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The Commodification of Umrah Pilgrimage in Indonesia: Between Worship and Lifestyle

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The novelty of this research lies in its ability to explain the process of commodification in the context of the role of the actors who carry out the commodification, the meaning of the Umrah community in the phenomenon of commodification, and the impact of commodification on Muslim hyperreality. This study aims to determine and explain the commodification of Umrah worship through Umrah travel agents by using a qualitative research method and case study approach. The high enthusiasm of Indonesian Muslims for carrying out the Umrah pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina City is a result of the commodification of Umrah travel through Umrah travel agencies transforming transitional forms of worship into commercial commodities. The purpose of worship, which initially sought tranquility, has been turned into a commercial activity with the purpose of making a profit. Commodification makes the meaning of worship more artificial from a religious perspective, and further strengthens the symbolic reality of Muslims (lifestyle) through religious tourism, pilgrimage, leisure, tours and shopping. Umrah is similar to profane worship, which is far from religious dogma.

Key words: *Umrah, Commodification, Hyperreality, Indonesian Muslims*

Introduction

Umrah is a sunnah worship in Islam, which also carried out by Prophet Muhammad and is regarded as a religious duty and tourism like a Hajj (Almuhri & Alswafi, 2017; Akbulut & Ekin, 2018; Jafari & Scott, 2010; Kessler, 2015). Umrah is a ritual of worship conducted by visiting Mecca City (Saudi Arabia) to carry out Thawaf, Sa'i and Tahallul. In Muslim societies, this is done with the intention of gaining forgiveness and blessings from God as well as a history of Ibrahim. Besides visiting Makkah, Umrah also involves a pilgrimage to The Prophet Muhammad Tomb in Medina City, which can provide peace or good fortune to Muslim societies (Akbulut &



1

Ekin, 2018; Haq & Jackson, 2009; Thimm, 2017). Thus, Umrah has become a belief that should be carried out as an obligation in the context of religious rituals.

Commodification of Umrah worship by Umrah travel agents in Indonesia has had an impact on the expansion of and/or shift in the meaning of worship. The current condition shows that Umrah is not only interpreted as worship, but also has meaning as a trend, lifestyle, leisure, touring, halal tourism and shopping tourism (Ambrož and Ovsenik, 2011; Hassan et al., 2015; Murti, 2017). This trend is also increasing along with the growth of social media. The earliest impact was the commodification of a kind of degradation of belief (sacredity) into profane worship. Other forms of commodification, such as the existence of the level of service facilities made by travel agents include luxury hotels, premium flights, city tours, holidays, shopping and catering, plus transportation facilities in Mecca and Medina City. This representation has become more important than the Umrah itself, in keeping with what Baudrillard (1970, 1996) terms 'hyperreality'.

The strong pressure of the current of commodification finally brought Umrah worship to commercial commodities packaged through religious rituals (Zamani-farahani and Henderson, 2010). The implementation of the Umrah is not to explore the value of utility or use-value; rather, it tends to look for more value (profit) than the exchange value. The results of the production and reproduction of the Umrah ritual from upstream to downstream have been made into commodities with the primary aim of profit.

2

Marx argues that commodification is the transformation of relations that were previously clean from trade into commercial relations, exchange relations, buying and selling (Hung et al., 2016). On the other hand, and still relevant to Marx's argument, formality or a shift in the relevance of intrinsic value in one aspect is a form of assertion of commodification, while an increasingly intrinsic value reduces the meaning of other intrinsic values (Fellner, 2017). In the context of Islam, commodification is often in the form of commercialisation of religion or changing faith and symbols into commodities that can be traded for profit. Especially if it is related to the demographics of Muslim communities in Indonesia, the high number of Muslim communities has the potential to become a new business opportunity in business turnover, which is packaged in worship values such as Umrah (Greg Fealy, 2008).

It is very difficult to see the difference in motivation when performing Umrah, given the diversity of personal motives. Is the motive in the form of worship, or is it merely fulfilling lifestyle needs (recreation, religious tourism, or shopping) as a symbol of socio-economic wellbeing? Equally, will that person only understand personal intentions and goals in the context of worship rituals? Worship that is degraded and commodified tends to lead to a diminished lifestyle, as different ways of life, attitudes, values and behavioural orientations come into play (Narottama, 2016; Sobel, 1981).



1

Lifestyle and comfort can meaningfully be defined as belonging to individuals, groups or even cultures (Veal, 2001). Based on the previous explanation, Umrah has two perspectives: first, the lifestyle perspective and leisure time expressed by Veblen (1899) in the form of enjoying free time, only to perpetuate inequality, increase social hierarchy and promote material goals; and second, a meaningful holiness perspective that draws one closer to God and distances the worshipper from worldly or immaterial concepts. (Piliang, 2011; Vernon, 1974). For Muslim communities in Indonesia who perform Umrah worship, both are often involved, whether primarily from a holiness perspective or a lifestyle perspective.

Previous studies of the commodification of religious rituals show that the market (demand) has become a major driving factor in the life of modern society (Davie, 2007; Roof, 2001; Ward, 2003), and that markets are a significant means of channelling, disclosing and spreading popular religiosity (Abdurrahman, 2009; Dillon et al., 2003; Einstein, 2007b; Kitiarsa, 2007). The existence of religious rituals and hard efforts to sell religious beliefs into commodity opportunities that have the potential to enter markets and media channels has shown increasing worldlines of religious teachings and religious beliefs (Hoover, 2008). While a more specific study in the context of Hajj and Umrah, the results of this study show that the Hajj and Umrah performed by Muslims in addition to worshipping also aim to obtain honour, lifestyle behaviours and socioeconomic status (Bruinessen, 2012; Burhanudin, 2015; Fealy & White, 2012; Gannon et al, 2017; Haq & Jackson, 2009; Lutfi, 2014; Masitah, 2015; Sinha, 2007; Sucipto, 2013; Sultoni, 2012; Thahir, 2016).

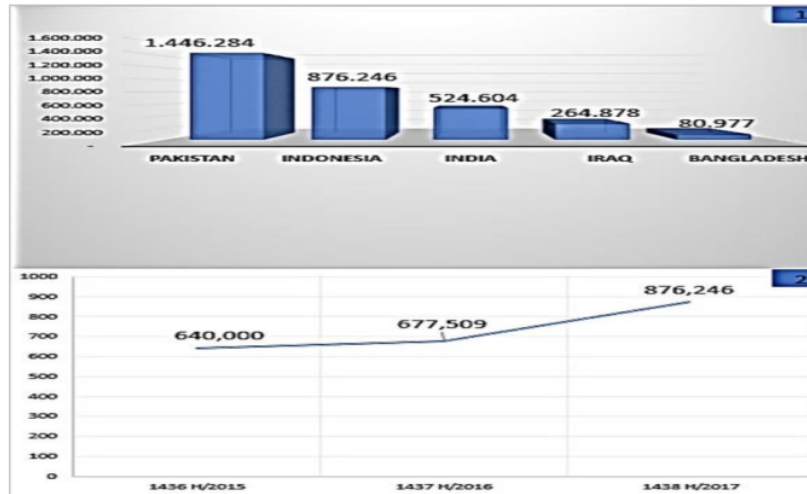
Lifestyle is a pattern of the use of space, time and objects in social life, giving meaning to life. Lifestyle is built in certain social spaces where the activities of the use of space, time, and objects intersect with pleasure. Baudrillard (1970) calls it a simulation. Simulations occur when image theatre and imaging are displayed. Everything can be part of the lifestyle, as long as it can be built into a set of images; this includes Umrah, which is actually worship (Dewi, 2017; Gannon et al, 2017).

There is debate among theorists and practitioners about the impact of the commodification of Islam. First, commodification carries a new meaning for Muslims in practising Islamic sharia and in creating Muslim societies with more stringent Islamic principles. Second, commodification leads to the basic meaning of Islamic religious worship emphasising formality rather than building intellectual and spiritual appreciation of the importance of the depth of faith. Third, there is concern over the impact of the commodification of Islam, which has the potential to change pluralist, tolerant and distinctively distinctive stances in Indonesia to make them more puritanical and radical, leading to the formation of an Arab community by changing the style of dress (hijab/burka, etc.), not the fundamental essence of Islam.



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Figure 1. (a) Big five countries sending Umrah congregation, 2017; (b) The number of Indonesian Umrah congregation in the last three years



Source: Ministry of Hajj and Umrah Branch, Saudi Arabia Government (2017)

This study has an urgency due to the high interest of Indonesian Muslims carrying out the Umrah, and the many frauds carried out against Umrah pilgrims. Second, the existence of commodification by travel agencies originally resulted from a business opportunity that was not related to the degree of Muslim interest in carrying out the Umrah.

Table 1: Troubled Umrah travel agents

Travel Agency	Total Travel Victims Number	Description
First Travel	58,682	Licence revoked, the legal process
Hannien Tour	4,126	
Assyifa Mandiri Wisata	3,056	
Azizi Tour & Travel	2,000	
Abu Tour	85,000	

Source: Jawa Pos, 2018

When there is a high demand for travel agent services, this should be used to provide the best service to consumers. In fact, the opposite is true: service providers or Umrah travel agents commit fraud on most Umrah participants. One case of fraud that occurred in Indonesia was a trip with Abu Tour with a loss of IDR 905 billion. This originated from the existence of a travel agent that offered Umrah packages at very cheap prices, in the range of 13 to 15 million rupiah. The impact of such behaviour by travel agents is that consumer confidence is declining. From the same source, namely the *Jawa Pos* newspaper, until 2020 there was



still no clarity about the departure of pilgrims who are clients of those on the list of problematic travel agents in relation to cases of fraud. The novelty of this research is that it explores how the travel agency's bureau commercialises Umrah activities and the meaning of Umrah commodification by consumers. In addition, the study seeks to explore the impact of commodification on Muslim hyperreality in Umrah activities. Previous research was limited to an exploration of how the process of Umrah commodification took place.

Research Method

The research used a qualitative approach by producing descriptive data, written narratives, oral opinions and informant behaviour (Taylor et al., 2015). The study location was East Java. East Java is a province with the largest number of Umrah congregations in Indonesia and is believed to be able to represent the validity of the research results. The unit of analysis is the largest organiser of Umrah travel in East Java. Informants were taken from the management of Umrah travel agents based on the typology of the trip, with as many as seven analysis units, namely Shafira, Linda Jaya, Arminareka Perdana, Arofahmina, Al-Ghozali Nabila and Al-Imron. Informants from the elements of the pilgrims were taken from the pilgrims who had performed the Umrah as a means of control in interpreting the commodification of Umrah worship. Data collection was undertaken through interviews. The author used data reduction techniques, data presentation and conclusion drawing to analyse data (Miles et al., 2014). These three components were involved in the analysis process and were interrelated to determine the final results of the commodification of Umrah worship commodification.

To deepen the results of analysis, the author used Baudrillard's (1996) concept to explain and analyse the commodification of Umrah worship in Indonesia. Some of Baudrillard's core concepts include consumptive society, simulacra and simulation; he argues that a commodified society is a society that considers everything as a commodity. Baudrillard (1996) considers Marx's concept of commodities to contain many weaknesses, arguing that there has been a fundamental change in the status of commodities with a total expansion of the sign code into the body of the commodity. The commodity is no longer seen as a change from exchange value to use value, as in Marx's concept, but has become a symbolic exchange value (Paraskevaidis and Andriotis, 2015).

Results

Umrah Commodification Concept

Commodification of Umrah worship has an impact on Muslim hyperreality in relation to the meaning of worship activities. The hyperreality is in the form of a change of Umrah from doctrine to religious ritual. In other words, Umrah worship is no longer carried out purely on



1

the basis of religious doctrine, but is changing towards cultural settings in the form of commodification. Worship can be produced in a cultural setting without the intervention of the doctrine itself so it becomes a purely cultural activity.

The practice of religious activities not only appears as a series of rituals, beliefs and/or doctrines, but also as commodity symbols relevant to the lifestyle of certain social classes. Borrowing Bourdieu's concept, cultural capital and habitus play an important role in shaping the basic values of religious rituals (including Umrah worship). They build on what is referred to as a logic of practice, which is basically cultural in character and is clearly separated from religious logic. However, under certain conditions, the logic of that practice shapes the daily rituals of religion and removes the ritual from the basis of its religious doctrine, using cultural logic in a more profane or simplified sense.

The reduction of meaning and value of Umrah worship occurs when symbols, signs and images, or formality become stronger. The reduction of the meaning and value of Umrah worship is uprooted from its spiritual roots. Appearing as a contradiction from a religious perspective, Umrah worship is seen more profanely in the form of a lifestyle of consumerism, transcendence, profanity and superficiality. The spirit of God and religion is an effort to limit desire as a way to achieve salvation and peace, to build the foundation of transcendence, reflection and the depth of meaning in life. In contrast, the spirit of consumerism is the spirit of liberation of desire, a celebration of all forms of fetishisation of the superficial world and the worship of extremities.

The hyperreality of Muslims towards a series of Umrah activities is the exit value of Umrah worship. Umrah worship, which previously focused on increasing spiritual values, metamorphosed into many activities such as recreation, lifestyle, tours, selfies and shopping. The symbolic consumption process of Umrah worship has the urgent drive to establish a new class lifestyle for the Umrah congregation. The function and utility of Umrah as an obligation and blessing of religion are often disregarded, with a tendency to prioritise social reputation and lifestyle. The phenomenon of Umrah as a lifestyle commodity also influences social transformation, which impacts the transformation of religious social behaviour. This concept is in accordance with the results of several studies, such as those of Muslim World and Tourism; Trajectories and Journeying on The Sea of Faith Perspectives from Religious Humanism; Tourism and Islam Considerations of Culture and Duty; and Cultural and Religious Tourism Development in Iran: Prospects and Challenges (Bruinessen, 2012; Chianeh et al., 2018; Hall, 1999; Jafari and Scott, 2014; Sucipto, 2013; Timothy and Conover, 2006).



Umrah Commodification Form

Values and symbols, in the form of status, prestige, expressions of style and lifestyle, luxury and honour, are the main impetus for consumption activities in the consumer society. In this context, the implementation of Umrah worship is no longer just an in-depth interpretation of worship activities; other meanings and motivations are achieved by the Umrah congregation, especially in terms of the worldly aspects. In other words, Umrah is no longer interpreted as a spiritual need to draw closer to God, but rather tends to demand symbols and prestige, and self-identity. In a mass society, dominating all aspects of life is often a motivation for self-actualizing in the social sphere. There are no more pure objects other than sign objects. Individuals in mass society act as sign consumers without having a certain class status.

Umrah worship that has become a space of reality is a form of simulacra or simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1996). In the same dimensions of space and time, simulacra is a reality space, where there is a process of reduplication and recycling of different fragments of life (in the form of commodity images, facts, signs and chaotic codes) (Piliang, 1998). Simulacra has no reference: it is a duplicate of a duplicate, so there is a bias between the original meaning and the duplicate. In this space it is no longer possible to recognise which is original and which is false, which are the results of production and which are the results of reproduction, which are objects and which subjects. In this phenomenon, the Umrah can no longer be seen as worship, but rather becomes an activity exhibiting desires and lifestyle.

Initially, the search for truth, enlightenment and authentic experiences, with sacred deities and places that have high historical value for their religion, became a driving factor in religious tourism or pilgrimages for religious communities in Indonesia and elsewhere (Olsen and Timothy, 2006). Today, in the era of modernisation, there is contradiction between scriptures and the views of religious communities regarding pilgrimage activities. The religious pilgrimage has lost aspects of its social and institutional significance. In addition, the appeal of religion began to fade. This is due to contamination by the progressive values of the Western world with science, technology, modern culture, the privatisation of religion and cyber-pilgrimages. One example of reflection is the rapid increase in religious pilgrimages in Europe, while the presence of religious communities in modern churches is increasingly decreasing (Olsen and Timothy, 2006). The degradation of religiosity described here also applies significantly to Umrah worship in Indonesia, where there is an exit value outside the real value by the Umrah travel agency, such as service classes, Umrah package selection, accommodation (hotels), aircraft classes and other options. Umrah worship is no longer purely worship, but involves the class, identity and symbols of worshippers (Battor et al., 2011).

Manasik Umrah

Manasik Umrah is a preliminary simulation that contains the procedures for a series of activities in Umrah worship. During the implementation of Umrah rituals, the travel agency prepares a series of things to do (*fard'* and *sunnah*) using a miniature Kaaba before leaving for Saudi Arabia. For this reason, before performing actual Umrah worship, the Umrah congregation is required to follow the Umrah rituals in order to know what to do and what should not be done during the Umrah. As modernisation progresses, the Umrah rituals are not currently performed in an open field with the aim of providing a real picture of the area of performing Umrah. The committee uses luxury hotel facilities and audio-visual assistance as a medium to assist participants in the Umrah Manasik activities.

Figure 2. Manasik Umrah



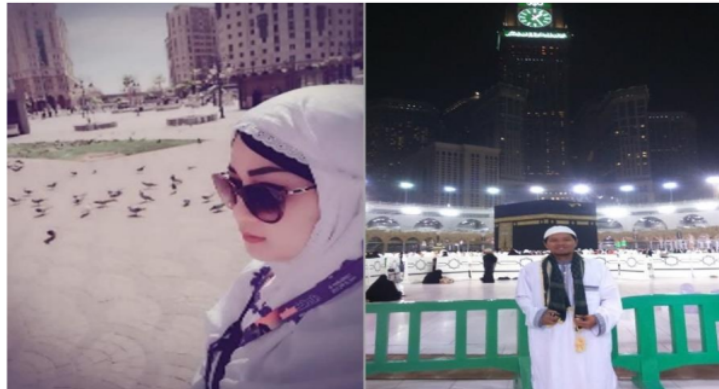
Source: Linda Jaya Travel Agency (2020)

The implementation of the Umrah rituals in hotels and locations that are not in accordance with the real conditions where the Umrah worship takes place is an effort to change the behaviour of the Umrah community in preparation to carry out the Umrah worship. Basically, Umrah requires strong stamina and mentality in its implementation. This is because the Umrah worship is performed in an open area, where the temperature in accordance with the morphology of the region is very different from the present Umrah Manasik model. The mismatch simulation in the form of Umrah rituals is that when the Umrah travel agency replaces the real conditions of Umrah activities with Umrah rituals that are not relevant to the real conditions.

Selfie Photo Trends

In Indonesia, one of the activities in Umrah in the context of forming the image and self-identity of the Umrah congregation is taking “selfies”. This new habit cannot be separated from Umrah and has become a trend. The majority of Umrah pilgrims take selfies with the aim of capturing and documenting important moments when they make Umrah. Although there are still pros and cons for the Umrah congregation and the world community who carry out the Umrah worship, but this is still done on the grounds of capturing certain moments. The problem that often underlies this is that not everyone is happy with the behaviour of taking a selfie on the sidelines of performing worship, which is considered the highest point in a Muslim’s spiritual life. In addition, custom or politeness norms often highlight this kind of selfie photo activity.

Figure 3. The phenomenon of the “selfie”



Source: Documentation (2020)

Some informants gave various answers about the reasons for taking a selfie and making it a habit, such as the informant really wanting to capture the moment when the pilgrimage took place, and; secondly, the desire of the majority of people in Indonesia in presenting and expressing themselves through personal collections. Selfies are basically personal freedom, but what is often not realized is when a selfie is taken in a public space which then violates the norms and values that apply it will become a problem.

There are ¹⁰ number of favourite selfie area for the Umrah congregation: (1) the Nabawi Mosque (Prophet’s Mosque) and visiting the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad; (2) Raudah (The Garden of Paradise); (3) Arafah, a place to perform time before Hajj; (4) Jabal Rahmah, a small hill located east of Arafah; (5) Zam-Zam Tower, the tallest tower in Mecca, which is the closest hotel to the Grand Mosque; (6) Al-Haram Mosque; (7) Kissing the Black Stone



(Hajar Aswad); (8) Sa'i worship at Shafa Hill to Marwah Hill, and vice versa; (9) Kaaba in the Grand Mosque, which is the most popular place to take a selfie. Usually, selfies occur on the sidelines before or after prayer.

Religious Tourism and Leisure

The new meaning of Umrah as religious tourism (leisure) is very much attached to the meaning of Umrah worship, and this has increasingly become the point of the existence of Umrah's hyperreality of worship. All Umrah worship travel products use a city tour in addition to entertainment products. During the nine-day Umrah trip, pilgrims only carry out Umrah three or four times and only spend six to seven hours doing so. The rest of the time is spent in worshipping *fard'* and *sunnah* prayers, and travelling and shopping. Umrah has undergone a simulation process where Umrah is no longer worship, but has been integrated into city tours, shopping and *pelisir* abroad. The representation and existence of the city tour is often more important than the Umrah itself. The simulation (from Baudrillard's perspective) is based on models that are meticulous: all models are close to the facts, and the model appears ahead of the facts. In this simulation era, reality no longer has existence. Reality has merged into one with signs, images and models of reproduction. It is no longer possible to find real references, making a distinction between representation and reality, images and reality, signs and ideas, as well as pseudo and real events.

This study reinforces and fills the gap between previous studies (Bruinessen, 2012; Chianeh et al., 2018; Hall, 1999; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Timothy & Conover, 2006), showing that religious pilgrimage tends to lead to the tourism industry rather than aspects of religiosity. Umrah worship has undergone many changes is the impact of the modernization era and has become a tourism industry, with a huge impact on substantial goals. Umrah as an object of consumption, which is actually related to the fulfilment of the function value as worship, is now loaded with values of status, symbols, prestige and social reputation. In fact, it has now become an inseparable part of the creation of lifestyles, involving patterns of use of time, space, money and goods that are loaded with certain symbolic meanings.

Shopping Tourism

Shopping is a new reality that arises from Umrah worship. For the Umrah congregation from Indonesia, the Umrah is indirectly interpreted as an opportunity to satisfy consumer desires on the sidelines of the Umrah pilgrimage. By carrying out preparations in the form of shopping for gold and other items, the meaning of Umrah has shifted to become a form of shopping tourism – which, incidentally, is a worldly activity. The existence of the transition from worship to worldly orientation is a form of denial and destruction of the Umrah ritual (Baudrillard, 1983). Congregational consumption items such as souvenirs are not merely a

necessity for giving gifts, but have become symbols or symbols of hyperreality that must be met. For the mindset of the Umrah community, the higher the economic value of souvenirs bought and distributed, the more social values and reputation will increase.

Figure 4. Shopping area



Source: Documentation (2020).

9

Discussion

The results of this study showed that the Umrah congregation enjoyed the results of the Umrah pilgrimage (exit value) such as lifestyle, leisure and touring. These results tend to refract the meaning of Umrah worship as faithful and sacred (real value), with the religious spirit replaced by the meanings of the banal and profane (exit value). Exit value has produced social class and different meanings of the commodification of Umrah worship. The top/premium class comprises pilgrims with economic sufficiency and prioritises premium facility services in carrying out Umrah (Gannon et al., 2017). This class considers exit value as a very important value to support perseverance in carrying out Umrah, such as choosing a top travel agent, choosing a VIP or family package, luxury hotel accommodation with premium aircraft class, and so on.

Then there is the middle class, or executive class. Umrah pilgrims who choose standard facility services in carrying out Umrah fall into this segment. Although the selection of service facilities is classified as a standard class, the orientation of this class in carrying out the Umrah worship tends to lead to exit values. The selected travel agency is a top-class travel agency, but with the choice of executive or standard package. This segmentation has a high awareness of Umrah facility services. This segmentation is also an Umrah congregation that grew from the success of urban groups to new successful people with sufficient income



to carry out Umrah worship. This group of worshipers includes rational people who live, grow and develop in metropolitan areas and big cities, have an understanding of religion and know how to carry out the Umrah.

The last class is often called the 'economy' class. This segment consists of a group of pilgrims who choose economical or economical Umrah packages from top-, middle- and/or lower-class travel agencies. The meaning of Umrah worship by the lower classes is mostly in real value rather than the exit value. This is because this class does not have much knowledge about the new concept of Umrah implementation and does not have a high awareness of Umrah travel facility services. This class of worshippers is a congregation of the results of chain marketing in several districts and cities in East Java. This class is very dependent on the opinion of religious leaders in the selection of travel agencies and the package chosen to carry out the Umrah.

Based on all studies, Muslim hyperreality towards Umrah worship in East Java can be divided into two areas: hyperreality that results in leisure, lifestyle and touring; and hyperreality that results in hyper-rituality. Muslim hyperreality is the result of the commodification of Umrah worship from real value and exit value. Real value produces hyper-rituality and many occur in the lower classes, while exit values produce leisure, lifestyle and touring, and tend to occur in the upper and middle classes, having an impact on social transformation and religious behaviour (Abdurrahman, 2009; Timothy & Conover, 2006). Both phenomena seem very real to show that the meaning and understanding of the Umrah is not singular. There are symptoms of expansion, refraction and/or shift in the meaning of the Umrah, which has an impact on the meaning of a series of activities in the Umrah worship (Khaksari et al., 2014). Various forms of expression on social media by pilgrims (top and middle class) are a display of lifestyle, holidays, tours, selfies and shopping. Umrah facility services, such as star hotels, premium planes, city tours, holidays, shopping, catering and overseas suppliers have closed and assimilated the authenticity of Umrah worship (Battor et al., 2011). Representation is more important than the Umrah itself, in a phenomenon that Baudrillard calls hyperreality. In other words, it is hard to tell whether it is worship while travelling or travelling while worshipping that is real; what emerges from this is a reality above the existing reality – hyperreality.

Although there is a commodification of Umrah worship, this phenomenon does not affect the Umrah congregation of the lower, or 'economy' class. The lower class Umrah congregation does not really care about aspects of lifestyle, leisure, touring, selfies and/or shopping. Knowledge, understanding and awareness of the choice of facility services in this class do not change the value of Umrah worship to become a symbol value (lifestyle, leisure, touring). The spiritual act of performing rituals before and after carrying out the Umrah, such as the ritual of permission to go and welcome the return of pilgrims after the Umrah, is a form of



hyperreality. It requires a large fee for the cost of the Umrah itself. The choice of the economic package is not because these class members are poor or unwilling, but rather because knowledge, understanding and the need for more services have not yet been formed. For the economy class, the use value of the Umrah is to show the symbol of Islam in the community – they are proud to be called Abah or Ummi, to learn new habits of leading prayer, and to engage in the custom of ‘kissing the hands’ by the surrounding community and so on.

The most important aspect for ‘economy’ class worshippers is how to immediately visit Mecca, pray at the Kaaba, pilgrimage to the funeral of the Prophet Muhammad, kiss the Hajar Aswad and follow the advice of their religious teacher to visit other holy places. The main purpose of the ‘economy’ class congregation is only to go to Mecca. Whatever happens when performing Umrah is considered as part of God’s test in carrying out Umrah. Umrah requires patience and a strong physique, just as Hajj is a mindset that is embedded in this class or segmentation. Like Hajj, Umrah is a worship that is full of tests and trials that must be faced.

Conclusion

Umrah is a worship that is not paid (free), which must be done in the City of Mecca and Medina (Saudi Arabia). To reach the destination, however, a travel agency is needed to help manage the journey and experience. The phenomenon that occurs is the Umrah travel agency has commodified Umrah worship into a high-cost ritual worship with various additions outside the Umrah ritual (exit value). The higher the form of commodification, the higher the costs involved in carrying out the Umrah. Commodification of Umrah is largely profit oriented, and does not just involve worship. Economic (business) interests have encouraged Umrah travel agencies to commercialise Umrah worship. This commodification has given rise to different classes, both for the agency and for the worshippers. Class differences are a logical consequence when there is competition and differentiation at the services and facilities provided by the agency to pilgrims. Facilities and services can differentiate groups and individuals based on esteem and prestige. Umrah travel agencies provide several package offers with grade levels for Umrah pilgrims.

The meaning of exit value in terms of Umrah worship has seen a substantial shift because it has experienced commodification. The meaning of real value produces hyperreality in the form of hyper-rituality, while the meaning of exit value produces hyperreality in the form of leisure, lifestyle and touring. Hyperreality makes Umrah a reality of worship that is distorted from the initial reality towards a new meaning where the image of the Umrah is considered the reality. Hyperreality of pilgrims to the Umrah is no longer ritual reality that refers to reality of religious dogma, but rather a new cultural practice that has become a second kind of reality, referenced to the Umrah worship.



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