



Religious Education via Social Media to Improve Literacy and Interest Among Umrah Pilgrims in Palembang

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Abstract: The development of social media has transformed the patterns of information dissemination and religious learning in society, including in Umrah education. This study aims to analyze the utilization of social media as a medium for religious education in enhancing the literacy and interest of prospective Umrah pilgrims in Palembang City. The study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method across three Umrah travel agencies: PT Payung Madinah, PT Fatih Muliya Bersama, and PT Baitussalam Sako Mandiri. The research was conducted in Palembang City, with data collection taking place from January to April 2026. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling and included 12 participants comprising umrah travel agency managers, social media administrators, as well as prospective and current umrah pilgrims who actively obtain information through social media. Data was obtained through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion-drawing techniques. The results of the study indicate that social media serves not only as a promotional medium but also as a tool for religious education through the dissemination of information regarding the procedures for performing the Umrah pilgrimage, manasik (ritual practices), religious tourism, pilgrim testimonials, and relevant Islamic content. The use of digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube can improve access to information, strengthen prospective pilgrims' Umrah literacy, and build public trust and interest in performing the Umrah pilgrimage. However, the effectiveness of social media utilization is still influenced by the quality of educational content, the consistency of digital platform management, and the digital literacy skills of travel agency managers. The contribution of this research lies in the development of a social media-based religious education perspective as a form of non-formal religious learning that can improve the public's literacy and interest in the Umrah pilgrimage, while also expanding the study of digital technology utilization in religious education in the era of digital transformation.

Keywords: Digital Platforms; Religious Education; Social Media; Umrah Literacy; Umrah Pilgrims.

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Introduction

Digital transformation has brought significant changes to various aspects of society, including in the field of religious education (Rachmadio et al., 2024; Fajar et al., 2024). Advances in information and communication technology have enabled the dissemination of knowledge to extend beyond formal learning spaces, now occurring through various digital platforms easily accessible to the public (Nasution et al., 2025

; Darwis, et al, 2026). Social media has become a primary tool in supporting learning processes and information dissemination due to its ability to reach users widely, quickly, and interactively (Fajar et al., 2023). The presence of platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, , and WhatsApp has created new spaces for the public to obtain information, share experiences, and build religious understanding independently (Al-Qaysi et al., 2023; Kurian et al., 2024). In the context of Islamic education, social media not only functions as a means of communication but has also evolved into an educational medium that supports the process of religious learning within society (Manca et al., 2021).

This phenomenon is also evident in the organization of Umrah pilgrimages in Indonesia. As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has seen a steadily increasing number of Umrah pilgrims each year (Fahrudin et al., 2024). The growing public interest in performing the Umrah pilgrimage is driven by various factors, such as rising household incomes, easier access to international transportation, and the expansion of Umrah travel agency services (Muhammad et al., 2024)). On the other hand, the high number of Umrah travel agencies has led to increasingly fierce competition in providing services and information to prospective pilgrims (Ahmadi & Sudahri, 2025; Anugrah et al., 2026). This situation has prompted travel agencies to utilize social media as an effective means of communication and education to help the public understand the procedures for the Umrah pilgrimage, the rituals (manasik), religious tourism, and travel information related to the performance of these religious duties.

Several studies indicate that social media plays a significant role in enhancing the quality of learning and public literacy. The study (Barzilai et al., 2020) explains that social media has become an integral part of integrated communication strategies because it enhances interaction, engagement, and the effectiveness of information delivery to the audience. Meanwhile, the study (Polizzi, 2020) demonstrates that social media serves as an effective educational medium in enhancing users' knowledge and awareness regarding various social issues. Another study conducted by (McGrew, 2020) found that social media provides a more flexible and interactive learning space, thereby encouraging active user participation in acquiring information. These findings demonstrate that social media holds significant potential as a digital learning tool capable of reaching a broad audience.

In a religious context, the use of social media as an educational medium has also seen rapid development. Various religious institutions, da'wah organizations, and providers of worship services have begun utilizing digital platforms to deliver educational materials to the public. The study (Mawardi et al., 2024) indicates that social media has become a new space for disseminating religious values through a digital approach that integrates educational and communicative aspects simultaneously. The study (Wibisono et al., 2026) also found that integrated communication via digital media can enhance the public's understanding of the religious services offered. Furthermore, the study (Bahrudin, 2025) confirms that social media enables more intense social interaction, making the knowledge transfer process more effective compared to conventional communication media.

Nevertheless, most previous studies have primarily focused on digital marketing, marketing communication, and consumer behavior in selecting umrah

travel agencies. For instance, the study (Rakhmadi et al., 2025) emphasizes the influence of social media on consumer behavior in choosing an umrah agency during the pandemic. The study (Muhammad et al., 2024) places greater emphasis on Hajj and Umrah travel marketing strategies to increase the number of pilgrims through both digital and conventional approaches. Meanwhile, the study (Khan & AlGhamdi, 2024) focuses on optimizing digital marketing to increase the number of travel agency customers. These studies make significant contributions to the development of digital marketing strategies; however, relatively few have examined social media from the perspective of *religious education*, particularly in enhancing the public's Umrah literacy.

Given this situation, there is a *research gap* that warrants further attention. Previous studies generally view social media as a marketing and promotional tool for Umrah travel services. On the other hand, advancements in digital technology indicate that social media functions not only as a promotional tool but also as an educational medium capable of enhancing the public's knowledge, literacy, and understanding of the Umrah pilgrimage. Consequently, there remains a lack of studies explaining how social media is utilized as a medium for *religious education* to build Umrah literacy while simultaneously increasing public interest in performing the Umrah pilgrimage.

In addition to this research gap, there is also a *practical gap* observed in the field. Before the advent of digital technology, the umrah education process was generally conducted through face-to-face activities such as manasik (ritual *practice*), religious lectures, and counseling sessions held in person. Currently, the development of social media allows prospective pilgrims to independently access various information about the Umrah through digital platforms. However, this ease of access to information is not always accompanied by an improvement in the quality of religious literacy, as there is still information that is inaccurate, unverified, or more promotion-oriented than educational. Therefore, a study is needed to explain the role of social media as a tool for religious education that can enhance the quality of the public's Umrah literacy. Given the continuously increasing number of Indonesian Umrah pilgrims year after year and the increasingly widespread use of social media as a source of religious information, a study on the role of social media in religious education is crucial. This research is necessary to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of social media as a tool for religious education that can improve the public's Umrah literacy while also serving as a foundation for developing digital education strategies for Umrah travel agencies and policymakers in the religious sector.

This study employs a *Religious Education* perspective to understand how social media contributes to the public's religious learning process. The concept of *religious education* is not limited to formal learning processes within educational institutions but also encompasses various non-formal and informal learning activities aimed at enhancing individuals' religious knowledge, understanding, and awareness. In this context, social media is viewed as a digital learning space that enables the public to obtain information, engage in discussions, and build an understanding of the Umrah pilgrimage through various forms of educational content.

The city of Palembang was chosen as the research location because it is one of the cities with a Muslim majority population that exhibits a high level of enthusiasm for performing the Umrah pilgrimage. In addition, the growth of Umrah travel agencies in Palembang indicates an increasing use of social media as a means of

conveying information to prospective pilgrims. These conditions make Palembang a relevant context for examining the implementation of *religious education* through social media in enhancing the literacy and interest of Umrah pilgrims.

Based on the above, this study aims to analyze the use of social media as a tool for *religious education* in enhancing the literacy and interest of prospective Umrah pilgrims in Palembang. This study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution in the form of advancing research on *digital religious education* within the context of non-formal religious education, as well as offering practical insights for Umrah travel agencies in developing more effective social media-based educational strategies. The novelty of this study lies in the shift in perspective from a marketing communication and digital marketing approach toward a *religious education* approach, positioning social media as a religious learning instrument that plays a role in improving Umrah literacy and fostering public interest in performing the Umrah pilgrimage in the digital era.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method to analyze the utilization of social media as a tool for *religious education* in enhancing the literacy and interest of prospective Umrah pilgrims (Sugiyono, 2017). This approach was chosen because it provides a deep understanding of the phenomenon of using digital platforms as a medium for religious education among Umrah travel agencies. This study was conducted from January to April 2026 at three Umrah travel agencies in Palembang City: PT Payung Madinah, PT Fatih Muliya Bersama, and PT Baitussalam Sako Mandiri. Research informants were selected using *purposive sampling*, comprising company executives, social media managers, as well as prospective and current Umrah pilgrims who had previously obtained information via social media. A total of 12 informants participated in this study, comprising 3 Umrah travel agency executives, 3 social media managers, and 6 prospective and current Umrah pilgrims who actively access information via social media. The selection criteria for informants were based on their experience, knowledge, and roles in the social media-based Umrah education process, with the expectation that they would provide relevant and in-depth information aligned with the research focus. The research data consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with informants, while secondary data was obtained from company documents, social media content, and various literature relevant to the study (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection techniques were conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation (M. Djunaidi Ghony dan Fauzan Almansur, 2019). Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain information regarding the forms of social media utilization as a medium for Umrah education. The interviews focused on several key indicators, namely: (1) the types of social media platforms used by Umrah travel agencies; (2) the forms and characteristics of the educational content presented; (3) the frequency and strategies for managing social media; (4) the patterns of interaction between social media managers and prospective pilgrims; (5) prospective pilgrims' perceptions of the benefits of social media in enhancing understanding of the Umrah pilgrimage; and (6) the influence of social media content on public interest in

performing the Umrah pilgrimage. The interview guide was developed based on the research objectives, a theoretical review of social media based religious education, and the established research indicators. Before being used in data collection, the interview guide was first reviewed by two experts with expertise in Islamic education and qualitative research methodology to obtain feedback regarding the clarity, relevance, and depth of the questions. The interview guidelines were then used flexibly during the semi-structured interview process, allowing the researcher to develop follow-up (probing) questions based on the informants' responses to obtain more in-depth and comprehensive data regarding their experiences and views on umrah education via social media. Observations were conducted on the social media activities of travel agencies, such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube, to identify educational content and emerging interaction patterns. Documentation was used to supplement the data through the collection of archives, promotional materials, activity documentation, and digital content related to Umrah education.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions (Miles, 2014). Data obtained from various sources was first selected and grouped based on the research themes, then presented in narrative form to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were then drawn through a continuous verification process to ensure the consistency of the research findings. To enhance the validity and credibility of the data, this study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation obtained from various informants and data sources. Through this procedure, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the role of social media as a tool for *religious education* in enhancing literacy and interest among prospective Umrah pilgrims in Palembang City.

Results and Discussion

Results

1. The Use of Social Media as a Tool for *Religious Education* for Prospective Umrah Pilgrims

The development of digital technology has transformed the delivery of religious information from a model previously dominated by face to face meetings to digital media based learning. In the context of organizing the Umrah pilgrimage, social media is not only used as a tool for promoting travel services but also functions as a medium for religious education (*religious education*) that helps prospective pilgrims gain an understanding of the procedures for performing the Umrah pilgrimage, pre departure preparations, and the spiritual values associated with it. Research results indicate that the three travel agencies studied PT Payung Madinah, PT Fatih Muliya Bersama, and PT Baitussalam Sako Mandiri have utilized social media with varying levels of intensity to convey information to the public.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, the most widely used social media platforms include Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok. These platforms are utilized to share various information regarding Umrah packages, documentation of pilgrims' departures, testimonials, information on Umrah rituals, as well as Islamic content relevant to the performance of the Umrah pilgrimage. The use

of these social media platforms indicates a transformation in the function of digital media from merely a marketing tool to a non formal religious education medium that can be accessed by the public anytime and anywhere.

Table 1. Utilization of Social Media as a Tool for Umrah Education

Umrah Travel		Digital Platform	Forms of Educational Content	Characteristics of Utilization
PT Payung Madinah		Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Website	Umrah videos, pilgrim testimonials, brochures, worship information	Active and integrated with digital strategy
PT Muliya Bersama	Fatih	Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp	Departure videos, pilgrim documentation, Islamic content, package information	A combination of education and digital promotion
PT Baitussalam Sako Mandiri		WhatsApp and limited social media	Information through a network of religious teachers and long-standing congregants	More dominant use of traditional approaches

Source: Results of researcher observations and interviews, 2026.

PT Payung Madinah is the travel agency that most actively utilizes digital media. Based on interviews with company executives, social media is used as a means to reach various segments of society, particularly the younger generation who are more active on digital platforms. In addition to using social media, the company also utilizes its official website to provide more comprehensive information regarding umrah services and religious activities. An informant explained:

"We use various media, both offline and online. For offline channels, we utilize brochures, banners, religious study sessions, and Umrah seminars. As for online channels, we are active on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, and use our official website to provide comprehensive information to prospective pilgrims."

These findings indicate that social media is positioned as the primary tool for conveying information and education to prospective pilgrims. PT Payung Madinah not only shares information about travel packages but also instills spiritual values in every piece of content published. This is evident in the company's efforts to highlight religious aspects, comfort, and trust in the messages conveyed to the public.

Additionally, interview results with the marketing team indicate that videos and pilgrim testimonials are the most effective forms of content for capturing public attention. Video content is considered capable of providing a visual representation of the umrah pilgrimage experience, while testimonials offer real-life experiences that can enhance prospective pilgrims' trust in the travel agency. These findings indicate that

the process of religious learning through social media occurs not only through the direct delivery of content but also through social experiences shared by other pilgrims.

At PT Fatih Muliya Bersama, social media also serves as a key tool in educating prospective pilgrims. Based on the interviews, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp are used to share information about travel packages, documentation of pilgrims' activities, and various Islamic content related to the Umrah pilgrimage. One informant explained:

"Nowadays, most promotions are done through social media like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp because they reach the public faster. If there's a departure schedule or a new promotion, we usually upload it right away."

Furthermore, the informant also explained that video content showing pilgrims' departures and activities while in the Holy Land is the type of content that attracts the most public attention.

"Video content of pilgrims' departures and activities in the Holy Land usually attracts the most public attention on social media."

From a *religious education* perspective, these documentary videos serve not only as promotional tools but also as visual learning media that help prospective pilgrims understand the umrah worship process more concretely. Through these videos, prospective pilgrims gain an understanding of the procedures for performing the rituals, conditions in the Holy Land, and various preparations needed before departure.

Meanwhile, PT Baitussalam Sako Mandiri demonstrates a different pattern of social media utilization. Based on interview results, the company still relies more on traditional approaches through networks of religious teachers, study circles, and recommendations from pilgrims who have already departed. The use of social media has not been optimized due to limited resources in managing digital content. An informant stated:

"Our social media is underdeveloped; in this day and age, social media should be highly influential. Since social media is both easy and difficult to manage, we focus more on advertising through the clerics who manage Baitussalam."

These findings indicate varying levels of digital technology adoption among the Umrah travel agencies studied. Nevertheless, all agencies continue to utilize communication channels that facilitate educational interaction with prospective pilgrims, whether through social media or interpersonal communication.

Table 2. Level of Social Media Utilization

Level of Social Media Utilization	Umrah Travel Agencies
High	PT Payung Madinah
Moderate	PT Fatih Muliya Bersama
Low	PT Baitussalam Sako Mandiri

Source: Synthesis of the researcher's observations and interviews, 2026.

Overall, the research findings indicate that social media has become an effective tool for *religious education* in supporting the dissemination of knowledge regarding the umrah pilgrimage. Digital platforms allow prospective pilgrims to access religious information in a more flexible, interactive, and easily accessible manner compared to conventional methods. Additionally, the use of videos, testimonials, Islamic content, and communication via WhatsApp creates a non-formal learning process that helps prospective pilgrims understand the aspects of the umrah pilgrimage before departure. These findings confirm that social media no longer functions solely as a marketing tool but has evolved into a space for religious learning that contributes to enhancing the umrah literacy of the public in the digital age.

2. Social media contributes to the development and strengthening of prospective pilgrims' Umrah literacy

Umrah literacy refers to prospective pilgrims' ability to understand various aspects related to performing the umrah pilgrimage, ranging from administrative preparations, worship procedures, understanding the pillars and obligatory acts of umrah, to information regarding conditions in the Holy Land. In the digital age, improved literacy is not only gained through manasik (pre-pilgrimage training) and in-person religious study sessions but also through various social media platforms that provide quick and continuous access to information. Research findings indicate that the use of social media by Umrah travel agencies contributes to enhancing prospective pilgrims' literacy by providing information that is easily accessible, interactive, and tailored to the community's needs.

Based on interview results, one of the main reasons for using social media is its ability to reach a wide audience at a relatively low cost compared to conventional media. Through social media, prospective pilgrims can obtain various information regarding the performance of Umrah without having to visit the travel agency's office in person. An informant from PT Payung Madinah explained that social media allows the public to understand the services and Umrah worship procedures before conducting further consultations with the travel agency. The information provided is not limited to travel package promotions but also includes education on worship preparations, departure procedures, and various other matters prospective pilgrims need to know. Research findings indicate that the forms of Umrah literacy acquired by prospective pilgrims through social media can be categorized into several main groups, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Forms of Umrah Literacy Acquired Through Social Media

Literacy Aspects	Forms of Information Obtained
Worship Literacy	Umrah procedures, pillars and obligations of Umrah, Umrah prayers
Administrative Literacy	Registration requirements, passport, visa, travel documents
Health Literacy	Physical preparation, vaccinations, health supplies

Travel Literacy	Departure schedules, accommodations, transportation, itineraries
Spiritual Literacy	Motivation for worship, religious values, congregational experiences

Source: Research data analysis results, 2026.

The data above indicates that social media serves as a learning resource that focuses not only on the technical aspects of the journey but also encompasses spiritual and religious dimensions. Through regularly shared content, prospective pilgrims gain a more comprehensive understanding of the performance of the Umrah pilgrimage.

Interview results with PT Fatih Muliya Bersama indicate that the content most sought after by the public includes videos of pilgrims' departures, documentation of worship practices in the Holy Land, and educational content regarding the procedures for Umrah. According to the informant, prospective pilgrims find it easier to understand information presented in visual formats rather than lengthy texts.

"Videos of pilgrims' departures and their activities in the Holy Land typically attract the most attention from the public on social media."

This finding indicates that social media has an advantage in presenting information visually, thereby facilitating the learning process. From a digital education perspective, the use of visual-based media can enhance user understanding because information is received through a combination of text, images, audio, and video simultaneously. Thus, social media serves as an effective tool in supporting the improvement of prospective pilgrims' Umrah literacy.

In addition to improving access to information, social media also enables direct interaction between prospective pilgrims and travel organizers. Through comment features, private messages, and WhatsApp groups, prospective pilgrims can ask questions regarding the performance of the pilgrimage or the travel services provided. This interaction creates a two-way learning process that allows prospective pilgrims to receive answers quickly and tailored to their needs. Observations indicate that WhatsApp groups are the most frequently used platform for consultations and discussions regarding various aspects of the Umrah pilgrimage.

Table 4. The Role of Social Media in Improving Umrah Literacy

The Role of Social Media	Impact on Prospective Pilgrims
Information Provider	Increases knowledge about Umrah
Communication medium	Facilitating consultation and discussion
Educational visual media	Clarifying understanding of worship procedures
A platform for sharing experiences	Expanding knowledge through congregants' testimonials
Self-learning resources	Enabling access to information anytime

Source: Results of research data analysis, 2026.

Research findings also indicate that pilgrim testimonials play a significant role in the process of improving literacy. The experiences shared by pilgrims who have completed the umrah provide more contextual and easily understandable information for prospective pilgrims. In addition to providing an overview of conditions on the ground, testimonials also help prospective pilgrims understand the various challenges and preparations that need to be made before departure. Therefore, testimonials serve not only as a promotional tool but also as a source of *experiential learning*.

Nevertheless, the study found that the effectiveness of social media in improving Umrah literacy is influenced by each travel agency's ability to manage digital content. PT Payung Madinah and PT Fatih Muliya Bersama demonstrated a higher level of social media utilization compared to PT Baitussalam Sako Mandiri. Limitations in human resources and digital competencies are among the factors affecting the optimization of social media as an educational tool. This is evident from the statement by an informant from PT Baitussalam Sako Mandiri, who acknowledged that social media management is still not fully optimized and that the company relies more on networks of religious scholars and pilgrims' recommendations.

Overall, the research findings indicate that social media plays a strategic role in enhancing prospective pilgrims' umrah literacy. Through the provision of easily accessible information, engaging visual content, two-way interaction, and the sharing of pilgrims' experiences, social media supports the process of non-formal religious learning. These findings reinforce the concept of *digital religious education*, which positions digital technology as a means to expand access to religious education and improve the public's understanding of the performance of the Umrah pilgrimage. Furthermore, the increased literacy gained through social media contributes to fostering public interest in performing the Umrah pilgrimage, which will be discussed in the following subsection.

3. The Contribution of Religious Education via Social Media to Pilgrims' Interest in Umrah

Research results indicate that the use of social media as a medium for *religious education* not only contributes to increased Umrah literacy but also influences the growth of public interest in performing the Umrah pilgrimage. In this context, interest is not merely understood as a desire to use the services of a specific travel agency but also as a motivation to learn about, understand, and ultimately perform the Umrah pilgrimage. The research findings indicate that the increased literacy gained through social media serves as one of the factors reinforcing the confidence and readiness of prospective pilgrims in making the decision to travel to the Holy Land.

Based on interviews with travel agencies, social media plays a crucial role in raising public awareness about the importance of the Umrah pilgrimage and providing a more comprehensive understanding of its implementation process. Before actively utilizing social media, most prospective pilgrims obtained information through recommendations from family, friends, or direct religious activities. However, the development of digital technology has transformed the public's information-seeking patterns. Currently, many prospective pilgrims first seek information through social media before consulting with or registering at an Umrah travel agency. This

finding indicates that social media has become the primary information source influencing prospective pilgrims' decision-making process.

One factor driving the emergence of pilgrims' interest is the availability of comprehensive and easily accessible information. Research results show that educational content shared via social media can reduce prospective pilgrims' uncertainty and doubts regarding the performance of the Umrah pilgrimage. Information regarding worship procedures, travel facilities, departure schedules, and the experiences of previous pilgrims helps the public gain a clearer picture of the Umrah process. With this increased understanding, prospective pilgrims become more confident in preparing themselves to depart for the Holy Land.

Table 5. Factors Influencing Pilgrims' Interest via Social Media

Factor	Contribution to Pilgrims' Interest
Educational content	Increases understanding and readiness for worship
Congregant testimonials	Building trust and confidence
Documentation of Umrah Activities	Providing a realistic picture of the pilgrimage
Interaction via social media	Facilitating consultations and information access
Religious content	Strengthening the spiritual motivation of prospective pilgrims

Source: Results of research data analysis, 2026.

Research findings indicate that pilgrims' testimonials are one of the most effective forms of content for influencing public interest. Testimonials provide real-life experiences that prospective pilgrims can use as a reference before making a decision. Travel documentation, videos of religious activities, and pilgrims' personal accounts are considered more convincing than formal promotional information. From an educational perspective, testimonials can be understood as a form of *experiential learning* that allows individuals to gain knowledge through the experiences of others.

In addition to testimonials, visual content such as videos and documentation of pilgrims' activities also has a significant influence on shaping interest. Observation results show that videos of departures, the performance of worship at the Masjid al-Haram and Masjid al-Nabawi, as well as documentation of manasik activities receive high attention from social media users. Such visual content not only provides information but also evokes emotional experiences capable of inspiring the public's desire to perform the Umrah pilgrimage. Thus, social media functions not only as an information medium but also as a medium that fosters emotional connection between prospective pilgrims and the spiritual experiences depicted.

Table 6. Relationship Between Literacy and Pilgrims' Interest

Stage	Resulting Impact
Exposure to educational content	Increases knowledge about Umrah
Improved Umrah literacy	Reducing doubts and uncertainty
Increased understanding of worship	Strengthening readiness and self-confidence
Fostering spiritual motivation	Increasing the desire to worship
Interest in performing Umrah	Encouraging the decision to depart

Source: Synthesis of research results, 2026.

Based on Table 6, it can be understood that the increase in pilgrims' interest is not an instant result, but rather a gradual process initiated by exposure to educational information via social media. When prospective pilgrims acquire sufficient knowledge regarding the performance of Umrah, the level of uncertainty decreases and self-confidence increases. This situation then strengthens spiritual motivation, which ultimately fosters an interest in performing the Umrah pilgrimage.

The research findings also indicate that social media facilitates more intensive interaction between travel agencies and prospective pilgrims. Through comment features, private messages, and WhatsApp groups, prospective pilgrims can obtain answers to various questions they have. This interaction contributes to building *trust* in the Umrah travel organizers. In many cases, trust is a key factor influencing people's decision to choose a travel agency and determining their readiness to perform the Umrah pilgrimage.

However, the study found that the effectiveness of social media in increasing pilgrims' interest is heavily influenced by the quality of the content shared. Content that is educational, informative, and relevant to pilgrims' needs tends to have a greater impact compared to content that is purely promotional. Therefore, the success of utilizing social media as a tool *for religious education* is not only determined by the intensity of digital platform usage but also by the travel agency's ability to produce content that provides educational value to the public.

The research results indicate that social media makes a significant contribution to increasing the interest of Umrah pilgrims through mechanisms that enhance literacy and strengthen spiritual motivation. The use of social media as a tool *for religious education* enables prospective pilgrims to gain a better understanding of the Umrah pilgrimage, build trust in travel organizers, and strengthen their desire to perform the pilgrimage to the Holy Land. These findings confirm that social media functions not only as a medium for communication and promotion but also as an instrument of religious education capable of influencing public behavior and decisions regarding the Umrah pilgrimage in the digital age.

Discussion

The research results indicate that social media has undergone a functional transformation from merely a marketing communication medium into a tool *for religious education* that plays a role in enhancing the literacy and interest of Umrah pilgrims. These findings demonstrate that the use of digital platforms by Umrah travel agencies is not only focused on conveying service information and promoting travel

packages but also serves as a medium for religious learning capable of providing knowledge, understanding, and learning experiences to prospective pilgrims. In this context, social media functions as a non-formal learning space that allows the public to access religious information in a flexible, interactive, and sustainable manner.

Research findings indicate that PT Payung Madinah and PT Fatih Muliya Bersama have utilized various digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok to disseminate educational content regarding the Umrah pilgrimage. Meanwhile, PT Baitussalam Sako Mandiri still relies more heavily on interpersonal communication through networks of religious scholars and study circles, although it has begun to utilize social media on a more limited scale. These differences in the level of social media utilization indicate variations in the adoption of digital technology among umrah travel organizers. However, all the travel agencies studied demonstrated an awareness that social media is an important tool in building communication and education for the public (Wu & Chen, 2020).

This finding aligns with the theory of *Digital Religious Education*, which explains that digital technology has created new spaces for religious learning processes outside formal educational institutions (Tagg & Seargeant, 2021). According to this theory, religious education is no longer limited to face-to-face activities in schools, mosques, or religious study circles but also takes place through various digital platforms that enable the widespread and rapid dissemination of knowledge. Social media allows individuals to access religious materials at any time according to their needs and individual learning styles. In this study, content ranging from manasik videos, umrah procedures, travel documentation, to Islamic studies serves as a concrete example of the implementation of digital-based religious education.

The research findings also indicate that social media makes a significant contribution to enhancing the Umrah literacy of prospective pilgrims. This literacy encompasses not only an understanding of the rituals of worship but also administrative, health, travel, and spiritual aspects related to performing the Umrah. Through social media, prospective pilgrims gain access to information that was previously only available through manasik sessions or direct consultations with travel agencies. This ease of access allows the public to better prepare themselves before performing the Umrah pilgrimage.

This finding reinforces previous research findings stating that social media has the ability to improve public literacy through the rapid, easily accessible, and interactive dissemination of information. The study (Yang et al., 2021) found that social media can enhance users' knowledge through the continuous delivery of information tailored to the audience's needs. Similar findings were also presented in (Olszewski & Crompton, 2020), which explains that social media has evolved into a digital learning environment that facilitates self-directed learning. In the context of this study, prospective pilgrims are no longer passive recipients of information but actively seek out, read, watch, and discuss various information related to the Umrah pilgrimage.

One of the key findings of this study is the role of visual content in enhancing pilgrims' understanding. Videos of the departure, documentation of religious rituals in the Holy Land, and pilgrims' testimonials proved to be the content that most captured the public's attention. This indicates that the learning process via social media occurs not only through text but also through visual representations that are

easier to understand. This finding can be explained through the *Multimedia Learning* theory proposed by (Wahid, 2024) and (Unstad & Fjørtoft, 2021), which states that learning is more effective when information is conveyed through a combination of text, images, audio, and video rather than using only one type of media. In the context of Umrah, visualizing religious activities provides a more concrete learning experience, thereby helping prospective pilgrims understand the situations they will face in the Holy Land.

In addition to improving literacy, this study found that social media contributes to fostering pilgrims' interest in performing the Umrah. This interest develops through a gradual process, beginning with exposure to information, increased knowledge, growing understanding, the emergence of spiritual motivation, and culminating in the desire to perform the Umrah pilgrimage. In other words, social media does not directly create interest but serves as a medium that facilitates the learning process and the development of religious awareness, which ultimately fosters that interest.

This finding aligns with the *Hierarchy of Effects* theory, which explains that behavioral change begins with the cognitive stage (knowledge), then develops into the affective stage (attitudes and interest), and finally results in action (Weilbacher, 2021). In this study, social media plays a role in the early stages by providing information and education that enhances prospective pilgrims' knowledge. This knowledge then develops into interest and spiritual motivation, which ultimately drives the desire to perform the Umrah pilgrimage. Thus, the increase in pilgrims' interest is a logical consequence of the increased literacy and understanding gained through social media.

Another interesting aspect of this study is the importance of pilgrims' testimonials as a source of *experiential learning*. The results indicate that prospective pilgrims are more likely to trust information derived from the real-life experiences of pilgrims who have already performed the Umrah than formal promotional messages. Testimonials provide a more authentic picture of on-the-ground conditions, the challenges faced, and the spiritual benefits gained after performing the Umrah. This finding supports *Experiential Learning Theory*, which states that experience is a crucial source in the process of knowledge formation and behavioral change (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

From an educational perspective, the findings of this study indicate that social media has expanded the meaning of religious education from one previously centered on formal institutions toward flexible learning that takes place through digital spaces. The concept of *religious education* in this study is no longer understood merely as the transfer of religious knowledge within formal educational settings but also encompasses learning activities conducted through social media (Grimmitt, 1987); (Boiliu et al., 2025). Thus, social media functions as a non-formal learning tool that supports the enhancement of religious literacy among the public.

The research results also show that the success of utilizing social media as a means of *religious education* is greatly influenced by the quality of the content presented. Content that is educational, informative, and relevant to the needs of the congregation has proven to be more effective in enhancing public understanding and interest compared to content that focuses solely on promotion. Therefore, social media management strategies at umrah travel agencies should be directed toward

developing content with high educational value so that it can provide greater benefits to prospective pilgrims.

Based on the analysis of research findings, relevant theories, and previous research results, it can be concluded that social media serves as a *digital instrument for religious education* that bridges the process of enhancing literacy and fostering interest among Umrah pilgrims. This process occurs through the provision of educational content, visual learning, digital interaction, and testimonial-based learning experiences, which ultimately result in increased understanding and spiritual motivation among prospective pilgrims.

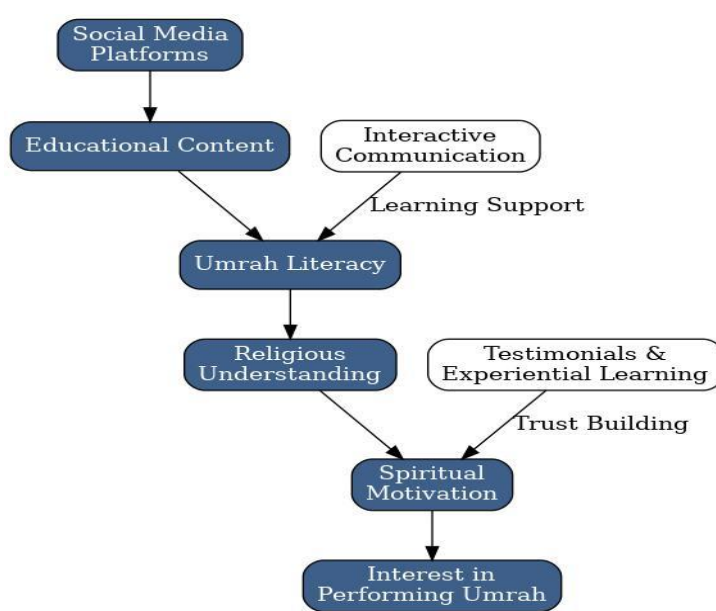


Figure 1. Conceptual Synthesis of the Research

This synthesis demonstrates that social media functions as a digital religious education medium capable of enhancing umrah literacy, strengthening religious understanding, fostering spiritual motivation, and ultimately increasing public interest in performing the umrah pilgrimage. These findings constitute the primary contribution of this study toward expanding the discourse on *digital religious education* within the context of non-formal religious education in the era of digital transformation.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that social media has evolved from merely a promotional tool into a *religious education* medium that plays a crucial role in enhancing the literacy and interest of Umrah pilgrims. Research results from PT Payung Madinah, PT Fatih Muliya Bersama, and PT Baitussalam Sako Mandiri indicate that the use of digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and websites enables umrah travel organizers to deliver various educational content covering the procedures of the umrah pilgrimage, administrative preparations, travel information, and the reinforcement of spiritual values. Through educational content,

activity documentation, and pilgrim testimonials, social media serves as a flexible, non-formal space for religious learning accessible to the public.

The study's key findings indicate that social media contributes to enhancing prospective pilgrims' Umrah literacy by providing easily accessible, interactive, and multimedia-based information. This increased literacy subsequently fosters a better understanding of religious practices, reduces uncertainty regarding the performance of the Umrah pilgrimage, and strengthens the spiritual motivation of prospective pilgrims. Thus, the public's interest in performing the Umrah pilgrimage is formed through a gradual process that begins with exposure to educational content, followed by improved literacy, strengthened religious understanding, and ultimately the emergence of a spiritual drive to perform the pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of *digital religious education* research by demonstrating that social media can function as a non formal religious education tool that is not only oriented toward information transfer but also toward the formation of religious understanding and motivation. This study broadens the perspective of religious education which has traditionally been studied primarily within the context of formal educational institutions by introducing a new context: the use of social media by Umrah travel agencies as a platform for digital-based religious learning. Practically, the study's findings have implications for Umrah travel organizers to better optimize social media as an educational tool, not merely as a promotional medium. Developing content that is informative, educational, interactive, and tailored to the needs of prospective pilgrims can improve service quality while strengthening the religious literacy of the community. Additionally, enhancing the digital competencies of social media managers is a crucial factor in maximizing the effectiveness of delivering educational messages to prospective pilgrims.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the study was conducted only at three Umrah travel agencies in Palembang, so the findings cannot yet be generalized to all Umrah travel organizers in Indonesia. Second, the study used a qualitative approach, so it did not quantitatively measure the extent to which social media influences the improvement of pilgrims' literacy and interest. Third, the study focused on the perspectives of organizers and some pilgrims, so it has not yet explored in depth the social media usage behavior of various age groups and social backgrounds. Therefore, future research is recommended to use a mixed methods or quantitative approach with a broader geographical scope to measure the relationship between the intensity of social media use, the level of Umrah literacy, and pilgrims' interest more comprehensively.

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