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# Acceptance of New Travel Norms Among Potential Umrah and Hajj Pilgrims: An Empirical Investigation

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This paper investigates how *Umrah* and *Hajj* travellers' needs and wants are influenced by their acceptance (behaviour) of new norms practices (social distancing, hygiene standards, wearing face masks) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The cross-sectional survey utilises the purposive sampling method with 216 respondents. Partial-least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to confirm the study model and test the hypotheses. Additionally, this study validates the role of age in influencing the new norms of travel behaviour through the PLS-SEM multi-group analysis (MGA). Path Analysis results revealed that psychological needs, safety needs and self-actualisation influence the new norms of travel behaviour. However, self-esteem and belonging needs insignificantly affect their new norms of travel behaviour. Based on the MGA, this study confirms that age / generation plays a significant role in the new travel behaviour practices. This study contributes to the literature on religious tourism and the necessary new norms and changes explicitly relating to *Umrah* and *Hajj* travel through the lens of Maslow's theory of hierarchical needs. The study also contributes to a better understanding of tourists' post-pandemic needs and motivational facets, which helps redesign religious travel experiences.

**Key Words:** Umrah, Hajj, COVID-19, new norms, travel behaviour, Maslow's needs theory, PLS-SEM, multi-group analysis (MGA)

## Introduction

Religious tourism has received increasing global focus as it has rapidly grown over the years (Vargas-Sanchez & Moral-Moral, 2019). Literature notes that Muslims have two types of pilgrimage activities in religious tourism, namely *Umrah* and *Hajj* (Suid *et al.*, 2017) which incorporate religious endeavours with historical and cultural tourism activities. *Umrah* and *Hajj* function as vibrant and massive gatherings of Muslims regardless of political, intellectual, cultural or economic exchanges. *Umrah* is classified as a form of religious tourism, an optional pilgrimage taken by Muslims, at any time of the year, except during the period of the *Hajj* pilgrimage calendar (Oxford Dictionary, 2018) and conducted in specific locations within Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, *Hajj* is mandatory for Muslims and must be performed on the 9th and 10th of *Zil-Hajj*, the

final month of the Islamic calendar (Kovjanic, 2014). Muslims who participate in these travel activities must maintain good manners and moral conduct and not behave in anger or lust during the pilgrimage (Malik *et al.*, 2021). Both *Umrah* and *Hajj* travel is highly demanded in the Muslim market.

Many scholars have started to study the literature that focuses on Islam and tourism, paying particular attention to the *Umrah* and *Hajj* pilgrimages. However, most of the available studies focus on spiritual tourism perspectives (Luz, 2020; Othman *et al.*, 2020; Heidari *et al.*, 2018). Some other scholars have investigated motivational factors that impacted the needs and behaviour among participants in *Umrah* and *Hajj* pilgrimages. By examining the behaviour and needs of past *Umrah* and *Hajj* pilgrims, Reisinger *et al.* (2015) discovered that travel motivation and affective and cognitive images have a significant influence on Muslim travellers' choices. Battour *et al.* (2017) found that intrinsic and extrinsic

<sup>#</sup> This paper is dedicated to the memory of our dear friend and colleague **Muhammad Azlan Shah Badar**

motivation significantly impact Muslim religious tourists' satisfaction. On the other hand, Wu and Mursid (2019) found that travel motivation significantly influences their satisfaction, perceived value, and participation, contributing to greater loyalty.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and travel barriers, religious tourism activities, including *Umrah* and *Hajj* related travels, have suffered adverse consequences resulting from social distancing restrictions, personal hygiene, and other requirements. Thus, several concerns need further exploration. How and to what extent do these new practices and behaviours impact the needs of future *Umrah* and *Hajj* activities? As these issues must be anticipated and managed, revisiting Maslow's hierarchy of needs is considered appropriate to evaluate how Muslim travellers' motivational behaviour and needs are impacted by the new norms during *Umrah* and *Hajj* travel after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In light of this, the current study aims to:

- i) investigate the acceptance level of new norms and practices among Muslim travellers, and;
- ii) examine how the new norms influence Muslim travellers' specific needs when performing *Umrah* and *Hajj* through the lens of Maslow's hierarchical theory of needs.

This paper aims to offer input on Muslim travellers' future needs as they are influenced by the new norms arising from the COVID-19 pandemic by applying Maslow's model of hierarchical needs. The results of this study are vital to various service providers and industry players involved in religious tourism as they can learn and anticipate the changing needs and behaviours and respond appropriately in the aftermath of COVID-19. As the number of Muslim pilgrims and tourists has been steadily increasing over the years, this study has significant practical and academic implications. Moreover, this empirical research offers new knowledge, allowing future researchers to mould theories regarding post-COVID-19 marketing, management and consumer behaviour within the field of tourism and beyond (Holmes *et al.*, 2019; Wen *et al.*, 2020).

## Literature Review

### *The Concept of Umrah and Hajj*

Both *Umrah* and *Hajj* are known as pilgrimage tourism. They are one of the largest congregations of religious tourists globally (Aminudin & Jamal, 2019). *Umrah*

is derived from the Arabic word *I'timar*, which means 'visit,' and refers to paying a visit to the *Ka'bah*, performing *Tawaf* (circumambulation) around it, and walking seven times (*Sa'i*) between Safa and Marwah (Muneeza & Mustapha, 2021: 661-679). *Umrah* is a pilgrimage that can be carried out at any time of the year or in conjunction with a *Hajj* (Ledhem & Moussaoui, 2020). It is important to note that *Umrah* is a highly recommended but not obligatory act of worship. Hence, the *Umrah* packages are offered as holidays, allowing the traveller to perform Islamic worship and pilgrimage around the year and indulge in social and leisure pursuits during their trip (Aziz *et al.*, 2018).

On the other hand, *Hajj* pilgrimage is a fundamental Islamic ritual that is prescribed as obligatory for any able-bodied Muslim who has the ability to perform it once in a lifetime. It is the annual pilgrimage made by Muslims to the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia, in the Middle East. Every year, over 2 million Muslim pilgrims from all over the world embark on the holy pilgrimage of *Hajj* (Ahmed *et al.*, 2016; Taibah *et al.*, 2018). Although the extent and magnitude of preparations required for each differ significantly (Muneeza & Mustapha, 2021), close coordination is required to successfully manage both *Umrah* and *Hajj* activities. Usually, during *Umrah* and *Hajj*, pilgrims travel to the Masjid an-Nabawi in Medina and Masjidil Haram in Makkah, which generates huge crowds of worshippers (Acar, 2019). These activities involve many people gathering at specific locations and times, performing the same rituals, and staying for the same number of days.

### *The Effect of COVID-19 on Umrah and Hajj*

The tourism sector has generated a tremendous amount of direct and indirect income and significantly contributes to the economic progress of host countries (Latiff *et al.*, 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had severe repercussions on the tourism and hospitality industry worldwide (Hanafiah *et al.*, 2021). Human mobility resulted in the rampant spread of COVID-19, resulting in a high number of cases and fatalities (BBC News, 2020). As a result, most nations adopted restrictions, including implementing travel bans and halting visa-on-arrival systems, to contain the spread of the virus (Gossling *et al.*, 2020; Lotfinejad *et al.*, 2020). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia took several measures to combat the spread of COVID-19, particularly during the 1441 *Umrah* and *Hajj* events. This included stopping *Umrah* and limiting the number of people performing *Hajj* to those from within

the Kingdom and imposing a curfew on the Kingdom's cities beginning in March 2020 (Muneeza & Mustapha, 2021).

In the aftermath of COVID-19, indications point toward massive changes in the travel system and tourism behaviour (Gossling *et al.*, 2020). Most governments worldwide adopted new norms that were applied to counter the spread of the virus. Particularly, travellers had to familiarise themselves with the health guidelines established by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (Lotfinejad *et al.*, 2020). These includes social distancing, personal hygiene and wearing face masks. Social distancing and hygiene practices were expected to reduce the number of cases and decrease the severity of the affected population (Cavanagh & Wambier, 2020). Maintaining hand hygiene through the use of alcohol-based hand rubs was an inexpensive, simple and widely used preventative measure against COVID-19 transmissions worldwide (WHO, 2020).

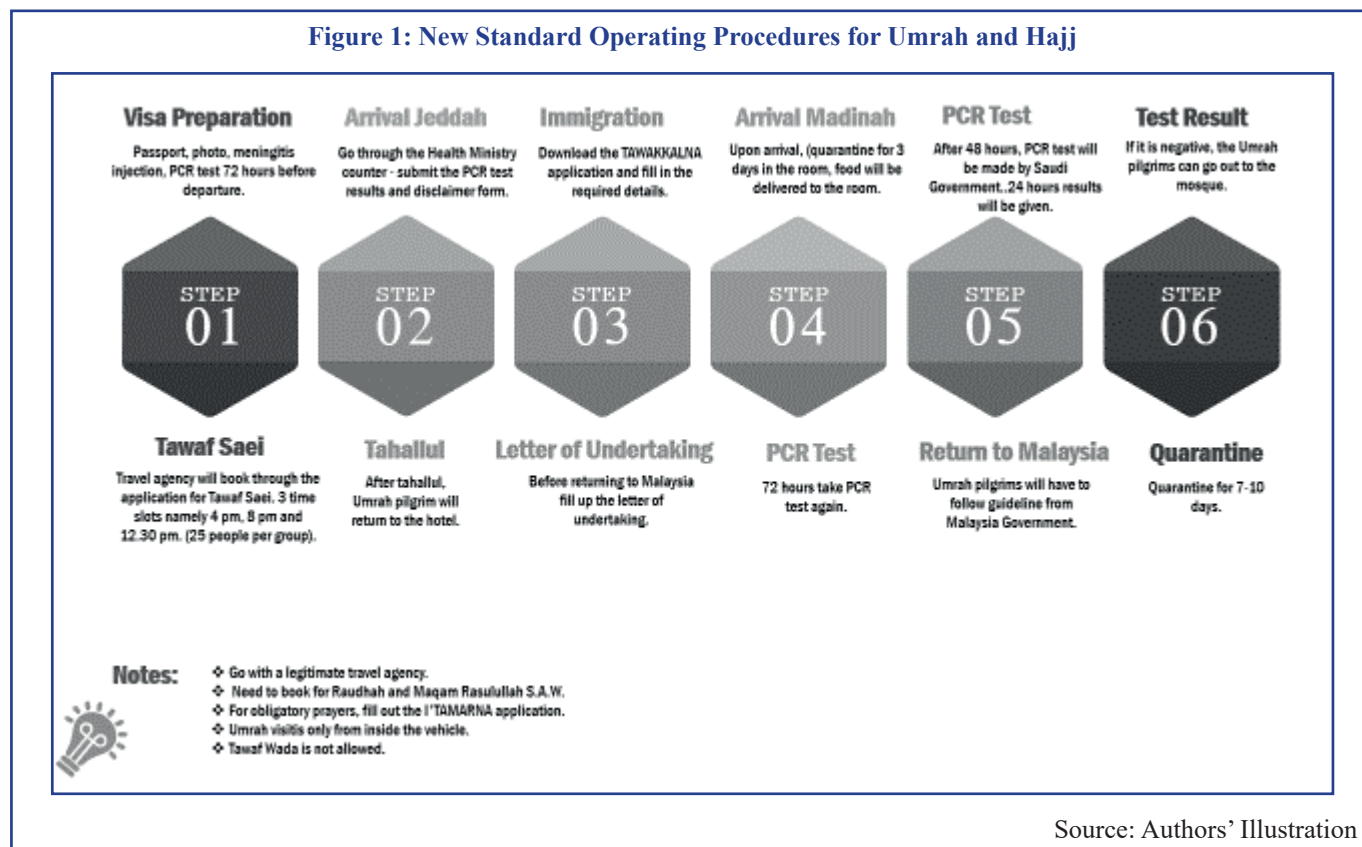
The adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector spread to different tourist activities. These activities included the area of religious tourism, particularly in terms of *Umrah* and *Hajj* related travel. In line with the WHO practices, Muslim travellers

needed to practice the 'new normal' culture through social distancing, utilising face masks and following the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for religious gatherings. Figure 1 depicts the new *Umrah* and *Hajj* SOPs set by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) government.

### The New Norms of COVID-19

The public health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic currently surging worldwide poses a severe challenge to a safe and successful *Umrah* and *Hajj*. The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Saudi Arabia, the host of these Muslim pilgrimages, was seriously worrying. Therefore, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Saudi Arabia's health authority recommended preventive behaviours and practices to reduce the risk, impact, and spread of respiratory tract infections among pilgrims participating in *Hajj* or *Umrah* activities. This included hand hygiene, proper use of a face mask, cough etiquette, social distancing, and reduction of contact due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Balaban *et al.*, 2012). As a result, restrictions were put in place to ensure that diseases did not spread. Among them were social distancing, hygiene intervention and wearing face masks as new norms (Cavanagh & Wambier, 2020; Howard *et al.*, 2021).

Figure 1: New Standard Operating Procedures for Umrah and Hajj



Source: Authors' Illustration



### ***Social Distancing as a New Norm***

Social distancing is crucial to prevent virus exposure and curb the spread of this disease, and this has become a globally practised method (Block *et al.*, 2020; McGrail *et al.*, 2020). The WHO-China Joint Mission on COVID-19 identified that outbreaks in the region of Wuhan occurred in the absence of such pre-emptive practices, highlighting the importance of establishing social distancing norms in a community (WHO, 2019). Dalton *et al.* (2020) illustrated a case in China where transmission between family members was more prevalent. On the other hand, a recent study by WHO (2020) highlights that although infected individuals may not display any symptoms, they can still spread infection through droplets from their mouth and nose when they cough, sneeze or even speak. Additionally, the severity of COVID-19 can manifest differently for people depending on their current health status, but all individuals are at risk of contracting and spreading the infection (Di Gennaro *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, social distancing can help minimise the chances of individuals exposing themselves to infection outside their places of residence (Block *et al.*, 2020). However, even with social distancing practices, respiratory infections among pilgrims from various countries have increased during *Umrah* and *Hajj* (Ebrahim & Memish, 2020).

### ***Hygiene Intervention as a New Norm***

Maintaining hand hygiene has long been proven as a method to curb respiratory diseases (Jefferson *et al.*, 2008: 77-80). Hygiene standards are vital, where a person who has already experienced contact with the virus can limit the risk of transmission that they pose to others (Hillier, 2020). WHO (2020) claimed that regardless of the product type, disinfectant usage and proper handwashing techniques reduce COVID-19 contamination effectively. Therefore, to achieve maximum protection, adherence to additional preventive practices such as proper hand hygiene, social distancing, vaccination, use of face masks, and cough etiquette must be ensured in a complementary and synergistic manner (Ashraf *et al.*, 2016; Goni *et al.*, 2021). This is supported by a study by Mahdi *et al.* (2021) which notes that prior to the COVID-19 crisis, hand hygiene was the most preferred prevention method among *Umrah* and *Hajj* pilgrims.

In early June 2020, restrictions on *Umrah* and *Hajj* activities were gradually eased, and a limited number of current Saudi residents (with some foreign visitors) were permitted to pray with strict public hygiene protocols (Ebrahim & Memish, 2020).

### ***Wearing Face Mask as a New Norm***

Face masks are a form of personal protective equipment (PPE) intended to stop the spread of respiratory infections and effectively minimise the transmission of viruses and bacteria that cause respiratory diseases (Howard *et al.*, 2021). The use of face masks protects the individual and everyone around them and is invaluable in the effort to reduce the spread of infection (Cheng *et al.*, 2020; Feng *et al.*, 2020). Hence, the world population were advised to don masks when they were out in public, particularly among crowds, while large gatherings were entirely forbidden (Singhal, 2020).

However, there are varying cultural and societal perspectives regarding the utilisation of face masks (Cheng *et al.*, 2020). The use of face masks by healthy individuals within the community to mitigate the risk of transmitting respiratory viral diseases is still hotly debated. For the *Umrah* and *Hajj* pilgrimage, although appropriate hand cleanliness and physical separation are the most effective ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infections, wearing a mask in public has proven to limit COVID-19 transmission by those who have the virus (Irfan *et al.*, 2021).

### ***New Travel Needs of Umrah and Hajj Travellers***

With the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that religious travellers' behaviour will be altered (Cheung *et al.*, 2021; Ryan *et al.*, 2020; Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021; Li, 2021; Šimková, 2014), this will require study. Understanding travellers' motivations is vital in anticipating patterns in future travel activities, especially post-COVID-19 (Lewis & D'Alessandro, 2019). Notably, religious travellers' motivations and their basic needs will be altered because of the obligations imposed by the new norms post-COVID-19. Hence, revisiting Maslow's hierarchy of needs is considered as an appropriate tool to evaluate the changes in tourist behaviour.

### ***Satisfying Physiological Needs - Maslow***

Maslow categorises needs in a hierarchy, beginning with physiological needs and progressing to self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943). From a religious standpoint, it is possible that the boundaries of the field expressed as needs will change (Ibrahim & Hacikeleşoğlu, 2021). During *Umrah* and *Hajj* travel, Muslim pilgrims want to feel confident that their travel agent can ensure safe and appropriate

accommodation, preferably with easy access to religious locations and spaces to obtain basic needs such as clean and nutritious food (Albughuli, 2011). Hence, a safe environment during the trip is vital to satisfy Muslim pilgrims' physiological and safety needs on their way to perform *Umrah* and *Hajj*. Providing comprehensive information regarding the location's accessibility and safety can encourage more people to visit the area.

### *Satisfying Safety Needs*

Scholars generally contend that safety and security play vital roles in tourists' decision-making and travel experiences (Kovari & Zimanyi, 2011; Kozak *et al.*, 2007). Indeed, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 have demonstrated the impact of security risks on tourism, resulting in a significant slump in tourist flows and even regional stagnation (Kovari & Zimanyi, 2011). The same goes for the COVID-19. Exploration of literature generally shows that safety and security concepts are different, but some studies have used these two terms interchangeably (Wichasin & Dounghummes, 2012). However, risks in tourism are a complex research topic with many disputes and paradoxes. Although not directly focusing on risk, Yang *et al.* (2015) suggest the possibility of risk being a positive factor in tourism as some tourists are explorers or risk seekers.

The severity, frequency, and impact of unprecedented tragedies has given rise to an increasing volume of research investigating the various aspects of risk in tourism, including *Umrah* and *Hajj* travel (see in particular Korstanje *et al.* 2018, ).

### *Satisfying Belonging Needs*

Following the satisfaction of physiological and safety requirements, the third level of human wants includes feelings of belonging. From the tourism perspective, social belonging is a significant element in motivating travellers to visit a country or location. This can be done by projecting a warm and friendly environment (Wichasin & Dounghummes, 2012). Ideally, tourists should feel the capacity to create strong connections with fellow travellers and locals, increasing their motivation to return to that place. One of the reasons for *Umrah* and *Hajj* trips is participating in various religious rites or activities, which provide a sense of well-being, satisfaction and belonging (Hassan *et al.*, 2015). The acquisition of an experience, such as an emotional, intellectual, spiritual,

or bodily one, is central to religious travel. Therefore, during *Umrah* and *Hajj* travels, these relationships can be fostered to facilitate pilgrims interacting with local communities and other Muslim travellers. In addition, tourists have an expectation of benefits gained from their travel (Moutinho *et al.*, 2011) and the optimal experience that brings them the satisfaction of travel.

### *Satisfying Self-esteem Needs*

The next travel motivation comprises self-esteem and personal development. This can be self-directed, such as improving skills, interests, proficiencies, and expertise, or aimed at others, such as social status goals or the attraction associated with those who visit certain areas (Yousaf *et al.*, 2018). Specific to tourism, esteem needs can be satisfied by the experience of travelling itself, where the visitor can gain knowledge, learn skills, and expand their interests and worldviews (Wichasin & Dounghummes, 2012). However, religious travel is about having an experience that is emotional, intellectual, spiritual or physical (Hassan *et al.*, 2015). The ability to share these elements of travel experience with others once a visitor has returned home can also be a motivating factor. This can develop esteem needs by allowing the individual to feel more confident, respected and valued.

### *Satisfying Self-actualisation Needs*

The highest level of need is self-actualisation, in which an individual realises their full potential and experiences spiritual transformation (Qiu *et al.*, 2021; Kovari & Zimanyi, 2011). Notably, self-actualisation needs can be met through strong core values, perceptiveness, and motivation. Hence, stakeholders in the tourism industry consider the need for self-actualisation, hence offering tourism products and services which involve more altruism-based marketing and activities. For *Umrah* and *Hajj*, the pilgrimage experience itself bring self-actualisation and the highest levels of motivation (Hassan *et al.*, 2015). *Umrah* and *Hajj* bring the soul, spirit, and heart together. They aids in the return of a person to a purified state, reflecting the Holy Spirit, nature, and the presence of God in creation. Therefore, it is the role of the travel agency to ensure they can assist the pilgrim in reaching their self-actualisation needs, considering the highest level of satisfying needs in the *Umrah* and *Hajj* journey.

## Study Hypotheses

### *The Influence of Traveller's Needs on Umrah and Hajj Behaviour in the Context of New Norms*

Maslow's theory of hierarchical needs has been widely applied in the literature to examine travel behaviour and motivation (Yousaf *et al.*, 2018). This theory aids in understanding the various needs that motivate travellers and gives service providers a more in-depth perspective into the type of experiences sought by specific groups of travellers. The theory is valuable in comprehending travellers' motivations and how they attempt to fulfil their travel needs. With the current COVID-19 uncertainties, grasping travellers' motivations is vital in anticipating patterns for future travel activities, especially in the post-pandemic realm (Lewis & D'Alessandro, 2019).

Based on Maslow's theory, Terakunpisut (2018) and Battour *et al.* (2011) identified the various conditions and facilities deemed necessary by Muslim travellers, including access to prayer areas, halal cuisine, Muslim-friendly toilets, Islamic-based entertainment, and the ability to fulfil all five daily prayers. These are the essentials in fulfilling Muslim travellers' physiological and safety needs. Jamal and El-Bassiouny (2019) noted that Muslim tourists might opt to visit interesting non-religious locations during their trip. A sizeable number of *Umrah* and *Hajj* pilgrims often stop in countries, such as Dubai, within the same journey (Thimm, 2018, 2017; Abuhjeeleh, 2019). This can be an attempt to further satisfy both belonging needs and self-esteem needs. This is also evident in how common it is for the British-Asian Muslim population in the United Kingdom to include visits to their home countries along with their *Umrah* and *Hajj* travels.

Additionally, Muslims travelling with their families must account for the requirements of their children. Previously, parents may have prioritised the religious aspects of the pilgrimage but still include various other experiences to educate and entertain their children; they would have carefully planned their itinerary accordingly. However, there are now valid concerns regarding Muslim travellers' changing needs and behaviours in the wake of a post-pandemic global tourism market (Bieber, 2020; Dionne & Turkmen, 2020; Hassan *et al.*, 2021). There are new norms in daily life, but certainly there will be changes in long-distance travel, especially in *Umrah* and *Hajj* trips that involve a huge number of people congregating in the

same place. An appropriate pilgrimage travel package should satisfy a Muslim traveller's needs while also fulfilling the new Standard Operating Procedures (Ridha *et al.*, 2020). Among these have been social distancing, wearing face masks and hygiene. Tourism marketing must offer information in promotional material regarding how travellers can continue to adhere to new norms while ensuring that a trip to a specific location will fulfil their self-esteem, self-actualisation, and belonging.

The basis framework for travel behaviour in the current study is adapted from Maslow's hierarchical model, which is the lens to view the new norms as factors that will likely impact the needs and behaviours of future *Umrah* and *Hajj* travellers. The discussion above gives rise to the following hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub>:** Physiological needs will significantly affect *Umrah* and *Hajj* traveller's behaviour under new norms.
- H<sub>2</sub>:** Safety needs will significantly affect *Umrah* and *Hajj* traveller's behaviour under new norms.
- H<sub>3</sub>:** Belonging needs will significantly affect *Umrah* and *Hajj* traveller's behaviour under new norms.
- H<sub>4</sub>:** Self-esteem needs will significantly affect *Umrah* and *Hajj* traveller's behaviour under new norms.
- H<sub>5</sub>:** Self-actualisation needs will significantly affect *Umrah* and *Hajj* traveller's behaviour under new norms.

### *The Moderating Effects of Age / Generation*

When preparing promotional materials and activities for Muslim travellers, tourism marketing can consider specific traveller demographics. Past literature highlights the influence of demographic markers on consumer plans, expenditure, and travelling behaviour (Aziz *et al.*, 2018; Bernini & Cracolici, 2015; Coibion *et al.*, 2020; Pak, 2020). It has been discovered that travel expenditure is impacted by age (Pak, 2020) and travellers in their late 40s to early 50s are the age demographic that spends the most on trips. Findings also illustrate that the various restrictions imposed by old age or the experience of travelling with children and the access to leisure time impact the choices and behaviours of tourists. Aziz *et al.* (2018) indicate that middle-aged home-makers have substantial control over the money in their households and are highly likely to indulge in travel. Compared to former generations primarily in the working classes, these women are physically healthier



and have the availability of leisure time since their children have reached adulthood. Finally, Coibion *et al.* (2020) highlighted that behaviour related to expenditure in both genders is consistent up to 25 years old. Beyond this, higher education levels correspond with higher travel expenditure.

In terms of travelling outside of group tours, expenditure becomes more similar in old age (Mondal & Dubey, 2020). Within age, studies highlight that women are also found to spend more on group tours, while men choose to spend on travelling outside of group tours from middle age. However, Bernini and Cracolici (2015) asserted that changes in demographics across populations could impact travelling decisions over a person's life cycle. They posited that age positively influences travel expenditure but adversely affects desire to travel. Similarly, a study by Aziz *et al.* (2018) suggested that Muslim families in different age ranges display varying motivation levels. Young adults (18-24 years old) show the highest motivation levels among all age groups, and as such more attention and effort must be focused on assessing this age bracket's demands and needs (Inglehart, 2018).

This study aims to provide perspective on how the individual demographic category of age can be beneficial in solidifying the connection between the practice of new norms and the new behavioural needs of Muslim travellers performing the *Umrah* and *Hajj*. Hence, this proposed a hypothesis: -

**H<sub>6</sub>:** Age generation has a significant effect as a moderator in influencing the relationship between new norms and Umrah and Hajj traveller's behavioural needs.

## Methodology

This study examines whether *Umrah* and *Hajj* travellers' needs and wants are influenced by their acceptance (behaviour) of new norms (social distancing, hygiene standards, wearing face masks) by using the causal relationship between constructs and variables, guided by the positivist approach. This study applies the quantitative approach to a causal type of investigation. The quantitative study data were collected cross-sectionally. The unit of analysis was members of the public who planned to perform *Umrah* and *Hajj* during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the study population is unknown, a non-probability purposive sampling approach was employed. According to the G-Power analysis (Cohen, 1992:155), this cross-sectional study

applies the purposive sampling method with a minimum sample of 138 respondents (Memon *et al.*, 2020; Hair *et al.*, 2017). The study was undertaken in Malaysia.

The study instruments are adapted and adjusted based on the dimensions of previous research. The new norms instruments such as social distancing, hygiene care and wearing face masks are adapted from the guidelines of WHO (2020), Mills and Salisbury (2021), Yan *et al.* (2020) and Singhal (2020). The instruments for the five hierarchies of need by Maslow were adapted from QuestMeraki (2018) for the hierarchical needs, physiological and safety needs - Mullins (1999), belonging and self-esteem needs from Battour (2011) and self-actualisation needs - Kaufman (2018). The respondents also completed a socio-demographic survey focusing on their gender, age, and occupation.

Ethical approval was received before the questionnaire could be distributed to ensure the research process follows the correct guidelines. The instruments were translated into English and Malay to provide easy comprehension for the respondents.

The survey items were measured using a seven-point scale, with responses ranging from 'very strongly agree' to 'very strongly disagree'. The collected data were coded, cleaned, and analysed using the SPSS version 24 software. In total, the study yielded a substantial data set of 216 valid questionnaires for analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to explore the demographic profile of the sample. Notably, 73.1 percent (n=158) of the respondents were female, while 26.9 percent (n=58) were male. Most were between 18-39 years of age (61.6%; n=133), and the rest (38.4%; n=83) were 40 years old and older. In term of occupation, the majority are higher institution students (40.7%; n=88), public (32.9%; n=71) and private (20.4%; n=44) sector workers.

In the next phase of analysis, SmartPLS 3.3.1 software was used to assesses the measurements, and undertake structural models and multi-group analysis (MGA). PLS-SEM is a second-generation technique used to predict relationships among multiple latent constructs (Hanafiah, 2020). Thus, this is suitable for researching forecast-oriented goals, but does not require normal data distribution, and is ideal for accommodating small sample sizes (Marcoulides, 1998). The measurement model (validity and reliability) and structural model (relationship between the variables) were examined using the bootstrapping method (Hair *et al.*, 2017).



## Study Findings

## Structural Model

### Measurement Model

The study variables and constructs need to satisfy the requirements for composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and factor loadings, as highlighted by Hair *et al.* (2017) and Hanafiah (2020). Tables 1 and 2 report the measurement model output. The CR recommended value is 0.7, while the factor loadings recommended value should be higher than 0.7. Meanwhile, the AVE recommended value is higher than 0.5. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was opted against the traditional and commonly used Fornell-Larcker's criterion to test the model's discriminant validity (Henseler *et al.*, 2009: 277-319). The conservative HTMT recommended value should be lower than the 0.85 ratios.

In this research, the construct factor loadings are above 0.7, while the CR value (>.70) and the AVE value (>.50) are above their threshold values, respectively. Table 1 indicates that the measurement model has satisfactory discriminant validity (Hanafiah, 2020). However, the HTMT value was below the recommended value (<0.90) (Henseler *et al.*, 2009), as reported in Table 2.

The study hypotheses claimed a significant relationship between physiological needs (PN), safety needs (SN), belonging needs (BN), self-esteem needs (SEN), and self-actualisation needs (SAN) and the new norms of travel behaviour. Table 3 presents the path coefficient based on the structural model assessment.

This study confirms that psychological need (PN) ( $\beta = -0.133^{**}$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) significantly influences the new norms construct. The result proved a positive direct relationship between psychological need (PN) and the new norms of travel behaviour. Next, this study found that safety needs ( $\beta = .508^{***}$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and self-actualisation needs (SAN) ( $\beta = .238^{**}$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) significantly influence the new norms of travel behaviour. However, this study's findings confirm that self-esteem Needs (SESM) and belonging needs (BN) insignificantly affect the new norms of travel behaviour.

The  $R^2$  for this study was 0.556, which is considered moderate according to the rule of thumb of behavioural research in marketing (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The predictive sample reuse technique ( $Q^2$ ) was also employed to assess the structural model's predictive relevance (Chin,

Figure 2: Measurement Model

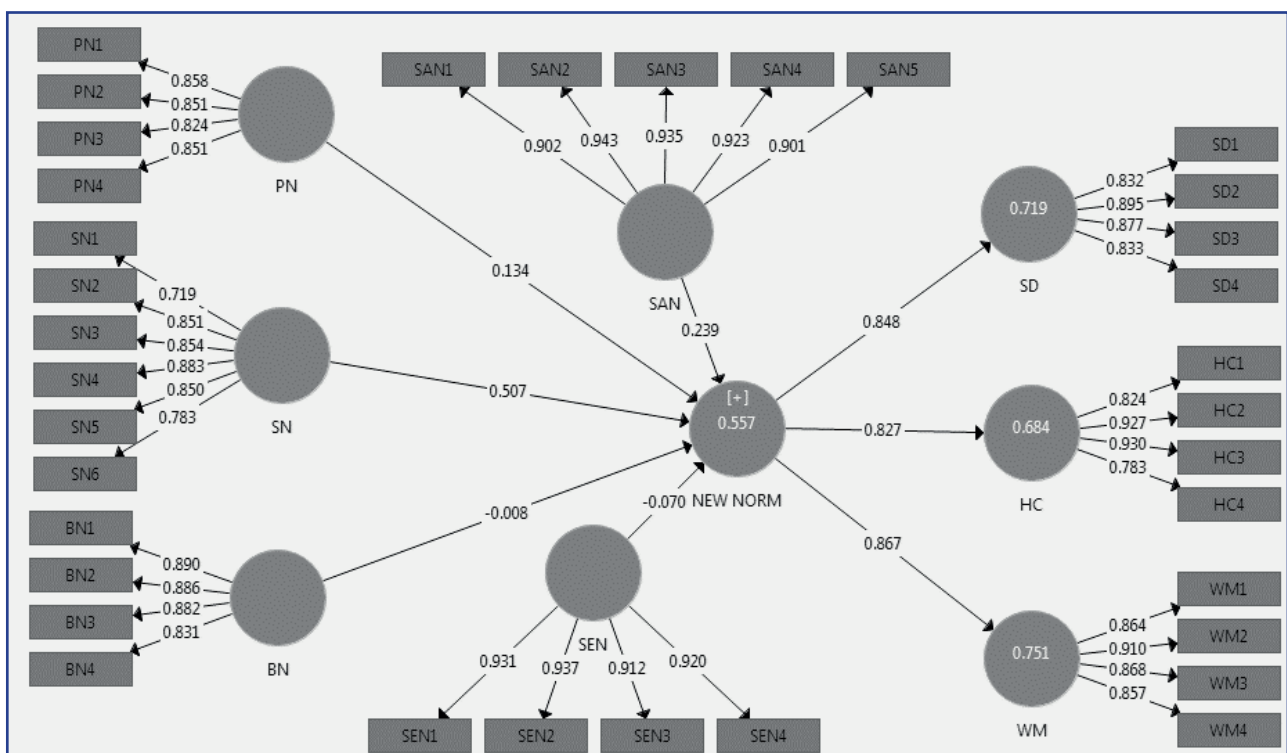


Table 1: Measurement Model Assessment

Code	Items	Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>Physiological Needs (PN)</b>			<b>0.868</b>	<b>0.910</b>	<b>0.716</b>
PN1	I believe in having quality transportation during the trip.	0.858			
PN2	I believe in consuming hygienic food during the trip.	0.851			
PN3	The hotel rooms and other facilities should be frequently cleaned during the trip.	0.824			
PN4	I should be able to use basic hotel facilities during the trip.	0.851			
<b>Safety Needs (SN)</b>			<b>0.905</b>	<b>0.927</b>	<b>0.681</b>
SN1	The hotel rooms must be frequently sanitised during the trip.	0.719			
SN2	Briefing on the safety information should be done before and during the trip.	0.851			
SN3	Health security screenings should be offered.	0.854			
SN4	The PCR test is mandatory before departure to Makkah and Medina	0.883			
SN5	The PCR test should be done after arrival at Makkah and Medina	0.850			
SN6	Self-quarantine must be enforced at Makkah and Medina	0.783			
<b>Belonging Needs (BN)</b>			<b>0.898</b>	<b>0.927</b>	<b>0.761</b>
BN1	Bonding with the other travellers and Mutawwif should be allowed during the trip.	0.890			
BN2	Gatherings such as “ <i>Tazkirah</i> ” sessions should be allowed.	0.886			
BN3	Experiencing a welcoming atmosphere during the trip is important.	0.882			
BN4	Social events and activities should be allowed to visit religious or historical places.	0.831			
<b>Self-Esteem Needs (SESM)</b>			<b>0.944</b>	<b>0.960</b>	<b>0.856</b>
SEN1	I believe in developing self-confidence during the trip.	0.931			
SEN2	I want to be feeling valued and important during the trip.	0.937			
SEN3	I believe in receiving respect from others during the trip.	0.912			
SEN4	I believe in being accepted by others during the trip.	0.920			
<b>Self-Actualisation Needs (SAN)</b>			<b>0.955</b>	<b>0.965</b>	<b>0.848</b>
SAN1	I believe in having a strong sense of right and wrong during the trip.	0.902			
SAN2	I believe in having a clear perception of reality during the trip.	0.943			
SAN3	I believe in staying true to Islamic core values.	0.935			
SAN4	I believe in practising safety and risk SOPs during the trip	0.923			
SAN5	I believe that we must always be honest about our needs and take responsibility during the trip.	0.901			
<b>Social Distancing (SD)</b>			<b>0.882</b>	<b>0.919</b>	<b>0.739</b>
SD1	Practice a no handshake policy between travellers.	0.832			
SD2	Avoid large gatherings between travellers during the trip.	0.895			
SD3	Practice social distancing during the process of travelling during the trips.	0.877			
SD4	Remain at least 6 feet away from each other throughout the trip.	0.833			

Table 1: Measurement Model Assessment (Cont.)

Code	Items	Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>Hygiene Care (HC)</b>			<b>0.890</b>	<b>0.924</b>	<b>0.754</b>
HC1	Promote proper coughing and sneezing etiquette among travellers during the trip.	0.824			
HC2	Practice regular hand sanitation for travellers during the trip.	0.927			
HC3	Practice regular hand sanitation before entering places and buildings throughout the trip.	0.93			
HC4	Practice regular hand washing for travellers during the trip.	0.783			
<b>Wearing Mask (WM)</b>			<b>0.898</b>	<b>0.929</b>	<b>0.766</b>
WM1	Wearing medical-grade masks by unhealthy persons is necessary.	0.864			
WM2	Wearing medical-grade masks by family members or anyone that have been in contact with an unhealthy person during the trip is necessary.	0.910			
WM3	Wearing masks by travellers who are in good health is necessary.	0.868			
WM4	Wearing masks by travellers aged 60 years old and above is necessary.	0.857			

1998). The result confirms the predictive reliability of both research models. The inner-model change related to the effect size is calculated by employing the effect size function of  $f^2$  (Chin, 1998). Referring to Table 3, the effect size of psychological needs, safety needs, and self-actualisation needs on the new norms of travel behaviour are larger than 0.02, reporting minimal significant effect size.

### Multi-Group Analysis

The PLS-based multi-group analysis (MGA) was adopted to examine the moderators' impact on the relationship between independent and dependent variables. This study chose the PLS-MGA approach rather than the interaction approach based on two motives. Following the MGA approach, the sample was first split into groups

(subsamples), and the path relationships of exogenous/independent variable(s) were regressed with endogenous/dependent variable(s) using one subsample at the time. Next, the bootstrap method was applied (5000 times) to re-sample the data to get the standard error of the structural paths in the subsamples under consideration. Subsequently, differences between the path estimators were tested for the significance of the t-test values.

As mentioned, the specific moderating effect under consideration was the respondents' age generation. Since the moderating variable was categorical, the overall sample was split into two groups (Hair *et al.*, 2012) - the young generation (18 to 39 years old) and the aged generation (40 to 59 years old) group categories. Table 3 shows the estimated values of the structural relations for the two subsamples.

Table 2: HTMT assessment

	BN	HC	NN	PN	SAN	SD	SESM	SN
<b>HC</b>	0.299							
<b>NN</b>	0.417	0.816						
<b>PN</b>	0.529	0.598	0.604					
<b>SAN</b>	0.537	0.592	0.703	0.624				
<b>SD</b>	0.353	0.611	0.841	0.431	0.592			
<b>SESM</b>	0.542	0.524	0.622	0.601	0.819	0.509		
<b>SN</b>	0.530	0.642	0.793	0.707	0.877	0.709	0.796	
<b>WM</b>	0.424	0.633	0.845	0.529	0.633	0.691	0.572	0.698

Table 3: Path Analysis

Path	Beta value	Std error	t-values	p-values	F-square
PN -> NEW NORMS	0.133	0.072	1.847	0.032**	0.023
SN -> NEW NORMS	0.508	0.119	4.270	0.000***	0.171
BN -> NEW NORMS	-0.007	0.068	0.106	0.458	0.001
SESM -> NEW NORMS	-0.071	0.096	0.738	0.230	0.003
SAN -> NEW NORMS	0.238	0.132	1.807	0.035**	0.022

Notes:  $R^2 = 0.556$ ;  $Q^2 = 0.380$ ;  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ \*\*\*;  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ \*\*

This study differentiates between the aged generation (40-59 years old) and the younger generation (18-39 years old) respondents to see whether age moderates the effects of the independent variables on new norms of travel behaviour. Out of 216 respondents, almost 62 per cent were identified as young generation (n=133, 61.6%), while the remaining were considered aged (n=83, 38.4%). Based on Multi-Group Analysis (MGA), the Smith-Satterthwait test of differences in the self-actualisation needs (SAN) effect on the new norms of travel behaviour revealed significant paths of differences. As there are differences in the significance level for each age generation, this study confirms that age generation moderates the relationship between self-actualisation needs and new norms of travel behaviour; therefore, the hypothesis is supported.

On the other hand, the Smith-Satterthwait test of differences in the safety needs (SN) effect on the new travel behaviour norms revealed significant paths. As there are differences in the significance level for each age generation, this study confirms that age generation moderates the relationship between safety needs and new norms of travel behaviour. Meanwhile, this study also confirms that age generation does not moderate the relationship between self-esteem needs (SESM), belonging needs (BN), psychological needs (PN), and the new norms of travel behaviour.

## Discussion and Implication

The study findings conclude that COVID-19 has changed Muslim travellers' habits and behaviour. This pandemic has drawn the attention of travellers to the issue of hygiene and health while travelling to perform *Umrah* and *Hajj*. This study confirms that psychological needs, safety needs and self-actualisation needs significantly influence the new norms of travel behaviour. These findings are similar to pre- and post-COVID-19 researchers' propositions (Bouzenita & Boulanouar, 2016; Hanafiah & Hamdan, 2020; Sibi *et al.*, 2020; Sigala, 2020). For example, Musa and Sim (2010) have highlighted the significant influence of psychological needs within the older generation. Similarly, Cheung *et al.* (2021) showed significant changes in travel behaviour and proposed that businesses need to focus on post-pandemic needs.

The study also highlighted that the predominant psychological needs of tourists were different in each phase. Thus, understanding tourist behaviour changes would guide the tourism planner towards developing bespoke strategies to provide adequate response measures and serve as a basis for reflection for tour operators seeking to bounce back from this crisis.

Belonging needs and self-esteem needs significantly influence the new norm behaviour. The findings highlight the importance of the basic hierarchy of needs to

Table 4: Multi-Group Analysis Results (MGA)

Path	Path Coefficients-diff (GROUP_Age (18-39) - GROUP_Age (40-59))	p-Value new (GROUP_Age (18-39) vs GROUP_Age (40-59))	MGA Results
BN -> NEW NORMS	-0.031	0.817	Not Significant
PN -> NEW NORMS	-0.024	0.875	Not Significant
SAN -> NEW NORMS	-0.587	0.021**	Significant
SEN -> NEW NORMS	-0.080	0.754	Not Significant
SN -> NEW NORMS	0.662	0.032**	Significant

Notes:  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ \*\*



understand how physiological needs affect behaviour in the practice of new norms for *Umrah* and *Hajj* travelling (El-Gohary, 2020; Krishnapillai & Kwok, 2020). Albughuli (2011) and Bouzenita and Boulanouar (2016) mentioned that Muslim pilgrims want to be confident about their safety and basic needs, such as clean and nutritious food. It is confirmed in this work that the pandemic has resulted in new norms for *Umrah* and *Hajj* activities. Hence, the basic needs for travellers should be prioritised in *Umrah* and *Hajj* travel in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Based on multi-group analysis (MGA), it was confirmed that there are differences in tourist behaviour in terms of the respondents' age generation. The MGA demonstrates that age generation moderates the relationship between self-actualisation needs and safety needs with new norms of travel behaviour; therefore, the hypothesis is supported. The results show that for a younger generation, safety needs are vital attributes to influence their behaviour toward new norms in *Umrah* and *Hajj* travelling after the pandemic. This is in line with previous studies highlighting age as a construct that affects needs and behaviour in tourism (Kovari & Zimányi, 2011; Seabra *et al.*, 2013). It is reasonable to postulate that tourists are heterogeneous in terms of their risk perception, even from the same nation or age group, which is explained by the safety needs in Maslow's theory (Yang *et al.*, 2015; Viet *et al.*, 2020).

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### Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has had severe repercussions for the tourism and hospitality industry on a scale we have never witnessed. This includes religious tourism, particularly *Umrah* and *Hajj*-related travel, which involves packages offered as holidays, allowing the traveller to perform worship, complete their pilgrimage, and indulge in social and leisure pursuits on their trip. The changes in choices and behaviour of tourists worldwide and the consequences on the global tourism market call for thorough exploration. Hence, it is critical to learn from this pandemic whose unprecedented scale disrupted religious gatherings and is considered a geopolitical risk. Such knowledge will allow policymakers and stakeholders to ensure the continued survival of the tourism industry, especially the religious tourism sector.

Muslim pilgrim and tourist demand has been steadily increasing over the years, and as such, this study has worldwide importance. Hence, it is hoped that these findings can provide insight into both academic and practical fields within religious tourism. First, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders must act to ensure that the effects of the pandemic on *Umrah* and *Hajj* are properly managed with stringent anti-spread measures being implemented. This requires appropriate planning and preparation for both the host and participating countries. It is also hoped that the governments of Muslim and non-Muslim countries and *Umrah* and *Hajj* regulatory/management bodies will consider how to address the pandemic's long-term implications for *Umrah* and *Hajj* activities.

This study has several limitations. First, the results are not generalisable, they exclude supply-side predictors and are restricted to a limited understanding of COVID-19 new norms. Hence, future research should focus on other factors that might influence religious travellers' behaviour toward new norms in the future. Furthermore, future researchers can also consider expanding the range of respondents - considering other countries for example, to make the result more generalised. Additionally, it would be valuable for future studies to employ mixed methodology approaches to fully capture what could not be encapsulated by the survey alone. Future studies are also advised to include additional variables to increase the wholeness of the study model.

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