MYUMRAH: A DIGITAL UMRAH MOBILE GUIDE APPLICATION

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Abstract:

Umrah, a sacred ritual in Islam, holds significant religious importance as believers seek to fulfill their faith. This article presents the development of the MyUmrah application, designed to assist pilgrims in their Umrah journey both before and during the performance of the ritual. This application encompasses various functions tailored to meet the needs of Umrah pilgrims. The development of MyUmrah follows an iterative application development process, beginning with the collection of data to establish requirements followed by design and development of the prototype that aligns with the identified requirements. To gain insights into the newly developed app, a prototype evaluation is conducted using dichotomous techniques, providing a comprehensive understanding of its functionality and effectiveness. The feedback received during the evaluation phase have been overwhelmingly positive, spanning various aspects of usefulness, usage, and design. This indicates a high level of acceptance and satisfaction among Umrah pilgrims. Users have reported positive experiences, affirming the application's effectiveness in facilitating a smooth Umrah experience. MyUmrah application proves to be beneficial, offering valuable assistance to pilgrims throughout their sacred journey.

Keywords:

Dichotomous Techniques, Digital Umrah Guide, Mobile Application, Umrah Pilgrim

Introduction

"The belief in God" is a fundamental principle of Rukun Negara that has played a significant role in shaping the Malaysian nation. Despite the commonality of the concept of God across various religions, Malaysia has officially recognized Islam as the country's religion, acknowledging its historical roots in the archipelago since the 15th century. Consequently, muslims in Malaysia, like their counterparts worldwide, adhere to the five pillars of Islam as prescribed by their faith. Umrah and Hajj, being one of these pillars, is a religious duty for all Muslims who are able to undertake it. 'Capable' in this context implies possessing the necessary financial means, good health (preferably), and a comprehensive understanding of the rituals involved (Nur Hidayah Syed Harun et al., 2022). Consequently, many Umrah and Hajj agencies prioritize educating pilgrims either before or during their journey. Various physical courses, conducted at the state, district, or private group levels, are organized at least once to ensure pilgrims acquire the necessary understanding and knowledge of the worship rituals before embarking on their pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Traditionally, Umrah rituals were guided by conventional manual booklets, serving as the primary source of information for pilgrims. These booklets provided a step-by-step guide on performing Umrah, offering textual descriptions and illustrations to assist pilgrims throughout the sacred journey. Additionally, the presence of a mutawif, an Umrah guidance person, played a pivotal role in guiding pilgrims through the rituals. The mutawif, equipped with extensive knowledge of the rituals, provided personalized assistance and clarification, ensuring a smooth and informed Umrah experience for the pilgrims (Khalid, 2022).

Modernization of human life is not a treat for the Islam religion, in facts it has helped Islam to reached it believers more easily. For example, the used of information technology has make this religious easier to be disseminated and teach even started from children (Saidin et al, 2015). Often the presentation of information that applies multimedia theory provides a positive impact (Rahimi and Allahyari,, 2019) in providing understanding and attracting the interest of users (Salsidu et al., 2017). According to studies from Kim and Gilman (2008) followed by Rahimi and Allahyari (2019) effective learning can be achieved by involving all human senses through a combination of these elements. Therefore, the production of umrah applications that use multimedia learning theory (Walsh, 2017) and appropriate elements are seen as very suitable to explain the implementation of umrah worship.

Literature Review

Recently, there is a growing recognition of the potential benefits of incorporating digital technology into the Umrah ritual. Researchers have proposed leveraging digital tools to enhance the guidance and support provided to pilgrims. This shift towards digital solutions aims to complement traditional methods, offering a more dynamic and interactive approach to guiding Umrah rituals (M.Fitri et al., 20110. The incorporation of digital technology is seen as a means to make the Umrah experience more accessible, informative, and tailored to the evolving preferences and needs of modern pilgrims.

There are various mobile apps that has been developed for various reasons to accommodate Muslim needs. Similar to umrah ritual, various application can be found in order to helped Muslim learned about the ritual easily as research stated that mobile phone technology should be employed to assist with and make Umrah more convenient (Showail, 2022). There are few examples such as (1) Mobile Dua and Zikr for Hajj (MDZ4H) which explains about the journey

of Umrah/Hajj and focuses on appropriate prayers and zikr to read during its implementation (Al-Aidaroos et al., 2013); (2) Digital Mutawif application that uses GPS in mobile phones to help Hajj participants during the Hajj. This application uses GPS to track the position of the pilgrims and explains the method of performing Hajj/Umrah at the GPS location (Al-Aidaroos and Abdul Mutalib., 2015); (3) The M - Umrah application explains one by one the steps that must be taken by the Umrah/Hajj pilgrims starting from the planning to the completion of the pilgrimage (Mohamed et al., 2013); and (3) HAJJRAH application, which is embedded in smart watches such as Samsung Gear or Iphone Watch, which is used to help pilgrims in performing their Hajj. The application sheds light on performing Hajj, counting the laps during Saie from Safa to Marwah by using a pedometer embedded in a smart watch. It also has a pedometer to help pilgrims remember how many times they have circled the kaaba for tawaf. In addition, the HAJJRAH application is also equipped with prayer and dhikr audio to help pilgrims memorize and read prayers when performing the Hajj and another important feature of HAJJRAH is the ability to track its users if they get lost (Abdul Majid et al., 2016).

Motivated by the success of these scholars' work, Embun Ritz Travel Network, a company specializing in guiding umrah pilgrims for this religious ritual, has undertaken the development of a umrah mobile guide for their customers. This application serves the purpose of alleviating challenges encountered by Umrah pilgrims. It aims to address various difficulties faced during the pilgrimage, such as remembering the recitation of pillars or prayers and navigating the Umrah manual while performing the rituals. This application, known as MyUmrah, a digital version of the traditional guidebook distributed to pilgrims currently performing Umrah. MyUmrah incorporates multimedia elements such as images, text, animation, video, and audio, aiming to align with technological advancements and offer customers easy access to a digital application.

MyUmrah Mobile Application

In alignment with other pilgrimage agencies, Embun Ritz Travel Network provides umrah guidebooks to assist pilgrims in their umrah journey, encompassing all essential rituals. However, the thickness of the guidebook poses challenges, particularly in crowded places where it is difficult to open and read (Abdul Majid et al., 2016). Additionally, the extensive prayers and readings are hard to memorizes, leading pilgrims to face difficulties in recalling each step and reciting the required dua'.

The development of the MyUmrah application addresses these challenges by offering a convenient mobile reference for pilgrims before or during their Umrah experience. This transition presents several advantages for the company. Firstly, it has the potential to reduce expenses related to Umrah guidebooks by eliminating the need for paper, printing, and associated operations. The application's accessibility without an internet connection makes it a convenient option for pilgrims who always carry their smartphones. This shift simplifies the task of monitoring Umrah pilgrims for both the mutawwif (person who guide the umrah ritual) and the Umrah manager. Additionally, the application may serve as an incentive for younger individuals to explore and deepen their understanding of Umrah through accessible study resources. Finally, the adoption of the MyUmrah application could contribute to increased brand awareness for Embun Ritz Travel Agency.

MyUmrah application was developed by following the phases as depicted in Table1. During the phase 1, research has been done to identify and understand the context of the problem. This

study has helped in the process of identifying the tools that will be used for application development and identify the target audience.

Table 1: MyUmrah Development Phases

Phases	Activities	Deliverables
Phases 1: Analysis	Determine problem, gather information through primary and secondary data gathering techniques.	Requirement Analyisis
Phase 2: Design & Development	Determine the initial concept and design of the application. Applying design elements that has been determine in phase 1.	Storyboard and MyUmrah Prototype
Phase 3: Evaluation	Obtaining user feedback from testing and evaluation.	Evaluation finding

For data gathering purposed there were two techniques data gatherings were conducted namely interview and comparative analysis of an existing mobile umrah application downloaded from apps store. The interview was conducted with the objective of identifying requirements and important parts for the development of the MyUmrah application. The data gathering method used is a qualitative research interview to describe the meaning of the subject. According to Griffee (2005), interviews are a common method of acquiring qualitative research data since asking individuals to talk is natural. To acquire in-depth information, a mix of open and closed-ended interview questions had been revised for this study. The interview was conducted with three mutawwifs (client) and ten umrah pilgrims (user). Mutawif is a person who assists pilgrims on their Umrah and gives them practical instruction in the rites and customs of the Umrah Then a comparative analysis review consisted of twenty apps from the Google Play Store was compared to get insight on multimedia elements and features that preferred to be in the application. As a results MyUmrah apps will be developed with the function that listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Functions and Feature MyUmrah

Functions	Features
Panduan Umrah Lengkap,	Multimedia Elements – Text, Audio, Images and Animation
Jom buat MyUmrah	Bahasa Malaysia
Solat-Solat Sunat	Text - Segoe UI font and Uthamanic Script
Amalan dan Doa	Colour - Monochrome colour schemes
Tawaf counter	Android

Secondly, the design phase is the phase that designing of MyUmrah application took place. It consists of careful planning of designing of Interfaces, navigation structure, and multimedia elements such as textual, auditory and images information. This process is very important to ensure that the functionality, user-friendly and aesthetical aspects is met.

i.   Interface
The interface is divided into four main sections of Panduan Umrah Lengkap, Jom Tunaikan MyUmrah, Solat Sunat and Amalan-amalan doa. This section allow user to select the main function to get the detail information on Umrah ritual (Figure 1).

ii. Textual Information

MyUmrah apps provide textual information for the user to get the information that was design using Segoe UI font and Uthamanic Script was chosen for the Arabic text version especially for various doa (Figure 2).
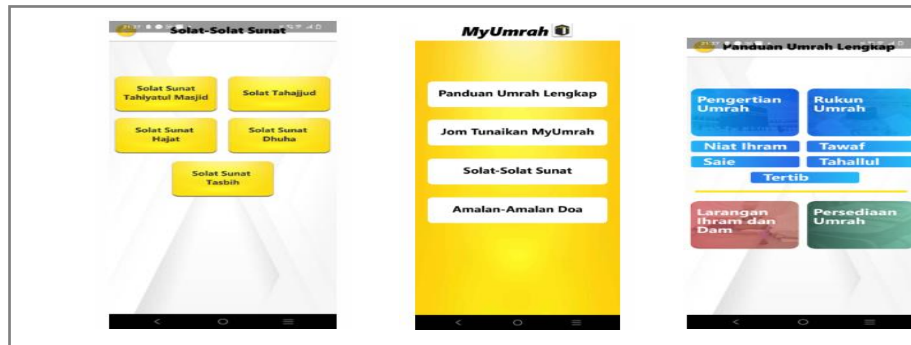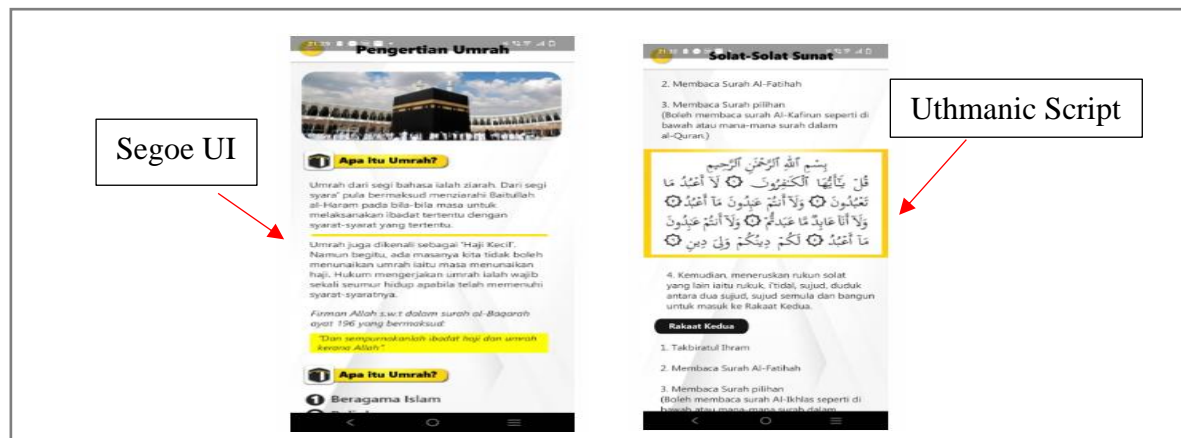

Figure 1: MyUmrah Interfaces

Figure 2: Textual Information

iii. Auditory Information

In the Umrah ritual, the act of reading holds significant importance, emphasizing the need for auditory elements to aid Umrah pilgrims in reciting the dua. Consequently, all the supplications (dua) within this application are presented in both textual forms (Romanized and Arabic script) and are complemented by auditory elements (refer to Figure 3). This feature plays a crucial role in enhancing the confidence of Umrah pilgrims during the recitation of dua, as the combination of visual (reading) and auditory (hearing) senses facilitates a more comprehensive learning experience, contributing to better retention and understanding of the supplications.
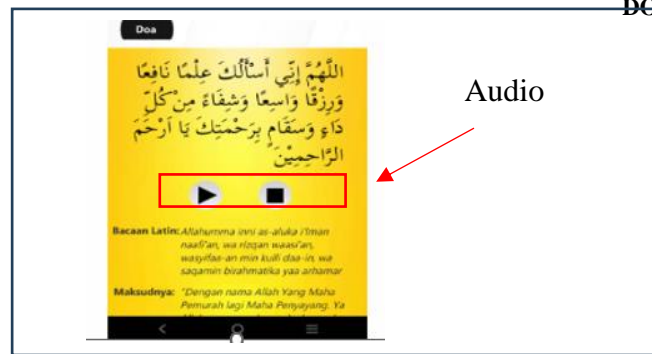
Figure 3: Auditory Information

iv. Images

For understanding purposes, the photographic images are used in this application. Its aimed to avoid misunderstanding and provide better learning experience. Using photographic images will increase clarity as the picture shown is similar to the real object or situation (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Photographic Images

v. Navigation

MyUmrah Employed two types of navigation of structural navigation and local navigation. The structural navigation, as its name implies follows the structure of a web site. It allows people to move up and down the different points of a site's hierarchy. The links in the main navigation are expected to lead to pages within the site and behave in a very consistent.   The local navigation is used to access lower levels in a structure, below the main navigation pages. The term local implies within a given category.   On a given page, local navigation generally shows other options at the same level of a hierarchy, as well as the options below the current page (Kalbach, 2023). Refer to Figure 5, for the navigation structure.
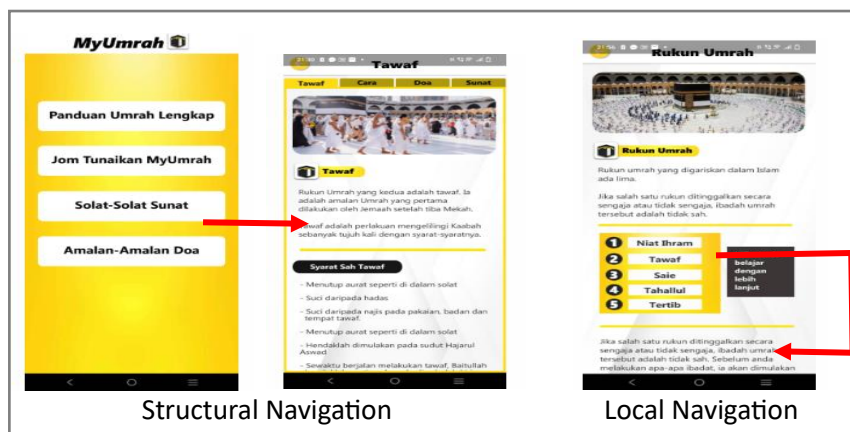

Structural Navigation   Local Navigation

Figure 5: MyUmrah Navigation Structure

vi. Development

As the detail of MyUmrah elements has been carefully designed, the application development process begins in order to produce a functional and user-friendly application prototype. This application was developed using Unity software. This software was chosen because it is free and meets the requirements for the development of this application. This phase took nearly 3 months to complete and ready to be used (Figure 6).
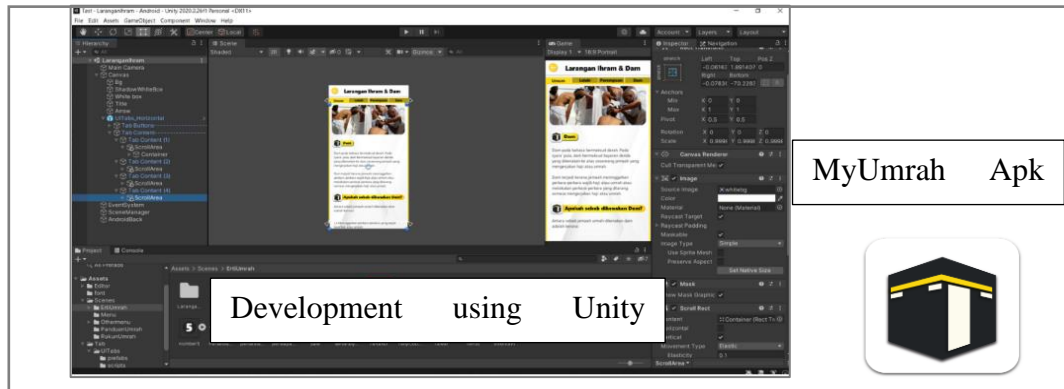

Figure 6: Development of MyUmrah

The final phase involves the evaluation of the application, providing insights into its performance and acceptance among Umrah pilgrims associated with the company. Given that the majority of Umrah pilgrims are aged 40 and above, a straightforward set of questions will be administered to gather feedback after they have utilized the application to complete their Umrah rituals. The application was made available for download to their mobile phones before and during the Umrah pilgrimage with the company in the end of 2022. Approximately 30 respondents participated in this evaluation phase, responding to 11 questions that covered aspects of usefulness, usage, and design. These respondents are among the umrah pilgrims that followed the umrah package conducted by Embun Ritz Travel Agency.

The survey employed a dichotomous question format, which involves binary answers such as Yes/No, True/False, and Agree/Disagree. This approach is chosen to minimize ambiguity and facilitate a quick and straightforward response from the participants. Dichotomous questions have been proven effective in surveys, as they are easy to answer, save time for both surveyors and respondents, and lead to clear and concise conclusions (Stiles, 2018). The questions were adapted from USE questionnaires and divided into three dimensions of usefulness, usage, and interface design.
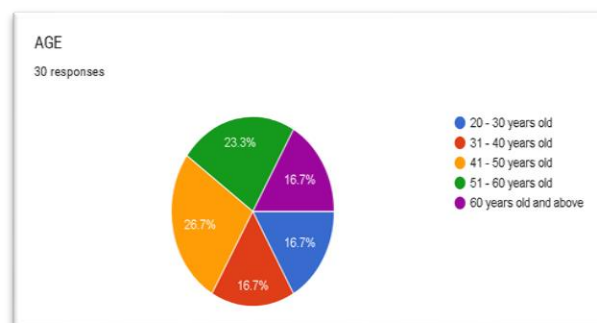

Figure 7: Respondent of MyUmrah

There are 30 respondents have been included in this evaluation. Three questions of age, gender, and the usage of Umrah guide application. The range of ages that answered this survey was 5 respondents of 20-30 years old (16.7%), 31-40 years old (16.7%), 41-50 years old (26.7%), 51 - 60 years old (23.3%), and 60 years old above (16.7%). Meanwhile, in the gender question, there are 20 respondents (66.7%) are female and 10 respondents (33.3%) are male.

For section usefulness, there are four questions have been asked about the practicality of the Umrah guide application. For the first question about is it easy to use the umrah guide application there are 29(96.7%) respondents said yes and one (3.3%) respondent said no. The next question in section B is about the simplicity of using the application. There 25(83.3%) respondents say yes to this question and 5(16.7%) respondents feel no for the simplicity of using the application. The third question for this section is about the usefulness of the app before going to umrah. 27 (90%) out of 30 respondents say yes and the balance three (10%) of the respondents say no to the question. The last question for this section is about the usefulness of the app during performing umrah. All respondents (100%) said yes to the question indicated that the app is useful during performing the umrah.

Meanwhile for usage section, only one question was asked to the respondents in which 25 respondents of (83.3%) of mentioned that they will use this application again in the future while only 5 (16.7%) do not plan to use this application again.

Finally for the design section indicated that 27 (90%) respondents like the MyUmrah application interface design while only 3 (10%) respondents did not like it. As for the use of animation in the MyUmrah application, a total of 27 (90%) respondents like the applied animation in this application. Furthermore, a total of 26 (86.7%) respondents like the images used in the MyUmrah application while only 4 (13.1%) respondents do not like the use of images in this application.

Discussions

The findings reveal that the MyUmrah application proves highly beneficial for Umrah pilgrims, particularly in terms of ease of use and simplicity. This is evident in the user-friendly interface, allowing pilgrims to effortlessly navigate the app and access relevant information with a simple click. The application's simplicity is further highlighted by its focus on the core subject of Umrah, presenting a step-by-step guide on how to perform the ritual.

A noteworthy discovery is the users' unanimous agreement on the app's usefulness both before and during the Umrah pilgrimage. This attests to the acceptance of technological tools during the sacred Umrah ritual. Users find the application valuable in enhancing their overall Umrah experience, indicating a positive reception of technology integration.

The readiness of users to embrace digital technology is evident in their increased usage of the app. The results suggest a willingness among pilgrims to transition from conventional methods to digital technology for a more convenient experience. This inclination aligns with the contemporary trend where technology, including advanced tools like GPS for tracking pilgrim positions, has become commonplace during Umrah rituals (Al-Aidaroos & Abdul Mutalib, 2015).

In terms of design preferences, users express a preference for a simple and straightforward layout, reminiscent of traditional printed Umrah guides. This reflects a comfort with familiarity. Additionally, the survey delves into two multimedia element, animation and photographic images. Users show acceptance and appreciation for both, with simple animations proving effective in conveying understanding and facilitating learning for pilgrims. Photographic images are deemed suitable for providing a clear visual understanding of the Umrah process. Overall, the findings emphasize the positive reception of the MyUmrah application, highlighting its user-friendly design and the effectiveness of multimedia elements in enhancing the Umrah experience.

In general, based on the positive results showed by the evaluation data, MyUmrah application has achieved the objectives laid by the Embun Ritz Travel in which to developed an umrah digital application that aims to helps the umrah pilgrimage difficulties in using the conventional guidance book in navigating the information and remembering the recitation of prayers while performing the rituals

Conclusions

In conclusion, the development of the MyUmrah application has proven to be mutually beneficial for both the pilgrim company and its consumers. In keeping with the advancements in today's technology, this digital solution has streamlined the Umrah experience, offering convenience and accessibility to users. The incorporation of multimedia elements within the application, including images, text, animation, video, and audio, indicates its acceptance among users, enhancing their engagement with the content.

The successful development of the MyUmrah app can be attributed to a systematic approach, following three general phases: requirements, design, and development. Despite encountering obstacles such as the need to condense information, the development team effectively navigated these challenges. The use of multimedia elements not only addressed the constraints but also contributed to making the information more dynamic and engaging for users, ensuring a positive user experience. As the evaluation phase has demonstrated success, the practical implementation of MyUmrah in real pilgrimage scenarios is now essential to gain deeper insights for future improvements. The feedback obtained from the users highlights the application's usability and effectiveness in guiding pilgrims through Umrah rituals. This real-world implementation will serve as a valuable source of information, allowing the development team to refine and enhance the application based on user experiences and preferences.

MyUmrah application has ushered in a new era of technological innovation for pilgrimage guidance, fostering a positive impact on both the pilgrim company and its users. With a foundation built on comprehensive development phases, the application's successful integration of multimedia elements has positioned it as a user-friendly and effective tool. The ongoing implementation in real-world scenarios will further contribute to the continuous improvement of MyUmrah, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness in meeting the evolving needs of Umrah pilgrims.

Acknowledgement

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