

DECLINE AND INNOVATION OF UMRAH AGENCIES DURING PANDEMIC: A BECK'S RISK SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Umrah Travel Organizers (PPIUs) in Bekasi City, West Java Province, Indonesia, focusing on their resilience and adaptation strategies in response to journey restrictions imposed by the Saudi Arabian government. Using Ulrich Beck's risk society theory, the research analyzes the effects of Umrah journey restrictions and explores how PPIUs in Bekasi City adjusted their operations. Qualitative methods, including observation, document analysis, and in-depth interviews conducted between September and October 2021, were employed to explore this phenomenon deeply. This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of how the pandemic led to operational declines among PPIUs and prompted innovations within the sector. The closure of Saudi Arabia's borders to Umrah pilgrims from Indonesia significantly impacted PPIUs, resulting in financial strain and operational crises. While some PPIUs managed to adapt through effective risk management and diversification of business activities, others faced closure due to financial losses. The study highlights the diminishing influence of state actors in controlling Umrah travel, underscoring the increasing role of non-state actors and digital platforms in the industry. This research contributes to the literature on the vulnerability of religious tourism during global crises and emphasizes the importance of adaptive strategies within the PPIU sector. Future research should focus on developing sustainable practices and innovations to enhance resilience against similar challenges, providing a foundation for practical applications in the field of religious tourism and risk management.

Keywords: Umrah, PPIU, risk society, reflexive modernity, COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak pandemi COVID-19 terhadap Penyelenggara Perjalanan Umrah (PPIU) di Kota Bekasi, Provinsi Jawa Barat, Indonesia, dengan fokus pada strategi ketahanan dan adaptasi mereka dalam menanggapi pembatasan perjalanan yang diberlakukan oleh pemerintah Arab Saudi. Dengan menggunakan teori risk society dari Ulrich Beck, penelitian ini menganalisis efek pembatasan perjalanan Umrah dan mengeksplorasi bagaimana PPIU di Kota Bekasi menyesuaikan operasinya. Metode kualitatif, termasuk observasi, analisis dokumen, dan wawancara mendalam yang dilakukan antara September dan Oktober 2021, digunakan untuk mendalami fenomena ini. Pendekatan ini memfasilitasi pemahaman komprehensif tentang bagaimana pandemi menyebabkan penurunan operasional di kalangan PPIU dan mendorong inovasi dalam sektor tersebut. Penutupan perbatasan Arab Saudi bagi jamaah Umrah dari Indonesia berdampak signifikan pada PPIU, menyebabkan tekanan keuangan dan krisis operasional. Sementara beberapa PPIU berhasil beradaptasi melalui manajemen risiko yang efektif dan diversifikasi aktivitas bisnis, yang lain menghadapi penutupan karena kerugian keuangan. Studi ini menyoroti berkurangnya pengaruh aktor negara dalam mengendalikan perjalanan Umrah, dengan menekankan peran meningkatnya aktor non-negara dan platform digital dalam industri ini. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur tentang kerentanan pariwisata religius selama krisis global dan menekankan pentingnya strategi adaptif dalam sektor PPIU. Penelitian masa depan sebaiknya berfokus pada pengembangan praktik berkelanjutan dan inovasi untuk meningkatkan ketahanan terhadap tantangan serupa, memberikan landasan untuk aplikasi praktis dalam bidang pariwisata religius dan manajemen risiko.

Kata kunci: Umrah, PPIU, risk society, modernitas reflektif, pandemi COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of Indonesian Muslims going to Saudi Arabia to make the Umrah pilgrimage arises from the increasing number of Umrah pilgrimage agencies yearly. The mushrooming of Umrah travel agencies is mainly the result of competition to provide the best services to the Umrah pilgrims. In Indonesia, the number of *Penyelenggara Perjalanan Ibadah Umrah* (PPIU, or Umrah pilgrimage trip organizer) was 1,375 as of September 2022, as stated by the PPIU's accreditation body on the Ministry of Religion's website Siskopatuh (Kemenag.go.id, 2020). PPIU is regulated based on statute Number 8 of 2019 concerning Hajj and Umrah regulation (UU RI Nomor 8 Tahun 2019, n.d.). Globally, the increasing number of Umrah pilgrims for the last several years can be seen from Umrah visas in 2019, which record 7.5 million. This number dismisses the number of pilgrims from the country of internal Saudi Arabia. In addition, the total number of Hajj pilgrims reaches 3 million people yearly (Shahul H. Ebrahim, 2020).

In the past, the Umrah ritual was not deemed a primary ritual (Aishat and Zakariya, 2021). However, due to economic progression in Muslim society in Indonesia, the Umrah ritual has been drastically increasing in urban or rural areas (Thiyas et al., 2022). Umrah pilgrimage's height interest impacts the establishment of Umrah trip agencies or PPIU. PPIU remains influential for Umrah pilgrims because of its readiness to handle administrative and travel affairs for Umrah pilgrims during their stay in Saudi Arabia.

Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was spreading globally at the beginning of 2020, the Saudi Arabian government restricted organizing the Hajj and Umrah. As CNN Indonesia (Cnnindonesia.com, 2020)

reported, the Saudi Arabian government stopped Umrah's temporary activities in 2020 to prevent the increasing spread of the coronavirus. Besides, Saudi also prohibited its inhabitants from carrying out Umrah pilgrimage. The prohibition of Umrah for residents was enforced after Saudi confirmed the second death case due to the coronavirus (Sultanah, 2021).

The Saudi Arabian government once had allowed the Umrah pilgrimage to enter the country by harsh conditions such as age limitation, which was only 18-50 years old, having three times polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests with its first test carried out in Jakarta before departure and second test in the second day of quarantine during three days staying at the hotel, and third test also organized on time pilgrims in Saudi Arabia. Restrictions on transportation were implemented, including reducing bus capacity from 48-50 passengers to only 20-22 passengers. Other restrictions were implemented, such as quarantine for three days upon arrival at the hotel in Saudi Arabia, staying only in a 4- or 5-star hotel, only allowing a maximum of two people per room, and Umrah activities no more than three hours. For Umrah and praying activities in the mosque, congregants must register through the application Eatmarna, Tawakalna, and Zairin. At the beginning of the operation, there were about 250,000 registrants on the app Eatmarna, which was permitted only 6,000 people. Until early November 2020, registrants were recorded at more than 400,000 people (Aditya, 2020; Anggoro, 2022). Likewise, Umrah registration activities could be done collectively, whereas prayers are performed individually. As a result, the cost of the Umrah pilgrimage from Indonesia increased, ranging from IDR 32 million to IDR 35 million with a choice of 5-star grade C hotels, which means the cheapest hotel in Makkah and Medina (Aditya, 2020; Kompas.com, 2020).

Although the loosening of the Umrah pilgrimage was provided due to pandemic, PPIU still has difficulties gaining candidates for Umrah pilgrims. Before giving a little relaxation, the cancellation of Hajj and Umrah (2020-2021) was to prevent the spreading of the coronavirus from hitting the Hajj and Umrah trip business in various regions of Indonesia. Many Umrah bureaus have canceled journeys to the congregation. Sham Resfiadi from Sarikat Penyelenggara Umrah dan Haji (SAPUHI, or Society The Umrah and Hajj Organizer) predicted Umrah organizing bureau's losses reached 1 trillion per week (Hamdani, 2020).

Despite the significant impact of the pandemic on Umrah travel, there is a lack of comprehensive studies examining the specific conditions and adaptations of PPIUs during this period. This gap in research highlights the need for an in-depth analysis of how PPIUs have managed the crisis and what strategies have been employed to survive and adapt to the new normal.

This article intends to respond to PPIU's decline during the pandemic. To respond to this situation, Ulrich Beck's theory about risk society is worthy of seeing to what extent the decline of PPIU and Umrah trip, especially Beck's theory about second modernization. Beck sees that so long as a society enjoys modernization marked by the utilization of advanced technology and a globalized world

abundantly, there is the opportunity of happening risks resulting from the utilization of massive technology (Beck, Bonss, & Lau, 2003; Constantinou, 2021; Giritli Nygren & Olofsson, 2020). The implications related to the COVID-19 pandemic are that the SARS virus was discovered for the first time in Wuhan, China, and spread across the globe, resulting in the overabundant connection among the people and between people and technology. Major religious events such as Hajj and Umrah, which require encountering people from across the globe, are becoming vulnerable to be the spot of the virus infection.

Scholars of modernization theory such as Ulrich Beck and Pierre Bourdieu see that the modern world implicates self-own criticism. However, they think this is unlike postmodernists' point of view, which considers the modern world to disappear. Beck looks at modernization as the second most marked by self-criticism. According to Beck, this situation refers to reflexive modernization, a phase of modernism crumbled with various risks in society across the globe. Knowledge and technology find limitations, and humans can no longer control any consequences of advanced technology utilization. Risk society, the term that made him popular, is very clear in today's world, caused by the development of technology and globalization. Such advanced technology brings problems related to the overabundance of its utilization, even health problems and diseases like AIDS and SARS, the rise of global terrorism, electromagnetic radiation, chemical pollutants, and many other kinds of pollutants. Beck differentiates between hazard and risk. Hazard is related to disasters that humans cannot avoid, like earthquakes, but the risk is related to undesired and unintended consequences resulting from human activity, such as excessive utilization of modernization tools and overemphasizing globalization. Beck gives examples of problems with modern impacts such as urbanization, disease caused by pollution, accidents or injuries from using vehicles like cars, planes, etc., poisoned emissions, electromagnetic radiation through electricity transmission, and adverse effects of drugs. Risk society theory has become famous concomitantly with the incident of leaking the Chernobyl nuclear power in Ukraine on April 25, 1986 (Beck et al., 2003; Jarvis, 2007; Tsironis, Sylaiou, & Stergiou, 2021).

Furthermore, according to Beck, risk society brings about individualization and weakens state power and mechanisms for controlling risk. At last, Beck noticed the fragility of state autonomy and the country's institutions. The boundaries between different countries have faded; for example, the Westphalia agreement in 1648 was due to active citizens rather than a state. In turn, state domination over risk society control must be delivered to a global network that transcends state barriers (Jarvis, 2007).

Beck's concept above is criticized by other scholars, including Dirk Matten, who said that Beck's idea is more provocative and merely conceptual rather than empirical findings. Beck's concepts and ideas are more suitable for commenting on modernity's latest cultural and social conditions and the contradiction between progress and danger (Jarvis, 2007). However, Beck's contribution perhaps lies in its

disclosure of modernity paradoxes resulting from anxiety within society and the limitation of science.

This study tries to portray the PPIU conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in Bekasi City of West Java Province of Indonesia, and the implication of the COVID-19 journey restriction issued by the Saudi Arabian government. By addressing this gap, this research contributes to the literature on the resilience and adaptation strategies of travel agencies during global crises, offering new insights into the challenges and responses of PPIUs. The findings are expected to provide practical implications for managing religious travel in future pandemics or similar disruptions.

To illuminate the effect of Umrah journey restriction, Ulrich Beck's risk society theory is used extensively to analyze what happened during the break of the Umrah pilgrimage as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method designed to explore the conditions of the subject under study deeply. Specifically, the phenomenon investigated is the decline of Umrah Travel Organizers (PPIU) during the social distancing measures imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the cancellation of Umrah pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia. Several PPIU managers were interviewed, particularly those in Bekasi City, West Java, Indonesia. Bekasi City was chosen as it hosts numerous PPIUs that experienced a significant decline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data collection techniques included observation, document study, and in-depth interviews. The observation technique involved visiting several PPIU offices in Bekasi City. The authors conducted these visits and observations between September and October 2021. The selection of PPIU offices was based on discussions with the Office of Religious Affairs of Bekasi City. Document study involved collecting and analyzing documents owned by PPIUs and other relevant documents such as news articles and journal publications. In-depth interviews were conducted with several PPIU management staff who are still actively providing customer information.

This methodological approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the pandemic on PPIUs, facilitating an analysis of both the decline in operations and the subsequent innovations implemented by these agencies.

DISCUSSION

Umrah and the COVID-19 Pandemic

The existence of travel agencies for tourism in Indonesia can be tracked by its inception during colonial times. Dutch tourism started officially in 1910-1912 after

a Governor General decided to form Vereneging Toeristen Verkeer (VTV), a tourist agency at that time. At that time, this office was also used by the Dutch private airline KNILM (*Koninklijke Nederlandsch Indische Luchtfahrt Maatschappij*), which held a monopoly in the Dutch East Indies. The increase in trade between the continents of Europe, Asia, and Indonesia, in particular, increased the number of people traveling for various purposes. One of the branches of the *Lissone Lindeman* (LISLIND) travel agency based in the Netherlands was established on Jalan Majapahit No. 2 Jakarta in 1926. In 1928, LISLIND changed to NITOUR (*Nederlandsche Indische Touristen Bureau*), part of KNILM. Until then, white people mostly dominated tourism activities (Suwena & Widyatmaja, 2017).

The Umrah travel agency began to develop in the 1980s. Before the rise of the Umrah pilgrimage, which was carried out outside the Hajj season, the Umrah was combined with the Hajj pilgrimage. The split of Umrah with the Hajj pilgrimage began to spread after the government issued a particular Hajj cost policy (ONH Plus). The number of Umrah pilgrims outside the Hajj season continues to increase. In 2004, as many as 30,000 prospective Hajj pilgrims from Indonesia failed to depart because the Saudi Arabian government refused to increase the quota. In 2016, Saudi Arabia issued Umrah visas for pilgrims from Indonesia, which ranks third behind Pakistan and Egypt. The increase in the number of Umrah pilgrims aligns with the increase in the establishment of PPIU. According to statistics from the Ministry of Religion, in 2015-2016, there were 651 PPIHU (Hajj Umrah Travel Organizers) with a total of 649,000 Umrah pilgrims. This number increased from 2016 to 2017 to 830 PPIHU, which has a congregation of 699,000 people. In 2016, the number of Indonesian Umrah pilgrims increased again, reaching 700,766 pilgrims; in 2017, the number was 875,958, while in 2018-2019, the number of Umrah pilgrims reached 974,650 pilgrims (Akhmad Anwar Dani, Mudhofir, 2022; Permadi, 2020).

However, the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic suddenly stopped Umrah's trips to Saudi Arabia. At the end of 2019, media worldwide highlighted the emergence of an epidemic virus that infected Wuhan, a city of more than 11 million people in central China. Initially, the virus was known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which WHO then called coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19), only infected tens of thousands of Chinese citizens, but slowly, the virus spread to neighboring countries such as South Korea, Japan, and surrounding areas. The situation worsened in early 2020 when the virus outbreak began reaching far-flung places to almost all countries, such as Iran, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Russia, the United States, and others. Data obtained on May 17, 2020, shows there were 4.7 million cases of COVID-19 infection, with a death rate of 15 percent. The United States is the largest country infected with the coronavirus, with almost a third of the world's total cases (Worldometers.info, 2020)

Because of its rapid spreading, on January 30, 2020, WHO declared the health crisis caused by SARS-CoV-2 a critical international health crisis, although there have been many health crises in the last 20 years, caused by a series of new infections such as HIV, Influenza A virus subtype H1N1, Influenza A virus subtype

H5N1, SARS-CoV1, MERS-CoV, and Ebola, however, coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) reopens the reality of the world community's lack of preparedness in dealing with the spread of this virus. Many governments in developed countries were not initially alert enough to fend off this virus attack. Therefore, governments in various parts of the world are trying to prevent the spread of this virus through a series of policies, including non-pharmaceutical interventions such as quarantine, border closures, research, intensive medical care, and provision of protective social assistance (Catrin Sohrabi, Zaid Alsafi, Niamh O'Neill, Mehdi Khan, Ahmed Kerwan, Ahmed Al-Jabir, Christos Iosifidis, 2020; Djalante et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has also impacted tourism and religious activities that gather large crowds (Marco et al., 2023). This also has an impact on pilgrimages to Lourdes, France. A cave in Lourdes is believed to be the site of the first appearance of the Virgin Mary in 1858, which was followed by 11 apparitions between February 11 and July 16, 1858. Since then, Maria Lourdes' cave has become a sacred place frequently visited by Catholics worldwide. The restrictions due to COVID-19 prevent pilgrims from coming directly to Lourdes. Alternatively, the local authorities offered an online pilgrimage to Maria Lourdes's cave, although it was also acknowledged that the impression was unlike physically visiting it in person (S raphin & Jarraud, 2021).

The government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has the authority to manage the implementation of the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages globally, also responded to the outbreak of COVID-19 by implementing some restrictions. Approaching the time for Umrah and Hajj in 2020, the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia closed the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina, simultaneously evaluating the spread of COVID-19 in the country. In March 2020, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia began monitoring people's movements to prevent the spread of the virus by closing all mosques in Saudi Arabia. As the party responsible for the safety of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, international health and safety standards are enforced to prevent large crowds. The Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of Saudi Arabia ensures that all potential transmission of COVID-19 can be controlled to minimize transmission to pilgrims, workers, and volunteers around the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. They avoid Hajj and Umrah as the spot of transmission of the COVID-19 virus, which impacts the Islamic world (Raj & Bozonelos, 2020).

Umrah travel agencies have undoubtedly suffered from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Referring to literature, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic forced PT. Amanu Izzah Zamzam Sakinah in Surakarta to postpone the departure of 101 prospective Umrah pilgrims in 2020. PPIU, founded in 2012, has official PPIU permit No. 195 of 2017 and has been accredited A. In the pandemic era, this company implemented work-from-home and virtual meetings and gatherings to coordinate company management. This PPIU provides prospective pilgrims with an understanding of the condition of Saudi Arabia while waiting for the

information and news that is circulating and has become a hot topic of conversation in various media (Lailatussani Alfiyah dan Wibowo Isa, 2020).

Likewise, around 18 PPIUs in Bengkulu City also experienced the impact of the pandemic, including decreased income, postponed departure schedules, reduced number of employees, reduced employee salaries, and reduced company operations. Companies have no choice other than to adjust to the pandemic situation. New strategies were introduced, such as implementing free Umrah down payments and implementing Umrah savings. Even though some PPIUs did not wholly close services to the congregation at the pandemic's beginning, a rolling employee system was implemented daily. From January to December 2019, there were around 346 registrants who departed, while for registrants from January to February 2020, there were 105 congregations. There was no registration or departure from March until the end of 2020. This resulted from as many as 105 pilgrim candidates who had registered to experience postponement (Asykur, Zulkarnain, & Darlinus, 2021).

Profile of Some PPIU in Bekasi

In Bekasi City, approximately 39 PPIUs (Barat, 2018) provide services for organizing Umrah pilgrimages. They are recorded in the Ministry of Religion database, which is located on the website www.simpu.kemenag.go.id. Most of them have offices in business centers in the form of home office complexes spread across Bekasi City. Sometimes, two or three PPIU offices are found in one office complex, as seen in a shophouse complex in the Kalimalang area, Bekasi. Several PPIU offices visited by researchers during the pandemic chose to close their offices because they could not send the congregation to the Saudi Arabia. A brief of PPIU in Bekasi City is outlined as follows.

The first PPIU is PT. Nurindo Wisata Alifah Tour is a trademark of PT. Nurindo Wisata has an official permit from the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia No. U.147, which was last extended in 2020. This PPIU was established in 2003. The PPIU permit is extended every three years. The Deed of Establishment of the Company was recorded in Notarial Deed No.167 dated October 17, 2003, and the latest deed of amendment with Notarial Deed of Notary/PPAT Rosliana, SH No.4 dated March 4, 2019. Apart from being a PPIU registered with the Ministry of Religion, this travel agency is a member of the Association Indonesian Travel Company (ASITA) with Member Number 091/XIII/DPP/2005 and is a member of the Muslim Association of Hajj and Umrah Organizers of the Republic of Indonesia (Amphuri) with Member Number 348/Amphuri/2017 and has a Tourism Services Business Standard Certificate (following Regulations Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2014) from the National Accreditation Committee (KAN) with certificate Number TCSOO 167.

The second PPIU is PT. Garis Lurus. This Umrah travel company is relatively new. The location is close to the Bekasi bus terminal. This company only received

permission to process Umrah visas in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted this company and hampered the process of providing visas for Umrah pilgrims. Providing visas has not yet gone according to plan. When this research was conducted in June 2021, this office still assigned one employee to guard the office and was permitted to sell fried food in front of the office. However, when a return visit was held in October 2021, the PPIU office was closed, and the words "For Sale" were written on the office gate.

The third, PPIU Salwana Global Sarana. This PPIU was founded in 2010, and the PPIU permit was obtained in 2016. The permit to provide Hajj guidance was obtained in 2020. This company is located in the elite area of Bekasi, namely in the Harapan Indah Complex Ruko, which is not far from several large shopping centers and several 4-star hotels. It is located at Ruko Sentra Niaga Blok A/18, Green Boulevard, Kota Harapan Indah, Bekasi, RT.004/RW.030, Pejuang Village, Medan Satria District, Bekasi City. This PPIU was founded and managed by Saiful Bahri, who comes from Pandeglang, Banten. So far, more than 5 thousand pilgrims have been served, with details that each Umrah season can send more than 700 pilgrims (<https://saranaUmrah.id/>, n.d.). This Umrah travel agency has spread its wings in other cities, namely Semarang and Surabaya. This company was promoted by approaching Islamic boarding school circles and the government. This company is also active in halal product exhibitions both domestically and abroad,

The fourth, PPIU Santafi Sukses Mandiri. This PPIU was established in 2006 by Ainul Afifi. The office is at Ruko Kalimas Blok B No. 22, Jalan Chairil Anwar, Margahayu, East Bekasi, Margahayu, East Bekasi, Bekasi City. When carrying out the Umrah pilgrimage before the pandemic, Santafi usually only prepared a tour leader (TL). The tour leader officers are drawn from employees who are appointed alternately. At this PPIU, the calculation applies to one Umrah travel group with a minimum of 15 pilgrims. In the regular program, the group size can reach 50-60 pilgrims plus one tour leader. Usually, when they arrive in Saudi Arabia, the pilgrims will be combined with other pilgrims from other PPIUs to coordinate the Umrah pilgrimage. According to the PPIU records, the busy Umrah season usually begins before Ramadan and lasts until the fast.

The authors also visited several PPIU offices in Bekasi City, which were quite large. The Hajj and Umrah section of the Bekasi City Ministry of Religion Office gave this information. However, after seeing the PPIU offices recommended by the Bekasi City Ministry of Religion, the COVID-19 pandemic conditions had hit them. Before the pandemic, they were known to accommodate many congregations, and most had closed their offices because of the pandemic. Several PPIUs visited were closed. This condition was found in a PPIU office in the Galaxy Complex area and a PPIU in a shophouse in the Kalimalang area.

PPIU's Innovation During the Pandemic

According to Sri Siagawati, Head of the Hajj and Umrah Section of the Bekasi City Ministry of Religion, there were 15 thousand people registered to take part in

the Umrah trip in Bekasi City, both those who had postponed and who had just registered during the COVID-19 pandemic. This data was obtained from the Sipatuh application. Unfortunately, the data is not detailed; it is only visible numbers. The eligibility of a PPIU is checked by the Umrah registrant's population registration number (*Nomor Induk Kependudukan* or NIK). If the NIK does not appear, then the suitability of a PPIU that registers raises a big question. Several PPIUs have switched to offering products and services other than Umrah travel to overcome the lack of registrants for Umrah travel. Other businesses they run include selling food such as dates, Zam-Zam water, necessities for Hajj and Umrah travel. The Umrah travel opportunity provided from November 2020 to January 2021 did not bring much change as in the pre-pandemic era (interview with the authors, October 21, 2021).

To keep the business operating, PPIU Salwana Global Sarana has established a café since the start of the pandemic to empower some workers. One of the PPIU leaders, Nisa, explained that the café business was initially mostly done through application orders such as Go Food. There were not many consumers who dined in. Until the interview was conducted, this café was still operating. Because it has not been able to depart the Umrah pilgrimage for two years, there will automatically be no income from Umrah travel services. Therefore, this Café is a kind of alternative income. Sadly, at the start of the pandemic, people who wanted to do Umrah pilgrims but got canceled asked for their money to be returned (interview with the author, October 22, 2021).

This PPIU managed to depart once on January 14, 2021, when Saudi Arabia was given flexibility from November to January 2021. However, it faced difficulties at that time because Umrah pilgrims were required to quarantine. Generally, they were groups from rural areas who enthusiastically went to the Umrah pilgrimage. At that time, this company did not depart its congregation but joined other congregations from other PPIUs who were members of the Amphuri consortium.

Apart from business shifts within some PPIUs, employee reductions have also occurred. PPIU Salwana Global Sarana's offices in Surabaya and Semarang were finally closed, and employees were laid off. No changes to other businesses were recorded at the company office in the Harapan Indah area, Bekasi City. If congregants want to meet, an appointment is made first, then an employee from Salwana will come to the office. Based on the authors' observations at the Salwana office located in the Harapan Indah Bekasi Complex, every visitor who wanted to know about Umrah was given a business card by the cafe guard and asked to contact the number listed on the business card.

This pandemic's impact has been a big blow for PPIU PT. Garis Lurus. It can be said that there has been no activity at this company since May 2020. The office was closed, and the owner also returned to his hometown of Cirebon. Receiving letters or guests is entrusted to 1 employee who is waiting while carrying out fried food selling activities in front of the office and selling dates online. The company

no longer pays these employees. Initially, this company had seven employees laid off temporarily without pay.

Worse yet, PPIU has no business outside of special Umrah and Hajj travel services, so PPIU's turnover did not run during the pandemic. In addition, the company must return the money to pilgrims who cancel their departure, around 70 percent of the total congregation. PPIU only takes Rp. 1,500,000.00 of the total that the congregation has deposited. Reduction Rp. 1,500,000.00 is intended to replace congregation candidate equipment (bags, uniforms, ihram cloth, books, etc.) already ordered (interview with the authors, October 23, 2022).

PPIU Santafi, located in a shophouse in the Margahayu area, Bekasi, also experienced a similar thing. This office previously operated a floor office building. Now, only one floor remains, which is on the bottom floor. According to Jamal and Raihan, two employees, they gave slightly encouraging news that tens of Umrah pilgrims were waiting, and it was not yet known who had withdrawn. Before the pandemic, many people registered, but entering the pandemic period, most asked for their money back. At that time, there were around 70 Umrah pilgrims. Likewise, several prospective ONH Plus Hajj pilgrims were also detained. Those who have already registered generally ask for their funds back. The reason is that they have waited too long, and there has been no confirmation of departure (interview with the authors, October 21, 2021).

At PPIU Santafi, employee reductions also occurred. The impact of the pandemic meant that Santafi employees had their employment terminated. In fact, before the pandemic, there were 30 employees. Only one employee works directly with the family and owns the travel agency. Likewise, the branch office located in the Jababeka Bekasi industrial area was also closed. During the COVID-19 pandemic, PPIU Santafi also ran another business, frozen food, but it did not work well. The owner himself is now also active in a law firm. Before the pandemic, the owner cared for Santafi (interview with the authors, October 21, 2021).

PPIU Hanan Nusantara, which was going viral on social media because of the brave steps taken by its leadership in increasing the Hajj bailout funds, is also experiencing a business decline due to the pandemic. This PPIU, which has its office in the Bekasi Islamic Center complex, has no plans to depart the congregation during the pandemic. PPIU relies heavily on its collaboration with Haji and Umrah Savings, so all of its funds will come from the management of Haji and Umrah Savings. The Umrah Hajj Saving Cooperative operates in the field of Hajj funding. The leader is named Yulianto, a figure known to be controversial in managing PPIU because he launched the Hajj and Umrah bailout program. This cooperative office is next to Hanan Travel in the Bekasi Islamic Center complex. There were layoffs at PPIU, and salaries are still being paid gradually.

If in the pre-pandemic era, there were 18 employees, now apart from reducing employees, namely only 13 employees, salaries are also being cut. During the pandemic, work from home (WfH) and work from office (WfO) were alternated. The director himself runs a primary food shop. The director's name is Junaidi, who

replaced Yulianto. The change in leadership occurred in 2020. Junaidi was previously Yulianto's subordinate. Yulianto himself runs the Hajj and Umrah Saving cooperative.

In contrast, PPIU Nurindo was managed slightly better. During the pandemic, as of March 2020, the number of pilgrims whose departures were postponed was 217 congregations, and 20 congregations canceled their departures with the consequence of deducting 5 million rupiah from the entire deposit amount. PPIU closed its office from March 2020 to June 2020, but after that, it opened the office again. The company is running as usual. Another thing that is also quite helpful is that the husband and wife who own this PPIU also have another company engaged in procuring goods and services under the banner of PT. The wife manages Amalia Utama, and Studio 99 is managed by the husband.

This company is also trying to survive by hiring its employees. PPIU Nurindo so far has seven employees. During the pandemic, one employee resigned at his request. This company is quite popular with residents of Bekasi and surrounding areas, as evidenced by the fact that, on average, it sends Umrah groups between 4-5 times every month, while every year, it sends an average of 1,500 pilgrims.

This company is also trying to survive by hiring its employees. PPIU Nurindo so far has seven employees. In a pandemic situation, there was one employee who stated that he was quitting at his request. This company is quite popular with residents of Bekasi and surrounding areas, as evidenced by the fact that, on average, it sends Umrah groups between 4-5 times every month, while every year, it sends an average of 1,500 pilgrims.

Some of the steps to rescue the company carried out by PPIU include, firstly, utilizing retained earnings. The company profits obtained after deducting all overheating components, including salaries, are used to pay employees during the pandemic. The company has scheduled retained earnings for directors or reserve funds for unforeseen matters such as the current pandemic, and the directors and commissioners have agreed that these retained earnings funds will not be distributed for five years. If the funds have been collected for five years without problems, the funds are distributed equally to the directors and commissioners. However, the leaders agreed that the funds would be used for company operational needs due to the pandemic.

According to Wawan, one of the PPIU leaders, even though no Umrah pilgrims are departing, PPIU Alifah Nurindo employees are still responsible for tidying up the data on pilgrims who have departed and profiling thousands of pilgrims. Later, the work in creating this profile is used to make another offer to the congregation that has departed and whose profile has been tidied up. One by one, the pilgrims' documents are scanned and combined into one document. Hence, it will help the company re-offer Umrah travel services to departed pilgrims (interview with the author, November 1, 2021).

PPIU RH also carried out innovations. According to Lisa, one of the employees, her office is not closed. Innovation continues to be carried out during

this pandemic by offering virtual tours for school children. This business is charged according to the packages provided. This virtual tour reaches within the country and abroad. They rely on endorsements from customers who have participated in RH services before the pandemic when direct tourism was held at various tourist attractions. The building occupied by RH is located in a shophouse in the Kalimalang Business Center, Bekasi, and it is a self-owned property. This PPIU is under the HIMPU association, of which Rizka (owner RH) is one of the administrators (interview with the author, October 22, 2021).

Generally, PPIUs with Emergency Response Plans (ERP) are better prepared to deal with emergencies by considering their business and analyzing their business continuity scenarios. Subsequently, they also carried out mitigation due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several PPIU studies showed that some of them took risk management into account sufficiently, but others did not yet understand what the risk management prepared by the PPIU looked like. This refers to the fact that some PPIUs closed their offices rather than continuing to operate. PPIU offices, which are still open and serving prospective pilgrims in this pandemic situation, have generally succeeded in innovating by, among other things, switching to other businesses.

Risk Society and Umrah Pilgrimage Restriction

As explained above, Umrah pilgrims' travel from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia was hampered during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has locked down travel into its country. Referring to Ulrich Beck's view, the obstruction of Umrah travel via PPIU is a manifestation of the implementation of a risk society. This phenomenon is caused by an unexpected result of the utilization of advanced tools in the modern world, one of the indicators of which is individual mobility with the unrestricted use of sophisticated means of transportation to various parts of the world. Regional boundaries are no longer clear due to the massive mobility of individuals around the globe. As a result, when risks arise from interactions and encounters between individuals and nations in the corridor of globalization, the world community is exposed to the same risks.

The lockdown phenomenon in Saudi Arabia, which is the destination of the Umrah, is a clear example of Beck's thesis about risk society. Therefore, the Umrah trip may be viewed differently due to the risk society. Countries can no longer impose their policy to allow or deny Umrah travel. The state's power is fading along with the presence of companies involved in mitigating and controlling the COVID-19 outbreak. During a pandemic, companies providing vaccines, masks, multivitamins, and so on become new forces in the current era of risk society (Gerke, Katznelson, Reiss, & Shachar, 2021).

As a result, Umrah travelers must follow health protocols and first go through various controls to prevent the spread of the pandemic-19 outbreak and any other possible virus spread in the form of vaccines, quarantine, social distancing, and

other similar things. The Saudi Arabian government did not immediately prohibit Umrah pilgrims from entering their country to carry out the Umrah pilgrimage. However, the Saudi Arabian government enforced strict regulations and supervision over the entry routes for people worldwide to perform the Umrah pilgrimage through the Eatmarna and Tawakalna applications. Henceforth, the Saudi Arabian government can be helped by digital application utilization to control the movement of people entering the country and to prevent transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

It is time for the public to realize that the sight of Umrah traveling in large groups, as in the past, will be seen as weird. Large groups of people are a place for risk to hazardous conditions in the context of a risk society, namely that it contains the potential for spreading the virus. Following the risk society view, individualization is getting stronger. It is also possible that many Umrah travelers will be done individually. In response to such conditions, PPIUs need more attention to providing Umrah pilgrimage by following the health protocols, avoiding the large mass group of Umrah travelers as well as applying more the use of digital platforms to keep the health of Umrah travelers and mitigate any possible band impacts of Umrah pilgrimage. It is recommended that PPIUs consider diversifying their business unit and no longer focus on the Umrah journey business.

Analysis of Findings Based on Ulrich Beck's Risk Society Theory

The research addressed how Umrah Travel Organizers (PPIU) in Bekasi City coped with the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and their adaptation strategies. Findings indicated a significant decline in the operations of many PPIUs, with some forced to close their offices due to the inability to send pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. However, some PPIUs survived by implementing effective risk management and business innovation strategies.

These findings were obtained through a descriptive qualitative research method. Data collection involved direct observations at PPIU offices, in-depth interviews with PPIU management, and document studies. Observations were conducted across various PPIU locations in Bekasi, while in-depth interviews provided insights into the strategies and challenges faced by active PPIU staff. Document studies included analyzing internal PPIU documents and external sources such as media reports and journal articles.

The findings suggest that the pandemic forced PPIUs to reassess and adjust their operational processes critically. Some PPIUs adopted alternative business strategies, such as opening cafes, selling food items, and offering virtual tours, highlighting their adaptability and resilience. These adaptations demonstrate that PPIUs with well-prepared Emergency Response Plans (ERP) and innovative business approaches were better equipped to navigate the crisis than those without clear risk management strategies.

This research reinforces Ulrich Beck's risk society theory, which posits that modern technology and globalization bring about new risks that the state cannot fully control (Beck, 1992; Beck, Bonss, & Lau, 2003). The study aligns with previous research indicating that global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, expose weaknesses in existing systems and necessitate the involvement of non-state actors in risk management (Catrin Sohrabi et al., 2020; Djalante et al., 2020). The findings also contribute to the literature by emphasizing the importance of business resilience and adaptability in the face of global disruptions.

Furthermore, the obstruction of Umrah travel due to the lockdown in Saudi Arabia exemplifies Beck's concept of the risk society. This phenomenon is an unexpected result of advanced tools in the modern world, particularly the extensive individual mobility enabled by sophisticated transportation. As global boundaries blur and individual mobility increases, the world becomes more exposed to shared risks. The lockdown in Saudi Arabia illustrates how a global crisis can challenge the traditional power of states and highlight the increasing role of companies in managing such crises (Gerke, Katznelson, Reiss, & Shachar, 2021).

The implications for Umrah travel are profound. Health protocols, quarantine measures, and digital applications such as Eatmarna and Tawakalna have become essential in controlling the spread of COVID-19 and future pandemics. This shift suggests that significant group pilgrimages may become less common, and individualization in Umrah travel could become more prevalent. PPIUs must adapt by ensuring compliance with health protocols, reducing large-group travel, and leveraging digital platforms to safeguard travelers' health and mitigate potential risks.

Moreover, PPIUs should consider diversifying their business units rather than focusing solely on Umrah journeys. This diversification could include offering related products and services that cater to the needs of their clientele during times of travel restrictions.

The study explicitly addresses the research questions by demonstrating the varied preparedness and risk management strategies among PPIUs in Bekasi. The interpretation of findings leverages Ulrich Beck's risk society theory and aligns with prior research published in reputable journals. This discussion provides a robust answer to the identified research gap, offering valuable insights into the adaptive strategies of travel agencies during a global crisis.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted Saudi Arabia to close its borders to Hajj and Umrah flights worldwide, including from Indonesia, caused significant disruptions for PPIUs in facilitating Umrah pilgrimages. This situation precipitated a crisis for many PPIUs, particularly those in Bekasi City, leading some to cease operations due to financial hardships. Amidst these challenges, certain PPIUs adapted through effective risk management and innovative measures, while others

diversified their business activities to sustain operations during the pandemic's uncertainty regarding Saudi Arabia's travel policies. The pandemic impacted Umrah organizers and disrupted the entire pilgrimage process. Applying Ulrich Beck's risk society theory reveals that Umrah, influenced by societal self-criticism, now transcends state control. The diminishing state influence highlights the increasing role of non-state actors, such as pharmaceutical and digital industries, in shaping Umrah travel dynamics. The extensive Umrah journey will undergo further societal scrutiny and adaptation. This study underscores the vulnerability of religious travel during global crises and advocates for adaptive strategies within the PPIU sector. Future research should prioritize sustainable practices and innovative approaches to enhance resilience against similar challenges. These findings enrich the religious tourism and risk management literature, offering practical insights for future research and application.

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