

OPTIMIZING HAJJ AND UMRAH GUIDANCE AS AN EFFECTIVE RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGE SOLUTION: A CASE STUDY OF KBIHU MULTAZAM SITI KHODIJAH

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Abstract

Hajj and Umrah guidance is a comprehensive educational and mentoring process designed to assist prospective pilgrims in understanding, learning, and performing the pilgrimage properly, with sincerity, and in a way that maximizes spiritual reward. This guidance plays a vital role in preventing common mistakes by providing clear and accurate knowledge of the proper rituals and procedures, helping pilgrims avoid errors that could diminish their rewards. The ultimate goal of Hajj is to draw closer to Allah SWT and to attain purification from sin. Achieving this requires thorough preparation—beginning with spiritual readiness, selecting a trustworthy institution, saving consistently, increasing righteous deeds, and deepening one's devotion to Allah SWT. KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah, located in Ujung Gurap Village, Padang Sidempuan Batunadua District, Padang Sidempuan City, offers such guidance. Here, pilgrims receive direct instruction from experienced *ustadz* in a well-equipped environment. Supported by donations from the congregation, benefactors, and other sources, KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah has established various replicas and miniature models that accurately represent the landmarks and conditions encountered during the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. These facilities greatly enhance the learning experience and help pilgrims gain practical understanding before their journey to the Holy Land.

Keyword: Hajj and Umrah Guidance, Religious Pilgrimage Optimization, KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah

INTRODUCTION

Performing Hajj and Umrah is a deeply cherished aspiration for every Muslim. These sacred journeys demand thorough preparation—physically, mentally, and spiritually. In this

context, proper Hajj and Umrah guidance, or *manasik*, plays a crucial role. It serves not only as a preparatory phase but also as a practical and spiritual solution to ensure that pilgrims fulfill their religious obligations correctly, meaningfully, and with full devotion.

Socially, the increasing number of prospective pilgrims, particularly in Indonesia, has highlighted the importance of structured and effective Hajj and Umrah guidance. Many pilgrims lack sufficient understanding of the rites and rituals, resulting in errors during pilgrimage that may affect the validity and spiritual value of their worship. Therefore, structured guidance through certified institutions becomes essential in helping pilgrims navigate the complexities of the pilgrimage journey.

From a literature perspective, many previous studies—both nationally and internationally—have explored the significance of Hajj and Umrah education in enhancing the quality of religious experiences. However, most of these studies focus on general theoretical frameworks or governmental policy aspects. There remains a limited amount of empirical research examining specific, localized, community-based guidance institutions and their direct impact on pilgrims' preparation and performance. This creates a research gap that this study seeks to address.

The main purpose of this study is to explore how Hajj and Umrah guidance provided by KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah serves as an effective and practical solution for pilgrims preparing to undertake this sacred journey. Specifically, the research investigates the institution's unique advantages, the comprehensiveness of its guidance programs, and the trust it fosters among the community.

As a preliminary argument, this study proposes that KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah presents an innovative model of localized pilgrimage education. It not only addresses the technical aspects of Hajj and Umrah rituals but also integrates spiritual preparation, financial planning, and social bonding among pilgrims. The institution offers certified guidance under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Decree No. 1085 of 2015), which ensures the quality and legality of its services.

This guidance includes practical and experiential learning through replicas of sacred sites such as the Kaaba dome, Safa and Marwah hills, Mina, and designated lodging simulations. Furthermore, the institution offers various affordable packages—such as 12- to 13-day Umrah trips, Arbain packages, Ramadan Umrah, and extended Umrah plus tours—all accompanied by administrative and spiritual support from Indonesia to the Holy Land.

KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah has become a trusted and holistic solution for prospective pilgrims, helping them understand the religious, historical, and spiritual dimensions of the pilgrimage. It also enhances pilgrims' mental and physical preparedness, builds social solidarity, and ultimately improves the overall quality of the worship experience. The institution's methods have proven effective over the years and can serve as a model for similar programs elsewhere.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on a specific, well-established Hajj and Umrah guidance institution in a regional context—Ujung Gurap, Padang Sidempuan—which has not yet been explored extensively in the academic literature. By examining this case, the study aims to provide both theoretical and practical insights into how community-based religious guidance can optimize the Hajj and Umrah experience for Indonesian Muslims.

METHOD

his research employs a descriptive qualitative methodology, a commonly adopted approach in social science disciplines, particularly in the study of Islamic da'wah management. The purpose of this method is to provide a thorough and nuanced understanding of a specific phenomenon within its natural setting, rather than aiming for broad generalizations. The choice of this design is appropriate for examining the implementation and impact of Hajj and Umrah guidance at KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah, as it facilitates the exploration of participants' experiences, behaviors, and viewpoints in depth.

The target population of the study comprises all individuals involved in the guidance program, including religious instructors (*ustadz*), organizational staff, and pilgrims receiving the training. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure the inclusion of participants with

relevant experience and insight into the guidance process. This technique allows researchers to focus on information-rich sources. The sample size was determined by the concept of data saturation—data collection ceased when no new significant information emerged during interviews.

Data collection involved multiple instruments, such as semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Observations were conducted during *manasik* sessions to capture practical teaching moments, while relevant documents—such as training schedules and materials—were reviewed to reinforce the findings. The study proceeded in structured stages: preparation (including site selection and tool development), data gathering, and data analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to process the data, involving the identification and interpretation of key themes. This method enabled a systematic coding process, allowing the researchers to categorize findings and present a coherent, credible narrative aligned with the research objectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Strategic Role of KBIHU in Pilgrimage Preparation

From the perspective of religious readiness, KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah plays a strategic and multidimensional role in equipping prospective pilgrims for the sacred journey of Hajj and Umrah. Rather than limiting its function to teaching rituals, KBIHU establishes a holistic framework that prepares pilgrims comprehensively—physically, mentally, and spiritually. This approach acknowledges that Hajj is not merely a ceremonial obligation but a deeply transformative experience that challenges a person's physical stamina, emotional stability, and spiritual discipline.

The physical dimension of preparation involves helping pilgrims adapt to the physically strenuous nature of the pilgrimage, including long periods of walking, high temperatures, and large crowds. KBIHU addresses these challenges through simulation-based practice and health-related advisories, ensuring that participants are physically conditioned and aware of what to expect. These

practical preparations are especially crucial for elderly pilgrims and those with pre-existing health conditions, who are often at greater risk during the journey.

Mentally, the institution provides an environment that fosters focus, discipline, and patience—qualities that are tested repeatedly during the pilgrimage. Through guided sessions and group discussions, participants are encouraged to reflect on the deeper meanings of the Hajj journey, reinforcing mental resilience in the face of stress and potential discomfort. KBIHU helps participants build emotional endurance and cultivate attitudes such as humility, self-restraint, and perseverance, which are integral to completing Hajj successfully.

On the spiritual level, KBIHU emphasizes the intention (*niyyah*) and the inner dimension of worship. Through spiritual counseling, Qur'anic reflections, and collective prayers, the institution guides pilgrims toward aligning their goals with sincere devotion to Allah SWT. Pilgrims are taught to understand the symbolism of each rite—from the *tawaf* to the *stoning of the jamarat*—which deepens their spiritual engagement and enhances the meaning of the experience. Ultimately, KBIHU's role ensures that pilgrims are not only well-informed but also spiritually awakened, positioning them to attain a *mabrur* Hajj—a pilgrimage accepted and blessed by Allah.

Experiential Learning and Simulation-Based Instruction

One of the most distinctive and impactful elements identified in this study is KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah's use of experiential learning through realistic simulations. The institution has invested in creating scaled replicas of key pilgrimage landmarks, including the Kaaba, the Safa and Marwah hills, and Mina tents. These replicas are not merely symbolic; they serve as functional learning tools that allow participants to physically rehearse the essential rituals of Hajj and Umrah. This approach transforms abstract religious instruction into tangible, embodied experience, which greatly enhances learning outcomes.

By enabling participants to perform rituals in a simulated environment, KBIHU reduces uncertainty and anxiety—particularly among first-time pilgrims and the elderly, who often express fear of making mistakes during the actual pilgrimage. For example, practicing *tawaf* around a

Kaaba replica or simulating the *sa'i* between Safa and Marwah helps demystify the rituals, making them more approachable and manageable. These sessions allow for repetition, correction, and personalized guidance, all of which contribute to building confidence and familiarity before facing the real conditions in Mecca and Medina.

From an educational standpoint, this method reflects the principles of andragogy, or adult learning theory, which emphasizes experience, problem-solving, and self-direction. Adults learn more effectively when they are actively engaged and can relate learning content to real-life situations. KBIHU's use of simulations aligns perfectly with this model, as it caters to a demographic that often requires clear, visual, and hands-on experiences to grasp complex spiritual and logistical concepts. This method also allows for interactive feedback between instructors and participants, which is critical for correcting misconceptions and reinforcing accurate practices.

Furthermore, the integration of experiential learning into religious guidance signifies a broader shift in how Islamic education is evolving in community-based contexts. It shows a willingness to innovate while remaining faithful to religious principles. In this light, KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah is not just a training center—it serves as a learning ecosystem, blending tradition with modern pedagogical techniques. This positions the institution as a model for how faith-based education can be enhanced through active, learner-centered strategies that are both practical and spiritually enriching.

Strengthening Community Bonds Through Shared Religious Experience

In addition to preparing individuals for the rituals of Hajj and Umrah, KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah also plays a crucial role in fostering communal unity and spiritual brotherhood. Through regularly scheduled group sessions, collective worship, and joint *manasik* activities, the institution promotes a strong sense of *ukhuwah Islamiyah*—a core value in Islamic tradition. These shared experiences cultivate interpersonal trust and emotional connection among participants, which becomes especially important when embarking on a physically and spiritually demanding journey.

This communal aspect of preparation is often underemphasized in discussions that focus solely on logistical readiness. However, the emotional support and solidarity built during these sessions contribute significantly to the overall pilgrimage experience. When pilgrims embark on Hajj together, the sense of having a trusted support system reduces feelings of vulnerability and isolation, especially for elderly participants or those traveling for the first time.

The spiritual benefits of community building are equally significant. Engaging in prayer, reflection, and religious discourse as a group reinforces shared purpose and collective devotion. These interactions help pilgrims internalize the notion that Hajj is not just a personal act of worship but a communal expression of faith, deeply tied to the broader ummah. By fostering unity, KBIHU helps transform individual preparation into a shared spiritual journey, enhancing both the ritual and emotional dimensions of the pilgrimage.

In this way, KBIHU functions as more than a training center—it becomes a spiritual community hub. Its approach reflects the prophetic tradition of encouraging collective acts of worship and mutual support among believers. This social dynamic enriches the experience of Hajj and Umrah, not only by easing practical challenges but by embedding the pilgrimage within a broader ethical and communal framework.

Institutional Credibility and Alignment with State Religious Frameworks

A significant factor that reinforces the public's trust in KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah is its formal recognition by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as established by Decree No. 1085/2015. This accreditation affirms the institution's compliance with national religious education standards and provides an official endorsement of its operational legitimacy. In an environment where concerns about unlicensed and fraudulent Hajj operators persist, such certification acts as a protective assurance for pilgrims, signaling that the institution operates ethically and in line with state-sanctioned procedures.

Accreditation also elevates the institution's status within the wider network of religious service providers. It allows KBIHU to formally collaborate with the government in organizing

standardized *manasik* training, which is essential for ensuring uniformity and quality in pilgrimage education. This collaboration exemplifies a productive partnership between civil society and government, where faith-based organizations work in synergy with regulatory institutions to support national religious objectives.

Moreover, the presence of an accredited local institution contributes to decentralizing access to quality religious services. Instead of relying solely on large, urban-based providers, communities in regional areas such as Padang Sidempuan can receive equally high-quality, locally relevant guidance. This reflects an inclusive model of religious empowerment where public trust is built not only through personal experience but also through the visible accountability of the institution itself.

In broader terms, the case of KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah illustrates how institutional legitimacy can be harmonized with grassroots impact. Its ability to meet national standards while remaining deeply embedded in the local context provides a compelling example of how religious institutions can be both spiritually effective and administratively sound. This dual strength makes KBIHU a model worthy of emulation by other regions aiming to improve the safety, quality, and spiritual depth of Hajj and Umrah preparation.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the crucial role of KBIHU Multazam Siti Khodijah as not only a provider of ritual instruction but also as a transformative institution that prepares pilgrims holistically—spiritually, physically, and socially—for their Hajj and Umrah journeys. The most significant finding is the implementation of experiential and community-based learning, which empowers pilgrims through real-time simulations and fosters a strong sense of Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*). This approach transforms the learning experience from a passive reception of information into a deeply engaging and emotionally supportive process, significantly enhancing the likelihood of a meaningful and successful pilgrimage.

From an academic perspective, this study offers a **novel contribution** by presenting a localized model of pilgrimage education that integrates modern adult learning methods with traditional religious values. Unlike prior studies that focus on large-scale or institutional frameworks, this research sheds light on how **grassroots religious institutions**—particularly in regional areas—can deliver high-impact training. The combination of certified legitimacy, experiential pedagogy, and spiritual mentoring creates a replicable model for enhancing religious education and community resilience. It contributes to the evolving discourse on Islamic education by demonstrating how faith-based learning can remain adaptive, relevant, and locally grounded.

However, the study has several **limitations**. It focuses primarily on one institution in a specific geographic context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should explore similar institutions across different regions to compare effectiveness, explore cultural variations, and validate the applicability of the experiential learning model in broader contexts. In addition, quantitative studies measuring long-term spiritual impact or behavioral changes among pilgrims post-Hajj would provide deeper insight into the sustainability of such guidance programs. These future directions are essential to further advance the academic and practical understanding of religious mentoring in the Hajj and Umrah context.

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