



Developing Sustainable Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Modules Within the TVET Framework: A Noss-Based Competency Model for the Contemporary Umrah Industry

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Abstract: The rapid expansion of the umrah industry has increased the demand for competent mutawwif who are capable of providing both religious guidance and professional operational services. Although Malaysia's National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) offers a competency-based framework within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), its responsiveness to contemporary industry requirements remains underexplored. This study aims to analyse the structure and content of NOSS-based mutawwif competency modules and to propose an Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) that supports sustainable human capital development in the umrah industry. A qualitative document analysis was employed to examine Level 3 and Level 4 NOSS competency modules together with relevant policy and industry documents. Data were analysed using content and thematic analyses to identify competency domains, structural characteristics, and gaps between existing training provisions and current industry needs. The findings reveal that the modules are well aligned with competency-based training (CBT) and TVET principles, particularly in developing religious knowledge and foundational competencies. However, significant gaps remain in digital literacy, operational management, professional communication, risk management, and adaptive competencies required by the contemporary umrah industry. In response, this study proposes the IRMCM, which integrates religious, operational, digital, communication, and adaptive competencies into a comprehensive competency framework. The proposed model extends existing TVET competency frameworks by incorporating sustainability-oriented workforce capabilities and provides practical guidance for curriculum enhancement, policy development, and professional training. It also contributes to sustainable human capital development by supporting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) within the Islamic tourism sector.

Keywords: Mutawwif competency; National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS); Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); Islamic tourism; sustainable human capital; competency model.

Introduction

The global expansion of the umrah industry has transformed Islamic religious tourism into one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global tourism economy. Increasing numbers of pilgrims, technological advancements, and evolving service expectations have reshaped umrah operations and the competencies required of industry personnel (UNWTO, 2019; Buhalis, 2020; Sigala, 2018). Consequently, sustainable human capital development has become essential for maintaining service quality, workforce resilience, and the long-term competitiveness of the industry.

Within this evolving landscape, the role of the *mutawwif* has expanded from that of a traditional religious guide to a multidisciplinary professional responsible for religious guidance, operational coordination, customer service, intercultural communication, and real-time problem-solving. This transformation is consistent with Service-Dominant Logic, which views value as being co-created through service interactions and customer experiences (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Accordingly, contemporary *mutawwif* are expected to integrate religious expertise with operational, communication, digital, and adaptive competencies to meet increasingly complex service demands (Baum, 2015; Page, 2014).

Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET), implemented through the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) framework, provides an effective mechanism for developing industry-ready professionals by integrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Mulder, 2017). In Malaysia, the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) establishes nationally recognised competency standards that support workforce development across multiple industries (Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran, 2016). Beyond occupational preparation, competency-based TVET promotes lifelong learning, employability, and workforce adaptability, contributing directly to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Despite these developments, the adequacy of existing NOSS-based *mutawwif* training modules in addressing the multidimensional competencies required by the contemporary umrah industry remains uncertain. Previous studies have primarily focused on pilgrimage experiences, halal tourism, destination management, and religious motivation, with comparatively limited attention to the professional competency development of *mutawwif* (Timothy & Olsen, 2006; Henderson, 2011; Battour & Ismail, 2016). Moreover, existing studies rarely integrate competency-based TVET with sustainable human capital development, digital transformation, and service-oriented workforce requirements within Islamic tourism.

Rapid digitalisation has further intensified the need to review existing competency frameworks. The adoption of e-visa systems, artificial intelligence, mobile applications, and integrated pilgrimage management platforms has fundamentally transformed umrah operations, making digital capability an essential component of service quality, operational efficiency, and organisational resilience (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Buhalis, 2020). However, the extent to which these competencies are systematically incorporated into current NOSS-based *mutawwif* training remains insufficiently explored.

Accordingly, this study critically examines the structure and content of NOSS-based *mutawwif* competency modules to identify their strengths, limitations, and competency gaps relative to contemporary industry requirements. Based on the findings, the study proposes an Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) that integrates religious, operational, digital, communication, and adaptive competencies within a competency-based TVET framework. By integrating Human Capital Theory, Service-Dominant Logic, and sustainable human capital development, the proposed model contributes to curriculum enhancement, workforce professionalisation, and the long-term sustainability of the Islamic tourism industry.

Literature Review

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has become a strategic mechanism for developing a competent, adaptable, and sustainable workforce capable of responding to rapid industrial transformation. Unlike conventional education, competency-based TVET integrates knowledge, technical skills, attitudes, and workplace behaviours to ensure graduates are industry-ready and able to perform effectively in dynamic occupational environments (Mulder, 2017; UNESCO, 2016). As industries continue to evolve through digitalisation and automation, TVET increasingly emphasises transversal competencies, including digital literacy, communication, critical thinking, adaptability, and ethical professionalism.

Recent discourse has extended this perspective through TVET 5.0, which aligns competency development with the principles of Society 5.0 by promoting human-centred innovation, digital intelligence, sustainability awareness, ethical

leadership, and social responsibility (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022; World Economic Forum, 2023). This paradigm recognises that workforce development should prepare graduates not only for current occupational demands but also for continuous learning and adaptation in increasingly complex service environments.

From a sustainable development perspective, TVET contributes significantly to sustainable human capital development by strengthening employability, lifelong learning, workforce resilience, and organisational competitiveness. Accordingly, competency frameworks should extend beyond technical proficiency to include innovation, adaptive capability, ethical decision-making, and sustainability-oriented competencies, thereby supporting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Nevertheless, competency-based education has traditionally focused on measurable occupational performance, with comparatively limited emphasis on higher-order competencies required for digitally enabled and service-oriented industries (Mulder, 2017; OECD, 2023).

In Malaysia, competency-based TVET is institutionalised through the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS), which provides nationally recognised occupational standards for curriculum development, competency assessment, and skills certification (Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran, 2016). While NOSS establishes a comprehensive competency framework, continuous revision remains necessary to address emerging industrial requirements, particularly in digital transformation, interdisciplinary collaboration, communication, and workforce sustainability.

These developments are particularly relevant to the contemporary umrah industry, where service quality depends heavily on the competencies of *mutawwif* as frontline professionals. Unlike conventional tourism personnel, *mutawwif* are responsible not only for religious guidance but also for operational coordination, customer service, intercultural communication, and pilgrims' well-being throughout the pilgrimage journey. Consequently, effective competency development requires an integrated approach that combines religious expertise with operational capability, digital literacy, communication skills, and adaptive problem-solving.

From this perspective, sustainable human capital should be understood as the continuous development of competencies that enable professionals to remain employable, resilient, innovative, and socially responsible throughout their careers. Therefore, competency development within the umrah industry should extend beyond compliance with occupational standards and be viewed as a strategic mechanism for strengthening sustainable workforce capability. This perspective provides the foundation for re-examining existing NOSS-based *mutawwif* competency modules and supports the development of the Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) proposed in this study.

Research Gap

Previous studies have extensively examined competency development within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), workforce development, and tourism management, demonstrating the importance of competency-based education in improving employability, workforce performance, and service quality (Mulder, 2017; Noe, 2020). Similarly, research in Islamic tourism has predominantly focused on halal tourism, pilgrimage experiences, destination management, and customer satisfaction (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Hanafiah et al., 2022). Despite these contributions, limited attention has been devoted to the systematic development of professional competencies for *mutawwif* as a specialised occupational group.

Existing studies generally address religious competency, tourism management, and workforce development as separate domains rather than as an integrated competency framework. Consequently, current models provide limited guidance on how religious knowledge should be combined with operational capability, digital literacy, professional communication, and adaptive problem-solving to address the increasingly complex demands of the contemporary umrah industry.

From a theoretical perspective, competency development has largely been interpreted through competency-based education, tourism management, or service quality frameworks independently. Few studies have integrated Human Capital Theory and Service-Dominant Logic to explain how competency development enhances workforce capability, value co-creation, and sustainable service delivery within Islamic religious tourism. Furthermore, sustainability has rarely been embedded within NOSS-based competency frameworks, which remain primarily focused on occupational standards and religious practices while giving comparatively limited attention to digital transformation, innovation, lifelong learning, workforce resilience, and adaptive professional capability.

Methodologically, previous studies have predominantly adopted descriptive approaches centred on pilgrimage experiences or tourism services, whereas systematic analyses of competency structures within occupational training

modules remain scarce. Consequently, empirical evidence regarding the adequacy of existing NOSS-based mutawwif competency modules in addressing emerging industry requirements is still limited.

These conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and practical gaps highlight the need for a more comprehensive competency framework capable of responding to contemporary industry challenges. Accordingly, this study develops the Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) by integrating Human Capital Theory, Service-Dominant Logic, competency-based TVET principles, and sustainable human capital development. The proposed model comprises five interrelated competency domains—religious, operational, digital, communication, and adaptive competencies—that collectively provide a holistic framework for curriculum enhancement, workforce sustainability, and the professionalisation of *mutawwif* within the contemporary Islamic tourism industry.

Table 1. Summary of Research Gaps and Research Contributions

Previous Studies	Main Focus	Identified Gap	Contribution of This Study
TVET Competency Studies (Mulder, 2017; Noe, 2020)	Generic competency development	No application to Islamic tourism and mutawwif profession	Extends competency-based TVET into the umrah industry
Islamic Tourism Studies (Timothy & Olsen, 2006; Henderson, 2011)	Pilgrimage experience and destination management	Limited emphasis on workforce competency	Focuses on professional competency development of mutawwif
Halal Tourism Studies (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Hanafiah et al., 2022)	Service quality and customer satisfaction	No integrated competency framework	Develops a multidimensional competency model
NOSS-Based Studies (JPK, 2016)	Occupational standards and competency units	Limited integration of digital, communication, adaptive and sustainability competencies	Enhances NOSS through an Industry-Responsive Competency Model
Sustainable Human Capital Studies	Sustainable workforce development	Limited application within Islamic religious tourism	Integrates sustainable human capital principles into mutawwif competency development

Source: Developed by the Authors based on literature synthesis (2026).

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory (HCT), introduced by Gary S. Becker (1964, revised 1993), posits that education, training, and competency development constitute strategic investments that enhance individual productivity, organisational performance, and long-term economic growth. The theory assumes that knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through structured learning increase workers' capability to perform effectively and generate value within their respective professions. Unlike traditional labour theories that primarily regard labour as a production factor, Human Capital Theory conceptualises workforce competency as an intangible organisational asset capable of creating sustainable competitive advantage.

Within the context of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Human Capital Theory provides the theoretical foundation for competency-based education by emphasising the systematic development of knowledge, technical skills, attitudes, and professional behaviours required by industry. Competency development therefore

represents a long-term investment that strengthens employability, improves workplace performance, and enhances organisational competitiveness (Mulder, 2017; Noe, 2020).

In the contemporary umrah industry, Human Capital Theory suggests that investment in the competency development of *mutawwif* contributes directly to service quality, operational effectiveness, pilgrim satisfaction, and organisational sustainability. As the responsibilities of *mutawwif* continue to expand beyond religious guidance towards operational coordination, customer service, and digital service delivery, competency development becomes increasingly important in ensuring workforce resilience and sustainable professional practice.

Nevertheless, traditional Human Capital Theory primarily emphasises productivity and economic returns. In contrast, contemporary service industries require competency frameworks that also foster adaptability, digital capability, ethical professionalism, lifelong learning, and organisational resilience. Accordingly, this study extends Human Capital Theory by integrating sustainable human capital principles to explain how multidimensional competencies contribute not only to workforce productivity but also to long-term organisational sustainability within the umrah industry.

Service-Dominant Logic

Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), developed by Stephen L. Vargo and Robert F. Lusch (2004; 2014), provides a complementary theoretical perspective by conceptualising service as the fundamental basis of value creation. Unlike traditional goods-centred perspectives, SDL argues that value is co-created through interaction between service providers and customers rather than being embedded solely within products or services.

This perspective is particularly relevant to the umrah industry, where the quality of pilgrimage experiences depends heavily on continuous interaction between *mutawwif* and pilgrims throughout the pilgrimage journey. The role of *mutawwif* extends beyond delivering religious instruction to facilitating spiritual experiences, managing operational activities, resolving unexpected problems, coordinating logistics, and providing emotional support. In this regard, value co-creation contributes not only to enhanced pilgrim experiences but also to sustainable service delivery by strengthening trust, organisational reputation, and long-term stakeholder relationships.

Within this framework, competencies such as communication, adaptive problem-solving, digital capability, cultural sensitivity, and customer relationship management become equally important alongside religious knowledge. SDL therefore complements Human Capital Theory by explaining how workforce competency contributes not only to productivity but also to service quality, customer satisfaction, and value co-creation.

Accordingly, this study adopts Service-Dominant Logic to explain why competency development for *mutawwif* should extend beyond ritual proficiency towards multidimensional professional competencies capable of enhancing both organisational performance and pilgrim experience within the contemporary Islamic tourism industry.

Integration of Human Capital Theory and Service-Dominant Logic

Although Human Capital Theory and Service-Dominant Logic originate from different disciplinary traditions, both theories provide complementary explanations for competency development within the contemporary umrah industry. Human Capital Theory explains why competency development should be regarded as a strategic investment in workforce capability, whereas Service-Dominant Logic explains how these competencies create value through service interactions and customer experiences.

The integration of these theories provides a comprehensive theoretical foundation for the development of the Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM). Human Capital Theory supports the systematic development of professional competencies through competency-based TVET, while Service-Dominant Logic emphasises the application of these competencies in delivering high-quality, value-creating services. Together, these theories justify the integration of religious, operational, digital, communication, and adaptive competencies as essential components of sustainable professional development for *mutawwif*.

The integration of Human Capital Theory and Service-Dominant Logic enables this study to conceptualise competency development from both organisational and service perspectives. While Human Capital Theory explains competency as a strategic investment that enhances workforce capability, Service-Dominant Logic explains how these competencies generate value through service interaction and customer experience. Together, these perspectives provide a robust theoretical foundation for developing a competency model that simultaneously supports workforce excellence, service quality, and sustainable human capital development.

Conceptual Framework

Development of the Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM)

Drawing upon Human Capital Theory, Service-Dominant Logic, competency-based TVET principles, and the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS), this study proposes the Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) as a multidimensional framework for competency development within the contemporary umrah industry.

The conceptual framework assumes that rapid changes in the umrah industry—including digital transformation, increasing service expectations, operational complexity, and sustainability requirements—necessitate a competency framework that extends beyond traditional religious instruction. Existing NOSS-based modules provide a strong foundation in religious competency but require enhancement to accommodate emerging industry demands.

Accordingly, the proposed IRMCM consists of five interrelated competency domains:

1. **Religious Competency** : mastery of Islamic knowledge, fiqh of umrah, ritual guidance, and ethical professionalism.
2. **Operational Competency** : management of pilgrimage operations, logistics coordination, documentation, customer service, and organisational procedures.
3. **Digital Competency** : effective utilisation of digital platforms, e-visa systems, travel management technologies, mobile applications, and digital communication tools.
4. **Communication Competency** : interpersonal communication, intercultural interaction, conflict resolution, counselling, and relationship management.
5. **Adaptive Competency** : critical thinking, decision-making, crisis management, resilience, innovation, and continuous professional learning.

These competency domains collectively contribute to the development of industry-ready *mutawwif* capable of responding effectively to evolving workplace challenges while maintaining religious integrity and delivering high-quality service experiences.

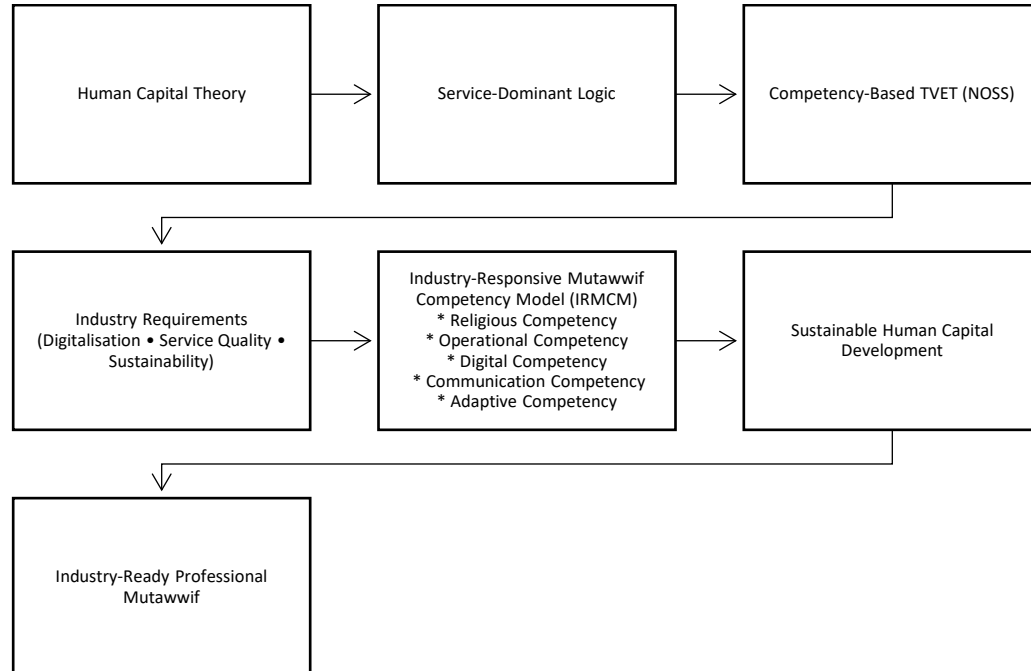


Figure 1. Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed by the Authors based on Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993), Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2014), and the National Occupational Skills Standard (JPK, 2016).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM). The model demonstrates the integration of Human Capital Theory, Service-Dominant Logic, competency-based TVET principles, and contemporary industry requirements in producing five interrelated competency domains that collectively contribute to sustainable human capital development and the preparation of industry-ready Mutawwif

The conceptual framework further proposes that competency development is influenced by contemporary industry requirements and implemented through competency-based TVET using the NOSS framework. The resulting competencies contribute to sustainable human capital development, improved service quality, enhanced organisational performance, and the professionalisation of *mutawwif* within the Islamic tourism industry.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using document analysis as the primary research method. Qualitative document analysis is particularly appropriate for investigating structured educational and policy documents because it enables researchers to systematically examine textual content, identify recurring patterns, and interpret the underlying meanings embedded within documentary sources (Bowen, 2009). Unlike quantitative approaches that measure relationships among variables, document analysis facilitates an in-depth understanding of competency structures, curriculum design, and occupational standards within their organisational and industrial contexts.

The qualitative approach was selected because the primary objective of this study was not to evaluate the effectiveness of training implementation but rather to critically examine the structure, content, and competency orientation of existing NOSS-based mutawwif training modules. Through systematic document analysis, the study sought to identify competency strengths, competency gaps, and opportunities for curriculum enhancement in response to the evolving requirements of the contemporary umrah industry.

The study further adopts an interpretivist perspective, recognising that competency frameworks are socially and institutionally constructed through educational policies, occupational standards, and industry expectations. Consequently, the analysis focuses on understanding how competency is conceptualised within existing training documents and how these competencies correspond with emerging workforce requirements.

Research Philosophy

This study is underpinned by the interpretivist research paradigm, which assumes that social reality is constructed through human interpretation rather than existing as an objective phenomenon. Within competency research, interpretivism allows researchers to explore how competency standards are represented, interpreted, and embedded within curriculum documents and occupational frameworks.

The interpretivist approach is particularly appropriate because competency development cannot be understood solely through measurable outcomes but requires interpretation of the meanings, intentions, and assumptions embedded within competency documents. Therefore, this philosophical stance supports the exploration of competency structures beyond their explicit content by considering their relevance to contemporary industry practices and sustainable workforce development.

Data Sources and Sampling

This study employed purposive sampling to select documentary sources that were directly relevant to mutawwif competency development within Malaysia's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the selected documents constitute the principal references governing competency standards and curriculum implementation within the Malaysian umrah training ecosystem. The documentary sources analysed included:

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Table 2. Documentary Sources Used in the Study

Document	Purpose
National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) – Pengurusan Mutawwif Umrah dan Ziarah Level 3	Primary competency standard
National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) – Pengurusan Mutawwif Umrah dan Ziarah Level 4	Advanced competency standard
Work Instruction Modules (WIM)	Curriculum and competency implementation
Industry operational guidelines	Industry competency requirements
Relevant government policy documents	TVET and workforce development policies
Relevant scholarly literature	Theoretical and industry validation

Source: Developed by the Authors (2026).

Level 3 and Level 4 modules were purposively selected because they represent the complete occupational competency pathway for practising mutawwif under the Malaysian Skills Certification framework. Together, these modules encompass both foundational religious competencies and advanced operational responsibilities required within the umrah industry. A total of six categories of documentary sources comprising 18 individual documents were analysed.

Table 3. Documentary Sample Size

Documents	Sample
NOSS Level 3	1
NOSS Level 4	1
WIM Level 3	5
WIM Level 4	5
Policy Documents	3
Journal Articles/Industry Reports	3
Total	18 documents

Source: Developed by the Authors (2026).

The selected documentary sample was considered adequate because qualitative document analysis prioritises information richness rather than numerical representativeness. The selected documents constitute the principal references governing competency development for mutawwif within the Malaysian TVET system. Data collection ceased when documentary saturation was achieved, whereby no substantially new competency themes emerged from additional documents.

Data Collection Procedures

Document collection was conducted through systematic identification and selection of official competency documents, curriculum materials, policy documents, and industry references relevant to mutawwif competency development.

The data collection process consisted of four sequential stages:

- Identification of relevant documents.
- Screening documents based on research objectives.
- Organisation and classification of documentary sources.
- Preparation of documents for qualitative analysis.

Only documents directly related to competency development, occupational standards, curriculum structure, and industry requirements were included in the analysis. Documents unrelated to competency development or lacking sufficient relevance were excluded.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using an integrated approach combining qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. Initially, content analysis was conducted to examine the structural characteristics of the selected competency documents, including competency units, learning outcomes, work activities, knowledge requirements, skills requirements, and assessment criteria. This analysis enabled systematic mapping of competency elements against industry expectations. Subsequently, thematic analysis following the six-step framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was undertaken to identify recurring competency themes. The analytical procedure consisted of:

- a. Familiarisation with documentary data.
- b. Initial coding.
- c. Searching for themes.
- d. Reviewing themes.
- e. Defining and naming themes.
- f. Producing the final analytical interpretation.

The integration of content analysis and thematic analysis enabled both structural examination and interpretive understanding of competency development within the existing NOSS framework.

Trustworthiness

To enhance the quality and credibility of the findings, this study adopted the trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Table 4. Trustworthiness Criteria Applied in the Study

Criterion	Technique Applied
Credibility	Data triangulation across multiple documentary sources
Dependability	Systematic documentation of coding procedures
Confirmability	Audit trail and continuous analytical review
Transferability	Rich description of competency structures and research context

Source: Adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985); developed by the Authors (2026).

These procedures strengthened the reliability of the analytical process and ensured that the findings were grounded in the documentary evidence.

Mitigation of Internal Bias

As this study employed qualitative document analysis, several strategies were implemented to minimise internal bias during data collection and interpretation. First, data triangulation was undertaken by analysing multiple documentary sources, including the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS), Work Instruction Modules (WIM), government policy documents, operational guidelines, and scholarly publications. Comparing evidence across different documents reduced dependence on a single source and enhanced analytical consistency. Second, a structured coding framework based on Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis was consistently applied throughout the analysis to minimise subjective interpretation. Third, an audit trail documenting coding decisions, theme refinement, and analytical procedures was maintained to ensure transparency and replicability. Fourth, theoretical triangulation was employed by interpreting findings through Human Capital Theory, Service-Dominant Logic, and competency-based TVET principles. Finally, the researchers continuously compared emerging findings with documentary evidence to avoid confirmation bias and ensure that interpretations remained grounded in the analysed data. These procedures collectively strengthened the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and trustworthiness of the research findings.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was not required because this study relied exclusively on publicly available documentary sources and official competency documents. Nevertheless, ethical research practices were maintained throughout the study by ensuring accurate interpretation of documentary evidence, appropriate acknowledgement of all documentary sources, and faithful representation of the analysed competency frameworks.

Results

Structural Analysis of NOSS-Based Mutawwif Competency Modules

The structural analysis demonstrates that both Level 3 and Level 4 NOSS-based mutawwif competency modules are systematically organised according to the principles of Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET). Each competency unit consists of clearly defined competency standards, work activities, learning outcomes, knowledge requirements, skills requirements, attitude components, and assessment criteria, reflecting the standardised framework established by the Department of Skills Development Malaysia (Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran, 2016).

The analysis further indicates that Level 3 modules primarily emphasise foundational religious knowledge and ritual competency, whereas Level 4 modules progressively incorporate operational and managerial responsibilities associated with professional umrah services. This progression illustrates a competency continuum that supports the gradual development of occupational capability.

Nevertheless, structural consistency does not necessarily indicate competency completeness. Although the competency units are systematically organised, the content analysis suggests that several emerging competency domains required by the contemporary umrah industry remain insufficiently represented.

Table 5. Structural Characteristics of NOSS-Based Mutawwif Competency Modules

Component	Level 3	Level 4
Religious Competency	High	High
Operational Competency	Moderate	High
Digital Competency	Very Limited	Limited
Communication Competency	Limited	Moderate
Adaptive Competency	Limited	Limited

Source: Developed by the Authors based on document analysis of NOSS Level 3 and Level 4 (2026).

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis identified five major competency domains embedded within the analysed documents.

Theme 1: Religious Competency

Religious competency emerged as the dominant theme across both competency levels. The modules consistently emphasise Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), ritual guidance, worship management, ethical conduct, and spiritual development. These competencies constitute the fundamental professional identity of *mutawwif*.

Theme 2: Operational Competency

Operational competency becomes increasingly prominent in Level 4 modules. The analysis identified competency elements related to logistics coordination, pilgrimage management, documentation, customer welfare, transportation management, accommodation coordination, and programme implementation.

Theme 3: Digital Competency

Digital competency received comparatively limited attention. Although the contemporary umrah industry increasingly depends upon electronic visa processing, digital travel platforms, mobile applications, and integrated information systems, these competencies are only minimally represented within existing training modules.

Theme 4: Communication Competency

Professional communication competencies were identified in several competency units; however, the emphasis remains relatively limited. The modules contain little structured training concerning intercultural communication, customer relationship management, negotiation, counselling, or conflict resolution.

Theme 5: Adaptive Competency

Adaptive competency represents the least developed competency domain. Few competency elements address crisis management, emergency response, critical thinking, innovation, organisational resilience, or decision-making under uncertain operational conditions.

Competency Gap Analysis

A comparative analysis between existing NOSS competency modules and contemporary industry requirements identified several competency gaps.

Table 6. Competency Gap Analysis

Competency Domain	Existing NOSS	Industry Requirement	Gap
Religious	Strong	Strong	Low
Operational	Moderate	High	Moderate
Digital	Low	Very High	High
Communication	Moderate	High	Moderate
Adaptive	Low	High	High

Source: Developed by the Authors based on thematic analysis of documentary data (2026).

The analysis indicates that while religious competency remains comprehensive, substantial deficiencies exist in digital capability, adaptive competency, and professional communication.

Development of the Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM)

Religious Competency

Religious competency remains the foundational component of the proposed IRMCM because the primary responsibility of a mutawwif is to provide accurate religious guidance throughout the pilgrimage journey. The document analysis demonstrates that existing NOSS competency modules strongly emphasise fiqh of umrah, ritual guidance, ethical conduct, and spiritual leadership. These competencies preserve the authenticity of Islamic teachings while ensuring that pilgrims receive appropriate religious assistance. Consequently, religious competency forms the core upon which all other professional competencies are integrated.

Operational Competency

Operational competency addresses the expanding managerial responsibilities of contemporary mutawwif. Beyond religious guidance, mutawwif are increasingly responsible for pilgrimage logistics, documentation, accommodation, transportation, emergency coordination, customer welfare, and programme implementation. The findings indicate that strengthening operational competency improves organisational effectiveness, service consistency, and workforce readiness, thereby enhancing the overall quality of umrah operations.

Digital Competency

Digital competency emerged as one of the most significant competency gaps identified in the document analysis. Contemporary umrah management increasingly depends upon digital platforms, electronic visa systems, mobile applications, cloud-based information systems, and online communication technologies. Consequently, future competency modules should incorporate digital literacy to enable mutawwif to utilise technology effectively, improve operational efficiency, and support digital transformation within the Islamic tourism industry.

Communication Competency

Communication competency extends beyond interpersonal interaction by encompassing intercultural communication, counselling, negotiation, conflict resolution, multilingual communication, and customer relationship management. Given the increasingly international nature of the umrah industry, effective communication enables mutawwif to provide high-quality services while strengthening pilgrim confidence, satisfaction, and value co-creation throughout the pilgrimage experience.

Adaptive Competency

Adaptive competency represents the capability of mutawwif to respond effectively to uncertain operational situations through critical thinking, crisis management, innovation, emotional resilience, and continuous professional learning. As operational environments become increasingly dynamic, adaptive competency enables mutawwif to make informed decisions while maintaining service continuity, organisational resilience, and professional judgement. Collectively, these five competency domains constitute the foundation of the proposed Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM).

Discussion

Competency-Based TVET and Sustainable Workforce Development

The findings indicate that existing NOSS-based mutawwif competency modules successfully establish a structured competency framework aligned with Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET). This finding supports the proposition of Human Capital Theory that structured competency development enhances workforce capability and organisational performance (Becker, 1993; Mulder, 2017). However, competency development within the contemporary umrah industry should extend beyond occupational compliance towards sustainable workforce development capable of responding to rapid technological advancement and evolving service expectations.

The findings also demonstrate that current modules place considerable emphasis on religious competency while comparatively underrepresenting digital capability and adaptive competency. Such imbalance may reduce workforce readiness within an increasingly technology-driven service environment.

These findings contribute directly to sustainable workforce development by demonstrating that competency-based TVET provides a systematic mechanism for producing industry-ready mutawwif capable of adapting to technological change and evolving service expectations. Strengthening competency standards beyond traditional occupational requirements enhances workforce resilience, lifelong learning, and employability, thereby ensuring that human capital development remains sustainable over time. The proposed competency enhancement supports long-term sustainability through continuous curriculum improvement, competency standard revision, and the integration of future-oriented competencies that enable the umrah workforce to remain relevant within an increasingly dynamic service environment.

Human Capital Development in Islamic Tourism

The findings extend Human Capital Theory by demonstrating that competency investment within the umrah industry encompasses not only technical capability but also sustainable professional development. Contemporary *mutawwif* are expected to integrate religious expertise with operational management, communication, digital literacy, and adaptive decision-making to maintain service quality and organisational competitiveness.

This multidimensional competency profile reflects broader developments in sustainable human capital, where employability depends upon continuous competency enhancement rather than static occupational qualifications.

From a sustainable development perspective, these findings demonstrate that investment in human capital should extend beyond technical competency towards continuous professional growth and adaptive capability. Developing multidimensional competencies enables mutawwif to respond effectively to changing industry requirements while maintaining high standards of religious guidance and professional service. The proposed competency enhancement therefore supports long-term sustainability through workforce adaptability, continuous professional learning, and improved organisational competitiveness within the Islamic tourism sector.

Service-Dominant Logic and Value Co-Creation

The findings further support Service-Dominant Logic by illustrating that service quality within the umrah industry depends largely upon the interaction between *mutawwif* and pilgrims rather than solely upon operational efficiency. Competencies such as communication, emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and adaptive problem-solving facilitate value co-creation throughout the pilgrimage journey.

Consequently, competency development should be viewed not merely as workforce preparation but as an essential mechanism for enhancing customer experience and organisational sustainability.

These findings further reinforce sustainable development by illustrating that value co-creation between mutawwif and pilgrims contributes not only to customer satisfaction but also to organisational sustainability and service excellence. Sustainable service delivery depends upon competent professionals who are capable of building trust, delivering high-

quality experiences, and maintaining long-term stakeholder relationships. Consequently, strengthening communication, digital capability, and adaptive competency contributes to the sustainability of Islamic tourism by improving service quality, organisational resilience, and customer confidence.

Implications for Sustainable Human Capital Development

One important contribution of this study concerns the integration of sustainable human capital development into competency-based TVET. Existing NOSS competency standards provide a strong occupational foundation; however, future competency frameworks should incorporate digital transformation, innovation capability, organisational resilience, lifelong learning, and sustainability-oriented professional practice.

Such competency enhancement supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by improving the quality of competency-based education and Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by strengthening workforce employability and professional capability. Moreover, the integration of digital competency and innovation aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure).

Overall, these findings demonstrate that sustainable human capital development should become a strategic priority in future competency enhancement initiatives. The proposed competency enhancement supports long-term sustainability through digital transformation readiness, innovation capability, lifelong learning, organisational resilience, ethical professionalism, and continuous competency improvement. Collectively, these elements contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 9, and SDG 17) by strengthening competency-based education, workforce employability, technological innovation, and strategic collaboration among government agencies, higher education institutions, and the umrah industry.

Proposed Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCN)

The proposed IRMCN addresses the competency gaps identified through document analysis by integrating five complementary competency domains into a unified framework. Unlike conventional competency models that primarily emphasise religious competency, IRMCN adopts a multidimensional approach that combines religious integrity with operational excellence, digital capability, professional communication, and adaptive competency.

From a theoretical perspective, the model extends Human Capital Theory and Service-Dominant Logic into the context of Islamic tourism and competency-based TVET. From a practical perspective, the model provides strategic guidance for curriculum revision, NOSS enhancement, professional certification, and workforce development within Malaysia's umrah industry.

Beyond its contribution to competency modelling, the proposed Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCN) represents a sustainable workforce development framework capable of supporting long-term industry transformation. By integrating religious integrity, operational excellence, digital capability, communication competency, and adaptive professional skills, the model enhances workforce resilience and organisational sustainability. The findings suggest that continuous competency enhancement is essential for ensuring that the Malaysian umrah industry remains globally competitive while simultaneously supporting sustainable economic growth, quality education, and responsible institutional development.

Comparison with Previous Studies and Future Research Directions

The findings of this study both support and extend previous literature on competency-based Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), sustainable workforce development, and Islamic tourism. Consistent with Mulder (2017), the analysis confirms that competency-based education provides an effective mechanism for integrating knowledge, technical skills, and professional behaviours required by industry. Likewise, the findings reinforce UNESCO (2016), which emphasises that TVET should prepare learners not only for current occupational requirements but also for lifelong learning, employability, and workforce adaptability. The present study further aligns with OECD (2023) by demonstrating that contemporary occupations increasingly require digital literacy, critical thinking, adaptability, and interdisciplinary competencies in addition to technical expertise.

However, this study also identifies several important differences from previous competency frameworks. While conventional TVET literature primarily focuses on generic occupational competencies, the findings demonstrate that the mutawwif profession requires a unique integration of religious competency, operational management, digital capability, communication skills, and adaptive decision-making. Existing NOSS competency standards provide strong coverage of religious knowledge but place comparatively limited emphasis on digital transformation, crisis management, intercultural communication, and innovation. This finding suggests that traditional competency

frameworks are no longer sufficient to address the evolving operational complexity of the contemporary umrah industry.

The findings are also consistent with studies by Battour and Ismail (2016) and Hanafiah et al. (2022), which highlight the importance of service quality, customer satisfaction, and professionalism within halal tourism. Nevertheless, those studies primarily examine tourism experiences and customer perceptions, whereas the present study shifts the analytical focus towards workforce competency development. Consequently, this study extends previous Islamic tourism literature by proposing a competency-based framework that directly links professional capability with sustainable service delivery, organisational resilience, and long-term workforce development.

A further contribution of this study lies in integrating Human Capital Theory, Service-Dominant Logic, and competency-based TVET within a single conceptual framework. Previous studies generally discuss these perspectives independently, whereas the proposed Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) demonstrates how competency investment creates value not only through workforce productivity but also through service excellence, customer value co-creation, organisational sustainability, and sustainable human capital development.

Despite these contributions, several opportunities remain for future research. The proposed IRMCM is currently based on qualitative document analysis and therefore requires empirical validation involving industry practitioners, training institutions, policymakers, and certified mutawwif. Future studies should employ quantitative approaches such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) or Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to examine the causal relationships among the five competency domains and their effects on workforce performance, service quality, and organisational sustainability. Furthermore, Delphi or Fuzzy Delphi techniques could be utilised to validate competency indicators through expert consensus. Comparative international studies involving Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Brunei, and Türkiye would further strengthen the global applicability of the proposed competency model and contribute to the advancement of sustainable competency development within the Islamic tourism sector.

Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM)

Development of the Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model

The findings of the document analysis revealed that the existing National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS)-based mutawwif competency modules provide a comprehensive foundation in religious knowledge and operational procedures. However, the analysis also identified several competency gaps, particularly in digital capability, professional communication, adaptive problem-solving, and risk management. These findings indicate that the current competency framework requires enhancement to better reflect the evolving demands of the contemporary umrah industry.

Drawing upon the findings of the structural analysis, thematic analysis, Human Capital Theory, Service-Dominant Logic, and competency-based TVET principles, this study proposes the Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM). The model is designed to provide a holistic competency framework that integrates traditional religious competency with contemporary professional competencies required within the Islamic tourism industry.

Unlike conventional competency frameworks that primarily emphasise ritual knowledge and occupational compliance, the IRMCM conceptualises competency as a multidimensional construct that enables mutawwif to perform effectively within increasingly digital, customer-oriented, and service-intensive environments. The model therefore supports sustainable workforce development by preparing mutawwif who are capable of responding to changing industry expectations while maintaining religious integrity and professional excellence.

Components of IRMCM

The proposed model consists of five mutually reinforcing competency domains.

Religious Competency

Religious competency forms the core foundation of the model. It encompasses mastery of Islamic knowledge related to *fiqh* of umrah, *aqidah*, worship practices, ethical conduct, spiritual leadership, and the ability to provide accurate religious guidance throughout the pilgrimage journey. This competency ensures that mutawwif continue to fulfil their primary responsibility as religious guides while preserving the authenticity and integrity of Islamic teachings.

Operational Competency

Operational competency refers to the capability to manage all operational aspects of umrah services, including pilgrimage planning, logistics coordination, documentation, transportation, accommodation, welfare management,

emergency procedures, and organisational administration. This competency reflects the expanding managerial responsibilities of mutawwif within contemporary umrah operations.

Digital Competency

Digital competency represents one of the most significant additions to the proposed model. Contemporary umrah services increasingly depend upon digital platforms, electronic visa systems, mobile applications, cloud-based information systems, digital documentation, and online communication. Consequently, mutawwif must possess sufficient digital literacy to utilise these technologies effectively while ensuring efficient service delivery and operational coordination.

Communication Competency

Communication competency encompasses interpersonal communication, intercultural interaction, conflict management, counselling, negotiation, customer relationship management, and multilingual communication. Considering that umrah pilgrims originate from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, effective communication becomes essential in ensuring customer satisfaction and enhancing the overall pilgrimage experience.

Adaptive Competency

Adaptive competency refers to the ability to respond effectively to changing operational circumstances through critical thinking, problem-solving, crisis management, innovation, emotional resilience, and continuous learning. Given the complexity of contemporary umrah operations, adaptive competency enables mutawwif to manage unforeseen situations while maintaining service continuity and professional judgement.

Integration of Competency Domains

Although each competency domain performs a distinct function, the model assumes that professional performance can only be achieved through the integration of all five competencies. Although each competency domain performs a distinct professional function, the proposed Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) assumes that effective professional performance can only be achieved through the integration of all five competencies.

Religious competency provides the ethical and spiritual foundation for professional practice, while operational competency enables effective management of pilgrimage activities and organisational responsibilities. Digital competency enhances operational efficiency through the effective utilisation of contemporary technologies, including electronic documentation, digital communication, and integrated pilgrimage management systems.

Communication competency facilitates interpersonal interaction, intercultural understanding, conflict resolution, and value co-creation between mutawwif and pilgrims. Adaptive competency complements the other competency domains by strengthening resilience, innovation, critical thinking, and crisis management capabilities required in increasingly complex operational environments.

Rather than functioning independently, these competencies interact dynamically to produce a balanced professional profile capable of meeting occupational standards while responding effectively to contemporary industry expectations. This integrated competency structure represents the principal contribution of the proposed IRMCM towards strengthening sustainable workforce capability within the Islamic tourism sector.

Relationship between IRMCM and Sustainable Human Capital Development

The IRMCM extends beyond occupational competency by positioning competency development as a strategic mechanism for sustainable human capital development within the Islamic tourism industry. The model supports sustainable workforce development through.

The Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) extends beyond traditional occupational competency by positioning competency development as a strategic mechanism for sustainable human capital development within the Islamic tourism industry. Continuous competency enhancement enables mutawwif to maintain professional relevance through lifelong learning, digital transformation readiness, organisational adaptability, and customer-centred service delivery.

Ethical professionalism, innovation capability, and workforce resilience further strengthen the long-term sustainability of the profession by enabling practitioners to respond effectively to evolving industry demands and technological advancement. Consequently, the proposed competency model contributes directly to organisational competitiveness while supporting national workforce development initiatives.

The model also aligns closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by strengthening competency-based education (SDG 4), promoting decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), enhancing innovation and digital capability (SDG 9), and encouraging collaboration among higher education institutions, government agencies, training providers, and industry stakeholders (SDG 17).

Through this multidimensional approach, the IRMCM provides a sustainable framework for preparing future-ready mutawwif capable of delivering high-quality professional services within the contemporary umrah industry.

Accordingly, the model contributes directly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (Quality Education) by strengthening competency-based education, SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by improving workforce capability and employability, and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) through the integration of digital competency and innovation into professional practice.

Practical Implications of the IRMCM

The proposed model provides practical guidance for multiple stakeholders.

- For the **Department of Skills Development (JPK)**, the model offers strategic direction for reviewing and enhancing future editions of the National Occupational Skills Standard.
- For **training institutions**, the model provides a framework for curriculum redesign and competency-based instructional planning.
- For **umrah agencies**, the model establishes competency benchmarks for recruitment, professional development, and performance evaluation.
- For **mutawwif**, the model offers a structured competency pathway that supports continuous professional development and career sustainability.

Implications For Sustainable Development

The findings of this study have significant implications for sustainable development, particularly in strengthening sustainable human capital within the Islamic tourism industry. As the global umrah sector continues to expand through technological advancement, increasing service expectations, and greater operational complexity, the sustainability of the industry increasingly depends on the availability of competent professionals capable of delivering high-quality, ethical, and customer-oriented services. Accordingly, competency development should be viewed not merely as occupational preparation but as a strategic investment in developing a resilient, innovative, and future-ready workforce.

The proposed Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) contributes to sustainable workforce development by integrating religious competency with operational capability, digital literacy, communication skills, and adaptive professional behaviour. This multidimensional competency framework supports lifelong learning, continuous professional development, and workforce adaptability, thereby enhancing both individual employability and organisational competitiveness within the contemporary umrah industry.

From a policy perspective, the findings provide evidence for the continuous enhancement of Malaysia's National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) and competency-based TVET curriculum to ensure alignment with emerging industrial needs. The integration of sustainability-oriented competencies into competency standards may strengthen workforce resilience while promoting innovation, service excellence, and digital transformation across the Islamic tourism sector.

The proposed model also contributes directly to the achievement of several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). First, it supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) by enhancing competency-based education through curriculum improvement and lifelong learning. Second, it contributes to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by strengthening workforce capability, employability, and professional standards within the umrah industry. Third, the incorporation of digital competency and innovation aligns with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) by preparing professionals to operate effectively within digitally enabled tourism ecosystems. Finally, collaboration among government agencies, training institutions, higher education providers, and industry stakeholders reflects the aspirations of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) in promoting sustainable workforce development.

Collectively, these contributions demonstrate that competency enhancement extends beyond improving individual performance to strengthening organisational sustainability, service quality, and the long-term competitiveness of the Islamic tourism industry.

Conclusion

This study examined the structure and content of NOSS-based mutawwif competency modules within the Malaysian TVET framework to determine their responsiveness to the evolving needs of the contemporary umrah industry. The findings indicate that although the existing modules provide a comprehensive foundation in religious knowledge and competency-based training, they remain predominantly oriented towards traditional religious competencies and provide comparatively limited emphasis on digital capability, operational management, professional communication, and adaptive competency.

Through qualitative document analysis, the study identified five essential competency domains required by contemporary mutawwif, namely religious, operational, digital, communication, and adaptive competencies. Based on these findings, the study developed the Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) as a multidimensional competency framework that integrates Human Capital Theory, Service-Dominant Logic, competency-based TVET principles, and sustainable human capital development.

Theoretically, this study extends existing competency literature by integrating Human Capital Theory and Service-Dominant Logic within the context of Islamic religious tourism, an area that has received limited scholarly attention. Practically, the proposed model provides strategic guidance for curriculum enhancement, competency standard revision, professional certification, and workforce development for mutawwif operating within increasingly complex service environments.

The conclusions presented in this study were derived through a systematic comparison of evidence obtained from multiple documentary sources rather than relying on a single document. The researchers continuously compared findings across competency standards, curriculum documents, policy documents, and industry literature to ensure analytical consistency. The use of thematic analysis, supported by structured coding procedures and theoretical triangulation, reduced the influence of researcher subjectivity. Furthermore, conclusions were interpreted within the perspectives of Human Capital Theory and Service-Dominant Logic, ensuring that the proposed competency model was supported by both empirical documentary evidence and established theoretical foundations. Consequently, the findings represent an evidence-based interpretation of existing competency structures and provide reliable recommendations for curriculum enhancement and sustainable workforce development.

From a broader sustainable development perspective, this study demonstrates that strengthening mutawwif competency is not merely an educational initiative but a strategic investment in sustainable human capital. The proposed Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) contributes to the development of a resilient, adaptive, and future-ready workforce capable of responding to technological transformation, increasing service expectations, and global industry challenges. Consequently, the findings support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals by enhancing competency-based education (SDG 4), promoting decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), strengthening innovation and digital capability (SDG 9), and encouraging collaborative partnerships among higher education institutions, government agencies, and the umrah industry (SDG 17).

Overall, the study demonstrates that sustainable competency development represents an essential strategy for strengthening workforce capability, improving service quality, and enhancing the global competitiveness of Malaysia's umrah industry. The proposed IRMCM therefore provides an important foundation for future competency development initiatives within the Islamic tourism sector.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the study relied exclusively on qualitative document analysis. Although this approach enabled a systematic examination of competency structures embedded within NOSS documents and related materials, it did not capture the practical experiences and perceptions of mutawwif, trainers, employers, or pilgrims.

Second, the analysis focused primarily on Malaysian competency standards, particularly the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) for Mutawwif Level 3 and Level 4. Consequently, the findings may not fully represent competency frameworks adopted in other countries with different regulatory environments and operational practices.

Third, the proposed Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM) remains conceptual and has not yet been empirically validated through field investigations involving industry practitioners or competency experts.

Finally, although the study incorporated sustainable human capital development as a guiding perspective, the relationship between competency enhancement and measurable organisational performance or service outcomes was

beyond the scope of the present research. Despite these limitations, the study provides a comprehensive conceptual foundation for future empirical research on competency development within the Islamic tourism industry.

Future Research

Future studies should extend the present research through empirical validation of the proposed Industry-Responsive Mutawwif Competency Model (IRMCM). Quantitative approaches, including Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) or Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), may be employed to examine the relationships among competency domains and their influence on workforce performance, service quality, and organisational outcomes.

Further research may also utilise expert consensus techniques such as the Delphi Method or Fuzzy Delphi Method to validate the competency indicators proposed in the IRMCM. Such approaches would strengthen the content validity of the competency framework and facilitate its adoption within competency-based curriculum development.

Comparative studies involving different countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Brunei, and Türkiye, would provide valuable insights into international competency practices and enable benchmarking of Malaysian mutawwif competency standards against global best practices. Future investigations should also incorporate multiple stakeholder perspectives, including mutawwif, training providers, umrah agencies, policymakers, and pilgrims, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of competency requirements across the entire service ecosystem.

Finally, longitudinal studies are recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing the IRMCM within TVET institutions and to examine its long-term contribution to sustainable workforce development, organisational competitiveness, and the advancement of Islamic tourism.

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