The spread of infectious and non-communicable diseases, trauma, and injuries are among the health hazards. The cost of healthcare facilities in Saudi Arabia is so prohibitive that even pilgrims cannot afford them. Therefore, the ministry should think about creating a social health insurance programme or a general tax system to finance healthcare, as these are widely acknowledged as effective ways to provide financial security for everyone against medical expenses. similar to the research conducted Alghamdi et al. (2003). Along with religious and spiritual rites, pilgrims enjoyed the services provided in holy cities. They also went shopping, primarily purchasing dates, Oudh perfumes, and zam-zam water for their purported spiritual advantages. According to Saudi Vision 2030, the nation of Saudi Arabia is implementing new services and introducing technology advancements in holy pilgrimage to increase religious tourism in the

nation. Saudi Arabia's government, is working to increase religious tourism by 2030 as outlined in the Vision Document. The governments of Saudi Arabia and India get along well, with around 1.75 lac of Indian Muslims performing the Hajj and lacs of pilgrims performing Umrah round the year. For pilgrims, the Indian embassy and mission are performing admirably in all sectors (Bashir, 2019). Future research could delve deeper into the evolving dynamics of Umrah pilgrimage motivations, considering the impact of contemporary global events, technological advancements, and shifting cultural landscapes. Additionally, exploring the long-term spiritual impact of Umrah on individuals and their communities could provide valuable insights into the enduring significance of the pilgrimage. The insights gained from this study have practical implications for policymakers, religious authorities, and pilgrimage organizers. Strategies that prioritize religious education, community engagement, cultural sensitivity, and organizational excellence can collectively contribute to a more meaningful and spiritually enriching Umrah pilgrimage experience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this discussion illuminates the intricate tapestry of contributors that shape the spiritual and religious inspirations of Muslims undertaking the Umrah pilgrimage. By addressing these findings in policy and practice, stakeholders can work collaboratively to enhance the spiritual journey, fostering a more profound connection with faith and a meaningful experience for Umrah pilgrims in Saudi Arabia. It was determined that the facilities and amenities provided by approved travel agencies working with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are excellent. In terms of hotel infrastructure and medical treatment, more needs to be done by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is responsible for maintaining the holy mosques in Makkah and the medina.

Based on the Saudi Arabian Kingdom's 2030 ambition of housing 30 million Umrah pilgrims. The Umrah pilgrimage is contributing to Saudi Arabia's economic growth and reducing unemployment among its populace. Apart from oil, religious tourism is the main driver of Saudi Arabia's economy. Transformative Umrah pilgrimage under Vision 2030 is a pillar of economy of Saudi Arabia. Vision 2030 states that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's primary economic driver will be religious tourism. Understanding the contributors that shape the spiritual experiences of Umrah pilgrims can contribute to the development of targeted interventions and initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall spiritual journey. The findings of this study may inform religious institutions, policymakers, and travel agencies about effective strategies to support and enrich the Umrah pilgrimage experience for Muslims. Slashing of E-Visa fee and Accomodation charges will influx large number of Umrah Pilgrims.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to Umrah Pilgrims for participating in this research. Thanks to Allah for helping us in this research. Darood and Salaam on Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his family and Companions. I am very Thankful to all contributors who directly or indirectly guided me in this research.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests in relation to this study and its publication.

Data availability

The datasets generated and analysed during this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethics declaration

Although formal ethical approval was not obtained, the study was conducted in accordance with recognised principles of ethical research and good research practice. Appropriate safeguards were implemented to ensure informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy, and responsible handling of research data.

References

Abu Khalil, S. (2004). *Atlas of the Prophet's biography: Places, nations, landmarks*. Darussalam.

Al-Ghamdi, S. M., Akbar, H. O., Qari, Y. A., Fathaldin, O. A., & Al-Rashed, R. S. (2003). Pattern of admission to hospitals during Muslim pilgrimage (Hajj). *Saudi Medical Journal, 24*(10), 1073–1076. https://doi.org/10.15537/1658-3175.2185

Al-Qahtaanee, S. S. (1997). *A manual on the rites of Umrah*. Invitation to Islam Publishers.

Bashir, H. (2019). Umrah: A spiritual journey from mountainous valley of Kashmir India. *International Journal of Tourism & Hotel Business Management, 1*(2), 81–84.

Bashir, H., Beigh, R. A., Rumysa, Bashir, S., Bazaz, A. Y., Beigh, A. A., & Farooq, R. (2017). Experience of Umrah trip to Saudi Arabia from Kashmir India: Model study on management and facilities to pilgrims by Custodian of Holy Mosques Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality, 6*(6), 328. https://doi.org/10.4172/2167-0269.1000328

Gannon, M. J., Baxter, I. W. F., Collinson, E., Curran, R., Farrington, T., Glasgow, S., Godsman, E. M., Gori, K., Jack, G. R. A., Lochrie, S., Maxwell-Stuart, R., MacLaren, A. C., MacIntosh, R., O'Gorman, K., Ottaway, L., Perez-Vega, R., Taheri, B., Thompson, J., & Yalinay, O. (2017). Travelling for Umrah: Destination attributes, destination image, and post-travel intentions. *The Service Industries Journal, 37*(7–8), 448–465. https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2017.1333601

Ibn Sa'd, M. (1967). *Kitab al-tabaqat al-kabir* (Vol. 2; S. Moinul Haq, Trans.). Pakistan Historical Society.

Mohamed, M. N. (1996). *Hajj to Umrah: From A to Z*. Amana Publications.

Saudi Press Agency. (2022, July). *Doyof Al Rahman Vision Realization Program*. Saudi Vision 2030. https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/en/explore/programs/pilgrim-experience-program

Yezli, S., Yassin, Y. M., Awam, A. H., Attar, A. A., Al-Jahdali, E. A., & Alotaibi, B. M. (2017). Umrah: An opportunity for mass gatherings health research. *Saudi Medical Journal, 38*(8), 868–871. https://doi.org/10.15537/smj.2017.8.20124