

# Religiosity, Halal Tourism Meaning, and Visit Intention: A Phenomenological Study of Muslim Tourists

*Religiosity, Halal  
Tourism Meaning, and  
Visit Intention*

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## ABSTRACT

*Halal tourism is booming as Muslim travelers increasingly seek trips that honor their faith without compromise. This study aims to analyze the role of religiosity as a mediator in the relationship between the meaning of halal tourism and the intention of Muslim tourists to visit. Using a phenomenological approach, this study explores the subjective experiences of Muslim tourists in understanding the concept of halal tourism. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with Muslim tourists who had visited halal tourism destinations, then analyzed using thematic analysis. The results show that the level of religiosity plays an important role in shaping positive perceptions of halal tourism and strengthening the intention to visit. Tourists with higher levels of religiosity tend to perceive halal tourism not only as a facility that supports worship, but also as part of fulfilling religious values in travel. These findings contribute theoretically to the development of halal tourism marketing by incorporating religiosity as a key factor. Practically, the research results can be a reference for managers and developers of halal tourism destinations in designing marketing and destination development strategies that are more in line with the needs of Muslim tourists.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry is undergoing rapid transformation, with halal tourism emerging as one of the most dynamic segments. This growth is driven by the expanding Muslim population and their increasing mobility, positioning halal tourism as a strategic market rather than a niche. Recent industry reports indicate that international Muslim arrivals reached 176 million in 2024 and are projected to grow substantially by 2030 (Mastercard, 2025). This expansion creates significant opportunities for destinations and businesses capable of addressing the specific needs and values of Muslim travelers.

Halal tourism extends beyond the provision of halal food and prayer facilities to encompass a holistic travel experience aligned with Islamic principles, offering spiritual comfort, ethical assurance, and faith-consistent services (Vanany et al., 2020; Arachchi & Samarasinghe, 2023). Consequently, Muslim travelers increasingly seek destinations that not only comply with halal standards but also resonate with their religious identity and personal values. Despite the growing relevance of halal tourism, much of the existing literature remains supply-oriented, emphasizing infrastructure development, certification, destination readiness, and economic performance (Khalek et al., 2023). While these studies provide important managerial insights, they pay limited attention to how Muslim tourists themselves experience, interpret, and emotionally engage with halal tourism offerings.

Most earlier research focuses on external factors like destination features, price, or service quality. However, for Muslim tourists, these things mix closely with their religious

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beliefs and personal values (Rahman et al., 2020). Religiosity, which means how deeply a person follows and lives by their faith, acts as an important internal factor. It shapes how people see and give meaning to halal tourism. According to Wibowo (2023), religiosity is not just a background detail; it works as a lens that changes how Muslim travelers understand halal attributes and decide on their travel plans. Yet, few studies explore this meaning-making process from the tourists' own point of view. There is little qualitative work that looks into personal experiences and how religiosity influences the link between halal attributes and the intention to visit a place.

This study fills that gap by using a phenomenological approach. It focuses on the lived experiences of Muslim tourists who have visited halal destinations. Through in-depth interviews, the research explores how they understand halal tourism and how their level of religiosity shapes that understanding. The study's main aim is to examine the role of religiosity as a mediator in the relationship between the meaning of halal tourism and Muslim tourists' intention to visit. Unlike quantitative studies that test direct effects, this qualitative work seeks to uncover the essence of these experiences. It looks at subjective views, emotions, and personal stories to build a richer picture (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015).

The findings can help in two ways. First, they add to theory by bringing spiritual and psychological elements into tourism marketing models, especially for faith-based segments. Second, they give practical ideas for tourism managers and policymakers. Instead of just adding basic halal facilities, destinations can create more genuine experiences that touch on spiritual needs, such as inner peace or a stronger faith connection. This approach can make halal tourism more attractive and sustainable in a competitive global market (Utomo et al., 2024).

In short, halal tourism is no longer a small niche. It has become a key part of global travel. Understanding the deeper role of religiosity in how Muslim tourists interpret and value these experiences is now very important. This research uses a phenomenological lens to provide fresh insights into this growing segment and support better strategies for the industry. This study seeks to explore Muslim tourists' lived experiences and the meanings they attribute to halal tourism, to examine how religiosity shapes their interpretations of halal tourism attributes, and to understand how religiosity mediates the relationship between perceived halal tourism meanings and visit intentions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Religiosity**

Religiosity refers to how much a person follows and lives by their religious beliefs and practices. In marketing and consumer behavior, it is seen as more than just a simple background factor. It strongly shapes values, ethics, and choices, especially for Muslim consumers, where Islam guides many parts of daily life (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019). Scholars divide religiosity into intrinsic and extrinsic types. Intrinsic religiosity means religion is the main goal and motivation in life, while extrinsic sees it as a tool for other benefits like social status (Iflah & Putri, 2019). For Muslim tourists, intrinsic religiosity matters most because it drives the search for travel that matches faith deeply. High religiosity makes people more aware of Islamic rules in all activities, including travel. It works as a filter that helps interpret halal attributes through religious values. According to Eid and El-Gohary (2015), religiosity influences how tourists perceive value and feel satisfied in faith-based contexts. Tourists with strong religiosity often see halal tourism as a way to fulfill religious duties even away from home. This commitment directly affects their travel decisions.

Religiosity also plays a key mediating role. It does not just influence intention to visit on its own; it explains how perceptions of halal attributes turn into stronger desires to visit. For example, positive views of prayer facilities or halal food become more powerful motivators when high religiosity makes these elements feel essential for spiritual well-being. Studies by Rasyid et al. (2019) show that religiosity strengthens the link between halal features and behavioral intentions by adding personal and spiritual meaning. In this

way, religiosity bridges external offerings and internal motivations, making it central to understanding Muslim tourist behavior in halal contexts.

### **Halal Tourism**

Halal tourism means travel services and experiences designed to follow Islamic Sharia principles. It includes certified halal food, easy access to prayer spaces, alcohol-free environments, gender-separated facilities, and entertainment that fits Islamic ethics (Zailani et al., 2016). The segment grows quickly because of the rising Muslim population, higher incomes, and the wish to travel without breaking religious rules (Rahman et al., 2017). Many non-Muslim countries now develop halal-friendly options to attract this market. Past research often examines supply-side aspects like certification standards, infrastructure, and marketing tactics (Sherwani et al., 2018). These studies highlight that basic halal attributes act as a starting point for Muslim tourists to consider a destination. Without them, the place usually loses appeal for this group. However, halal tourism is more than a list of facilities; it involves creating an overall environment that supports faith and brings spiritual comfort.

Halal attributes have a positive effect on intention to visit when tourists see them as reliable and meaningful. The presence of these features builds trust and encourages repeat visits or recommendations (Ting et al., 2017). Yet, the real value comes from how tourists interpret them personally. Positive perceptions of halal offerings lead to stronger travel intentions, especially when the experience feels authentic rather than just meeting minimum standards. This interpretation process makes halal tourism a holistic concept that goes beyond physical items to include emotional and spiritual benefits (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019).

### **Intention to Visit**

Intention to visit is a key idea in tourism studies. It shows how likely a person is to go to a destination again or suggest it to others (Leyva-Hernández et al., 2022; Ferdiyanti et al., 2025). This intention often predicts real behavior and helps measure a place's success in keeping tourists. In general tourism, factors like destination image, service quality, and perceived value shape this intention (Luthfiyah & Salwa, 2019). Researchers see it as the bridge between satisfaction and actual action, making it very useful for planning marketing strategies. For halal tourism, intention to visit includes extra layers tied to religious values. Muslim tourists look for places where they can follow their faith easily and feel respected. High intention usually comes from a sense of spiritual safety and comfort (Shafaei, 2017). When halal attributes match expectations well, satisfaction grows and leads to stronger plans to return. This kind of intention also grows when tourists feel emotionally connected to the destination because it supports their daily religious routines without stress.

Theories like the Theory of Planned Behavior help explain how attitudes, norms, and control affect intentions. In faith-based travel, spiritual alignment adds more depth. Positive experiences that support Islamic identity create emotional bonds and boost loyalty (Permana & Adam, 2024). Intention here reflects not only practical satisfaction but also deeper fulfillment of religious needs, making it a strong sign of long-term appeal in halal tourism. Destinations that manage to build this deeper connection often see higher repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth from the Muslim community.

### **Muslim Tourists and Phenomenological Approach**

Muslim tourists represent a large and growing segment of the global travel market, seeking travel experiences that allow them to maintain Islamic practices comfortably (Hassan et al., 2015). Their preferences typically include halal food, prayer facilities, safety, privacy, and family-friendly environments aligned with Islamic values. Travel motivations among Muslim tourists combine leisure and relaxation with spiritual needs, such as ease of worship and reinforcement of Muslim identity (Isa et al., 2018). Levels of religiosity vary, leading to diverse expectations ranging from strict adherence to more

flexible interpretations (Youssoof et al., 2023). For example, female travelers often prioritize security and modesty-supportive facilities, while others emphasize family bonding or learning about Islamic history. As noted by Al-Ansi and Han (2019), Muslim tourists are a heterogeneous group shaped by cultural background and personal faith. Authentic, respectful services rather than symbolic gestures enhance satisfaction, trust, and loyalty, with small details such as staff awareness of prayer times significantly influencing overall experience.

The phenomenological approach focuses on lived experiences from individuals' perspectives, seeking to understand the essence of a phenomenon through personal meanings and narratives (Prayogo & Febrianita, 2018). Unlike quantitative methods, it emphasizes subjective interpretations, emotions, and sense-making processes, making it especially suitable for faith-based travel contexts. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) enables in-depth exploration of how individuals interpret their experiences while acknowledging the researcher's interpretive role (Quezado et al., 2022). In tourism research, IPA reveals emotional and symbolic meanings that cannot be captured through numerical data. This approach is particularly relevant to halal tourism, where religiosity shapes experiences, and seemingly small elements such as access to prayer spaces carry profound personal significance. According to Musyarofah et al. (2025), phenomenology is effective in uncovering why certain tourism experiences feel meaningful to Muslim tourists, particularly those related to spiritual comfort and identity affirmation.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study adopts a qualitative approach using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore and understand Muslim tourists' lived experiences of halal tourism. IPA allows in-depth examination of how religiosity shapes their interpretations and intentions to visit, focusing on subjective meanings rather than statistical relationships. Guided by an interpretive paradigm, the researcher seeks to understand participants' perspectives while acknowledging their own positionality. The design is exploratory and descriptive, aiming to identify patterns and themes in participants' experiences. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they could provide rich insights into the phenomenon. To be included, individuals had to be Muslim, at least 18 years old, and have had at least one travel experience where they actively sought or used halal tourism services, such as looking for halal food, praying in public facilities, staying in sharia-compliant hotels, or visiting Muslim-friendly destinations. The researcher aimed for variation in age, gender, and self-reported level of religiosity to capture different perspectives. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached, meaning no new major themes appeared in the interviews. The final sample consisted of eight participants who met these criteria.

Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and was conducted one-on-one, either face-to-face in a comfortable setting or online when distance was an issue. An interview guide with open-ended questions was used to cover key areas: participants' experiences with halal tourism, their personal understanding of what "halal tourism" means, the role of religiosity in their travel decisions, emotions they felt during these experiences, and their thoughts about returning to or recommending halal destinations. All interviews were audio-recorded with full consent and transcribed word-for-word. The researcher also took field notes during and after each session to record non-verbal cues and immediate reflections.

The data analysis followed the standard IPA procedure, beginning with repeated reading of each transcript to develop an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences. Descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual notes were generated and transformed into emergent themes for each case, followed by cross-case analysis to identify superordinate themes. The analysis remained grounded in participants' narratives while incorporating interpretive insights. Trustworthiness was ensured through prolonged engagement with the data, a clear audit trail, and verification of interpretations against the original transcripts. Ethical standards were strictly observed. Ethical approval was

obtained prior to data collection, and all participants provided informed consent after receiving a clear explanation of the study's purpose and procedures. Confidentiality was maintained through pseudonyms and secure data storage, and participants retained the right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

## **RESULTS**

### **Lived Experiences and the Meaning of Halal Tourism**

The participants described their encounters with halal tourism as going beyond basic travel arrangements, where the overall journey created a sense of harmony between daily life and faith principles. They explained that finding certified food options or dedicated prayer areas felt like part of a larger framework that supported their well-being during trips. This perspective turned simple facilities into symbols of respect and inclusion, making the travel feel more complete and less stressful. Many noted that these elements helped maintain a consistent lifestyle away from home, reducing any internal conflict about following religious guidelines. Such experiences align with broader patterns in halal tourism where facilities foster emotional security and spiritual comfort for Muslim travelers (Hanafiah & Hamdan, 2020; Han et al., 2019; Aji et al., 2021).

In sharing their stories, the participants highlighted how halal tourism provided emotional security, allowing them to relax fully without constant worry about compliance. They talked about moments when the environment aligned with their expectations, leading to feelings of peace and gratitude. Such experiences reinforced a positive view of the destination as a place that understood their needs deeply. The narratives showed that this alignment contributed to a stronger connection with the trip, turning it into something memorable and spiritually rewarding. This emotional dimension echoes findings that halal environments enhance feelings of gratitude and inner peace among Muslim tourists (Aziz et al., 2020; Al Kautsar et al., 2022).

Another aspect that emerged was the role of authenticity in shaping their perceptions. Participants expressed that when services seemed genuine, rather than just for show, the meaning deepened significantly. They described instances where staff interactions or small details, like clear directions to prayer spaces, added layers of value. This authenticity made the tourism feel like an extension of their personal values, enhancing the overall satisfaction. The accounts suggested that without this genuine approach, even well-equipped places could fall short in creating lasting impressions. Authenticity in service delivery is crucial for deepening the perceived value of halal tourism experiences (Garg & Joshi, 2018; Amalia et al., 2021).

The lived experiences also revealed a holistic view where halal tourism integrated cultural and spiritual elements seamlessly. Participants recounted how activities that respected modesty and family-oriented settings contributed to a sense of belonging. These elements were seen as essential for enjoying the trip without compromising identity. The stories indicated that such integration led to a broader appreciation of the destination, influencing how they remembered and evaluated the journey later on. This holistic integration supports the growing emphasis on cultural and spiritual coherence in Muslim-friendly destinations (Chetioui et al., 2020; Bhutto et al., 2023). Participants described halal tourism as transformative, enriching their spiritual lives and turning ordinary trips into opportunities for reflection and personal growth (Han et al., 2018; Haryono & Albetris, 2022). They also highlighted a communal dimension, noting that traveling with family or friends in halal-compliant environments strengthened social bonds and collective Muslim identity, making the experience meaningful beyond convenience (Chiou, 1998; Ham et al., 2015).

### **Religiosity Shaping Interpretations of Halal Tourism Attributes**

Participants' levels of religious commitment influenced how they viewed halal tourism features like food certification and prayer facilities. Highly observant individuals regarded these attributes as essential extensions of their spiritual routine, scrutinizing even minor details, which intensified their importance in travel decisions (Jeaheng et al., 2020;

Ibrahim et al., 2021). In contrast, moderately observant participants adopted a more flexible approach, valuing convenience and overall atmosphere alongside basic faith considerations, reflecting a balance between practicality and spiritual awareness (Maulina et al., 2021; Hidayah & Widanti, 2023). Religious commitment shaped participants' views of halal tourism features. Highly observant individuals saw them as vital extensions of their spiritual routine, while moderately observant participants valued convenience and overall atmosphere, balancing practicality with faith (Jeaheng et al., 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2021; Maulina et al., 2021; Hidayah & Widanti, 2023).

The shaping process often involved personal reflection, where participants linked attributes to broader religious teachings about purity and respect. They described how seeing compliant services evoked a sense of divine approval, enhancing the attribute's perceived value. This connection made the tourism feel like a faithful choice rather than just a practical one. The accounts highlighted that such reflections deepened the interpretation, turning features into symbols of ethical living during travel. These reflective processes underscore the role of religiosity in transforming halal facilities into symbols of spiritual and ethical alignment (Nassar et al., 2015; Moshin et al., 2020).

Variations in interpretation appeared based on past encounters, where previous positive or negative trips influenced current views through the lens of faith. Participants recalled how earlier experiences built expectations, making them more attuned to authenticity in attributes. This history shaped a cautious or enthusiastic response, depending on how well past alignments matched their beliefs. The stories showed that religiosity amplified these lessons, guiding future evaluations with a spiritual filter. Prior travel experiences, filtered through religiosity, significantly shape ongoing perceptions and expectations toward halal attributes (Pujiastuti, 2020; Karya et al., 2025).

Another layer emerged in how religiosity affected sensitivity to cultural nuances within attributes. Participants noted that faith guided their notice of subtle elements, like staff behavior reflecting modesty or kindness. These details were interpreted as signs of true commitment from the provider, strengthening trust. The narratives indicated that higher religiosity heightened this awareness, leading to richer meanings assigned to the attributes overall. Higher religiosity enhances sensitivity to cultural and interpersonal cues in halal service delivery, fostering deeper trust and meaning (Husin et al., 2016; Farizkhan et al., 2023).

Participants with varying levels of faith explained that strong religiosity made halal attributes like food certification and prayer facilities vital to their spiritual routine, turning ordinary amenities into meaningful supports (Jeaheng et al., 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2021). Those with moderate faith valued these features but focused more on atmosphere, blending practicality with spiritual awareness (Maulina et al., 2021; Hidayah & Widanti, 2023). Religiosity guided participants in linking past experiences and cultural nuances to the interpretation of halal attributes, enhancing trust and ethical alignment. It integrated features into a unified travel narrative, reinforcing dignity and faith preservation, and influenced long-term memory and sharing, sustaining positive evaluations of halal tourism (Husin et al., 2016; Moshin et al., 2020; Tami, 2023; Ramon et al., 2025).

### **Religiosity Mediating the Connection Between Halal Meanings and Visit Intentions**

Participants illustrated that their level of faith mediated the connection between positive interpretations of halal tourism and the intention to revisit or recommend destinations. Those with stronger religiosity reported that meaningful, compliant features enhanced spiritual alignment, making intentions feel natural and internally motivated. Without this mediation, the positive experiences might not translate as effectively into future plans. This role of religiosity aligns with findings that faith strengthens the pathway from experiential meanings to behavioral intentions in halal contexts (Ratnasari et al., 2020; Widjaja et al., 2020).

Religiosity also amplified the impact of feelings such as authenticity and peace, fostering loyalty and reinforcing intentions through spiritual fulfillment. Emotional reinforcement enabled participants to sustain positive interpretations over time, turning

short-term satisfaction into long-term motivations and committed plans. Faith provided a reflective framework that preserved intentions and strengthened their continuity, highlighting religiosity's central role in sustaining revisit and recommendation behaviors among Muslim tourists (Said et al., 2022; Roh et al., 2022; Suseno et al., 2024; Shahzad et al., 2024).

Variations in mediation appeared when comparing different faith intensities, where stronger religiosity led to quicker and firmer intentions based on the same meanings. Participants with moderate levels described a slower build-up, where meanings needed additional practical benefits to solidify plans. This difference highlighted how religiosity adjusted the strength of the connection. The stories emphasized that understanding these variations helped explain diverse responses to similar halal offerings. Variations in religiosity intensity moderate the speed and firmness of intention formation in faith-based tourism decisions (Shin & Hancer, 2016; Xu et al., 2022).

Another aspect was the role of religiosity in overcoming potential barriers, where faith helped reframe minor shortcomings in meaning to maintain positive intentions. Participants explained that a spiritual perspective allowed them to focus on overall alignment rather than flaws. This reframing preserved the link, ensuring intentions remained intact. The accounts showed that such resilience was a direct outcome of religiosity's mediating influence. Religiosity's reframing capacity builds resilience in intentions despite minor service gaps in halal experiences (Pratama et al., 2024; Said et al., 2025).

Participants further described how religiosity extended the connection to social intentions, like recommending to family or community. They noted that faith-based meanings inspired sharing, as the experience felt worth promoting for similar spiritual benefits. This social extension broadened the impact of mediation beyond personal plans. The narratives suggested that this communal aspect strengthened overall intentions through a sense of shared value. This extension to social recommendations underscores religiosity's role in fostering word-of-mouth and communal loyalty in halal tourism (Singh & Aggarwal, 2024; Yusuf et al., 2025).

The mediating role culminated in a holistic intent formation, where religiosity integrated all meanings into a unified desire for future engagement. Participants recounted how this integration made intentions feel authentic and rooted in their core beliefs. This unity ensured that the connection was not fleeting but built to last. The stories underlined that religiosity was essential in making halal tourism a reliable driver of ongoing travel choices. Holistic integration through religiosity creates sustained and authentic drivers of long-term travel intentions (Zhang et al., 2024; Shahzad et al., 2024).

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings from this phenomenological study reveal that religiosity serves as a central interpretive lens through which Muslim tourists assign deeper meaning to halal tourism experiences. Participants consistently described halal attributes not merely as functional conveniences but as elements that either supported or challenged their spiritual integrity during travel. When these attributes aligned authentically with Islamic values, they evoked feelings of inner peace, security, and affirmation of Muslim identity. This deeper meaning-making process goes far beyond surface-level compliance and highlights the subjective, emotionally rich nature of halal tourism encounters. Religiosity thus acts as a vital driver that shapes holistic experiences, transforming practical facilities into sources of spiritual assurance and emotional comfort for Muslim travelers (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015; Sudarsono et al., 2021).

Religiosity emerged as the key factor shaping how participants interpreted these attributes. Those with higher levels of intrinsic commitment viewed even minor details, such as staff awareness of prayer times or the sincerity behind halal certification, with greater significance, often linking them to broader religious principles of purity, respect, and gratitude. In contrast, participants with moderate religiosity appreciated the facilities but placed less emotional weight on them, focusing more on overall convenience and

atmosphere. According to Eid and El-Gohary (2015), religiosity acts as a powerful cognitive and affective filter in faith-based consumption contexts, a pattern clearly reflected in the participants' narratives. This interpretive role explains why the same physical offerings can produce markedly different experiences and levels of satisfaction across individuals.

The mediating function of religiosity became especially evident when participants connected their constructed meanings to future behavioral intentions. Positive, spiritually resonant interpretations, such as feeling "truly accepted" or "at peace while worshipping", translated into strong desires to revisit destinations or recommend them to others, but only when reinforced by high religiosity. Without this internal reinforcement, even satisfactory facilities did not always generate lasting loyalty. This mechanism aligns with earlier observations by Rahman et al. (2020), who noted that spiritual alignment significantly strengthens the pathway from perception to behavioral outcomes in Muslim travel contexts. The qualitative depth here shows that the mediation is not mechanical but deeply personal, rooted in the interplay between lived faith and experiential meaning.

These insights extend the current understanding of halal tourism by shifting attention from supply-side infrastructure to the demand-side lived reality. Khalek et al. (2023) have concentrated on developing certifications, facilities, and economic impacts, yet the present study demonstrates that the true value lies in how Muslim tourists internalize and personalize those offerings through their religiosity. By adopting a phenomenological lens, the research uncovers emotional and spiritual dimensions, such as gratitude, identity reinforcement, and communal sharing, that quantitative approaches often overlook. This richer perspective confirms that halal tourism succeeds most when it resonates at the level of personal belief and inner experience rather than checklist fulfillment.

The practical implications are significant for destination managers, hotel operators, and tourism policymakers. First, investing in genuine cultural sensitivity training for staff can create the authenticity that participants valued highly, turning basic compliance into meaningful spiritual support. Second, marketing strategies should move beyond listing halal features and instead highlight emotional and spiritual benefits, such as inner calm, family harmony in faith-friendly settings, or opportunities for reflection, to better connect with religiously committed segments. Third, recognizing variations in religiosity suggests the need for tiered or personalized offerings: highly observant travelers may respond strongly to subtle, sincere details, while more moderate groups prioritize overall accessibility and comfort. Implementing these nuanced approaches can enhance satisfaction, build loyalty, and support sustainable growth in the halal tourism market. Religiosity does not merely influence halal tourism, it actively mediates how meanings are formed and how those meanings drive intentions to return or recommend. Understanding this dynamic offers both theoretical advancement in religious consumer behavior and actionable guidance for an increasingly important global travel segment.

## **CONCLUSION**

This phenomenological study has illuminated the profound role of religiosity in shaping how Muslim tourists interpret and derive meaning from halal tourism experiences. The findings consistently show that halal tourism is far more than a collection of facilities such as halal food, prayer rooms, or gender-segregated amenities; it represents a holistic journey that either supports or disrupts spiritual integrity and personal identity during travel. Through the participants' lived narratives, religiosity emerged as the primary lens that filters external attributes into deeply personal and emotionally resonant meanings. When these meanings feel authentic, spiritually comforting, and aligned with Islamic values, they generate strong inner peace, gratitude, and a reinforced sense of Muslim identity. Religiosity mediates the entire process by transforming positive interpretations into firm intentions to revisit destinations or recommend them to others. This mediation is not automatic but deeply rooted in the interplay between individual faith commitment and experiential meaning, offering a richer understanding of what truly drives loyalty in the halal tourism segment.

The practical implications of these insights are clear for tourism stakeholders: moving beyond minimum halal compliance toward genuine cultural sensitivity, staff training on Islamic etiquette, and marketing that emphasizes spiritual and emotional benefits rather than just listing features. Destinations that create authentic, faith-resonant experiences are more likely to build long-term loyalty among religiously committed Muslim travelers. However, this study has limitations, primarily its qualitative nature and small purposive sample, which restrict generalizability to broader populations or different cultural contexts within the global Muslim community. Future research could address these by conducting large-scale quantitative studies to test the mediating role of religiosity statistically, or by exploring cross-cultural variations through comparative phenomenological inquiries across different Muslim-majority and minority countries. Longitudinal designs that track how meanings and intentions evolve over repeated visits would also enrich understanding of this dynamic process.

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