



Understanding Pilgrim Satisfaction: The Role of Customer Experience and Bonus Pack in Umrah Travel

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Abstract. In the context of increasing demand for religious tourism, understanding the factors that drive satisfaction among Umrah pilgrims is essential. This study examines the impact of customer experience and bonus packs on the satisfaction of Umrah pilgrims in Indonesia. Employing a quantitative approach, data were collected from 120 respondents using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results reveal that both customer experience and bonus pack significantly influence satisfaction, with both factors having a partial and simultaneous impact on satisfaction. Bonus packs—comprising additional services or amenities—emerged as a strong predictor of satisfaction by enhancing perceived value during the pilgrimage journey (path coefficient = 0.376, $p < 0.001$). Customer experience also demonstrated a significant positive effect (path coefficient = 0.354, $p < 0.038$), underscoring the importance of service quality and emotional connection throughout the pilgrimage process. Simultaneously, the two constructs explain 51.5% of the variance in satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.515$). These findings underscore the strategic importance of integrating meaningful customer experiences with value-added offerings to enhance service satisfaction in Umrah travel services. Travel agencies are advised to invest in enhancing service touchpoints and bundling attractive bonus features to improve customer satisfaction. Limitations of this study include its regional focus on Tasikmalaya, which may limit its broader applicability. Future research is encouraged to include more diverse populations and investigate moderating variables such as religiosity, service innovation, and digital engagement.

Keywords: Customer Experience; Satisfaction; Bonus pack; SEM-PLS; Umrah Pilgrims.

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INTRODUCTION

The pilgrimage to the holy lands of Mecca and Medina (Hajj) is a wish for every Muslim who has the physical and financial ability (istitha'ah). One form of worship in the Holy Land, besides the Hajj, is to perform Umrah. The high interest of the Indonesian people in undertaking the Umrah pilgrimage is evident from the increasing trend of Umrah pilgrims from year to year,

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following the closure of the Saudi Arabian border during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on information from the Director General of Hajj and Umrah Organisers (PHU), between 2023 and August, the total number of Indonesian Umrah pilgrims was 808,301 (Changir & Febriani, 2025). The trend of Umrah travel in the last 5 (five) years, namely in the period 2018-2023, continues to increase. However, from late 2019 to 2021, there was a significant decrease in international travel due to the pandemic (Flaherty et al., 2022; Grépin et al., 2021; Vo & Tran, 2021). The number of Umrah pilgrims has fluctuated significantly (Changir & Febriani, 2025). However, in 2022 and 2023, the number of pilgrims began to recover with a significant increase, reaching around 1.2 million pilgrims in 2023 (Ohlan & Ohlan, 2024). The sharp decline in 2020 and 2021 reflects the direct impact of global travel restrictions (Alshammari et al., 2024). In contrast, the easing of restrictive policies and high demand for Umrah from Muslim countries, including Indonesia, drives the subsequent recovery (Changir & Febriani, 2025).

Indonesia is one of the countries with the most significant number of enthusiasts in the world, thereby providing opportunities for the Umrah travel industry and making a significant contribution to the local and national economy. According to estimates, the economic potential of Hajj and Umrah is expected to reach around Rp194 trillion by 2030 (Wakhidah et al., 2024). This sector not only supports economic growth through the sale of travel packages, but also impacts various other sectors, including hospitality, transportation, and food. The purchasing power of people for Umrah trips shows a positive trend. Many families in Indonesia have set aside special funds to undertake the Umrah pilgrimage. Although Umrah travel costs vary, the average cost for one Umrah package ranges from IDR 20 million to IDR 30 million per person, depending on the services provided (Wakhidah et al., 2024).

With the development of Islamic financial products and increasing public awareness of the importance of worship, many pilgrims opt to take advantage of instalment plans or participate in the Umrah savings program. This phenomenon reflects the increase in people's purchasing power, despite challenges posed by inflation and rising living costs (Cheumar & Akem, 2024). The Umrah travel industry is viewed as a significant opportunity for economic growth, both directly through its contribution to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GDP) and indirectly through the enhancement of other supporting sectors (Ali, 2018). With the high public interest in the Umrah pilgrimage, it presents an opportunity for Umrah pilgrimage trip organizers (PPIU) to provide safe, easy, and reliable services, as well as the implementation of solemn worship by experienced and competent supervisors in their fields, thereby providing a

memorable experience for pilgrims. Thus, if the experience felt is unforgettable, it will provide satisfaction for the pilgrims. This condition arises because the customer experience in carrying out the Umrah pilgrimage can be shaped by the output of the interaction between pilgrims and PPIU, both directly and indirectly, physically and emotionally, thereby providing satisfaction (Septian & Handaruwati, 2021).

Customer experience plays a critical role in influencing visitor satisfaction levels. Some of the factors of the pilgrim experience that can affect the satisfaction of Umrah include the quality of good Umrah guidance and services, the availability of facilities and accommodation, the psychology of the pilgrims when worshipping in Mecca and Madina (*Haromain*), interaction with the organizers and the implementation of worship that is good, planned and following the expectations of the pilgrims. Thus, the experience gained by the pilgrims will lead to their satisfaction with the services and facilities provided by the Umrah worship organizers. In addition, customer experience can impact customer satisfaction through both the emotional and cognitive aspects of the customer (Kim & Kim, 2022), as well as service quality and customer commitment (Yingfei et al., 2022). The consumer experience, encompassing sensory, emotional, and social dimensions, has a significant partial and simultaneous Influence on consumer satisfaction (Septian & Handaruwati, 2021). A customer's cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensory, and social responses to a firm's offerings throughout the customer's entire purchase journey (Arkadan et al., 2024).

The high interest of the Indonesian people in the Umrah pilgrimage trip then led to problems for several Umrah worship providers (PPIU) that carried out fraudulent practices. According to the Head of the Sub-Directorate of Criminal Investigation of the Metrojaya Police, there were 13 reports of fraud by Umrah travel agents that affected more than 500 victims, resulting in a total loss of 91 billion Rupiah (Palangkey et al., 2021). Some of the modes of fraud against Umrah pilgrims include abandonment of pilgrims, inconsistencies in services, accommodations, and transportation, or even failure to depart at all. Following this incident, many pilgrims have expressed doubts about the PPIUs that offer Umrah packages. Therefore, PPIU, a travel agency, seeks to restore public trust by conducting worship in various ways. Some provide breakthroughs in the form of testimonials, present celebrity endorsers, involve religious leaders, and even leaders of Islamic boarding schools as *muthowif*. Additionally, they offer various bonus packs to prospective pilgrims.

Although bonus packs are commonly used as promotional strategies by Umrah travel organizers (PPIU) to enhance service attractiveness, their role in influencing pilgrim satisfaction—especially when combined with customer experience—remains underexplored in academic literature. Previous studies have acknowledged that experiential marketing and bonus offerings through pay-later features can affect customer satisfaction (Yustica, 2021). However, limited empirical research has specifically examined how these two variables interact within the context of religious tourism, particularly in the context of Umrah services. Bonus packs, such as additional tours to destinations like Turkiye or Dubai, exclusive prayer kits, or other value-added services, are often perceived by pilgrims as expressions of care and appreciation. While these elements may significantly enhance the perceived value and emotional connection to the service provider, studies linking customer experience and bonus packs in shaping satisfaction among Umrah pilgrims are still scarce. This gap presents a compelling opportunity to investigate how bonus packs may not only influence satisfaction directly but also moderate the relationship between experiential quality and perceived service value in the religious tourism sector.

This study aims to investigate and analyze the impact of consumer experience and bonus pack on satisfaction. This study employs a survey method to investigate the experiences, bonus packages, and satisfaction of Umrah pilgrims during their trips with PPIU. The research process begins with the identification of problems that occur, and is then supported by relevant previous research. The research results are expected to provide practical recommendations for tourism business actors to increase customer satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer experience is a crucial aspect of marketing strategy that influences consumer satisfaction, loyalty, and perception of a product or service. Customer experience is the consumer's awareness or perception of a product or service, which has the potential to enhance its value. This perspective expands the understanding that experience is not just about the basic functionality of goods/services but also about creating added value that strengthens the product's market position (Chen & Lin, 2015). Pranoto and Subagio (2017) indicated that sense, feeling, thinking, acting, and relating were indicators of customer experiences.

Customer satisfaction is a key concept in marketing, reflecting how well a product or service meets the expectations of its consumers. Customer satisfaction arises as a response when the

performance of a product or service aligns with consumer expectations. It underscores the importance of meeting these expectations to achieve satisfaction. According to Kotler and Amstrong (2017), customer satisfaction is a function of how well a product or service's perceived performance matches the buyer's expectations. This perspective frames satisfaction as a comparative evaluation, where meeting or exceeding expectations leads to positive outcomes, while falling short results in dissatisfaction. Tjiptono (2019) defines customer satisfaction as the level of feeling a person experiences after comparing perceived outcomes with their expectations. According to Tjiptono (2019), the key indicators of customer satisfaction are service quality, emotion, price, and cost.

The concept of a bonus pack is a common sales promotion strategy designed to enhance customer value and Influence purchasing decisions. Kotler and Amstrong (2017) define a bonus pack as a form of price reduction where additional products or services are offered as part of a sales promotion strategy. This perspective frames the bonus pack as an incentive to encourage immediate purchasing decisions by enhancing perceived value without altering the actual price. A bonus pack is a manufacturer's sales promotion technique of giving the buyer an extra quantity of a product at the usual price (Carlson, 2017). According to Shimp (2014) describes a bonus pack as involving the provision of additional products or services from the company while maintaining the same price point. This definition emphasizes the attractiveness of added value for the consumer, making the offer more appealing without requiring extra cost on their part. This strategy combines psychological appeal with tangible rewards, creating a win-win situation for both businesses and consumers. Businesses can leverage bonus packs to differentiate their offerings and drive sales, while consumers perceive greater value in their purchases. As a result, bonus packs serve as an effective mechanism for achieving short-term sales objectives and building long-term customer relationships.

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are put forward:

H1 : The customer experience has a significant positive impact on the satisfaction of Umrah Pilgrims.

H2 : The bonus pack has a significant positive effect on the satisfaction of Umrah Pilgrims.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach and causal research design in a survey research context, aiming to understand the Influence of independent variables on dependent variables

within the phenomenon being studied and to test the proposed research hypotheses. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to Umrah pilgrims. The sample consisted of 120 respondents selected through a purposive sampling technique. The criteria for respondents included individuals who had undertaken Umrah using the services of Umrah travel providers (PPIU) and had received a bonus package during their pilgrimage. The instrument employed an ordinal Likert scale to capture perceptions, with each item measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") (Sugiyono, 2017).

The data analysis technique utilized Structural Equation Modelling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). This method was chosen for several reasons: (1) SEM-PLS is suitable for predictive and exploratory research, particularly when the research model includes complex relationships; (2) SEM-PLS is robust for small to medium sample sizes, making it appropriate for this study with 120 respondents; and (3) SEM-PLS allows simultaneous assessment of both measurement models (outer models) and structural models (inner models), providing a comprehensive analysis of the relationships among constructs (Hair et al., 2021). The outer model testing includes assessments of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, while the inner model testing involves evaluating the structural path coefficients and testing research hypotheses.

RESULTS

The data collected from the questionnaire, 120 responses, met the conclusion criteria and were used for analysis in this study. According to Table 1, Most respondents (33.3%) are aged 41–50 years, indicating that middle-aged individuals dominate the pilgrimage group and need comfortable travel arrangements suitable for this age group. Most respondents have completed high school (37.5%), suggesting that Umrah pilgrims generally have moderate educational backgrounds. Moderate Education levels highlight the importance of clear communication and assistance in understanding travel requirements. The Entrepreneurs form the largest group (33.3%), likely due to their financial independence and flexibility in managing travel plans. The diverse employment backgrounds reflect varying income levels, requiring a range of Umrah packages to cater to different financial capacities. The characteristics of the respondents are fully detailed in the Table as follows:

Table 1. Demographics of respondents

Gender Classification		Counts	Percentage
Male			
Female		55	45.8
Total		65	54.2
Age Groups		Counts	Percentage
20 – 30 years		15	12.5
31 – 40 years		30	25
41 – 50 years		40	33.3
51 – 60 years		25	20.8
Above 60 years		10	8.4
Educational Background		Counts	Percentage
Primary School		15	12.5
Secondary School		40	33.3
High School		45	37.5
Tertiary	Education	20	16.7
(college/university)			
Employment			
Government employees		20	16.7
Private sector employees		30	25
Entrepreneurs		40	33.3
Others (e.g., homemakers)		10	8.3

Source: Primary data (2024)

The outer loading of the reflective model against its indicators was evaluated as the first step in the SEM-PLS analysis. The following figure displays the results of the analyzed model.

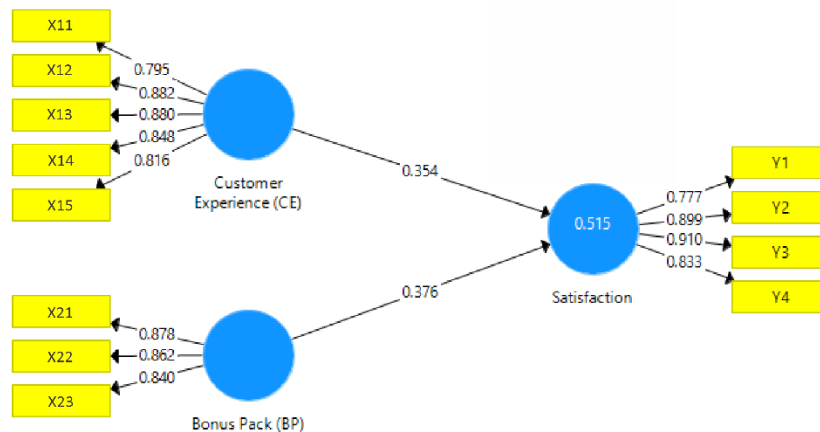


Figure 1. Outer Loading

Source: SmartPLS (2024)

The outer loading, including convergent validity, discriminant validity, and measurement tool, must demonstrate that all indicators have an outer loading value greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021). Table 1 shows that the 12 indicators met the outer loading criteria.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test

Variables	Dimension	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach Alpha
Customer Experience	The surrounding environment of the accommodation provided by the PPIU left a positive impression and contributed to my overall comfort.	0.795	0.714	0.926	0.899
	I felt safe and comfortable with the worship arrangements and facilities provided by the PPIU.	0.882			
	I believe that the PPIU delivered services adequately as promised in the Umrah package.	0.880			
	I feel encouraged to choose this PPIU again for future religious journeys due to the satisfying experience.	0.848			
	I felt that the PPIU treated me with empathy and care, which made my Umrah pilgrimage more meaningful.	0.816			
Bonus pack	I felt that I received significant added value from the bonus pack provided by the PPIU, such as additional worship equipment or other facilities.	0.878	0.739	0.895	0.825
	The PPIU was able to offer a more attractive and valuable bonus pack compared to its competitors, which has strengthened my loyalty to their services.	0.862			
	I believe that the bonus pack offered by the PPIU enhanced my satisfaction and made me more likely to purchase additional services.	0.840			
Satisfaction	The services I received during the Umrah trip met my expectations, including accommodation, transportation, and other facilities	0.777	0.733	0.916	0.883
	During the Umrah journey, I felt safe and comfortable due to the attention and care provided by the travel organizer.	0.899			
	I believe the price I paid for the Umrah package was fair and reflected the quality of the services and facilities I received.	0.910			
	The Umrah travel organizer provided clear information regarding any additional costs that might arise during the trip.	0.833			

Note: AVE= Average Variance Extracted; CR= Composite Reliability
Source: processed by authors

Based on the results of the analysis based on Figure 1, it is known that the outer loading/loading factor value of each assessment indicator is greater than 0.7 which means that the indicator meets the requirements of convergent validity so that the indicators can represent each research construct in other words all indicators are valid to be used in measuring the research construct.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker)

	Bonus Pack (BP)	Customer Experience (CE)	Satisfaction
Bonus Pack (BP)	0.860		
Customer Experience (CE)	0.700	0.845	
Satisfaction	0.648	0.670	0.856

Source: processed by authors

Fornell and Larcker mention that a latent variable shares more variance with the underlying indicator than with other latent variables. Based on Table 2, the loading value for each indicator is expected to be higher than the cross-loading of any other indicator. If the Fornell-Larcker criterion assesses the validity of discrimination at the construct level (latent variable), then 'cross-loading' is possible at the indicator level. Thus, the two concepts that are conceptually different show sufficient differences or in other words, are not unidimensional.

The model's internal consistency is evident in the Cronbach's alpha value. The results showed that all constructs have a Cronbach's Alpha of more than 0.7, and the Composite Reliability is below the upper threshold of 0.95, indicating that the model's constructs are reliable (Hair et al., 2021).

A variable is declared tested or reliable if it has a Cronbach's alpha value, a composite reliability value greater than 0.7, and an AVE value greater than 0.5 (Ghozali, 2014). Based on the results of the data analysis presented in Table 2, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values, as well as AVE values, meet the required criteria. Therefore, it can be concluded that all constructs have met the reliability criteria, and all indicators demonstrate consistency in measuring the variables. The structural analysis of the model/inner model consists of several statistical analyses, including the analysis of R-squared values and the testing of research hypotheses. The results of the analysis showed that the R-squared value was 0.515, which means that customer experience and bonus packs accounted for 51.5% of the variation in customer satisfaction. In comparison, the remaining 48.5% were influenced by other variables.

In Model Evaluation, it is carried out by examining the significance to determine the Influence between variables through the Bootstrapping procedure. The hypothesis test was conducted by examining t-statistics and P-values. The hypothesis in this study can be declared accepted if the results follow the Rule of Thumb, if the p-value is below 0.05, and if the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 (Significance level = 5%).

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T Statistic	P Value	Conclusion
H1	CE → S	0.354	2.076	0.038	Accepted
H2	BP → S	0.376	3.270	0.001	Accepted

Note: CE= Customer Experience; BP= Bonus Pack; S= Satisfaction

Source: processed by authors

The analysis showed that customer experience had a significant positive effect on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.354$, $t = 2.076$, $p\text{-value} = 0.038 < 0.05$). This finding aligns with the findings of Kim & Kim (2022), which demonstrated that a good customer experience enhances satisfaction. This finding highlights the importance of designing Umrah services that cater to the emotional, functional, and relational needs of pilgrims. Service providers in the Umrah industry should focus on creating seamless, personalized, and memorable experiences at every touchpoint, including pre-departure arrangements, travel logistics, and spiritual guidance during the pilgrimage.

The analysis revealed that the bonus pack had a significant positive effect on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.376$, $t = 3.270$, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$). Based on the statistical results, the bonus pack has a positive and significant effect on satisfaction, aligning with prior research in promotional strategies. The result was in line with those of (2021), who found that experiential marketing and bonus packs positively affect customer satisfaction. This finding underscores the effectiveness of bonus packs as a tangible demonstration of added value in Umrah services. Providers could include additional perks, such as complimentary meals, spiritual kits, or special group activities, to elevate customer satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The experience of pilgrims in the context of Umrah refers to the overall interaction, perception, and emotions they feel during the worship process, from preparation and travel to returning home. This experience encompasses physical aspects (travel facilities), emotional aspects (spiritual experiences), and social aspects (interaction with the organizer or fellow pilgrims).

Meanwhile, the satisfaction of the pilgrims is the result of an individual evaluation of the suitability of expectations and reality during the Umrah process. In this context, satisfaction is influenced by the quality of service, the fulfilment of spiritual needs, and comfort during the trip, thereby creating a meaningful experience for pilgrims. Congregational experience is one of the main factors that affect the level of satisfaction. A positive experience will enhance the congregation's perception of the organizer, while a negative experience can diminish their satisfaction.

The pilgrim experience can include the quality of friendly service from PPIU or travel organizers, professional guidance that provides comfort during worship, the availability of competent and communicative worship leaders, and an in-depth religious experience when participating in worship in the Holy Land. This finding aligns with the research of Hassan et al. (2022), which demonstrates that the pilgrim experience, characterized by quality services, adequate facilities, and practical worship guides, has a significant impact on the level of satisfaction among Umrah pilgrims. In addition, research by Othman et al. (2021) showed that Umrah pilgrims who are satisfied with the travel experience tend to be more loyal to the organizer and are willing to recommend it to others. Hassan et al. (2016) also stated that the quality of package services and emotional values are significant predictors for the Muslim traveler's satisfaction, and this satisfaction mediates the link between perceived value and loyalty.

Based on a study by Nanggong et al. (2022), positive religious experiences during Umrah (such as meaningful manasik guidance) are significantly correlated with pilgrim satisfaction, on the service marketing mix side. Othman et al. (2021) found that elements such as marketing communication and after-sales service strengthen consumer satisfaction with Umrah services, which then has a direct impact on loyalty. Ardhani et al. (2025) reaffirmed that service quality and brand trust, as integral components of the consumer experience, enhance pilgrim satisfaction and loyalty.

Other research findings have concluded that customer experience has a positive and significant impact on satisfaction (F. Ali & Omar, 2014; Juanna et al., 2021; Tjahjaningsih et al., 2021). Pei et al. (2020) examine how various dimensions of customer experience influence satisfaction across different retail contexts and confirm a clear positive relationship. Then, Susetyo et al. (2024), in their bibliometric study, conclude that the customer experience–satisfaction link is among the most cited themes in recent literature.

Further, in creating satisfaction for Umrah pilgrims through bonus packs. Bonus packs are additional incentives provided by Umrah organizers to add value that pilgrims feel. Bonus packs in Umrah services include additional facilities, such as hotel upgrades or transportation, merchandise, and discounts or vouchers for future trips. Bonus packs can reinforce a positive experience. For example, pilgrims who are satisfied with the service will be even more satisfied if they receive additional facilities, such as exclusive bags or better-quality amenities. In addition, it can compensate for negative experiences, namely when the pilgrim experience is not satisfactory, bonus packs can reduce the negative impact by providing additional value that makes pilgrims feel appreciated. For example, in the event of a travel delay, offering bonuses such as extra meals or upgraded accommodations can help mitigate dissatisfaction.

Bonus packs enhance value perception, which in turn strengthens the relationship between customer experience and satisfaction. Intelligently designed bonus packs can enhance consumer satisfaction and increase the likelihood of recommending services (Muhammad & Artanti, 2016). Ardhani et al. (2025) also stated that service quality and trust, amplified by satisfaction, drive loyalty. Consider how bonus packages (e.g., group meals, guided spiritual sessions) could enhance perceived service quality.

This finding also related with the study of Purnhagen et al., (2021) who stated that a significant visual effect on the Bonus Pack packaging, finding that even though consumers overestimated the extra volume, the bonus pack still increased purchase intent, without affecting the perception of brand manipulation, and Bonus packs, discounts, and store displays together have a significant effect on impulse buying (Annisa Sabilla et al., 2024). These findings were relevant because Impulse buying and emotional value are closely related to satisfaction (Lestari, 2018)

The limitations of this research were in various aspects, including geographical scope, cultural and religious context, and bonus pack perception. The research focuses solely on Umrah pilgrims in Tasikmalaya, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions. The role of customer experience and bonus pack perceptions may vary in different cultural or religious settings, which could influence satisfaction differently.

CONCLUSION

The findings reveal that both customer experience and bonus pack have a positive and significant effect on satisfaction. This interaction suggests that when Umrah pilgrims receive bonus offerings—such as additional services, gifts, or exclusive amenities—their overall experience becomes more impactful, resulting in higher satisfaction. This synergy highlights the strategic value of combining well-crafted customer experience designs with promotional incentives in religious travel services. Despite its valuable insights, the study has several limitations. First, the research is limited geographically to pilgrims from Tasikmalaya, which may constrain the generalizability of the results to other regions or cultural contexts. Second, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to assess the long-term impact of bonus packs on satisfaction and related outcomes such as loyalty and advocacy. Third, the research relies on self-reported survey data, which could be subject to biases such as social desirability or recall bias.

From a practical perspective, Umrah travel providers are encouraged to enhance customer experience across all service touchpoints—pre-departure, during travel, and post-return—while simultaneously integrating well-targeted bonus packs that align with pilgrims' expectations and cultural values. This integrated approach can increase customer satisfaction, foster long-term loyalty, and encourage positive word-of-mouth referrals, which are crucial in a highly competitive and trust-driven market. From an academic standpoint, this study contributes to the literature on religious tourism and customer satisfaction by empirically validating the role of the bonus pack in the context of Umrah services. Future research should consider expanding the sample to a more diverse population across different regions or countries to enhance external validity. Moreover, further studies are encouraged to explore other potential moderating or mediating variables, such as trust, religiosity, service customization, or perceived fairness, and adopt longitudinal designs to assess how these factors influence satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy over time. In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of delivering meaningful customer experiences and the strategic use of bonus packs as complementary tools for enhancing satisfaction in the Umrah pilgrimage industry.

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