

## Broadcasting Umrah through the Hadith of Hajj Badal in the COVID-19 Pandemic Era.

*Menyiarkan Umrah melalui Hadis Hajj Badal di Era Pandemi COVID-19.*

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### Abstract

This article delves into an extensive project concerning the development of the umrah industry in Indonesia and its relationship with the interpretation of Hadith. Specifically, it examines the impact of the pandemic on this brief pilgrimage practice in Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim society. Despite the economic setbacks, the pandemic has significantly influenced the widespread use of social media globally. Indonesian Muslims, being active netizens, have shown a strong desire to reconnect with the sacred sites in Mecca and Medina. This article employs a multifaceted approach to investigate the utilization of social media by Indonesian *mutawwif*-vloggers, employing intersecting methodologies. Firstly, it conducts a textual study focusing on thematic badal Umrah. Secondly, it involves direct observations and active participation in the activities of various *mutawwif* vloggers based in Saudi Arabia. The result of this research is that cyber-mediated Umrah experiences cannot fully substitute the physical pilgrimage journey. Badal Umrah, primarily rooted in Hajj Hadiths, emerges as a crucial practice during times of crises, offering assistance to those who are physically unable to undertake the journey. Consequently, there has been an increased acceptance of Hadiths related to Hajj and Umrah during the pandemic, which is referred to as “living Hadith.” *mutawwif* play a pivotal role in facilitating communication between geographically distant parties during the pandemic, thereby emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations. Lastly, the activities in the cyber-space realm align with three essential dimensions: providing an imaginative travel experience for dispersed audiences, engaging *mutawwif* as navigators in the cyber-space, and addressing ethical considerations concerning badal Umrah amidst health and financial challenges.

Key words: *Badal* Hajj; Ethics; COVID-19; Social Media

### Abstrak

Artikel ini fokus pada proyek panjang yang berkaitan dengan pembentukan industri umrah di Indonesia serta korelasinya dengan pemahaman Hadis. Secara khusus, artikel ini mengulas dampak pandemi terhadap praktik ziarah singkat ini di Indonesia, yang mayoritas penduduknya beragama Islam. Selain mengakibatkan kerugian ekonomi, pandemi juga memengaruhi cara masyarakat di seluruh dunia, termasuk Muslim Indonesia, menggunakan media sosial untuk terhubung dengan tempat-tempat suci di Mekah dan Madinah. Penelitian ini menggunakan beberapa metode yang saling terkait dalam menganalisis penggunaan media sosial oleh *mutawwif*-vlogger Indonesia. Pertama, dilakukan studi tekstual tentang badal umrah berdasarkan tema. Kedua, melibatkan pengamatan dan partisipasi terhadap berbagai *mutawwif* yang beroperasi di Arab Saudi. Hasil Penelitian menunjukkan

bahwa pengalaman umrah yang difasilitasi oleh media siber tidak dapat sepenuhnya menggantikan pengalaman fisik. Badal Umrah, yang merujuk pada penggantian pelaksanaan umrah oleh pihak lain, khususnya menjadi penting selama krisis ini untuk membantu mereka yang tidak dapat melakukan perjalanan fisik ke Mekah dan Madinah. Dalam konteks ini, terjadi peningkatan penerimaan hadis-hadis tentang haji dan umrah selama pandemi. *mutawwif*, yang merupakan pemandu umrah, memainkan peran penting dalam memfasilitasi komunikasi antara mereka yang berada jauh dari tempat suci selama pandemi ini, dan aspek-etika dalam peran mereka menjadi sorotan penting. Penelitian ini juga mengarisbawahi bahwa kegiatan di ruang siber terkait dengan tiga aspek utama: memberikan pengalaman perjalanan yang imajinatif bagi pemirsa yang tersebar, melibatkan *mutawwif* sebagai panduan dalam lingkungan siber, serta menangani pertimbangan etika dalam badal umrah selama tantangan kesehatan dan keuangan yang dihadapi.

Kata Kunci: Hadis Haji *Badal*, Etika, COVID-19, Media Sosial

## Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak significantly impacted religious gatherings such as Hajj and Umrah. Saudi Arabia suspended Umrah on 27 February 2020, and restricted Hajj pilgrims in June 2020, which continued into the following year.<sup>1</sup> In 2019, there were 7.5 million Umrah pilgrims who visited, which caused a significant economic loss of \$12 million or 7% of national GDP. The number of Umrah pilgrims dropped by about 99.7% during 2020-2021 compared to 2019.<sup>2</sup> Saudi Arabia is adapting to new customs with technology solutions such as *Eatamarna* and *Tawakkalna* apps to manage pilgrim information and health data. Despite being a major player in the Hajj sector, Saudi Arabia faces severe economic challenges due to the pandemic, with short-term strategies failing to generate revenue.<sup>3</sup>

The cancellation of the hajj pilgrimage had a major impact on the Indonesian economy's hajj spending. The government had to cancel hajj plans for two consecutive years (2020 and 2021), impacting 18,589 Indonesian pilgrims.<sup>4</sup> Travel agencies in Indonesia lost significant revenue, with estimates of at least \$5 million in lost revenue. This policy also impacted the waiting list of 221,000 annual Hajj participants. The commencement of new normal Umrah trips in October 2020 did not fully

1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs KSA, "The Kingdom Is Closely Following the Developments of the Spread of the New Coronavirus," Al Jazeera, February 27, 2020, <https://www.spa.gov.sa/2039971>.

2 Shahul H Ebrahim and Ziad A Memish, "Saudi Arabia's Drastic Measures to Curb the COVID-19 Outbreak: Temporary Suspension of the Umrah Pilgrimage," *Journal of Travel Medicine* 27, no. 3 (May 18, 2020): taaa029, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jtm/taaa029>.

3 Gilang Nur Alam et al., "The Impacts Of Covid-19 To Saudi Arabia's Economic Sector And Hajj Pilgrimage Policy Of The Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia," *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)* 12, no. 8 (April 24, 2021): 463-72, <https://doi.org/10.17762/turcomat.v12i8.2823>.

4 Kementerian Agama RI, "856 Jemaah Umrah Transit Selamat Tiba Di Indonesia," Kementerian Agama RI, March 1, 2020, <https://haji.kemenag.go.id/v4/856-jemaah-umrah-transit-selamat-tiba-di-indonesia>; Sarah Dadouch and Erin Cunningham, "For a Second Year, Coronavirus Shrinks Saudi Arabia's Once Immense Hajj Pilgrimage," *Washington Post*, July 19, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/07/19/covid-19-global-updates-england-celebrates-freedom-day-experts-blast-lifting-restrictions/>.

compensate for the loss.<sup>5</sup> Even when Saudi Arabia reopened tourist visas in August 2021, Indonesian travel agencies still struggled to fulfil the requirements of Saudi Arabia's vaccine policy.<sup>6</sup> The pandemic created opportunities for virtual connections to the pilgrimage landscape when physical access was restricted.

This raises questions about whether virtual pilgrimage can replace physical presence and the importance of live-streamed experiences. Forced immobility stimulate Muslims in Indonesia to reconsider how to reconnect to the holy sites and what are the strategies and normative textual reasons to evaluate. This article portrays the Indonesian guides' use of social media to substitute Umrah (*badal Umrah*) during the immobility of physic period. Several aspects are being explored to formulate the problematisation. Initially, this *muṭawwif*'s activities around the Kaaba to perform substitution and to broadcast such substitution has shed light on the various strategies employed while it is also important to examine how the text speaks of *badal* and then how these *muṭawwif* act as walking hadith *mufassirs* and mediators for the would-be pilgrims who are forced to think about how to stay connected to the holy places and what strategies and religious reasons they should consider.

This study uses double approaches to frame data; it comprises a thematic approach to elaborate the hadith on *badal* Hajj and how the consensus of ulama comes to the agreement of using such hadith for Umrah. The textual discussion and ethical considerations appear then are being utilised to analyse the practice of *muṭawwif* in broadcasting their *badal* Umrah. By first collecting hadiths about *badal* Hajj, commentaries and opinions of scholars regarding the conditions and requirements of the *badal*, especially with regard to *badal* Umrah, which draws largely from *badal* Hajj.

The virtual data belongs to the online observations and participations. Researchers initially monitored social media activities, primarily on Instagram and YouTube. Subsequently, five vloggers were selected for in-depth study, focusing on their YouTube live-streaming of conditions in Mecca and Medina during the lockdown from May 2021 to October 2021. This group included one female and four male vloggers chosen for their consistent activity and viewership exceeding 5,000. It's worth noting that not all of them had a *muṭawwif* background, and only a few regularly broadcasted the Umrah *badal* process. The study exclusively focused on two

5 Ferry Sandi, "Haji Batal & Umroh Setop, Agen Perjalanan Rugi Triliunan," CNBC Indonesia, June 2, 2020, <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20200602181033-4-162558/haji-batal-umroh-setop-agen-perjalanan-rugi-triliunan>.

6 Razaq Raj and Dino Bozonelos, "COVID-19 Pandemic: Risks Facing Hajj and Umrah," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 8, no. 7 (November 18, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.21427/awkb-8f25>.

*muṭawwif* vloggers who met specific criteria, particularly their extensive networks beyond the virtual realm and their consistent live streaming of *badal* Umrah processes. This approach aimed to gain insight into how these *muṭawwif*s not only conducted Umrah pilgrimages but also facilitated a connection for viewers who, in essence, sought reconnection to Mecca and the Kaaba during periods of physical detachment from the sacred sites. Ultimately, these two interlocutors were chosen for their roles as current guides and active social media engagement, providing valuable insights into their experiences and the evolving landscape of pilgrimage practices. The textual discussion and ethical considerations appear then are being utilised to analyse the practice of *muṭawwif* in broadcasting their *badal* Umrah.



Pict 2: 2020 Hajj situation

**Khalifah Asia**  
TOUR & TRAVEL

**PROGRAM  
BADAL  
UMROH**

Biaya  
**BADAL UMROH**  
Rp. 4.000.000

**Daftarkan Segera**

Dari Abu Razin Al'Uqaili, bahwasanya ia mendatangi Nabi Shallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam, dan Berkata: "Wahai Rasulullah, sesungguhnya bapakku sudah tua renta, tidak dapat menunaikan haji dan umrah serta safar", maka beliau Shallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam bersabda: "Hajikanlah ayahmu dan umrahkanlah."  
(HR. Ibnu Majah No. 2906)

**Fasilitas & Layanan**

- ✓ Sertifikat Badal Umroh
- ✓ Mendapatkan Zamzam 5 ltr dan kurma
- ✓ Pelaksana Badal adalah para muthowif Makkah & Madinah
- ✓ 1 pelaksana membadalkan 1 jiwa

**Persyaratan**

- ✓ Mengisi Formulir Badal Umroh
- ✓ Membayar lunas biaya Badal Umroh
- ✓ Status yang dibadalkan harus sudah meninggal/sakit berat

**Khalifah Asia Umrah&Haji** **KhalifahAsia\_** **khalifahasiatourtravel\_**

Pict. 2. Travel agencies offered a substitution for pilgrimages during the pandemic.

## Previous studies on Badal Umrah and the use of social media in pilgrimage activities

Studies on *badal* Hajj (some scholars call it *al-ḥajj ‘an al-ghair*, *al-taukīl* or *al-niyābah fi al-ḥajj*) include those conducted by Abdul Malik.<sup>7</sup> The article discusses some of the opinions of scholars who do not allow hiring others to perform Hajj as the opinion of the majority of the Ḥanafī madhhab and those who allow it such as the Syāfi’ī and Ḥanbalī madhhabs and some of the Ḥanafī madhhab.

In addition, the search for legal certainty of *badal* Hajj was carried out by Roswati Nurdin and H. Rajab.<sup>8</sup> They said that in practice, there is a great opportunity for abuse by irresponsible parties in the implementation of *badal* Hajj. Therefore, to seek legal certainty, they used *bayānī* (textual), *tahlīlī* (cause-effect), and *istiṣlāḥī* (public interest) in *uṣūl al-fiqh* reasoning. As a result, *badal* Hajj is indeed permissible if it follows the existing regulations and the organiser is trustworthy. Nasikhin et al. highlights several critical aspects surrounding the practice of *badal* Hajj, each presenting challenges. These aspects encompass issues on the legal foundation and practical implementation of *badal* Hajj, instances of its misuse by irresponsible individuals, and considerations of trust and accountability concerning *badal* hajj performers, the collection of relevant data on *badal* Hajj participants, and associated contractual agreement and fee structures.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Al Jazeera also reported on how some *badal* Hajj become brokers (*samsarah*). In this practice, the organiser takes a percentage of profit ranging from 20% to 30% of the cost of the *badal* pilgrimage.<sup>10</sup> Rahmadanil asserts that the act of profit-taking within the context of Hajj remains unproblematic, provided that such profit-seeking endeavours remain in compliance with the essential requisites and foundational principles of Hajj. Conversely, any form of exploitative profit-making is explicitly proscribed.<sup>11</sup>

The aforementioned articles collectively bring together a consensus on the permissibility of performing *badal* Hajj with a strong emphasis on responsibility and trust, ensuring adherence to the basic principles of Hajj. In addressing specific aspects

7 Abdul Malik, “Badal Haji,” *Jurnal Raudhah* 4, no. 1 (November 9, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.30829/raudhah.v4i1.64>.

8 Roswati Nurdin and H. Rajab, “The Practice of Hajj Substitution in Indonesia: The Search for Legal Certainty through Usul al-Fiqh Approach,” *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 20, no. 2 (December 28, 2020): 217–29, <https://doi.org/10.30631/alrisalah.v20i2.576>.

9 Nasikhin et al., “Permasalahan Pelaksanaan Badal Haji Di Indonesia,” *Al-Ittibad: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 2 (2021): 15–27.

10 Al Jazeera, “Haji al-Badal yatahawwal ilā Samsarah,” *Aljazeera*, 2010, <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2010/10/31>

11 Rahmadanil, “Pelaksanaan Badal Haji Sebagai Profit Ditinjau Dari Hukum Islam,” *Qawānīn Journal of Economic Syaria Law* 5, no. 1 (January 24, 2021): 101–16, <https://doi.org/10.30762/qawanin.v5i1.3423>.  
maka membuka peluang bagi yang menggantikan (mubdil

of *badal* Hajj arrangements, such as compensation, contractual obligations, associated costs, and data management, these opinions underscore the need for adaptability to prevailing circumstances and compliance with relevant regulations.

However, studies on *badal* Umrah remains scarce. On the one hand, the possible source to do so was the current web-based fatwas. A theme close to *badal* Umrah, for example, was carried out by al-Jabūrī.<sup>12</sup> He discusses the legal status of performing Umrah more than once in one trip. For him, based on the evidence, it is *mustahabb* to perform Umrah more than once during a journey, except on certain days, such as the day of ‘Arafah, ‘Īd al-Aḍḥā, and the day of al-Tasyrīq. On the website of *al-Islām Su’āl wa Jawāb* fatwa number 142,234, the editor of the website explains that it is permissible to perform Umrah on behalf of the deceased and those who are weak due to old age or illness.<sup>13</sup> *Al-Lajnah al-Dā’imah li al-Buḥūs al-‘Ilmiyyah wa al-Iftā’* issued fatwa no 18808, states that ‘Umrah on behalf of a deceased person is permissible, and the reward may be for the deceased person.<sup>14</sup> Ibn Bāz issued a fatwa no 216 in *Nūr ‘alā al-Darb*, stating that it is permissible to perform ‘Umrah (*al-‘umrah ‘an al-ghair*) on behalf of a deceased person or an infirm person who cannot reach Makkah due to old age, just like Hajj. In contrast to the general fatwa of *al-Islām Su’āl wa Jawāb*, Bin Bāz mentions the specific evidence for *badal* Umrah with the hadith of *badal* Hajj of Syubrumah from the narration of Ibn ‘Abbās.<sup>15</sup> And then, the editorial *Islām Web* issued a fatwa stating that ‘Umrah is permissible based on the Hadīth of Buraidah and Ibn ‘Abbās (fatwa no. 69,673).<sup>16</sup> So, the current web-based fatwas relatively agree on the consensus of issuing *badal* Hajj for the reason to do so in Umrah.

On the other hand, certain sources, such as *NU Online*,<sup>17</sup> and Umrah

12 Aḥmad Naṣīf Jāsīm al-Jabūrī, “Tikrār Al-‘Umrah Fī al-Safar al-Wāḥid: Dirāsah Fiqhiyyah Muqāranah,” *Majallah Al-‘Ulūm al-Islāmiyyah* 24 (2013): 209–50.

13 al-Islām Su’āl wa Jawāb, “al-Taūkīl fī Adā’ al-‘Umrah ‘an al-Mayyit,” al-Islām Su’āl wa Jawāb, 2009, <https://islamqa.info/ar/answers/1>

14 al-Lajnah al-Dā’imah li al-Buḥūs al-‘Ilmiyyah wa al-Iftā’, *Fatāwī Al-Lajnah al-Dā’imah al-Majmū’ah al-Ṣāniyah*, ed. Aḥmad bin ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Dawīsī (Riyadh: Ri’āsah Idārah al-Buḥūs al-‘Ilmiyyah wa al-Iftā’, 2003), vol. X: 74-75.

15 ‘Abd al-‘Azīz bin ‘Abd Allāh bin Bāz Ibn Bāz, *Fatāwī Nūr ‘alā al-Darb*, ed. Muḥammad bin Sa’d al-Syuwai’ir (Riyadh: al-Ri’āsah al-‘Ammah al-Buḥūs al-‘Ilmiyyah wa al-Iftā’, 2007), vol. XIV: 320-321.

16 Islām Web, “al-Ḥajj wa al-‘Umrah ‘an al-Ḥayy wa al-Mayyit Aḥkām wa Adillah,” Islām Web, 2005, <https://www.islamweb.net/ar/fatwa/69673/الحج-والعمرة-عن-الحي-والميت-أحكام-وأدلة>.

17 NU Online, “Niat Badal Umrah,” NU Online, 2019, <https://islam.nu.or.id/haji-umrah-dan-kurban/niat-badal-umrah-jIj5b>.

pilgrimage service providers like *Travel Umroh Haji*,<sup>18</sup> predominantly reference specific Hadith narrations related to the pilgrimage of Syubrumah, sourced from Ibn ‘Abbās. Additionally, these sources incorporate more general hadiths, such as those pertaining to almsgiving and the narration of Ibn ‘Abbās concerning the woman from Khath‘am, as recorded by the canonical Hadith compilers al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Yet, Al-Qaḥṭānī has conducted a comprehensive analysis of the various traditions relating to the performance of Umrah. Noteworthy examples are his references to traditions about the cancellation of Hajj, as described in Ibn ‘Abbās’ narration about the woman from Khaṣ‘am (as documented by Bukhārī and Muslim), as well as stories involving the wife of Sinān ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Juhanī (as documented by Aḥmad, al-Nasā’ī, and Ibn Khuzaimah), a woman who sought advice from the Prophet (as narrated by al-Bukhārī), and the case of Shubrumah (as narrated by Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah). In addition, al-Qaḥṭānī also unearthed a single narration relating to the concept of *badal* Umrah that originated from Abū Razīn (as narrated by Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmizī, al-Nasā’ī, and Ibn Mājah).<sup>19</sup>

From the normative perspective, the hadith concerning the performance of Umrah exhibit a degree of generality when compared to the more precise and detailed traditions pertaining to Hajj. In many instances, the traditions relating to Umrah often draw upon the corresponding traditions associated with Hajj for their validation. Consequently, the traditions were utilized to substantiate the practice of substitution or delegation of Umrah. It predominantly derives from those governing *badal* Hajj with the notable exception of Abū Razīn’s narration. This alignment stems from the fact that the regulatory framework (*aḥkām wa dawābiṭ*) governing Umrah closely mirrors that of Hajj, with only minor distinctions, notably the absence of the *wukūf* (standing) in ‘Arafah, which is obligatory on the 9th of Zū al-Ḥijjah during Hajj. Therefore, Umrah is often referred to as *al-ḥajj al-aṣghar* (the lesser Hajj) due to the absence of the *wukūf* in ‘Arafah, a hallmark of *al-ḥajj ‘Arafah* (the Hajj of ‘Arafah).<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, before the pandemic, the use of mobile devices and social media for documenting and sharing pilgrimage experiences was a topic of discussion. While some argue that physical presence is irreplaceable, studies have shown the significant use of social media in enhancing the pilgrimage experience. For instance, Mayasari

18 Travel Umroh Haji, “Dalil dan Hadits Shahih Tentang Badal Haji dan Umroh,” 2018, <https://www.travelumroh haji.co.id/2018/10/hadits-badal-haji-umroh.html>.

19 Sa‘id bin ‘Alī al-Qaḥṭānī, *Al-Umrah Wa al-Hajj Wa al-Ziyārah Fī Daw’ al-Kitāb Wa al-Sunnah: Faḍā’il Wa Ādāb Wa Aḥkām Wa Ad’iyah Jāmi‘ah* (Riyadh: Fihriyah al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah, 1994), 19–24.

20 Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfah Al-Aḥwāzī Bi Syarḥ Jāmi‘ al-Tirmiḏī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d.), vol. VI: 313.

highlighted how travel agencies benefit from promoting services on social media, where pilgrims' testimonies serve as valuable archives.<sup>21</sup> Caidi, Beazley, and Marques explored the expression of pilgrimage on social media, particularly through "holy selfies," revealing how captions, hashtags, and viral posts create new avenues for sharing religious practices.<sup>22</sup> Stanton discussed the implications of Muslim pilgrims' engagement with the internet and social media, emphasizing their role in generating revenue and providing broader access to pilgrimage information.<sup>23</sup> Lastly, a study by Al Ajarma and Buitelaar examined Moroccan and Dutch vloggers, demonstrating how social media allows previously underrepresented voices to challenge dominant representations of Mecca and express multiple identities in Western public spaces.<sup>24</sup>

The abovementioned studies evidence that despite there might any criticism of diminishing the sacrality of pilgrimage, pilgrims continue to use social media as it affirms their existence and display of identities for broader audiences with the spiritual experience attached to such day-today activities. Cyberspace has long been used as a sphere where pilgrims integrate their bounding to pilgrimage elements, such as Kaaba or the Prophet's grave, and Muslim pilgrims are currently more eager to share with broader netizens. Given that Muslims worldwide point their prayer to Mecca five times a day, the social media engagement shows that pilgrimage was no longer exclusive. Instead, it is part of Muslims' articulation of everyday religion before physical deferment period of pilgrimage.

### Thematic discussion on Hadith Badal

Hajj and Umrah are religious acts of worship related to economic possession (*'ibādah badaniyyah māliyyah*). Therefore, scholars agree that these two acts of worship must be covered by two things *zād* (allowance) dan *rāḥilah* (vehicle and physical strength).<sup>25</sup>

21 Nuki Mayasari, "Recharging Faith: The Practice of Multiple Umrah Trips Among Middle Class in Yogyakarta" (PhD Thesis, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2014).

22 Nadia Caidi, Susan Beazley, and Laia Marquez, "Holy Selfies: Performing Pilgrimage in the Age of Social Media," *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion* 2, no. 1–2 (February 14, 2018): 8–31, <https://doi.org/10.33137/ijidi.v2i1/2.32209>.

23 Andrea Stanton, "Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj Apps: Managing the Operations and Piety of the Hajj," *Journal of Religion Media and Digital Culture* 9 (October 23, 2020): 228–46, <https://doi.org/10.1163/21659214-BJA10020>.

24 Kholoud Al-Ajarma and Marjo Buitelaar, "Social Media Representations of the Pilgrimage to Mecca: Challenging Moroccan and Dutch Mainstream Media Frames," *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 10, no. 2 (March 29, 2021): 146–67, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22117954-BJA10027>.

25 Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, ed. Aḥmad al-Bardūnī and Ibrāhīm Uṭfāisy (Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1964), vol. IV: 147.



Qurtūbī when interpreting QS. Āli ‘Imrān: 97, quotes al-Syāfi’ī as saying:<sup>26</sup>

الاستطاعة وجهان: أحدهما: أن يكون مستطيعا ببدنه واجدا من ماله ما يبلغه الحج. والثاني: أن يكون معضوبا في بدنه لا يثبت على مركبه وهو قادر على من يطيعه إذا أمره أن يحج عنه بأجرة وبغير أجرة، ... أما المستطيع ببدنه فإنه يلزمه فرض الحج بالكتاب بقوله عز وجل: “من استطاع إليه سبيلا” ... فأما إن قدر على الزاد بمسألة الناس في الطريق كرهت له أن يحج لأنه يصير كلا على الناس

Ability (*istitā‘ah*) has two aspects. Firstly, a person who has the physical ability and wealth to make Hajj. Secondly a sick person who is unable to go for Hajj but he is able to send someone to perform Hajj on his behalf, whether for a fee or not ... If he is physically able, then he is obliged to perform Hajj because Allah says: “(that is for) those who are able to travel there.” If he is physically able, then he must go for Hajj, because Allah says: “(that is for) those who are able to travel there.” But if he is not able to travel, but he can afford it, then it is disliked for him to go for Hajj, because he will be a burden on others

Based on this statement, those who are still alive and have the financial means but not the physical ability to travel can do *badal* Hajj or *badal* Umrah.

The fuqaha’ allow *badal* Umrah because Umrah itself has the same conditions, pillars and rulings as Hajj. Since Hajj is permissible, then Umrah is also permissible. The Hanafi scholars say that it is permissible to perform ‘Umrah on the condition that the person being replaced commands it. This is because substitution (*niyābah*) must be by order.<sup>27</sup> The Mālikī scholars say that performing *badal* ‘Umrah (*istinābah*) is makrooh, but still valid.<sup>28</sup>

The Syāfi’ī scholars, on the other hand, allow it on condition that the person being replaced has passed away or is unable to perform ‘Umrah himself.<sup>29</sup> The Hanābilah scholars say that the *badal* Umrah must be performed with the permission of the person who is performing it, because it is related to the *‘ibādah niyābah*. Yet, if the *badal* Umrah is performed by a deceased person, then no permission is required.<sup>30</sup>

Hadiths that allow the performance of *badal* Umrah are usually based on traditions about *badal* Hajj. These include the narrations of Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah

26 al-Qurtūbī, vol. IV: 147.

27 Abū Bakr bin Mas‘ūd al-Kāsānī, *Badā‘i’ al-Ṣanā‘i’ Fī Tartīb al-Syarā‘i’* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1910), vol. II: 213-214.

28 Muḥammad bin Aḥmad ‘Ulaisy, *Minaḥ Al-Jalīl Syarḥ Mukhtaṣar Khalīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1984), vol. II: 213.

29 Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Syirbinī, *Mughnī Al-Muḥtāj Ilā Ma‘rifah Ma‘ānī Alfāz al-Minhāj* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1994), vol. II: 172.

30 ‘Abd Allāh bin Aḥmad Ibn Qudāmah, *Al-Mughnī*, ed. Ṭāhā al-Zainī et al. (Kairo: Maktabah al-Qāhirah, 1986), vol. III: 226; 234.

and Ibn Hibbān from Ibn ‘Abbās about Shubrumah,<sup>31</sup> and al-Tirmizī from Buraidah.<sup>32</sup> In accordance with the discussion, if any individual has previously completed the Hajj, they are eligible to engage in the practice of performing the Hajj substitution on behalf of other persons.<sup>33</sup>

Another Hadith that specifically mentions Umrah is narrated by al-Tirmizī from Laqīṭ ibn ‘Āmir who is known as Abū Razīn al-‘Uqailī.<sup>34</sup> In the context of this Hadith, Al-Mubārakfūrī, with the perspective of Al Khattābī, while further elucidating that the inclusion of the phrase “*wa i’tamir*” implies an obligatory mandate for performing Umrah in conjunction with the Hajj pilgrimage. This interpretation is buttressed by the claim of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who maintain that the preeminent and authoritative narration affirming the obligation of Umrah is attributed to Abū Razīn al-‘Uqailī.<sup>35</sup>

The Hadīth of Abū Razīn is the only narration that has a specific wording about *badal* Umrah. Al-Tirmizī adds the explanation that the mention of Umrah in this hadith indicates that one can perform *badal* Hajj.<sup>36</sup> However, this narration is used by al-Kankūhī as evidence that the *badal* Hajj and Umrah ordered by the Prophet to Abū Razīn was for the sunnah (non-obligatory) Hajj and Umrah.<sup>37</sup> This confirms the opinion of al-Tirmizī who tends to say that Umrah is a sunnah, rather than the opinion of al-Syāfi’ī who calls Umrah as a Prophetic sunnah that is obligatory.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, the norms for performing *badal* Umrah are related to the person who asks for *badal* Umrah (*mustanīb*) and the one who performs *badal* Umrah (*wakīl*). Firstly, the *mustanīb* of a living person should obtain permission from the person

31 Muḥammad bin Hibbān al-Bustī, *Al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ ‘alā al-Taqāsīm Wa al-Anwā’ Min Ghair Wujūd Qaṭ’ Fī Sanadibā Wa Lā Subūt Jarḥ Fī Nāqilihā*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Alī Sūnimiz and Khālīs ‘Āy Damīr (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2012), vol. II: 178; Sulaimān bin al-Asy’aṣ al-Azdī al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abi Dāwūd*, ed. M. Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (Sidon: al-Maktabah al-‘Aṣriyyah, n.d.), vol. II: 162; Muḥammad bin Yazīd al-Qazwīnī Ibn Mājāh, *Sunan Ibn Mājāh*, ed. Syu’aib al-Arnā’uṭ et. al (Beirut: Dār ar-Risālah al-‘Ālamīyyah, 2009), vol. IV: 147-148.

32 Muḥammad bin Īsā bin Saurah al-Tirmizī, *Jāmi’ al-Tirmizī*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Syākīr (Mesir: Mustafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1975), vol. III: 45; 260.

33 Ḥamd bin Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm al-Bustī al-Khaṭṭābī, *Ma’ālim al-Sunan Syarḥ Sunan Abi Dāwūd* (Aleppo: al-Maṭba’ah al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1932), vol. II: 172.

34 al-Tirmizī, *Jāmi’ al-Tirmizī*, vol. III: 260.

35 al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfab Al-Aḥwaḏī Bi Syarḥ Jāmi’ al-Tirmizī*, vol. III: 580-581.

36 al-Tirmizī, *Jāmi’ al-Tirmizī*, vol. III: 260.

37 Rasyid Aḥmad al-Kankūhī, *Al-Kaukab al-Durri ‘alā Jāmi’ al-Tirmizī*, ed. Muḥammad Zakariyyā bin Muḥammad Yaḥyā al-Kāndahlawī (Maṭba’ah Nadwah al-‘Ulamā’ al-Hind, 1975), vol. II: 140-141.

38 al-Tirmizī, *Jāmi’ al-Tirmizī*, vol. III: 261.

in order to avoid future misunderstandings (*al-khurij min al-khilāf mustahabb*).<sup>39</sup> Permission is a form of validating representation in the Hanafī madhhab (*niyābah*). The money used for performing Umrah should be halal and clear.<sup>40</sup> In addition, if the person being replaced has died, whether he made a will or not, then according to Ibn Ḥazm the ‘Umrah should take precedence overpaying off his debts from the estate he left behind.<sup>41</sup> *Badal* Umrah should also be performed in the month of Ramadan, as the Prophet said from Ibn ‘Abbās that Umrah in Ramadan is like Hajj.<sup>42</sup> *Badal* Umrah should also be performed as soon as possible (*lā yatawaqqaf fi ‘alā al-su‘āl*) so that the worship can be carried out immediately.<sup>43</sup> The second is related to the *wakīl*. *Badal* Umrah should be performed by children or close relative (based on the hadith narrated by Abū Razīn, Buraidah and Ibn ‘Abbās). Children or close relatives who perform *badal* Hajj and Umrah are more trustworthy and responsible, especially with the nature of both which requires physical and psychological energy.

The *wakīl* should perform the *badal* Umrah with the intention of Allah and actually perform the Umrah according to the terms and conditions.<sup>44</sup> This related to whether or not the *badal* Umrah performed is valid. The *wakīl* is also expected to have performed Umrah before performing *Badal* Umrah (based on the narration of Ibn ‘Abbās) and also to avoid the khilaf of the group that requires that the person performing *Badal* Umrah must have performed Umrah.<sup>45</sup>

It is permissible for the *wakīl* to take a modest fee for performing Umrah, but not to seek worldly gain from his act of worship (*inna allāzī yaṭlub al-‘amal innamā yaṭlubuhū ghāliban li taḥṣīl al-ujrah allatī syurī‘at li al-‘amal*).<sup>46</sup> Then when going to perform Umrah, the *wakīl* recites the intention of Umrah such as *nawaitu al-‘umrah ‘an fulān wa aḥramtu bibi li Allāh Ta‘alā* (I intend to perform Umrah (in exchange)

39 “Umrah,” in *Al-Mauṣū‘ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah* (Kuwait: Wizārah al-Auqāf wa al-Syu‘un al-Islāmiyyah, 1983).

40 al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfah Al-Aḥważī Bi Syarḥ Jāmi‘ al-Tirmiżī*, vol. III: 272.

41 ‘Alī bin Aḥmad al-Andalusī Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Muḥallā Bi al-Āsār*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. V: 41.

42 Yaḥyā bin Syaraf al-Nawawī, *Al-Īdāh Fī Manāsik al-Ḥajj Wa al-‘Umrah* (Beirut: Dār al-Basyā‘ir al-Islāmiyyah, 1994), 379–80.

43 Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Sindī, *Kifāyah Al-Ḥajjah Fī Syarḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, n.d.), vol. II: 212.

44 al-Sindī, vol. II: 212.

45 Aḥmad bin ‘Alī bin Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath Al-Bārī Bi Syarḥ al-Bukḥārī* (Kairo: al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, 1970), vol. XII: 327; al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfah Al-Aḥważī Bi Syarḥ Jāmi‘ al-Tirmiżī*, vol. III: 580-581.

46 al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath Al-Bārī Bi Syarḥ al-Bukḥārī*, vol. IV: 440.

for Fulan and perform *iḥrām* for the sake of Allāh Ta‘ālā).<sup>47</sup>

### Mediatized proxy pilgrimage to Mecca (*Badal Umrah*)

The above-mentioned Quran verse and hadiths inform the physical substitution of Hajj and Umrah. A hadith informs a woman who asked the Prophet Muhammad about her deceased mother’s vow to a Hajj. The Prophet suggested that she perform Hajj for herself and followed by her substitution for the mother’s vow, given it was counted as a debt. Scholars have deduced a law to the Umrah case, considering that direct relatives are mandatory to substitute the vowed pilgrimage, either Hajj or Umrah. However, this research fieldwork attested to some changes during the pandemic: the proxy and the substituted did not meet in person, and both interacted through internet-based telecommunication.

This research interlocutors were two prominent Indonesian *muṭawwif*s, Ustad Sofi (35yo) and Bang Hasbi (28yo). Both individuals graduated from local pesantrens in Indonesia. Ustad Sofi hails from a traditional pesantren in Bangkalan, Madura and did not continue his undergraduate level, only to have seasonal *ḥalaqah* with syekh in Mecca. Bung Hasibuan completed high school at a renowned pesantren in North Sumatra and pursued his undergraduate degree at Al Azhar University in Cairo. Currently, Ustad Sofi has 762K subscribers, and Bung Hasibuan gained 418K subscribers by the end of 2022.<sup>48</sup> Their YouTube channels were among the highest Indonesian-Mecca bloggers so far. Their activities to delegate Umrah and Hajj during the pandemic were viewed by millions of Southeast Asians from which they gained national television coverage during the live Hajj broadcasts in 2020 and 2021.

Ustad Sofi migrated to Mecca in 2009, following his parents who already resided for decades. He underwent a one-year mentorship under his brother who has prior worked in this field. He then commenced his career as an independent guide in 2010, catering to Indonesian and Southeast Asian pilgrims. yet, Ustad Sofi expanded his career by actively engaging with his pilgrim clientele through social media platforms since 2012, from writing his blog, and gathering his pilgrims in Blackberry groups and finally maintaining this online presence. His daily vlogs documenting the Hajj pilgrimage on behalf of a deceased Malaysian individual during the 2020 season garnered significant attention and went viral.

In contrast, Bang Hasibuan started his YouTube platform quite recently. He

47 Sa’id bin Muḥammad Bā ‘Alī Bā ‘Isyin, *Busyrā Al-Karīm Bi Syarḥ Masā’il al-Ta’īm* (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāj, 2004), 616.

48 “Muhammad Sofi AW,” YouTube, accessed June 26, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/@MuhammadSofiAW>; “Bung Has,” YouTube, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/@bunghas5874>.

embarked on his career in Mecca in 2012, following in the footsteps of a colleague from Sumatra, who was also an Azhar graduate. His bachelor's degree from a reputable university facilitated his collaboration with Indonesian and Southeast Asian travel agencies, enabling him to offer guidance and services to pilgrims from Malaysia and Singapura, with only a minor group from Indonesia. His extensive knowledge of Shari'ah principles further motivated him to initiate video broadcasts, as he remained:<sup>49</sup>

“Guiding the pilgrims is actually as important as guiding prayer and even *wudlu*. That's what we face here. It was not only about Umrah and Hajj. Primarily about their religiosity! So, by vlogging our activities, we can educate and give them advice without being coercively teach them!”.

The most interesting thing about his “going online” activities was that he actively collaborated with two other individuals to expand their media coverage and increase viewership on social media platforms. This collaboration even extended to regular online gatherings, known as “Trio Hore,”. The pengajian team was held online, mostly meeting in person during their Umrah of hajj. So, the pandemic has stimulated a more vibrant and hybrid pattern of pengajian, mostly based on online space. The online Kajian hosted renowned preachers such as Ustazah Khadijah Peggi Melati Sukma, Tete Ninih Muthmainnah, Ustad Wijayanto and many other popular preachers.<sup>50</sup>

Back October 2020 corresponded with the opening Umrah in of Syawwal 1442 lunar year. Ustad Sofi streamed live his 15 minute-video to substitute Umrah for a covid deceased Indonesian lady, Siti Kaula, sponsored by the lady's children. During the streamed live, Ustad Sofi opened the chat tab on his YouTube channel, so the audience might have room to interact and feel the atmosphere of the grandest Mecca. He started the video with salam, *greeting* his loyal viewers, whom he referred to as ‘akhi’ and ‘ukhti’. *The ustad* recited du'a for *his subscribers and viewers* for better conditions each day:<sup>51</sup>

“From the front of Kaaba, we pray for those who wish to meet their beloved will find someone soon, those who suffer sickness will recover, and those who wait for offspring will be given soon. Hopefully, all your affairs run smoothly, and good fortune comes, therefore you are enabling to return to Umrah or Hajj soon! For those who watch this video from the beginning may opportunities come to you soon,

49 *Umrah Hari Kedua Membacakan Titipan Do'a Dari Para Saudara Subscriber Di Hadapan Masjidil Haram*, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTCXiYszfAo>.

50 Subkhani Kusuma Dewi, “Research Fieldnote,” June 23, 2021.

51 *Pelaksanaan Tarwaf Umroh Ke Dua 07 Okt 2020 Setelah Pembukaan Umroh 04 Okt 2020*, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hudsk8dA24o>.

perform Hajj or Umrah here! Please answer our prayer, akhi, and ukhti, it might be from your response that God grants these prayers, it might have come from your amiinn, akhi ukhti! [19/10/2021]

He kept interacting and calling for the audience to actively comment on his prayers and suggesting the viewers write their concerns facing those hard days. During the circumambulation, he focused the camera on his surroundings while reciting the prayers. It was an empty Kaaba, with a very restrictive amount of people allowed to access the *maṭāf*, circumambulation areas. Witnessing the emptiness and the proxy that he never imagined before has touched Ustad Sofi in tearful, at the same time, the akhi ukhti viewers kept texting their responses with words of purity, among those are as:

@Owo. N: Alhamdulillah, [all praises are due to Allah (God)], I am from Malaysia, and I did Umrah in 2017 and 2019. Please for my health so I may be able to return, Ustadz! Please pray for my niece who currently suffered from illness, and is unaware in a hospital

@Nuur: I wish I can pray and do salah in front of Kaaba!

@Heriani: I hope your substitution is granted by Allah!

Ustad Sofi completed his live YouTube in fifteen minutes after he finished the *ṭawāf* and *taḥallul*, compulsory rites in Umrah. By May 2022, his video has been viewed by 14.509 audiences.

Besides this dramatic streamed video, Ustad Sofi collaborated with Bung Hasbi in substituting one of the Indonesian men's Umrah pilgrimages.<sup>52</sup> In a collaborative video, both guides explained the Fiqh basis for the practice of *badal* Umrah. Ustad Sofi revealed a debate in society about whether Badal Umrah is necessary.<sup>53</sup> Bung Hasbi then explained that the possibility of practicing Umrah is derived from the analogy of the Hajj's substitution with specific requirements. The deputy needs to be part of a direct family who has performed the practice for themselves or those with the religious knowledge and ability to perform the substitution. In addition, the replaced individuals must be the ones who enable physically to undertake or pass away.<sup>54</sup> However, their vlog shows their palpable role; his range of knowledge and experience become sources to explore various narrations, values, and wisdom to respond to the pandemic situation. His interaction with the distanced audience stimulated various feelings, and his strategy to stream live and open chats successfully

52 *Perjalanan Umrah Di Tengah Malam Rasanya Seperti Ini.. Bareng @Muhammad Sofi AW*, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSLrpTaIZhA>.

53 *Pelaksanaan Amanah Badal Umroh Untuk Almarhum Dan Almarhumah*, 2021, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-vBoxN5e\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-vBoxN5e_k).

54 *Apa Sih Badal Umrah Itu?? Bagaimana Pelaksanaannya? Kupas Langsung Depan Ka'bah*, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFQFO443iW8>.

maximised the effect of the ritual. The far-distanced viewers felt the Ustad's enactment by projecting their imagined memory of Kaaba and its surroundings as if they were in the same area. Internet technology has helped to mediatize the connection and interaction of the *muṭawwif*.

### **Discussion of the normative to the current mediatised hadith *badal* Hajj**

From the normative standpoint, when it comes to the customs and rules of Umrah (a lesser pilgrimage), the legal position of Umrah tends to be more general and less specific than the rules for Hajj (a significant pilgrimage). In many cases, the customs for Umrah borrow heavily from those of Hajj Hadith for their approval. This borrowing allows the customs of *badal* to be used to justify a practice known as "substitution" or "delegation" of Umrah. It is particularly occurred when someone can perform Umrah on behalf of another. Interestingly, the pandemic did not regard the ability toward the physical ability to travel. Instead, the COVID-19 pandemic has made people worldwide struck and immobile. Given that most of the *badal* hadiths that support this practice is from the ones that deal with substituting for Hajj, it is necessary to ask whether substituting or being in *niyābah* allows someone to broadcast. The action was needed particularly, when people's physical ability people were stranded in forced immobility, given that Umrah was *al hajj al aṣghar*, the shorter pilgrimage to Mecca. So, the reason for this is that there are a few minor differences in the rules and requirements of Umrah from the Hajj. This includes that Hajj rites require a specific ritual of *wuqūf*, staying in Arafat by the 9th of Ḍū al-Ḥijjah.

The ethical position of actors in performing *badal* is essential in this practice. As mentioned by the two vloggers, they position themselves as *badal* Umrah, based on normative from the abovementioned hadith. This means that there is a growing reception of the hadith on Hajj and Umrah during the pandemic (*living hadith*). During the 15-minute blog, Ustad Sofi frequently denotes the name of the lady being substituted while he also kept attracting his viewers online. The lady was part of the can be called a martyr victim of the Covid-19 pandemic disaster. Then the child entrusted his mother with his Umrah pilgrimage. As a form of transparency, Ustad Sofi broadcasts the *badal* process live via a YouTube account. The two ustads also said that they would only broadcast *badal* live to families who wanted it, not the entire *badal* service. Ustad Sofi said:

"We also take into account our health. So, this is not solely for us to enrich ourselves from YouTube. Therefore, it is only a means of making a living, and we must continue to strive for live. Because currently is not easy time to gain revenue, everyone struggles! Even the gate of

the Haram Mosque was always open and close due to the curfew”.<sup>55</sup>

While the ethical principle of performing pilgrimage on behalf of someone else before the pandemic, pilgrims expressed their freedom to experience and broadcast their experiences on social media. The abovementioned studies evidence that despite criticism of diminishing the sacrality of pilgrimage, they use social media as it affirms their existence by displaying a set of identities for broader audiences, integrating their bounding to pilgrimage elements, such as Kaaba or the Prophet’s grave, and many other sacral sites. The spiritual experience attached to such day-to-day activities, before the COVID lockdown has ever being imagined.

However, the period of forced immobility has set aspiring pilgrims apart from surrounding. The showing identity as studied previously was impossible. The research data discussed above can be linked to prior studies on the role of social media in Muslim-majority societies during pilgrimage traditions. Notably, the emphasis has shifted from showing one’s presence to a more crucial role: helping pilgrims aspiring to combat loneliness, isolation, and anxiety during the pandemic. *Muṭawwif*’s live videos and interactions serve as a means for individuals to alleviate homesickness for the holy land, aligning with Stanton’s observation that virtual media has allowed viewers to project themselves into the pilgrimage experience.<sup>56</sup>

Regarding the second research question, this study finds that YouTube content about *badal* offers valuable educational information. An example is seen in the collaboration between Ustad Sofi and Bung Hasibuan, where they explain the legal and ethical aspects of Umrah *badal*, aligning with normative ethical considerations outlined in subsection C.

Neither the two *muṭawwif*’s nor their viewers perceive their practice as a substitute for Umrah. Instead, their cyber-space activities align with MacWilliams’ description, which can be outlined in three key aspects: first, cyber media creates mythical spaces by using audio-visual techniques to transform physical locations, including sacred sites, into virtual spaces that evoke a sense of divine presence.

The other two find that the act of travel itself is imaginative, as viewers are physically isolated and dispersed worldwide. MacWilliam states: “physical travel is a large imaginative act, fictional in that the traveller sees what the traveller expects to see”. Last, *muṭawwif*’s serve as navigators in cyberspace, engaging viewers through words, gestures, facial expressions, and actions, allowing both viewers and navigators to express emotions and feelings through language. In cyberspace, this interaction is

55 *Kabar Hari Ini! Umroh Dibuka Dan Usia Dibawah 18 Sudah Diperbolehkan*, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9Ewin10Rrs>.

56 Stanton, “Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Hajj Apps.”



inherently imaginary and serves to collectively preserve cultural memories of “being there”.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, essentially, it is crucial to note that, despite the immersive nature of cyber-media facilitated *badal* Umrah, it cannot replace the physical act of pilgrimage. This fundamental finding underscores the essence of this short project. The two *muṭawwif*s’ actions were essential to bridge a communication block between Mecca and Indonesia during the crisis. Their actions diverged significantly from the ulama’s concerns about excessive wages, mainly because their ethical considerations take centre stage in times of crisis. Viewers, those being substituted for, their sponsors, and *muṭawwif*s all share common ground—the dual challenges of a health and financial crisis. While there are still evident shortcomings, their endeavours to navigate crucial safety and health screenings have occurred at a time when social media serves as a medium for expressing the diverse identities of pilgrims.

## Conclusion

The main finding of this research is that although the immersive nature of cyber-media facilitated Umrah pilgrimage, it cannot replace the physical act of pilgrimage. From the normative standpoint, the rules and norms of the *badal* Umrah (a lesser pilgrimage), are the sub-set of the legal position of Hajj (the grandest pilgrimage). In many cases, *badal* Umrah’s practice borrows heavily from Hajj Hadith’s. In times of crisis, the *badal* Umrah and Hajj are necessary under health and safety procedures to facilitate people physically stuck due to forced immobility. The two *muṭawwif*s exposed ethical position where during the pandemic it became increasingly important to mediate transparency between two parties who were distanced.

In conclusion, cyber-space activities do not substitute physical Umrah but align with three aspects. First, cyber media provides an imaginative travel experience for dispersed viewers and involves *muṭawwif*s as navigators in cyberspace. Second, the *muṭawwif*s’ actions played a crucial role in bridging the communication gap between Mecca and Indonesia during the crisis. Third, there have been ethical considerations of *badal* Umrah undertaken by the broadcasters-*muṭawwif*s because people collectively shared health and financial challenges.

In this study, several aspects remain inadequately addressed, such as the psychological and social implications of the virtual Umrah experience and the extent to which this media effectively fulfills the spiritual needs of the Muslim community. Furthermore, future research endeavors could delve deeper into the role of *muṭawwif*

<sup>57</sup> Mark W. MacWilliams, “Virtual Pilgrimages on the Internet,” *Religion* 32, no. 4 (October 1, 2002): 315–35, <https://doi.org/10.1006/reli.2002.0408>.

in facilitating remote worship and explore how they can enhance their contributions in the context of an ongoing pandemic. There also exists an opportunity to investigate the ethical dimensions of the badal Umrah and Hajj practices amidst the pandemic and explore potential enhancements in terms of regulations and governance related to remote worship. These research endeavors have the potential to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of worship in the digital age and the evolving pandemic landscape.

### **Supplementary Materials**

The data presented in this study are available in [insert article or supplementary material here] (Usually the datasets were analyzed from library research can be found in the whole data references ).

### **Acknowledgements**

### **Authors' contributions**

All listed authors contributed to this article. S.K.D wrote the original draft, reviewed and edited it, and wrote the formal analysis, compiled the resources, conceptualised the study, and managed the project administration. M.A. was responsible for the methodology and validation and supervised the project

### **Data availability statement**

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

None of the authors of this study has a financial or personal relationship with other people that could inappropriately influence or bias the content of the study.

### **Funding**

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

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