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### MUTHAWWIF COMPETENCY IMPROVEMENT TRAINING IN THE SERVICE OF HAJJ AND UMRAH PILGRIMS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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### **Abstract**

Training is one of the crucial elements in strengthening the professional capabilities of Muthawwif, a spiritual and practical companion for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims in Saudi Arabia. This PKM explores the significance of training in improving the competence of Muthawwif, focusing on improving services and pilgrim experience. Effective training methods integrate key aspects, including religious knowledge, time management, intercultural communication, as well as emergency situation handling skills. Analysis of the training results shows a marked improvement in the quality of services provided by Muthawwif, as well as its positive influence on pilgrim satisfaction and safety. The implications of this increased competence pave the way for further development in supporting spiritual and safety experiences for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims in Saudi Arabia.

### Keywords: Muthawwif, Pilgrim Service, Competency Improvement.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Hajj and Umrah activities need to be considered in the implementation process in this case focused on Hajj and Umrah services ranging from accommodation, transportation, consumption, health services and most importantly Hajj and Umrah guidance, should be given professionally in order to provide satisfaction to Hajj / Umrah pilgrims. In this PKM it is interesting to be able to do one of the Hajj and Umrah Travel Tours at one of the institutions engaged in Hajj and Umrah travel, namely Qiblat Tour is a tour company that focuses on religious travel for Muslims. The company was founded with the aim of providing meaningful and immersive travel experiences to customers who want to explore Islam's holiest sites around the world. The agency has a team of professionals who are experienced in the travel industry and have in-depth knowledge of Islam's holy sites. Its team is conservation to provide customers with an unforgettable travel experience. PT. Qiblat Tour Islami is located at Jl. South Cibeunying Park No. 15, Cihapit Village, Bandung Wetan District, Bandung, West Java.

Qiblat Tour offers a variety of travel packages specifically designed to meet the needs and preferences of customers. His travel package includes visits to holy sites such as Makkah, Medina, Al-Aqsa Mosque, and other places of religious significance for Muslims. (Qiblattour 2017) In addition, Qiblat Tour also provides tour guides who are knowledgeable about the history and culture of Islam in each destination. Tour guides will ensure that customers get a deep understanding of the places they are visiting. The agency provides comfortable and high-quality accommodation services during the trip. The selected hotels are located close to the holy places and provide adequate facilities for the convenience of customers. Qiblat Tour also ensures that the customer's journey runs smoothly and safely and cooperates with trusted transportation partners and provides a comfortable and safe vehicle for the customer's trip. In addition, Qiblat Tour also provides guidance and support services to customers before, during, and after the trip. The team is ready to assist customers in organizing pilgrims' trips, answering questions, and providing recommendations that suit the needs of pilgrims. The agency prioritizes customer satisfaction and strives to provide the best travel experience and is willing to receive feedback from its customers and continuously improve services based on that feedback.

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Qiblat Tour also has a commitment to desire and is socially responsible. They work to reduce the environmental impact of travel and support local communities in the places we visit. The Hajj and Umrah travel industry is one of the sectors that continues to grow in Indonesia. Every year, thousands of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims choose to use the services of Hajj / Umrah agents to facilitate their trip. However, in some cases, there are obstacles and problems faced by pilgrims during their journey. One of the Hajj/Umrah agents operating in Bandung, Qiblat Tour, realizes the importance of providing quality services and ensuring pilgrim satisfaction. However, Qiblat Tour also realizes that there are still shortcomings in terms of training and service assistance to pilgrims. In the implementation of Hajj / Umrah, pilgrims are usually accompanied by officers who will guide and accompany the implementation of the pilgrimage, these officers are known as muthawwif. Muthawwif comes from the word thawaf (the process of circling the Kaaba). Muthawwif is a person who teaches pilgrims Hajj / Umrah, regarding matters related to Hajj / Umrah management with practice, and serves pilgrims during Hajj / Umrah.(Darsih 2022)

The service saw that there were still some problems experienced by the muthawwif in carrying out their duties. Among the problems faced by muthawwif are: First, the level of competition is very tight where muthawwif need to compete with other travel agents for clients and contracts. Second, Changes in Regulations and Policies; Third, Client satisfaction, the muthawwif must ensure that the pilgrims' journey meets the expectations and needs of the client. Fourth, Limited resources. Based on these problems, it is important for muthawwif to have good management skills, understand the market and its customers, and be ready to overcome these problems wisely and professionally. In this context, the service intends to assist the muthawwif in minimizing these problems by carrying out training and assistance in PKM activities with the title "Training and Assistance of Muthawwif in the Service of Hajj / Umrah Pilgrims at Hajj / Umrah Agents in Saudi Arabia" aims to improve the quality of services provided by the Hajj / Umrah agents.

Through proper training and mentoring, it is hoped that one of the Qiblat Tour agents can provide better service to pilgrims, so that their Hajj / Umrah experience becomes smoother and more satisfying. Aggy Cariene, et al said that muthawwif has a positive and significant influence on service quality which results in an increase in consumer loyalty to tour operators. Research says the muthawwif has a significant influence on the quality of Hajj / Umrah agents.(Aggy Cariena 2015) (Sherlly Rahmadani RS 2018) This PKM also aims to provide wider benefits, namely improving the image of the Hajj and Umrah travel industry in Indonesia. With the increasing quality of service from agents such as Qiblat Tour and travel, it is expected to provide trust and satisfaction to pilgrims, as well as encourage the growth of the Hajj and Umrah travel industry as a whole. Thus, this PKM has a high relevance in improving the quality of services for Hajj / Umrah pilgrims at Qiblat Tour Bandung Hajj / Umrah agents, as well as making a positive contribution to the Hajj and Umrah travel industry in Indonesia.

### 2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The method of community service titled "Muthawwif Competency Improvement Training in the Service of Hajj and Umrah Pilgrims in Saudi Arabia" is an approach aimed at enhancing the competence of muthawwifs (managers of Hajj and Umrah travel) in Saudi Arabia. This method is designed to improve the service and experience for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims visiting Saudi Arabia. Here is an explanation of this method: Needs Identification: The first step is to identify the needs and challenges faced by muthawwifs in serving Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. This may include knowledge of worship procedures, communication skills, time management, security, health, and hygiene. Training Planning: Based on the needs identification, training planning is carried out covering various relevant aspects of the duties and responsibilities of muthawwifs. Training may include topics such as service ethics, group management, intercultural communication, emergency response, and others.



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Training Implementation: Training is conducted by inviting muthawwifs to participate in the prepared training program. Training materials are delivered through interactive sessions, case studies, role-playing simulations, group discussions, and field practices. Mentoring: In addition to training, this method also involves direct mentoring for muthawwifs. Mentoring is provided by experienced instructors or mentors in the field of Hajj and Umrah services to provide guidance and support in applying the learned skills. Monitoring and Evaluation: The implementation of training and mentoring is monitored and evaluated periodically to assess its effectiveness in enhancing the competence and performance of muthawwifs. Evaluation can be conducted through direct observation, questionnaires, or interviews with training participants. Report Compilation and Results Dissemination: The results of the training and mentoring program are compiled into a report which is then disseminated to relevant parties such as the government, institutions managing Hajj and Umrah, and the general public. Information and findings from this program can also be shared through seminars, conferences, or academic publications. By adopting this method, it is hoped that the competence and professionalism of muthawwifs in serving Hajj and Umrah pilgrims can be enhanced, thereby improving the pilgrimage experience for pilgrims in Saudi Arabia.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 The activities of the umrah and hajj mentoring team in improving their competencies

The umrah and hajj mentoring team plays a crucial role in ensuring the success and safety of pilgrims performing these religious rites. Here are several activities that the mentoring team can engage in to enhance their competencies:

**Regular Training:** The mentoring team should participate in regular training sessions organized by authorized institutions or authorities responsible for overseeing umrah and hajj affairs. This training covers various aspects such as group management, handling emergencies, effective communication with pilgrims, and a deep understanding of the rituals.

**Religious and Cultural Studies:** It is important for the mentoring team to deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings related to umrah and hajj. They should also study the diverse cultures and customs of the pilgrims they will accompany, especially if they will be guiding pilgrims from various countries.

**Field Experience:** Directly experiencing the processes of umrah and hajj is the best way to enhance the competencies of the mentoring team. By participating in pilgrimages with the pilgrims, they can deeply understand the challenges and needs of the pilgrims and gain practical insights into the best ways to guide them.

**Special Skills Training:** The mentoring team can also undergo training in special skills such as first aid, conflict management, communication skills, and security. These skills will help them address any situations that may arise during the umrah and hajj journeys.

**Collaboration with Other Professionals:** Collaborating with healthcare professionals, safety experts, or travel consultants can provide additional knowledge and insights to the mentoring team. Such collaborations can also help them plan and manage journeys more effectively.

**Evaluation and Feedback:** The mentoring team needs to regularly evaluate their performance and seek feedback from the pilgrims they accompany. This will help them continuously improve the quality of their services and tailor their approach to the pilgrims' needs. By regularly engaging in these activities, the umrah and hajj mentoring team can enhance their competencies in providing the best possible services to the pilgrims they accompany. (Faiz Zamroni 2023)

### 3.2 Definition Of Competency Improvement

In the context of "Competency Improvement" according to Noe, there are two important concepts that can serve as the basis of understanding:

**Competency:** Competency refers to a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and personal characteristics required to achieve successful performance in a specific job or role. Competencies may vary depending on the type of job or role being performed.

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**Improvement:** Improvement or enhancement refers to the process of improving or developing an individual's competencies. This may involve various methods such as training, coaching, work experiences, or self-directed development. In Noe's view, the process of "Competency Improvement" occurs through various learning and development activities tailored to the needs of individuals or organizations. This may include formal learning (such as training and courses), informal learning (through work experiences and mentoring), as well as personal development. (Raymond A. Noe 2018).

### 3.3 Definition Of Muthawwif

Muthawwif is a manager or travel guide tasked with guiding and providing services to pilgrims performing the Hajj or Umrah pilgrimage. The duties of a muthawwif include arranging travel schedules, providing information on worship procedures, accompanying pilgrims during the journey, offering spiritual advice, as well as providing assistance and support in various aspects during the Hajj or Umrah pilgrimage. (Abdullah 2018).

### 3.4 Partner Problem Solution

Judging from the language, Muthawif is an Arabic term that means "a person who serves as a travel guide", or in our daily lives in Indonesia more often referred to as a guide. (Jauhary 2014) Muthawwif, are words that will often be heard by prospective Umrah pilgrims if they have performed Umrah, or after registering for Umrah to the Umrah organizing bureau. Muthawwif is simply an officer who accompanies a group of worshippers and controls and guides his group in matters of worship. Muthawwif comes from the word thawaf (the process of circling the Kaaba). Muthawwif is a person who teaches pilgrims Hajj / Umrah, regarding matters related to Hajj / Umrah management with practice, and serves pilgrims during Hajj / Umrah. profession of mutawwif has been around for a long time. In the past, only members of the family in Mecca became mutawwif and then passed on to their descendants. The beginning of the emergence of this profession as a job that received wages was during the Mamluk Dynasty, 1250 AD to 1517 AD. When Sultan Qaitabai made the pilgrimage in 884 H/1485 AD, Hakim Ibrahim bin Dhahirah guided him. Then this profession developed from just a worship guide to a provider of lodging, catering, to transportation facilities. (Aettravel 2019)

At first the mutawwifs were judges and scholars of jurisprudence, then also the leaders and dignitaries of Mecca. The development of this profession has gone through various periods and phases, where in the past mutawwif traveled to various Islamic countries to make agreements with pilgrims so that they would perform Hajj through this mutawwif. Then information about the mutawwif profession widened to most pilgrims from various countries. The pilgrims know that the mutawwif await the arrival of the pilgrims, and are ready to serve and provide lodging for the pilgrims. During the time of King Abdul Aziz al Saud (1932-1953), a temporary regulation was issued for mutawwif. This is the fundamental point that explains in total the duties, requirements, obligations that must be carried out to become mutawwif, as well as the infrastructure of its service. So that the role of mutawwif really becomes a profession. This regulation was reviewed and revised in 1968. (Darsih 2022)

And in 1999, the General Leadership of the Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques established a special body, which looks after the affairs of this ministry. Among the obligations of this special body are tidying up the work of mutawwif and supervisors, directing them to be consistent with Islamic ethics with Hajj/Umrah pilgrims, and issuing permits for those who wish to undergo this profession. (Aettravel, 2019). Hajj and Umrah guidance officers or commonly called muthawif are sought to be certified. Director General of Hajj and Umrah (PHU) of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) Hilman Latief emphasized that the benefits of Hajj supervisor certification are not only used during the Hajj season, but also during Umrah. "Saudi Arabia really wants worship guidance officers to have professional insights, attitudes, and attitudes," Hilman said in a statement obtained by Republika, Tuesday (7/3/2023). (Oktaviani 2023)



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The role of muthawif in Hajj or Umrah activities is very important. Muthawif is a spiritual guide who is in charge of guiding and giving direction to pilgrims during their Hajj or Umrah. Here are some of the main roles of muthawif: (Raffindowisata 2023)

- 1. Education and Counseling: Muthawif provides knowledge and understanding to pilgrims about the procedures for performing Hajj or Umrah. They explain the pillars, ordinances, and prayers to be performed during worship.
- 2. Supervision and Regulation: The Muthawif is responsible for supervising and managing worshippers during worship. They ensure that worshippers carry out worship in accordance with religious guidelines and applicable rules.
- 3. Spiritual Guidance: Muthawif provides spiritual guidance to worshippers, helping them deepen religious understanding, improve the quality of worship, and strengthen bonds with God.
- 4. Logistics and Administration: Muthawif is also responsible for taking care of all logistical and administrative needs during the Hajj or Umrah journey. They assist worshippers with accommodation, transportation, and administrative processes related to worship.

With this important role, muthawif helps ensure that pilgrims can perform Hajj or Umrah smoothly, in accordance with religious guidance, and get maximum spiritual benefits. In carrying out their duties, the muthawwif still faced several problems. Among the problems faced by muthawwif are: First, the level of competition is very tight where muthawwif need to compete with other travel agents for clients and contracts. Second, Changes in Regulations and Policies; Third, Client satisfaction, the muthawwif must ensure that their journey meets the client's expectations and needs. Fourth, Limited resources. Based on these problems, it is important for muthawwif to have good management skills, understand the market and their customers, and be ready to overcome these problems wisely and professionally. Despite the difficulties faced, muthawwif usually attend adequate training and experience to overcome these challenges and provide effective guidance to pilgrims.

Training for muthawif usually involves several aspects that include religious knowledge, communication skills, group management, and practical knowledge related to Hajj or Umrah. Here are some general stages in muthawif training: (1) Religious Education: Muthawifs must have a deep understanding of Islamic religious teachings, especially related to Hajj and Umrah. They learn the ordinances of worship, related laws, and prayers that must be known. (2) Communication Training: Muthawif needs to have good communication skills to be able to interact with pilgrims effectively. The Muttahwif learn how to convey information clearly, listen well, and respond appropriately to pilgrims' questions or needs. (3) Group Management: Muthawif is also trained in group management, including how to manage schedules, organize worshippers, and ensure compliance with rules and regulations that apply during worship. (4) Field Practice: Muthawif training also involves field practice where muthawifs can observe and learn from experienced muthawifs who can follow Hajj or Umrah trips as muthawif's assistants to gain practical experience in guiding pilgrims. Muthawif training aims to prepare pilgrims with the knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary to guide pilgrims well during Hajj or Umrah.

Muthawwif Competency Improvement Training In The Service Of Hajj And Umrah Pilgrims

No	Name	Nilai Pretest	Nilai Postest	Progress	Percentages
1	Abd. Kowi	60	81	21	26
2	Abdussomad Abdullah	65	78	13	17
3	Achmad Fahrurrosi	75	89	14	16
4	Achmad Khoiruddin	67	80	13	16

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No	Name	Nilai Pretest	Nilai Postest	Progress	Percentages
5	Fairus Abd. Aziz	56	79	23	29
6	Fais Ardabili	48	80	32	40
7	Faiz Zamroni	70	80	10	13
8	H. Dede Shobarna, Lc	86	100	14	14
9	Hefni Mubarok	68	80	12	15
10	Control of the Khusaen Assufyan	60	78	18	23
1	1 Lukman	75	94	19	20
1:	2 M. Zheiynal Abidin	45	75	30	40
1.	3 Mahat Magandy	60	78	18	23
1	4 Mahmudi	67	89	22	25
1:	5 Mathori	68	88	20	23
10	6 Misbahudin	56	72	16	22
1′	7 Mohammad Dabri	60	78	18	23
18	8 Mohammad Sabri	61	79	18	23
19	9 Muhamad Arsidin husni	67	89	22	25
20	O Muhammad Fahrurrozi	60	85	25	29
2	1 Ridwan Mohammad S.	75	86	11	13
2	2 Saisin Qosim Jahra	46	75	29	39
2:	3 Salman Al Farisi	85	100	15	15
2	4 Shonhaji Salikan	61	85	24	28
2:	5 Solehuddin	60	88	28	32
20	6 Solehuddin Armin	61	78	17	22
2'	7 Subairi	58	80	22	28
2	8 Taufikur Rahman	61	78	17	22
29	9 Taufiq Ismail Fahmi Ali	66	80	14	18
30	O Ulil Albab	61	78	17	22
3	l Walid Ali Akbar Ali	79	85	6	7
3:	2 Zainuddin	61	78	17	22
3:	3 Yusron Hamid	70	80	10	13
		211			
	TOTAL	8	2723	605	22

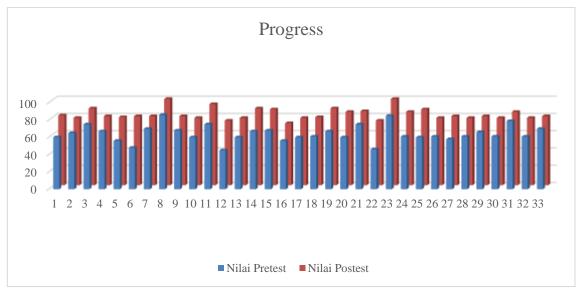
Based on the table, it can be seen the description of muthawwif's condition in terms of their ability to serve Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. The pretest results from 33 respondents, namely the muthawwif, show that the lowest score obtained is 45, the highest score is 86, the average score is 64.2, the median is 61, and the mode is 60. These scores fall into the "sufficient" category. The pretest was conducted before the training and mentoring for the muthawwif. Meanwhile, the scores after attending the training and mentoring through posttest assessment show that the lowest score is 75, the highest score is 100, the average score is 82.5, the median is 80, and the mode is 78. These scores fall into the "good" category. Looking at the changes, the lowest pretest score is 45 and the lowest posttest score is 75, indicating an increase of 30 points or 40%. The highest pretest score is 86 and the highest posttest score is 100, indicating an increase of 14 points or 14%. As for the



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average pretest score of 64.2 and the average posttest score of 82.5, there is an increase of 18.3 points or 22.18%. In the table, it can be seen that the total pretest score is 2118, while the overall total posttest score is 2723, resulting in an increase of 605 points. When converted into a percentage, there is an increase of 22%. Therefore, the improvement in the muthawwif's abilities after attending the training has increased by 22%. The improvement in the muthawwif's abilities from before the training to after attending the training can be seen in the illustration diagram below:



A competent Muthawwif plays a significant role in increasing the interest of pilgrims to choose Umrah travel, as they serve as a benchmark for pilgrims regarding the quality of service provided by a Hajj or Umrah travel agency. This was explained in a study conducted. (Eka Wahyuni 2022) As one of the important icons in the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage, Muthawwif's role and function should be increasingly emphasized to continually improve their services. Efforts from travel agencies must be continuously enhanced to improve the competence of Muthawwif. (Lina Fadiyah 2018). Among the efforts to enhance competence is the improvement of emotional intelligence. The study mentioned that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant influence on the performance of Muthawwif, thus the higher the emotional intelligence of a Muthawwif, the higher their performance. (Ferdy Novri 2019) The research also mentioned that providing rewards has a positive effect on the performance of Muthawwif.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The performance of Hajj and Umrah rituals must be carried out devoutly in order to obtain rewards from Allah SWT. The series of Hajj and Umrah rituals must be performed correctly and properly. Hajj and Umrah travel agencies always provide their best services for pilgrims, and one of these services is provided by Hajj and Umrah guides called "muthawwif." These muthawwif guide and assist pilgrims throughout their Hajj and Umrah rituals, fulfilling their needs for guidance in performing rituals and providing other necessary information. With their tasks and functions being crucial in facilitating the smoothness of the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages, the muthawwifs must possess adequate competencies to provide the best service. Efforts in this regard are continuously undertaken by Hajj and Umrah travel agencies or associations of Hajj and Umrah organizers through organizing training sessions, religious and cultural studies, skill training, field experiences, collaboration with other organizations, and conducting evaluations and feedback. LPPM Unisba, in collaboration with the Hajj and Umrah travel agency Qiblat Tour, conducted training aimed at enhancing the abilities of the muthawwifs in religious education, communication skills, group management, and practical fieldwork. Based on the results of pretests conducted before the training and post-tests after the training, there was an improvement in the muthawwifs'

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abilities by 605 points or 22%. This indicates the necessity for continuous improvement among the muthawwifs, as it closely relates to the development of competition, changes in regulations and policies, client satisfaction, and resource limitations.

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